Week08: Interactive Soundscape

Our project is about a person climbing up a flat building, encountering different sounds with some horror features on every floor. He will find some words hidden in the background of the sounds, by first playing all these sounds together and then playing it reversely, a message will show up, saying – “You are trapped in a dream, the only solution is to JUMP.” And he realizes that he is in a dream. That’s when he reaches the top floor – the rooftop of the flat, and then he knows, he should jump off the roof.

The reason for choosing this topic for our project is quite simple, it is just an idea pop up to us. And since we found it hard to make a continuous story based on well-processed audio, we decided to set the background of our story to a dream, and then the transition and connection between audios could be not that seamless. And since we are asked to use limited visual element, we think pure audio is so easy to arouse people’s imagination, and by adding some horror features into it, it can affect users more.

We recorded some sound of walking in the staircase & opening the door & some recorded breathing sound as our transition. And I recorded the sound for the message from my friend since his voice is so much sexier. For most our other audios, they’re combinations of recorded sound and sound found on the internet, and we used Adobe Audition to combine them in several multitrack. Since some sound sources are really hard to find, we go to the YouTube and use Audition to record the system sound [the video sound] and used them in our project.

The audio processing tool we used is just Adobe Audition, there are actually really few problems. One is that Audition doesn’t support system input despite a lot of my efforts trying to, so I turned to Audacity and it miraculously worked. Another barrier is the reverse of sounds, in our project we have a step by step reverse of the message, and it took me some time to think of a better way of showing the process, so I used the screenshots of Audition and used Photoshop to process them. Other obstacles include – Chrome doesn’t support autoplay and it confuses me for a bit at the beginning, but then I found that .play() function is just a better way of realizing the effect I intended.

To me, the project is better than I expected, because to be honest, we have no clue what exact thing to doing in the beginning, and it’s really satisfying to see the final outcome to be like this. If I were to modify some parts, I would probably find a new way to record the footstep sound in the staircase because there’s too much echo in the staircase and it could not be fixed using any feature of Audition/Audacity, so rerecording them could be the only solution, but we need to use more professional gadgets to achieve an ideal sound record.