



Article

[dis]Connected 00:06:05 | Towards a cyberpunk architecture

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Abstract

This article investigates the ways in which cyberspace inspired speculative architecture in recent decades. It focuses particularly on the characteristics and spatial potential of cyberspaces in Science Fiction literature, films and architecture. This article presents a short SF narrative developed from an award-winning short film, *Hyper-Place*, which the author created in 2009. Inspired by the notions of the Baudrillardian worldview, the film shares-Masamune (1989), Mamoru (1995, 2001), and Wachowski's (1999–2003) visions for cogno-technology in a cyberpunk context, especially uploaded consciousness, and it examines the spatial characteristics and potential for cyberspace. The architecture of this short cyberpunk narrative is 365 seconds and infinitely looped. The text takes an experimental position to represent multiple consciousnesses, and dual languages (English/Korean) to voice the multi-consciousnesses of the Green Brick Room. The Korean text takes the form of 'Coding Script' to represent a 'background system log'. As the narrative has a cyclical structure, it starts again after one of its loops. Thus, like cyberspace, the text's potential signification(s) remain open-ended.

Keywords

narrative architecture; science fiction; cyberpunk; cyberspace; metaverse; posthuman.

Introduction

Next year it will be exactly three decades since Hiro Protagonist, the last of the freelance hackers, the greatest sword fighter in the world, a stringer at the Central Intelligence Corporation, and a specialist in software-related intel (music, movies & microcode) created *Metaverse* (Stephenson, 1992). It has also been nearly 30 years since the first international discussion on architects in cyberspace (Pearce and Spiller, 1995).¹ Gibson and Stephenson's cyberpunk visions on cognitive and informa-

tion technologies immensely inspired the early digital pioneers in architecture. The digital revolution has enforced the paradigm shift of the conventional conception of architecture in recent decades, and architects are "now able to look back and recognise the architectural potential and spatial structures of cyberspace" (Spiller, 2002, p.151).² Metaverse, avatar, virtual reality, augmented reality, and extended reality; 21st century architecture cannot be departed from these new virtual territories. The virtual and physical boundary becomes blurred through the virtual augmentation within actual

1 - Also, see Spiller, N. (2020). *Cyberspace: Speculative Futures of the Recent Past*. *Architectural Design*, 90(3), p.130, Chichester. John Wiley and Sons.

2 - Spiller, N. (2002) *Cyber_Reader: Critical writings for the digital era*, London: Phaidon Press

physical spaces or vice versa.

One of the significant aspects of cyberpunk is cognitive science/technology—the brain as a computer. In Gibson's early cyberpunk-posthuman visions such as *Johnny Mnemonic* (1981), *Burning Chrome* (1982), and his *Sprawl Trilogy* (1984–1988), he depicted cyberspace as an infinite grid-space where artificial intelligence and human consciousness can be uploaded to the vast virtual-network infrastructure, to communicate with each other. In *Ghost in the Shell* (1989), Masamune speculated that human augmentation via the 'Cyberbrain' could enable human consciousness to directly 'dive' to the network/cyberspace. Mamoru animated Masamune's vision in 1995 that influenced Wachowski's *Matrix trilogy* (1999–2003). Wachowski visualised a simulated utopia and the characteristics of cyberspace. Cronenberg's *eXistenZ* (1999) and Mamoru's *Avalon* (2001) touched upon the ideas around gamification and uploaded consciousness in cyberspace and examined the spatial structure of the virtual realm. These iconic cyberpunk masterpieces served as the epitome of Simulacra and Simulation (Baudrillard, 1981) and the spatial potentials of cyberspace.³ As cyberspace is utterly free from physical conditions, its spatial structure is inevitably surreal. Similar to Escher's *Relativity* (1956), *Ascending and Descending* (1960), and Chyr's *Manifold Garden* (2019), cyberspace has distinctive uncanny attributes. Multiple spaces, times, and events can be simultaneously set within the same topological location. Each space can be directly connected, much like the hypertext structure. They can be infinitely duplicated, repeated, animated, regenerated, and overlapped.

The short SF narrative in this article is developed from a short film, *Hyper-Place*, that the author created in 2009.⁴

3 - Other films that share similar spatial ideas are Nolan's *Inception* (2010), Kosinski's *Tron: Legacy* (2010), Pfister's *Transcendence* (2014). These films are not referred to in the main body of this paper as they were released after the author's film (Park, 2009).

4 - The author's film can be accessed via <http://unitfifteen-archive.com/2008-2009-The-Bartlett-UCL/Hyper-place-Hyun-Jun-Park>.

The film was showcased and awarded Silver Medal in the 1st Seoul International Architecture Film Festival (SIAFF 2009). Inspired by the notions of the Baudrillardian worldview, the film shares Masamune, Mamoru, and Wachowski's vision for cogno-technology in a cyberpunk context—such as uploaded consciousness, and it also examines the spatial characteristics and potential for cyberspace. In doing so, *Hyper-Place* exhibits a similar spatial structure to *eXistenZ* (Cronenberg, 1999) and *Avalon* (Mamoru, 2001) explained as above. The narrative of the film depicts a story of a man whose fragmented consciousnesses remained and somehow decayed in a virtual system. Each fragmented consciousness is situated in four distinctive spaces, Greyscale Brick Room, Green Brick Room, London (psychogeographic), and The Cathedral. Each splinter is able to perceive each other simultaneously through TV screens. Each space, time, and event projected on the screens are the other space/consciousness' past, present, or future. The role of London in the film is critical as it reveals the spatial structure of the film. London is a transitional space that is directly connected to Greyscale Brick Room, Green Brick Room and The Cathedral. The camera passes through the rose window of the Green Brick Room and enters London's Southwark area, then subsequently rotates 360 degrees and goes back to the same rose window that it came through. When the camera arrives at the same location, it reveals the Cathedral rather than the Green Brick Room as these three spaces simultaneously exist at the exact topological coordinates. London is spatially distorted like Debord's *The Naked City* (1957); Westminster is located to the east of Canary Wharf. The infinite Babel is situated in the Southwark area, and the viewers can refer to the location of St. Paul Cathedral. Moreover, the materiality of each space, such as greyscale brick walls and green brick walls, is deliberately distorted/manipulated.

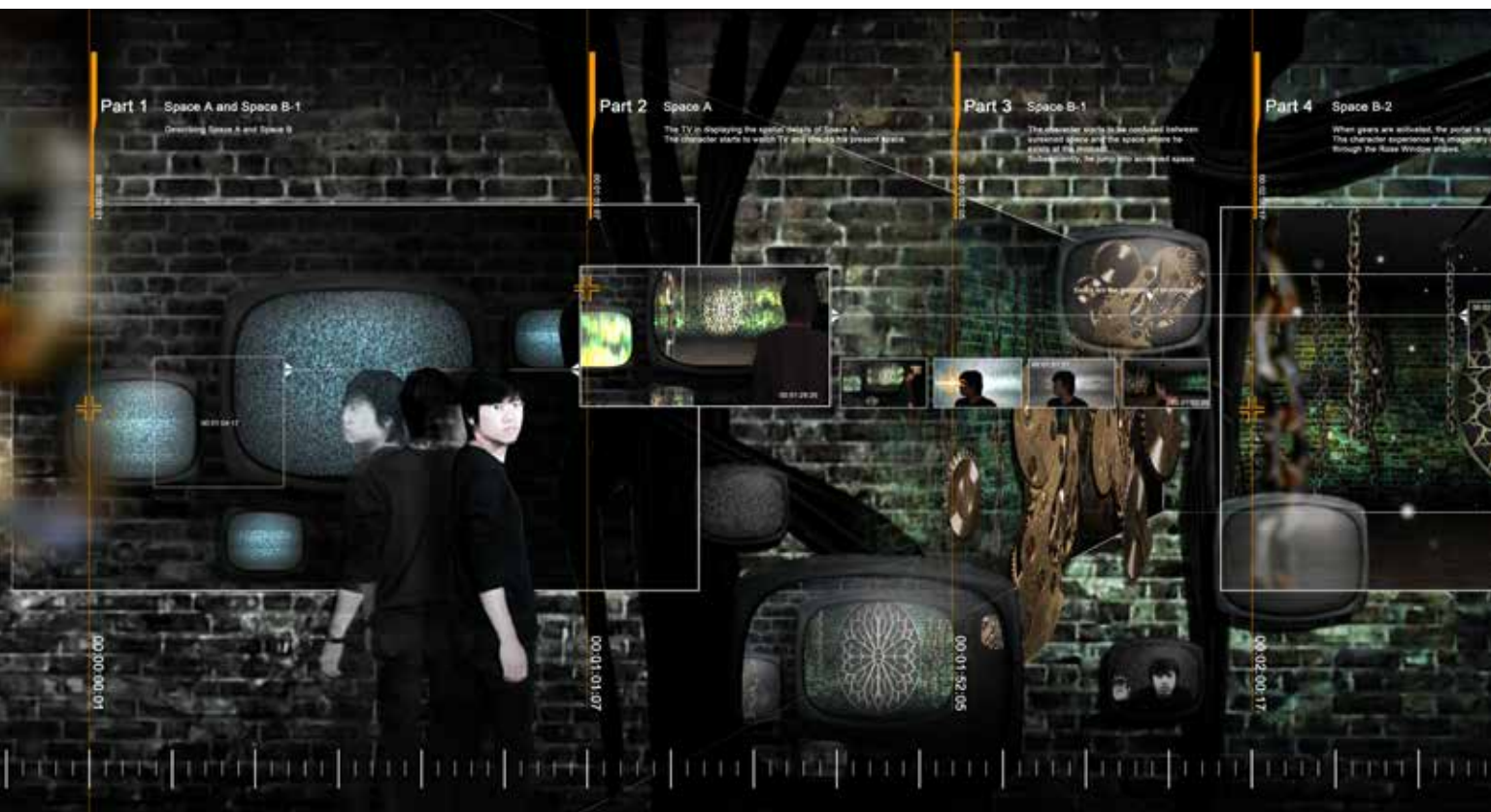


Figure 1. Post-production Chronogram⁵

The architecture of this short cyberpunk narrative exists for 365 seconds, it is infinitely looped. The text takes an experimental position to represent multiple consciousnesses, and the dual languages (English/Korean) voice the multi-consciousnesses of Green Brick Room. The Korean text takes the form of a 'Coding Script' to represent a 'background system log'. As the narrative has a continuous structure, it starts again after one of its

loops. Thus, like cyberspace, the text's potential signification(s) remain open-ended/repeated. The story begins with its timeline at 00:00:00. It will resume with its timeline at 00:00:00.⁶

5 - A time-based drawing that explains narrative, relations between architectural space, and the movement, angle, and sequence of the camera. See Clear, N. (2013) 'Drawing Time', in Spiller, N. (ed), *Drawing Architecture in Architectural Design*, 83(5), p.76–79, Chichester. John Wiley and Sons.)

6 - The author have been working with Professor Nic Clear, under the name of Clear + Park since 2015. In December 2020, Clear + Park guest-edited a special issue for AIS, 1(2), *Narrative Architecture*. The featured articles focused on a series of advanced architect/academic projects driven by speculative narratives. Clear + Park defined 'Narrative Architecture' as a specific genre/research methodology for visionary architecture (Clear and Park, 2020). Specifically, Science Fiction is a critical driver to develop Clear + Park's projects. Clear + Park is specialised in the use of film, digital animation, moving images and 3D scanning to generate, develop and represent architectural thoughts.



[dis]Connected 00:06:05

"... My own upbringing, my education and medical practice, my courtship of Margaret and our happy marriage, all occurred within the generous rectangle of the television screen. ... On television I was never alone. In my nursery I played hours of happy games with my parents, who watched me from the comfort of their homes, feeding on to my screen... In fact, at this time I had no idea where Margaret lived, whether she was five miles away from me or five hundred. ..."

*Intensive Care Unit, J.G Ballard (1977)*⁷

7 - Ballard, J.G. (1977) The Intensive Care Unit in The Complete Short Stories: Volume 2 (2006), 442-451. London: HarperCollins Publishers

00:00:00

*I hear the noises of an old machine.
I cannot find where it is coming from.*

Greyscale Brick Room 1 'TV was activated again.'

I cannot remember how long I have been awake. I am looking around, closely observing this room. Somehow, all of the materials are decolourised. I inhabit a thoroughly greyscale space. Almost everything is in greyscale sans a series of moving images screened through televisions. It seems that somebody or something has manipulated the materiality of this space; A simple square room. There are four televisions on one side of the wall. Various size TVs. Each screen shows different angles of



Figure 2. The machine

a certain space. I recognise the grotesque environment over the screens.⁸

Greyscale Brick Room 2

'The room was encircled by green brick walls.'

The screen shows a green room that has a machine located on one of the walls. It looks quite old. However, it is hard to tell its exact age. The extent of decay on the gears gives me a hint of a long life. It also looks quite big as it covers most of the wall. The gears are rapidly rotat-

ing, yet its operational output remains unknown. Come to think of it, the intermittent noises are coming from the machine⁹.

I do not know the designer's intention, but the rusted chains suspended from the ceiling make me feel uncomfortable. Ironically, I find a distorted beauty in the harmony of the green brick with the rusty chains. Through their presence, I can measure the depth of the room. At a rough guess, the scale and shape of the room seem to mirror the room in which I stand. An idea flashes into my mind. What if I painted this room green, would it look similar to the room on the other side of the screen? This room and the other room are filled with distorted materiality. It looks like a cheap video game environment created by a clumsy game designer. Just to be sure, I recheck this room. There are only greyscale bricks. How uncanny.

8 - Since John Logie Baird broadcasted some of his first experimental television broadcastse through BBC frequencies in 1929 (BBC, 2013), TV has become a part of daily life. The main function of TV, which receives radio signals of video information remotely, is no longer advanced technology. When we watch a TV programme, we imagine the space over the screens based on the individual experiences of particular or similar space. In this experiment, TV is a symbolic installation to reveal the viewer's perception of technologies. The author used 1980s TV design to emphasise the broadcasting-receiving-screening mechanism. Moreover, they are a metaphor of the direct connection in-between different spaces and time like the spatial structure of a hyper-text.

9 - The machine, consisted of a bunch of gear sets here, is used as a metaphor of the system that operate the cyberspace of this project.

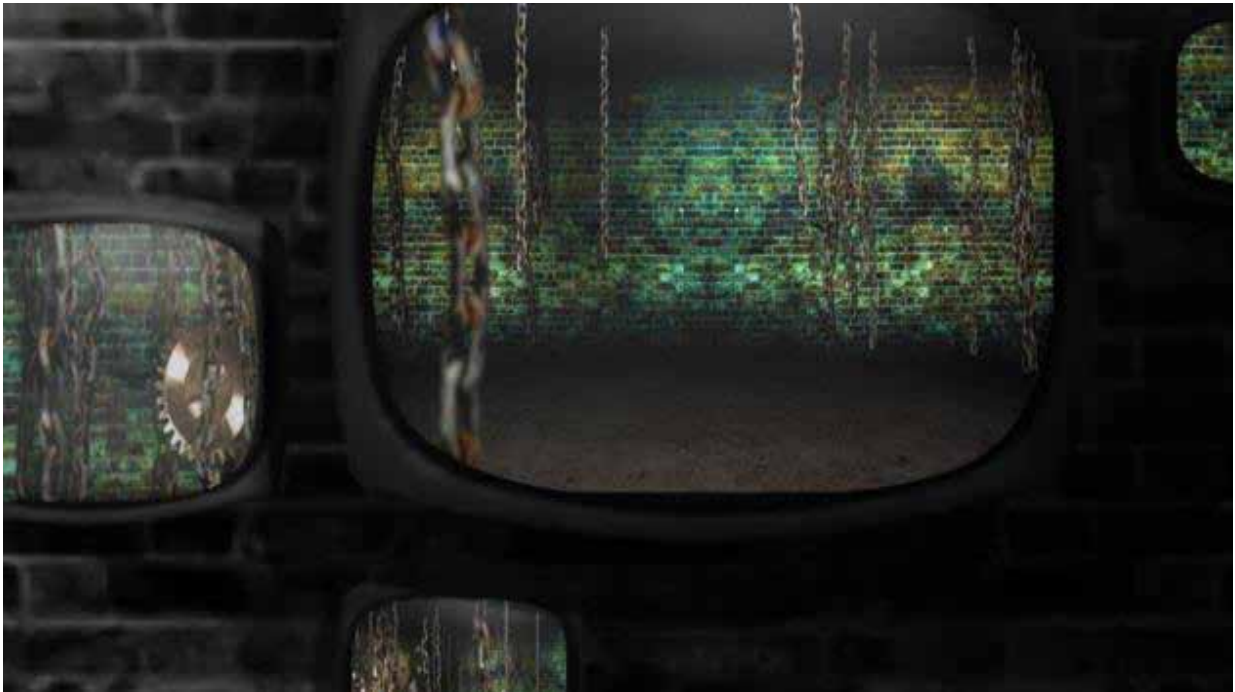


Figure 3. Greyscale Brick Room and TV screens

Green Brick Room 1

'I am watching myself through the TV screen.'

I am not sure how long I have been awake. A machine that occupies an entire wall has begun to operate again. The repetitive drone of the revolving cogwheels swiftly brings me back to reality. Suddenly, the smell of rusty iron strongly stimulates my olfactory sense. It also seems as though the iron chains suspended from the ceiling are dripping red water. There are around a dozen televisions connected to thick electronic wires on the other side of the walls.

```
{
/* Loading: */ */
textSize(8);
background(0);
text("언제부터 깨어 있었는지는 기억이 희미하
나. 방금 전, 한쪽 벽면의 대부분을 차지하고 있
는 거대한 기계가 서서히 움직이기 시작했다. 기
어들이 맞물려 돌아가는 규칙적인 소음은 상념
에 잠겨 있던 나를 다시 현실로 불러왔다. 불현
듯 방 안 가득한 녹슨 쇠 냄새가 다시 후각을 사
극했다. 전장 가득히 걸려 있는 쇠사슬들은 금
```

방이라도 독물을 똑똑 떨어뜨릴 것 같았다. 기
계가 설치되어 있는 벽과 수직으로 만나는 벽
에는 붉은 선선 나팔에 10여 대의 TV가 연결되
어 있었다.)

After the machine was activated, the screens begin to show a strange space. It looks pretty similar to this room but a completely greyscale space. Now I see 'myself' on the screen, and I am wearing glasses. Do I have a weak vision? The scene seems utterly foreign to me. The stranger on the other side continues to look around the perfect greyscale environment.

```
/* Loading: */ */
text("기계가 작동하고 난 후, TV는 어니인지 모
를 공간을 보여 주기 시작하였다. 이 방과 닮아
있지만 완벽한 회색조의 공간. 그곳에는 내가 있
었다. TV 속의 나는 안경을 끼고 있다. 나의 시력
이 좋지 않았던가? 내 모습이 낯설다. TV속의 나
는 무엇인가를 뚫어쳐라 쳐다보거나 뒤를 응시
하며 두리번거리기를 반복하고 있었다.)
```

Shortly, all mysteries are revealed. The man who wears glasses over the screen looks at the televisions on the

greyscale walls, showing me watching the screens on a green brick wall. As the biggest TV streams different angles of the greyscale room, I can finally understand its spatial configuration. Everything but myself is in greyscale. Even the frames of the televisions are decolourised. There are only four of them. The locations of the screens are in the same position within this room, however, there are no thick electronic wires connected to them. Obviously, it is a different space, but very much similar.

/ * Loading: */ */

text("의문은 얼마 지나지 않아 풀렸다. TV 속의 나는 지금의 나처럼 한쪽 벽에 걸려 있는 TV에서 보여 주는 영상을 살펴보고 있었다. 다른 각도의 영상이 제일 커다란 TV에서 보이기 시작하면서 TV너머의 공간에 대해 조금 더 파악할 수 있었다. 우선 그곳은 TV의 영상과 나의 모습을 제외하고는 아무것도 존재하지 않는 무채색의 공간이었다. 벽에 걸린 TV의 위치와 배열을 살펴보면 이 방의 것과 흡사하지만 이것과 연결된 굵은 전선 다발이 없었다. 분명히 다른 공간이다.)

In the smallest TV along the grey wall, my face is zoomed in. The images reflected on the glasses look very familiar. It shows the same rusty iron chains, uncanny green brick walls, and colossal machine, which occupies almost one side of the wall. The other me is looking at the room that I am standing in.

/ * Loading: */ */

text("벽에 걸려 있는 작은 TV들에는 내 얼굴이 확대되어 있다. 화면 속 내 안경에 비친 공간이 매우 낮아 보였다. 독슨 죄자를 다발, 이끼가 낀 듯한 녹색의 벽돌 벽, 한쪽 벽을 거의 다 차지한 거대한 기계 장치. 내가 보고 있는 TV 안의 나는 지금 내가 있는 이 방을 보고 있다.)

What is the place where the TV screens are continuously projecting? How can I concurrently stay in the different spaces? Are they broadcasting past events? Despite the fact, I don't have glasses like I did before, do I? There are too many questions swirling in my mind, but nothing tells me the answers. The central TV screen on the grey wall begins to show rose windows on the green brick wall. Due to the unexpected scenery, I look back and recheck

the room. There is no rose window. On second thought, it appears to be an entirely different realm to what was shown to me in the greyscale room. Suddenly, I feel my shirt dampen with cold sweat, utterly uncomfortable. I am confused.

/ * Loading: */ */

text("TV가 보여 주는 저곳은 어디인가. 어떻게 내가 동시에 두 장소에 존재할 수 있을까. TV는 과거의 나의 모습을 보여 주고 있는 것일까? 하지만 현재까지 나는 시력이 안경을 낄 만큼 좋지 않았던 적이 없다. 많은 의문이 들었지만 대답을 들을 방법은 없었다. 이제 TV 속 벽에 걸려있는 회색 공간의 TV는 중세시대 교회의 장미창을 보여 주고 있다. 뜻밖의 상황에 욕지나 해서 뒤를 둘러보지만 지금 이 곳에 장미창은 존재하지 않는다. 회색조의 방에 그가 보고 있던 곳은 이 장소는 아닌 것 같다. 문득 등에서 흐르는 식은 땀에 축축해진 옷이 불편하게 느껴진다. 이 모든 것이 혼란스럽다.)

Greyscale Room 3: Rose Window

'The biggest TV screen in the centre of the green brick wall shows a huge rose window.'

I see a rose window appearing on the green wall with intense flashes running through the screen, which was not there before. One of the small TVs on the greyscale wall has continuously displayed the activating machine. Is this room trying to send me a secret message? Perhaps, the reason why the rose window appears in the greyscale room might be because of that machine? In the screens, it is still operating rapidly.

Suddenly, a bell tolls. I look around to find where it comes from. A glimmer starts to emerge from the opposite wall, accompanied by heavy electronic noise. The heavy bell sound keeps ringing. As the bell tolls, something happens. The glimmer turns into a harsh light until the room is completely immersed. I cannot open my eyes. After a few seconds, the flash gradually subsides. As I open my eyes, I can see a vast rose window on the wall — the very same rose window that I saw on the screen. The wall colour turned green, and the red chains hung from the ceiling appeared. Televisions behind me now show the

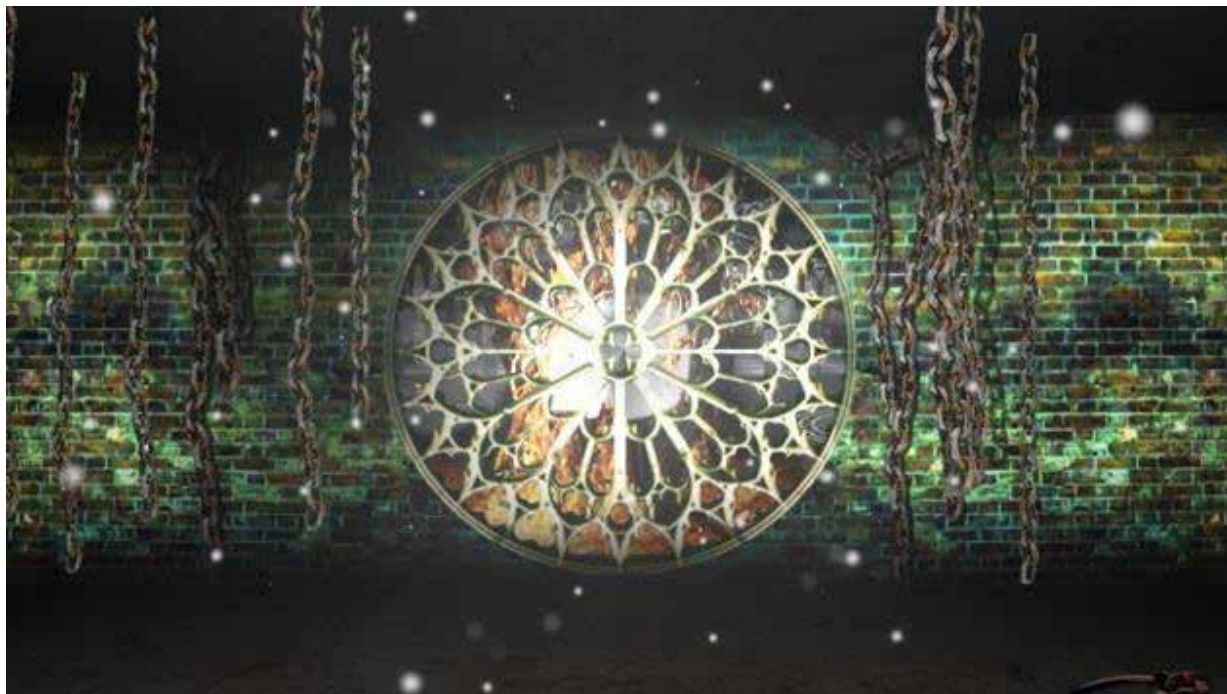


Figure 4. Rose Window-TV

greyscale environment where I was a moment ago. How could the screens display future events in this room?

Green Brick Room 2

'Something happened that I could not understand.'

A bell sound started and filled the entire room. I am not sure, but I believe that it comes from a cathedral because I am looking at a colossal rose window on the wall behind me. Yes, it is precisely the same rose window that has been playing on the TV screens for a while. At the same time, faintly glowing, tiny particles begin to fly around the room. Shimmery snowflakes reflect lights and slowly disappear over the darkness of the room. They fly through the rusty chains in disarray and create a mysterious atmosphere. I am trying to grab them, but they are fugacious. They might be some kind of hologram particles? The bell sounds trail away, but the machine is still roaring in the corner of the room. The persistent noise from the machine still remains. Whenever that machine was activated, new events took place, one after another. There must be some sort of connection across all the events happened so far. The rose window keeps emitting intense light. It seems to be another kind of screen. It be-

gins to display a new space. The window is big enough to see from a distance, but as if an unknown power has attracted me, I walk involuntarily towards the sign of a gothic cathedral.

// * Loading: */ *

text("방금 전 교회의 종소리가 울리기 시작했
다. 아니 교회의 종소리인지는 확실하지 않았지
만 그렇다고 믿었다. 왜냐하면 맞은편 벽에 거대
한 장미장이 나타났기 때문이다. 벽에 걸려 있던
TV들이 계속해서 보여 주던 바로 그 장미장 말
이다. 그와 동시에 출처를 알 수 없는 빛 무리들
이 방 안을 떠돌아다니기 시작했다. 하얀 눈송이
들이 빛을 반사하며 아른거리는 것처럼 보인다.
방안에 어지러이 걸려 있는 쇠사슬 사이로 놀아
다니며 신비로운 느낌을 만들고 있었다. 하지만
손에 잡히지 않는 것을 보면 일종의 홀로그램 파
티클인 것 같다. 이제 종소리는 잦아들었지만 측
면에 있는 기계는 여전히 웅웅거리며 울어 냈다.
서 기계가 작동할 때마다 계속해서 새로운 일들
이 발생한다. 틀림없이 지금 벌어지는 모든 일들
과 연관이 있으리라. 장미장에서는 계속해서 강
렬한 빛이 쏟아져 나왔다. 또 다른 스크린이었던
모양이다. 장미장에서 갑자기 어딘가를 비추기

시작했다. 멀리서도 잘 보일 만큼 커다란 장이었지만 어떤 미지의 힘에 이끌리듯 나는 장미장 스크린 쪽으로 다가갔다.)

Green Brick Room 3: The Rose Window

'It seems like a long corridor in a cathedral.'

A dense fog. Through the mist, I can see a glimpse of columns. It might be the Corinthian order? There is a figure walking through them. The gothic window displays legs. There is no sound, but I can imagine him making a deep tip-tap sound, the soundwaves are reflected from the high ceiling. Now, I can see his dark, black, matte shoes. It looks very familiar. I know them. Don't tell me...

/ * Loading: */ */

text("장미장의 스크린 속에는 자욱한 안개 사이로 언뜻언뜻 코린티안 양식의 기둥들이 보였다. 누군가 기둥 사이를 걷고 있었다. 화면은 그의 다리를 비추고 있었다. 화면의 소리가 따로 들리지 않았지만, 구두 소리가 회랑의 높은 천장에 반사되어 깊은 울림을 만들고 있을 것 같았다. 그리고 보니 검은색 구두가 낫아 익었다. 실마...)

After a while, the screen shows his face. Expectably, it was me. How could my figure be within a space I have never been before? The person roaming the misty corridor does not wear glasses. He might be a different person from the one who was obsessed with looking at the TV screens in the greyscale room. However, the person in the corridor *is wearing glasses*. My glasses. I think this figure is definitely myself. I assume that the events on the screens might be pre-broadcast from the future, just like the rose window. The vibration of the low-pitched tone from the machine dies-down. I have no clue when it is activated again. I am afraid of what may happen next.

/ * Loading: */ */

text("잠시 후 걸음을 옮기는 이의 얼굴이 보였다. 역시 화면 안의 인물은 나였다. 어디인지 알지도 못하는, 교회처럼 보이는 곳의 회랑을 걷고 있는 나라니... 저곳을 배회하고 있는 인물은 안경을 끼고 있지 않은 것을 보니, 햇빛 방에서 TV 스크린에 침취해 있던 인물과는 달리 내가 분명했다. 이쯤 되니 이곳에서 보여 주는 사건들이

어디선가에서 일어날 일들을 보여 주는 일종의 메시지 같은 것이 아닐까 생각해 보게 된다. 방금 전에 나타난 저 장미장처럼 말이다. 이제 기계는 움직임이 찾아들었고 중저음의 울림도 줄어들었다. 언제 다시 움직일지 모르지만, 어떤 일이 벌어질까 두렵다.)

The video in the rose window-TV is changed with weak noise. Blurred images fill the entire screen. I need a bit more information to understand the space, but it looks like a cathedral courtyard surrounded by multiple layers of gothic pointed arches along the corridors. After a moment, the image on the screen turns into noise. The blurred image seems to be a reflection on a sort of glass material? As a camera slowly zooms out, the configuration of the space is finally revealed. A courtyard gradually appears. A huge old tree stands alone in the centre of the courtyard. I realise that the blurred images were a reflection of the courtyard on the three TV screens embedded in the trunk of a vast old tree. The screens are all black and white monotone. At least the bright noise gives them a clear appearance. The images are changed again. They display my figure walking through the foggy corridor in a monotone colour. At first glance, its ceiling height seems six times higher than this room. Why did, or do, or will I walk along there?

/ * Loading: */ */

text("미약한 잡음과 함께 화면이 전환되었다. 흐릿한 이미지가 화면 가득히 보였다. 회랑 너머로 보이던 교회의 중성인 것 같았다. 하지만 그것도 잠시뿐. 화면이 일그러지며 노이즈가 보이기 시작했다. 아마도 쉼전의 희미하던 이미지는 중성 어딘가의 스크린에 반사된 모습이었던 것 같다. 카메라가 서서히 줌아웃(zoom out)을 하면서 장미장의 스크린에는 서서히 중성이 그 모습을 드러냈다. 중성에는 거대한 고목이 외로이 서 있었다. 방금 전 노이즈를 보여 주던 장미장 속의 이미지는 거대한 고목의 몸체에 설치되어있는 TV의 스크린이었다. 나무에는 총 3대의 모노톤 TV가 설치되어있었다. 노이즈가 가득하던 나무의 스크린은 어느새 회랑을 걷고 있는 나의 모습을 다시 보여 주고 있었다. 나는 왜 교회 회랑을 걷고 있는 것일까.)



Figure 5. London: Southwark—perhaps.

London 1: Southwark¹⁰

'Suddenly, it rains.'

It seems that it started just now; the giant LED screens are hung onto the high-rise buildings and begin to show a grotesque machine. The heavy noise of the machine is accompanied by the sound of rain hovering between buildings. I am at the south of the River Thames. Looking at St. Paul's Cathedral over the river, I presume that this area is probably Southwark. Fifty years ago, the Tate Modern

Gallery was refurbished from an abandoned Bankside Power Plant into a complex cultural complex as a monument for the new millennium (Tate, n.d.).¹¹ The tallest high-rise building in Southwark was the Shard next to London Bridge. Was it a trigger for mass development in this area? This place is filled with high-rise buildings. I turn my eyes towards the east. I can see the business district in Canary Wharf over the high-rise buildings. Wait a minute. Is it possible to see Canary Wharf from here? I turn my head further east. I expect the sharp head of the Shard. However, the Palace of Westminster and the London Eye greet me. Aren't they supposed to be to the west rather than the east? It is very disorienting. I am confused. What a Bizarrely twisted city. Behind me, there is a massive tower.

10 - As the author explained earlier, London has two main purposes in this text. Firstly, it is a transitional intermediary space that reveals the spatial structure of this film. Greyscale Brick Room, Green Brick Room, and The Cathedral are directly connected with London and they are set at the same topological location. Secondly, it distorts the empirical perception of geographical information through relocating landmarks in London. It shares the same sense of Guy Debord's *The Naked Cities* (1957).

11 - Tate Modern was funded by Millennium Commission, Arts Council of England, English Partnerships (London), and Southwark Council. It was designed by Herzog & de Meuron and opened to the public on 12 May 2000 (Tate, n.d.).

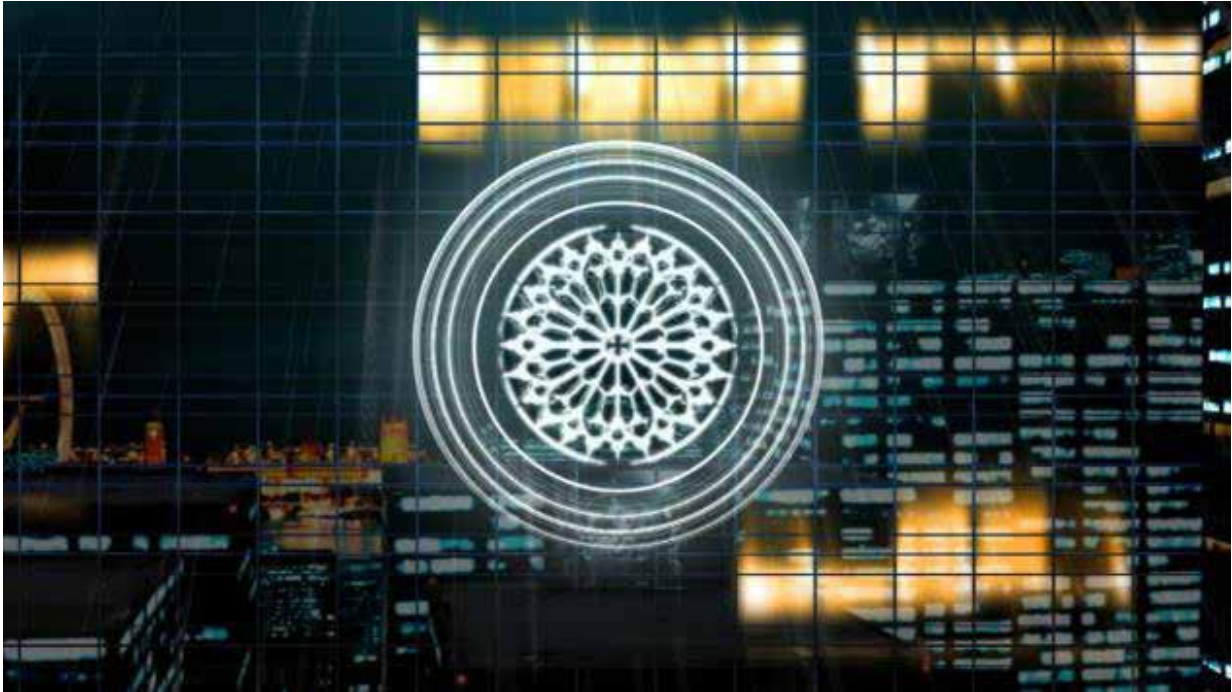


Figure 6. Rose window on the Babel: a portal from London to 'Green Brick Room' and 'The Cathedral'.

London 2: The Babel

'I am looking at a tower.'

It is, of course, an office, isn't it? I don't care anyway. It is not my property. Due to the dense rain cloud, I cannot even imagine its full height. As it reaches the cloud in the sky, I now name it—The Babel.

Church bells gradually start to sound again through the city. It comes from The Babel. The distant drone from the machine continues to stimulate my nerves. The LED screens on the buildings still display rapidly revolving gears. I wonder where the hell the machine is? If I knew its location, I would immediately turn it off. On the facade of The Babel, a gleaming holographic rose win-

dows begin to appear. I am looking at the beauty of the uncanny balance between the rotating holograms of the rose windows and their glowing concentric circles. The bell sound comes from the rose windows. I thought The Babel was a vast office, however, I might be completely wrong. I reckon that the tower is somehow perfectly bizarre in this distorted city.

The glowing concentric circles disappeared.

The cathedral bells stopped.

But the rose window remained.

I am inquisitive enough to explore that symbolic gothic sign.

By the way, when will this rain stop?



Figure 7. The misty cloister.

The Cathedral 1: A Corridor¹²
'For Whom the Bell Tolls.'

The tip-tap of the heels echo along the corridor. Perhaps the hard marble floor exaggerates the sound of my footsteps? The arcade has thirty-six Corinthian columns that support a series of gothic arches. The corridor draws a square quadrangle, and the arch openings face a cloister. The dense fog adds mysterious veils. I cannot recall when and why I have been walking along this walkway. I am repetitively creating an imperfect square trail. If the bells had not suddenly tolled, I would just hoof it mindlessly forward. I am also hearing a continuous faint vibration sound since the bell tolled, but I could not figure its source out. The distant rumbling becomes harsh.

I realise that there are some figures in the mist. It is strange that I can only hear my footsteps. Who are they? I am trying to catch up with one of them and finally looking at a figure. Surprisingly, it is me. I am chasing the others, and I realise that my figures are all over the corridor. They are all in monotone colour, and I can see some kind of digital glitches on them. I am trying to communicate with them, but they are not responding to me. I assume that they might be duplicated real-time holographic figures. They are moving back and forward at different speeds. How are they created? Is there some sort of 3D scanning system? How are they projected in 3D physical spaces? I started to see 'myself' since the weak vibration sound began. Is there some kind of system that generate hologram figures? In the distance, I can see a beautiful garth that is filled with fallen leaves. There are several columns of intense light all over the cloister. In the centre of the courtyard, there is a huge tree. I want to see it closer.

12 - The spatial motif of 'The Cathedral' is from Salisbury Cathedral's cloister and corridor. A cloister is a type of courtyard that is surrounded a walkway and typically found in the religious buildings. It is derived from the Latin 'claustrum' that means 'enclosure'.

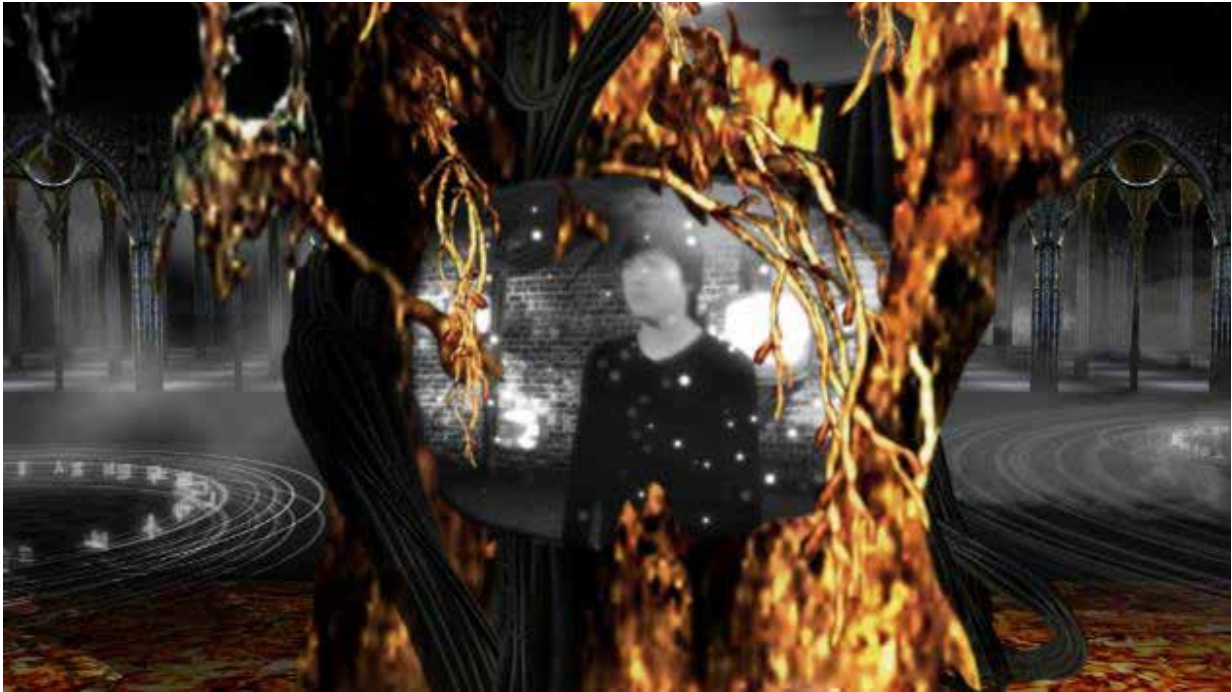


Image 8. Cyborg Tree-TV.

The Cathedral 2: Cloister

'Surprisingly, the lone old tree was a tree-machine hybrid.'

Three televisions are installed on the trunk of a huge old tree. Considering the size of the screens, it is a mystery that the tree is still alive. The tree-machine hybrid is connected to thick wires on its old body and creates a grotesque beauty.¹³ The fallen leaves are spread all over the garth. The soft texture of the red-yellow field makes a strong contrast to the marble floor in the corridors. The holographic rose windows keep drawing glowing concentric circles on the courtyard floor. The light pillars are coming from the centre of the circles, and luminescent butterflies are dancing around them with tiny gleaming particles. The mist is generated from the points where light is emitted and creates a divine moment. Finally, I have found the origin of the dense fog in the corridor.

13 - A cyborg is "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (Haraway 1991, p.149).

The biggest TV on the cyborg's trunk displays a small brick room. Multiple chains are suspended from the ceiling, and tiny glowing objects fly through them. It is a pity that I cannot confirm their colour. Damn, monochrome screens. It is the first time I have seen this room, but somehow, I am there. Fair enough. I just saw my holographic duplications in the corridor, didn't I?

My figure is walking somewhere on the screen. After a moment, a faint noise triggers a shift of the camera angle, and it closes up the face. The figure is trying to find something, moving around and staring somewhere. I can read embarrassment on their face. What is the figure looking at?

Now, the image of the smallest screen is changed. It shows a machine. Its gears are rapidly rotating. Maybe, it is part of the whole operating system of this place? I might finally find the source of the vibrating sound. However, its location is still unknown. Where is it?

London 3

'The LED screens showed me.'

Huuuuuh. Such weather in London.....

While I complained about the persistent rain, the videos on the LED screens changed. The dismal drone sound blended with the rain and died away as the machine disappeared on the screens. Probably, it was the origin of the sound. Finally relieved from the annoying noise. I wish the rain would stop as well.

Now, the large screens display an unidentifiable brick room. It shows four televisions on the brick wall. Each TV has a different size, and the central one is the biggest. It displays a large rose window. A medium-sized screen focuses on multiple revolving gears, and two small TVs show a bunch of rusty chains suspended from the ceiling. The rose window on the biggest screen is identical to the one on the Babel's façade. I thought that the space on the screen might be an interior projection of the Babel.

Something just happened that I cannot understand. In the brick room video, I am smiling. Why am I laughing? What am I laughing at? Where the hell is that place? Why am I there? Is it really inside of The Babel? I am confused. It is bizarre to see myself through the giant screen. So many questions are raised in my mind. If I had visited the Babel before, I could understand this uncanny situation. While I am thinking about one thing or another, it keeps raining. Please stop. Again, the drone noise begins. What the bloody hell? It starts over again. The strong noise overwhelms the song of rain. It becomes louder than ever before.

Oh, dear. This..... is not good.....

The Cathedral 3: Awaken

'I was smiling there.'

It was feeble, but I could hear the distant machine rumbling. Simultaneously, the tree-machine started to display different places. It shows somewhere in the middle of a dense city. Considering St. Paul Cathedral far over the river, it must be Southwark. However, it looks pretty much different from what I remember. Where is the Tate Modern? When did this area become densely populated with high-rise buildings?

There are many LED screens on the building facades. They show a brick room that has four televisions. Each TV screen in the brick room displays the identical space that the old cyborg tree showed just before. Additionally, it shows my smiling figure in front of the brick wall. Still, there is no way I can confirm the colour. Why do all screens in this place keep showing the same spaces repeatedly? Also, what is the machine? What does it do? Many questions flooded back at once. I need time to pull my thoughts together.

Stepping back in time, the holographic figures in the corridor were the replica of my activities. They must be generated by capturing my actions and movements through advanced 3D scanning and motion capturing technology. However, the replicas did not have any consciousness. How about the other figures of 'myself' in other spaces? They might be created in a similar way. However, they seem alive and active. I do not dare to check whether they have their own consciousness. They should not be as I am here. How on earth could they be conscious?

I noticed spatial changes whenever the drone noise came out from somewhere else—the videos were changed, and new events took place in each space. Are they somehow connected with each other? What if I call them, might they be able to see me? If my figure were shown on the LED screens, he might be able to see me.

Ok, why don't I try to call him?

Green Brick Room 4: Awaken

'I began to knock on the screen.'

The machine had been static for a while, but it begins to rotate again with a roaring noise. As the identified mechanism of this room so far, it is the signal that some events and changes will occur soon. The activated machine always resulted in some changes in this space. After a short moment, my figure on the screen starts to call somebody else. All screens suddenly changed simultaneously and started to display the figure knocking something. It must be the reason why the machine activated again. My figure seems to realise something in the cathedral. The figure's tapping and yelling through the screen began to look desperate. It seems that he is calling me. The loud roaring noise of the machine, however, fills the room. Thus, the voice could not reach me.

`/* Loading: */`

`text("한동안 멈춰있던 벽의 기계가 강렬한 소음과 함께 다시 돌아가기 시작했다. 지금까지의 이방의 메커니즘을 살펴보면 또 다시 무엇인가 일어나려는 것 같았다. 기계의 움직임은 이 방에 항상 변화를 동반했으니 말이다. 잠시 후 화면 속 중정의 내가 누군가를 부르기 시작했다. 그 동안 다양한 공간들을 보여 주던 벽의 TV들의 모든 화면이 일제히 그 모습 비추기 시작했다. 이 것 때문에 기계가 다시 움직이기 시작했던 것 같다. 교회에 있던 내가 무엇인가를 발견한 것 같았다. 화면을 누드리며 외치는 그 모습이 너무나 절실하여 마치 나를 부르는 듯 했다. 안타깝게도 웅웅거리는 기계 소음으로 가득한 이 방에서 그의 목소리는 나에게 닿지 않았다.")`

London 4: Awaken

'I started to call my figure.'

Again, the videos are changing along with the heavy noise of the machine. The persistent heavy rain continues to bother me. How annoying. The greyscale brick room view is changed to the cathedral view. Maybe, the Babel might not be just an office tower as I expected. Here are my questions. Whenever the LED screens are changed and show different spaces, why is my figure always there? The figure was smiling in the greyscale room

just before. Then now, the screen shows my figure in the cathedral, who is embarrassed and almost desperate to call someone else. What an ironic contrast. I read the figure's lips, and I realised that the figure is calling me. I am a tiny being, almost invisible in this city. Can the figure really see me? Is the figure looking at me from that rose window?

Please..... I wish someone could shut down that machine. I cannot think properly.

Disconnected 1

'The entire space was filled with a loud noise of electromagnetic waves.'

The periodically resonating bell sound no longer occupies the cathedral. Again, the courtyard is filled with the heavy drone noise of the machine. Its rapid movement appears on all TV screens. The videos on the cyborg tree turn into grey noise. I can no longer see the cloister from the room with many chains, and my smiling face is no longer visible in the LED screens in the forest of high-rise buildings in Southwark.

Disconnected 2

The screen is filled with full of noise.

`/* Loading: */`

`text("노이즈만이 화면에 가득 하다.")`

I cannot see anything anymore.

`/* Loading: */`

`text("더 이상 아무것도 보이지 않았다.")`

`void systemPressed() {`

`exit();`

`}`



Figure 9. Cyborg tree-TVs are disconnected from the system.

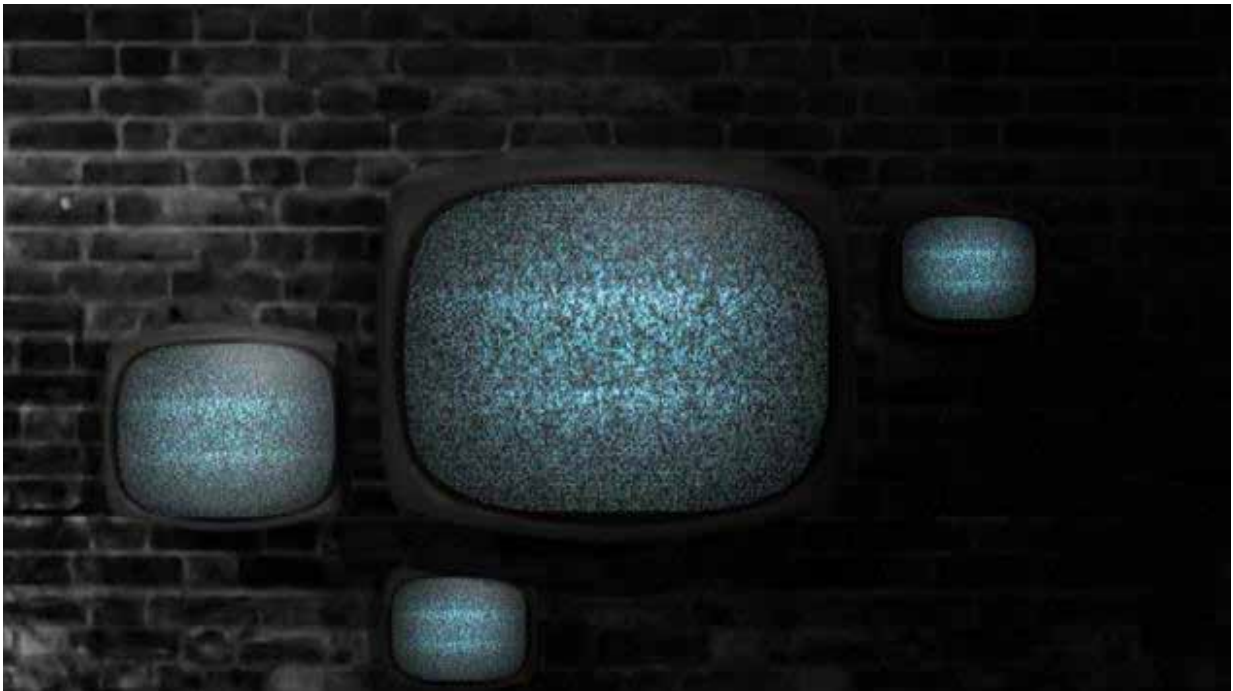


Figure 10. Televisions in the greyscale room display full of noise.

00:00:00

{
 /* Loading: *//
 text("I hear the noises of an old machine.
 I cannot find where it is coming from.
 The TV is activated.")

I cannot remember how long I have been awake. I am looking around and observing this room closely. Somehow, all of the materials are ...

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