

**HARTOGS****CLOSEUP****Those Words****NORA EPHRON**

Dr. Renatus Hartogs' fascination with obscene language really began, he was explaining the other day, with a slow counter-man at Nathan's in Coney Island.

Hartogs, a Dutch-born psychoanalyst, came to the United States in 1940. "When I learned English," he said, "I became aware accidentally that in order to talk in disparaging terms about, say, a radio that was defective, you would say that the radio was somehow engaging in sexual intercourse.

"Then, one day, I was at Nathan's. I wanted three frankfurters for me and my family, and the man behind the counter shouted at me not to be so anxious. On purpose, just to see what his reaction would be, I used an obscene word to describe his frankfurters. He became so angry that he threw the whole pot of mustard at me.

"I began to wonder about the usage of obscene language, the way people were able to use certain sexually-tinged words to achieve effects of power, vengeance, anxiety, release. How was the recipient reacting to the language and why? Why does obscene language refer only to sex?"

* * *

The result of many years of investigation—in his work with his private patients and with inmates of Sing Sing and juvenile delinquents at Youth House—is a new book, "Four Letter Word Games," by Hartogs with Hans Fantel (M. Evans & Co.).

According to Hartogs, four letter words have become chic in polite society and are used for a variety of reasons in social transactions, or games. A middle-class woman who drops an obscene word into conversation is saying that she is emancipated and progressive.

"The four letter word game," writes Hartogs, "allows my lady to remain physically within accepted bounds while committing symbolic transgressions. Her stylish use of profanity openly violates nothing more than fading conventions

of polite discourse; yet by implication it overthrows a broad spectrum of restraints."

How Hartogs manages to produce books as well as maintain his hyperthyroid practice is something of a mystery to his friends. He is the director of psychiatric services at Youth House, a position that brought him into contact with young Lee Harvey Oswald 13 years ago, and works a 17-hour day.

The son of a Dutch physician, he was raised in Groningen, studied for his Ph.D. in psychology in Germany, and moved to Brussels for his psychiatric M.D. He completed medical school just as the Nazis swept over the Low Countries, was captured, and sent to a concentration camp in France. He was shipped there in a cattle car and watched helplessly as several fellow prisoners killed themselves during the food-less, water-less four-day journey.

He managed to escape and rejoin his wife Nettie and their son in Lisbon. After arriving in New York, Hartogs began to study to fulfill requirements to practice here. A friend from Antwerp apprenticed him as a diamond polisher, and he worked nights shining the gems in order to pay for his days in medical school.

* * *

An expert on the "violence-prone" child, Hartogs is still hoping for a grant to study potentially dangerous children. In spite of the assassination and the mounting number of mass murders in this country, he says, "Nobody in the United States wants to study violence." He did note, however, that there has been progress, through electroencephalograms, in diagnosing the violence-prone child.

Hartogs' working hours—he commutes from his West End Av. apartment to an E. 86th St. office at 7 a.m. and often does not leave until midnight—are such that he has little time for leisure. He does make time for Sunday painting, and the Hartogs' large apartment is decked with his surrealist, somewhat macabre oils.

Except when he wants to obtain a therapeutic effect, Hartogs says, he never uses obscene language.