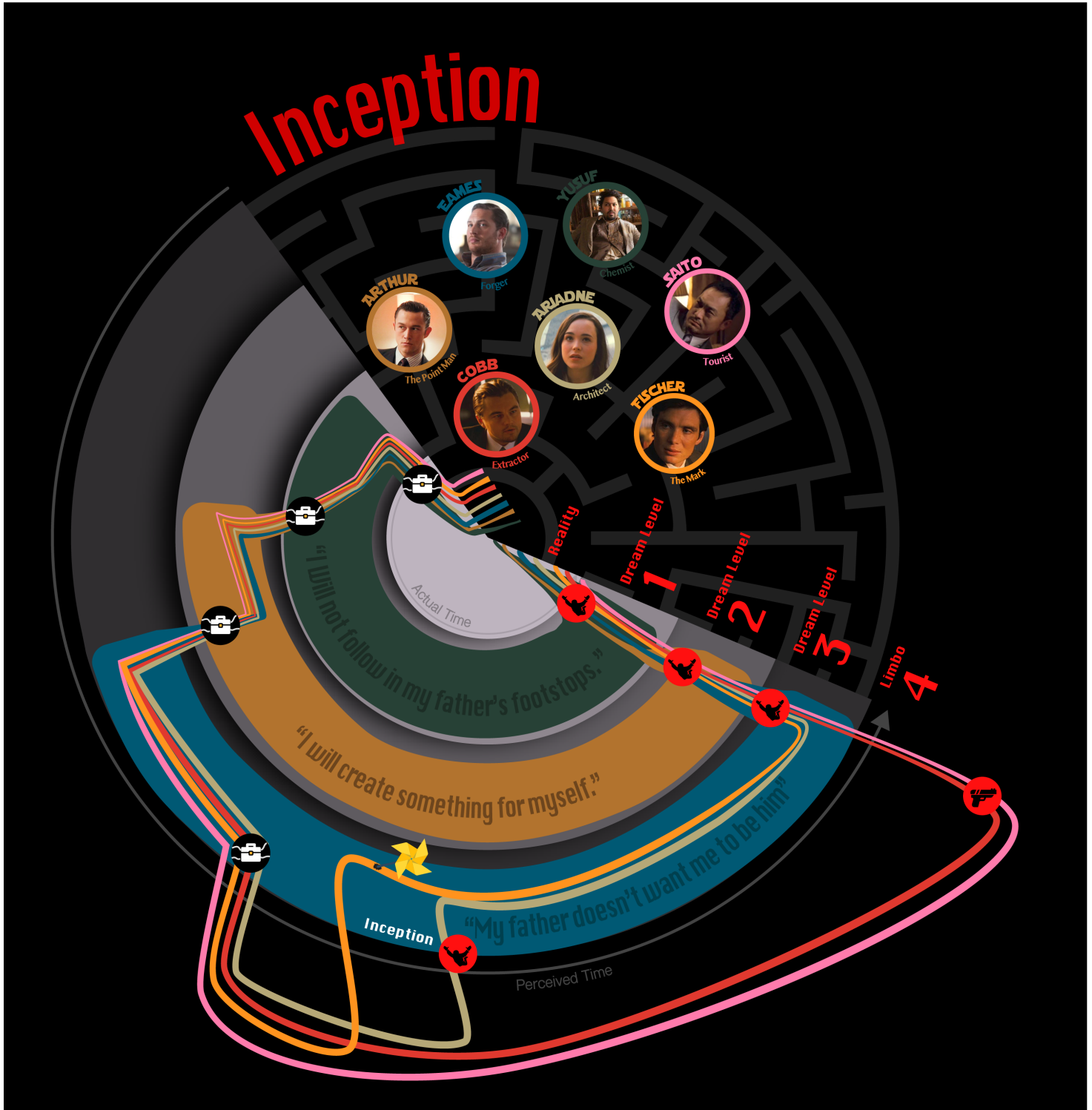


Inception Pictogram

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Part A – Narrative Pictogram



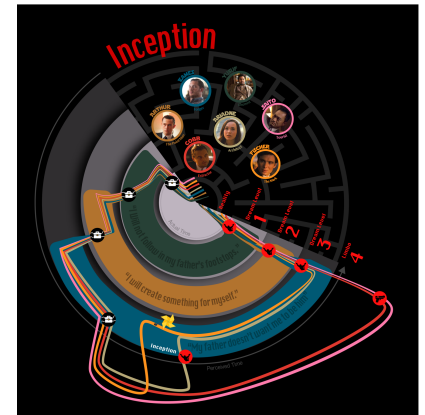
Summary of Inception

Cobb cannot enter U.S. to see his children because his wife framed him of murder in the case of her suicide. Cobb is given a mission of inception, that is plant an idea in the mind of an CEO. Cobb know he's capable of this task because he did that to his wife before, leading her to believe the reality isn't real and committed suicide. Cobb finally let go of his guilt by confronting his wife. And he can return home.

Overview

This pictogram depicts Inception's (2010) story about a team of people go through a quest into a dream, with a mission to plant an idea into target's unconscious and finish the quest successfully.

Therefore, you can see the pictogram designs like a dart board. Each ring layer holds a mission statement. At the bottom, there's a pinwheel pin on 'the mark's' path, like a dart.



Legend

Each color line represents a team member's journey. You can tell how deep the characters go into the dream. If the path occupied the width of layer, the character is hosting the dream level who in-charge to protect and wake other team members.

The quest begins when the characters enter the dream world from reality. Each layer represents a dream level. Time's flow is represented by going anti-clockwise from start point. Since time perceived is longer down each dream layer, the outer/lower ring is larger/longer.



The Compound / Dream Machine

The compound create the connection between dreamer (so that they can share dream) and accelerate the brain function (which affect the perception of time in dream layers) . The machine usually is packed within a briefcase and wired to blood veins of dreamers. The icon represents the time when they are connected to entre next level of dream.



The 'Kick'

The 'Kick' is the feeling of falling. That's how the characters wake from one dream to the other. The icons represent the timing when they are 'kicked'. The graphics in the icon shows how the 'kick' is happened, whether by falling or die in the dream.



The Inception (and the mission statements)

Actually the inception happen in all dream levels. It's a progress rather than one off thing. The team affects the target's, Robert Fischer, perception to his father in every layer of dream little by little. The idea the team plants in subject's mind is written on each layer of rings.

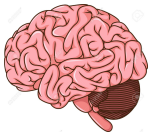
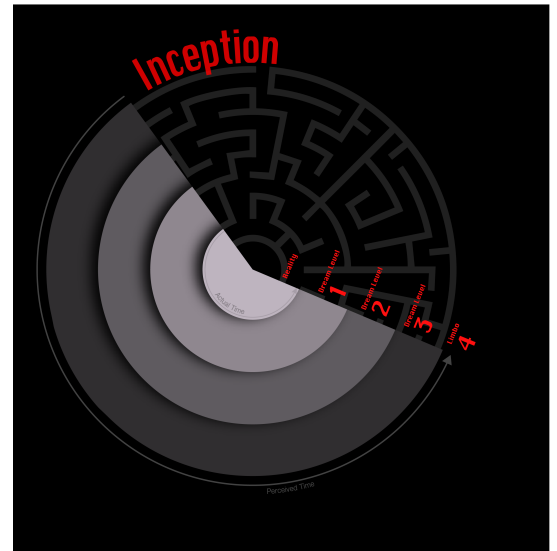
The icon represents the biggest emotional change of Fischer’s towards his relationship to his father. This is the point when the inception is successful. The pinwheel is a childhood memory of Fischer with his father.

Aspect: Structure of the world

The whole dream world in Inception is architected to be like a maze. The circle maze is also drawn by the architect when first interviewed. I also think the maze pattern resembles the look of a human brain. Therefore, I put it in the background.

The dream world in Inception are layered, from top to bottom. Therefore, I used drop-shadowed layer of rings to emphasize the hierarchy.

The time perceived in each lower layer of dream is expanded by linear fashion. Therefore, each layer of rings is bigger in proportion as well.



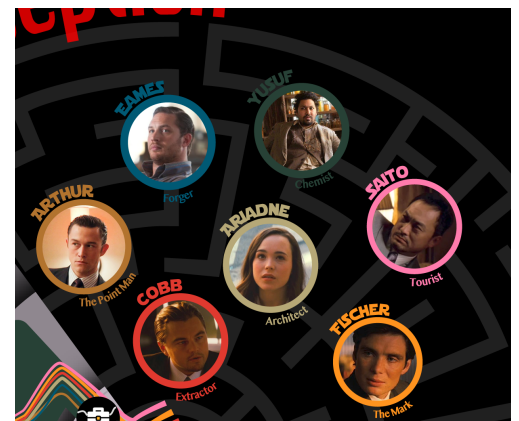
Aspect: Representation of Reality

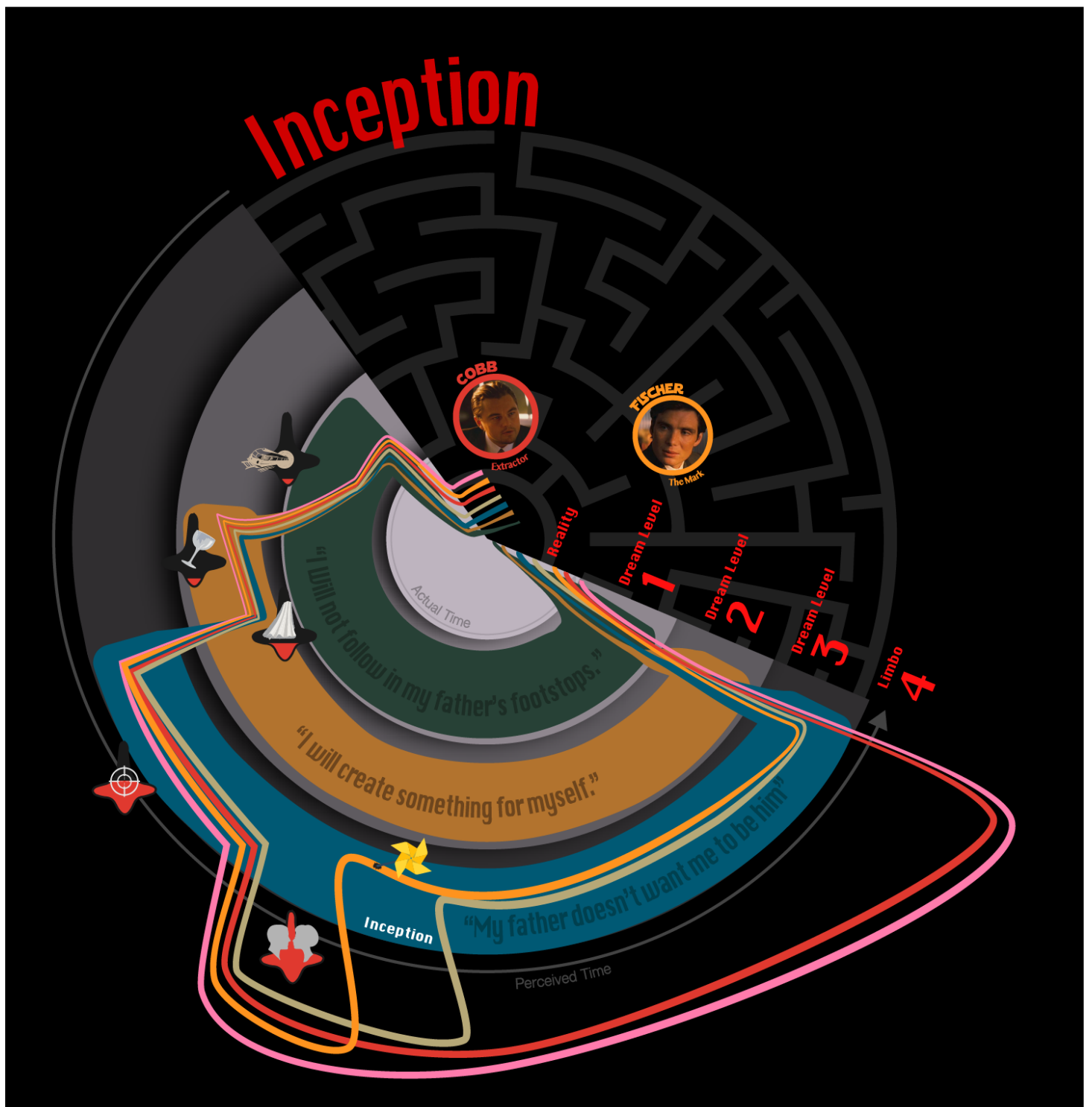
It seems that the movie reflects the director’s processes of creation and therefore the characters are referring to the crew in production:

- Cobb, “Extractor”:
- Eames “Forger”:
- Arthur, “The Point Man”:
- Ariadne, “The Architect”:
- Robert Fischer, “The Mark”:

- Director himself
- Actors
- Producer
- Production Designer
- Audience

Therefore, we audience are the one receiving the illusions and ideas. I think during the creation of this movies, Nolan subconsciously project his memories into his creation.





Overview

This graph aims to emphasize the three-structure and the character arc in traditional storytelling sense. The path of the characters represents their journey to face their past and overcome them in the dream.

Legend

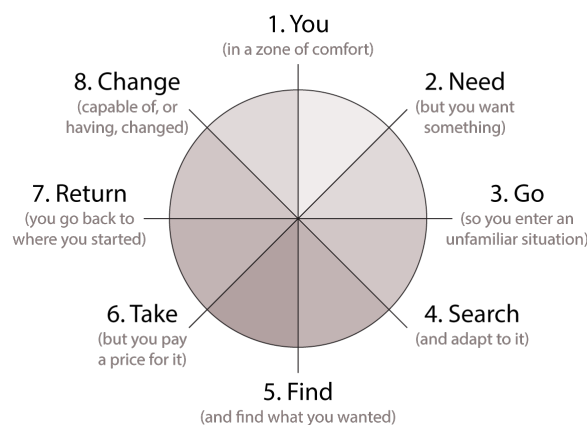


The Spinning Top

This represents the progress of Cobb's reconciliation to himself. The more the red, the more completion of the progress goes. This shows up when a past memory or Cobb's wife appear in dream world. It reaches the top when Cobb finally let go of his guilt during his final talk with his wife.

Character-centered three acts storytelling

In traditional storytelling, a story is usually about a need and the quest of overcoming their shortcoming in order to fulfil their true desire. Dan Harmon, a creator and writer of Rick and Morty, develop this story circle theory. It shows that story is about a character go through changes to get what they truly desire.



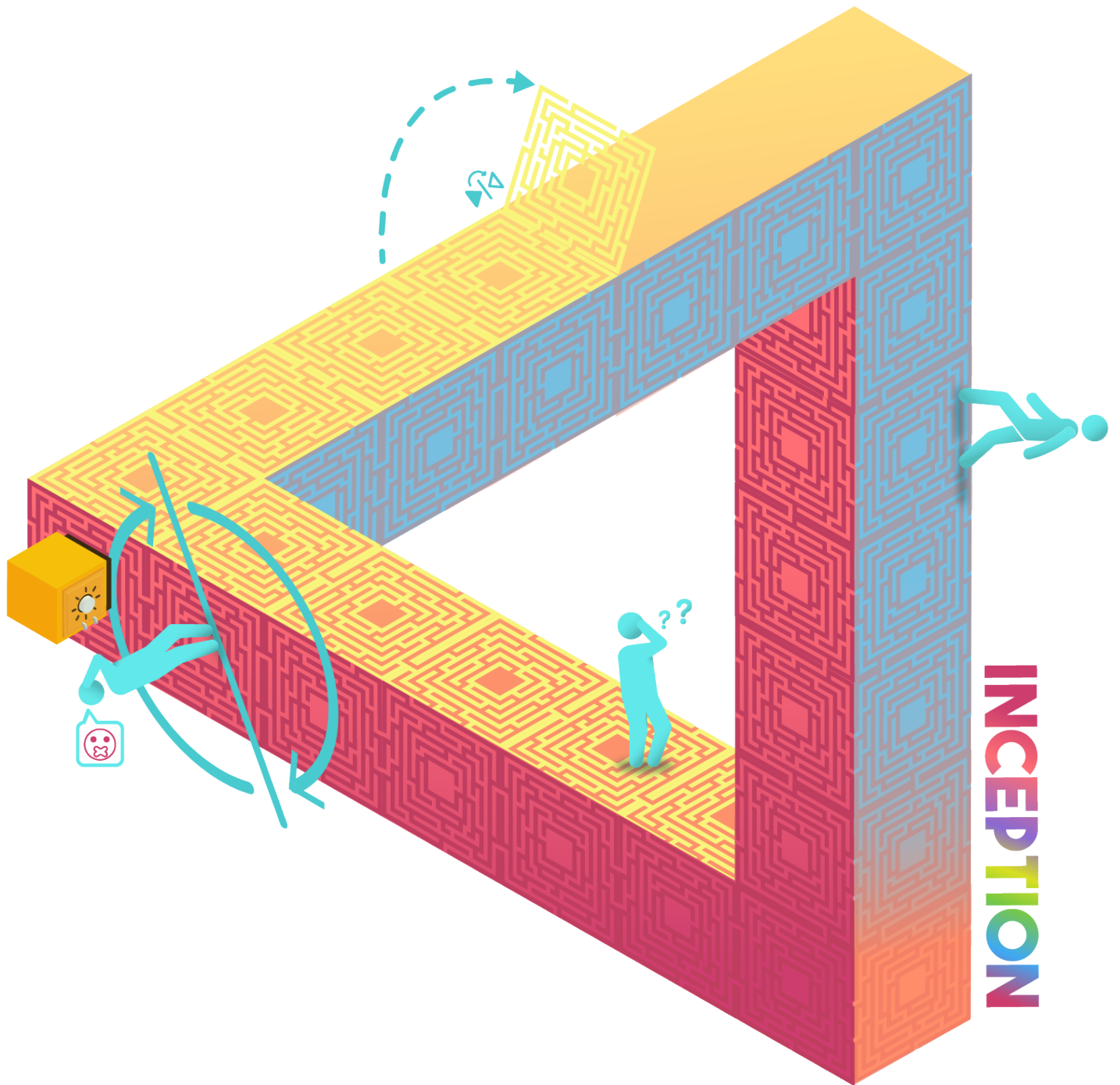
In the Inception movie, the story is about Cobb and Fischer facing their past. Cobb needs to face his guilt of getting his wife killed by Inception and get back to his family. Fischer needs to face the broken relationship with his father. Cobb and Fischer's journey parallel each other as they seek closure, coming to terms with their past.

Dream works

Why does Cobb keep seeing his fragmented memory of his wife? According to Freud's (1964) theory on psychoanalysis, the purpose of dreaming is for repressed wishes to find their way out of the unconscious.

"These are the moments I regret. They're memories I have to change." This is a line from Cobb. Cobb can finally dare to see his children's faces when he confront his wife and let go of his guilt in his dream. We can see the film is similar to Freud's theory by showing that dreams are product of dream fulfillment.

Part C – World Building Methodology



Overview

The graph depicts the ways of constructing the world in the movie. This movie shows an interesting way to build a world with infinite possibilities, even though the characters is still bounded by the rules.

Legend

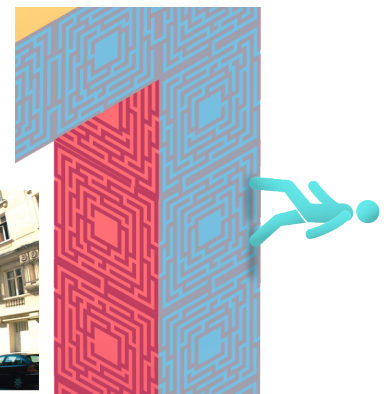
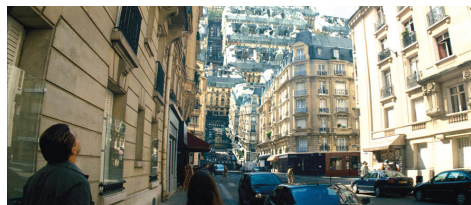
Expansion of the world

The dream world in the movie can be expanded by reflecting the region to itself. Just like the mirror scene shown in the picture. The reflection of the mirror creates an infinitely long pathway. If we design merely a region in a world, we can expand it to infinity by this method.



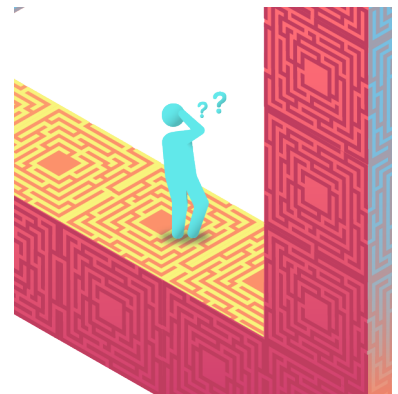
Defying the Physics

In the movies, the world can be folded up and the people can walk on the walls. The activity area grows way bigger from the ground level(2D) to the walls(3D).

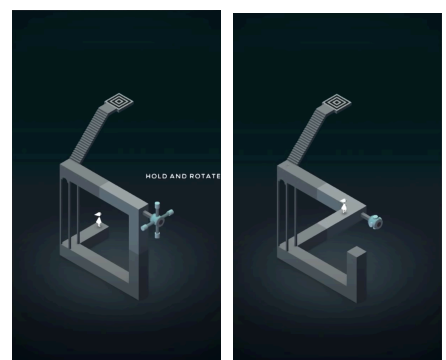


Perception and Paradox

They can create paradox to create infinite loop from paradox staircase. It is to use perspective illusions to create linkage between different walkable pathway. That is if the surface in 3D world is seemingly connected in 2D camera perspective, then the surface is connected. Therefore, a) it creates more options to travel, and b) the characters can travel much faster between different 3D places.

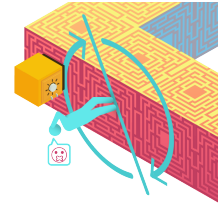


There is a game, namely Monument Valley, toot the similar idea. It allows the player to play with perspective of objects to create pathway for the in-game character.



Automatism

The central idea of world-building in Inception is 'perceive and create' at the same time. That describes the procedure of association in unconscious level. It resembles to the Automatism in art.



The example quoted from movies:

Perceive: When world-builder puts a vault in the world, the dreamer is likely to put secrets in it. It's an unconscious act.

Create: when an idea is presented to dreamer, like 'creating a building', sometimes our mind will fill the details on his own. An image of building shows up automatically.

Rules of Limitation

The imagination is unlimited. The character can fold and create the world in they want. However, the movie pinned a rule. They cannot change too much, or the projection in dreams would attack them.

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Freud, Sigmund(1964). *New Introductory Lecture on Psycho-Analysis*. Hogarth Press. Pages 7-30, 57-80.

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