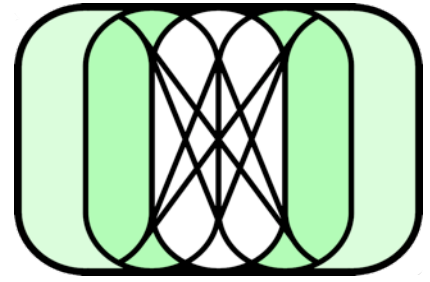


1-218-936-4700 code 81581 #

The Creation

Order of Service #227

Sunday, January 22, 2012 8:00 AM CDT



January 22nd is the 22nd day of 2012. As this is a leap year, there are 344 days remaining until the end of the year.

Welcome: You are always already chosen

Hymn: John, Musical Director

Announcements and Sharing

Process: **No-thing-ness...**

This week in Semiotics: **Multi-Modal Meaning-Making Mechanisms**

Message: **Questionable “Current Conditions”**

Lost In Space:

Birthday Acknowledgement:

Antonio Gramsci (January 22, 1891 – April 27, 1937)
Italian writer, politician, political philosopher, and linguist

Future Weeks:

January 29 Let's Get Metaphysical!

February 5 Super?

Welcome:

Welcome to the 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 creative service, without a creed or a code. Recognizing that believing or disbelieving may get in the way of living authentically, it is one of our practices to suspend belief in favor of inquiries into the unknowable infinity of Being. Notice that I said suspend: You don’t 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. For example: **What** You eat is important to Your life and health; **That** You eat is crucial. This distinction shows up everywhere. For the purposes of this service, we could say that **what** You sing is merely important. What makes a difference is **that** You sing as a self-expression and contribution to Yourself and others.

I acknowledge John for his willingness to participate as our musical director for this morning’s Creation, and call on him now to lead our participation...

The order of service today is...

Announcements and Sharing:

Process: No-thing-ness...

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 in a world where the house or building that you are in does not exist. Create for yourself that the house or building never existed. In fact, no house or building has ever existed. You remain fully conscious, feeling calm and relaxed as you observe and explore a very strange existence. Please create for yourself a world where no cars or trucks ever existed, as the buildings, the factories where such things might be produced, never existed. No paved roads or driveways or parkways ever existed as there was no need for them in a world without cars and trucks. In this world without houses and roads and driveways, green lawns of evenly mowed grass never existed. Now consider a world where no horses or carts, wagons or even wheels ever existed. Human life would be very different in this world, so human life as we know it would have never existed. Create for yourself a world of no people.

Still fully conscious and feeling very safe in your explorations, create the experience of the silence and lack of meaning that the lack of human life would produce. In the silence and lack of meaning, create the experience of a Universe where the Earth and the Moon and the other planets never existed. Imagine that the Sun never existed. Consider that no star has ever existed in this universe. Create for yourself the experience of being in a Universe where no matter has ever existed. No energy exists in this Universe either, nor has energy ever existed in this Universe. No light, no energy, no matter, no thing.

You are now in a Universe of no-thing: Nothing. In the midst of this no-thing-ness, consider the possibility of a Universe of your own design. Consider for a moment that when there is no-thing, the possibility of some-thing is all that exists. Create for yourself the possibility of a Universe that is perfect as it is: a Universe where everything is as it should be. What is the possibility of Your Universe? Notice that when you create the possibility, a new realm of activity comes into being? What will you create? Light and energy? Matter and no-matter? Light and energy located within conglomerations of matter and visible across vast expanses of no-matter? Stars and the Sun? A planet on which to live?

As you create your perfect Universe, consider that the matter and energy come from your consciousness — your expansive creative power. Create for yourself energy and vitality, health and prosperity, abundance and freedom, joy and appreciation for the Universe you create. You are here and You are at home.

As you continue to create your Universe, create the house or building that you are in and create yourSelf within a physical expression of yourSelf within. When you are ready, please open your eyes.

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: Multi-Modal Meaning-Making Mechanisms

Humans make meaning. The other critters on this planet communicate in various ways, and meaning is derived from whale squeals, bird chirps, pig grunts, cow moos and so on, especially by other whales, birds, pigs cows and so on. It takes a Human Being, however, to come along and add significance to all of that. We make meaning all day long, and even in our sleep.

Applications of Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure's theories regarding the nature of signifier and signified, in particular their arbitrary relationship, had a strong influence in the arts after their introduction in the early twentieth century. Visual artist Rene Magritte serves as a prominent example of pointing out the dissonance between a thing and the symbols used to define it with his work, exemplified by his *Trahisson des Images* in which his painting of a pipe has the caption: "This is not a pipe."

In the realm of literature, writers began to explore the consequences of deliberately creating a disharmony between the immediate language encountered on the page and its greater meaning in the work as a whole, leading to an increase in the usage of verbal irony in various forms in the twentieth century. The works of the surrealists in both the literary and visual arts took de Saussure's theories and theories from the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis and applied them to create deliberate discordance between the manifest and latent content of the Human Mind.

Literary and artistic criticism turned the ideas of Peirce and de Saussure into tools of analysis with the formation of the movement of Structuralism in the twentieth century. By discovering the relationships between signifiers and signifieds, Structuralism hoped to construct systems of meaning which could be derived from the language used in a particular work of literature or art. With the advent of cinema and television, the ideas originally applied to the static visual arts and literature gained application to studies in cinema and advertisement.

Anthropology and sociology have also taken interest in the ideas of semiotics in their capacity to transmit cultural ideas and value systems, providing a means of understanding the world to its citizenry.

Language in use always creates three interdependent kinds of social and cultural meaning. It constructs social relationships among participants and points-of-view; it creates verbal presentations of events, activities, and relationships other than itself; it construes relations of parts to wholes within its own text and between itself and its contexts.

Presentational meaning is the most familiar and most studied. This aspect of meaning is often referred to as representational, propositional, ideational, experiential or thematic content. This is the function of language for presenting states-of-affairs, for saying what is going on. It presents processes, activities, and relationships; the participants in these processes, and attendant circumstances of time, place, manner, means, etc. It defines entities, classifies them, ascribes attributes to them, counts them.

Orientalional meaning may be even more fundamental developmentally. This aspect of meaning, also called interpersonal or attitudinal, constructs our social, evaluative, and affective stance towards the thematic content of our discourse, towards real and potential addressees and interlocutors, and toward alternative viewpoints. It includes the language of formality/intimacy, status and power relationships, role relationships; speech acts such as promising/threatening, joking, insulting, pleading, requesting/demanding, offering, etc.

Organizational meaning is not always perceived in our culture as meaning, but analysis shows that it is an integral member of the team, functioning together with, and indeed enabling, the other two. Organizational meaning includes the ways in which language creates wholes and parts, how it tells us which words go with which other ones, which phrases and sentences with which others and how, and generally how a coherent text distinguishes itself from a random sequence of sentences, phrases, or words. Organizational meaning in language is generally created through simultaneous use of two complementary principles: (1) constituency structure, in which a larger meaning unit is directly made up of contiguous smaller units, and (2) cohesive structure, or "texture", in which chains of semantic relationships unite units which may be scattered through the text.

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, **January 22nd through January 28th**, we are in the first full week of the Zodiac sign of Aquarius, the Water-Bearer.

The sky's biggest asterism (informal star pattern) is the Winter Hexagon or Winter Circle. It fills the sky toward the east and south these evenings. Start with brilliant Sirius at its bottom. Going clockwise from there, march through Procyon, Pollux and Castor, Capella high up, Aldebaran over to Capella's right, down to Rigel, and back to Sirius.

Sunday, January 22

New Moon (exact at 2:39 a.m. Monday morning EST).

Monday, January 23

By 9 p.m. the Big Dipper is already standing vertically on its handle, well up in the northeast — an early sign of the approach of spring.

Tuesday, January 24

In twilight, look far lower right of Venus for the thin crescent Moon, as shown.

Wednesday, January 25

Venus and the waxing crescent Moon shine in the west-southwest in twilight about 8° apart, as shown.

Thursday, January 26

The Moon shines over Venus in twilight, as shown.

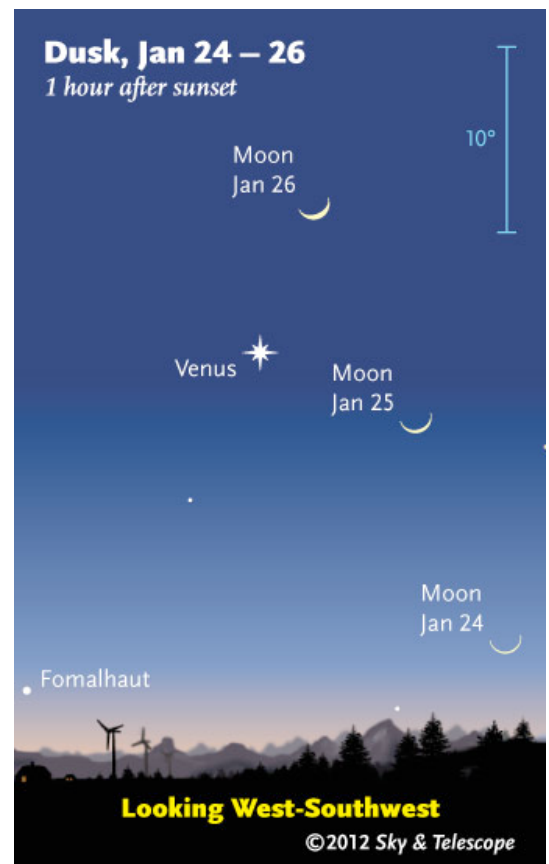
Friday, January 27

Now the Moon is higher above Venus. Once the stars come out, look a similar distance to the Moon's right for the bottom star of the Great Square of Pegasus. The Great Square is balancing on this corner.

Saturday, January 28

This evening, look right of the Moon for a different corner of the Great Square of Pegasus: its leftmost corner. About twice as far to the Moon's upper left, Jupiter is shining brightly.

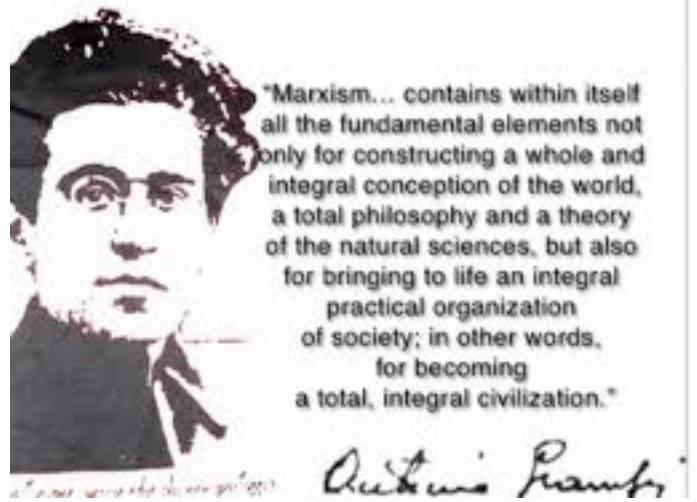
_o/ **Look up — There is always something worth seeing!**



Birthday Acknowledgement

Antonio Gramsci (January 22, 1891 – April 27, 1937) was an Italian writer, politician, political philosopher, and linguist. He was a founding member and onetime leader of the Communist Party of Italy and was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime. Gramsci was one of the most important Marxist thinkers in the 20th century, and his writings are heavily concerned with the analysis of culture and political leadership; he is notable as a highly original thinker within modern European thought. He is renowned for his concept of cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the state in a capitalist society.

Gramsci's thought emanates from the organized left, but he has also become an important figure in current academic discussions within cultural studies and critical theory. Political theorists from the center and the right have also found insight in his concepts; his idea of hegemony, for example, has become widely cited. His influence is particularly strong in contemporary political science, on the subject of the prevalence of neoliberal thinking among political elites, in the form of Neo-gramscianism. His work also heavily influenced intellectual discourse on popular culture and scholarly popular culture studies in whom many have found the potential for political or ideological resistance to dominant government and business interests.



Cultural hegemony is Gramsci's philosophic and sociological theory that *a culturally diverse society can be dominated (ruled) by one social class, by manipulating the societal culture (beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values) so that its ruling-class worldview is imposed as the societal norm, which then is perceived as a universally valid ideology and status quo beneficial to all of society, while actually benefiting only the ruling class.*

Sound familiar?

Quotes:

- The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.
- My practicality consists in this: in the knowledge that if you beat your head against the wall it is your head which breaks and not the wall ... that is my strength, my only strength.
- The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned.
- One must speak for a struggle for a new culture, that is, for a new moral life that cannot but be intimately connected to a new intuition of life, until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality
- A given socio-historical moment is never homogeneous; on the contrary, it is rich in contradictions.
- Common sense is not something rigid and stationary, but is in continuous transformation, becoming enriched with scientific notions and philosophical opinions that have entered into common circulation. 'Common sense' is the folklore of philosophy and always stands midway between folklore proper (folklore as it is normally understood) and the philosophy, science, and economics of the scientists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, a relatively rigidified phase of popular knowledge in a given time and place.
- It is too easy to be original by doing the opposite of what everyone else is doing; this is just mechanical.