

Session 5, Unit 14, Week 4
LOK 201-208; SDTS 17-21
TSK Ex. 25

Transition and Orientation

The phone discussion this week brought out a key point. Here is one way of formulating it:

The usual ‘space-as-empty’ at work in our ordinary understanding can be called into question. We can do this through a transitional move in which we explore space as a ‘field’ that is full rather than empty, a field we can access directly by turning away from the content (objects) that show up in space, in favor of engaging the immediacy of the field itself. Can we make a similar transitional move away from the ‘self-across-linear-time’ story that turns time into the sequence of moments that unfold endlessly from past to present to future?

The exercise we did during the phone call invited you to make that transitional move in a very direct way: de-centering the narrative sequence of events in time that usually occupies our attention in favor of the dynamic aliveness that powers that sequence. Please work with this exercise as the walkabout for the week. Can you occasionally shift your focus in this way? Or does the primary story of the self inevitably reassert itself?

Is there an exercise or a way of seeing that would let us build a bridge between the linear-time alternative of the self-story and the dynamic underlying aliveness of? In the phone call, I mention ‘Going without Going’ as one possible exercise. Eliana mentioned ‘Subject-Object Reversal’ (TSK Ex. 30) as another possibility. You might also explore the sequence LOK Ex. 22-24. All these exercises (and there are certainly others) challenge the position of the self at the center of the narrative, the self as knower, owner, and actor.

The reading for this next week continues to explore this position of ‘self-at-the-center’, the “founding identity.” The chapter from LOK in part points to certain difficulties with the logic of a self that claims an identity not subject to time. It also invites us to consider the uneasy relationship between the self and the objective world it claims to own and know. Notice the assertion at 205: “The founding story and the narratives it supports are maintained, but the dynamic inherent in those stories is lost.” Is this a clue to how we might renew our link to time’s underlying dynamic?

What about the discussion in SDTS, which takes us back to the fundamentals of ‘here’ and ‘there’ and ‘from’ and ‘to’? Does emphasizing the links between categories we ordinarily separate out as opposites help undermine our commitments to the particular position that the self takes and the meanings the self imposes? Does this approach shed light on the assigned exercise (TSK Ex. 25)?

For those of you in the training program, here is an assignment. Look at one or two other instances in LOK where the term 'witness' is discussed (The index to the book will give you all the references you need.) Does reflecting on these examples help clarify the role of the witness in the discussions that we are involved with at present?