Inception

Direction and Screenplay by: Christopher Nolan
Group: Mohit, Matthew T, Gjorn, Mason, Eliza, and Chinonso
Cobb is the main narrator. He is seen talking diegetically and non-diegetically throughout the movie.
First transition

Starts off with the scene from limbo with Saito and Cobb. The scene then switches to Saito’s initial dream with young Cobb and Arthur. This is because Saito and Cobb are trying to remember the story that led them to the limbo state.
Things go wrong

Cobb tries to convince Saito that he can protect him from extraction, but Saito figures out what he’s trying to do and he is dreaming and the dream collapses.
The Dream Ends...Or does it

They awake into the first dream but Saito thinks this is reality. Cobb tries to interrogate Saito, but in the process allows him to feel his totem, the carpet thus exposing the second dream,

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nMGYWypICVDeDG70wdOTf7hmX3FRhbI7/view?usp=sharing
The Dream Collapses

After the dreams collapse the team packs up, pays the random kid, and get a move on. Cobb says “I don’t like trains, a reference to something we find out later in the movie.
Offered a Job

Saito finds Cobb and his team at the hotel. Saito Offers Cobb a job that will get him home to his children. The idea of Inception is introduced.
Cobb Starts Recruitment with Ariadne

Cobb goes to his Stepfather to ask for his best Architect and he introduces him to Ariadne. Cobb takes her to the dream world to teach her the basics.
Cobb recruits Eames

Cobb goes to Mombasa to meet Eames and gets him on the team. He ends up getting chased by men from the company that Cobb worked with before.
Cobb gets introduced to Yusuf

Eames introduces Cobb to Yusuf who is the chemist. Yusuf shows Cobb proof that his drugs work in the dream room.
We get a first look at Fischer, and his dying father. Fischer’s father dies allowing for the team to take advantage of Fischer in this vulnerable state.
They start to get ready

The entire team starts to prepare by creating the maze and the different dream levels.
Mal’s effect

Ariadne discovers about Mal and the effect she has on Cobb. Cobb takes Ariadne through his different levels of memories.
A plane ride

The team manages to get on the same flight as Fischer. They drug his water to put him to sleep, then they start their operation.
The first level of dream

The first dream state starts in Yusuf’s dream. They get everyone together and try to kidnap Fisher, but realize that he is mentally protected.
The warehouse

They find out that Saito got shot and will be stuck in limbo if he dies.
The van

Everyone is in the van and are going to the next level of the dream.
The hotel

There are in the dram of Arthur and here they are doing the Mr. Charles Strategy.

This strategy is where Cobb acts as if he is a projection in fischer’s mind trying to protect him.
The trick

Cobb brings Fischer to the room. Eames impersonates Browning and acts as if he kidnapped Fischer in the real world.

Fisher agrees to go into the dream state of Browning but in reality everyone is going into Fischer’s dream.
Another level

This dream is where the inception is planned to take place.

They have to infiltrate the base in order to achieve inception in Fischer.
Back to Yusuf

Yusuf is having trouble with the projections. He drives the van over a hill and it rolls over.
Arthur fights

Because of the Yusuf, Arthur has to fight the projections in a turning hotel.
Yusuf’s having too much trouble with the projections in his dream state so he starts the music early and the kick as well by running into the barrier.
Time is ticking

Everyone is being pressed for time and they have to rush. Arthur has it especially hard as he has to create a kick without any gravity.
A Short cut

Ariadne tells Cobb about a short cut and he tells Saito and Fischer.

Eames tries to buy them more time and fights off the projections.
Arthur plans a kick

Arthur in the meantime, gets the team together by tying them up with telephone lines.

He plans to create a kick using the explosives that he has.
Inside

Saito and Fischer get inside the building, but Mal is there too, and she shoots Fischer and then Cobb shoots her.
A chance of success

It seems as if it is all over but Ariadne states that they can enter limbo with Fischer and bring him back to do the inception. Saito also dies in the process of protecting them.
In Limbo consciously

Cobb and Ariadne are in Limbo but are still aware that they are dreaming because they used the machine. They go and find Mal.

Ariadne pushes Fischer of the building.
The end of Mal

Cobb is trying to let go of Mal but then she stabs him.

Ariadne shoots Mal in order to help Cobb let go of her.

Ariadne jumps off and Cobb says his goodbye to Mal.
Inception

Fischer gets back up to the fortress after jumping off the building and getting a kick with the defibrillator.

Fischer goes into the room and sees his father laying here.

He then gets the inception that his father wanted Fischer to be better than he was.
The kicks

Eames blows up the fortress in order to get Ariadne out.

Arthur starts the kick in the elevator to get them in his dream state.

The van gives them the kick to get them into Yusuf’s dream.
Limbo

Cobb wakes up in Limbo although this time on Saito’s porch and unknowing of why he is there.

Here they start to try and remember why they are here and then they realise what they must do.
Home?

Cobb and Saito go back to reality on the plane.

Saito honors his agreement and gets Cobb home without any trouble.

Cobb gets to finally see his children.

He spins the top one more time...
Plot Chart:

PERCEPTION OF TIME BECOMES SLOWER AS DREAM DEPTH INCREASES
Form and Content

Form- The form of Inception is non-linear which means that the events within the film do not follow chronological order. We know this because throughout the film, we get flashbacks of Cobb that tell us about his background regarding his main motives.

Content- The content of Inception is that the team is trying to do inception within Fischer’s mind in order to plant a memory. This memory would convince Fischer that his father wanted him to tear down his company rather than continue it.
Opening Credits

As the title sequence plays, a very dark and loud sound is played showing how the movie contains a lot of mystery and intensity. When the word “Syncopy” is shown, the background shows a maze like one of the levels that is shown in the movie.
The title inception plays a major role in the overall movie. Inception is the concept that is mentioned throughout the movie and allows the team to complete their objective.
Subplot

- Cobb’s background with Mal and how it drives Cobb to complete the objective
- Cobb’s reputation and his desire to get to his children
Causal, Spatial, and Temporal

Causal: Cobb’s past experiences with Mal causes him to become obsessive about reality. Changes in the previous dream level affects the next level in terms of gravity, weather, and etc.

Spatial: The film opens up with a close up shot of Cobb which shows his significance in the film. Cobb’s children, Phillipa and James, are always far away from the camera showing Cobb’s distance from the children due to his restrictions.
Temporal: the film uses the scenes in a manner that can express to the reader how each level last for much longer than the one before it. In Yusuf’s dream for example, his van is falling into the ocean and we get its very slow progress every couple of scenes, however in between those scenes there is much more going on in the other levels.
Change of Knowledge

The film uses range and depth to limit the audience’s view of what is going on the film many times.

An example of this is whenever Cobb uses his totem as the range is not very far and the depth even less, only showing the top and the surface it is on. But when the camera zooms out the range increases and we can see the setting.
Change of Knowledge cont.

In the beginning when we see the scene with old Cobb and Saito we don’t know much about what they are doing there. However, when we see the same scene after most of the plot is over, we understand why they are there.
Motif throughout the film

Mal’s totem: Christopher Nolan wanted to have a totem for Cobb that would take a long time to fall as this would lead to more dramatic scenes as seen in the end.

Train: The train that keeps popping up in the film shows how Cobb continues to struggle with his past and how his relationship with Mal still makes a negative impact on him.

Water/Ocean: The use of water is very relevant as it is used to show how it can create (dreams) and how it can destroy (a kick).
Motif cont.

Music used in the kicks is called “Non, Je ne regrette rien” This song was chosen because it talks about the effect of dreams on someone, and how not letting go of a heartbreak can lead to devastation.

The song, when in reality, sounds quite normal, but each level you go down in the dream world, it gets slower.
Motif Cont.

James and Phillipa: Cobb’s children are shown throughout the movie playing and never actually show their faces. This emphasizes Cobb’s motive on how he wants to see their faces again.
Sound

Diegetic:
The children laughing and talking on the beach which builds mystery and wonder.
The song used for the kick “Non, Je ne regrette rien” is heard by the characters as well as the audience.

Non Diegetic:
The beginning sounds are loud and bold indicating that the film has plenty of action and intensity.
As more characters are introduced, the sound shifts towards a more slow and tense tone which builds up suspense as the film goes on.
What’s the Kick?

“It's that feeling of falling you get that jolts you awake. It snaps you out of a dream.” —Cobb.

In order to wake up from a dream, you receive a “kick”, which is a sense of falling, hitting water, or an intense jolt. The sense of falling is caused by the sedative that the characters take.
Symbolism: What’s a Totem? And how is it used?

A Totem is an object that is used to test if oneself is in one's own reality (dream or non-dream) and not in another person's dream. A totem has a specially modified quality (such as a distinct weight, balance, or feel) in the real world, but in a dream of someone who does not know it well, the characteristics of the totem will very likely be off. Any ordinary object which has been in some way modified to affect its balance, weight, or feel will work as a totem.
Time (in levels) VS. Time (Real Life)

Without sedative (Sedative changes ratio to 1 hour in real time : 20 hours in real time):

1st Level: 12 hours in the first level is equal to one hour in real life.

2nd Level: 144 hours in the second level is equal to one hour in real life.

3rd Level: 1800 hours in the third level is equal to one hour in real life.

4th Level: 21912 hours in the fourth level is equal to one hour in real life.

Demonstration of How Time Works:
It’s all about movies

Some theories support that Nolan made this movie in order to relate it to his life as a director. The dreams are like the multiple different movies that he creates, and him getting lost in some of them. He, like Cobb, has not been able to be with his children because of his work. Many characters have symbolic relations to this theory.
Setting

Most of the movie takes place in the dream levels. The major places that were Mombasa, the workshop, the plane, the university, and Cobb’s house.
Cobb

He is used as a symbol for the Director who makes a pitch and makes a vision come to life. Nolan made Cobb relate to his life.

His totem is the spinning top although it was initially Mal’s.

Cobb is the main character and the movie is really about him and his change.

His personality: Risky, Selfish, and Disturbed
Arthur

He is like the producer, he gets the details, does the research, and deals with all of the problems.

His totem is a red loaded die that always lands on the same side.

His personality: logical, serious yet sometimes funny, and hardworking
Ariadne

She is used as a symbol for the audience as she is learning about how everything works in the dream world.

Her totem is a bishop chess piece that falls if she is in reality but stays up if she is in a dream state.

She helps the audience discover more about the background between Cobb and Mal. As she learns, we learn more.

Her personality is: curious, creative, and daring
Ariadne Cont.

Ariadne also relates back to Greek mythology due to how she led people out of a labyrinth. The dreams represent the labyrinth.
Saito

He is like the fiancer or the studio as he is the one who helps provide the funding for everything.

He doesn’t have a permanent totem but he does use the rug in the apartment and Cobb’s top in order to perceive reality.

Personality: Brave, trustworthy, and forgiving
Mal

She is the main antagonist and represents all of the evil thoughts and bad events that arise within the director.

She is just a perception of Cobb’s mind

Personality: deceptive, angered, and distraught
Yusuf

He is the one who brings in extra hardware. He has his potions which are used in order to help Cobb bring about what he desires.

His totem: none

Personality: funny, smart, and quirky
Yusuf was the name of a dream interpreter given this power by Allah.

This is related to our Yusuf because he too helps in dreams and their understanding.
Eames:

He is the forger, the one who can be like another, an actor. He represents the various different roles that actors have to play and act as.

Totem: A poker chip that has “mombassa” spelled with 2 “s” on purpose

Personality: Similar to that of James Bond (which is actually the inspiration to his character)
Fischer

Fischer is like the one being manipulated as he is the competition to Saito or for our theory the other company.

Fischer is what we perceive as the main target of the story even though his plot distracts from the real one about Cobb.

Personality: good at Self control, cocky, and gullible.
Character Motivations

Cobb- Cobb wants to go and reunite with his children after he was wrongfully framed of harming his wife.

Saito- Saito wanted to bring down the major company that Robert Fischer was going to inherit in order to prevent it from becoming a superpower.

Mal- Mal wanted Cobb to join her in the what she thought was reality.

Ariadne- Ariadne wanted to help Cobb keep his projections of Mal under control
Irony

The irony is that Cobb got sent away from his children through inception, yet he is using inception to help remove his charges and get back to his children.
Point of View (Third Person Limited)

This movie is based around Cobb, his relationship with Mal, and his journey getting back to his children. The film’s perspective is primarily visionary. The camera focuses on another person during an event, and also when they are about to receive a kick. As this movie is primarily around Cobb, the film has restricted narration, and is told through him.
Important Scenes:

This scene is at the beginning. They use this exact scene at the very end of the film in order to show how both Cobb and Saito are remembering what led to them being in this state. This scene serves as a way for the audience to feel anticipation for the events that led to this.
This scene shows how Mal has infected Cobb's mind. She is shown here to be a very dangerous person to both Cobb and to the rest of the team. Cobb keeps this scene in his memory to remind him of the guilt that he felt that night. This scene shows just how unstable Cobb really is.
Important Scene cont.

This last scene shows the first scene only this time we understand its significance. We also see the joy that Cobb has when he gets to see his children as he doesn’t care about the totem or if it is reality or not because he has chosen this reality to live in. Evidently the totem does fall as he doesn't have his ring, the totem is shaking, and his children show their faces and they are older than when we initially saw them.
Important Quotes

Cobb: “An idea is like a virus. Resilient. Highly contagious. And even the smallest seed of an idea can grow. It can grow to define or destroy you.”

Eames: “If we are gonna perform Inception then we need imagination.”

Mal: I'll tell you a riddle. You're waiting for a train, a train that will take you far away. You know where you hope this train will take you, but you don't know for sure. But it doesn't matter. How can it not matter to you where that train will take you?”
Easter Eggs in Inception

1. “Non je ne regrette rien” was 2 minutes and 28 seconds long and the movie's runtime was 2 hours and 28 minutes long.
2. The numbers 528 491 was the code to the safe at the end of the movie and was also the hotel room numbers in the second level.
3. The first letters of the main characters spell out the words 'Dreams Pay'.
4 V’s

Voyeuristic- The film’s place is very complex due to how it takes place on several different levels of dreams and different places such as Mombasa, the plane, and etc. The pace is constantly changing due to how each level has its own time rate.

Visceral- The story keeps the audience in their seats and tense. As the very tight timer ticks down for the kick, the suspense builds up and causes the audience to feel exhilarated.
4 V’s Cont.

Vicarious- Although the film is filled with action, it also contains many intimate scenes. The film has flashbacks that show how Mal and Cobb were very intimate with each other.

Verisimilitude- In the point of view of the characters within the movie, the film seems to be very realistic. The fear for death is very relevant and shows real world struggles within the film.
Explicit Meaning

The mind is like a labyrinth of Secrets. We choose what to remember, what to forget, and what we can't forget. It is very powerful and can allow for us to choose our own reality.

Mal: “You don't believe in one reality anymore. So choose. Choose your reality like I did. Choose to be here. Choose me.”

Elderly Bald Man: “They come to be woken up.”
Is it a Good Movie?

Unified Plot: The film sticks to one plot and one objective.

Credible/Plausible: Yes

External Observable Truths: Love causes people to do crazy things

Internal Truths of Human Nature: The past causes people to change, Love can cause people to do crazy things, an idea becomes an obsession

Artistic Semblance or Truth: Yes

Suspense: The main way that suspense is created is through non-diegetic music.
So is the top still spinning?

That’s for you to decide.

Cobb doesn’t really care anymore whether he was in a dream or not because he was back with his children. This shows he’s in his own subjective reality. However, there are theories stating that he is not dreaming because in every dreaming scene, he is wearing a wedding ring. In the final scene, the wedding ring is absent.
Sources:

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Thank You

Yusuf was here