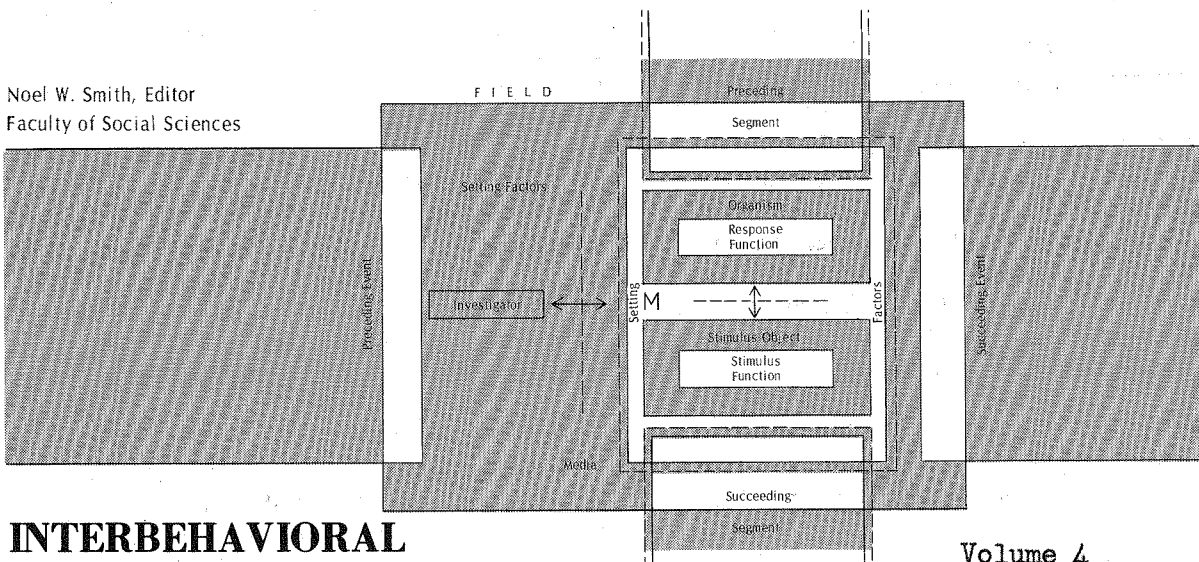


Noel W. Smith, Editor
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NATURE AND MIND: SELECTED ESSAYS OF FREDERICK J. E. WOODBRIDGE

Thus the sense organs appear to be constructed and differentiated in relation to specific differences in the stimuli which may affect them, while the nervous system appears to be constructed and unified in relation to co-ordinated activity by the organism. While the sense organs put the organism in diversified interaction with its surroundings, the nervous system prevents this diversification from resulting in disintegrated and isolated reactions. It is thus apparent that the nervous system secures to the organism individuality and unity of life in spite of very great diversity of stimuli and environment. We have in these considerations, I believe, the means of stating the relational view of consciousness in biological terms. An organism so situated that it should be in differentiated interaction with the specific differences in the world about it, but which should none the less, react in a unified and co-ordinated manner no matter how it might be stimulated, might well be defined as a conscious organism. Its consciousness would be a relational term integrating and unifying its differentiated interaction with its surroundings. Furthermore, its consciousness would naturally be marked by many of the characteristics usually attributed to consciousness. It would, for instance, be what we call individual and personal, and, being unified, it would present features often ascribed to a self or mind.

--"Consciousness, the Sense Organs, and the Nervous System", 1909

...consciousness is not a term, but a relation.

...our life...manifestly appears to be an interaction between organism and environment, and not an interaction between consciousness and objects...

--"Consciousness and Object", 1912

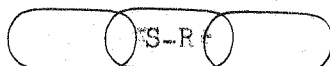
Crude Data

Investigative Contact

Scientific Construction

We are publishing the first original research in the Newsletter with Jacqueline Farrington's work. It was conducted as a class project and a continuation of her interests in construct usage and its influence as expressed in a paper she published in the Psychological Record. Requests for offprints for that publication have exhausted her supply. She is in the second year of her M.A. program in clinical psychology, plans to spend a year working after completion, then look for a doctoral program. Hopefully, her journal publication and her works in this Newsletter may help her in gaining admittance to a satisfactory program. The second article is a whimsical piece by the editor.

In cutting down from five to four issues we have tried to provide as much material as in the five and can now count pages and find that 1972 pages are about one-third more than 1971. Prices will remain the same as we go into our fourth year of the Newsletter. The feature articles coming in 1973 include a comparison by a senior psychology major of a systems approach of D.L. Clark and the field approach of J.R. Kantor and a lengthy article of exceptional quality by a graduate student at the University of Denver.



"RITE WORDS..... BUT ARE THEY RIGHT?"

Jacqueline Farrington

Dollard and Miller (1950) have suggested that effective communication and effective psychotherapy consist of verbal labeling and symbolic linguistic manipulation of adult problem solving situations. Such labeling and manipulative behavior is frequently observed in the use of constructs which are reified into possessing existence and which often connote direction or force within the human organism. Additionally, such directors or forces are viewed as underlying and causative factors of both implicit and explicit behaviors.

McLuhan (1967) has suggested that humans engaged in social interaction learn to use "the rite words in rote order." This study was undertaken as a pilot study of a series of studies by the author (Farrington, 1972) which attempt to discover the ways in which "rite" words may be used in both description and explanation within a group setting concerned with problem solving. Previous studies (Ellis, 1967; Dollard and Miller, 1950; Jourard, 1958) have suggested that such constructs carry an assumed and implicit meaning which is seldom defined or agreed upon by group participants.

Subjects:

Ss consisted of 25 members of an education subgroup of a Drug Awareness Workshop, Summer, 1972, at State University of New York at Plattsburgh. Age range of Ss was 17-68 years (median age = 36 years, \bar{X} = 35 years). Twelve Ss were public school classroom teachers; 4 Ss were nurse-teachers; 3 Ss were employed by community drug programs; 4 Ss were students; 1 S was a medical technician in the US Air Force.

Data Collection

Ss were requested during the second group session to write a brief definition of 10 constructs identified by Q as high in frequency of use during the first group session. The ten constructs were: (1) anxiety, (2) ego, (3) mind, (4) problem, (5) self-image, (6) identity, (7) paranoia, (8) psychological, (9) physiological, (10) self-esteem.

During three 90-minute group sessions, the observer recorded the frequency and context of constructs. Three conditions were observed: Condition A: discussion group in dialogue with three high school student participants centering on students' perceptions of drug usage among peers; Condition B: discussion of adult attitudes toward the high school graduate who is classified as a "drifter"; Condition C: discussion led by educational consultant of teaching techniques for school health education programs.

RESULTS

As is shown in Table 1, a wide diversity of meaning was found in written definitions. A total of 120 definitions were given for the 10 constructs. The words "ego", "anxiety," and "psychological" received the greatest number of definitions in that order. The least number of definitions were given to "physiological," "problem," and "self-esteem" in ascending order.

Ss frequently gave more than one definition per word and occasionally gave overlapping definitions. For example, "self-image" was defined as "identity" and vice versa. One construct was also often defined by another construct or part of another construct: e.g., "ego" by "self," "identity" by "self," "paranoia" by "character disorder," "mind" by "intelligence." Additionally, a construct was defined partially by itself: e.g. "self-esteem" by "self-feelings", "self-pride", and "self-judgement."

The construct "self" demonstrated higher frequency than any other construct as a definer of several other constructs, (frequency = 17).

Figure one demonstrates that behavioral use of constructs during the three sessions showed extreme variability. The construct "self-image" was verbalized most frequently over the total sessions, followed by the construct "problem".

Of interest in considering such frequencies are the group setting factors. Under setting Condition A the most frequent constructs (in order of frequency) were "self-image", "problem", and "paranoia;" under Condition B, "self-image," "problem", and "self-esteem;" under Condition C "self-image," "anxiety" and "mind."

In Table 2 is given the verbal context in which the 6 most frequent constructs were utilized. In all but one case ("the problem drinker"), the construct is described rather than descriptive and is viewed as being acted upon rather than acting. That is, constructs, both in conversational and in written verbal context, have been reified to assume existence as concrete objects or events.

DISCUSSION

In a previous and better controlled setting of 8 Ss, the author (Farrington, 1972) suggested that the utilization of constructs in group discussion appeared to have the characteristic of an "anticipatory pre-current reaction" (Kantor, 1924, p. 39) which prepared participants for the final act of avoiding discussion of particular events. It is unfortunate that in the limited number of group sessions available, a single observer in a large group of 25 subjects cannot validate further the earlier findings. It is suggested, however, that the "problem", whether an underlying cause or an effect or factor contributing to behavior, was never specifically defined. In fact, the "problem" was not defined as a group of factors, though such was suggested occasionally. Rather, the information which emerged from group discussion suggested that setting factors (societal, economic and political) as well as innumerable specific stimuli with varying functions had not yet been specifically identified.

The construct "self," so frequently utilized in both written definition and verbal communication, was never operationally defined. Such is not surprising, for the definition of self is far from succinct or singular in any psychological dictionary. Even holding constant the function of reference,

Table 1. DEFINITIONS OF TEN FREQUENTLY UTILIZED WORDS IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

anxiety	ego	self-image concept	identity
need	self**	reaction to others	what I am
unrest	self-esteem	seen in mirror	way viewed
nervousness	knowing	framework of ego	self
worry**	improving	learned, tried,	familiar
fear***	feelings**	accepted	self picture
uncomfortableness**	personality**	outward appearance**	sense of self
feeling of stress**	determines behavior	self picture**	uniqueness
apprehension	worth	sense of self	role**
concern	mind	opinion of self	goals
madness	conscious	identity**	philosophy
unhappiness	me	evaluation of self	what I think
frustration	self-image	what want to be	self-image
emotions	dreams		personal thing
uneasyness	sense of self		
tension	things		
insecurity	process		
	psychic director		
	inner strength		
psychological	physiological	mind	paranoia
deal with mind	physical**	intelligence***	character disorder
mind effects	vital organs	non-physical part	feeling persecuted**
relates to mind**	body processes***	thought processes	irrational fear
relates to psyche	inborn tendency	where unconscious	distrust
mental orientation	body, not brain	stored	critical
brain	body and mind	memory	suspicious feeling**
emotional effect		subconscious	ill feeling
feeling		unconscious	fear**
thinking		reasoning	scared
learned behavior		judgement	hostility
mind processes**		personality	discouragement
consciousness		discipline	feeling threatened
unconscious		where I think	insecurity
problem solving			
mind directing			
problem		self-esteem	
interfering factors	stressful	belief of self	self-pride
situation***	circumstances	ego-strength	self-judgement
needs solving		feelings of worth**	functional relation-
obstacle hurdle		self-feeling	ship between iden-
idea		favorable opinion	tity and self

***given more than ten times

**given more than five times

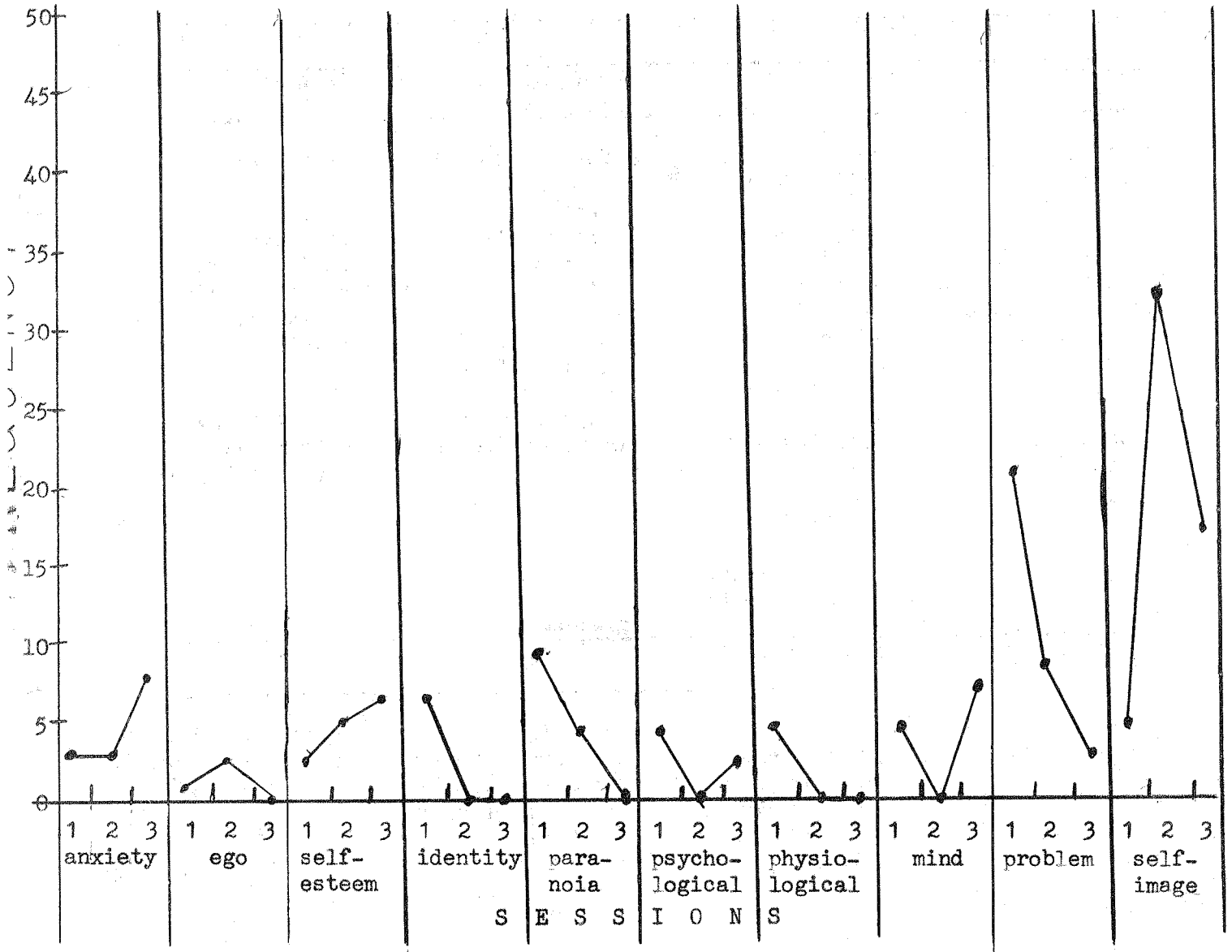


Figure1. Frequencies of Constructs observed in group discussions

Table 2. Verbal context of most frequently used constructs.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1) <u>self-image</u> and <u>self-concept</u>
 damaging to a kid's self-image
 high self concept
 low self concept
 an evaluation of the self -image
 self-image is what a person
 thinks of himself
 activities used to develop
 self-image
 decisions are related to
 one's self image
 drug abuse...depends upon
 your self-concept</p> | <p>4) <u>mind</u>
 overtones in our minds
 the unconscious part of your mind
 mind-expanding drugs
 secure in your mind
 in the back of the mind
 a critical mind</p> |
| <p>2) <u>problem</u>
 abuse is symptomatic of a
 problem
 underlying nature of the
 problem
 an underlying problem
 security in having a problem
 the drug problem
 the problem drinker
 problem is a thing that concerns
 run into a problem
 psychological problem</p> | <p>5) <u>anxiety</u>
 create anxiety
 low anxiety
 high anxiety
 emotional anxiety</p> |
| <p>3) <u>paranoia</u> - <u>paranoid</u>
 people get paranoid
 feelings of paranoia
 doing drugs gives paranoia
 to be paranoid</p> | <p>6) <u>self-esteem</u>
 high self-esteem
 low self-esteem
 teach self-esteem
 provide self-esteem
 self-esteem growth</p> |

(Discussion cont.)

Brown and Gilman (1966) have found that there remain differences in expression which exist at a level of difficulty which demands time-and-painstaking effort. These authors have suggested that the repertoires of verbal responses of individuals alter under varying conditions, appear to be descriptive of their own reactions and have significantly different effects upon others. What may be reasonably inferred is that the construct "self" probably refers to reaction patterns established by the individual using the word, these then being imposed upon other individuals" observed behavior.

The purpose of a Drug Awareness Workshop is assumed to be that of placing individuals in a setting in which they may discuss and attempt to find adequate means of understanding and altering behavior patterns of drug usage deemed undesirable and/or harmful to effective and satisfactory personal and group functioning. As has been demonstrated, words acquire innumerable functions or meanings. A relevant question posed by Lewis Carroll (1936) then arises: "...whether you can make words mean so many different things."

Phrased somewhat more bluntly, the question is: what events or actual happenings have we actually been talking about?

Such a question is not posed as either challenge nor idle hair-splitting, but rather with serious concern. It has been oft said that "psychologists don't know what they are talking about." The author suggests that the disciples of psychology must take both credit and blame for the promulgation of reification of constructs and the implications of such a practice. Psychology has aided the splitting of the human organism into two parts...a questionably sound view of a whole organism which interacts with and within an environment. If indeed our constructs have no referent in crude data, that is, in actual behavior which is observable, it would seem more than expedient to dispense with their use.

Rather than continue a practice which cannot facilitate the alteration of behavior and may facilitate avoidance of such efforts, we would do well to attempt to adequately describe and classify behavioral events. Only then can we discover the conditions which may facilitate and encourage alteration of behavior. Such admits of our ignorance and simultaneously suggests that systematic analyses of connected series of events could lead to more favorable results than we presently see in most social institutions. In the meantime, we are spinning circular discussions with labels and constructs which have far too many referents and varied meanings and functions to enable us to communicate with clarity or to adequately seek new directions. Our "rite" words have seemingly become a rite in themselves as we perpetuate the circle, or as a young poet said at age seventeen: (published in "Verdi Valley Review" in 1969, Verdi Valley School, Arizona).

"words learn themselves after a long time, after all
 their cramped misunderstood falterings finally lead them
 to some point (not in time) where they find space around
 themselves and breathe full, ah.
 which is not to say that they are suddenly free, as freedom is
 generally misunderstood, but that they are free to be
 created rather than merely found in the dark.
 which is very like other art and living, not only writing.
 which is where most of us happen to be. right now."

Perhaps the time has come to say: we are as much victims of our rites as are our young friends...and our old friends...whose rites are, after all, only different. That's all we know...right now.

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AN INTERBEHAVIORIST LOOKS AT SANTA CLAUS

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For many years we have been indoctrinated in the belief that we must convince children of the reality of Santa Claus. Never does a December slip by without our local newspaper reminding us that "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." We are told in this chestnut that Santa Claus is necessary for "child-like faith" and for poetry, and romance, and joy. And what we cannot see is not proof something doesn't exist: witness fairies. Further, "there is a veil covering the unseen world" which can never be removed except by fantasy.

With this belief which is so strongly entrenched and highly cherished, do we even dare to question it or poke at it a little or try to lift a corner of that veil with our fingers rather than our fantasy? Could we possibly be so bold and undisciplined as to suggest some doubt about the value of the entire concept and its mystique? We must, for there is much that we have learned in psychological investigation of children that demands our scrutiny of this tradition.

First of all we must recognize that our attempts to convince children that a fantasy is not a fantasy but a truth is the deliberate fostering of a lie. Yet the parent who so lies to the child would likely punish the child for such a lie. We must be truthful to children in all matters as we expect them to be, for they follow examples of our behavior, not our admonishments. This is not to deny the value of imagination, but we must distinguish between encouraging imagination and deliberately passing off imaginative objects as truth.

Santa Claus is commonly employed as a device to control children: "You better not shout; you better not pout, you better not cry..." The song tells the child that he must not behave as a child if he expects to receive the potential gifts that have been dangled before him. He must give up his wicked ways and conform to an adult pattern of being "good." It is no wonder that some children scream with fright when they encounter this bizarre creature in a department store. Others merely assert to him that they have been "good" even though they have necessarily and inevitably all shouted, pouted, and cried.

When the child finally discovers that the whole matter is a monumental hoax perpetrated upon him in his innocence, there is disillusionment and confusion and finally disappointment and embarrassment. Up to this time his parents and other adults had been the repository of total truth for him but now the story all falls away as a deliberate fabrication and his parents are found wanting. Not only can the gift receiving never be the same again but neither can his parents. In some cases he will be too embarrassed to admit to his parents, either for his sake or theirs, that he knows the truth, and so he goes along with the hoax on himself. This is similar to the situation in which the child learns that his parents' story about the origin of babies is a lie but never mentions it in order to embarrass no one including himself.

As adults we often view in retrospect our own belief in Santa Claus as pleasurable. But if we sort through our nostalgic memories of eager anticipation we may find that we are confusing sentimentality with enjoyment or we are desiring to continue believing what our parents told us was true; we cling to the childhood belief rather than face the disillusionment and we bolster this belief by vicariously living it with our children on whom we have, in turn, perpetrated the lie. It is this kind of bond that

can account for the strong feeling of attachment we have for this hoax.

In a class of child psychology that I taught to college freshmen, I raised some of these same objections to Santa. The outcry of protest was loud and intense. Upon sorting through the students' various arguments I found that they centered around these three assertions: (1) if children are not taught that Santa is real they will tell other children and that will cause problems; (2) Santa Claus is no different from any other fantasy and children should be encouraged in the use of fantasy; further, children cannot be taught to distinguish between truth and fantasy; (3) believing in Santa is fun and no child should be deprived of this fun.

I asked the class how many thought it wise to tell children that storks brought babies. Not a single student raised a hand. I then informed them that their arguments for Santa would apply in precisely the same way as that of storks and babies. To be consistent they would have to accept both or relinquish both. But let us look at the arguments one at a time.

The first argument recognizes the inevitability that children will pass on information no matter what it is they are told, whether truth, fabrication, or folklore. It was such information that caused Virginia to write her letter to seek clarification. It seems hardly justified to lie to a child in order to prevent his passing truthful information to another child. If a child can be informed by another child of truth as opposed to fantasy it contradicts the argument that he can't distinguish between them. That leads us directly to the second argument. Children are constantly confronted with such ready-made fantasies such as personalized animals; trains that have faces, feelings, and desires; and television cartoon characters that fly through the air. Yet in their actual encounter with these things they maintain constant awareness that dogs don't wear hats or talk; that trains, cars, and other inanimate objects must be made to function by humans; and that no one flies unassisted. I had tried on several occasions to see if my twins at the age of four would believe that a neighborhood squirrel was either the same as their favorite storybook squirrel or at least behaved similarly. They clearly informed me that squirrels don't really do such things as the storybook describes and that I should know better.

In addition to their ready-made fantasies there is no dearth of fantasies children themselves construct whether they be centered around their creations in a sandpile, activities of dolls, or just sitting in a chair pretending to be driving a car and producing some noise to heighten the effect. Yet the child constantly exhibits his ability to distinguish between these and real objects. What child would not leave his fantasied car to sit on his father's lap behind the steering wheel of a real car?

These kinds of fantasies are desirable and healthy but they are of a different kind from those proffered as truth by parents where the child has no opportunity to test them against reality. In addition to Santa Claus and storks bringing babies there is the Easter bunny that lays eggs and shovels, the fairy that replaces the tooth under the pillow with a coin, the star that is a dead relative, the supernatural agents that provide a constant surveillance of the child's behavior, and other veils of an unseen world that we construct. It is in the Santa Claus Lie that we go to the most elaborate extremes to lend credulity to the hoax. Both S. I. Hayakawa and Brock Chisholm have observed the problems in these distortions of reality and have shown how imagination as a valuable tool of exploration

may be actually crippled by not having reliable information for comparison until there is an emotional realization or a traumatic revelation. When imaginative behavior encounters inconsistent tests of reality it cannot realize its potential as a tool of innovation and progress in adult life. For there have been no reliable guidelines, nothing to trust. It seems likely, then, that what is necessary for poetry and romance and joy is not "child-like faith" but rather the freedom to engage fully in fantasy while surrounded by a concrete world and factual and true information -- or factual and true to the best of our ability to provide it; at the very least we should not impede any child from discovering it. Any veil is one that we have placed between our children and the truth. It consists of lies and ignorance. Lies we can immediately dispense with. Ignorance we can overcome.

As for the third argument, if we look at the child's reactions objectively rather than nostalgically we are likely to find more eventual pain and damage than fun. His fun and pleasure can probably be more genuine and freer of conflict if he is not the victim of a hoax however well meaning it may be intended.

What are the real functions of Santa Claus? There are two: (1) a symbol for Virginia and others of "love and generosity and devotion;" (2) a commercial gimmick to increase sales. The first one is probably too abstract for small children, and we might suspect that it is also a convenient alibi for justifying the lie. The second is a very concrete one that children can understand: Santa helps stores sell toys. Let us look at some considerations that bring us to these two functions.

So far we have dealt largely with the negative issues. Let us add one more that leads us toward the first function. If Santa is really supposed to be a symbol for our interpersonal relations as in (1), he subverts that intent. The gift giving that should be one of intimacy and devotion between parent and child is handed over to a bizarre impersonal creature who sneaks in during the night. Certainly the excitement of finding gleaming new toys is there but does this really represent the way parents and children feel about each other? Have they expressed any intimacy and devotion to each other? Would not the whole matter of gift giving be more meaningful and more directed toward warm personal relations if we gave our gifts directly from each other to each other-- parents, children, grandparents, sisters, brothers, friends -- with all of the meaning of fond personal selection and cordial presentation?

What then do we tell our children about the many creatures in red that they see in the stores in December. I tell mine that these Santas are men in costumes just like the clown at the circus. They are in the stores to laugh and make us happy and to help us to select gifts for each other. This is concrete and they understand it and accept it readily. It is the utilization of the second function. As for the descent down the chimney we tell them how this was derived from the Norse belief that the goddess Hersa descended through the smoke and flames of a fire of fir boughs and through her magic slippers gave gifts to obedient children. This tale we compare with fairy tales and personified animals as "pretending" and not real. The fact of such a derivation is not quite so concrete and clear but neither is it clear to them how an automobile or a television works or how paint sticks to the wall or trees turn color in the fall, or how glass transmits light; but we keep helping them with new information and improving methods of explanation. Never are they told a deliberate lie about anything. In the meantime they are free to pretend they are flying

through the air on a sleigh or coming down chimneys and to have all the fun with the tale that it can provide, but they are quite clear about what is fantasy and what is not.



While it is clear that a person does accumulate and remember ways of behaving and normally does behave in a way that is consistent with his present circumstances, there is no clear evidence in logic or in data that these behaviors are really internal physical units that get stored, processed, searched for, selected, and invoked by some set of internal storage or processing devices. That argument only leads to regressive questions about the mechanisms underlying the mechanisms. It is not an accident that the description of symbolic processes (the functions of some alleged symbolic device) is given in behavioral terms, such as storing, sorting, and selection. That in itself is a strong clue that, rather than being functions of a device at all, they are functions of a person, i. e., part and parcel of or, better, parameters of his behavior.
(p. 13)

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