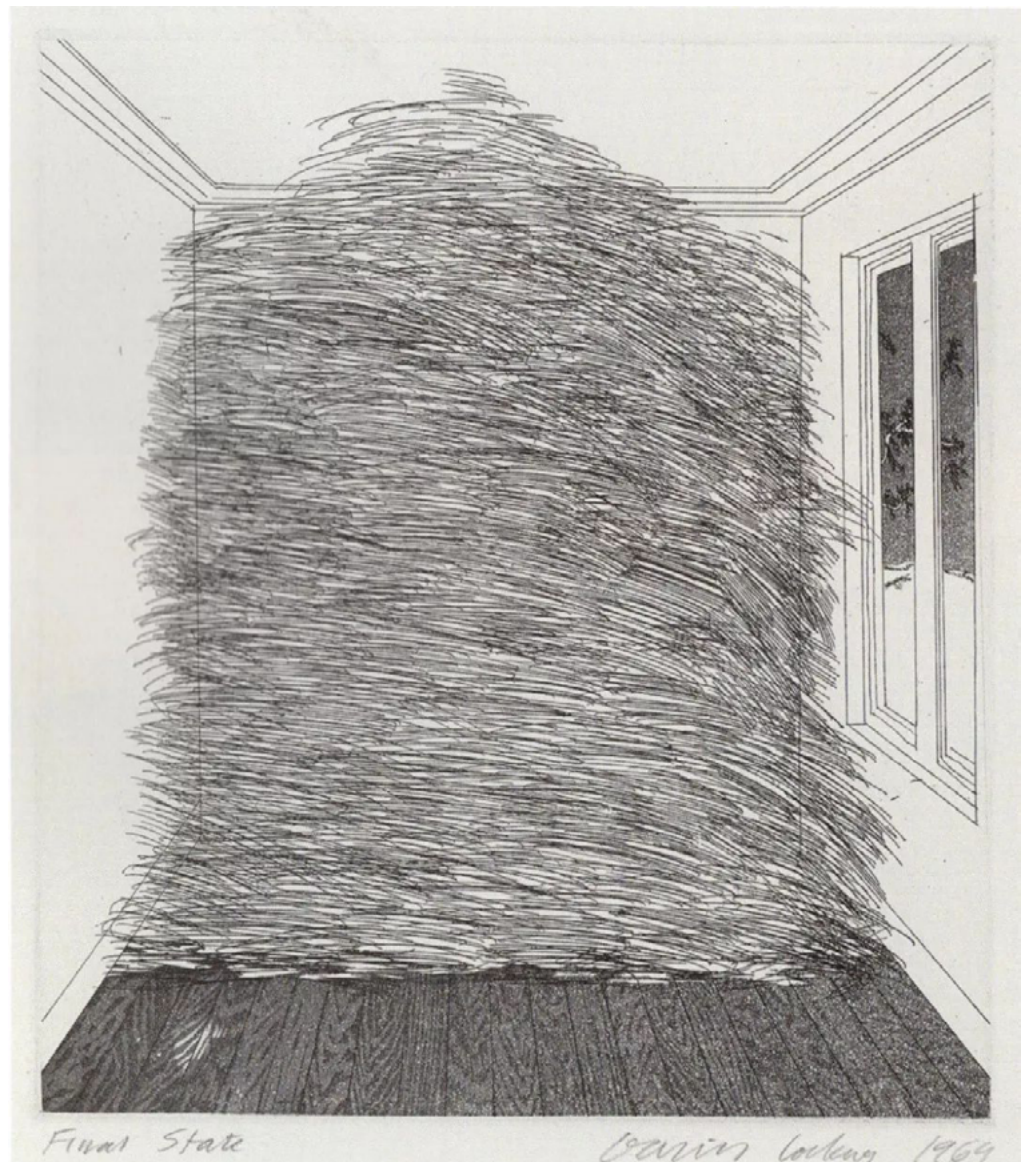


# On Memory

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MA2 of Interior, Architecture and Furniture Design

## Introduction

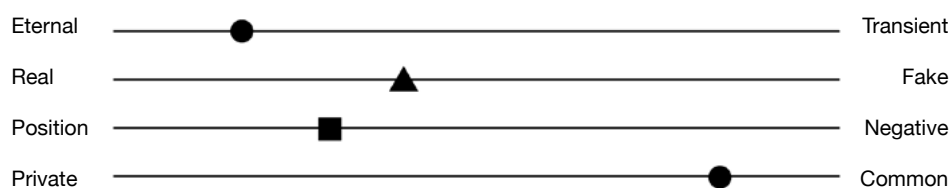
In the memory, it was a quiet summer night in the countryside. The light was dark around and all I can see is the shinning stars. The wind-bell made by my grandmother was gently swaying in the breeze, and the breeze touched the edges of my favourite blue dress. Such a summer night could be one of my precious memories.

Now, I am living in the student apartment in Oslo. The warm light is spraying down on the grey wall and also touching my face as I am typing. I can see the people are walking downstairs through the closing tightly window. It is a bit late, and I am a little hungry. The man I love is also working on his project which needs to submit at the end of this semester. Such a winter night would make an irreplaceable time for me.

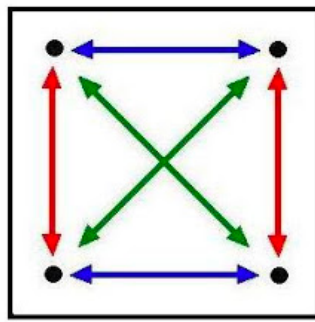
The memory is personal and internal. I can smell the flowers of the yesterday, hear the wind of my hometown, and see the old friends of the childhood when I want. The memory is a special door for me, from which I can entrance the inner world of mine. More often, I regard it as a small space, and it exists in the present but free from the reality. I can be very loose and safe in it. On one hand, it can be said that memory is such a simple thing that only connects with the intention. But the existence of memory is actually a very complicated thing. The memory of the past not only provides a record of events we have experienced, but can also affect our experience of what is happening at the present. Obviously, it can affect our views on objects or events all the time.

The intricate quality of memory has always interested me, that is the reason why I have been researching it. How do we transform memory into physical materials? My works always discuss around this question. It is an arduous process when I first expressed my memory in material terms. Also, to find an artistic way approaching the memory would be a long journey in my mind.

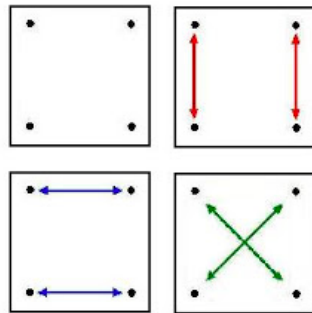
Hence, I have been trying to figure out how to bring the memories to our reality through my artistic practice, as well as the artworks that my interest. The answers will make a base for my thinking and result in the right form of expressions. Also during the theory courses, I aim at getting close to a certain answer through theories and words. With the group exercise in the beginning phase, some words related to memory were emerging in my mind. I intend to focus on them and make a group of words that represents an opposite relationship, or the two extremes which is against each other in one group. Then I try to find my reference point or the research point between these two words in one group.



**Fig. 1.** The picture about try to find the reference point.



*The Klein Group*



*and its four elements*

**Fig. 2.** *The Klein Group* is a four-element group named for Felix Christian Klein.  
*Klein's Group:* a term ( $x$ ), its opposite ( $-x$ ) and their two inversions ( $1/x$  &  $-1/x$ ) (Barbut 1968, p.792).

Unfortunately, this method is not sophisticated enough to cope with the intricate reality. Then, I switch my study method to another one which is *The Klein Group/Semiotic Square* (Theodor Barth, personal communication, December 2020). This method provided me with many opportunities to explore and research in a creative way. It is like, I found a lot of rocks on the surface of the river when I try to reach the other side of the river. Unlike the bridges, convenient and time-saving. They were coincidental and profound, natural as well as complex. This is the way that I want to explore in the uncertain field—to get to know the qualities of memories.

In the course of exploration, I focus on some words and divided into four chapters to discuss.

Chapter 1: A Vessel for Time

Chapter 2: The Reconstruction of the Past

Chapter 3: Layered the Emotion

Chapter 4: You are your memory

## Chapter 1

### A Vessel for Time

'Eternity' and 'transience' could be the first group of words emerge in my mind when I do the research about remembrance. With this group, It comes to me that word 'Time' when I work in *The Klein Group*.

'Everything in life is memory, save for the thin edge of the present.'(Foster, 2009, p.2) Between the time and the memory, there is a subtle and complicated relationship.

In my imagination, when we try to recall the memories of the past, we are almost to enter an asteroid belt—where different sizes of bodies floating freely. We live together with these fragments which are hanging surrounding us. From my perspective, I think these fragments are like the vessels for storing time.

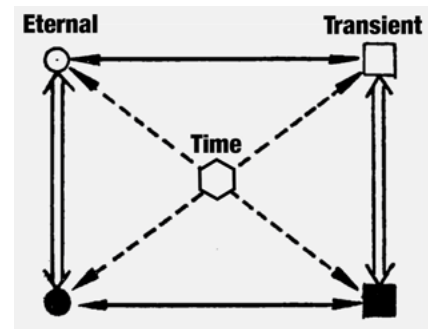


Fig. 3. The words 'Eternal' and 'Transient' in *The Klein's Group/Semiotic Square*.



Fig. 4. The photo of my grandmother's living room.  
Private picture

The time can be long or short. It only takes a few seconds to take a photo. But through the photo, we can freeze a moment from the time. This is a photo I have been saving on my phone. It was the first time I took my best friend to my grandmother's house. There was a fan on the table which had been spinning around almost of the summer. The television showed the news which could be one of my least favourite program when I was a child. There were always full of candies in the sugar can on the table which was never empty. I know every story about the photo very clearly, and I am quite willing to think back about them. Every year when I return hometown, I will open the old album as a custom, and find a sort of peace and warmth. When my grandmother was alive, she always likes to hold those old photos and narrative her memories slowly. Most time she was deeply immersed in the story of the photos, as if to invite others to experience the time of past with her. I believe the memories was frozen in the photos.



'Time stopped, time remembered, time recreated'—Louise Bourgeois (Wye, 2017, p.9)

I remember the first time when my mother taught me cradling a baby. It was very nervous but excited when I was cradling a small life. My mother told me to relax myself and remember to hold the baby's neck and buttock tight. I try to use simple materials—tree branches, rice paper to recreate the gesture to record the transient moments in my memory. This is the reason why I made *Cradling*. Simultaneously, it reminds me of how my parents felt when they cradling me for the first time. They were also very young at that moment. Would they be as satisfied as I am? That moment was to become a permanent in their mind, was not it?

Generally, when people discuss the memory, it will be mentioned as a long period of time. Process and experience can represent the traces which left on the person's memory mostly. Indeed, the form of memory is like a dream or video. It is not so real, but it also records our time with some different kind of qualities.

I used to make a prototype with soft paper. First, I soaked the paper with water, then accumulated the shape with round by round when I made it. I have done a lot of experiments with the material and try to find a suitable way to build the shape. During that time I felt a little cold when my fingers touch the water again and again. Finally, the prototype reached a more complete gesture, also my fingers were wrinkled while did this. After a while, something unexpected occurred. The paper fell down as the water evaporated. By far, the prototype almost disappeared. There are only pieces of papers left.

I started to think about the meaning of the process in the making for me. Only the experience of fingers could let me know about the existence of the prototype. Then it can be said that this memory could be regarded as part of my experience in this way with the short-term.



Fig. 5. Chuan, *Cradling*. 2020. Private picture



Fig. 6. The working process of the prototype.  
Private picture

Besides 'moment' and 'period', personally I think we also store the time in memories in other forms. I remember that terrific time when making the graduation project of my bachelor. Until now, I can still realise the fatigue of that memory. But in my mind, I cannot analyse this memory in such a simple way. There are a lot of different fragments and memory points exist during this time. These various kinds of pieces constitute this memory. For instance, I can remember the exhaustion while I made the project in the workshop, the smell of the food brought by my friends when they visit me, the experience I talk and laugh with my classmate when we to buy materials at the market, and the moment when my graduation work was exhibiting. These fractions seem irrelevant but somehow combined. Therefore I could not define them as merely a moment or a lasting time in the memory. For me, it is a montage of multiple memory points, moments, and periods.

The first time When I saw *Twice Twilight* (Sze. 2015), I felt this was a space close to memory with physical material. They composed of pieces of papers with different sizes. The videos and images were projected on papers. Then there is a visual combination of static or dynamic, changing or repeating, fast or slow. I can imagine that this is a certain physical representation of combinatorial memories.

What does the time leave us with the memory? It is always my intention to figure out the answers of these personal questions through my creative practices. The death, would be the ultimate destination for all of us. Someone will say that the process is more important than the result, with which I totally agree. If we lose memories of the past, there should be nothing to say and nothing to think about with our long or short life. Therefore, those decades of time seem to have never been owned for us. That is exactly how I think about that memory as the vessel of time, is narrating the meaning of life constantly in different ways.



Fig. 7. Pictures from the video. *Twice Twilight*. Sarah Sze

In my best moment I think 'life was passed' me by and I am content.  
Walking seems to cover time and space but in reality we are always just where we started. I walk but in reality I am hand in hand with contentment on my own door step.

The ocean is deathless  
The island rise and die  
quietly come, quietly go  
A select swaying breath

I with the idea of time would drain out of my cells and leave me quiet even on this shore.

—Agnes Martin  
(Glimcher, 2012, p.201)



Fig. 8. Pictures from the video. *Twice Twilight*. Sarah Sze

## Chapter 2

### The Reconstruction of the Past

'Let us, then, say that this is the gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses, and that whenever we wish to remember anything we see or hear or think of in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions and thoughts and imprint them upon it, just as we make impressions from seal rings; and whatever is imprinted we remember and know as long as its image lasts, but whatever is rubbed out or cannot be imprinted we forget and do not know.' (Plato, 2014, Vol.12)

Plato regarded the memory as a wax table, on which people could write their own memories. As the metaphor suggests, memory is never the 'real' things that happened. Eating, sleeping, working, studying along with playing is the real thing that existed. But memory is a special experience, rather like a real documentary in our mind. We have experienced our own memory, but the memory stored in our mind is a kind of 'Sensation Memory'. When we are in a familiar room, the stuffs and the atmosphere had existed before in the room will immediately come to our mind. The memories leave us with a knowing of the 'appearance' of things, like this scene in our mind. So that even the things do not exist in front of our eyes, we can still 'see' them.



Fig. 9. The wax table. 2020. Wikipedia

In life, we always remember or forget things, intentionally or unintentionally. Once in a while, we will also recall things we have forgotten. So it is hard to figure out the realness of an event in our memory. Sometimes it could even be the lies, which full of subjective imagination and fiction. This is the rules of memory: it is not a diary, but a creation that could be manipulated.

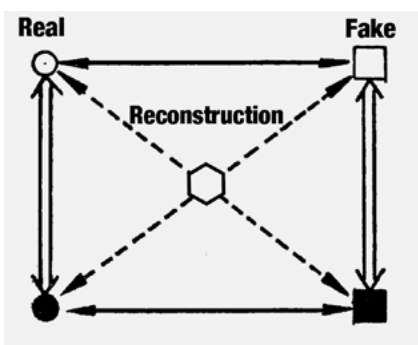


Fig. 10. The words 'Real' and 'Fake' in The Klein's Group/Semiotic Square.

The memories have special qualities between the real and unreal. It is like a certain of reconstruction. As far as I am concerned, the events of reality that happened could not change. Yet it is totally different in the memories. Then, when people reconstruct the memories of the past, consciously or unconsciously, we will trust them more or less. In a sense, more parts of our memories are derived from the reconstructions of the events in the past. For example, we rearrange and reconstruct our memory is a certain method of changing memory



which in psychoanalysis. When we fall into memory, we tend to think them as the reality, and forget the objective aspects towards the memories. We may optionally remember and forget, try to restructure. It is a way for a human being to cure ourselves of the wound. Hence, if we pay more attention to the 'reconstruction', we could be able to see the inclination of our mind, and to understand our intention freshly.

There was once a movie called *Under the Heat of the Sun* (Jiang wen, 1994), which is the extraordinary debut of the famous director Jiang Wen. The narrator at the beginning of the film is a boy. Following his memories, the audience saw the temperament of Beijing in the 1970s. The Cultural Revolution was a dark period in China. However, the group of boys and girls in the movie are in their best time. This is their golden age, a hot, splendid, energetic, and free life. The atmosphere of the movie is also extremely romantic.



Fig. 11. The photo from the movie *Under the Heat of the Sun*

At the end of the movie, the director has conceived a reversal. The fictive narrative is succeeded by the real narrative of the event. Then, leaving the audience a great astonishment, pushed the story toward the climax. Only here, the recomposition of the narrative is revealed in front of the audiences. So that the narrative in the movie is not credible anymore. The audiences start to question the total story, and hence the understanding of the movie becomes richer. Only then did we recall that the various events in the movie happened so mysteriously. In the first half of the story, there was almost no evidence of the presence of a 'third man' in the narrative but the two principal characters. So what is the truth of the story? What is the thing hidden behind that the director wants to convey? The questions appear and guide the audiences to re-examine this memory told by the protagonist. The illusion and reality of memory, the unconcealed desire in my heart, are exactly something the movie wants to express. For me, the entire story is the absolutely actual record of a fake memory. The director, Wen Jiang, did not merely tell a story with an illusory temperament. In the story he was implicit in the madness of that era, and his own reflection on it. The distinguishing of the plots in the movie on whether they are real or fictional is hence unnecessary. The memory in the movie is more like the image in the mirror, reflecting the reality and revealing the truth behind the truth.

'I'm interested in memory because it's a filter through which we see our lives, and because it's foggy and obscure, the opportunities for self-deception are there.' —Kazuo Ishiguro(Lydia Gaukler, 2006, p.11)

This aspect of memory obviously has influenced the creations of artists a lot. Although memory is quite alike with dream. They are all deeply involved with the subconsciousness of the human. However memory, compared with dream, is more subjective and active in a sense, and will influence directly the decision that we make. I would like to regard the memories as an intermediary between dreams and reality. And it is because the memory is not reality. It belongs to everyone and exist unique. Although in memory we cannot fully attain the reality , we can also choose to be as close to reality as possible.

'Contemporary theorists have come to appreciate that memory is a selective and interpretive process.'(Foster, 2009, p.6) Memories could be selected, interpreted and integrated by us. There are always two sides to everything. As the aspect of remember and the forget in memory. We usually ignore 'forget'—it is a significant component for reconstructing the memory.

Days before in the group discussion, professor Theo mentioned the word 'remember'. He talked about the 'member' in 'remember' have the meaning of 'body member'. So that 'remember' in a sense, is to put things together in a new way(Theodor Barth, personal communication, November 2020). It is an interesting topic referred to memory from my perspective. To remember sometimes more like telling stories.

When I was a child, one of my favourite things before going to bed was to request my grandfather to tell stories. In my daily conversations with my grandfather, most of the time he was reminiscing about the past. There are a lot of memories he has told me many times, but every time he will narrate it out completely and carefully. In the narration, he was a smart boy with excellent grades when he was young. In middle age, he worked hard and promoted from the teacher to the principal by his own efforts. These memories are totally catching my attention. Not only because of the ups and downs of the story, but also its unique narrative form. Grandfather always has the exaggerated gestures and expressions to narrative each story vividly.



Fig. 12. The photo from the movie *Big Fish*

The movie *Big Fish* (Burton, 2003) is about a talkative father. Most of the time, he was telling many people about his legendary experience. It is like a romantic and thrilling fairy tale. The son has always admired his father's story since he was a child. When he grew up, he did not believe in these stories told by his father, and even felt extremely tired of it. Finally, when his father was dying, he understood the mystery and truth hidden behind these stories. All memories are wonderful and endless. It is not just stories that have been passed down from generation to generation. I realised that the trivial things in reality make us farther and farther away from the dream world of childhood. In the movie, the son finally understands his father's deep love. Fairy tales could also become a reality in memories.

I was very lucky to be born in a similar family. My grandfather's legendary and romantic 'memories' influenced my life. I imagined that many years later, when I held my child's hand, what kind of story would I tell him with my memories? At that time, I should be like my grandfather, using my love and tenderness to tell him a special memory.

## Chapter 3

### Layered the Emotion

Emotion has always been one of themes from artists' self-creation. When I make works about the experience of memories, I often judge that if I could convey an emotion of positive or negative subconsciously. Generally, there could be a positive impact during a positive creative process. Yet, human emotions are extremely complicated and fluid in reality. Hence, I intend to figure out some branch with *The Klein's Group*. In fact, for certain people, emotion is the point of start and end with the memory.

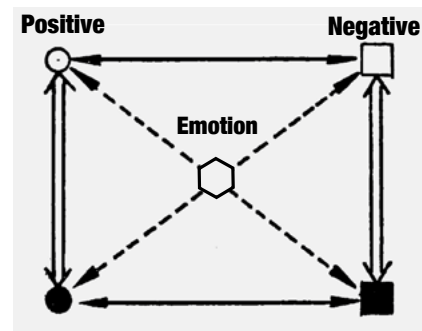


Fig. 13. The words 'Positive' and 'Negative' in *The Klein's Group/Semiotic Square*.

I grew up in an intimate family. Same as the most, my home fill the life with extraordinary happiness and joy. As a traditional Chinese family, we appreciate and value the affection between family members. But at the same time, we also keep a certain sense of order from our culture. Especially under the environment which has an implicit expression of emotion in the East. We seldom express our love for the elders or juniors. In my memory, I rarely tell directly my family that I love them. And I used to hide my emotions during this situation. It is the first time I realised and understood the existence of this distance, when I have a fierce quarrel with my father.

I contradicted my father because of the different views on some trivial matters. As a traditional Chinese father, he was solemn almost time. Obviously He was mad because of my talk back. Then the discussion quickly deteriorated into an angry argument. Finally, when I was asked by my mother to apologise to him, my father sat in the shadows quietly, his back to us and did not turn back. I still remember the emotion when I saw this situation. My father is no longer young now. When we were children, our father was like an omnipotent man. He has a powerful arm that can lift me high, he can answer all my questions, he knows everything. Later, I find that gradually he was not all-powerful. When facing the world, he has as much trouble and confusion as I do. Because my world gets broader and broader, he withdrew from my life as time goes by. From anger to annoyance, and finally to sadness, there is a deep record in my memory.



Fig. 14. Chuan. *Distance*. 2020. Private picture



Until now, I have completely forgotten the content of the argument. But when I think back of this memory, the complex emotion will arouse through my mind. I intend to express this emotion with my artistic practice named *Distance*. I consider that my father and I are like two similar monsters. However, there always have many differences from each other. Because of these differences, we often fail to understand each other and hurt each other. But we are family members, hence we are always tolerant and considerate to each other. The complex emotion in this memory gradually becomes my understanding of my father. Although there have been rarely any physical contacts between family members in our tradition. But this kind of reconciliation made me feel the hug with distance for the first time in my life.

Memory is a key psychological process.(Foster, 2009, p.2)

In daily life, the emotions in memories have changed slightly during the time. But certain kinds of emotions are constantly deepening and accumulating over the time. Louise Bourgeois is an artist I have always admired. 'She smashed a taboo,' said Christopher Knight, the art critic. 'Bourgeois was the first Modern artist to expose the emotional depth and power of domestic subject matter. Before her, male artists had only nibbled around the edges, and women just weren't allowed.'(Times staff, 2010)

Louis Bourgeois's life-long works are all about getting rid of the wound in her childhood. She once said that she has been a prisoner of her memories and her aim is to get rid of them. There is a story that told by her in her documentary *Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine*(Cajori & Wallach, 2008) that left me with a deep impression. It is a joke that her father used to tell after the family dinner when she was young. He took an orange, used an oily pen to draw the silhouette of a small man on the orange peel, then cut off the silhouette by a knife. Then he would turn the orange peel to its back, showing the other side of the peduncle extremity where one can see a protruding part. "This small man looks great. I think it reminds me of my daughter,"Bourgeois' father always went like this "But it obviously is not my daughter since she has nothing "there'." The words often made the people present roar with laughter. The public humiliating joke that her father constantly made, and the disappointment he had in the gender of her had turned the memories of her childhood into a shadow that never fades. She turned angry, anxious and scared ever since. Fifty years had passed, and when she talked about this 'joke' of her father in the documentary movie, she still could not help to cry emotionally. Through her works and her stories, the deep embarrassment and shamefulness are conveyed to the others.



Fig. 15. The photos from the documentary *The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine*

Later, the sensitive Bourgeois found solace in her mother, who is bearing and tolerant. But the character of mother is in a sense another form of betrayal and abandonment of her. Bourgeois created the most well-known *Spider* series as a tribute to his mother. From *Spider* (Louise Bourgeois, 1995), we can still feel the contradictory and complicated emotions from Bourgeois towards her mother. The spiders are both hunters and protectors, with Bourgeois' gratitude and awe for the character of a mother.

There is an old saying in China that goes "Women are vulnerable, but mothers are strong." I can still remember a time in my childhood when my father needed to work in another city, then my mother had to work and take care of me during that time. It must be a hard time for my mother. In that period, she sometimes worked at home. While working, she always left me a sense of distance. The occasional severity and rebuke make me feel a bit uneasy. But it is certain that at that time, my mother was the closest person to me and the person I love and rely on the most. In my work *Protection*, I try to portray the relationship I had with my mother in this childhood memory with materials. The work has a soft knitted fabric around, at the same time, it is very hard inside. It has a warm shell but difficult to break. Many years passed, as a grown-up, revisiting that precious memory allows me to get more understanding my mother. And it also allows me to face that memory with the different emotions from my childhood—gratitude and consideration. It is a hard, also soft memory.

And the first time, full of sad memories, was about the death of my grandmother. As the Chinese ancients used to say, the fallen leaves return to their roots. We held the funeral for about a week in the remote village where my grandmother was born. It was a long journey back to the village. I was in a state of panic on the way because I did not reach before my grandmother passed away. Eventually I arrived at the funeral

as fast as I could. I calmed down slowly when I saw all my family members. There were many funeral customs in rural areas. As long as I can remember, we were in a noisy, chaotic environment where we could also only take turns sleeping for two or three hours at night. Under such overwrought, we can only complete some rituals mechanically. The whole funeral was mixed with the pain of facing death and the noise of Taoist funeral traditions. On the last evening of the funeral, we have collected my grandmother's belongings. Then we walked in the field side road which connecting grandmother's house. I was curious if my grandmother used to walk or run along this road when she



Fig. 16. *Spider*, Plate 8 of 9 from the illustrated book *Ode à Ma Mère*.



Fig. 17. Chuan, *Protection*. 2020. Private picture



**Fig. 18.** The photo of the field side road in the remote village.  
Private picture

was a child. The whole village is silent. Here was a peaceful moment also in our mind. Suddenly our younger cousin broke the silence. She began to talk about some interesting things in the memories of our grandmother. We finally accepted the death of our favourite person in such a night.

It is difficult to explain the emotion when I am facing the death of my loved one for the first time. I was deeply saddened by the news of her death. Hence I would subconsciously stop mentioning this memory. When I

miss my grandmother, but I cannot avoid remembering the emotions in the past. And this memory taught me what the priorities in the world and we must cherish the loved persons around us.

2008, an earthquake took place in Wenchuan, China. The catastrophic earthquake took away sixty-nine thousands of people's lives and made millions of people homeless. And we made the date May the 12th a commemoration day for the nation. The earthquake was gone. But the pain and wound had left in the people's heart as the beloved are carried away. In 2009, a small house designed by a famous architect, Jiakun Liu. It had construction started to 'remember' a junior high school girl who died in the earthquake. Although the house is named as the Hu Huishan Memorial Hall, quite formal as it is, it is a rather gentle and caring way to remember. To remember the girl as a person rather than a number in the statistics. This house is a special way to enter the space of her. The house is small. The entrance ground is paved with red bricks commonly found in the earthquake area. And the walls are covered with the daily objects of Huishan—the school bag, notebook, badminton racket, sports shoes, small comb, small hairpin, scarf and other items she used when she was still alive. More particularly, her favourite colour, pink, is used to paint the interior wall. Being inside, it is like experiencing an ordinary wake-up scene of a junior high school girl. It can be said that this kind of representation and



**Fig. 19.** The photo of *Hu Huishan Memorial Hall*. Jiakun Liu. (2008–2009)

artistic display of the deceased's objects makes the audience immersed in the space of reorganising memories. And at the same time, they will understand life better.

The emotions in memory always play an important role in life. Sometimes we remember a memory just because we remember the emotion. And the feelings left to us which cannot be calmed as time goes by. Especially it needs to be cured or released in certain situations. We sense new emotions with the complex emotions in our memories. It can always bring us new feelings and inspirations in reality.



## Chapter 4

### You are your memory

Before I even notice, I have been in Oslo for one year and a half. I have been thinking a lot, but I still have no idea on how to farewell to the city. I still remember the bewilderment that I have when I arrived in the city the first time, holding on to the maps tightly and thinking which roads to take. Now I walk calmly in the city, almost never getting lost. During my time in Oslo, I have been trying to observe and experience the new life this city has offered me. There are islands with the breathtaking sunset, and the natural scenery even in the city. The hills that I climbed, the snow that I stepped on, they all became my memory.

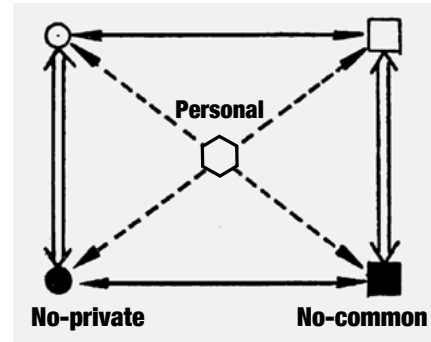


Fig. 20. The words 'Private' and 'Common' in The Klein's Group/Semiotic Square.

Of course, the longing for my hometown will also remain in this memory. During this semester, I made a bowl out of paper. It has looked as the bowl I used when I was still a kid. There are many manners and rules on dining in China. When talking about the rules of dinner, the first scene that comes up in my mind will be the moment when my parents gave me the first bowl to me. In a sense, it is also the first lesson that my parents taught me the ritual of the daily diet. Generally, it is the first time that I encountered, as a Chinese kid, the culture and manner of China that have existed for thousands of years. From then on, the elders in the family will gradually teach the children more and more manners, such as how to hold a pair of chopsticks properly. For instance, when treating a guest we should let the guest move the chopsticks first to show a sense of respect. And when we being a guest go to someone's house, it will be rude to take the dish that is in front of the host with your chopsticks. In a sense, I always feel that this is my real beginning as a Chinese. Some people might feel like the first contact they have with the Chinese culture is the time when their parents taught them how to write and so on. Indeed, I cannot deny that calligraphy is a very important tradition of China, and most of



Fig. 21. Chuan. Bowl. 2020. Private picture

us will encounter it in a rather young age. But the etiquette of dining, for me, is more naturally rooted in my mind. When the dining itself nurtured much by the culture, the behaviours are already an act of education. And it is an emotional thing, a personal thing. For that reason, I can always recall the first bowl that I have: it is a plastic, durable, colourful bowl made for children. Normal I treat it with care and cherishing during the memories. And now it becomes fuzzy, soft, warm, and there are many traces on the surface. Along with this precious bowl, there is also my sense of belonging that lies in the memory no matter how time passes.

It turns out that no matter how far away from home, one's most concerned thing is the homeland, and the stories that are connected with his bloodline. I keep thinking about the influence of private memory and collective memory towards the individual. From my perspective, the sense of belonging to some extent is no-private. Most likely it comes from the community or society that shares things, that experience things together. I and my peers grow up in the same country, we witness the same history and share the same language and tradition. And all of these that I experienced eventually become my memory, the memory that helps shape my cultural belonging. And then I understand myself as a person, as a Chinese.

Maybe, the roads we walked, the memories we gained, are to reveal one's true self to himself/herself.

One of my enthusiasm is to travel around the world, to see the different cultures, different views. Now that I am already in another country living, I suddenly realise that the things remain in my mind are really the beloved—my family, my dear friend. As a Chinese, I am taught to be a person who should first care about the family, then to care about the country of mine and to care about the entire world. But personally speaking, it is the memories that are closest to me at this moment. And after being through different circumstances and different phases in life, what needs to be said farewell is often memories, one after another. And now, I know, after a period, I shall say goodbye to a country that is much larger than me.

We carefully bid farewell to a place that seems irrelevant to us, maybe it is because it is very much connected to us. A few days ago, an interesting thing happened. My mother sent me a picture with astonishment. The villagers told her about a tomb when she back to the hometown. This tomb from the picture belongs to a Norwegian child that travelled to China a hundred years or more ago. It surprised me a lot. It will be a rare thing for a foreign, not to mention Norwegian, to come to this remote village in China at that time. And when I have a close look on this traditional Chinese tomb, I discover that on the top of the corresponding Chinese words there are the Norwegian names of the kid. The Norwegian name that is not unfamiliar to me so I convince myself of this unrealistic story. At this moment, it comes to me that I am connected to Norway in a sense. The things that I saw and experienced in Norway, no matter if I had noticed or not, have become the component of mine. And they will draw me to things that is related to Norway. A century has spanned since this little boy appeared in our hometown. China and Norway are all completely different. But the experience of being a stranger in a foreign land makes me feel connected to this Norwegian boy. This kind of memory is rather a personal one than a cultural one or one that's associated with traditions. In this memory, we could see how the 'no common' nature of memory is imprinted in one's own identity. When the boundary



**Fig. 22.** The photo of the tombstone. Private picture

of the body is extended to a body of mind, rather the physical body. The words that you see, the places that you have been, the experiences you had, actively or passively, they eventually become parts of our body through the tunnel of memory.

In our daily life, more often we face the relationship with ourselves, for we are the one that we are companying. Memory, as in my eyes, is a sort of conversation that I have with myself in my mind occasionally. Quite often we also have to confront the relationship with the others and the circumstance. And the farewells in life that we cannot escape, all become the precious memory that we have. And that we should take good care of, and move on.

The lesson that Oslo has given me is the bravery to discover myself, to be myself, to treasure myself and to do what I want to do. The farewell is inevitable. There are things that we might forget, intentionally or unintentionally. We move on to the things that are coming. But once these hidden memories occur to us, they will bring us the new cognition and be able to integrate with the things happen currently. This might be the value of memory. It connects the past and the present, and affects the present and the future.

This might be the value of memory. On one side, it unites people and makes them part of a culture. And it enables an individual to see the true self of one's own on the other side. It connects the past and the present, and affects the present and the future.

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