

Opening Unknown Time – Spring 2013

Orientation for Week 6, 138-144

We are caught within a temporal order, and will remain so, unless we can find a way for consciousness to “somehow remain connected to the hidden time of founding.” (137) If we find this way, we may be able to “reshape the core issues” that define the concerns of religion, ethics, and other key human concerns. What a remarkable possibility!

But just how is this possible? The reading for Week 5 suggested some possible points of access to a different knowing; for instance (134), in “the reading out of each temporal projection,” “the communicating forward of what is projected,” or “the coordination of multiple orders.”

These possibilities may sound abstract initially, but each of them points toward an aspect of experience that is available to us. It’s just that we don’t usually think to look in these places, and it may take us a while to find the right ‘place’ to look. It’s just like what happens when someone is trying to point something out in the distance and at first we don’t know what to look for, and then suddenly it becomes quite obvious.

In the phone call we explored a different form of access: inhabiting two temporal orders simultaneously. You can listen to the recording for the details; here just let me point out that the practice is one that is easily available and also easily modified. In fact, this approach, which refuses to hold fast to a particular position, may be related to the shaping that we could in this way “reshape” core human issues and concerns.

In the reading for this week, we build on a point mentioned on 135: the indispensability of time’s active happening: a happening not bound to the conventions of this or any other temporal order. This active happening could be understood as being in “perfect harmony” with our being. Activating this perfect harmony is not our aim, because our ‘being’, in the sense being referred to here, is already shaped by the temporal orders we inhabit. Instead, we are interested in the awareness or knowing that allows for this taking form. In one of the wonderfully evocative and puzzling phrases that DTS so often makes use of, this temporal knowing is “both more and less than possible.” This phrase may sound cryptic, but in fact it summarizes beautifully what much of the chapter is about.

To go beyond the temporal order, we can trace the arising of the order. Of course, doing this requires a mode of tracing that does not simply activate or establish a different order—the order of that tracing.

The gateway to such a tracing, it is suggested, is the unknownness of the future. Compare this to the ‘unknownness’ of time’s “active happening” (135). Is it the same? Different? What about the “more fundamental unknown dynamic” introduced at 141?