
Memorializing The Achievements Of Individuals Considered As Members Of Families

Family, as most people would say, is everything. Some people would even go as far as making a list like, God first, family second, self-third. Generally, one could easily say that the word family is just a single word with various meaning with respect to how different individuals perceive it. I would say that family varies with respect to our economic background, cultural background and social background to mention a few. Irrespective of all of this, one thing every family has in common is that the people who refer to it as family are making it obvious that those people are highly important to the person calling them his family.

Susan Sontag, an American writer, filmmaker, teacher and philosopher gave an incredible write-up on photography, where she argues about family photograph, in her book she talks about what the earliest popular use of photograph was, she discussed that it was used in “memorializing the achievements of individuals considered as members of families (as well as of other groups)”. Sontag went on by explaining that “photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperiled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life”. She explained how some photographs are sometimes not the true reflection of what was happening at that particular time. Santog also explained that one of the saddest hold photography has on the society at large is when people have a choice of whether to save a life of to take a picture of what was happening. Overall, Sontag view on photography reveals views on the ways photography has to an extent affected the society by adumbrating moments captured through the lens of a camera.

I come from a family where all photographs taken has a significant meaning. Some photographs in my family can be dated to about 40 to 50 years ago. Even if at that point, my family did not have their personal camera, words came down to my generation that my family would normally employ the services of professional photographer to sometime take pictures of my family members during events and sometimes to just come take personal photographs.

One interesting thing about my family is that all photos taking must be taken a number of times so that everyone would have one for themselves. The picture I will be analyzing is 60 years old photo. Upon looking at the picture, you would notice that the picture involves three people. Two young ladies and a little boy. I could easily tell how happy the boy in the picture was, his face as seen in the photograph is covered with a huge smile. It was picture day for the family, and the little boy wanted to be in everyone’s picture. The two young ladies standing beside him are his sisters who form the look on the face of one of them is being stressed out by their little brother’s

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menace. Furthermore, while the boy in the picture wears a shirt with a character drawn on it, his sisters seem to be wearing a silky like shirt, a typical old school material which was common among the young people in the 60s. The image is quiet obviously posed. I can see that the two young ladies are looking into the distance as they are trying to look into the lens of the camera while holding their brother in place with their hands placed on the thighs of the boy. In addition, I can tell from the picture that the young lady on the left is quiet big on jewelries, as there are a lot of bangles sliding down her wrist, and the huge ear rings dangling down her ear. She also looked like the eldest of the two sisters considering how matured she looked, she could be between ages of 23 to 25, the other sister would be between the ages of 18 to 20 while the little boy in the photography would be between ages of 3 to 5. The pictures also made it obvious that the boy is seated on a high chair so he could match up to the height of the sisters who appear to be standing.

I could also conclude that this picture was taken in a studio considering the uniformity of the background. This picture is a photograph of my father and his two sisters back in the 50s. This photograph clearly supports the argument of Sontag on the idea of picture telling a different story from what reality actually is, it also supports the motion of a photography being a memorialized achievement of individuals considered as members of families. I could also conclude from other family photographs that I have seen that photography was in some way a rite to my family life at that point. The photos taken by my family back then has really helped in passing knowledge down to the younger generations, thus, giving us an idea of who was part of the family back then and how life was for them.

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