

Session 6, Unit 17, Week 4

Transition and Orientation

I want to return to an issue that came up in the phone call, and that might have been left unclear. The reading for last week contained this very helpful statement (TSK 206):

“When all tendency to be manipulated by meanings and goals has died away, real balance can shine through.”

As the text goes on to say, when the meaning-giving tendency (which is also the naming tendency, the pointing-out tendency, or the referring tendency), dies away, we are left in situation of “nothing to say.” Compare the possibility mentioned at TSK 194, that “each situation is, at least potentially, . . . infinite or all-embracing. Both these descriptions suggest the possibility of arriving at ‘wholeness’, which we discussed in the phone call.

However, we are at present exploring a different kind of wholeness, or perhaps a particular way in which this wholeness manifests. This is the wholeness of the ‘logos’ or the ‘read-out’. Last week’s reading emphasized the insight that this wholeness is self-contained: whatever manifests is unfounded by anything outside the ‘logos’ of the whole; in fact, there is no ‘outside’. There is only (TSK 196) “a convincing message, which includes a convinced you.” In one way, this suggests (TSK 199) that “all existence and experience is like an apparition, a surface with no substantial core” However, if we ‘conclude’ that everything is just an illusion, or ‘only experience’, we are still “saying something,” which means we are stopping short.

Getting clear on the operation of the ‘logos’ gives us a way to see that our ‘saying’ (which is ultimately grounded in the saying of the ‘logos’) can itself be a way into the wholeness that cannot be captured in any saying. When we know with the knowing of the logos, whatever is said—and this includes the logic that makes the saying make sense—is not limited by what is pointed out. We transcend all pointings.

The reading from KTS for this week (411-425) makes clear from the outset that the ‘logos’, which gives the basic order of the world we inhabit, is itself a knowing. We can know the knowing inherent in the ‘logos’ (a type of knowing labeled here as “cognition,” using this word in a technical sense.) Cognition is just our ordinary knowledge, reoriented to focus on possible modes of knowing rather than the specific objects that the self knows on the basis of its concerns and needs.

Cognition has the capacity to know ‘through’ the ‘logos’ (KTS 415), which seems to equal knowing with the knowing of the ‘logos’. Is it also the same as (KTS 417) ‘embodying’ the ‘logos’?

Finally, notice how the discussion at 417 turns back again to a focus on the growth of knowledge (compare “love of knowledge”) as a way to overcome ‘self-imposed’ limits on cognition.

Here’s an experiment. I recorded myself reading a chapter of KTS, thinking it might be useful to listen to a slow, thoughtful reading aloud. Try listening a couple of times (the reading takes about 7 minutes), and post something online about whether you found it helpful or interesting.