

The Relationship Between Personal Memory and Social Memory

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Abstract

One of the ways to construct social memory was that every single person traces history. In modern years, we used new media, media tools to integrate the historical resources and contemporary information. Blogs, forums, main stream of media sites were the typical represent, the way to gather people, memory and emotion. The progress that social memory and personal memory constructed each other showed they depend on each other. Social memory had to be constructed by personal memory. However; personal memory attached social memory, so personal memory that relied on social memory was extremely important to be. Society was constructed by personal memory, and the way was called “construction-deconstruction-reconstruction”.

Keywords

Social memory, personal memory, construction.

1. Elaborating on Social Memory and Personal Memory

Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) elaborated deeply on collective memory in 《On Collective Memory》. The research of it was mostly related to social memory, so it had a significant impact on researchers in later period. In other words, researchers in later period got the thoughts and model from Maurice Halbwachs for their research of social memory. The researchers also summed up the collective characteristics of social memory, and then made the definition of Collective Memory----a kind of construction depending on “now to past” [1]. At the same time, in that article, the author emphasized the joint between each personal memory and the position of personal memory in the social groups. In the discourse, Maurice Halbwachs emphasized that social memory gave personal memory significance, so he thought personal memory could be understood only in collective memory. On the other words, personal memory relied on society to exist. Also, it magnified the flaw in his research. He ignored the agency of personal memory and the different dimensions that personal memory presented in social memory. Liu, chiuya expounded the adversarial relationship between collective memory and personal memory in 《From collective memory to individual memory, a reflection on the study of social memory》, she thought “individual memory contain too many things that we couldn’t approach, and the problem could not be solved if it only depends on research paradigm of social memory. [2]

In traditional mainstream discourse research, individual memory appeared problem I called it “memory black hole” because individual memory was covered and social memory involved right. “Glimmer of memory” was ignored because of those massive stories told by people. In historical event, glimmer of memory glowed by individual memory quickly disappeared in sociology paradigm. Although glimmer of memory was weak, it was still profound and meaningful. However, because the era of self-media was coming, large amount of social apps or website such like blog, forum, wechat sprang up, solving the problem of “memory black hole”. For example, blogs and wechat let us see the lives that didn’t appear on the screen before of people. In the past, we relied on imagination, news or interview on television, newspaper to construct the memory for people who engaged in migrant workers. But these days, we have

blog of migrant workers, and also some classic migrant workers representatives like zhang-jun emerged with time passing. zhang-jun showed mind courses that migrant workers came into metropolis to do part-time jobs on his own blog. In his blog, not only showed the individual memory of themselves, but also expressed the feeling about some events which were great influential to the society, for example: post an evaluation about the employee in Foxconn died of a fall, etc. It might be inferred that although social memory presented collectively, it was conveyed by several individual. Blog, forum, wechat let individual memory could express what it wanted, then became powerful collective memory and constructed social memory, playing significant roles making a big impact to social memory.

In fact, individual memory and collective memory constructed each other, and also the relationship between individual memory and social memory relied on each other. Individual memory contained plentiful memory of thoughts. individual memory was active and flowing so that it could make up the “authenticity” ignored in social memory and revised it, breaking the identification that personal memory led collective memory. In contrast, tolerance and openness in the society made “utterance” of individual memory multiple and much freer.

2. Parsing for the Presence of Personal Memory in Social Memory

2.1. Personal Memory Became the Power of Constructing and Deconstructing Society

We got the conclusion from analyzing some previous research about social memory and personal memory written by researchers: social memory was independent and specific under normal circumstances, and it involved the problem about the viewing position during constructing memory [3]. For example, the miserable history about Japanese people invaded China. Some historical memory retained in “memorial of massacre” only belonged to public social memory. However; people who experienced that period might keep the gloomy memory in their personal memory. That personal memory was unable to assimilate into public social memory, being expelled out of history, but it was the testimony of suffering history also the constructor of real social memory then. Personal memory made a stand against to the “fake memory”.

At that time, there were many ways to express for personal memory to construct social memory, through the blogs, forums, magazines, newspaper, television, etc. Spirit of every single person might gather with these medium. When this personal power conversed to social power, personal memory would be the power for constructing society in an overwhelming way. For instance, there was a column on 《new financial》 that gather many bloggers to post comment. In addition, personal comment about major social events might have guiding force, then constructed new social memory.

Personal memory gave support to construct social memory, and also could deconstruct it. Sometimes, personal memory emerged intensely with an unstoppable way, thus social memory might be at risk of being deconstructed by personal memory [4]. Actually, while social memory was deconstructed by personal memory, it might become other new social memory. Social memory was constructed by personal memory. It was a process about construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. According to these viewpoints, personal memory had powerful strength to construct or deconstruct social memory.

2.2. Social Memory Performed Through Personal Memory

Social memory showed through personal memory, and it was also the combination of large self group and social experience. Such as social memory presented as reference in front of people, and it was just through the way gathering information, extract information from personal memory. Among this, people played the function of storing, extracting, applying, and

reconstructing. In works of film and television we could also experience that social memory present through personal memory. For example, the famous director Yimou Zhang used personal memory, historical memory and life memory to constitute vivid pictures in 《Red Sorghum》 ,bring the scenes of the society then to audience, and then making a bright, vivid social memory.

According to personal memory could influence social memory significantly, people had to take care of personal memory. Construction and representation that personal memory gave social memory had to depend on real historical facts and lives, and highlight the loyalty, reality and science, not to shape fake social memory with wrong personal memory. Especially with new media technology, individual became far more influential. People who were in Internet mainstream crowd that walking on the time forward and with significant voices had to be guided more correctly.

3. Conclusion

From a artistic perspective, memory could penetrate into art works like utensils, sculptures, oil paintings. Yet these art works which should be containing intense personal memory was formatted gradually. Art works in these days contained less personal memory or emotion of the artists. Just like personal memory didn't penetrate into art works, and couldn't become mainstream culture, mass production instead. Under the mass production, personal memory and social memory the period gave drifted. In the future, we should think back over how to integrate personal memory and emotion in our creation, no to be replaced by mass production. A good work of art should bring its own self-memory and social memory the society gave. Personal memory and social memory welded together effectively, just like personal memory and social memory were in the process of mutual construction and interdependence.

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