NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Education, Liberation, and Freedom From the Known:

The Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti

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Abstract

In studying the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti, I will be focusing on his ideas on education. Krishnamurti insists on educating without fear, without authority, and without competition. He suggests that rather than a hierarchical relationship, the educator and the educated should meet on the same level, questioning and counter-questioning. He promotes the idea that the mind must become incredibly sensitive, alert, and aware in order for real learning to take place. A mind in this state is alive and innocent, ready for learning. Keen observation and self-knowledge should be main goals in education, so that the students can form clear pictures of themselves and the world around them. The concepts of freedom, discipline, and order are also very important in the understanding of right education. One purpose of this education is so that students will not conform and simply fit into society. To change society, which Krishnamurti feels is in dire need of change, one must start by changing oneself. Education, which he agrees must include the gaining of knowledge, must more importantly create intelligent human beings; therefore, education is of the utmost significance in the bettering of life, and indeed, in the very survival of it.
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Education, Liberation, and Freedom From the Known:
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"In oneself lies the whole world, and if you know how to look and learn, then the door is there and the key is in your hand. Nobody on earth can give you either that key or the door to open, except yourself.

Krishnamurti, from You Are The World
This essay begins with a brief history of Krishnamurti. Section I is a discussion of the state of education today, focusing on the issues of fear, conformity, discipline, authority, competition, and violence. Section II deals with what Krishnamurti believes education should be. This involves the difference between knowledge and intelligence, along with the concepts of self-knowledge, sensitivity and observation, revolt, freedom and order, and love. The last section involves the possibility for the implementation of these suggestions.
Krishnamurti realizes the pressing need for change in educational methods today. He thinks of our society as mad, and evidence definitely supports him. We need only look at the world around us, at the violence, stupidity, and callousness, to realize that we are in a state of chaos. People starve to death, murder, terrorism, and a host of other atrocities abound, and war threatens our very survival. His argument is that our educational system is educating our children to fit into this madness, rather than teaching in ways that might help to correct or alleviate it. In order for our world to be saved, literally, a revolution must take place in the way in which we educate our children, and indeed, in how we educate ourselves. What Krishnamurti is calling for is not only a radical change in education, but a radical change in the minds and lives of all people. There are definite steps that we can take, he argues, to begin to create a sane society.

Although he puts great emphasis on several unconventional ideas, Krishnamurti believes there is a place for many of the existing educational practices. The educational basics of reading, writing, math, history, geology, geography, biology, etc., must be taught in order for students to be equipped to function in the world. He does
not argue that one should not be knowledgeable, only that one should also be intelligent. He even concedes vocational training; after all, one must support oneself if possible. But he asserts that we need to ask questions such as, "What is the point of just getting a good job and making a lot of money if in the process your mind becomes dull and stupid?" (see 1974:84). Though part of the task of education is to train, it must go far beyond that. While training produces efficient citizens, it does not create not holistically complete persons.

The process of being educated is no longer a holistic experience, but rather, a technical training exercise. So much emphasis is being placed on specialized departments, each person being trained to fit into his or her little niche, that education really has very little meaning except to be trained for a job. If we are being educated only to be scientists, scholars, and specialists, then we may be outwardly intellectual, but incomplete and uncreative inwardly (see 1953:15). Our educational system in general produces mechanical, thoughtless people, which in turn furthers the thoughtlessness and mechanization of society. School prepares us for only certain aspects of life, when it should be preparing us for the entirety of life.

We have to go beyond the teaching of factual knowledge if we are to help create intelligent people. As Krishnamurti says, "...a mind that has merely been trained in factual knowledge is incapable of meeting life in its variety, its subtlety, its depths and great heights. When we train our children according to a particular system of thought or a particular discipline, when we teach them to think within depart-
mental divisions, we prevent them from growing into integrated men and women..." (1953:24). Modern education teaches us to learn from books, memorize facts, and pass examinations, but it doesn't teach how to observe, how to listen, how to really be in direct touch with the world. Education offers endless theories and facts, but it does not help to bring about an understanding of the total process of human existence. Though we are highly cunning and intellectual, we are rarely creators. While we are taught to quote what others have said, we are not often taught to do original thinking. We fill our minds with knowledge, information, and very often, arrogance. To merely cultivate intellect, which is to develop capacity or knowledge, does not result in intelligence (see 1953:63). What, then, is the present educational system preparing us for?

The present system, which is based on exploitation and fear, leads to the inculcation of self-defensive fears. We are being trained by education and environment to seek personal gain and security, and to fight for ourselves (see 1953:12,13). This fear, which will be discussed at length subsequently, creates psychological barriers which separate people. We are educated into an endless routine—we pass examinations, we get a job, get married, have children, pay taxes, etc. Rather than something to help us with every aspect of life, education is thought of as something to help us achieve distinction, get a better job, and have greater power over others. Though education may equip us to make money, it leaves us shallow and uncaring and does not help us out of this endless conflict. One of the biggest problems that lies at
the heart of ineffective education today is fear.

As Krishnamurti points out, most of us learn through fear. We are taught through authority and obedience, and at the heart of both of these lies fear. Two main institutions that inspire and promote fear are authority and competition, along with the innate human desire for security. We need only think about the authority/obedience relationship to realize its implications. "What happens to you when you obey? You cease to think. Because you feel that the authorities know so much, are such powerful people, you begin to obey, and become a slave to an idea, an impression, to influence" (1974:52). We need to ask then, whether or not it is possible to learn without authority. Authority breeds fear, and can a fearful person learn? When there is fear, no true learning can take place. A very mechanical sort of knowledge gathering might occur, but a true understanding is not likely to come about. The question for the educator is how does one teach without authority, and therefore, without fear? The function of education is to eliminate fear, and at the same time, give knowledge.

How can one be completely free of fear? Krishnamurti suggests that if we understand fear, we will no longer be afraid of it. We need to try to find out what we are afraid of and see if we cannot go beyond that fear, not simply in theory, but in practice. If we really come to understand something, we are no longer afraid of it. Krishnamurti gives an example of understanding fear:

Suppose I am afraid of [death]--now what is that fear? Is it actual or is it merely a thought, in time?...Thinking about
We know from experience that we cannot get rid of fear through discipline or suppression, or by wishing it away; it follows that to actually get rid of a fear, its causes have to be searched out and understood. This requires tremendous patience and awareness. However, this effort is very important because if we are fearful, we will almost surely not develop to our potential. Being fearful makes one lose one's sense of adventure, and becomes a limiting factor throughout life. If one is fearful, it is very easy to fall into the ruts of society--being afraid to be different, to think otherwise than the established pattern of society, to not question authority or tradition. One of the most troubling aspects of all is that our whole upbringing and education now point us in this fearful direction. One innate problem in the dilemma of fear is the human need for security.
Human beings, like most animals, instinctively crave security. Very often, people do not care what happens to others as long as they are safe. We are fearful when we are insecure. One way to fulfill this need is through conforming, which is of course a very secure thing to do. It is safe and easy to conform, to fit into a groove. It can be very comfortable and satisfying, but in this life of conformity are fear and decay. The desire to imitate is a very strong factor in our lives. This imitation breeds fear, and fear kills creative thinking (see 1964:11, also 1953:56, 57). Conformity leads to mediocrity; but mediocre people are not troublemakers, they are more prone to be productive, law-abiding citizens. Therefore, society would much rather see people conform. This is not to say that it is bad to be a productive, law-abiding citizen, but simply that it is insufficient; as capable people, we have the responsibility to at least try to better society. (This is also not to say that trouble-making is necessarily good.) Our educational system is being used to turn out people who will conform and to fit into society, but is that what education should be? Couldn’t we educate in a way so that students would be excellent in biology and writing and so on, and still refuse to conform into the madness of society? Surely, this must be the role of education. "Merely to implant existing values in the mind of the child, to make him conform to ideals, is to condition him without awakening his intelligence" (1953:25). Children, while they do have some superficial freedoms, are being taught through our schools to accept all the old values of money, power, and prestige. Society wants us all to conform nicely
into this pattern of values. "We have been taught to conform to the authority of a teacher, of a book, of a party, because it is profitable to do so" (1953:35, see also 1974:15). Isn't the educational system and society today turning out people whose main interest is to find security, to become somebody important? To continue to condition children to accept the values of money and position and to accept the present condition of the world is stupidity. This conditioning does not bring about happiness or intelligence. Education can help to produce a different human being—one who cares, who has affection and loves people, as we will discuss later. In our hopes to force children to conform and obey, we often resort to various forms of discipline.

Discipline has become an important factor in the present social structure, and it is because of our desire to be psychologically secure that we accept and practice various forms of discipline. There are many dangers involved in discipline. It can become a habit as an easy way to control a child, it can become a substitute for love, and often, it can develop into a routine that becomes more important than the human beings who are entrapped by it (see 1953:31,32). Though discipline may bring about a quick answer to monitoring a child's behavior, it does not help them to understand the problems of living. Discipline is not conducive to understanding—it breeds animosity, prejudice, and resistance. It can also build a tremendous pattern of fear. Innate and conditioned fears and the need for security promote the acceptance of authority, which is yet another great problem with
today's education.

One of the results of fear is the acceptance of authority. Authority is created by our desire to be right, to be secure, and to feel comfortable. Submitting to authority can be seen as a self-protective reaction (see 1953:58). When we blindly follow a belief or certain traditional ideas, we are avoiding our own problems and difficulties by not working them out for ourselves. The acceptance of authority may help us temporarily to cover up our difficulties and problems, but to avoid problems only intensifies them in the long run. In a sense, freedom is denied by the acceptance of authority. Krishnamurti feels that we should not accept authority because acceptance of authority is obedience which, as we have seen, only breeds further fear. The problem with this idea is that man, as an individual, can only do and learn so much. If man did not accept any authority, almost nothing in society would get done. Certain decisions require the knowledge of an expert, and in these cases, ordinary people need to rely on the opinions of authorities in specific fields. For example, almost everyone must rely on the authority of a doctor at some point in their lives. However, what Krishnamurti is putting emphasis on is the hierarchical structure in education.

Our present teacher/student relationship assumes that there is a teacher who knows and students who don't know. Krishnamurti asserts that this traditional approach is failing, as it promotes fear and obedience. His suggestion is that it be replaced by a situation in which the student and teacher meet at the same level; where the educator
and the educated, through questioning and counter-questioning, are both participating in the act of learning. If we all think back to the class in which we learned the most, in which we still remember much of what we learned, it was probably a situation in which the students had tremendous input, and discussion and essay writing were emphasized rather than lectures and objective tests. A good working environment, and consequently an environment conducive to learning, is only feasible if there is mutual respect, consideration, and cooperation between the teacher and the students. These conditions sound almost absurd when placed in context with present day situations. We might ask, "How can there be affection and genuine cooperation between those who are in power and those who are subject to power? (1953:36).

First of all, many teachers today demand respect from their students, but do not respect their students in return. This obviously makes the students feel indifferent and disrespectful toward their teacher. Certainly anyone who has felt the horrible humiliation of being labeled "class dunce" is not going to feel anything but animosity toward their teacher. If mutual cooperation and affection are to come about, it is this sort of authority/obedience routine that must be discarded. This is not to say that the student should be given the impression that the teacher is not capable of answering any questions or providing guidance; it simply means that the teacher is not the final authority on matters, to be obeyed at all costs. If authority is not discarded, the teacher is only continuing to encourage fear and
imitation. If the student is accepting authority, he or she is submitting to domination and denying intelligence. To really come to an understanding of life, we have to think for ourselves, independent of any authority. Therefore, we can see that conformity and obedience have no place in right education. Fear, which is inherent in authority, obedience, and conformity, is also found at the heart of competition.

Krishnamurti puts forth that competition must be eliminated from education because it brings with it the desire to succeed and in turn, the fear of failure. The urge to be successful, which is conditioned in all of us from a very early age on, puts an end to spontaneity and breeds fear. When competing, the student, instead of concentrating on what is happening, is worrying about whether or not he is better than his classmate; he is concerned about whether or not he will get a prize and be elated, or come in last and be humiliated. We have all almost certainly experienced the anxiety of waiting to be picked for a team in gym class, or the sinking feeling of being the first one to spell a word wrong in a spelling bee. Competition breeds ambition which in turn breeds anxiety and fear; therefore, to be best able to learn, the mind should be free of ambition. However, all competition may not necessarily be bad in that it may give the child incentive to learn in certain situations. On the other hand, this same competitive situation which encourages one child may discourage another. However, it is obvious that the competitive process can be quite destructive. Most of us are after security and success, but as long as we crave success, we will not be able to learn with a clear, open,
and intelligent mind. "As long as success is our goal we cannot be rid of fear, for the desire to succeed inevitably breeds the fear of failure, and this desire leads to competition, envy, animosity, and finally to war" (1953:43). This realization brings us to our next subject, violence.

There is obviously a tremendous amount of violence in the world today. Our society is based on a long tradition of violence. Though we tend to blame others for the violent nature of the world, i.e. governments, organizations, terrorists, in actuality, violence is inherent in all of us. After all, "circumstances can be controlled by us, because we have created the circumstances" (1954:183). Often, human beings are outwardly educated, cultured, and clever, but inwardly, they are violent. "We are aggressive, brutal, competitive, and we build a society which is equally competitive, brutal, and violent" (1972:31). If inwardly we were loving, considerate, and caring, there would be no wars. Though some may think violence is necessary at times, nothing can really be achieved through violence. Though one violent act might temporarily appease a particular circumstance, it breeds further violence and misery in the long run. Violence leads to violence. As a popular saying declares: you can not simultaneously prevent and prepare for war. Or put another way by A. J. Muste, "There is no way to peace, peace is the way." Education is supposed to help us go beyond this violence, but our educational systems are not yet doing that. Indeed, some schools still practice the questionably effective act of paddling. Each of us as individuals has to choose
deliberately to either follow society in its violence or to stand up against it. Consequently, education has the responsibility of preventing conflict whenever possible. A more subtle, elusive sort of conflict is image-making.

In our minds, we all have images of ourselves and other people. Sometimes these images of ourselves do not accurately reflect who we are, but rather who we want to be. They are images of where we think we should be and what we think we should be doing. Often, the older we get, the stronger these images become. In these cases, the disparity between who we think we should be and who we actually are causes great sorrow and conflict. Since it is highly unlikely that any learning can take place when one is in conflict with oneself or others, part of the function of education is to see that the student does not form an illusory self-image, but instead has a clear picture of him or herself. If the student realizes the dangers of image-making, he or she is less likely to have problems in relationships with others. Often, difficulties in relationships are caused by a person relating to the image of who they think they are dealing with instead of the actual person. Quite often, we form images of people, but do not update them sufficiently as the person changes. Therefore, education needs to be sensitive not only to the more obvious forms of violence, but also to its less evident manifestations. When viewed simultaneously, the problems facing education today seem overwhelming.

As we have seen, education today is perpetuating practices that do not allow our children to truly learn. The hierarchical structure
found in most schools inspires fear and promotes obedience. The use of competition as a learning incentive is also widely used, along with violent means of discipline and reprimand, which in turn breed further violence in the students. When added together, these obstacles to learning are turning out students who are fearful, close-minded, mediocre, and dull. In light of this situation, what practices would comprise "right education"?

II

The function of education is to help create knowledgeable, intelligent human beings who have a greater understanding of themselves and the world around them than their predecessors. In speaking on right education, Krishnamurti proposes that we must make a fresh start on an entirely different basis. Can we afford to continue in this culture based on consumerism and industrialization? (see 1974:18). Can we bring about, through education, a mind that is completely different, a mind that is not greedy, envious, or ambitious? A mind that is alert, active, and aware; perceptive, efficient, and intelligent? Isn't the real meaning of education to help create people with these qualities? If we are made aware of our conditioning, we will be able to better understand ourselves and our actions. Therefore, right education will not place emphasis on any ideology, methodology,
or system, because all of these are attempts to further condition the child, and in so doing, hinder true understanding. Conditioning the individual only builds more barriers, whether they be national, social, or individual. The cultivation of an open mind that is able to see things clearly should be a high educational priority.

"Education has no meaning unless it helps you to understand the whole vastness of life with all its subtleties" (1964:10). To understand this vastness, we must have an integrated understanding of ourselves; and in order for this to happen, our minds must be alert, aware and open so that we may come to know ourselves. Right education, while conveying information and offering technical training, should create an atmosphere in which this maturing process can take place. Education is very significant in that it has such a great capability to transform a child--make them aware of their own processes of thinking, feeling, and action. When a child becomes sensitively aware of him or herself, they become much more alert to their surroundings. This produces a keen sense of observation which promotes true understanding. Right understanding will help the child to develop right relationships between himself and others and his surroundings. "Education is not merely acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts; it is to see the significance of life as a whole" (1953:34). This distinction can be seen as the difference between knowledge and intelligence.

Krishnamurti offers an interesting analogy for the relationship between knowledge and intelligence: "Wisdom is infinite, it includes knowledge and the way of action; but we take hold of a branch and
think it is the whole tree" (1953:65). To be intelligent, one must have knowledge; but one can be very knowledgeable without being the least bit intelligent. The implications of this latter combination could prove to be quite dangerous. Simply being knowledgeable does not give one the capacity for understanding. In this way, we may think of knowledge as the grouping of data that we accumulate through books and other sources, as an instrument that allows us to gain technical skill. Knowledge, which can be scientific, collective, or personal (see 1974:28,29), is not comparable with intelligence. Knowledge alone is not wisdom; wisdom, unlike knowledge, cannot be accumulated, memorized or simply found in books.

What we now call education is a matter of accumulating information and knowledge from books...Such education offers a subtle form of escape from ourselves...Does the cultivation of a technique enable us to understand ourselves?...Present day education is a complete failure because it over-emphasizes technique. In over-emphasizing technique, we destroy man. To cultivate capacity and efficiency without understanding life, without having a comprehensive perception of the ways of thought and desire, will only make us increasingly ruthless... (1953:17,18).

Indeed, in our educational system today, we seem to worship knowledge. It is this lack of emphasis on intelligence that leads Krishnamurti to use phrases such as "freedom from the known." We are too busy filling our heads with information to leave any room for
intelligence. This situation is representative of the famous Zen anecdote about a scholar of Buddhism who was anticipating meeting a Zen Master for the first time. Sitting down to talk with the Zen Master over tea, the excited scholar talked on at a furious pace about Zen Buddhism and related topics. When he looked down, he saw that the Zen Master had filled his tea cup, but continued to pour the tea. Horrified, the scholar said, "Stop! Stop! What are you doing?" The Master replied, "Just as the cup can not hold any more tea, how can I teach you anything when your mind is already full?" So we see that right education must take care to find the right balance between the cultivation of knowledge and intelligence.

While Krishnamurti does place emphasis on the necessity to have a sharp, analytical and precise mind, he lays far greater stress on critical awareness and a harmonious balance of intellect and sensitivity. True intelligence is the integration of reason and love (see 1953:64,65). Acquiring knowledge is a rather mechanical process, but learning requires a mind that is clear, fresh, and sensitive. Intelligent, direct understanding requires a mind that is capable of clear, objective judgment. "...Learning is not the accumulation of knowledge; learning is a movement from moment to moment" (1972:19). As so many people profess, the best way to learn is through experience.

This is your life, and nobody is going to teach you, no book, no guru. You have to learn from yourself, not from books. There is a great deal to learn about yourself. It is an endless thing, it is a fascinating thing, and when you learn
about yourself from yourself, out of that learning wisdom comes (1974:19).

A knowledge and understanding of oneself, then, is the gateway to an understanding of all life.

All living things are interconnected; the biological and spiritual base of all life is universal. Since there is no existence outside of relationship, we can only end conflict and suffering when we understand the relationships between ourselves and others. "To understand life is to understand ourselves, and that is both the beginning and end of education" (1953:14). Coming to a deep understanding of oneself, of one's total psychological processes, is an extremely difficult process. It is much easier to simply fall into the existing pattern of society. However, as we have found, this lifestyle generates fear, conformity, and unhappiness. Without an understanding of ourselves, merely following an occupation leads to frustration and triviality. Self-knowledge not only creates wisdom and eliminates fear, but also can be seen as the beginning of freedom; for only when humankind comes to understand themselves can there be tranquility and happiness, peace and order. Life today is becoming so complicated that self-knowledge is really a prerequisite for dealing with life's complexities. "Without self-knowledge, surely, one has no basis for any real, serious action, no foundation upon which to build clearly" (1972:109). If self-knowledge is the key to understanding, then what are our tools for obtaining self-knowledge?

To develop the capacity to think both deeply and clearly, one
must be incredibly sensitive. This means being intensively alive, alert and perceptive. In this state, we are able to observe what is, not what we project to be. If one wishes to understand, one must observe directly, with choiceless awareness. In speaking on awareness, Krishnamurti states, "Awareness is observation without condemnation... If I want to understand something, I must observe, I must not criticize, I must not condemn, I must not pursue it as pleasure or avoid it as non-pleasure" (1954:173). In order to change society, to better our lives, we must come to understand ourselves. To understand ourselves, we must understand our thoughts. The opening lines of the Dhammapada state, "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world." In order to see our thoughts, to understand them for what they are, we must have great concentration and keen powers of observation. This is the meditative mind, the keenly sensitive mind. It is necessary to cultivate such a mind for self-knowledge to come about. To see clearly what is requires a meditative mind. Right education helps to develop your whole being, the totality of your mind. It gives your mind and heart a depth, an understanding of beauty. In coming to a greater understanding of ourselves and the world, we see that we can not sanely chose to fit into the existing order of society. Some sort of intelligent revolt is called for.

Krishnamurti believes there are two kinds of revolt: the first is violent revolt, lacking understanding, which is a mere reaction against the present order, and the second is a deep psychological revolt of
intelligence (1953:24). Intelligent revolt involves an understanding of 'what is' cultivated through self-knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity. Right education encourages the student to find out for themselves, to discover what is actually true. This revolutionary idea requires great strength on the part of the student. To actually discover what is true requires freedom from tradition and fear. Education today does not encourage us to do this because, in so doing, we may uncover what is false; this makes many people fearful of the right kind of education, and therefore, disinclined to try it (see 1953:30). As discussed earlier, society is in a state of madness and chaos. We need to ask then, what are we going to do about it? The answer must be to revolt, intelligently, against the ways in which society needs to change. Bureaucratic organizations are not going to bring about peace and order, though they may be able to help in some ways. Radical change must start at the individual level. "Ideals and blueprints for a perfect Utopia will never bring about the radical change of heart which is essential if there is to be an end to war and universal destruction. Ideals cannot change our present values: they can be changed only by the right kind of education, which is to foster the understanding of what is" (1953:21). Although right education encourages a revolutionary spirit, it also emphasizes the need to understand freedom and order.

Many people do not understand what freedom is. Freedom is not doing whatever one likes, because there are others who want to do what they want too. As the political philosopher Locke has expounded
on at length, man has chosen to leave a state of nature and enter a state of society so that his rights and property might be protected. In so doing, he has given up some of his natural rights of choice. Because we live in a society, we cannot have freedom for the asking. Freedom is not doing what one wants, because man cannot live by himself. "Freedom does not mean the opportunity for self-gratification or the setting aside of consideration for others (1953:31). Because we must live in a society, we need to be polite, considerate, and concerned with other people. Out of this consideration and thoughtfulness for others, both inward and outward, comes order, and with that order, comes freedom. Freedom does not exist without order; the two go together. In speaking of order, we are not referring to discipline or commands, which promote dullness and imitation, but rather of ordering oneself, by being very attentive, thoughtful and considerate. Out of that type of action comes order. Contrary to common belief, one cannot simply be given freedom; it is something the individual must bring about themselves, since one has to find out how to bring about order in oneself. In order for the student to be sensitive, caring, and aware, his mind must be free from greed, jealousy, and the like, since they keep him from thinking clearly and understanding what is. The caring, compassionate mind that right education fosters is based in love.

What is love? Where there is possessiveness and attachment, which breed jealousy, fear, and antagonism, there is no love. This, however, is what many people consider as love. This sort of 'love' is
based on attachment, which is fear of being alone, being empty, and insufficient. As Krishnamurti explains in *The Wholeness of Life*: "Love is passion, which is compassion. Without passion and compassion with its intelligence, one acts in a very limited sense...where there is compassion that action is total, complete, irrevocable" (see 1979:151,153). When greed and ego drop away, creating space for consideration and understanding, then there is love. Love is necessary to best work out our many conflicting problems; for without it, the acquisition of knowledge only increases confusion and leads to further self-destruction (see 1953:46,48; also 66). In order for right education to come about, the teacher must love the child, because only then is there the possibility of helping the child to understand who he is (see 1953:26). To really help the child, to study and observe him or her closely, the educator must have great patience and care. If love and patience are lacking in an educator, they may be replaced by discipline and patterned behavior. How might these ideas discussed as being part of right education, i.e. intelligence, self-knowledge, sensitivity, revolt, freedom and order, and love, be implemented in the classroom? What sort of situation would it take to allow these concepts to bloom?

III

We have discussed in detail the major problems present in
education today. To add to the practices of hierarchical organization, competition, obedience, harsh discipline, and conformity, we may add lack of funding, overcrowding, apathy, illiteracy, and a host of other afflictions. Also, we have discussed the concepts involved in right education. Our question now is what sort of environment is necessary in order to implement these ideas. There is presently a school in Ojai, California called the Oak Grove School (a private, co-ed elementary and secondary school started in 1983), that is associated with the Krishnamurti Foundation of America. This school is working to implement the previously discussed ideas of Krishnamurti's on what right education should be. They offer as a statement of intent the following remarks:

This school aims to develop a new kind of mind: one that is sane, whole, intelligent. Everything either contributes or detracts in this endeavor. Among the essential qualities most conducive to learning and intelligent understanding of life, we feel, is the atmosphere, the implicit sense of a place in which learning, order, care, sensitivity, are brought about by affectionate attention to the ordinary details of living. In this way, diet, dress, manners, attendance, behavior in general, are centrally related to the basic intent of the school (from the Parent/Student Handbook, 1987-1988).

In our exploration of what a "new" school might be, then, we may refer to the Oak Grove School as a reference point.

A school that allows true learning would not promote any ideology or system, but rather would be singularly concerned with the development of the student. Hierarchical levels of authority would be
discarded so that the hindrances of fear and obedience would be unknown. There would be mutual respect and affection between the teacher and the students, with an atmosphere of caring and freedom. Open discussion would be emphasized with an equal exchange between teacher and students, since the learning process is as much the responsibility of the student as it is the teacher. The student has a responsibility to ask, to demand, to discuss, to always question. Original thinking would be stressed and the student would be taught never to accept anything which they themselves do not see clearly. Ideally, the class sizes would be small so that the teacher could give his full attention to each child. Along with conveying necessary knowledge and information, the school should help its young people to discover their vocations and responsibilities; it should be the soil in which they can grow without fear, happily and integrally (1953:44).

Under these circumstances, a change would be brought about in the mind of the student simply by the way in which instruction is imparted. This atmosphere would lead to the development of a sensitive and critical mind in the student. What must the disposition of the educator be in order for this type of education to succeed?

The function of an educator obviously goes beyond imparting information and knowledge, it is also to bring about intelligence. However, under the conditions of "right education," teachers must be extraordinarily patient, caring, and alert. They must be willing to be bombarded with a barrage of questions from the students, they must be willing to discuss matters at depth, openly. Ideally, students would
not be afraid to ask questions about whatever they think is important to discuss; after all, school is a place to learn about all of life. Therefore the teacher must be inclined to discuss any of innumerable topics. The function of an educator is to show the student the whole expanse of life, so that when the student is ready to enter society, they will be an integrated, intelligent person instead of a narrow, thoughtless human being. This job of actually educating our children is an incredibly taxing vocation, requiring extremely hard work and dedication on the part of the educator. One of the most important hindrances an educator must actively avoid is the tendency to fall into a patterned system or methodology.

The educator must not rely on ideologies, systems or methodologies, but must understand him or herself. When one follows a method, even if it has been worked out by a thoughtful and intelligent person, the method becomes very important, and the children are important only as they fit into it. We can see this happening at the university level with the use of strict syllabi. For example, a professor, the semester before he or she is teaching a class, draws up a syllabus for the course. They have in their mind what they want to cover, the pace of the course, and so on. Isn't this done in complete disregard for the students? Wouldn't it make much more sense to wait and see what the students want to do, what they want to spend the most time on, what they feel is most important? After all, the teacher is there to fulfill the needs of the student, not vice versa. This latter type of planning seems to be the only truly intelligent
Ideally, the teacher will not depend on any method, but will teach each individual pupil. Unfortunately, this is practically under current situations. There simply are not enough funds for this kind of situation to take place. Another the educator to overcome is conditioning. Teacher must understand his own conditioning. When young, we have the tendency to want to shape their ways and feeling in accordance with our own cravings and

Understand a child we have to watch him at play, study his different moods; we cannot project upon him prejudices, hopes, and fears, or mold him to fit pattern of our desires. If we are constantly judging the according to our personal likes and dislikes, we are to create barriers and hindrances in our onship with him and in his relationships with the unfortunate most of us desire to shape the child way that is gratifying to our own vanities and leanacies (1953:47).

Kind of educator helps the child to observe and understand relation to all things, and simply allows the child to be who conditions for right education are being tested at the Oak school with quite successful results. However, this school is small. In cases of already existing large schools, such as feasible that this type of education could take place? consideration of budget cuts and the consequent larger class
size, it seems highly unlikely that these ideas of right education could be practiced at any extensive level. However, the N.I.U. Honors Program does offer the opportunity for students to enroll in classes of much smaller size, in which the student-to-teacher ratio is around 15-20. Open discussion is usually emphasized in these classes. This program, then, would be an ideal place to begin implementation of these concepts. Krishnamurti, however, would disagree, since he asserts that "any method which classifies children according to temperament and aptitude merely emphasizes their differences and breeds antagonism" (1953:23). Therefore, he would condemn the very existence of an Honors Program. However, we must start somewhere; we are not going to be able to change the entire bureaucratic, hierarchical structure of an enormous university overnight. The Honors Program offers the perfect place to plant the seed of right education; and with awareness, caring, and effort, we may be able to observe its growth and further implementation.
References


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In studying the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti, I will be focusing on his ideas on education. Krishnamurti insists on educating without fear, without authority, and without competition. He suggests that rather than a hierarchical relationship, the educator and the educated should meet on the same level, questioning and counter-questioning. He promotes the idea that the mind must become incredibly sensitive, alert, and aware in order for real learning to take place. Keen observation and self-knowledge should be main goals in education, so that the students can form a clear picture of themselves and the world around them. The concepts of freedom, discipline, and order are very important in the understanding of right education. To change society, which Krishnamurti feels is in dire need of change, one must start by changing oneself. Education, which he agrees must include the gaining of knowledge, must more importantly create intelligent human beings; therefore, education is of the utmost (over)
significance in the bettering of life, and indeed, in the very survival of it. In discussing these ideas, I will explore how they might be implemented into already existing school systems, and in particular, that of the Honors Program at Northern.