

ON INDEPENDENCE

By Peter Whitehead

What is independence and why do we need independence? Every natural system in the universe, every social system, every psychological system is trapped in a dialogue between order and adventure, between order and regeneration, call it what you will. We all of us every day evolve in a certain kind of way, producing two things simultaneously. One is structure, which, if it becomes too hard, too rigid, becomes fascism; the other is mutation, which, if it becomes too loose, becomes anarchy.

But independence is essential to every system. It is a principle of nature. It is the only way that things are prevented from becoming unfree. And that is what happening in our world today. I see how much freedom, how much independence we have lost... We need independence in our relationships. We need independence, not a free market. To make a choice, where nobody is breathing down our necks saying, your choice is between A and B, which is the basis of Western philosophy and Western Capitalist-based society.

This is why we need independence, to keep healthy, just like all organisms need mutation to prevent themselves becoming so structured that they atrophy and die.



This was extracted from a speech given at a rally to save London's Other Cinema from closure, in late 2004.

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A retrospective of Whitehead's film work will take place at London's BFI Southbank cinema in March 2007.