

Spring 2012 Online TSK: Orientation for Week 3

Last week we looked at the role of thought in relation to space. I suggested that thoughts create or communicate ‘worlds’ (another word for “the interpretive structures that give experience continuity”). As we will see in the reading for next week, such interpretive structures are closely linked to the “field communiqué,” discussed in the previous course.

Just to be clear, when I say that thoughts create worlds, I am not saying that thoughts create the physical world; at least, not in the most obvious sense. The relation between thoughts and substance happens at a deeper level. This ‘real world’ we inhabit is itself an interpretive structure. And the very fact that physical reality is independent of our interpretations (The tree that falls on my house at night, unseen and unthought of, will still crush the house) is itself part of the interpretive structure.) That structure may well allow us to deal effectively with the world around us. But because it allows for some possibilities and not others, it sets limits on what is possible.

The worlds that thoughts bring into being, the worlds we inhabit, have their own space, time, and knowledge. But—keeping the focus on space—the space that ‘constitutes’ the interpretive structure carried by the thought is a space that has been completely filled up in advance. The space that makes up part of the world or interpretive structure carried by the thought is in fact manufactured *by or through* the thought. It is a simulated space, one that lacks the power to accommodate. It is a space that does not allow for freedom.

Here’s an analogy. Suppose you are looking at an image on your computer that shows a house in the middle of a field, with the sun shining above. In this image of a house, the availability of open space (the sky above the house let’s say, or the empty garage next to the house) is not really space at all: it’s just pixels of light on the screen, no different from the pixels that show the house. I couldn’t park a car inside the garage, though I could replace some of the garage pixels with car pixels to show an image of a car. The space ‘carried’ by a thought is like that; it’s a representation of space. We live inside such representations.

The source of our difficulties is that thoughts insist that these representations are ‘real’, and we accept this claim. As the reading for Week 3 says, thoughts communicate the *substantiality* of their content. The reading for this coming week investigates this substantiality, and finds that it emerges out of our commitments and intentions. That’s what we’ll be investigating.

If you can set aside the time to practice ‘Space between Thoughts’ that might help orient you to themes for the week (even though, as I’ve said, this is not the approach we’re emphasizing). I’d suggest setting aside at least half an hour for this practice, and to plan on doing it several times over the week. Otherwise, the two other practices I suggested for last week are a good focus. They can be done as you go about your activities or when you feel like taking a short break.

Finally, let me remind you of the upcoming intensive, August 14-17, at Ratna Ling. This would be a time to practice ‘Space between Thoughts’, and lots more.