

The Limits to Thought

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the question of thought — with what it is, what its limitations are and what the status is of some of its constructs. Our inability to come to anything but a limited understanding of thought, coupled with our misunderstanding about the status of some of its creations, Jiddu Krishnamurti called the fundamental mistake of mankind. Thought, the paper maintains, is clearly a magnificent tool, which enables us to do all manner of things, but unless there is recognition of what it can and cannot do, unless we are aware of its limits and let thought have its proper place, the human mind will remain in a divisive state which inevitably leads to conflict. The paper tries to show that thought itself cannot end conflict and that becoming aware of this depends on unsolicited acts of perception and intelligence. Such intelligence, not to be confused with cleverness or intellectual dexterity, can use thought rationally without being consumed by the demands of the psychological 'me'. This intelligence does not come into being as a result of an act of will but can only flower when the pull of memory, the pull of all our conditioning, of all, indeed, that we know — which is the past — is in abeyance.

Jiddu Krishnamurti had many discussions throughout his life with the renowned physicist, David Bohm, all of which came about because of a deep interest they both shared in understanding the human mind. In one of these discussions published under the title *The Future of Mankind*¹ (Brockwood Park 11th June 1983), Krishnamurti began by saying that he wanted to talk about the whole of mankind. He did not want to limit it to talk about the British or the

¹ My debt to this article will be clear throughout. All views attributed to Krishnamurti and David Bohm, unless otherwise stated, come from this article,.

French or the Chinese, for example, but wanted to talk about the whole of humanity. It was always important to him to play down any of the psychological differences attributed to nationality and to talk instead of the human being. At the beginning of the discussion, he made two interesting comments. The first was 'the whole future is now' and the second was 'there is no such thing as psychological evolution'.

He says that while he accepts the fact of physical evolution he does not think there is any such thing as *psychological* evolution. By way of example, he says that an acorn will grow into an oak and that the species' have certainly evolved. The brain, for example, started out quite small and has grown, over time, bigger and bigger. There is, he maintains, physical and neurophysiological time, but he questions whether there is such a thing as a psychological tomorrow, psychological evolution. He is not denying that people can remember yesterday and can anticipate tomorrow but he is denying psychological change through time. He says, "I deny that I will be something better."

In denying this, he goes against what many of us believe. Human beings have done many things, some of which we are proud and others of which we may not be so proud. Indeed, we may from time to time continue to do some of the latter, but many of us believe deep down, that it is possible to improve on ourselves, get better in some way. We will try to be a little less selfish, a bit more forgiving ; we will try to be more considerate of others and perhaps spend time going out of our way to help them. Isn't this precisely what people everywhere, in their schools, in their places of worship, in their workplaces and in private discussions with friends and families exhort themselves to do? And, when people fail, as oft times they do, it is in the same such places that others rally round and encourage them not to give up but to try again regardless, to learn from their mistakes and improve as people. Isn't this what drives many of us on, the feeling, perhaps the belief, that we do, or certainly can, get better as time goes on?

It would be a very different world, would it not, if there was a general acceptance that every one of us gradually gets worse, that we never improve but become more self-centered as the years go by? How would we react, if we thought this were true? At first, it would be a tremendous shock, wouldn't it? Some might ignore it and others might be uncertain how to react, but most of us, I feel, would find the idea disturbing and would feel compelled to act, perhaps introduce some counter-measures, to try to stop it happening.

The feeling that we can and do improve, and the feeling that if we were all to gradually get worse as time goes by, we could, nonetheless, interfere in the process and bring about a change in ourselves, is at root grounded in the same belief, namely, that human beings are able to change themselves for the better, over time. This, it seems to me, is a very deep-seated belief that rests in our consciousness.

It is this belief that Jiddu Krishnamurti challenges saying that it rests on a mistake and, in particular, represents a fundamental mistake in the understanding of our thinking processes. One aspect of this is our inability to recognize the limits of thought and another is our inability to recognize the true status of some of the constructs brought in to being by this wonderful tool.

At first, we should appreciate the magnitude of the claim. Krishnamurti says that it is a mistake to believe that we as human beings can improve on ourselves and furthermore says this is based on a lack of awareness of how thought operates. These are extremely interesting observations with far-reaching implications, which demand a response from each one of us.

So, why precisely does Krishnamurti believe that we human beings cannot improve on ourselves? Why does he believe there is no such thing as psychological evolution? To get clearer about this, we have to get clearer about the notion of self, psyche, or more simply the 'me' that Krishnamurti was referring to, because it is this that people believe can improve. We have to

examine what the 'me' is. This connects with his comments about human consciousness. At another point in the article *The Future of Mankind*, Krishnamurti says :

The 'me' is the consciousness, my consciousness : the 'me' is my name, form and all the experiences that I have had — remembrances and so on. The whole structure of the 'me' is put together by thought. (Brockwood Park 11th June 1983, #88)

From the beginning, very clear and challenging observations. Krishnamurti says the 'me' is consciousness, and says *the whole structure is put together by thought*. This raises the question of what Krishnamurti means by thought. If the 'me' is a construction out of thought, what kind of thought does he have in mind? Krishnamurti stresses that he does not simply mean intellectual thought, although that will definitely contribute, but includes experience, knowledge and memory, with this last being what holds everything together.

For each one of us, our sense of who we are is clearly closely bound up with the experiences we have had in our passage through life, nearly all of which are retained in memory. The knowledge we have gained along the way, in all its many forms, resides there, too. This includes the things we have learnt as members of a particular culture or community, the knowledge we have accumulated at school, and the things we have acquired from a multitude of other sources. All of this knowledge, in some way or other, will have some residue in memory. And so it is that the experience of visiting Brazil, the knowledge of how many inches there are in a foot, as well as the knowledge of what I had for breakfast this morning — which all find their way into memory - might be articulated as, 'I have been to Brazil,' 'There are twelve inches in a foot,' and 'I had toast for breakfast.'

Thought, clearly, is central to this operation. This is what we use to identify

and structure experience, is how we express knowledge, and this is the form that anything retrieved from memory must take. Memory and thought are inextricably linked.

Krishnamurti not only maintains that the 'me' is consciousness and is a structure put together by thought, he also maintains that this means that, fundamentally, it has no underlying reality ; in short that it is a virtual entity built out of ideas, and hence an illusion. He continues :

Consciousness, as we know it, is made up of all what it has remembered : - beliefs, dogmas, rituals, the nationalities, fears, pleasures, sorrows.... (Ibid, #126)

In being something that is made up of all that it has remembered, we see the stress on memory, but Krishnamurti is talking about consciousness *as we know it*, which is not to say that it could not be different. His whole reason for talking over the years was to help people see that it could actually be different, but in the first instance, here, he wants to point out how things actually are. He has no wish to persuade people ; he simply wants them to see what is the case.

We should be clear that he is not talking about the consciousness of a particular individual but about the whole of humanity. He is not talking about 'my' consciousness or 'your' consciousness but the consciousness of all mankind. The structure of consciousness is the same for all of us but is something we do not realize, and one reason for this may be that we have never really put the question and examined the issue. For that reason, this is one of the issues that we will be examining a little later in the paper.

To reiterate : We are being asked to see that consciousness as we are aware of it is made up of all that has been recorded, all that has impinged on the mind to date. Experiences may vary somewhat from person to person within a particular country and between people of different countries but fundamentally the

same process is going on and, at bottom, the sense of 'me' is reducible to memory and thought.

Thus far there will be those who say, well, it's an interesting idea, an interesting theory but it cannot really be tested, and it doesn't prove anything, and for them, perhaps, it will remain in the domain of the metaphysical. Others, with a highly developed sense of self, will, for obvious reasons, be reluctant to seriously investigate this claim.

For the moment let us simply register this view of things - that the 'me' is a construct out of thought and is based on memory - and move on to what Krishnamurti says about what the 'me' actually does, how it actually functions.

The function of the 'me'

It ought to be made clear that when Krishnamurti talks about the 'me' or consciousness, he is talking about psychological thought, thought concerned with the self. He asks us to see that it is this 'self', this 'me', that has caused all the conflict in the world, because the 'me' in its very constitution and function, divides and separates people one from another. However, even though it may divide and separate, why exactly must it cause conflict? Bohm pursues this point :

We have to make this clear. You see if I say that this is a table, it creates no conflict, but when I say this is 'me' that creates conflict. (Ibid, #221)

For Krishnamurti talk of a table, as opposed to that of a chair or a tree, does distinguish one thing from another but in doing so need create no conflict. Such distinctions are merely ways of classifying which help us in our daily life. A table is different from a chair and we put these things to different uses but the

classification does not contain a psychological element, and the things themselves, the chairs and the tables, are clearly not in competition with one another. The 'me' is not like this. It separates; it divides and is concerned with its own protection. The division created is between you and I and this becomes very personal. My desires and yours may compete and may then cause antagonism. While we get on well together we may doubt this last suggestion, may indeed believe that such claims are unfounded, but if that sense of camaraderie breaks down when interests no longer remain mutual, a divide becomes inevitable. How we respond to that difference will vary from person to person but the tension will be there. Even when I seem to be subjugating my interests to that of the group or indeed the nation, division is still going on which separates those very groups and nations from each other. Each group, each nation, pursues its own interests and conflicts arise, necessarily. Where there are competing interests, nations, groups and, indeed, so-called individuals, pursue their targets with great vigor, sometimes ruthlessness. Without this psychological separation into groups and nations, and without, at root, the separation of you from me conflict would not exist because, quite simply, conflict is a serious confrontation between two parties or sets of ideas.

Of course, you and I are separate physically; there is your body and mine, we can count two, and in that there is no problem as such. It's like the separation of two chairs or two trees, a factual or objective distinction, useful for simple everyday communication and movement. It is with the emergence of the sense of 'me' and 'you' that problems begin to arise because this 'me' then becomes preoccupied with its own interests. The pursuit is for the satisfaction of one's own interests and the maintaining of one's own security. And yet, the very separation as the 'me' and the very pursuit of what that 'me' sees as in its own interests leads ultimately to conflict and an increase in insecurity.

This may lead two people from different countries, for example, to separate

out as 'my' country and 'your' country. I love 'my' country and you love 'yours'. I will fight for 'my' country and you will fight for 'yours'. I love 'my' family and will try to provide for them and you will do the same. Where there is a challenge, I will support 'my' nation, 'my' group, 'my' family, and you will support 'yours'. It is this sense of possession, this sense of ownership, this sense of being as one with the object — the nation, the group, etc — the underlying sense of being identifiable with the object that is at the root of the 'me'. The 'me' separates out, divides into a multitude of different things : 'my' country, city, house, car, family, children, money, books, ideas, feelings, ambitions, hopes, aspirations, dreams, regrets, mistakes, fears, anxieties, pleasures, etc. The list goes on endlessly and as it does so the very complexity of this sense of identity is revealed. We do not see these things simply as : an area where people live, a building in which they live, a means of transport, simple human beings, a repository of knowledge, a way of facilitating exchange, etc. The hooks of personal connection are woven into them, and they are woven in without us, the weavers, being aware of the process.

Krishnamurti says that when we see that we are not separate, when we see that we simply are just like the rest of humanity, then our sense of responsibility becomes immense.

Bohm paraphrases this : "So we say that the whole of humanity is one and to create division there is dangerous but to separate something out as a table or a tree is not dangerous, need not create insecurity." (Ibid. #243) He then goes on to ask why mankind does not realize that it is all one. People tend to feel, he says, that they are individuals, that they are different and have different qualities : He is good at mathematics, I am not. Krishnamurti counters that such differences are superficial. Basically, we are the same. We all experience fear, sorrow, pain, anxiety, loneliness, etc. This is what is common.

This is important. Yes, he can run fast, while I tend to be slow. He can

solve mathematical problems while I am the better cook. She picks up languages quickly, etc. The abilities which people have and which may mean so much to them and perhaps to others trying to emulate them are really rather unimportant if we look with a wider perspective. Yes, such differences undoubtedly exist but what we choose to make of them is quite a different thing. This man is President of the United States and that man delivers my milk. Do we need to see the one — however you differentiate — as somehow ‘better’ than the other? In ‘looking up’ to people with certain abilities while ‘looking down’ on others who lack them, are we not really engaging in superficial division? And, if we are, might not this blind us to what is central?

Fear, sorrow, pain, loneliness, anxiety, the pursuit of pleasure, etc, are things which all of us feel. We may not feel them all at the same time but this for Krishnamurti is the bedrock of humanity and this is what forms the basis of the ‘me’ or consciousness as we know it. The separation of things into trees, tables, cars, bicycles, ovens and computers etc, springs from a differentiation by thought into categories which can be used to the benefit of humankind. The categorization of something as a ‘tree’, for example, calling it a unit even though it clearly needs the air around it and the soil beneath it — which means it can never be separate — for its very existence, is very useful. Not only biologists but also ordinary people can then talk about trees in a variety of ways and use the term in daily life. We might agree to meet near one at a certain time or have a favorite one for climbing or for resting under. We can refer to such trees and point them out to others. This separation, this classification and naming of things of like kinds helps us to describe the world and function in it. This in no way need lead to conflict. Here thought is factual and grounded, rational and useful.

When we move into the realm of the psychological, where thought is concerned with the ‘me’, we move into an area that thought has constructed, an area that Krishnamurti says has no ultimate reality. The ‘me’ here is not simply

based on a set of experiences, it is not a 'benign' history but has hardened into something seemingly alive and, moreover, in to something that 'must' be protected. It is of the essence of this core of thought, which continually reinforces itself, that it has an identity and that it must look out for its own welfare. This, in essence, is a separating feature, one that puts it into potential conflict with all the other 'separate' beings it sees around itself. The sense of identity is extremely strong and is fundamentally, thought-based, thought-created and thought-driven. Not recognizing that the 'me' has no real foundation, not seeing that it is based on a mistake, is precisely where Krishnamurti sees humankind as having gone wrong.

There is one consciousness of mankind and the sense of separateness is an illusion. If we think that we are separate, when in fact we are not, then what we do in the world will be a mess. Each one thinks he has to do what he wants to do, fulfill himself. So, he is struggling in his separateness to achieve peace, security, which are thereby denied. (Ibid, #318)

Bohm replies to this by saying that if there were separation, it would be a rational thing to do, but if we are trying to separate what is inseparable, the result will be chaos. And the result does indeed seem to be chaos. Yet, it is all accepted as inevitable and never really looked at closely. It is a battleground, a never - ending search for 'opportunities' with the corresponding 'successes' and 'failures'; each person, for the most part, seeking to maximize his or her 'individual' interests. The same applies, of course, to groups and nations. It is, indeed, chaos, and by pursuing our own desires and ambitions, each one of us helps to maintain such a state.

This, of course, is all on a seemingly external level, but as we all know, conflict does not just arise in relation to others: we feel it very clearly within ourselves. So, as well as the sense of separation from others as in 'me' and 'you', etc, there are internal conflicts in each one of us, that we are all well aware of. We

often find it difficult to make up our minds about something, and when we do finally make up our minds, doubts often enter in. One part of me thinks this, but another part of me thinks that. Yesterday I felt that this was what I wanted but today I'm having doubts. There is internal conflict in each one of us. Is this because, as Krishnamurti says, thought in its very nature is divisive and fragmentary?

JK : I think it is again the activity of thought. Thought in its very nature is divisive, fragmentary, and therefore I am a fragment.

DB : Thought will create a sense of fragments. You could see, for example, that once we decide to set up a nation we will think we are separate from other nations, and all sorts of consequences follow which make the whole thing seem independently real, We have a separate language, a separate flag, and we set up a boundary. And after a while we see so much evidence of separation that we forget how it started, and say it was there always, and that we are merely proceeding from what was there always.

JK : Of course. That's why I feel that if once we grasp the nature and structure of thought, how thought operates, what is the source of thought - and therefore it is always limited - if we really see that, then...

DB : Now the source of thought is what? Is it memory?

JK : Memory. The remembrance of things past, which is knowledge, and knowledge is the outcome of experience, and experience is always limited.

DB : Thought also includes, of course, the attempt to go forward, to use logic, to take into account discoveries and insights.

JK : As we were saying some time ago, thought is time.
(Ibid, #330-336)

It is important to understand the form that psychological thought takes, and the process by which it is generated. Thought springs from memory and is ultimately based on the past even if logic uses some of its premises to project into what we imagine as the future. The essence of thought about the self, about the 'me', is felt by many of us in at least two key ways. One is in the form of a consideration of action in the past, which often presents itself as regret: 'I wish I hadn't done that,' 'That wasn't like me.' This expresses a wish, a desire that things had been otherwise and will influence future behaviour. The other takes the form of what the speaker believes he or she will become in the future: 'I'm going to become a better person,' or 'I'll change in such and such a way.' Actions performed in the past cannot be undone, but many of us believe that the self can change for the better but that it will require time. We do not see that the 'time' we are talking about here is not hours, days and weeks, but is going on in our heads, in our imaginations. This kind of mental time, planned and conceived in our heads, and which concerns itself with the self, Krishnamurti calls 'psychological time' and says that it resides in the form of hope in the person. Expressing a desire, it is fundamentally a thought about what the person would like to achieve.

This might manifest itself as a desire to be free of fear, anger, anxiety, a sense of loneliness, a tendency towards violence or aggression, in short any of the feelings human beings dislike in themselves. Such feelings reveal themselves from time to time depending on the person and on the frequency of a particular kind of challenge. People used to getting their own way and who like to issue orders often get angry when things go against them or when they are disobeyed. Feelings of anxiety arise in relation to thoughts about possible failure in some regard. The sense of loneliness arises from thoughts about differences and separation from others coupled with a desire that it were otherwise. We recognize these thoughts and feelings in ourselves and recognize, too, their

unpleasantness. We wish to be free of them and we imagine that we can be. Thought is the form of such conjecture. We imagine being free of these tendencies and we think that it is possible. We map out worlds, scenarios, in our heads where the self, the 'me', is different to how it actually is. These worlds traced out in the minds eye, as it were, are simply ideas but many of us believe that given 'time' these ideas can become reality.

This is clearly a mistake, is it not? The anger we feel, the fear that consumes us, the depressing sense of loneliness, as well as the feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, confidence and hope - these are very different creatures, are they not? Anger, when it appears, takes over and for its duration that is all there is. After it passes, thought, driven by memory, rushes in. First of all, it identifies the emotion: 'That was anger'. Then judgments rush in: 'I shouldn't have got angry. It was a mistake. I won't do that again.' The emotion is recognized and identified by memory and the reaction to what has happened emanates from our sense of self. Observing this, it becomes almost comical to see how deep our conditioning really is. The in-rushing thought in the form of memory is demanding a better 'me' a better behaved self. We do not see that these emotions cannot change, even if their visits become less frequent. Anger can only ever be anger, fear only fear, and violent actions only ever violent. They cannot change. I can repair a roof, make it better. A few modifications here a few additions there, another coat of paint, all of these things, can improve its quality. We can bring about a change for the better in such things. Anger, however, cannot be altered, it cannot change. It can, however, be understood. And, in understanding it, in seeing it for what it is, the grip it has can be loosened and may perhaps wither away completely.

This relates directly to the problem with the 'me,' with its sense of separation, a sense of 'I am this' but 'I can become that'. Coupled with this is the very real belief that to say 'I am angry' is to talk of two separate things, the 'I' and the

'anger'. In a similar way, to say, 'I am hungry' is to talk again of the 'I' and also the 'hunger'. The structure of language facilitates and encourages this belief. We break the sentence down into a subject and an object or a subject and a complement. Without doubt we feel that there is an 'I' and it is this 'I' that is angry or hungry. And we feel this more strongly with the emotions or desires that come and go and they come and go all the time. Having never been to Tokyo, for example, a person might express the wish to go by saying 'I want to go to Tokyo.' Seeing it as a new desire, that person may well feel that it is the long-standing 'I' that wants to go to this new destination, a destination that may never have been considered before. It seems that we view some things as contingent, temporary and fleeting like anger, hunger and wanting. The 'I', which 'experiences' them, by way of contrast, is viewed by most as something permanent and separate.

However, the function of memory in all of this is immense: the gradual recording of experience from an early age; the forming of an initial sense of self hardened by the residue of further experience and the identification with that experience. The whole sense of the 'me' intricately bound up with the history of the individual in question. There is a very strong sense in which we feel we are our experiences, we are the very things that we have done. And we hang on to this belief for the most part because we have never questioned it, never doubted it for a minute. For to doubt it would be such a tremendous shock; we would have to question our very sense of being. What is it about us that makes us so very logical and unforgiving in certain areas and yet so very unquestioning in this particular area? After all it is not so very hard to imagine that our whole life experience might have been different. A parent's job transfer overseas soon after birth might have seen us brought up in completely different surroundings in a culture that molded us differently, not simply in terms of the type of food we preferred but in a total ideology. Why, one wonders, do we not examine this

more closely?

To return to our earlier example: 'I am hungry.' Do we really feel that there are two things here, an 'I' and an empty stomach? Surely it is simply the body that requires food, the stomach that needs to be filled. Do we really feel that when we say, 'I am angry,' there is an 'I' and anger? To answer in the affirmative to this last merely illustrates that we simply have not looked closely at what moves through us.

Before we pursue this point further let us make a note of some of the key points that have been made so far.

- (a) We do not see that the 'me' is a construct out of thought.
- (b) We do not see that the 'me' separates 'you' from 'me' and 'them'.
- (c) We do not see how the 'me' itself is divided into fragments.
- (d) We do not see that the 'me', being thought, cannot be altered or changed in time like a damaged roof.
- (e) We feel there is a 'me' separate from the feeling as in 'I am angry'.
We feel that the anger can be separated from the 'me' which once released from anger, for example, can then acquire imagined traits like non-anger.
- (f) We do not see the anger for what it is. We feel the anger can be replaced by an idea, in time.

It is the sense that the 'I' and the anger are two separate things that encourages us in the belief that given time, the 'I', the 'me', can change. We believe that the 'me' can get rid of or replace certain attributes in the same way that a damaged roof can be repaired and improved on. The desire to change the 'I', the 'me', and the belief that it can and will improve, creates a conflict in the self between one part and another part, between what it is and what should be.

Krishnamurti expresses our confusion thus :

I need time to go from here to there. I need time if I want to learn some engineering. That same movement is carried over into the psyche. We say I need time to be good.
(Ibid, #410)

This supposes that the 'I', like a roof, can be worked on and changed in a period of hours, days or weeks and can be verified accordingly, whereas, if what we have been saying is true, this cannot possibly be the case. The sense of 'me' is based on a mistake, an illusion, which is not to say that we do not talk about it. Without doubt, many believe in its existence and express such belief in statements of the following kind : 'I will change,' 'I will get better,' 'I am getting better,' 'I am a better person now.' All the statements, the judgments, all of this imagining, is psychological thought in action.

However, if all of this talk of 'me' is a mistake, if at bottom, there is nothing corresponding to this ubiquitous pronoun, what actually is going on? Krishnamurti gets straight to the heart of the matter :

We are saying the observer is the observed and therefore there is no psychological time. There is simply the thought. So there is no thinker separate from the thought. (Ibid, #416)

There is no psychological time, no correspondence for 'I will be,' or 'hope to be,' etc. There are simply, thoughts and feelings passing through. The observer is the observed. The 'I', the 'me', is an illusion.

This is a tremendous claim ; it attacks directly what many believe, that there is both something doing the observing and that which is observed. To say the observer is the observed is to remove the 'me' in one fell swoop. It says, as we noted earlier that there is not an 'I' and anger, not an 'I' and hunger, but simply

the anger and the hunger. There is simply the thought or the feeling. Thoughts and feelings coming and going, impinging and moving on and there is nothing corresponding to the 'me', the construct supposedly having these thoughts and feelings.

The resistance to this from most of us will be immense because it goes against all that we think we are. In fact, it destroys all that we think we are. However, for it to do that we have to see the truth of the statement directly and this is no easy thing even for those who might feel some affinity with the suggestion. Many others, of course, perhaps the vast majority, will not be interested for a variety of reasons, but the inquisitive will feel the need to push on, perhaps with a little fear, or maybe even an open heart, clear that this is no easily tested empirical claim.

Bohm, for his part, remains undaunted, 'It seems reasonable but goes against the tradition. The source of conflict is thought or knowledge.' (Ibid, #421) Krishnamurti, who sees the limitations of thought, and the immense conflict caused by its constructions, is in no mood to slow down and explain: 'So the question becomes, is it possible to transcend thought, to end self knowledge?' (Ibid, #432)

Transcend thought? End self-knowledge? Krishnamurti is not denying the importance of understanding the self, merely the way most of us go about it. We try to identify areas where we need to change and imagine that taking place. We consider, analyze, and speculate about our state. There is always a gap between where we are and where we would like to be. We imagine crossing that space and we imagine, too, that it will take time to do that. This 'time' exists in our heads and is the self in operation :

Self-knowledge is important but if I take time to understand myself, that is, I will understand myself eventually by examination, analysis and so

on, watching my whole relationship with others.....all that involves time. And I say there is another way of looking at the whole thing without time, which is when the observer is the observed. In that observation there is no time. (Ibid, #440)

There is indeed no time. There is no 'I' and hence no possible changes it could undergo. There is no imagined, wished for, space for it to move to. There is simply the thought that flashes through the brain and nothing else ; there is no thinker having the thought. However, actually seeing this is a terrifying possibility for a mind convinced of its own self-identity.

Taking up the mantle for the doubter, Bohm says that what Krishnamurti is suggesting goes against common language and experience.

The ordinary way of thinking is that I am here and (for example) I could be either greedy or not greedy, which would be attributes I either have or do not have. (Ibid, #485)

And of course, Bohm is right, this is how people normally think, which is precisely the area that Krishnamurti contends is in error. The act of attributing qualities such as being greedy or not greedy is the work of the self. In fact every thought or feeling which is of a psychological nature, is the 'me' in operation.

All the qualities, the attributes, the virtues, the judgments, the conclusions and opinions is me. (Ibid, #492)

At this point, Bohm, who clearly sees the truth of what is being expressed, captures the essence of what is necessary here :

Well, it seems to me that this would have to be perceived immediately as obvious. (Ibid, #493)

Here Bohm hits on something that he and Krishnamurti return to again and

again in their talks, which is the important role that immediate or direct perception plays in understanding what they are talking about. Here they are talking about something other than thought, which is memory based and is ultimately the past.

Krishnamurti agrees with Bohm

That is the whole question: to perceive the totality of this whole movement instantly. Then we come to point: whether it is possible to perceive — it sounds a little odd and perhaps a little crazy, but it is not — is it possible to perceive without the movement of memory, to perceive something directly without the word, without the reaction, without the memories entering into perception? (Ibid, #494)

The movement of memory is the movement of the past. So long as this is present there can be no direct perception. Bohm acts for many when he asks what is going to stop memory from entering perception. The response is direct.

Nothing can stop it. But if I see the reason, the rationality of the activity of memory, which is limited, in the very perception that it is limited, you have moved out into another dimension. (Ibid, #498)

Krishnamurti is not presenting an argument here, not trying to persuade. He is not asking 'What if memory is limited?' he is not asking us to suspend our beliefs and use thought to entertain a new idea. He is saying categorically that seeing that the observer actually is the observed requires a direct perception, which is nothing to do with thought as we know it, nothing to do with the past. And, of course, the big question for most of us at this point is whether or not it is possible to be free of this past, free of this thought. Pursuing this point, Bohm asks if Krishnamurti thinks there is an activity beyond thought, which does not require the cooperation of thought.

That is the real point. We have often discussed this, whether there is

anything beyond thought. Not something holy, sacred, I am not talking of that. Is there an activity that is not touched by thought? We are saying there is and that activity is the highest form of intelligence. (Ibid, #516)

Krishnamurti is talking of intelligence which transcends thought, and yet which can use thought. He is not talking about a quality that is commonly thought to be measured by an I.Q. test, but something entirely different. What he is calling intelligence is capable of direct perception, of perceiving something as true and is also able to use ordinary thought in everyday life. This enables us to perform everyday tasks such as building a house, making a table, cooking dinner, writing a book and planning an itinerary, etc. Bohm expresses it thus : “Thought can be the action of intelligence, or thought can be the action of memory in which case it is limited and leads to conflict.”

So, there are two clear cases : (1) intelligence uses thought or (2) thought springs directly from memory, which of necessity is limited and which leaves the human being functioning from a fixed set of memories very much like a computer following a program, tracing out every step in memory. This second way leads to conflict.

Krishnamurti is bringing in a notion, which he calls ‘intelligence’, which is free of the program. Before we pursue this question of intelligence in more detail let us recap on some of the points that have just been raised. We have said : a) the ‘me’ is an illusion based on memory ; b) there is no ‘me’ separate from the thought ; c) the observer is the observed ; d) seeing this requires a direct perception ; e) there is something which transcends thought — this is intelligence ; e) this intelligence, which does not function in most of us, can use thought rationally to build cars, etc, but is not dictated to by psychological thought ; f) so, there is possible relief from the ego-dominated, psychological thought-programmed mind. However, the breakthrough has to come in the form

of a perception, when intelligence comes into being. This is not memory dependent, and brings a complete break with the past. It is a shattering and releasing breakthrough from the control of the 'me'.

How to find out if this Intelligence has any reality

From what has been said so far, it should be clear that finding out if the intelligence Krishnamurti is talking about has any reality or not is related to the ending of the psychological 'me'. What may come as a surprise to some of us, however, is to hear him say that to understand this one has to go into the whole question of suffering. "As long as suffering and fear and the pursuit of pleasure exist, there cannot be love." (Ibid, #534)

Never one to mince his words, Krishnamurti brings an earthquake to our fixed stock of assumptions, testing their very foundations. Where there is fear, suffering and the pursuit of pleasure, there can be no love. This statement rocks one's whole sense of the world. We are told that suffering just is the activity of psychological thought. All of the thoughts and feelings connected with suffering, which includes fear, anger, and violence, as well as pleasure, desire and hope, are the response of memory, and as long as they are present, love and intelligence cannot come into being.

David Bohm continues to act as the foil to Krishnamurti's advances: "The general feeling is that 'I' exist and either 'I' suffer or don't suffer. But you are saying suffering arises from thought — is thought." (Ibid, #547)

It is not simply one thought however because a subtle identification process is going on. Another thought says, 'I am that' or 'That is me' which means that identification takes the form of attachment. There is not, for most of us, just a sense of feeling bad, for example, there is usually a sense that 'I' feel bad, which means there is attachment to, and identification with, the feeling.

Bohm pushes on

So what is it that suffers? You see there is this feeling — it is really the opposite of the feeling of pleasure — memory may produce pleasure, but when it doesn't work, it produces pain. (Ibid, #553)

...what is suffering really? Why does it destroy intelligence or prevent it? Why does suffering prevent intelligence? What is going on really? (Ibid, #580)

The only way to find out the answer to this question is to examine oneself. It is the 'me' that suffers.

This 'me' is really being sorry for itself in some way. My suffering is different from yours. It isolates itself, creates an illusion of some kind. We don't see that suffering is shared by all humanity. (Ibid, #584)

Most of us feel that suffering is intensely personal. When someone feels bad for some reason, due to physical injury or through failures of various kinds, or because of the loss of a friend or family member, the pain is felt in a very private and personal manner. While it is going on the other people around may be in various states, some feeling content and others experiencing pleasure of different kinds. So, in what sense can we say that it is not personal? It seems at first as if it must be, but if we go into it further, we realize that all these feelings are sporadic; they come and go. The other person who seems happy now, goes through his spells of grief and loneliness as, indeed, most people do and it is the concern of each and every one of us to keep these feelings at a minimum, even though it is not something we are readily aware of. Every day life is a mix of worry, anxiety, problems with others, and trying to make ends meet. In so far as we achieve this last, we may feel reasonably content. Even the pursuit of pleasure, which is also memory based, has fear and failure lurking in the wings. While we get what we want, while we have our pleasure, we remain reasonably

happy, but if we fail to get what we want or expect, there is disappointment and sometimes anger and resentment. Pleasure and fear are two sides of the same coin and they are never far away from many of our pursuits.

To really understand the idea of suffering, we have in Bohm's words "to get out of this idea that it is my suffering, because as long as I believe it is my suffering, I have an illusory notion of the whole thing. And then it becomes impossible to end it." (Ibid, #592) And this last point is crucial because as long as we treat it as personal, as long as we remain in the status quo, we have no chance at all of solving this problem. This, unfortunately, is the state that much of humanity finds itself in. The inability to see that suffering is not personal - or perhaps more pertinently, having never even considered the question - leaves most of us in a surreal nether - land governed by fear. Rankin expresses this feature of humanity in the following way :

What the hell. It was all one. If God swirled in his heaven, leaning down to touch his creatures, then it was a curious touch that he gave them. Looking around, Rebus stared into a heart of desperation. Old men sat with their half-pint glasses, staring emptily towards the front door. Were they wondering what was outside? Or were they just scared that whatever was out there would one day force its way in, pushing into their dark corners and covered glances with the wrath of some Old Testament monster, some behemoth, some flood of destruction? Rebus could not see behind their eyes, just as they could not see behind his. That ability not to share the sufferings of others was all that kept the mass of humanity rolling on, concentrating on the "me," shunning the beggars and their folded arms. (Rankin, I. p 198)

As long as we focus exclusively on the 'me', as long as we see it as 'my' suffering as opposed to 'your' suffering, a separation is being maintained, which is the state most of us find ourselves in. We are ensconced in a cage of self, a cage built out of thought, a cage in which we are trapped without realizing it. Our

position there has been built up so steadily, so gradually, that it seems such an integral and 'natural' part of us. Without a willingness to look, or without an enforced shock of some kind, we seem unable to begin to examine ourselves, let alone question this tool called thought.

K : ...all the problems that humanity has now, psychologically, as well as in other ways, is the result of thought. And we are pursuing the same patterns of thought, and thought will never solve these problems. There is another instrument, which is intelligence. Without love and compassion there is no intelligence. (Brockwood Park, 11th June 1983 #466)

We come round again to the question of intelligence and the need to understand thought. We are so dependent on thought that we seem unable or unwilling to look at it head on. It is useful in all kinds of ways but we must see that the whole of its functioning with regard to the self is based on memory, on the past. It is therefore, limited. Thought cannot see the present moment for what it is. Thought cannot see that suffering is all one, a product of the 'me'. Thought cannot examine itself and for all its uses, it is of no help in understanding the self.

To see that suffering is all one, we need a direct perception, we need intelligence to enter, and this point is not the conclusion of an argument. It is not the result of thought-based discussion, which is one of the reasons that people give up at this stage. The suggestion that to break out of the circle of thought requires not a judgment but a perception is hard for many to take. To see the truth of what is being said here we need to see that we are not being asked to complete a logical syllogism. It is not deduction or inference. It is not of the form : If A is true and B is true, then C is true. It is not an intuition or an experience. Nor is it like recognizing that $2 + 2 = 4$, although that is closer. It is not memory, not the past. It can only appear when memory stops. And memory can only stop

impinging — and this is voluntary cessation, which has nothing to do with effort — when the mind is watching and listening carefully, not when it is pursuing questions and conclusions, not during the relentless activity and movement of thought.

At this point many will dismiss the enquiry because it is like nothing they have ever known or heard of. And, of course, it cannot be. All we have known or heard of is based on memory, on the past. Seeing the truth here, having a direct perception, which is the action of intelligence and which would stop us in our tracks, cannot be a function of memory.

To see this, we first of all need to see what intelligence is not.

What is intelligence? When you say he is an intelligent man, what do you mean by that? Intelligence according to a dictionary meaning is to have the capacity to read between the lines, and it also means gathering information by observing, by learning, from information around you and acting according to that information. All that is implied by intelligence in the sense that thought is operating. That is, thought is reading between the lines, between the words, the hidden meaning. And also thought is gathering information by watching, seeing, hearing, optically reading and so on. Out of that gathering, reading between the lines, acting, is so-called intelligence - right? That is to be very clever, to be sharp, to discuss opinions, holding on to your opinions because you, etc. All that is generally called intelligence. We, the speaker, is questioning that, asking whether that is intelligence. Or is intelligence something entirely different? Are we together in this? The speaker is not laying down anything. He is not being dogmatic but together we are enquiring.

We have accepted intelligence as we have just now described it. And also we say it is intelligence to go off to Asia and meditate from somebody or other. You follow? All these patterns have been repeated over and over again and we call that intelligence. (Saanen, 1981, p.5)

Normally, we call someone intelligent if they are quick witted and skilful in using argument and persuasion. Such a person has facts at their disposal and is

adept at using and manipulating them. It requires a certain talent to do this and such activity is often very useful. Employing such skills in the fields of science and everyday technical matters may indeed be highly commendable. All of this, of course, is based on the activity of thought. Where it is used for the betterment of a particular project or for society in general it should not be criticized. But too often it reduces to mere cleverness and is used competitively as a means of elevating the particular individual using it. Employed in this way it has all the characteristics of a skill, something that can be honed for better performance. But doesn't the word 'intelligence' suggest something other than this? Krishnamurti is not happy with such an understanding of what intelligence is and nor, I think, should we be.

He continues :

Now we are asking what is the depth of intelligence? The depth. That is very superficial - you understand? Gathering information, reading between the lines, watching, learning and cultivating that intelligence of thought, which is common to all mankind, we say that intelligence is really destroying humanity because it is competitive, because it has been reduced to individual intelligence, it has been reduced to Einstein, to this or that. So that intelligence, which is the product of thought, that has become competitive, aggressive and so it is gradually destroying human beings. And we are saying that is not intelligence. There must be another quality of intelligence - right? (Ibid, p.5)

Krishnamurti says that what we have accepted as intelligence really cannot be because so many aspects of it are unsavory. Competitive use of thought is not creating a better society. For him, humanity is being destroyed by the activity of so-called 'individual intelligence'. We are using thought to build bigger and more powerful weapons to fight wars where, on the basis of thought, human beings are bent on killing each other. Whatever benefits are brought about by the sensible and rational use of thought, it is the cruel and senseless uses that stand

out for attention. There must be more to intelligence than mere cleverness.

He elaborates :

We say humanity has accepted that as intelligence. We are not discussing that. We are pointing out its dangerous nature. Now we are beginning to enquire into what is the very root of intelligence, the depth of it, the extraordinary vitality of it, the tremendous energy that is involved in that intelligence. And in that intelligence there is love, compassion. We are enquiring into that. Now to enquire the mind, the brain must be free from its tether, from its prejudices, from its conclusions, from its limited, narrow tradition - all tradition is narrow. So the brain that begins to enquire into what is the depth and the quality of a mind, is a brain that is completely free otherwise it cannot penetrate, obviously. If I am tethered to my belief, tied to my family, tied to a conclusion, the brain is limited ; it functions in a very narrow, limited way. Whereas if the brain is free from its anchorage, from its attachment, then it can penetrate ; because only a mind that is free can penetrate - right? The brain that is free is already intelligent. That intelligence cannot be cultivated. You understand? (Ibid, p.6)

The very enquiry into the question, the willingness to look at it and pursue it, is for Krishnamurti, the beginning of intelligence. This willingness allows things to be seen. One is not starting with a set of premises or indeed a conclusion. To enquire, he says, the mind must be free from its fetter of prejudices, from all that it has accepted so far. This may be an unpleasant realization. We could look at countless examples, but let us take one. One's nationality, for example, which up to now may have seemed so important, must be seen as part of unnecessary conditioning. But this is something so central to what we consider to be our identity that it will not be easy for many of us to be released from such constraining influence. A brain that is free of such restrictions is settled and compassionate.

As Krishnamurti says :

Thought under all circumstances is fragmentary, because thought, which is the response of memory, is limited. You might acquire tremendous knowledge about everything, about the world, everything in existence, but that knowledge is never complete, never whole. (Ojai, 1977, #64)

So what then is intelligence? When I say I am a Hindu, the assertion is based on memory, conditioning, superstition and so on. So, as long as there is conditioning, which is the product of thought, whatever it does is still limited, fragmentary, illusory. So the question is then what is intelligence? (Ibid, #108)

There will be many who will get irritated with this approach. They want the answer, the conclusion, the final piece of the syllogism. A mind in this state is still grasping, has a motive, and is very means-ends focused. However, to get even close to what Krishnamurti is saying, everything has to stop, and if it does not, there is nothing any one of us can do about it. Any movement which springs from conditioning prevents intelligence from acting. And this conditioning covers anything that separates us as human beings.

Krishnamurti pushes on and pushes us with him :

If we say thought cannot bring about intelligence, then intelligence is totally independent of thought. So, have you listening grasped, or had an insight into these two facts? Insight, that is see the truth of this, that thought is limited, and that thought cannot under any circumstances bring about intelligence, cultivate intelligence, under any circumstances. Intelligence we say is the capacity to see the whole — the whole of the movement of thought. The capacity to see that. The capacity to see thought is limited, to have an insight, that insight is intelligence. (Ibid, #126)

Intelligence is the capacity to see the truth that thought is limited. It can only come into being when there is the art of placing — when there is the placing of thought in its right place. We need thought to speak,

to communicate verbally. But thought thinks that it can also perceive the whole, but that is not the whole. The perception of the whole is intelligence. (Ibid, #140)

We need insight to see that thought is limited and to see that thought cannot perceive the whole, cannot bring about intelligence. This insight, this self-occurring act of awareness is intelligence operating and it has nothing to do with thought.

Thought is our filter to the world. We are continually identifying, assessing, evaluating and recording experience. The process never really stops and it's a process that never gets questioned. How, after all, does thought challenge itself without posing the question so that it can search for an answer in terms thought understands? We think that ultimately everything should be understandable in terms of thought. We may be able to entertain the idea that thought is limited and then, almost inevitably, ask the question, 'What next?' This, of course, is a request from inside thought ; a request to explain in terms that we can process using thought. A mind that can see that this is what is happening is already in a slightly different state and may see that the question is inappropriate. To see that it is inappropriate and to remain in a state of watching is the first step to awareness. This is not a place within thought but can only occur when thought becomes suspended. It is a state of pure perception without agenda. We have to be alert to the seemingly unstoppable inrush of memory as we go about our business in the world. This sounds easy, but while it is not technically difficult, it goes against much of our usual behaviour and it never occurs to us to try it. We normally become engrossed in, or led by the thoughts that rush through our brains. Like signposts we willingly follow them to new destinations. En route more thoughts flow in, to which the response is quick, and this is how we are occupied most of the time. Staying alive to this is like trying to keep your balance on a

bicycle going over rocky terrain. One small mistake and you are thrown off. And indeed, some aspects are easier than others. As Krishnamurti says, to look at a mountain or a tree without thought entering allows you to see the beauty of the thing. And while this may be relatively easy for something like a tree or a mountain, it is more difficult to look at a partner or someone close to you and to be aware of thoughts, preconceptions, judgments and assessments coming into play. However, to be aware of these things coming into play is already to be in a different state. Can there be looking without the movement of thought?

Can you look at your wife, or boy, or whatever it is, without the word, without the image which is the result of all your conflict, the struggle, the pain, the insults, the nagging, the pleasure, the fear, the domination, the attachment, all that brings about a division. Right? The division takes place when there is the observer. Right? Who is the past. So can you observe without all that, your wife, your girl friend? (Ibid, #175)

I'll repeat it carefully — I said you observe your wife or your husband ; when you observe the observer is made up of the past. The past is your thoughts, your memories, your remembrances about her, all that. Now can you look at her without all these images, pictures, and all the rest of it? And that is only possible when there is great awareness of the movement of thought. Right? Can you observe your wife, or your whatever it is, without the movement of thought? The movement of thought occurs only when there is choice. I say, 'Yes, she has been good to me', and hold on to that, or hold on to, 'Oh, she has been etc., etc.'. So where there is choice there is no awareness because it is still the operation of thought. So to observe without the observer is to be totally aware of her, or her, me, you. So then in that awareness if there is no choice there is supreme attention. Attention can only take place when there is no movement of thought as the 'me', with all my pictures and all the rest of it. And that is intelligence. (Ibid, #187)

So can you be aware of your movement of thought? This awareness is

not identified with thought, just to watch it, sir, like watching this microphone, watch it. But if I say, 'It's a microphone, it's that colour, this, who is sitting behind it' I am not watching. So I say can you watch yourself as though you were looking at a mirror that doesn't distort? And I said, when there is this alert watchfulness which is awareness in which there is no choice, that moves into attention, in which there is no centre from which you attend. So when there is complete attention, with your heart, with your mind, with everything you have, to attend, then that intelligence begins to operate. (Ibid, #235)

To begin to see if there is anything at all to what is being said here, all of our usual way of processing the world has to wither away, come to an end. The frenetic activity of thought has to be seen for what it is, which of itself requires that we slow down and watch what happens. By doing this we can observe the linear and seemingly chaotic movement of thought through us. In our usual everyday lives, we do not do this but simply respond or react to these thoughts as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Becoming aware for the first time of this random chaotic flow and observing how it directs our movement through life can be a very chastening experience. Without such awareness, we have very little chance of following what Krishnamurti is talking about. He continues :

First of all can the brain be free of the centre which is me? You understand my question? Can my brain be free of myself, the self, whether that self is super self, ultra, ultra, ultra super, it is still the self. Is there total dissipation of selfishness, to put it very simply? Selfishness, the self-centre is very cunning - it can think it is escaping from all selfishness, from all concern about its own entity, its own becoming, and yet very subtly, deeply it is putting out a tentacle - you understand all this? So one has to discover for oneself whether there can be complete and total freedom from all selfishness, which is all self-centred activity - right? That is meditation. To find out a way of living in this world, without being selfish, without self-centred, egotistic activity, egocentric

movement. If there is a shadow of that, a movement of that, then you are lost. So one has to be tremendously aware of every movement of thought. That is very easy, don't complicate it. When you are angry, for the moment you do not know even that feeling. But when you examine it you can observe the arising of it - right? The arising of greed, the arising of envy, the arising of ambition, aggression, as it arises to watch it, not at the end of it, as it is arising, as you watch it, it withers away. You understand? So the brain can be aware of the arising of a thought. The awareness of the arising of thought is attention, not to smother it, destroy it, put it away, but just the feeling that - don't you know the feeling of hunger when it arises? Obviously you do. Or your sexual feeling, as it arises to be completely aware of it. So the awareness, the attention of the movement of the 'me', my desire, my ambition, my egotistic pursuit, when one is aware as it arises, it withers away. That is absolutely necessary so that there is not a particle, a shadow of this 'me', because the 'me' is separate. I went into all that. So that is the first thing I have to understand. Not control my body, special breathing, yoga - you know all those - you wash your hands of all those.

Then to have a brain that is not partial - right? You understand? That is not acting partially but whole. I do not know if you have gone into this. I am talking so long. I must be brief.

We pointed out the other day that we are functioning not with all our senses, but only partially. The partiality, the narrowness, emphasizes the self - of course. I am not going to go into it in detail, you can see it for yourself. But when you observe the mountain, the trees, the rivers, the blue sky, the person whom you love or whatever it is, with all your senses there is no self. There is no me that is feeling all of it. So that means a brain that is not functioning as a dentist, as a scholar, or a labourer, as a super astronomer, but functioning in the whole of your brain. That can only take place when the brain is completely quiet. So no shadow of self and absolute silence of the mind, quietness, not emptiness - that gives a wrong meaning. Most people's brains are empty anyhow! But to have a brain that is not occupied with anything, including god, meditation, with nothing. Only then the brain is silent, full of vitality and that brain has a great sense of love, compassion, which is intelligence. (Saanen, 1981, p.7)

So, is intelligence able to operate in us or not? The relentless train of thought rattles on guided by the past, conditioning all movement. To be willing to observe this activity in a non-judgmental way is the first step to becoming free of it. However, only with complete awareness will intelligence flower into being. Without it, it is impossible to be free of the divisive mind with which most of us view the world.

The consciousness of mankind is all one. However, thought has divided it, created the illusion of separateness, which causes conflict between you and me. (Brockwood Park 11th June 1983, #315)

There will be those who say that if this is true, something must be done about it, but this is precisely the point we mentioned at the beginning of the paper and it would be a complete mistake. Hypothetical acceptance is still only thought entertaining itself. To see the truth of it directly, to smile and see there is nothing to be done, is to bring about a different way of living and is the most positive of action. Such seeing recognizes the place that thought has in the scheme of things, recognizes when it is useful and when it is not, and recognizes too the amazing push and pull of some of its constructs. Being alive to the pernicious influence of such things is an ongoing, demanding and yet invigorating business.

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