

FILM AS A SYSTEM...

System

- A work as a system means that it is a collection of elements that depend on and influence each other, just as they depend on and influence the whole of which they are a part.
- As Aristotle says, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

- Each film is different, none is exactly the same. And even if someone made a film today that was exactly the same copy of a film made fifty years ago, it would not be the same because it is made in different conditions, it enters into different conditions, it raises different expectations.
- Any film, as a system, was made by certain people at a certain time and place.
- In other words, it was made in a particular historical context. We don't always know this context, but we should be aware that some such context existed – and that it can play a significant role.

INCEPTION

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoHD9XEInc0>



- It's a film in which a number of things happen at the same time and with different durations of time. It's a film in which we find ourselves watching a parallel narrative in four levels of the human dream. It is a film where expectations of what is physically probable are violated. But at the same time it is extremely clear and understandable. Its innovation lies not in denying assumed certainties, but in making them more explicit.
- Why? Because it relies on the viewer's mastery of genre conventions. It uses the conventions of the spy film, the action film, the film about clever thieves and big heists. At the same time, it is a love and family drama, a film about trauma from which the hero cannot escape. These are all formulas we understand. At the same time, it uses perfect timing for its plot, because things happen very rhythmically

INCEPTION

- screentime duration in minutes -

- INTRODUCTION: 00-21
- COMPLICATING ACTION: 21-61
- DEVELOPMENT I: 61-91
- DEVELOPMENT II: 91-107
- CLIMAX: 107-131
- EPILOGUE: 131-135

- At the same time, each floor of the dream in which the events take place comes from slightly different shades of the thriller genre. The first floor of the dream is an action thriller, the second floor of the dream is a spy film, the third floor of the dream is a dynamic Bond film, and the fourth floor of the dream is a post-apocalyptic psychological drama. But that's not enough, because the filmmakers have chosen even more techniques so that we don't get lost in the complex narrative.
- Each floor of the dream works with a different environment, as you could see. The first dream floor is a rainy city, the second dream floor is a luxury hotel, the third dream floor is a hospital fortress in a snowy landscape, and the fourth dream floor is a wasteland full of apocalyptic or obscure scenes.
- Moreover, each environment also has a different colour palette: blue, gold, white, grey-brown.
- Moreover, the hero's inserted flashbacks are always repeated, the ghostly wife says the same sentences, the unavailable children are always seen from the same angle. Moreover, the first half of the film explains the rules that are used in the second half. INCEPTION may be a complex film, but it is also an unprecedentedly communicative one, anxiously controlling its clarity.

INLAND EMPIRE

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yv9E-H2OEM>



On the other hand, we can look at David Lynch's INLAND EMPIRE. It too has layers of fiction, it too reflects on itself, but... the trailer already suggests that it doesn't strive for intelligibility. Lynch exploits the viewer's knowledge of genre conventions, but uses that knowledge against him. He wants to confuse, annoy, surprise, unsettle. He is incomprehensible, ungraspable, giving no key to his understanding.

- I know many colleagues who hate INCEPTION and love INLAND EMPIRE. And I know a lot of colleagues who hate INLAND EMPIRE and love INCEPTION. What makes a good movie? What is the sign of a good movie? It's likely that even Christopher Nolan and David Lynch would disagree with each other's perspectives, because as artists they strive for different things, they solve different artistic problems, they find different things inspiring.

Time and Space

- But it is also very important to take into account the time and place of creation. Hollywood filmmakers in the 1950s shot differently than filmmakers in the 1920s – and they in turn shot differently than filmmakers in the 1980s. They preferred different processes, different acting, different ways of shooting, different speed of editing.
- At the same time, however, filmmaking standards differed in Hollywood, in Japan, in Czechoslovakia, in the Soviet Union, and in France. Firstly, because they had different conditions and faced different constraints. Technological, ideological, economic - but cultural.
- And cultural standards are very important, because filmmakers make films for an audience - and they have to rely on the audience to understand their films.
- So... what can they actually rely on? A cultural encyclopedia.