**CHAPTER 1: LEARNING**

**PLATO**

**Multiple Choice and True/False Questions**

1. True or False\*

Education is putting knowledge into those who lack it.

2. True or False\*

According to Plato, the virtue of reason is always beneficial.

3. What does Plato say would be the probable first reaction of someone freed from the cave and shown the light?

a. Joy

b. Pain and confusion\*

c. Understanding

d. Knowledge

4. In the allegory of the cave the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ represents the visible world.

a. The forms

b. The form of the good

c. The prison dwelling\*

d. The sun

5. Which of the following does Plato say is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful?

a. The forms

b. The form of the good\*

c. The philosopher

d. The sun

**Essay Question**

Discuss the allegory of the cave. Be sure to explain each of the symbols in the allegory.

There is a dark cave in which many people sit, chained, unable to get up or even move their heads (these represent the uneducated). The only thing they can see it the shadows of little artifacts projected on the cave wall. They can hear the sounds of the people carrying those artifacts as well (this represents their understanding of the world around them). One person escapes, and upon leaving the cave is blinded by the light of the world, and wishes to return to the cave (this represents the surprise and confusion at learning about the way the world really is, about the Forms, and the wish to accept what one already understands, the 'knowledge' one is comfortable with). But she becomes accustomed to it, and gradually is able to see all the beautiful things above ground (this represents her understanding and acceptance of the truth that she has learned upon being educated). Upon returning to the cave, she is unable to see in the darkness, and is ridiculed by the former companions there for her inability to recognize the shadows on the wall (this represents that it is often difficult to understand the folk beliefs or awkward representations of truth of those without the privilege of education when one already understands truth). When she attempts to explain the way things really are to her friends, they simply think her eyesight has been ruined by the upper world, and that it is not worth going to (this represents what the uneducated might think of what truth has done to the educated, in other words, that they don't actually understand the truth because it does not conform to the understanding of the uneducated). When she tries to lead one up, they attempt to kill her (this represents the suppression of the truth that often occurs when the learned attempt to teach what they know).

**Discussion Questions**

1. This passage is an allegory because things within it are metaphors for other things. What interpretation(s) can you give to the allegory of the cave? How would you justify your interpretation(s)?

See answer to above essay.

1. The person who leaves the cave has a transformation that changes that person’s relationships with other people. What other examples can you think of where an educational experience changes a person’s relationships with others?

Examples of transformations people undergo when educated which would change a relationship are, say being convinced of the truth of atheism over previous adherence to theism, or the truth of theism over previous atheism. One may discover an intense love of mathematics due to education, and prefer it's subject matter of that of say, chemistry, which it a friend's preferred subject, and this change the dynamic of the relationship.

1. Do you think it is possible to achieve the ideal kind of knowledge that Plato describes? Why or why not?

It is certainly possible to attain the type of knowledge which, when first heard is completely antithetical to all that one has known, and yet come to accept it. Various discoveries in physics have been like this, where everyone except the discoverer are disbelievers and simply feel that the discoverer is warped or misguided--the wave-particle duality, the Copernican conception of the universe. This seems to be very much like the knowledge Plato is idealizing. On the other hand, Plato is also talking about knowledge of the Forms, knowledge that comes by abstracting away from the senses and recollecting Ideas that are not of this world.

**KRISHNAMURTI**

**Multiple Choice and True/False Questions**

1. True\* or False

Krishnamurti says that life is complex and broad, but we usually only learn about one small corner of it.

2. True\* or False

Krishnamurti equates intelligence with the capacity to think freely, without fear.

3. One purpose of education for Krishnamurti is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Become a productive, tax-paying citizen

b. Eliminate fear\*

c. Maintain power

d. Attain wealth

4. According to Krishnamurti, we must create an atmosphere of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Open-mindedness

b. Political liberalism

c. Freedom\*

d. Segregation

5. Krishnamurti thinks that we should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Accept and maintain the status quo

b. Search for our own answers to questions\*

c. Align ourselves with power

d. Accept the inherent nihilism of humanity

**Essay Question**

What do you think Krishnamurti means by “revolt”? Do you think it is a good idea?

Krishnamurti talks about the type of false environment we live in. Our whole educational system is designed to maintain conformity, and this conformity is always in the service of keeping ambitions men and women in power. So if this type of imitation is false, and limits freedom, and it is also the highly entrenched social order, then the only way to get rid of the fear and become free is to revolt against that entrenched social order. One's mind is always questioning, which in itself is a revolt since the social order tells one not to question. One does not simply follow a path that has been laid out or has been pre-determined.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Krishnamurti says that appreciating life requires us to be in constant revolt. Why does he think this? (List several reasons.) Do you agree? Why or why not?

Krishnamurti thinks that we should be in constant revolt because the imitative and conformity based established social order implies an atmosphere for fear – fear of difference, fear of loss of power or position, fear of the truth. To live in freedom means a lack of this fear. So to revolt against the “rotten social order” would tend to produce more discovery of truth, and so more freedom. Some might agree. If education is currently a means to create an order—an order which keeps certain people in power at the expense of the freedom and discovery of truth of all—then we ought to bring an end to that order, by questioning and by learning in the real sense of learning. All of this is in the service of human love and better human relationships. Some might disagree: constant revolt would produce chaos and with chaos there would be even more fear.

1. Krishnamurti talks about creating an atmosphere without fear. Describe in concrete detail what a typical day would be like for someone who lived in that atmosphere.

In an atmosphere without fear, a person would go throughout her day not concerned with how best to behave in the specified way, the typical way, but rather, how best to display love for those she meets. Perhaps her typical day would be much the same as it is now, she would eat, and go to school, sleep, but the attitude would be very different. She would not be afraid to be confronted with new ideas at school, but rather would hear them, question them, and decide if they were true or false. The goal would be knowledge rather than a job, or success, or praise. Those who present differing opinions and conclusions would not be her enemy, or adversary, but rather a companion in the search for truth, and a fellow in the education of freedom, so to treat those she meets in her day with disrespect or malice would be the antithetical to her freedom. She would be a “student of life” and learn from everything around her, questioning everything. For example, she might notice how often people say they want to “get something over with” or “get something out of the way” and wonder if she should live her life doing things that are not meaningful. When she finds that she does things because they are meaningful, she finds that she is able to notice the world around her better: the gas station is ugly and smells bad, but look at the beautiful pansies off to the side not caring about the ugliness…

1. Are there any points on which you agree with Krishnamurti? If not, why not? If so, do you think that he would challenge you to make changes in your life? What are they? Would you make them?

Some might agree with Krishnamurti. Freedom is the result of a well-spent education, and not on social expectations. Simply recognizing this is would represent a major change for many. One might also argue that many of us have too many indulgences like television and the Internet and cheap books. Those things dull us to the world around us and dull us to questioning things. So one might try to give up some of those things. One would also have to make a major change every time one found oneself in a situation where one is thinking “this is so stupid—why am I here? Why am I doing this?” Others might disagree with Krishnamurti. He is too individualistic. Perhaps the status quo is ok, in which case we should not be in revolt. Perhaps a revolution is needed, but if one revolts against everything, one will not have anyone to help make the change. People need love and friends, and it would be very difficult to live as Krishnamurti says and find fulfillment because people who live as he says are so rare.

1. How would Krishnamurti respond to Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” (Reading 1)? Do you think he would agree with Plato? Why or why not?

Krishnamurti would agree that true education is difficult and that those who have true education are often ridiculed. Krishnamurti also would distinguish between so-called learning where we accept everything our senses present us and true learning, which involves going against simply accepting the easy answer. He would also agree that many people are like prisoners.

1. Do you think that Krishnamurti is right to characterize this would as mad and full of fear? What do you think he has in mind? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment? Why or why not?

Some might think, for instance, that it is madness for people to leave their Thanksgiving dinners to go stand in line all night to get into a store and buy some gadget, yelling and shoving those around them. Some might say that our secularity is a sign of sickness and fear in our culture. Some might point to poverty or racism or war as signs of madness and products of fear.

**FOUCAULT**

**Multiple Choice and True/False Questions**

1. True of False\*

Foucault argues that truth is an objective notion, like a unit of measure in the metric system.

2. True\* or False

Foucault argues that we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.

3. Foucault says that the problem of the intellectual is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Separate truth from power

b. Discover the truth

c. Detach truth from hegemonic systems of power\*

d. Gain power over non-intellectuals

4. In what terms should we think of the political problems of intellectuals?

a. Truth and Falsity

b. Right and Wrong

c. Truth and Power\*

d. Science and Ideology