

Orientation for Week 4: DTS 45-47
March 11, 2012

I suggested in the phone call that the chapter we are currently reading in DTS is remarkably clear on what is going on in our ordinary way of being, and why. We insist on substance and identities, which means that we accept limits, borders, restrictions, and countless obstacles to knowledge. And all of this happens because—or at least, occurs in connection with—a particular understanding of space. We accept that space is what holds particular objects (Usually we would say ‘physical objects,’ but even if we broaden the concept of space to include the mental realm, we still regard mental space as the container for thoughts, memories, etc.

The solvent for this restrictive way of seeing and being is a knowing that knows appearance as appearance, while “dissolving” substance (DTS 45). Substance itself continues to appear, and in that sense nothing has changed. But we do not accept the truth of its claims to be real.

This non-acceptance takes the form of challenging ordinary space. This is the basis for the suggestion (a kind of thought experiment, rather than a practice) to flatten space. Conventional, three-dimensional space goes hand in hand with substance: it supports it and authenticates it. At the same time (something we have not been focusing on), it authenticates the self as the one who engages or interacts with a world of real, substantial things. Flattening space flattens substance, and also flattens the one who knows. In doing this, it opens the way for a different way of knowing: the inward-outward knowing of *eknosis*, identified in the previous chapter.

I emphasized in the phone call that as far as I can see there is no good way to practice ‘flattening’ space; as DTS says, we have no access to such a realm. You might think here of a black hole: when something falls into a black hole (think here of the ‘less than zero,’ or ‘zeroless,’ we no longer have any way to communicate with it.

So how can we proceed? My sense—we discussed it in the phone call—is that we need to discover the fullness of our embodiment, of the Body of Knowledge and the heart of space. Here are two exercises to work with toward that end. The first is Exercise 5 in DTS, called ‘Abiding in Thought,’ found at p. 262. Note that the idea of ‘thought’ in this exercise is quite broad. It includes feelings, emotions and thoughts, and in fact all mental events (I would include perceptions as well.)

The second exercise is based on the following idea: When two people interact, they establish a shared space that is not the same as the space inhabited by each of them individually. This new, shared space will have no special significance if neither person is ready to let go of the commitment to his or her own space: it will be covered over by the presupposed. But if you are ready to let go of your own space, ready to challenge its established dimensionality, you may find in the ‘space between’ that operates for you and the other person a different dimensionality and a different embodiment, one that doesn’t belong to you or to anyone. Try this out in the many simple interactions you have during the week. What do you discover?