



FRIEDRICH'S  
NEWSLETTER 2019



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



## FRIEDRICH'S DEAR FRIENDS LETTER

*Dear Friends,*

Last year in the Newsletter we wrote about my goodbye to the mountain hut I had rented for 45 years! It is high up at 2130 meters of altitude. Included in the article from last year's Newsletter were comments from several Brockwood friends who had stayed there on various occasions over the past three decades. I have many fond memories of that place where I spent four Christmas with my two sons when they were little. At that time, there were still a few meters of snow in the winter, which only happened again last year. Unfortunately, snowing only one time won't prevent the glaciers from melting, which will be a big water problem for Switzerland and the Alpine regions of France, Italy and Austria. I was alone there a few times when I was younger but also in the company of many friends and former students from Brockwood Park. People said that the place had a special atmosphere. At some point, I wanted to bring K up there with a helicopter! Perhaps K gave us all his blessing.

Many people have the same feeling of peace at Chalet Solitude in Rougemont. The building was started in 1985, when K gave his last talks in Saanen and stayed in Rougemont. He was very curious about why I wanted to build a chalet and where it would be. In spite of having said once "Building your own chalet is still selfishness", perhaps K has also given his blessing to this project.

Stephen Smith, our Brockwood old friend, wrote his book up there. Christina West and Gary Primrose (now a Trustee of the English Foundation) stayed together up there and she did an illustrated survey of some of the plants and herbs one could find around the hut.

Later we had the help of many different former Brockwood students, mainly to carry the food and water up the mountain and do the shopping in the distant town. They had to take the bus and then the train to get organic food, sometimes two hours away. The water was collected from a fountain forty minutes'

walk away and carried in a large metal canister strapped to one's back. It's like a very, very heavy backpack.

They slept in a hotel at the foot of the mountain, since the hut was a one-room living space with bunkbeds and a little kitchen. Gregor and his sister Clara came several times. When one left the place, one would even become sentimental. When I realized this feeling, I was able to drop it immediately.

It was the right moment to leave. This year I wouldn't have been able to go up. But I still keep fit! Vishuanath, our friend and a trustee of both the Indian and English Foundations, wrote:

*Good morning Friedrich,*

*I hope you are well and going through your daily fitness regime of walks and K work. I reckon both these elements can keep one's body and mind in good health. I take your health and fitness both in body and mind as a great example for me.*

One could add to the list the right food (mostly organic) and, of course, no alcohol or drugs!

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September, I celebrated my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Eighty-five people gathered at Le Cerf in Rougemont, an old, wooden, traditional, cozy restaurant that was bought and beautifully renovated by my sons, John and Christoph, with help from one of my granddaughters, Laura, who studied interior design. Le Cerf specializes in cheese dishes like *malakoff*, *raclette* and *fondue*. It's good for vegetarians and, in keeping with the times, it now serves gluten-free vegan dishes.

The party was a glorious event, with a wonderful atmosphere. Normally I ignore such dates, as I think every day is my birthday. But it was a perfect opportunity to bring together several generations of the extended family – sons, grandchildren, brothers, nephews, nieces, cousins, cousins' children – and several friends. Some family members hadn't seen each other in 50 years. Everyone was





Friedrich greeting guests for his 90th birthday celebration

© Photo by Raphael Faux

happy. One of my cousins told me: “Everyone is so nice here, despite most of them being family!” And a friend commented: “Love is in the air.”

Christoph and John presented a funny sketch, and the Deputy Mayor of Rougemont gave a nice speech. I was delighted when my sons announced that, as a birthday present, 90 trees were being planted in my name in a forest in La Vallée de Joux, my mother’s native area. My mother was from the Raymond side of the family, whose presence there was first recorded in the year 1300! The Deputy Mayor showed everyone a drawing of an “insect snappy”, a simple device for catching insects and then releasing them outdoors. I had given one to his aunt when he was young, and seeing it every time he entered her house made a big impression on him. There was a time when I gave one to almost anyone who visited Chalet Solitude.

It was also great to have Claudia Herr, Javier Gómez Rodríguez, Jürgen Brandt, Nick Short and Raman Patel there. We’ve been working together

for over 20 years, supporting the Krishnamurti Schools, Study Centres and Foundations in various ways. Antonio Autor Guembe, principal of Brockwood Park School, also joined the party.

Bernard Pulfer, who founded and runs the Riversong centre in Les Plans-sur-Bex, Switzerland, wrote a very nice comment about the event. What Bernard is referring to when he mentions my name is that Friedrich comes originally from 'Friedensreich' which means "full of peace".

*Dear Friedrich,*

*I am very happy to be here with my family to celebrate your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday! But it's not the addition of the years that moves me. What I appreciate, at the highest level, is that you radiate peace, a serene joy. You are 'rich' in peace and you share it!*

*Have you realized what destiny has offered you in giving you your name? And it is, no doubt, the contact with K and his teachings that has made it possible. It is actually through him that we became friends. Thank you for all that has been achieved and is being achieved!*

*Best wishes of serenity, Bernard Pulfer*

Having reached such a respectable age, this might be a good moment to make something of a sketch of one's life. There is a German proverb that says: "If you want to tell a story, take your time and make it short." That is why I'm only going to give you a short version of my life's story after leaving the company, moving to Switzerland and meeting K.

I was born in 1929 in Schiltach, a village in the Black Forest, which is probably responsible for the strong connection with nature that I've had all my life. Our family lived just beside my grandfather Hans' factory and its noises and smells were an integral part of my natural surroundings. After attending boarding school in Davos, Switzerland, and studying economics in St. Gallen and Cologne, I joined the company, gained experience in every department and, aged 29, became head of Grohe Thermostat and eventually head of all the com-

panies. During those years the companies experienced a rapid expansion and we were making record profits. But it was all getting a bit too much for my father, who after a while decided to sell a majority stake in all the companies to ITT.

This meant we were out of the management, which was rather hard for me, since the factories had been an integral part of my identity since childhood and I had taken enthusiastically to the work. But in spite of the loss and disappointment, an inner voice urged me to welcome the opportunity to get off the treadmill. And I still feel grateful for it.

The whole family gradually moved to Switzerland and in 1969 I settled in Vaud, on Lake Geneva, with my wife and two young sons. The land was very familiar to me and it always struck me as an ideal location to build a home. I am glad that my sons grew up there, where they still live with their families. I also had an apartment in Davos that was my base for many mountaineering expeditions with my guide and friend Andreas. We climbed 200 peaks, including some of the highest ones in the Alps, notably the Matterhorn. I also assembled a vast collection of paintings, principally from the Viennese Magical Realism school.

In the 1980's I began to wonder what life was all about and came across K. New horizons opened, new 'homes' in England, California and India. Once I asked K, "Can one do good with money?" This was a silly question: of course,



With my sons, John and Christoph © Photo by Raphael Faux



With Claudia Herr © Photo by Raphael Faux

one can do good with money. K said, “We got some money and bought Brockwood Park.” I had gotten money by selling my part of the company to my sister and brothers. This sale came at just the right time so I could help the schools and foundations wherever necessary, and I began by financing the construction of the Study Centre at Brockwood Park. This support work with the K organisations has been my main concern for the last forty years.

I have kept myself physically active, with long walks and other exercise in nature. For the last thirty years I have been collaborating with my colleagues in the Link team, affectionately known as ‘Friedrich’s Gang’ or just ‘The Gang’. And I have been taking lots of nature photos. I keep up with the news and with my interest in ecology and nature protection. I have solar panels on my house and haven’t owned a car for about 20 years now. And, after two failed marriages, I have been blessed with a successful partnership. Above all, there is wonder regarding life and the origin of all things.

A general question that people often ask is “How did K and his teachings affect you?” Recently I was asked this question at the Centre and I tried to explain the effect of the teachings on my life. An example is that when I was younger I could fly into a rage and now it doesn’t happen anymore. When one notices anger coming up, it dissolves. And even when it explodes, it is immediately forgotten. Some suggested that it could also be due to old age, but a new friend and doctor, Hamid, said at the time that “Old age doesn’t guarantee that one becomes peaceful”. Hamid is originally from Iran, but he now lives and works in Norway and comes regularly to the Centre.

K affected different people differently. Our friend Abhijit Padte shared with us the impact encountering K had on him. I met Abhijit and his amazing mother a few years ago in Switzerland where, already in her 80s, she went on long mountain walks. Together they founded the Badlapur Krishnamurti Centre on the outskirts of Mumbai. Abhijit teaches mathematics and has a lifelong connection with K and the teachings. Ever since meeting him I thought it would be nice for him to teach at Brockwood. He and his lovely wife, Rozmin, are now teaching and living there with their bright 3-year-old daughter, Reeva. At my request, he sent us **a short autobiography**:

Dear Friedrichji,

I was very reluctant, but on your request decided to write something about my life, a short autobiography. It is not exactly short, but captures the main milestones of my journey.

I first came across Krishnamurti's teachings when my mother's advisor told her to choose a living philosopher for her thesis in the Dept. of Philosophy in Mumbai. In the course of her research she met members of KFI Mumbai and she began a lifelong relationship with Nandini Mehta, with whom she worked in Bal Anand School for many years. My mother requested me and my brothers to attend the Bombay talks of Krishnamurti in the early eighties. I have vivid memories of K, sitting under a tree full of crows, delivering his talks to a packed crowd of Bombay office workers late in the evening. When the crows became too noisy, he would remind listeners that we were disturbing them and not the other way around. His talk dazed me into silence. It's hard to describe, but I distinctly remember having experienced a force that left me unable to move both physically and psychologically. I sat on the ground, not knowing how to respond to what I had heard. That started a journey which has continued for the past 40 years. Since that first meeting, my interest in the teachings has had a bearing on very single decision of my life.

I read as many books on the teachings as I could and visited many retreats and schools in India and abroad. I completed my post-graduation in Mathematics

and started a three-decade long career in teaching Mathematics at a college in Mumbai. Just before I took voluntary retirement from my teaching job, I decided to do research in Krishnamurti's philosophy of education from the same Department where my mother did her research in his philosophy of religion. Both my mother and I were interested in starting a school, but gave up on the thought when K told her, rather sarcastically, "First visit our existing schools and then decide".

In the late nineties, I met Dr Parchure, Raman and Rabindra, with whom I remain closely associated. I spent a lot of time with Dr Parchure, helping him to compile his *Documents of Private Study* and organizing small group discussions in and around Mumbai. Together with my mother and other friends, we bought a five-acre piece of land on the outskirts of Mumbai to start the Badlapur Krishnamurti Retreat, which continues to this day.

I moved to Canada with Rozmin in 2011 and lived first in Toronto and then in Vancouver for 7 years. In 2016, we were blessed with a daughter, Reeva. Latent in me was a strong desire to teach in a K school and ringing in my ears was this passage from my favourite K book, *Education and the Significance of Life*, Chapter I, pg. 10:

*"In seeking comfort, we generally find a quiet corner in life where there is a minimum of conflict, and then we are afraid to step out of that seclusion. This fear of life, this fear of struggle and of new experience, kills in us the spirit of adventure."*

That brings me to the latest adventure of my life, as I begin as a Mathematics teacher at Brockwood. Sitting in my patio in the East Pavilions, overlooking a grand display of magnolia trees, my mind wonders what K could have meant when he said:

*"Mathematics is order, infinite order. Order is the universe, is intelligence. Order is not static, it is a living movement."* (*The Whole Movement of Life Is Learning*, Letter 47, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1982, pg. 168)

With respect and affection – *Abhijit*, 18 May 2019

## **K: Do not kill.**

Human beings like to kill, whether it be each other, or a harmless, bright-eyed deer in the deep forest, or a tiger that has preyed upon cattle. A snake is deliberately run over on the road; a trap is set and a wolf or a coyote is caught. Well-dressed, laughing people go out with their precious guns and kill birds that were lately calling to each other. A boy kills a chattering blue jay with his air-gun, and the elders around him say never a word of pity, or scold him; on the contrary, they say what a good shot he is. Killing for so-called sport, for food, for one's country, for peace – there is not much difference in all this. Justification is not the answer. There is only: do not kill. In the West we think that animals exist for the sake of our stomachs, or for the pleasure of killing, or for their fur. In the East it has been taught for centuries and repeated by every parent: do not kill, be pitiful, be compassionate. Here animals have no souls, so they can be killed with impunity; there animals have souls, so consider and let your heart know love. To eat animals, birds, is regarded here as a normal, natural thing, sanctioned by church and advertisements; there it is not, and the thoughtful, the religious, by tradition and culture, never do. But this too is rapidly breaking down. Here we have always killed in the name of God and country, and now it is everywhere. Killing is spreading; almost overnight the ancient cultures are being swept aside, and efficiency, ruthlessness and the means of destruction are being carefully nurtured and strengthened.

'Contentment'

*Commentaries on Living, Second Series*, pg. 199

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Our old friend Sebastian Runde, naturopath and herbalist, vegan chef and nature conservationist, also published a lovely article in *Eco-Age*, under the general heading of 'Life as I know it' (03 November 2018). In this piece, he traces some major turning points in his life until he discovered what he really loved to do. This had been one of the central purposes of his education at Brockwood and it struck him years later, in the midst of a successful career,

that what he did was not what he loved. What he loved was nature. So he abandoned his corporate life and went to live in a farm in Umbria. There he has been for the past 15 years, giving expression to his love of life.

### *Life as I know it*

*Donkey Years* was the title I had chosen for my autobiography – the title referring to the years before I actually had donkeys in my life. Now, I have 17 of them. The book, however, I haven't started yet.

Life as I know it has always been full of drastic and sudden change, breaking with everything that was before – nothing ever worked out as planned. However, when I was a little boy, I would have much rather envisioned the life I live now than the life I lived 15 years ago, when I was working in advertising and was part of the corporate world. The person I was 15 years ago would never have thought that he would end up on a woodland farm in the hills of central Italy.

I left home, whatever that meant back then, quite young, at 14. An article I had read about a school founded by the philosopher and teacher J. Krishnamurti was so incredibly inspiring that I took off, hitchhiking, to find the school, of which the only thing I knew was that it was in southern England. I was lucky. After four days of travel I found it and eventually became a student there. Little did I know what impact those years at Brockwood Park would have on me. They have shaped my life since and led me to where I am today.

During the 18 years I spent in Zurich, Switzerland, advertising and film were my life; I enjoyed what I was doing and apparently was not bad at it either. I had a good life, big cars and bespoke suits. Working 90-hour weeks was not unusual, nor was earning good money. One day I bought myself a rather expensive sports car. At the first red traffic light, driving away from the car dealership, like a bucket of ice water in my face, an epiphany, I was suddenly aware that I really did not need all this, and I wondered whether I was really doing what I loved. At the Krishnamurti school, one of the main objectives



was to find out what you really loved. The red light did not want to change to green; the halt was very welcome; the good life I felt I had seemed so utterly superficial and senseless. And no, I was not doing what I really loved. I might have functioned rather well, my executive life had its own momentum, the swirl of its g-force embracing me comfortably, but it was numbing, it utterly lacked the vitality of life. My life was so crowded with stuff, an accumulation of things, useless things. I had too much of everything. And I decided to get rid of it all, to start anew, afresh, and begin to do what I loved.

We all know what we really love; it is not that one needs to look for it. Shedding the superfluous from one's life helps to let it shine bright and clear. In my case, it is a deep and profound love for nature. My plan was to move to the Isle of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides, where I still had a house (well, a ruin). I closed shop in Zurich.

But a phone call to a friend would change all my plans: "Oh hello, Sebastian, sorry I cannot talk right now, I have friends here from Italy", and then jokingly, "Wouldn't you like to take over a farm in Umbria?" I replied that right now, in my present situation, I might even consider that possibility, and he replied, "No, no, for a folly like this you need to be young, full of power and above all, full of illusions."

When I went to bed that night, my gut feeling said, "Why not? Why not try something completely new?" Going back to something is not half as attractive as trying something never done before. I had never been to Italy, nor did I speak the language, but the idea to move there appealed to me tremendously. It felt right; I couldn't explain why.

My gut feeling was right. I found what I had been looking for all my life. I found home.

Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity

The good life is something completely different today; it means doing as little harm to the environment as possible, embracing a sustainable life-

style, challenging oneself to live off as little as possible. And enjoying and loving it.

It has been 11 years now that I have been here in the woods and during all this time I haven't bought a single item of new clothing; everything I own I had before or is second-hand. I grow my own food, even mill the flour for bread and pasta. And as not to waste precious drinking water, I installed a compost toilet – mind you, not a terrible latrine, but an amazing 'Loo with a View'. It is a life of great luxury, because every single step makes sense and is integrated into the natural cycle of Mother Nature. There is a right time for everything and one develops a great sensitivity for those natural cycles. Plants are a great passion of mine – well, they are at the basis of our life, aren't they? Be it for food, fibres for clothing, building material, medicine and, of course, the oxygen we breathe – we are nothing without them. Every little weed deserves our love and respect.

Plants are also inspirational and I love to investigate the different possibilities for inspiring that love for plants in other people through my work as a naturopath and herbalist, by producing natural cosmetics and through my love for a plant-based diet.

Life as I know it is full of surprises that want to be embraced. To be happy is a conscious decision of how we choose to view our world, a filter we install into our perception of reality. I am happy and blessed. While harvesting olives last week, high up in the trees, a dear friend of mine talked about life being all about relationships; I believe that is very true and we are here to inspire each other.

While writing these lines, I have a fire crackling in the stove, a view across the fields with the donkeys peacefully grazing and Adriano, my wonderful husband, spoiling me with tea and biscuits. Could life get any better? Most certainly, with every moment, it does. When I was about five years old I was convinced I'd live to be 120. That child was right about so many things, and I hope he was right about this one too, for I do love life. – *Sebastian Runde* ■

## **K: If you are not in communion, you are dead**

So ask yourself, if I may request you, to find out for yourself whether you are in communion with anything – whether you are in communion with a tree. Have you ever been in communion with a tree? Do you know what it means to look at a tree, to have no thought, no memory interfering with your observation, with your feeling, with your sensibility, with your nervous state of attention, so that there is only the tree, not you who are looking at that tree? Probably you have never done this, because for you a tree has no meaning. The beauty of a tree has no significance at all, for to you beauty means sexuality. So you have shut out the trees, nature, the river, the people. And you are not in contact with anything, even with yourself. You are in contact with your own ideas, with your own words, like a human being in contact with ashes. You know what happens when you are in contact with ashes? You are dead; you are burnt out.

*Second Public Talk, Varanasi, 22 November 1964*  
*The Collected Works, Vol. XIV, pg. 285*  
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Our old friend Gerard Bayle was deeply touched by K's teachings when he came across them in a French translation. He then worked at Brockwood for a number of years and has continued to collaborate with that school and the K schools in India ever since, offering his highly appreciated drama workshops. He is an actor of long-standing who has specialised in the work of Eugene Ionesco. At my request, quite recently he sent us the following account of his **involvement with Brockwood and the Indian schools.**

Dear Friedrich,

I got your last mail and I thank you. You reminded me of our conversation about writing something concerning my involvement with Brockwood and the schools in India. First of all, and by way of an excuse for my doing this later than expected, I would like to tell you that using a computer is quite an arduous task for me and I need a lot of time to compose a mail. Also, for

the last 3 weeks I have not been well (an old stomach problem). That being said, I am going to try now to do more or less what we had agreed, that is speaking with the pronoun 'I', which is a bit delicate. So, Friedrich, I will do my best and if you find anything not good or beside the point, please feel free to correct my writing. So here is the text I am proposing to you.

In September 1985, I joined Brockwood as a staff member. That was the result of my insisting for 3 years. That year, at the end of August, I was at home with some friends and I got a call from Steve Smith. Steve asked me, "Are you still willing to come to Brockwood?" I said, Yes. So Steve said, "You can come now or at the beginning of September". So that is how I joined the School.

In the first year, things were not obvious for me. I had many jobs, as all the staff did. In addition to teaching Drama and rehearsing a play with the students, I taught some French and almost every morning I would help in the kitchen or in the garden – out in the cold!! I was very busy and the best time for me was the morning meeting. The whole school sitting quietly for 10 minutes or listening to Alan Rowland playing piano on Sundays was a blessing. At the end of that year, the students staged the play we had been working on, Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

We could say that for about six years my life at Brockwood was very much the same. Perhaps not exactly, because in such a small community there is something new every day. Towards the middle of those six years, the Principal, Scott Forbes, suggested that I visit some K schools in India. Scott gave me a letter of introduction and I also wrote to the schools I was about to visit. I remember very well that Christina West helped me with that letter and suggested that I might offer some drama workshops in exchange for food and lodging. I visited three schools: Rishi Valley, The Valley School and Rajghat. It so happened that in The Valley School there was a teacher, Usha Mukunda, who was very keen on Drama and that is how Usha and I met for the first time.

The next three years went by, still working full time at Brockwood and enjoying my very busy life there, including the conversations with students



The Matterhorn seen from Smut, Zermatt, Switzerland

and staff and the weekly K video for the whole school. Brockwood became, in a way, home for me. But in spite of that I gradually began to miss the easy Parisian life and at the beginning of 1991 decided to return to France for a time.

Krishnamurti died in 1986 and after his death Giselle Balleys, who had been organising the Saanen gatherings and who had taught at Brockwood, decided to organise a two-week annual gathering at the end of July in Schönried, near Saanen. It must have been around 1994–1995 that I decided to go to these gatherings. I have a very good memory of them. The ambiance was very, very good, surely due to Giselle herself.

And I think it must have been during one of these gatherings, probably in 1995, that Usha told me, “Why don’t you come back to India?” And from that time, I have been to India every year, visiting all the K schools, although for the last few years being more frequently in The School in Chennai, The Valley School and Centre for Learning in Bangalore. During my visits, which are about one month in each school, I propose drama workshops for students and, sometimes, for staff. Those workshops consist of silent games with movements, postures and miming, rehearsing a play with older students, and improvising games (without words of course). Usually I go to India from November to February and I am not ashamed to say that at the same time I escape the cold European winter!!!

But apart from my visits to India, I went back to Brockwood in 1997, still doing Drama, working in the kitchen or in the Centre. I left Brockwood in 2002 and since then I regularly go to Brockwood for one or more weeks, organising drama workshops or rehearsing a play.

I would like to say that the teachings of Krishnamurti (that I discovered through French translations in 1970) have been, to put it simply, the most important part of my life and my years of involvement with Brockwood and the schools in India have been, for want of a better word, the most beautiful of my life.

Regards – *Gerard*, 27 August 2019

## K: Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom

To live in the world and yet not be of the world is our problem, and it is a problem of earnest pursuit because we cannot withdraw, we cannot renounce, but we have to understand ourselves. The understanding of oneself is the beginning of wisdom. To understand oneself is to understand one's relationship with things, people, and ideas. Until we understand the full significance and meaning of relationship with things, people, and ideas, action, which is relationship, will inevitably bring about conflict and strife. So a man who is really earnest must begin with himself; he must be passively aware of all his thoughts, feelings, and actions. Again, this is not a matter of time. There is no end to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is only from moment to moment, and therefore there is a creative happiness from moment to moment.

*First Public Talk, New Delhi, 14 November 1948*  
*The Collected Works, Vol. V, pg. 155*  
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Finding out what one loves to do may take different forms. It may consist, for example, in discovering one's hidden talent, which is a fundamental purpose of education in K schools. But talent, however creative and life-giving, does not necessarily answer our innate intent to wholeness. Such purpose is deeper than talent, though talent is part of it. This deeper purpose may be what the ancients called *dharma*. Very early in his childhood, Javier manifested a precocious artistic talent as well as a universalist thirst for knowledge. At different times, these artistic and scholarly bents promised to become his settled path in life – except for a nagging existential discontent that neither artistic skill nor humanistic and literary culture could dispel. This discontent concerned his early awareness of the seemingly tragic mode of time-bound and conflict-ridden human existence. For him there is no more fundamental challenge, which is why he continues to work closely with the teachings. In October of last year, he was invited to China to conduct a seminar on K's approach to relationship and he sent us the following **report from Beijing**.

Compañeros,

I'll attempt to give you something of an idea of my recent trip to Beijing.

This was organised by David Blanco, an old Spanish friend of mine from the days of our K inquiry group, who has set up his own transpersonal psychology practice in that city. The programme was to give a talk on education and then conduct a three-day seminar on K's teachings, on the theme of relationship. As not everyone attending these meetings was proficient in English, two translators took care of the talk on education and the seminar.

To encourage participation, David had one of the translators interview me on camera on the topics of the seminar. Then he posted these different excerpts on their own centre network. The interview lasted over an hour and it covered a great deal of what I meant to address. In fact, I feared that whoever saw the interview need not attend the seminar, for it was all there!!

That evening we had the meeting on education. It was well attended and the exchanges were very intense. Due to the translation, the dialogue was more of a Q&A. But it was a good discipline for me, as I had to keep it short and to the point.

The seminar proved to be quite a challenge. It went from 9:30 to 13:00 and from 14:30 to 18:00, from Friday through Sunday. I thought we ended up covering a lot of ground. As David had warned me, the participants tended to raise very concrete questions and were wary of any grand philosophical propositions. So that became the general tenor.

K's approach moves quickly from the evidence of experience to our psychological constitution and the fundamental need for self-knowledge, which is one of the deeper meanings of relationship as the mirror facilitating such self-exposure. Motivation then becomes a key issue. So the whole drive for self-fulfilment was gone into from different angles. Questions of desire, attachment and loneliness took central stage.



Since the group was into spirituality, they asked how they could choose a teacher. So we went into the question of truth being a pathless land. I suggested that truth is therefore not a question of following but of seeing and that when one begins to see for oneself, then all the masters worth the name are with you.

By the end of the three days they were asking for a comprehensive overview of K's teachings, but there was only time for the most schematic outline. I did manage, however, to convey what I consider to be K's basic approach, which is to explore and expose the contradictory movement of self-centred consciousness as we know it. The dissolution of this self-deceptive structure in the light of insight is for K the ground of freedom and wholeness. That's why K wants to abolish psychological time. So, ironically, while the theme of relationship had been suggested as the more practical or down-to-earth approach to K's teachings, in the end it proved to be an invitation to an exploration of the deeper issues inherent in this encompassing selfinquiry.

The participants seemed to be particularly appreciative of the non-dogmatic nature of the exploration. They appreciated the fact that I did not take on the role of 'teacher', which they apparently are used to. This sense of inherent equality in our shared human predicament seemed to bring out their own freedom and initiative in relation to their inner and outer existential concerns.

My friend was rather impressed with the intensity and quality of the exchanges. Already during the interview, he had asked whether I had ever thought of becoming an 'existential psychologist'. What I was talking about and the way I was approaching the issues being raised seemed to him to fit into this particular branch of psychology. I could see what he meant. Well, I guess I took too seriously the notion that one is a human being first and everything else second, so there went another of my promising careers!

In my free days I had the chance to do a bit of site seeing. Unfortunately, I only managed to see the grand exterior of the Forbidden City, with Mao's famous portrait over the gate. But I did end up visiting another palace, pretty

much on the same model, though on a smaller scale. I went to a couple of parks, which was a real delight and relief in the hectic labyrinth of the smoggy metropolis. The air quality in Beijing leaves much to be desired. People wore masks in the street and kept air purifiers at home. One of the parks was really lovely, covered with trees, artificial lakes and lots of old Buddhist temples. I had not expected to see so much Buddhist cultural legacy in the Chinese capital. People still seemed to keep some kind of faith, bowing reverentially three times before the effigy of the Buddha. But they also bowed at other temples dedicated to the three principles of traditional Chinese culture, namely Fortune, Status and Longevity. The character for Fortune was on every door, and everywhere there was the flaming dragon.

Naturally, I made it to the Great Wall. According to the Chinese, one is not a man unless one has set foot on these gigantic defence bulwarks. It's indeed impressive and, as it follows the ridge of the mountains, it gets quite steep at points and is not that easy to climb. One imagines a smooth level road along which horse chariots could run with perfect ease, moving the troops along the whole 3000 km of it. What's missing from this picture is the whole rollercoaster nature of the construction and its endless staircases. But the view of the hills to the north was breath-taking and the legend seemed to live on in the enduring masonry. The hillsides were covered with wild fruit trees. It was chestnut season and I had to try the roasted chestnuts. They were small but very tasty. This Autumnal ritual made me feel very much at home, for I would have been doing the same back in Spain at this same time of year. There was something of a simple communion East and West in eating a roasted chestnut.

I boarded the flight back with a feeling of gratitude for all the human warmth and kindness I had felt from the organisers and the people who participated in the meetings. It was rather reassuring to feel the universal human condition as the fundamental ground of humanity, of the common consciousness binding us all in the same stream of experience and meaning, inquiry into which is our fundamental cultural responsibility.

*Un fuerte abrazo – Javier, 06 November 2018*

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, the exhibition *Krishnamurti in Saanen: 1961–1985* was inaugurated at the Museum der Landschaft in Saanen, open six afternoons a week and initially scheduled to close on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. There are 25 large posters, all in English, German and French, and 4 video monitors, three showing extracts of talks with German and French subtitles, and one playing the promotional videos about Brockwood Park School and Study Centre. There's a display of a representative selection of books, including a facsimile of K's original handwritten *Notebook*, together with various information leaflets, and even a bronze bust of K. The posters introduce the man and the teachings via many short and a few longer quotes. There are also posters on the Foundations and especially about Brockwood. Many of the posters include photos, for example of K in Saanen, the tent where he spoke, the paths where he loved to walk, and K in conversation with others.

Although K talked in Saanen every summer for 25 years, it seemed as though he had been forgotten there. So it was a happy surprise to learn at the opening of the exhibition that of the approximately 50 local people attending, almost half of them had been to one or more of the talks, most commonly with their parents. Others spoke fondly of housing visitors to the region who were attending the talks, and one woman even offered us some decorated planks from Chalet Tannegg, in Gstaad, where K used to stay. This lady lived next door and had saved these planks after Tannegg had been torn down to make room for a new chalet.

With thousands of people from many parts of the world coming to the talks each year, the gatherings made quite an impact on the region. Tourism wasn't the huge business then that it is now; the roads remained small and there was still some silence in the valley. But despite that impact, visible traces of K and the Saanen talks had dwindled to almost nothing. When people turned up seeking to learn more about that intense time, there was nothing to see – though perhaps something to feel.

But now, at least for a while, there is something. The advantage of this region is that it is very international. We had visitors from England, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain and even Morocco! Some visitors, it seemed, had come out of a feeling of nostalgia for those unforgettable days

when they had been there. Others actually took time to go around savouring every aspect of the exhibition, reading the posters, watching the videos and quietly absorbing the message. A series of dialogues was also organised for those interested in going into various specific aspects of the teachings, such as awareness, conditioning, relationship and freedom. A number of people were very interested in the schools and took the brochures. We are sure that at least some of them will also visit the Study Centre.

On the second day of the exhibition, a couple came from Italy specifically for K. When they realized it had just opened, they were first amazed and then rather shocked to learn that it would be dismantled in just over two months' time. The good news is that the exhibition *J. Krishnamurti in Saanen: 1961–1985* has been extended. It will reopen for the winter high season in mid-December and go on until mid-April 2020!

K spoke of himself as the eagle that leaves no trace in its flight. Knowledge leaves a mark but wisdom doesn't. While we may remember and celebrate its expression, the word and the image are not the thing. We could leave something of a permanent reminder of such a joyous and momentous time, scatter some K quotes along the wandering trails crisscrossing the valley, or even set up the bronze bust in the town square or at the cultural centre they built near where the talks used to take place on the other side of the river, but I'm not sure if K would have approved of any such memorial. It was never about him, anyway, or about a place but about the pathless and timeless land of truth.

*Friedrich Grohe*



Woman at the 'Krishnamurti Lake', Rishi Valley

## **K: The Intent of the Schools**

It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation, not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little occurs beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship.

Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behaviour. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and its misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful exploration into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.

A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man's endeavour, his search for beauty, his search for truth and for a way of living without conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideals, theories or belief which bring about a contradictory attitude toward existence.

The school is concerned with freedom and order. Freedom is not the expression of one's own desire, choice or self-interest. That inevitably leads to disorder. Freedom of choice is not freedom, though it may appear so; nor is order conformity or imitation. Order can only come with the insight that to choose is itself the denial of freedom.

*The Beauty of the Mountain*, pp. 18–21

A question that often comes up and is not easy to answer is what the education in K schools is about. I would say it is about being free of fear, anxiety, cruelty and to have care, generosity and affection. The main intention, I would say, is that in their interaction with the teachers and with each other the students understand themselves. As K also said, you are the world and if you understand yourself you understand humanity. That is part of its holistic nature. But perhaps the best people to answer such a question are the students who have gone through it.

In this regard, I was rather impressed with the following reports written by two of the graduating students from Pathashaala, the KFI school in South India. There is a genuine sense of the quality of freedom, care, learning and creative responsibility at the core of these educational institutions. Reading such honest and clear reports from the students themselves is most reassuring regarding the actual rather than the theoretical significance of such an education. These two articles are here reproduced with the generous permission of their respective authors.

The first piece is by Rishika Rajkumar. Rishika studied high school in Prakriya Green Wisdom School, Bangalore, and Pathashaala (PCFL-KFI), Elimichampet village, Kanchipuram district, where she completed her A Levels creditably in 2018. Having spent half of her schooling years in Guangzhou, China, she is fluent in Mandarin and is qualified to teach the language. With her interest and concern being environmental sustainability, she intends to explore this subject in order to discover what and how she can contribute. To this end,

she has chosen to study for her undergraduate degree via online education so that she can also work with and learn from people who are actively engaged in this field.

## What has education at Pathashaala given me?

When I decided to join Pathashaala PCFL-KFI, I had no idea of the transformation that was awaiting me for the next two and a half years. Living in a place where initiative and change are encouraged, even when it comes down to rota, in a campus where we try our best to live in harmony with nature, where we prepare our own compost and use as little water as we possibly can, has given me a taste of what life can be outside. This is my attempt to record what Pathashaala has given me during my stay. I thought it best to organise the learnings I have gained here under the following headings: Community, Autonomy, More Reflections and Moving Forward.

### COMMUNITY

Pathashaala has a total strength of approximately 120 and was designed for about 150. What struck me most strongly in my initial days was how everyone seemed to be close to everyone else! I saw that the younger LEs (Learner Educators) approached the senior-most LEs for a conversation with disarming ease. LEs had open interactions with ELs (Educator Learners) about topics ranging from music and movies to emotions and feelings. I remember finding the openness with which everyone engaged with each other refreshing, with there being absolutely no age barrier. I used to wonder how it was that everyone was able to do this. As time passed, I began to understand that this was so by design.

In Pathashaala there is emphasis on randomization. That is, every individual should be aware of who they spend time with and should make sure not



to be with the same group or person always. I slowly began to understand that the intention behind it is to ensure that everyone does interact with everyone else, so that groups don't end up being exclusive and for people to move out of their comfort zones. While this is what I have understood from the point of view of living in harmony with other individuals, I see that there is also something more personal about it.

Randomization allows the individuals at Pathashaala not to be dependent on a certain person or group, to be okay to stand alone, to walk alone, to just be alone, allowing for observing and reflecting on oneself. In this, I began to become more aware of myself: who was I engaging with, was I unknowingly excluding or avoiding someone, how was I engaging with people, how was I listening, was I really listening at all? I came to realize that relating to others, irrespective of their opinions, choices, appearances, etc., was way more challenging than I had thought at first. I also began to see that structures and formations held more meaning when it came to relating to one another. For example, circles, whether they were the tables or the seating arrangement in discussions, meant inclusion and respect, and the L- shape classrooms meant flexibility and diversity.

All activities at Pathashaala require everyone's participation, whether it is cleaning of the dorms, dining hall or toilets. The rota groups being mixed age groups, allow ELs and LEs to work together. LEs learn to communicate and work together as well as take initiative on their own to experiment and see how the work can be done most efficiently.

Everyone is valued equally regardless of age, gender, strength at academics, etc. The culture at Pathashaala is carefully maintained such that everyone has a voice, a rather important and powerful one at that. At Pathashaala it is difficult not to speak up, because everyone, especially the ELs, encourage the LEs to speak their mind and to listen to one another. I have felt that it is the deep understanding that is held strongly by the school that every being is intelligent that has allowed Pathashaala to succeed in creating an inclusive, non-judgmental space for all present.

## AUTONOMY

### *Academics*

The autonomous learning program (two and a half years) is one that is present only for the senior-most LEs in school, that is, the eleventh and twelfth graders. This means that while the LE does have contact time with the EL of the subject for a few hours, the rest (that is, most) of the study hours in the day is left to the LE to plan and manage. The LE is expected to own and take responsibility for his or her learning.

In my former schools, I had been a student who met expectations. In other words, I did whatever I was asked to. In my first term in Pathashaala, I did exactly that, but this time there was no teacher in the classroom at all times to make sure I was working. I felt that, for the first time, I was studying and working just because I genuinely wanted to.

To me, owning one's learning was synonymous with taking responsibility for one's own life. The LEs are given the freedom to plan their own time, their own academics (with the help of the EL if the LE feels its necessity). The program respects and trusts the LE's intelligence and allows for it to be exercised by oneself. This brings about a sense of ownership in the LEs, which transcends to spaces other than the classrooms.

Taking charge of my own learning made me realize how much more I could be doing after doing the very minimal, or the expected. I began to refer to books other than the given textbooks as I tried to understand certain topics more deeply. I wrote more than the required for the English Language classes as I realized that understanding a language is not just about meeting the requirements for the examination, but more about understanding communication and its relevance in our daily lives.

In this process, I was challenged in situations where I saw myself distracted, or not as focused as I wanted to be. Watching the mind in these situations also revealed a lot about myself. It brought about a certain discipline in me

which I did not earlier know was possible. I feel that while the autonomous learning program helped me learn to study by myself, I was also given the space to study my own self.

### **COW: Community Oriented Work**

The sense of ownership that the autonomous learning program helps the LE to tap into, is exercised again in COW or Community Oriented Work (only for the senior-most LEs). COW gave us the space to take our own initiatives in the campus and outside. We were to look for ways to improve current systems and norms. Here the LEs were allowed to initiate and be part of the change they would like to see in place. The senior LEs are allotted specific time for this program so that long term projects can be taken on. However, taking initiatives is not limited to them alone. Everyone on campus is encouraged to take charge of the space and constantly improve the systems present at all times. For example, changing counters where food is served to make it most efficient in the dining hall. “Proposal sheets” (structured templates to present proposals) are available for anyone who has suggestions to offer. In addition, practical hands-on work is highly valued and considered very much part of our education. (An example would be placing bricks in puddles after heavy rains to be able to walk across).

### **Coursera**

While we were given the space to take responsibility for our academic learning, we also had the option of taking online courses via Coursera or edX. This turned out to be extremely valuable, for we could explore topics and subjects of our interest to the depths we wished to. I did two courses: ‘The Miracles of the Human Language’ (Wageningen University, The Netherlands) and ‘The Age of Sustainable Development’ (Columbia University, USA). Not only did this provide exposure to topics out of my academic syllabus, but it also showed me a new possible way of enhancing knowledge: through online learning you can study anywhere anything that is of interest!

## Contemporary Studies

LEs from the ninth to the twelfth grade have a fortnightly session where we discuss and go into contemporary issues with the aid of newspaper articles and other sources. We were welcome to discuss any issue of concern or interest, be it sexual harassment, international and national events, thought-provoking essays or judgments passed by the Supreme Court. The process of the discussion, or rather dialogue, is quite special, I think.

Each paragraph is read out loud by a different LE. One is invited to read carefully and listen carefully. If the meaning of a word is unknown or something is not understood, one is invited to clarify. After each paragraph or so, we paused to discuss what we understood the written content to mean. In hindsight, I find the little rules the session used to follow to be of great significance. Here too, the LE is expected to take charge of her own learning. Once again, listening is given great importance, to both the article when it is read out and to each other when it is discussed.

Personally, in the initial stages of each session I used to feel that we were discussing something of interest that was far away and perhaps even irrelevant to my life. However, as the session progressed, as we went deeper into the issues and slowly got closer to the roots, there came this revelation that all the issues discussed were quite relevant to each and every one of us, in one way or the other. We live in the same world and it's our responsibility to be aware of the happenings in society and understand them deeply.

## MORE REFLECTIONS

### Listening

One of the most significant learnings I have made at Pathashaala is the importance and power of listening. I think it is the most challenging art to master or even attempt to master. To listen completely, with no judgment,

no preconceived notion, to read between the words, to understand what one is actually saying – I believe it is the sense of leisure to share and listen to one another that makes Pathashaala a space where everyone knows that they have a voice and it will be heard, where every human being is respected, appreciated and valued for who they are, where there is the understanding that every being, regardless of age, is intelligent.

From the time I saw the importance of listening, I began to observe myself carefully while engaging in conversation. I saw that unconsciously I translated the words that were spoken to me into what I thought was being said. I saw myself making judgments and conclusions almost immediately after I heard or saw something, not even giving it time to register as merely an observation, to be able to understand it for what it was, to be fine with leaving some things unknown. Is it possible to delay or suspend the formation of a judgment to simply understand?

### **Being present**

A big challenge I see is to be present not only in conversation, but also otherwise. To not be pulled this way or that by preoccupations, to be present, to be free, to see things clearly, to be independent in observation. For this, I see it is important to be still, again something I have come to understand only after coming to Pathashaala. It is rare to find the space outside to pause, to reflect, to just be.

### **Observation**

When I am by myself, I find that there is a certain stillness, a silence within. Many things that may have seemed unclear to me earlier slowly appear clear to me. I find that I am able to observe myself, to relate. Now I try to watch myself as though I were a third person watching somebody else going through thoughts. I have begun to look carefully into little unconscious decisions I make, say, how I chose to sit at a particular place in the assembly

hall. All decisions, big and small, made unconsciously, seem to have hidden motives and in attempting to understand them I find the human mind to be most complex and fascinating.

When I began to pay closer attention to myself, I also began to observe how others choose to respond to different situations. How different people go about handling and resolving problems in their own ways. I think observing others has also taught me a lot about my own conditioning and why I function the way I do. I really don't think I would have begun my journey in trying to observe myself at this point in my life and find stillness within if it weren't for the encouraging of enquiry in Pathashaala.

### **Understanding society**

Trying to understand society to me also meant a way of understanding the self. The end of the discussion of many, if not all, issues pointed to something human, some emotion, feeling, or thought process we could identify with, such as wanting to gain control over certain things. There is this deep understanding that whatever is happening out there at the large scale is also happening within us at the small scale. The external conflicts in society reflect the internal conflicts that we have within. We are not separate from the world, but very much a part of it. Therefore, it is vital we stay alert as we watch ourselves and the happenings of our surroundings to be able to see things clearly, as they are and act accordingly; not to be mere consumers. It is difficult not to be reminded of Jiddu Krishnamurti's profound words, "You are the world and the world is you."

### **Moving forward**

I leave Pathashaala with hope. Hope for the future, carrying the values, learnings and insights I have gained here, to bear the culture of the school wherever I go. To persist and stand by what I see to be the truth. The ELs, LEs and non-teaching staff made my experience in Pathashaala what it was and I am so thankful to each and every one of them. – *Rishika Rajkumar* ■

## K: Integrated education

Integrated life and action is education. Integration does not come about through conformity to a pattern, either one's own, or that of another. It comes into being through understanding the many influences that impinge on the mind; through being aware of them without being caught in them. The parents and society are conditioning the child by suggestion, by subtle, unexpressed desires and compulsions, and by the constant reiteration of certain dogmas and beliefs. To help the child to be aware of all these influences, with their inward, psychological significance, to help him understand the ways of authority and not be caught in the net of society, is education.

Education is not merely a matter of imparting a technique which will equip the boy to get a job, but it is to help him discover what it is he loves to do. This love cannot exist if he is seeking success, fame or power; and to help the child understand this is education.

Self-knowledge is education. In education there is neither the teacher nor the taught, there is only learning; the educator is learning, as the student is. Freedom has no beginning and no ending; to understand this is education.

*'Psychological Revolution'*

*Commentaries on Living, Third Series, pg. 46*

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The second piece is by Kalki Vundamati. Kalki completed his A level exams and at the time of writing was preparing to go to University. He is interested in an environmentally sustainable way of living and in leading a life that is dignified and respectful, learning about himself and the world around him. During the two and a half years he was at Pathashaala he rediscovered his enthusiasm and zest for meeting life.

## Lessons from Pathashaala

*“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.”*

*J. Krishnamurti*

Owing to a merciless afternoon sun, combined with our travel fatigue, my parents and I did not explore the large, sweeping campus of Pathashaala the first time we ever visited.

I was ready to join the school without knowing how my classroom would look like, how exactly the dry toilets worked, what the dormitory beds were like or how big the games field was. I was willing because the interview that day was unlike any other I had ever attended up until that point.

For once it wasn't about the past (my academics or achievements until then) but about what I was willing to offer from then on. They hardly spoke to my parents; they wanted to hear from me. Why would I like to join Pathashaala? Why was I choosing the subject combination I chose? Would I be willing to work selflessly in a group? Would I report something that troubled me to an Educator-Learner if need be? What did I hold to be important? Was I open to change? I did not have clear answers to many of the questions that day but the questions triggered the drive to find out what the answers would be.

In the following two and a half years at Pathashaala I learned about love and selflessness, about forgiveness, gratitude, respect, empathy, teamwork, about putting “us” before “me”, about being a ‘culture bearer’ and about observation. I learnt about questioning, delaying gratification, overcoming fears, understanding the power of my voice, about becoming aware of emotions like envy and greed, about cynicism and my own conditioning.

I learnt to coexist and interact with the biodiversity around me, with the diversity in me.





At the Krishnamurti Centre, Brockwood Park

## Away from the fast lane

The biggest adjustment I had to make was to be willing to forgo the very things that had been defining my ‘modern’ lifestyle until then: unnecessary Internet and media, junk food, chocolates, phone calls, et al. The transition was seamless owing to the fact that everyone around me adhered to the same idea and the shift soon paid dividends.

I became healthier, both mentally and physically. I took up skipping (and later jogging) and gave sports a lot more importance. Social interactions went beyond just pleasantries, and obtaining information became much more rewarding owing to the effort that went into it. This was the first taste of my outsider’s view into the myriad vicious webs conventional society had created where one would do anything to ‘fit in’, never asking if it was the best way to go about things.

In a way, I had still succumbed to following a convention without questioning; for I only felt okay giving up my unnecessary luxuries because people around me were doing the same. If not the outside world, I had surely followed the Pathashaala convention without asking why. Maybe sometimes that first push provides a much-needed fillip.

A natural tendency to observe and engage developed in me. Soon I could try and make more sensible decisions, even if the majority wasn’t with me. And an open engagement in a range of areas meant that academics became not a tedious task, but an opportunity to learn, teach, explore. Without the pressure of performance-based assessment, learning became a holistic experience with multiple facets and not a close-ended objective in which one needed to score big in order to blend into society.

What seemed like a break from the ‘luxurious’ life, in fact ended up distancing me from the fast lane; it was better to think before acting, deciphering illusions.

## **Standing up and taking charge**

We rarely tend to speak up these days; I had been happy to have my opinions tucked away in a corner and nod away to most things people told me even if I did not think along the same lines. We tend to just talk. Although I would have been able to talk of poverty and environmental destruction and exploitation, and state how something should be done about it, I would never have imagined taking the first steps myself.

In whose hands is our learning? I had been more than happy to let my teachers and peers have the controls of my work ethic and mostly studied to meet the requirements or to please others rather than really revel in the process of learning.

Enter Pathashaala.

It took time but slowly I found a voice and realised that it was sometimes important to air my views, even if it was just to add perspective. This happened through the countless CTPs (class teacher periods), assemblies, classes, football, and required prodding and gracious encouragement at times. I realised that not only does it add to the discussion but also takes away that guilty conscience I never knew I had, for not voicing things out.

I finally started taking matters into my own hands. Community oriented work helped pave the way to identify and deal with problems across the campus and even in the neighbouring villages. This acted as a natural base for me, helping me take initiative on my own for problems no matter how small. From fixing the games field swing to help cleaning up after someone else's mess, all the work I did was out of a choice to help and add to the community.

The AS and A level program is self-regulated, and called Programme for Autonomous Learning. In effect, this meant that most of my academic endeavours were in my hands. The ELs (Educator – Learners) would not be teachers but would play the role of guides and facilitators, willing to assist me with the subjects only upon my asking and interest.

For the first time, I discovered the depths of a subject on my own; be it understanding the basics of calculus or discussing in detail the seemingly vague concepts of the kinetic model of gases. I was in charge of my academics and found myself doing it for the joy of finding things out rather than out of mere pressure. Finally, the results and the process were erasers of self-doubt as now I was sure that it was my own effort, conviction and will that led to the results.

Taking charge was a lesson in learning to be independent and willing to stand apart if need be.

### **“Us” in a society where “me” thrives**

The people of Pathashaala in a social space are quite an anomaly! Be it in the assemblies, the dining hall and outside it, the games field, walking to different venues (mostly towards the dining hall) or going back to the dorms, you mostly don't see *any* fixed, reoccurring patterns. It *cannot* be determined that the ELs mostly gel well with each other or that most of the teenagers shield themselves in exclusive groups of their own or that all the juniors can be found in clusters together.

Rather, you see the smallest of LEs (Learner – Educators) walking around and speaking to the tallest of LEs; you see the seniors sharing games, stories and experiences and vice-versa everywhere. You hardly see any LE not comfortable enough to strike a conversation with any of the ELs or even the director. ELs and LEs are often seen comfortably sharing their space, joy and time with the non-teaching staff and vice-versa.

Giving myself the opportunity to interact with a spectrum of people has been perhaps the most wholesome of experiences of being in Pathashaala. I've come to experience the joys of playing with my juniors and learning from them. I've been helped by the most unexpected (a serious indicator of my conditioning) people many a time. I've learnt a great deal about empathy and listening through the simple task of being present

in a conversation. I've opened up a great deal and in return I have had the privilege of being open enough for other people to come and confide in me.

Again, it was by design that I got introduced to this fresh and holistic mode of social interaction. Our population strength didn't exceed Dunbar's number, a hundred and fifty, regarded as the maximum number of people you can maintain a stable relationship with in any community. We had rota teams that represented each demographic in school and dining table arrangements, and conscious randomisation in all spaces. Though earlier I was doubtful about the scope and impact of conscious randomisation often emphasised by my peers and ELs, it was that conscious decision to engage with people I would usually not have spoken to, that made the difference. I had to force myself and be reminded on multiple occasions to randomise more. And only later did I realise that the conditioning in me was fairly strong and if not for that initial prodding, I would have never been able to give myself to the interactions I ended up having.

These everyday decisions and choices enabled me to look at my conditioning and helped me understand myself better and perhaps become a less confined person. These small realisations opened the door to introspection. Combined with yoga and solitude, I had started the journey to understand my thought-flow and functioning.

It is in realising our individual pictures and conditioning that we can really appreciate the joys of putting "us" before "me". And, of course, through working with my rota team(s) to cheerfully wash and scrub the stains off plates and tables!

## **Synergy**

The sense of harmony at Pathashaala existed far beyond our tiny human community. It extended to the natural environment around us to a great degree.

At Pathashaala, it was an everyday occurrence that you would find frogs in the bathroom. Quite often a tiny scorpion would lodge itself in a nook of the room, sometimes big scorpions crossed the mud roads us humans frequented and, every so often, snakes too. During the first few weeks, all these creatures made my heart jump and skin crawl. Let alone snakes, I couldn't imagine sharing my bathroom with tiny little harmless frogs. But when not many others shared my ill feelings for these frogs, I decided I would give co-existing with them a try.

Soon these 'intruders' became part of my life at Pathashaala, and I realised something paramount: they own the place as much as we do and they aren't intruders. Living and letting live makes the place thrive. We are part of the ecosystem and so are the trees, birds and animals. They exist to give to us only as much as we exist to give to them; an ecosystem thrives in a mostly egalitarian world. Fair share.

The creation of a whole is greater than the simple sum of its parts. Where fine lines are erased, synergy reigns.

### **The individual in a contemporary world**

Almost every Thursday, we had a class called 'Contemporary Studies' where current issues would be dissected and analysed in a group. The senior school would sit in a circle and then a few volunteer LEs would read out articles selected by our moderator, Gautama Anna, as we called the Director Secretary of the Palar Centre of Learning of which Pathashaala is the central unit.

We debated and discussed topics like the state of the current judicial system, sportsmanship in the World Cup, demonetisation and GST, Hindutva and cow vigilantism, North Korea and human rights, child abuse, rape and misogyny, to name a few. While this exposed us to otherwise taboo conversations and widened our perspectives, it also helped remove the background filter that always operated in me.

Listening to countless takes on a single issue is a rewarding exercise. It provides stimulus like nothing else because your beliefs are stretched to breaking point and, with room for malleability, the discussion can help recast your perceptions.

At the core of the class was how we relate these contemporary issues to our everyday lives. In the end, these sessions reinforced one's sense of how speaking up for the right cause was all the more important in a turbulent world, how gender and caste discrimination is a dire fallacy, how the right spirit matters and how some 'promises' are just an illusion painted by people with vested interests through propaganda and advertising. We did this for ourselves, it wasn't force fed; in that lay all the difference.

### **The road ahead**

It was not only the contribution of words and people that have helped me start on a journey of understanding myself and the world around me, but also the starlit nights and breath-taking sunsets, the small fights and big smiles, dancing in gay abandon and singing, feeling liberated, scoring goals and conceding them both with our heads held high. Learning lay in the most unexpected places. That has been a learning in itself.

To be introduced to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti has been a blessing but, more importantly, the real difference has been to see for myself the meaning behind the words through practice and exploration.

Pathashaala has provided me with the canvas, colours and brushes and I have hardly painted anything; just a few brushstrokes in one corner. The painting is yet to be done; the strokes could go any way along the course of my life. I don't know what the painting will be.

I'm trying to free myself as much as possible from both the confines of the past and future to be able to give my all to the present. It's not an easy task.



The two and a half years at Pathashaala have taught me so much – I could not possibly encapsulate all of it in words. Pathashaala has provided me with a way of living, a way of thinking. The ball is in my court now. – *Kalki Vundamati* ■

## K: Responsibility

You are responsible for the whole of mankind, not for yourself as a separate human being, which is a psychological illusion. As the representative of the whole human race, your response is whole, not partial. So responsibility has a totally different meaning. One has to learn the art of this responsibility. If one grasps fully the significance of the fact that psychologically one is the world, then responsibility becomes overpowering love. Then one will care for the child, not just at a tender age, but will see that he understands the significance of responsibility throughout his life. This art includes behaviour, the ways of one's thinking and the importance of correct action. In these schools of ours, responsibility to the earth, to nature and to each other is part of our education, not merely emphasis on academic subjects, though they are necessary.

*Letter 6, 15 November 1978*

*The Whole Movement of Life is Learning, pp.19–20*

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The question of responsibility has ever been central to a K education. It has been seen as working in tandem with freedom, since only in freedom – freedom understood in the deeper sense envisaged in the teachings – can there be the direct perception of the facts and the right response can then follow. As we see from the reports by the two graduating students from Pathashaala and from the K quote above, one of the main areas of responsibility is to the earth, to nature. This is of course a very urgent topic in the world today on account of the ecological crisis and climate change. The whole world is now aware of and worked up about this issue. While this problem had been clearly perceived and predicted some fifty years ago (e.g. in the ground-breaking reports to the





Near Inwoods Small School, Brockwood Park

Club of Rome of the early 70s), only now, when the catastrophic estimates of science leave no room for doubt, does humanity appear to wake up to the consequences of its own actions.

But it would seem that facts alone are not enough to bring about right action because, individually and collectively, we are not free from self-interest. The political and economic inertia is delaying, when not preventing, the implementation of the needful solutions, which has given rise to a new wave of climate activism. High school students like Greta Thunberg, from Sweden, rightly question the point of education when the future is looking so bleak and the powers that be simply refuse to take the necessary measures.

In an email from this past August, Ted Kneupper, responding to some supposedly good news based on a report from NASA concerning the greening of the planet by massive tree planting in India and China (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2019/02/28/nasa-says-earth-is-greener-today-than-20-years-ago-thanks-to-china-india/amp/>), wondered what the K communities are actually doing about this worldwide challenge:

Good news! The question comes to mind: What action(s) in response to this most serious crisis that our species is facing and generating have been originating from the community of those who take K's teachings seriously? Here I mean action beyond simply thinking and talking.

Regards – *Ted, 23 August 2019*

Our old friend and KFT trustee Gary Primrose, from Yewfield, was the first to reply. As a long-time Brockwood staff member, he was instrumental in fostering the whole ecological outlook in the school. So for him it is clear that, although one can never know where the seeds will fall, what has been and continues to be done there and by some of those who have been there is **more than talk:**

As to Ted Kneupper's comment, I would argue that there is a lot more than talk going on at Brockwood in response to the present social and environmental crisis we are facing. Over the years, many of us have tried to engage students to develop a personal relationship with nature which goes beyond 'thinking and talking'. We trust that this will foster appropriate action and care for their local environment wherever they live. That intimate approach continues today with the Human Ecology program and at Inwoods.

At the Reunion, it was heartening to talk to many alumni and to hear how they were influenced deeply by their contact with the trees and gardens at Brockwood. Many of them I talked to were very concerned with the crises we are facing and were changing their lifestyles accordingly, whether it is flying less, becoming vegans, working in the caring and environmental sectors, growing their own food and so on. Indeed, a number of current students have been active in the Friday school climate strikes in London. Having a sustainable livelihood is very much a value that many of them share and put into practice. Here at Yewfield are two ex Brockwood staff members living and working within a World Heritage Site, very much involved on a day to day basis in carbon reduction, habitat restoration, reforestation and gardening for wildlife by doing it both at home and in the locality, sharing techniques and experience.

I agree with Ted that talk is easy and it is much harder to put our 'thinking and talking' into coherent action. Nevertheless, I would disagree that that is all that happens or ever happened at Brockwood. It is my understanding and experience that many at Brockwood today are taking the crises we are facing very seriously and actively doing whatever they can about it. When there are the financial and manpower resources to make low carbon choices, they do it, such as putting a biomass boiler at the Centre, ground source heat pumps in the new pavilions, a straw bale classroom at Inwoods and low wattage lighting throughout the schools. There is always more to do and if Ted has any suggestions, I'm sure the Brockwood staff would be happy to hear them.

Regards – Gary, 12 September 2019

Suprabha Seshan also wrote a response to Ted's question from the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala, spelling out the tremendous ecological work being done there and making a critical distinction between **egology and ecology**.

Dear Everyone,

I've not seen Ted Kneupper's full email. I had responded quickly very early on to Friedrichji with two articles refuting the good news from NASA but for some reason that didn't get circulated, so I've appended that at the end of this note.

To begin with, I'd like to comment on Ted's question.

First: I see this most serious crisis as one facing all life, and not only the human species.

Second: I see this crisis as being generated by a particular culture, that is, modern civilization (all mainstream religions, empire, communism and capitalism, basically all isms, and patriarchy). There are thousands of extant indigenous cultures who are not part of generating the current crisis. This is a very serious distinction to make. The modern person tars the breadth of humanity with the same brush/motive with respect to the rest of nature. I will leave it for a separate discussion (i.e. ego-nature across all human culture), for we need to give time to it. I question the assumption of the universality of the ego (as a domination violation imperative), with respect to human cultures. I do believe many cultures have a completely different inherence in the natural world, which makes their ego-nature an eco-nature at a fundamental level.

I have been trying to find ways to understand this, and I believe it can only be understood by someone who has a biocentric world view, with a deep relationship with nonhumans, and an understanding of how different creatures and humans create community. Aboriginal cultures are shaped by different forces because the boundary between human and nonhuman is not made. Of course, we need to understand how the mind functions when nonhumans are

within its fundamental relational and cognitive makeup. Because there are so many aboriginal cultures (and yes, they are being destroyed, weakened) there are thousands of different ways of relating to place, and sense of place. This makes for a good study of egology and ecology! Eco and Ego are mutually exclusive!!

The common, tiresome and dangerous argument is that humans have always destroyed. While I would agree that some cultures have been destructive and have overrun nature and other cultures, many other cultures have lived in place for thousands of years. There are some that have sustained themselves for tens of thousands of years. In place. Without destroying. They are not being allowed to continue their ways of life, and they are undergoing genocide.

With respect to the second half of Ted's question, here are some actions I have taken and am taking, with no claim on having achieved anything of significance (the horror still continues!). But I persevere.

FIRST: a choice to live in community with humans and nonhumans, with the latter being as centre-stage as the former. Where daily life is devoted as much to the care of other life forms, and to convivial community life with them, as with humans.

SECOND: steadily increasing possibilities for other species even when the odds are so against us all. This is in part at a local level, within this 70-acre Sanctuary. All creaturely beings, elephants to springs, to butterflies to mosses! Thousands of species are here! Most of my fellow human Sanctuarians look after the increase of plant life, i.e. the care of threatened, endangered and vulnerable species, primarily those on the brink of extinction. As for myself, I help to form and sustain bands of people, and actions that protect land, or animals, or habitat. Right now, we are in the final phase of acquiring land at a higher elevation, so that there can be a second location for climate nonhuman refugees!

THIRD: steadily engaging in education. Short-term and long-term. I am not involved in school teaching, but for 26 years I have facilitated various

means by which young people can come close to the natural world, to discover some space beyond human artifaction and invention. Spending time with wild creatures is the simplest way to explore ego-nature, embodied nature, consciousness, emotions, reactions etc. I am interested to ask the question what is to be human in the company of nonhumans! (I hope I do not need to say in this group that the K question of ending thought and going beyond self remains central!!)

FOURTH: being 24/7 on call for anybody who seeks support in protection of wild nature.

FIFTH (oops this is bit of an extension of second): creating a habitat level engagement for local community. In our case, we have now a 16 km stretch of river, about 5000 hectares of forest to protect and monitor. On the village side, we are engaged with asking questions of how to shift practice and economics and attitudes. We also have a vigilance group. And there are steady attempts to work with local bureaucracy.

SIXTH: joining in policy level negotiations, when invited. I am more often invited than I accept. This is due to the fact that my allegiance is primarily with the underprivileged and the marginalized. A bit like the ego, power structures need to end, not just get a little less brutal!

Example: I have just returned from a two-day conference with the finance minister of Kerala on “rebuilding Kerala” after the two consecutive years of floods (anthropogenically related, clearly), and my main contribution was on “rewilding Kerala”. The central debate was on the push to consume our way out of the mess, which many of us challenged and rather to think like citizens of biomes, members of natural communities. The people present at this meeting were farmers, local NGOs, planters, business interests, government officials, activists, conservationists.

SEVENTH: Through essays and articles, being visible in a much wider public space, with a non-negotiable stance towards bio-centrism, calling out for an end of this way of being (industrial culture). Unfortunately, this means

that I am also noted, watched by people who want this way to continue. Given India's right-wing regression, this is a problem I have to figure out what to do, for myself, and the Sanctuary and others.

EIGHTH: To constantly nurture alliances at regional, national and international levels. This is simply being part of a network, of several networks. Organized social action is vital.

NINTH: Lifestyle choices, of course.

And more. There are several more actions worth talking of, but this is getting to be too personal. I hope however that the spirit of group/collective work comes through. I kept the tone personal, this is the only way I could do justice to Ted's question. Others can speak for themselves. Also, this is not to judge anyone who chooses not to do any of these, who works on a personal intimate level, for instance. Or anything else. This is simply a response to a question. And to show the knock-on effect of the K schools with clear examples from one person's life. There are hundreds of ex-students. Multiply what I outlined by all those!

Work is cut out for several hundred years, and there is plenty to do every day. Inspiration for me comes from seeing how trees and other beings do what they do, day after day, night after night!

On this email list is a fellow Brockwoodian who is a superstar of the farming and food movements: Duncan Krishna McKenzie. And there are so many other stalwarts who just keep at things daily. Marcelo Fiorini, not on this list, is also doing incredible things with indigenous peoples.

I'd like to end with some appreciation for specific individuals: meeting Krishnaji was fundamental to my life-long enquiry on action, psyche and relationship, the self being mirrored. Meeting Gary Primrose and Christina West was fundamental to finding a sense of place. Meeting David Bohm was pivotal in unpacking the question of the problem of civilization. Meeting Friedrich Grohe was key to my long journey in so many ways, a gratitude I



can never repay! Meeting Lorenzo Castellari, migrant between worlds, indefatigable worker and questioning spirit, has been essential to the work of education. Having a feisty and sustained connection with Stefi and Sonali and other ex-Brockies is pure oxygen. Knowing Bill and Antonio and Steve and Colin and THE GANG just brings a cheer to my heart! The impact of my K education appears even today in thousands of little ways. Borne by living beings also similarly impacted! But the schools can do much MUCH more.

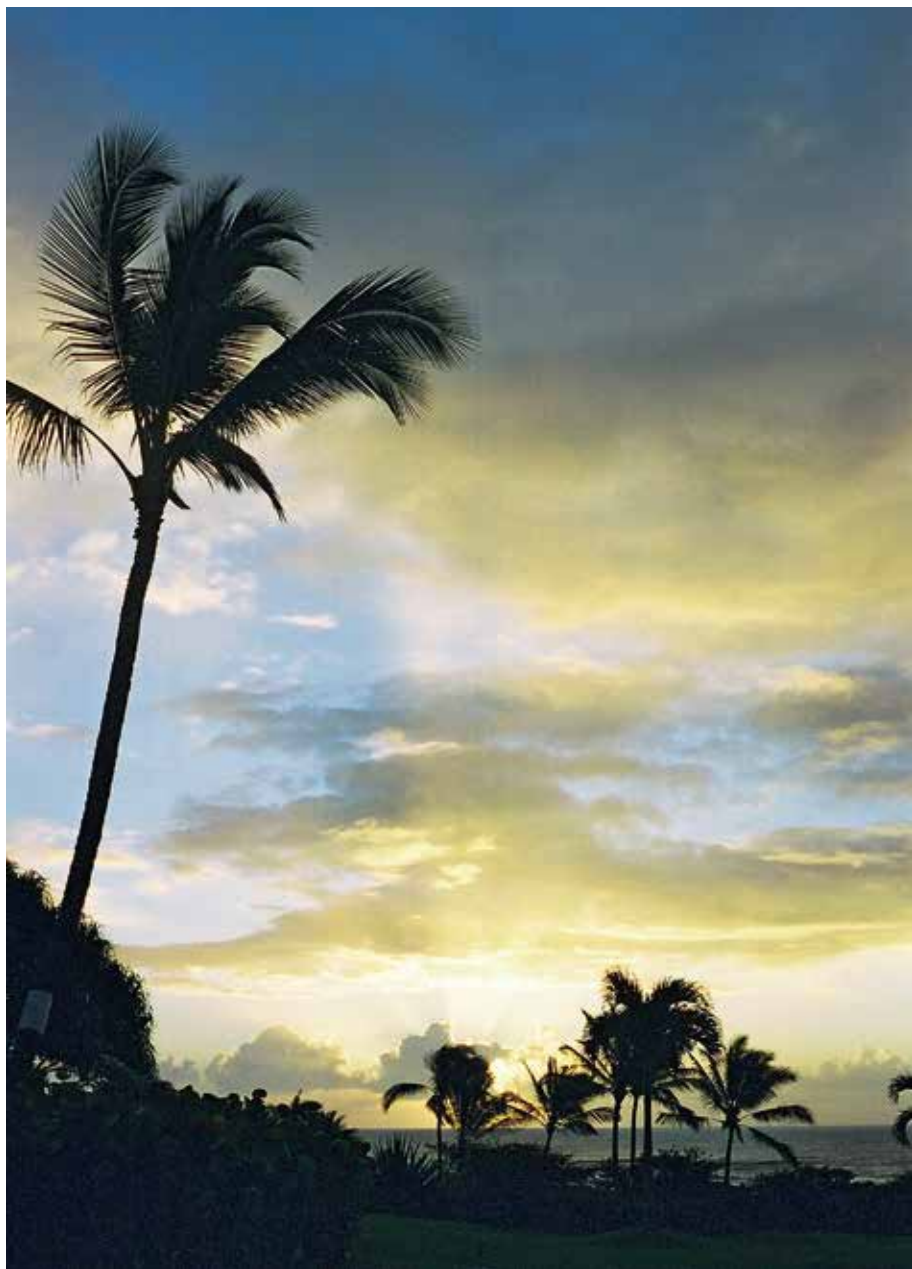
All the best – *Suprabha, 17 September 2019*

P.S.: for an alternative view on the greening of the earth, see the following: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/earth-stopped-gettinggreener-20-years-ago/?amp> and <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/8/eaax1396>. I personally don't set much store by science when it can make contradictory statements simultaneously about the same thing.

### **K: The immediate and the long vision**

If one is living in terms of the immediate, responding to the immediate challenge, the immediate is constantly repeated in different ways. In one year it will be war, in the next year it may be revolution, in the third year industrial unrest; if one is living in terms of the immediate, life becomes very superficial. But you may say that that is enough because that is all we need to care about. That is one way of taking life. If you live that way it is an empty life. You can fill it with cars, books, sex, drink, more clothes, but it is shallow and empty. A man living an empty life, a shallow life, is always trying to escape; and escape means delusion, more gods, more beliefs, more dogmas, more authoritarian attitudes, or more football, more sex, more television. The immediate responses of those who live in the immediate are extraordinarily empty, futile, miserable. This is not my feeling or prejudice; you can watch it. You may say that is enough, or you may say that that is not good enough. So there must be a long vision, though I must of course act in the immediate,





In St Lucia

do something about it when the house is burning, but that is not the end of action. There must be something else, and how can one pursue that something else without bringing in authority, books, priests? Can one wipe them all out and pursue the other? If one pursues the other, this immediacy will be answered in a greater and more vital way.

*'On the Long Vision'  
On Education, pg. 84*

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Andy Foley, Brockwood's Estate and Facilities Manager, also sent a note wondering why the K community, given the great relevance of K's insights to the issues of our time, is not more active, even developing **a political wing**:

Thank-you, Friedrich, for your email.

Greta's effort is amazing! It seems to me that K's insights have a great deal of relevance in the current turbulent times. I have often wondered why as an organisation we do not have an active political wing grounded in those insights?

Regards – Andy, 22 September 2019

Lorenzo Castellari, who has been deeply involved in the whole ecological movement within the K community, also contributed to this exchange. Partly in response to Andy's call for greater activism, he raises a very important issue that has been at the heart of K's approach, namely the distinction between **action and activism**:

Dear Friedrich,

the world is burning and Ted asks what it is that people who avowedly are taking Krishnamurti seriously are doing about it, other than thinking and talking. And I hear Andy's question: given the relevance of K's message for what is going on out there, are we present enough on the front line?

I read Gary's reply to Ted, specifically about Brockwood and its students, and I can confirm that staff members get tired not just because of talking and thinking. And I have been blown off by both Suprabha's and Marcelo's replies.

Is Ted's question thus quenched and can we go back to sleep? Not quite yet!

I was just entering middle school as my older peers were taking to the streets, along with hordes of young people in the western world, to be done with authoritarian rule and a culture of exploitation, violence and war. Too young and little inclined to take part in political struggle, I still had my own sense of something being wrong in the society around me and within myself, and of a vague connection between the two. The unease never left and we witnessed the unabated continuity of division and violence, in spite of the superficial positive changes brought by that revolution.

Exactly fifty years down the line, the *déjà vu*: young people around the world are taking to the streets, essentially addressing the very same destructive movement.

Krishnamurti made quite clear what he perceived as the root cause of the human crisis and how we are part of it. History past and present confirms his words, like the following quote from the Introduction to *Life Ahead*:

*"We try to deal with these issues through political and organizational methods, through economic readjustment and various reforms; but none of these things will ever resolve the complex difficulties of human existence, though they may offer temporary relief. [...] Without understanding the whole complex being of man, mere reformation will bring about only the confusing demand for further reforms."* (Pg. 7)

He never tired of addressing the outer and inner human crisis and he placed that at the core of the learning in the schools he set up. Late in life he said that none of the schools had yet done what they were meant for. In his own words, they had produced improved mice, not lions, elephants or gazelles. Would he see it differently today? I don't know about him, but I do not.

Walking for the first time into places like Brockwood Park and Rishi Valley, struck by the beauty and the definitely good work, I felt: Wow! This place can change the world!

After functioning within our schools for a while, I realised that here we hit the same boundaries as everywhere else and obtusely drive up the very dead ends that Krishnamurti pointed out to us: self-centred activity, personality conflicts, ambition, comfort zones, divisions, you name it. This resulting in what often seems like a self-defeating waste of resources: human, first and worst, and energy, time, money, opportunities.

So I think we should rather heed Ted's question as a wakeup call.

I know Suprabha and Marcelo have been touched by Krishnamurti the person and by his teachings, but I don't see them as typical Brockwood products; rather as exceptional birds with complex histories. In fact, some of Suprabha's views and attitudes have been frowned upon from within the K world. Sitting in safe havens, people labelled it as activism, which K wouldn't have approved of.

Indeed, K exposed the incoherence of activism, yet he challenged people throughout his life, calling for a different culture; he started five schools and endorsed a couple more; he entrusted Mr Naidu with greening Rishi Valley and its surroundings for the welfare of the school and the local villages. On December 21, 1974, to mention just one occasion, he told the teachers there: *"What is your responsibility to the student in educating him? To see that he changes and transforms society. That is your responsibility if you take your profession seriously. If you don't, then that is a different matter."* When the school board in Varanasi showed him the new rural school, he asked them why they set out to educate the rural poor separately from the city rich? And so on.

So, was he contradicting himself?

Here is one question then: what tells action from activism?

And a second one: Gary invited Ted to give suggestions to Brockwood staff about what more they could do; before beavering at new activities, though, or while marching in the streets, isn't it essential that we look earnestly at where we may be falling short? Not at a philosophical level but in the mirror of our daily deeds.

Regards – Lorenzo, 30 September 2019

Brian Jenkins, former Brockwood staff member, founder and director of **Sholai School** Centre for Learning in Southern India, also sent a response, describing the responsible ecological approach that as a community they take to sustainable living:

Dear Professor Kneupper,

I was at Brockwood from 1970 to 1985 as a staff member. It was a wonderful education. During those years we explored pro-environment strategies, such as installing a biogas plant instead of the septic tank, and solar photo-voltaic electricity generation. But it was all deemed too expensive. David Wolfe, an Engineer from South Africa, focused on making the oil-fired boilers more efficient. I kept the thermostat at 64° F (18°C).

When we founded Sholai School, Centre for Learning, Organic Agriculture and Appropriate Technologies in India in 1989, we were clear that we would produce all our own electricity from solar photo-voltaic panels.

- The electrical systems have been working faultlessly for 30 years. As a result, we consume 109 watt-hours per person per day. A Swiss NGO claims that 2000 watt-hours per day should be “the ideal”. We have no connection to the electricity grid.
- We have installed 9 “rocket” smokeless, low-emissions, efficient, wood-burning stoves in the kitchens for cooking and in the hostels to heat bath water.
- We have 6 nos. solar hot water heaters. We have 2 hydrams (water pumps which work without fuel or electricity).

- We also have a 50 watts wind generator which failed after 15 years of use.
- We have a solar fridge running on a 24-volt DC compressor, which we rebuilt after 16 years of use. However, the new Danfoss compressor failed after 3 years. Danfoss of Denmark have been very generous. But Danfoss India, the reverse.
- We have shredded most of our waste plastic and incorporated it into the school campus road. Although steep, it supports heavy traffic of a mini-bus, a jeep, a pick-up, etc.
- We have 8 biogas plants. The feedstock is cattle or human manure or both. Over 2 years we sent monthly samples of the effluent for testing to a micro-biological lab at Madurai; there are no pathogens. We use the effluent as fertilizer on the farm. We use the biogas in the kitchens, in the science lab, in the staff cottage kitchens and to run a dual-fuel internal combustion engine for agricultural use: 80% biogas, 20% diesel, etc.

We still need to convert plastic to fuel. Research is going on in India and Japan and we also aim to convert inedible tree seeds to biodiesel. A friend and a scientist, Dr Bindu, is ready to work with us on these research projects. Hence, we are working towards being an ultra-low carbon, sustainable, eco-friendly, educational community. We also give great energy to assisting our fun-loving students to be more aware of themselves and more inclined to consider the value of Krishnaji's teachings. Coming from regular schools in India, where competition, bullying and punishments, corporal and other, are commonplace, our children rather enjoy Sholai. It is not so easy for them to reflect deeply with sobriety. Nowadays our staff are more mature, so we work at it with them.

You are welcome to stay with us. There is more to share regarding the serious issue of Krishnamurti institutions' response to the deep needs of the planet. Incorporating Krishnamurti's teachings into education and people's lives in the Indian context is another topic we could explore.

Yours Sincerely – *Brian, 1 October 2019*

## K: Civilization and culture

Civilizations may vary according to climate, environment, food, and so on, but culture throughout the world is fundamentally the same: to be compassionate, to shun evil, to be generous, not to be envious, to forgive, and so on. Without this fundamental culture, any civilization, whether here or there, will disintegrate or be destroyed. Knowledge may be acquired by the so-called backward peoples; they can very soon learn the 'know-how' of the West; they too can be warmongers, generals, lawyers, policemen, tyrants, with concentration camps and all the rest of it. But culture is an entirely different matter. The love of God and the freedom of man are not so easily come by, and without these, material welfare doesn't mean much.

*'Positive and Negative Teaching'*  
*Commentaries on Living, Second Series, pp. 185–186*  
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K's holistic vision of education involves much more than a responsibility to nature and the environment. The teachings are an extraordinarily insightful mirror of the universal consciousness of humanity, the understanding of which lies at the core of our total responsibility. As such a mirror, the teachings are therefore central to the educational approach in the K schools. But the way K's teachings are incorporated in the educational process, how much the students should be directly exposed to them, or whether it should all be absorbed through the cultural atmosphere and ethos of the community, is still the subject of an ongoing and lively inquiry.

It has been my experience, however, that many of the former Brockwood students who have helped here in Rougemont over the past 30 years were rarely visibly interested in what K was talking about. They seemed to know very little about him, to begin with, and seemed to have received relatively little exposure to his teachings or educational vision. This has concerned me and so I raised the issue with the school directors.

The following is Antonio's informative and considered overview of how they approach the question of **the teachings at Brockwood**. I have appreciated this letter very much, as it shows very clearly the subtleties involved in working with the teachings in such a closely-knit school community.

Dear Friedrich,

I trust that this email finds you well and that you are enjoying the summer in Switzerland.

Raman suggested that we write something about the role of Krishnamurti's teachings in Brockwood. This is a complex topic and I am not sure whether I can do such an important part of BP justice in an email.

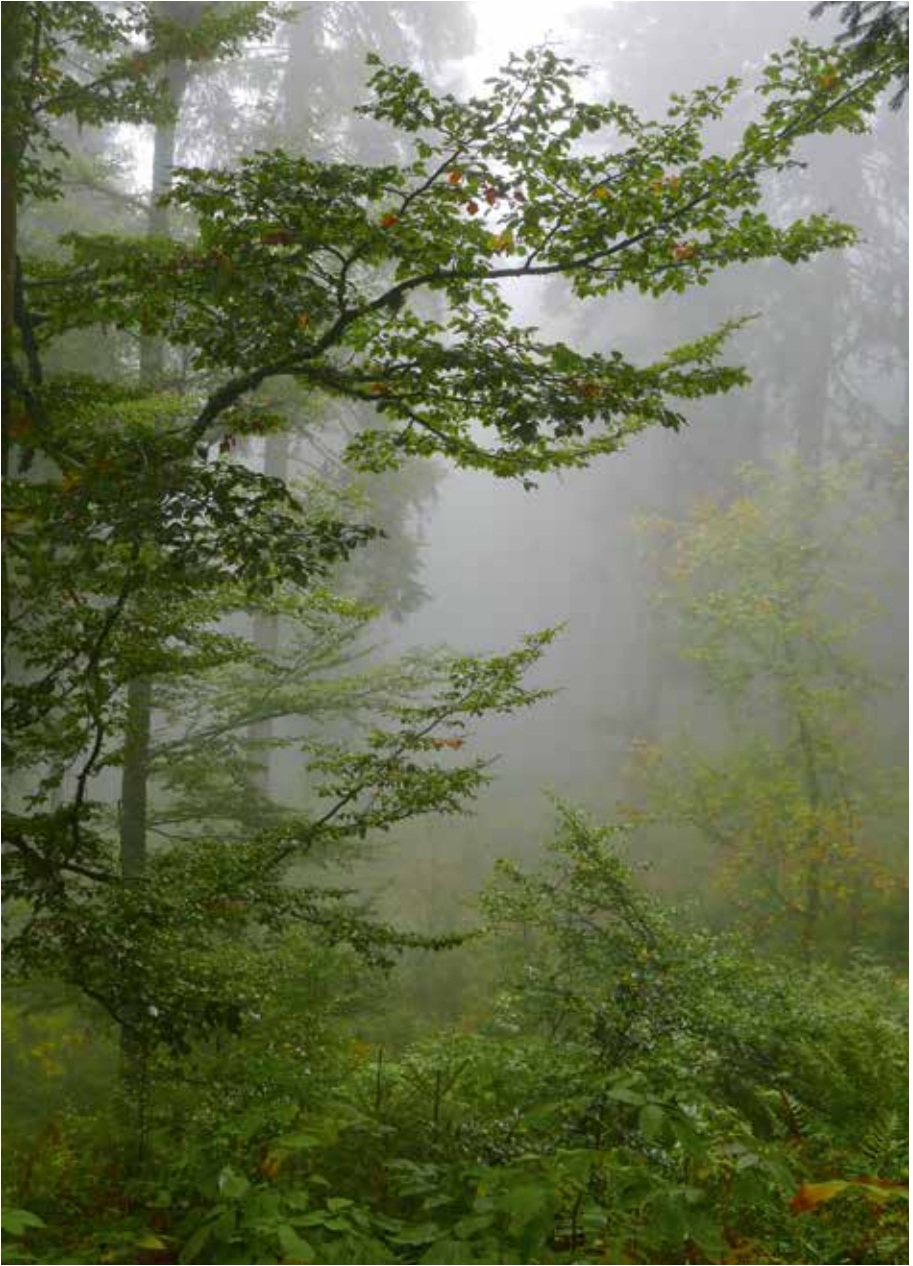
After Krishnaji died, this intention of the school became more urgent. It does not mean that while K was alive staff were not looking at this and exploring ways to bring students to the teachings, but as he used to talk to the students regularly, they were being directly exposed to the source.

The exposure of Krishnaji's teachings to the students has been challenging throughout the history of BP. To my understanding, while some students do become interested in the teachings during their time at the school, there are several reasons for this: we do not want to impose on the students; they might be too young to get involved with some of the material in a meaningful way; and it has to connect to the students' reality, otherwise it is abstract to them.

Another important factor is that while we watch videos, read extracts of K's books and discuss fundamental questions of life together, students may pick on staff's contradictions and be put off. It is pivotal in how we staff approach this topic and communicate it to the students. As a staff body, each year we need to reflect on how to approach this issue, as this is essential to what we do at BP.

Last year, Bill introduced Krishnamurti's life and legacy to all the new students and has been doing so for the last two or three years. The school





Near Haus Sonne in the Black Forest, Germany

meets weekly for Inquiry Time, where we discuss topics related to living and working together and fundamental questions of life. Sometimes we show a short K video on the chosen topic, followed by a dialogue. We have also been regularly showing short K videos in the Morning Assembly and connecting them to our daily lives. This is key when we consider a topic – the students have to connect all of this to their own life so that it makes sense to them. Staff also have many private conversations around consciousness with the students; they occur organically and are important in creating a culture of exploration in the school. We are learning and growing together with the students in the art of living and endeavour to keep the spirit of K's teachings alive in every aspect of school life. Nevertheless, this is an area in which no matter how much we do, it feels like it is not enough.

In addition to the above, at the end of last year staff decided to introduce a K class for next year, where we read or watch something together followed by dialogue. The idea would be to question the teachings and find out if what K says is true.

The weekly Mature Student and Teacher Apprentice's dialogue is divided in three parts. The facilitators for the first term are Steve and Raman, for the third term are Bill and Nasser, and the second term is open. The idea is that they are exposed to different senior staff who are passionate about the teachings. Next year, Javier will be joining during the second term.

It is vital that we adults are serious about K's teachings in order to shape an atmosphere of inquiry which is reflected in our recruitment process. It is also important that the questions discussed in this email are kept alive among those in association with the school, such are Trustees and friends of Brockwood.

Krishnaji talks about the importance of implanting seeds in human consciousness, so there is an element that goes beyond our rational thinking process by which students can be affected in ways that we neither know nor control.

Warm regards – *Antonio, 10 August 2019*

This year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Brockwood Park as a Krishnamurti Educational Centre. That's what it was initially called. Now Brockwood includes not only the original international boarding school but the Small School at Inwoods and the Study Centre, which also houses the KFT offices and Archives. The reunions are held every five years and this one was a massive celebration of the profoundly human spirit of the place. The following report was kindly written by our colleague Claudia G. Herr.

### **Brockwood Park's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion**

For five days in August, Brockwood Park celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an alumni reunion. More than 500 former students, mature students, staff members and guest helpers came together, mostly in person but also online, to connect and reconnect and, once again, to appreciate the beauty of the place and its intentions as established by Krishnamurti. Many alumni also brought their children, who played, helped and infused the event with their fresh energy.

There were K tapes, quiet times, dialogues, presentations, concerts, workshops and networking organised by the alumni, a fund-raising auction, 'morning jobs' for those who could help, lovely familiar walks, and lots of general catching up. For some it was also an opportunity to re-encounter a few old challenges; what would Brockwood be without challenges!

Each day the heads of the various Brockwood departments, or trustees and teachers (Bill Taylor, Antonio Autor, Nasser Shamim, Mina Masoumian, Ana Gomes, Mary-Ann Ridgway, Gary Primrose, Colin Foster and others), spoke of the history and current opportunities and challenges of the Schools, Centre and Foundation, and the general outreach and development work. By the way, if you'd like to join Friends of Brockwood, with their own weekend gatherings at least twice a year, please go to: [friendsofbrockwoodpark.org.uk](http://friendsofbrockwoodpark.org.uk).

Some of the presentations were touchingly serious, others were laugh-out-loud funny; all were 'spot-on' – there are so many ways to view and appreci-

ate Brockwood. A light-hearted introduction to the work of the Foundation was given by its director, Nasser:

*You know, we have been here in this place, and sometimes we take it for granted. If you think about the concept of Brockwood Park, if you really try to look at it freshly – I did that and was surprised by my reaction. If any sane person were told, “I’ve got such a great idea. I’m going to get 70 teenagers, put them in a house ...” And it doesn’t end there, it just begins. So we say, “You know what? We’ll make sure that they come from 20-25 countries, so a variety of conditionings and backgrounds; sometimes they won’t speak the same language. And we’ll make sure to attract staff who are ready to come here on very little pay, no pension, no future. And we are also going to invite some young adults, 10-15 of them, mature students, so they also will be here. And these educators and prospective staff, they won’t have to have experience in any area, but we’ll ask them to be creative and innovate. And half of the population of the community is going to change each year.” And it’s still easy, it’s not difficult enough. So we say, “You are going to have freedom and question authority.”*

*You know, if you look at this plot, I think it makes perfect sense for a reality TV show. Put them in a house, install some cameras, after season 1 it’s going to ‘blow up’ and we are going to have fun watching it. There is no other place in the world with these ingredients. If you question what is the x factor which has made it possible, to me it’s the intentions and ethos of the place, the teachings of Krishnamurti. Because of that there were people who were ready to donate money, they were ready to leave their lives, come and commit to here without pay, without future. They were ready to deal with teenagers who come with a concept of freedom and authority; they have little knowledge of what Krishnamurti meant by that. And it attracted a lot of staff who were ready to put themselves in this situation, essentially to be so open, to try to inquire with others and look into their reactions.*

*In the history of Brockwood Park, I’ve been told, there were some moments close to ‘blow-up’. But it hasn’t happened – 50 years have passed. And if you look at that, you are here because something very nice happened to you at Brockwood. So to meet the ethos and intentions of the place is the x factor. And*

*the Foundation is responsible to preserve and disseminate this wonderful body of the work of Krishnamurti's teachings. ...*

Another presentation was Hard Rain, an updated talk with photos and music (Bob Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall') on the accelerating environmental crisis. It was given by Mark Edwards, a renowned environmental photographer and former Brockwood trustee, and a photographer of Krishnamurti. He offered facts and perspectives on environmental degradation and climate change, exploitation and poverty, war and other terrors, illustrating each point with devastatingly striking photos and Dylan's haunting verses. For many it was a transfixing hour, a passionate vision of a world desperate to be free of the source of corruption and violence.

And outside the presentations and other events, how many lingering conversations there were all through the day and night – in the marquee, on the lawn, under trees; with smiles, hugs and tears. Old friends who had not seen each other for years found themselves instantly reconnecting. The sense of sharing in a common and enduring purpose of universal concern and transformation, of being on the same human, all-too human journey was palpable throughout. There was a great feeling of gratitude for it all and thanks were especially given to all who organised, cooked, cleaned, provided, attended, donated, entertained and volunteered, not just on this occasion, but over the years, including of course Krishnamurti, who has made Brockwood, this great experiment in learning, possible.

As a fitting conclusion to the event, after a silent walk around the Brockwood grounds, including the Grove, which was so dear to Krishnamurti, the whole assembly gathered in a giant circle for a tree planting ceremony. Each of those present helped to refill the hole at the base of the young tree with a handful of soil. And Gary then read part of the first entry in *Krishnamurti to Himself – His Last Journal* – text is reproduced below – where K talks about the relationship with the trees, with nature as being integral to our relationship with each other and with the universe. – *Claudia Herr* ■

## **K: A relationship with the living things of the earth**

There is a tree by the river and we have been watching it day after day for several weeks when the sun is about to rise. As the sun rises slowly over the horizon, over the trees, this particular tree becomes all of a sudden golden. All the leaves are bright with life and as you watch it as the hours pass by, that tree whose name does not matter – what matters is that beautiful tree – an extraordinary quality seems to spread all over the land, over the river. And as the sun rises a little higher the leaves begin to flutter, to dance. And each hour seems to give to that tree a different quality. Before the sun rises it has a sombre feeling, quiet, far away, full of dignity. And as the day begins, the leaves with the light on them dance and give it that peculiar feeling that one has of great beauty. By midday its shadow has deepened and you can sit there protected from the sun, never feeling lonely, with the tree as your companion. As you sit there, there is a relationship of deep abiding security and a freedom that only trees can know.

Towards the evening, when the western skies are lit up by the setting sun, the tree gradually becomes sombre, dark, closing in on itself. The sky has become red, yellow, green, but the tree remains quiet, hidden, and is resting for the night.

If you establish a relationship with it then you have relationship with mankind. You are responsible then for that tree and for the trees of the world. But if you have no relationship with the living things on this earth you may lose whatever relationship you have with humanity, with human beings. We never look deeply into the quality of a tree; we never really touch it, feel its solidity, its rough bark, and hear the sound that is part of the tree. Not the sound of wind through the leaves, not the breeze of a morning that flutters the leaves, but its own sound, the sound of the trunk and the silent sound of the roots. You must be extraordinarily sensitive to hear the sound. This sound is not the noise of the world, not the noise of the chattering of the mind, not the vulgarity of human quarrels and human warfare but sound as part of the universe.

*Krishnamurti to Himself, pp. 9–10*

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# THE TEACHER AND THE TEACHINGS

## K: The teaching covers the whole of human existence

I think this teaching covers the whole of human existence. I don't know if you have studied it. It covers the whole of human life, from the physical to the most inward depth of human beings. So there is nothing in it that sets it apart as a cult, as something or the other. When you look into it, you say, 'My God'. I personally look at it as a marvellous thing, not because I have said it, but because it is something extraordinarily life-giving. And that life-giving thing can never go dry. Like a spring well, it can never go dry. To me it is so, otherwise I wouldn't have spent a day on it. I would just become a carpenter or something else.

*Nucleus Discussion, Rishi Valley 7 December 1982*  
*Don't Make a Problem of Anything, pp. 15-16*  
© 2007 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, Ltd.

K once said: *The vast majority is not interested in what we are talking about.* This was true when he said it 50 or more years ago, and it is so still today. It seems that with internet there is a renewed interest in the teachings, but we must not forget that K was not interested in the masses. The only case where the individual is important, K said "is when it comes to change". Sometimes people say that they don't understand a word of what K says. One can say it is because of our conditioning and because it is a new and different way of thinking.

When people ask me what K talks about I reply that he talks mostly about love, death and fear. Also, about brain, meditation, thought, time, intelligence, listening, awareness, authority, God, conditioning and so on. If one wants to read about other topics, in the *Book of Life* there is a theme for every week, which means there are at least 52 different subjects that he covered.

K used to say that he was not important at all, that the most important thing was what he had to say. On the other hand, there is no doubt that he was a fascinating person. He led an extraordinary life, which is why there are the biographies and several interesting memoirs by people who knew him. What was impressive for me always was the simplicity of his life and of his expressions.

Some time ago, an old friend said that K was one among many others, while I always thought that K was unique in his so-called 'teachings' containing the whole of life. So, I asked my friend and colleague Javier Gómez Rodríguez for his thoughts about this, and here is his interesting statement, which I very much tend to agree with.

### **Is Krishnamurti unique?**

K is one among many ... Yes and no. For me K is a Buddha, a truly great enlightened being. As far as I can tell, the depth of his illumination is unlike anything that has been reported in the last 2000 years. When looking for similarities in the record of history, K himself would come up with just two other figures, namely Buddha and Christ, with the former a bit more prominently delineated, as the record on the latter was both sketchier and historically more doubtful. The Buddhists, though, maintain that Siddhartha Gautama was the latest incarnation in a long line of Buddhas. And they might even consider, like the Theosophists did, that K was the Maitreya, i.e. the Buddha of the future predicted in their scriptures. But even if he belonged in the long line of Buddhas, one still has to bear in mind that a real Buddha is always unique, for Truth is unique, from moment to moment. That's why such beings are incomparable, because no measure can be applied to their wisdom.

What I think our friend is saying, though, is that even if K were the Buddha of our time (not her words, but mine), that would not grant him a monopoly on the expression of truth. Others might be able to express it differently and it might still mean the same. By this she also means to warn against turning K's impressive teaching into the exclusive doctrine of a particular sect. Implied in this is the sense that no matter how deep K may have gone, at





In the Grove, Brockwood Park

certain levels he is saying very much the same thing that others have said. When it comes to inquiring into the human condition, K certainly touches on many things that others have also investigated and his insights are not unique, for others have also had them, no matter how differently expressed. The depth and range of K's understanding, however, is so total and complete that it is hard to find anything resembling it anywhere. So, while there is a great deal of ground that has been covered by many others, there is quite a different dimension to K because of the all-encompassing nature of his insight. That is for me the difference.

But there is indeed a danger in saying this, as it would tend to elevate K's teachings to a kind of exclusive expression of truth. Unfortunately, the word is not the thing, so the truth is not in the expression, no matter how truthful the expression might be. The expression may be conducive to seeing but it is the latter that is the key to truth. And that's why at the end of the day it is to truth we must look and not to its expressions.

Take the seminar on K's life and teachings I started in its new briefer incarnation this past Friday. Just trying to give the 12 participants a sense of the content I mean to cover was an incredible experience, for, as it seemed to me, all life was being addressed in a miserable 10 chapters. That is part of the fascination and beauty of the teachings, namely the deep and panoramic mirror they offer of our human condition and its needful transformation and transcendence. And they come with a quality of total freedom, since they are devoid of authority and imposition, of sectarian identification and idolatrous following. This is wonderful, for it really faces us with one of the most fundamental challenges of all, which is to become fully aware of and responsible for our own lives in the fullness of their accidental particularity, necessary universality and beyond. As far as I am concerned, there is nothing like it in the whole world and probably never was. This too makes K's teachings, and thus K himself, unique.

On the other hand, I don't mind any reference to other people. The thing is not who says what but whether what is being said throws any light on our human predicament. A couple of days ago, trying to locate two quotes I might

use as headers in two chapters in the book-in-the-making about K and his teachings, I looked through the pages of my collected works of Shakespeare. And I could not believe the wisdom of the old bard from Stratford-upon-Avon. The old boy had an extraordinary grasp of human motivation and of the deeper questions involved in relationship and existence. So much so that I mean to take up reading his plays and poems once more, savouring as best I can the beauty and wisdom they so skilfully reflect.

This reminds me of a curious incident while I was a staff member at BPS. A number of people used to question me about why I was reading so many other authors when K was just about the only one who spoke the truth. I tried to explain that although K might have been the only one who had indeed lived in the truth and spoken from there, there were realms of understanding that others had also reached and it was nice to hear their voices, even though they might be neither so deep nor so absolute. This kind of argument did not convince any of these K fundamentalists. So imagine my surprise when one day one of them comes along brimming with joy and enthusiasm. There had been a school trip to London to see Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. Well, guess what: Shakespeare was saying exactly the same things as K!! So I told this good friend of mine that there were plenty of others besides Shakespeare who were saying the same things as K. Did she want me to provide her with a reading list?

This is the kind of thing that one can get into in relation to this question of K's uniqueness. He was unique, but not exclusive. He went beyond anyone I am aware of, but others have gone a long way in the same direction. I am quite happy to join them all and not to make a fuss about the degrees of understanding. What matters is the honesty and the concern with truth. And then one finds K in everyone, just as everyone can be found in K. – *Javier Gómez Rodríguez* ■

This reflection on whether K was unique, and what that might mean, elicited a number of interesting responses. One of them was from Eddie O'Brien, who wrote to us from Ireland. He questions whether anyone might have ever lived whose understanding was total and all-encompassing. For him the question of uniqueness relates to there being **something 'uniquely' different** from what others have said.

Dear Friedrich,

My favourite Krishnamurti statement is the following: *"If you really faced the world as it is, and tackled it, you would find it something infinitely greater than any philosophy, greater than any book in the world, greater than any teaching, greater than any teacher."*

Another reason I resonate to the wisdom in this statement is because it appears to support my suspicion, regarding incarnating into this world and taking on a human, that there may never have been anybody who has lived whose understanding was total, all-encompassing and complete. And even if there has been, the only way I could pronounce with absolute certainty that this is the case would be if my understanding was total, all-encompassing and complete. And, needless to say, I factually know that it is not.

My relationship with Krishnamurti's teachings has been a hugely beneficial element on my life and I feel very grateful to Krishnamurti for this. But I also feel huge gratitude to many other people and teachers for what I have encountered in the wisdom they shared. Especially when I find they are sharing something unique, because this uniqueness implies that what they shared is in its essence uniquely different from what the others have shared. And for me difference is of great importance, as it is often difference that makes the difference.

Thank you so much Friedrich for your Newsletter, and all your wonderful work in creating a forum that allows for the sharing of different view-points.

Warmest regards from the Emerald Isle – *Eddie, 5 March 2019*

Another reflection came from Geetha Varadan, who works in Rishi Valley. When Krishnamurti heard that she had done her PhD on Heidegger, and had even learned German to understand him better, K asked her if she would study him as she had studied this existential philosopher. She told me that she still hasn't found the time, and regrets it. For her K is **unique but not exclusive**.

Dear Friedrich,

I, too, in telling my children of the teachings, say that K is unique but not exclusive.

I also speak to the children about the uniqueness of each of us in a purely physical way: each one has a different olfactory and auditory signature, a different fingerprint, iris. And *yet* each is non-different from everyone/thing else. We are a part of the world/universe. After all, we, like everything on earth, are the result of so many million years of the evolutionary dynamics of a hydrogen atom. So we share, and are a part of, the Universe. And our consciousness is a shared consciousness. I tell them that not only are we like everyone else in the world (with fear, joy, attachment, desire and so on), but that animals and plants are also now being acknowledged as sentient beings, and each one of us is the rest of Nature. (They like to watch and listen to Robert Sapolsky.)

I also tell them about the uniqueness of everything: the veins in each leaf, each tiger's stripes, and so on. And then, again, I switch to (though my knowledge is very limited) Fractals: in studying a part, you see the whole; in studying yourself, you see mankind, you see that you are not different from everyone else.

Such a discussion takes place because in facing self-imposed and outside pressures children often become depressed. On the one hand self-worth is very low, while on the other self-absorption/selfishness is very high. We also look *gently* at the possibility of 'depressions' being the result of self-absorption (me/myself and my/mine) and comparison. It is vital to show them that suicide is not the answer.

In discussing how unique each one is, I also refer to the Buddhist concept of *sva-lakshana*, which is translated as the *unique-particular*. Each cannot be replicated and, yet, is all one.

How wonderful, how extraordinary life is. What a privilege, what a gift to be alive. What a responsibility *not* to waste it and to keep its trust, living wisely, lightly, lovingly, at least kindly.

Sorry. My response is not quite about J's article (which is very good), but it reminded me of a child-adult learning situation which I just had earlier today. In connection with such cases, many other thinkers/religions are also discussed and it is here that '*unique but not exclusive*' is pointed out. Nobody has the 'copyright' to goodness, truth, beauty, love and a questioning life. And, of course, I always end by adding that, in this comparative realm, for me K has no equal. He encompassed every known aspect in a current way/vocabulary and, therefore, divests the Teachings of symbolism and so on.

However, in the discussions, we also look at the tendency to compare. I listen to the Teachings and if I am *not* in an academic situation, I listen *per se*, listen just as I listen to a bird or to a child. I see its relevance or otherwise to my life. Full stop. That is what really concerns me.

With affectionate best wishes – *Geetha, 23 February 2019*

Hillary Rodrigues also sent us his own thoughts on this topic. Hillary is a professor of religious studies in Canada and was a teacher at the Wolf Lake School. He wrote the book *Krishnamurti's Insight*. Even from his academic perspective, Hillary finds that K was unique. At the same time, he feels that more important than K's uniqueness is to point to what he was concerned with, which is **the uniqueness of this moment**.

Dear Friedrich,

Thank you for keeping me in the loop, and by all means please do continue to share information and communiques with me. I don't always have the time to respond thoughtfully, but enjoy reading what has been written.

I don't have much to add on the question of K's uniqueness. I think the question can be approached from many angles, and the ultimate answer to all of them, from my perspective, is yes, K was unique.

For instance, from the perspective of religious studies (my area), one can see many similarities between K's teachings and those of Advaita Vedanta, Madhyamika Buddhism, Tantra, or Zen. So, at one level one could answer that his teachings are not unique. But we academics like to look for differences, and so K is clearly unique in comparison to all those. He did not promote a Noble Eightfold Path (as some say the Buddha did). I don't think he really promotes the notion of the Self as equal to the Absolute Self (although some think he does), but does not promote guru devotion, as many traditional systems do, and so on. So, in all those respects, his approach and teaching could be regarded as unique.

Certainly, the story of his life is remarkable and distinctive. I think so was the quantity, style, and content of his teachings.

I think it is more valuable to ask and observe where this question of his uniqueness comes from and why it is important to the person asking it. Is it important to be following the teachings of someone whose teachings are special, instead of teachings that have been spoken by innumerable others? Perhaps the essence of these teachings has been offered by many others through the course of history, and are even being offered today. But they are only unique in the impression that they make on someone who hears and resonates with them for the first time. Is a common butterfly any less beautiful when "really seen" by a child for the first time? Certainly not. And every butterfly and every person who views it are themselves unique. If our minds are free from the past every encounter with a great teaching affirms its uniqueness.



Frankly, I would be delighted if everyone in the world pointed less to K's uniqueness, but to what K was pointing to, which is the uniqueness of this moment in all its unfathomable depth, in their own unique ways. Perhaps they all are, even if they do not know it.

Warmly, and keep rocking, Friedrich! – Hillary, 12 March 2019

David Skitt, former KFT trustee, editor of *The Ending of Time* and one of the editors of the Complete Teachings project, also responded. For David, the question of K's uniqueness is not as important as the crucial issues he raises and his invitation to test them in daily life. Besides, the question of 'uniqueness' might only be settled by comparing what he said with what might be found in other major religious teachings, which would be quite a task. David suggests reading Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* as a helpful shortcut. Nonetheless, for David K was **quite an exceptional human being** who had explored fundamental issues more deeply than anyone he was aware of.

Hallo Friedrich,

On 'Is K unique?' I think these days I would be inclined to simplify and say he was clearly a quite exceptional human being who gave his whole life to deeply exploring human conflict and suffering – more deeply than anyone else I have come across in our times. I find the issues he raises are crucial. He invites us to test what he says about them in our day to day existence. Seen in this way, the question of his 'uniqueness' takes, well, a lower priority.

If someone wanted to study that, they could start with Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*, which has great quotes on common issues from all the world's major religions (and, interestingly, many references in its introduction to The Ground, in fact a whole chapter on that later in the book with some points I find relevant to The Ground in *The Ending of Time*). Which finds me now digressing, and wondering whether Huxley



coined the term The Ground – this usage is not in the multi-volume OED. Perhaps it is in Theosophy, Augustine, Aquinas, or Meister Eckhart. Anybody know?

Rock and stomp on, Friedrich – *David*, 5 March 2019

### **K: To me this is totally new**

*Question: Is there anything new in your teaching?*

KRISHNAMURTI: To find out for yourself is much more important than my asserting ‘yes’ or ‘no’. It is your problem, not my problem. To me all this is totally new because it has to be discovered from moment to moment. It cannot be stored up after discovery; it is not something to be experienced and then retained as memory – which would be putting new wine in old bottles. It must be discovered as one lives from day to day, and it is new to the person who discovers it. But you are always comparing what is being said with what has been said by some saint or by Shankara, Buddha, or Christ. You say, “All these people have said this before, and you are giving it another twist, a modern expression”. So naturally it is then nothing new to you. It is only when you have ceased to compare, when you have put away Shankara, Buddha, Christ, with all their knowledge, information, so that your mind is alone, clear, no longer influenced, controlled, compelled, either by modern psychology or by the ancient sanctions and edicts, that you will find out whether or not there is something new, everlasting. But that requires vigour, not indolence; it demands a drastic cutting away of all the things that one has read or been told about truth and God. That which is eternal, new, is a living thing, therefore it cannot be made permanent; and a mind that wants to make it permanent will never find it.

*VII Talk in Bombay 25 March 1956*  
*The Collected Works Volume IX 1955–56, pg. 278*  
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The topic of K's uniqueness naturally gives rise to the question of whether there is anything new in the teachings. That's what, in the above quote, somebody asked K in Bombay in 1956. In his reply K pointed to the teachings being totally new to him because they have to be discovered from moment to moment. The newness is not in the *knowledge* one may have already acquired about these things but in going beyond it, for only so can the new and eternal be discovered. The newness is in the *timelessness of seeing*.

Wanting to get some feedback on this question, I asked Javier to comment. He was hesitant because it would involve some research, which he could not do just then. But in his reply to my request he touched on a few points that, in his view, might constitute new elements and expressions of the ancient quest for truth. In the end, he echoes the view that the question of newness and creative living has to be seen in relation to **perception without knowledge**.

Dear Friedrich,

Would I want to write something on this subject of 'is K saying something new?' It is tempting, but it would need a little research and right now I'm a bit stuck for time. But I'll consider it. He himself posed this question on occasion. I recall that at one time he said that in all the literature he was aware of he had never come across the phrase 'the observer is the observed'. This meant he was saying something new. I personally think he said lots of things that are new. His whole emphasis on observation is certainly new, at the centre of which lies the insight that the observer is the observed. I think his emphasis on thought and time is also new. Others touched on the whole issue of memory, thought and time, notably St. Augustine and some more modern philosophers like Bergson (who, incidentally, may have been the first to distinguish between chronological and psychological time) and Heidegger, but it would seem that none of them really went to the end of the question and saw through the whole implications of it. (Heidegger, I've been told, concluded that there is no being outside of time, which raises some questions as to what he meant by time and being. Maybe Geetha could enlighten us on this.) And then there is the amazing depth and range of his understanding of the human condition. And last but not least, his



Giferspitz from La Saussa, Rougemont, Switzerland

foundational statement that truth is a pathless land. So even such a cursory glance would suggest that he had something new to say. Besides, the question of the new in the field of perception comes in, for such perception being from moment to moment what is seen is inherently new, no matter how many may have seen it before. Knowledge is what makes things old, whereas perception without knowledge is the very newness of creative living.

So, I'll have to leave it for later consideration, thus bringing in time, which is a sure way of postponing action and complicating things.

Rock on, Friedrichji! – *Javier, 27 February 2019*

### **K: Nothing new under the sun**

There is nothing new under the sun. Everything has been thought out, every manner of expression has been given to thought, every point of view has been shown. What has been said will always be said, and therefore there can never be anything new from the ordinary point of view – you can only vary the expressions, using different words, different connotations, and so on. But to a man who desires to test anything, any idea, for himself, everything becomes new. If there is a desire to get beyond the mere illusion of words, beyond the expressions of thought, beyond all philosophies and all sacred books, then, in that experiment, everything becomes new, clear, vital.

*Benares Star Camp, Public Talk 7 November 1929  
International Star Bulletin March 1930, pg. 4*

At the beginning of the year, a new friend, Jenifer Austin, shared with us her interest in K and Bohm, in the study of consciousness and meditation, as well as a succinct curriculum of her very enterprising life. She had gone on leave from her PhD in Neuroscience at Stanford to work at Google. She left Google a year ago after spending almost 14 years there. She trained as a yoga

teacher and started to teach yoga meditation. As a neuroscientist, she is very interested in how meditation techniques influence the mind, and she has been tracking her own meditations with the new Muse Meditation headband.

Jenifer is an active disciple of Mumtaz Ali, who many years ago worked at Vasanta Vihar and Rishi Valley and had interesting meetings and inner experiences in his contacts with K. Mumtaz, who now goes by the name of Sri M, has his own ashram in Madanapalle, K's birthplace. Jenifer recently incorporated a start-up company to build an app that allows for better video sharing and might be helping Sri M to build a Retreat Centre in Texas focused on the study of consciousness. Jenifer had read *The Beauty of the Mountain*, which she had received from Michael Krohnen during a visit to Ojai, and made some interesting comments about its contents. The extract from her message below was edited to reflect her fascination with **consciousness, meditation and energy**.

Dear Friedrich,

I was glad to meet Michael, and it was kind of him to walk me around K's house and share some stories. But your book has brought him to life for me and I can tell he was realized. It has opened my mind to K more. I find his writing sometimes hard to follow, but I will continue to try.

Yes, Sri M is my meditation teacher now. I just saw him at his ashram in Madanapalle a couple of weeks ago. I'm curious what yoga exercises you did with K, if you are willing to share that at all. I teach meditation yoga at my house, but just to people I know.

I first learned of K through the writings of David Bohm, whose notion of the holographic universe interests me greatly. In your Newsletter Bohm writes about meditation: "The English word meditation is based on the Latin root "*med*" which is, "to measure." The present meaning of the word is "to reflect," "to ponder" (i.e. to weigh or measure), and "to give close attention." Similarly, the Sanskrit word for meditation, which is *dhyana*, is closely related to "*dhyati*", meaning "to reflect." So, at this rate, to medi-

tate would be, “to ponder, to reflect, while giving close attention to what is actually going on as one does so.” (Friedrich’s Newsletter 2018, pg. 58)

Actually, the ‘*dhr*’ Sanskrit root means ‘to hold’. So ‘*dharma*’ is to hold to one’s duty. And it’s the same root in ‘*dhyana*’, meditation. So in my mind ‘*dhyana*’ or meditation means to practice holding one’s attention on something, on your breath, the image of a lotus, the word ‘Ram’. With this practice, you then learn to silence the chatter of the mind. And when you do this, you connect to a higher source, higher consciousness.

Bohm goes on to say: “... one can however say that meditation, in Krishnamurti’s sense of the word, can bring order to our overall mental activity, and this may be a key factor in bringing about an end to the sorrow, the misery, the chaos and confusion, that have, over the ages, been the lot of mankind ...” (Idem, pg. 60)

Yes, I agree. Change yourself. Change the world. But getting people there, that is the rub!

I like the conversation between K and Bohm from *The Ending of Time* on page 84 about the source of all energy. What is this energy? I believe that at the highest level of realization there is perhaps one consciousness, that all is/are one. But to reach this state, life’s greatest goal, moksha, is a difficult spiritual *sadhana* (practice).

Kind regards – Jenifer, 22 January 2019

This open and candid message from Jenifer raised a number of questions concerning the meaning of meditation and how it is being explored and practiced. Firstly, there is the issue of concentration, which appears to be the usual starting point, particularly within the Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions. Jenifer indicates that this is based on the Sanskrit *dhyana*, whose root ‘*dhr*’ apparently means ‘to hold’, therefore holding the attention to an image, one’s breath or the repetition of a certain word. K, however, rejected concentration as the beginning of meditation. For him such an exploration began with ‘choiceless

awareness'. He also had a problem with the English word as being from a Latin root meaning 'measure', because for him meditation had nothing to do with measure.

Another related aspect is the whole issue of traditional practices and techniques, to which we now must add a Western technological component, such as the meditation headband mentioned by Jenifer. This is a neurofeedback device that, according to the description, measures brainwave activity and helps control one's emotions, reduce stress and have a calm mind. Again, for K meditation did not involve the practice of a technique and, most definitely, it was never a question of control, whether through inner or external devices. All of which points to significant divergences of meaning and the consequent need for a clarifying dialogue around the whole subject.

I sent Jenifer's message around and got a number of responses. I also asked Javier about responding to Jenifer and which K book might be best to send her. Javier sent us the following message where he mentioned the **Google mindfulness programme**:

Dear Friedrichji,

Sometime ago an old friend of mine took me to meet someone she knew at the Google headquarters in Madrid. This chap was in charge of conducting mindfulness sessions and seminars for Google personnel. The whole point of introducing mindfulness techniques everywhere appears to be to reduce stress and increase creativity, efficiency and productivity. So this good old Buddhist approach to perception and right living is being incorporated into the modern achiever's tool box. As far as I know, there is no ethical component to it or any deeper spiritual implications except for its potential to provide greater and more satisfying 'inner' experiences.

As it seems to me, the way Jenifer is exploring meditation follows the more traditional practices of concentration. That's why she leans on the meaning of '*dhyana*' as 'holding', whereas in K it means exactly the opposite, namely emptying consciousness of its content, which denies concentration as a

technique to achieve a silent mind and access higher states of consciousness.

In terms of an appropriate K book, *Meditations* would certainly do but, since she is a bright lady, I suggest you send her *This Light in Oneself: True Meditation*, where K goes into the subject in greater detail.

Cheers – Javier, 10 February 2019

In my answer to her I included Javier's statement and sent her *This Light in Oneself*. I was also curious to find out whether we could somehow get involved with Google about their mindfulness programme and, once more, asked around. Jenifer suggested contacting Chade-Meng Tan, the founder of the programme and author of *Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace)*. The subtitle (and some of the chapter headings when I looked it up in Amazon) seemed to confirm the notion that such approaches to mindfulness or meditation are intended to further the general aims of corporate organisations and their pursuit of success, with world peace parenthetically added.

### **K: Laying the foundation of righteousness**

Meditation is hard work. It demands the highest form of discipline – not conformity, not imitation, not obedience, but a discipline which comes through constant awareness, not only of the things about you outwardly, but also inwardly. So meditation is not an activity of isolation but action in everyday life which demands co-operation, sensitivity and intelligence. Without laying the foundation of a righteous life, meditation becomes an escape and therefore has no value whatsoever. A righteous life is not the following of social morality, but the freedom from envy, greed and the search for power – which all breed enmity. The freedom from these does not come through





In Tucson, Arizona, USA

the activity of will but through being aware of them through self-knowing. Without knowing the activities of the self, meditation becomes sensuous excitement and therefore of very little significance.

*The Only Revolution, pg. 44*

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I did not contact Chade-Meng Tan but from within K circles the responses generally concurred that K's holistic approach to meditation would not jell with Google's. Javier felt it would be pointless to seek such an association. For him the main thing would be for the K schools and centres to develop to their highest potential for excellence: **produce the nectar and the bees will come.**

Hello Friedrichji,

Yes, I saw Jenifer's message where she talked about the Google mindfulness programme.

The thing is that in these highly technical companies and domains, although they stand for 'creativity' and so on, what matters is practicality, efficiency and results. They aim to achieve and everything is a tool to that end. It is technique all the way, whether for producing an app or improving your mental condition. And it all must be financially successful. Which means that unless we were to offer a profitable technique, method, system and practice, they would not even consider it. So, in my view, it would be pointless to try. What we need to do is develop our own study centres and schools to their full potential for excellence. If we develop properly within our own centres, then Google might come to us instead of our going to Google. As K sometimes put it, produce the nectar and the bees will come.

Cheers – Javier, 25 February 2019

Shailesh Shirali, maths teacher and principal of Rishi Valley School, responded in a similar vein. In his view mindfulness is currently seen as **a technique to cope with the world:**

Dear Friedrich,

Thanks for sharing this correspondence with me. I agree completely with what is being expressed.

I think in today's world, mindfulness is simply seen as a technique to cope with the world, to cope with the vicious uncertainties of life. And in the corporate world, where the only God is profit, mindfulness is just a way to become more efficient and thereby generate more profits.

The vital element that is left out in this is goodness, and kindness, and simplicity, and innocence. What is left out is one's responsibility, one's feeling for the world, compassion.

I think this is inevitable when one is driven by the desire for success and expansion.<sup>1</sup>

Warm regards – *Shailesh, 3 March 2019*

After this exchange, I wrote to all of them that with this statement we could close the chapter on mindfulness. But, of course, that's not all there is to it. While mindfulness in this context might have been more or less put to rest, the chapter on meditation is broader and deeper and it deserves a more extensive exploration. Perhaps in subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

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1 Shailesh later shared with us an article from the New York Times dated 5 April 2019 where they report on the use of mindfulness in military training, which speaks for itself. ([www.nytimes.com/2019/04/05/health/military-mindfulness-training.html?mc=edit\\_nn\\_20190407&nl=morning-briefing&nid=721917520190407&te=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/05/health/military-mindfulness-training.html?mc=edit_nn_20190407&nl=morning-briefing&nid=721917520190407&te=1))

## **K: A movement measureless to man**

Meditation is a movement without any motive, without words and the activity of thought. It must be something that is not deliberately set about. Only then is meditation a movement in the infinite, measureless to man, without a goal, without an end and without a beginning. And that has a strange action in daily life, because all life is one and then becomes sacred. And that which is sacred can never be killed. To kill another is unholy. It cries to heaven as a bird kept in a cage. One never realizes how sacred life is, not only your little life but the lives of millions of others, from the things of nature to extraordinary human beings. And in meditation which is without measurement, there is the very action of that which is most noble, most sacred and holy.

*Ojai, California, Friday 22 April 1983*

*Krishnamurti to Himself, pp. 82–83*

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### **K: The word is not the thing**

**Krishnamurti:** We live by words and words become our prison. The words are necessary to communicate but the word is never the thing. The actual is not the word but the word becomes all-important when it has taken the place of *that which is*. You may observe this phenomenon when the description – the symbol we worship, the shadow we follow, the illusion we cling to – has become the reality instead of the thing itself. Words, the language, shape our reactions. Language becomes the compelling force and our minds are shaped and controlled by the word. The words *nation, State, God, family* and so on, envelop us with all their associations, and so our minds become slaves to the pressure of words.

**Questioner:** *How is this to be avoided?*

**K:** The word is never the thing. The word *wife* is never the person; the word *door* is not the door. The word prevents the actual perception of the thing or person because the word has many associations. These associations, which are actually remembrances, distort not only visual but psychological observation. Words then become a barrier to the free flow of observation. Take the words *Prime Minister* and *clerk*. They describe functions, but the words *Prime Minister* have tremendous significance of power, status and importance, whereas the word *clerk* has associations of unimportance, little status and no power. So the word prevents you from looking at both of them as human beings. There is ingrained snobbery in most of us, and to see what words have done to our thinking and to be choicelessly aware of it, is to learn the art of observation – to observe without association.

*Letter to the Schools No. 24, 15 August 1979*  
*The Whole Movement of Life is Learning, pg. 93*  
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Dialogue is a word that is closely associated with the activities around the teachings.<sup>2</sup> This activity was often called discussion. It was part of the structure of K's public speaking, wherein a set of talks would be followed (in Saanen, for example), or sometimes interspersed (as in Brockwood) with a series of direct exchanges with the audience. K had something definite he wanted to say and it was important to listen to it in its entirety. Since the talks concerned our shared human condition, their nature and content was inherently participatory. The dialogues or discussions were the natural extension of this participatory or common endeavour.

Over the years, and particularly after Bohm's development of his dialogue proposal, the notion of what is dialogue has itself become an ongoing object of inquiry. As is natural with any such endeavour, a number of differences, sometimes nuanced, sometimes not, have naturally emerged. Different practitioners give different emphasis, for example, to the role of the facilitator. Others set out guidelines, such as not talking personally, not analysing, not discussing opinions, etc. Still others apply the general notion in such practical areas as conflict resolution or organisational development. The field has a rich variety of possible expressions, which invariably leads to the consideration of their relative merits.

Last year we received enough articles on dialogue to dedicate an entire section to the topic. However, there was so much other content already that we decided to leave it for this year's Newsletter. The pieces that we have included reflect a variety of points of view from a number of people actively engaged in setting up and facilitating dialogue groups in various parts of the world. Perhaps one of the simplest formulations of a general definition is a piece that Jackie McKinley, currently one of the most internationally active facilitators, sent us this past April:

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2 All the introductory and explanatory comments linking the various pieces in this section were authored by Javier Gómez Rodríguez.

## What is dialogue?

Dialogue is a group event where participants sit together in a circle to explore the important questions of life. This form of dialogue does not claim to resolve particular social, economic or religious questions, or deliberate about academic theory. We are not gathered in the name of any particular spiritual thinking, nor in any way presume to teach or lead people towards a better way of living. Our intention is to consider together the deeper existential questions as a living reality affecting our lives and the world around us. As well as explicitly challenging and exposing our everyday condition, it is also out of an implicit quality of attention, communication and relationship that a new kind of learning can perhaps take place.

Inspired, but not led, by the revolutionary teaching of J. Krishnamurti, this form of dialogue is open and welcoming to all those interested in learning about themselves, their ways of thinking and the impact this is having on the world in general. Lack of awareness about our fears, desires, attachments, loneliness, etc. – conscious or otherwise – is limiting our very perception and outlook on life. We will be investigating ordinary patterns of conditioned thinking – not as an intellectual activity but as an animate process affecting us directly – and seriously examining whether it is possible to actually and fundamentally change.

Dialogue proposes no group **leaders or authority figures**. Participants are invited to think for themselves in a spirit of collaboration, not competition or hierarchy. We are conditioned to follow teachers, bosses, leaders and experts; we feel secure copying and following their ideas, rephrasing their insights and generally leaving it to somebody else to know what to do. Thinking for ourselves is not an easy task and necessarily requires unbiased observation as well as honesty to see the truth about ourselves. When we begin to see through mind-sets that have been actively running our lives, a vital interest is naturally generated. Learning is **experienced as a spontaneous discovery of something** new rather than a more traditional learning that absorbs what has already been commonly accepted as true.

Fast-held opinions and judgements can keep us from actually finding out about our own and others' thinking. Words and repetitive discussion can give us a limiting sense of being in control or apparently possessing the solution. Quite differently, in dialogue our intention is not to come to any final solutions or conclusions, but to listen and probe beyond our treasured fixed ideas and learn as we go along: learn from what we don't already know.

In this field of dialogue, mere interesting **conversation** and casual inquiry does not have the energy to break through the habits and traditions of who we are. If we are willing to leave the well-trodden paths of established thinking and venture into an atmosphere of observation, exploration, care and integrity, a new quality of connection and feeling between people and towards the world may come about. This ephemeral quality cannot be measured, evaluated or even specifically verbalised; it may even operate unconsciously. Perhaps it is this quality and energy that could be fertile for real learning and creative thinking.

In these modern times where change and intelligence seem so desperately needed, is there an inner revolution that could potentially contribute to creating a new way of living and a very different world? Let's find out. – *Jackie McKinley* ■

## **K: Dialogue and dialectic**

I think there is a difference between dialectical questioning and dialogue. Dialectical questioning, or investigation, implies, according to the dictionary, to find the truth through opinions. That is the literal meaning of dialectical approach. Whereas dialogues are between two friends who know each other fairly well, know their vocabulary, the usage of words, and together, with a spirit of real enquiry find truth – by enquiry, not by asserting opinions. So, it is up to you to choose which you want: either through opinions to investigate if there is truth, which I question very much because opinions imply prejudices, personal idiosyncrasies and so on; whereas dialogue implies that both of us are deeply interested in a problem, we are not prejudiced, we don't want a certain





Peacock at Brockwood Park

definite answer, but together we are investigating to find the truth of the problem. You see the difference? One is dialectical approach, the other is approach to truth through careful, non-personal, objective investigation. That means both of us start with no opinions, no conclusions, no assertions, but together, as two friends, and I mean by friends, who are really concerned with a problem, to investigate it together by sharing it, and thereby perhaps coming upon what is true – right? So, if that is clear during all these dialogues which we are going to have, which is, not asserting opinions, or prejudices, or conclusions, “I believe”, that is a conclusion, whereas if you are investigating we are both open and we can go very far if we both are free to look objectively into things.

*First Public Dialogue, Saanen 28 July 1976*  
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Jackie sounds a very positive note and extends an open invitation to join in this adventure. However, after years of experimentation, other facilitators are more concerned with spelling out the factors that impede or that are conducive to dialogue. One such author is Martin van Kalmthout, who published an article in the 2008 issue of the Dutch Bulletin, *In Feite*. Martin, who is a psychotherapist, was also intent on describing the pitfalls and requirements of dialogue in the context of K’s teachings. In 2017 this article was translated into English and it was used by Martin during the International Committee Meetings at Brockwood that year as a way to inform their dialogues.

## On Dialogue and Debate

### Introduction

If you are familiar with Krishnamurti’s teachings then you know that a differentiation can be made between a dialogue and a discussion or debate. In many of his talks this subject is often discussed, as it is in David Bohm’s work. However, in practice these insights and indications are often forgotten. Even in gatherings specifically intended to hold a dialogue we find that we retreat

into familiar habits and patterns. As nowadays there are more of these so-called dialogue groups in the context of K's teachings, it seems appropriate to highlight some of the pitfalls and to list the basic requirements of a dialogue.

### **Pitfalls**

When people come together in a group to discuss an issue, some phenomena inevitably appear which we all recognise from our own experience. The fact that a group comes together to talk over the deep questions of life does not guarantee that it will proceed any differently from a political discussion. After all, we come to the group with our rigid communication patterns, our sensitivities and identifications or identities. With some this is more obvious than with others, but nobody is truly free from this established pattern.

One manifestation is that a few people take the floor, while the majority remains silent. It then becomes a conversation between two or three people without the involvement of the group as a whole. It may be that others are actually participating but don't show it. Quite often the speakers are not concerned with the rest of the group but with expressing their own opinions. They are not interested in what others have to say but wait for them to finish and then carry on from where they left off.

In such cases people are not listened to, let alone that a deeper insight into what they were saying has been gained. There is no way that we can talk of a dialogue here because obviously it is of little concern to the speaker that a specific insight is achieved but that his/her own personal opinions are what matter.

Sometimes a real discussion or debate evolves. This means that different viewpoints are offered with the clear purpose to clarify which of these is correct. In our culture, these forms of talking together are much stimulated, and so-called debates are organised where two or three viewpoints are posed and defended. A major issue here is to attack the opinion of the opponent and to defend one's own. It is evident here that it involves a real battle, instead of a dialogue, because afterwards a so-called balance sheet is drawn up, just as in a boxing match, announcing the winners and losers. It is obvious that the focal point is not the truth about a specific enquiry but rather to celebrate a specific opinion, whether this is true or not. Within certain boundaries all means are permitted.

Another well-known phenomenon is that in group conversations people often become quite emotional. Some feel insulted or misunderstood and become angry and even aggressive. Others become jealous or irritated and go into battle with another member of the group. Even the specific subject the group has set itself can lead to emotional reactions. This is specially the case when the subject elicits strong opinions, with which we identify ourselves and invest with emotional energy. Even though it may appear that a detached and rational discussion is taking place, quite often the body language reveals that people are emotionally involved but hide their feelings behind a screen of rationality.

What also happens is that people think they already know the answers to the questions. This does not necessarily entail the end of the debate or discussion but it certainly means the end of the dialogue. If the answer is known in advance, then the search ends there.

The above situations may seem exaggerated, but these basic mechanisms do take place in our dialogue groups, even though the rough edges may have softened somewhat. Nothing human is alien to us and we all bring this humanity to a group, even when this is called a dialogue group. The question is how do we handle this situation?

### **Starting points and atmosphere in a dialogue group**

The dialogue group has a number of basic starting points.

The most important one is that the question is more important than the answer. In our culture, where exact knowledge and quick solutions are indispensable, this is an exceptional and radical point of view. After all, we have been programmed to get quick answers to a question. This is fine when faced with a technical problem, such as what time a train departs and how to get this information as quickly and accurately as possible.

However, when important questions about life are at stake, it is crucial not to be too quick with a readymade answer. It requires an open attitude in which one listens to the question and one's own response to it, without regarding it as the definitive answer. Space has to be created for other answers which, although they may differ from our own, need not necessarily be rejected or supported. All our opinions are limited and cannot bring the whole truth to light. Modesty is required rather than cer-

tainty. If we search together with an open disposition, there is a greater chance of getting nearer the truth than when we identify with our own opinions and defend them tooth and nail against the opinions of others. With the latter approach, much energy is wasted and few results are obtained.

An atmosphere of modesty, openness and silence is more important than lots of talk, than getting stuck in a porridge of words. We then make no contact with the deeper layers of our knowledge or consciousness, which is only possible in an attitude of silence. In other words: if we stay within the boundaries of our conditioned knowledge and programmed reactions, there is little chance that we come any closer to what is true and new.

To achieve this silence, it is necessary that in the dialogue group we first look inwards to our own reactions, without bringing them immediately into the group. What am I actually doing at the moment? What makes me feel so irritable? Why do I talk so much or don't say anything at all? What am I afraid of? In observing our own emotions and seeing through our established patterns, without suppressing them, but recognizing them clearly, an important contribution is made to the atmosphere of a dialogue group. We see what is happening inside ourselves and more often than not this creates the space for new openness and contact. We at once put into practice one aspect of what K's work is all about. Needless to say, we do not sit together as enlightened beings, but that we pay serious attention to our own emotions, reactions, habits and patterns and the consequences of these for the group. Other than in the average therapeutic group, in a dialogue group we do not treat each other in an analytical way, but solve the problem within ourselves.

A good dialogue group demands that the participants put their own sense of self aside. By 'self' we mean the conditioned, neurotic part of our being, the entire programme of patterns and determined opinions with which we have identified ourselves. It does not mean that we are not present. On the contrary, fear to bring something important out into the open could be just as neurotic as being the dominant speaker in the group.

By now it will have become clear that to create a good atmosphere for a real dialogue is not a simple matter and demands high standards from the participants.

## **Practical points**

What do these general viewpoints actually mean in the practice of dialogue? In the first place, an atmosphere of quietness, attention and alertness is necessary. At the start we should consciously switch from our habitual social behaviour, which is marked by superficial manners, to one of silence. It is, therefore, conducive to start the meeting with a period of silence and to hold on to this deepening aspect during the course of the meeting.

Listening to others is essential. We have to put our self aside, for example by delaying our reactions, thereby creating a space for something new to occur. The group is more important than me. It is of no consequence who says it, but that it be said. This demands trust in the group process and that in the end it will lead somewhere. This trust implies that every member of the group is taken seriously. If you are irritated, then focus on the irritation instead of reacting in a reflex manner like Pavlov's dogs.

To observe yourself is the most important thing you can do in a dialogue. It is the most concrete way of setting the self aside. This is not the same as being passive or withdrawn. On the contrary, if you are really engaged, there will be an opening for a voice not from your conditioned patterns but from a different layer of your being. You will then respond spontaneously and without tension because your own self is no longer so crucial.

## **The facilitator**

The explicit task of the facilitator is to conduct the group according to the intentions of the dialogue. All the same, each participant is responsible for what occurs in the group. It is not a question of an authority who is responsible for the content or any other issues. However, the facilitator does have a special responsibility. He or she can try, for example, to make sure that everyone participates as much as possible. He/she can also intervene if some members obstruct the dialogue in a prolonged and compulsive manner by, for example, drawing attention to his or her personal problems, or by repeatedly asserting their particular theories as ultimate truth, with no regard for other perspectives.

In general, each group member is responsible for ensuring that the group does not become just an exercise in theorising, analysing and talk-

ing about. The best way to do this is to set a good example yourself! –  
*Martin van Kalmthout* ■

## **K: Listening, silence and communication**

I do not know if you have ever examined how you listen, it doesn't matter to what, whether to a bird, to the wind in the leaves, to the rushing waters, or how you listen to a dialogue with yourself, to your conversation in various relationships with your intimate friends, your wife or husband. If we try to listen we find it extraordinarily difficult, because we are always projecting our opinions and ideas, our prejudices, our background, our inclinations, our impulses; when they dominate we hardly listen to what is being said. In that state there is no value at all. One listens and therefore learns, only in a state of attention, a state of silence in which this whole background is in abeyance, is quiet; then, it seems to me, it is possible to communicate.

*Talks and Dialogues Saanen 1968, pp. 7–8*  
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This proliferation of articles about dialogue seemed to reflect a general consensus about format, content and approach but it also gave rise to significant questions regarding the specific recommendations or views being expressed. In 2017, we published and distributed Javier Gómez Rodríguez' booklet *Reflecting Consciousness: An Overview of Dialogue*, which was his attempt at distilling the essence of the proposal by drawing from the writings of K and Bohm as well as from his own experimentation with the process. His idea was to provide a general text that might serve as a reference to those inclined to experiment with it.

Santi Borgni, a member of the Italian K Committee who runs his own retreat, Casa della Pace, in beautiful Umbria, took issue with both Martin's article and with Javier's booklet as being too prescriptive, in fact providing a method where no method is required. The very notion of dialogue as a 'process' seemed antithetical to him in terms of the approach to truth. And he had a serious issue

with the role of the facilitator as depicted in these approaches to dialogue. Having engaged in countless dialogues himself, he had a different take on it which he was eager to share. Although seemingly critical, his piece was an invitation to engage together in an inquiry about it. He was asking, as it were, for a meta-dialogue. His original piece was much longer but he graciously agreed to produce the following abridgement.

## Exploring dialogue

The present writer has facilitated hundreds of dialogues at Casa della Pace, hosted and participated in several retreats with Rajesh Dalal and Prof. P. Krishna, was in Brockwood on many occasions for the International Committee Meetings, and facilitated some dialogues at Rajghat, India. Having been through all that, one sees that sometimes dialogues are sincere, intense, touching a depth in everyone's mind, allowing a natural flow of words and silence, while sometimes they seem to go around in circles, repeating K statements or personal opinions, or even becoming a theatre of quarrels. Dialogue is one of the main activities around the teachings and it represents a potentially fertile ground. The question is what makes a dialogue meaningful or superficial and whether it is possible to initiate a learning process about the whole issue.

In an article written by Martin van Kalmthout and published in the Dutch Bulletin for 2008, a number of common hindrances to dialogue are described: that only a few speak without regard for others; that a debate rather than a dialogue takes place; that people become quite emotional, feel misunderstood and get angry. His conclusion is that *“nothing human is alien to us and we all bring this humanity to a group, even when it is called a dialogue group”*. This seems to be an obvious fact. Our mind is limited and often confused.

The object of Martin's article is how to handle these hindrances. He points out a few essential psychological requisites for dialogue to happen. These are: an atmosphere of silence, listening to others, seeing that the group is





Winter above Gstaad, Switzerland

more important than me, to observe ourselves, and to realize that each one is *“responsible in ensuring that the group does not become just an exercise in theorizing, analyzing and talking about”*. Martin invites the dialogue participants to bear these indications in mind.

It seems to me that to ask a confused mind to be silent, or a selfish mind to listen to others, or any other invitation of that kind, has no real effect. How can a noisy mind become silent following an invitation? It will be superficially silent, the dialogue will probably become gentler, there will be more respect on the surface, but this is not what “communication” means. One cannot but agree with what Martin writes, but it must come about naturally. As K sometimes said, the inner noise of thought must end spontaneously, effortlessly. The very effort to put an end to noise is noise.

The question is: can a confused mind meet silence, meet communion without any methods? This seems to me the real issue. All methods, all invitations to adopt a desired behaviour, inwardly or outwardly, come from the assumption that without a method we would be lost, that there is not enough maturity to be free and therefore a certain level of control is necessary. The fear that one person might dominate others is well founded. We see how many schools of dialogue exist that approach the problem from that perspective. There are a number of methods intended to avoid the domination of the many by the few while trying to produce freedom and communication. The problem is that what is born out of fear will generate control and division. The beauty of the spontaneous, affectionate flow of communication cannot exist when things are determined through a method intended to control and achieve aims. Krishnamurti maintains, with reasonable and convincing argumentation, that freedom, love, truth must be in the beginning, not at the end of a process. In my view, that has a strong bearing on dialogue.

It is necessary to explore what is a method and what it means to be free from all methods. Whenever we meet, we must agree on a time and place, and on other things besides, such as seating in a circle or around a table, and so on. We could say that that is our method. Our “method” is whatever we

decide and, in this sense, there is no way out of methods. The real question is whether one believes that a method may produce a movement toward truth or whether the method is only an agreement. A group of twenty people talking together is no more conducive to truth than sitting alone on top of a mountain or travelling on a train with a friend. To see that no method can help means that one does not know. The awareness of not knowing is the necessary open ground for the mind to engage in a serious enquiry. Awareness and depth in observation cannot be invited in ourselves or in others.

In European K-circles we generally see the facilitator as a moderator, as someone who should not interfere with the dialogue. The facilitator should limit his or her activity to give everybody the opportunity to speak while preventing, as far as possible, conflictual behaviours. That is the view expressed in Martin's article and it was the view accepted during the last International Committees Meetings at Brockwood Park. According to Javier Gómez Rodríguez's booklet *Reflecting Consciousness: An Overview of Dialogue*, the facilitator should tend to withdraw from the interaction, leaving the participants unconditioned by his/her presence. The underlying idea is that the role of the facilitator is a role of authority, of the one controlling or conditioning, and so on.

Why do we attend a dialogue? Is it out of the selfish motive to find a stage and an audience? That may be the case for some, but there is a deep urge in many to come together with the desire to find an open space to explore life. What is that space? It is not just the room and the people coming together; it is a space in the mind and in the relation with each other. It is a space of trust and affection where one feels safe to be, interact and enquire. This is essential to express in words a deep and direct observation of the mind and of life.

That space of reciprocal trust and affection cannot be invited and cannot come about through any given structure or method. On the other hand, a group of people can easily enter into a relation conditioned by the more assertive, the more emotional, and so on. In that case, the larger group will enter into a state of discomfort, reaction, oppression and so on. The issue now would seem to oscillate between doing nothing and seeing what hap-

pens, or exercising some form of control, however mild. The alternative to these two approaches is to consider the responsibility of the facilitator. In this context, the word responsibility should be understood as the capacity to respond adequately.

In K-circles, the role of facilitator has been generally kept under control. The fear that he or she might become an authority in the interpretation of the teachings may have prevented the exploration of a different approach. Authority is clearly extraneous to dialogue, because trust, affection, friendship, communication are totally unrelated to authority. We are aware of the danger of interpreting the teachings and of the ugliness, the utter stupidity, of using the teachings to acquire a position. We can see how authority perverts the function of the teacher, the father or the police officer, although the position itself does not create authority. Being a father does not imply authority; love and authority cannot live together.

Dialogue is freedom, trust, affection; it must start with that and there is no way to that. It is, in my understanding, the responsibility of the facilitator to start establishing a sense of trust. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to be the ground for communication and friendship. That is the responsibility of each participant too but, as said earlier, expecting, asking or inviting participants to adhere to a certain behaviour will not help; it will rather create a sort of right conduct opposed to a wrong one. The responsibility of the facilitator cannot be denied. We must explicate this statement and see what it implies. It does not mean that the facilitator has a better understanding of K's teachings than others have. To claim anything more than "this is my understanding" would be futile. It does not imply either that the facilitator knows how to solve human problems. If there is any possibility for change, that is not in a future achievement but in moving presently in a different direction, in caring for every action, every word, every feeling, and every relation *now*; *in never delegating to others the responsibility for what is going on*. That is the point I am trying to develop in relation to facilitation in dialogue.

The facilitator should not *create* the right ground; he/she must *be* the ground. One must live with a sense of total respect for the other, with the

awareness that each human being seeks to share love and knows sorrow. The facilitator must be aware of not knowing and therefore be open to find out with others, walking slowly together, picking up every issue and exploring it carefully, inviting everybody to join in the exploration. It is also the facilitator's responsibility to stay with the question, not moving away, so that it unfolds naturally, disclosing its hidden content.

The greater part of a dialogue is not speaking but listening. One must listen not only to what is said but also to oneself, to one's reactions, thoughts, and so on. Likewise, the speaker must be aware, while speaking, of the source of his/her words. This is also part of the facilitator's responsibility. If the facilitator cannot be responsible for all that, then confusion or superficiality are likely to prevail.

Most people attend a retreat at Brockwood, Casa della Pace and similar places because they have been touched by reading some K book. They invest their time, money and energy in going there in order to see whether there are other human beings, fellow travelers, brothers with whom they can share a serious journey of enquiry. Not to realize fully the implications of all this produces confusion and frustration in the dialogue group. Not to recognize this responsibility would make the work of Centres and Committees partly futile.

What I am asking is: Is it possible to learn about dialogue? This is an invitation to work together on the whole question. – *Santi Borgni* ■

### **K: Inquiring into ourselves and listening to others**

This is supposed to be a dialogue, an exchange, not merely of ideas but of our problems, in order to see if we can understand and resolve them. There must be freedom between us to express whatever you want and freedom to listen, not to be so occupied with our own problems that we refuse, or don't have the patience to listen to others. So in order to communicate with each other there must be freedom, patience, and a sense of deep, inward

demand to comprehend, to understand. And also we must be able to face our problems, not merely remain at the intellectual, verbal level, but go into them very deeply in this exchange of our feelings, our ideas, our opinions, and expose ourselves – if we can – to each other, which is rather difficult. Otherwise I am afraid these discussions will have very little meaning. Can we talk with each other at that level freely, with an intention to inquire into ourselves and our problems and difficulties, and have the patience to listen to what others are saying? Also, can we change our opinions, our conclusions? Can we proceed along these lines?

*First Public Dialogue, Brockwood Park 9 September 1969*

*Understanding Ourselves, pg. 51*

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Since Santi was inviting a dialogue about dialogue, Javier took up the offer and attempted to answer his criticisms. On the face of it, there were some significant, even major, disagreements. The whole question of dialogue being a method had not even occurred to him, nor had he questioned the notion of it being a process or what that might imply. But he in turn felt that Santi had made a series of unwarranted assumptions, such as that dialogue was a method intended to lead the participants to truth. Leaning on K's statement that truth is a pathless land, any such 'method' or 'process' could be dismissed offhand. But in Javier's view what dialogue intends is to clear up our confusion and incoherence through self-awareness and inquiry in a collective setting. As process implies time, it was also rather problematic within the context of K's teachings. Javier's emphasis on the need to sustain the dialogue over a significant period of time seemed to contradict the general view that inward change necessitates a timeless perception or insight.

Another area of disagreement was Javier's tenet that the personal is the particular manifestation of the psychological universal, therefore not to be excluded from the dialogue, as it generally tends to be in K contexts. And as for the role of the facilitator, it most certainly admitted of a more extensive treatment than he had given it. Javier, however, objected to Santi's description

of the facilitator as a perfect embodiment of the essential qualities required for inquiry. Something of those qualities would certainly need to be present, but such an assumption of perfection sounded to him like a dangerous way of endowing the role with an unwarranted aura of authority.

Their exchanges were friendly and intense. However, because of the subtle and complex nature of the issues involved, it was rather difficult to work through them in any satisfactory manner. But as it happened, Santi had registered for the Dialogue Retreat at the Brockwood Study Centre that Javier would be facilitating. Given their significant disagreements, this circumstance might prove rather challenging. On the other hand, it offered the best opportunity for them to go into these matters and putting the very notion of dialogue directly to the test.

The following is the shortened version of Javier's report on this dialogue retreat. He was keen to point out that it contained a number of omissions or lacunae, as he had not managed to stick to his intention of keeping detailed notes of the meetings and later he was unable to reconstruct them from memory. But he still trusted that it might offer a taste of what in retrospect was, in his view, something of a unique experiment.

## Dialogue Retreat – A Report

This is a short and partial report on the Dialogue Retreat at the Brockwood Study Centre this past 16-21 November 2018. This retreat was an attempt to experiment with the dialogue proposal as put forward in the booklet *Reflecting Consciousness: An Overview of Dialogue*.

The retreat was organised under the heading “Can we inquire together as human beings?” Inquiring as human beings was an expression K used to describe the spirit of his talks and discussions. To me that has always meant an appeal to look into our shared humanity. So I proposed to meet without a prescribed theme, since we meant to inquire together into our own existence. K books, videos and audios could always be incorporated on demand.

There were 16 of us from 11 countries, mostly from Europe but also the USA and China. There were lawyers, doctors, artists, psychologists, academics, yoga teachers, dialogue facilitators and even a K hermit. There were more women than men (9/7), though the men tended to dominate the conversation, which eventually became its own issue.

The initial presentation was simple and short. I then asked the participants to introduce themselves, give an idea of their backgrounds and to share their core concerns. They understood the word 'background' as their association with K's teachings. This association had usually sprung from an existential crisis and the consequent journey of self-discovery. Two main concerns stood out: the quest for harmony in relationship and in oneself, and the question of right action in a deteriorating world. This connected directly with the theme of universal fragmentation which is central to dialogue. So how did it manifest in our lives?

One example was following protocol while not agreeing with the resulting decision. Such situations left a regret that became the object of a continued mental and emotional occupation. Motive was added as a contributing factor, such as not doing the right thing out of fear of the adverse consequences. Quite often our motivations follow the rule that the end justifies the means, turning ours into a Machiavellian world. This exploration of incoherence and fragmentation in our lives caught on and drew the group beautifully together. One of the most insightful moments was when one of the participants shared that whenever people reacted to her comments she invariably felt guilty at the thought that she might have been insensitive. It was observed that the reaction of guilt was a pattern of recognition from personal history that might have nothing to do with the actuality. That history is the source of such interpretations and the core of our sense of self. The self is the bundle of recurrent patterns of our history. But between the history and the now there is a space in which the pattern, the self, can be perceived and dissolved. Dialogue means to provide such a space.

I began next day with a reference to Bohm's example of the Amerindians, some thirty of them, who would gather periodically to share what was on





Underneath the handkerchief tree in the Grove, Brockwood Park

their minds. It took them three days to say all they had to say. There was no argument, no discussion, no decision, no voting or consensus, but the net effect of this tribal ‘parliament’ was that they functioned harmoniously as a whole. So if it took a group of thirty people leading much simpler lives three days to share all they had to say, how much longer might it take us to do so? To begin with, we were not meeting as a tribe but as representatives of modern humanity. Besides, we were not only sharing the content of consciousness but inquiring into it.

An added challenge was the presence of three facilitators in the room: Santi, Ana & myself. Ana and I were working together, but Santi had his own approach. Santi had written an article taking issue with, among others, my approach to dialogue. He considered it essentially a method or process to improve communication, so it had nothing to do with the pathless and timeless land of truth. He also disagreed with my description of the function of the facilitator as working himself out of a job.

These differences were brought to light in the second morning session. Santi took the lead and posed some good questions about order and security as a continuation of the previous day’s reflections on motivation. (These motivations included what I called the three p’s: pride, profit and pleasure, corresponding to the standard elements of biological conditioning, namely hierarchy/power, territoriality/security and sex/pleasure.) However, he held the reins of the conversation and engaged with just a couple of other people. To me this exemplified the opposing views of dialogue as inquiry or as a participatory process, ‘inquiry’ giving the facilitator a leading/didactic role and the ‘participatory’ mode excluding such guidance.

This discrepancy in approach made for one of the most challenging moments in the whole event. Santi was told he talked too much and was ‘teaching’ us, whereas we were there to learn together. This comment, made with a great deal of consideration, caused Santi to feel rather uncomfortable and he thought of dropping out of the group. After talking it over in the evening, he agreed to stay on and I promised to address the issue next morning.

I broached the subject of our unfinished conversation over the nature of dialogue and the role of the facilitator. I explained my approach as a ‘participatory’ process, for this was a conversation about our lives and the sharing of the ‘personal’ or ‘particular’ was a way to partake of our existential issues. As these issues are common, there is no difference between the personal and the universal. So it was only natural that we should talk personally, making it a conversation among equals. My function as facilitator was not only to provide the opportunity for each one to speak but to explicate the emerging common thread in the conversation, thus providing a more general level or deeper layer of inquiry.

I mentioned Bohm’s example of the breakdown in the communication between Einstein and Bohr. At first, they had talked for hours and there was a feeling of love between them. Eventually, their fundamental discrepancies concerning the nature of physical law drove them apart. This was an illustration of the devastating effect of strongly held assumptions on relationship. For me this implied that every proposition, every thought, has its own natural border, so the important thing is to mind the gap, for it is in the gap that we can meet.

I thought this was an insightful way to look at it, but Santi disagreed because it was still a ‘process’. In view of which, we agreed to discuss our disagreements in a separate meeting.

It occurred to me that the tragedy of every truth ever uttered is that it becomes a conclusion of thought. Conclusions being inherently limited, when identified with they create division and conflict. The thing to bear in mind is that the idea of truth or wholeness is not wholeness or truth but an idea. And if we value relationship, then we will naturally suspend our ideas and look beyond them. We are not related in the past or in the future but now or never.

The question of order and disorder ran like a thread through several meetings. For one of the participants order seemed to be an obsession. Everything needed to be in the right place and just so. Her man was her exact opposite

in this, so the relationship eventually broke down. They restored 'order' by living near each other in separate houses. It sounded like Robert Frost's "good fences make good neighbours": proper barriers allow people to get along.

This view conceived each person as holding on to his own centre, radius and circumference, touching, overlapping and keeping his distance in relation to other circles. Some kind of adaptation might be necessary to get on with each other and then one just had to 'manipulate' or 'condition' oneself accordingly. This openly behaviourist stance felt like an extreme dehumanisation of existence, but it enfolded the deeper question of conditioning and whether we can relate at all from a centre of identity and self-interest.

Order was not only viewed in terms of the disagreements, frictions, shipwrecks and safety measures in relationship but as an inward quality. This inward quality, which might be called happiness, joy or love, found its match in a persistent feeling that something was missing even when one seemingly had it all, health, money, satisfying relationships and the great outdoors. Why this universal and abiding state of discontent? This sense of constant search suggested that we might be wasting our lives, a rather serious question we all need to answer.

One might be wasting one's life because one is not fulfilling oneself. This stream of fulfilment runs through contemporary culture as the new religion of our time. But the objects of fulfilment do not fulfil us. Another view is to consider whether the search for fulfilment is not an escape from the nothingness underlying the constructs of our consciousness. So maybe we waste our lives because completeness is not in becoming through the accumulation of things, experiences, knowledge or achievement, but in embracing the emptiness within. But we're afraid of emptiness, which causes us to run away from it.

This line of inquiry culminated in an extensive and very moving sharing of the whole group over the question of death. The topic was introduced by observing that most of us were of a 'respectable' age and death was not

something in the offing but an imminent reality. At any rate, it was not just a question of age but of life itself, for life is a death sentence. Death hangs like a great question mark over the meaning of existence. And what might life mean if it is an escape from our inner emptiness only to end up in the arms of death? There is no escape. Facing our inner emptiness might be the same as facing death, only now while living. For only in the incorporation of death into living can life itself be whole.

We talked about our experiences of death, as in the death of someone close to us, in our own encounters with it through accident or disease, and as an inner state that had a quality of meditation, beauty and otherness. Even after sharing beautifully with us about two very special encounters with death in his life, Santi protested that inquiry was not about the personal or feeling good about the resulting emotional relief. He was referring to the fact that a number of people had broken down in tears when sharing their experiences. As far as I was concerned, the tears had been a genuine expression of deep feeling. We had touched on something of vital significance and seen that when we embrace the ending there is an awakening to another dimension. This gave death an extraordinary meaning.

The communication did not always flow smoothly, however. In the afternoon after our sharing on death, the communication broke down completely. There was no way for the meaning to get across from one person to another and all our attempts to remedy the situation failed. We'd had a very intense morning. Then, in the afternoon, Santi and I had had our meta dialogue and most of the others had gone on a tour of the school. While originally this visit had been intended to last about half an hour, the school staff had welcomed and engaged them in an extensive exchange on education. So by five o'clock we were all exhausted. We acknowledged this fact and closed the meeting, for we all needed a break.

The meeting between Santi and I was very intense, but it turned out that we did not have any fundamental differences, for what mattered was communication and learning. To begin with, I had felt that our respective approaches were rather complementary. Santi was very good at mapping out the gen-

eral questions and my approach facilitated the exploration of those same topics existentially. In the end, I felt we had managed to transcend our cherished opinions and what remained was a sense of mutual respect, friendship and affection.

And so we came to the last day of the retreat. I felt that as a test of our awareness of the overall nature and implications of the teachings, we had not done at all badly. We had quoted K briefly on occasion, but otherwise had not felt the need to bring his work into the meetings. The KSC people had inserted an evaluation sheet in the retreat brochure. Since Ana was away teaching at the school, it fell to me to tell the group about it. As I dislike that kind of exercise, I avoided doing it during the meeting. As far as I was concerned, we had answered the question ‘Can we inquire together as human beings?’ in the affirmative. And we had done that in spite of the varied cast of characters and the divergent notions of dialogue. Some of the participants found the approach novel and ‘enabling’. Some hoped that something similar would be organised again. One person would have preferred to have a set theme. In general, however, the feedback seemed to be rather positive. – *Javier Gómez Rodríguez* ■

This report was sent around to our broad network of friends. Since Santi had figured prominently in the report, it was naturally sent to him and he sent us a very kind and appreciative **response from Rajghat**.

Javier in his report has already described the setting and the topics of the dialogues along with the main issues faced, including the ones concerning myself; therefore, I will take that as understood and will try, rather, to recall my feelings and thoughts of those days. Furthermore, I have no notes and I do not remember well the topics we addressed.

As a first thing, one must say that, although there were no Krishnamurti videos or readings, the fact that the retreat was happening at Brockwood Park and that most of the participants were well acquainted with the teach-

ings (the two things are surely connected) made the dialogues flow with the background of the teachings.

Not using K videos perhaps made for a greater freedom from the repetition of K's words, giving the dialogue a sense of freshness, somehow allowing it to become more 'personal', though the issues raised were always common to all of us. The relation between the teachings and dialogue is in my understanding an important issue that should be explored and those dialogues were an excellent opportunity for that exploration. It is obviously not just a question of reading some texts or watching videos. The question is whether after having studied the teachings for a number of years, after living and working with them in everyday life, as is the case with Javier, Ana Gomes, and myself, one can be free from them. Having been deeply touched by them, one is no longer trying to repeat, interpret, imitate or follow K because one sees the necessity of perceiving things afresh and directly for oneself. I think that this was, although not expressed, part of Javier's proposal and intention in conducting the retreat under the heading "Can we inquire together as human beings?" and in not scheduling videos.

In my understanding, the teachings can only live through human beings. The books and videos are words; to turn those words into life requires actions, hearts, dialogues, affection, friendships and so on; it requires freedom from them and being just ourselves: to repeat the teachings does not make them come alive. One is then responsible for whatever he or she does and says, one is not representing K nor is dependent on his words. The teachings are alive when one, having been through them, forgets them. It might sound paradoxical, but I see a deep logic in this. One is not negating their sacredness or importance, or moving away from them, but rather one is responsible for oneself.

The dialogues we are considering gave a very positive example of the possibilities that open up when that "freedom from the teachings" is somehow a fact, at least for some in the group. There was intense communication during almost all the sessions and I felt that most of the people were really engaged in the discussions and listening effortlessly, out of genuine inter-

est. While one cannot be sure, I think that Javier's approach, his inherent understanding and vision, opened the door for that intensity and freedom in communication. This is the basis for my next consideration about those days.

Javier, as facilitator, was responsible for providing the human ground for the whole retreat. By 'human ground' I mean, for instance, his mentioning in his report our disagreement on some issues concerning our different approaches to dialogue. Those differences never became a hindrance to our discussing the whole question in a friendly and open manner. This allowed for a sense of affection going beyond opinions that, it seems to me, is so essential to communication. A point of disagreement between him and me was that he considered the facilitator as having to "work himself out" of the dialogue. I maintain that the facilitator is fully responsible for the dialogue, not for talking endlessly but for creating the human ground essential for real communication to occur. That, in my opinion, is what he did in a very caring and generous way. That care and generosity are part of the responsibility of the facilitator.

Seeing the facilitator in this perspective opens a series of question about authority and others connected issues. Javier's position was unavoidably connected with the authority intrinsic to his having started the whole thing; apart from that, he was responsible without taking on himself any other kind of authority. The responsibility of the dialogues was shared among perhaps four or five of the participants, including myself. By 'responsibility' I mean that one is not speaking for oneself, nor is one reacting to anything, but one unfolds a question as far as one can, leaving it eventually open and carefully keeping it alive. All participants are responsible for the dialogue; no one is just a guest. However, the fact is that dialogue, as the art of inquiring into our lives, is almost unknown; so it is rather common to see reactions, with disagreements turning into arguments, or seeking approval by saying the "right" thing, or repeating K's words. I addressed this issue in the article written some month ago, so I will not repeat it here.

What I want to point out is the fact that during our dialogues there was a difference in the actual responsibility for the whole thing between one





Autumn in Rougemont, Switzerland

participant and another, and that without someone taking responsibility, which means capable of responding, most probably the dialogue would have turned into a series of reactions.

Javier describes in his report how everybody shared their own experiences with death, which was very touching and highly emotional. The dynamic was perhaps helpful to open a better understanding of each other and to see that our human nature is very similar even when we live something as intimate and personal as the death of someone very close. It can be seen as a moment of deep trust or whatever one might call it. It is the same as when two friends tell each other their pains and difficulties and share their tears. There is nothing wrong with that, of course; it is part of relationship. But it is not inquiring. We can go on sharing our pains for a long time, and in fact it is what we do often in a friendship, without seeing the nature of the mind.

During our dialogues, there were many moments when order, for instance, was seen in its connection with fear or with the wish to control others, and it became possible to explore another aspect of the same word, as when order is not the attempt to control the environment but is the understanding of our own nature. In such an exploration there was no emotionality, just examining facts. The trust existing in the group allowed for a sincere description of a few events, which were helpful to touch the thing, without that description replacing the inquiring.

Emotionality might appear to be opening the doors of something very important, but it is not. We look for emotions and events out of the ordinary; for some reason, this seems to be very satisfying. I have often heard people making a distinction between the emotional and the rational, expressing their preference for one or the other. I think that inquiring is neither emotional nor rational; it comprehends those two parts of our being, but it is wider because it touches a quality of silence.

The telling of personal stories, if I remember well, was invited by Javier. Though my opinion is what I have just written, I really do not think it was

wrong to go into that; it was one of the possible directions of the dialogue. What is interesting here is that it is a good example of how the facilitator gives a direction to the dialogue through his personality, feelings and so on, choosing to open a question and discarding another. I do not see the possibility for that not to happen. Even when the facilitator is just trying to ensure that everybody is participating, this is also going to give a direction and condition the whole dialogue.

Another thing I might point out is that in the announcement of the dialogue retreat there was no mention of either the schedule of meetings or Javier's name. This is in tune with the way the Centre announces such retreats: the name of the facilitator is never listed. It came as a surprise to discover that Javier was proposing this retreat. Not announcing the facilitator's name is clearly meant to deny that role any importance. But is it true that the facilitator has no importance at all, or is it an ideal derived from the understanding that the teachings deny all authority? In this case, Javier had the 'authority/responsibility' to determine the event schedule, to take the first step in the dialogue, giving it a direction and an atmosphere, and to open certain streams of discussion rather than others. From what I see, those are facts and to ignore facts leads to confusion. Acknowledging the fact allows us to see things clearly. In this case, to see how Javier's sensitiveness, care and honest openness greatly contributed to generate a space for dialogue where everybody felt comfortable, where everybody felt the trust to open and speak sincerely and freely. The feeling left in me from the retreat was one of friendship with some of the participant and of having experienced something intense, a living opportunity to explore myself and human nature.

While writing these last sentences I wondered to what extent the words 'trust', 'freedom to speak', etc. actually represent what everyone experienced in those dialogues. One person left before the end because he was unable to sleep during the whole time he was there; he was clearly in some kind of trouble that he could not fully share. We do not know if the inquiry touched everybody equally. That seems impossible, but this very fact demands that we not be satisfied and that we deepen our understanding of both dialogue and human relationship. – *Santi Borgni* ■

## **K: Communication as communion**

Communication implies thinking together, not agreeing together or denying together, but thinking together. And in the very process of thinking together we are sharing together, and therefore creating together. Communication implies all that: the sharing, the thinking together, and thereby creating. You cannot share together, that is partake together, if you are not interested or concerned, committed in what is being shared, in what is being investigated together. If you are not involved in the investigation of what is going on both outwardly and inwardly, and therefore partaking together, then communication comes to an end.

There is not only verbal communication but also a communication where ideas, words, have very little meaning. It's a form of communion – I am using that word non-religiously. To commune together means we must both be at the same level, at the same time, with the same intensity; otherwise there is no communion. When we are investigating into something that demands total attention there must be this quality of sharing. Therefore, you are not sharing what the speaker is saying, or sharing his particular experience or thought or words, but sharing together that perception of what is true. We can only see what is true if we know what is false. The very perception of the false is the true.

*Santa Monica, California, 16 March 1974*  
*Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Bulletin 80, pg. 4*  
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Stephen Smith also wrote a paper, published in the *KFI Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools No. 23, January 2019*, where he explores the topic of dialogue in his own poetic way. We reproduce part of his article here:

## Kite-Flying for Beginners: Dialogue in our Schools and Centres

In dialogue what we bring to the table is not first and foremost our knowledge and experience, but an unforced quality of listening attention – we are willing to make space for whatever may come up. Apparently innocuous, this is the vital first step since it opens the field to something ‘greater’, more significant, than the back-and-forth of discussion, debate and dialectic. This ‘something’ cannot be known in advance; indeed, to speak truly, it cannot be *known* at all. But it can be sensed, felt, intuited, ‘known without knowing’ – the access to it is via a different door. The poor village boy on a bluff above the Ganga releases his home-made kite to the breeze.

Dialogue groups vary in size, age and composition, but the thread of listening unites them all. For listening is a quality both of heart and mind. In a sense, it has no resting place; it is as open as the sky, and as unpredictable. Also, like the sky, it has no end. I am listening not just to the literal meaning, but to the tone of voice, the ‘resonance’ of the speaker, and implied in that listening is an unfettered willingness to receive what is said without barriers or reactions. It is this alignment/attunement that is important, not the ideational content of what is being said, for it is at this moment that we leave behind the divisive, often confrontational, exchange of thought for the deeper waters of communion. There is a felt shift, a ‘change of heart’. Or, perhaps it is simply that the heart takes its place – not the heart of emotion and reaction, but the subtle sense of wholeness, of oneness – that truth does not lie in the ideational, but in the shift to a deeper level of being.

This deeper lever has its own radiance, its own unborrowed light; we may call it *intelligence*. It arises in a group when the separative self, which is the outcome of thought, becomes aware of itself – sufficiently, at least, for it to be temporarily suspended. There is a diminution of its controlling grip – without, incidentally, any loss of acuity – a sense that what looks continuous, the ‘I’, is not the impenetrable wall it seems but is, in fact, discontinuous. It is in the gap that communion takes place. By its very nature it is untenanted: it is the free and open space waiting to be filled. Or, rather, not

*filled* exactly – more inhabited, played in, enjoyed. The breeze catches the kite. It is moving now, though held.

What is the need for, the *raison d'être* of, dialogue? In a strict sense, it has no purpose; like life itself, it is its own reason for being. Nevertheless, we restrict ourselves greatly if our lives are so dense with experience and information that we make no room for 'something else' to enter, that something which, as K says, "man has always sought". We sense it first perhaps vaguely, ill-definedly, then it becomes of compelling importance. At the same time, it takes shape in us; it becomes the nature, the substance, of who we really are. So, to put it bluntly, we are dumbing ourselves down if we restrict ourselves to the level plane of action laid out for us by modern materialistic society. This includes the latest waves of technological invention as it does the pursuit of self-advancement, the narcissistic craving to be seen and recognised.

The 'something else' we seek is not far away; indeed, it is exactly and precisely where we are. It is at the core of our daily lives. It is in this sense that dialogue creates the opportunity to explore the immediate *what is* of existence. *What is* may also be the ultimate truth; it may also be the truth of our own conflicted lives. And the relevance of it may pertinently lie in the direct exposure of the nature of such conflict – impersonally, because it is common to us all. And the commonality of consciousness implies not only that we share the same content, as we share our DNA, but that the way into the unravelling of this content lies in observation of the common pool. We are not *in-dividuals* (= *un-divided*), whatever we may think, and our 'salvation' does not lie within the pursuit of this illusion, but in the seeing that consciousness really is common and that we are part of the stream; it is our inheritance. In this sense, truly, I am 'my brother's keeper'.

In this sense also – naturally, easily – a sense of affection should pervade the group. Once it is understood that point-scoring is not the object and that individualistic competition injures all the competitors, winners and losers alike, there is again room for that space to emerge wherein true learning-in-attention can take place. Unlike book learning, it is non-accumulative;

indeed, it is unrepeatable. We are speaking psychologically, of course. We all need to be aware of the world we are living in, but self-knowledge, or self-knowing, is of a different kind. For, while we may by reflection and analysis put aside the blocks to the awakening of intelligence, this alone will not bring it about. The kite is hovering, thirty feet above the ground. What shall we do? Wait for it to fall? This is the moment of suspension, the moment of non-action, the empty atom. If we fill it with the known, we are back where we were; if we strain to go beyond it, similarly so. Can we simply sit and wait? It is an arduous task, one that the brain is quite used to. It is used to the forward movement of time; in fact, that movement is thought-time. And anything it projects is still tied to time; therefore, it is never original. Originality does not lie in the promptings of thought, however high-flown, far-reaching and inventive. It lies in the nuanced in-between, the abeyance, but not the control, of thought. Originality flows *from its own ground*, once the way to that ground is unimpeded. The 'I' as the doer, the agitator, the mover cedes his central place; he ceases to exist. It is at this moment that intelligence may enter, quicker than lightning and equally destructive. It is death to the time-worn trammels of thought. The kite takes a nosedive but soars up again.

We have touched something now – it is a new equation. Whatever the topic – love, death, relationship – we are launched, in touch with the actuality of it, not merely with the verbal cipher. In other words, we are looking at the moon and not at the finger which points to it. A subtlety has entered our field of perception, and with that perception we can travel far. At the same time, it is nothing abstruse, nothing mystical or requiring explanation. It is the simplest, most commonplace thing on earth, available to all, anywhere, any time. For it unites the *what is* of ultimate truth with the equal *what is* of daily life and, indeed, reveals them to be one and the same. There is no work too grand, no task too humble. This is Krishnamurti's legacy.

What is required of us is implementation, a fearless setting forth, an *application*. No kite-flying manual can teach us what to do, for the stuff of its building is our own. And the making of it is its own goal, the flying of it its own transcendence. From first to last it was meant to fly. – *Stephen Smith* ■

## PUBLICATIONS

### *The Beauty of the Mountain – Memories of J. Krishnamurti*

By Friedrich Grohe

I'm writing once again about *The Beauty of the Mountain*, which I've said many times is a good introduction to what K was talking about, one that especially shows his human side.

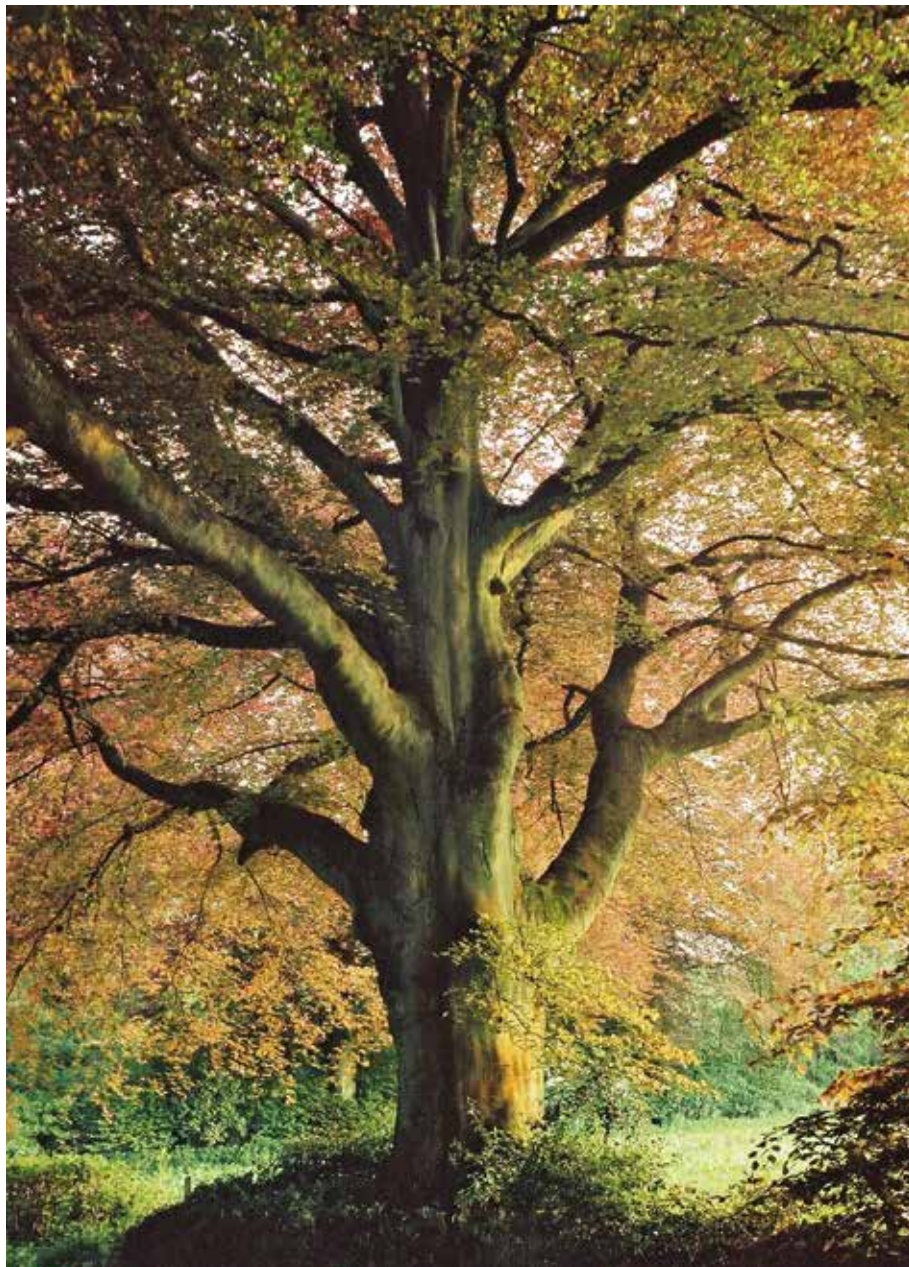
This memoir is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> English edition. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition was translated into French, the 2<sup>nd</sup> into German. The Spanish and Hindi online editions can be found at [www.kinfonet.org/Beauty-2017\\_spanish.pdf](http://www.kinfonet.org/Beauty-2017_spanish.pdf) and [www.kinfonet.org/Beauty-of-the-mountain-hindi.pdf](http://www.kinfonet.org/Beauty-of-the-mountain-hindi.pdf), respectively. A paperback version of the Hindi edition can be ordered from the Rajghat Study Centre. A Mandarin edition can be requested by writing to us. And currently an Italian translation is being prepared. If you would like copies (including multiple ones to give away) of any of these, please write to us and we'll send them to you free of charge.

You can also visit my new website, which is being put together by Ewan Benoit, a former Brockwood student who is very talented in this area. To take a look at this work in progress, please go to: [www.friedrichgrohe.com](http://www.friedrichgrohe.com).

The journalist Harry Eyres, who published articles about Brockwood in *The Financial Times*, wrote, "I think your memoir conveys the human side of K better than anything else I have read." When Mary Lutyens read the first draft of the book, she said, "Krishnaji becomes alive."

Bill Quinn, who was a close friend of K during the war years, wrote, "I think a book like yours is extremely important, since it stands as a witness to K's extraordinary humanity, which few people were privileged to see, and which indeed exemplifies what he talked about. It always seemed unfortunate to me that his public persona was so austere."





Copper beech in spring, near Brockwood Park

Mary-Ann Ridgway, head of Inwoods Small School at Brockwood, wrote, “I appreciate the interesting and simple clear descriptions, in which you convey some touching and more personal aspects of Krishnamurti’s life ... Your memoirs shine a little light on a part of K that I didn’t know before.”

When I offer a copy of the book to someone, I’m doing it to share with them the beauty of the teachings. I want nothing for myself, I just want to show them *The Beauty of the Mountain*.

Brockwood day guests are especially grateful to receive the book, and when they ask to pay I suggest they make a donation to the Centre. I try to make sure that prospective students, students, mature students, parents and Open Day visitors are offered a copy. Given my valuation of this memoir as a good introduction to K, I think it would be nice if such distribution were continued even in my absence.

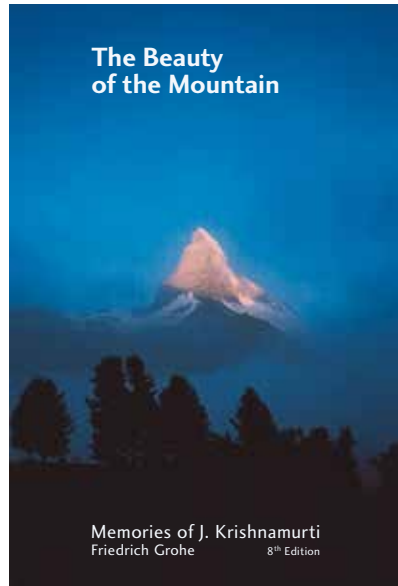
In Ojai the greatest distributor of the book is Michael Krohnen. As the author of *The Kitchen Chronicles – 1001 Lunches with J. Krishnamurti*, which I highly recommend, he understands how to offer the book to interested people. Sometimes we have enthusiastic responses. One family even moved to Ojai after the mother read the book.

What speaks in favor of *The Beauty of the Mountain* as such an introduction to K is that it reveals how such a man lived his daily life, which testified to his great humanity and exemplified what he talked about. It also includes some key statements of K that are not generally found elsewhere or collected together, e.g. ‘The Intent of the Schools’, ‘Brockwood Today and in the Future’, and ‘Education for the Very Young’.

Recently a retired professor from Australia, Patricia English, wrote a great review of the book, published in the *Australia Bulletin* 59. She said that if she were a teacher at a school or university, she would make the book compulsory reading:

I first read Grohe's book sometime after it was first published in 1991 and thought it a splendid effort. Like the many reviewers who are cited in the inside cover of the book, I found it heartwarming, beautifully produced, sensitively written and adorned with the most exquisite photography and a selection of the most penetrating insights of Krishnamurti.

Reading it again in 2019, some twenty-eight years later, I was overwhelmed with sadness Grohe's book belonged to a young woman who had been deeply influenced by the teachings of Krishnaji and who thought that his message would transform humankind.



Coming upon Grohe's book *The Beauty of the Mountain* was like tasting the water of a beautiful stream, and smelling a perfume that lingers in spite of the years of corruption and degradation.

After innocence has been destroyed, is there any way to come upon it again? I don't know. But I do know that if I were teaching in a high school, or at a university, I would make Grohe's book an essential text. For one thing, the tone of the book is conversational. Grohe is talking to us in intimate and kindly terms (as K used to talk to Grohe). There is no effort to influence or persuade.

Let me digress to say that Grohe is a man of the "real" world, as it is sometimes described. He was the son of a wealthy and successful industrialist, and excelled in his own right when it became his turn to take over the enterprise. Like Krishnaji, he had an eye for detail, an awareness of the importance of relationship with colleagues and, above all, he had an eye for beauty, an awareness of the sacredness of life.

Like Krishnaji, Grohe loved Nature and would climb every mountain in sight. Krishnaji walked the valleys, knew the streams, and the clouds that drifted across the sky. Grohe had a similar eye for beauty and experienced the same breathless capacity to listen to the silence.

No wonder they liked each other, no wonder they settled into a harmonious communion. No wonder that Grohe helped Krishnaji financially to bring about many of the projects that would not otherwise have existed. Grohe was a practical man with a mystical bent. Krishnamurti was a mystic, who could also solve problems at their very root. Grohe was interested at once in education and was willing to help Krishnaji establish his study centres and schools.

Krishnaji once wrote: *“From ancient of times, man has sought something beyond the materialistic world, something immeasurable, something sacred. It is the intent of this school to inquire into the possibility.”* Krishnaji went on to write that *“The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind”*.

Krishnamurti has long gone in a physical sense. But the challenge is still there, alive in all its beauty in Grohe’s book. The book is filled with quotes, conversations, and writings of Krishnaji that are chosen with great precision. Not a word in the book is superfluous or unnecessary, and the footnotes are pertinent and invaluable to the story line.

As early as 1928, at the Ommen Star Camp, K said to his audience: “I am in love, not with you, but with that which is behind you; not with your faces and your clothes, but with that which is life”.

Krishnaji expressed his affection for Grohe by saying “we are brothers”, and Grohe was overcome. He later asked Sunanda Patwardhan, a close friend of Krishnamurti, what K might have meant. She replied that K simply fell in love with people.

I can personally vouch for this insightful comment. The people known to me who were intimately connected with K, who walked and talked with him,

who laughed and interacted with him over long periods, often felt his love. And they in turn were in love with him.

Now that Krishnaji has gone, we are left with his frequently posed question: “What will you do when K has gone?” So far, at least on the surface, the answer is “not much”. On the other hand, K was adamant that if you lived the teachings, they would endure and bear fruit.

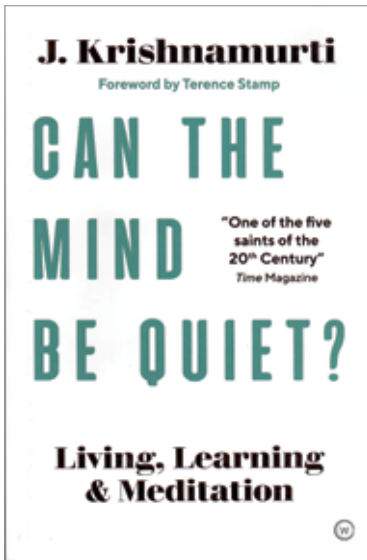
But in order for that to happen, we need to understand our conditioning and leave it completely. For me, but perhaps not for others, that means giving ourselves completely to understanding ourselves, our environment, and those around us. It means we cannot be a closet theosophist, or a devotee of some guru, or a follower of some religious belief no matter how high the ideals. It means standing completely alone and with an enquiring, learning mind, approaching the mystery, the beauty, the indescribable loveliness of the earth itself with humility and reverence.

This is a book for everyone, for all who seek freedom from conflict, confusion and disintegration. Don't miss Krishnamurti's own review of his own *Notebook*. It is an absolute gem. It also reveals just how incisive and acute Krishnamurti could be. It turns out that he was much more than a mystic. His mind was always connected to some dimension of being that we may sense, but which so far has alluded most of us.

We may not be able to change the world, but there is still time for us to change ourselves. – *Patricia English* ■

KFT has published a new book, ***Can the Mind be Quiet? – Living, Learning & Meditation***, Watkins, London 2019, with a foreword by Terence Stamp.

This book consists in a series of private interviews that K himself transcribed from memory. It is thus very much in the line of such works as *Commentaries on Living*, *The Only Revolution*, and *The World Within*. It is divided into three parts: Explorations into Living, Explorations into Learning, and Explorations



into Meditation. The wide range of issues being explored, from conflict in relationship, to perception, to the meaning of learning and education, to the religious mind and the quality of the sacred, are all addressed with K's characteristic clarity, simplicity and directness. In every single piece, no matter how particular the issue, the broad panorama of the human condition is always in the foreground. On a couple of occasions, however, K seems to reverse the process and offers us very incisive individual portraits of C.W. Leadbeater (19: The Intellect is Very Limited, pp. 77–80) and Rajagopal (25: Can I Stop Decline in Myself? pp. 98–99). Although these may be of some

historical interest, the beauty of such a work is the jewels of compassion and insight that are to be found scattered throughout.



### K: The unfolding of *what is* is the beginning of wisdom

Self-knowledge is to be discovered in the action of relationship; and all action is relationship. Self-knowledge does not come about through self-isolation, through withdrawal; the denial of relationship is death. Death is the ultimate resistance. Resistance, which is suppression, substitution or sublimation in any form, is a hindrance to the flow of self-knowledge; but resistance is to be discovered in relationship, in action. Resistance, whether negative or positive, with its comparisons and justifications, its condemnations and identifications, is the denial of *what is*. *What is* is the implicit; and awareness of the implicit, without any choice, is the unfolding of it. The unfoldment is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is essential for the coming into being of the unknown, the inexhaustible.

*'The Search for Truth'*  
*Commentaries on Living, First Series, pp. 47–48*  
© 1956 Krishnamurti Foundation of America

Here is an interesting comment from Jill Furmanovsky, the famous photographer of rock musicians who took the picture of me on the back of last year's Newsletter. If you haven't had a copy of this publication, please email me your postal address. Otherwise you can read the Newsletter online at: [http://kinfonet.org/FG\\_Newsletter\\_2018.pdf](http://kinfonet.org/FG_Newsletter_2018.pdf). And we just learned recently – in fact directly from her during my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party in Rougemont – that she will be teaching photography at Brockwood, which is very good news. She finds that my look in her picture of me on the back cover of last year's Newsletter is that of a **slightly mischievous angel**:

I was delighted to receive your latest calendar and booklet this week. The picture of you on the back of the latter looks great. I hope your friends and family agree that you have the look of a spritely, slightly mischievous, angel!

Thanks also for crediting me so nicely. I found your Newsletter very interesting. You do an important job helping the various educational institutes inspired by K to understand each other's challenges.

As others seem to recognise too, the term 'rocking on' suits you in a variety of ways. The rock and roll spirit is not only in music, you know! Rather, it has to do with thinking outside the box, and then manifesting extraordinary results in a mysterious way. The K Centre is hugely important to so many people for the tranquillity and peace it offers internally as well as externally. I can only thank you for your part in making it happen.

And since it is nearly the end of the year, I hope you won't mind me saying 'Rock on, Friedrich!' After all, you have now been photographed by a rock & roll photographer, so it seems appropriate somehow.

Warm wishes – *Jill*

Another friend joked that I'm a rock star because I used to climb rocky mountains. And here is the latest contribution from Prof Ted Kneupper, the driving force behind the AKS (Association for Krishnamurti Studies). Following on the 'rock' metaphor, he considers I've been **a rock for the foundations**:

I think the world has been greatly blessed by your years of unwavering commitment to inquiry as inspired by K, along with your important service to extending the reach of his teachings. I was amused by your story of the photographer's reference to you as the 'rock.' Being from a community called Slippery Rock and having spent years serving as a facilitator of learning at the institution familiarly known as 'the Rock' (one of its favourite songs at sports events is the one adopted appropriately from Queen's 'We will rock you,' recently acclaimed in the film 'Bohemian Rhapsody'). If you as 'the rock' want to hear them play it, listen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tJYN-eG1zk>. It strikes me as especially noteworthy that you have indeed been a 'rock' for the foundations.



We then listened to 'We will rock you', and everybody started dancing and singing to it. It's all been fun and funny, and I keep ending my emails with: Warm greetings and rock on!

Mr. Saumeetra, from the KFI Cuttack Centre, wrote us the following email commenting on how well the calendar is being received. I have been considering what he said: "the calendar acts like **a key that opens the door** to people's acceptance of K's original materials". This is a question I often ask myself and it is nice to have this kind of feedback. I agree with him that publications like the Calendar, the Newsletter and *The Beauty of the Mountain* can be easier to access and therefore they can act as an introduction to K's original material.

Dear Mr. Friedrich Grohe,  
Greetings from KFI Cuttack Centre.

I am sending you, attached, the KFICC's Annual Activity Report, along with the utilization report of the calendar and other materials sent to us by you. Like last year, this time also it has helped us immensely in our dissemination work. Particularly the calendar acts like a key that opens the door to people's acceptance of K's original materials. If we present them only with K materials, people sometimes are averse to them; but if we first give them the calendars, then they are more receptive to us and to the K books and booklets that we carry to give away as an introduction. Like last year, we distributed the calendars and materials in various colleges, different educational institutions, judicial offices and in government offices. Some of these people and offices seemed to be waiting for the calendar!

As part of the commemoration of K's 125<sup>th</sup> birth year, we plan to reach remote areas of our province. And I know that your material will help us a lot in this work.

Our Centre is extremely thankful to you for this support and we hope you will continue to extend it.

Regards – Saumeetra, 2 September 2019

Shripati Dubey, director of Rajghat Besant School, in Varanasi, also sent us **an appreciative message**.

Dear Mr. Grohe,

It is indeed wonderful to receive your mail. The eagerly awaited Newsletter and the Calendars did reach me in December 2018 and I spent many hours, after receiving it, continuously reading the Newsletter from cover to cover. In fact, I look forward to receiving the newsletter every year.

Like every year's issue, this Newsletter is full of information, beautiful photographs and very insightful writings on K's teachings. I also read Kabir's last writing in the Newsletter. It was so sad to lose him last year in September. Kabir & I were neighbours for two years in Rajghat. An extraordinarily simple person with his whole life devoted to K's teachings. There cannot be, ever, another Kabir in Krishnamurti Foundation India.

Please do plan to visit Rajghat soon, as it has been years since you visited. Siddhartha Menon, from Rishi Valley, has joined as Director of the School and presently we have a very good team of new teachers.

After an unbearable summer the rains have finally reached Rajghat and the whole campus looks green and beautiful. The temperature too has come down considerably. By the way, we had received enough copies of *The Beauty of the Mountain* from Vasanta Vihar which were distributed among all school teachers here. Thank you so much for this.

Awaiting your response and looking forward to your visit to Varanasi.

My best regards – Dubey, 10 July 2019

Here is a recent email from our old friend and music teacher Ulrich Eichenauer expressing his appreciation for the Newsletter and Calendar and raising **some interesting questions on education**. He now works in North Carolina.

Dear Friedrich,

I hope this message finds you well and in good spirits. It is about time for me to thank you for the wonderful Newsletter, which I 'devoured' in just a



Sunset over Lake Geneva

couple of reading sessions, and your Calendar, which I am sure I will enjoy just as much as the previous ones, and which may yet again yield, month after month, some of those precious jewels in the form of K quotes that somehow, more often than not, seem to come just at the right time.

It was a delight to read the various contributions to your Newsletter, in particular those on Education, namely Mary-Ann's summary of her visits to alternative schools. I am continuously grappling with finding out how to offer my students a different kind of learning experience within the confines of a mainstream institution. More and more I doubt that it is possible. The overall current is going in another direction, and very strongly so. The articles in the Newsletter, however, gave me much to consider and think about, and it is good to see, or be reminded, that there are people out there

who are taking the questions of good education very seriously and who put all their energy into making it happen.

I also read with great interest what people had to say about the place of 'rules' at K schools. It seems discussions around this and related topics often boil down to a difference of opinion between those who say that the well-being of the individual student takes priority over the interests of the institution, and those who think it is the other way around. We somehow never seem to get away from that conflict between the individual and the collective. We may decide one way or the other; we may refer to K to support our particular point of view, but the conflict continues. We somehow accept it and find various ways of dealing with it without ever resolving it. It seems we rarely ask why there should be this conflict, why should one dominate the other? Is that question too naive, too idealistic? To me it is a question well worth pursuing, because not to ask it would be to continue on the path that every institution has taken so far, the path of domination and submission, of constant quarrelling or acceptance. Is it too far-fetched to ask whether one can live and work and learn together as a living organism in which no part dominates another, neither by rules or rebellion, nor by contracts or the breaking thereof? Experience would say it is impossible.

I wish you much joy and good health for the coming year and hope to see you again at some point. I regret not being able to attend the Reunion, as it falls into the first week of our academic calendar year, during which I cannot be there.

All the best – *Ulrich, 26 December 2018*

### **K: When time is not then death is love**

Death is everywhere and we never seem to live with it. It is a dark, frightening thing to be avoided, never to be talked of. Keep it away from the closed door. But it is always there. The beauty of love is death and one knows neither. Death is pain and love is pleasure and the two can never meet; they must be kept apart and the division is the pain and agony. This has been from the beginning of time, the division and the endless conflict. There will always be death for those who do not see that the observer is the observed, the experiencer is the experienced. It is like a vast river in which man is caught, with all his worldly goods, his vanities, pains and knowledge. Unless he leaves all the things he has accumulated in the river and swims ashore, death will be always at his door, waiting and watching. When he leaves the river there is no shore, the bank is the word, the observer. He has left everything, the river and the bank. For the river is time and the banks are the thoughts of time; the river is the movement of time and thought is of it. When the observer leaves everything of which he is, then the observer is not. This is not death. It is the timeless. You cannot know it, for what is known is of time; you cannot experience it: recognition is made up of time. Freedom from the known is freedom from time. Immortality is not the word, the book, the image, you have put together. The soul, the 'me', the atman is the child of thought which is time. When time is not then death is love. Love is.

*Brockwood Park, 19 September 1973*

*Krishnamurti's Journal, pg. 19*

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Ray McCoy, beloved by many at Brockwood Park and further afield, died on 2 April 2019 at the age of 88. He had been a teacher and tutor at Brockwood Park School and, earlier, at Rajghat Besant School and Rishi Valley School, and

an editor, archivist and Secretary at Krishnamurti Foundation Trust. He had lived and worked at Brockwood for more than 35 years. An extract from Brockwood's announcement of his death reads: "Ray had a mature and incisive engagement with Krishnamurti's teachings, which he was always happy to share and discuss. His intelligent and sensitive editing of many of Krishnamurti's books helped make the teachings available to a large international audience. Ray died peacefully in his home city of Toronto. In this video from 2017, Ray reflects on his years at Brockwood, how he came to be here, when he first met Krishnamurti and his feelings about Brockwood: <https://youtu.be/D-pCIYsytFA>."

Valentin Gerlier, a former Brockwood student and staff, wrote a most touching tribute to Ray, which we reproduce with his kind permission.

## Ray McCoy: In Memoriam

At the risk of disappointing parents and teachers alike, I have to admit that a great deal of my first year at Brockwood Park School had to do with lunch. This was the nineties, in the day when veganism was a courageous adventure in dietetics and not a fashion statement, and the hopeful promise of a cheese-smothered meal made this fourteen-year-old boy dart to the food servery to be among the very first to indulge. Except – I was never the 'first': there was always Someone Else. To be sure, he would *always* be there: pioneer of the lunch queue, pillar of prandial punctuality, not-so-patiently holding on to a steel plate, ready (at times) to make his displeasure known if the dedicated kitchen team had the temerity of slightly mistiming the lunch hour. Once served, the ritual would continue; he would proceed to sit always in the same place: the lonesome, intimidating other-worldly Back Table. Always, he would begin his meal thoughtfully chewing a piece of fruit before passing on to the savoury items (anathema to a young European!), each day sitting with a series of different interlocutors, to whom he listened, sparsely speaking while observing the life of the dining room with a steely, removed gaze. These are the sorts of thing one observes as a fourteen-year old boy. But this fourteen-year-old

boy just did not know what to make of this man. For a start, he looked out of place. Austerely dressed and unassuming in his bearing, he wore no sandals or outdoor wear, gave hugs only at choice moments, did not assume the all-too-Brockwoodian semi-spiritual ‘I’ve been to India, you know’ look. What strange life animated this dour, hasty exterior? I was told he was an ‘Editor’. But what sort of animal was that, and what ‘edit’ could words drawn from a timeless well need? (Now that I do some editing work myself, I can only imagine what patient, dedicated and careful work he was engaged in).

A year of not being first in the lunch queue passes. The fourteen-year-old boy becomes fifteen, more engaged in the community, more at ease with others, and is developing a passion for music, poetry, philosophy, Shakespeare. Not many people know that for this boy, coming to Brockwood Park has been a world-shattering experience; he is smitten with the grounds, the beauty of the land has become a part of him, life-sap coursing in his being. Brockwood Park calls for a love that goes beyond the many teenage loves and heartbreaks, and so the boy also loves the cold misty mornings on the South Lawn, the lush late afternoon in the Rose Garden, the quiet embrace of the English twilight. He knows there is something special at Brockwood Park, but he doesn’t know exactly what: the rhetoric of staff members and open day brochures does not entirely convince him.

One lunchtime, brimming with returning-student-confidence, I decide to dare the back table. I am greeted with a legendary greeting: ‘hallo’ – in a rich Canadian twang. I have never spoken to him but Ray, it turns out, knows who I am. In fact it turns out he knows a lot of things. Those clear blue eyes are observant, subtle, sharp. As his conversations progress with other interlocutors and I listen quietly, I discover to my surprise how deeply aware of the community he is, how astutely he reads Brockwood, and how refreshingly assured he is in delivering his dry, witty, perceptive takes on the school’s many dramas. And I find, to my lasting pleasure, that when friends gently tease him, Ray’s seemingly sullen features instantly resolve into a bashful but cheeky, disarming smile, cheeks reddening, eyes sparkling. I warm to him.

Soon Brockwood's fast-paced teacher turnover means that Ray has to teach us 'GCSE' History and English. He sits quietly in class, poised and austere, yet also warm and welcoming: he listens to all, nods gravely, laughs quietly, even shares a joke. As a good teacher must be, he sometimes knows-it-all, sometimes knows-nothing. He is reassuring, like the wise and wistful Cedar on the lawn. I like him: we all like him, because he supports us and surprises us, he affirms us and disarms us with a wise sobriety dashed with human warmth.

Later on that same year, courageous pioneers in poetics decide to publish a yearly record of Brockwood's literary talent. It is a well-known fact that everyone at Brockwood is a poet, whether they are or not. As quickly as we are taught to be wary of words, we are taught to love them. Staff, students, cooks, friends, local wits, silent newcomers, eccentric 'mature' students with barely a hundred words of English, wise laundry-folders, mysterious maintenance men, Rota-yogis and herbal tea fanatics, 'K-world' globetrotters, perpetual discontents and Brockwood lovers – every species in Brockwood's tangled ecosystem writes, romantically, dryly, ironically philosophically... And Ray the Editor is no exception. With the poetry journal still hot off the overworked Brockwood printers I glance at his offering, perhaps surprised that this austere and mysterious man bothers at all to be poetic.

But what he wrote surprised me much more.

### **Brockwood's Heart**

Brockwood is not ten thousand  
brilliant flames  
Below breath-stopping giants in a Grove;  
It isn't dazzling streams of daffodils  
Meand'ring over fresh young leaves in spring.



Brockwood is not great cedars,  
standing proud,  
Aloofly holding climbers daring heights;  
It isn't garden rows of luscious growth  
Tended by wind, sun, rain and joyful work.

Brockwood is not a happy smiling face  
Greeting, rushing by in a busy hall;  
It isn't classes taught with care, and time  
For looking far beyond the words and books.

Brockwood is the silence beneath all this,  
The still, great space within each  
moment's heart  
That's glimpsed within the hurry and the fun  
When Nothing makes us stop to look at it.

In a lucid and uncomplicated way, these words quietly made sense of this place I so loved, beyond its complexities, contradictions, fears. There was in these words the faint shimmer of the simple, luminous, creative stillness that drew and knit together all our seemingly separate Brockwood existences, humans and non-humans alike. Simply, yet richly, Ray made clear to me – or reminded me, perhaps – how that ‘silence beneath’ is the nourishing flow that sustains the activities ‘above’ – a stillness that is not the haunting terminus of movement, a silence that is not a forbidding limitation of words, but the very fertile ground of all movement and all words. These unassuming verses clearly voiced what I loved here, why the fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen-year-old boy could naturally call this place ‘home’, the *only* place he has called home in fact, before and since – despite all the changes, despite growing up, despite feeling called to be elsewhere. Perhaps, the poem seemed to whisper, home is a place not where one lives but where one lives: truly dwelling, tarrying, *staying* with things; being inhabited by a place just as much as inhabiting it. Dwelling is flourishing, like ‘luscious growth’, tended ‘by wind and rain and joyful work’, echoing the land’s fertility and

peace. And sometimes it is to be seized by that ‘Nothing’, which unforcedly and effortlessly calls us, again and again, into its wholesome, all-embracing stillness that is the beating heart of each moment at the School.

Many people love Brockwood – some love the exquisite grounds; others the relationships they brush past, encounter or build here; some join thinking that they are ‘serious about the teachings’ and leave unsure of what that might mean, and for some it is the opposite. I was one of those who simply felt Brockwood was *home*, and I am grateful for Ray McCoy for having known and having voiced what that truly was about. Beyond conversations at the back table, GCSE classes, lunch queues, dialogues, polite nods across the rose garden – the thrust of life keeping us apart for its own mysterious designs, this simple truth strangely brought together two beings who perhaps could not have been more different. Is it perhaps that we were both once, or more than once, held in awe by this ‘Nothing’; this ‘Nothing’ that is also everything, the enduring, creative ground of Brockwood Park School?

20 years on, I still feel these words ring with Ray’s discerning wisdom; with the sharp vision of his sharp blue eyes; with his benevolence and wit. I never got to thank him for this poem. Now, belatedly, I do. – *Valentin Gerlier* ■





Friedrich walking between Saanen and Rougemont, in his 90<sup>th</sup> year © Photo by Ewan Benoit

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