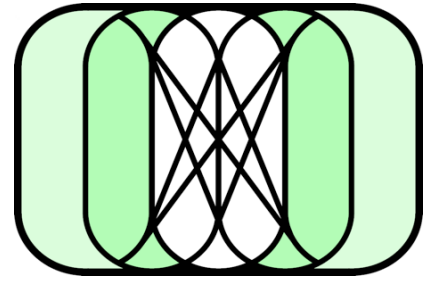


## **Church of Creation**

**Order of Service**

Sunday, March 15, 2009 8:00 AM



### **Welcome:**

You are always already chosen

**Hymn:** Blah-Blah

### **Announcements and sharing**

This week in Semiotics: **Modes of Address / Subjectivity**

### **Lost In Space...**

Spring is Springing

### **Birthday acknowledgment:**

**Lionel Johnson** (March 15, 1867 - October 4, 1902, aged 35)

English poet, essayist and literature critic

### **Process:**

**Embodiment...**

### **Message:**

**Beware the Ides of March: Superstition**

**Dialogue on Beware the Ides of March: Superstition**

### **Next week: March 22**

Vernal Equinox: Equanimity & Balance

## 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:**

**Sharing what showed up this week inside of our conversation on our tendency toward unconsciousness**

What happened this week?...

**Studies in the Church Charter**

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: Modes of Address / Subjectivity

'A sign... addresses somebody,' Charles Peirce declared. Signs 'address' us within particular codes. A genre is a semiotic code within which we are 'positioned' as 'ideal readers' through the use of particular 'modes of address'. Modes of address can be defined as the ways in which relations between addresser and addressee are constructed in a text. In order to communicate, a producer of any text must make some assumptions about an intended audience; reflections of such assumptions may be discerned in the text (advertisements offer particularly clear examples of this).

Rather than a specifically semiotic concept, 'the positioning of the subject' is a structuralist notion, although Saussure did not

discuss it. It is a concept which has been widely adopted by semioticians and so it may be worthy of exploration in this context. The term 'subject' needs some initial explanation. In 'theories of **subjectivity**' a distinction is made between 'the subject' and 'the individual'. As John Fiske put it, 'the individual is produced by nature; the subject by culture... The subject... is a social construction, not a natural one.' While the individual is an actual person, the subject is a set of roles constructed by dominant cultural and ideological values (e.g. in terms of class, age, gender and ethnicity). Ideology turns individuals into subjects. Subjects are not actual people but exist only in relation to the interpretation of texts and are constructed through the use of signs. The psychoanalytical theorist, Jacques Lacan, undermined the humanist notion of a unified and consistent subject. The individual can occupy multiple *subject positions*, some of them contradictory. 'Identity' can be seen as 'a matrix of subject-positions.' The fluidity and fragmentation of 'identity' is highlighted in the context of the internet, where the 'subject' need have no necessary connection to a supposed referent (a specific individual in the material world); gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity or any other demographic marker may be shifted at will (assuming the social competence required to sustain such a virtual identity).

According to theorists of textual positioning, understanding the meaning of a text involves taking on an appropriate ideological identity. In order to make sense of the signs in a text the reader is obliged to adopt a 'subject-position' in relation to it. For instance, to understand an advertisement we would have to adopt the identity of a consumer who desired the advertised product. Some theorists argue that this position already exists within the structure and codes of the text. 'Narratives or images always imply or even construct a position or positions from which they are to be read or viewed.' The 'classic realist text' is orchestrated to effect closure: contradictions are suppressed and the reader is encouraged to adopt a position from which everything seems 'obvious.' This stance assumes both that a text is homogeneous and that it has only one meaning - that which was intended by its makers - whereas contemporary theorists contend that there may be several alternative (even contradictory) subject-positions from which a text may make sense. While these may sometimes be anticipated by the author, they are not necessarily built into the text itself. Not every reader is the 'ideal reader' envisaged by the producer(s) of the text. The phrase, 'the positioning of the subject' implies a 'necessary "subjection" to the text' and is thus problematic since there is always some freedom of interpretation. We may for instance choose to regard a poorly-translated set of instructions for assembling furniture as a text constructed purely for our amusement.

The notion that the human subject is 'constituted' (constructed) by pre-given structures is a general feature of structuralism. It constitutes a radical opposition to the liberal humanist (or 'bourgeois') stance which presents society as 'consisting of "free" individuals whose social determination results from their pre-given essences like "talented", "efficient", "lazy", "promiscuous", etc.' The French neo-Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990) was the first ideological theorist to give prominence to the notion of the subject. For him, ideology was a system of representations of reality

offering individuals certain subject positions which they could occupy. He famously declared that 'what is represented in ideology is... not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations in which they live' (Althusser 1971). He outlined the ideological mechanism of interpellation:

Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all) or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'

Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was really him who was hailed' (and not someone else).

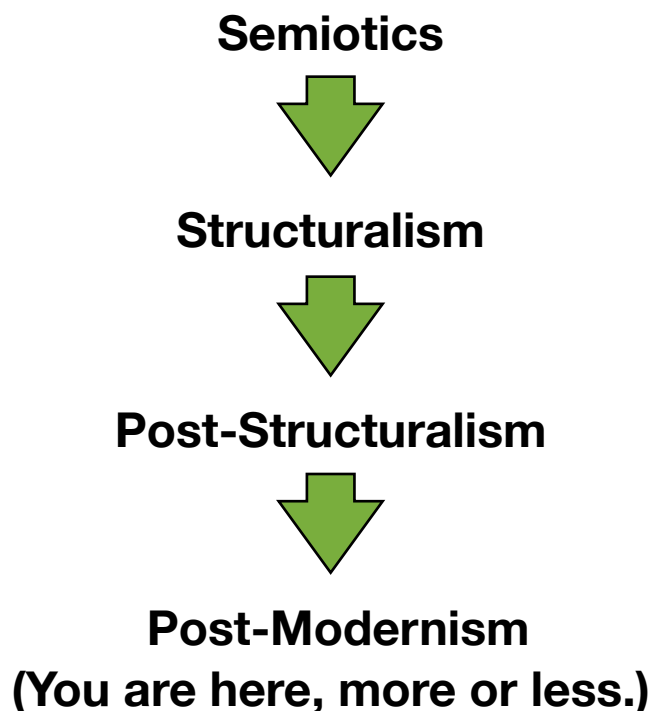
Althusser, Louis (1971): Lenin and Philosophy (trans. Ben Brewster). London: New Left Books

### **Main points:**

The subject-object relation, no matter how real it seems, is a social construction, a conventional mode among other possible modes.

Modes of address are used by producers of communication to establish a desired or required subject-position, in order to sell you (the subject) a product, or simply to perpetuate the mode, code and position.

If you hear someone holler "Hey you, there!", do not turn around.



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, **March 15<sup>th</sup> through March 21<sup>st</sup>**, we make the astrological move from Pisces to Aries in the Zodiac, and the celestial move from Winter to Spring. On Friday March 20th at exactly 6:44 a.m. Central Daylight Time or your local equivalent the Sun will lie exactly on the celestial equator which marks the very first moment of the beginning of spring for the northern hemisphere and the first moment of autumn for the southern hemisphere.

We use the word Spring to mark the beginning of this new season because it is an abbreviation for the phrases ‘spring of the leaf’ and ‘spring of the year’. Now ‘spring of the leaf’ is pretty obvious because at this time of the year in the northern hemisphere leaves literally do spring up out of branches and grass and flowers spring up out of the ground. And that’s why we call Spring, Spring. What about the spring of the year?

Before 1752 in England and her colonies, the new year officially began when Spring began on March 25th. To put it quite simply the New Year sprang up at the same time the leaves and the grass did. In fact when George Washington and Ben Franklin were young, they and all American colonists wished each other Happy New Year and Happy

Spring on the same day, March 25<sup>th</sup>. English Parliament declared that beginning in 1752 the new year would no longer begin in March but would be celebrated on January 1st, a tradition begun by the Romans in 153 B.C.



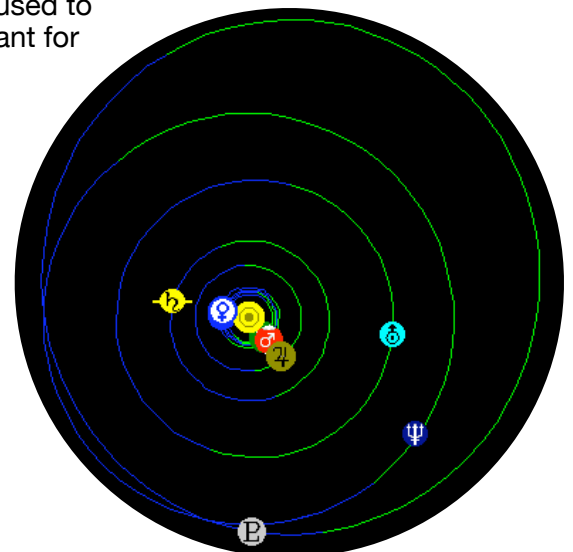
However, the first day of spring is strictly speaking an celestial event which marks one of the two days when our Sun is aligned with the celestial equator, the other date being the first day of Autumn. These are the only two days of the year when the Sun rises exactly due east and sets due west and this was just one of several astronomical markers

our ancient ancestors used to

help them determine the seasons which was very important for their planting schedules.

You can see for yourself just how dramatic the arrival of spring is visually if you drive to or from work on a due east / west highway at sunset and sunrise. On the first day of Spring and Autumn the Sun will rise and set directly over the yellow line in the middle of the road, and blindingly so. Try it yourself. This week if you travel around sunrise on a due east highway notice how close the Sun rises to the center of the road. Then on Friday, the first day of Spring, watch it rise directly over the yellow line. Then, watch the Sun set directly over the yellow line. Happy Spring and Happy New Year, everyone!

Check out [www.globe.gov/GaN](http://www.globe.gov/GaN)



## Birthday Acknowledgement: March 15<sup>th</sup>

**Lionel Pigot Johnson** (March 15, 1867 - October 4, 1902) was an English poet, essayist and critic. He was born at Broadstairs, and educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford, graduating in 1890. He lived a solitary life in London, struggling with alcoholism and repressed homosexuality. He died of a stroke after a fall in the street — by some accounts, a fall from a barstool.

During his lifetime only three books of his poetry were published: *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894), *Poems* (1895) and *Ireland and Other Poems* (1897). He was a member of the Rhymer's Club. In 1892, Johnson converted to Catholicism and repudiated former friend Oscar Wilde. He directed a sonnet at him called "*The Destroyer of a Soul*" (presumably the soul of his cousin Lord Alfred Douglas, whom he had introduced to Wilde the previous June). In the following year, Johnson wrote what some consider his masterpiece, "*The Dark Angel*."



### The Dark Angel

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust  
To rid the world of penitence:  
Malicious Angel, who still dost  
My soul such subtle violence!

Because of thee, no thought, no thing,  
Abides for me undesecrate:  
Dark Angel, ever on the wing,  
Who never reachest me too late!

When music sounds, then changest thou  
Its silvery to a sultry fire:  
Nor will thine envious heart allow  
Delight untortured by desire.

Through thee, the gracious Muses turn  
To Furies, O mine Enemy!  
And all the things of beauty burn  
With flames of evil ecstasy.

Because of thee, the land of dreams  
Becomes a gathering place of fears:  
Until tormented slumber seems  
One vehemence of useless tears.

When sunlight glows upon the flowers,  
Or ripples down the dancing sea:  
Thou, with thy troop of passionate powers,  
Beleaguerest, bewilderest, me.

Within the breath of autumn woods,  
Within the winter silences:  
Thy venomous spirit stirs and broods,  
O Master of impieties!

The ardour of red flame is thine,  
And thine the steely soul of ice:  
Thou poisonest the fair design  
Of nature, with unfair device.

Apples of ashes, golden bright;  
Waters of bitterness, how sweet!  
O banquet of a foul delight,  
Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete!

Thou art the whisper in the gloom,  
The hinting tone, the haunting laugh:  
Thou art the adorer of my tomb,  
The minstrel of mine epitaph.

I fight thee, in the Holy Name!  
Yet, what thou dost, is what God saith:  
Tempter! should I escape thy flame,  
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death:

The second Death, that never dies,  
That cannot die, when time is dead:  
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,  
Eternally uncomforted.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust!  
Of two defeats, of two despairs:  
Less dread, a change to drifting dust,  
Than thine eternity of cares.

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,  
Dark Angel! triumph over me:  
*Lonely, unto the Lone I go;*  
*Divine, to the Divinity.*

### The Destroyer of a Soul

I HATE you with a necessary hate.  
First, I sought patience: passionate was she:  
My patience turned in very scorn of me,  
That I should dare forgive a sin so great,  
As this, through which I sit disconsolate;  
Mourning for that live soul, I used to see;  
Soul of a saint, whose friend I used to be:  
Till you came by! a cold, corrupting, fate.

Why come you now? You, whom I cannot cease  
With pure and perfect hate to hate? Go, ring  
The death-bell with a deep, triumphant toll!  
Say you, my friend sits by me still? Ah, peace!  
Call you this thing my friend? this nameless thing?  
This living body, hiding its dead soul?

## Process: Embodiment...

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, create for yourself the experience of Being Silent within yourSelf and whole and complete. Create the experience of bringing your consciousness into the center of your body and shrinking so that you are small, whole and complete within your body — fully contained within your physical form, choosing for now to forsake the outer You in favor of exploring the Inner You. Allow your whole self to shrink within your body so that you create for yourself an entire Universe of You within your body. If you cannot see anything inside your body, wait for a moment to allow your vision to adjust and look for the ever-present light within yourself and move toward that light. Continue to shrink your inner self so that you are now the size of a single cell, and you can move about the spaciousness of your physical body freely and without fear, without any feelings of claustrophobia. Feeling very relaxed and warm and whole within your body, begin to travel to any area of pain or tension within your body, bringing your inner light with you to illuminate the substance of your body.

Travel on the fluids and gases within your body to get to any place that is a concern for you and bring healing energy and light to that area. Create for yourself the experience of warming and energizing your cells and organs and muscles, bones, skin and mucous membranes from the inside. Experience warmth, health and vitality as you direct the flow of fluids and energy into those areas. You have the freedom to move quickly and effortlessly within your body, from your head to your toes, from the left to the right. When you have brought energy and light to an area of concern for you, you may move to another area of concern. If you have no concern about any area of your body, explore your body, bringing light and energy to any area that needs to be relaxed or strengthened or energized.

Notice that you are not your body. You have a body and you have concerns for it and its function. In this process we are giving our 'body of concern' the gift of our attention, providing whatever it needs or wants. Continue to travel the pathways of your body, giving generously of your care and light and energy.

When you have completed your rounds, and are satisfied with your journey through your body, bring yourSelf to the center of your body and begin to expand yourself to fill your body again. Allow your consciousness to reach into every finger and toe and fully inhabit your body again, feeling the renewed vigor, ease, comfort and health of your body. Create for yourself the experience of overall well-being and satisfaction with your glorious and magnificent body. You may take this experience with you throughout the week and revisit it at any time.

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

## Message: **Beware the Ides of March: Superstition**

**Sunday, March 15, 2009**

### **Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> and the Ides of March**

Last Friday was the 13<sup>th</sup>, and in our culture we are aware of triskaidekaphobia, the irrational fear of the number 13, particularly when the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a Friday. Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> or Ides of March. In Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar. Act I scene 2, a soothsayer warns the Emperor to "Beware the Ides of March." there were no superstitious attachments to the ides; the superstition was the soothsayer. Ides refers to the middle of the month or in times before the Numa Pompilius calendar reform in 713 BC, the full Moon of the month. Three reference dates were declared publicly when lunar conditions were observed. After the reforms, they occurred on fixed days.

**Kalendae** (Kalends) — first day of the month, from which the word "calendar" is derived; thought to have originally been the day of the new moon. Interest on debt was due on Kalends.

**Nonae** (Nones) — thought to have originally been the day of the half moon.

**Idūs** (Ides) — thought to have originally been the day of the full moon. The Romans considered this an auspicious day in their calendar. The word ides comes from Latin, meaning "half division" (of a month).

The nones are related to the *nundinae*, the market days which fell on the eighth day of the eight-day market week used by the Romans. They are so-called because, in the Roman system of inclusive counting, they came every nine days. From the nones to the ides, there was exactly one market week. From the ides to the end of the month (except in February), there were exactly two market weeks; hence the mnemonic:

*March, May, July, October,  
These are they,  
Make nones the seventh,  
Ides the fifteenth day.*

In all other months (Aprilis, Iunius, Sextilis, November, December, and after their addition, January and February), nones were on the fifth and ides on the thirteenth. The preceding day was **Pridie**, e.g. Prid. Id. Mart. = 14 March. Other days were ante diem ("days before"),<sup>[8]</sup> e.g. a.d. III Kal. Oct. = 29 September. Note that the inclusive system of counting meant that the second day before the fixed point did not exist (because it was the same as Pridie, and the 'third' day was thus the day before that). Some examples: a.d. IV Non. Jan. = 2 January; a.d. VI Non. Mai. = 2 May; a.d. VIII Id. Apr. = 6 April; a.d. VIII Id. Oct. = 8 Oct; a.d. XVII Kal. Nov. = 16 October; a.d. XVII Kal. Dec. = 14 November.

Workers were paid according to this calendar, on Ides and Pridie Kalends: the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of the month. Some still are, after nearly 3,000 years.

The supposed unluckiness attributed to the number thirteen goes so far back that it is difficult to tell where and how it started. An early reference to thirteen being unlucky or evil is in the Code of Hammurabi (circa 1780 BC), where the thirteenth law is omitted. Some Christian traditions have it that at the Last Supper, Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, was the 13<sup>th</sup> to sit at the table and that for this reason 13 is considered to carry a curse of sorts. However, the number 13 is not uniformly bad in the Judeo-Christian tradition. For example, the 13 attributes of God (also called the thirteen attributes of mercy) are enumerated in the Torah (Exodus 34: 6-7).

Paraskavedekatriaphobia is the fear of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, which is considered to be a day of bad luck in a number of western cultures. In Romanian, Greek and Hispanic cultures, Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> is considered unlucky.

In 1881, an influential group of New Yorkers led by U.S. Civil War veteran Captain William Fowler came together to put an end to this and other superstitions. They formed a dinner cabaret club, which they called the Thirteen Club. At the first meeting, on Friday 13 January 1881 at 8:13 p.m., 13 people sat down to dine in room 13 of the

venue. The guests walked under a ladder to enter the room and were seated among piles of spilled salt. All of the guests died. Just kidding; they were all well and happy. Thirteen Clubs sprang up all over North America for the next 40 years. Their activities were regularly reported in leading newspapers, and their numbers included five future U.S. presidents, from Chester A. Arthur to Theodore Roosevelt.

Superstition is a strange game we play.

**superstition** |,soʊpər'sti sh ən| noun

excessively credulous belief in and reverence for supernatural beings

- a widely held but unjustified belief in supernatural causation leading to certain consequences of an action or event, or a practice based on such a belief

Etymology: c.1386, from O.Fr. *superstitieux*, from L. *superstitiosus*, from *superstitionem* (nom. *superstitio*) “prophecy, soothsaying, excessive fear of the gods,” perhaps originally “state of religious exaltation,” related to *superstes* (gen. *superstitis*) “standing over or above,” also “standing by, surviving,” from *superstare* “stand on or over, survive,” from *super* “above” (see super-) + *stare* “to stand,” from PIE base \**sta-* “to stand.” In English, originally especially of religion; sense of “unreasonable notion” is from 1794.

NB: The standing-over is like standing over a vanquished foe. If we approach our Universe as “that which is not I” we could make the mistake of attempting to control or conquer it, in order to survive.

Superstition is a form of **magical thinking** that we apply to our World in the hope of controlling the people, events and environment around us. We attempt to increase our chances of survival (we think of it as though it were the chances of rolling a seven) through superstition. Magical thinking in anthropology, psychology, and cognitive science is “nonscientific causal reasoning that often includes such ideas as the ability of the mind to affect the physical world (mental causation), correlation equaling causation, the law of contagion, the power of symbols, and adding meaning to simultaneity.”

We are all familiar with examples of superstitions that we rarely take seriously:

- Friday the 13th
- A black cat crossing one’s path
- Killing a ladybug/ladybird beetle
- The number 13 (Many buildings skipped 13 when numbering their floors for this reason)
- Killing a spider in one’s home
- Breaking a mirror (seven years bad luck)
- The number 4 (in China, the word’s pronunciation in Mandarin is similar to “si”, which means death.)
- Stepping on a crack (your mother’s back will break; rhymed as “step on a crack, break your mother’s back”)
- Stepping on a line in pavement or floor cover (similar to above, rhymed as “step on a line, you’ll break your mother’s spine”)
- Spilling over salt (When salt was more precious than gold, if one spilled some it was believed to mean that a demon was trying to steal one’s salt, but by appeasing it with a little salt over the left shoulder, the demon would leave)
- Putting a hat on a bed
- Opening an umbrella indoors (a variant is putting it over someone’s head, indoors)
- Walking underneath a ladder (when being hanged, the condemned man would often be made to pass underneath a ladder before climbing it and onto the gallows)
- Saying “good luck”
- Replying “thank you” to someone wishing good luck
- Picking up a face-down penny (can be avoided by giving the penny away)
- Putting shoes on a table. In the UK, this is considered to bring extremely bad luck, traditionally the death of a person in the house. This is sometimes specified to only be unlucky when new shoes are put on a table

- In the British and early U.S. Navy it was traditionally considered unlucky to have a woman on board ship. However, having a naked woman on a ship was considered good luck.
- Among sailors it is considered unlucky to kill an albatross or a porpoise
- Among sailors it is considered bad luck to have anything blue aboard ship
- Saying 'good luck' to an actor going on stage (the preferred expression is 'break a leg')
- In theaters, "Macbeth" must not be uttered by anyone unless it is necessary to the show. For example, if the company is performing Shakespeare's Macbeth, one says "the Scottish Play" and refers to the characters as "Mackers" and "Lady Mackers"
- Being left-handed is sinister
- Because one magpie is seen alone, we'll have bad luck
- A bird flies into one's window (a person in the family will die today, or has died last night). In some variants, it is believed to only be bad luck if the bird dies.
- In some areas it is believed to be bad luck to kill a mockingbird; this became a part (albeit not a large part) of the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as well as inspiring the title.
- Cutting your fingernails or toenails at night
- Five leaf clovers
- Hanging a horse shoe with the opening down is said to drain the good luck from it and bring about bad luck
- Avoiding eye contact when toasting with another person

Of course, none of us would let our lives be ruled — or even affected — by such unjustified and unreasoned beliefs, would we? We dismiss these superstitions as, well, superstitions! What about the superstitions that we have not distinguished as superstitions? So far, three types have appeared in the inquiry.

The first of these superstitions that affect us is 'IS.' To be exact, it is the superstitious use of the present tense of the verb, 'to be,' conjugated as 'am, is and are.' We say these words every day: "I am," "you are," "they are," "it is," "he or she is." Consider that part of our neglect of Being has us forget that the current Being of someone, something, or even oneself, cannot be known or even assessed. Once we have experienced something and assessed it, we have that assessment retrospectively, in the domain of Having.

When I was a child, I lived under the superstition, very real to me, that my father is a bad and mean person. Notice how the structure of that sentence is a lot like 'a black cat is bad luck.' He beat me like a rented mule. Almost every day. The almost was the rough part. I kept trying to duplicate the conditions of the days when I didn't get a severe whipping, thinking that I could somehow control the situation, and master it for survival. Now, of course, I can declare that he was the perfect father for me. I couldn't be exactly me, if he had not been exactly him.

These superstitions are especially powerful when they start out 'I am....' We see ourselves as the subject, and others as the objects. When we attempt to have it both ways, being subject and object, then we get goofy about it. The subject-object relation is an illusion. Consider that we may all be subject, creating the Universe together from moment to moment.

The second type of superstition is 'BECAUSE.' Because I am bad, I deserve to be whipped. Because I hung the horseshoe upside-down, the luck drained out.

The third type of superstition is the 'IF.' If I avoid eye contact with my dad, I can avoid being murdered by him. This is like, "If I put new shoes on the table, someone in my family will die." If I had known of that superstition when I was a kid, I probably would have tried it.

Magical thinking has no power. It is a feeble attempt to control life, which tends to be out-of-control.

We've talked before about creating possibilities and being our word (as a promise). Are these forms of magical thinking? I assert that they are not. Magical thinking excludes, by nature, as the thinker pretends to objectify and disempower others. Creating possibilities includes. For example, one cannot create the possibility of winning a million dollars. Winning a million dollars is a statistical probability. If you, like me, do not enter contests, the statistical probability is very, very small. When you create a possibility, like the possibility of Abundance, it is not for you alone. It is possible for everyone and everything. Being your possibility will make a difference in the quality of abundance in the World. It may not show up the way you imagine it, and it will make a difference, nonetheless.

## **Dialogue on Beware the Ides of March: Superstition**

### **Completion**

#### **Next week: March 22**

Next Sunday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, is the Sunday after the Vernal (Spring) Equinox. Many of us will be getting together, in the flesh, so to speak. Beth will be coming in from Texas, Jacqui and Nate will be coming in from Wisconsin. We'll be meeting John for lunch after Service. Join us next week for **Equinox, Equanimity and Balance**, in which we explore the middle way of non-duality.