

# **THE SCENT OF BLUE MEMORIES**

## **Multisensory Exploration in Animated Autoethnography**

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**Monique Hyobin Park**

**Master of Design**

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Design

**2020**

**School of Art & Design**  
**[Digital Design]**

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# Abstract

This thesis discusses the experience of worlds within a film, which can be understood as a multisensory exploration that reveals animation as being more than simply an audio-visual medium, and how such a film can resonate with an audience. Synaesthesia, the Proust phenomenon, phenomenological film theories, the animation produced by the film company Studio Ghibli and poetic film are discussed using an in-depth analysis as a means for supporting these claims, as well as to enable imaginatively reconstructing filmmakers' autobiographical narratives. Psychological and phenomenological theories are discussed throughout as approaches for creating unique narrative, visual, and auditory systems. The results of this research contributed to generating emotional resonance through the production of an animated autoethnographic film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong* (2020).

# Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Attestation of Authorship.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Intellectual Property Rights.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction: Positioning Statement .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Contextual Review .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.1 Synaesthesia.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1.1. Phycological Synaesthesia.....	11
1.1.2. Eastern Cultural Synaesthesia .....	11
1.1.3. Emotional Resonance .....	13
1.1.4. Nostalgic Interaction.....	14
<b>1.2. The Proust Phenomenon .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1.2.1. The Evocation of Childhood Memories .....	15
1.2.2. Scent-evoked Nostalgia .....	16
1.2.3. Photographed and Animated Memories .....	17
<b>1.3. Travelling into My Memories .....</b>	<b>19</b>
1.3.1. The Memory of Blue Mould.....	19
1.3.2. The Memory of My Grandmother’s Wooden Walking Cane.....	21
1.3.3. Personal Synaesthesia.....	22
<b>1.4. Studio Ghibli Animation .....</b>	<b>24</b>
1.4.1. Miyazaki’s Narrative in <i>My Neighbour Totoro</i> (1988) .....	24
1.4.2. My Story in <i>The Scent of Blue Uiseong</i> (2020).....	25
1.4.3. The Imaginative Beauty of Nature .....	26
<b>1.5. From Analogue to Digital.....</b>	<b>29</b>
1.5.1. Miyazaki’s Traditional Cel Animation.....	29
1.5.2. My Digital Cel Animation.....	33
<b>1.6. Colour System .....</b>	<b>35</b>
1.6.1. Unified Colours of Nature .....	35
1.6.2. Hanji Texture.....	37
1.6.3. Mother Colour .....	38
1.6.4. Achromatic and Complementary Colours .....	40
1.6.5. Chromatic Light.....	41
<b>1.7. Poetic Film .....</b>	<b>42</b>
1.7.1. Relationship Between Film and Audience .....	42



1.7.2. Metaphors .....	43
1.7.3. Symbolism .....	43
1.7.4. Words and Imagery .....	44
<b>1.8. Sound System .....</b>	<b>46</b>
1.8.1. Narrative Voiceover .....	46
1.8.2. Silence .....	47
1.8.3. Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response.....	48
<b>CHAPTER 2: Research Design .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.1. Paradigm: Artistic Research .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.2. Methodologies.....</b>	<b>51</b>
2.2.1. Practice-based Research .....	51
2.2.2. Autoethnography .....	52
2.2.3. Action Research.....	53
<b>2.3. Methods.....</b>	<b>54</b>
2.3.1. Iterative Design and Thinking Processes.....	54
2.3.2. Initial and Revised Research .....	55
2.3.3. Review of Embodied Knowledge.....	56
2.3.4. Photographs and Matte Painting.....	57
2.3.5. Scriptwriting .....	58
2.3.6. Reflective Thinking .....	60
2.3.7. Animation References .....	61
<b>CHAPTER 3: Commentary on <i>The Scent of Blue Uiseong</i>.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.1. Narrative Treatment.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.2. Visual Treatment .....</b>	<b>67</b>
3.2.1. Environment Animation .....	67
3.2.2. Character Animation.....	68
3.2.3. Computer Generated Images .....	70
<b>3.3. Auditory Treatment.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>78</b>

# List of Figures

## CHAPTER 1: Contextual Review

Figure 1.1. Still images from *The Scent of Green Papaya* (dir. Trần Anh Hùng, 1993, Président Films, France).

Figure 1.2. The Uiseong country (Joohwan Park, photography).

Figure 1.3. My grandmother's hometown scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.4. Wooden walking canes (Joohwan Park, photography).

Figure 1.5. Mapping my contextual review process.

Figure 1.6. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.7. Stream scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.8. A still image from *10 Years with Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2019, NHK World-Japan, Japan).

Figure 1.9. A still image from *Never-Ending Man Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2016, NHK World TV, Japan).

Figure 1.10. A still image from *Never-Ending Man Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2016, NHK World TV, Japan).

Figure 1.11. 3D particle effects (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.12. Still images from *My Neighbour Totoro* (dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1988, Toho, Japan).

Figure 1.13. Hanji (n.d, paper).

Figure 1.14. The scenery outside the house (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.15. Gravel road scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.16. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.17. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Figure 1.18. The protagonist outside the house (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

## CHAPTER 2: Research Design

Figure 2.1. Mapping of my iterative design and thinking processes.

Figure 2.2. Initial concept art (pastels, Monique H. Park, 2019).

Figure 2.3. *Weekends* (dir. Trevor Jimenez, 2017, New Europe Sales, USA).

Figure 2.4. *I Have Dreamed Of You So Much* (dir. Emma Vakarelova, 2015, Tant Mieux Prod, France).

Figure 2.5. Sunrise scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

## CHAPTER 3: Commentary on The Scent of Blue Uiseong

Figure 3.1. The emotional variation curve of the protagonist in *SBU*.

Figure 3.2. Images representing the matte painting progress.

Figure 3.3. Work in progress (WIP) of the first scene in *SBU*.

Figure 3.4. Subsequent WIP of the first scene in *SBU*.

Figure 3.5. A 3D Auckland (New Zealand) cityscape modelled in Maya.

Figure 3.6. The rendered images of the Auckland cityscape.

Figure 3.7. The Maya-to-Photoshop painting progression.

## **Attestation of Authorship**

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

**Monique Hyobin Park**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

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Rest in peace my grandmother. My film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong* (2020) is for you.

# Intellectual Property Rights

The author/designer asserts the intellectual and moral copyright of the creative work *The Scent of Blue Uiseong* (2020), contained in this thesis. All rights of the owner of the recorded work are reserved.

The film contained in all its formats is protected by copyright and use of the recording is restricted.

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**Monique Hyobin Park**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

# Introduction: Positioning Statement

My research focuses on the aesthetic relationship between a film and its audience as a means for creating a multisensory animated film that reflects my childhood memories. This process aims to answer the overarching research question, i.e. to what extent can animation be extended to a multisensory medium as a means for exploring autobiographical memories? The purpose of this research is to gain a theoretical understanding of how visual and auditory elements in films can trigger other sensory modalities that an audience can use to explore the world of the film imaginatively. This thesis discusses the psychological and phenomenological film theories that outline the emotional dimensions of cinema.

In Chapter 1, I explore psychological aspects, synaesthesia in an Eastern cultural context and the Proust phenomenon to define my multisensory experiences as forms of personal olfactory–visual synaesthesia. I provide an in-depth analysis of the Studio Ghibli film company’s animation style and colour system and reveal the strong influence of director Hayao Miyazaki’s animation on my own animated film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong* (2020). This chapter provides discussions on various audio-visual theories and aesthetic knowledge that support the animation. It also presents my understanding of the relationship between film and audience.

Chapter 2 discusses my research methodologies, autoethnographic and action research approaches, and the methods I employed to create *SBU*<sup>1</sup>. This chapter demonstrates the practical design and thinking processes that helped to develop and support the project. Based on my understanding of multisensory films, I explain the sincere approach I employed to connect with an audience throughout *SBU*.

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<sup>1</sup> Contraction of the title of my animated film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong*.

Chapter 3 presents the processes I conducted to construct the narrative, visual and auditory elements of *SBU*. This chapter discusses the technical challenges I faced and the solutions implemented for both major and minor issues using a variety of professional filmmaking software.

# CHAPTER 1: Contextual Review

## 1.1. Synaesthesia

### 1.1.1. Psychological Synaesthesia

The study of synaesthesia can be traced back based on its conventional meaning within a psychological context. According to the American neurologist, Richard Cytowic, who is one of the world's leading experts on synaesthesia, the word “[shares] a root with anaesthesia, which means “no sensation” [but] synaesthesia means “joined or coupled sensation”. A synaesthete, as we call these otherwise-normal individuals, might not only hear my voice but also see it, taste it, or feel [it in a manner akin to] physical touch”.<sup>2</sup> My observation of the term *synaesthesia* is that it is generally unfamiliar to most people and appears to be considered a surreal phenomenon that only occurs to a particular group of people. However, Cytowic argues that “technically, we are all synesthetic”.<sup>3</sup> Based on this perspective, synaesthesia is a real, multisensory experience in which the olfactory sense triggers, e.g. visual, auditory, tactile and gustatory senses.

### 1.1.2. Eastern Cultural Synaesthesia

Psychological synaesthesia was additionally explored by Assistant Professor of Moving Image Studies at Georgia State University, Atlanta (USA), Jennifer Barker, and Professor in Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (Canada), Laura Marks, in relation to how it enables the audience to experience the medium of film as multisensory. For example, the Academy Award-nominated film, *The Scent of Green Papaya* (1993), directed by Trần Anh Hùng, serves as a rich resource for understanding synaesthetic psychological processes. The theme of nature is at the core of the film, which invites the audience into a ‘world of greenness’ in Vietnam.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 108.



This image has been removed by the author due to copyright issues.

Figure 1.1. Still images from *The Scent of Green Papaya* (dir. Trần Anh Hùng, 1993, Président Films, France).

Barker states that “viewer and film share certain ways of being in, seeing, and grasping the world”.<sup>4</sup> The film immerses its audience in a multisensory experience, not only through its visual and auditory elements but also by using olfactory, gustatory, and tactile elements, such as presenting the croaking sound of a frog, the smell of pan-fried vegetables, and the tactility of touching glossy seeds of papaya (see Figure 1.1). The director deliberately minimises the use of dialogue and consistently employs close-ups throughout the film. What we see and hear in the close-up images is not simply an audio-visual record of what the filmmaker experiences in the real world, neither is it the same as the filmmaker’s physical point of view; this is because the director does not experience the world in the same close-up manner as the film itself, facilitated by the camera. Rather, it can be better described as an onscreen multisensory expression by the filmmaker, conveyed through audio-visual elements.

In this way, Hùng is able to reveal a hidden world of greenness in Vietnam, enabling the audience to perceive the world within the film through the use of their senses. The Hungarian film critic, Béla Balázs, notes that by using “close-up [angles] the camera in the days of silent film [also] revealed...the hidden mainsprings of a life we thought we knew very well”.<sup>5</sup> In *The Scent of Green Papaya*, it is the subtlety of nature that is captured in close-up shots, enabling the film to trigger multiple senses through audio-visual elements. I present the argument that the phenomenon of synaesthesia allows a film audience to feel that they are physically inhabiting the space of the film, and facilitates their exploration of the unfolding multisensory world they are observing.

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<sup>4</sup> Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Béla Balázs, ‘The Close-Up’, in *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*, trans. Edith Bone (New York: Arno Press, 1952), 55.

### 1.1.3. Emotional Resonance

Trần Anh Hùng, who was born in Vietnam and raised in France, viewed *The Scent of Green Papaya* as being a meditation on his life in Asia, in the way he remembers it.<sup>6</sup> Marks notes that “perception is...informed by culture”.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, I consider *The Scent of Green Papaya* as a work of nostalgia, created through Hùng’s perceptions, and, as such, revealing his unique understanding of personal past cultural experiences. Hùng admits that when he made the film, he felt “the desires of those Vietnamese [the represented characters in the film] living abroad”.<sup>8</sup> As a Vietnamese-born French director, the film demonstrates Hùng’s longing for the culture that he remembers and with which he yearns to reconnect. Associate Professor in the Japanese Department at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch (New Zealand), Alistair Swale, introduces the term *nostalgia* as a “mood...an aspiration to reconnect with a past”.<sup>9</sup> On one level, the audience is invited to witness multisensory fragments, collected from Hùng’s memories, and is thereby enveloped in the nostalgic atmosphere of the film.

In my own animation, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong*, multisensory elements prompt a sense of nostalgia because they trigger memories of my grandmother in *SBU*, which are embodied within me and imbued with complex emotions. Jennifer Barker, in her book *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (2009), notes that “the film and viewer each respond in their own uniquely embodied ways to one another’s style of touch”.<sup>10</sup> I believe this observation asserts that our viewing experience is a deeply embodied one that differs from one person to another because we live within different cultures and that the number of senses triggered vary based on our perceptions.

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<sup>6</sup> Kaori Shoji, ‘The Crafted Sensuality of Director Trần Anh Hùng’, *The Japan Times*, 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2017/09/27/films/crafted-sensuality-director-tran-anh-hung/#.Xm0F1agzaU1>.

<sup>7</sup> Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film : Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 145.

<sup>8</sup> Trần Anh Hùng, Trần Anh Hùng - BOMB Magazine, interview by Lawrence Chua, 1994, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/tran-anh-hung/>.

<sup>9</sup> Alistair Swale, ‘Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in *Spirited Away*’, *Routledge Journals, Taylor & Francis Ltd*, Asian Studies Review, 39, no. 3 (2015): 414, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2015.1056086>.

<sup>10</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 32.

#### 1.1.4. Nostalgic Interaction

Cytowic asserts that “emotional scripts play out unconsciously until the mental readout of feeling lets us take stock”.<sup>11</sup> When an audience experiences multisensory engagement when watching a film, the film’s world will evoke individual emotions. This is because a film encourages viewers to physically commit themselves “to the film’s space as well as their own, caught up “there” [the film] and “here” [reality] at the same time”.<sup>12</sup> In this way, they can unconsciously experience specific emotions triggered by their sensory faculties. When a film affects an audience through multisensory elements, the audience members will often express their emotions by reacting to it using various actions, e.g. laughter or crying. As an artist and filmmaker, I have found my own conceivable vehicle for conveying my sense of nostalgia. Swale suggests that nostalgia is “an aesthetic emotion evoked imaginatively”.<sup>13</sup> That is, nostalgia is a subjective emotion evoked by individual imagination, i.e. it is not necessarily based on the precise representation of a particular time and space. Imagination is an important tool when it comes to films evoking nostalgia, as it reconstructs every recollection with “salient and meaningful details from the original event”.<sup>14</sup>

I believe nostalgic emotions provide a rich and imaginative resource for the creation of an autobiographical film that is meaningful to myself, while also resonating with an audience. Hùng reminds us that memory is a moment that will never be experienced in the same way as the original event. He states that “people told me [*The Scent of Green Papaya*] gave them a strong sense of nostalgia. For me, and [likely] for everyone, there comes a point when you realise that nothing will bring back the past”.<sup>15</sup> I believe that the combination of an aesthetic strategy and the realisation that the past cannot be recovered affects all of one’s senses and generates profound emotional resonance.

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<sup>11</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 162.

<sup>12</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 83.

<sup>13</sup> Swale, ‘Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in *Spirited Away*’, 427.

<sup>14</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 103.

<sup>15</sup> Shoji, ‘The Crafted Sensuality of Director Trần Anh Hùng’.

## 1.2. The Proust Phenomenon

### 1.2.1. *The Evocation of Childhood Memories*

Phenomenology considers one's consciousness starting from an individual experience, and an engagement with sense memories. From a phenomenological point of view, the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, affirms that cinema can give us "the genesis of an "unknown body", which we have in the back of our heads, like the unthought in thought, the birth of the visible which is still hidden from view".<sup>16</sup> Marks has based her film theories upon the phenomenological ideas of Deleuze and others, to emphasise that, given the nature of memory, cinema is capable of evoking other sense memories. Marks suggests that "smell is already a movie, in the sense that it is a perception that generates a mental narrative for the perceiver".<sup>17</sup> The sense modality that is particularly intriguing to me, and which I discovered to be highly relevant to my specific childhood memories, is the olfactory sense. The sense of smell has been examined in films and novels such as *Attila Marcel* (2013), directed by Sylvain Chomet, and *Perfume* (2006) directed by Tom Tykwer. The sense of smell is at the core of the Proust phenomenon, which was first introduced by the French novelist, Marcel Proust, in his best-known series of novels, *In Search of Lost Time* (1913). In the novel, when Proust, i.e. the author himself, takes a bite of a madeleine biscuit soaked in tea, the smell immediately evokes childhood memories. This commonplace experience is known as the Proust phenomenon, i.e. a vivid recollection of past events through the olfactory sense. For Proust, the experience recalls images that include the homes he lived in as a child, neighbours, and the scenery of his hometown in vivid detail, an unfolding narrative that brings to life Proust's childhood and development towards adulthood.

Marks unites both the themes of embodiment and narrative recollection when stating that "smells typically generate unique stories, according to the idiosyncratic ways our bodies remember them".<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that in the above example, Proust inserts himself into the story and instead of

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<sup>16</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Cinema, Body and Brain, Thought', in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 201.

<sup>17</sup> Laura U. Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 114.

<sup>18</sup> Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, 124.

portraying his own narrative objectively, emotionally elaborates on his experiences using his senses. In other words, he recreates a story from his childhood based on how his body emotionally remembers it. Swale notes that “very rarely is it possible to evoke a historical past in some factually precise form”.<sup>19</sup> Proust demonstrates such a departure from factual precision by conveying his memories using a creative and unique approach to the traditional structure of the novel.

### 1.2.2. Scent-evoked Nostalgia

In a study of scent-evoked nostalgia, the social psychologist, Chelsea Reid, affirms that “scents rated as arousing, familiar or autobiographically relevant were particularly likely to elicit nostalgia, as were scents linked to a greater proportion of positive and negative emotions”.<sup>20</sup> The olfactory sense is highly associated with a sense of nostalgia and, accordingly, the Proust phenomenon is distinctly examined in *SBU*. Where the smell of madeleines features at the core of *In Search of Lost Time*, in *SBU*, the smell of blue mould is entrenched. Similar to Proust’s story, the smell of blue mould recalls atmospheric images of my grandmother in her old home and the scenery of her hometown. The story of my childhood memories unfolds emotionally, based on how I remember sensory experiences, as opposed to precise renderings of real experiences. Marks argues that “the odor memory is much more likely to be accompanied by a blast of emotion”.<sup>21</sup> Similar to the novel format, which employs printed text, *SBU* cannot directly stimulate the audience’s olfactory memory. However, it is possible to invite the audience indirectly into the story of my reconstructed olfactory memory and nostalgic associations within the present. Marks emphasises that “the associations we have with odor are strongly individualized and context-dependent, and will be as long as humans have different life experiences”.<sup>22</sup> If these associations are related to sense modalities other than the visual and auditory, I believe that an audience will be able to experience *SBU* through a synaesthetic approach to recall their specific memories alongside a sense of nostalgia.

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<sup>19</sup> Swale, ‘Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in Spirited Away’, 413.

<sup>20</sup> Chelsea A. Reid et al., ‘Scent-Evoked Nostalgia’, *Memory* 23, no. 2 (2015): 164, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2013.876048>.

<sup>21</sup> Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, 121.

### 1.2.3. Photographed and Animated Memories



Figure 1.2. The Uiseong country (Joohwan Park, photography).

The sense of smell is a powerful means for considering images from the past, and this approach to personal stories is illustrated in *SBU*. Photographs can capture a moment in perpetuity, and, as such, they exist as permanent evidence of the past and provide direct and vivid access to a particular memory. Nonetheless, the photograph is also transitory in nature, as explored by the German philosopher, Walter Benjamin, who states that “the true image of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability, and is never seen again”.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Benjamin, Walter, ‘On the Concept of History’, in *Eiland H and Jennings MW (Eds)*, *Selected Writings* vol. 4., trans. E. Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 390.





Figure 1.3. My grandmother's hometown scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Film animation has a unique ability to relocate 'lost time' and physical space in the imaginative world, based on the director's subjective memories. For example, I redesigned a photo of my grandmother's hometown in a country (Figure 1.2) using matte painting to illustrate the energising feeling of early morning. Chromatic light was incorporated to intensify the brightness of nature, leading the viewer to observe the beauty of the area, which I did not appreciate as a child. The English art critic and novelist, John Berger, states that "a film [that] reproduces images of a painting leads the spectator, through the painting, to the filmmaker's own conclusions".<sup>24</sup> In the current instance, the application of matte painting over an original photograph leads the viewer to share in my sense of joy at the ordinary scenery depicted, and the associated longing for the freedom I had as a child.

Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Surrey, London, Annabelle Honess Roe, suggests in *Animated Documentary* (2013) that "animation as [a] strategy for the re-presentation of personal history is a tool by which self-identity can be explored and understood".<sup>25</sup> I interpret this observation

<sup>24</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), 26.

<sup>25</sup> Annabelle Honess Roe, 'Animated Memories', in *Animated Documentary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 146.

as a comment on animation's ability to not only help film directors explore their own identities, but also to provide distinct understandings about particular relationships. In addition to providing a personal account of the filmmaker, animation enables them to explore deeper and more diverse memories through stories about their home country and family. In autobiographical animation, the director can discover aspects that they regard as most meaningful to them, by telling real stories and memorialising personal and collective history. All memories are to some degree inaccurate and have gaps in terms of how much is remembered. One of the reasons this happens is to help remove unpleasant memories by forgetting the past. In this regard, Honess Roe states that "a traumatic event is often understood as an aporia in subjective experience and also for [its] possibilities of representation".<sup>26</sup> Animation is a performative medium that, to a degree, can reconnect pleasant and unpleasant memories, and fill pre-existing gaps with realisations. The animation process has enabled me to overcome my own aporia in the form of a traumatic experience for which I could not find a solution as a child. By acknowledging this aporia through an exploration of my childhood memories, the smell of mould arose as a motif that represents recollections of my grandmother and her life.

### **1.3. Travelling into My Memories**

#### *1.3.1. The Memory of Blue Mould*

The memory of my grandmother's house and how it smelled of mould first entered my consciousness accompanied by a sense of discomfort, which understandably triggered negative emotions toward my grandmother. Despite recovering fully from asthma, there are moments when a sense of anxiety arises in me whenever I smell mould in an old house. This response, as noted previously, arises from the effects of childhood associations. My olfactory sense has linked negative emotions to having stayed at my grandmother's house when I was a child. Social neuroscientist, Yaara Yeshurun, argues that "first associations were privileged when they were unpleasant"<sup>27</sup>; that is, the vividness of memories triggered by the olfactory sense will vary depending on the emotional intensity of the recollection.

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<sup>26</sup> Honess Roe, 156.

<sup>27</sup> Yaara Yeshurun et al., 'The Privileged Brain Representation of First Olfactory Associations', *CELL PRESS*, Current Biology, 19, no. 21 (2009): 1869, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2009.09.066>.



Without the strong memory recalling the smell of mould, the asthma-associated memories of being in my grandmother's house, or the accompanying anxiety in these instances may not be recalled as vividly. The memories of my grandmother triggered by my olfactory sense appear to be particularly emotional, rich, and intense. This can be demonstrated by the previously noted Proust phenomenon, as conducted by the clinical psychologist, Marieke Toffolo, who affirms that "odour-evoked memories of aversive events [are] more detailed, arousing, and unpleasant than memories evoked by auditory triggers".<sup>28</sup>

However, negative emotions can still arise unprompted by sensory modalities when recalling memories. While researching the Proust phenomenon, I re-experienced some of the very first emotions imprinted in my consciousness by my olfactory sense. The primal intensity of smell noted by Yaara's observation above is supported by clinical studies, which state that "brain imaging...revealed a unique hippocampal activation for early olfactory but not auditory associations, regardless of whether they were pleasant or unpleasant".<sup>29</sup> The olfactory sense may even lead to the recollection of a specific memory in a manner more emotional and intense, whether positive or negative, than how it was originally experienced. Cytowic emphasises this notion when he notes that "each time we remember something it is [remembered differently]".<sup>30</sup> This indicates that the memories triggered by sensory modalities are not as accurate as those awakened during the original experience. However, it appears that memories triggered by the olfactory sense may be much more likely to cause a barrage of either positive or negative emotions than those recalled by other sensory modalities.

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<sup>28</sup> Marieke B. J. Toffolo, Monique A. M. Smeets, and Marcel A. van den Hout, 'Proust Revisited: Odours as Triggers of Aversive Memories', *Cognition & Emotion* 26, no. 1 (2012): 89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2011.555475>.

<sup>29</sup> Yeshurun et al., 'The Privileged Brain Representation of First Olfactory Associations', 1869.

<sup>30</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 103.

### 1.3.2. The Memory of My Grandmother's Wooden Walking Cane



Figure 1.4. Wooden walking canes (Joohwan Park, photography).

When I visited my grandmother's house in the country, I often spent significant amounts of time outside to avoid the smell of mould inside the house. There were many wooden walking canes outside the house, and my brother and I used to carry them around with us whenever we visited her. This remains a pleasant memory from my childhood. As an adult, although the smell of mould precipitates negative feelings, the images of my grandmother's walking canes trigger positive emotions. Marks suggests that "memory is encoded in objects through contact"<sup>31</sup> and posits that "cinema itself appeals to contact – to embodied knowledge, and to the sense of touch in particular – in order to recreate memories".<sup>32</sup> In addition to mould, my grandmother's cane is another central element in *SBU*, a significant object and a symbol imbued with potent meaning. My grandmother started walking with a cane following a car accident shortly after I was born, which was why she had many canes both inside and outside her house. The canes served as lifelong 'friends' that helped her to remain living in her

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<sup>31</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 129.

<sup>32</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 129.

home and, as such, embody her story. The presence of her canes eventually led me to realise the difficult moments she would have experienced, and whenever I see them now, they trigger in me a sense of regret and nostalgia. Marks emphasises that “objects are not inert and mute but...tell stories and describe trajectories. Cinema is capable not only of following this process chronologically but also of discovering the value that inheres in objects”.<sup>33</sup> Similar to the smell of mould, the image of a wooden cane not only triggers emotional memories for me but also invites me to chronologically discover the epiphanies behind how such memories have been embedded into my view of my grandmother’s life. I describe it as an aura of objects disseminated through time that makes me realise the value of these memories.

### 1.3.3. Personal Synaesthesia

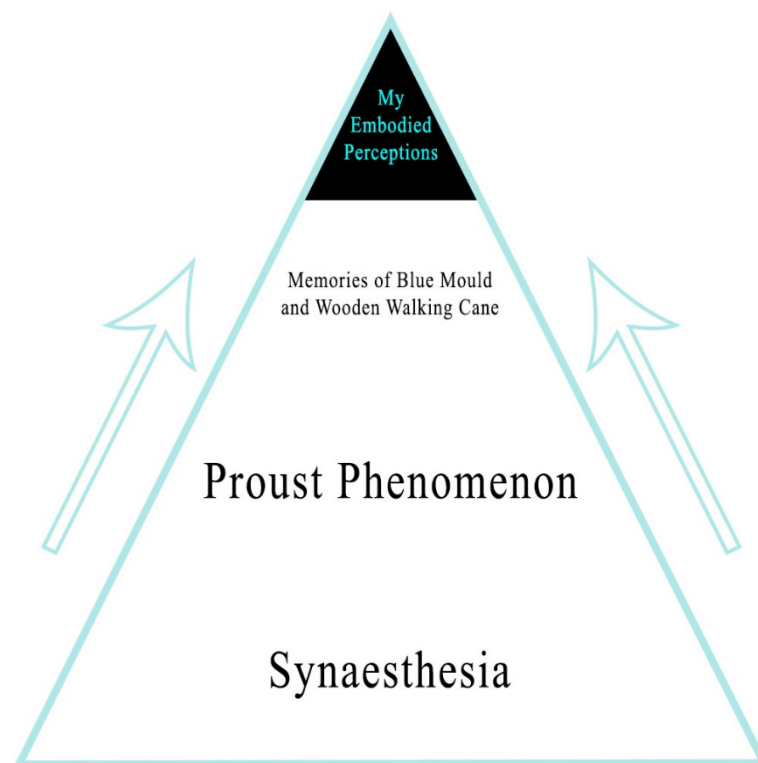


Figure 1.5. Mapping my contextual review process.

<sup>33</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 80.

I believe my personal synaesthetic experiences can be used to reconstruct memories and illustrate the metaphorical thinking that intersects with my embodied perception, and which distinctly invokes the Proust phenomenon through my childhood memories. The smell of mould reminds me of the deep-blue dyed wallpaper in my grandmother's house; however, this memory is accompanied by a sense that the same wallpaper has a rough and sticky feel, a 'memory' that is not true. This can be viewed as a somewhat distorted memory that is recalled based on the negative emotions that are perceived when the memory is initially evoked, and which may continue to trigger a chain of unpleasant memories in a domino-effect manner. Similar to *SBU*, the film *Attila Marcel*, directed by Sylvain Chomet, also examines the Proust phenomenon. Chomet anchors the film by introducing a quote by Proust at the start of the film: "We're able to find everything in our memory, which is like a dispensary where, at random, we pick a soothing drug or a dangerous poison".<sup>34</sup>

Despite a full recovery from asthma, the smell of mould still triggers memories of my grandmother's house and associated negative emotions. However, this does not mean that the smell of mould only triggers negative emotions for me. On the contrary, a sense of nostalgia about my grandmother intensifies when I realise the mould and the wooden cane embody stories involving both her and myself. Reid affirms that "scent-evoked nostalgia [predicts] higher levels of positive affect, self-esteem, self-continuity, optimism, social connectedness and meaning in life".<sup>35</sup> The personal memories illustrated in *SBU* cannot be defined as memories with negative emotions, but rather, embodied perceptual experiences that are explored positively with a sense of nostalgia. It is an opportunity to delve into my memories and discover the value of pleasant recollections overshadowed by negative emotions, and to correct my understanding of my grandmother and the place where she lived. Cytowic states that "all memories are in some sense false".<sup>36</sup> Memories of my grandmother's house may thus also be slightly exaggerated and skewed towards negative emotions. Nonetheless, the image of mould in my memories creates a narrative based on my real, embodied perceptions as

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<sup>34</sup> Sylvain Chomet, *Attila Marcel*, Blu-ray Disc, Drama (Pathé, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Reid et al., 'Scent-Evoked Nostalgia', 157.

<sup>36</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 103.

experienced through the visual and olfactory senses, which I would argue as representing my personal olfactory-visual synaesthesia.

## 1.4. Studio Ghibli Animation

### 1.4.1. Miyazaki's Narrative in *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988)

Legendary Japanese film director, Hayao Miyazaki, is the head of Studio Ghibli and internationally loved for bringing unique fantasy worlds to life in many feature-length animation films. The vivid, imaginative, and multisensory experience of childhood is a distinct feature of Miyazaki's work. In particular, Miyazaki's fourth feature film, *My Neighbour Totoro*, serves as a rich source of personal inspiration, as the film includes several elements that parallel *SBU*. The film is set in the rural landscape of Japan in the 1950s after World War II and is highly memorable for its portrayal of a peaceful co-existence between humans and nature. Miyazaki presents nature as a restorative setting throughout the film and strongly conveys the message that humanity must live in harmony with nature.<sup>37</sup>

Similar to how Walter Benjamin, emphasises that a story “bears the marks of the storyteller”<sup>38</sup>, Miyazaki's own experiences are reflected in the film's animation. From early childhood, Miyazaki was physically weak and his mother suffered from incurable spinal tuberculosis. As a child, he felt unable to approach her due to the fear of being infected with the disease himself.<sup>39</sup> For many personal and historical reasons, Miyazaki notes that “*My Neighbour Totoro* is...a letter written by me as an adult to myself as a child who hated Japan”.<sup>40</sup> Despite his unpleasant childhood memories, Miyazaki nonetheless depicts a story of intelligent children exploring dreamlike incidents in a peaceful rural area in Japan. Marks argues that “a film can recreate, not the true historical event, but at least another

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<sup>37</sup> Hayao Miyazaki, Interview with Hayao Miyazaki, interview by Hye-rim Hwang, trans. Monique H. Park, 2001, [http://www.cine21.com/news/view/?mag\\_id=3485](http://www.cine21.com/news/view/?mag_id=3485).

<sup>38</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov’, in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 92.

<sup>39</sup> Kaku Arakawa, ‘Drawing What's Real’, *10 Years with Hayao Miyazaki* (Tokyo: NHK World-Japan, 2019), <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/video/3004581/>.

<sup>40</sup> Miyazaki, Interview with Hayao Miyazaki.

version of it, by searching into the discursive layers in which it was found”.<sup>41</sup> *My Neighbour Totoro* can be viewed as a story of the world that Miyazaki dreamed of occupying in reality. Through the rich application of the director’s unique imagination, the film can be viewed as representing a utopian world, recreated from Miyazaki’s real life, as a tool for healing his unpleasant childhood memories.

#### 1.4.2. *My Story in The Scent of Blue Uiseong (2020)*

My own animated film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong*, reflects my personal story and depicts my experience of having asthma as a child, and of my grandmother, who lived in an old house in Uiseong (Figure 1.2), one of South Korea’s rural areas. Similar to how Miyazaki had a fear of approaching his mother, whom he loved very much, I was unable to approach my grandmother without experiencing a degree of discomfort, based on my fear of being overwhelmed by the smell of mould. *SBU* similarly serves as a letter from my adult self, having made a full recovery from asthma to my grandmother, from whom I always tended to distance myself. Certain threads within *My Neighbour Totoro* present parallels to *SBU*. Several significant features demonstrate Miyazaki’s strong influence as a director, animator, and storyteller on my own animation process. Miyazaki intentionally set *My Neighbour Totoro* in the 1950s following World War II, thereby suggesting an ideal space for people in which to seek recovery in nature from past turmoil. Miyazaki situates the film within meaningful social, cultural and historical contexts.

Similarly, my film, *The Scent of Blue Uiseong*, can be viewed in the wider context of the issue of small towns across South Korea being on the verge of collapse, with the elderly in these towns left to fend for themselves. In the end sequence of the film, I portray myself as an adult returning to my grandmother’s home and recalling my childhood days. This sequence was created from my imagination, and the setting reconstructed to highlight a reunion between my grandmother and myself, which is now impossible due to her death in reality. It is here where Miyazaki’s influence can be perceived; I created a utopian world as a conduit for healing negative childhood memories and

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<sup>41</sup> Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 29.

situated my film within a wider context by highlighting social and cultural issues that are woven into the story of *SBU*. Barker suggests that “perhaps viewers respond to whole cinematic structures – textural, spatial, or temporal structures, for example – that somehow resonate with their own textural, spatial and temporal structures”.<sup>42</sup> Through the sensory exploration of the real world and the consideration of social and psychological issues, *SBU* enables the audience to engage with my personal yearning, one that is universal in nature, i.e. to mend misunderstandings and negative experiences in relation to those who have passed away.

#### *1.4.3. The Imaginative Beauty of Nature*

Miyazaki does not simply portray his childhood life in Japan but evokes “a “world”, one that...transcends a particular time and place”.<sup>43</sup> The theme of nature is always at the heart of the director’s work, which strongly engages the audience to experience a more Eastern perspective. By evoking the peaceful world of Japan in the past, Miyazaki’s animation is rendered appealing to older generations with its strong sense of nostalgia, while also inviting younger generations to consider collective memories. When Swale emphasises Miyazaki’s impact on both Japanese and non-Japanese audiences, he notes that the director “succeeds in facilitating precisely such an imaginative engagement regardless of...cultural specifics”.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 74.

<sup>43</sup> Swale, ‘Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in Spirited Away’, 416.

<sup>44</sup> Swale, ‘Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in Spirited Away’, 424.



Figure 1.6. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Similar to *My Neighbour Totoro*, there is a sensibility in my autobiographical animation, *SBU* that aligns with perceptions associated with the East, such as the theme of humanity's relationship with nature. For example, in *SBU*, I depict distinct cultural elements such as hanok, the traditional Korean-style houses (see Figure 1.6) that are often depicted as existing within nature, while temporal and spatial structures are reconstructed by my imagination. My embodied perceptions are informed by an Eastern perspective because my formative years were spent in Korea and my memories of this time are entrenched within Korean culture. This differentiates *SBU* from films with a Western perspective; however, a sense of universality remains in the theme of an intimate relationship with nature because we are all, regardless of culture, surrounded by nature in the real world.





Figure 1.7. Stream scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

When an audience views an autobiographical film, they are not simply watching a record of what the filmmaker saw within a specific time and space, nor do they physically experience the exact impressions felt by the filmmaker. This notion can be illustrated using an example from *SBU* depicting a scene of fine-edged leaves in a stream. My physical vision does not allow for the type of proximity exhibited in Figure 1.7, i.e. the close-up of the film. Instead, I utilise the strategy of close-up shots (introduced earlier when discussing *The Scent of Green Papaya*) to extend a multisensory exploration of nature. Barker offers an insightful analysis of this strategy, stating that “what we do see is the film seeing: we see its own (if humanly enabled) process of perception and expression unfolding in space and time”.<sup>45</sup> The imaginative beauty of nature highlights the presence of the extraordinary within ordinary scenarios, and through the use of close-ups, the hidden world of nature is revealed for the audience to explore.

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<sup>45</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 9.

## 1.5. From Analogue to Digital

### 1.5.1. Miyazaki's Traditional Cel Animation

Miyazaki has worked in the animation industry for nearly 60 years and has consistently employed analogue cel animation techniques throughout his career. Despite the rising trend of three-dimensional (3D) animation, according to Miyazaki, "I want to use my [own] eyes to see the world and portray [what I see] using my own hands".<sup>46</sup> The director admits that he strongly prefers drawing by hand to retain the originality of his analogue animation style. Miyazaki's tenth feature film, *Ponyo* (2008), provides rich examples of this, featuring a record 170,000 frames, every one of which was drawn by him.<sup>47</sup> Similar to *My Neighbour Totoro*, in *Ponyo*, Miyazaki presents the beauty of nature but in a more illustrative manner, as the production of the film began with hand-drawn imageboards. Through the analogue method of using pencils, brushes, and paper – the basic tools of animation – Miyazaki constructs his world of imagination in search of the ultimate, mesmerising image.

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Figure 1.8. A still image from *10 Years with Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2019, NHK World-Japan, Japan).

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<sup>46</sup> Hayao Miyazaki, Hayao Miyazaki, the 'Walt Disney of Japan,' still does animation the old fashioned way in 'Ponyo', interview by Ethan Sacks, 2009, <https://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/tv-movies/hayao-miyazaki-walt-disney-japan-animation-old-fashioned-ponyo-article-1.395456>.

<sup>47</sup> Miyazaki. Hayao Miyazaki, the 'Walt Disney of Japan,' still does animation the old fashioned way in 'Ponyo'.

After Miyazaki finished the first imageboard (Figure 1.8) for *Ponyo*, he remarked, “*Ponyo is Here* is the [image] that captures the [film’s] essence. Finally, I’ve drawn the definitive image for the story. This pushes the envelope on imagination”.<sup>48</sup> Miyazaki’s animation is delicately created in each frame, and as the creator of the film, it comes alive by his hand. For the animation cel in *Ponyo*, instead of portraying a realistic image of a tsunami, Miyazaki created a giant monster-like fish to convey the force of a tsunami, an image that is imaginatively explored through hand-drawing. Miyazaki does not simply pursue an analogue-style of animation because of his familiarity with it; rather, by capturing the essence of the film in a hand-drawn image, he reveals his unique way of creating the film’s body, “a lived body (but not a human one) capable of the perception of expression and the expression of perception”.<sup>49</sup> The image in Figure 1.8 demonstrates that Miyazaki uses the film’s ‘body’, which perceives a tsunami as a giant monster-like fish, to express its overwhelming force through a hand-drawn illustration. The film’s body immerses the audience to experience it; to see, hear, feel, and interpret Miyazaki’s imaginative world. In the analogue process of freely exploring the perception of expression and the expression of perception, Miyazaki adds sensory qualities to the film’s world through hand-drawn techniques.

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<sup>48</sup> Kaku Arakawa, ‘Ponyo is Here’, *10 Years with Hayao Miyazaki* (Tokyo: NHK World-Japan, 2019), <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/video/3004569/>.

<sup>49</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 9.

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Figure 1.9. A still image from *Never-Ending Man: Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2016, NHK World TV, Japan).

Ten years after the production of *Ponyo*, Miyazaki decided to work with computer graphics (CG) animation artists to produce his short animation, *Boro the Caterpillar* (2018) for the Ghibli Museum. Miyazaki stated, “I have ideas [that] I may not be able to draw by hand, and [CGI] may be a way to do it – that’s my hope. It’s a new technology”.<sup>50</sup> Miyazaki discovered that computer graphics (CG) had the potential to extend his imaginative world. He acknowledges the benefits of CG but shows that it remains essential that analogue methods be used in the animation process. For the first scene in *Boro the Caterpillar*, when the caterpillar in question, Boro, peeks out of his eggshell, CG enabled speeding-up the production of animating the character; however, Miyazaki was not satisfied with the character’s lack of personality. He felt it did not move like a newborn creature observing the beauty of the world for the first time. During this process, he used a drawing tablet (see Figure 1.10) to demonstrate to CG animators the details of the character’s movement that required improvements. In addition, Miyazaki made significant changes to the scene (see Figure 1.9) by adding ‘night fish’ and other creatures to highlight Boro’s curiosity and fear about facing a new world.

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<sup>50</sup> Kaku Arakawa, *Never-Ending Man: Hayao Miyazaki*, Blu-ray Disc, Documentary (NHK World TV, 2016).

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Figure 1.10. A still image from *Never-Ending Man: Hayao Miyazaki* (dir. Kaku Arakawa, 2016, NHK World TV, Japan).

As such, the basic movement of the primary character, Boro, which Miyazaki could not express through hand-drawing, was generated by CG. However, during this process, Miyazaki infused the character with emotion to render Boro representative of a truly living creature. This strategy is emphasised by the Toronto-based scholar, Tess Takahashi, a writer and programmer who focuses on experimental moving image art. Takahashi argues that “many films that use direct animation techniques suggest a desire for the pure communication of an image [using] techniques based on the impression of an implement held in the filmmaker’s hand”.<sup>51</sup> Miyazaki pursues such a direct animation technique with his hand, whether through analogue or digital strategies, to truly bring stories to life, and to convey the emotions that he wishes the audience to experience within the world of his imagination.

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<sup>51</sup> Miriam Harris, Lilly Husbands, and Paul Taberham, ‘From Analogue to Digital’, in *Experimental Animation: From Analogue to Digital* (London, New York: Routledge, 2019), 105.

### 1.5.2. My Digital Cel Animation

Similar to Miyazaki's work, I introduce a direct [hand-drawn] animation with painterly and illustrative visual elements but do so using digital cel animation and particle effects to express my unique animation style. Takahashi argues that "direct animation emphasises the contact between the artist's hand and the film's surface".<sup>52</sup> While relishing the convenience that digital devices can provide, I first apply delicate hand-drawn work to individual animation frames, using the strengths of the hand-drawing techniques demonstrated in Miyazaki's work. Throughout the digital process, I aim to express ideas that are difficult to draw by hand, while still employing the unique abilities that hand-drawing provides. The American painter, Hans Hofmann, notes that "a work of art is a world in itself reflecting [the] senses and emotions of the artist's world".<sup>53</sup> When engaging in drawing, there is a direct correlation between the emotions evoked by my past sensory experiences that still mentally linger and the movements of my hand that physically reproduce these impressions, enabling me to capture a remembered atmosphere.



Figure 1.11. 3D particle effects (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

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<sup>52</sup> Harris, Husbands, and Taberham, 102.

<sup>53</sup> Hans Hofmann, 'Excerpts from the Teaching of Hans Hofmann', in *Search for the Real and Other Essays*, ed. Sara T Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Revised (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1967), 59.

In *Experimental Animation: From Analogue to Digital* (2019), Miriam Harris suggests that “digital media can prompt a sensory and emotional response, that is equal in its intensity to that of its analogue counterpart”.<sup>54</sup> Although *SBU* is generally created entirely using digital devices, analogue sensibilities are maintained through the use of hand-drawing on a pressure-sensitive digital tablet. The combination of both analogue and digital influences is evident in the scene in *SBU* where the character hears an accent that she finds difficult to understand. In this scene (see Figure 1.11), the letters floating in the air were created in Maya (v. 2020), a 3D computer animation software program. Using Maya was extremely time-efficient; however, the computer-generated movement of the letters was too realistic in the sense that they were readable, thereby indicating that the character was able to understand them. I subsequently reduced the number of frames to achieve a visual effect reminiscent of the cel animation style, through which the movement of the letters was manually distorted, using a drawing tablet to emphasise the character’s confused response upon triggering of the auditory sense. This scene shows that the hand-drawing technique employed in the digital process remains powerful due to the intimate relationship between the filmmaker’s hand the film being created.

The pressure-sensitive digital tablet retained the ability to vary the width and intensity of drawn lines, rendering them less machine-like and more sensitive to the different nuances of the human hand, which is tied to both the intellect and emotion. In this manner, digital devices can still convey my personal sensibilities because they are controlled by my hand. The complex interplay of two-dimensional (2D) animation and the 3D particle effect is inflected with a hand-drawn sense of vulnerability that assists in conveying the character in the scene’s emotional response to the sensory experience. Sean Cubitt, Professor of Film and Television at Goldsmiths, University of London, provides an understanding of our relationship with technology by referring to the Canadian philosopher, Marshall McLuhan. Cubitt observes that McLuhan “describes tools as extensions of the hand [and, accordingly, illustrates that] the relation between human and machine is purely one of

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<sup>54</sup> Harris, Husbands, and Taberham, ‘From Analogue to Digital’, 129.

control. The machine is an instrument of humans”.<sup>55</sup> In addition to creating time and giving rise to cost efficiencies, digital devices such as personal computers and drawing tablets are employed to extend my physical hand into the digital world, assisting me in conveying my genuine emotions to an audience, the members of which can, in turn, experience their own emotions by engaging with my autobiographical film.

As a filmmaker, the greatest pleasure in making an autobiographical film arises for me when the filmmaker and the audience are both engaged in the world of the film through a mutual sense of empathy. Barker notes that “our empathy with [a] film’s body can be considered a kind of handshake. We extend our bodies to the film, and it extends its body to us simultaneously, and in doing so, we agree on certain terms”.<sup>56</sup> The strongest advantage of hand-drawing is that it reflects traces of the animator’s thoughts and emotions, which permeate each visual element. This serves to extend sensory exploration and creates a connection between the filmmaker and the audience through the film.

## **1.6. Colour System**

### *1.6.1. Unified Colours of Nature*

In animation, colour is a visual language that contributes to the atmosphere of a story and subconsciously influences an audience’s emotions. Miyazaki worked closely with Michiyo Yasuda, a colour designer at Studio Ghibli for more than 40 years, to create a unique colour system that effects strong synergy with the emotional narratives of Miyazaki’s animation. As previously noted, Miyazaki consistently deals with the theme of nature, and strongly influenced Yasuda to uniquely mix and combine various natural colours for individual film productions. The naturalistic colours of Miyazaki’s films gradually change based on how the story evolves, thereby illustrating Yasuda’s successful approach to imbuing Miyazaki’s animation with emotional and spatial qualities.

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<sup>55</sup> Sean Cubitt, ‘Graphical Film: The Vector’, in *The Cinema Effect* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 88.

<sup>56</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 94.



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Figure 1.12. Still images from *My Neighbour Totoro* (dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1988, Toho, Japan).

For example, in *My Neighbour Totoro*, a scene with characters under a dark and rainy sky (see Figure 1.12 B) is depicted using colours low in brightness and hue. Contrastingly, under a clear sky, the colours are relatively vivid (see Figure 1.12 A). Yasuda employed a relaxing colour palette in the film to convey a well-balanced light intensity, and in this manner created different moods within the film that could be easily understood, with the hope that “viewers would all see and feel the beauty of nature in the film”.<sup>57</sup> Yasuda used a creamy yellow colour to express Totoro’s friendly personality, vibrant emotions, and the soft and warm tactility of an animal, yet mixed in light grey and green colours to emphasise the character as a mysterious creature living in the forest. The result of this palette is that Miyazaki’s fantasy world acquires real-world flourishes that the audience can physiologically respond to.

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<sup>57</sup> Cristy Lytal, ‘She Makes a Colorful Addition to Any Story’, *Los Angeles Times*, 2009, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-aug-16-ca-workinghollywood16-story.html>.

### 1.6.2. Hanji Texture



Figure 1.13. Hanji (n.d, paper).

The texture that accompanies my unique colour system reflects hanji (Figure 1.13), a traditional Korean handmade type of paper made from the inner bark of paper mulberry, a native Korean tree. As a traditional material, hanji can enhance both the cultural references and the analogue mood of *SBU*, and also creates a synergistic relationship with the visual elements of *SBU* around the theme of nature. The warm colour of the specific hanji I selected in this instance and the unique textile pattern of fibres on the soft surface of the paper itself awakens the audience's tactile sense, creating the sense that they can touch the film with their fingertips. Throughout *SBU*, hanji can be considered a haptic image that allows the film's body to approach the viewer, which it does "by virtue of pulling the viewer into a richly textured space – or perhaps it is better to say, pushing texture out to meet the viewer".<sup>58</sup>

My use of hanji suggests "a desire to get back to an original, primal language of film, made through direct contact with the most basic of materials".<sup>59</sup> By triggering the sense of touch through an

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<sup>58</sup> Laura U. Marks, 'Institute Benjamenta: An Olfactory View', in *The Sharpest Point : Animation at the End of Cinema* (Toronto: ON : YYZ Books/Ottawa International Animation Festival/Images Festival, 2005), 127.

<sup>59</sup> Harris, Husbands, and Taberham, 'From Analogue to Digital', 109.

analogue-like painting, this texture provides possibilities for the filmmaker and the audience to become engaged in a sense of mutual emotional resonance. Barker considers “texture as something we and the film engage in mutually, rather than something presented by [a film] to [its] passive and anonymous viewers”.<sup>60</sup> By using this texture as a filter for *SBU*, the body of the film encourages both Korean and non-Korean audiences to experience cultural familiarity and novelty. Barker further states that “film borrows our ability to feel things deeply and the style with which we express our feelings tactilely and emotionally”.<sup>61</sup> In *SBU*, hanji is a tool encapsulated by the film’s body that allows us to physically feel the film, regardless of cultural differences.

### *1.6.3. Mother Colour*

The American film director and storyboard artist, Francis Glebas, posits that “three ways [in which] to create unified colors are [by using] a mother color...using grayed out or desaturated colors, and by using chromatic light”.<sup>62</sup> Miyazaki uniquely applies this theory by building a colour system to fuse the real world and the fantasy world of his animation. Based on this colour theory and analysis of Miyazaki’s colour system, *SBU* has developed its own unique colour system, one that invites the audience to explore my imaginative world from a realistic perspective.

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<sup>60</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 25.

<sup>61</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 148.

<sup>62</sup> Francis Glebas, ‘Creating Worlds’, in *The Animator’s Eye, Adding Life to Animation with Timing, Layout, Design, Color and Sound* (New York: Focal Press, 2013), 130.



Figure 1.14. The scenery outside the house (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

A key feature of Miyazaki's animation style is the consistent use of a natural colour scheme. Since nature is a central theme in *SBU*, natural watercolours dominate, encouraging an audience to delight in the beauty of nature as it is transmitted through my pleasant childhood memories. The neutral colour of green dominates the entire screen, particularly at the beginning of *SBU*, and serves as a mother colour that is “added to all the colors to unify them into the same “family””.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Glebas, *Creating Worlds*, 130.



#### 1.6.4. Achromatic and Complementary Colours



Figure 1.15. Gravel road scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

In *SBU*, characters are created using a combination of saturated accent and achromatic colours to bring them to life within a nature-based setting.<sup>64</sup> The achromatic colours are often used to reduce gaps in the colour scheme, enabling the characters to blend well with the naturalistic background. For example, different shades of white and grey, are used for each of my brothers, based on their true skin colour. Concurrently, white and grey are combined with blue as a symbolic colour of the characters' clothes to emphasise the children's innocence and honesty, while also recalling the smell of blue mould slowly seeping into their clothes.

The colour purple has multiple purposes in *SBU*, expressing both reflected light and shadow, while also evoking an air of mystery. It is blended with most of the background colours in the image of Figure 1.15, alongside the use of contrasting intensive light and shadow. For the shadow of the tree on the gravel road, the original brown background colour was combined with purple, which resulted in objects in the scene being portrayed realistically, enabling an audience to vividly explore the space I

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<sup>64</sup> Glebas, *Creating Worlds*, 131.

created from memory. Where the shadow of the tree overlaps with the shadow of a character, the neutral grey is intensified into a darker colour. These details within my colour system not only draws the audience into the real world of the film but also conveys the pure enthusiasm of children running under the clear sky and their imaginative play.

#### 1.6.5. Chromatic Light



Figure 1.16. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Glebas states that “the progression of color relationships throughout a film is designed to enhance the emotions of the story”.<sup>65</sup> Based on the emotional variation of a narrative, “chromatic light, which simply [refers to] colored light”<sup>66</sup> is often used in *SBU*, and represents another approach for unifying colours to create dramatic effects. In *SBU*, natural light can also be viewed as chromatic light, and pastel colour variants of orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple are all purposely used at different intensities. The hue, intensity, and direction of light can change entirely, based on the setting of the scene, and this type of light is highly effective for adding spatial quality and to express specific

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<sup>65</sup> Glebas, *Creating Worlds*, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Glebas, *Creating Worlds*, 131.

emotions that I recall from my childhood. For example, in the scene in Figure 1.16, the sky is illustrated using the intensity of light at sunset over the mountains to emphasise the emotional depth of the scene and to imbue it with a sense of nostalgia. Warm pastel colours such as orange and yellow are enhanced to realistically depict the rays of the setting sun. The combination of green, blue and purple is also added to the scene to unify the chromatic light with the original colours of mountains and sky, suffusing the entire scene with the sublime beauty of nature.

## 1.7. Poetic Film

### 1.7.1. Relationship Between Film and Audience

Poetic film borrows characteristics of poetry; I consider *SBU* as a poetic film that reflects personal understandings and epiphanies from my childhood. Barker refers to the Russian quasi-autobiographical film poem, *Mirror* (1975), directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, which incorporates poems read by the director's father. She states that "the poetic image evokes not only the complex relationship between the past and present, with which [*Mirror*] is explicitly concerned but also the complexity of the relationship between film and viewer".<sup>67</sup> Similar poetic aspects of *Mirror*, *SBU* begins with the portrayal of memories but also expresses my embodied perception through more implicit language of my own narrative voiceover. Regarding this phenomenon, Cytowic states that "synesthesia illustrates how memory, embodied perception, and metaphoric thinking support one another".<sup>68</sup> The narrative of *SBU* reveals that synaesthesia is woven into different types of creative expression, and ultimately transforms the complex relationship between film and audience into a more intimate and empathetic experience.

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<sup>67</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 161.

<sup>68</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 102.

### 1.7.2. Metaphors

Cytowic argues that “without synesthesia preceding language developmentally, we wouldn’t be able to understand metaphors like “loud tie,” “warm color,” or “sweet person””.<sup>69</sup> In the context of poetic film, metaphors serve as bridges that connect the filmmaker and audience by confirming that we are all multisensory beings with the capacity to synaesthetically understand each other. *SBU* adopts a first-person perspective, enabling the audience to experience the film in a three-dimensional manner, as the spatial quality is enhanced through the use of metaphors. For example, in the phrase “the air, which was heavy with the whirr of the dusty fan”, ‘heavy’ is an adjective used figuratively rather than literally, to describe a sensory experience. Throughout *SBU*, it is consistently inferred to the viewer that hot air is heavy on summer days, even though the word ‘heavy’ is related to tactile feeling, e.g. when lifting a physical object. This poetic narrative strategy engages the audience by soliciting their own embodied perceptions throughout the duration of the film and spurs them into making associations with their own memories involving specific tactilities. Barker states that when “watching a film, we are certainly not in the film, but we are not entirely outside it, either. We exist and move and feel in that space of contact where our surfaces mingle and our musculatures entangle”.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.7.3. Symbolism

The complexity of the relationship between a film and its audience is also perceptible when the audience exists at a level of remove from a film. Synaesthetic metaphors in a poetic film can also create intimacy between the film and its audience. Barker observes that “the film certainly perceives, experiences, is immersed in, and has a vantage point on the world, and without a doubt the film signifies [its body], or otherwise there would be nothing at all for us to see, hear, feel, or interpret”.<sup>71</sup> In *SBU*, the colour blue as a signifier becomes symbolic of several meanings, inviting the audience to contrast the sadness of past reality with a sense of future serenity. For example, the phrase, “I saw a trace of you in the blue mould” evokes a sense of decay, yearning, and regret, whereas the phrase,

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<sup>69</sup> Cytowic, *Synesthesia*, 102.

<sup>70</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 12.

<sup>71</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 9.



“The smell of blue and the smell of our old summer days” has intimations of blue-sky summers, lightness, and hope. Paul Wells, director and Professor in Animation at Loughborough University, Loughborough (UK), states that “metaphor essentially grows out of symbolism and serves to embody a system of ideas in a more appealing or conducive image system. The use of metaphor simultaneously invites interpretation but insists upon openness”.<sup>72</sup> I hope that in *SBU*, these contrasting images affect the audience emotionally because the symbolic nature of the colour blue is sufficiently open-ended, enabling the audience (not only the filmmaker) to create their own associations with the metaphors in a deeply meaningful way.

#### 1.7.4. Words and Imagery

Words and images have a particular propensity for expressing memories. The relationship between words and imagery has been examined in various forms of art including films, paintings, and comics, and plays a vital role within my poetic animation, *SBU*. According to Berger, “seeing comes before words”.<sup>73</sup> As an audio-visual medium containing a combination of verbalised words and imagery, in *SBU* visual cues precede auditory cues in the audience’s perception of a specific culture. In addition, the combination of words and images encourages an audience to experience and express their own thoughts and emotions; as Barker states, “a lived-body is always in the act of perceiving expression and expressing perception”.<sup>74</sup> At this point, being subtle and less literal serves as a key approach throughout *SBU*, providing the audience with enough time and space for a sensory exploration of the film’s world. Berger reflects that “every image embodies a way of seeing”<sup>75</sup>; the imagery in *SBU* embodies the way I remember my memories, while the words that make up the narration further supply details about this world in a poetic fashion.

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<sup>72</sup> Paul Wells, ‘Once Upon A Time: Narrative Strategies’, in *Understanding Animation* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), 84.

<sup>73</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 8.

<sup>75</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 10.



Figure 1.17. Sunset scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

For example, in the scene where the children wind their way through a rice field (Figure 1.17), the audience only gets to see the walking canes moving across the screen, along with the rustling rice plants, while the camera slowly tilts up to the sky. This is a subtle way of portraying the phrase, “we secretly jumped into the rice field”, so that the essence of the words is captured. Rather than showing an entire sequence of children running into a rice field, this scene shows only a fragment of the event, while also furnishing the image that is shown with additional details. This encourages the audience to combine fragments supplied by visual and auditory elements and to experience my film’s world individually. Berger states that “although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing”.<sup>76</sup> The audience’s understanding of a film’s world is influenced by individual society and culture; the individual will view the film within the personal context that they are familiar with, rather than from an objective perspective. The American cartoonist and comics theorist, Scott McCloud, notes that “it’s [this] sense of continuous experience that can help make reading feel like living”.<sup>77</sup> I believe that this strategy of combining

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<sup>76</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 10.

<sup>77</sup> Scott McCloud, ‘The Power of Words’, in *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels* (New York: William Morrow, 2006), 129.

words and imagery applies not only to cartoons but also to films, and allows for the encapsulation of both memories and imagination. According to Berger, “the more imaginative the work, the more profoundly it allows us to share the artist’s experience of the visible”.<sup>78</sup>

## 1.8. Sound System

### 1.8.1. Narrative Voiceover

*The Scent of Blue Uiseong* focuses on conveying genuine emotions arising from real situations, while also giving voice to my own imagination. This echoes Miyazaki’s pronouncement that “we must be idealistic realists”.<sup>79</sup> To achieve this, I use a narrative voiceover throughout the film, as I consider it a powerful approach for creating a sense of intimacy and emotional immersion. The narration draws on metaphors and symbolism, as I have previously noted, and has an aural rhythm that creates synchronicity with the emotional variances of the protagonist. By providing the film’s narration myself, I aim to delicately convey my embodied perception of childhood and enhance the animation’s sense of intimacy by engaging in an emotional conversation with the audience. Audio engineer and Adjunct Professor in Film Sound at Flashpoint Chicago (USA), Tom Blakemore, comments that “the voiceover is about holding a conversation with a friend, even if we are aware that millions of people will hear the words. [It] is this intimacy that we are trying to capture, with all of its friendliness and personal content”.<sup>80</sup> Similar to the letter format, the narrative voiceover is conducted as an individual conversation while speaking directly to an audience. Audio effects were intentionally excluded for the voiceover section and I recorded it in a sound recording room. The resulting audio is unaltered and intimate, which aims to ensure that the audience listens closely to my voice, thereby enhancing the vivid nature of the storytelling.

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<sup>78</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Arakawa, ‘Ponyo is Here’.

<sup>80</sup> Tom Blakemore, ‘The Voice in Media’, in *Recording Voiceover: The Spoken Word in Media* (Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press, 2015), 22.

### 1.8.2. Silence

The voiceover supports the visual storytelling of *SBU* by verbally portraying the protagonist's emotions and circumstances. The speed at which narration is delivered will impact the emotions triggered by the animation and, accordingly, the depth of the audience's emotional engagement with the moving images. Silence also provides time for the audience during which to fully observe and experience the world of animation. It encourages them to fill gaps in scenes with their own interpretation and acts "as a component of interaction".<sup>81</sup> The frequent use of silence in Miyazaki's animation can be compared to a Japanese conversational style. Senior Lecturer of Linguistics at the University of Westminster, London (UK), Haru Yamada, states, "the process of anticipatory guesswork required to fill out each other's communication is called *sasshi*, a strategy where [participants] try to understand as much as possible from the little that is said".<sup>82</sup>



Figure 1.18. The protagonist outside the house (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

<sup>81</sup> Fernando Poyatos, ed., 'Nonverbal Communication across Disciplines', *John Benjamins*, Paralanguage, kinesics, silence, personal and environmental interaction, 2 (2002): 299, <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.ncad2>.

<sup>82</sup> Haru Yamada, 'Speak for Yourself Listen to Others', in *Different Games, Different Rules: Why Americans and Japanese Misunderstand Each Other* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 37.

In addition to playing an important role in Japanese discourse, I would argue that silence is a distinct feature of Korean discourse and that in *SBU*, it affects the flow of the animation's overall narrative. Silence can be viewed as a type of language that encourages an audience to engage in automatic 'guesswork' about the specific time and space captured in a scene. For example, in the scene in *SBU* where the protagonist hesitates about entering an old house (Figure 1.18), there is a gap in the narration during which the voiceover is not heard. The use of silence here intends to capture the character's anxiety and the dreariness of the environment at sunset. Although this silence expresses a specific feeling and emotion, I acknowledge that the audience may associate the visual and auditory elements of the scene with different thoughts and emotions. Barker states that while watching a film, we are "living and moving and being thrown about "there," in the world of the film and, at the same time, feeling those very sensations "here," in the safety of our seats".<sup>83</sup> The use of silence invites the audience to personally commit themselves to the particularities of the film's world and emotionally react to the events on the screen in the real world.

### 1.8.3. *Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response*

Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is a term that describes a mysterious 'tingling' that listeners experience through multiple senses when triggered by a particular auditory stimulus.<sup>84</sup> The founder of the ASMR Research Project, Jennifer Allen, conceptualised the term 'ASMR' based on her personal experience, and extensive psychological research has been conducted to theoretically demonstrate this phenomenon.<sup>85</sup> Atypical and clinical psychology cognitive scientist, Emma Barratt, and Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester (UK), Nick Davis, refer to Cytowic's analysis of synaesthesia and analyse how ASMR can be described as auditory–tactile synaesthesia. They argue that ASMR may be "the positive end of a spectrum of a

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<sup>83</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 105.

<sup>84</sup> Rob Gallagher, 'Eliciting Euphoria Online: The Aesthetics of "ASMR" Video Culture', *Film Criticism* 40, no. 2 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.3998/fc.13761232.0040.202>.

<sup>85</sup> Jamie L Keiles, 'How A.S.M.R. Became a Sensation', *The New York Times Magazine*, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/magazine/how-asmr-videos-became-a-sensation-youtube.html>.

sound/emotion synaesthesia, [where] this tingling sensation is a secondary phenomenon resulting from intensely positive feelings”.<sup>86</sup>

I consider ASMR as a synaesthetic phenomenon, one that serves as a crucial tool in the construction of my sound system. Paul Wells states that “the role of sound inevitably informs any debate concerning realism in animation because it often defines the hyper-realist premise of a situation, but what it offers more specifically is a mode of authentication to the nature of the narrative preferred by the animator”.<sup>87</sup> In the case of *SBU*, natural sounds that are rarely heard without focused concentration are precisely captured for the audience as a means for vividly experiencing the world of the film in a manner that is close to how my body remembers the past. Wells states that “voice, music, song and sound effects may all be evaluated separately for the particular contribution each makes to the collective aural vocabulary that simultaneously illustrates, interrogates, comments upon and narrates the visual image”.<sup>88</sup> Due to the nature of animation, the audience may alight upon different visual information, depending on where they direct their focus onscreen, whereas the auditory information can generally be acknowledged in more ambient terms. Unlike the background music and the narrative voiceover, where silence is intentionally employed, ASMR functions as a consistently present aspect throughout *SBU* to support the visual images and extend the space of the film. As a result, the sound system provides various auditory cues to increase the degree of narrative immersion.

Since nature is a central theme of *SBU*, I believe that ASMR contributes to creating a heightened state of calm and embodied sensory perception within a naturalistic environment. Postdoctoral researcher with Ego-Media at King’s College London, Rob Gallagher, states that “ASMR autobiographies demonstrate a continuing desire to narrate the self according to familiar templates”.<sup>89</sup> By emphasising the subtlety of familiar sounds within nature, ASMR allows for the sharing of my multisensory

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<sup>86</sup> Emma L Barratt and Nick J Davis, ‘Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): A Flow-like Mental State’, *PeerJ Inc* 3 (2015): 14, <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.851>.

<sup>87</sup> Wells, ‘ONCE UPON A TIME: Narrative Strategies’, 102.

<sup>88</sup> Wells, ‘ONCE UPON A TIME: Narrative Strategies’, 99.

<sup>89</sup> Rob Gallagher, “‘ASMR’ Autobiographies and the (Life-)Writing of Digital Subjectivity’, *SAGE Publications Inc*, *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 2019, 273, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856518818072>.

experience, enabling an audience to vividly explore said experience using their own imagination. In a scene where the protagonist hesitates to enter an old house (Figure 1.18), the visual setting is designed based on actual photos that I own. At this point in the film, sound layers, which include crows flying across the sky, a radio playing inside the house, footsteps on a gravel surface and a breeze are overlapped to provide additional imagined information. Barker states that “film not only reveals [the] “hidden provinces” of physical reality but also...incorporates the viewer’s body into these configurations”.<sup>90</sup> The world of *SBU* is extended to intimately invite the audience to explore the familiar sounds of nature. They are encouraged to imagine the hidden space of the film through these auditory cues.

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<sup>90</sup> Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, 83.

## CHAPTER 2: Research Design

### 2.1. Paradigm: Artistic Researcher

Research paradigms have been applied in many academic fields of art and design. These paradigms serve as theoretical frameworks and collections of concepts that dominate the practitioner's design and thinking. Former Dean of the Centre for Art Education at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore (USA), Karen Carroll, suggests that a paradigm is "a body of beliefs and values, laws and practices that govern a community of practitioners".<sup>91</sup> In dealing with the particular concerns of animation, the specific paradigm that underpins my research is the belief that I am an artistic researcher who has conducted in-depth consideration of the possibilities associated with the autobiographical narrative genre. As an artist, I embrace a paradigm in which artistic research is a reflection of the practitioner. Director of the Institute for Artistic Research Berlin (Germany), Julian Klein, argues that "artistic knowledge is, in each and every case, sensual and physical, "embodied knowledge"". <sup>92</sup> That is, artistic research is conducted based on sensory and emotional perceptions that cannot be separated from each other. As an artistic researcher, my aim with the present research is to explore how and why I convey my embodied knowledge through *SBU*.

### 2.2. Methodologies

#### 2.2.1. Practice-based Research

Writer and researcher of creative practice in art and technology, Linda Candy, suggests that practice-based research is "an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice".<sup>93</sup> I believe that originality and new (my embodied) knowledge can be discovered using my technical methods, which will be discussed in the 'Methods' section of this thesis. However, the most comprehensive understanding of this

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<sup>91</sup> Karen Lee Carroll, 'Researching Paradigms in Art Education', in *S. D. La Pierre & E. Zimmerman (Eds.), Research Methods and Methodologies for Art Education* (Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 1997), 171.

<sup>92</sup> Julian Klein, 'What Is Artistic Research?', *The Journal for Artistic Research*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.22501/jarnet.0004>.

<sup>93</sup> Linda Candy, 'Practice Based Research: A Guide', *Creativity and Cognition Studios Report* (Sydney: University of Technology Sydney, 2006), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257944497\\_Practice\\_Based\\_Research\\_A\\_Guide](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257944497_Practice_Based_Research_A_Guide).



investigation can be manifested when the meaning and context of the work are clarified. This is crucial in practice-based research, where the creative outcome accompanies theoretical contexts to emphasise the originality of the work. The contextual review not only locates the work within the broader creative framework of embodied knowledge but also strengthens my logical understanding in the applicable psychological and phenomenological fields.

### 2.2.2. *Autoethnography*

Autoethnography is the overarching approach that was selected for this research. It describes and systematically analyses a personal experience to facilitate an understanding of it within a specific culture. That is, it combines the characteristics of autobiography and ethnography.<sup>94</sup>

Autoethnographers “retrospectively and selectively write about past experiences”.<sup>95</sup> I believe autoethnography to be the best overarching approach for *SBU* as it examines personal stories that are retrospectively selected in a cultural context. The methodology is reflected in my overarching research question, i.e., to what extent can animation be extended into a multisensory medium to explore autobiographical memories?

My personal memories are assembled not simply for the sake of creating an animation, but also to gain additional insight. I argue that my ‘epiphany’ had been discovered through the process of autoethnography. American communication scholars Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, and Professor in the Department of Communication at Bradley University, Peoria (USA), Tony Adams, shed light on the factors that support this belief. They state that “most often, autobiographers write about ‘epiphanies’—remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life”.<sup>96</sup> In *SBU*, personal epiphanies are evoked through recollected past events and by the olfactory trigger of blue mould, which is a core aspect of my personal story. The discovery of such

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<sup>94</sup> Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams, and Arthur Bochner, ‘Forum: Qualitative Social Research’, ed. Jeanine Evers et al., *Autoethnography: An Overview*, The KWALON Experiment: Discussions on Qualitative Data Analysis Software by Developers and Users, 12, no. 1 (2011): 1–18.

<sup>95</sup> Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 4.

<sup>96</sup> Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 3.

epiphanies led me to analyse the embodied knowledge of the culture in which my memories are embedded, and how these memories have influenced the trajectory of my life.

Ellis, Bochner and Adams note that “autoethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyse experience, but [must also] consider [the] ways [in which] others may experience similar epiphanies”.<sup>97</sup> The multisensory experience in *SBU* not only targets a Korean audience, the members of which may have similar collective memories, but also considers a non-Korean audience. Although they may not share the same cultural experiences as my own, it provides them with the opportunity to explore relevant associated memories. Whether it is collective or associated memories that are recalled, the audience is invited to explore a specific film’s world in the personal and cultural context of the filmmaker’s life. Consequently, I argue that prompted by the film, *SBU* may enable a wider audience to discover their own similar personal epiphanies.

### 2.2.3. Action Research

My supportive methodology employs action research, which incorporates a practice-based approach to autoethnography. This approach shaped the practical methods for generating epiphanies within myself; it also served as a tool for enabling the audience to do the same. Director of the Myron E. Ullman Jr. School of Design at the University of Cincinnati, Gjoko Muratovski, concludes that action research is “an examination of the way in which practitioners reflect on their actions during and following [completion of] their work”.<sup>98</sup> The methods I employed are the tools contained within my chosen methodologies. They serve as a review of embodied knowledge, photographs, matte painting, scriptwriting, reflective thinking and animation references. These methods were conducted using the action research cycle of planning, acting, monitoring and evaluating stages to reflect on my actions systematically. As a result, original investigation and personal embodied knowledge were carefully embedded within the components of *SBU*. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner note that “autoethnography is

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<sup>97</sup> Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 4.

<sup>98</sup> Gjoko Muratovski, ‘Chapter 7: Applied Research’, in *Research for Designers : A Guide to Methods and Practice*. (London: Sage Publications, 2016), 192.

both process and product”.<sup>99</sup> I agree that, in the context of this study, the more deeply one explores a range of resources throughout the cycle of action research, the more the world within a film is made manifest, which enables both filmmaker and audience to vividly explore said world and discover their own epiphanies.

## 2.3. Methods

### 2.3.1. Iterative Design and Thinking Processes

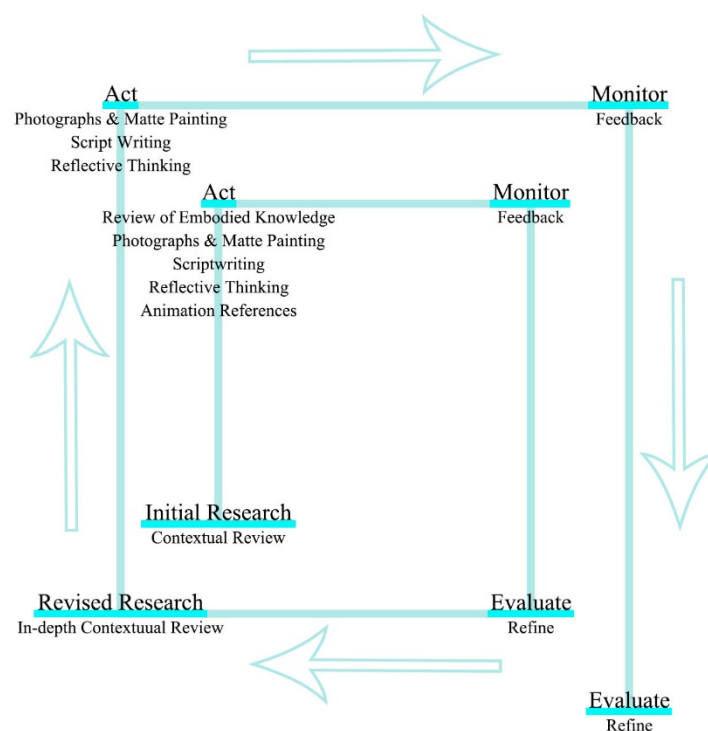


Figure 2.1. Mapping of my iterative design and thinking processes.

The contextual review is a major part of my iterative design and thinking processes as it theoretically anchors *SBU* within the zone of my personal interests. The process of making my film overlapped with the process of understanding my personal synaesthesia, the Proust phenomenon, the relationship between the audience and the filmmaker and practical analysis of narrative, colour and sound systems. Muratovski emphasises that “action research should be [centred] around a problem, dilemma, or

<sup>99</sup> Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 'Forum: Qualitative Social Research', 1.

ambiguity from the situation in which practitioners may find themselves”.<sup>100</sup> Throughout the iterative design and thinking processes, I faced several issues and constantly made adjustments to refine *SBU* through an in-depth contextual review. In this way, my understanding of psychological, phenomenological and artistic theories was deepened and carried over into *SBU*, enhancing its communicative power. All of the practical methods were used in combination to construct the narrative, visual and auditory components for the audience, enabling exploration of the vivid multisensory world within the film.

### *2.3.2. Initial and Revised Research*

When I conducted the initial contextual review, I only intended to create an autobiographical narrative for myself, and, as such, focused solely on the conventional phenomenon of synaesthesia. The theme of synaesthesia was unfamiliar to me, and I was often confused by its exact meaning. As an artistic researcher, I wanted to understand synaesthesia within the context of my personal and cultural experiences to enhance the originality of my work based on my embodied knowledge. I believed that by doing this, I would not be confused by individual definitions created by others and my thinking process would be anchored by my specific beliefs and perspectives.

I decided to create an animated film to record my memories and visualise my synaesthetic experiences. Initially, my understanding of the relationship between audience and filmmaker was somewhat shallow, and I overlooked that a film is, in some sense, a form of communication. This means that production was started without an in-depth theoretical understanding of how emotional resonance might be generated within a film in a multisensory manner. During the course of my revised contextual review, I found that the audience and the filmmaker can be intimately linked through our innate synaesthetic abilities and that a film can act as a bridge for assisting them to emotionally relate to the film’s content as it relates to their specific personal contexts. I subsequently realised that an audience can explore my film using all their senses, which is made possible through

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<sup>100</sup> Muratovski, ‘Chapter 7: Applied Research’, 193.

the triggering of additional sensory associations through audio-visual elements. Accordingly, I changed the ultimate aim of the production to be communication with a broader audience, as opposed to connection limited to an audience that holds the same collective associations.

### 2.3.3. *Review of Embodied Knowledge*

Once I gained a better understanding of synaesthesia and that it parallels the Proust phenomenon, I began writing several premises in the form of a diary to examine my embodied knowledge. The author and story consultant, Robert McKee, suggests the “Premise awakens what waits within, the visions or convictions nascent in the writer”.<sup>101</sup> While drafting a variety of premises that drew upon my childhood, I attempted to discover the specific types of emotions evoked by memories that paralleled the Proust phenomenon. Arthur Bochner states that epiphanies reveal how a person might negotiate ‘intense situations’ and “effects that linger – recollections, memories, images, feelings – long after a crucial incident is supposedly finished”.<sup>102</sup> After writing several premises, I referred to my childhood diaries to compare my feelings about emotional experiences in the past and how I felt about these memories in the present. I realised that a sense of nostalgia strongly lingered within my mind concerning epiphanies surrounding my grandmother. Rather than evoking the past emotion of dislike that arose whenever I visited her home (due to the presence of the mould), I now understand that her desire to see me reflected her love for me. At this juncture, it was impressed upon me that past and present emotions can be extremely contrasting in nature. Having noted down these epiphanies, several premises were retrospectively selected to form the narrative ideas for the animation. Following on, I referred to significant views of other film theorists, particularly Jennifer Barker and Laura Marks, to locate further possibilities that could aid the exploration of my multisensory experiences in *SBU*’s extended world; these are discussed in Chapter 1.

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<sup>101</sup> Robert McKee, ‘Structure and Meaning’, in *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*, 1st ed. (New York: It Books, 1997), 113.

<sup>102</sup> Arthur P. Bochner, ‘The Functions of Human Communication in Interpersonal Bonding’, in *Handbook of Rhetorical and Communication Theory*, by Carroll C. Arnold and John W. Bowers (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1984), 595.

#### 2.3.4. *Photographs and Matte Painting*

Photographs, as an extension of the appraisal of my embodied knowledge, visually and vividly evoke this knowledge. I selected photographs of my grandmother, her hometown, the interior and exterior of her house, and her wooden canes. Having selected the narrative and visual ideas that I felt personally attached to, these fragments were used to create moving pictures conveying my emotions. The South African artist and filmmaker, William Kentridge, argues that as an artist, a picture is “about the combination between what comes to me from the picture and what I project onto it from all my own history”.<sup>103</sup> As both an indexical personal history and sensory memories are projected onto photographs, I found their constant use to be the most powerful means for inviting the audience into my autobiographical story.

Matte painting was employed in the form of creating overlays on photographs to emphasise, using an imaginative manner, the various emotions evoked by a specific time and space. In this process, I noticed that some of my photographs were not as successful at conveying a strong sense of emotion, or failed to conjure a scene as I remembered it. John Berger states that “painting lends authority to the filmmaker”.<sup>104</sup> For this research, all photographs were matte painted to flesh out the world of *SBU*. To do this, I used my own colour system and a drawing tablet as discussed in Chapter 1. In this way, I brought to life my childhood and infused the entire film with my emotions. I acknowledge that audience members will have different experiences to mine. Nonetheless, *SBU* functions as an emotional conduit through which I believe they can relate to the experiences depicted through the atmosphere portrayed by the matte paintings.

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<sup>103</sup> William Kentridge, “William Kentridge Interview: How We Make Sense of the World,” October 1, 2014, documentary, 30:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1lwOmoxoJ6U>.

<sup>104</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), 26.

### 2.3.5. Scriptwriting

McKee argues that the key to winning the war against clichéd stories is research and suggests that the three indispensable ideas a story needs are “research of memory, research of imagination [and] research of fact”.<sup>105</sup> In this study, the contextual review was used for factual research and the review of embodied knowledge and photographs were employed for researching memories. Matte painting and scriptwriting were utilised as an approach for researching imagination. The combination of these three types of research acts as a guide for avoiding the narrative and visual components that can be considered clichéd dimensions to an audience. Paul Wells reflects that “memories submerge within memories [and] fantasy underpins the flawed or revised recollection of real events”.<sup>106</sup> In conjunction with matte painting, which expresses the visual imagination, in this study, scriptwriting reviews embodied knowledge in search of narrative imagination. When watching a film, I believe imagination is what strongly engages the audience with the film and concurrently, creates a sense of anticipation in terms of exploring the story within the film’s world. Such expectation encourages the audience to individually interpret the imaginative world within the film.



Figure 2.2. Initial concept art (pastels, Monique H. Park, 2019).

<sup>105</sup> Robert McKee, ‘Structure and Setting’, in *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*, 1st ed. (New York: It Books, 1997), 72.

<sup>106</sup> Wells, ‘ONCE UPON A TIME: Narrative Strategies’, 96.

In *SBU*, the scriptwriting was finalised after a number of both major and minor adjustments. It was written based on my real memories; however, it should be noted that all dialogue in the script are fictitious and were forged by my imagination. At the beginning of the script-writing process, I created concept art traditionally, on paper (Figure 2.2). The drawing was created using a charcoal pencil and pastels to help establish the essence of the narrative, a method employed by Miyazaki. However, I felt that the image I created was superficial because a concrete colour system had not yet been outlined. Major adjustments had to be made in the first three versions of my script to establish the distinct setting of the film. Miyazaki emphasises that “logical storylines sacrifice creativity”.<sup>107</sup> To write from a retrospective vantage point, I needed to delve more deeply into how my body experienced the past when I was a child. I selected the season of summer to focus upon, verbally visualising specific colours, textures and temperature. I chose this direction because my strongest childhood memories are primarily related to summer holidays. For example, phrases such as ‘the burning smell of a mosquito coil’, and ‘the sound of cicadas that cascade like a shower stops slowly’ establish the season of summer in South Korea by referring to the weather. These phrases, based around the theme of nature in summer, were intentionally selected because they are associated with olfactory and tactile senses, which verbally invite an audience into multisensory exploration.

Throughout the process of refining my script, some words needed to be removed or replaced to enhance visual or narrative aspects and to create a specific atmosphere. For example, for the sequence at the beginning, many unnecessary words were removed to convey a ‘subtle and less literal’ atmosphere, as well as to support a visual depiction of children playing. Contrastingly, in the sequence depicting my asthma attack, the protagonist experiences it as a representation of a personal experience. Metaphorical phrases such as ‘the black bubbles sneaked into the room’, and ‘the swirling storm finally rushed into my throat’ were essential for symbolising the claustrophobic atmosphere that contributes to the ‘aporia’ moment of my childhood. These metaphors grew from the dark symbolic nature of the blue mould, and my narrative suggests that the film’s ‘body’ perceives the asthma attack

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<sup>107</sup> Arakawa, ‘Ponyo is Here’.



in a way mimicking a tsunami rushing towards me, thereby imbuing my embodied knowledge with a strong sense of anxiety.

### *2.3.6. Reflective Thinking*

During my iterative design and thinking processes, I often asked myself a question that presented a level of doubt: to what extent can *SBU* generate emotional resonance?

The discussion in my contextual review demonstrates that Miyazaki influenced both my design and thinking processes. I grew up watching his animated films and have always admired him as a renowned filmmaker, dreaming of becoming a filmmaker myself who can emotionally move an audience. This fervent admiration for Miyazaki's films has served as inspiration in terms of the narrative, visual and auditory elements of my own works. However, as I became fixated on Miyazaki's work, I found myself almost beginning to lose my own originality and the direction of my design.

While dealing with these issues, I began considering the fundamental purpose of production and what animation means to me. Kentridge argues that "animated films can be a demonstration of how we make sense of the world rather than an instruction about what the world means".<sup>108</sup> As an animator, rather than portraying the world that I remember, I was trying to emulate Miyazaki's methods and way of portraying the world as an ideal approach for creating animation. However, once I was able to separate my perspective from his, I was able to identify his work as exemplifying a compelling expression of emotional resonance. Throughout Miyazaki's animation, he consistently demonstrates the power of affect. As such, his work served as a model for me in terms of how I could effectively approach a wider audience. I acknowledge that having been influenced by his work had been extremely helpful, but I have realised that creating animation that evidences my own originality is the most powerful and sincere approach.

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<sup>108</sup> Kentridge, William Kentridge Interview: How We Make Sense of the World.

### 2.3.7. Animation References

In addressing reflective thinking, I decided to analyse other animated films, rather than only focusing upon Miyazaki's films. I found valuable inspiration in the work of animators from different cultures who also created unique worlds by drawing on their personal experiences. The use of concept art, photographs, analogue and frame-by-frame animations are evident in their design processes that facilitate the use of unique creative strategies through a variety of thinking approaches.

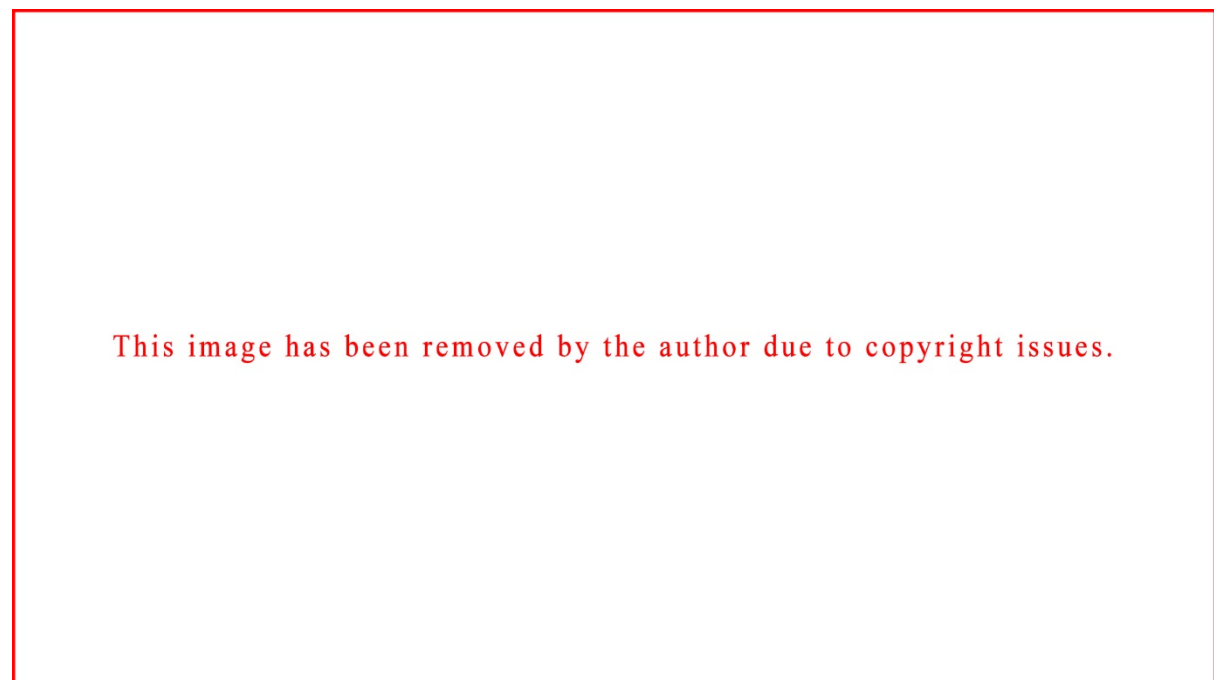


Figure 2.3. *Weekends* (dir. Trevor Jimenez, 2017, New Europe Sales, USA).

The 2019 Academy Award-nominated animated short, *Weekends* (2017) was directed by Trevor Jimenez, a filmmaker and story artist at Pixar Animation Studios. This creative project is based on the director's personal experiences of being shuffled between the homes of his divorced parents. The director conveys feelings of confusion, loneliness, and sadness in the context of divorce. Jimenez notes about *Weekends*, "it's my experiences collected in the body of a young boy. It's my way of re-experiencing what happened".<sup>109</sup> The director purposefully examines his childhood memories by embodying his emotions in the film's world and revisits the reality he faced to imaginatively fill the

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<sup>109</sup> Trevor Jimenez, "Weekends- 'A Personal Story'," November 6, 2018, video, <https://vimeo.com/299351613>.

gaps with therapeutic images of a complete family. As an artistic researcher who is interested in portraying an autobiographical story, I was able to strongly engage with the story of *Weekends* and the world of the film, even though my experiences had been different. Jimenez surmises that such engagement arises “not because...specifics are the same, [but] because the feeling of not really knowing what’s happening or why it’s happening, and understanding it later is sort of universal”.<sup>110</sup> The director specifically highlights this reaction through a child character from a divorced family. Even if the viewer has never experienced such a specific situation, the experience of loneliness and sadness is nevertheless sufficiently universal to enable connection to the story. By authentically sharing his emotions with millions of viewers, the film not only becomes a vehicle for the director’s personal healing but can also serve the same function for audience members who experience connection through the film. For Jimenez, this “justifies the film”.<sup>111</sup>

McKee argues that “story is an instrument by which [one creates]...epiphanies at will, [a] phenomenon known as aesthetic emotion”.<sup>112</sup> By inviting the audience to travel back and forth between realistic and dreamlike moments, I believe that animation can convey aesthetic emotions, thereby creating a connection between an audience and myself in the same manner Jimenez demonstrates throughout his autobiographical animation. Even though different background stories reside within each audience member, I would argue that it is the aesthetic emotions rooted in the film that creates emotional resonance. Accordingly, the story acts as a tool that triggers relatable and therapeutic feelings for the audience, as well as for myself as an autoethnographer.

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<sup>110</sup> Trevor Jimenez, “Trevor Jimenez: On Making ‘Weekends’,” December 4, 2018, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCdk97quE7I>.

<sup>111</sup> Jimenez, *Weekends – ‘A Personal Story’*.

<sup>112</sup> McKee, ‘Structure and Meaning’, 111.

This image has been removed by the author due to copyright issues.

Figure 2.4. *I Have Dreamed Of You So Much* (dir. Emma Vakarelova, 2015, Tant Mieux Prod, France).

Since my narrative has poetic characteristics, it was essential to me to refer to animated poems to create dreamlike sequences in the middle of *SBU*. One of the animated poems that I found particularly powerful and fascinating was *I Have Dreamed of You So Much* (2015) directed by the Bulgarian visual artist and animator, Emma Vakarelova. This animation was created based on the eponymous poem written by the French surrealist poet, Robert Desnos. Vakarelova integrates painterly and illustrative ideas within a sequence that is inflected with surrealistic and cosmic tropes.

The relationship between words and imagery is one of the striking features of Vakarelova's animation, which maintains the subtlety of the original poem without being overtly literal. For example, when I hear the phrase 'I would surely become a shadow' accompanied by the tactile sound of a thin blanket being pulled, these words do not directly synchronise with the images of the character transforming into a shadow. Rather than precisely visualising words with literal images, Vakarelova portrays the character pulling up a black blanket to cover half of his body, emphasising his strong will to become almost like a shadow for his beloved. Berger notes that "we could begin to

define our experiences more precisely in areas where words are inadequate”.<sup>113</sup> The poem itself cannot be understood objectively. However, when the poem is visualised through Vakarelova’s unique animation style, the hidden meanings of the words, which may otherwise have been overlooked, are highlighted, thereby enhancing my subjective understanding of the animation. From this personal experience, I noticed that when the audio-visual elements of the poetic film were particularly vivid and imaginative, the audience can increasingly use their senses to fashion creative interpretations in a subjective manner.



Figure 2.5. Sunrise scene (motion picture, Monique H. Park, 2020).

Due to the embodied nature of childhood memories, I acknowledge that *SBU* is, in a sense, depicted from a child’s point of view, i.e. sensory experiences are intense, dramatic and/or dreamlike. The climax of *SBU* is portrayed in a subjective way to emphasise the hidden meanings of key phrases and words such as ‘blue mould’ and ‘epiphany’. In the sequence portraying my asthma attack in *SBU*, a significant symbol is the statue of a hand in the ocean. Here, I was inspired by the sculpture ‘Hand of Coexistence’ (Seung-guk Kim, 1999) installed at Homigot Square, the point where sunrise can first be

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<sup>113</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 33.

observed in South Korea. The narrative voiceover metaphorically describes the breath-robbing feelings of an asthma attack, while the distinct use of chromatic light can be observed at the same time (see Figure 2.5). In this sequence, I intentionally employed bright, warm colours to create a strong contrast with the dark blue colours of the ocean, thus gradually creating a welcoming atmosphere. In this way, the chromatic light visually indicates that the protagonist is at the point of dawn, a space in which she is close to discovering epiphanies. This reflects the visual language in Vakarelova's animation strategy, which seeks to instil in the audience subtle anticipation of an emotional turning point, which in *SBU* infuses the film with a sense of hope toward the end. The abstract visual style amplifies the viewer's curiosity and urges them to extend their imaginative interpretations of this dreamlike moment. The symbolic hand has both cultural and childhood links, as it references a specific place in the country in which I spent my childhood. Therefore, I believe the sunrise sequence (Figure 2.5) acquires further power to evoke a sense of nostalgia.

## CHAPTER 3: Commentary on *The Scent of Blue Uiseong*

### 3.1. Narrative Treatment

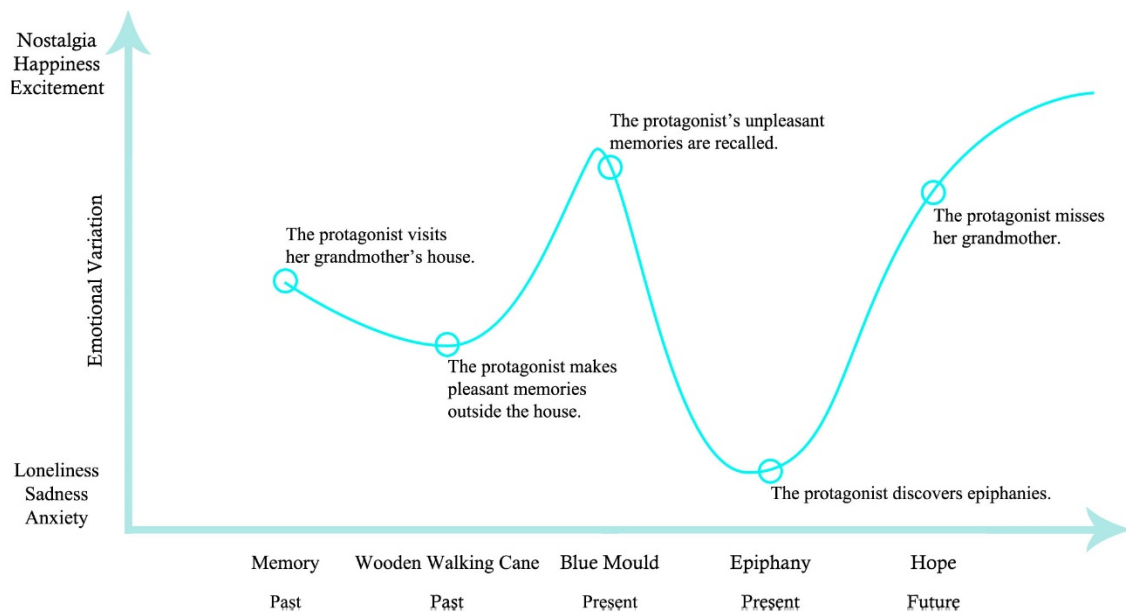


Figure 3.1. The emotional variation curve of the protagonist in *SBU*.

In the process of constructing my narrative for *SBU*, I strategically employed five keywords, i.e. ‘memory’, ‘wooden walking cane’, ‘blue mould’, ‘epiphany’ and ‘hope’. These words effectively helped me to connect narrative fragments that I collected from my premises, and assisted me in finding “strata of meaning that make ideas connect together”.<sup>114</sup> My five keywords are further divided into three categories, i.e. past, present and future. The first two keywords, ‘memory’ and ‘wooden walking cane’ distinctly represent my childhood memories. Contrastingly, the phrase ‘blue mould’ links directly to the asthma attack that is employed in the film to trigger negative emotions towards my grandmother. However, the word ‘epiphany’ represents my current status of having made a full recovery from asthma and reflects my grandmother’s love for me. Finally, the word ‘hope’

<sup>114</sup> Giuliana Bruno, ‘Chapter 9: Cultural Cartography, Materiality and the Fashioning of Emotion’, in *Visual Culture Studies: Interviews with Key Thinkers*, ed. Marquard Smith, 1st ed. (Lithuania: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2008), 149, <http://sk.sagepub.com/books/visual-culture-studies/n10.xml>.



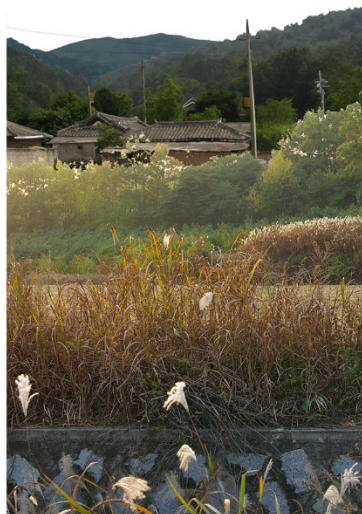
imaginatively represents the future status that I hope to embody when I next visit my grandmother's home.

## 3.2. Visual Treatment

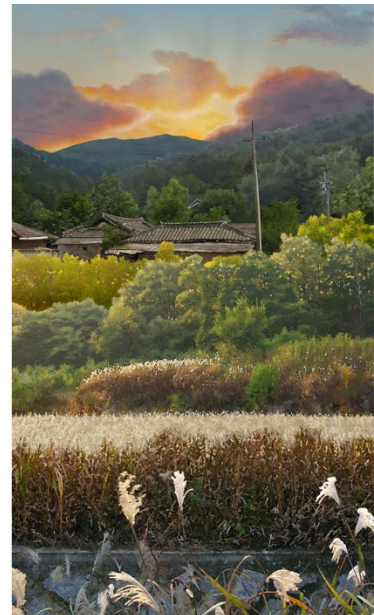
### 3.2.1. Environment Animation



1. Selecting photographs



2. Compositing



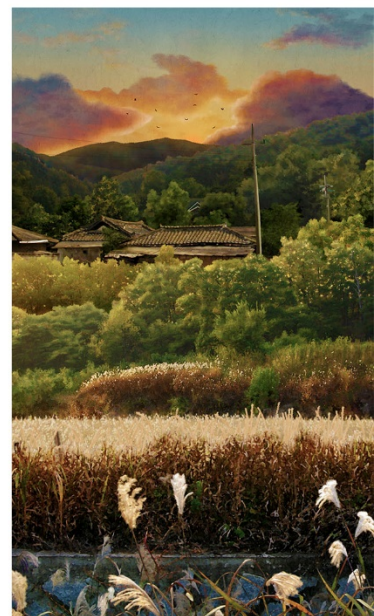
3. Matte Painting



4. Adding details



5. Adjusting light



6. Adding the Hanji texture

Figure 3.2. Images representing the matte painting progress.



Adobe Photoshop (2020) and Adobe After Effects (2020) were the primary software I employed in the production process for *SBU*. I initially planned to use the professional animation software, TV Paint Animation (11 Standard Edition), which is available from the university. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown period, I used Photoshop and After Effects, which was convenient to access at home and provided professional photo editing, compositing, digital painting and animation tools. The visual quality of *SBU* created in Photoshop (see Figure 3.2) and After Effects was sufficiently rich for expressing the painterly and illustrative style of *SBU* sequences.

Six steps were involved in the environment animation of *SBU*, i.e. selecting photographs, compositing, matte painting, adding details, adjusting light, and adding the hanji texture. In addition to these steps, different fragments of the images were animated to make the setting come alive. In the rice field scene (see Figure 3.2), the rustling rice plants and the walking canes moving across the screen were created by hand drawing each keyframe in Photoshop. A motion blur was added to both the rice plants and canes in After Effects to emphasise their subtle movements. The ‘vibrance’, ‘levels’, and ‘curves’ tools were employed at the final stage of my environment animation in After Effects as a means to unify the colour intensities and tones of different visual elements and to balance the overall brightness.

### 3.2.2. Character Animation

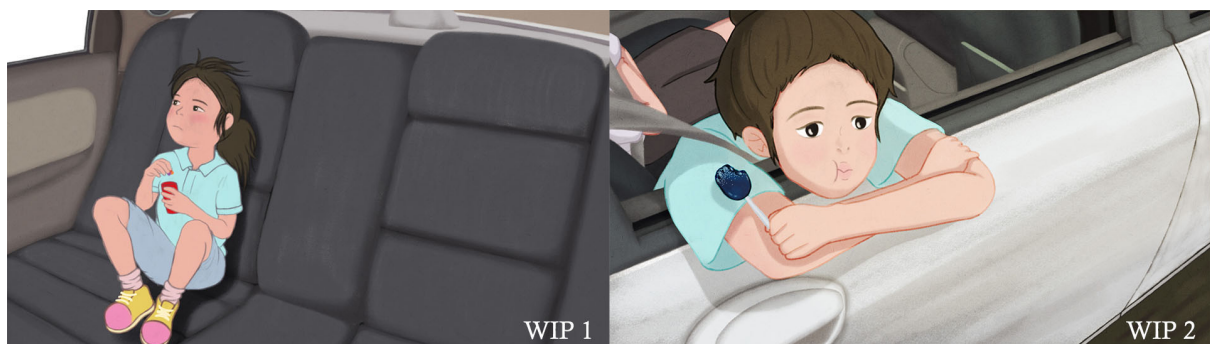


Figure 3.3. Work in progress (WIP) of the first scene in *SBU*.

*The Scent of Blue Uiseong* is my first digital cel animation project. My understanding of character animation was initially shallow and, as a result, I overlooked critical tasks that I should have conducted in the pre-production phase. The character concept design was one of these essential tasks. I struggled several times to redesign the protagonist. At the start of production, while still fixated on Miyazaki's animation style, the protagonist of *SBU* (Figure 3.3 WIP 1) was unconsciously designed to look too similar to Chihiro, the protagonist in the Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2001). When my supervisor provided feedback on this major issue, I realised that I needed to completely change the first scene of *SBU* to better anchor and retain the originality of my animation style.

As a solution to the above issue, I decided to redesign the protagonist by referring to my childhood photographs. In doing so, I noticed that I had maintained three typical hairstyles: a ponytail, bun, and pigtails. For the second version of my character design, I applied the bun-type hairstyle for the protagonist in *SBU* to avoid her having too strong a resemblance to Chihiro (see Figure 3.3 WIP 2). However, her appearance made her seem older than a nine-year-old girl, which she was supposed to reflect. I then reviewed all the painting tools I had used when creating the scene and found that the well-polished thick outline (see Figure 3.3 WIP 2) I had used made it seem as if she was wearing make-up.

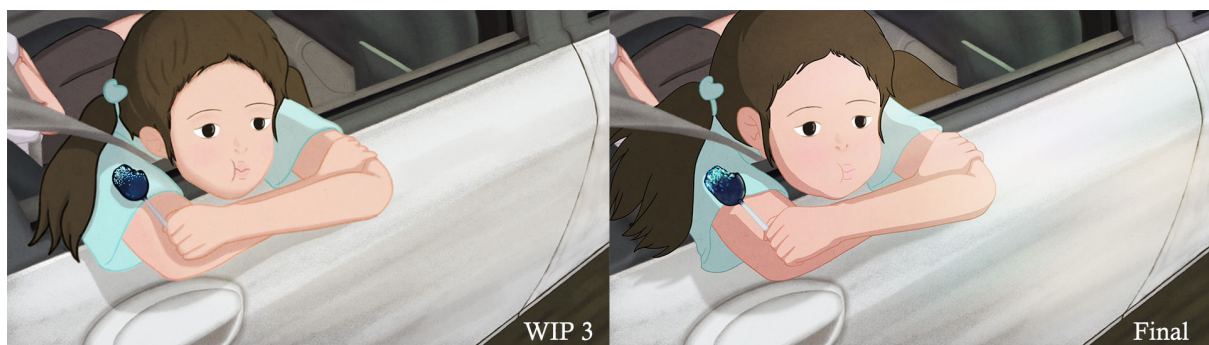


Figure 3.4. Subsequent WIP of the first scene in *SBU*.

In addition to using a thinner outline, my third character design (Figure 3.4 WIP 3) has a pigtail hairstyle, which I observed as the most common hairstyle of myself as a child. However, a minor

technical issue occurred in the form of the pigtailed moving too mechanically. This problem was caused by a five-frame animated loop, which was insufficient for creating smooth animation movement for the hair. I increased the frame number to seven and added a more flexible quality to the hair fluttering in the wind (Figure 3.4 Final). Despite facing several major and minor issues, the use of a drawing tablet helped me to overcome these technical issues within a short amount of time.

### 3.2.3. Computer Generated Images

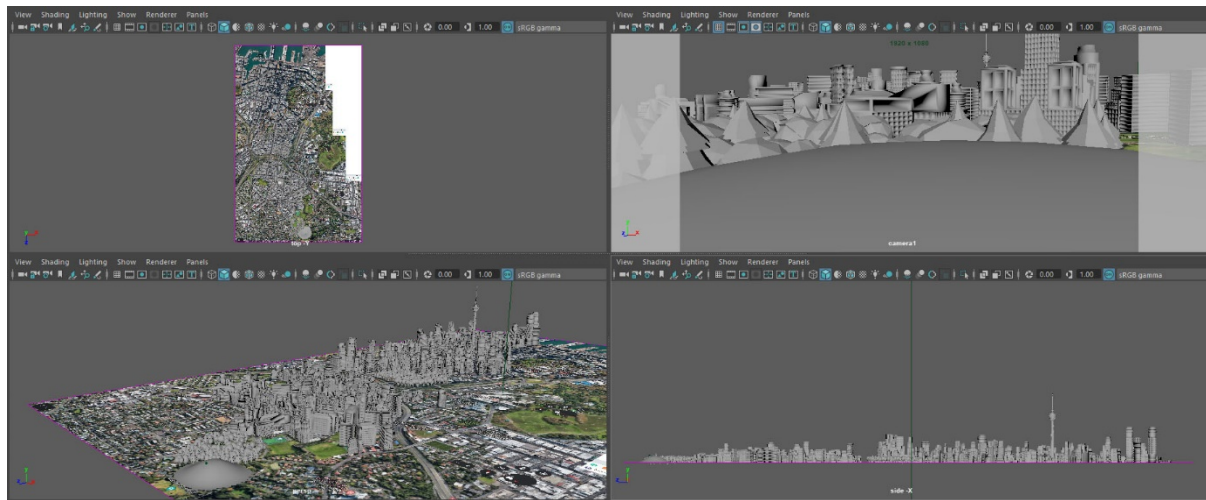


Figure 3.5. A 3D Auckland (New Zealand) cityscape modelled in Maya.

Admittedly, using labour-intensive hand drawings made it difficult to portray the organic movement of 2D images in the limited available production time. In this regard, Maya was essential software for generating various types of computer generated images (CGI), including particle effects and 3D models, which were employed to highlight surreal and dreamlike sequences in *SBU* more efficiently. One of the challenging CGI sequences was the cityscape scene. I employed 3D models to initially create reference images of the Auckland cityscape as a means to add a spatial quality to the scene. Many low-poly buildings were placed on the Auckland City map (see Figure 3.5) to create a sense of reality. I made the camera move from Mount Eden (New Zealand) to the Pacific Ocean by taking a path across the city. However, the first attempt to do this failed due to the low-poly trees being too artificial. As a result, the images could not achieve an adequate standard for proceeding to the painting phase in Photoshop.

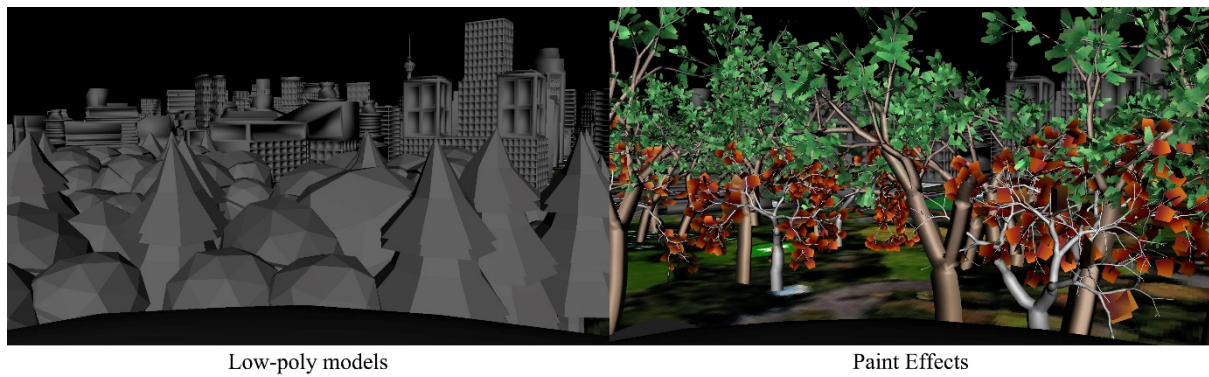


Figure 3.6. The rendered images of the Auckland cityscape.

Paint Effects was employed for the second rendering attempt (Figure 3.6 B) in Maya to enhance the visual quality of the trees. The density of trees and the number of branches were manually adjusted to add a sense of wildness, randomness, and an organic feeling to the scene. After rendering frames as individual images, I noticed that too many buildings occupied the screen. I had to render the scene several times to establish an adequate number of buildings to ensure the time-efficiency of the painting stage.

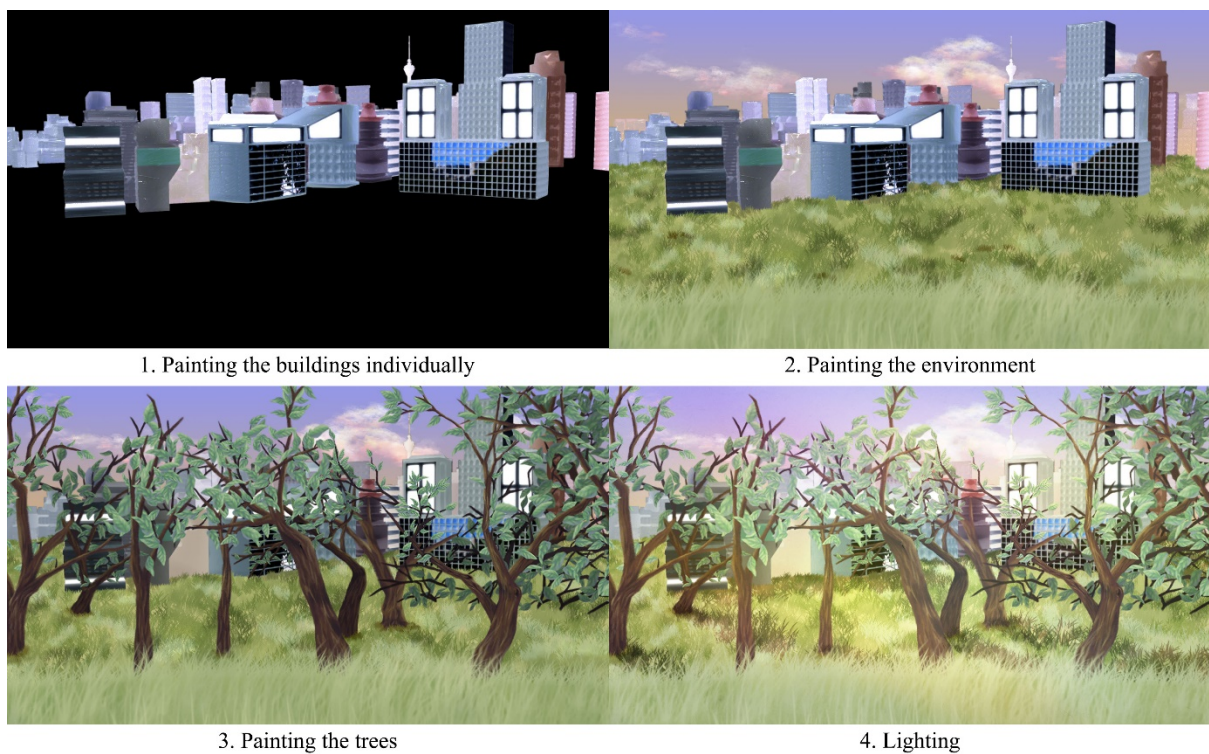


Figure 3.7. The Maya-to-Photoshop painting progression.



In the painting process, I challenged myself to paint over the scene frame-by-frame and without entirely relying on the reference images. When the camera zooms in, the angle of the buildings and trees change slightly in each frame. The buildings comprised simple shapes and I experienced no difficulty drawing them. In contrast, due to the organic shapes of the trees, I found painting them to be the most time-consuming stage in the creation of this scene. To speed up the process, I constantly copied a previous frame for a subsequent one and adjusted the perspective of each tree, rather than redrawing the entire frame. In this way, the natural and dreamlike atmosphere was expressed using CGI while retaining my own hand-drawing style.

### **3.3. Auditory Treatment**

For the narrative voiceover, I focused on the protagonist's various emotions such as joy, excitement, anxiety, sadness and happiness while recording my voice in a sound room at the university. Whenever my pronunciation was recorded incorrectly, or if I made changes to the narrative, I returned to the sound room to re-record the lines several times. I used Avid Pro Tools (2020) to record the entire narrative voiceover. I composited the most evocative version of each line in Adobe Premiere Pro (2020). For the foley sound design, I created lists of ASMR soundtracks for each scene; these included the overall mood, type, and order of sound clips that I wished to employ based on the specific memory of each scene. Following this planning stage, I began collecting sound resources. I used many copyright-free sound clips that were provided online and also recorded sounds on my own when I could not find appropriate ones. All of the sound clips I used were composited in Premiere Pro while editing my video sequences. One of the auditory strategies that I often employed throughout making *SBU* was a panning effect. For example, in the first scene of *SBU*, I balanced the audio between the right and left channels and synchronised it with the car driving across the screen from right to left. I found that adjusting different volumes in the right and left channels an effective means for creating space in the audio mixing process. A variety of soundtracks were overlapped for each sequence. As such, the entire rhythm of the mixed Foley sounds and the background music maintains a degree of subtlety, which enables the audience to focus on the narrative voiceover.

## Conclusion

My Master's research proved to be a challenging process because I had limited knowledge of synaesthesia from the outset and did not know how an audience could explore films via multiple senses. However, starting the research process by gaining a more in-depth understanding of psychological synaesthesia, Eastern cultural synaesthesia and of the Proust phenomenon in my personal context assisted me in creating a meaningful project outcome as an answer to my overarching research question. I have come to understand animation as a medium that has the power to generate a degree of emotional resonance based on the audience's individual experience.

I can define my multisensory experience of blue mould as representative of the Proust phenomenon and as personal olfactory–visual synaesthesia. Although it is a memory of the past that accompanies countless complex emotions, a sense of nostalgia remains intense when I smell mould in an old house. I have gained an understanding of this significant emotional charge through the psychological theories introduced by Richard Cytowic and Marcel Proust. It should be noted that the concept of synaesthesia serves as a subset of phenomenology in my overall discussion. The multisensory exploration in *SBU* reveals a theoretical approach for demonstrating how an audience perceives the world around them through their senses and cognitive faculties. Since we are all multisensory beings, the experience of a film can be understood as an expression of perception and a perception of expression. Film theorists Jennifer Barker and Laura Marks analyse this phenomenological approach and provide rich resources for demonstrating an affective relationship between film and audience. Since *SBU* was created as an animated autoethnographic narrative, the film's world is expressed through the audio-visual elements based on the real world I perceived using memories of my childhood. The audience can perceive the film's world using multiple senses because the audio-visual elements can trigger a range of sense modalities based on their individual experiences. In addition, I based my theoretical exploration on the ideas of significant phenomenological thinkers such as John Berger and Alistair Swale to highlight that the imaginative world of a film is capable of evoking aesthetic emotion in the form of nostalgia.

In the process of creating *SBU*, which reflects my embodied knowledge, Hayao Miyazaki strongly influenced me; this is evidenced by the fact that certain threads within his animated film, *My Neighbour Totoro*, parallels *SBU*. Throughout the process of creating *SBU*, I mainly referred to Miyazaki's animations to acquire a better understanding of his design and thinking processes. The work of Francis Glebas and Paul Wells provided narrative, visual, and auditory strategies for creating animation. I subsequently analysed Trevor Jimenez and Emma Vakarelova's works to construct an imaginative world within *SBU*. In this way, my own, less literal and subtle animation style was designed through the creation of symbolic and metaphorical audio-visual elements. The sensory design process of digital animation was expressed by my hand-drawn images, which were based on real photographs that I own, and my emotions were imbued within *SBU*. I constantly returned to the process of thinking how I could genuinely portray the world I perceived to an audience and how, in turn, they, too, could explore and experience this world.

Once a broader audience can view *SBU* in the future, I believe this research can be further developed by observing the degree of emotional resonance it can generate. However, I am satisfied that I have gained a new understanding of the film's world, created by multisensory elements, and the intimate relationship between film and audience. As my thesis title suggests, this research represents a study of personal memories recalled by a particular smell. It demonstrates that regardless of what might trigger unpleasant memories in our lives, it is possible to achieve epiphanies when nostalgic emotions arise. I suggest that *SBU* accompanies genuine emotions based on real memories, reconstructed by my imagination. This research allowed me to deepen not only my theoretical knowledge but also to discover personally precious epiphanies that reflect my grandmother's love for me.

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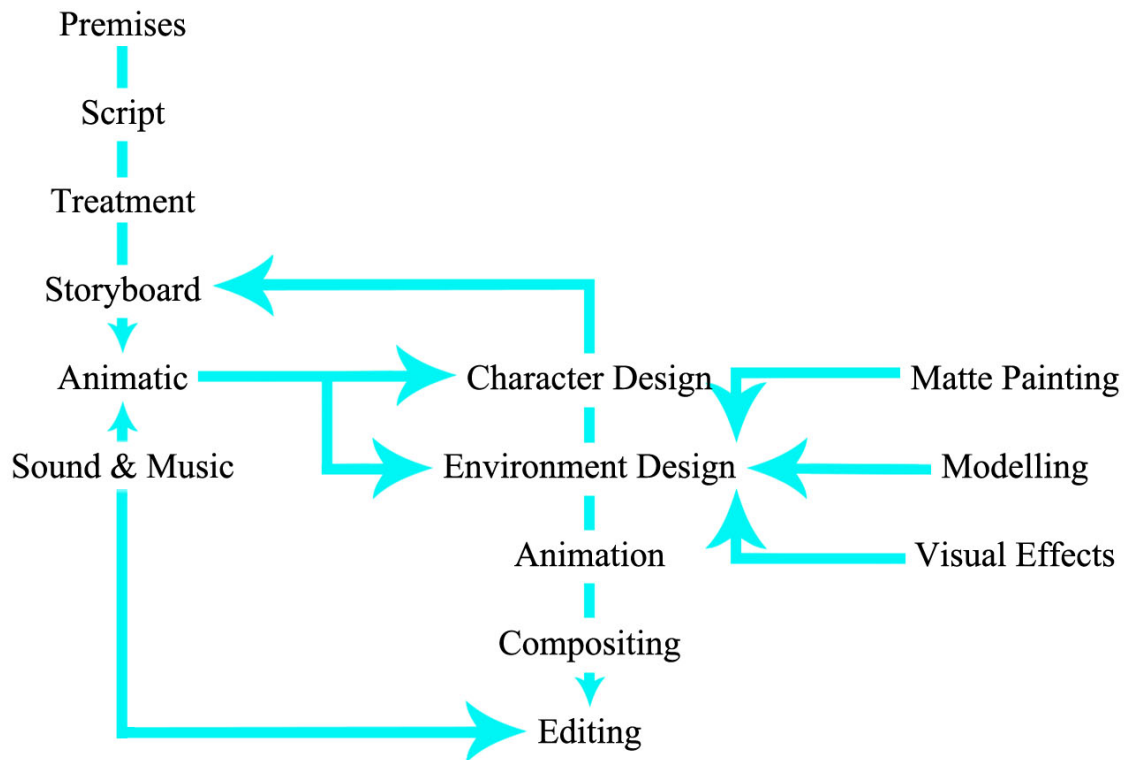
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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Project Pipeline



## **Appendix B: Script for *The Scent of Blue Uiseong***

### *Sequence 1: Memory*

My parents took me all the way down to your place in the Uiseong country from Seoul every Summer. In the middle of straggly weeds, I could sense you before even walking through the door. The musty wallpaper dyed deep blue, the air that was heavy with the whirr of the dusty fan, and the burning smell of mosquito coil near the room. As I walked across the sticky floor on tiptoe, I could hear you welcome me with the accent I couldn't understand. Back then, I couldn't find beauty in your old place.

### *Sequence 2: Wooden walking cane*

I remember the lonely wooden cane guarding you near the small garden. It was taller than me and I turned my face up to it. Through the way of the winding track with my brothers, we fed the next-door neighbour's cows, we made a whistle with the fine-edged leaves, and we secretly jumped into the rice field. Back then, I was happy carrying the cane with me until the sun hid its face behind mountains.

### *Sequence 3: Blue Mould*

Even in August, it's winter here in Auckland. Over the horizon, I can smell the deep blue ocean in my memory. Yes, I remember that time. The black bubbles sneaked into the room to wake me up, and I inhaled them. The breathless nights when endless coughs were floating in front of my eyes. The white breaking wave chased me and choked my neck without warning. The swirling storm finally rushed into my throat, and I saw the trace of you in the blue mould.

#### *Sequence 4: Epiphany*

I should've tasted the handmade noodles that you always cooked for me. I should've listened to the radio with you on the rooftop, lit by starlight. The letter from me to you in messy handwriting, I should've noticed that you have read it hundred times. Now I realise I was part of your life. Things would've been different if I hadn't had asthma, if I'd been close to you, if I'd been able to touch you.

#### *Sequence 5: Hope*

The sound of cicadas that cascade like a shower stops slowly. In the unexpected silence, I realise how beautiful your old place is. I miss the smell of you, and everything turns upside down. The smell of blue and the smell of our old summer days. I want to enjoy the time I can be here. Perhaps I might be with your cane that is also missing you.