WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

AI and "The House of One's Dreams"

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Abstract: In the era of simulated images and extended machine-interactive conversations, the question of the imagination's function requires an evermore disciplined theory. This session invites speculative engagement with—and proposals for—new relationships with Artifcial Intelligence that go past the simplistic model of wishfulness to look for meaningful, unpredictable determinacy.

The idea of the dream-house is ancient. When resources have allowed, as in the case of Nero's Golden House, the results have proven a rule that applies to the Chinese saying "beware of what you wish for." Wishfulness in a complex counterpoint to truthfulness, in the sense that imagination does not have full access to foundational desire. Before the child's fateful encounter, at the "Mirror Stage", within the restrictive conditions of language, family, and society, it had diversifed the places and means of enjoyment in an "autoerotic" universe-building way. Substitutes for this Paradise Lost, money, status, material goods—houses in particular—are dissatisfying because their quantity cannot substitute for the truth-quality of the original.

This session engages with Artifcial Intelligence to anchor discussion that range across a number of disciplines: anthropology, architecture, psychoanalysis, philosophy, philology … The recent practice of combining the popular Tiny House idea with AI-generated images is a test of this session's inventiveness: (1) either the imagination is able to construct a proper frame to circumnavigate the candy of wish-generation, or (2) it is held prisoner suspended within an "as-if ideology," with access to the satisfactions of deep childhood stepping just out of reach with every attempt to recover it.

Each proposal to engage the architectural manifestation of wishfulness should address this question: Where should this go? Every plan should come with a map, a specifcation for future collaboration and conclusion, ambition with reasoned supports—the framework beneath the daring track of a roller-coaster.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 | Slot 1 | Room 4
Fatemeh Naji Meydani: The Labyrinth of mind: From Negation's concentric nature to Hal's odyssey

Arash Madani and Sina Zeinal Zadeh: AI and the Designer of One's Dream

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 | Slot 2 | Room 4
Jodi La Coe, Berrin Terim: Anamorphic House

Don Kunze: Cultures Talk: The (la-)Language of the Tiny House

Iraj Esmaeilpour Ghoochani: Heart as the Tiny House

SESSION PAPERS

The Labyrinth of mind: From Negation's concentric nature to Hal's odyssey
Fatemeh Naji Meydani

This essay investigates the concept of 3 different words through the Zairaja method, a serendipitous game of word selection that led me to explore the profound psychoanalytic significance of 'Negation.' The term, deeply rooted in the unconscious mind's labyrinth, is a defense mechanism where a repressed wish or thought is articulated and simultaneously disowned, as described by Laplanche and Pontalis. Freud's work further distinguishes between outright denial (Verneinung), acknowledgment with denied significance (Verleugnung), and rejection of reality (Verwerfung), each forming layers of denial around the truth.

The labyrinth metaphor, derived from the Greek myth of the Minotaur, symbolizes the psyche's complex denials. Theseus's defeat of the Minotaur within the labyrinth parallels the psychoanalytic journey through denial to confront repressed truths. Similarly, Kubrick's "A Space Odyssey: 2001" reflects a form of 'self-destruction via an external agent,' akin to the dynamics of denial and disavowal in our interactions with AI.

The narrative questions our fetishistic fascination with AI, where we disavow its influence and potential consequences. As we approach the AI singularity, our relationship with technology mirrors the 'Tiny house' trend, where living spaces shrink, resembling the womb-like enclosure of our earliest fantasies. This shift indicates a transformation in our interaction with space and technology, prompting us to question when we will confront the proverbial Minotaur within the unconscious labyrinth of AI and technology.

Incorporating the Zairaja method into this exploration emphasizes the role of chance and the unconscious in shaping our understanding of negation and its manifestations in the realms of psychoanalysis, mythology, and artificial intelligence.

AI and the Designer of One's Dream
Arash Madani and Sina Zeinal Zadeh

In the age of AI and machine-interactive environments, the distinction between dreaming and designing a house becomes increasingly significant. This proposal explores AI's potential to bridge these concepts, addressing the evolving relationship between humans and their living spaces.

Anamorphic House
Jodi La Coe, Berrin Terim

In the pursuit of adventurous solitude, we dream of a tiny house, a portable living space with the possibility of ever-changing remote vistas. This is the van life phenomenon that, remarkably, appeals to youthful vloggers and elderly retirees alike. A chance to see secluded parts of the world from the comfort of your own home. However, through its media-generated popularity, this collective dream has been shattered. When these undisturbed destinations are overrun by like minded adventurers, wishful experiences are undermined by a lack of solitude. With AI-generated representations, the dream of adventurous solitude may soon be achieved in a tiny, stationary living space.

There was a distinct arc to the portrayals of a tiny, van life. At the outset, the experience of the first adventurers was profound. As their videos went viral on social media platforms, these isolated locations became crowded with tourists, who took turns attempting to photograph themselves without revealing the throngs of strangers nearby. These highly choreographed photos and videos ensured that the representation of their dream of solitude remained intact, while the reality was something quite unfulfilling. Ultimately, we have now seen podcasts dedicated to undermining these deceptive representations by documenting the grim realities of overcrowded sites and monotonous, taxing routines (mainly related to our bodily functions) born out of the constraints of living in a tiny, portable house.

In this paper, we will examine the tiny house in light of the possibilities of wish fulfillment that are opened by AI-generated, on-demand immersive environments. In these terms, the tiny house becomes an extension of the unconscious, a rethinking of the twentieth-century mass housing concept developed by Sigmund Freud and El Lissitzky as an anamorphic projection into space and time.

Cultures Talk: The (la-)Language of the Tiny House
Don Kunze

Culture, broadly considered, is the totality of networks that allow listeners to understand speakers, but this is only part of the story. In exchanges of human subjects with objects, shelters, and physical landscapes, there is another way of speaking and listening, where conventional distinctions give way to evenly-distributed "sideways" relations (gleichswebende Aufmerksamkeit), where the blending of speakers and listeners, distances, feelings, motions, and even causes and effects allows culture to "talk to itself." This is the case of the "Tiny House," an increasingly popular meme powered by ideas of identity, solitude, and spirituality.

In the case of the Tiny House, culture's "inner conversation" reconfigures the forces used to distinguish and relate subjects and objects. Where the Shannon-Weaver model defines senders and receivers exchanging messages troubled by noise, the sideways ciphers of the Tiny House use noise as a channel for messages. This has to do with what the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan called "lalangue" — what is left over after we subtract conventional meanings from symbolic systems. This is nonsense as, literally, non sense, the "sense of the no," which comes with the implicit structure of the omen. Tiny House lalangue uses this negation to reconfigure locale as performative, a theater complete with stage whispers and soliloquys. Because Lacan considered lalangue to be the language of the unconscious, we can consider that the Tiny House is the unconscious of architecture.

The widespread use of AI in creating Tiny House images encourages me to use ChatGPT to find out (1) how the Tiny House so quickly became an avatar and (2) how topology played a key role in the extroversion of subjective interiority to architectural exteriority. My methodology will be to use lalangue in relation to Lacan's idea of extimity, the conversion of interiority to exteriority and vice versa.

Heart as the Tiny House
Iraj Esmaeilpour Ghoochani

In Persianate culture, the symbolism of a house in dreams serves as a profound reflection of the dreamer's spiritual state. The condition and nature of the house in a dream directly correlates to the dreamer's soul, where a well-kept house signifies spiritual well-being and a dilapidated house indicates spiritual distress. This symbolic relationship extends to the extreme vision of the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam. Dreaming of visiting the Kaaba is traditionally interpreted as an omen of impending death, symbolizing the soul's ultimate return to its divine origin. This underscores the house in dreams as more than a mere object; it embodies a dual role as both a "model of" the soul and a "model for" the soul, echoing Clifford Geertz's terminology.

In Sufism, the entire world is seen as a reflection of the heart (qalb, قلب), which literally means "invert." Circle inversion is a mathematical tool that provides a theoretical framework for understanding the function of metaphor as well as a range of Oriental cultural conceptualizations, where the house serves as a "model of" the human body, mirroring its heart. The term sadr (صدر), another word for heart, also denotes the most esteemed place within a house, reinforcing this analogy.

Applying circle inversion, the tiny house serves as an extended metaphor for the body, where each element reflects bodily functions. This concept is further enriched by modern technology, such as AI and the internet enabling increasingly efficient and compact living spaces with intricate connection between physical space and the spiritual self.

Thus, the house in Persianate dream culture and traditional Iranian architecture acts as a cultural and spiritual model, embodying personal and collective significance. This multifaceted interpretation will be explored and addressed in this workshop, introducing the heart as a metaphor for the tiny house, and vice versa.