

## FREEDOM AND EDUCATION

Krishnamurti often began discussing a topic by looking at the origin of the words he was going to use, and that seems to be an appropriate practice here as I shall be discussing freedom and education with particular reference to his work. As this paper is intended for those interested in holistic education, I shall also make references to the work some other authors who are frequently quoted by holistic educators.

The modern word 'free' comes from the Old English word *frēo*. This word is connected with *frēon* which in Old English means 'to love' as well as *frēond* which means a person whom one loves, that is a friend or lover. This connection of freedom to love is one that we shall be returning on several occasions because for Krishnamurti "the word *freedom* implies love..."<sup>1</sup>

As a general statement about the nature of freedom, Krishnamurti stated in many ways and at many times that "freedom is a state and quality of mind."<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, not a new view. Such an understanding of freedom lies at the heart of religious notions of liberation found in the more esoteric approaches to all religions but perhaps most conspicuously in Buddhism.

The earliest reference I know of which puts this notion of freedom at the heart of education is in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his famous educational monograph *Emile*, Rousseau says,

Freedom is found in no form of government; it is in the heart of the free man. He takes it with him everywhere. The vile man takes his servitude everywhere.<sup>3</sup>

This is a remarkable statement for a philosopher who was so concerned with political questions, and one of many reasons that so many people credit Rousseau as a founding thinker of the holistic approach to education.

I shall begin by mentioning six major impediments to the kind of freedom being discussed here before addressing the topic of freedom in relation to education. I do this partly because the nature of the freedom being discussed must first be clear before its relation to anything can be considered. But I also begin exploring the topic of freedom through impediments to it because this was one of Krishnamurti's favourite methods. By seeing what freedom isn't, especially what is commonly assumed to be freedom but which isn't, he felt made it easier to see what it is. In fact, Krishnamurti specifically recommended an approach through such negation as the best way to help students discover the nature of freedom.<sup>4</sup> Part of the reason he gives for approaching freedom through negation is to avoid Utopianism, or ideologies, which is to say approaching freedom principally through concepts. For Krishnamurti, freedom is not a concept and knowledge of freedom is not accessible through concepts anymore than knowing how to ride a bicycle is accessible through concepts.

One of the most frequent negative statements which Krishnamurti made about freedom was that freedom is not *from* or *to* anything.<sup>5</sup> Whenever a person wants to move *from* something or *to* something, there is the sense that that thing (being either onerous or pleasurable) is compelling the action; and any action being compelled is not a action of

freedom. So the impediment to freedom is the thinking it can be found either away *from* or *towards* something.

A second impediment to freedom which Krishnamurti frequently stressed is thinking that freedom has anything to do with *choice*. All too often in our era we think that if we have choice we are free, and Krishnamurti felt this was a great illusion.<sup>6</sup>

It is said that a customer came up to the first Henry Ford and complained that all the model T Fords were black and that customers couldn't have any colour they chose. Henry Ford responded that customers could have any colour they chose as long as it was black. Similarly, if the range of options amongst which we choose are limited and dictated to us by our conditioning, what can it mean to say that choosing is an expression of freedom?

St. Augustine very poignantly said of his instruction, "Give me a boy from his birth until he is seven, and I will have him for the rest of his life." For such a boy with such an upbringing, what can it possibly mean to say he chooses to be a Christian, or chooses to pray? B.F. Skinner understood this, and as he felt it was impossible to be without conditioning, he insisted that there was no such thing as freedom.

This leads to the complex topic of *choicelessness* as Krishnamurti used that term. We can only briefly touch on this topic but it is important as it broaches one of the more subtle aspects of the freedom being discussed here. *Choicelessness*, for Krishnamurti, refers to a singularity that results from seeing something clearly as well as a singularity of action which is in accord with such seeing. It is comparable to asking, 'What is the shortest route from here to New York' and seeing that there is a singular response; there is no choice. Perhaps there are two or more ways which are equally short, but that answer is just as singular.

*Choicelessness* must not be confused with not being given a choice, and therein lies a subtle but crucial distinction. In our example, a person must be free to consider any number of routes to New York, and be free of influences, in order to see that there is no choice about the shortest route. For Krishnamurti then, freedom is necessary in order to come upon *choicelessness*. *Choicelessness* does not refer to trivial situations as, for example, having two identical strawberries and needing to choose which one to eat first. In that there is, of course, choice. But in life's non-trivial situations one must decide which action to take, and in seeing the situation clearly and fully there is a singular answer.

Abraham Maslow credits Krishnamurti's insights on "choiceless awareness" with some of his own distinctions between a state of mind which sees and acts out of what he called 'Being-cognition' and the more typical mind which rubricates, mulls things over and then chooses.<sup>7</sup>

More than two hundred years earlier Rousseau had a similar insight and talked about the importance of seeing what he called 'the law of necessity' and felt this was indispensable to education. This law can be thought of as similar to the law of gravity yet for Rousseau it also covers things like emotions, virtue, morality, etc. He called them "the eternal laws of nature and order"<sup>8</sup> and claimed that only by enslaving oneself to this law does one become free.<sup>9</sup> Rousseau was saying that only in having no choice about seeing what is true and acting accordingly is a person free.

Such *choicelessness* is related to seeing the necessary doing of something unpleasant now in order to avoid a greater unpleasantness in the future (and its more benevolent cousin - delayed gratification). Understanding this 'law of necessity' is an important understanding of the way the world works. This was seen as fundamental to education by Rousseau,<sup>10</sup> Pestalozzi,<sup>11</sup> and has recently been shown by experiment to be an indicator, when seen in preschoolers, of later success.<sup>12</sup> What is important for the present topic is that a person must be free to choose and free to have gratification or delay it if they are to develop "choiceless awareness" or understand the "law of necessity" or develop foresight.

The third impediment to freedom is one briefly touched on in the previous discussion of choice; conditioning. Conditioning, however, needs to be addressed more fully as its implications for freedom extend beyond its effect on choice.

Krishnamurti used the word 'conditioning' very differently to the way it is used in behaviourist psychology.<sup>13</sup> We needn't fully differentiate the two uses of the word, but only point to one salient difference mentioned earlier. Krishnamurti contended that the conditioning of which he spoke can be seen by the person conditioned, and in such seeing, the power of limitation and distortion of that conditioning can end. Hence, a person might see that their perspective on something is conditioned by their language, and in seeing this their perspective can be altered to adjust for the effect of language. A behaviourist would contend that as long as that person still uses the language, it makes no sense to speak of being free of its conditioning.

Krishnamurti frequently pointed out that we are slaves to the known; to concepts, beliefs, symbols, and institutions,<sup>14</sup> a point he persuasively made in one of his early books entitled Freedom From the Known.<sup>15</sup> He insisted that if we are to live with any sanity and freedom we must find a way to end this enslavement. It is a point that has been made by some others, most notably by one of the great unread philosophers of our age, Alfred Korzybski,<sup>16</sup> but it is a point that is surprisingly rare.

The importance of being free of conceptions and conceptualising as our only way of knowing has received support in the last several years from several psychology studies.<sup>17</sup> In these it has been shown that recognising patterns which are too complex for us to conceptualise can occur when we are, in Krishnamurti's phrase, "free from the known" as well as free from the conceptualising process. While freedom from our conditioned conceptions and conceptualising has been shown to be important for dealing successfully with situations which are complex in the psychology laboratory, how much more important this freedom must be, of necessity, for our actual lives which are infinitely more complex than any laboratory experiment could possibly be.

From this one naturally asks the question, 'Do we have any processes which are not conditioned and related to freedom?' For Krishnamurti, one such process is 'awareness,' most specifically 'choiceless awareness' as mentioned earlier. In recent psychology work this has been most closely represented by states of consciousness called "mindfulness"<sup>18</sup> or "flow."<sup>19</sup> One can say that such states of consciousness in general are an engagement with the world that seems to be without the mediation of words, images or concepts, and which seems more veridical than the state of consciousness normally held. Having such a state of consciousness requires freedom from conditioning, yet paradoxically this state of consciousness is said to generate freedom. This is a phenomenon we see in several

aspects of some of the more esoteric approaches to psychology, holistic education, and religion – namely, that to do X, Y is needed, yet in doing X, Y is generated. This is a problem for those locked into causal thinking. A more subtle etiology knows that the chicken and egg riddle is nonsensical. Some things, as confirmed by systems theory, have a simultaneous emergence.

Another process that Krishnamurti said was beyond conditioning is love<sup>20</sup> – which brings us to the origins of our word ‘freedom.’ We shall be returning to his relationship of love to freedom several more times.

Another impediment to freedom, according to Krishnamurti, is the pursuit of self-interest.<sup>21</sup> To understand this we must make a distinction between self-preservation and self-centredness. Rousseau named these two *amour de soi*, which he claimed was a necessary and healthy self-preservation, and *amour propre*, which we might call egotism and which he felt was destructive. Krishnamurti made similar distinctions but did not give us two different terms. He felt it was necessary to take care of oneself in all senses including aesthetically, yet he was completely against anything that smacked of self-centredness. The distinction is analogous to seeing that one must observe oneself, but one must not be narcissistic.

Krishnamurti insisted that the result of everyone pursuing their selfish interests, ambitions, pleasures, is that it brings “about a great deal of disorder, confusion, conflict,” etc.<sup>22</sup> which then requires laws and restrictions to limit the damage. Essentially, as a result of everyone pursuing this false idea of freedom nobody is free because everybody’s life is circumscribed by the negative consequences of everyone else pursuing self-interest. There is also, of course, the issue that in the pursuit of selfishness, it is people’s desires and images, etc. (which are generally a product of their conditioning), which are driving the person, and such conditioning, as we saw before, is not liberating but expressing a lack of freedom.

Another impediment to freedom for Krishnamurti is identification. He said,  
There is only freedom when there is absolute non-identification with anything, with the church, with the gods, with beliefs, with a statue... with anything.<sup>23</sup>

This insight was shared by Jung, who was also interested in a very deep sense of freedom. Jung put the activity of differentiation at the foundation of this deep freedom and ultimate human realisation. For Jung, differentiation was an ending of identification. He felt a person needed to stop identifying with his culture, nation, family and even with himself in the sense of ceasing to identify with his persona or constructed image of himself. This is not a cold and heartless distancing that some might imagine, but a stripping away of the accretions of identity accumulated from infancy onwards, so that the unique (what others might call ‘self’) can be discovered.

Identity for many is a form of subtle possession, and possessions seems to cut both ways. Many people have contended that when a person can say, “I have X” that person can say with equal validity, “X has me.” As a consequence, for Rousseau “dominion and liberty are two incompatible words...”<sup>24</sup> and for Jung, “bondage and possession are synonymous.”<sup>25</sup> These notions of possession are not to be confused with the possessions necessary for

living, but they are very much meant to include all the psychological possessions we accumulate, especially identity.

The final impediment to freedom we shall discuss is dependence. This seems like an obvious statement, but it isn't. For one thing, Krishnamurti maintained that non-dependence should not to be confused with independence.<sup>26</sup> He insisted that we are not and cannot be independent in any meaningful way as we depend on others for food and for the materials that are part of even the most simple life.<sup>27</sup> It is psychological dependence (for things like security and approbation) that are the real impediments to freedom.

Now that something of the nature of the freedom being discussed has been established, we can now turn to the relationship of freedom to education.

To begin with, Krishnamurti, and I will presume most readers of this paper, are not interested simply in education *about* freedom. A person could be in the most unfree situation (e.g., a highly conditioned Islamic fundamentalist communist - if such a person could exist - in a fascist concentration camp) and still get lessons *about* freedom. When Krishnamurti, and most holistic educators say they are interested in people *knowing* or *learning* freedom, they are saying that people must do more than simply learn *about*, they must learn *of*. From this certain question necessarily follow:

- What does it mean to know *of* something such as freedom? Is it the same as knowing *of*, something like, the names of the planets?
- If knowing *of* freedom is not the same as knowing *of* the names of the planets, what makes it different?

To keep this as simple as possible, it can simply be said that a good case can be made for there being a category of things (such as love, responsibility, courage, etc. – or even how to ride a bicycle) which requires an experiential component as such things are not accessible through concepts, abstractions or representations alone. This is the kind of learning which Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow had in mind when they talked about 'intrinsic learning' and distinguished it from 'extrinsic learning.'<sup>28</sup> They saw extrinsic learning as an accumulation of impersonal associations or information (necessary for some things like learning the names of the planets) while intrinsic learning is a very personal internalising of information or events (necessary for learning other things like responsibility, freedom, or riding a bicycle).

In looking at such different kinds of knowledge, a question necessarily emerges: what is education for? If education is principally for the accumulation of information and acquisition of degrees, then extrinsic education is enough. Krishnamurti insisted, however, that education should

be concerned with the cultivation of the total human being... We have laid far too much emphasis on examinations and getting good degrees. That is not the main purpose for which these schools [the Krishnamurti schools] were founded...<sup>29</sup>

Krishnamurti went on to say that with such a wrong emphasis on examinations and degrees "the freedom to flower will gradually wither."<sup>30</sup> For Krishnamurti, 'the cultivation of the total human being' and 'the flowering' he frequently spoke of required what he called 'the awakening of intelligence;' that is, a capacity to discover truth, find meaning and

values, and live with a certain 'goodness.' We shall return to the topic of finding truth, meaning, values, and goodness a bit later, but they need to be introduced here as many writers (including Krishnamurti) have insisted that acquiring such qualities requires more than extrinsic learning, it requires intrinsic learning. Interestingly, there is an increasing number of people suggesting that even for the relatively simple goals of earning a livelihood and becoming a good citizen intrinsic learning is necessary.<sup>31</sup>

This raises questions about how people develop, and what the relationship of freedom might be to the process of development. We need to mention briefly the historically old notion that nature is dark, dangerous, animalistic, sexual, impulsive and evil – another name for the devil was 'the prince of this world' – and that what is sacred rises above nature; it is *supra*-natural. Part of this notion is that children are closer to nature and animals and (until redeemed by religion and socialisation) are inherently sinful, and their impulses must be kept in check until these children can rise above their own natures. This justifies any withholding of freedom and even brutality to save children from their 'lower' selves. I shall not argue against such notions, not because I agree with them or because such notions don't still play a role in even the most modern societies (because they do, though often in disguised form), but they will be left aside because I assume that most readers here are not encumbered with such thinking. There is, however, another notion of development which is more widespread and just as deleterious for any real freedom within education.

This notion of development comes from Plato and (very briefly and simply) holds that the mind develops according to the knowledge it acquires. According to Plato, after a certain amount of knowledge of sufficient complexity is acquired by the child's mind, that mind develops the ability to form abstractions with that knowledge. Certain kinds of knowledge are better for this than others, and Plato expounds on the virtues of mathematics as a form of knowledge particularly well suited to this process. Developing the best mind is accomplished by having the mind acquire the various forms of knowledge suited to form abstractions, because it is with abstractions that a person finds truth. From this it follows that the point of a curriculum is to present such knowledge in increasingly elaborated forms in order to create the mind that will be able to create the abstractions that can see truth. A good case can be made that this is fundamental to the thinking in many approaches to modern education. For our present purposes the important point is that the nature of the person is seen as determined by the nature of his mind, and the nature of his mind is seen as determined by the knowledge it acquires.

Contrary to this was the notion of development proposed by Rousseau, and which has been adopted by many holistic schools. For Rousseau, the nature of our minds is determined principally by nature, not by knowledge. He held that we have three sources of development or education – nature, men, and things.

The internal development of our faculties and our organs is the education of nature. The use we are taught to make of this development is the education of men. And what we acquire from our own experience about the objects which affect us is the education of things.<sup>32</sup>

The education coming from nature is beyond the control of people, "that coming from things is in our control only in certain respects,"<sup>33</sup> so it is only the education of men that can be entirely determined by the teacher. If all three sources of education are to be in

harmony, which Rousseau felt was essential for the harmonious development of the person, then they had to follow the development of nature because that is the one beyond control. This means that the teacher has to pay attention to each individual child and present lessons that are in conformity with the individual's idiosyncratic nature and natural development. A major task for the teacher is to watch and learn about the ever-changing child, and above all not interfere with the child's nature, which is a reflection of the sacred.

According to the Rousseauian notion of development the mind, just like the body, goes through its own natural and inherently good process of development. Just as what the body eats (as long as it is relatively healthy) does not determine the nature of the body (it will still be composed of the normal body parts), so what the mind acquires (as long as it is relatively healthy) does not determine the nature of the mind. This is the exact opposite of Plato's view.

In the Rousseauian model of development we have the first compelling reasons for the necessity of a child *having* freedom and not just learning about it. A child must be given the maximum amount of freedom possible so that the child can develop according to its nature and so that the teacher can discover its idiosyncratic nature and make lessons that accord with it.

Rousseau was well aware of the problems of conditioning which we discussed earlier, and for him giving the child the maximum amount of freedom did not mean giving complete licence. He equated giving a child complete freedom to planting a shrub in the middle of a road and expecting it to grow naturally; society would simply run it over and destroy it.<sup>34</sup> For this reason, Rousseau spoke of giving the child "well regulated freedom,"<sup>35</sup> or freedom that was real (not just a product of his conditioning), but still safe. Contrary to Plato, Rousseau felt that a child is in no danger from having freedom to learn whatever he wants, because what he learns is not nearly as important as *how* he learns, and that he learns *how* to learn.

Learning how to learn, or meta-learning, is fairly universally acknowledged as important. Yet, usually this is taken to mean, learning how to learn what the educator wants the student to learn. This may, however, be a violation of a fundamental aspect of what it means to really know something, namely, finding one's own meaning.

Just as a good case can be made for there being a difference between learning something from experience and learning from abstractions (e.g., learning how to ride a bicycle from doing it or from reading a book about it), a good case can also be made for there being a difference between *seeing* the meaning of something and *being told* about the meaning of something. It is the difference between meaning that is *made* and meaning that is *received*.

'Understanding' has frequently been described in terms of making connections and seeing distinctions. It is said that the intelligent person is the one who sees similarities where others see differences and who sees differences where others see only similarities. In both cases, it is the creativity of the act which distinguishes it. A person *sees* or *makes*, he does not *receive* or *accept*. Krishnamurti was constantly imploring people not to accept or simply agree with what he was saying. The important act for Krishnamurti was the *seeing* for oneself.<sup>36</sup>

It should be fairly evident that a person cannot learn to see for himself or make his own connections if he is told where to look and what he should find when he looks there. Yet, unfortunately, that is exactly what a prescriptive curriculum does. The prescriptive curriculum usually also says at which rate a person should pick up the prescribed material. If the student's rate is slower than the prescribed rate, then the student is deemed to be a dim, and if the student's rate is faster, then the student is deemed to be bright. At no time in this scenario, however, is it suggested that each student has a natural rate for learning different sorts of material and it is never suggested that a good thing for the student to discover is what his own rate might be. This, despite the value people ascribe to meta-learning. What is also frequently missed is that a person's learning about what they find meaningful and what that person's rate of learning is for different kinds of material can be an important aspect of that person learning about himself. Probably the reason this is missed is due to what are the perceived goals of education (as mentioned above). If education is for acquiring information, then what a person finds meaningful and their rate of learning different kinds of material is of little importance. If, however, education holds self-knowledge to be central, then these things are of great importance.

According to a long list of respected commentators on education (including Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Jung, Maslow, Rogers, Krishnamurti) a person's making their own connections and their own meaning is fundamental to that person discovering what their deeper interests are and, as a consequence, discovering something important about himself. Probably, there would be a general consensus that it is a good thing for people to discover what their interests are. There would probably be less of a consensus about the value of people making their own meaning, as there would be concern that a person's own meaning might conflict with accepted meaning. What there would not be a consensus on is that to discover interests and meaning freedom is required, yet this is exactly one of the reasons all the aforementioned authors gave for the importance of freedom. They felt that if you tell a child 'These are the right connections to make in understanding this topic, and this is what it really means' you are simultaneously saying 'Your connections or meaning (if they differ from these) are not right.' And, if you tell a child 'This is important, this is something you must learn' you are simultaneously saying, 'your interests (if they differ from these) are not as important.'

This brings us back to the origins of the word 'freedom' with which we started, and its relation to love. Krishnamurti, in talking with young children in one of his schools in 1954 said,

The love of something for itself is freedom. There is freedom when you paint because you love to paint, not because it gives you fame or gives you a position. In the school, when you love to paint that very love is freedom, and that means an astonishing understanding of all the ways of the mind. Also, it is very simple to do something for itself and not for what it brings you either as a punishment or as a reward. Just to love the thing for itself is the beginning of freedom.<sup>37</sup>

To what I imagine was the dubious joy of the teachers, Krishnamurti went on to suggest the students give some time to such a love, instead of wasting your time on some stupid stuff that does not really interest you but that has to be done?<sup>38</sup>



Krishnamurti was not suggesting a form of self indulgence. Instead it is a form of the child's learning what that child really wants to do in life (which Krishnamurti held to be very important),<sup>39</sup> and therefore a way for the child to learn about himself. It is also a way of learning about motivation.

Krishnamurti talked about acting without a motive, which can be confusing in view of the way the word 'motivation' is commonly used.<sup>40</sup> It might be easiest to use the terminology of Rogers and Maslow who again used 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' to distinguish kinds of motivation, and who were making a point similar to that of Krishnamurti. Extrinsic motivation is seen as motivation from the outside, it is the rewards or punishments that compel so many of us to do so much that we do in our lives. Intrinsic motivation comes entirely from within; it is something inner which is not dependent on any outside agent. In this one needs to be wary of apparently inner rewards which are actually socially derived. These include rewards such as fame, power, money, applause, or having a 'cool' image, etc. We can say that these are internalised extrinsic motives – we may carry them inside, and they come from outside. The only true intrinsic motivations according to these authors which I can find, are the love of something for its own sake, seeing the rightness of something (very much in keeping with what Krishnamurti described as 'right action'), and the appreciation of something (like the appreciation beauty or order). Those who try to reduce such motives to disguised selfishness (as do many evolutionary psychologists) are, to me, unconvincing and solipsistic – they demand proof of something other than selfishness while denying the validity of the evidence; namely, the experience of the selflessness of love, and the seeing of beauty.

There is a real problem in valuing intrinsic motivation in education, and it is one which Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Krishnamurti gave a great deal of attention to, and it is a problem that sends shivers down the backs of many educators. The question at the heart of this problem is, 'How does the educator, without the use of extrinsic motivation, get the student to do what is for the student's own good?' Let us assume for the moment that the educator knows what is good for the student. Unfortunately, the only answer to this question is; 'Engage the student's interest.' It is when the student is not interested in doing what is good for him that the educator's true colours show. Does the educator allow the student the freedom not to do what is best for him, or does the educator intervene? For Rousseau and Pestalozzi the answer was to let the students make mistakes towards which they are inclined because they will learn more from the consequences of that than they would from blindly following the educators' instructions. We must not conflate this issue with some supposed freedom of a child to run in front of a bus or off a cliff, etc. Such dire and irreversible consequences are practically never the substance of education. Usually those who invoke such parallels (i.e., the freedom of a child not to study something they find boring with the freedom to run off a cliff) are seeking justification for restricting freedom. This ends up as a variation on the Henry Ford quote, 'You are free to do whatever you want, as long as it is in, what I see as, your best interests.'

There are some questions that necessarily follows from this, namely: 'Do humans have a way of knowing for themselves what is in their own best interests? And if they do, how is that faculty developed?' The answer to the first question from authoritarian structures is, 'No! People do not have a way of knowing for themselves what is in their own best interests. They need to be told by those with superior religiousness, or spiritual

development, or wisdom, or intelligence, or knowledge, etc.’ But is this answer true, or is this simply an answer that serves the vested interests of those in power?

Rousseau insisted that this is not true, that a child is not naturally sinful or self-destructive, and that left to his own devices a child will eventually come to do what is in his own best interests.<sup>41</sup> And this answers the second of our two questions; ‘How is faculty (of knowing for oneself what is best) developed?’ It is learned by the child having freedom. Rousseau held that learning to discover what is in your own best interests is learning how to trust oneself and this is the only basis one which one can be free of authorities – reason enough for society, which is based on authorities of various forms, to find it an anathema.

In modern times this phenomenon of inherent self-regulation has been fairly well studied and is called homeostasis. It holds that all animals, including man, chooses what is in their best interests if left to their own devices, and it is a phenomenon which Maslow and Rogers felt ensured that freedom for children is safe. Krishnamurti didn’t use the word ‘homeostasis,’ but he did speak a great deal about ‘right action’ and ‘the flowering of goodness’ in terms that when one really sees what is ‘right’ or ‘good’ that is naturally what one does. The implication is that humans have a natural inclination to do what is right and good if they can but see it - a kind of homeostasis that extends to the moral and religious plane.

What this means for our present topic is that people are not in moral danger if they are given freedom. Quite the contrary, it is only with freedom that people have the possibility to develop the capacity to discover for themselves what is right and good, instead of having to be told what is right and good. And here we come back to difference between received meaning and discovered meaning, between received truth and discovered truth.

Krishnamurti was very firm on the subject. He held that no truth could be received. It could only be discovered.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, ‘right action,’ for Krishnamurti, could only be discovered. As truth can only be discovered, and knowing what is right and good can only be discovered, and as such discovery requires freedom, then freedom is not some pleasant extra. Freedom is indispensable, and it is necessary at the beginning of the learning process, not just when everything is in order and running smoothly.

It is not a question of order first and then freedom, but rather the freedom first and then out of that freedom comes order.<sup>43</sup>

This order is not an imposed order which Krishnamurti, on several occasions, called ‘disorder.’<sup>44</sup> Real order is discovered order and reminiscent of what has been said before about discovered meaning. This intrinsic rather than extrinsic order has been echoed through the millennia, especially where moral ordering is concerned. Jung stated it simply when he said, “there is no morality without freedom.”<sup>45</sup> If people are not free to act immorally, they are not moral agents and therefore can not be said to act morally any more than a dog trained to not steal food can be said to be acting morally. Elaine Pagels shows this to be a Gnostic interpretation of the Adam and Eve story, which may well have existed long before the Gnostics.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, for any education which wants children to be moral (rather than just learn *about* morality), they must have freedom.

So far we have seen that finding meaning, truth, and right action, and the development of morality require freedom. Are there any other compelling reasons for there to be freedom in education?

For Carl Rogers the answer is, yes. He maintained that giving a child freedom shows the child that he is worthy of trust, respect, and able to be responsible. Not giving a child freedom conveys the opposite to the child, which usually results in the child acting irresponsibly when they finally have freedom. Having freedom dramatically affects the way a child sees himself. Rogers feels that the normal message given to the child, namely that the child needs authority and is dependent, is a message that a child too easily carries for the rest of his life. Rogers also insisted that freedom is needed for discovery oneself.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Krishnamurti insisted that

One can never understand the depth of oneself when one is dependent on something; one cannot be a light to oneself.<sup>48</sup>

Returning to the goals of education mentioned earlier: Let us say that education is for the fullest development of the whole person and not just preparation for functioning (either vocational functioning or social functioning). According to Krishnamurti, and many other authors, the fullest development of persons requires self-discovery. If self-discovery requires freedom,<sup>49</sup> which all of the above mentioned authors insisted is true, we can add self-discovery to the list of reasons for having freedom.

Let us, for the sake of brevity, agree that the fullest development of persons also requires their development of judgement, insight, and sensitivity. It seems too obvious a point to argue that such judgement, insight, and sensitivity require that a person be able to see things as they are. It might be less obvious to say that seeing things clearly as they are requires freedom from the distorting lenses of prejudice, opinion, bias, habit, customs and other forms of conditioning. Krishnamurti insisted that without such freedom the challenge of living can not be fully met.

Without this freedom you know, not as an idea but actually to be free, inwardly - without this freedom, I don't see quite how life with its vast, complex problems, demands, activities – how all that can be understood.<sup>50</sup>

What is clear is that the fullest development of persons, or what used to be called 'self-mastery' (in another era), is required to fully meet the challenges of living, and this involves freedom. According to Goethe,

From the power that binds all creatures none is free  
Except the man who wins self-mastery!<sup>51</sup>

An examination of the relationship of freedom and education must touch on social aspects, otherwise an important element is ignored. It is frequently thought that it is society that constrains freedom; after all, if it weren't for others we could do whatever we wanted. As mentioned earlier, the reverse is true; without others we couldn't do hardly anything of what we wanted.

All social structures require order, and order can be kept for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons. If order is kept for extrinsic reasons then it is felt as a hindrance to freedom, because one is being compelled by external forces to act in a way that does not come from one's own inclinations. However, if order is kept for intrinsic reasons (e.g., out of an appreciation of order as mentioned earlier), then for Krishnamurti, as well as Rousseau, Jung, Maslow and Rogers it reflects intrinsic motivation, and is an expression of freedom.

Rousseau had the interesting insight that if a person acts pro-socially out of a sense of duty (which he describes as extrinsic), it will never be sufficient because duty will inevitably come into conflict with self-interest. However, if a person acts pro-socially out of compassion or the love of order, then there is never that conflict because compassion is an absence of self.<sup>52</sup> For Rousseau, as for Krishnamurti and others, compassion is a true love and the only reliable basis for pro-social behaviour, and "compassion requires freedom"<sup>53</sup>; which brings us back to our etymology of the word 'freedom.'

Two questions need to be asked in the light of what has been said:

- 1) What are the risks of giving the child freedom - and by 'freedom' we must mean at least the freedom for the child to study what they want, when they want, how they want, and if they want.
- 2) What are the risks of not giving the child such freedom.

According to Krishnamurti and several of the other authors quoted, in giving the child freedom the educator risks the child not doing what the educator wants, how he wants it and when he wants it. The educator also risks there being a certain amount of disorder until homeostasis kicks in and a natural inclination towards well being brings order. As Krishnamurti said,

...it is only when ....a human being is free inwardly that he disciplines himself and does so naturally. But if I discipline through punishment, it is not discipline at all.<sup>54</sup>

The educator also risks not inculcating the child with the morals, values, and perspectives which the educator wants the child to have, and which the vested interests of society want the child to have and might reward the child for having.

The risks of *not* giving the child freedom are, according to Krishnamurti and most of the other authors referred to, not so much of a risk as a certainty. The certainty is that the entire point of education will be lost and all that can remain is training for a livelihood and the inculcation of social values and perspectives. For Krishnamurti, the point of education is what he called 'the awakening of intelligence' and for Krishnamurti this involves coming to know *of* goodness, love and beauty, which he claimed are inseparable.<sup>55</sup> And for Krishnamurti, "Goodness [love and beauty] can only flower in freedom."<sup>56</sup> All this points to the rather stark conclusion that without freedom, there can be no real education.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Krishnamurti. 1985. Third Public Talk , 31st August, at Brockwood Park, England.
- <sup>2</sup> Krishnamurti. 1958. Fifth Public Talk at Poona, 21st September. In *The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti*. : Krishnamurti Foundation of America. p.5
- <sup>3</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979. *Emile: or On Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. London: Penguin Books. p.473
- <sup>4</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1967. Fourth Educational Talk to Teachers and Young People, 9th August, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>5</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1958.
- <sup>6</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1954. 8th Public Talk, 3rd March, at Bombay.
- <sup>7</sup> Maslow, Abraham. 1996. Acceptance of the Beloved in Being-Love. In *Future Visions: The unpublished papers of Abraham Maslow*. Edited by E. Hoffman. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications. pp.36-37
- <sup>8</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979 p.473
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.* pp.471-472
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.* p.177
- <sup>11</sup> Pestalozzi, Johan Heinrich. 1827. Letter XVI, December 31, 1818. In *Letters on Early Education Addressed to J.P. Greaves, Esq.* . London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper. p.pp.66-67
- <sup>12</sup> Shoda, Yuichi, Walter Mischel, and Philip K. Peake. 1990. Predicting Adolescent Cognitive and Self-regulatory Competencies From Preshcool Delay of Gratification. *Developmental Psychology* 26 (6):pp.978-986.
- <sup>13</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1956. 1st Public Talk, 24th September, at Athens.
- <sup>14</sup> Krishnamurti. 1984. Second Public Talk, 10th July, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>15</sup> Krishnamurti. 1969. *Freedom from the Known*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- <sup>16</sup> Korzybski, Alfred. 1948. *Science and Sanity: An introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and General Semantics*. 3rd ed. Lakeville, Conn. International Non-Aristotelian Library Pub. Co.
- <sup>17</sup> see several studies cited in Claxton, Guy. 1998. *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind: Why intelligence increases when you think less*. London: Fourth Estate Ltd.
- <sup>18</sup> e.g., Langer, Ellen J. 1989. *Mindfulness*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley & 1997. *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- <sup>19</sup> e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 1993. *The Evolving Self: A Psychology For The Third Millennium*. HarperCollins Publishers. & Csikszentmihalyi, M., and I.S. Csikszentmihalyi, eds. 1988. *Optimal Experience: Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>20</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1968. 1st Talk at New School for Social Research, 1st October, at New York.
- <sup>21</sup> Krishnamurti. 1985. Third Public Talk , 31st August, at Brockwood Park, England.
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> Krishnamurti. 1978. Third Public Talk, 13th July, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>24</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979. p.472
- <sup>25</sup> Jung, C.G. 1958. Psychology and Religion. In *Psychology and Religion*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. 20 vols. Vol. 11, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.86 § 143.
- <sup>26</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1955. 5th Public Talk, 25th June, at London.
- <sup>27</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1981. 2nd Public Talk, 7th May, at Ojai, California.
- <sup>28</sup> e.g., Maslow, Abraham, ed. 1959. *New Knowledge in Human Values* New York: Harper & Brothers. p.310
- <sup>29</sup> Krishnamurti. 1981. *Letters To The Schools: Volume One*. Den Haag, Holland: Mirananda. p.9
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> eg., Bernstein, Basil. 1996. *Pedagogy Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. London: Taylor & Francis. Senge, Peter. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
- <sup>32</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979 p.38
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p.37
- <sup>35</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979. p.92
- <sup>36</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1947. 9th Public Talk, 14th December, at Madras.
- <sup>37</sup> Krishnamurti. 1954. Thirteenth Talk with Students, 20th January, at Rajghat School, Varanasi.

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- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1970. 1st Dialogue with Young People, 21st July, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>40</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1977. 2nd Public Talk, 28th July, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>41</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979 p.120.
- <sup>42</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1948. 3rd Public Talk, 18th July, at Bangalore.
- <sup>43</sup> Krishnamurti. 1967. 30th March, at Rome.
- <sup>44</sup> e.g., Krishnamurti. 1981. 1st Public Talk, 25th November, at Rajghat, Benares.
- <sup>45</sup> Jung, C.G. 1971. *Psychological Types*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. Edited by H. Read, M. Fordham and G. Adler. 20 vols. Vol. 6, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.213 § 357
- <sup>46</sup> Pagels, Elaine. 1988. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage Books.
- <sup>47</sup> Rogers, Carl, and H. Jerome Freiberg. 1994. *Freedom to Learn*. Third ed. New York: Merrill. p.304
- <sup>48</sup> Krishnamurti. 1978. Seminar, 12th September, at Brockwood Park, England.
- <sup>49</sup> "... it is only in freedom that there can be self-discovery and insight." Krishnamurti. 1990. *Education and the Significance of Life (Gollancz Paperback)*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. p.108
- <sup>50</sup> Krishnamurti. 1967. Eighth Educational Talk to Teachers and Young People, 13th August, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>51</sup> Jung, C.G. 1953. The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious. In *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. 20 vols. Vol. 7, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.227 § 380
- <sup>52</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1979. p. 314.
- <sup>53</sup> Krishnamurti. 1982. 5th Public Talk, 6th February, at Bombay.
- <sup>54</sup> Krishnamurti. 1967. Third Educational Talk to Teachers and Young People, 8th August, at Saanen, Switzerland.
- <sup>55</sup> Krishnamurti. 1975. Discussion with Staff and Students, 15th June, at Brockwood Park School.
- <sup>56</sup> Krishnamurti. 1981. p.12