

Further Reflections on the Final Reading

Here is an addendum to our final phone call. As I mentioned, it grows out of this sentence (p. 88) in DTS: “When the past-centered identities of each moment shape our present responses, emotionality builds.”

The question I want to consider is why a commitment to identity—to sameness and repetition—leads to emotionality. The starting point is to consider the opposite: a present in which we are simply present, not *responding* to what emerges on the basis of the past. When we reflect on this possibility, we see that our responses to what appears add a layer of complexity to what is fundamental more simple. First we step away from the present into our identities, then, on that basis, we respond to what appears.

That additional layer, that added complexity that insists on the sameness of the past, is the source of emotionality. It is its own kind of neurosis, as Rinpoche suggests. Why should this be so? Here are a few ways of thinking about this:

- Speaking abstractly, we could say that emotionality arises when we try to view “the multiple complexity of pastness” through the lens of a single-minded identity . . . [reducing] the powerful dynamic of unity within multiplicity to the mindless projecting forward of the past.” (88-89)
- The moment we accept our identity as the reality of who we are, “our claims of independence ring hollow.” Not only do we fall into the trap of being determined by our own past, but (90) “deep within, the suspicion festers” that our own sense of vitality and aliveness is a hoax. Emotionality is the marker of this inauthenticity or fraud.
- So it’s not just that ‘I get angry at you’ because of something you did—that is just the occasion for my anger. The anger, the emotionality, comes from my own frustration and sense of inauthenticity. We insist on position and territory, and even though we “perform an ongoing miracle” (90) in turning the ‘happened’ into a simulation of the dynamic of time (miraculous because doing so requires us to draw on the dynamic of time despite ourselves, and thus to step outside the realm of pastness even as we affirm it.

To explore this further, you could explore the relationship among the following set of terms:

- identity
- positions
- territory
- sameness
- recording, the prerecorded
- repetition
- the happened
- substance
- objective time
- commitment

At the very close of the chapter, two additional terms are added to this list: the witness and the

owner, the one who claims and proclaims. We will have the chance to look with care at the witness-structure in the next program.

Exercises for January 13 practice session

We have been working with the ppf structure, and with the relate concept of lineage. There is a sequence of Exercises in TSK that explores these themes: Exercises 18-22A. I will post these on the website.

My sense is that some of these exercises need to be performed in the context of formal practice; in other words, they are sitting practices. Others can be carried out as you go about your life. Here is how I would break it down:

Ex. 18A is a sitting practice

Ex. 18B is a walking-around practice

Ex. 19 has both aspects

Ex. 20 is a sitting practice, because if you try to do it when you walk around, you are trying to inhabit two temporal orders at once—like trying to carry on a phone conversation while driving. Still, as long as there's no risk of crashing, feel free to experiment.

Ex. 21 has both aspects

Ex. 22A potentially has both—work this out for yourself.

I have not included Exercise 22B because it seems to me to go in a different direction.