

THE WHIRLPOOL OF BELONGING

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According to the Greek mythology, Persephone, the goddess of spring, is believed to have been taken to the underworld by the god of the dead, Hades, who was profoundly enamoured of her. Despite being reluctant initially, Persephone grows a sense of belonging to the underworld and when her mother, the goddess of agriculture, who was devastated by her daughter's stay in the underworld, urges her to leave the place; she finds herself in a quandary between her sense of belonging to the underworld and her mother. Consequently, they establish a middle ground on Persephone spending half of the year with her mother, which we perceive to be spring and summer on the Earth; and half of the year with Hades, which shapes the seasons autumn and winter. Although this story predominantly amplifies the old notion of seasons in Greek society, it is also an apt depiction of the idea of belonging as the devotion of Persephone to both her mother and the underworld demonstrates an innate and grown sense of home and loyalty, which, from this view, is closely related to belonging.

However, what is belonging and what makes it have such a tremendous influence on human beings? The concept of belonging stems various inquiries and dilemmas in societies due to being an essential part of the human disposition, which will be further discussed in the subsequent parts of this writing. To exemplify the quandaries on belonging, while philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes argued that living in communities meant an inevitable loss of freedom due to laws and regulations; Jean-Jaques Rousseau was well known for opposing this view by suggesting that it was possible to remain free despite the laws and constraints of being a part of a society. There was an addition to the claim of Hobbes and Locke, however: They didn't know a way to escape from the commune life as it was also a defence mechanism and indispensable. Seeing this, Notwithstanding the aforementioned claims, I would like to suggest that this controversy should be scrutinised in another dimension, which will shape the primary question of this writing: 'Is it possible not to belong?'

Some other inquiries to be made through this direction would be: 'Doesn't not belonging mean that you belong to the concept of not belonging and that you still have to belong to the ideology of not belonging?' and 'If the sense of belonging is a knot wouldn't endeavouring to get rid of it further tangle the knot, which will make it impossible for us to escape alongside hurting us?'. To answer all of these questions and many more, our first step should, indubitably, be determining what the concept of belonging means. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, there are two denotations of the verb 'to belong', which are:

1. to be in the right place or a suitable place,
2. to feel happy or comfortable in a situation.

Not disagreeing with these definitions entirely, I would like to extend the given statements to include the base of the sense of belonging: a conscious and unconscious unison of ideologies. This helps us think of some answers to the previous questions. As not belonging also means coming under a certain ideology, it must be impossible for us not to belong as long as we have our free will, and as with belonging comes a feeling of comfort, we will always want to or will have no choice but to belong.

Subsequently, having come up with a possible answer to our initial inquiry of what belonging is and some related questions, I would like to invite you to focus on something that might be considered to be off the beaten track for the notion philosophy by combining this discipline with scientific disciplines to find out what is behind the notion of belonging. Simply put, I will invite you to scrutinise this concept from the perspective of mathematicians, physicians and chemists to further comprehend the behaviour of nature to help us to come to a conclusion about ourselves although most of our approach will be metaphorical for human societies.

Initially, an apt metaphor for the idea of belonging or not belonging in humans would be Isaac Newton's law of inertia. According to Newton, an object would always want to preserve its initial state. If the object is at rest, it will try to remain at rest and if it is moving with constant velocity, it will continue its movement without acceleration. The only way to change this cycle would be a force acting on the object to change the net force, total force, from zero. In our case, the initial state of the object would be belonging. However, the force acting on it doesn't necessarily indicate not belonging. On the contrary, it means acquiring a new state, which means a new sense of belonging. Seeing this, you may realise that the only equivalent of not belonging or not having a state in the universe means not having a presence in nature. This also applies in human societies purely because of the fact that a person will belong to a minority or majority group depending on their notions or moral values. Even people deemed to contradict all humanly ideologies may feel a sense of belonging to a place or for anything and continue their movement towards that direction or remain in the place where they feel belonged. Given this, although the direction and the place of belonging may change, there is no force that can terminate the sense of belonging in humans without affecting their presence, which indicates that not belonging may not be a part of the universe.

The reader might suggest that not belonging actually means individuality and being out of the bubbles created by societies. Despite not being completely wrong, not belonging, in this case, would be not belonging to a dynamic. Even if a person doesn't always pursue a previously determined path as seen in the previous example of inertia, however, it may not be possible for humans not to belong. This may be exemplified by the behaviour of electrons explained by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. According to Heisenberg, as electrons don't move in a particular way, it isn't possible to determine their precise position (x) or momentum (p). This, however, doesn't show that they don't belong to a dynamic. According to quantum mechanics, there are orbitals where electrons are thought to be located most of the time in a certain harmony according to their energy levels. Likewise, people who claim to have their individuality because of their unique and unparalleled behaviour are not away from the sense of belonging, it is just a natural sense of denying, which also comes from the concept of belonging. This is because, everyone has certain energy levels, notions, which keep them in their orbitals.

Furthermore, we live in a world of juxtapositions, which means that there are the same and the different. According to Aristotle's law of identity in logic, 'Everything is the same as itself and different from another' so if 'x' is expressed to be identical to 'y', every statement made with 'x' will be valid for 'y' with the same meaning and anything that is not equal to 'x' will be different. The sense of belonging may separate people from each other, however, it may help them feel a sense of familiarity as well. This is because of the fact that people who don't belong to a group may be a part of the 'other' group, which, in fact, is not a bad thing as it is closely related to the disposition of humans. The thing that doesn't take part in this system, once again, is not belonging because no matter what we do, there will always be the notion of 'us' without, which we will be undefinable.

Consequently, the ones who don't claim themselves to belong to a certain part of the universe will be the ones who belong to the group of not belonging, which will make them the ones who belong, and even science can't prove otherwise. Everything in nature has a sense of identity and harmony and we are obliged to belong with every morsel of flesh in our blood because not belonging is the thing that doesn't belong to us.

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