

Sub-literal (SubL) Schemata of Deity in Verbal Narratives

Stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God (Book of Samuel 9:27.44).

Western culture has a set of religious beliefs predominately derived from a Judeo-Christian ethic, with a God high in a heaven who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. This image of God is a deeply rooted cognitive schema that is often unconsciously expressed in social narrative situations involving authority roles. HASKELL has termed such unconscious referents sub-literal (S_{ubL}). The purpose of this paper is to present examples of God Schemata.

There are two ways to understand the notion of an abstract God Schema. First, the God Schema is like a simple arithmetic formula $1 + 1 = 2$. This is an empty calculus into which can plugged almost anything, e.g., apples, pears, jaguars. Second, the God Schema implies an analogical reasoning structure. For example,

*Above : Below :: God : Mankind :: Parent : Child :: Employer : Employee*¹

The term God Schema is used not only because it has the form of an abstract universal structure, an empty calculus, but because it likely has an evolutionary-based neurological substrate. In this sense it is a generic term. In addition, the concept of a

Abstract

Western culture religious beliefs, derived predominately from a Judeo-Christian ethic, elicits beliefs in an omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God residing in a heaven. For those raised to believe in such a God, the images they become deeply rooted cognitive schemata that tends to cognitively undergird relationships with authority figures. On an unconscious level, experience with authority figures resonate to unconscious God Schemata. When in a relationship with authority, subordinates may unconsciously experience themselves as God's children. Accordingly, narratives about Deity are often unconscious or sub-literal (S_{ubL}) references to authority figures present in the narrative setting. Abstract God Schemata are like the simple arithmetic formula $1 + 1 = 2$, an empty calculus of slots into which most anything can be cognitively inserted, e.g., apples, pears, jaguars. These God Schemata seem to be pervasive in social situations involving authority roles. Narrative examples are presented and implications discussed.

Key words

Methodology; experimental design; epistemology; logico-mathematic; unconscious; cognition; language; sub-literal; narrative analysis; linguistics; psychodynamic.

God Schema is used in a more concrete sense. This second sense involves the affective content that is plugged into a particular abstract structure. In this paper, the affective content involves schemata about deity, but as the content of a God Schema narrative changes, these are referred to as sub-schemata. The basic God Schema as used here is one of *authority* in relationship to *subordinates*. Accordingly, on an unconscious level experience with authority figures in everyday settings resonate to this unconscious God template. Put schematically, the form is represented in Figure 1.

As Figure 1 shows, any authority position automatically belongs in the "God slot" and any subordinate position belongs

in the "God's Children" or subordinate slot. Further, as well be shown below, within any given God Schema, there are sub-schemata. For example, there are affective sub-schemata about whether God is (a) benevolent, (b) mean, (c) competent, or (d) fair, etc?

There are a host of other affective God Schemata. For example, there are *privacy* schemata, where narratives about newspaper reporters, novelists or the governmental Freedom of Information Act where all may be S_{ubL} references to actual privacy concerns within the narrative situation in which they are