SM2105 Narrative Srtg & Aesthetics
2020 Sem B
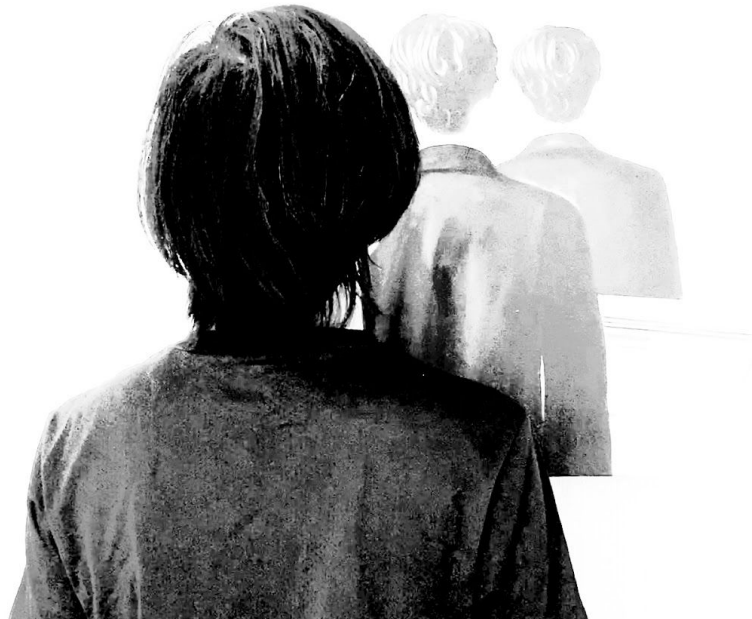Project 3:
Automatism and dream narrative
Hardboiled Wonderland
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The protagonist seeking for a view outside the wall
Work link: https://youtu.be/90-EcIQDu40

Artist's Statement

I am trapped in the subconsciousness surrounded by perfect and impenetrable walls. I need to know what the outside world looks like by following the map. Will the map lead me to consciousness?

Idea

I was reading *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* （世界末日與冷酷異境）by Haruki Murakami. This novel have a parallel narrative, which seems didn't have any relations at the beginning, but echo to each other throughout the story.

The parallel narrative thread are 'Hard-boiled Wonderland' which is a story about the protagonist working in an organization that help firms write their datas into encrypted minds. And 'The End of the World' which the other protagonist getting stuck in a surreal world and need to read ancient dreams inside different animal skulls. It is actually a story about reality and subconsciousness. In reality, the protagonist encrypt datas by writing them into the

subconsciousness. But to decrypt datas, we need the other protagonist in the surreal subconscious to read the datas. It's like an encrypted hard drive in our minds.

I want to focus more in 'The End of the World'. In the story, the protagonist's shadow was 'cut off' and himself was stuck in 'The Town' which was surrounded by perfect and impenetrable walls. There isn't even a crack for you to glimpse the outside world. So the protagonist is drawing a map to try to escape with his shadow. The protagonist's only job is to read data. To him, this surreal world is his reality, and the process of reading data (decrypting) is in conscious. But for the other protagonist in the real world, process of writing data (encrypting) is by automatism. He just need to lay down and let it done.

I am trying to invert the read and write progress. What if I let the protagonist in the subconsciousness to be the initiative one and try to read the reality by automatism? That would be fun.

The other inspiration was from Hai Zi（海子）, a chinese poet which some of his works gave me some surreal like imagination.

Narrative Structure
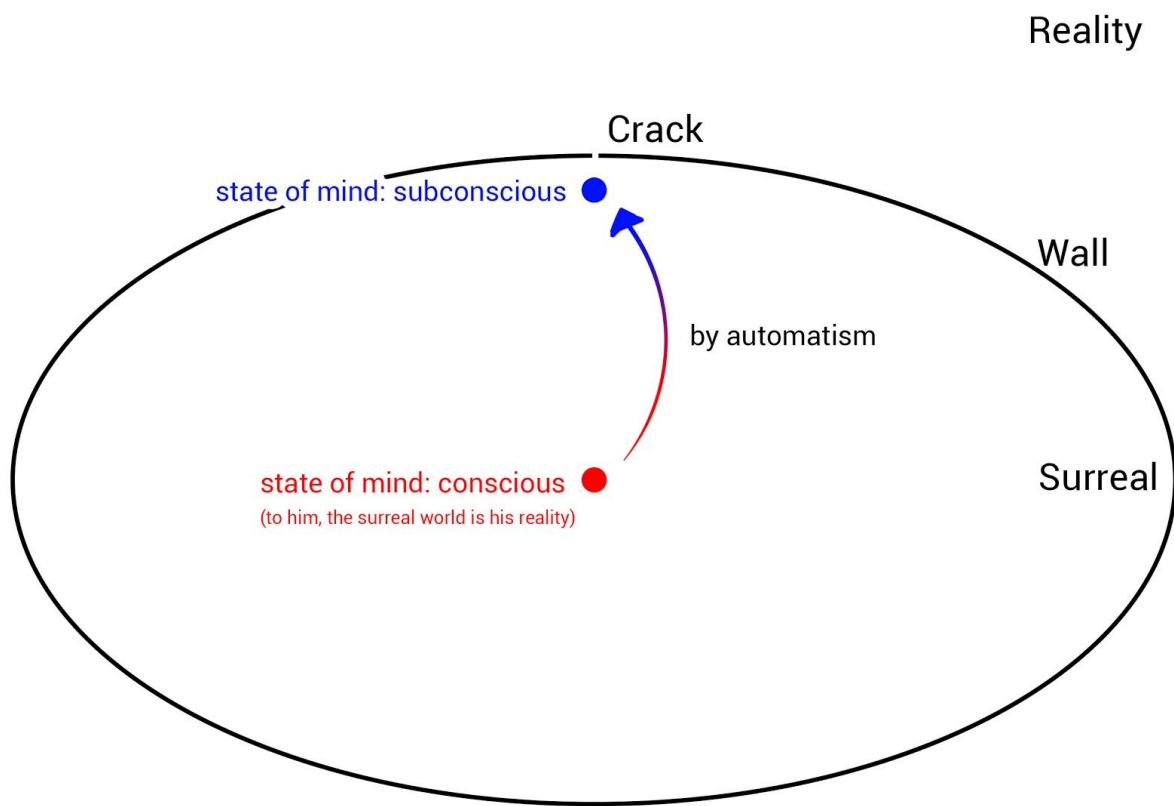
a diagram showing the progress of peeking through the wall

I borrowed the map in the book as a starting point. In my work it is a process of the protagonist which located in subconscious, trying to head towards reality. But in order to get

close to the wall the protagonist state of mind will be from conscious to subconscious by automatism.

The state of mind is shown by moving images, while the sound indicates the distance from reality. As the protagonist move forward, the images will become more abstract but the sound will be more close to reality. But throughout the whole process there will be voice over reading automatism poems － *死亡之詩（之三、採摘葵花）* by Hai Zi（海子）。

Throughout the process to the wall, a man will appear closer and closer through a crack, which would be the image that the protagonist saw when he arrives his destination. And finally seeing the whole image. But of course he will be seeing himself, because he is inside the subconscious of himself.

Method
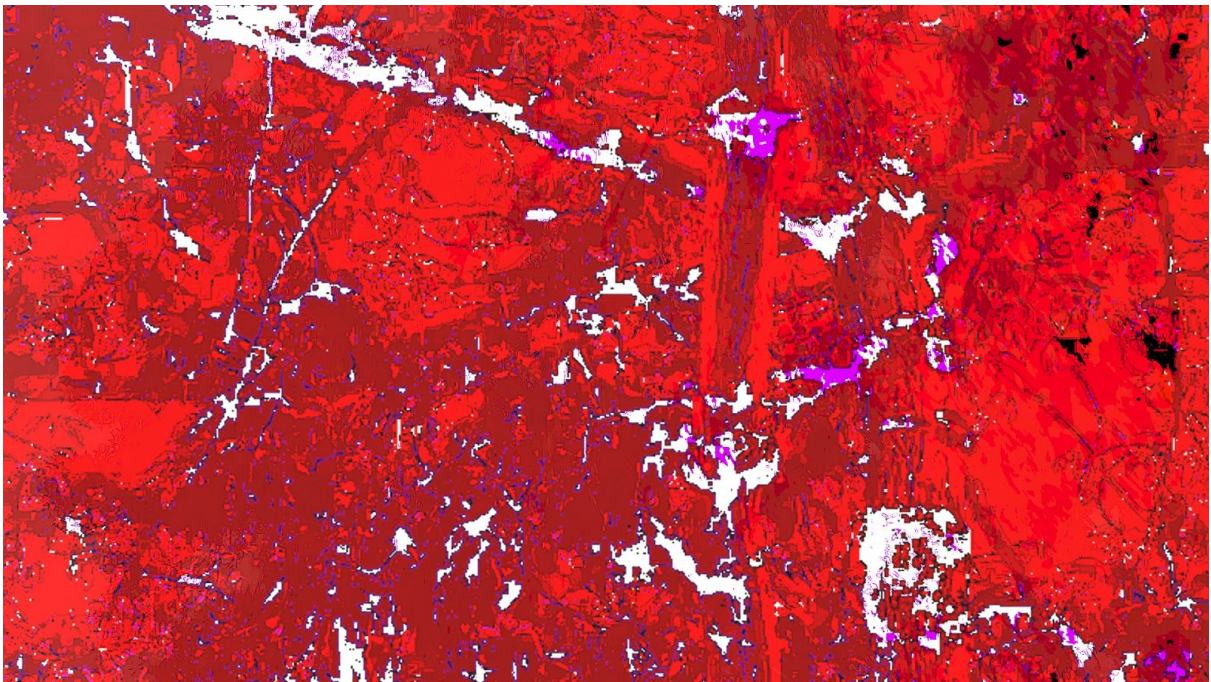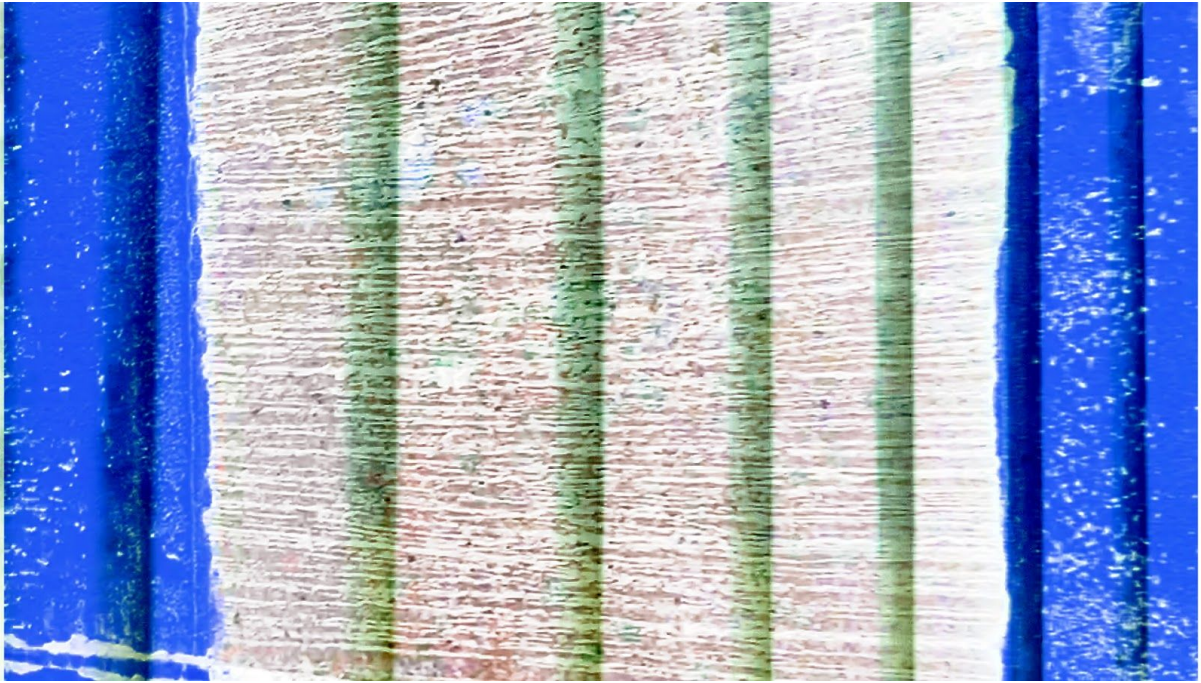
I breakdown the elements and think of it individually. Image and sound are what we received from outside (reality) to inside. However, automatism (or Hai Zi's poem) is from inside (subconscious) to outside.

I found places in real life similar from the fictional map. And let my eyes lead me without thinking, I film things that caught my attention. It's a process of automatism. But however logic must involve in the process of editing, it can be seen as a conscious act to 'read data'.

I add filter and change blending modes to achieve a 'dream like' image. I also use distorted sound effects to create 'dream like' sound.

I also extract the essence of a location on the map. For example 「舊軍營」, Abbandoned Boot Camp, I think the buildings and people living in there will be in order, and are all looking similar with least personal characteristic. So I edit pattern and repeating images in that part. In 「東方森林」, Oriental Woods, I use red as the main color since the last part is about violence and order. I turn cracks and tree clips into this organic pattern.

I remixed the music by Eugenio Caria to fit the rythm of images. And I also displace the original audio from the clips and put it in the right place, to make the machine sound, beating sound and singing bird sound. I played my poem reading soundtrack slower in the first part, then eventually back to normal speed in the end.

Reference

Map from Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World
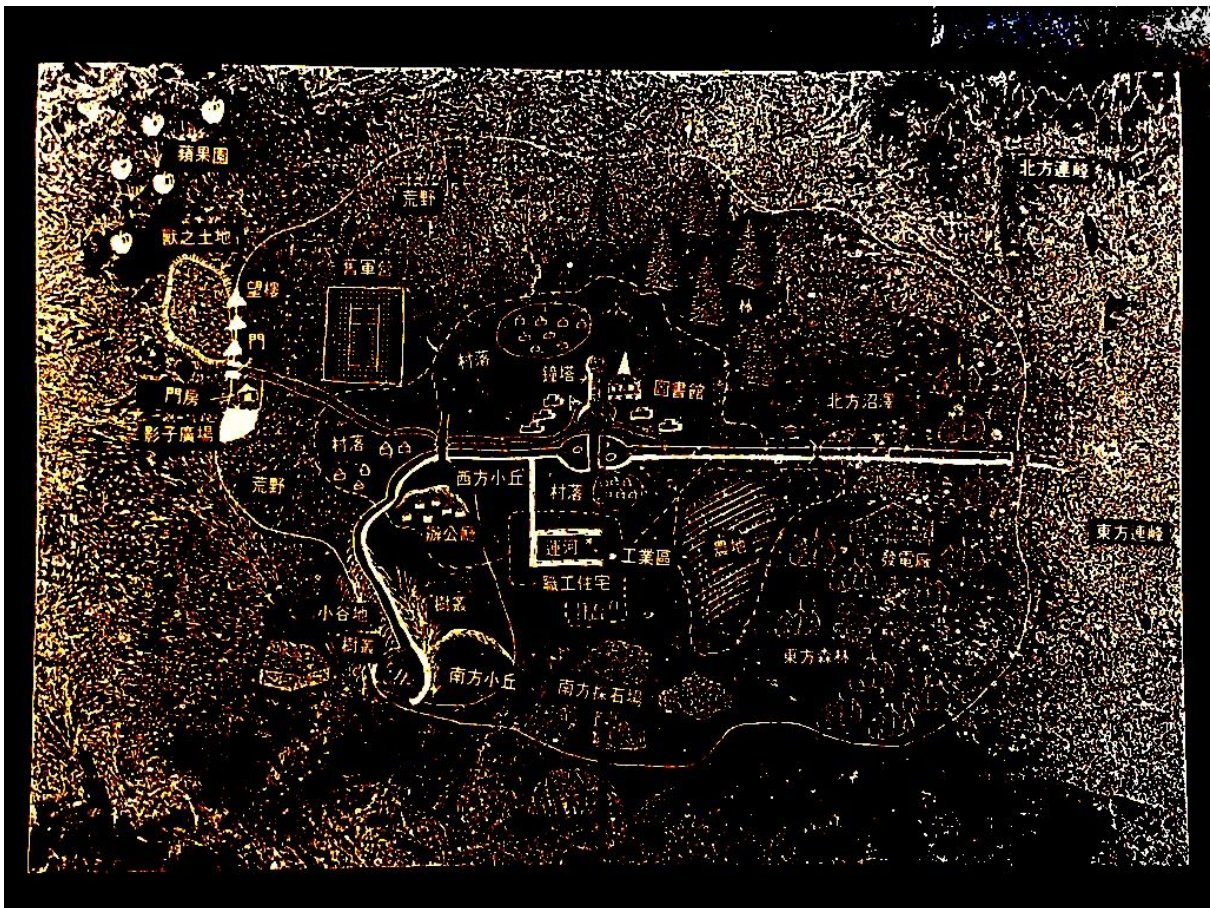
死亡之詩（之三、採摘葵花） by Hai Zi（海子）
雨夜偷牛的人
爬进了我的窗户
在我做梦的身子上
采摘葵花

我仍在沉睡
在我睡梦的身子上
开放了彩色的葵花
那双采摘的手
仍象葵花田中
美丽笨拙的鸭子

雨夜偷牛的人
把我从人类
身体中偷走。
我仍在沉睡。
我被带到身体之外
葵花之外。我是世界上
第一头母牛(死的皇后)
我觉的自己很美
我仍在沉睡。

雨夜偷牛的人
于是非常高兴
自己变成了另外的彩色母牛
在我的身体中
兴高彩烈地奔跑

Muisc: Aesthetic of Surrealism by Eugenio Caria
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bWSp6XKdko