



INTERROGATING THE CAPTIVE MIND: ADDICTION OF THINKING

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Abstract

*The addiction of imagination can never help to solve the problem of life. Because there is very long distance between image and real existence of things, we should have understood this. The image of things in the mirror and the real existence of things are very different. Thinking without imagination, thinking with the support of reality, thinking without any type of pressure is most important in emptying the mind from this addictive imagination. Once one is able to empty the mind from this transcendent imagination, once we are able to get an “empty mind” then one can become free. Freedom is itself freedom and cannot be related to dependency. A unique idea of freedom thus emerges. **Here we recall Gandhi: There is no way to peace, peace is the way.** Thus we say: **The dependent life has been counted as captive.** This dependency will make us captive. Any kind of dependency makes one captive. In order to thus create a treatise of political freedom, it is necessary to construct a treatise on the free mind. Therefore, the most important point is we should have try to free ourselves from everything, which is gathered by us unnecessarily in our memory. One can most certainly free oneself from the mundane world, but to free oneself from the burdens of the mundane and reified mind is something that must be highlighted. One should thus be detached from everything in the world that we have accumulated. If we must detach ourselves from the accumulation of capital, so too one must detach oneself from the accumulation of thoughts. So we need to reflect on how one frees oneself from our very thoughts and ideas.*



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Introduction

The question of ‘crisis’ is fundamental in modern capitalist societies. While some would claim that the crisis is fundamentally economic in nature, and while others would claim that the crisis is political, there is also another angle to this question, and that is the human crisis itself. This is because the modern world has largely devalued philosophy. It was thinkers from Aristotle and Kant, Plato to Hegel, Marx and Gandhi who had talked of the importance of philosophy.

Today’s acute crisis—ecological, economic, political and cultural—lies in this devaluation of philosophical thinking and the consequent production of what we call ‘the captive mind’. Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* had talked of the “burden of ideology”. In this essay we talk of the “burden of thought”.

The Concept of Captive Mind

While the idea of the captive mind emerges from the 1953 work of the Polish writer, Czesław Milosz and while it is a central idea in the works of Syed Hussein Alatas, we are placing this idea much deeper in the interiors of philosophical thinking. We thus go to Jotirao Phule's *Slavery* where he talks of 'mental slavery' where people become captives (p. 45, *Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule*, edited with annotations and introduction by G.P. Deshpande). Likewise Gandhi uses this idea in his *Hind Swaraj* where he says that Indians have been colonized not only economically, but also mentally. This idea, one must note is also central to Marx, Freud and Frantz Fanon, besides a whole galaxy of thinkers.

In the social sciences the concept of the captive mind was created by the Malaysian sociologist Syed Hussein Alatas, which was intended to conceptualize the nature of scholarship in the Third World, particularly in relation to western dominance in the social sciences and humanities. The captive mind is defined as an uncritical and imitative mind dominated by alien sources, whose thinking is deflected from independent-critical perspectives.

In the 20th century that gave to two imperialist world wars where civilized Europe was at war both with itself and the rest of the world, J. Krishnamurti (like Georg Lukacs and Edmund Husserl) comments on the philosophy of the mind. This is with special relation to psychoanalysis and human behavior. The idea comes out clearly in his *The Commentary on Life*. In this regard the idea of the captive mind is enlarged where we have, what we call: "The person who is inspired and impacted by another source or object and who is engaged in that particular object." We can call captive, who are impacted by books, spiritual leaders, political leaders, religion, economic situations, ideas of soul, karma and reincarnation, previous birth that we have learnt from our teachers and other ideals. While this idea is directly related to Lukacs' idea of the reification of consciousness and Freud's idea of repression, there is also a de-reification process where an alternative narrative is available. Let us have a look at it.

We first analyze the concept of captive mind as follows,

1. The person, who is impressed by another object, is as we can call it the "captive mind".
2. The mind, which has been covered by some extrinsic motive, is called "captive mind".

3. The person who has been circumference by particular emotions can be called a person with a “captive mind”.
4. The person who is engaged in some particular thoughts, ideas and retentions, called a person with a “captive mind”.
5. The person, who is long away from the self thoughts and ideas it, called a person with a “captive mind”.
6. The person, who is depending on someone else for everything, called a person with a “captive mind”.
7. Our thoughts makes us captive- J. Krishnamurti.

But if these are so, then how is human freedom possible?

J. Krishnamurti on the Captive Mind

J. Krishnamurti explored his thoughts basically on “beyond the thoughts”. His principle theme is that *our thoughts are our enemy*. An example is the “communalization of the mind” where we imagine people from different religious faiths as hostile. In this sense we can say that he was the first psychoanalyst who told the thought is our enemy. This is because thoughts cover the entire arena of life which causes an “unbearable weight” with unnecessary thinking. Apart from that he defined thoughts are a *motion of our intelligence*. In this regard we can understand the depth of his thinking. And since he told that thought is the *motion of our intelligence*, and then we can define this motion as our mind. Therefore, I define the concept of mind as “*the mind is the motion of our intelligence*”. That this idea of thought as motion is also brought about in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* and Engel’s *Dialectics of Nature* must be highlighted. In this regards we pose the question: what is the idea of captive mind? We can analyze with help of some following terms.

Thinking

In the perspective of J. Krishnamurti, *the mind which is thinking continuously without any kind of meaning becomes a captive mind*. This kind of mind is not free and it will be not a free mind. Instead we say that the mind needs to be “emptied”. For instance we need to empty our minds of the burden of caste and communal conflicts. We need thus a thoughtless mind. *The thoughtless mind is the empty mind*. And it is the empty mind which is able to create new things in life. It means the first powerful impact on our mind is thought. Thoughts are forces of the mind which has been impacted by the world. That this idea is startling similar to the ideas of Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Mind* has to be stated.

Ideas

The second phase of the captive mind is idea, which is produced by our thoughts. What we are saying is that unlimited period is wasted in our life because of unnecessary and unnatural ideas and imagination which can in actuality never be realized or which can never become practical. Here, we have to know the difference between reality and meaningless thinking. Therefore, we can say here the imagination of idealistic thinking is the main cause of creating the captive mind and making us captives, because imagination is a basic term of idealism and idealism helps to make us captives.

The *addiction of imagination* can never help to solve the problem of life. Because there is very long distance between image and real existence of things, we should have understood this. The image of things in the mirror and the real existence of things are very different. Thinking without imagination, thinking with the support of reality, thinking without any type of pressure is most important in emptying the mind from this addictive imagination. Once one is able to empty the mind from this transcendent imagination, once we are able to get an “empty mind” then one can become free. Freedom is itself freedom and cannot be related to dependency. A unique idea of freedom thus emerges. *Here we recall Gandhi: There is no way to peace, peace is the way.*

Like this freedom has no way, freedom is itself the way. An ironic situation arises here: *The move for freedom itself is a state of being captive.*

Thus we say: *The dependent life has been counted as captive.* This dependency will make us captive. Any kind of dependency makes one captive. In order to thus create a treatise of political freedom, it is necessary to construct a treatise on the free mind. Therefore, the most important point is we should have try to free ourselves from everything, which is gathered by us unnecessarily in our memory. One can most certainly free oneself from the mundane world, but to free oneself from the burdens of the mundane and reified mind is something that must be highlighted. One should thus be detached from everything in the world that we have accumulated. If we must detach ourselves from the accumulation of capital, so too one must detach oneself from the accumulation of thoughts. So we need to reflect on how one frees oneself from our very thoughts and ideas.

Memory

J. Krishnamurti told us in his book *Freedom from the Known* that we have no will to be a free from the known. Therefore, we are in a frame of captiveness. We should have tried to forget all, which is gathered by the memory. Then there is the possibility of freedom from
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captiveness of the mind. The memory is the powerful support system in our thinking. We thus should try to erase all imaginary and unnecessary things from the memory.

As long as we are bound to our memory, we still live in the state of captiveness. It is thus necessary to leave all things, which is stored in our memory.

Problems

Another phase of captives of our mind is the different problems in our life. We all are impacted by everyday problems which are created by us. In the last resort all problems of our life are dependent on our needs, even on our basic instincts. And because of that we pose the question: how can we live without problems? Because it is everyday and routine problems that makes us captive. And such a mind is afraid. The mind becomes a fearful mind, the mind that is always in a state of dread. This fearful mind (Lukacs' reified mind) is always trying to flee from problems. Because it is fear that makes us captives. *Therefore, fear is the principle source of captiveness.*

And since we have said that where there are problems we try to be away from these because of our fears, we now say that we should leave this type of state of fear. This is the way to free ourselves and attempt to go at the state of the empty mind. But before that we should have try to be fearless.

Fears

There are so many kinds of fears in life. We should have thought first on the different states and situations that create fear. So, many fear factors are there in our life like care of life-security, money, love, affection, darkness, diseases, accident and death, etc. Death is most powerful fear factor in our life. We should have tried to leave all these kind of fears. Another question arises: what can we do for this? The answer is the "*acceptance of all things very boldly*". And to the question: is this possible, one answers that this is most certainly possible. First of all we must think on this kind of possibility. Surely, this is hundred percent possible for

us. If we had got success, we can see the way of freedom from the different kind of boundaries of life.

Emotions

The next phase of captiveness in the context of J. Krishnamurti is emotions. Emotions create a complexity between human relations. If relations will be depending upon our greed, it is rest assured that complexity will most certainly come. If the relation is selfless, it will be pure and secure. In between what we call the "innocence of mind" is important. If Lukacs
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talks of the de-reification of the mind, we talk of the *innocence of the mind*. When mind has no innocence, we call as “captive”. But if there is what we call the “innocent mind” then there are also “innocent emotions” which are very significant in human relations. If human nature is greedy, then this kind of greediness makes us captives. Our aims, objectives, purpose, ambitions will create greed and greed helps to make us captives. The radical differentiating of need and greed is an idea that Marx and Gandhi both share. Thus we recall Gandhi: *one can satisfy everyone’s needs, not everyone’s greed*. Both Marx’s *Capital* and Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* are about learning this radical difference.

Likewise there is difference between greed and innocence. For example love exists in-itself. There is no any adjective for love. But we have created types of love like “greedy love”, “innocent love”, etc. Devotion is meaning of love or affection. Affection is very different from attraction. Attraction is not love. Where there is no greed, there is devotion that gives rise to “innocent relation”. Where there is innocent relation, love arise itself in the mind. And this kind of “lovely mind” will not to be captive.

Conclusion

The main question in contemporary world is that Marx and Gandhi’s naturalism was not understood. We are all consequently walking on wrong paths. Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* is a lesson for us. Thus the world of western modernity with its gigantic industries is a wrong path. The real way of life is naturalism. We should go to natural sources like water, air and light, instead of running after economic and political power. Apart from this we should have try to think only of love and pleasure. Love and pleasure have no kind of boundary like caste, country, language etc. We should have to know there are no limitations for water, air and light. This kind of view is the first and last hope to live with love, devoid of the captiveness of the mind.