

Another long chapter this week. I hope you share my sense that our themes are beginning to crystallize in a fruitful way. Notice especially the continued focus on the relation between time and knowing.

This chapter follows closely on the previous one, continuing to explore what it would mean to “turn inward.” It does so in a surprising way: by telling a story meant to ‘deconstruct’ the usual stories. The chapter itself is the telling, so we cannot accept it as anything more than another story: the story of conducting. It is a story of limited options, of “separation and dichotomy.” But that, of course, is not the point of the telling. Or rather, it is not the final word, not a final conclusion.

The way out, the path that leads beyond the story, begins to take shape when we learn something about the “remarkable not-knowing” that has taken on so central a role in our lives. It becomes more fully formed when the inquiry turns to the ways in which we conduct time, itself the conducting medium. “Once the temporal order is identified as a construct, it can in principle be differently constructed.” But that discussion comes at the close of the chapter, which we will discuss in the week that follows, the last week of this program.

I don’t see anything especially challenging in this chapter, because it builds on what has gone before. As a practical exploration of how we could conduct time differently, you might try working with DTS Ex. 20, pp. 324–25, which focuses on the senses. The issue here has to do with sensing as a way of knowing, one that has the potential to evolve without reference to any telling or conducting. Since that is so, we shouldn’t expect really the text to provide ‘authoritative’ instructions, and it doesn’t. But the instructions regarding the instructions are clear: just jump in, and don’t worry about how to do it.

Suppose for this week we try an experiment. Can each of you post one question or thought? I’d be curious to see what we get. For those of you who have not posted before, my advice parallels the instructions for the exercise: don’t worry if you’re not sure of the mechanics of how to do a post. If you fail that’s okay; if you get it partly right, we can take care of the rest.