

When I first read this question I tried to put the pen down and think this through quietly in my head. But the only conclusion I gathered in those three minutes was that it would be a lot more fun for you and me if we worked this problem out together in the style of free form jazz. I'm going to assume you don't know the answer and that this is a legitimate question that deserve philosophical rigor. My gut instinct tells me, No, Santa does not cry. He is a fictional character and all available depictions of the man show him as jolly, selfless and busy delivering toys. On second thought, however, there is nothing holding back yours truly, a new writer, to imagine our world to be one in where Santa cries or has cried, investigating one by one the case in which Santa is jolly, selfless and busy. I say in all three of these cases, Santa does in fact cry.

Why these cases? Let us not go so far as to make up new worlds like air-headed novelists and let us instead garner our minds and inspect our world which has already been presented to us, that's why. For starters, it'll make this inquiry (or rather its ultimate conclusion) that much more meaningful and relevant to our world. Second, it would eliminate the possibility of us creating a potentially inconsistent world, in which case our conclusion would become invalid in our world. And lastly, and honestly, this is what we're going to do because I damn well please.

Someone who is jolly couldn't possibly cry, no? In fact to be jolly is the very opposite of being sad, i.e. the state that produces tears. Or is it? Here, please review, our first evidence that he might cry: happy/jolly people sometimes cry; for they cry tears of joy. Why assume crying is only for the sad? Have not we all at one point cried at the end of a good joke or at a birth or at the return of a loved one from war or near-death? Santa is jolly, therefore there exist at least one case in which he might cry. But there still remain 2/3rds of the man still holding back tears. Let us see if they outweigh or fall apart dry and tearless.

Someone who is selfless couldn't cry, right? Within seconds, the opposite notion becomes self-evident: Selfless people are too empathetic to another's feelings NOT to cry. Sure there is a case where the selfless person is helping out a sad creature and therefore producing happiness of which to empathize with. But more often than not the selfless person feels more sadness--this is what propels the empathetic one and surely Santa who wants to make sad children happy. Santa is selfless therefore there exists a case in which he cries. Now there are 2/3rds of the possibilities in which Santa cries. A lesser philosopher would stop here, call it a day and have a beer. But we, I am sure, want the satisfaction of hitting all three points--for three is the number of the universe.

The third statement is Santa is busy (he doesn't have time to cry) and this is the assumed implication, that to be sad one needs time to be sad. Now this is quite possibly the strongest of the cases--

for busy people haven't the time for family, friends or for themselves in certain cases. It takes time to cry and time, Santa doesn't have. Or does he? Set that question aside for now and let us attack the important question of why one is busy. We agree that most busy people never have time for family and friends. And family and friends are what make a person happy, right? So a lack of those would generate a lot of sadness. And then what? Take a logical step with me and let's agree that busy people, in all their sadness, actually become even busier to ignore or put off feeling sad. This endless cycle had produced many a great workaholics, you've seen this yourselves, my friends! I will posit that Santa, at the eve of Christmas fever, prepping for it, getting the reindeer, packing and distributing presents makes him more busy, love less, hang out less and therefore even more busy ad infinitum until there is a massive black hole in his heart. Then, after Christmas when the work is done, that black hole consumes him and, my faithful reader, Santa cries his jolly, selfless butt to sleep for 11 months.

It would appear, almost unequivocally, that Santa cries tears of joy, selfless empathetic tears, and lonely long summer tears when he isn't busy ignoring his elf manager wife. So there. I'm sure the author of the above question didn't mean nothing by it, surely didn't mean to dethrone our beloved red hat wearing, white beard sporting, equal opportunity employer, hero of the people, hero of the children, Old Saint Nicolas, the one, the only, Mr. Santa Claus. Now we can proceed, uninterrupted, through the humidity and wet season outside waiting, calling us down—so that one day, we can reach that beautiful north pole in our calendar and know that our boy is sheading a salty one and checking it twice.