

Solidarity

Memory

Identity

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Introduction.

In the beginning, states Darwin (1871) life in a dimension of pre-existence despite the theory of being descendent of “ape-like progenitor”, humans are conceived and born into a life of solidarity, associating with family culture, and discovering their place within society, “the individual must come from somewhere to go somewhere, you cannot go somewhere without coming from nowhere” (Hayes, 2022). The notion being that we are conceived and nurtured into an unfamiliar association with family, it has been documented that a parent’s responsibility is to create memories for their children.

Memories are a part of the human condition, “how do we really begin to talk about the complex phenomenon of memory?” (Shaw, 2017), every day is an opportunity, a moment for capturing instant replicas of what is seen, as supported by Schaefer who states, “I tried to reimagine my first memories to investigate my past” (2017), as they are the very representational truthful memories of our youth. Is it then possible to recall the memories lived through your childhood?

Despite all indications of human capability, who are we? Accepting ourselves is of importance for confidence. Finding a sense of meaning often indicates discovering your inner self, as “the ‘identity theory’ of love, which Solomon (2015) based his arguments around, states that “the self is, individually, indeterminate, and is rather defined with and through others” (Solomon, 2015). The constant fight with ourselves to love our minds, our body, our personality, and everything around it, however, it is the realisation to love another before we accept ourselves, or do we learn to love ourselves before we love another?

SOLIDARITY

How would you interpretate solidarity?

Although there are many definitions to the word itself, in this context we refer to the notion of social solidarity, which emphasizes the independence regarding individuals in society, allowing the freedom to enhance the lives of others, “solidarity becomes the stick we walk with in our collective blindness to ‘the truth’” (Owczarski and Virginia, 2015, p.4), a unity based on kinship, a traditional culture of family ties to each other and constructs the notion of personal needs within the myth of society.



Figure 1

Before we discuss the values and associations of family, we should visualize the true question, ‘how are we brought into existence?’.

The journey of existence began centuries into evolution, as stated within Darwin's published book *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which talks of how organisms have evolved over generations through physical or behavioural traits, however, Pobiner (2021) argues against this within the notion of "the pattern of evolution, but he didn't really know about the mechanism," (LiveScience, 2021). Therefore, is the notion being that we are a descendent from aps brought into this evolutionary society for the purpose of being associated with family?

The bond and institution of family is the basis of unity, this notion indicates the main foundation building upon various societies and bringing them together. However, the perfect picture that families are made to last is not always reality, you will often face a family who appear stable, although consider what goes on behind closed doors, (Figure 1) as "times gone by and still hopefully today, 'the family is the necessary foundation of all order and morality'" (Williams, 1976. p. 90). Solidarity is considered a psychological basis for the human condition, this can be equated with through Maslow (1943), the need of love and belonging.

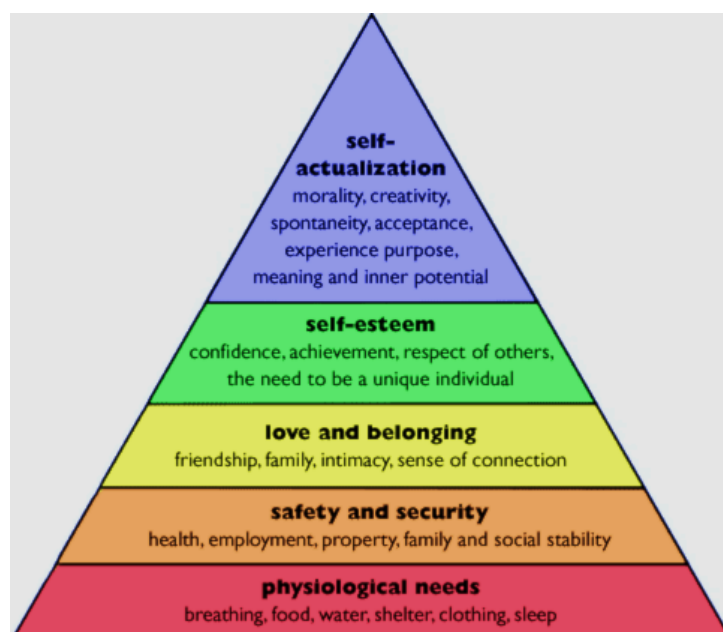


Figure 2

The foundational need for love and belonging is replicated within basic human needs as both a social and emotional concept, interpersonal relationships, affiliating, connectedness, and being part of a group, or family. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) (Figure 2), this signifies the importance that all individuals must satisfy lower-level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher levels of growth...

in any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or to step back into safety.

(Maslow, 1943)

A reflection of solidarity is not a simple, contextual basis, it is an emotional need, a practical requirement not just for families, or for the individual. Nevertheless, it is likely encouraged in both families and to yourselves that formulating bonds of emotion becomes a need within the notion of subjectivity. As a development of recent discoveries, the concept of family within the context of solidarity continues to develop throughout the observations of a photographic practice; 'the truth' of channelling personal narratives of the past into imagery, associating the relationships of which we are born into, alongside the quality of memories shaping the meaning of "life as well as after death" (Owczarski and Virginia, 2015. p.6).

MEMORY

Our brains piece together information fragments in ways that make sense to us, and which can therefore feel like real memories.

Of course, in the case of early childhood memories, this definition can fall a bit short: the event may have actually taken place, it is just impossible that our brains were able to store this information at such a young age and present it back to us in a single meaningful memory later on.

(Bergson, 1991, pp. 3 - 4)

Personal memories are often associated with the past, the beginning of life which manifests itself into a whole period of creating, sharing observations of the future, “brain regions implicated in declarative memory deficits include the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, and imaging and biochemistry studies as they relate to memory dysfunction” (Samuelson, 2011). Our memories have elements which play with our intensions, the past can depict a series of moments of childhood tales, growing up, being nurtured, and loved, and the development of the human mind.

When it comes to creating memories, you are faced with a series of events of which occurred before time and society developed within photographic meaning, “the past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognised and is never seen again,” (Benjamin, 1979, p. 6). Photography has always been the source of producing images worth a thousand words, as time replicates moving forward

with elements of traditional and contemporary methods, giving them life, and revealing the essence it brings to the imagination of reality.

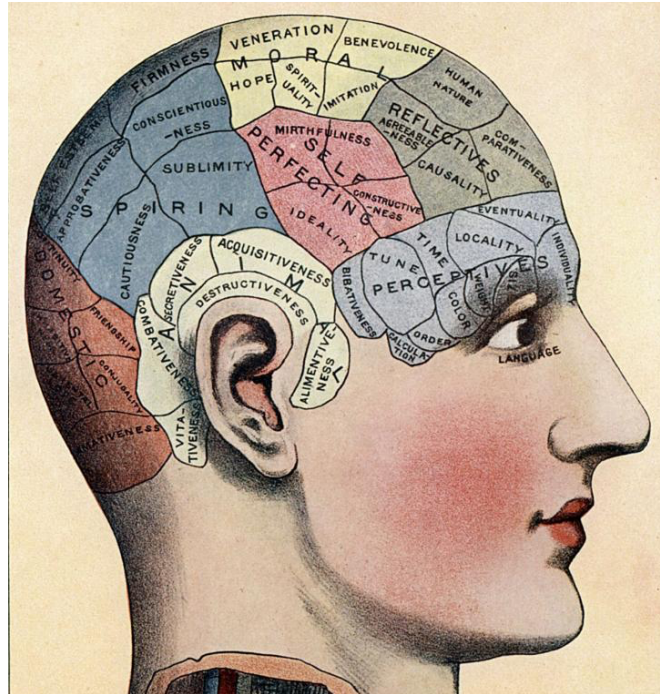


Figure 3

If we were to refer to a specific person or a place, this might activate a memory relating to a moment in time which took place at that location with that person. We often experience the one moment within life which holds a key connection to our memories (Figure 3), an instant feeling of gratification which holds that one period of recollecting memories, “this is possible because our brains are so efficient at storing the ‘essence’ of a picture, capturing not just the subject but specific visual qualities,” (The Guardian, 2016). The conclusion being when faced with a photographic image it brings forward meaning of truth and reality, in fact it is not ‘how the photograph is taken’, or ‘who is behind the camera’, it is about ‘the moment being captured’ as...

between the affection felt and the image perceived there is a difference, that the affection is within our body, the image outside our body. And that is why the surface of our body, the common limit of this and of other bodies, is given to us in the form both of sensations and of an image.

(Bergson, 2016, p. 234)

As a photographer you see true reality from a vocal lens capable to producing exactly what we see, however, the ability to recollect memories for re-production is possible, as supported by Thomas Schaefer who created a series *Experiential Spaces* (2015), this body of imagery is based on interpretations of an investigation, recollecting his past childhood memories for photographic purposes; he has tried to be as historically accurate as he could, however...

...chocolate ice cream will never taste the same like the one you had when you were five years old. Nor will you remember the original taste because newer taste (memories of it) will overlay or overwrite the old ones.

(Schaefer, 2017)



Figure 4

Memories do not only affect our minds, but they can also have a significant impact on our sensations, taste, smell, vision, all buried deep within the very sub-conscious of mind and body. As memories can fade over time leaving behind a recollection of sub-conscious thoughts, “the happiness which I had just felt was unquestionably the same as that which I had just felt when I tasted the madeleine soaked in tea,” (Proust, 2007, p. 194), according to Proust’s analogy of the ‘Madeleine’ cake (Figure 4), emphasizing the non-active dimension and assigned the matter: the memories come to him without being summoned, this is what is known as ‘affective consciousness’. This is associated with the dominant universe and time of the human condition seems to be the past, this is more than a delicacy, an odour, even certain objects, it is a sensual experience both physical and emotional as “memory plays an important part of identity formation and creating a positive sense of self,” (Hull, 2018).

IDENTITY

What is the meaning of Identity?

Dealing with the question regarding ourselves, various notions often indicate the contrast of virtue, when did I begin?

This “personal identity” contrasts with ethnic or national identity, which consists roughly of the ethnic group or nation one takes oneself to belong to and the importance one attaches to this.

(Olson, 2002)

To uncover the variations of identity, love is a priority, as it is the basis for this investigation. It has once been said that love has the power to reveal the light, a statement for which is known to have significant traits, “love does not appear luminous, nor active, in short nor perceptive to the senses, and its nature, as well as its presence, pass unnoticed and are considered questionable” (TPS Editor, 2020), it is often the very thing we do not see creating an impact upon love itself.



Figure 5

It may be of both theoretical and practical relevance to know that there are many types of identity we possess in our DNA, (Figure 5), however, there are in fact 6 indications to the word 'Identity': Cultural, Professional, Ethnic and National, Religious, Gender, and Disability. All play a vital role within ourselves from a young age, "childhood is an important period of social development, particularly in the formulation of social identity, or a person's sense of who they are" (DiMaria, 2022), despite this notion it is difficult to conclude a method which individually measure the various identities to which we belong.

Why do we need Love to know our Identity?

Love comes in all manner of shape and size, in fact there are eight types of love, according to Regan (2020),

Eros, Philia, and Agape, the highest form which love has to offer, given without expectations of nothing in return, based on the purity of feeling with no physical attachment. Storge, Pragma, Mania, and Ludus, a child-like love found within the beginning stages of relationships, your emotions allow you to feel excited and find a rewarding side in a relationship.

In a contemporary world there may be confusion as to how we should love or accept another. Even though there are various indications as to types of love, there is only one which plays a vital role within 'IDENTITY', that being Philautia. The realisation that before you can love another, you must find it within yourself to accept the body and mind which you possess.

Within the context of identity, the distinction of photography is about revealing what is underneath, this notion is comparable to producing analogue film uncovering the essence which is not seen until "that moment, however, the sheer accumulation of photographs offers an eternal, ever-renewable photographic present" (Kracauer, 1927, p.9). Showcasing 'your true self' is practically the variation of 'developing a roll of film', "it is an emanation of past reality: a magic, not an art" (Barthes, 1980, p. 22), it is the relationship between contemporary and traditional interpretations of reality, fantasy and physical, declaring that every photograph is analogue of past and present (Figure 6). Therefore, communicating with us with no verbal content displays an instant representation of how our identities connect with our past and present selves.



Figure 6

How we think and feel in terms of love are aspects of the mind which we cannot see, "while light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, thoughts virtually travel in no time" (The Economic Times, 2021), even though your mind is a machine without wires, waves are sent out travelling the speed of light in all directions producing similar thoughts of harmony, which are then transferred into feelings of love and affection.

As the speed of thought and feeling stand as of greater power than light, its representation holds as a scientific concept of time and space. As we continue with love from the ancient text, 'Love thy neighbour', directed from the Bible, "thou shall love thy

neighbour as thyself,” (The Gospel of Matthew, 22:37-39), think about what it represents in theory, loving yourself is vital, of course, however, we have a duty to care for others as well as ourselves, as referred to in the field of law we find ourselves questioning the statement of love,

who, then, in law, is my neighbour? The answer seems to be persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act that I ought reasonably to have them in contemplation as being affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question.

(Lord Atkin, 1932, The Neighbour Principle in Tort Law. LawTeacher)

To create a narrative based on this development it involves a sort of art, a matter of delicate intuition that flows with the balance of nature, the emotional and fundamental aspects, “there are few greater experts on the importance of love than those who are bereft of anyone to love” (Botton, 2020), considering the sustainable notion that even though we are happy with ourselves, we have the duty to love those around us, to treat those around you as you wish to be treated. That is how we accept the human condition for we are as no more different than our neighbours.

CONCLUSION.

This is the foundation to the start of a photographic journey into Solidarity, Memory, Identity, throughout this progression the structure will become clear as to the relation of diverse areas of reality. My research has found that solidarity is a cultural object, we are born into a social society with the desires of conceptual needs to feel loved and belong within the relations of family. Memories shape the very foundation throughout society, the relationship we find ourselves within the past and present aspect of photography, how our sensations have profound effect within mental procession and the unconscious mind. Identity is the truth to uncovering answers, the indication being that loving ourselves before another is of no difference than accepting our neighbours, within a metaphorical society.

Dissertation Question.

‘Do the associations of Solidarity, Memory and Identity remind us of a person, a place, an era, or a feeling?’

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