

Imagine... Social Constructionism *

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Imagine a time and place in which meaning isn't a direct product of reality... in other words, in which language is unable to represent it... where its people don't have a mind that allows them to know themselves nor their world. Actually, imagine that this reality isn't even divided in an inner mind and an outer world.

In such a time and place, its people would construct every meaning between themselves. What they would consider as truth, it wouldn't be the projection of reality through language, but congruent expressions within group practices. So language would neither be meaningless, as it would allow this practices to take place, as well as it would allow this people to participate in them. In this sense, no statement could be neutral nor biased, but each one would favor some traditions while complicating others.

In fact, this people would be constructing their own reality as they build it's meanings. In other words, by using their rhetoric, they would favor a particular version. For instance, since their words wouldn't be literal reflections of an independent reality, but metaphors from different contexts, they would make sense of each aspect of their reality by relating them with other aspects from other contexts. Besides, when they would describe that particular version, they would do it by narrating certain stories instead of others, being that they would only have access to metaphoric words. Yet, each one of them wouldn't have personal control over reality construction, for each one would be incapable of positively predicting the course of their own social interactions.

* I basically made this writing, in April of 2006, as part of my dialogue with Susan Swim in the first unit of the distance program. The unit and the writing are based on: Gergen, Kenneth J. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chpts. 1-3.

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In order to take maximum advantage of their social construction potential, they would elaborate a more participative reality. By taking interactions as forms of negotiation between its participants, they would enrich their lives with various possibilities. That's why they wouldn't like to take words literally, because then those possibilities would be constrained. Also, since statements would favor and complicate different traditions, they would decide the statements' fate and not the other way around. Finally, considering that any narrative, in relation to other narratives, would hide certain aspects while showing others, they would neither like to limit themselves to only a few versions.

Now tell me, what if this time and place was actually **our** time and place?