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Analysis of Hyperreality in the Movies of Inception and Bab'a Aziz

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ABSTRACT

Although it is claimed that the concept of existence has no definition, many different definitions and interpretations have been made by philosophers who have pondered this field throughout history. While most ancient philosophers and scientists were interested in the problem of what existence is and what it is, the essence (origin) of existence was also a matter of curiosity. According to some, the first being or the essence of being was air, water, and fire. According to the others, they are concepts such as 'One, logos, idea, substance, cogito, perception, monad, object, self, soul, will' and power. While the problem of knowledge of existence (ontology) goes through many philosophical stages and focuses on it as a research topic, it can be seen that in later stages this focus shifts to what knowledge is and what it is (epistemology). The method of reaching true (absolute) knowledge has varied from age to age. While scientific and transmitted knowledge was popular in ancient times to reach true knowledge, positive science was used as a reference in reaching absolute knowledge in modern and post-modern ages. This scientific method, which centers on experiment and observation, has been accompanied by technical technological developments. While mass media, and in this context, cinema/television based on visuality, gained great momentum after the 19th century, the first impression created by the train of the Lumiere brothers coming towards people was replaced by panic and fear. Therefore, the truth between visuality and reality has been questioned. What is intended to be done in this study is to try to understand the relationship between existence, image, reality, and effect.

INTRODUCTION

Not only philosophy and philosophers are interested in the whatness of being, the concept of being also attracts the attention of scientists. In this respect, philosophy constitutes an interdisciplinary field. Philosophical knowledge is a type of knowledge that takes a person beyond everyday knowledge. Therefore, it addresses the essence of being rather than its reality in the external world, that is, it addresses its metaphysical or ontological side. Therefore, it basically establishes its own method in the context of these two problems. The problem of whether there is existence, and if there is existence, the problem of what the existing being is. The answers and interpretations given to these two problems have given rise to two different views. One of them is realism, which accepts existence, and the other is nihilism, which denies existence. In ancient Greece, philosophical thoughts were made in the context of these two problems, namely, what existence is or is not, or what existence is if it exists. The interest of the West and the Islamic world is not so much what existence is, but what objects are. In this study, while the whatness of man is discussed within the scope of existence, two sample films are studied in order to put theory into practice. Of these two films compared, the dream-themed Inception directed by Christopher Nolan and the Sufi-themed Baba Aziz directed by Nacer Khemir are studied. The aim of these two films is to compare the similarities and contrasts of the sample films, to understand the connection between existence and image,

reality and effect, and to investigate the whatness of man as a perpetrator of this action.

Existance

When we delve into the essence of existence, we come across very different thoughts since the early ages. While Homer (700 BC) defines existence as 'a world full of Gods', for Hesiod (700 BC), it is 'beginning, chaos, emptiness, depth, abyss'. Thales (625 - 545 BC), who is considered the father of philosophy, considers the essence of existence as 'water' or liquid 'clay'. Anaximenes (588 - 524 BC) sees the main source of existence as 'air'. Pythagoras (580 - 500 BC) sees existence mathematically as 'number' (one), and Xenophanes (569-477 BC) claims that 'earth' and water are the origins of all elements. For Heraclitus (540-475 BC), the essence of existence is 'fire'. According to Pannides (515 BC), the first principle of the universe is 'Eros (love)'. According to Empedocles (490 - 432 BC), 'water, fire, air and earth' are the four eternal and everlasting substances. According to Anaxagoras (500 - 429 BC), nothing comes from nothing, all elements are called 'spermata' (seed). According to Democritus (460 - 400 BC), the first cause of matter is 'atom' (Sunar, 1997). In Plato, existence is the existence of 'idea' in the form of an 'ontos on' (real existence). So what is there in Aristotle? In Aristotle, it is the answer to the question of Being (ti esti), there is (to de ti), that is, something that exists as a fundamental 'on he on', is what exists.

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The Mood of the Concept of Existence (Being)

Another definition of the concept of existence is that it is defined linguistically as existing in language. It is the appearance of existence (things) as a signifier/indicator in language. This linguistic definition makes existence felt externally as a symbol, an icon of an image, a perception. In speculative studies related to the theory of being, it is discussed whether the term “existence” can be a predicate as evidence for the existence of being, and throughout the history of thought, a chain of systems has existed with the development of many concepts on the concept of being (Kılıç, 2004). What is “being” may not be known, but when it is asked, “What is being”, the third-person indicative mood “is” is tried to be understood linguistically, even if it is not determined conceptually what this “is” implies. In ‘being in general’ and ‘being like that’, in the real, in being-in-front-of-hand, in the Being-there, in “there is” (es-gibt), existence lies. The meaning of being is understood in existing things, the manifestation of being can take its beginning from existing things (Heidegger, 2004). While there was such a definition of the concept of being in ancient Greece, the absence of such a definition in Eastern philosophy can be attributed to some linguistic deficiencies and reasons. When the philosophical thought of Ancient Greece was transferred to Arabic through translations, it is seen that the concept of existence emerged as a problem due to the terminological structure. Arabic has a grammar in which the intention can be expressed with a kind of ‘agreement’ in nominal sentences without the need for a conjunction that will connect the subject to its predicate. When it is said that “Zeyd is the scribe” (Zeydin is the scribe), this claim about Zayd can be expressed without the need for a conjunction. However, this situation can be expressed with a conjunction in other languages. According to the Iranian thinker Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, ‘est and hest’, which are generally used to express existence in Persian, are the equivalent of ‘est’ in Greek, and both are used as conjunctions. According to Yazdi, the characteristic of this word is that it is timeless. There is no such conjunction that is timeless in Arabic. For example, when it is said, “*der dânişgeh-i edebiyat rişte-ifelsefe hem hest*” (There is also a Philosophy department in the Faculty of Letters), the ‘hest’ here is the predicate, not the ‘conjunction’. Here, the ‘hest’ mood expresses an entity that comes as a ‘predicate’ in the proposition (Öçal, 2013). In philosophy, the essence of the entity, rather than the conceptual (linguistic) evaluation of the entity, constitutes another important problem that needs to be understood.

The Essence of Being

Since ancient times, the ‘essence’, which constitutes the first and main source of existence, has been tried to be explained with concepts such as ‘one’, ‘logos’, ‘apeiron’, ‘atom’, ‘idea’, ‘soul’, ‘will’ and similar concepts, while in the New Age, it is explained with concepts such as ‘substance’, ‘ore’, ‘monad’, in the 20th century with the concepts of ‘phenomenon’ and in the new ontology with the concepts

of ‘dasein’ (Kılıç, 2004). However, an agreement cannot be reached on the relationship between essence and existence discussed by philosophers, and therefore many idealist and realist interpretations of existence are encountered (Kılıç, 2004). Plato constructs existence as ‘idea’, Aristotle as ‘energeia’, Kant as ‘position’, Hegel as ‘absolute concept’ and Nietzsche as ‘will to power’. These are not teachings presented haphazardly, but rather words belonging to ‘being’ as answers that meet an idea by referring to ‘being’, that is, ‘it’ gives being’, that speaks of sending what conceals itself (Heidegger, 200). However, according to the German philosopher Heidegger, being is ‘the being that is currently/present is characterized by a notion of time’ (Heidegger, 2001). Being should not be considered in connection with concepts such as ‘spirit’ or ‘idea’, but in its current state; for example, when “table” is mentioned, one should not talk about an existence beyond “this table”. Here, Heidegger is actually against substantial existence. He does not see another being behind the existing. The existing is the one who is here right now with all his being (Çüçen, 2006). Heidegger tries to explain being and existence through Dasein. Another concept used together with the concept of Dasein is the concept of Das Man (Tezcan, 2019). According to Heidegger, the place where being encounters and confronts itself is the possibility of being human called ‘Dasein’. Dasein does not mean an essence, it is an existence. He argues that the traditional understanding of essence and being does not apply to Dasein’s understanding of being, but it does apply to things. The essence of things; what they are made for determines their existence. Dasein does not have an innate essence. Its essence is its existence, Heidegger states, and defines Dasein as a temporary and finite existence that pursues the possibilities and futures of its own plans and projects in order to realize this existence (Çüçen *et al.*, 2009). As can be seen, the history of philosophy in the West is a long-term struggle between existentialism and essentialism, sometimes openly but generally implicitly. Since it began with Plato, essentialism has always been at the forefront in Western philosophy (Barrett, 2016). The disagreement between those who prioritize essence in existence and those who put forward existence itself before essence generally continues in later times. According to Descartes, essence comes first, then spatial existence. However, Cogito is at the core, and the proposition that sum comes after cogito, which forms the basis for the proposition “*cogito ergo sum*” or “I think therefore I am”, has been stated incorrectly. According to Heidegger, the reason for this understanding is epistemological. This situation is Dasein’s state of not being itself and misunderstanding itself. Can Dasein truly interpret itself and become itself? This is only possible if Dasein interprets itself with an ontological structure. And this ontological interpretation indicates that the prior, existence, that is, sum, comes and cogito follows sum. In this respect, what is correct for Heidegger is “I am therefore I think”, that is, “*Sum ergo Cogito*” (Çüçen *et al.*, 2009). Based on Heidegger’s approach to being as

Dasein (das men), at this stage the problem of being human and the whatness of being human emerges.

What is a Human

What is a human being? There are incomparably different views on the origin and nature of a human being, from those that take spiritual sources as reference and those that take materialist sources as reference. If it is said that Socrates was the first thinker to address the concept of 'original human' as a fundamental problem in ancient Greek philosophical thought, this would not be an exaggeration. Because he examines man as a whole. He argues that man cannot be understood when he is divided into parts. If there is a universe that he knows, it is the fact of being human, which will form the source of all his research (Demir, 2004). Plato sees human nature, the code of meaning, as a difficult text that must be understood through philosophy. However, this text consists of small letters in a way that cannot be read or understood through one's own personal experiences. The first task that falls to philosophy should be to try to enlarge these letters (Cassirer, 1970). In his dialogues that have reached a certain maturity, Plato perceives man within the framework of an eternal soul that descends from the world of ideas to the material/physical world, enters a certain body and returns to its origin by following a certain cycle (Demir, 2004). This thesis, which has been considered a general opinion in the West since ancient Greece (ancient Greeks), was abandoned after W. Dilthey (1833-1911). In the modern and post-modern thought period, when the direction of philosophy was changed from ontology (philosophy of being) to epistemology (philosophy of knowledge), considering humans as a factor that gives meaning to all existence is perceived as an old myth. It can be said that this transformation first started with N. Copernicus in modern philosophy. Copernicus tried to destroy the cosmological myth about humans by taking humans from the center of the universe. Later, in his studies in this field, C. Darwin dealt a great blow to the biological myth of humans by refuting the thesis that humans are superior to all other species (Düzgün, 2007). Lamettrie followed the same path (1709-1751), rejected the soul-body duality of Descartes (1596-1650), and claimed that humans are entirely composed of matter, in fact, such matter that they are nothing but a set machine, thus encouraging the advocates of materialist determinism (Cassirer, 1970). Psychoanalysts, in a similar manner (S. Freud), put forward that the mind (ego) is not effective in the essence, structure, will and mind of a person, on the contrary, a person is completely under the domination of instincts and internal drives (id), and deal the final blow to the person. Freud's main emphasis on this issue was on the instinctive abilities of the person. The power of these instincts also determines the way the mind functions in particular. Although Freud changed his thoughts many times on the nature of these internal drives, he never considered changing his views in this area as the basic elements of the human

structure and designing them in a way that would conflict with each other. Freud perceives the characteristic of change (transformation) in a person as a process shaped around the internal drive, which is an unchangeable bio-psychological human form. According to him, this stable structure prevents the person from undergoing a fundamental change and transformation (Düzgün, 2007). P. Sartre, on the other hand, does not accept the existence of such an unconscious mechanism; according to him, wherever a spirit appears, it is only consciousness. A person's life or personality cannot be understood in the context of some hypothetical unconscious concepts and fantasies behind the scenes, holding the strings and playing the puppet of consciousness. According to him, a person's personality is neither more nor less than a person's life. He says, 'We cannot understand Baudelaire's life by associating his thoughts, poetry and struggle with his sexuality; on the contrary, sexuality should be seen as something that takes place in the whole of life, that is, as something that takes its form and direction from the total project that is that life itself.' Sartre states that Baudelaire's own choice that shaped his life emerged when he was sent to primary school, that is, when he was first separated from his mother (Barrett, 2016). Like Sartre, Goethe also advocates for man to overcome his egoism in his own philosophy. However, Goethe's definition of man is completely different from both Sartre's and Hegel's definition of man. Goethe places the idea of man at a central place in his philosophy. According to him, the social integration of man by overcoming his own egoism (selfishness) is important in the maturation of his personality. However, for Goethe, each individual is a soul and meaning, a monad. In Hegel, the individual completely melts into society, which abstracts him from the human free personality consciousness that makes man human. According to Hegel, the will of God, the state, is the will of justice and freedom. The more the individual surrenders himself to this will and melts in this will, the freer he becomes. The problem of what man is is also the most prominent problem of Karl Jaspers. According to Jaspers, man is "studied by physiology as a body, psychology as a soul, and sociology as an element of society" (Jaspers, 1981). Jaspers states that until now, man has been perceived as a 'zoon logon echon' who has language and thinks, a 'zoon politikon' who establishes his sociality under the laws of the city with his behaviors, a 'homo faber' who makes tools, a 'homo laborans' who uses the tools he makes, a 'homo economicus' who provides for the needs of Dasein with a common economy." (Erdem, 2001). Throughout the history of thought, the 'what' of man has been defined differently by many different philosophers and thinkers. In addition to all these different realist/materialist or idealist thoughts, the definition of man (whatness/whoness) also has a theological dimension.

Identity of the Original Human

The original person of philosophy (logic/Socrates B.C.

469-399) is a person of reason. Everything is based on logic and is explained by reason and logic. If a person can give control to reason in the conflict between reason and lust, reason and anger, reason and fear, reason and self, then that person is a person of reason (logic). While reason is given great importance in theology (Islamic theology), reason only constitutes a condition (ruknu) for being an original person, not a whole. For the original person of reason, knowing and recognizing is enough, but for the original person of theology, confirming and approving events and facts is also necessary. If recognizing were enough, the being in the position of an angel would not be humiliated or become a demon. Because this being was actually one of those who knew Allah best, but according to theology, knowing is not enough to be original. Here, the function of belief comes into play. Islamic Theology defines the original person as 'Those who believe and do good' (Tin/1-6). In this context, the original person of logic (rational mind) is a skeleton consisting of only reason. He knows very well, but his soul is far from love and action. In this respect, reason can be insulted by the Arifs (Sufism). While rationalists care about logic, evidence (istidlal) and comparison, Arifs care about the purification of the soul (nefs-i tazkiye) and the purification of the soul (nefs-i tasfiye). Theology has also given importance to the purification of the soul (nefs-i taskiye) in this regard. However, theology has also given importance to knowledge and wisdom. In wisdom, however, reason and knowledge can be insulted. In wisdom, there are those who have fallen to such extremes and understatement in the subject of the purification of the soul (nefs-i tazkiye) that purification of the soul is perceived as breaking, beating and humiliating oneself, which Islamic theology does not approve of. In Islamic theology, unlike Christianity, there can be no place for a debilitating principle such as the one attributed to the Prophet Jesus, 'I tell you, do not resist evil, and whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matthew, 5:39). The original human of modern science (Cyanism / F. Bacon, 1561-1626) is a human profile that tries to take over nature with the power of science. When it comes to power, the first name that comes to mind is Machiavelli. In Machiavelli, every means is considered permissible to win. The second name is Nietzsche, it can be said that he is the person who adapted Darwin's theory that all living things are in competition with each other to humans and transformed humans in the sense that they can actually defeat and prevail. In other words, humans who have physical strength like other species can continue their lives if they are strong. Nietzsche's original human is a human of power (brute force). He is a Superman. Mercy, forgiveness, pity, etc. are concepts that he is hostile to. Therefore, they are against those who defend this, both Socrates and Jesus Christ. The Stoics during the time of Socrates (3rd century B.C.) also (tr.m.wikipedia.org) had the same idea with Nietzsche. While Karl Marx defended the thesis that the strong invented religion (opium) to put the weak to sleep, Nietzsche, on the contrary, puts forward

the idea that the weak invented religion (fallaciously) to stop the strong through justice, equality and mercy. Will Durant (Durant, 2002), who says that no theology has made a person as powerful and strong as Islamic theology, states that the original person of theology is not a person with biological or physical power, but a person who can give up his rights for the benefit of everyone and who can control his desires and ambitions, even though he has the power. Some see service to the people as sufficient to be an original person. However, theology still sees service to the people as only a condition for being an original person, not a whole. For example, those who claim to serve the people and neglect the consciousness of servitude and duties that theology envisages are included in this class. The original human of socialists (K. Marx, 1818-1883) is also in favor of breaking the self, like the original human of Sufism (Sophism). In socialists, the self is completely destroyed in order to become us. The self has no private property. It condemns and makes dependent the self on things, not the things on the self. Theology, on the other hand, suggests reforming the self instead of completely destroying the self. If this self transforms into 'It', the we factor emerges. In the words of the wise, we cannot become us without transforming into 'It'. Therefore, if the we and you factor passes through 'It', one of us will not be a servant or slave to the other. We are all equal in it, the understanding prevails. The original person of Existentialism (J. P. Sartre, 1905-1980) is, unlike the Socialists, an original person with completely free will and thought. Nothing is accepted as superior to the freedom of man. Here, man has unlimited freedom (liberty). In fact, his own freedom is above his own good. Therefore, he becomes alienated from himself, and when he becomes alienated from himself, he also becomes alienated from nature (physics) and metaphysics. The original person of psychoanalysts (S. Freud, 1856-1939) is not under the domination of the ego (reason) but under the control of the subconscious and impulses. In complete contrast to reason and theology, here a number of hypotheses and fantasies are going on. M. C. Rumi (1207-1273) defined the concept of man in his mathnawi in the style of verse as follows: 'Man is half angel, half donkey. The donkey half is the cause of lowly desires, The other half wants to be sublime'. Since man is a being that is stuck between the physical universe and the metaphysical universe, the realm and the beyond, Mevlana says, 'Angels are saved by knowledge, animals by ignorance. Man, on the other hand, is left to struggle and fight between the two' (Rumi, 1988). Man lives in a world of individuals in an ultimate world formed by temporal divisions – this world is the fragmented phenomenal state of absolute existence. However, he is aware that his place is in absolute existence, in the world of eternity, in the side of the universal single Subject. Man is in constant longing and suffering to overcome this tension of alienation from knowledge and consciousness (alienation from the transcendent, from himself, from the cosmos). Because infinity (absolute existence) is the food of the human soul. This infinity

becomes conscious in man. The conscious expression of infinity in man is in the form of contemplation, freedom and will (free will) (Çağlı, 2017: 593). In the context of these evaluations, it is necessary to compare the human (being) who is stuck between existence and image, reality and effect, who constantly questions and questions himself and reality, who is in a search, on the films *Inception* and *Baba Aziz*. Only in this way can the reality of what man and being are and the subject, the work itself, be clarified concretely.

The Story of the Inception Movie

Table 1: The Story of the Inception Movie

Director	Christopher Nolan
Players	Leonardo DiCaprio, Marion Cotillard, Joseph Gordon, Ellen Page, Cillian Murphy, Tom Hardy, Ken Watanabe, Michael Caine.
Music	Hans Zimmer
Year of Construction	2010
Country	US/UK

In the movie *Inception*, Cobb and his team, who are experienced in dreams, can enter people's dreams in exchange for money, and try to learn their feelings and thoughts, and even change them. If he succeeds in the job that a rich businessman offers him, he will be able to see his children, from whom he is legally obliged to be separated. Therefore, Cobb and his team will enter the mind of a businessman named Fisher and work to dissolve his company. While Cobb is forced to do this task, he also feels remorse for what he has done, and he always confronts his past and his wife in his dreams. Because he first performed various experiments on his wife, and as a result, his wife, although unintentionally, lost her sense of reality and committed suicide (Ormanlı, 2001).

Dream and External Reality

In the context of Descartes' proposition, "I think, therefore I am," which questions existence, "How can I be sure whether it really exists? What if the world we live in is entirely a dream? What if this dream world is under the influence of external factors that control people's thoughts and emotions? Where does one's own reality begin and end? With such distracting questions, dreams and reality intertwine in the movie "*Inception*." In the movie, which is created with visual effects, there are characters who are aware that they are traveling in areas constructed in the mind and characters who unknowingly think that they are living their own actual reality. Here, the passive states of people (captives) who are trapped in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and deceived by the reality of shadows projected on the wall come to mind (Güntay & Güntay, 2019). In Plato's cave, the captives,

whose backs are turned to objects and whose faces are facing the wall, see only the shadows and reflections of the objects behind them on the wall.

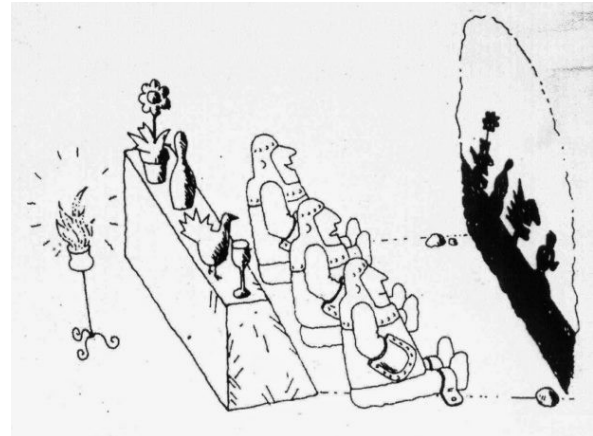


Figure 1: Plato's Allegory of the Cave

People think that the only reality is these shadows. The objects in people's hands can be considered as fiction, or the traditions and ideologies that shape society. And people understand that what they thought was reality in the cave was a reflection. When they escape from the dim cave, the sunlight blinds them temporarily. This temporary blindness symbolizes the state of those who have lost their way. When they get used to the sunlight, they see the shadow of the object. They finally realize that the principle that allows us to see in the universe is the sun. But they remember that there are still people in the cave, chained (Kizilkaya, 2017).

Plato states that those who come out of the cave and realize the captivity to the illusion inside can see the real reality. Just like those who are deceived by the reality constructed by the ideological illusion in the cave, the businessman in the movie "*Inception*", whose mind is surrounded differently in each layer in a four-layered dream, is not aware that the thoughts constructed in the fictional world by the group wandering in his dream affect his decisions in his real life and are manipulated to perform the desired behavior. In this respect, the movie shows the audience that the world believed to be real can

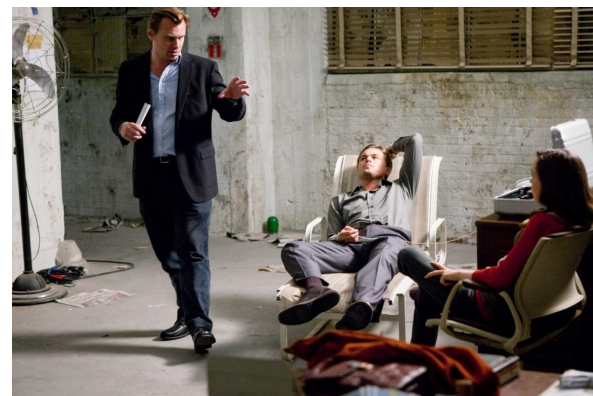


Figure 2: Cobb and the Dream Team

be a dream world without looking for reality, in other words, it is possible to be the prisoners in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (Güntay & Güntay, 2019). The characters lying in the dream in the movie *Inception* are reminiscent of the prisoners in Plato's cave. They are in an imaginary/fictional reality separate from external reality.

The *Inception* Beginning Movie deals with a technology developed by the military industry that includes a fantastic application like a dream within a dream. This technology was developed so that soldiers could practice war together. However, Cobb and his team stole this technology and began to use it for thought theft. The dream is very important in terms of its position in the movie (Aslangörür & Arık, 2020). The Arabic word "Rüya" came into Turkish from the word (ru'ya), which is based on the verb (re'a), that is, "to see" (Wikipedia, 2025). In this context, it has a wider scope than its equivalents in Western languages, and it also corresponds to dreams while awake. The word 'düs' in Turkish corresponds to the Arabic word 'dream' rather than its meaning in Western languages (Ormanlı, 2001). According to Ibn Arabi, the first form of revelation was not in the world of senses, but in the world of imagination (dream). Because the world of meaning is closer to the world of imagination than the world of senses; imagination can give form (shape) to meanings. Sensations constitute the lowest stage, while meanings constitute the highest. The imaginary dimension is a passageway between these two dimensions, which has the feature of uniting the most distant borders. In order for the revelatory dimension to descend to the dimension of senses, it must pass through the world of imagination between the two. In this way, if the revelation arrives in a state of sleep, it is called a dream, and when it appears in human form with the angel of revelation (Gabriel), it is called imagination. Therefore, the beginning of revelation, whether it is a true dream or imagination, is through imagination (Çakmaklıoğlu, 2005). Apart from this, various definitions are made about dreams: according to some explanations, dreams occur due to external stimuli (the brain records what it sees like a recording device), while a similar explanation is that dreams are closely related to the person's current or recent past experiences. Among the many approaches to the formation and emergence of dreams, one of the most popular is Freud's dream theory (Ormanlı, 2001). In Freud's work called *Dream Interpretations*, under the title "Dreams are the Realization of Wishes" (Freud, 2012), he touches upon the subject of dreams as follows: Dreams are not absurd and meaningless phenomena, and they do not mean that one part of our imaginary world is active here while the other part is passively sleeping. Dreams are valuable psychic phenomena, and moreover, they are in a position where a wish can come true (Freud, 2012). In his studies on personality, Freud focuses on concepts such as id (lower self), ego (self-ness) and superego (superego). The ego, which is particularly identified with consciousness, works by comprehending the external reality of the person and the importance of

the social structure in which it is located. Therefore, the "pleasure principle", which is considered the primitive side of the person, gives way to the ego, the "reality principle" (Freud, 2002). From this perspective, the main characters in the film (Cobb and his wife Mal) get out of the control of their egos and move away from the reality principle, and are influenced by the id, in other words, the pleasure principle. Although it is pointed out that subconscious impulses are activated in this way and create their own universes independent of time and space (Ormanlı, 2021), here, there is a superconscious (metaphysical) state, the 'Araf' reality, rather than a world created by the subconscious (internal impulses). This parallel (intermediate) world called Araf becomes the attractive world of the film's characters.



Figure 3: Purgatory (Parallel World)

The two main characters of the film, Dom Cobb and his wife Mal, get stuck so deep while investigating the concept of a dream within a dream that when they reach the shores of their subconscious, they cannot remember what reality is. They live in this simulative world for 50 years of their own volition. Cobb tells his teammate that they feel like God, while adding that nothing is real. Over time, it becomes impossible for Cobb to live like this, while his wife Mal does not think like him. "Purgatory becomes his reality." When they wake up from the dream, Mal feels that the world they live in is not real and that they need to return to reality. According to him, the only way to return is to kill himself. He internalizes the idea that his children in the world are projections and that his real children are waiting for him in the other world. In the end, he commits suicide and dies (Güntay & Güntay, 2019). In this sense, when looking at the film, Mal cannot accept the integrity of life. He limits his life to the spirit world. The main reason for Mal's suicide is that he gets caught up in the dream (Purgatory) and does not accept external reality.

However, in the film, Cobb and all the other characters in his team have been able to perceive the two worlds as a whole. In the subconscious world, they accept how bad they have become. In the conscious world, they continue their normal lives. Rather than making these two worlds clash with each other, they have learned the lifestyles of these two worlds. In this sense, all of these characters mentioned have gained a certain personality.



Figure 4: Mal's Suicide Scene

It is mentioned that there are two worlds, conscious and subconscious, for human beings. Keeping these two worlds at peace with each other means experiencing the peak of personality. Cobb and his team play exactly this

role (Çiçek, 2013). In the film, Mal is the only one who cannot achieve this balance and chooses death as if he is in a dream. Since he cannot get rid of the effect of this dream, Cobb regrets his wife Mal throughout the film.



Figure 5: Chaos (visual effects)

The aim of the film is to include visual effects that are in line with the nature of the dream. They are also visually appealing to the viewer. The viewer is included in the film more and the perception that he is the dreamer is created (Çiçek, 2013). Falling into the purgatory, buildings that overlap contrary to the laws of gravity, streets that can bend and twist, huge giant buildings that collapse one by one with the waves of the sea, people resurrecting from the dead, are not possible situations in a world where the laws of physics apply. However, all of these

are images that almost everyone can see in dreams. Seeing a dead person alive in a dream, or seeing an old person as young, are of course images. It is not possible to see these extraordinary situations that belong to the world of dreams in real life (Çiçek, 2013). These images are quite in line with the nature of the dream, but beyond being dreams, they can be considered as signs of individual and social moral collapse and bankruptcy.

Religion and Totem



Figure 6: Chaos (visual effects)

The doctrine of purgatory is not a doctrine that exists in general Christian theology. Christianity only has a counterpart in the Catholic sect. According to the Catholic sect, Christian dead people who cannot enter heaven due to sins committed in the world but not repented for are kept in an intermediate region (parallel region) determined by God, waiting to meet God after being purified from their sins by serving some of the punishments they committed in the world. From this perspective, the doctrine of purgatory in Catholic belief also parallels the movie *Inception*, which is the subject of this study (Usta, 2011). Islamic theology also includes the reality of purgatory. 'Araf' is the plural form of the Arabic word 'urf', meaning 'Sand Hill'. In Islamic theology, the name of this concept is Araf. Araf is expressed with different words in different faiths and languages. Araf is also the name of a surah in the Quran revealed during the Meccan period. The surah takes its name from the word "el-Araf" in verses 46 and 48. "el-Araf", as mentioned above, means places, high places. The description of Araf in the Quran is as follows: Between the two sides is a barrier and on the hills are men who recognize each other by their faces. They will say to those who will enter Paradise: 'Peace be upon you!' They are those who have not yet entered but 'they are those who hope for it with great desire' (An'am/46). When their eyes are turned towards the people of Hell, they will say: 'Our Lord, do not put us among the wrongdoers' (Araf/47). The men on the tower will address the men whom they recognize by their faces and say: 'Neither your gathering nor your arrogance has availed you any good' (Araf/48). As seen in theological texts, the event of Araf is discussed openly. The belief that the reality of Araf, which is also the subject of the movie *Inception*, is inspired by theological sensations is dominant.

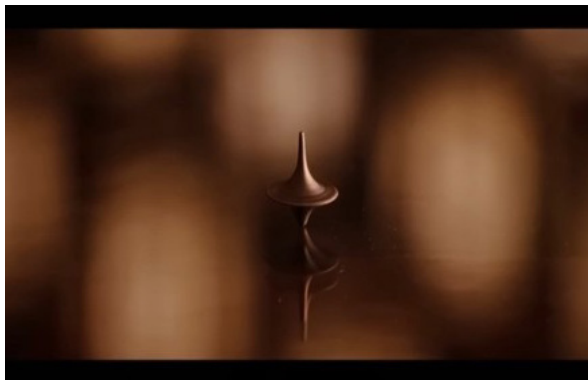


Figure 7: Inception Spinning Top

However, here the Araf narrative is structured around mythological legends rather than theology. The only way to understand whether you are in Araf or in the world is the inception top. When this top spins around itself or tilts, it is understood that you are in the world or in 'Araf'.



Figure 8: Joseph

In the film, references to Ancient Greek Mythology with the name Ariadne and to the Quran, the Bible and the Torah with the name Joseph are very clearly processed. References to the story of Prophet Joseph are sprinkled throughout the film. The character of Joseph is needed in the film in order to reach a deep dream. The character of Joseph is a drug producer or chemist. This analogy can also be confusing as a reference to Karl Marx's words, "Religion is the opium of the people" (Aslangörür & Arık, 2020). As can be understood from this scene, although the film is generally focused on theological figures, the flow of events revolves around totems (spinning top, dice, chess bishop) along with a weak (often misinterpreted) theology. Here, in addition to the movie *Inception*, which is based on weak (excessive) theological sensations, we should also look at the movie story of *Baba Aziz*, which is based on very strong (sometimes to the point of exaggeration) theological figures and compare them.

BAB'A (FATHER) Aziz Movie Story

Table 2: Aziz Movie Story

Director	Nacer Khemir
Players	Parviz Shahinkhou, Maryam Hamid, Golshifteh Farahani
Music	Armand Amar
Years of Construction	2005
Country	Iran/Tunisia

The Bab'Aziz Movie was shot in 2005 by the originally Tunisian screenwriter and director Nacer Khemir. The film was shot in Iran and Tunisia and later dubbed into Turkish and screened in festivals in Turkey. The movie tells the adventure of an old, blind man and his granddaughter searching for a meeting of a group of dervishes in the desert. Baba Aziz, an old and blind dervish, is searching for the unknown location of the meeting of the Sufis that takes place every thirty years in the desert. During their long journey through the desert, they encounter interesting people and Baba Aziz tells his

grandson stories. The story of the prince who gave up his throne to become a dervish is among the stories Baba tells along the way. When they find the meeting place of the dervishes, this long journey comes to an end for Baba Aziz.

There are six different stories in the film: The story of the Prince (divine love/union) told by Baba Aziz, the story of Osman and Zehra, Zeyd and Nur (human or female love/separation), the story of twins Hasan and Hüseyin, who resemble two halves of an apple but are like two reflections of a mirror, from completely different worlds, the story of the red-haired Dervish's spiritual cleansing, and Baba Aziz and İstar's own stories (Seyr-i Sülük/The Path to Allah). There is a cyclicity and search in all of these stories. Some find what they are looking for, some do not; some find themselves, some lose themselves while trying to find themselves, and some get lost while searching. All the stories in the film are intertwined and most of the stories have unknown endings. The film is actually worked around two main themes. On the path to God, do not lose yourself in the pursuit of union (divine love) and the love of a human being (love of a woman/human love), do not lose yourself in yourself.

Reunion

Baba Aziz (a blind dervish) tells the story of the Prince who disappeared to his natural-born granddaughter Ishtar, who they stopped over with along the way:



Figure 9: The Prince Listening to His Soul

While traveling in the desert with his aides, a young prince notices that his horse is restless while having fun in his tent. While trying to look after his horse, he sees a timid gazelle run away and run into the desert. The prince follows the gazelle with his horse and never returns to the tent. One day, the people find the prince kneeling by a puddle, staring at his reflection. The prince sits there for a long time, staring at his reflection in the puddle; when he finally takes his eyes off his reflection, the old dervish who looks at him disappears, leaving his own clothes and staff next to him. The prince puts on the dress that the dervish left next to him, takes his staff and walks towards the desert.

When Bab Aziz tells Ishtar this part of the story, he says,

‘The Prince watched his soul for so long that he separated from the material world and began to see the spiritual world.’ This ‘seeing the spiritual world’ is an awakening for the Prince. A similar relationship between Ishtar and Bab’Aziz, the beginning and end, birth and death, is seen between Prince and Bab’Aziz in terms of the evolutionary stage. When both situations are considered, a situation that defines “seyr-ü sülük”, which is a term that covers all the actions that lead a person to God on the path of becoming a perfect human being in Sufism, is seen. Seyr-ü sülük (Arabic) means “to go, to travel, to make way and to progress. It means a spiritual journey undertaken for union with God under the guidance of a sheikh.”

In this spiritual journey, the old dervish Baba Aziz, the narrator of the prince's story, is also in the same quest. At the center of all these stories, while crossing paths with them, continuing on his own journey by taking a different path, the blind dervish Baba Aziz is traveling to attend the dervish meeting with his granddaughter Ishtar, when he is actually traveling to the most important moment of his life. His wedding, his birth, his reunion. He is the dervish who goes in search of his grave waiting for the time to be filled in order to be born into a new life. Death is the moment of finding what he has lost. When he reaches this moment, he calls Hasan to him, Hasan is still raw, afraid of death, unable to make sense of life. Hasan's story begins in the film with the end of Bab Aziz's story. Hasan puts on his clothes and takes his staff in his hand, and sets off to find what he has lost. Dervishhood passes from one hand to another. In these two stories, the center of both the prince's and Baba Aziz's stories is taking over/handing over the dervishship, pursuing the love of God, seeking and gaining God's love, as opposed to Osman and Zeyd's story of human love (love of humanity/love of women).

Separation

In the movie *Baba Aziz*, the second story that deals with the theme of search is the story of Osman and Zehra, Zeyd and Nur:

Osman, whose story is mentioned in the movie *Baba Aziz*, is the son of a sand merchant; he wants to do his ancestral profession and continue his life in a desert town. In his last job where he delivers sand to the calligrapher, the calligrapher asks him to deliver the letter he wrote to its owner. When Osman delivers the letter to the address, a woman opens the door and invites him in, asking him to read the letter. While Osman is reading the lustfully written letter, the woman's husband comes home and Osman is forced to escape from there. However, while escaping, he falls into a well and finds himself in a palace full of beautiful women. While all the women fall in love with Osman, Osman only falls in love with Zehra. Zehra hears a noise in the desert and sends Osman there; Osman runs towards the sound and sees a palm tree burning. When he turns around, he sees that the palace has been blown away. Osman runs, shouting “Zehra...!” at the top of his lungs.



Figure 10: Osman and Zehra

In the following stages, Osman is always looking for his love Zehra. Sometimes he throws himself into a well to return to the palace, sometimes he looks for his love Zehra in the puddles he sees. In fact, Osman is blinded by his worldly love here and he is looking for nothing but human love. However, in the same puddle, the Prince and Bab'Aziz saw divine love in their own reflection. A

dervish who goes to the great meeting invites Osman to the transcendent love:

“My child, instead of wasting your time with a drop of water, you should abandon yourself to His river.” He says of Osman, “He never knew that true love.” Another story similar to the story of Osman is the story of Zeyd and Nur.



Figure 11: Zayd and Nur

Zeyd, who won the grand prize in the category of singing hymns, is invited to the circle of love. Zeyd falls in love with Nur, who listens to his poems at the poetry night. And when everyone leaves, he spends the night alone with her. Nur leaves Zeyd without telling him and leaves early in the morning to find her lost father. When Zeyd realizes this, he sets off to find Nur. He searches for Nur everywhere. Zeyd, like Osman, has attached his soul to a mortal. Like everyone else in the desert of the world, he searches for his soul's desire. But he cannot know true love either.

Comparison of the Movie Inception and the Movie Baba Aziz

The movie Inception, which is inspired by different

theologies and whose main theme is dream, and the movie Baba Aziz, whose main theme is love and mysticism, are the products of two different worlds. Both movies contain many contrasts. However, both movies attract attention with visual similarities rather than contrasts.

Similar Aspects of the Movie Inception and Baba Aziz

Although the main themes of the sample films are different, they can evoke almost the same association in the mind in terms of visuality. With most of the pictures selected with different purposes and methods, almost the same perception is formed in the mind of the individual, although unintentionally.



Figure 12: Confrontation

However, according to Sufism, there is no other real being in the universe than the existence of Allah. Beings are nothing but mirrors that reflect Him. According to the idea of the film, only those who are not in love see their own manifestation. In the trembling torment of “time that has passed by in silence”, the prince has touched a little flame with his wings and learned how the fire of love burns. Passing from matter to meaning, from multiplicity to unity, the journey... According to the main idea of the film, the Prince finally gains a more universal and spiritual view with the dervish dress he wears, stripping

off his worldly feelings (his old dress). The fact that the Prince experiences all of this while getting lost in his own reflection also reminds us of Hallaç-ı Mansur’s words, ‘Enel-Hakk’ (I am the truth). Because in Sufism, man is a reflection of God, a manifestation, one of His attributes. Although the aim of the film with the Prince character is to capture the style of ‘finding oneself, finding one’s Lord’, a similarity can be read in these photographs to Hallaç Mansur, who is accused of heresy, who goes to extremes and compares himself to the truth, and his narcissistic attitude when he gets lost in Caravaggio’s painting.

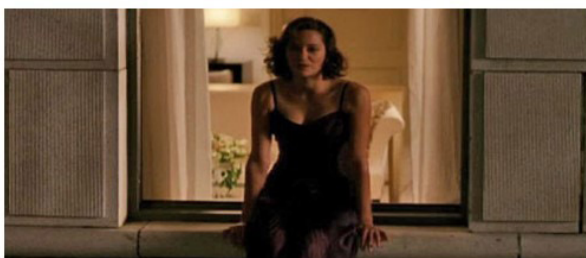


Figure 13: Suicide

In the film, the very religious Hüseyin asks the red dervish to execute him in order to die before death and reach reunion (a second world), but the dervish cannot accept this. One day, the red dervish and Hüseyin go down to the underground grave together. For this reason, Hasan thinks that his twin brother Hüseyin was killed by the red dervish. Hasan only believes in the reality that his eyes see, whereas Hüseyin entering the grave has a mystical meaning here. Because “Sufism is God killing you from your ego and resurrecting you with Himself.” What is important is for a person to get rid of his ego and be free from worldly life. “The death here is the elimination of arrogance, pride, egoism, and envy; in short, the control of the ego, its neutralization as if it were dead. In terms of mysticism, this is asceticism, abandonment, and ultimately ‘fenâfillâh (being as if you were dead before you die)’.

The perception of fenâfillah (dying before death) as in the movie, the execution of oneself by oneself, having someone else do it or speeding it up, even if it is for the sake of reaching Allah (the reality beyond the physical),

is an impermissible situation in theology. Theology cares about metaphysics as well as the lived world. Whether it is the case of this fenâfillah (dying before death) in the movie *Baba Aziz* or the suicide of the character ‘Mal’ in the movie *Inception* in order to return to Araf, both can be considered as situations that are not theologically permissible (permissible).

The main character of the movie *Inception*, Mal, believes that when they wake up from a dream, the world they wake up in is not real and that they need to wake up to return to reality. He continues to believe that the world is not real, and for Mal, the only escape is death. He thinks that the only way to return to their homes in the real world is to kill themselves. He internalizes the idea that his children in the world are projections and that his real children are waiting for him in the other world. He eventually commits suicide (Güntay & Güntay, 2019). Mal’s suicide in *Inception* is similar to Hüseyin’s early death in *Baba Aziz* for the event of returning to Araf. Both of them wanted to escape from the masiva (the visible world) and reach Mavera (the unseen beyond) early.

Contrary Aspects of the Baba Aziz Movie Inception
When the visual images are compared, although the longing and search for the unseen (metaphysical) world

is dominant in both films, the tools and methods these two films use to reach beyond the visible world are very different.

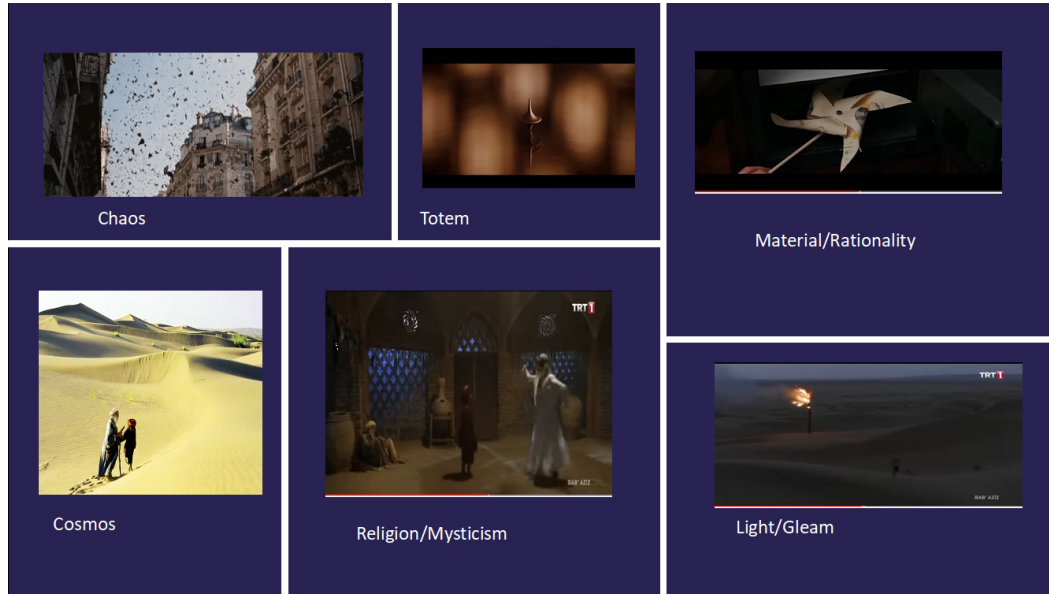


Figure 14: Inception - Baba Aziz Movie Comparison

In contrast to the overlapping buildings, sudden explosions, and chaos in Inception, the boundless plains, serenity, harmony, and cosmos (universe) in Baba Aziz... The desert is also a riot of color (multiplicity in unity-unity in multiplicity/unity in multiplicity, multiplicity in unity). The desert, dance, spiral, and spiritual depth. Melody, music, and ritual in the desert... Projection in the desert, hardship... And the soul, spirituality... A serene dervish who has tied his heart to absolute existence... Here is meaning against matter. Soul against flesh. Heart against mind. Killing the self against the self, pushing it away. Ascension from lowly feelings to high feelings. This chaotic environment in the movie Inception, as opposed

to the attractive order in the movie Baba Aziz, can be attributed to many different reasons.

At this stage, Jean Baudrillard's simulation theory also comes to mind. Jean Baudrillard's simulation theory basically starts from modern civilization. Materialist modern society, which has surpassed the goals and objectives they have set and lost their illusions, does not know which way to go. They turn around themselves and enter a vicious circle. Modern people, who have lost their symbolic meaning, try to deny and hide this finishedness in order not to lose what they have in the material sense. The simulation universe is a universe where this finishedness is tried to be hidden (Adanir, 2008).



Figure 15: Way, method, guide

Baba Aziz is the profile of a man of ancient (old/deep-rooted) tradition who acts with his knowledge. Modern man, on the other hand, perceives knowledge as power. Francis Bacon sees a great power (power) in knowledge itself and says, "Knowledge is sovereignty." Michel Foucault says, "Knowledge is power." As the Azerbaijani

philosopher Selahaddin Halilov puts it: modern civilization is theoretical thought, traditional civilization is wisdom; modernization is systematic knowledge, tradition is wisdom. The modern man of the West uses knowledge for technical development; the man of the East, who is attached to the deep-rooted (ancient) civilization,

practically acts with his knowledge. The knowledge of a learned person is knowledge, and knowledge leads man to the absolute truth. A person who is not alienated from the environment but knows and knows both himself and the environment... In his opinion, it is better to change himself than to change the world with his knowledge. That is why knowledge (wisdom) is glorified in ancient (deep-rooted) Eastern societies. In such civilizations that internalize tradition, within the scope of the concept of existence, humans are in harmony and at peace with their environment, and their external and internal realities form a harmonious whole.

CONCLUSION

Jung (1875) talks about the existence of two separate worlds, the physical and the spiritual. The only difference between them is that one belongs to the world of objects, the other to the spiritual world. In fact, he says that it is again the spiritual images that convey the physical world. These views also strengthen the judgment that these two separate worlds cannot be completely independent of each other, the realities here can shape each other and reality can be perceived as a whole. The only distinction between fiction and dreams in cinema is that dreams convey the spiritual world, while cinema tries to convey the physical world through visuals. In example films, this reality is processed in a very complex way, without being clearly distinguished from each other. As in the scene of Purgatory, scenes such as gravity, the absence of physical rules, bridges coming into being by themselves, and buildings overlapping are only phenomena and events specific to dreams. The unknown, unseen reality related to humans (beings) is designed to be reflected to the outside through visual effects. Cinema can depict beyond external reality and the inner world of the subject (human) with visuals. Here, an attempt is made to make events and phenomena that have no physical reality seem real in the context of dreams.

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