

Opening Unknown Time Fall 2012
Orientation for Week 5 DTS 85-87

Lots to discuss this week, even before we get to the reading.

1. First, I want to remind everyone that there will be a **TSK workshop this summer, from August 8-11**. We will post that information on the website, of course, but I raise it now to encourage you to consider attending. It's really a powerful support for study of the TSK vision to engage it intensively over several days and with other people. Let your friends know too; even without prior exposure to TSK, the workshop should be beneficial. If you live at a distance, consider combining the workshop with a private retreat at Ratna Ling or with a program at the Institute. I am organizing an invitation-only conference at Ratna Ling immediately after the retreat, and it may be that I could arrange to meet with people doing a private retreat at that time, at least for some discussions in the morning.

2. I mentioned in the phone call that I would like to change the way posts are handled for this class. I am happy to see that there has been a fair amount of activity on the website this fall. At the same time, this increases my frustration that someone coming to the website and looking at the Discussion Section will see virtually no activity, because all of the class-related discussions are password protected.

Accordingly, I'd like to strip away the password protection from the online-class discussions, so that anyone can see them. The downside of this is that the posts will no longer be restricted to the group. This might possibly lead to a little confusion, though I don't think this will be much of an issue. I'm more concerned that if the posts are public, it will inhibit discussion. So I'd like your feedback on that point, or any other concerns, recommendations, etc.

The way the new approach would work will be like this: we would do away with all the discussion categories (though I think I'll keep 'Jack's Corner'. Any post will go into the same 'pool' of posts. The way to distinguish them will be through the use of 'tags'. When you write a post, instead of choosing what categories it goes in, you will 'tag' it (using a list of suggested tags or making your own). For instance, you might take a post with the word 'time', and perhaps also the word 'online'. By searching on tags, you will automatically be led to all posts on the same topic. That way, we won't have a whole list of categories that are completely inactive. It should give a much better sense of the activity taking place on the site.

I'll wait a few days for reactions. But if we go ahead, we will write some instructions for the Discussion area that should be quite clear.

3. In the phone call, I said that in Week 6 we would start in on the next chapter, moving from the topic of the past to the topic of the future. But I was wrong; we are deferring consideration of the future till the winter. This means you will have to exercise some patience. A focus on the past, on 'the happeneded', leaves us stuck with identity and identities. It can make it seem that we have no way to free ourselves from the pre-established positions and conditions. That is because freedom is much more connected with the future. Still, the work we are doing now is deeply important. The ppf structure, and now the focus on lineages, offer alternative visions of time, and by engaging them, we are slowly moving away from the closed and lifeless model of time we have in effect.

4. Finally, about a practice session: let's set it for Sunday, January 13. And while we're at it, let's set the rest of the year:

February 3-March 10	Winter
April 14-May 19	Spring

About summer: perhaps we could do a summer session this year, though usually we don't. That way we would be ready to start something new in the fall.

If we do, here are proposed dates:

June 30-August 4. That we would end just before the Ratna Ling workshop/intensive starts.

Now, about the exercise for the week. I have suggested that you practice tracing the lineages—multiple, dynamic, interconnected—of what arises. These are not the lineage of objective time, thought to contain all past moments. They are the lineages of objects and the interactions of object, of my relation to what I encounter in my world and to my own past and future (so that the ppf structure is itself a kind of lineage. By 'tracing', I mean in the first instance that you simply be sensitive to this temporal dimension—memory shaped by intention—in your encounters and your actions.

There is an exercise in *Knowledge of Time and Space*, p. 237, that invites exploring lineage. Here, however, the tracing is linked more to space than time. This is not an obstacle. It helps remind us that 'objects' appear both in space and time.

Tracing Lineages

Consider the possibility that whatever appears can be traced through a variety of 'lineages'.

For example, an object can be traced to its component elements; alternatively, it can be traced to the whole of which it forms a part. There could be tracing in the direction of greater subtlety or underlying energies; tracing in new dimensions, both visible and invisible; tracing of

associated sensory and mental operations (including those involved in tracing); tracing of historical conditions and causes. Lineages can be investigated in various domains: structural, chemical, biological, mathematical, philosophical, therapeutic, linguistic, cultural.

Finally, here is a short fable from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* that speaks directly to the question of lineage . . . and of the relationship between space and time:

In vain, great-hearted Kublai, shall I attempt to describe Zaira, city of high bastions. I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing.

The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamp post and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamp post to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the tilt of a guttering and a cat's progress along it as he slips into the same window; the firing range of a gunboat which has suddenly appeared beyond the cape and the bomb that destroys the guttering; the rips in the fish net and the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock.

As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

To close, I will say just a few words about the short reading for the coming week. In Week 4 we looked at the way that our insistence on identity commits us to living in the past, in the realm of the 'happened', thus cutting us off from the dynamic of time. The section we read this week reminds us that we too assert and enact our own identity, confirming 'pastness' and sameness, affirming our lack of freedom. It goes on to work out the consequences of adopting this structure, the loss of freedom and above all the ever increasing weight of the time.

You might want to consider here the brief reference to technology as the governing form of knowledge compatible with identity and sameness. Here is a possible analogy: just as our technology disturbs the balance of the earth's climate, leading to a melting of glacial ice that threatens to flood our cities and our homes, so the way of knowing that relies on identities and privileges the past threatens to flood and wash away whatever has meaning, whatever can guide us toward a life that has value and meaning, a life where love and compassion are the intimate truth of time.