

Our Thoughts Are Relational; And, Neurobiogenetics

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Our thoughts are relational. Not only are they relational within the mind, these thoughts, this thought space, is interconnected and mutually co-arising with the external world (dependent arising).

Meaning in the mind exists. It exists in the mind. That is, a serial-transfer interpretation to neurobiogenetics cannot explain this meaning: it must at least admit that thought is relational – that it is not just the firing of neuron gap junctions – but the content of the neurons and the entire interconnectedness, structure, and relational of thought, and of structures in the mind, and any structures in the physical which may correspond to some of these. And once you're into the relational (see 'combinatorial unfolding interconnected relational action-memes', my term for Minsky's triangles diagrams in TSOM) then you're into an entirely different idea, in considering neurobio-protospecialists (and ideas!) in considering the wetware. Then you run up again into meaning, which can be considered by each of us, and worked with – making differences in the wetware!

Understanding, thought, speech, and action are interconnected, along with awareness and effort. These are the domain of not only psychiatrists, but of all of us. It is from the Buddha's noble eightfold path. Nagarjuna says that in an act, consciousness and action are one. But if consciousness cannot be explained strictly by a narrow interpretation of neurobiogenetics, nor thought, then perhaps we can turn to these other terms.

And action is impenetrable, to the psych unit psychiatrist.

Nagarjuna also says, "If we are insincere, we cannot recognize the accomplishment of an act, or the cause of action." I'd postulate, in addition, the following: "If we subscribe to the psychiatric disease model of permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction, we cannot recognize the accomplishment of an act, or the cause of action." Likewise, I'd argue, neither can psychiatry actually discern mental states, emotive states, intentional states, and physical states; nor work with the individual standpoint; nor work with the relational (thought-relational, social-relational, and world-space); nor work with a dependent arising world-space; nor work with 'reason – reason on the table'; nor work with 'merit'; nor work with perception. And psych unit psychiatry omits, contradicts, refutes, and sets aside all ideas and realities like this.

Dogen suggests in his essay "Guidelines For Studying The Way"[1] that we should not study the mind, we should not study the truth. I think he was either being sarcastic, meant that we should study both mind and truth together – or was the world's first psychiatrist.[2]

Footnotes

1. See the essay “Guidelines For Studying The Way” in “Moon In A Dewdrop” by Dogen edited by Tanahashi.
2. I encountered one private practice psychiatrist in NYC who was intelligent and aware, and used terms like ‘the mind’, and engaged with me in descriptions of it. But it’s not part of a psych unit psychiatrist’s repertoire. And none brings it to the table. And it certainly does not inform the diagnosis – which is one of absolute deficiency, with the understanding that it’s permanent neurobiogenetic malfunction, the only remedy meds. Much less the truth of a situation, that can be discussed, with reason on the table.

References

“First Discourse Of The Buddha”

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