

The Consciousness in Dreams, Film, and Architecture

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Abstract

Dreams are a universal phenomenon and tie all mankind together. They have inspired man throughout history from influencing religious mythologies to various scientific innovations. Dreams have also inspired various art works. They are the ultimate visual, spatial and temporal experience and, due to this attribute, dreams are identified with the act of watching movies. Likewise, architecture provides visual, spatial and temporal experience. There are striking similarities between the medium of films and dreams experience. Thus movies have produced the most satisfying imitations of Dream experiences. But even though the architecture also provides a visual, spatial, and temporal experience, the attempt to portray dream characteristics deliberately is rare to find. This paper aims to narrow the gap regarding the understanding of the state of consciousness while experiencing dreams, films, and architecture. Thus, narrowing the gap between the three disciplines. The study is primarily based on qualitative data analysis. The research makes use of discoveries in the field of neuroscience and elaborates on the existing findings. The research concludes that all three disciplines have a lot in common and certain attributes of each can be experienced in the other.

Keywords: oneiric cinema, dreams, architecture design, oneiric architecture, neuroscience, consciousness

Introduction

Since the beginning of mankind, humans have been trying to comprehend dreams. The approximation of dreams with reality has led to their influence on religious mythologies. Many religions advocate dreams as divine messages from God. This is due to the fact that dreams appear so real that we are not able to deny their actuality when we are in them. The close to reality feeling about dreams has influenced and led people to act upon them, thus resulting in many scientific discoveries as well. Although dreams are identifiable from waking life, it's hard to avoid being influenced by them. A more common phenomenon is of nightmares where people may wake up as a result of anxiety evoked by dream content.

(Rodríguez, 2020) Thus, the state of consciousness in dreams has to be far more strikingly similar to waking life than it's generally perceived.

Dreams are visual, spatial, and temporal experiences and several art mediums have been used to illustrate dreams. However, cinema is the only medium that can generate the most satisfying dream portrayal than any other medium of art. (Juniad, 2021) People associate watching films with a dreaming experience. Like dreams, films also play with our perception and can generate relatable experiences. But on the other hand, architecture is an art form meant to inhabit people. It forms our consensus reality. It is a visual, spatial, and temporal experience and generates experience for our waking life. The role of buildings is not just to provide shelter but also to generate the identity and memory of a place. Movies are close to reality and life-like. The camera is used to capture reality out of which a new reality is generated, like the way a dream plot is generated out of fragments of waking life. While visualizing films, we devote our time to hallucinating another reality that is contrary to our existing reality.

Materials and methods

The research relies on qualitative research methods mainly. The research relates the neuropsychological findings with the experience of waking life, dreaming, and watching movies. It elaborated on co-relating the state of consciousness while dreaming and watching films. The interpretation of the state of consciousness in dreams is related to its most closely associated interpretation in architectural design and architectural elements. The aim is to aid in devising design interpretation of dream consciousness in architectural design when needed.

Results and Discussion

State of Consciousness

To identify the state of consciousness in the dream state and watching films, the neurological study of the brain is essential. While watching films, the synchronized part of the brain is the cortex and fusiform face area. (MILLER, 2014) Likewise, while dreaming visual cortex is a highly active part of the brain. (Burke, 2019) This is because dreams and films are both essentially visual experiences. In dreams, our brain elaborates on the visuals by proposing a narrative and plot. Similarly, while watching films, we comprehend the plot by linking the visuals. However, while we are dreaming, there is no room for generating new thoughts or engaging in another activity. Such as in the case of VR headset experience. (Community, 2021) The visual experience in dreams is so immersive that little room is left for the mind to wander around along with the brain engaged in proposing the narrative. But while watching films and in waking life there is room for the mind to wander round. There is room for ruminating after breaking the continuity of the experience. That is only when one is not focused on film for any reason. In dreaming, an exception is lucid dreams,

where one can consciously make decisions other than what is being projected as a visual and spatial experience. (Ursula Voss, 2009)

In dreams, there is decreased self-awareness, logical thinking, and a lack of sense of orientation. A similar experience is encountered when watching films in a cinema. Cinema is one such architectural program that helps viewers to give in to the screen visualization so as to hallucinate. This has particularly to do with the ability to sit and relax in dark surroundings where the only source of light and visualization is the screen for the viewers. In cinemas, we give-in to the visualization in front of us while we put our motor functions to rest. (Juniad, 2021)

It is important to distinguish the state of consciousness in dreams to be able to identify dream experiences from or with waking life and watching films. When we are experiencing the present or in a state of consciousness, our brain is continuously connecting our experience with memory while proposing plans for future actions, which is usually the same for experiencing architecture. While watching films and dreams, our memory does not help our movement with visual experience and our flow of thought is not guided by past experience, so our working memory is at rest. In dreams, we cannot choose how long we want to be part of a visual or spatial experience, the flow in space is unidirectional and repetition is a less experienced phenomenon. Only if dreams can be recorded, or in the case of an oneiric film we can always replay to re-live the dream plot. Dreams and cinema are able to hallucinate and to deceive perceptions. In architecture, such an effect has been created through the incorporation of media into spatial designs. Examples of this are projects by Team lab of Japan and the Museum of Dream space. (teamlab, 2015) Another type of approach can be found in the project Mimesis museum by Castanheira & Bastai Arquitectos Associados, Jun Sung Kim and Álvaro Siza. It has a hallucinatory effect in it. (Archdaily, 2013) It has a void that is partly a courtyard. On the human scale, it is hard to comprehend at first glance. Memisis is a mechanism of dreams that is part of the primary process. (Rascaroli, 2002) It is to displace or project attributes of what's causing disturbance into something associated with it in a signifying chain. So, in this museum, one can identify attributes of the courtyard projected in a void and vice versa.

Dreams have increased emotional experiences and anxiety is the most prevailing emotion of all. (moods, 2013) Dreams, architecture, and films can evoke emotions. The first display of the film of a moving train by the Lumier brothers is a classic example to understand that, as it made people rush for their lives. In architecture, building like the Berlin museum by Denial Libeskind evokes an emotional experience through its spatial design. The impact of the experience lasts even after visit of the building is over. During REM, the emotions experienced also can prolong further than the dream visual content. It is at times illogically related to the occurring dream events.

The visual composition of dreams is derived from fragmented visuals from memory. These fragments are regenerated in varying new compositions and arrangements. Such quality of juxtapositioning can be found in buildings such as Berlin museum and The Royal Ontario Museum by Denial Libeskind. Where the buildings of two distinct time periods are linked together. Thus, there are elements from two periods of time present in one place.

In dreams there is hyper association of thinking, perceiving, processing, and understanding of language. At this point mind is struggling to comprehend what it is exposed to. Thus resulting in dream plot or narrative. Such struggle in consensus reality occurs when we are exposed to either something new or something that may have hallucinating impact. The illusionary architecture can generate a sense of confusion and can result in struggle of finding a comprehension of spatial experience. KATHERINE MACDUFFIE, GEORGE A. MASHOUR (2010). Cinema is the medium through which an altered reality can be produced by the manipulation of captured reality. Cinema can portray the effect of de-familiarization. Such as in the case of Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) film. It uses Cinematographic techniques to destroy the symbolic order and to produce the effect of de-familiarization by presenting a familiar object and then disrupting it through montage. This same quality of narrative exists in surreal automatic writing, which was driven by the psychoanalytic technique of free association to suggest a disruptive narrative. Thus, Surrealist films used this method to illustrate disorientation. According to Baundry cinema creates an "impression of reality". While we are in dreams, they seem real, so dreams give the impression of reality. Thus, while we are in them, they are our reality. Likewise, when we experience architectural spaces, they are a component of our reality during the experience and it's when we are outside of a building we are able to differentiate it from other types of buildings and other types of spatial experiences. (Mormina, 2016)

In films, our prior waking life and dreaming experiences help the viewer to form link and connections in various shots of film. Our eyes correlate the movement in film as one consistent experience. They help us to assess scale, proportion, depth, texture, color, and light. (Academy, 2010-2022) We use our visual experience to judge and build imaginary out of the symbolic. Similarly, when we see a portion of space in the film, we assume it to be part of the larger context and we assume the space to be complete in itself. Such as in the case of the famous montage experiment by Eisenstein where our mind builds a relationship between the visuals juxtaposed together. (Admin, 2014). Such is our experience with dreams that we are exposed to fragmented visuals of spaces that are connected through perception and we perceive the space to be complete in itself. We talk about traveling to various places in a dream even though we are visually exposed to a fragmented vision of a space.

Co-relation of dreaming consciousness in architecture design.

Design theory is generally intended to enrich design through a developed concept around which the components and expressions of design rely upon. The expression helps formulate a method of analysis that is unique to the discipline and helps resolve design problems. (Elsemary, 2014) Since dreams and architecture are visual, spatial, and temporal experiences, the elaborate understanding of dreams can help device design theory for its possible interpretation in architectural design. Since movies have been used to portray the most satisfying illustrations of dreams, the study of oneiric cinema can provide an exemplary model for comprehension of the dreaming experience.

In dreams and films the visualization is generally out of the control of the visualizer. Similarly, when it comes to the design of a building it's the architect who devises the visual and spatial experience of the building for its user. When architects design a building they make decisions about the flow of people in the building. They can redirect, plan and control the flow of people in the space by manipulating the hierarchy of spaces or by playing with the scale of space for example with respect to human anthropometry. Thus the will of the user can be brought to rest unknowingly or unconsciously. Particularly in the case of public spaces, there is less in the hands of visitors to alter the visual experience proposed by the architect. Also in case of illusionary architecture, the movement of people can be further deceptive. Example for this is movement inside Ames room and movement around the Penrose triangle. (BROWNLIE, 2006) In the case of an impossible triangle, the working memory cannot help predict what's coming ahead while we are moving through the space, only a thorough investigation can lead to the comprehension of the space. Unlike dreams, architecture has a physical reality and a sense of permanence to it. Dreams and films are more fragile and are visual illusions. In case of buildings we are able to choose for how long we want to stay in one space and we can return to previously experienced space. We can also capture a building in multiple ways through camera and record it. By bringing dream scape into architectural experience architects can bring a sense of permanence to it. They can make illusive dream plots look more concrete, this will eventually and hopefully help to comprehend them in waking life. Dreams and films have hallucinatory effect on us. (Fusco, 2017) Furthermore, in dreams, there is a lack of color association and a natural pattern of luminance. Films have been portraying the uncanny through the process of lack of color association and natural patterns of illuminance such an example is of portrayal of jitterbug dance in the film Mulholland drive. Where the shadows of dancers don't correlate with their dance moves and the dance ends with the overexposed image of the leading protagonist of the film. In spatial designs, the art of anamorphism can portray a disruptive association of shadows, forms, and colors. Also, techniques like Thomp'e loei can create a very deceptive perception of space. In dreams, there is the absence of personality expression and moderation of social behaviors. Architecture may or may not be an expression of the personality of the client or an expression of the life

of someone in any way. This depends on the design philosophy that is being used for proposing design. It can be customized to decentralize it from being an expression of specific personality traits. To a certain extent, architecture has the ability to shape human social behaviors as well. (Lipman, 1969). For example, a window opening on the street enables the dwellers to keep a watch on the happenings in their neighborhood and sometimes vice versa. In films, many functions are associated with common, buildings elements of architecture such as windows, doors, walls, stairs, etc., showing their role in daily life and elaborating on them. (Anon., n.d.) A dream similarly, elaborates on the collection of visuals from waking life and generates an experience outside of our previous experiences. Thus, the elements in dreams are not far from identified by a dreamer. In cinematics set production is done to generate a specific spatial experience for a particular film sequence. The art of set production is similar to designing a building. In both a spatial experience is being shaped. In waking life, the movement of people within space is slower as compared to the shift of spatial frames in dreams and films. Our ability to communicate through a screen has a further blurred sense of reality, identity, personality, or physical characters of the users. This has broken down the 'physical' distance while maintaining a perception of distance. (Kacar, 2005)The incorporation of media in architectural spatial experience has revolutionized how architecture can be experienced today. (Community, 2021) dreams, Architecture and films both can evoke emotions but not necessarily the same type of emotions. Buildings can on purpose be created to generate anxiety such as haunted houses. Last but not least in dreams and films we are exposed to threats visually but not physically so a dream-like architecture may result in evoking emotions but can still be a safe spatial experience for all. And watching a film is usually physically a safe experience. The unique architecture program of cinema is devised to let people hallucinate in the dark while motor functions are at rest. (Juniad, 2021) Apart from cinematic experience, it's hard to disconnect people from awareness of self in waking life. An example of it is people being afraid of glass see-through bridges. They know they won't fall down but it cannot prevent them from fear of falling down. So their consciousness is connected with the awareness of the existence of self.

Conclusion

To a certain extent, the state of consciousness in dreams can be recreated in architecture through the design of its spatial composition. Today, all that is required to portray dreams in architecture is at our disposal but requires an active and conscious effort to do so. we can generate dream-related spatial experiences. However, one deliberate and coherent attempt is still due. Cinema is a suggested medium to study for architects in order to understand how a dream plot can be formulated such that it can generate an illusion of dreaming. A deeper study can be done by studying various film editing techniques that are used to generate oneiric

experiences. Comprehension of such techniques in design interpretation can further suggest methods of generating dream experiences in waking life.

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