

The Choosing of Friends

What defines a friend has been long debated since the beginnings of philosophy. Is it enough when one loves another though the love is not reciprocated? Or must it be the case that the two souls both engage in love with each other for there to be a friendship? It is commonly held that love must flow both ways in order for a friendship to form. You can hold one as a dear friend although he holds you as an enemy, there would not be a friendship between the two, this comparison is the idea of secondness[[46]]. It is questioned whether friendship is the product of we as humans seeking to fill our own individual holes ((4)). This desire rooted in selfishness is firstness [[14]]. This possibility must be considered when we analyze the basis for friendship. We as humans are selfish creatures, it would make sense if the only motivation for friendship was for personal gain. Some argue that this is the case and is all that is required for friendship. Aristotle holds that there are three types of friendship, friendship for use, friendship for pleasure, and friendships of virtue ((7)). Under this view it would hold true that the only thing required for friendship is personal gain however it is the lowest of levels of friendship and would not be regarded as a “true” meaningful friendship

An individual chooses his friends based on a number of things. First it depends on the character of individual who is seeking the friend, if he has a good will, he will seek out individuals who also have a good will. If he has a good will he will not seek out friendships which only entail the exchange of goods, he will move on to the next dimension of friendship which is friendship of pleasure. These friendships still serve him but in a less selfish fashion, it is typically the case that both friends in this type of friendship experience the pleasure when they are with each other. In that aspect it is more noble and good that the exchange of services. The person will also look for similarities in the other he wishes to befriend; we typically have an image schema [[21]] subconsciously of what we're looking for. Although there almost need to be some sort of difference present in the friendship for it to form, this is to provide something new for both parties involved. Complete and utter opposites however are typically not compatible to be friends, these comparisons of differences are a form of secondness.

When children grow up, there are a lot of aspects of their life that they are not in control over. This comes into play when they're forming their first friendships. Often times kids will become friends because their houses are close to each other so their parents make them meet, or they're at the same bus stop so they sit with each other on the bus. If two kids are in the same class, that's all it takes for a friendship to break out, forming a friendship is much easier as a kid because they do not yet know the experience of unreciprocated love. They do not have doubt instilled in their minds and since neither one has the capacity to exploit the other for personal gain yet, there is no need for doubt. The friendship is always very pure. The point is that sometimes friendships have nothing to do with similarity or individual gain. Often times they're a product of the reduced area of the biosphere [[1]] they're exposed to.

Slightly similarly, sometimes friendships are based entirely on cultural context [[7]]. In ancient times especially, friendship had a very different reason of being formed than it does today. As a way of survival, it helped people in daily life if they were friends with political figures and people who had power or wealth. Even taking a look at the relationship of client and patron, it was in each other's best interest to be friends with each other, business went a lot smoother but friendship had a motivation other than two souls genuinely being good to each other not for the sake of themselves, but for the sake of the greater good, no selfishness involved ((5)). This understanding of the reason one would be friends with another is thirddness [[64]].

Semiotics of Friends

The closest of friends require something more than individual gain from each other's friendship, even if they both mutually benefit. In order to be genuine friends two people must have a wish to be together, complete tasks together, help each other, naturally do good for each other ((5)). An important aspect of genuine friendship is doing something good for the other and not expecting anything in return, as soon as you expect something in return you diminish the friendship to a means to an end which is hurtful to the other person. He only has good will towards himself, not the other in this situation. In these ways, close friends have a specific semiosphere [[48]] that they operate in as to not violate the genuine friendship. When two people are trying their hardest to be the other persons benefactor it is not a friendship rather a competition. When material and wealth and expectation get involved, the true friendship is tainted.

Friends express themselves to each other in many different ways. Genuine friends commonly communicate using the functions of Jakobson's model of communication. Jakobson's model of communication consists of six elements functions all describing a different way of conveying language, all six are responsible for separate types of messages. There's the referential function [[43]] which conveys information about a context [[7]], this function is commonly used amongst friends when referencing something that may have happened, will happen, or is happening in the real world, its used to convey information on a topic and is one of the more common functions of language. There's the poetic function [[38]] which compresses language and conveys the message for its own sake, for example advertisements, poetic functions can be a type of code for language, in this aspect certain friends may have their own unique poetic functions that an outsider wouldn't understand.

The emotive function [[13]] relates to the addresser and does a good job of conveying what mood they're currently in, it allows the sender of the message to express themselves and is used a lot between close friends, an example of this would be an exclamation if a close friend shared some good news. There's also the conative function [[3]] which addresses the receiver of the message directly and is usually a command/persuasion, an example of this would be calling the

receivers name and then telling them to do something, this function is used quite often between friends. There's the phatic function [[37]] which establishes lines of communication, keeps them open, or discontinues them, they are typically lacking in content and are meant to reassure the receiver the sender is still interested or no longer interested in communication. The final one is the metalingual function which is the use of language to describe itself. All of these functions of language are crucial to communicating with close friends.

It is very easy for people to be acquainted but not be engaged in a genuine friendship. For a large majority of the people we meet in our life, it serves us to be friendly acquainted them and create a non-hostile environment in order to function easier with them however this does not indicate friendship. Daily life often requires the interaction of people who you are unfamiliar with, friendship extends farther than considering someone as useful or pleasant. In order for someone to be considered a good friend they must stand out in some way as good to us. Our motive for friendship is we must like someone in such a way that we want to experience his/her good will in the intimate way that friendship offers. It's important to note someone can only have a limited number of very close friends due to moral and practical constraints ((7)).

Semiotics of Friend Groups

We as humans sometimes experience physical and mental health illnesses when we are isolated for too long. The need to belong or be a part of a group is inherently human. A group is any more than 1 person. For a group to be meaningful it usually must have some social connection tied into it, a group connected by similarities on the surface barely formulate a group with meaning. A group typically has a common goal or belief and each person has an emotional connection to another ((3)). So why are we so inclined to stick to groups, it may very well be evolutionary ((10)), before the modern age survival was far from guaranteed. Nature was extremely dangerous and predators were a real threat. Sticking together as a group in general almost always meant a higher chance of survival. This is mankind's most basic necessity, before anything else can come before its survival must come first. This naturally instilled the want to form meaningful trustworthy groups.

In today's modern society things are a bit different. We have to worry much less about survival as our most basic necessities such as food water and shelter are accounted for. We have created the proper technology to go above and beyond the basic necessities for survival. We now have comfort and luxury in our everyday life. This has somewhat eliminated the need to form groups. However, this desire that was instilled in us hasn't gone completely away. With the ever-advancing culture, groups, friend groups in particular have become huge part of everyday life. We can afford to choose the very people we spend time with. With the focus shifting away from survival we have the freedom to choose friends who have similar interests to us.

As we spend more and more time with these self-chosen groups, we experience similar things at a similar time with them creating a shared experience. This can allow groups to grow closer to each other. The more time spent together the more likely the group will develop their own unique jokes and sometimes forms of language. If used and reinforced often these unique forms of language can be completely detached from the normal commonly understood language. This can lead to only group members understanding what is being said or conveyed, sometimes they may even utter a comprehensible word but under the group it has an entirely different meaning, this is known as a connotation [[6]] or the meaning something has in a cultural context as opposed to its denotation [[9]] which is the understanding of something at face value.

Interestingly enough, your connotative [[6]] understanding of a certain person can have an effect on how their gestures [[16]] and oculosics [[32]] are perceived by you. Facial expression plays a big role in conveying behavior, especially in such as social species such as our own. Since facial expressions are such an innate feature in humans, there is little variation therefor there is little reason to study the expressing individual. The difference lies in the interpreter. If they view a group as connotatively aggressive, they're more likely to label their facial expressions as aggressive when in reality that's not what they conveyed. The same facial expression can be made by a different non connotatively aggressive group and the expression won't be labeled as aggressive ((3))

Friends as Lovers

Lovers can start out as friends and often times do. However, Lovers cannot be equal to friends according to Plato. On the hierarchical scale of relationships, friends are one level above colleagues, and lovers are one step above friends, if friends become lovers, they transcend friends because friend is encompassed within lovers. They are no longer two separate entities, lovers entail friends. It is a simple account of addition; the colleagues are still professional yet are now also very friendly with each other. The lovers are still friends they are just also now very intimate with each other.

However, Plato's account is wrong. It is rooted in Christianity with love being compared to the divine light of the sun, failing to not shine on any surface. What is wrong about this account is the idea of simple addition. What he failed to account for is the potential loss of it all after supposedly moving up a notch. With the extension of friends to colleagues, a certain degree of professionalism is lost, friends would be concerned over the others well-being and the friendship would therefore interfere with the professionalism, friends cannot be professional at least not as

professional as they were before the friendship, therefore there is a problem with the conceptual metaphor [[4]] “friends = lovers”.

Lovers cannot remain friends. Plato as a Christian believes that the ultimate good encompasses all other good within it. Reality is a bit more modest, when looking at lovers and friends, it becomes apparent that the two cannot exist with each other. Friends experience the world individually by each other's side. Lovers are each other's world and they experience it together. The analysis of Plato's text [[63]] on lovers and friends shows that the difference between friends and lovers is not one step above on a ladder but rather completely different entities. Friends are like people standing side by side and lovers are looking in towards each other, you cannot do both at the same time, both have their strengths and limitations ((1)).

The changes that occur from friendship to lovers can go unnoticed which is why it may seem friendship is a part of love; you enjoy the persons company as much as a friend but with an added dimension to it. However, like described above it is not an added dimension but rather a different dimension. Instead of the person being a part of the world you both experience independently, lovers become attached to each other at the hip, the want to be fully individual goes away, with friends you are going through a shared experience. With lovers you are each other's experiences.

The Meaning of the Kiss

The action of the kiss has always been around however its meaning has changed in a few contexts [[7]]. I will explore a diachronic [[11]] analysis of the kiss. In ancient Mesopotamia the act of blowing kisses was used to gain favor from the gods whereas today its used to show affection between one another with no divine meaning. Kisses commonly had religious ties in ancient times ((8)). Also, in some cultures men would kiss each other on the lips in greeting as a part of etiquette. Kissing was not viewed as a romantic act in ancient times, a lot of cultures did not even have a word associated with it. In some cultures, it was frowned upon because the spread of disease was a much more real threat. There were some exceptions however, in the Kama Sutra, haptics [[15]] comes up quite a lot, especially in reference to kissing or more specifically “mouth touching”.

Perhaps the most famous account of the kiss in myth [[29]] and narratives [[30]] is the one in Romeo and Juliet. The idea of two lovers whose families are against their being together has been around long before Romeo and Juliet. However, this work was the first to incorporate the kiss into the drama. The kiss in this play represents both extreme passion and defiance/rebellion. This work being published sped up the process of the kiss being widespread incorporated into

culture. Russians were the first ones to add the kiss as a part of marriage ceremonies. The kiss was written about being more intimate than other sexual acts, one writer described it as an expression of “pure love”.

The kiss is a symbol [[58]] of love in modern media. Aside from the art form of poetry and writing, the kiss has been a part of almost every other art form including painters, sculptors and photographers. These art forms often times convey the code [[2]] that is involved in kissing. The man is traditionally the initiator, this involves proxemics [[42]] coming close to the woman when it is appropriate to do so. It also involves kinesics [[25]] often times on the woman's end. She reacts kinesically to what the man is doing to her conveying a message back to the man. Art forms such as paintings illustrate and capture the affection that goes into a kiss, if the eyes are closed, we get the feeling of a more emotional embrace ((8)).

Some cultures never implemented the kiss into any facet of their life. It was only when global communication technology became available that they learned of it and only some started to incorporate it. Cultures where it never became popular view it as vulgar and dirty. However, in the modern age the internet has expedited the process of cultures experiencing the kiss exponentially. Virtually no one in this day and age denies the effect of love which a kiss possesses. Kisses are also now proven biologically to be beneficial to our physical and mental health, men who kiss their wives tend to live 5 years longer than one who do not. However the changes aren't all positive. With the creation of things such as porn, the cyberspace has created a hyperreality [[19]] with respect to sex and love. Kids who experience their first kiss via the internet may develop a skewed idea of where they can find love. It remains important that love is rooted in the real world, the internet although spread the wonderful act of kissing, also is somewhat responsible for corrupting its beauty.

When do you Have Love?

Love relationships first and foremost involve much more intimacy than traditional friendships. However, intimacy is not the only thing required for a love relationship; you can have intimacy without real love at all. Biologically we as humans are attracted sexually to the other sex ((6)). In order to have love two people must possess similar feelings towards each other to that of good friends. They must want good for each other without expectation in return, they must admire the good in each other for the sake of the other. In these ways lovers and friends are similar, but the semiotics [[47]] they use to convey the slightly different form of love changes; they engage in acts such as kissing to convey love whilst having the admiration for each other's good will. Friends do not convey love in this way.

The first sign that differs from lover to friend is the intensity of affection shown to one another. The lovers will engage more passionately towards each other. Friends can hug intimately but there will be no sexual desire there. With lovers there is almost always an added dimension of sexual desire ((9)). They are more interested in each other's bodies than that of the relationship between friends. Kissing is one specific sign [[51]] that differs from lovers to friends, engaging in sexual activity is one main difference. The lovers tend to be more concerned with each other's well-being more often than friends.

Although sex is not required for love, they do go hand in hand influencing each other. The signs are present because there is that extra dimension of sexual interest to the others body. With that new interest comes new signs [[51]] and signals [[54]] to explore.

Love relationships involve the healthy obsession about all aspects of your partner including their body, mind and soul. Friends do not care about the others body to the extent that lovers do. You may care for your friend's body insofar as to ensure he is healthy and well for his own sake. But there is no desire present to explore the friend's body. As mentioned earlier, love relationships mean that the other person is a part of your world and inclusively is your world at the same time. Friends are simply involved in the same world you're experiencing.

The Semiotics of Family

Families have control over their children's biosphere [[1]] for a large majority of their early life. The biosphere [[1]] is essentially your environment, your set and setting. If the family is full of love, the child is more likely to be full of love as he grows in experience. Families give children the foundation for their understanding of the world by shaping what kind of world they grow up in initially

The semiosphere [[48]] for each family often varies from family to family. This takes biosphere [[1]] one step further in that it is the make-up of communications via signs [[51]] that a family projects onto their child. Each family has a different set of expectations for their children, the way they behave, the actions they do are all in accordance and influenced by the familys semiosphere [[48]]

Family love is interesting because it is forced upon everyone at birth. Some children get more, some get less and some get none. Parents are important because they teach us first-hand how to love, if we don't learn from our parents its possible we will never learn in the future ((5)). Some may argue that because you choose your lover, you have a more intimate relationship with them

than you do with your immediate family. This is a good argument and sometimes sadly it is the case that the family did not show enough love and the child suffers as a result.

Marriage used to be strictly business. There was no love involved in marriage when the concept first came around. It was purely for two families to set themselves up politically, or to get a large amount of money from the other family. It was about ensuring the bloodline went on with typically a person who had good genetics. The connotation [[6]] of marriage has changed to one of love. People choose their own partners now and form a romantic bond with them which they promise will last forever.

Loving Oneself

I want to write about what it means for someone to love themselves. I plan to focus on the importance of loving oneself for your own sake and the sake of others. I would like my reader to grasp the importance of loving the self in the realm of relationships.

Self-love and self-respect mean that we grasp the understanding that our lives are worth living and we have a unique individual experience/perception of the world that makes it beautiful. Having self-love means that nothing someone else says or does to you can lower your spirits, you know your worth because you are you, they are not you. Having self-respect is treating one's own mental and physical health like it matters.

In order to love others, you must first love yourself, that is a necessary prerequisite. If you do not love yourself then how will you know how to love others? Even if you are not shown love when you are growing up by your family/parents you are still capable of loving yourself. It goes further than this, the extent to which you love yourself ends up being the extent to which you are able to love others ((2)).

Who we end up becoming is a cultivation and meeting of our upbringing, the cards we were dealt, and our own personal experiences and choices. These things shape the character you are, not the other way around there's no predestined character traits and you act accordingly to these constraints. It is a song and dance between the two with personal choice having the most influence.

Putting oneself first is the most important thing you can do. Being selfish is not a bad thing, too much of anything is not good and being selfish is also subject to this. We must be selfish in order to survive. Sometimes we get caught up in helping others and we do not have the capacity to be

doing so. Being selfish is actually being selfless, I know this sounds paradoxical but if you are selfish and you take care of yourself you will love yourself. Only when you love yourself do you have the capacity to love others and give away the gift of love. If you are loving without loving yourself the love is fake. Be selfish in order to love others

Conclusion

This paper aims to show the different types of signs/symbols used in the different relationships all involving love. It shows how the semiotics of different relationships are different from each other with respect to the self, the friend, the lover, and the family. It also describes the what makes each category distinct from one another.