

Teaching Santa is immoral

by Aidan Adams-Campeau
Humor Editor



As the holiday season approaches, elves, Rudolph, and Santa Claus begin to make their annual appearance. For many families, including my own, Christmas morning would be incomplete without presents under the tree marked "from Santa." However, this tradition offers little in terms of significant benefits and is made possible only through parents who lie to their children. This deceit and breach of trust outweighs whatever small benefits come from propagating this fiction.

Proponents of the Santa myth believe that it's just a little bit of harmless fun, adding to the spirit and cheer of the holiday season. They argue there is nothing wrong with fostering a belief in the magic of the holidays. The concept of Santa is heartwarming and can teach children about values such as generosity and charity. Certainly there are many children who are delighted as they bake cookies to leave out for Santa Claus, and certainly there are many parents who also take pleasure in this merry charade.

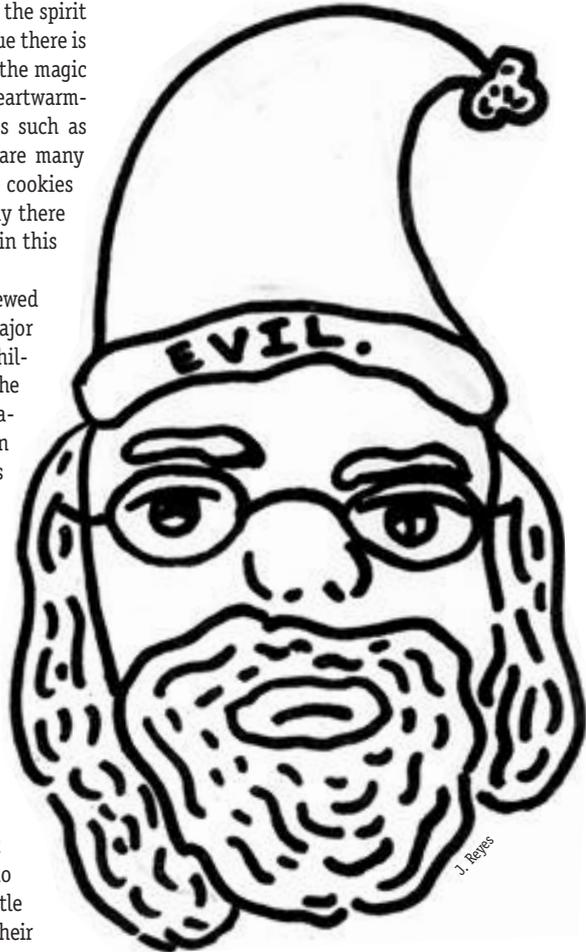
However, these benefits should be viewed as dramatically disproportional to the major ethical issue of parents lying to their children. This act is one of serious betrayal. The responsibility of filtering what information goes into a young child's mind is an enormous one, and the distortion of this information is not something that should be taken lightly. Though there may be merriment in stories, movies, and holiday customs based on lies about Santa, the feeling of confusion and sadness when children realize they have been deceived and betrayed by their own parents should be considered far more important.

Parents teach their children to always tell the truth. Usually, even white lies are discouraged. Going along with the fiction of Santa Claus is a direct contradiction of those values. Parents who preach about both honesty and Santa's little elves are deeply hypocritical and damage their

credibility as role models.

For me, as well as countless other children, finding out that Santa Claus wasn't real was a truly traumatic experience. I was not upset that the happy old man with the beard didn't really exist, but I was angry and disillusioned when I realized the scope of the fraud committed by everyone I trusted and admired. My parents, my older sister, and society as a whole happily lied to me again and again.

Even today, I find this vast web of lies utterly perplexing. In general, people should try to avoid lying. By the same token, parents should not lie to their children. If they are going to lie to their children, it should be about something important and they should have meaningful justifications. The entertainment value of a belief in Santa Claus is far from a meaningful justification. It is an immoral tradition that should not be continued by ethical parents.



Feminism is misused

by Lauren Finkle
Web Editor



With the advent of social media, the Internet, and a celebrity-based culture, the concept of feminism has been used, possibly misused, and worried over

in our everyday lives. A new wave of feminism that attacks female stars for the ways they are allegedly undermining women is on the rise. In the face of this, we need to remember that feminism means different things to different people, and tearing women down because of their supposed "unfeminist" actions is no way to advance the cause.

An incident between Lorde and starlets Selena Gomez and Taylor Swift provoked many to rethink their views on feminism, myself included. In reference to Selena Gomez's song, Come and Get It, Lorde said, "I'm a feminist and the theme of her song is, 'When you're ready come and get it from me...I'm sick of women being portrayed this way.'" Upon first reading, I was in total agreement. I do not agree with that song. But a little later I read Gomez's response, in which she said, "That's not feminism. [Lorde is] not supporting other women." After mulling over Lorde's comment and its response, I realized her comment was rooted in harsh criticism. Whether or not Gomez's song is supportive of the feminist cause, criticizing her and her sexuality is no way to improve how women are perceived and portrayed.



In a similar incident, Lorde criticized Taylor Swift for being a bad role model because she was "too flawless and unattainable." Why tear down someone who has yet to encourage young girls to drink themselves to liver disease or lose themselves to drugs? It seems like a hindrance to feminism to spend time calling out other women.

These examples call for us to rethink our approach towards feminism. The concept itself is elusive. It changes with every generation and means something different to everyone who encounters it. I think we need to realize that there will never be a strict definition to which the world can adhere. That act of dictating a way women must act to be "feminists," in itself, goes against the core idea of feminism.

Miley Cyrus thought-provokingly stated, "I feel like I'm one of the biggest feminists in the world because I tell women not to be scared of anything." I personally do not like her career choices or her image, but this statement struck a chord. This is the crux of feminism; it is undefinable. Miley Cyrus's feminism is different from Lorde's feminism, which is different from Selena Gomez's feminism.

This generation should take this opportunity to start recognizing what women are doing for society, not what they might be taking from it. In the case of Miley Cyrus, people's reactions to her behavior are most likely, if not religious or ideological, rooted in sexism. Why is it not okay for her to get up on stage and do what she likes? Because our society has been taught that women are supposed to act a certain way.

It is time for women to break out of that stereotype, and for the world to applaud them for doing so instead of tearing them down.

Tech ruins social skills

by Maddie Abene
Editorial Editor



Consider the amount of technological advances that we have made in the last 50 years: the Internet, cell phone, smartphone, iPad, iPod, laptop, Kindle, digital cam-

eras, flat screen television, Wi-Fi, Skype, Wii, and global positioning systems (GPS). Society has primarily become focused on the social relationships within the technological world that we live. Have you ever stopped to look up from your phone to see everyone else stumbling on the sidewalk because they're concentrating on their phone? Have you noticed how tourists see earth's greatest marvels through a camera lens? Or how most public meeting places have become areas to tweet rather than converse with others face to face? These are just some examples of how both interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships are being affected by this increase in technological advances.

This generation has become exceedingly lazy and has practically forgotten how to interact with one another. Teenagers suffer from re-allocation, spending an excessive amount of time elec-

tronically connected with others in lieu of physical interaction (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). This is both sickening and sad. People hide behind their devices in an attempt to avoid certain interactions with others face to face, replacing an endearing physical smile with an emoticon. This "comfort zone" leads to people texting their emotions rather than talking about them in person, which results in weaker social skills (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986).

If people continue to express their emotions and thoughts solely through social media, relationships will be unable to reach their fullest potential. Today, instead of a boy throwing pebbles at your window to flirt, he might text you or "poke" you on Facebook. Technology is detrimental to affectionate relationships between people, as it takes away from originality and classic displays of affection.

Psychological awareness of what is happening in real life is often changed by the widespread media connection that is virtually unavoidable. People become obsessively attached to their cell phones, and through mobile connection people become captivated in media connection. This leads to an unnatural interaction with physical surroundings, as well as a lack of awareness of what is actually going on in the world.

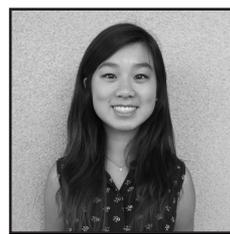
I am not against the use of technology; I myself take advantage of the benefits of my iPhone and other technological advances. I do, however, try my best to limit my use of devices. It is not that difficult to set your phone down for half an hour and maybe enjoy the outdoors, or have a quality conversation with your little brother whom you often ignore. If people begin to make a legitimate attempt to restrict their technology usage, relationships, awareness, and mental health will improve.

(Sources: The Internet and Social Life, Reducing Social Context Cues: Electronic Mail in Organization Communication)



You're not above average

by Michelle Huang
Web Editor



When inflated egos and superiority complexes are just as common as ninth-place trophies and superfluous encouragement, a reality-check is in order. Most of us grow up

with the idea that we are somehow special, but this belief of being above average, for the most part, is an illusion. Not only that, but it is an illusion that can eventually lead to disappointment, self-hate, and perpetual unhappiness if not shattered.

To start off, rate yourself in the category of your choice, be it friendliness, beauty, intelligence, or anything else you admire. Chances are, you gave yourself a six or higher—as would most people. The trend of people thinking of themselves as superior to others in many areas is statistically impossible, yet it is still prevalent in today's society. This phenomenon, known as illusory superiority, is especially common in our generation. Illusory superiority occurs because from very young age, we are constantly surrounded by reassurance that we are special and better than others. Because of this, people understand that not everybody can be above average, but they find it difficult to apply that concept to themselves.

It is also important to keep in mind that privilege is not equivalent to talent.

