

Inception

The much-talked about and debated techno-drama “Inception” involves a merry band of young talents, led by idea-thief Leonardo DiCaprio (see below), who has developed a mechanism to cast his team into a collective dream-state where they can invade a person’s dreams to manipulate them into conceiving an idea (inception) directly useful to the team effort. In this case, the aim is to seed the mind of an entrepreneur to forfeit the rights to the business of his oil-rich father. The film is certainly technologically dazzling, often very sweeping and handsome, mildly intriguing in its premise, but, but...

...it is to me also utterly banal in its narrative, wrapped in a story that is barren and nonsensical (and never well explained), and with too many elements that were inconsistent or stereotypical. Citing just one banality: why does every level of a collective dream time have a bunch of anonymous bad guys chasing and shooting at the team? This isn’t innovative or serious plotting, this is a video game write large, or a clumsy paraphrase of all the anonymous legions of bad guys in jump suits who always people the Bond films.



As to the creation of the several dream levels—a crucial artifact of the movie—I am admittedly the last one to judge their authenticity because I personally *never* remember my dreams and have zero sense of a personal dream-state. My sole knowledge of dream life is, thus, second-hand, wholly taken from my own readings or from the testimony of my family

members, most of whom highlight the wild inconsistencies and absurdities of their dreams, which often mix the very fuzzy with the palpably real. If that is the case, “Inception” doesn’t represent levels of dream life so much as a simply changes of exotic scenery, again, rather like a Bond film (time to sally off to...Japan, say, or, the Frozen North).

The British director, Christopher Nolan, has talent. His first major success, “Memento,” was a brilliant and tense study of memory—and its loss—and of playing with time, done in a most unassuming setting of a very barren Los Angeles. Hollywood liked what it saw, and since has given Nolan too much studio money to make facile, sumptuous entertainments which are not, to my mind, very good films. Witness the lumbering and dank “The Dark Knight” from two years ago, and now “Inception.”

Perhaps I am being too hard on the movie. It occurs to me that fans of science fiction will “get it” easily and even perhaps cherish “Inception,” since that

genre depends on an up-front suspension of disbelief and doesn't demand too much plausibility. Part of the point for such fans will be to have the film simply wash over them with startling images and catchy effects. Don't question things too much; just let it happen to you. Also, it might be the perfect movie for 16-year-old American boys everywhere who simply label it "cool" or "awesome" and see it more than once (the studio's clear intention for this now considerable money-maker).

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