

## Preface

In babyhood, using a pacifier is a natural step for infants. It soothes them and provides comfort, but despite its benefits, there comes a time when babies must move on. The transition away from the pacifier can happen in different ways. One method involves tying balloons to it and letting the baby release it into the sky—no rush, no force, enough time to say goodbye.

Goodbye. Not "bye," but a “good” bye. How is it done? When I saw a toddler wave to the pacifier floating away, I wondered: When have I ever said such a good goodbye?—this is how I participated in the EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalisation (EUCI). To say goodbye to one page of my growth, I dusted off a long record of mine.

### **Education Record**

- [2006~2008] Murrays Bay Primary School, New Zealand
- [2008~2011] Seoul Apgujeong Elementary School, South Korea
- [2011~2013] Kyungbok Elementary School, South Korea
- [2013] Apgujeong Middle School, South Korea
- [2013~2014] Resurrection Catholic School, United States
- [2014~2015] Christ the Teacher Academy, United States
- [2016~2017] Jamsil Middle School, South Korea
- [2017~2018] Jamsil Girls' High School, South Korea

Born in South Korea, I moved to New Zealand at the age of 3. Finishing my second year in New Zealand, I moved back to Korea. In years 7 and 8, I studied abroad in the United States, then returned to Korea. Since 2020, I have been pursuing higher education in the UK.

My personal record ends in 2018. I ended the long list myself and dropped out of school.

The years after 2020 did add to my mess, but it hasn't been a problem yet, and so far, no one has looked that far into my history.

My reflection is a baby's good-bye to a pacifier. A literal goodbye is hard, but I gave it a try.

This portfolio is me tying balloons to my record, flying it into the sky. With submission, I too am waving my hand.

## **Chapter 1. Record: Objectivity and Subjectivity**

What comes on the record are the facts and nothing more. Rhetorics, growth, 13 years, all refined, 8 lines are what is left. That is what a record should be: simple and clean, no excuses for decoration. Record for proof is the guaranteed objectivity. With few bulletpoints, the footprints of my traces are written objectively. There was a time when I questioned the validity of objectivity. It didn't seem like it could stand alone without the support of words of effort like 'possibly'. An equivalent antonym or a serving assistance, objectivity falls short of its definition, as if the least subjectivity couldn't be left no named. I held these doubts because I witnessed a moment. I witnessed a moment where the same sentences are read differently, where the objective truth instantly turns subjective, where the act of reading is followed by something more.

People, rather than having thrown a blank piece of paper, can be much more creative when given a few lines. Imagination becomes richer when reading between the lines. The printed objectivity is only used as a hint; people somehow manage to read the letters that cannot be there, and by that, subjectivity rules objectivity. And someone's very subjective and creative interpretation can be ruthlessly obnoxious.

My record has 8 lines. In my lines, there are new school uniforms and countless self-introductions. The inked stepping stones were firmly rooted objective, but whoever crossed the paper sank in between, leisurely swimming in their own pool of subjectivity. "Leading that is too loose leaves too much pause between lines." It's one of the lessons in typography; it makes me think if my leading was too loose, my gap too wide, their misstep foreseen. The more lines, the more leadings, the more interpretations. Between the lines, one read drama,

one read trouble. All read unfamiliarity. However, there's a saying: extremes meet. It's hard to tell the difference between unfamiliarity at its extreme and familiarity. I knew already the stones beneath my feet were different, but looking back, they're all lying down the same.

My lines are alike.

## **Chapter 2. Interculturalism: My Lines Are Alike**

'You're the Jane here.' 'You're the John here.' One who leads, one who is led, one who struggles to fit in, one who is selectively solitary—the characters of my peers. Not only the social interactions, but even the hallway noises were indistinguishable to be underrated. One plays with eraser shavings, rolling them into a ball. One can't normally close the door but habitually has to slam the door. And they all giggled off a good prank. People living on the other part of the world, who have never met each other, are getting along the same. It's like, different liquid poured each time on one shape mould, the same scenery, and only the country swapped. Carl Jung's collective unconscious explains the shared psychological experiences among people worldwide, despite the differences in cultures and environments. He established archetypes, inherent and universal psychological patterns that shape fundamental human behaviour (Jung, 1981). His theory and my observation share the same context. Humans tend to behave and think in similar ways. My *déjà vu* continued outside of school: the very basics of dance and music on the first day of class, the very worst of evil and the very best of good in documentaries, the agrees and disagrees of controversies down in the comment section, again a panorama with people swapped. These can be the examples of Jung's collective unconscious.

When skipping to the next bulletpoint, I packed, unpacked, repacked. I remember my first packing; I thought I was towing the whole house. In case, I might need this and they don't have that; for an unskilled and inexperienced beginner, the hypothetical 'in case' didn't really help as I found tonnes of replacements in supermarkets. Today, calling myself the master of packing, I don't pack much. What is here is there. Because it is where people live.

I'm not going off to Mars. It is the earth, where it's very livable. Global citizens are more alike than we think.

I am not denying the apparent differences. I mean, it will work out from similarities. If I were to recreate a traditional recipe on the opposite side of the globe, the ingredients would be different. I might not be able to find the exact same stuff. What I can do is find a similar replacement and stay in the broad categories: sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. There's no need to narrow things down because it's not going to be the same. Things 'somehow' and 'roughly' work out, with the acceptance of incomplete and imperfect. "Interculturalism goes beyond mere coexistence, towards living together in a space of respect, but also of interaction, communication, and genuine exchanges." (Mara et al., 2018, p. 20) In the context of interculturalism, the concept of global citizenship provides a practical approach to bridging these commonalities. Despite the differences in language and appearance, we are all citizens of the earth. Pressuring to understand can take time to persuade, as I find embracing the unfamiliarity too much to ask. If the reluctance is on difference, I would adjust the focus on the similarity. Throughout my bulletpoints, I have relied on the ambiguity of similarities and packed less. But something I overlooked was that, if I were to pack less, I needed to possess less.

### **Chapter 3: Reflection: Between My Lines**

Familiarity was something I can see but cannot have. Hometown, comfort food, security blanket—what ties them three is familiarity. The absence of familiarity led to the absence of unfamiliarity. Creeping into what's close, stability near familiarity, anxiety near unfamiliarity. The confidence in the idea of where I am now and where I will be is the same; it gifted me the quick adaptability and stole the excitement of a new beginning. Security and stability did not have to coexist. Security without stability does happen. There is no liking in particular. What is there to particularly like about colours? The absence of taste lightens the luggage. Attachment leans on desperation. Empty the full, let things go, and leave light. Pouring all my heart and soul into something is exhausting. Identity is the most generous word, inviting any words to its next seat. Having had such consideration, I am still tired of introducing myself and couldn't care less about my identity. The absence of likes and dislikes, the absence of favourites, the absence of passion. Near the passion there is ambition. The absence of familiarity by and by the absence of identity; absence after absence to indifference and insensitivity. The cause and effect so intricate, the give and take disappointingly fair.

Those who doodle between my lines are still readers. Their interpretation belongs to them. Even I do not know how to read between my lines, so there is no explanation or justification ready. I, too, enjoy the subjectivity of interpretation. Joining this programme, author Pearl S. Buck came to mind. She herself is quite an intercultural person. Born in the United States, four-month-old Pearl Sydenstricker Buck moved to China, following her missionary parent. She grew up in Zhenjiang, raised with the help of her Chinese nanny, she was bilingual, speaking English and Chinese. It was later she realised that she is not Chinese but American,

not Asian but Western (The Nobel Prize, n.d.). Pearl Buck used two different languages in two different cultures—this happened a century ago. She might be the start of interculturalism. Her best-selling book, *The Good Earth*, portrays the life of a Chinese peasant, Wang Lung. An American author writes a Chinese setting; I thought this book suits well with the programme. On the last page of *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung, with dried tear stain on his cheek, grasps a handful of soil and mumbles, “Out of the land we came and into it we must go—and if you hold your land, you can live—no one can rob you of land—...If you sell the land, it is the end” (Buck, 2005, p. 385). There are a lot of interpretations on why selling the land would make Wang Lung so furious and what the earth means to him. Above all, I wondered if he was consoled by the warmth of the earth or if he buried the warmth of his hand in the earth. Where was the warmth? “...he held tight in his hand the warm loose earth.” (Buck, 2005, p. 385)

After finishing packing, staring at the empty room where I had just been living, a pointless question arises. Was I here? Of course I know I was here, but still, it’s awkward and unnatural. As mentioned, extremes meet. If I can’t stay anywhere, I can stay everywhere. So I close the door, which I will never open again, to live on, anywhere or everywhere. Holding on to myself because it’s the only thing that’ll last until the end, I locked my warmth in the room and turned my back. Like he buried his warmth in his grasp of earth, I’d like to fill between the record of lines with my very earth.



At the end of my negligence is my exhibition.

### **Artwork: Plant Pot**

I didn't know what to do or where to start, so I thought I might as well go straightforward. Strangely, the more I wanted my record to be simple, the more I wanted to rub it in my face. That's it, straightforwardly—I'll rub it in my face.

I took a good, long look at my record. This is my first time going through the files, typing out the schools one by one. As if I'm creating a piece of insult for my injury, printing it flat didn't seem enough. I go as far as to add a dimension. Using my bare hands, I'll feel the embossment and engraving, filling in between the lines myself with dark, rich soil, so no one reads the blanks, including me.

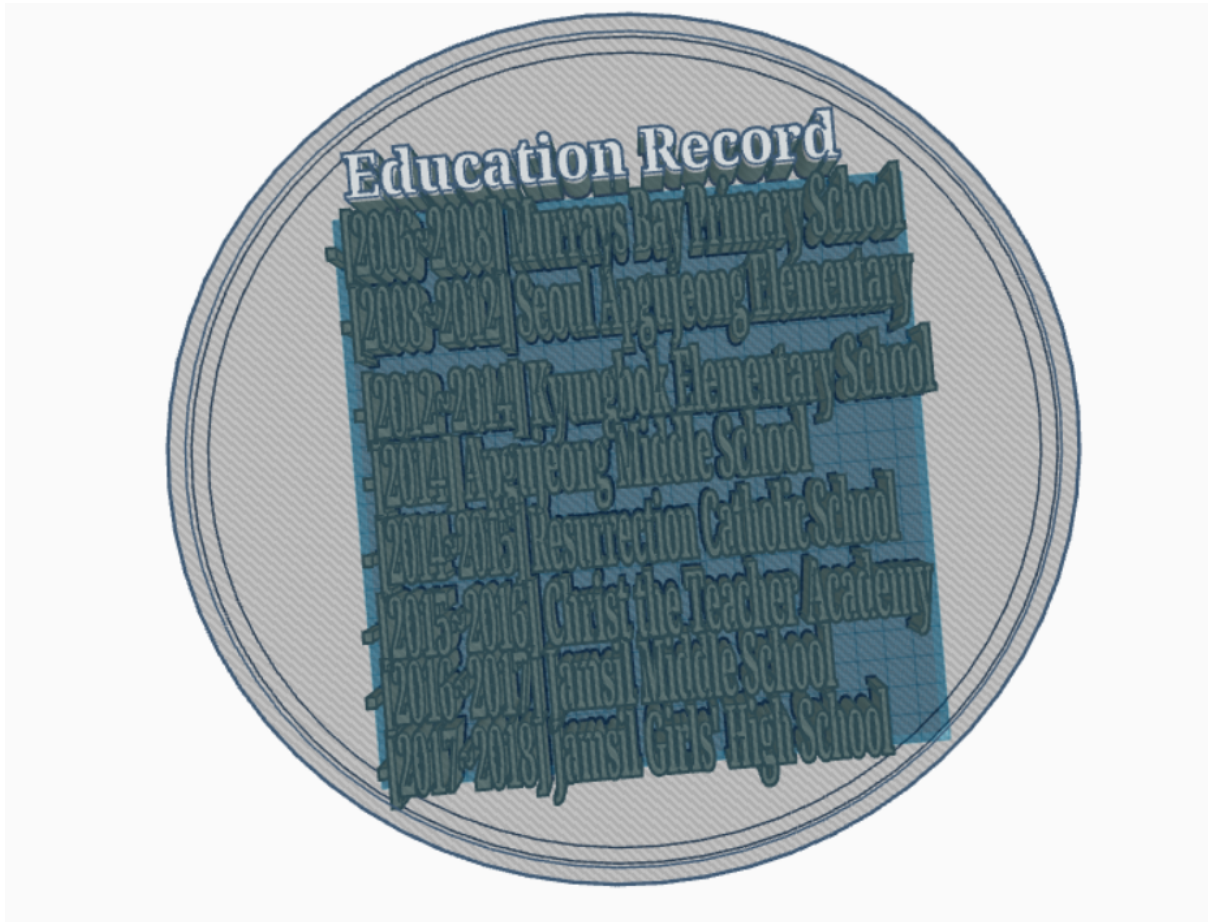
Honestly, how I lived, it's ridiculous. But laugh it off and move on. What else would I do.

<Example of a 3D printed model>

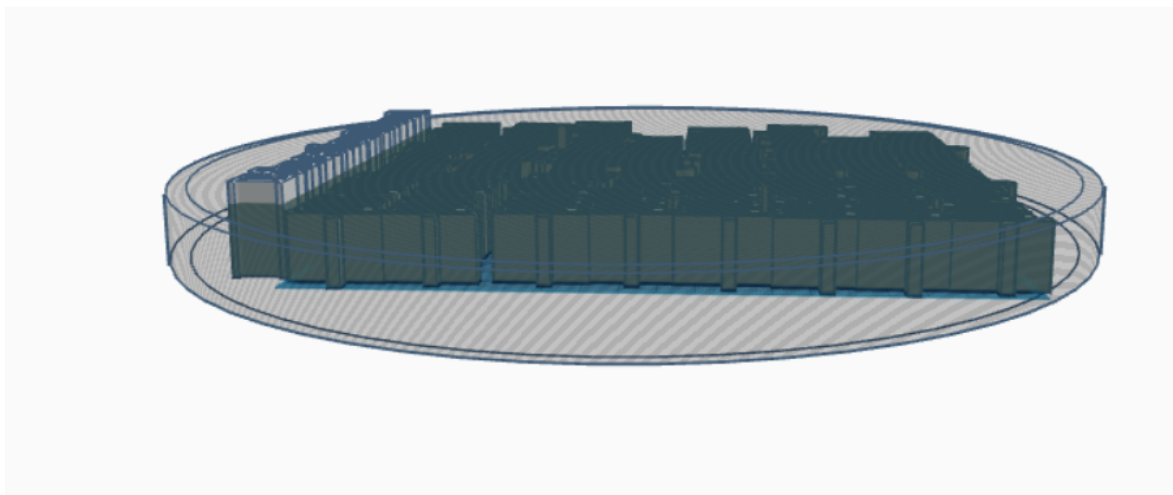


## <3D Print Plan of a Plant Pot>

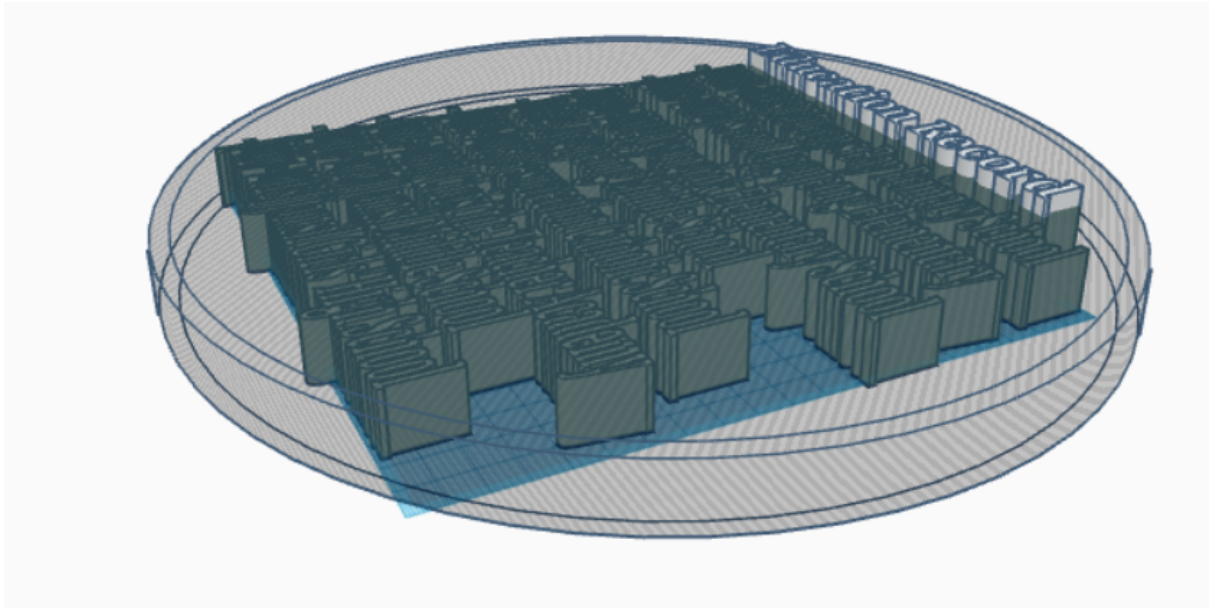
Top View



Front View



Side View



## References

Buck, P. (2005) *The Good Earth (Enriched Classics)*. New York: Pocket Books.

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The Nobel Prize (n.d.) *Pearl Buck – Facts*. Available at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1938/buck/facts/>. (Accessed 18 Aug 2024)