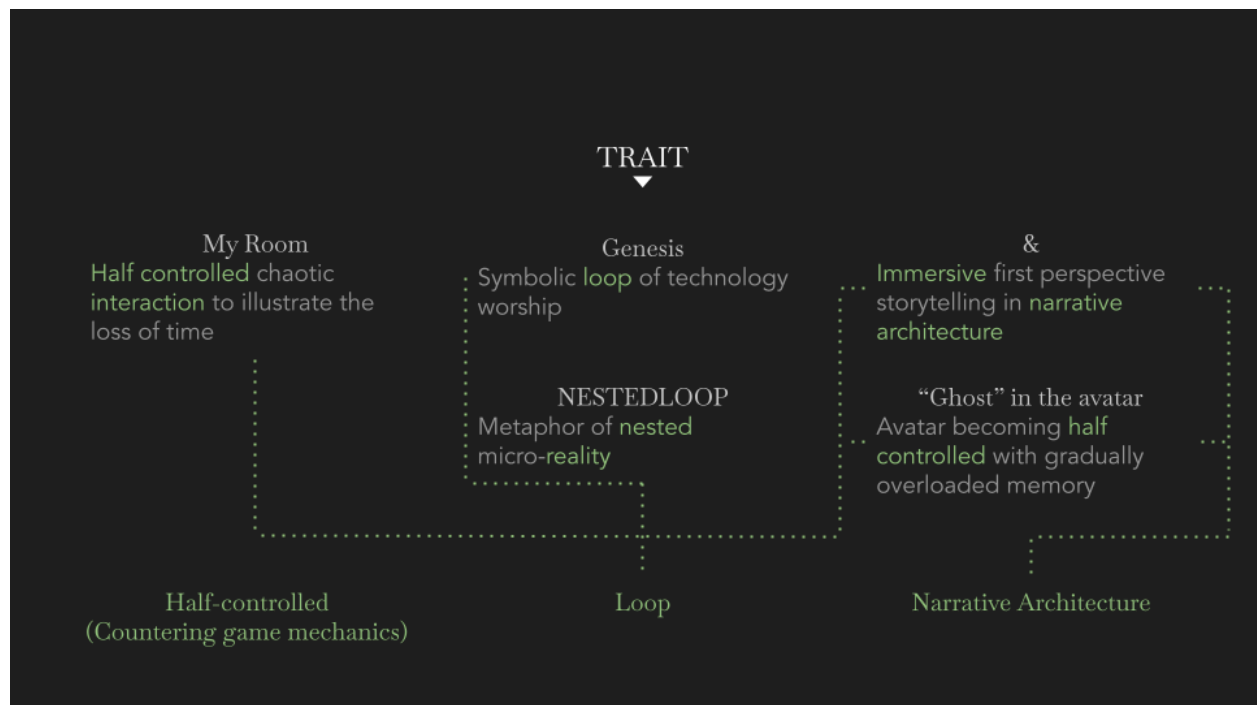# Intro

Subconsciousness is embedded in the habits and routines of yours, this is the same with art pieces. I got into this multi-media area for a year and I looked back at the projects I have been doing. I sorted out the clue of my preferred philosophy theme.


I put together the projects I have done during the past year in ITP and sorted out the shared elements in these projects. In terms of the interaction part of the projects, I have been experimenting with the half-controlled first perspective controller. For the world building part, I got interested in the construction of narrative architecture since the project "&" in Live Image Processing and Performance. While Loop is clearly the characteristic of my video pieces.

I regard myself as a combination of romantic idealist and rational realist, which is a suffering for me. Hypersensitivity is a gift and a curse, for which I suppress my emotions and feelings for a long time and I want to let myself out. I came from the background of design which creates things for people, I came here to create things for myself. All the bipolar characteristics in me are always striking the scale, which comes down to a forever on-going loop. I see patterns in things, projecting from the miniature to the whole image, so I got fascinated by the concept of loop. This is how I perceive the world I am confronting.

Long-suppressed emotions and feelings come out like the lava from the volcano, rationality evaporates. I feel making self-expression pieces like breathing. I exhale by exposing the darkness and bloodiness inside me, I inhale the self-healing. "I am my own medicine". I want to

release the anti-social aspect of me which is not socially allowed to exist into the pieces, to reconcile with every piece of me, a form of my being rebelling against the past of retreating myself to second place after everything. I'm obsessed with psychology and psychiatry, this is also revealed by the Countering game mechanics I have been experimenting with. Instead of catering to human's needs for comfort zone, I prefer to challenge the comfort level.

Initial Ideas
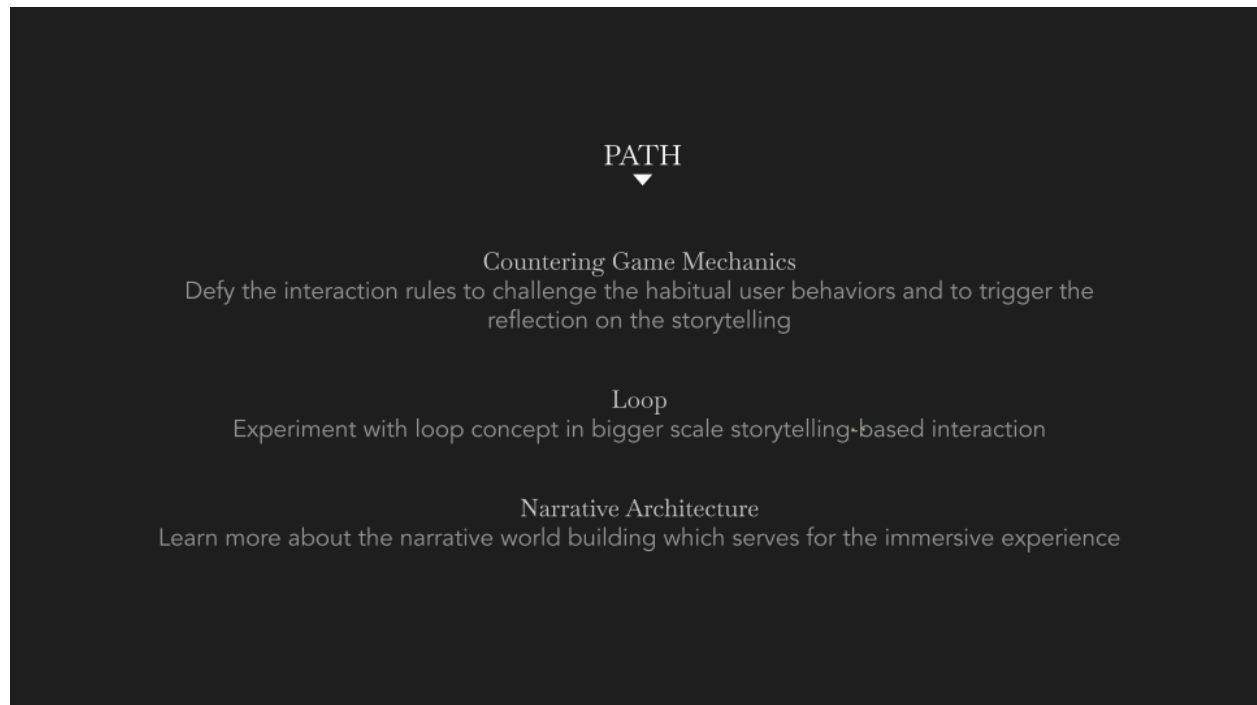
Categorized from the past projects, the fundamental elements I would like to work on in my thesis are as follows.

Counter Gaming Mechanics

Originated from Nouvelle Vague's, 'countercinema' refers to the plethora of genres of movies which stand in opposition to the mainstream formalistic and ideological domination of Hollywood cinema. It means that discursive means and methods are consciously followed, and offers an alternative discourse to mainstream cinema.Media theorist Alexander R. Galloway borrows this concept and calls the described tendencies to rebel against established forms of gaming and its conventions 'counter gaming'. The characteristics of 'countergaming' aesthetics are the 'Transparency versus foregrounding', 'Gameplay versus aestheticism', 'Representational modeling versus visual artifacts', 'Nature physics versus invented physics', 'Interactivity versus noncorrespondence' and 'Gamic action versus radical action'. The latter ones belong to the counter gaming and the characteristics I want to mainly focus on are the followings.

Visual artifacts

Instead of mimetic modeling of objects, I prefer to experiment with the unexpected products of the graphics engine like glitches, which can be achieved by the post-processing effect in game engine to illustrate an abstract environment for storytelling.

Non Correspondence

Rooted in human nature, we always crave for the feedback from the interaction. Noncorrespondence goes against the instant, predictable linkage between controller input and gameplay to challenge the common game experience. Since I'm keen on half-controlled experience, I still want to integrate this gaming mechanics into my thesis project to convey the concept by unexpected outcomes. The point is that even if the output is incompatible with expected input, it's still supposed to be reasonable and serve for the storytelling.

Radical action

When Galloway identified these characteristics in 2006, he emphasised that "We need radical gameplay not just radical graphics". I couldn't assure that I can make much innovation in gameplay mode due to the technical limitations, but I'd love to combine it with the modified gaming mechanics as above.

Loop

I have done loop themes in the experimental films but I haven't tried it in a non-linear narrative experience. Loop is like a mobius ring and the closed system is perfect for linear video. But it can be endless and incomplete for a narrative game which should have an ending. I wonder a balance between closed and open for a more inclusive philosophy of the project.

Narrative architecture

No matter whether or not my outcome format is in VR, the environment building is equally important especially for storytelling. Inspired by the guest talk from Multisensory Storytelling, experience can not be described, the described is plot. I have collected inspiration from my interested area like manga, indie games and so on. I want to design the architecture which can illustrate my artistic philosophy. The challenge is that the spaces I have created up to now are

more like stage scale and I need to figure out the way to sew them into a bigger scale architecture as a whole for the entire story.

Concept Map

Synthetic Architecture: subjective reality, brain filter, hyperspace, symbolic, behavior-determined., psychological, quantum physics
Storytelling: reconciliation, psychedelic, psychiatry, memory, parallel, growth, change, layers, inward, downward
Multisensory: audio-reactive, illusion, simulation, intense, time, space, horror, anxiety, out of breath, sink, drown
Counter Gaming: opposite, misunderstanding, out of control, mess, disorder, chaotic, reversed, expectation, rebel
Loop: morbius ring, dilemma, life, cage, trap, escape, get out

Research List

Here is the list of the inspiring resources for project: [ITP23 Thesis Inpiration List - Persia Wu](#)

Findings and Early Sketches

At this early stage, I am still gathering all the quotes from the research lists and putting them together to find the connections between them. One thing that becomes more clear is the translation between metaphoric structure of "self" and the construction of cinematic architecture. What I am picturing right now is an immersive theater of the ruins representing the collapsed self, like the house of usher. Using the methodology presented in "Montage and Architecture", to specify the storytelling sequence and the cinematic storyboard related to the moving perspective, to integrate the abstract events with the interactions.

Architecture

1. Apply the Temporal Design concept to architecture
"Spaces are not only composed, but also developed from shot to shot so that the final meaning of each shot depends on its context." (Tschumi, 1981, part.4).
Cited from the book of "Montage and Architecture", the advent of the notion of time and a fourth dimension to architecture is a major alteration in the earlier idea of space in both architecture and painting, and this alternation makes a modern work distinguishable from traditional works (Giedion, 1967, chapter.6) The following table, prepared by Lee & Kim, the authors of Reinterpretation of S. Giedion's Conception of Time in Modern Architecture (2008), summarizes Giedion's Explanation of the Space-time concept through four modern projects

(fig. 1-1).

Table 1. Giedion's Explanation of the Space-time Concept, Found in Modern Architecture Written in *Space, Time and Architecture*

Keyword	Building	Giedion's explanation
Simultaneity	Bauhaus -Walter Gropius	The glass curtain flows smoothly around the building, the corners showing no vertical supporting or binding members. There is the hovering, vertical grouping of planes which satisfies our feeling for a relational space, and there is the extensive transparency that permits interior and exterior to be seen simultaneously, en face and en profile, like Picasso's "L'Arlésienne" of 1911-12: variety of levels of reference, or of points of reference, and simultaneity – in short, the concept of space-time. (p.493)
	Villa Savoye – Le Corbusier	Due to the glass walls of the terrace and living room, the occupant can be brought into connection with both the interior and the outdoors. The use of a ramp links different horizontal levels with the interior and exterior spaces. It is impossible to comprehend the Savoye house by a view from a single point; quite literally, it is a construction in space-time. The body of the house has been hollowed out in every direction: from above and below, within and without. A cross section at any point shows inner and outer space penetrating each other inextricably. (p.529)
Movement	Bauhaus – Walter Gropius	These cubes are juxtaposed and interrelated. Indeed, they interpenetrate each other so subtly and intimately that the boundaries of the various volumes cannot be sharply picked out. The views from the air show how thoroughly each is blended into a unified composition. The eye cannot sum up this complex from one position; it is necessary to go around it on all sides, to see it from above as well as from below. This represents a new dimension for the artistic imagination, an unprecedented many-sidedness. The Bauhaus was the only large building of its time that was so complete a crystallization of the new space conception. (p.497)
	I.I.T – Mies van der Rohe	The twenty-four buildings stand in a rectilinear relationship to one another. At the same time, they are so disposed that an all-embracing space is created, though not visible at one glance – a space that can only be slowly perceived by including the dimension of time; that is, by movement. (p.603)

(Fig. 1-1). Giedion Space-time concept. Source: Lee, Y., & Kim, S. (2008). Reinterpretation of S. Giedion's conception of time in modern architecture-Based on his book, Space, Time, and Architecture. Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering, page: 18.

2. Take the subjective virtual existence in the space into consideration

"Perceptual time", time perceived on the human scale, depends on the movements of the eye and body through space. According to Pallasmaa (2001), film and architecture have similar elements of Time and Space. "time as an indispensable element in every work of architecture is based on movement" (Apollinaire & Read, 2004, part one: on painting). Seeing architecture as a sequence of images and the importance of the perception of architecture while moving through it has been noticed by Eisenstein, Le Corbusier, and Gertrude Stein, among others. In a film, these pieces are the shots. Their equivalent in architecture, which can be called paths, spatial shots, or episodes, are the type of movement Le Corbusier is talking about as a promenade, and according to him,should not be complicated but well designed.
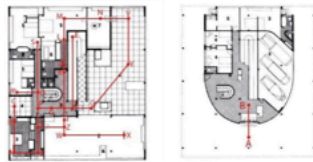
The method for designing a narrative architecture

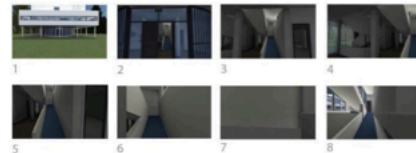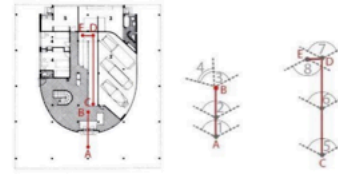1- *Drawing the main circulation pattern on each floor* (Fig.2-5).

2- *Defining destinations and turning points on the plan:* Destinations are the center of each activity or program. Thus the heart of each space allocated to an individual program can be considered as a destination. Turning points are spots where a path breaks and a rotation or change of view happens. Figure 2-5 illustrates the destinations and turning points.

3- *Recognizing episodes:* Each piece of the path is called 'an episode', and is the equivalent of a cinematic 'shot'. The spectator experiences episode A-B through moving from Destination A to Destination B (Fig.2-6).

4- *Drawing the views:* The perspectives are extracted from walkthrough videos of the project I am looking at the shreds of evidence showing that the architect has carefully designed the sequence of these perspectives from the view point of the reader of the space. Figure 2-7 illustrates the details of the view analysis (Fig.2-8).

**(Fig.2-6). Perspective analysis of the first floor.** Source: Author. The base plan drawing is adopted from: http://insideinside.org/bathroom-villa-savoye-82-rue-de-villiers-78300-poissy-france/. The sequence of photos are adopted from a walkthrough video of the Villa Savoye, retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SYxdWR-M0k.

(Fig.2-4). Circulation pattern on the second floor. Right. (Fig.2-5). Episode A-B. Source: Author. The base plan drawing is adopted from: http://insideinside.org/bathroom-villa-savoye-82-rue-de-villiers-78300-poissy-france/.
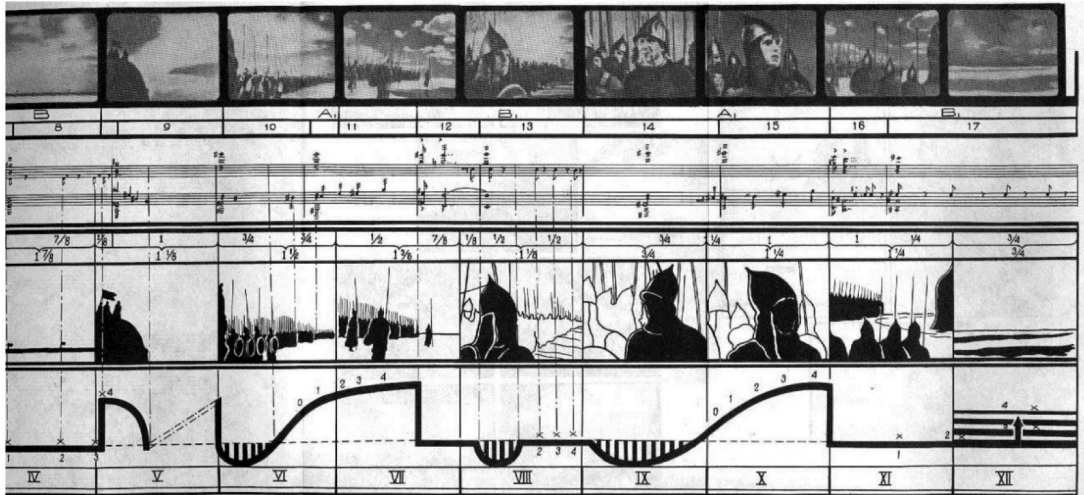
26   27

3. Translate the rhythm and pace of storytelling into architecture

There are several ways in which cinematic montage can influence the architecture. First is to consider the triple of event-movement-space as the main concept and deal with each of layers separately.
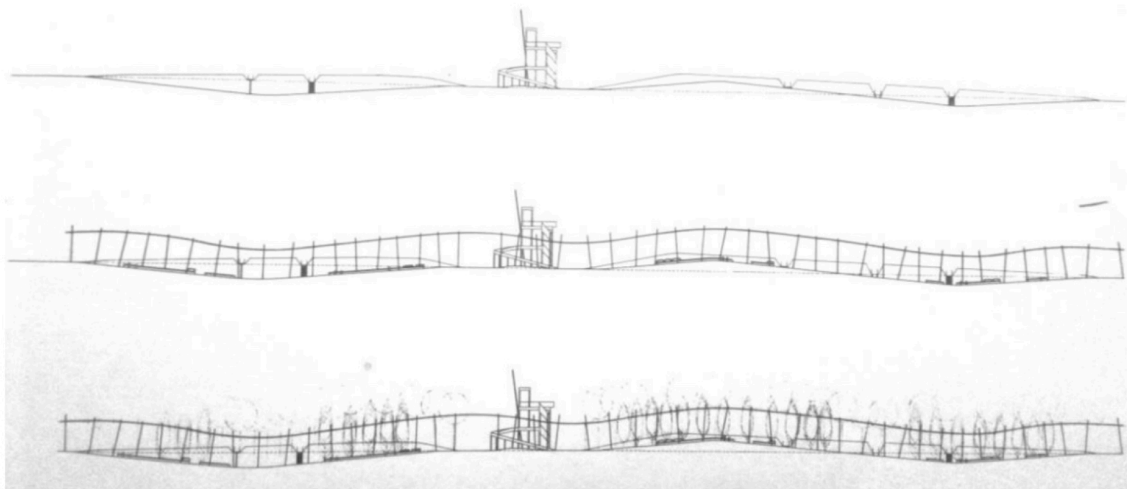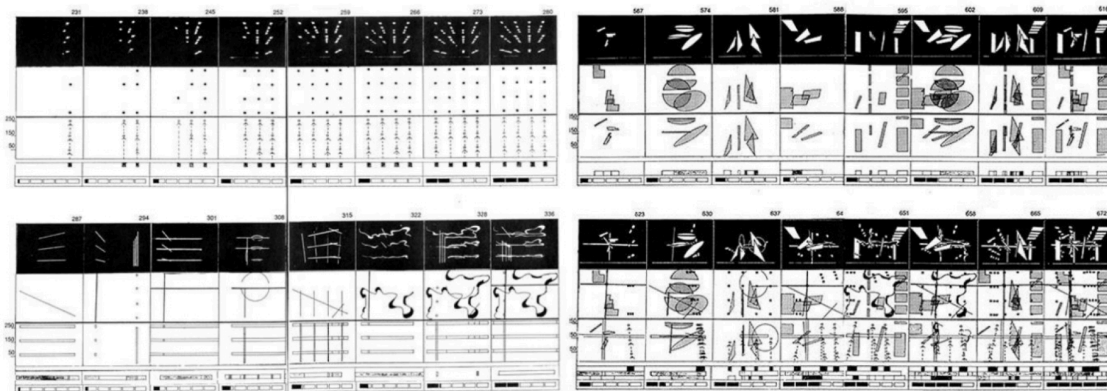

(Fig.2-12). Rhythms: simultaneity of frames, lighting strip and promenade planting. Source: Tschumi, B. (1987). *Cinegram folie: le Parc de la Villette*. Princeton Architectural Press. Page: 23

Second is to be used as a language of architectural presentation completely obeying the form and organization of the tables filmmakers use for developing the visual narratives and film editing.

(Fig.2-15). Sergie Eisenstein, diagrams for Battleship Potemkin. Retrieved from: http://socks-studio.com/2011/04/21/sergei-eisenstein-sequences-diagrams-for-alexander-nevsky-and-battleship-potemkin/.

(Fig.2-14). Firework design diagrams for Park De La Villette, Bernard Tschumi. Retrieved from: https://arch206eventspace.wordpress.com/.

4. Existential form as a philosophy metaphor
From "The library of Babel" by Borges, he illustrated a metaphoric infinite architecture depicting "life". He also visualizes the parallel timelines as the garden of branching paths.

Psychology

For the inspiration for this self-exploration piece, I reached out to the self identity related theory in many subjects. Although referring to more possible theories doesn't guarantee the concrete answer, they not only show me more perspectives to look at the phenomenon but also lead me to see the universal patterns underneath. Therefore I want to seek the possibility to deconstruct the specific events into the abstract patterns they all share.

1. "Self" consists of complicated layers
From Freud's theory, he used to divide personality into consciousness, pre consciousness and unconsciousness, then he stated that personality consists of id, ego and superego. Under this context, id refers to the instinct, ego represents intelligence and rationality while superego stands for the surveillance over the former two according to the social ethics.
From American psychologist William James, "We are not just one thing to others or even to ourselves." We present many faces: the material self, which includes everything I consider as me or mine; The social self, which depends on my interactions with others ("a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind"); And the spiritual self ("a man's inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions"). Furthermore, MBTI personality theory can also be compared to these models since one can have multiple social personalities confronting different kinds of situations.
These remind me of a compatible visual metaphor, the manga "Horror Layers" by Junji Ito where the protagonist grows one more layer year after year.
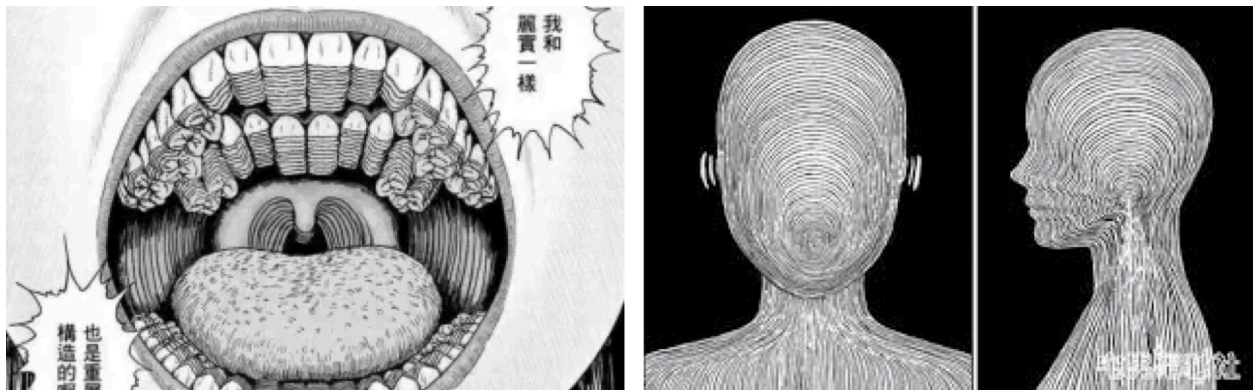
2. The narrative construct of "Self"
"The Man who wasn't there" listed multiple kinds of mental disorders related to sense of self like cotard's syndrome, depersonalization. The search for the self is also well served by thinking of it in terms of two categories: the "self-as-object" and the "self-as-subject." "Answering such questions requires us to return to what philosophers, scientists, and social scientists think the self is. Some argue that the self is fundamentally a narrative construct. It's true that one of the key aspects of the self is the narrative—the story or stories we tell others and indeed ourselves about who we are; these stories depend on remembering and imagining. "Individuals construct private and personal stories linking diverse events of their lives into unified and understandable wholes. These are stories about the self. They are the basis of personal identity and

self-understanding and they provide answers to the question 'Who am I?'" wrote psychologist Donald Polkinghorne."

I also got inspired by the movie "Pastoral.To.Die.In.The.Country". The protagonist traces back his childhood in the nested movie and confronts the younger self, which intertwines parallel memory and constructs an unreal mixed reality. It also reminds me of the psychological healing where you regard your past in the third perspective to get rid of the trauma from the past.

Philosophy

1. The three-dimensional visualization of Hyperspace can be an analogy
Under the theoretical context of Hyperspace, time and space are parallel dimensions existing at the same time. Technically it is not supposed to be visualize in three-dimensional way, but refer to the spatial visualization in the movie Interstellar and The Garden of branching paths, when the whole architecture acts as a metaphor of layers of self, the stories involving the virtual incarnation can represent the coexisting timelines as well.
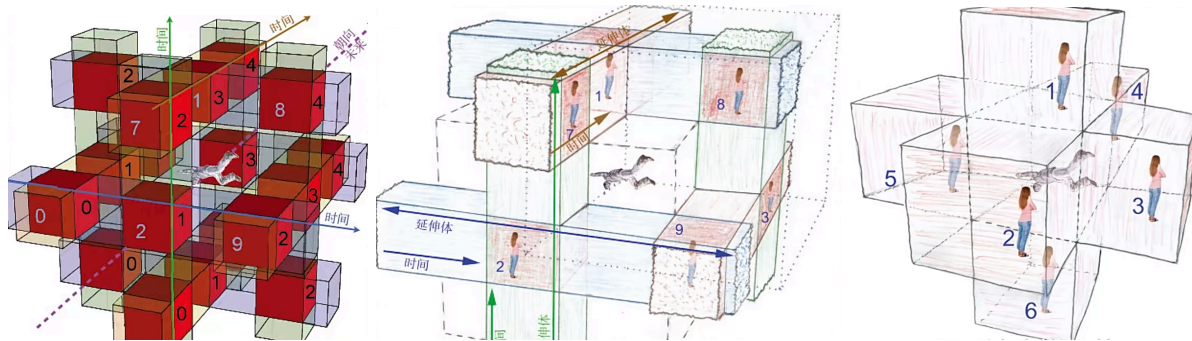
2. The coexistence of relativity and polarity are a shared pattern in many perspectives
In Taoism, this cosmology is uniquely devoid of symbolic deities, focusing instead on energetic and elemental principles. Taoist cosmology is cyclic—the universe is seen as being in a constant process of recreating itself. Evolution and 'extremes meet' are the main characters. In this spirit, the universe is seen as being in a constant process of recreating itself, as everything that exists is a mere aspect of qi, which "condensed, becomes life; diluted, it is indefinite potential". Qi is in a perpetual transformation between its condensed and diluted state. These two different states of qi, on the other hand, are embodiments of the abstract entities of yin and yang, two complementary extremes that constantly play against and with each other and one cannot exist without the other. Human beings are seen as a microcosm of the universe, as a consequence, it is believed that a deeper understanding of the universe can be achieved by understanding oneself.

In Quantum superposition, it states that every quantum state can be represented as a sum of two or more other distinct states, which is also similar to the coexisting balance between yin and yang. "Life breeds both plenitude and boid, exuberance and depression" cited from "On the Heights of Despair". The coexistence of polarity is a shared pattern in diverse areas.

3. The relationship between conscious initiative and phenomenon
In ancient Taoist texts, wu-wei is associated with water through its yielding nature. Taoist philosophy, in accordance with the I Ching, proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts their will against the world in a manner that is

out of rhythm with the cycles of change, they may disrupt that harmony and unintended consequences may more likely result rather than the willed outcome. Taoism does not identify one's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that one must place their will in harmony with the natural universe. Thus, a potentially harmful interference may be avoided, and in this way, goals can be achieved effortlessly. "By wu-wei, the sage seeks to come into harmony with the great Tao, which itself accomplishes by nonaction."

This reminds me of one episode from "Alice on the borderland" where the destination is actually the starting point but the players tend to believe they must do something to achieve the goal. This is also compared to the Counter gaming mechanics which goes against the player's expectation of output. Therefore, I reserve this point to be undecided game philosophy I want to figure out.

Medium

A nested multi-layer architecture can be a great metaphor for both "self" and natural philosophy. Since I want to deconstruct the etiology of the chain-effects between life events into a level of philosophy, the metaphor brought by this architectural structure can be a good bridge. The integration of virtual technology empowers more possibilities for the spatial experience of walking simulators and immersive theater. When the breakdown of the fourth wall is enabled in a virtual gaming medium, the interactive mechanics can be embedded in the theatrical space design to involve the audience into the stage.

Form: Visualization/mockup/prototype

I used my former experiments on narrative architecture to illustrate my idea. I will focus on the atmosphere brought by lighting and shadow.
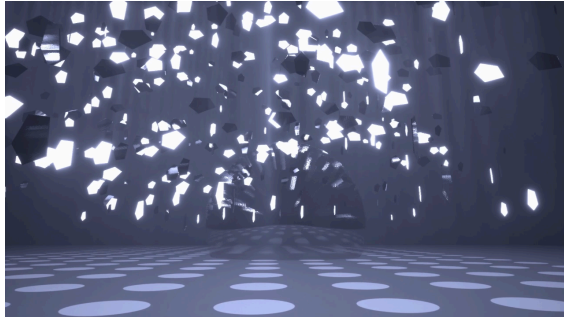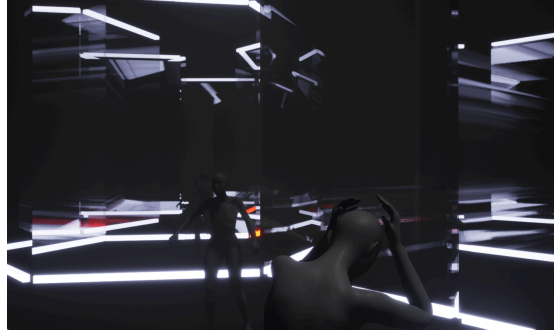
Plan for the spring

Since I have several inspiring classes next semester, I want to keep an open mind for the possible final format. Before the kick off of spring semester, I want to sort out the topics for the storytelling and have a draft plan for the architecture structure, then modify it along with the class of Synthetic Architecture. For the theatrical stage part, I plan to use mocap to record some emotional animations to rig the virtual avatar.

Reference

1. "Opening the doors of perception, the key to cosmic awareness", Anthony Peake
2. "The labyrinth of time, the illusion of past, present and future", Anthony Peake
3. "The psychedelic experience" a manual based on THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner & Richard Alpert
4. "Consciousness beyond life, the science of the Near-Death Experience", Pim van Lommel.M.D
5. "Genius or Psychotic", Gao Ming
6. "Burning your Boats", Angela Carter
7. "The garden of forking paths", Borges
8. Radical Gaming
9. "Montage and Architecture, a method for temporal design", Niloufar Kioumarsi

ITP23 Thesis Inpiration List - Persia Wu