

Jiddu Krishnamurti: World Teacher of Global Citizenship

Lauren Rebecca Clark¹

(Received: February 15, 2022; Revised: April 24, 2023; Accepted: April 25, 2023)

Abstract

This article investigates the humanistic relevance of the idea of “global citizenship” by examining some critically neglected metaphysical ideas and philosophical writings in the context of the late Covid19 pandemic era. Recent research has noted degrees of “post pandemic stress” terming the pandemic a “trauma” with recursive effects and global citizenship has been simultaneously encouraged to unite the disparate parts of society.

The research appraises the personal writings of the philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) aimed at a young readership, namely, *Happy is the One Who is Nothing*, *Letters to a Young Friend* (1948-1960) and the diary entries published in *Krishnamurti’s Notebook* (1961-1962). Despite their subjectivity, these writings reveal the philosopher’s universal message that a “world teacher” is not necessary for peace and self-realisation and, it will be argued, “global citizenship.”

It is suggested that Krishnamurti’s conceits, are useful material for educators and humanity at large in critiquing “global citizenship” in the traumatic post-pandemic era. The analysis contextualises Krishnamurti’s establishment as a global philosopher by utilising a biographical approach and historical contextualisation. A critical and literary appraisal of his seminal works is presented in this article. Then, a thematic analysis between these works and the message of “global citizenship” is presented.

Keywords: global citizenship; education; Jiddu Krishnamurti; philosophy; humanities

¹ Integrative Center for Humanities Innovation, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University

E-mail: laurenrebecca.clark@cmu.ac.th

Jiddu Krishnamurti: ครูในฐานะพลเมืองโลก

ลอเรน รีเบคคา คลาร์ก²

(วันที่รับ: 15 ก.พ. 2565; วันที่แก้ไขเสร็จ: 24 เม.ย. 2566; วันที่ตอบรับ: 25 เม.ย. 2566)

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้สำรวจความเกี่ยวข้องกันของมนุษย์ในแง่มุ่งหวังไปที่ความเป็นพลเมืองโลกโดยการตรวจสอบบางแนวคิดเมตาฟิสิกส์และการเขียนปรัชญาที่ได้รับการละเลยอย่างร้ายแรงในบริบทการแพร่ระบาดของ Covid19 ในยุคที่ผ่านมานี้ การวิจัยเร็ว ๆ นี้ได้สังเกตเห็นว่ามีระดับของ "ความเครียดหลังจากการแพร่ระบาด" ที่เรียกว่า "บาดแผลจิตใจ" ที่มีผลกระทบกลับตัวและพลเมืองโลกได้ถูกเชื่อมโยงส่วนต่าง ๆ ของสังคมอย่างพร้อมเพรียงกัน

การวิจัยนี้วิเคราะห์งานเขียนส่วนบุคคลของนักปรัชญาจิตตศึกษาชื่อ Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) ที่เน้นไปที่ผู้อ่านเยาวชนได้แก่ "สุขสบายคนที่ไม่ทำอะไรเลย", "จดหมายถึงเพื่อนสาววัยเยาว์" (1948-1960) และบันทึกประจำวันที่เคยแพร่ใน "สมุดบันทึกของ Krishnamurti" (1961-1962) แม้ว่าเป็นบทความที่มีลักษณะส่วนบุคคล แต่งานเขียนเหล่านี้เปิดเผยข้อความสากลของนักปรัชญาว่า "ครูสากล" ไม่จำเป็นสำหรับความสงบและการเข้าใจตนเอง และผู้เขียนจะพิสูจน์ว่ามันเชื่อมโยงกับ "พลเมืองโลก"

มีข้อเสนอแนะว่า การอ้างอิงถึงศิลปะของ Krishnamurti เป็นวัสดุที่เหมาะสมสำหรับผู้ศึกษาและมนุษยชาติโดยทั่วไปในการวิเคราะห์ "พลเมืองโลก" ในยุคหลังการแพร่ระบาดที่เป็นก้าวหน้าในปัจจุบัน การวิเคราะห์นี้ใช้เอกลักษณ์ชีวประวัติของ Krishnamurti และการติดตามบริบทประวัติศาสตร์ นำเสนอการประเมินวิจารณ์ที่สำคัญและวรรณกรรมของผลงานสำคัญของเขาในบทความนี้ จากนั้น นำเสนอการวิเคราะห์เชิงหัวขั้วระหว่างผลงานเหล่านี้กับข้อความของ "พลเมืองโลก"

คำสำคัญ: พลเมืองโลก การศึกษา Jiddu Krishnamurti ปรัชญา มนุษยศาสตร์

² อาจารย์ประจำศูนย์บูรณาการมนุษยชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

อีเมล: laurenrebecca.clark@cmu.ac.th

Introduction

As the Covid19 pandemic peters out throughout the globe, it continues to have a knock-on effect on not only physical health but the mental wellbeing of human beings. Recent research in high-, middle- and low-income countries (Pineault, 2021; Kola et al. 2021; Zhang & Lange, 2021) indicates that the isolation people endure in lockdowns, quarantines, and confinement since 2020 has had a highly negative impact upon the psyche, increasing anxiety and depression. There will be resulting rises in unemployment, homelessness, drug use, suicide rates, domestic abuse, racism, sexism, xenophobia, and addiction amidst the socio-economic turmoil of the virus' fallout. These issues continue to provoke fruitful as well as fatalistic deluges of words and thoughts whether articulated in speech, media channels; whether or suppressed and internalised. In the medical sciences, psychology and in the field of psychiatry, research on contemporary stress disorders amongst medical professionals and the general population (Łaskawiec et al, 2022) has noted degrees of “post pandemic stress” terming the pandemic a “trauma” with recursive effects. As students of primary, secondary, higher and tertiary education return to face to face classes, they and their teachers are met with the challenge of re-socialising after two years of virtual communication. The abovementioned physical, psychological, and material implications brought about in the human and collective condition by dint of the pandemic question the concept of “global citizenship.” By this, the researcher means a collective sense of belonging, duty and solace in (“citizenry”) to humanity as a whole (“global”) particularly flagrant in times of individual or collection crisis. It is not surprising then, in this dangerous and vocal post pandemic time, that humankind would turn to seek leadership and counsel in the realms of religion, philosophy, psychotherapy, and spirituality. Often dubbed “self-help” or “self-care” this approach proves of benefit to humanity as a whole and strengthens the sense of global citizenry being eroded at the individualised psychological level by the insidious divisiveness of a disease which does not distinguish between its patients nor the discrimination it evokes. “Global citizenship” refers here to being an inhabitant and active participant in the world. While both “global” and “citizenry” have politically and semiotically entrenched overtones, this is not the working understanding approached in the current paper. “Global readership” as mentioned later, refers to the works of Jiddu Krishnamurti as received (diversely) by readers from across the world. To preserve global citizenship and therefore be a citizen of the world in the current pandemic predicament, can serving the interests of humanity come from reading and enacting the words

of others? Seeking guidance from teachings is by no means unfamiliar in the academe for students and educators alike. The humanistic acts of writing, reading, and teaching recursively form a feedback loop of learning which, if followed sensitively, encourage self-enquiry with classroom- and world-facing perspectives. It is self-enquiry at the level of thought and language that has been offered up as human being's unique saving grace by saintly and enlightened beings for thousands of years. In the process of self-enquiry lies, as it were, the salvation of being.

Since recent research has explored language and global citizenship amidst a global pandemic from a variety of linguistic, cultural, and literary perspectives (Ryan, 2020; Huish 2021; Davis & Lohm, 2020) it seems fitting here to explore the work of one of the world's most renowned mystics, philosophers, and teachers of recent times, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986). The links that can be forged between Krishnamurti, language and global citizenry are pertinent at such a point in human history in which the global dimensions of our very existence (time, matter, speed, energy, and truth) are being called into question. Krishnamurti denied his mother tongue (Telugu) and being taught in English and in French, used these languages to attract and articulate teachings to a wider global listenership. To examine Krishnamurti, a brief biography will foreground his development towards becoming a teacher from having been found on a beach at the Bay of Bengal as a young boy in 1909 near Theosophical Society headquarters. He was soon primed for a messianic "World Teacher" role that he publicly rejected but ultimately incarnated in another form later thanks to the eminence of his life's work and his throngs of followers. A discussion of two of Krishnamurti's seminal teachings pertaining to being and thought will then follow. These formed the foundation of teachings throughout his career. He articulated them in different language by means of seeming aphorisms about the human predicament: (i) *choiceless awareness* i.e., "what-is" or the state of being and (ii) the state of thought as *the word is never the thing*. Gertel identifies the latter as his "solution for misuse of words – the shunning of words altogether" (2002, p.59). How Krishnamurti endeavoured to unite humanity by this unique approach to language as thought is fertile. It makes for interesting consideration as one seeks to remain or become a citizen of the world in the post-pandemic era.

Having established this context, three of Krishnamurti's works will be sequentially scrutinised in a textual and discourse analysis to discern how language aided or hindered his message and how it is to be understood as a pathway to global citizenship. These works are not only accessible for new readers of Krishnamurti's thought, teachers and students (as some

of the content pertains to education) but also for those who have already savoured the messages of his three most frequently discussed works: *Freedom from the Known* (1969); *You are the World* (1972) and *The First and Last Freedom* (1975). The collections have been deliberately selected here as they pinpoint key instances in the trajectory of his global teaching and thoughts about language as a conduit over a period of approximately seventy years. The chosen works enumerate an initiation account written under the pseudonym Alcyone, *At the feet of the Master* (1910); *Krishnamurti's Notebook* (1976) which diarises his perceptions between 1961-1962 and *Happy is the One Who is Nothing, Letters to a Young Friend* (2020) a collection twenty-four letters written between June 1948 and March 1960 to a young person who is troubled mentally and physically. The last collection contains significant excerpts from writings and lectures given to teachers and the students of the Krishnamurti Schools initiative in India.

The modest critical attention paid to Krishnamurti in the academe focusses on the trilogy of commonly read texts mentioned above. Scholars have interestingly aligned his work with Jewish Mysticism (Aberbach, 1993); the Catholic theologian Ivan Illich (Fisk, 1994); Biblical notions of '[r]emembrance' (Gertel, 2002) while simultaneously articulating the teacher's message. There were a series of skirmishes in scholarly exchanges about Krishnamurti following the publication of Radha Rajagopal Sloss' *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti* (1993) whose claims about his private life³ led to subsequent debates over his "unenlightened conduct" (Wren-Lewis, 1994; 1996 & Gopal 1995) being a mismatch for his relayed message. Krishnamurti's principal biographer Mary Lutyens penned a volume to reassess the controversial claims made by Sloss (1996). Little recent critical attention has been paid to Krishnamurti save for Hillary Rodrigues' assessment of existing criticisms of Krishnamurti and how they reiterate his ideas (2002). Williams (2004) writes a sensitive biographical account of situating Krishnamurti within the Advaita Vedanta tradition, and De Souza (2012) addresses the nature of the mind, consciousness, and freedom according to Krishnamurti. Most recently, David Moody, one of the first teachers at Oak Grove school, published a personal account of his twelve-year interactions with Krishnamurti at the school in Ojai, California (2020). For reasons of relative and recent critical neglect of Krishnamurti then and amidst a pandemic

³In this work, Schloss claimed that Krishnamurti had an affair and romantic relationship with her mother for many decades and that when questioned about marriage and celibacy by his followers, he was evasive. Schloss' father was also a director, close friend and instrumental in the management of Krishnamurti's business affairs.

impacting communication and global citizenship, a focus on the philosopher's approach to language and global citizenship is both timely and topical.

Background

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was born in a Hindu Brahmin family in Andhra Pradesh, colonial India. After the death of his mother in 1905, Krishnamurti's poverty-stricken father, a longstanding member of the Theosophical Society, requested that his family be relocated to their headquarters in Adyar in exchange for his duties as assistant recording secretary of the Esoteric Section (Blau, 1995, p. 14). This placed Krishnamurti within the vicinity of eminent theosophists Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater. In 1909 Krishnamurti was discovered by Leadbeater and was taken under his tutelage together with one of his few surviving siblings, his brother Nityanada. That same year, Besant shared guiding Krishnamurti as a protégé and began advertising the coming of a "World Teacher" as a messianic spiritual figure to bring humanity forth in its evolution. Krishnamurti was groomed for this role literally and figuratively. He was initiated in 1910 and *At the Feet of the Master* was his first work of purportedly channelled messages from an enlightened master named Kuthumi. Outwardly he was being raised and dressed as an English gentleman, controversially removed from his caste, and legally estranged from his father. Although entrenched in the preparation for it for eighteen years, Krishnamurti rejected the "World Teacher" role ascribed to him and dissolved the Theosophical Society (then known as the Order of the Star in the East) in August 1929. In a New York Times' account of the dissolution, Krishnamurti forecasts his later work and views of global citizenship in potent language: "[r]eligious, philosophical, and spiritual organizations are barriers to understanding of the truth [...] The truth needs no disciples. It wants nothing from any man. Only a few will understand, and they need no organization" ("Krishnamurti Ends Order of the Star", 1929). For the rest of his life, Krishnamurti spoke internationally and wrote prolifically about the human predicament. He was in regular peaceful dialogue with religious leaders, thinkers, and politicians worldwide. Amongst his associates were Professor S. Rinpoche, Indira Gandhi, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard and David Bohm. Schools, a publishing house, retreat centres and study centres established under the Krishnamurti Trust are still in operation to this day.

Krishnamurti has become a cause espoused in philosophical circles, in spiritual thought and increasingly within the realm of education. "Cause", for Krishnamurti rejected the

very idea of being personally responsible for the teachings he purveyed, addressed himself in third person in communication and urged listener and readerships to explore his claims for themselves. This iconoclasm was all-pervasive, rejecting the divisions offered up to humanity by its castes, colours, creeds, religions, and political orientations. He urged his listenership to come out of the socio-cultural-religious conditioning imposed on them and vagaries of “tribal” thinking which places human existence in a perpetual state of conflict and self-destruction:

So we are asking, is there an end to war, or rather an end to suffering?

Because as long as we are separate as a family, as a community, as a clique, as a nation, a religion, and so on, this division will always, perpetually create conflict.

“You” and “me.” “We” and “they.”⁴ This is the game we have been playing. First it was limited, tribal, now it is global. (Krishnamurti, 2005, p. 111)

The above extract attests to Socratic method of questioning Krishnamurti employed throughout his talks as well as his rhetorical prowess. He acts as a gadfly to audiences of scores of people whilst simultaneously maintaining the intimacy of direct address in third person “you” and probing the consciousness of listeners by means of active present continuous voice. His listenership is to be engaged in the process of meditating over the issue at hand and appear to be captivated in historic recorded footage recently made available online by the Krishnamurti Trust’s *Free to the World* collection.⁵

Despite attracting large followings, the speaker repudiated guru-status not only out of personal distaste or his prior “World Teacher” experience, but in the full embodied knowledge that submission was a trap preventing real freedom. This freedom, discussed in *The First and Last Freedom* (1975) is to be arrived at by a complete inner revolution of the self and not by railing against external forces. He discouraged acolytes and as a speaker by vocation, was renowned for his precision with words, eloquence and latterly frustration at the quality of questions his audience asked which belied the depth to which they had truly explored the matters he discussed. Fouéré (1969) notes a transition point in Krishnamurti’s communication and use of language in his late career, “poetical outpourings seem to put his audience to sleep

⁴ Speech marks added for emphasis.

⁵ See <https://kfoundation.org/video/>

making it torpid with a quiet, lazy adoration. Krishnamurti did not intend to remain an idol, and so his language hardens” (pp. 8-9).

Krishnamurti had little to no personal interaction with payments offered for his work and indeed he was aware, that large sums of money were given to support his work but had “no knowledge of how much or where this money actually was” (Blau, 1995, p. 171) with personal finances being taken care of by close confidantes. As a result, in 1968, soon after this admission, the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust was established to ethically account for donations and manage Krishnamurti’s publications. The trust still exists to this day and respectfully disseminates the original teachings offered and provides a place of study and research to bring them into fruition.

Two seminal teachings

Further to the background provided on the philosopher, we turn now to two seminal teachings in which Krishnamurti revealed how the mind (and humanity) becomes conditioned by conflict and how it may thus free itself. What the French have coined as “moi-je” is a slur against the psychologically egocentric self whereby existence is governed by individualistic thought and meted out by the expression of said thought or thought said (e.g. “moi je pense que..”). To be *choicelessly aware* according to Krishnamurti is somewhat different. The human condition he argues is an “I” or personal identification process driven by the desire to be free of something but enslaved to that very bondage. Krishnamurti posits that this desire itself is illusory because it creates a polarity of thought that rejects negative experiences rather than embracing the creative potential that enlivens humanity when it is experiencing something. In our desire to be free of suffering, for example, we evade the tremendous self-knowledge that comes through being aware of it. Suffering is neither something being done to us nor something negative but a *choiceless awareness* to be observed in medias res, as part of the human condition. This awareness is not a form of witnessing, though it can be related to Buddhist insight meditation and Sufism and Zen practices where there is no separation between the witnessed and the one doing the witnessing. Alertness as such is to be aware “both externally and inwardly, without any choice...Just be aware of the trees, the mountains, nature – just be aware. Not choose, saying, —I like this—I don’t like that, or —I want this, —I don’t want that...to be choicelessly aware implies [a state where] there is no decision, no will, no choice” (Krishnamurti 1979, pp. 175-176). It is therefore full attentiveness to that

scene in nature or suffering (or any other experience) as something which enlivens the core of every human being leading to freedom. For instance, say that one is presently suffering from mild symptoms of Covid19 such as having a high fever, being phlegmatic and with a dry cough. A *choiceless awareness* of this condition would lead one to have an acute passivity to the symptoms, discomfort and thoughts arising as a result of the illness. In this space there is freedom from resistance to suffering and the desire to escape in fear. The *choiceless awareness* concept destroys polarities which lie at the heart of mankind's mental turmoil as he falsely experiences as an individual rather than as a citizen of the world experiencing life. Rathnam (2013) has applied Krishnamurti's teaching beautifully to the furthering of educational philosophy wherein *choiceless awareness* can permit teachers and students to follow flowerings of their thoughts to practically solve psychological problems. Other practical applications of this teaching appear in the Krishnamurti Schools and are inculcated to bring about social awareness and responsibility where students have a "collective awareness", a reflection of what they feel, think, and do from dawn to dusk (Thapan, 2006, p. 18). This teaching brings about a self-awareness for internal change and conflict resolution before seeking the resolution of external conflict.

This micro- to macro- level circumspection is thus a pivotal notion to bring about real global citizenship from within the self and extend it outwards towards humanity and other living beings. "Global citizenship" referring here to being an inhabitant and active participant in the world can only come from a thorough understanding and radical acceptance of the state of (human) being. This, Krishnamurti posits, deconstructs his, her or their relationship to others and the incessant concept-making acquired by prior historic knowledge that is essentially a second-hand construct. From the *choiceless awareness* Thapan (2006) notes, beings in the world can develop an awareness that is at once collective and free of the splitting self that we so commonly enact when viewing ourselves as other than the external world. In the post-covid context, this is particularly important. There was a moment of impasse during the pandemic which permitted reflection on existing structures of thought and external organisation. A moment of reckoning which, by the teachings of Krishnamurti, could allow for a greater awareness of presence and addressing events in the post-covid environment as they occur. More suggestions on the practical application of this in the post-covid environment will follow before the article's conclusion.

The state of thought *the word is never the thing* initially appears to be analogous to Saussurean linguistics or Barthesian semiology - the difference between semiotic systems and

what words represent. Krishnamurti's concern here is less linguistic than it is metaphysical. "The word" (and by extension language itself) is taken to represent symbols or concepts or shadows of remembrances. By naming something it comes into our existence akin to the Buddhist notion of the naming and forming process, *nāmarūpa*. The word is thus based upon a priori experience. This is unreliable according to Krishnamurti because amidst *choiceless awareness* there is no room for thought as verbalised words, only the observation of what-is which can occur in choiceless (silent) awareness. Thinking without words is entirely possible according to Krishnamurti and this is what he understands to be attention or understanding what-is in a state of *choiceless awareness* (Gertel, p. 59). This begs the question, can the very teachings themselves can be understood non-verbally? In response to this matter, an early student of Krishnamurti's, and eminent sociologist Sunanda Patwardhan states:

We all know that the word is very limited, and thought is limited. Our relationship to each other is based on mutual pleasure, pain, dependence, insecurity. We have observed all this—and the word is not the thing. Not only because Krishnaji has said it, but we have also comprehended it. One of the great things which he said was that images in relationship prevent you from being really related to another. It is only when there is sensitivity, a listening, a sharing without wanting anything, that there is real relatedness. One of the grounds of the non-verbal quality is to be sensitive and be related in affection to each other. If human beings can love each other, have affection for each other, perhaps we may find a way out of all the extraordinary chaos in this world. (Blau, pp. 135-136)

What Patwardhan tentatively asserts here is that there runs the great risk of insensitivity and illusion in articulating thought. Without the illusion of language, human beings may become better listeners to be able to relate to each other beyond the images and symbols concocted in the mind which do not serve to unify. Unreliable thought and untrustworthy words unregulated then transmit themselves like a virus within the human self to the overall detriment of the global species. It is helpful to identify and analyse Krishnamurti's two seminal teachings considering the content and production of short works which span the duration of his career. This will illuminate how language and global citizenship are articulated within the literature and how they are used as exempla of the awareness without judging what-is and rejection of the word as thought.

At the Feet of the Master

Believing that Krishnamurti had been with them in previous incarnations, Alcyone was a name given to the boy by Leadbeater and Besant for the purposes of his first initiation undertaken between the 10th and 11th of January 1910. Leadbeater apparently travelled on the astral plane with the boy during this process and allowed him to receive instructions issued from an enlightened master named Kuthumi. According to the Theosophical Society this was a necessary rite of passage which took place in another dimension. The instructions were summarised by young Krishnamurti shortly the same year in a series of notes and swiftly compiled as *At the Feet of the Master*, a short book offering spiritual guidance. The book covers four key themes (or teachings), namely, discrimination, desirelessness, good conduct and love. In tune with Krishnamurti's later teachings on the unreliability of thought and words, Besant in her introduction to this volume notes that these are "the master's thought clothed in his pupil's words" and not a verbal reproduction (Blau, p. 28). The processes and content surrounding writing *At the Feet of the Master* were a starting point arguably spawning Krishnamurti's approach to the unreliability of language and thought and certainly alerting the perils of being conditioned by spiritual organisations. One cannot help but notice the speed with which this volume was produced, translated into twenty-seven languages, and circulated in situ to puff the cause of the coming of the "World Teacher." Leadbeater also published two volumes detailing the forty-eight incarnations of Alcyone by 1924. When Count Keyserling (founder of the School of Wisdom) asked if the adult Krishnamurti had penned *At the Feet of the Master* he admitted, "I don't remember, but I do remember writing something very laboriously in English in my early days" (p. 28). On another occasion, according to Ingram Smith Krishnamurti did affirm meeting and speaking with Master Kuthumi (p. 140). If the testimony is to be believed, then this account is a dictated directly from a spiritual master. The use of language therein is perhaps understandably couched in modals and imperatives: "You must distinguish between truth and falsehood; you must learn to be true all through, in thought and word and deed" (1910, pp. 21-22). This is of marked distinction to Krishnamurti's later lectures from the 1950s onwards in which discovery is a mutual process for the listenership and readership in progressive voice. These later lectures guided and encouraged the listeners to go into the topic of discussion by means of philosophical enquiry together with the speaker. By contrast, orders are given to the reader as a matter of urgency "[i]f a word is missed, it is lost for ever; for He does not speak twice" (1910, p. 4). There is at this very nascent stage of

Krishnamurti's career a fixation with the meaning of words and the dangers of their careless or cruel use.

Krishnamurti's Notebook

Krishnamurti's Notebook is a series of personal entries written between June 1961 and March 1962 whilst he travelled from his home in Ojai, California to London, Rome, Florence and then on to Bombay (Mumbai), Madras (Chennai) and Benares (Varanasi) on speaking tours. These constitute a record of his daily perceptions and states of consciousness (vii). The entries detail two procedures occurring to the teacher: one of mysterious physiological pain (headaches referred to simply as “the process”) and one spiritual (often referred to as the “benediction” or “blessing”).

Examining the language of the teacher's subjective writings here is worthwhile to probe the extent to which *choiceless awareness* and the unreliability of word as thought can be traced in his personal practice. The diary entries begin and end in an abrupt manner heightening their credibility over credulity. Krishnamurti often comments of nature scenes he witnesses in the very early hours of the morning after meditation. Entries from the 4th and 5th of March 1962 describe scenes in Rishi Valley. There is a poetic observation of the scene before him:

There were lean goats on the hills, devouring everything that grew; they were insatiably hungry and their little ones pranced from rock to rock. They were so soft to touch, their skin sparkling, clean and healthy. The boy who was looking after them was singing away, sitting on a rock and occasionally calling to them. The personal cultivation of the pleasure of beauty is self-centred centred activity; it leads to insensitivity. (1976, Kindle Locations 1922-1927)

Here an active pursuit of *choiceless awareness* can be traced in Krishnamurti's perceptions. The final sentence's “self-centred” observation jars with the cultivation of the pleasure of beauty described in the pastoral scene in previous sentences. This is not the only instant of interrupted thought (words) within the notebook. Amidst a narrated passive awareness of owls calling over the silent valley very early in the morning, Krishnamurti interjects with a warning that meditation can never follow a pattern laid down by thought nor become a habitual activity (Kindle Locations 1879-1880). The nothingness of the thoughts transcribed within the notebook is continually affirmed in poetic observations to such an

extent that it can be argued that Krishnamurti was living the tenets of what-is and his seminar teachings actively. Readers can be grateful that such accounts exist of the author's perceptions to detail the acute and active observation required to empty oneself of language and thought. This silencing and observing shows the teacher curbing his own magnanimity to permit global participation.

Happy is the One Who is Nothing, Letters to a Young Friend

The relevance that Krishnamurti's teachings have to language as a tool for global self-development and pedagogy can also be sampled in *Happy is the One Who is Nothing, Letters to a Young Friend*. This text comprised of two parts: the original collection of 'Letters to a Young Friend' and 'Krishnamurti for the young' which includes some selections from the book series with the same name. Part one contains twenty-four letters written between June 1948 and March 1960 to a young person who is troubled mentally and physically. Interestingly the correspondent is not named. These letters are briefly and helpfully prefaced by Pupul Jayakar, a close friend of the author's, member of the foundation, as well as his biographer. Part two is written for a child readership. It contains six short chapters notably entitled by questions to provoke self-enquiry about the topics: "What is it to feel?"; "What is it to care?"; "Why do we lose our imagination?"; "What does fear do to you?"; "Freedom and order", and "What is order?" The recurrent of what-is in these titles is by no means unintentional.

Great intimacy is established in part one in the language Krishnamurti uses with the reader addressed in first person terms: "I hope you have had a good night" (p. 16); "I am surprised that you have survived without being perverted in that peculiar atmosphere" (p. 19) and "I hope you don't mind reading all of this" (p. 51). As mentioned previously, this direct address is unusual in any recordings of Krishnamurti's other lectures or works and shows the proximity of his relationship with the correspondent. Care is communicated to the reader who is offered personal advice to help their mental and physical distress as well as recommendations and humorous asides. Indeed, the first letter in the collection warns the young friend that "[l]ife is a razor's edge, and one has to walk on that path with exquisite care and with pliable wisdom" (p. 11). While echoes of Katha Upanishad (1.3.14) may ring the ears of philosophers in this extract, Krishnamurti continually alerts the reader to have a *choiceless awareness* of thoughts occurring in the mind and to note its machinations without over

analyses i.e. “[b]e tremendous- be awake” (p. 66).⁶ The letters are written with high precision irrespective of their varying lengths. Some span three to four pages while other observations are terse, limited to one paragraph. The correspondence itself may be read as a form of instructional pedagogy of calming or controlling the mind or be structurally likened to other collections of disciples’ letters to their gurus.⁷ As befitting Krishnamurti’s teachings, the content of these letters is deliberately free of any potentially distracting contextualization and maintains a timeless and universal relevance.

During the 12-year period of this correspondence Krishnamurti was constantly travelling throughout South East Asia, Europe, Australasia, and the Americas where he was giving talks, establishing schools as well as writing. He was firmly establishing himself as a citizen of the world. This era saw the publication of *Education and the Significance of Life* (1953), *The First and Last Freedom* (1954) and a second series of *Commentaries on Living* appeared in 1959. There is no trace of well-travelled, secondhand information in *Happy is the One Who is Nothing* however. In fact, Krishnamurti advises his correspondent to still the instinctual wandering of the mind with such humility noting, “[i]t is odd how most people want to impress others, by their achievements, by their cleverness, by their books- by any means to assert themselves” (p. 54). As the letters progress, Krishnamurti guides his correspondent by posing rhetorical questions, giving personal observations, commenting upon the beauty of natural surroundings, and offering practical advice and examples. These letters do not appear to be in any chronological or sequential order and the correspondent’s identity remains indiscernible even by the last letter for there is no obvious dialogue. These factors enhance the applicability of the work to a global readership who can access snippets of valuable learnings within a few pages. The locus of these teachings is not firmly rooted in any one country although they coincided with the author’s establishment of nonprofit schools and study centers throughout India, Sri Lanka, the UK and USA. It may be explored in subsequent studies whether this output from the correspondent came as a resulting impact of the end of the Second World War.

⁶ Whitney’s translation of this verse from the Katha Upanishad reads:

Rise ye! awake! having obtained boons, attend;
a razor’s edge, sharpened, hard to traverse —
this the sages say is the difficult track (1890, p.102).

⁷ See for instance those between Swami Satyananda Saraswati and his initiates in *Steps to Yoga: And Yoga Initiation Papers*.

One can imagine such letters being written to Krishnamurti today amidst the pandemic to seek resolve for the global suffering and troubled thoughts that are aroused as a result.

Part two of this edition turns to address the porous minds of a younger audience. Ahalya Chari prefaces this section by calling upon child-learners to ask them what they might like to learn about and intimating what is left out of typical school education and highlighting what could be accounted for to restore global citizenship. The importance of knowing how to understand one's thoughts and feelings is highlighted here. Next, the importance of maintaining emotional empathy, care, imaginative faculties, and discipline is each outlined in brief chapters. Pertinent here is the focus on observing and feeling fear as it arises in the mind and the stultifying and traumatizing effects it can have upon life. The perennial focus of Krishnamurti's work is communicated plainly for children without losing any of its essence by indulging in ideation or over-simplification. Again, by means of elucidation, the author describes parallels with the natural world, school life as well as an engaging process of inquiry through rhetorical questioning. While the first part of the collection contains pithy statements such as the phrase from which the collection gets its name, "Life is a strange business. Happy is the one who is nothing" (p. 42) and is laden with insightful adages, part two contains expanded description, parables and analogies. These are for the child of school-going age to relate to, contemplate and perhaps follow. The reader here is invited to "[w]atch the bird across the sky. By being with yourself, sitting quietly under a tree, you begin to understand the workings of your mind, and that is as important as going to class" (p. 92). The information in part two may read as excessively benign or potentially eccentric to educationalists. Its craft lies in its clear-cut instructions to urge the young to think afresh and indeed to take baby steps on the path of spiritual inquiry without a hint of indignation nor moralization.

It may be rightfully asked to what extent revisiting Krishnamurti's oeuvres could have a practical impact upon global citizenship in the post-pandemic world. Such an applied question is problematic. To give directives in detail may negate the very principle of Krishnamurti's counsel for individual enquiry, leading to awareness of global (collective) accountability without instruction. The philosopher was, after all in lifelong denial of his previous appointment as a World Teacher. Nonetheless some potential applications may be considered from the researcher's standpoint of a lecturer in an interdisciplinary programme who has recently felt the pandemic's impact on her returning students' concentration levels and socialiation. One may, for instance, incorporate the work of Krishnamurti for critical enquiry and appraisal in any discipline dealing with global citizenship. The timelessness of this work

and preservation of lectures in audio visual format are of advantage to educators to engage students in critical listening and even practice for this purpose.

Krishnamurti's keen awareness of language is apparent throughout his works. He displays a readiness to polish it opulently and fulminate upon the glories of love, what-is and existing in a state of mental and verbal stillness. That said, the same speaker reaches climactic points of enquiry where his frustration is meted out with sharp words and instructions cutting the wandering thoughts of humankind abruptly. Through the modest analysis provided in this article, it is apparent that Krishnamurti never accepted being known as a leading teacher, guru or master. He was in the continual process of deepening into his own thoughts and self-hood to extricate the lies and division they evoked in the individual and global selves. He refused to teach this and offered enquiry in his later most eloquent talks. There is a certain irony, noted by his contemporary and a fellow theosophist UG Krishnamurti (1919-2007) in *The Mystique of Enlightenment* (1982) that despite Jiddu's protests against it, people began to flock to him seeking enlightenment. One entry in the *Notebook* speaks of Krishnamurti's brain being carved (Kindle Location, 1799) and it is unclear whether this refers to the "process" of his physical ailments alone or whether he had experienced a "benediction" of thoughts being emptied from him. Both probably applied but the limitations of language do not permit any true articulation of this.

References

- (1929, 4 August). Krishnamurti ends order of the star; Theosophists' society dissolved because leader believes followers ignore 'Truth'. *New York Times*. A1.
- Aberbach, D. (1993). Mystical union and grief- the Ba'al Shem Tov and Krishnamurti. *The Harvard Theological Review*, 86(3), 309-321. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1510013>
- Aveling, H. (1990). Krishnamurti on education. *Social Alternatives*, 9(1),33-36.
- Blau, E. (1995). *Krishnamurti 100 years*. Stewart Tabori & Chang.
- De Sousa, A. (2012). Mind and consciousness as per J. Krishnamurti. *Mind in Indian Thought*, 10(1),198-207.
- Fisk, L. (1994). Jiddu Krishnamurti: Violence as a resistance to factuality. *Peace Research*, 26(2), 85-102. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23607349>
- Fouéré, R. (1969). *Krishnamurti the man and his teaching*. Chetana.
- Gertel, E. B. (2002). Krishnamurti, language and biblical 'Remembrance'. *Religious Studies and Theology*, 21(2), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.1558/rsth.v21i2.49>
- Gopal, M. (1995). Krishnamurti and spirituality- a comment on Wren-Lewis's view. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 35(1), 89–96.
- Robert Huish (2021) Global citizenship amid COVID-19: why climate change and a pandemic spell the end of international experiential learning, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, 42(4), 441-458.
- Kola, L., Kohrt, B. A., Hanlon, C., Naslund, J. A., Sikander, S., Balaji, M., Benjet, C., Cheung, E., Eaton, J., Gonsalves, P., Hailemariam, M., Luitel, N. P., Machado, D. B., Misganaw, E., Omigbodun, O., Roberts, T., Salisbury, T. T., Shidhaye, R., Sunkel, C., Ugo, V., ... Patel, V. (2021). COVID-19 mental health impact and responses in low-income and middle-income countries: reimagining global mental health. *The lancet. Psychiatry*, S2215-0366(21)00025-0. Advance online publication. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00025-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00025-0)

- Krishnamurti, J. (Alcyone) (1910). *At the feet of the master*. Rajput Press.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1964). *The Krishnamurti reader*. Arkana.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1975). *The first and last freedom*. Harper One Publishers.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1976). *Beginnings of learning*. Gollancz Publishers.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1976). *Krishnamurti's notebook*. Gollancz Publishers. Kindle Edition.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1979). *The wholeness of life*. HarperCollins.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1983). *The flame of attention*. Harper Row Publishers.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2001). *You are the world*. Krishnamurti Foundation.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2001). *On education*. Krishnamurti Foundation of Amer.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2005). *Facing a world in crisis: What life teaches us in challenging times*. Shambhala.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2010). *Freedom from the known*. Rider Books.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2020). *Happy is the one who is nothing, letters to a young friend*. Watkins.
- Łaskawiec, D., Grajek, M., Szlacheta, P., & Korzonek-Szlacheta, I. (2022). Post-pandemic stress disorder as an effect of the epidemiological situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Healthcare (Basel, Switzerland)*, 10(6), 975. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10060975>
- Lutyens, M. (1996). *Krishnamurti and the Rajagopals*. Ojai, Krishnamurti Foundation of America.
- Moody, D. (2020). *Krishnamurti in America: New perspectives on the man and his message*. Alpha Centauri Press.
- Pineault, D. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and people with hearing problems. *The Hearing Journal*, 74(3), 6. doi:10.1097/01.Hj.0000737588.84699.98
- Rajagopal Sloss, R. (1993). *Lives in the shadow with J. Krishnamurti*. Addison-Wesley.

- Rathnam, A. (2014). *The whole teacher: Transformational approaches for awakening the teacher within*. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Rodrigues, H. (2002). *Krishnamurti's insight: An insight of his teachings on the nature of mind and religion*. Pilgrims Publishing.
- Ryan, J. M. (Ed.). (2020). *COVID-19: Volume I: Global pandemic, societal responses, ideological solutions*. Routledge.
- Davis, M., & Lohm, D. (2020). Pandemics, publics and narrative. (Explorations in Narrative Psychology). Oxford University Press.
- Saraswati, S. S. (2006). *Steps to yoga: And yoga initiation papers*. Yoga Publications Trust.
- Thapan, M. (2006). *Life at school: An ethnographic study*. Oxford University Press.
- Whitney, W. D. (1890) Translation of the Katha-Upanishad. *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 21(1).88-112.
- Williams, C. V. (2004). "J. Krishnamurti: Crossing cultural borders or ignoring their existence?" Paper presented to the *15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia*.
- Wren-Lewis, J. (1994). Death knell of the guru system? perfectionism vs. enlightenment. *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 34(2), 46-61.
- Wren-Lewis, J. (1996). Flesh-and-blood buddha or stained-glass Saint? a response to Gopal. *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 36(1), 21-27.
- Zhang, Y., & Lange, K. W. (2021). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and global mental health. *Global health journal (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*, 5(1), 31–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glohj.2021.02.004>