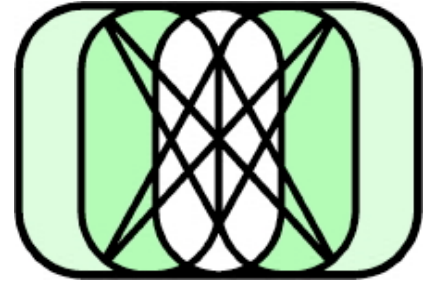


Church of Creation

Order of Service

Sunday, December 21, 2008 8:00 AM

Solstice Celebration



Welcome:

You are always already chosen

Hymn:

Announcements and sharing

Merry whatever...

How the Grinch Robbed Workers

This week in Semiotics: **Basics**

Solstice

Lost In Space...

Capricorn

Birthday acknowledgment:

Jan Łukasiewicz (December 21, 1878 – February 13, 1956, 77 yo)

Frank Zappa (December 21, 1940 – December 4, 1993, <53 yo)

Process:

In Orbit...

~~Communion Service~~

Message:

Winter Solstice: Telling Time

Dialogue on Telling Time

Next week: December 28

New Year: Completion and Creation

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:

Merry Whatever...

Bill O'Reilly of Faux News has been reporting on the "Secular War On Christmas" for four years. On a recent show: "We continue our reporting on which American stores are using "Christmas" in advertising this Christmas season and which are not. So far, here's the list. Again, our litmus test is which operations are using the greeting "Merry Christmas" in their advertising and which are not. OK, using -- you can see JCPenney's, Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Dillard's. Not using, there they are. Now, Kohl's, still giving us a hard time, but their advertising has been all "Happy Holidays" so I don't know what they want. The company says the clerks are free to say "Merry Christmas." Yeah, OK, that's nice. Again, this investigation is designed to spotlight retailers who have knocked the word "Christmas" out of the Christmas season. We're not too interested with the word "merry." Don't really care about "merry."

"See, I think it's all part of the secular progressive agenda to get Christianity... out of the public square. Because if you look at what happened in Western Europe and Canada, if you can get religion out, then you can pass secular progressive programs like legalization of narcotics, euthanasia, abortion at will, gay marriage, because the objection to those things is religious-based, usually."

Gretchen Carlson, on the same network blustered, "I'm just so enraged by all these atheist displays and trying to push Jesus to the back seat on Christmas Day... If you don't stand up and fight for it, it might just disappear! I'm talking about Christianity!"

Whatever. Paradoxically, if Christianity disappeared, I would believe in Santa Claus.

In American culture, by the way, most of the traditions originate with Yule, a Germanic (Anglo-Saxon, Gothic and Norse) pagan holiday season that predates Christianity. It is about the Winter solstice. More about that later. I'm all for putting the X back in Xmas.

How the Grinch Robbed Workers...

With 32 days left in his lame-duckitude, George Bush announced Thursday that Treasury Secretary Hank Paulsen had been directed to loan GM and Chrysler about 17.4 billion dollars as a bridge loan, to get them through the next 3 months of operation.

GM and Chrysler will get \$13.4 billion in short-term financing from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), with an additional \$4 billion to be made available in February, contingent on Congress allotting the second portion of the TARP funds.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) union will be asked to rework contracts to make wages and work rules comparable with those at nonunion plants in the United States owned by foreign automakers. Union scale is \$26 per hour. The foreign owned car companies pay American workers an average of \$18 per hour, the pension plan is limited and healthcare is not fully covered.

Economists note that people working in the range of one to two times the poverty threshold are in severe danger of falling into poverty. For the first time since the Great Depression, more than half of American workers are in this danger zone. Soon the auto workers will be also. In the meantime, they are on a one-month furlough. Ho ho ho.

Solstice...

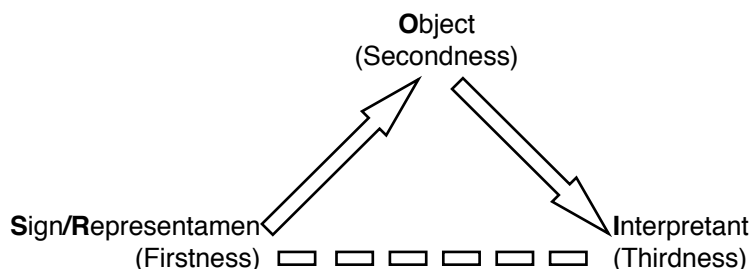
A solstice is an astronomical event that occurs twice a year, when the tilt of the Earth's axis is most oriented toward or away from the Sun, causing the Sun to reach its northernmost or southernmost extreme. The name is derived from the Latin *sol* (sun) and *sistere* 'to stand still' (desist, resist), because at the solstices, the Sun stands still in declination; that is, its apparent movement north or south comes to a standstill.

The term solstice can also be used in a wider sense, as the date (day) that such a passage happens.

Hanukkah...

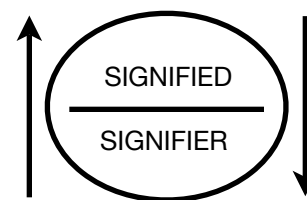
...begins at sundown this evening, by coincidence since the Hebrew calendar is lunar.

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: Basics

A few people have mentioned that this section is getting really technical, and I can appreciate that it is. If this were not a crucial aspect of our inquiries, I wouldn't venture into it at all, and I would remove the conversation



from the service. I am reluctant to do that, although I will back up a bit and lay what may be a firmer foundation for this study.

Theories of sign systems are an attempt to get at the process by which we create our consciousness. This includes everything that we would identify as the part of our existence that we can talk about: our physical condition, mental and emotional states, social interactions from the relationship of ourselves to ourselves, ourselves to others, others to others, interpersonal to international affairs, meaning and knowledge and so on. These are elemental to our existence. We are who we are to the degree we have signified ourselves as distinct entities. We cannot postulate anything beyond ordinary having — of memories, experiences, objects and ourselves as subjects — until we first consider how we created this World, and that is a process of signification. In the ordinary having World, there is no access to knowing the knower or being conscious of consciousness. We know that we do and act and experience life only as a function of signifying those experiences. Knowing is a function of something that can only be inferred through an inquiry that includes an inquiry into this signifying function.

Consider that we are born into a conversation that precedes us. Being born a human being is like walking into a room where a conversation has been going on for a long time. Until we are able to discern the subject and object of the conversation, we cannot join it, let alone contribute to the conversation. For instance, if you join a conversation about football and you say, "The Vikings came to America before Columbus," you are not contributing to the conversation and are likely to be dismissed. Most of us have had experiences similar to this. People often get the feeling that they "don't fit in" or that "no one listens to me." And it's not paranoia. They really *don't* listen to you. You really *don't* fit in.

Until something significant happens to us, we are conscious as pure possibility in the domain of being, and we are not conscious as anyone or anything in particular. When something significant occurs and we signify it by an act of consciousness, we emerge from Being, through Doing (the act of signification) into the having of an identity as a particular object; we each refer to that object as 'me.'

Basic Terms

Significant - An occurrence worthy of attention or notice

Signify - to indicate, symbolize or declare as having meaning

Signification - the act of signifying

Sign - an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else

Signifier - a sign's perceptible or physical form

Signified - the meaning, concept or idea expressed by a sign, distinct from its form

ORIGIN Middle English : from Old French *signifier*, from Latin *significare* 'indicate, portend,' from *signum* 'standard; indication; seal; sign, proof; signal; image.'

The ever-present sky is, in a way, an overarching context for all that happens here on Earth. Reason would doubt 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 is not only the Winter Solstice, but also time to move from Sagittarius into Capricorn. In a Greek myth, the King of the Olympian gods, Zeus appeared in his own form and prepared to do battle with the Titan Typhon, the god of darkness, but Zeus was defeated. Typhon cut out tendons from the hands and feet of Zeus, leaving him helpless. Typhon hid the tendons in a cave in the land of Cilicia and selected the dragon-woman Delphyne, half-serpent and half-woman to guard the tendons.

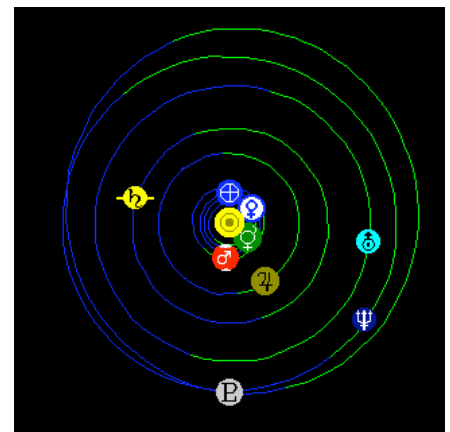
Delphyne was tricked by the gods Hermes and Aegipan, and they stole the tendons. Aegipan, like the other gods, had transformed himself into an animal to escape detection by Typhon. He had jumped into the river when Typhon approached. However, he was already halfway submerged before he thought of what form of animal he would become. He decided to be a goat.

So, he became a goat, but only from the waist up. From the waist down he took the form of a fish. Aegipan and Hermes returned with the tendons, making Zeus once again as fit as ever. His strength regained, Zeus unleashed all his fury and killed Typhon by hurling thunderbolts at him. For



Aegipan’s role in this battle, Zeus gave him an honored place in the zodiac as the constellation Capricorn, the Sea-Goat.

The Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Syrians all knew Capricorn as the Goat. In certain parts of East Asia, the constellation was known as the Southern Gate of the Sun, indicating that it is in this constellation that the Sun reaches its lowest point on the ecliptic and thereafter begins to appear higher and higher each day.



Birthday Acknowledgement: December 21

Jan Łukasiewicz [ˈjan wukaˈɕɛvʲitsɨ] (December 21, 1878 – February 13, 1956) was a Polish mathematician born in Lemberg, Galicia, Austria-Hungary (now Lviv, Ukraine). His major mathematical work centered on mathematical logic. He thought innovatively about traditional propositional logic, the principle of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle. To Łukasiewicz we owe a number of axiomatizations of classical propositional logic. A particularly elegant axiomatization features a mere three axioms and is still invoked down to the present day. He was a pioneer investigator of multi-valued logics; his three-valued propositional calculus, introduced in 1917, was the first explicitly axiomatized non-classical logical calculus. He wrote on the philosophy of science. His approach to the making of scientific theories was similar to the thinking of Karl Popper.

Łukasiewicz invented the Polish notation (named after his nationality) for the logical connectives around 1920. This notation is the root of the idea of the recursive stack, a last-in, first-out computer memory store proposed by several researchers including Turing, Bauer and Hamblin, and first implemented in 1957. This design led to the English Electric multi-programmed KDF9 computer system of 1963, which had two such hardware register stacks. A similar concept underlies the reverse Polish notation (RPN, a postfix notation) of the Friden EC-130 calculator and its successors, many Hewlett Packard calculators, the Forth programming language, or the PostScript page description language.



Łukasiewicz was a devout Roman Catholic. During the occupation of Poland in WW2 he worked in the secret Warsaw Underground University (Tajny Uniwersytet Warszawski). At the end of the war he was living in Hembsen, where he had been brought for his own safety.

Polish notation, also known as prefix notation, is a form of notation for logic, arithmetic, and algebra. Its distinguishing feature is that it places operators to the left of their operands. If the arity of the operators is fixed, the result is a syntax lacking parentheses or other brackets, that can still be parsed without ambiguity. The Polish logician Jan Łukasiewicz invented this notation around 1920 in order to simplify sentential logic.

“I came upon the idea of a parenthesis-free notation in 1924. I used that notation for the first time in my article.” — Łukasiewicz

It seems like a small contribution, to do away with parentheticals in mathematic operation. Most people don't use parentheses and do not understand the kind of math that requires them. Nevertheless, we would not have calculators, fast and small computers, and any digital device without Łukasiewicz' Polish notation.

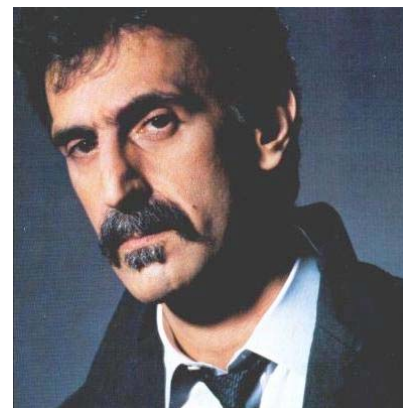
Frank Vincent Zappa (December 21, 1940 – December 4, 1993) was an American composer, electric guitarist, record producer, and film director. In a career spanning more than 30 years, Zappa wrote rock, jazz, electronic, orchestral, and *musique concrète* works. He also directed feature-length films and music videos, and designed album covers. Zappa produced almost all of the more than 60 albums he released with the band Mothers of Invention and as a solo artist. In his teens, he acquired a taste for percussion-based avant-garde composers like Edgard Varèse, and 1950s rhythm and blues music. He began writing classical music in high school, while at the same time playing drums in rhythm and blues bands—he later switched to electric guitar. He was an autodidact composer and performer, and his diverse musical influences led him to create music that was often impossible to categorize. His 1966 debut album with the Mothers of Invention, *Freak Out!*, combined songs in conventional rock and roll format with collective improvisations and studio-generated sound collages. His later albums shared this eclectic and experimental approach, irrespective of whether the fundamental format was one of rock, jazz or classical. He wrote the lyrics to all his songs, which—often humorously—reflected his iconoclastic view of established political processes, structures and movements. He was a strident critic of mainstream education and organized religion, and a forthright and passionate advocate for freedom of speech and the abolition of censorship.



He was a highly productive and prolific artist and he gained widespread critical acclaim. Many of his albums are considered essential in rock history, and he is regarded as one of the most original guitarists and composers of his time; he remains a major influence on musicians and composers. He had some commercial success, particularly in Europe, and was for most of his career able to work as an independent artist. Zappa was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 and received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997.

Zappa was married to Kathryn J. "Kay" Sherman from 1960 to 1964, and in 1967 he married Adelaide Gail Sloatman, with whom he remained until his death from prostate cancer in 1993. They had four children: Moon Unit, Dweezil, Ahmet Emuukha Rodan and Diva Thin Muffin Pigeen. Gail Zappa manages the businesses of her late husband under the name the Zappa Family Trust.

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Process:

In Orbit...

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 lying on the ground, in a flat field, on a warm and starry night. Looking up, you can see only the clear sky and billions of stars, and none of the field. Feeling safe and comfortable, please create the experience of being absorbed into the field on which you lie. Remaining conscious of all of your senses and feeling very secure and satisfied, allow yourself to be absorbed into the Earth until you become the face of the Earth — your eyes are the eyes through which the Earth sees; your senses are the senses of planet Earth.

As you continue to look into the night sky, begin to feel the relative warmth of your back, and allow any tension, pain or fatigue in your back to disappear into this sense of warmth and comfort. When you are ready to do so, please begin to turn toward your left, and allow the Sun to come into your peripheral vision (to rise) on your left side. Allow the Sun to warm the left side of your planetary being, and allow any tension, pain or fatigue in your left shoulder, left hip, left leg to be melted away by the sun. As you continue in your leftward turning, allow the Sun to come further into view. You are not blinded by the Sun, nor are you in any way uncomfortable with the brightness and power of the Sun. Allow any pain or fatigue to be absorbed by the Sun, as the Sun shines on your face and head, on your throat, on your chest, on your belly, on your hips, on your legs, knees and feet. As you continue on your leftward turning, notice the sun beginning to set on your right side. Allow any tension, pain or fatigue in you right side to disappear in the warmth of the Sun on you right shoulder, right hip, right leg.

As you continue in your leftward turning, create for yourself the experience of feeling the benevolent and beneficial warmth of the Sun as you again turn your back toward it and the stars become visible to you again. Notice that with each revolution, the Sun gets a little higher or lower on your body, the planet Earth. A little closer or farther, as appropriate for the moment. As you turn leftward, turning your face toward and then away from the Sun, toward and then away from the stars, experience the generosity and perfection of the Universe that you have created for yourself...

...as you turn, turn, turn...

... experience the generosity and perfection of the Universe that you have created for yourself for a person, lying in a field on the surface of your body, the planet that you are in this glorious Universe. Allow yourself to emerge from the planet and take the form of that person, lying in the field, and when you are ready to do so, please open your eyes.

Communion:

Due to weather and absences, we will reschedule the communion experience for another time.

Message:

Winter Solstice: Telling Time Sunday, December 21, 2008 Solstice Celebration

What is Time? And how is Time related to our inquiry into Being? Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher of ontology, of who we have spoken many times, titles his most famous book, *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit, 1927)*. **Passage 1**

For the conscious being, existences shows up between horizons: this day or night, January 1 to December 31, birth and death, and so on. These horizons occur in the elemental aspect of our existence, the domain of having. We have time or we do not have time. If this is the aspect by which we define time, then we are all doing time: living our lives in the jail cell of temporality, awaiting the end of our sentence. At the end of every sentence, there is a period. Is it a period of time?

period "course or extent of time," from M.L. *periodus* "recurring portion, cycle," from L. *periodus* "a complete sentence," also "cycle of the Greek games," from Gk. περιόδος "rounded sentence, cycle, circuit, period of time," lit. "going around," from περι- "around" + ὁδος "a going, way, journey"

Views of Time

In ancient times, the focus and attention was on the cycles of days and annual seasons, without regard to people or their perceptions. This ancient concept of time was independent of one's project. people lived their cycles and some were complete in their journeys in one year and some in a hundred, and it was all perfect. The other day, I told my mother that Tootsie Blanc, a childhood friend of Mom's, had passed away. "How old was he?" she asked. 86. "Tsk-tsk-tsk. So young!"

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) claimed that "time is the measure of change" [Physics, chapter 12], but he emphasized "that time is not change [itself]" because a change "may be faster or slower, but not time..." [Physics, chapter 10]. For example, a specific change such as the descent of a leaf can be faster or slower, but time itself can not be faster or slower. He raised the issue of the mind-dependence of time when he said, "Whether, if soul (mind) did not exist, time would exist or not, is a question that may fairly be asked; for if there cannot be someone to count there cannot be anything that can be counted..." [Physics, chapter 14]. He does not answer his own question because, he says rather profoundly, it depends on whether time is the conscious numbering of movement or instead is just the capability of movements being numbered were consciousness to exist.

St. Augustine (354 - 430 AD) emphasized that human experience is a one-way journey from Genesis to Judgment, regardless of any recurring patterns or cycles in nature. Since Augustine was a Manichean, believing that there is a right and wrong way to think about everything, he felt that it would be sacrilegious to persist in thinking of time as cyclical. Christ died, once and for all and it couldn't have happened before or again. Adopting a subjective view of time, he said time is nothing in reality but exists only in the mind's apprehension of that reality.

In the 11th century, the Persian philosopher Avicenna doubted the existence of physical time, arguing that time exists only in the mind due to memory and expectation. The 13th century philosophers Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome said time exists in reality as a mind-independent continuum, but is distinguished into earlier and later parts only by the mind. In the 13th century, Duns Scotus clearly recognized both physical and psychological time.

At the end of the 18th century, Kant suggested a subtle relationship between time and mind--that our mind actually structures our perceptions so that we can know *a priori* that time is like a mathematical line. Time is, on this theory, a form of conscious experience.

This metaphysical dispute was fueled by Einstein who looked at the limits of the integration of his time equations in relativity, saw that the slice of time we call "now" disappears and said:

Since there exists in the four dimensional structure no longer any slices which represent "now" objectively...it appears more natural to think of physical reality as a four dimensional existence instead of, as hitherto, the evolution of a three dimensional existence.

This leaves us in a very strange reality of a now that is, at once, infinitesimal and eternal, coupled with the same cycles that were evident to the Ancients.

The only thing that I can tell you about telling time is that no one can tell. To the extent that it is possible, live your life without regard to time. Honor the seasons and be appropriate to them, just as it is wise to honor the cycles of your body and mind and to be appropriate to those.

The Ancient Roman calendar ran...

Martius - 31days

Aprilis - 30 days

Maius - 31days

Junius - 30 days

Quintilis - 31days

Sextilis - 30 days

September - 30 days

October - 31days

November - 30 days

December - 30 days

There were 61 or 62 days of Winter that did not fall within the calendar, and nothing was scheduled. Just as it made sense for them to sleep during the darkest and coldest part of the day, it made sense for them to rest during the darkest and coldest part of the year. The months had three named days: the Kalends (New Moon), Nones (1st Quarter Moon) and Ides (Full Moon). If you're going to meet someone in Rome on the Nones of Maius, you should start out soon after the Kalends of Maius and wait there.

Around 713 BCE, Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome, caused trouble when he added January and February (There have been 28 days to February for 2,721 years!) to the calendar, making 12 months.

Dialogue on Telling Time

Completion

Next week:

Next Sunday is the 28th of December, the last Sunday of 2009. The message and theme of next Sunday's service is **New Year: Completion and Creation**. Please join us next Sunday as we complete this year and create the coming annual cycle of 2009.