

**A Dissertation On**

**A REALISTIC DREAM; INCEPTION BY  
CHRISTOPHER NOLAN**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of  
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**By**

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*This is to certify that the dissertation titled*

*A Realistic dream; Inception by Christopher Nolan*

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled "**A REALISTIC DREAM; INCEPTION BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN**" is an original work prepared and written by me, under the guidance of Mrs Akhila CK Assistant Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication program, Navrachana University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication.

This thesis or any other part of it has not been submitted to any other University for the award of other degree or diploma.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Akhila CK', written in a cursive style.

signature

I whole heartedly dedicate this work To  
My friends, family and my guide.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A REALISTIC DREAM; INCEPTION BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN**

Inception is a film with highly dense plot structure, a web of deep ideas with a strong cast like a heist film with a point and greatest cinematography techniques. It raises issues on the ideas of dreams being so manipulative that one might be unable to know if we are in one or not. In this paper, the questions relating to the movie's narrative techniques, human's behavior, laws of physics through cinematography techniques will be discussed in detail. Inception is extremely dense when it comes to screenplay and plot structure, hence, the paper will take you from one plot to another by distinguishing between five different worlds at once, i.e. one real world, three dream worlds and one defined world. It will explore the boundaries between dream and reality by summarizing and analyzing the most important scenes of the movie.

**Keywords:** Analyzing, Cast, Cinematography, Dream, Inception, Narrative techniques, Reality

## Contents

<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Dreams and reality; Inception .....	1
2.3 Conclusion .....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	6
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1 Research method .....	14
3.2 Significance.....	14
3.3 Objective .....	15
3.4 Hypothesis.....	15
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>CONTENT ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1 Plot Analysis .....	16
4.2 Scene to Scene - Summary & Analysis .....	19
4.3 Ending and its interpretations .....	25
4.4 Cinematography .....	27



<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>31</b>
5.1 Unanswered Questions.....	31
5.2 Conclusion .....	34
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Glossary .....	39
Character Analysis .....	42

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Inception; a masterpiece that took 10 years of dedication to be moulded into a screenplay by Christopher Nolan. Till date, it's one of the greatest psycho thriller with many mazes to be solved. Nolan with the help of cinematography techniques demonstrates this overly complicated heist plan in a complete different manner. The existence of dream-sharing technology shows the audience the power of sub consciousness. Four levels of dreaming has been shown by creating a perfect contrast between each layer and defining a line between fantasy and reality. Keeping intact all the scientific law of nature. It is a movie showing what it takes to plant an idea into one's sub consciousness which will change a person's mind-set within the actual world.

#### **1.2 Dreams and reality; Inception**

"Am I a man who dreamt about being a butterfly? Or am I really a butterfly who now dreams about being a man?" (Adams, 2010).

We can never even be really sure of what the relationship between dream time and real time is and that's what inception is all about. It's said that Christopher Nolan spent ten years writing his screenplay for "Inception." Nolan was interested in cinematically showing the idea of dream seen as reality and how it keeps occurring in our mind. It is a very dense movie with various dream layers,

memories and reality sequences and there are too many plot dots to connect. The sci-fi concept of the film is about the existence of "dream-sharing" technology and Nolan has used the same by showing too many plots/architects and characters over the years in the movie which makes the division between the real and dream blurry. It is a very original storyline, showing a heist plan in a complete different manner along with structured action movie basics so it feels like it makes more sense than it does, maybe?

Nothing is ever as simple as demonstrated by the movie "Inception," it is a movie that has made a show of complicating everything in its own path. In any case if you have been sleeping through in some other movie, or follow dreams of your own, "Inception" is now the film from Christopher Nolan where Dom Cobb was played as an unlicensed plumber of the subconscious named by Leonardo DiCaprio, fights and frets was his way through various dream escapes, the nature of which is very much in disputes down with also the number.

Depending on how a person interpret certain key images and pattern, there are either three or four levels of dreaming discovered by Cobb and his crew. Which happens within the film's packed and hectic 148 long minutes which in the dream time is at least a month, and which for some who're deep asleep may last forever, or at least feel this way has occasioned intense and contentious speculation on the web. The discourse is that it has been marked by the ritualistic incantation of two words which may at this point be redundant.

The movie Inception is a psychological thriller movie which is filled with actions and is spiced up with a little more romance. The story also deals with a lot of main character's which one of them is Cobb's emotions that affects whole part of the story. The end part is an open-ended ending which made me curious and also made me fall in love with this movie. It is not so clear that whether Cobb managed to get back to the real world or whether he is just trapped in the unexpected fourth level of a dream when he was in the search for Saito. During the quest, I had found many interesting

articles which weren't only related the story, but also the other things from the movie. One of the articles that I read, Christopher Nolan who is the writer and also the director of the movie, had been working on the script for almost like 10 years which is a big deal. He said in an interview, "About almost 10 years ago that he started thinking about fusing a film about dreaming with a heist-film structure (Taubin 32)." He first had the idea of writing about this dream-story from his lucid dream which are the dreams in which the dreamer has complete consciousness and also has been aware about the fact that one person is dreaming and therefore can interfere or influence, even creating the dream as he or she wishes. In some interview, Nolan has said that he had lucid dreams one night and has already attempted to manipulate his dream. But however, this attempt was "frustratingly elusive," which is a hint that such things are possible. Up to this point he started becoming more and more fascinated of how a man could plant such an intriguing work only because of a dream. Dreaming is something for which he was always fond of; he could imagine a story inside my mind after he had an interesting dream. However, this was just a simple imagination, a continuation from the dream which he probably had before; he never thought that one can really turn out to process story from having a dream. The things that happen within some person like unconsciousness and dreams are not an exact science but you cannot also tell what is inside someone's mind or a person could predict dreams he will have when he is sleeping, or the relation between these two. This matter attracts me to process some research about the ending.

There's also always a room for possibilities and discussion. There are other movies like *Matrix*, *Vanilla Sky*, *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* too, which talks about consciousness and sub-consciousness, dream and reality and much more. But in the movie *Inception* the term subconscious is used repeatedly and is referred to the subconscious mind where many of the interactions have taken place. Basically it means that almost everything that happens in the dream sharing. The concept is to be introduced to the viewers in the starting of the movie, when Cobb, Arthur, and Saito

were seen talking. They were discussing of how to defend their own subconscious even while asleep because in a dream conscious defenses are lowered and their thoughts are vulnerable. This scene then introduced us to the notion of subconscious between which the whole movie revolves around. As stated above, it is also suggesting that the subconscious contains repressed or some hidden memories that will re-emerge within a dream. The example is when Cobb and Arthur are in the middle of a set up to make unwary of Saito so they can steal the memories which were hidden which that contains information of his company's secret. Suddenly, a woman named Mal appears and destroys the whole operation by explaining Saito their goal. This first appearance marks a series of her appearances as a person who's troublemaker for Cobb's team in doing their work afterwards. Once they came back into reality, Arthur confronts Cobb about what really happened in the dreams.

The theory of the unconscious has been used to analyse the two central characters in the movie who're Fischer's and Cobb. Inception is solely based on the notion of subconscious, and it never mentioned the term of unconscious, even though they were actually vastly so different. Based on the film, everything which happens during dream sharing refers to the subconscious.

The main question of whether Cobb was still dreaming or not at the time when the film was ending is ultimately too simple. For there's also the problem of whose dreams Cobb might have been in and if not then his "own." The old Freudian paradigm created this a problem too, of course but then the issue was the fact which the ego was not really mastered in its own house because the subject was constitutively split into the unconscious. In the movie Inception, the ego is still not a master of the house, but that is because the forced predatory business are everywhere. Dreams have been ceased to be the space where private psychopathologies were worked through and have now become the scenes where competing corporate interested play out their banal struggles. Inception's "militarized subconscious" converted the infernal and mythical urgencies of the old unconscious into a panicked persecution and also a consolatory familiarize which pursued at work by videogame gunmen, you

then will later unwind with the kids building sandcastles on a beach. There is other reason too that the dreams in the movie Inception appeared more so dreamlike. After all, these weren't dreams in any conventional sense. Make no mistake because this is not an ambiguous film which is left open to interpretation. Christopher Nolan had made a living crafted intelligent films which thematically explores the differences between our perception of the world around us and the world that actually is really.

“This is inception. The seed of the idea we plant will grow...it'll change him. It might even come to define him.” - Inception (2010)

With this movie we become aware of the fact that the true meaning of a dream might not be there within the activities of the dream itself. Even within the physical world what we see and experience differentiates too.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

In other words, spinning tops, wedding rings, building tilt, characters floating, disregarding gravity, etc. are there and are the main hints. But the key to unlock the ending and solve the maze is not to do with totem but in fact living with character and answer all of that all along. The movie is nothing but a complex maze without a simple through-line, which is why there needs to be an analysis on it from every aspect. Hence, in the further thesis, I'll be summarizing and analysing every scene relating to reality and dream. Along with the characters, structure and plot analyzation. Also through the end, a detailed explanation of the cinematography skills and alternative theories will be given.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

To understand the numerous theories and ideas behind Christopher Nolan's movie; Inception, it is important to study various research papers, journals and featured articles. Through analysis of these papers, a clear and better understanding about the narrative and other techniques of the director Christopher Nolan is derived.

**2.1** Carmona, C.R. (2017). The role and purpose of film narration. *Journal of Science of Technology and Arts*. This journal talks about the narrative that appears in almost all human discourse as a way for understanding and communicating facts to others, and therefore as a tool for obtaining knowledge and expressing it. Hence, this paper intends to establish that film narrative can be better understood as an act of communication through and from experience from filmmaker to an audience and vice-versa. Whether filmmakers choose or not to complicate narrative comprehension, they usually mean to communicate. In every narrative, there must be an author, who creates the story, but not necessarily a narrator or narrate which are means and devices for telling the story, like for instance a voice-over narration.

Within his principles of narration Bordwell distinguishes three elements: Fabula, Syuzhet and Style. The fabula can be understood as the story and incorporates the action as a chronological

cause and effect sequence of events that occur within a particular time and space. The syuzhet can be understood as the plot and refers to the arranging and organization of the events that constitute the fabula.

How a filmmaker chooses different types of narratives, it maybe linear or non linear, it might be puzzling the audience or simple. No matter how the narrative is, its ultimate goal is to communicate, challenge their thinking in a way they are able to relate it their everyday life. What the directors really want and what their movies provide is experience to the spectators. And it depends how good the experience is on how long it stays with them. It could be involvement of various emotions like intellectual, emotional, spiritual or other type of experience. Nevertheless, viewing film narrative is always going to be an experience. A viewer may even know the narrative content by heart and they can still experience narration as if it is happening at the very moment they are watching it.

The filmmaker can choose their narrative styles and accordingly set their objectives of either making it incomprehensible or the kind which just relates to people easily. For example, filmmakers such as Nolan, Lynch, Kubrick, Pasolini, Straub, Resnais or Glauber Rocha have chosen, in some of their films, to frustrate the spectator's narrative comprehension.

**2.2** Erin Hill-Parks. (2011). Identity Construction and Ambiguity in Christopher Nolan's Films. *Journal by wide screen*. Christopher Nolan's movies have been all similar in some or the other way. He has developed his own style where he creates many layers in a movie. It has also been argued, that there's an unifying force behind his or her texts which helps to clarify and expose different meanings. This is what auteur cinema is, they set the framework but the ultimate meaning is derived by the audience. Nolan build up the uneasiness in the movies by building up the identity in a way that it engages audience. Nolan's films are filled with ambiguity and unease, which are partially transmitted through journeys of identity construction and through the films' endings.



Nolan's films rarely take clear moral stands when it comes to characterization, it's never good or evil, black or white which leads to a conscious absence of concrete resolutions. In movies like *Inception* and *Prestige*, he has challenged time and how it is related to the self. Time, in the case of Nolan's films, is compounded with identity construction, and Nolan attempts to use narrative structure to emphasize identity and time, challenging the audience to engage with the film and the themes on a wider scale. In movie *Memento*, he plays the memory of the character as well as with audiences', although identity is a frequent theme within film, it is the consistency with which Nolan's films center on the confusion of identity as a central theme that marks it as a significant point to consider. The identity can often be a lie or may change as the story unfolds, hence, the interpretation changes too. Although, in the movie *Inception*, he used another narrative technique of just leaving the screen blank at the end and what remains is an unresolved question for the viewers.

**2.3** Stuart Joy, 2009, *Time, Memory & Identity: The Films of Christopher Nolan*, Munich, GRIN Verlag. In this paper, the narrative structure of Christopher Nolan movies has been compared with other directors like *Chris Maker* and *David Lynch*. How they all play with time and memory and also question the personal identity of the characters. It has been shown in several movies like the *Prestige*, the *Memento*, *Dark Knight Rises*, etc. Christopher Nolan is also one of the directors who emerged by making low-budget independent cinema and broke all the mainstream stereotypes in Hollywood. He has also made a few movies which made his position as one of the 21st century's quintessential postmodern filmmakers.

While analysing his movies' narrative structure, the way he plays with time of the event that divides shots and controls the speed of it which makes the audience feel that we are there even though we are not, and creating effect of somethings going to happen and has just happened is what engages the audience and give them a subjective experience. Time and memory are inextricably linked through subjective experience. By this, we can say that he has acute knowledge of film as a

cultural medium. In the movies such as *memento*, *following* and *the prestige* they grab the audiences' attention by their plot as well as by the post production i.e. editing. Such experimentation with film form points toward an implicit relationship between the film text and the spectator.

Nolan has been directing the movies in a way that it develops complex relation between the spectator and cinematic screen. On one hand, he shows various timelines within one which requires the audiences' attention and at the same side, it gives them a subjective experience that engages them. Nolan's films equally transcend the boundaries between external reality and inner subjectivity presenting the spectator with a complex representation of the human mind. Through the director's fascination with themes of memory and identity, Nolan engages the spectator in multiple strands of deconstructive analysis through a complex awareness of the film texts' formal elements. Hence, his movies is all about showing external reality and inner subjectivity, playing with the human mind.

**2.4** Olsan, J.R. (2015) Nolan's immersive allergies in making *Inception* & *The prestige*. The cinema of Christopher Nolan. This paper mainly talks about the techniques used by him in the movie *inception* and *the prestige*. Talking about the movie *inception*, he has used the idea of frame narrative. Frame narrative is to show more than one story or to show a story within a story which provides a room for audience to think of their own. This technique is used when all the other elements or short stories are used to show the main narrative. Here the second story is kept in spotlight until the reveal of the main plot. The use of frame narrative is especially effective towards the ending of Nolan's films and in some way could be seen as a stage in Todorov's theory of the Four-Act structure, with the new equilibrium starting the films instead of the equilibrium that already exists. Fulton et al (2005) defines narrative is in the terms of plot and story, whereby "plot is the wherewithal of narrative construction. It is the higher-order of art selection" and "whereby a basic story is restructured to become interesting and compelling." By creating a simple story, he plays with the plot of and make it unique and interesting. Another technique that he used in one of his

movies, *memento* is by showing story backwards. While bringing a few glimpses of then and now in the story. Christopher Nolan has acquired a skill of distincting the story and plot in way that audience is also able to differentiate in what has been told and how which again, reveals many layers in the movie itself.

After studying his movies, he uses many techniques even in a non linear narrative but his essential method is the frame narrative. He also used a technique where the character dialogues help the audience to understand the plot. The parallel editing to show different scenes that are occurring at the same time is another way of distracting the audience from the narrative while letting them predict the scenes and surprise them with the climax. This technique is also used by him in the movie *inception* which is known as cross-cutting lines. It is also known as enigma codes.

**2.5** Ian. A.P. (2010). *Desiring-Machines in American Cinema: What Inception tells us about our experience of reality and film. Senses of cinema.* This journal article talks about the addition of *inception* into pheltora movies along with many other movies like *Matrix*, *New York*, etc which made us realized that everything is a construction and made us question reality. The movie *inception* majorly had a dream world which perplexed the audience philosophically as well as psychologically by showing different discourses.

The Freudian concept psychoanalysis has been used in the whole movie to put an idea in protagonist's subconscious mind. Throughout the movie, they show the glimpses of his children and late wife whom he hasn't seen in year. And by the inclusion of these events, *Inception* asserts the role that the unconscious and desire play in the process of the composition of our realities. The shots have been switched in such a smooth way that in the end even if he is in the real world, we cant stop questioning all that happened in the dream world.

This leaves the audience questioning the relationship between all of the events in the different worlds and subsequently the authenticity of the real world at the top of it all. Which also

lets the audience compare their lives with it as to describe our relationship not only to the world, but also to our expectations of it. *Inception* challenges us to consider the dream-world and the real world in the same way, that they are both always in a state of subjective-production, it is perhaps the central thesis of the film.

*Inception* is ultimately daring us to question not only the nature of our own everyday experiences, but also our experience of watching the film. And just as in the narrative of the film, we will be experiencing the space of another person's dream, in this case Nolan's.

**2.6** Seth D. Baum and James E. Thatcher. (July, 2010) *Journal of Evolution and Technology* - Vol. 21 Issue 1. This review talks about the storyline, narrative, editing technique, etc of the movie *Inception*. It not only talks about this movie but also his style of narrative. The plot has been explained in detail but they have also left a room for audience to experience it in their ways. That's how the almost every movie of Christopher Nolan's is, it is subjective to audience too.

It's plot revolves around technology and a space where everybody shares a dream experiences and talks about their own Dreamworld. The term extraction has been used where they let the character pre dream I.e. they put an idea into his brain and proceed with it. *Inception*, meant to challenge the target's waking behavior, is presented as a risky, cutting-edge technique and it was difficult to stick around with the idea keeping the reality into their mind too. This requires viewers psyche to be deeply involved with movie so that they can relate with dream and reality.

With a very dense plot structure and subjective characterization, Nolan raises very broad range of issues. According to this, the fight scenes are a bit of interpretation. Even though, the film has a highly dense plot structure, a strong cast, and a web of deep ideas, like a heist film with a point. This has attracted a broad audience and it has made them question whatever appears in the film as well as related questions to reality. hence, this was another reason for the viewers to watch it all over again.

The narrative structure focuses on many intellectual and ethical issues. The story also revolves around him breaking up with his company and his relationship issues with his dad. Thus the power to manipulate the identity of the character becomes stronger. And at the end it's upon the audience to solve the puzzles of the character.

**2.7** Sapientiae, F. (2010). Narrative Metalepsis as Diegetic Concept in Christopher Nolan's Inception. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*. Christopher Nolan's movie Inception is a very puzzle and complicate movie which played an important role in new media platforms. It is the kind of complex which needs to be seen over and over again i.e. one needs to rely on pause, rewind and replay. Though the movie has perfectly balanced between time and space and can be comprehensible to an extent if it is watched repeatedly.

By transgressing various levels, he fictionalizes the whole thing and shows it futuristic. There are many stories weaved in and similarly the fiction is built by embedding dream and reality together as the, metaphor commonly used: the deeper you dream, the deeper you descend into an embedded structure of dreams within dreams within dreams, and so on.

The strategy of fictionalizing narrative features might be familiar to those who have followed Nolan's filmmaking oeuvre so far. For example, in *Memento* (2000) he plays with inverse storytelling as a compositional, thus truly narrative category of structuring the plot. Another example is *The Prestige* (2006), in which Nolan plays with narrative features like unreliability, plot-twists and other complex hierarchies of frames. In this sense, Nolan is a typical 'post-auteur-author' who maintains Hollywood's rule of thumb of 'access for all,' as well as providing complex experiences. Beyond these, his *Inception*, as well as *Memento* and *The Prestige*, maintain a perfect relation between technological, economic, and cognitive aspects.

About the ending, he says, "There can't be anything in the film that tells you one way or another because then the ambiguity at the end of the film would just be a mistake. I put that cut there

at the end, imposing an ambiguity from outside the film. The real point of the scene – and this is what I tell people – is that Cobb isn't looking at the top. He's looking his kids. He's left behind. That's the emotional significance of the thing”

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research method

To research the cinema of Christopher Nolan and how he plays with time, space, dream and reality, storyline, camera technique, sound and so on, I will be using content analysis method. Through this qualitative method, I will be analysing the following topics and raising the questions which cover major part of my thesis:

**3.1.1** Analyzing the narrative techniques to show the importance of time and space.

**3.1.2** To get better understanding of human behavior and dream & reality.

**3.1.3** Manipulation of narration's timeline.

All of this will be studied by analyzing movie of Christopher Nolan, Inception. Further, interviews of the director and cinematographer, watching video essays and reading a few essays to understand the cinematic language will be referred to prove the objectives and significance of the thesis.

#### 3.2 Significance

The finding of this research will help us to understand and give us a bigger picture of why Christopher Nolan's complex and intricate movies turn out to be masterpieces and how his narrative techniques led him to become one of the greatest director of the century. How he plays with time,

space, characters, storyline, camera technique, sound and so on. The purpose of the study is to break down his techniques to the core which will enable us to understand his movies better.

### **3.3 Objective**

- 3.3.1** To analyse his narrative techniques as to show the importance of time and space.
- 3.3.2** To analyse how his sound design and cinematography techniques complement one another in building the storyline.
- 3.3.3** To get a better understanding of the laws of physics & nature and human behavior via his movies.

### **3.4 Hypothesis**

- 3.4.1** Manipulation in narration's timeline can give a different point of view to the story.
- 3.4.2** Cinematography techniques determine the significance of a shot.
- 3.4.3** Laws of nature and physics provide a different dimension when used correctly within a story.
- 3.4.4** Understanding human behavior can help audiences to connect and relate to the storyline.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONTENT ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Plot Analysis

**First layer:** The mission of the Inception team is different than what they usually do: to implant an idea deep in the subconscious of a leading executive so subtly that he will believe it is his own idea and won't choose to follow his father's footsteps, thereby leaving business to others and that's how competitors i.e Saito will take over his legacy.

Planting this idea requires such complexity that it must be done on a very deep level, a third-level dream, **a dream within a dream within a dream**, where minutes will be expanded to months and years in higher level dreams.

Dom with his newly assembled team try to figure out how to perform an Inception while also keeping in mind his wife's guilt might distract him. Dom also has to learn the rules of this unfamiliar situation and how to face the new goals. But he decided to take this risk as his own reality as on the stake.

**Second layer:** Ariadne gets in a car with Dom and that's when train immediately smashed into them. Ariadne confronts Dom that he has brought his guilt into dream and that now he needs to let her know the full story of how Mal died. He tells her that they both went way too much into dreams and landed into the subconscious where they were stuck for 50 years. And when they finally woke up, she believed that it was still a dream, that's when she decided to jump off from the window and asked him to join in the reality. This perfectly explains why Dom is willing to fight, no matter

what, to finish the mission. Ariadne tells Dom to confront his wife and get over his guilt. And that's when we come to know why he has been struggling since forever.

**Dream 1:** The first traffic dream is dreamt by Yusuf on an airplane. Due to lack of planning, Saito has been shot on this level and is about to die. But if anybody dies in the limbo, they cannot ever get out of it to the reality. The team captures Fischer and Eames informs him about the safe password they are trying to get and also, his dad has left a will in the safe so if he chooses he can dissolve the empire. *That is when the first seed was planted: that Fischer may not wish to follow in his father's footsteps.* But soon they are chased and are shot in deep traffic but Yusuf doesn't stop the van and enters to level two. He couldn't stop because if any member of the team dies they will be stuck in Limbo forever. The only way to survive is to continue the mission.

**Dream 2:** The team attempts to get done with the gambit, which involves making Fischer conscious of the very fact he's in a dream. Due to this, the team is pursued through the hotel, and Arthur must do battle with the projections while everyone else goes into subsequent dream level.

The second dream is pursued by Arthur in the van on level one while everyone else goes into the next dream level. Saito also stuck to the same while dying from the same wound. Cobb convinces Fischer that the Inception team are Fischer's own defensive projections which Fischer's actual defensive projections are the enemy invaders; they encounter Fischer's projection of Browning. The Browning projection says he can't just let Fischer destroy the empire by rising to his father's last comment — and start something for himself. Fischer's subconscious is feeding these ideas given by Eames on the primary level. **The second seed is planted: Fischer can create something for himself.** The Inception team succeeds in recruiting Fischer on this level, convincing him that Browning isn't telling the entire truth, and pretend to use Browning's subconscious to enter level three. Arthur stays behind on level two to observe over the the team as they are going to sleep within the bedroom and enter to the third dream. He will signal right down to level three when he hears

Yusuf's signal from above and is prepared to initiate a kick by detonating whatever he planted within the ceiling of the space below, bringing the dreamers through the ground.

**Dream 3:** In the third layer of the dream, the team winds up on a snowy mountain. It is a snow-fort dream, dreamed by Eames in the hotel room on level two. Eames, Cobb, and Ariadne provide cover and a distraction. On the mountain, Eames is that the dreamer, while Fischer remains the main character. But Unfortunately, even with the extra time from the deeper dream levels, Saito is dying, and the entire operation is running out of time. Soon Ariadne reveals a shortcut that she built into the dream with Eames, and therefore the team is in a position to urge Fischer inside within the given time. However, by telling Cobb about the shortcut, that also means that Mal knows about the shortcut which is trapping him in limbo. They'll dive into limbo to kick Fischer to level three just long enough for him to incept the thought into his own brain. Then, during a coordinated triple-kick, Eames, Arthur, and Yusuf will send the team all the way back to the primary dream level. They are only guessing that limbo will function as a level four dream but till that time, Saito finally dies on this level after Cobb and Ariadne go to limbo.

**The limbo dream:** The limbo level is dreamed by no one as it is a place of shared consciousness. Because limbo is pure subconscious space, there is no actual dreamer that builds the geography, although the landscape remains according to Cobb's experience in limbo because he's the sole member of the team that's been there before. In limbo, Mal is holding Fischer hostage, trying to use him to force Cobb to stay with her. Since Mal is also Cobb's subconscious, it's a reflection of Cobb's own desire to stay in limbo with a simulacrum of the family that he no longer has. Cobb manages to accept his own guilt in Mal's death, since he was the one who incepted the idea in her mind that her world wasn't real in order for the two to originally escape from limbo. However, that concept remained in her brain even once they escaped, making Cobb partially liable for Mal's own death, as she committed suicide within the world, thinking she'd wake up.

With all that going, Ariadne sends Fischer back up to the third level and Cobb stays behind to look for Saito, whose death on the higher level means that he's stuck somewhere in limbo, while Ariadne rides the kicks all the way back up to the first dream level and warns her not to get lost as he did when he was with Mal.

**Third layer:** So when all the kicks explode and mission is completed on level three. Fischer meets his dying father and decides to leave his father's company. Ariadne leaps to her death to awaken to reality dream level. Dom decides to remain behind to seek out Saito in Limbo, knowing he may find yourself trapped there also. Finally, after a couple of days of milling about on level one, Arthur, Eames, Ariadne, and Fischer get "kicked" up to reality when the sedation wears off on the plane. Cobb and Saito awaken too, but that they had to attend a few years since they were stranded down in limbo.

#### 4.2 Scene to Scene - Summary & Analysis

**Summary:** The film begins with waves crashing against a shore with a man lying on the shore names Dom Cobb. The wide scene also shows two children playing in distant. Soon after an armed Japanese security officer checks Cobb and calls up to his partner, as he founds a gun armed on his back. Cut to the house's dining room, the guards tell an elderly man named Saito that Cobb was found with only a handgun and a small spinning top. The guards drag Cobb in while all washed away. Saito asks Cobb if he is there to kill him, and mentions that he recognizes the top as belonging to a man he met in a dream while now he's all suited.

**Analysis:** The movie begins with a dream-within-a-dream, Saito's dream within Nash's dream, to be precise and the film's every frame asks the viewer to question whether the events unfolding on screen or in person's mind. The film opens with a pan shot of the sea, this is also an establishing shot showing the audience the location in which the scene is set. This fades when the

camera cuts to the protagonist lying face down on the shore. The military guard notices under the protagonist's jacket and uses the end of his gun to lift the back of this jacket up, this reveals that he has a gun. Not only does this confirm that the protagonist was hallucinating, it makes the audience ask questions to who the children were and why they are so important to him. The scene automatically changes as there is now low key lighting and there is a man, shown to be superior as he has men in suits as guards protecting him.

**Summary:** Cobb is dressed in a business formal and with his partner Arthur joined by Saito at a table. Over a meal Cobb explains how the most resilient parasite is an idea. That how in a dream thought can be stolen. But they can help Saito from avoiding this unwanted extraction to which Saito responds that he will consider the proposal later. The room starts to shake since in an apartment elsewhere, there are a series of explosions going on in streets. This is where Nash walks enters the scene, revealing Mr. Saito and Arthur connected to a device and in are asleep.

Back in the dream, Cobb executes two guards and steals an envelope from Saito's locker. But he's caught by Saito and Mal, who have taken Arthur their hostage. Saito asks whether this is an actual theft, or the fact that they are all asleep.

As Nash's the dream is collapsing, in the dream Saito realizes that his envelope is a decoy, and that Cobb has got the real one. In the apartment, Arthur tries keeping Saito asleep, but Saito awakens and threatens Arthur with a gun. Nash gives Cobb a kick drowning him into a bathtub. Cobb wakes up and incapacitates Saito who was able to wake up and tried to kill Cobb.

**Analysis:** Nolan guides the audience how "dream-sharing" technology works. For example, killing someone in a dream wake a person referred to as a "kick." Nash's dreams show that Dreams-within-dreams can be unstable. Also to show the speed difference between dreams, Nolan cross-cuts between events normal time events and events within the dream showing the normal event in slow

motion like Cobb falling in the tub. In the opening sequence, Nolan also shows the importance of architects in a dream.

In this case Nash forgets pay attention to details, which allows Saito to realize that he is dreaming as Saito's carpet was made of wool and not polyester.

**Summary:** Failing the assignment Saito confronts Cobb and Arthur about “inception”: the act of planting an idea in a dream, rather than extracting it. Cobb asks about the complexity of the idea they were required to “incept”. Saito explains that he wants his rival’s son to abandon his family empire. Cobb willingly accepts, against his partner’s advice. Cobb visits Paris to meet his mentor and father-in-law, Professor Stephen Miles. Cobbs asks for an architect and Miles introduces Cobb to one of his student Ariadne.

Cobb challenges Ariadne to draw a maze as her first assignment and, then induces her into a dream where both are sitting in a cafe. Where Cobb explains her the creative logic of dream sharing while she is busy in molding the dream. Ariadne begins experimenting by flipping the city and walking up walls, which Cobb warns not to do so. Cobb argues that imagining from memory is dangerous, that’s when Mal appears and stabs her. Both awake now Arthur instructs Arthur to give Ariadne a totem —a small, unique object to differentiate between dream and reality. Disturbed Ariadne leaves, but Cobb reassures Arthur that she’ll be back. Cobb risks going to Mombasa, to recruit a forger named Eames.

**Analysis:** Nolan in the second act shows Cobb's attempts to assemble a team of dream-sharing personnel. Through the new architect Ariadne Nolan explains the rules of dream-building and dream-sharing in detail. Nolan once again uses slow-motion explosions to create simultaneously dreamlike visuals. Cobb and Arthur describe to Ariadne the many ways in which dream-sharing distorts time and space.

Dreams, and dreams-within-dreams, not only unfold at progressively slower rates of time in relation to reality, but can also keep past memories alive. Cobb warns Ariadne to never use personal memories for dream-building. Nolan uses symbols like mazes, to symbolize the complexity of the mind, which can produce a world far away from reality.

**Summary:** Cobb meets Eames in a casino and asks him about process of inception. Eames explains that to be effective, simplicity matters a lot. This is when he tells Cobb about Yusuf the chemist. Then Eames finds out that Cobb is being followed, to which Cobb runs but then is saved by Saito who suddenly pulls him into a sedan.

Back in Paris, Ariadne returns as per Cobb's prediction, and Arthur starts with her training by showing her to "paradoxical architecture". A complex maze that will avoid dream projections. Arthur tells Ariadne about Mal, who is dead. Meeting with Yusuf Cobb asks for a compound that will help his team to create 3 layered dream. Then Yusuf shows his basement which is full of sedated men who have decided to spend rest of their lives asleep. Cobb tries the compound and dreams of Mal.

Over a rooftop, Saito, Cobb along with Eames discuss about inception. Eames asks about the relationship between CEO Maurice Fischer and his son, Robert Fischer, to which Saito responds "complicated." In Fischer estate Maurice is found on his deathbed, Peter Browning is trying to take control of the company.

**Analysis:** The scene where Cobb is introduced to the dreamers in Yusuf's basement, who prefer dream over reality, raises questions about the existence of truth and reality. Nolan's work shows that the dream world is so beautiful that once explored, you don't find the reality pleasing enough. That's the reason Ariadne returns and started exploring the ins and outs of dream sharing. She also says "There's nothing like it."

**Summary:** Ariadne finds Cobb dreaming again by himself so she decides to join him. As soon as she plugs herself in she finds herself in an elevator. To her surprise she see Cobb dreaming about Mal. Cobb confronts her and talks her out of that floor when she realises that he has created a prison of memories to contain Mal. Which on the first hand he ask Ariadne not to. Ariadne, shows her concern about the mission and asks him to tell everyone about Mal.

**Analysis:** The nature of Cobb's relationship with Mal is gradually revealed in the movie to the viewer through Ariadne. Nolan constructs a "Prison of Memories" containing Cobb's sentimental recollections of Mal and his kids which Ariadne crumbles over time. Such as the hotel suite where they had their anniversary. The violent, self-destructive nature of Mal is Cobb's guilt over her that is still in him. This can be seen when Mal tries to shoots Arthur in Previous scenes and then stabs Ariadne later when Cobb is training Ariadne. To which Ariadne worries that this might compromise the inception mission.

**Summary:** Everyone gets on a flight from Sydney to Los Angeles. One of the longest flight since they wanted at-least 10 hours to execute their plan. In plan Cobb sedated Robert and then they dive into his dream.

It's heavily raining and Arthur along with Saito, kidnap Robert in a taxi. Apparently Robert had an extractor teach him dream defense and now they're being attacked by assassins. Saito get shot in the mayhem and out of no where there's a freight train busting down the middle of the street. They find their way into a safe house where they learn that they won't wake up when they die. They'll fall into limbo which is subconscious containing nothing.

**Analysis:** Team finds out that experts must have helped Robert to protect his subconscious mind from unwanted extraction, something which Arthur failed to disclose. Since Saito was shot due to the assassins triggered by Robert's sub consciousness. When Eames suggests killing Saito to



wake him up, Cobb reveals that they cannot be killed while being sedated, or else they will become stuck in “limbo”. It’s an unconstructed dream space which might take decades to escape.

Now everyone except Yusuf dive in 2nd layer of the dream. While outside Yusuf is protecting all from Robert’s dream defense assassins. Cobb alerts Robert of being in a dream in a Hotel Bar. He convinces Robert that he will help him escape the extractor and is there to protect him. He’s reminds him of the numbers from layer 1 of his dream and they go to that hotel room. They also convince him that Browning is working for the kidnapers. Now they going into 3rd layer of Robert’s dream by convincing him they’re going into Browning’s subconscious.

**Analysis:** Nolan cleverly cross-cuts between the various layers of the dream in in a way audience will be able to track. For example, The uses is a song for the "kick". And also how if you want to you can impersonate anyone with a dream. When Eames Browning to have a conversation with Robert. This is where they use mirrors. A part of mirror reflects Eames while other reflects the person he is impersonating. Also within the scenes Nolas shows how external forces affect the conditions within a dream. With Yusuf struggles with the assassins there is an earthquake within the second layer of the dream.

Ariadne constructed a military fortress in snow. Yusuf is still driving the van but when it gets trapped on a bridge he decides to give an early kick by dropping the van off the bridge. So while the van is falling in layer 2 of the dream, there are still 3 minutes remaining and in layer 3 there is 60mins.

**Summary:** Arthur is now trying to figure out a new kick since there is no gravity due to the falling van. He ties everyone up and pushes them toward the elevator. Robert along with Saito make their way toward the safe while Eames distracts the guards and Cobb is on sniper. Unfortunately,

when Robert makes it into the safe room Mal shows up and shoots him. Cobb after hesitation shoots her. Cobb declares that they've failed their mission since Robert is dead.

**Analysis:** Ariadne has a idea of following Robert into his limbo. So she and Cobb dive into Cobb's version of limbo where they find Mal, and since she's trying to get Cobb back to her she has Robert. In the meantime, the van the van is still falling while Eames and Arthur are setting up their kicks. They go into limbo, and within the 4th layer which is the deepest and the most dangerous one. In order to free Mal from the limbo world that she thought was real, Cobb made her believe that the world isn't real by planting an idea in her. It worked but she still had that idea and she killed herself in real world who's guilt is carried by Cobb. Ariadne finds Robert and gives him the kick. While Mal stabs Cobb and before she could rethink Ariadne shoots her.

#### 4.3 Ending and its interpretations

**Summary:** The "Limbo" scene where Cobb's emotional turbulence reflects the destruction of the city on not only in leaving Mal behind but also, confessing to Ariadne that his had this guilt because of the idea he "incepted" into Mal's mind seemingly caused her to commit suicide.

The last sequence is very much like the first sequence except they are shown old here. Cobb wakes up on the shore and is once again escorted by armed guards into Saito's ornate dining room. Cobb asks Saito to question reality and to return to a time when they were both young men. As soon as Saito reaches for his gun, Cobb suddenly wakes up on the passenger airliner flying from Sydney to Los Angeles. He looks across and finds Arthur, Ariadne, and Saito who have also managed to successfully reawaken. In Los Angeles, Cobb is welcomed back into the United States and greeted by Stephen Miles. Stephen takes Cobb home and Cobb puts down his bags and spins his totem,

before heading outside to play with his children. The totem continues to spin. Leaving the audience with lot of questions.

**Analysis:** Cobb's successful attempt to retrieve Saito from limbo results that the opening scene of the film and the ending sequence are in fact intertwined. He is finally headed home. The last shot of the film, which lingers on Cobb's spinning totem, has troubled a lot of people while debating about whether Nolan's intention was to suggest that Cobb is still dreaming, or whether he has finally returned to reality. Nolan himself has confessed that it was done with intention questioning the absolute certainty whether the dividing line between reality and dreaming can ever be drawn!

### **The Michael Caine theory**

When Michael Caine read the script, he was confused and asked Christopher Nolan, “When is it the dream and when is it reality?” And he answered, “Well, when you’re in the scene it’s reality.” So that’s the theory, if he’s in it, it’s reality. If he’s not in it, it’s a dream.

In the final scene, Dom Cobb woke up after the inception of Robert Michael Fischer, it was a job done successfully. As Saito promised him to clear his name and convince American officials he hadn’t killed his wife. With the charges out of the way, Dom returned home to his two children. He arrived home and saw his children playing in the garden, he has seen that so many times in dream that he wondered if it was real. He spins his totem and the movie ended with his totem spinning. That’s where the audience was startled but as it is said, there was Michael Caine in the ending so even if the screen faded to black, we can assume that it was reality.

### **Wedding ring theory**

With a number of theories been floated about Inception, specifically the ending. This one’s another popular theory. It has been noticed that Dom Cobb is seen wearing a wedding ring in each scene in which he’s dreaming. When he’s awake, the ring is nowhere to be seen. In the final sequence

of the film too, the ring isn't on his finger. So it is kind of believable that it is the evidence to support early theories that he was awake in the sequence. Although director Christopher Nolan never confirmed the wedding ring totem theory, but it does seem to bring up some evidence.

### **Conclusion**

With all said and done, even if the ending of the film suggests that he's still dreaming, it doesn't matter. Dreams are indeed his and so is the reality. On the other hand, he does not care about the spinning of the spinning top. He does regret about anything that has occurred in his life and what matters is that he's free of his regrets and has overcome his fears and can be with his children! After all, he deserves it.

### **4.4 Cinematography**

In this chapter along with the cinematography of this movie, how Nolan & Wally Pfister have played with the physics & nature through different techniques is described in detail.

Nolan's Inception is basically manipulation people's mind by constantly switching between dreams and reality. And all of this is done by computer and software edits. The whole film is about multi layered dreams, a dream within a dream. And that's when physics and nature comes into a picture. It is the rotational change in the direction of gravity that has been shown by editing skills lets us experience a dream where we are down a hill in a van.

The production designers built the set of each of these scenes and was made up of a series of eight and it was further run by a motor with cam shafts and drive wheels. The whole thing had to be perfectly done otherwise problems such as vibration or bumps could occur. The rings spun were giving the illusion of gravity changing. Very fascinating techniques and engineering can be seen in Nolan's movies which is playing with the physics.

By now, we are familiar with the film, let's see how Christopher & Wally Pfister are with the way they want things shot. *Inception* was cinematography at its finest and Nolan combined a few completely different film genres into this film, notably sci-fi, heist film, and film noir. The film plays with time itself, expanding and adjusting it to suit the adventure and mystery. Nolan began with the structure of a heist plot and then with emotional narrative, made a planet of dreams and subconscious. Nolan says the works of Jorge Luis Borges and *Blade Runner* by marine turtle Scott has played a big role of inspiration. *Inception* was shot by Christopher Nolan and Wally Pfister used 35mm film 65mm for significant shots. Aerial shots were taken with Vista Vision. And the sequences shot in slow-motion are done at 1000 frames-per-second on a Super-Sonics 35mm camera. Let's get into more details by analysing it through layers.

### **First level**

For the first level that Cobb and his crew enter, shooting took place in Los Angeles. This was the layer where the van chase occurs. This was the first layer of the dream when the film's main heist takes place, and it started everything off with a rush of adrenalin. The color palette Wally Pfister went with gun-metal grey and a tint of metallic blue. The streets were packed hence the subconscious of the man who's mind is being infiltrated were violent. Eventually, more layers are created and as we fall into more of them, it gets more crucial. That's when the color palate makes things easier, when the scenes of gun-metal city soaked in heavy, we can guess where we are.

### **Second level**

In terms of cinematography, there is one of the most important and difficult sequence in the second layer of the dream and it's one of the most memorable scenes of any film. When shooting zero-gravity shots, it's normal to use different camera angles and give an illusion weightlessness through clever camera movement or use computer animation for the same. But here, in inception the zero-gravity fight sequence was approached with a totally different method by building a rotating

360-degree hotel hallway. The approach Wally took was quite surreal as he made sure that the camera movement goes normal. The floor of the rotating hallway was adjusted so that the camera was fixed on it. The camera was fixed on the ground, while gravity became a complete joke as we saw two men falling up, left, right, back left, and back up as the hallway made its rotations. The lighting of the hallway gave the layer its warm-orange tungsten palette. Every light that was placed in the hallway was meant for essential illumination of the actors.

### **Third level**

Both Christopher Nolan and Wally Pfister are hard core *James Bond* fans. Much of how Christopher Nolan himself has said that he has gained Dark Knight trilogy inspiration from the Bond series. For the third layer of the dream, the color palette Wally Pfister chose came through a Bond film, as well. The scene took place in alpine mountain ranges and a fortress in the middle of an Arctic desert, the colour palette in the sequence was monochromatic. An important moment in the film takes place here when Robert Fischer opens the safe and finds his father lying in bed and that is when the inception took place. The tone changes as the setting becomes surreal but the color palette remains the same.

### **Limbo**

Throughout the entirety of the movie only 500 visual effects shots are used and the most of them were used here, in the scene of Limbo. This might have been the most difficult scene out of the film for Christopher Nolan and Wally Pfister to approach because this was the very sequence that was constantly developing during production. Limbo was where Cobb and his wife spent fifty years together and building things they would never be able to bring in reality. As the death of Mal began to haunt Cobb's state of mind, the limbo was also a burden to his subconscious. Wally's photography came into play here, as he created ghost like imagery by all the photos he took in Morocco. The colour palate here decided by him was earth-like and natural i.e. warm, metallic, and

cool. Here, it all came together. With a world built on for fifty years by two young lovers, they had to give more meaning/life to the whole thing, that's why the buildings decay like they were living things.

**The last sequence**

The last sequence of the dream is the one it started with, in a setting built for Saito. Where in the beginning of the film Cobb was young and now, in the last scene he was old and demented. What Wally Pfister does here is basically a summary of what cinematography is all about. Through using lighting, he used the same set for both the film's opening and closing dream sequences. The story starts off with a room with the artificial lights artificial, having powerful highlights and shadows. The story concludes with the same room with no windows are present at all. Although the lighting is softer and the two men, who started off opposite each other in the best suits were now very old. In reality they were young but what they did to their minds made them older. They were ready to get out and live in reality again.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Unanswered Questions

##### **How cobb knew inception is possible?**

Cobb has performed the Inception before into his wife Mal. Once there was a time when they got into the limbo and they've been in that stage for too long because Cobb has insisted on pushing more deeper and deeper into the dream. Cobb and Mal both were trapped into the limbo for like 50 years, though they were unaware that their world wasn't actually real. Cobb eventually discovered the truth about it which Mal refused to accept. To get Cobb's wife to kill herself and get back to the reality (remember, you wake up into the reality if you kill yourself in the limbo stage), Cobb who has performed an inception by processing the idea that the world isn't actually real how it's in her mind. Upon arriving into the reality, it would work. Where Mal still perceived that she was not really in the real world and also determined to kill herself which also explains her death by jumping off the hotel balcony and the initiation of Cobb's guilt over his wife's death.

##### **What causes the loss of gravity during the second stage dream?**

In the second stage of dream where Arthur who dreams about the hotel, there is a particular scene in which the whole anti-gravity situation happened. Yusuf was driving the van and he had a turbulence drive if we traced back to the preceding level. Whenever the van had been flipped through, the hotel setting on the second dream has experienced a shift of the gravity too. Notice



when the hotel hallway seemed to be revolving just when Arthur confronts the projections into the same manner of how the van has flipped after he fell off the hill. Similarly, the entire moment when the van fell off the bridge, that was the moment when everyone who were inside the van was experiencing free-fall. The same free-fall feeling which was transmitted to the second stage which created an ala anti-gravity situation.

**Why is Saito older than Cobb in the final dream level?**

It is very likely that Cobb and Saito are in the limbo for the same amount of time, but however Cobb knows that he's in limbo which perhaps keeps him from this aging visibly. On the other hand, Saito seems to have forgotten where he was and so the passage of time (which could have been in decades too) had been more of an effect on him. Similarly, the first time both Cobb and Mal ended up in the limbo, they've been aged because they've forgotten where they really are and accepted it as their reality.

**What was between Cob and Mal?**

Cobb and Mal who were actually trapped in the Limbo for 50 years, they were unaware that their world wasn't real. Cobb has eventually discovered the truth, but Mal refused to accept the truth about their world wasn't really instead they were dreaming. In order to get Mal killing herself and return to the actual real world, Cobb has performed the Inception on her by planting and planting the idea that the world wasn't real in her mind. It worked, they killed themselves and escaped in the Limbo. Unfortunately, the idea has remained in Mal's mind and once they've returned, she was totally unable to accept that the real world wasn't a dream.

**Who all were the dreamers on the different levels?**

First level, with the van, was dreamed by Dileep Rao who played Yusuf. Second level, in the hotel was dreamed by Joseph Gordon-Levitt who played Arthur. Third level with the snow fort

was dreamed by Tom Hardy who played Eames. The last and the final level was Limbo and dreamed by no one, since it was a place of shared consciousness.

**What did Cobb put a spinning top inside the safe mean?**

A creation of the subconscious that Cobb exploits was the safe, in this case Mal. The safes have been constructed so that the dreamer could believe that it was a safe place for them to have their secrets stored. Mal's totem is the top, which she used to determine whether she was in a dream or she wasn't. If it never stopped spinning, that tells Mal that she has been in a dream. By placing a constantly spinning totem into the safe, Cobb was placing an idea inside her subconscious. It was not that she was watching the totem spinning, but that it was always spinning in her subconscious mind. That is why she thought she was trapped in the dream world.

**Why Cobb tells Ariadne never to build dreams from memories?**

While giving Ariadne a primer on the rules of dream-sharing technology, Cobb was stressed that she could never use memories to build the dream-worlds. The viewer comes to learn that, despite of his own advice, Cobb used his own memories to dream on a regularly in order to interact with his wife who was deaf, Mal. Cobb's feelings of guilt, which prompt him to live inside of his wife's memories, destroyed him emotionally and threatened him to compromise the mission. That's why Cobb told Ariadne to avoid using the memories to build dreams because he knew first-hand how psychologically damaged it can be.

**Why do dreams looks like reality in film?**

Inception explored the idea that dreams which seemed real for as long as they were happening. As a result, there has been a seamless visual relationship in the film between reality and dreaming, so the seamless that characters must have to carry around small objects which are called totems that could let them know if they are awake. An old man was encountered by Cobb in Mombasa who was questioned whether he could know with certainty whether or not he was just

dreaming. In the ending of the film, it also pushes the viewer to question whether Cobb has definitively woken up from his dream, or was he still immersed in a dream.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This research aimed to study & analyse Christopher Nolan's movie Inception's in detail. Based on a qualitative analysis of the movie by scene-to-scene, it can be concluded that all the objectives have been achieved. As a result, by analysing his narrative techniques from scene to scene and plot by plot and how it plays with time & space, also with the help of cinematography skills & techniques. Further combined, it also makes the audience understand the human behavior and how our subconscious and dreams work. The results indicate that after analysing this movie, one can understand the essence of filmmaking. The movie has a very cerebral plot, with a big focus on emotions and is deeply connected to the exploration of one's subconscious, along with action-packed sequences keeping the audience hooked to the story. Wally Pfister's cinematography is second to none and this movie is no exception.

Inception offers no certainty, there is no absolute ground level of reality to either the protagonists or the viewers, and even the existence of such a reality is left to us. However, within the emotional counterpart to the present argument, the movie takes a particular stand on the difference between Mal and Cobb's dream. Time itself deserves a separate mention. Time could also be a key element of both our perception of reality and our experience of ourselves, and thus the way during which the movie moves between different realms of subjective. Ultimately, the movie itself could also be a dream, a shared unreality that it's not such a logical exploration of its premises. But it's not surprising to seek out ourselves worrying sometimes about the depth and nature of our dreams.

This is a great film relating to psychology too as it tells us about our sub consciousness, each time Cobb enters a dream, whether it is his or someone else's, which says everything that happens in the dream is as a result of what they are fighting within their mind.

But it is also has an element of psycho-thriller film. While we talk about Cobb's visions of his late wife Mal; he's addicted to her memory, her beauty, her love for him, and that's where the noir part of the movie comes, he keeps going back to her when his eyes are closed, he says, "in my dreams, we're still together." Its noble intent is to implant one man's vision in the mind of a vast audience. This movie is more about dreaming along with Christopher Nolan.

Another great thing about this movie is that there are a lot of metaphors which gives it a notion of state of the art update. Inception depicts moments of awareness that we think to be our own of dreams and memories which are themselves implanted coming from outside, which shapes us, by making us to believe that they are a part of us.

When Christopher Nolan's Inception was released, they had a variety of reviews which both were negative and positive. But some people were intrigued by the power and deception of inception. While Others were appalled by the deceit and trickery exhibited by the concept of the film inception. At least one thought which passed almost universally through the minds of each and every person that viewed the move that what if inception became a reality? Prima facie this was scary thought from which the idea that we could possibly be manipulated to believe that certain things that we could not ordinarily believe. It is likely that the case that many people easily dismissed this thought as fanciful.

Having established that deception has played a fundamental role in inception, Nolan compels us to discuss the whereabouts relationship of truth and happiness to inception. Two questions which really must be asked in order to discern this relationship. First, can truth exist in

inception? Secondly, can one truly ever be happy under the influence of inception? Answer to the first question, I will argue that truth cannot exist in inception. Answer to the second question, I would like to argue that one cannot truly be happy under the influence of inception.

Inception offers no certainty, there is no absolute ground level of reality to either the protagonists or the viewers, and even the existence of such a reality is left undecided. However, within the emotional counterpart to the present argument, the movie takes a particular stand on the difference between Mal and Cobb's dream and nightmare of her. Time itself deserves a separate mention. Time may be a key element of both our perception of reality and our experience of ourselves, and therefore the way during which the movie moves between different realms of subjective. Ultimately, the movie itself may be a dream, a shared unreality that it's not such a lot a logical exploration of its premises. but it's not surprising to find ourselves worrying at times about the depth and nature of our dreams.

Christopher Nolan has made an incredibly great film that is as mainstream as it is independent. It stands out as a success on so many levels: a popular fiction, a sci-fi thriller, a complex heist, a heart-breaking drama, and most importantly an original movie. After analyzing almost all the aspects of the movie, one surely can appreciate Inception for its beauty, power and genius.

Because there hasn't been any movie where it was split almost evenly right down the middle before? For if somebody ask me the good; the script, the cast is perfection as are the visuals & music. And the downside? Well I have to make something up!

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## APPENDIX

### Glossary

- **Incept** is birth or born. The movie, inception is a process of making a new idea which has been indulged into someone's mind through a dream shared and subconscious state. Inception is difficult but it's not impossible. To understand Inception, it requires a lot of imagination. Inception is contrasting to the expected behavior by using shared dream state to steal information!
- During shared-dream state, a group of people has been stuck on a machine inside a briefcase which injected a special chemical formulation that processes into a high sedatives to allow sedation and shared-dream. The team which was usually is a part of an extractor, an architect or anyone else who may relate to the mission. The name of the device machine was **PASIV Device**.
- **The Extractor** is the person who is responsible for pulling out the information (or in this particular mission; introducing a new idea). Leonardo DiCaprio played Dom Cobb, which was a highly skilled extractor who has failed his mission while he was trying to pull out the secrets from Saito. He however redeems his reputation later on by a job he agreed to which is thought impossible.



- The **Architect** is the person who is responsible for recreating the world of dream inside the mind of the Dreamer. An architect providing the basic layouts in general like a town, roads, cars or light streets - a background of the dream which later on will be filled by the Dreamers with their subconscious. An architect can also create a setting based on their imagination or past experience. Ellen Page who plays Ariadne, she prepared the design which was very much the same as the maze puzzle. However, each architecture level has to be known by a specific dreamer so that no one else can bring their own projections into the dream state.
- The person whose dream provided the setting of the crime is the **Dreamer**. Dreams within a dream is possible in inception. For an example, Yusuf who is the dreamer for the first dream where he dreams about raining in the bustling city. Each level will usually have a different dreamer when few levels of dream involved. Notice that the term 'dreamer' is also including anyone who shares the dream-state too.
- The **Chemist**, he is the person who provided the perfect compound of chemical to process the sedation. The three different types of chemical which makes such depending on the level of dreams. Dileep Rao who played Yusuf, the chemist from Mombasa, he provides the team a special formula which induces deep dream-state.
- **The Subject**, it's the person who subconsciously was brought into the dream for the purpose of extracting information. In Inception, Cillian Murphy who plays Fischer Jr, he is the subject in which a new idea will be planted into him.
- **A Kick**, it is a mechanism where the equilibrium of a dream state is destroyed by bringing anyone in the dream state into the awake and returns them to the reality. A kick could be in any form as long as person awakes from their dream. In most of the cases, a kick is synchronized so that it allows everyone to wake up. It is different then

shooting yourself in the head, when a good kick will allow you to feel that you're falling off the bed during the dream to wake you up in the previous level. For example, in the leaves of dream which is second, the Arthur blows up the elevator to wake everyone up from the snow fortress, simply just by creating a falling sensation. Timing of a kick is so crucial that if multiple levels of dreams are employed, one has to be 'kicked' from the deeper stage one by one before anyone can back into the reality.

- **Totem** is the most important object that is light but which contains mass and the composition that only the owner knows, which is usually specific and constructed by anyone who plans to invade a dream. The object of totem is useful to determine whether a person is in the real world or still in a dream stage. In the movie, Cobb has used a top as his totem which when spins inside a dream, it never going to stop spinning. It also doesn't mean that they're dreaming of themselves. The only purpose of totem is to avoid being trapped in some other persons dream. It's common about the wrong idea is that the totem is used by the owner to figure out if he is in a dream state or not which is not entirely accurate.
- **Projection** is called when anyone who is created by the subconscious mind of the Subject. They are not real but are described to be functioning like white blood cells which will function if the subject realizes that the dream the particular person is in, isn't his. Projections are responded violently and attempted to seek out the Dreamer and the destroy him, while also it acts to protect the Subject's dream from been invaded.
- **Paradox**; it is a term in which any Dreamer can manipulate the exact setting, even the architect designs the specific layout; then there are some circumstances where the Dreamer can be altered. For example, Arthur who creates a paradox by changing of the

revolving staircase scene in the second level of dream, although Ariadne architects the whole setting of that dream.

- **Limbo** is a place where all the dreamers might end up only if they go too deeply. It is a place where time runs so quickly and all the people seems to be forgetting reality. It is believed that anyone that flung in this such level, will burn out of their mind and can't become entrapped in. A limbo; it does not have a dreamer but it is a place of shared consciousness.

## **Character Analysis**

### **Dom Cobb**

Leonardo DiCaprio who played Dom Cobb is the main character of Inception. He as a professional dream extractor, spy, and thief, uses military-grade technology to infiltrate people's dreams and retrieve their secrets. By Stephen Miles, a professor of architecture and Dom's father-in-law, Dom Cobb has been trained in the dream-sharing technology. Cobb is also a criminal who was unable to return to the States under the feeling of something bad happening because of killing his wife Mal, which still haunts his subconscious. Cobb had agreed to Saito's inception process plan in a way to return to his home country and have a reunited gathering with his children.

### **Ariadne**

Ellen Page who played Ariadne is a graduate promising student in architecture who was recommended to Dom Cobb by Stephen Miles as a builder of dreamscapes—complex, maze-like environments which helped ward off projections. She helped Dom and his team tried to plant their most ambitious operation, yet to perform the thought of inception in a three-tiered dream. Ariadne, although is initially disturbed by the content of Cobb's dreams, she is lured

back into the scheme by the limitless and awe-inspiring architectural possibilities of dreams. Ariadne also pushes Cobb to confront Mal and disclose his inner torment to the rest of the team.

**Arthur**

Arthur is Cobb's partner who is good at finding ways of doing things and second-in-command which is; a "producer" of sorts who plans, organizes, and researches all of his missions. Arthur has played many roles and also at times he has been giving Cobb advice, providing background whereabouts information, scouting locations, counselling Ariadne, and administering the "kicks." Arthur has opposed Saito's inception plan and also advised Cobb so that he could turn it down, but Cobb ignored him. Cobb later on scolded Arthur when his research has failed to turn up to the fact that Robert Fischer has militarized his subconscious.

**Eames**

Tom Hardy; playing eames, is a British forger whom Dom Cobb recruited in Mombasa so that he could to join the team in their efforts to pull off Saito's plan of inception. Eames gave Cobb and all of the team a crucial advice about how the inception could be performed telling them that the idea has to be exceedingly simple, and should seem self-generated. Eames; as a skilled forger, he is easily able to take the guise of other people in dreams. Eames has also been described as a "fence" which is someone who buys stolen goods and then sells them again for his profit.

**Saito**

Saito as a wealthy Japanese businessman who is the main target of Cobb and Arthur's first infiltration dream. He explains to Cobb that the operation was in fact an "audition" for a plan of Saito's own, which also involves an idea "incepting" in the mind of his rival business, who is Robert Fischer. Saito and Cobb were in an uneasy alliance so that Cobb can gather again with his children in the States, in exchange for helping Saito by securing his empire. In the end

when film ends, Cobb must have rescued Saito from "limbo," a scene which is also glimpsed in the opening sequence.

**Yusuf**

Yusuf; a Kenyan chemist whom Cobb has recruited in Mombasa. He was able to produce a sedative that induces the kind of deep sleep which was necessary for inception. Yusuf shows Cobb that a small group of permanent dream-sharers in his own basement, who prefer the world to be of dreams over the world of actual reality. Although Yusuf's sedative also induces a sound sleep, the sleeping person remains sensitive to the "kick" that could bring a person out of the dream. In Saito's plan, Yusuf has been tasked with driving a van in the "first" part of Robert Fischer's dream.

**Robert Fischer**

Cillian Murphy; as Robert Fischer he is the billionaire scion of his father's powerful energetic company, also Saito's primary business rival. The health falling of Robert's father Maurice ignites a struggle of power between Robert and his uncle Peter over whom will have the power to control the company as Robert's father did. Although Robert is desperate about his father's approval and committed that he can lead the company forward and as Saito's wants Cobb and his team to "incept" the idea in Robert to break up his father's empire instead. Then, achieving this by convincing Robert that his father really never wanted to follow his footsteps then to live his life created on his own.

**Mal Cobb**

Mal, played by Marion Cotillard is Cobb's dead wife who still has been haunting his subconscious. Cobb and Mal having two children together, acquired an interest in dream-sharing under the teaching of Mal's father Stephen Miles. Mal spending fifty years in limbo with Cobb, grows to prefer that the world of dreams had to be the world of reality. In order to

be with their children and return to reality, Cobb "incepts" the idea in Mal that their world is a fake one and that they must wake up. Mal continues to believe she is dreaming, and commits suicide, upon awakening. Over her death, Cobb's lingering guilt caused her projection to violently invade his dreams.

**Stephen Miles**

Stephen Miles playing Michael Caine is a college professor in the movie who resides in Paris, and is Cobb's father-in-law. Cobb's mentor is also Miles, who was the first person to be introducing Cobb and Mal to a dream-sharing technology. Miles acts as a go-between for Cobb and his children, Cobb cannot return to the States to be with them under suspicion of Mal getting killed. Miles was begrudging about Cobb's use of the dream-sharing technology for and espionage and criminal acts of theft, but nevertheless he was recommended as a skilled graduate student in architecture to join Cobb's team. Miles later on greets Cobb after he successfully performs inception, at the airport and was also able to return to the States.

**Nash**

Lukas Haas as Nash is the architect of dream in Cobb's first operation which involved Saito. Nash created a dream-within-a-dream which Cobb and Arthur could retrieve their business secrets for the Cobol Corporation. After the mission has failed, Cobb and Arthur upbraid Nash for an inconsistency in the carpeting in Saito's apartment, which causes Saito to realize he is dreaming. Nash later on revealed to be a traitor rather than kill him, later on Cobb turns him over to Cobol. Nash's actions has forced the team to find a new architect.