

Temporal Disruptions And Oneiric States: An Epistemological Inquiry Into Lucid Dreaming In *Pendulum*

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ABSTRACT

Dream enthusiasts and researchers are drawn to lucid dreaming, a unique state of awareness in which the dreamer is aware that he is dreaming and has influence over the dream world. A thorough examination of the state of dream research today is given in this review article, which covers a wide range of topics including the neurological underpinnings of the phenomena, induction techniques, clinical applications, and advantages and disadvantages related to it. *Pendulum* (2023), as the title suggests, deliberately employs a clear allusion to the idea of “time,” establishing it as the main character in the story. The word “pendulum,” which means “measured movements of a pendulum”, acts as a metaphorical anchor, signifying the rhythmic oscillation and sway of time. This article attempts to better understand lucid dreaming and its effects on psychology, neuroscience, and health by summarising important research and conclusions.

Keywords: Consciousness, epistemology, lucid dreaming, neuroscience, oneiric states, temporal disruptions, time travel.

Introduction

The movie *Pendulum* deftly examines the complex mechanics of time, using it as a protagonist and driving force behind the plot rather than just as a background. With this theme selection, the story takes on a fascinating new depth that entices viewers to explore the intricacies and secrets of temporal dimensions. This purposeful addition alludes to the movie's thematic emphasis on time's ebb and flow and suggests that it plays a crucial part in determining the fates of the characters. The pendulum's symbolic meaning deepens throughout the story, mirroring the individuals' journeys and the complex interactions between the past, present, and future. The film's title not only sums up the main points but also challenges viewers to think critically about how time affects decisions, experiences, and life itself.

Essentially, *Pendulum* does more than just acknowledge time; it makes the time a primary motivator that pushes the characters into a world where the past and present are entwined and the future is still a mystery. By using this thematic lens, the movie invites viewers to consider the mysteries that emerge as the narrative's pendulum swings back and forth, in addition to telling a story and stimulating thoughts about the profound and frequently mysterious nature of time. “Lucid dreaming is not only real but is relatively common. Lucid dreaming is when a person becomes aware that they are dreaming during the dream” (Medical News Today). Dr. Mahesh Narayanan (Vijay Babu), having returned to Kochi with his beloved wife Shweta (Devaki Rajendran) and their only daughter Thanu, takes a day trip to a hill area. Mahesh is found asleep during this excursion and recounts his terrifying story of being hit by a truck the night before, only to wake up and realize it was all a dream. Later, Dr. Mahesh finds an interesting link between his dreams and two other people, Ameer and Angel. He is determined to solve this mystery, so he asks John Master (Prakash Bare) for help.

Pendulum's creative director, Rejin S Babu, should be commended for exploring the comparatively unexplored fields of lucid dreaming and time travel in Malayalam cinema. Though the idea seems exciting and intriguing on paper, the movie makes significant mistakes in telling its story, leaving viewers with a confusing experience.

Despite its ambitious introduction of new ideas, this fantasy thriller is unable to fully communicate them to the audience.

1.1 Lucid Dreaming

For generations, people have been fascinated by the phenomenon known as lucid dreaming, which is characterized by the dreamer's awareness of and control over their dreams. This article delves deeper into the subconscious and examines the phenomenon of lucid dreaming, including its historical relevance, meaning, and relationship to consciousness. In essence, lucid dreaming is the ability to recognize one's dreams while they are still occurring. Dreamers can work together to create the environment they envision when they reach a heightened state of consciousness.

Being aware of the connection between the dream and the real world is what makes lucid dreaming distinct. The phenomenon of lucid dreaming is not a new one; rather, it has philosophical origins in ancient societies. Hindu and Buddhist writings contain the earliest mentions of dream awareness, emphasizing the practice of dream yoga, which aims to achieve heightened consciousness during dreams. Many cultures have acknowledged and investigated the possibility of lucid dreaming for spiritual development and self-discovery throughout history.

Researchers are now employing neuroimaging techniques to better understand the brain activity linked to a certain condition as interest in lucid dreams grows. The study determined the neurological correlates of lucid dreaming and demonstrated how several brain regions interact when lucid dreaming occurs. At the nexus of contemporary science and age-old wisdom, lucid dreaming offers a singular glimpse into the enigmatic human mind. Dream research contributes to our growing understanding of consciousness and offers new avenues for creativity, healing, and exploring the depths of the human heart as science and understanding grow. The country of dreams never ceases to inspire people who dare to venture in to venture into unexplored territory, whether it is through scientific inquiry or self-discovery.

1.2 Historical Overview

Dutch psychiatrist, poet, and author Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) had a significant role in the early study of dreams and the creation of the idea of lovely dreams. Throughout his life, Van Eeden, who was born in Haarlem, Netherlands, made important contributions to psychology, medicine, and literature. Van Eeden was a talented poet and writer in addition to being a doctor. It came to be connected to the works of the Tachtigers, a group of late 19th-century Dutch poets and writers.

Van Eeden is renowned for examining mystical and spiritual subjects in his articles, poems, and stories. When van Eeden released *A Study of Dreams* in 1913, he used the phrase "lucid dreaming" to refer to dreams in which the dreamer is aware that he is dreaming. He classified dreams into seven groups, the final one being "instructional dreams", or what we today refer to as lucid dreams. Van Eeden's investigation of psychological phenomena benefited greatly from his early observation of lucid dreaming. Lucid dreaming is only one aspect of Van Eeden's study on dream classification. He distinguished between several dream types and categorized them based on their traits and contents. His comprehension of dreams served as the foundation for further dream science investigations. Van Eeden proposed a classification system that included seven types of dreams. Here are the seven categories he identified:

(i) Initial Dream:

This has to do with the initial dream that follows falling asleep. It frequently includes components from current mysteries.

(ii) Psychic Dream:

The phrase "psychic dreams" is used by Van Eeden to characterize dreams that seem to provide knowledge about far-off thoughts or occurrences and suggest common-sense reasoning.

(iii) Dreams of the Ideal:

In these kinds of dreams, an ideal or utopian scenario is typically realized from the standpoint of perfection, harmony, and beauty.

(iv) Dreams for the Future:

These dreams feature scenarios that hint at potential future developments. They might be thought of as a kind of training or experience.

(v) Dreams of Dread:

This group includes nightmares and dreams that make you feel scared or anxious. They could represent strife or be menacing.

(vi) Vivid Dream:

Van Eeden refers to unusual, powerful, and unsettling dreams as "vivid dreams". These dreams frequently result from the dreamer's lingering feelings.

(vii) The Dream That Can Be Directed:

This category is particularly important in the context of lucid dreaming. In the dream described by Van Eeden, the dreamer knows that he is dreaming and, in some cases, can directly operate or control the dream. This type is very close to what we now commonly call lucid dreaming. It's crucial to remember that, despite its influence, van Eeden's classification system is not widely acknowledged, and other academics and researchers may suggest other classification schemes for dreams. In the field of dream studies, the realization that the "dream

which can be directed" was a forerunner to the idea of lucid dreaming has had a particularly significant influence.

1.3 Lucid Dreaming in Freudian Context

Although Freud did not clearly explain the meaning of dreams, his theory contributed to the understanding of the content of dreams. Lucid dreaming refers to consciousness in dreams and can be seen as a departure from Freud's theory. Freud focused on the symbols and backgrounds of different dreams, as well as the scientific theory of dream scenes in lucid dreams. Dutch psychologist Frederik van Eeden coined the term "Lucid Dreaming" in his 1913 article *A Study of Dreams*.

Van Eeden defines a dream as a dream in which the dreamer knows that he is dreaming. This was an important moment in the recognition of lucid dreaming as a unique phenomenon. Van Eeden proposed seven categories of dreams, with the last category being "the dream which can be directed". This category closely aligns with what we now refer to as lucid dreaming. Van Eeden's classification system laid the groundwork for recognizing the various types of dream experiences, including those where the dreamer has some degree of control over the dream narrative.

1.4 Lucid Dreaming in *Pendulum*

The film skillfully establishes the characters of Dr. Mahesh Narayanan and his family, setting off at a slow but promising pace. The intriguing story unfolds as the non-linear narrative deftly introduces the characters of Ameer, his father (portrayed excellently by Indrans), and Angel. But as Mahesh explores his journey to discover the meaning of his visions and meets John Master, played by Prakash Bare, the story takes a turn for the worse. Although the film aspires to be an engaging viewing experience, its subpar second half poses more questions than it answers. The non-linear narrative and many unresolved issues make the whole experience of watching tedious and perplexing. The rushed conclusion heightens the confusion and leaves the viewer with even more unresolved questions. Despite its relative conciseness. The film skillfully establishes the characters of Dr. Mahesh Narayanan and his family, setting off at a slow but promising pace.

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When it comes to acting, Indrans steals the show with his strong and somewhat terrifying portrayal of Ameer's father. The film begins with the background sound of Indrans to Ameer:

Let me teach you magic. The magic to create a new world from dreams. If that is so, from today onwards, you will have to keep track of all the dreams that you see. It is not just about remembering these dreams. You will have to memorize and write down everything you see. It is not just about remembering these dreams. You will have to memorize and write down everything you see. Then, after a few years, you look up those things which you have written down from your dreams. Then, after a few years, you look up these things which you have written down from your dreams. Then you will see how interesting it is. What will happen then? In these dreams you have written down, you will see that certain places are getting repeated over and over again. Those places are the keys that we gain through dreams. The keys to accessing the depth of our minds. (04:25)

Notably, the veteran actor's powerful delivery of the dialogue heightens the impression of his character as a whole. In his role as Dr. Mahesh Narayanan, Vijay Babu gives an almost flawless performance. But Prakash Bare falls flat in the character of John Master due to his stiff line delivery and restricted facial gestures. Two teens are featured in the movie's opening scenes, and it is the writing of this scene that undermines the film's potential to establish a positive impression. There are notable tonal differences between the tunes that feature Dr. Mahesh in the present tense and the flashback.

Rejin presents the fascinating notion of lucid dreaming combined with the concept of time travel as the first part comes to an end. One notable aspect is the character played by Prakash Bare's verbal explanation of lucid dreaming. It stays away from oversimplifying the topic, even though it can appear to be an orientation session for the audience. The film's fantasy vision deviates from a linear perspective of time, which sheds light on the complications underlying Dr. Mahesh's role in the story. According to Ameer's father:

When we are awake, we may go to these places and just suggest to our mind that, "we are dreaming, we are dreaming". Then when these places recur again in our dreams, our mind will tell us, "You are dreaming". When you are dreaming if you realise that you are dreaming, you can be able to decide, what to see and what to happen in your dreams. (04:27)

Responding to Ameer's question, Indrans says, "We can also bring another mind to our dream"! (02:49). Later, we can see that Dr. Mahesh Narayanan went to meet a psychologist to clarify his doubts regarding his illusions and dreams. John Master tries to clarify his doubt with an example by showing him an artificial plant. He says, "Can you believe it, doctor, that it is not a real plant? It is a well-made artificial one, is it? It is beautiful, and it looks original on seeing it first sight. (59:04). He inquires of Dr. Mahesh about his knowledge of lucid dreaming. From his reply and attitude, it is clear that he is aware of the term 'lucid dreaming.' John Master explains to

him by saying, "We all see dreams while sleeping, right? Depending on the depth of the sleep, we remember some of them. We don't remember at all" (59:55).

1.5 Dream Science

While dreaming, we can realise that we are within a dream, which is what lucid dreaming is about. This happens very rarely, if it happens very rarely. Suppose it happens, like we realize that we are dreaming. When we are within a dream, we can completely control that dream, and it can be designed according to the imagination of the dreamer. It is an art, and we can call it a very talented one. It is a very tough process. The dreams that we see daily are arranged in an orderly manner, like writing a diary. After a certain time, maybe after a couple of months, if we go through the dream journal that we wrote down, we will realise that our dreams, some places, and some people are getting repeated again and again. These common points are known as dream signs.

We can explain dream science with an example of a classroom in the school from our childhood days or a small shop on the country roads. When we awake, we prepare our mind to a meditative state and we can suggest to our mind that "I am in a dream; I am in a dream" (01:02:02). Then, when we return to these places in our dreams, our mind will tell us that we are in a dream. Then, we have attained lucidity, though it is easy to talk about it; in practice, it is not a toll and easy process. In the field of dream science, the idea of achieving lucidity in dreams can be compared to navigating through places that hold significance for us, such as our childhood classrooms or charming country shops. To grasp this concept, it as a journey where our conscious mind interacts with the realm of dreams.

The school or small business in this comparison is a representation of the ideal setting. Dream settings are like actual environments that leave an impression on our memory; our subconscious mind uses them as a stage to act out its stories. The trick is to navigate this terrain with awareness and skill while taking a thoughtful stance. We get ready to enter the realm of dreams when we wake up and change into a certain state. This action may be interpreted as programming our thoughts to doubt reality. Make a connection between our minds' domains. We eventually see these locations in our dreams, and this is when the conditioning we underwent starts to show. Our minds serve as guides in this state of consciousness, gently reminding us that we are dreaming. This point in the dream represents the attainment of clarity, a stage in which the dreamer becomes aware of the dream as it develops.

Rejin S. Babu, the writer-director of *Pendulum*, merits recognition for exploring subjects never seen in Malayalam cinema, such as dreams and time travel. Although the film's intriguing plot on paper first excited viewers, it eventually let them down with a glaringly weak storyline. The director here used the evidence for lucid dreaming in this film. We can see it in the dialogue between Dr. Mahesh and Angel.

Dr. Mahesh: Angel.

Angel: Yes, may I know who you are?

Dr. Mahesh: Angel, do you remember seeing me somewhere?

Angel: Where are you there at the DC Books seminar?

Dr. Mahesh: No, so, Angel has not seen me yet.

Angel: I may have forgotten.

Dr. Mahesh: That's okay. My name is Dr Mahesh I'm a doctor Saju. Shall we talk somewhere else?

Angel: That's unbelievable Dr. How can you see me in dreams even without meeting me that's too my childhood what is it? Murakkami's novel?

Dr. Mahesh: see Angel. I don't have anything to achieve by convincing you. I'm not trying to attempt it. I was following a strange event so to those who have it it might seem like a fixture whatever I didn't care. Even if Angel believes it or not, I am now part of the dreams which you have done once along with you and Ameer. (01:12:37)

Vijay here shows his findings to the psychologist. He came to meet the psychologist to convey that the old Lori incident was happening about 10 to 15 years after that. Two different periods are being concerned in a single dream. The psychologist replies, "That's very interesting" (01:14:54). Dr Mahesh replies that, "I was expecting Angel to have some

memory of me when she spoke realistically. It felt weird" (01:14:56).

John Master conveyed to Dr. Mahesh that he had become a part of a dream. He also inquired of Dr. Mahesh about the benefit of knowing the angels' appearance. According to him, he will be able to see her in the same appearance in his dream, and now his mind is inquiring about what happened to Ameer. It can be seen only from his dream in between the two periods that the doctor saw in his dream. Sometimes, something serious has happened, and to find out what it is, it is necessary to go back to the past to find out what it was. But John Master conveyed to him, "I don't think you will be able to do it alone because you don't have any memories related to that; please" (01:15:56).

When the doctor says that humans have a common problem, the common problem is that we think only of these people when we have talked directly to them or they are our acquaintances. After all, they were just dreams, and the doctor saw that these dreams were not true. They are only the dreams shown to the doctor by Ameer. Finally, Dr. Mahesh argues with the psychologist that he wasted his whole time following Ameer, but still, this is not even a trace of him. Dr. Mahesh told the psychologist that he was going to stop all his nonsense. Soon, he found a big snail on his arm.

Dr. Mahesh is aware that wherever the presence of a snail is, there will be the presence of Ameer. Dr. Mahesh finally understood that the person to whom he was conveying was not a real psychologist, but he was the man whom he was searching for. Suddenly, he took a coin from his pocket and tossed a coin into the air but he couldn't get the coin back into his palm. Finally, he understood that he was in a dreamy state and that his presence with the psychologist was not real. It was all his dreams. Soon Psychologist replied to the doctor, "Doctor, you shouldn't worry; the time you spent on me or you wasted will be retrieved without losing a single moment" (01:35:01).

Finally, Dr Mahesh went to see the psychologist John Master at his house. He sees a different man there whom he met earlier. Then he understood that it was all his dreams and it was not real. The moment he realised that all things were his dreams. Later Dr. Mahesh went to see Angel again, but he was surprised to see the response from the Angel. She asked him. "Yes, who are you"? (01:37:00). Here we can see the doctor trying to convince her by reminding her that he once came to that college to meet her.

Dr. Mahesh understood the reality that the things that were going to happen had already happened in his dreams, but he never stopped his conversation with Angel. He continued the conversation with Angel because he wanted to convince Angel that all things had happened once, so he continued his dialogue.

Angel: How can you see me in a dream even without meeting me? That's too in me Childhood.

Dr. Mahesh: What is Murakkami's novel? That's what you were going to say right?

Angel: Oh God, how is it possible? Are you a mentalist?

Dr. Mahesh: Angel believe me or not me coming to the school to see you our discussion and entire episodes. It has happened before I know it will be difficult to convince you to understand that a time loop repetition. Here occurs between us without our knowledge. May I tell you something you will have to give me a truthful explanation for that?

Angel: What is that?

Dr. Mahesh: Years ago, during your school days, why did you attack Ameer just before that even you thought is unknown to the others to place Angel has talked with me? So please tell me what was the provocation to cause danger to Ameer. (01:40:15)

1.5 Conclusion

A monument to humanity's tolerance for the complexities of the mind is Oneironautics. Those who engage in dream trips are considered not only dreamers but also conscious guides in the ancient dream-seeking tradition that continues to this day. Dream exploration offers a special chance for creativity, self-discovery, and a better comprehension of the human psyche. We set off on a voyage that transcends reality and unlocks the door to the infinite in the dream realm as we continue to uncover the mysteries of dream journeys. To find Amir, Dr Mahesh went to those places where he saw Ameer's presence in his dream. Finally, he reached a place, he saw the presence of a snail on his arm in the car. So, he understood that somewhere near there was Ameer.

Dr. Mahesh was sure that the snail's presence would be only a sign of finding Ameer. He asked a pedestrian to stop his car and ask him which place it was and where the sound was coming from. A man outside the car replied to him that the sound was from Dharga Street, where a funeral was going on. He came out of the car and walked towards the funeral place. He walked straight, and he saw some people carrying a dead body. He simply inquired about the matter of the funeral. One of them replied that it was Ameer. He also asked the doctor whether he knew him, but Dr. Mahesh replied that he didn't. Dreamers who journey into the unknown realm of their dreams, they encounter obstacles and moral quandaries. Dreams and reality can blend, which begs the question of how dream research may affect autism. Concerns about dream control and the impact on the dreamer's emotional condition also raise ethical questions.

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