

CCI TSK Online Programs
Spring 2009 Conducting Time and Knowledge
Guidance for Week Four Reading: DTS 85-90

We continue examining the nature of the temporal order we inhabit and the consequences of doing so. We will look at the notion of ‘temporal order’ later in this program, but we have a working sense of it now: a structuring of time in terms of past, present, and future that puts certain things ‘out of order’, in the twofold sense that the English term suggests: first, something that no longer works properly; second, aspects of experience, or of the range of the possible, that do not conform to what is allowed.

The reading explores in some detail what is ‘in order’. Nothing is allowed that has not already happened. It is as though we are characters in a play, following a script. As this image (and those in the text) suggest, our sense that we are free is mistaken in a fundamental way.

It is important to get as clear as possible on what it means to say that we are bound to the past, that we are not free. This does not mean simply understanding the line of reasoning laid out in the text. The real assignment is to see this in our lives, in the way we act. We need to discover (look clearly at) our conditioning, and to see the ways that it feeds emotionality (see p. 88)

In the conference call for Week 3, we worked with an exercise that can help us see that. It is a variant of the exercise we have already worked with, taken from p. 99 of DTS. Here we are looking at how time recreates itself from moment to moment. More specifically, we are looking at the dynamic of this recreation. When we make that dynamic our focus, the content of what has happened no longer engages us in the same way, and this is what gives us the chance to look at it with greater clarity. It is this clarity that can help us move into a different temporal mode.

Here is another ‘exercise’ that may appeal to some of you. A lot of our mental energy (more for some people than others) goes into explanation and justification, two operations that bind us to the past and the ‘happened’. Before I do something, I explain to myself (or others) why I am doing it and why it is a good thing to do. Before I make a suggestion, I lay the groundwork that makes it legitimate for me to be making that suggestion. When I am criticized for something I did, I lay out all the reasons that make it the right thing to do. See if you can notice these tendencies in operation. If so, experiment with letting go of them, and just acting. As an alternative, or in addition, set aside a few minutes in the evening to reflect back and notice times when you did this, either to justify a small action to yourself or in interactions with others.