

Lessons For Psych Unit Psychiatry: The Key Of The Relational (Namgyel: Relationship)

By Kevin A. Sensenig

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There are several things to learn from the following excerpt from the book “The Logic Of Faith: A Buddhist Approach To Finding Certainty Beyond Belief And Doubt” by Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel. It is from the section “Nihilism: Is That All There Is?” from the chapter “Faith”. The quote starts on page 94. The background is some treatment of analytic meditation and a discussion of the reality ‘dependent arising’ (pratityasamutpada).

She has also cited scientific materialism as insufficient. (So does Nishijima and his rendition of Nagarjuna: it is the fusion of the abstract and the concrete that yields the real world.) All of this would pertain to psych unit psychiatry and its theory/praxis. I then have comments.

Curiously, views that eventually fall into nihilism often begin when someone dares to question the realness of something through analysis. You might start by questining a belief, for instance, the belief that things have an intrinsic truth. After looking and not finding, your analysis might falter and then falll into nihilism rather than reveal a deeper insight. You may conclude then that life is devoid of meaning because things are unfindable. This is what happened in the story of the two monks we spoke of in the last section. In the context of Buddhist analytical meditation, a practitioner falls into nihilism when he or she mistakes emptiness as a state in which the power of cause and effect no longer function. It’s as if, through the process of analysis, one has reduced the world of appearances and possibilities to dust. When the result of analysis ends in the annihilation of relative expression, one has officially fallen into nihilism.

It’s actually humorous to think that just by probing the nature of things you would have the power to render something meaningless or nonexistent. Analysis doesn’t have the power to destroy phenomena, to take away or give things inherent meaning. The values we place on objects derive their meaning in dependence on their contexts. It is relationship and relationship alone that defines the significance, characteristics, and function of experience. This is what we rely upon to navigate the world with grace. So analysis (or loosening practice, as we have been calling it) is nothing more than the playful practice of learning from and marveling at the dynamic array of interdependent expression. Such an approach to analysis is not destined for nihilism.

– “The Logic Of Faith”, Namgyel, p. 94-95.

Excerpts With Comments

Namgyel: When the result of analysis ends in the annihilation of relative expression, one has officially fallen into nihilism.

Comment: Psych unit psychiatry has omitted, rejected, and contradicted all reality of relative expression and its relevance. It does not even permit or ask the individual to be participant. It does not acknowledge the relational (thought-relational, social-relational, and world-space) or the fact that it is when we see the fusion of the abstract and the concrete, we see the real world, before us (Nagarjuna). Instead, psych unit psychiatry produces a diagnosis of absolute deficiency that it indicates points to permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction – omitting, contradicting, and refuting ‘all of the above’ as applicable, relevant, actual, or real.

Namgyel: The values we place on objects derive their meaning in dependence on their contexts. It is relationship and relationship alone that defines the significance, characteristics, and function of experience.

Comment: The entire paragraph is strong, and relevant. This statement by Namgyel is what psych unit psychiatry should look for. It also may indicate a basis for open dialogues (Seikkula, et. al.). This also gets to the point of “The Diamond Sutra”, focused on chapter 5. It is what Minsky is talking about – with mindless agents as the basis – for what I term his ‘combinatorial unfolding interconnected relational action-memes’, the hierarchical, interconnected triangles diagrams in “The Society Of Mind”. But the Lankavatara Sutra might paint it as ‘Mind-only’.

Comment: But psych unit psychiatry not only omits, contradicts, and refutes the actuality and reality of the relational (thought-relational, social-relational, world-space), objects-and-context-as-relationship, and the fusion of the abstract and the concrete, it omits, contradicts, and refutes even the relational aspect to neurons and neuroscience, or the interlocked-unfolding mind parts Minsky might point to. Its reductionist view in terms of only the serial transfer of molecules and their regulation, and of permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction, must be rejected: and, ideas, awareness, and perception count!!

Comment: In an interview available on YouTube, Minsky says that it’s not mind-body separate, but mind-body-architecture, together. Zen might see it as mind-breath-body-world-space. These both indicate clearly the insufficiency of the permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction reductionist theory; and further scrutiny reveals it for the inverted world that it is.

Namgyel: It’s actually humorous to think that just by probing the nature of things you would have the power to render something meaningless or nonexistent. Analysis doesn’t have the power to destroy phenomena, to take away or give things inherent meaning. The values we place on objects derive their meaning in dependence on their contexts. It is relationship and relationship alone that defines the significance, characteristics, and function of experience.

Comment: This attempt by psych unit psychiatry to remove all meaning and reality from experience, or to postulate and enforce some entity ‘permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction’ as the ego-substance driver for ‘all of the above’ and the individual’s entire world-space, and in fact the entire world-space –

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its attempt ‘to destroy phenomena, to take away or give things inherent meaning’ – is ludicrous, and is one reason that the individual may feel a profound sense of injustice. In fact, because “The values we place on objects derive their meaning in dependence on their contexts. It is relationship and relationship alone that defines the significance, characteristics, and function of experience.”, the individual, in recognizing this, may be far more sane than the psych unit psychiatrist, or the field psychiatry! But the individual’s standpoint is not heard, is not asked for, is not used as a basis for inquiry – in fact the individual is not permitted or asked to be participant at all. Then: coercion is posed as a requirement, and the diagnosis is one of absolute deficiency, pointing to permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction, the only recourse meds, for a lifetime. None of ‘all of the above’ is permitted, and none of this diagnosis, theory, outcomes, etc., is permitted to be disputed or reasoned with.

Resources

“Open Dialogues And Anticipations: Respecting Otherness In The Present Moment” by Seikkula and Arnkil.

“The Society Of Mind” and “The Emotion Machine” by Marvin Minsky.

“The Diamond Sutra And The Sutra Of Hui-neng” by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam.

“The Lankavatara Sutra”, a discourse between the Buddha and Mahamati, translated by D. T. Suzuki (an epitomized version by Dwight Goddard is available).

“Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way” by Nagarjuna translated by Nishijima.

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