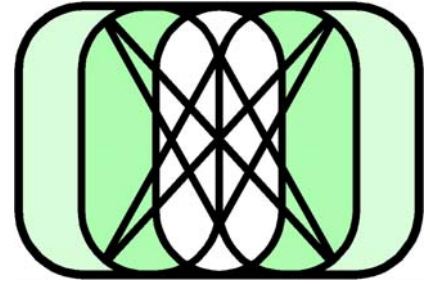


Church of Creation

Order of Service

Sunday, February 1, 2009 8:00 AM



Welcome:

You are always already chosen

Hymn: Blah-Blah

Announcements and sharing

This week in Semiotics:

Lost In Space...

Birthday acknowledgment:

Langston Hughes (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967, aged 65)
American Poet of the Harlem Renaissance

Fritjof Capra (born February 1, 1939, 70 today)
Austrian-American Theoretical Physicist and Philosopher of Science

Process:

One...

Message:

Groundhog Day: This Again?

Dialogue on Groundhog Day: This Again?

Next week: February 8

Nirvana Day: Release from Samsara

Welcome:

Welcome to the Church of Creation! ‘Welcome’ is one of those everyday words mostly spoken and heard automatically. ‘Welcome’ comes to us from the Old English, *wilcuma*, which means, “Your arrival is in alignment with our choice.” This coming together and welcoming is an act of choosing. By welcoming you, we are communicating that you are always already chosen. You don’t have to do anything to be chosen; you already are. Thank you for Being.

There is also nothing to believe or disbelieve. This is a church without a creed or a code. Recognizing that believing or disbelieving may get in the way of living authentically, one of our practices is to suspend belief in favor of inquiries into the unknowable infinity of Being. Notice that I said suspend: you do not have to give up your beliefs. Your beliefs will still be available to you, if you want to take them up again. It is always your choice.

Inquiring into the unknowable produces distinctions that make a difference in one’s experience of life. We promise that an open inquiry will give you power over the matter in question.

The distinction between what and that is a basic example of a distinction. The what-it-is of something (its whatness) describes the properties of the thing: its weight and measure, its content and dimensions, how it shows up in consciousness. That-it-is, or thatness, is the ontological aspect of a subject: the fullness of its existence. While whatness is considered important, it is mostly a matter of preference or point-of-view. Thatness is crucial and primary. **What** you eat is important to your life and health. **That** you eat is crucial. This distinction shows up everywhere. Given the subject of church music, we could say that **what** you sing is merely important. What matters is **that** you are joyfully expressed. In our ongoing experiment on bringing aliveness to our music, we invite you to...

Announcements and Sharing:

Super Bowl XLIII

The Super Bowl was created as part of the merger agreement between the National Football League (NFL) and its competitive rival, the American Football League (AFL). After its inception in 1920, the NFL outlasted several rival leagues before the AFL began play in 1960. The aggressive competition for top players and loyalty among fans led to serious merger talks between the two leagues in 1966, culminating in a merger agreement, announced on June 8, 1966. One of the conditions of the AFC-NFC Merger was that the winners of each league's championship game would meet in a contest to determine the "world champion of football." NFL Commissioner at the time, Pete Rozelle, wanted to call the game "The Big One." During the discussions to iron out the details, AFC founder and Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt (whose brothers, Nelson and William tried to corner the silver market in the late 1970s) had jokingly referred to the proposed inter league championship as the "Super Bowl". Hunt thought of the name after seeing his children playing with a toy called a Super Ball; the small, round ball is now on display at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. The name was consistent with postseason college football games which had long been known as "bowl games." The "bowl" term originated from the Rose Bowl Game, which was in turn named for the bowl-shaped stadium in which it is played. Hunt only meant his suggested name to be a 'working title' until a better name could be found. The name "Super Bowl" became permanent.

Ground Hog Day

This tradition also stems from similar beliefs associated with *Candlemas Day* and Groundhog Day. Candlemas, also known as the *Purification of the Virgin* or the Presentation, coincides with the earlier pagan observance *Imbolc*. Imbolc is one of the four principal festivals of the pagan calendar, celebrated among pagans, wiccans and other similar cultures either at the beginning of February or at the first local signs of Spring. Most commonly it is celebrated on February 2, since this is the cross-quarter day on the solar calendar, halfway between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox in the northern hemisphere. Originally dedicated to the goddess Brigid, in the Christian period it was adopted as St Brigid's Day.

As the light grows longer
The cold grows stronger

If Candlemas be fair and bright
Winter will have another flight

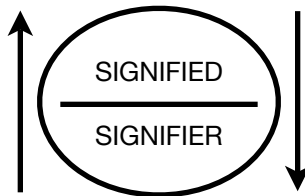
If Candlemas be cloud and snow
Winter will be gone and not come again

A farmer should on Candlemas day
Have half his corn and half his hay

On Candlemas day if thorns hang a drop
You can be sure of a good pea crop

Stimulus, porkulus, pukulus

Semiotics is a general term for the theory of sign systems. It is an inquiry into the way human beings signify their world in language and derive meaning. Through the study of semiotics, we can see how sign systems are used by media, politics and popular culture to manipulate reactions and manufacture consent. It provides us with a valuable look behind the curtain, and insights into how it works and how it doesn't. Beyond what is merely important and interesting about semiotics, we find that language is the medium in which human beings create the Universe. Using language rigorously and precisely supports complete communications and the fulfillment of possibilities.



This week in Semiotics: Representation and Reality

The medium of language presumes to be 'transparent reflection': this feature of the medium tends to blind us, as language-users to the part it plays in constructing our experiential worlds. 'Realistic' texts attempt to imitate so closely that which they depict that they may be experienced as virtually identical (and lacking mediation). Obviously, purely verbal signifiers cannot be mistaken for their real world referents. While it is relatively easy for us to regard words as conventional symbols for signified concepts, it is more difficult to recognize the conventionality of images which *resemble* their signifieds. Consider that an image is not what it represents — the presence of an image of something marks the absence of of the something itself. The difference between signifier and signified is fundamental. Nevertheless, when the signifiers are experienced as highly 'realistic' — as in the case of photography and film, forms of language and communication that do not seem limited by words — it is particularly easy to slip into regarding them as identical with their signifieds. In contrast even to realistic painting and drawing, photographs seem far less obviously 'authored' by a human being. Just as 'the word is not the thing' and 'the map is not the territory,' a photograph or television news footage is not what it depicts. Yet in

the 'common-sense' attitude of everyday life we routinely treat these high modality signifiers as though they were. Indeed, many realistic film narratives and documentaries seem to invite this confusion of representation with reality. Television is frequently described as a 'window to the world' (WTTW) and we usually assume that 'the camera never lies.' We know of course that 'the dog in the film can bark but it cannot bite' although, when 'absorbed', we may 'suspend disbelief' in the context of what we know to be enacted drama. However, we are frequently inclined to accept 'the evidence of our own eyes' even when events are mediated by the cameras of journalists. Highly 'realistic' representations in any medium always involve a point-of-view. Representations which claim to be 'real' deny the unavoidable difference between map and territory. Lewis Carroll satirized the logical consequences of neglecting the importance of this difference:

Modality refers to the status, authority and reliability of a message, to its ontological status, or to its value as truth or fact. We make **modality judgments**:

Formal features

3D — flat
detailed — abstract
colour — monochrome
edited — unedited
moving — still
audible — silent

Content features

possible — impossible
plausible — implausible
familiar — unfamiliar
current — distant in time
local — distant in space

'What a useful thing a pocket-map is!' I remarked.

'That's another thing we've learned from your Nation,' said Mein Herr, 'map-making. But we've carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?'

'About six inches to the mile.'

'Only six inches!' exclaimed Mein Herr. 'We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!'

'Have you used it much?' I enquired.

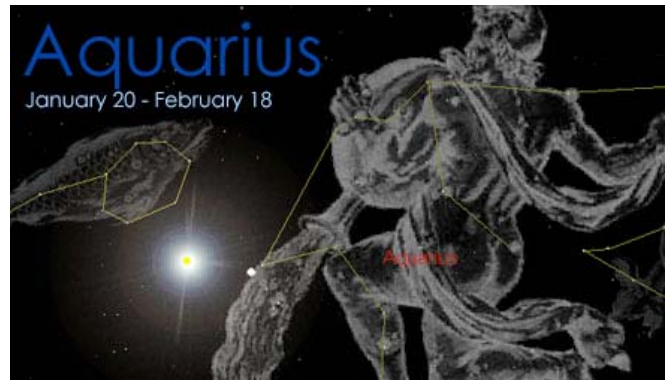
'It has never been spread out, yet,' said Mein Herr: 'the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.'

— Lewis Carroll.

Sylvie and Bruno Concluded. 1893. Page 169

We experience life and reality in the drift, so when we attempt to reflect our experience in language, we attempt to reflect that reality in our speaking. What we have forgotten in the collapse of distinctions is that the drift of our everyday experience is already encoded in language, so we are describing something in language that exists only in language already. We attempt to accurately speak about and listen for a reality that only exists in our speaking and listening to begin with.

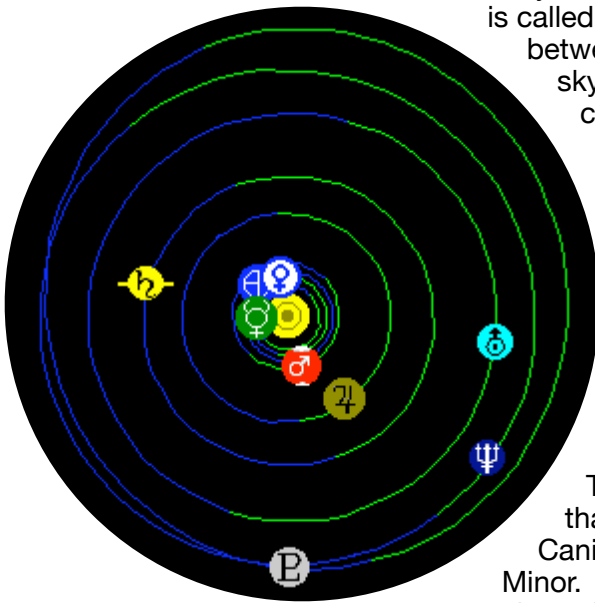
The ever-present sky is, in a way, an overarching context for all that happens here on Earth. Reason would give us doubts that the stars could move us any more than we could move the stars, although it is possible. Even when astrological projections correlate with what is going on with our lives, it is useful to remember that correlation does not indicate causation, and whenever one considers a possibility to be the “Truth,” it becomes a lie. For us of course, it is just inspiring to look upward and see the Universe showing off. Our purpose here is to expand our awareness and explore all inquiries, and so we look outward from this planet to get...



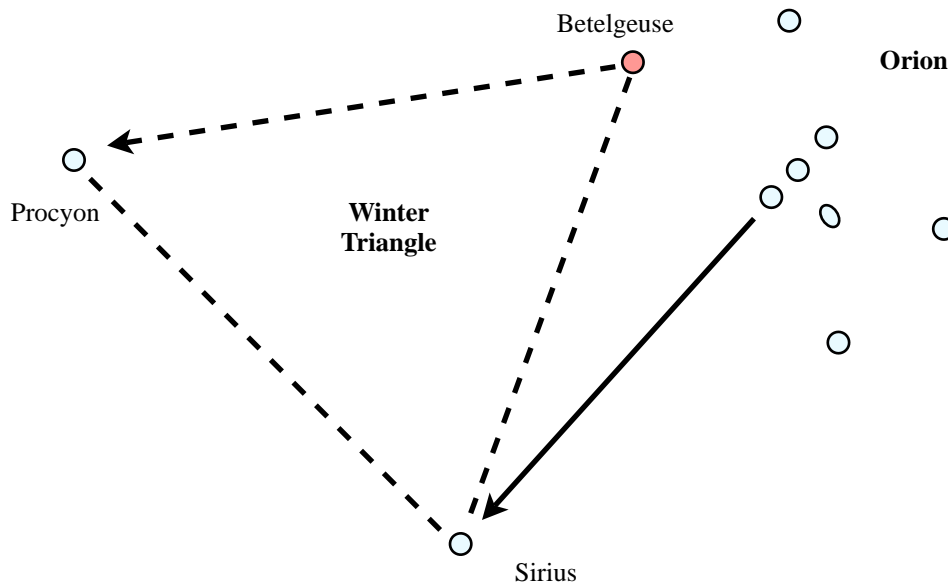
Lost In Space...

This week, **February 1st through February 7th**, we begin the week with Mercury having completed its retrograde movement and turning direct, at about 2 o'clock this morning.

Thursday, Uranus and Saturn are on opposite sides of the Sun. This is called an opposition. We are a few degrees off from directly between them, by the way. The god Uranus, the god of the sky, was the father of Saturn, the god of agriculture and civilization, and they did not get along. Astrologically, Uranus is associated with change and the breaking of conventions, while Saturn is associated with limitations, practicality and conventions. Needless to say, it is a tense opposition. We may feel like we're being pulled one way or another, and it is useful to keep going forward in the direction of you Word.



Here in the middle, between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox, the Winter triangle has been brilliant. The red shoulder star of Orion is Betelgeuse. That is the apex of the triangle. The super-bright star that is in line with Orion's belt is Sirius, the Dog Star in Canis Major. Completing the triangle is Procyon in Canis Minor. So you have Orion the Hunter and his two hunting dogs on a hunt through the Winter sky.



Birthday Acknowledgement: February 1st

Langston Hughes (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967, aged 65) was an American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist. Hughes is known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.



Harlem (sometimes called “Dream Deferred”)

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

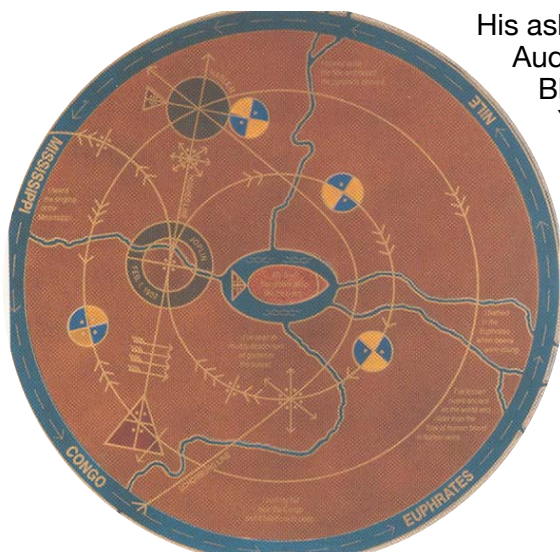
Or crust and sugar over

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?



His ashes are interred in the foyer of the Langston Hughes Auditorium of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture on Malcolm X Avenue in Harlem, New York City. There is a great terrazzo and bronze plaque marking the spot where his ashes are buried, showing the four rivers mentioned in the poem and inscribed with the line “*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*”

Fritjof Capra (born February 1, 1939, 70 today)
Austrian-American Theoretical Physicist and Philosopher of Science

Born in Vienna, Austria, Capra earned a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the University of Vienna in 1966. He has done research on particle physics and systems theory, and has written popular books on the implications of science, notably *The Tao of Physics*, subtitled *An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*. *The Tao of Physics* makes an assertion that physics and metaphysics are both inexorably leading to the same knowledge.



“**Systems thinking** emerged from a series of interdisciplinary dialogues among biologists, psychologists, and ecologists, in the 1920s and ‘30s. In all these fields, scientists realized that a living system – organism, ecosystem, or social system – is an integrated whole whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller parts. The ‘systemic’ properties are properties of the whole, which none of its parts have. So, systems thinking involves a shift of perspective from the parts to the whole. The early systems thinkers coined the phrase, ‘The whole is more than the sum of its parts.’”

“I had gone through a long training in theoretical physics and had done several years of research. At the same time, I had become very interested in eastern mysticism and had begun to see the parallels to modern physics. I was particularly attracted to the puzzling aspects of Zen which reminded me of the puzzles in quantum theory. At first, however, relating the two was a purely intellectual exercise. To overcome the gap between rational, analytical thinking and the meditative experience of mystical truth, was, and still is, very difficult for me.”

— from the Preface to *The Tao of Physics*

“We do not need to invent sustainable human communities. We can learn from societies that have lived sustainably for centuries. We can also model communities after nature's ecosystems, which are sustainable communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms. Since the outstanding characteristic of the biosphere is its inherent ability to sustain life, a sustainable human community must be designed in such a manner that its technologies and social institutions honor, support, and cooperate with nature's inherent ability to sustain life.”

Process:

One...

We are about to participate in a process. The process is a way to bring something that has not been experienced or experienced fully — or even something impossible to experience — into ordinary experience. There is nothing that you are supposed to get from it. There is no way that it is supposed to look. You get to experience what you experience and you get whatever you get.

Please position yourself comfortably, and close your eyes, if you would like to. Bring your awareness to your breathing and the words you are hearing. Allow your attention to your own thoughts to fade into the background. Create a rhythmic method for your breathing, inhaling through the nose, pausing after you inhale to allow the air to fully enliven your cells, then exhaling completely and pausing for a moment to consider the precious gift of air before receiving it gratefully, inhaling and smiling with joy.

As you breathe and smile, imagine and create for yourself the experience of Being where you are with your eyes closed. As you breathe and smile, experience yourself as one — an integrated system of one whole person. As you breathe out, create the experience of expanding into the room, along with your breath, filling the room until you experience yourSelf as one room. Breathing in, include everything that is in the room with you, and experience yourself as the room and all that is within it. Breathing out, experience yourSelf expanding into the whole house or building, Experiencing yourSelf as one building. As you breathe in include everything within your single system as one house or building. One neighborhood. One town or village or community. One county. One state. One country. One continent, along with the surrounding oceans. One planet. One Solar System. One galaxy. One Universe. One everything.

Experience yourSelf as Everything. As you continue to breathe, notice that now that you are One Whole Everything, there is now Nothing to expand into. When you breathe out again, expand into that Nothing. Begin to experience that the Nothing that you have expanded into has the form of a person, sitting comfortably with eyes closed. As you continue to breathe and smile, experience the oneness of Everything and Nothing and One, Whole, Perfect You.

When you are ready to do so, please open your eyes.

Message:

**Groundhog Day: This Again?
Sunday, February 1, 2009**

Groundhog Day is a 1993 comedy film starring Bill Murray.

In the film, Murray plays Phil Connors, an egocentric Pittsburgh TV weatherman who, during a hated assignment covering the annual Groundhog Day event (February 2) in Punxsutawney, finds himself repeating the same day over and over again.

Phil, who has grown tired of this assignment, grudgingly gives his report and attempts to return back to Pittsburgh when a blizzard that he predicted would miss the area shuts down the main roads, forcing Phil and his team to stay in town an extra day. He wakes up to find that he is reliving February 2 again. Everyone else is repeating the same actions as the day before, seemingly unaware of the time loop, though Phil remains aware of the events of the previous day. At first he is confused, but, when the loop continues, he starts to try to take advantage of the situation without fear of long-term consequences: learning secrets from the town's residents, seducing women, stealing money, and driving drunk. With each iteration of the loop, Phil becomes despondent; during one Groundhog Day, he kidnaps Punxsutawney Phil and after a long police chase, drives over a cliff, appearing to kill both himself and the groundhog. However, Phil wakes up in the next iteration and finds that nothing has changed; further attempts at suicide are just as fruitless as he continues to find himself back at the start of February 2. Eventually, Phil begins to make the most of the time warp to help as many people around town as possible, as well as bettering himself, such as by learning to play jazz piano and speaking French. When he finally reveals his love for his producer, Rita, rather than trying to manipulate her into falling for him, the time warp is broken and February 3 finally occurs.

The phrase "Groundhog Day" has entered common use as a reference to an unpleasant situation that continually repeats, or seems to, until it is somehow transcended. The movie was very popular. It was well written, produced and acted, certainly. Many movies are, yet this one has become a cultural icon with a perennial following. Fifteen years after its release, the term 'Groundhog Day' is still understood. Even in Europe and Asia, where there is no commemoration of Groundhog Day on February 2nd, the term has been adopted to signify repetitive situations. The term has also entered the world of politics: R. Nicholas Burns, U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs, on talks on the Israel/Lebanon conflict in August 2006. "We'd go home at 10 or 11 at night and say, 'Tomorrow will be a better day.' But the next day was Groundhog Day all over again." In the UK, Member of Parliament Dennis Skinner likened British Prime Minister Tony Blair's treatment following the 2004 Hutton Inquiry to Groundhog Day. "[The affair] was, he said, like Groundhog Day, with the prime minister's critics demanding one inquiry, then another inquiry, then another inquiry."

Perhaps the widespread use of the term 'Groundhog Day' had less to do with the impact of the movie, and more to the resonance of shared experience. It is a concept we are all familiar with: This again? How do I keep getting myself into these situations? Been there, done that.

Repetitive, Recursive Patterns in Life, Relationship, Career

Demystifying Karma

At the center of repetitive cycles and patterns is You, the one common element

We must repeat what we do not complete

"Trying to get it right"

Proverbs 26:11 — As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.
(επιστρέφω - turn upon) It is like walking though life with one shoe nailed to the floor, and not noticing it. Until one can complete the experience, one cannot move forward.

Getting Complete:

the small-t truth

The mastery of anything begins with giving up lying to oneself. Lies such as “my preferences are important.”

inquiry

Looking back to the first iteration of one’s pattern

being responsible and authentic

Recognizing that you are at the center and source of your life.

process

Creating the whole world of whatever it is and giving it up.

Dialogue on Groundhog Day: This Again?

Completion

Next week: February 8

Next Sunday is the 8th of February, Nirvana Day (or Parinirvana Day), is a Mahayana Buddhist holiday celebrated in East Asia. It celebrates the day when the Buddha achieved Parinirvana, or *complete* Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Please join us Next Sunday as we explore Eastern thought with the message and theme of **Nirvana Day: Release from Samsara**. Samsara is the recursive cycle of being born and dying. We will look at the six realms, the Bodhi nature and the liberation from suffering.