



Index of People

In Joe Brainard's / Remember

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English 1102: Dr. Sturm

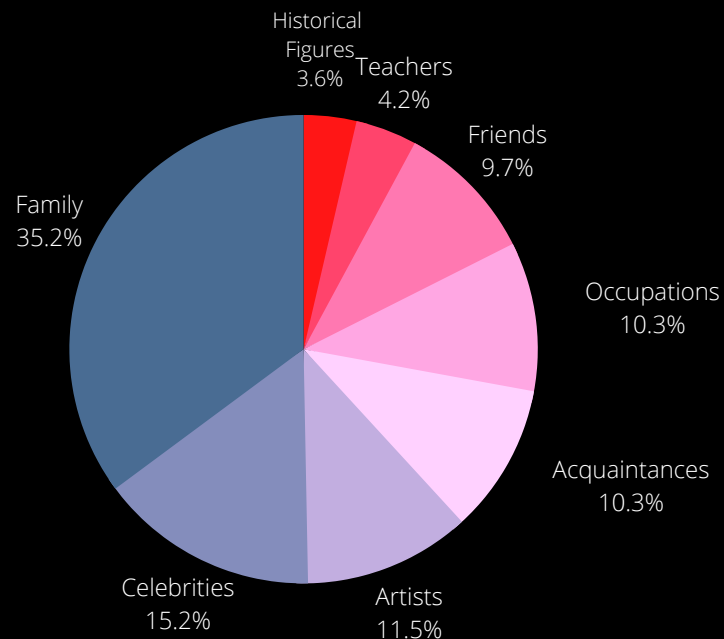


Introduction

For this artifact, we compiled an index involving different groups of people in Joe Brainard's experimental coming-of-age memoir *I Remember*. Following Brainard's life through his childhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma to his growth into a community of artists in New York City, *I Remember* is full of references to people around him and who influenced him, including his family, friends, celebrities, teachers, and artists. Our index tracks these categories to represent Brainard's relationships in a way that is not possible when reading his memories in a non-chronological list. One area of contention our group had while defining the scope of our index was whether we should consider fictional characters, such as Santa Claus and the lone ranger. Eventually, we decided that these characters should be included though it is interesting to note that Brainard deals with these characters in a manner much more similar to how he interacted with objects rather than real people. The distinction between the way Brainard addresses people and objects within his memory became somewhat of a guide for further discussions of scope as we used this to determine which terms were most relevant to our index's theme. In following this thought process, we chose to exclude possessive words such as his and her from the index because while they did refer to people, they primarily focused on the objects being possessed.

One of the hallmark aesthetic choices of *I Remember* is that he does not qualify his memories with his own feelings, a trend that also applies to the way he describes the people in his life. As a reader, it can be challenging to determine what Brainard thinks or feels about the people he includes in his memoir, though analyzing the book

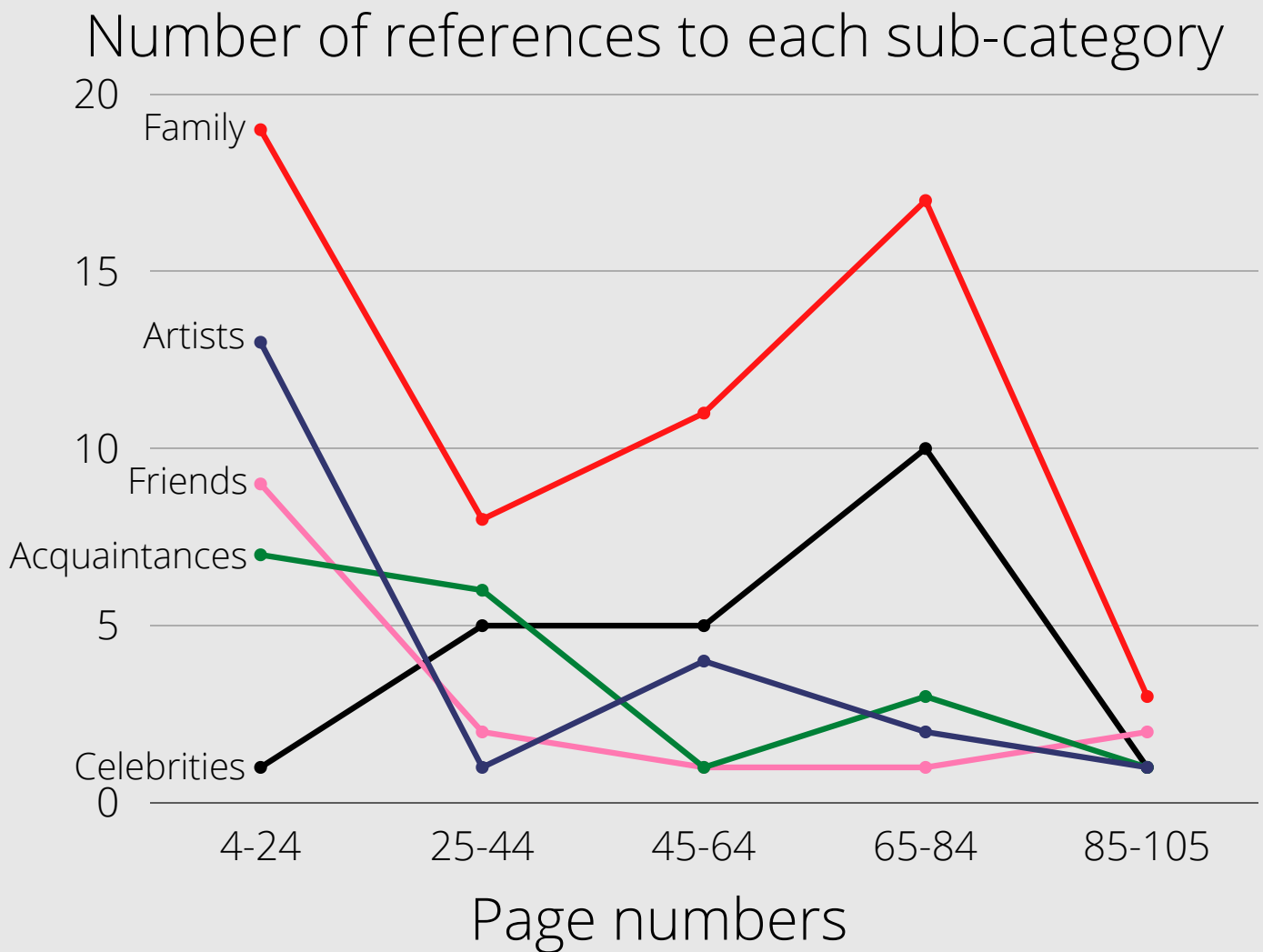
through distant reading methods allows us to see new relationships between Brainard and this theme. A prominent way Brainard expresses his views on others is based upon the distinct differences in the number of references he makes towards those in a given group. Although the frequency to which Brainard references his family is the highest among all the sub-categories, the way in which he describes them is vague and depthless, likely indicating that he may have been estranged or alienated by them. Brainard's memories involving his family in the memoir are also seemingly random and scattered. For example, Brainard remembers his father's collection of arrowheads and his father in black-face, yet oddly excludes interactions that would signify a more meaningful relationship. This is in stark contrast to Brainard's view on the celebrities and artists he idolized, in which he seemed excited and interested to talk about. Brainard mentions how their different movies, fashion styles, and works of art have greatly impacted him by providing new avenues for self-expression.



Usage of People Sub-categories

Introduction

Another piece of information our index brings to light is the distinctive shifts in how frequently Brainard refers to others throughout *I Remember*. The most notable of these is the reduction in the use of words referring to people towards the end of the memoir, as illustrated by the decline in references towards people from the sub-categories. This change is largely due to Brainard putting a higher emphasis on discussing self-reflection and accepting who he is.



*Pages are grouped in ~20 page sections

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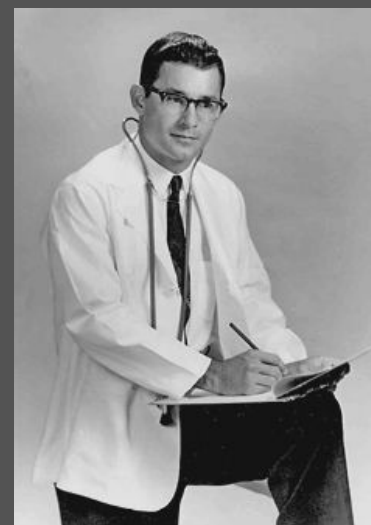
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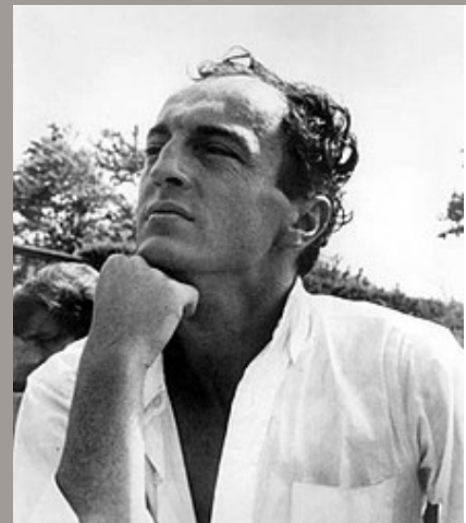
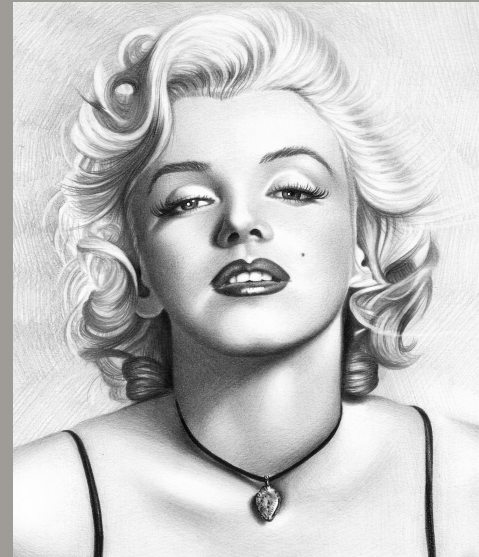
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