

# Further Questions On The Psychotic States: Spinoza, Minsky, And Zen

By Kevin A. Sensenig

Draft 1.03

2019 December 30

What is psychosis? What is a psychotic state? What are psychotic states of mind? Is it point-to-point thought relational? Is it a cutting contradiction of social values? Is it menace? Is it mental states that yield an action that is unanticipated or inexplicable? Is it a belief in something that is unusual, or can't be verified, and to whom, in the mind of whom? Is it a dilemma in or problem described in terms of the domains of life (the mental, the existential, the social, the societal, the experiential, and the physical)? Is there any sense of centeredness or of balance? Is there merit to this or that view?

Is it that the individual has encountered a certain type of mental event? Experiential event? How did the individual contextualize or respond to the mental event? Experiential event?

In a given situation, another scenario, is it that the individual would do what he or she would otherwise not do, or not do what he or she would otherwise do, and what is the basis-behind and givens and domains of life for this?

For some of these, there might apply the following analysis. Spinoza was a Jewish-Portuguese philosopher who grew up in Amsterdam. He came up with this idea of God that starts with several axioms and postulates, then derives further statements from those, in Euclidean fashion. For instance, if I understand it correctly, every feature in nature (and all is nature) is an infinite object that is a mode of God's. God is none other than this. God had no other choice than to create this universe as it is. For more, and to verify my statements, see his book "Ethics" and the Wikipedia entry. Also see "A Study Of Dogen" by Masao Abe for a presentation in brief of some of Spinoza's philosophy, and some contrast with Dogen's (the 13<sup>th</sup> century Japanese Zen Master who established Soto Zen in Japan). But Spinoza started somewhere. He did not end up with the type of deity we have accepted in large degree in America. It might be more monist-pantheistic, I'm not sure. (I have to look further into Spinoza).

The point is, Spinoza started somewhere, he developed a formal system, and made any number of statements. The same might be said of the person who gives charity (whether financial or wisdom), the person who writes a nation's constitution or carries out the state, the citizen who works in a factory with certain training, the philosopher who reflects on the nature of things. Or the person who is psychotic, in psychiatry's diagnosis. But I would challenge psychiatry that the psych team, the individual, and those he or she touches should scrutinize and reflect on just this fact, and that he started from somewhere with certain givens, just as did Spinoza. Zen might not rely on formal notions or logic, Minsky might find that formal logic does not explain either this world or how we think and work with it, and Spinoza had his description of God from it.

What can each of these, and the psychotic individual, tell us about what his or her thought-and-world-space is like? What if the individual has rationale for his or her thoughts or action? How does this all play out? Should it not then be the domains of life (the mental, the existential, the social, the societal, the experiential, and the physical)?

What if there is mental event A and event B in the external world? How can this be described by any type of person, many individuals in society – and how are they similar, or how do they vary in the specific situation, priority, shading, interpretation, and meaning? What of thought and praxis both ancient and modern can work with diverse domains of life, and yield workable, tractable material, perhaps traceable-untraceable?

What if it's 1 psychotic thought of 10 and 5 routine and 4 very realistic and dimension, with strong merit?

What if it's 0 psychotic thoughts-behavior-action, but 10 unusual beliefs?

What if there are existential, social, societal, or experiential problematics, or not? Is it a reaction or response to some temporal event? Is it that the individual has gotten lost in a thicket? Does the individual have or set up a serious life problem, honestly so ascertained? What is its nature, what is the source, and what lies behind the fact, of these or of the domains of life?

Is it that objects are real, to be adhered to; or that the universe is deterministic or not; or that the grounds for Buddha-expression are no-thing, nonobjectifiable, nonsubstantial? Or is it Spinoza, or Heidegger?

All of these questions make a difference, as does action or not, and its expression. And, Nagarjuna's statement comes to mind, "In an act, consciousness and action are one." So we should scrutinize, juxtapose, and work with these statements and questions, and penetrate the matter as clearly as we can.

Once one sees this type of thing, the entire field becomes illuminated.

## **Resources**

"Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way" by Nagarjuna translated by Nishijima.

"The Society Of Mind" by Marvin Minsky.

"The Emotion Machine" by Marvin Minsky.

"The Lankavatara Sutra" translated by D. T. Suzuki.

"A Study Of Dogen" by Masao Abe.

"The Logic Of Faith" by Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel.

For me, zazen has been key.

Further Questions On The Psychotic States: Spinoza, Minsky, And Zen

Page 2 of 2