

'Sculpting in Time': Integral Futures & Film Scanning

A Seminar for the Australian Foresight Institute

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19 August 2002

Seminar Format

- **Introduction:** Background and Evolution of Project.
- **Film Scanning I:** 8 DVD clips: ‘Raw’ and unfiltered scan using Gravesian and/or Wilber methodologies.
- **Coffee Break:** The most important bit . . .
- **Film Scanning II:** Seminar discussion and Practitioner DVD commentary.
- **Film Scanning Techniques:** Cinema Studies 101 and Media-driven Environmental Scanning (Alex Burns), Notation (Joe Voros).
- **Questions, Comments, Discussion**

Introduction:

Background and Evolution of Project.

Evolution of Film Scanning Project

- **Phase 1: Cinema Theory 101 (1992 - 1995)**

— Undergraduate exposure to modes of film analysis (Feminist, Queer, Psychoanalytic, Semiotic, Marxist, Postmodern, Post-structuralist). “Analytic overload” in 1993 ([John Alexander](#)).

- **Phase 2: Memetics & Spiral Dynamics® (1996 – 1999)**

— Research into Memetics ([Dawkins](#), [Dennett](#), [Brodie](#), [Lynch](#), [Blackmore](#), [Bloom](#)) and ‘Culture-jamming’ ([Rushkoff](#), [Lasn](#)). First project outline (41-page listing of films’ ‘surface structures’ to [Don Beck](#) and [Chris Cowan](#)) and early sequence analyses.

- **Phase 3: Disinformation® (1999 – 2001)**

— Genre and Industry Studies (Film Noir, Western, Pre-Code Hollywood); [Spiral Dynamics® I](#) and [II](#) certification; [Disinformation®](#) environmental scanning of films and global media vectors.

- **Phase 4: DVD Analyses and Futures (2002 -)**

— DVD analyses; Spiral Dynamics® I seminar (18 July 2002); [AFI](#) methodologies paper and MP3 commentaries (September 2002).

Futures Studies Models & Film Scanning

- “Images of the Future.” ([Fred Polak](#)).
- “Futures Beyond Dystopias.” ([Richard Slaughter](#)).
- Age-Cohort and inter-generational studies that cite films:
[Generation X](#) (1962-1982) and [The Millennials](#) (post-1982).
- [Social Indicators](#) tracking of **Surface Values** trends.
- Cultural Transformation Theory ([Riane Eisler](#)).
- [Causal Layered Analysis](#) ([Sohail Inayatullah](#)).
- FS-oriented Genre Studies: [Tech Noir](#) ([McKenzie Wark](#)).
- Film Cycles and the *global problematique*.

Film Scanning & Futures Applications

- Environmental Scanning training for ‘early warnings’.
- New Media architecture for Knowledge Management.
- Holistic Indexing System (Wilber, 2000a: 108-109).
- Simulation to provoke focus group discussion.
- Personal lifespan therapy (Timothy Leary’s Mind Mirror).
- ‘Passion Points’ (Howard Bloom) imprinting within individuals, groups, organizations and civilizations.
- Script-writing Models (Syd Field’s three-act structuralism, Christopher Vogler’s hero’s journey, Andrew Horton’s character-orientation and Robert McKee’s story structure) as ‘Scenario-Logics’ techniques and approaches.

Film Scanning I: 8 DVD Clips and ‘Raw’ Scan

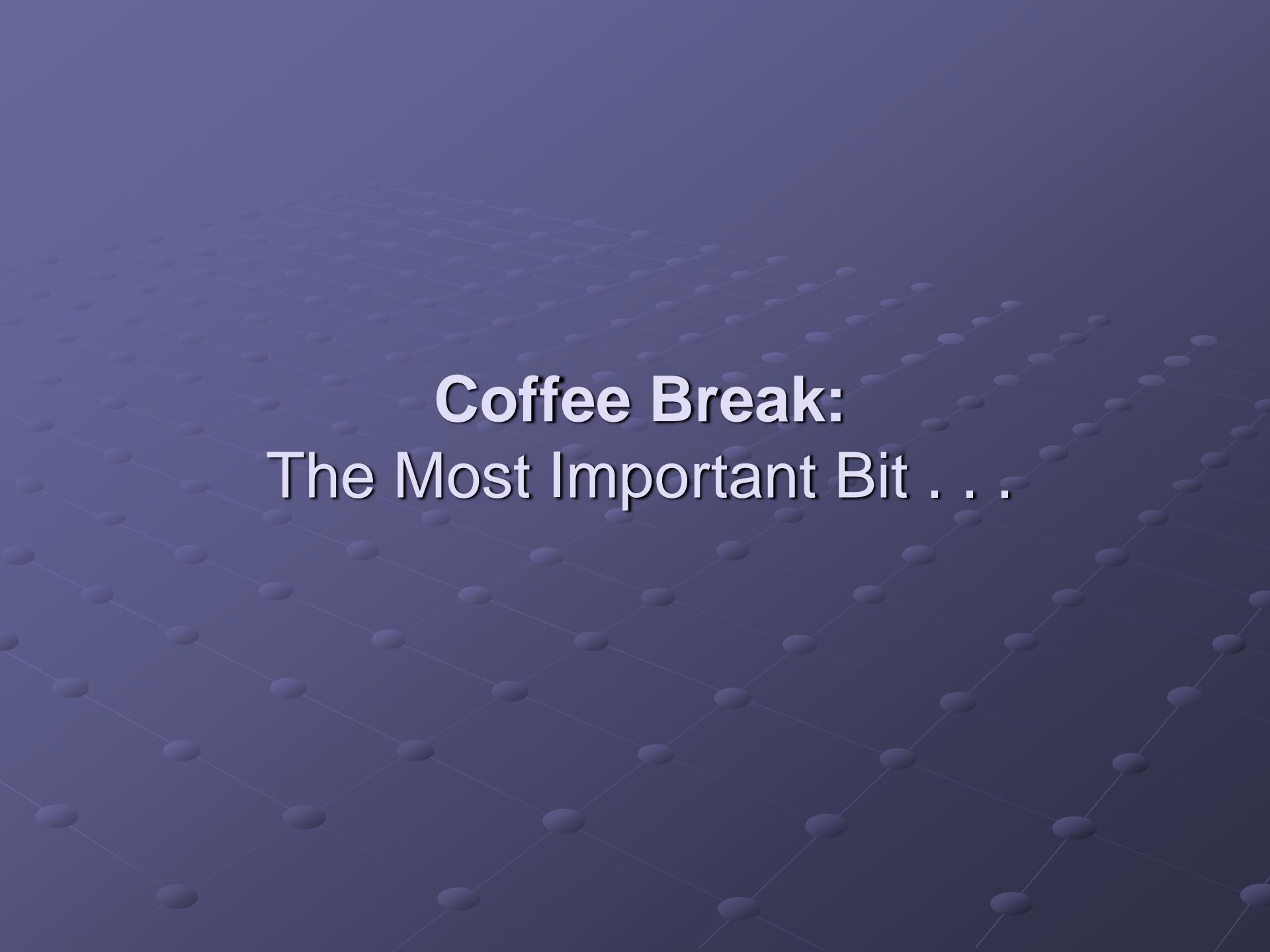
Guidelines for Film Scanning

Film scanning uses short film scenes as a cognitive tool to prompt critical synthesis and self-reflection (1-2 paragraphs). Some possible questions to consider:

- Where does this scene fit in a Structural/Systems Map?
- What would a Causal Layered Analysis ‘uncover’?
- What semiotics and memes can I perceive in the scene?
- Which FS ideas/concepts does the scene depict? Which theorists?
- Why have the film-makers/actors chosen this *mise-en-scene*?
- What techniques have the film-makers/actors used in this scene?
- What hidden/ideological assumptions can I ‘surface’?
- Does the film scene address the ‘civilizational challenge’? How?
- What psychohistorical or experiential knowledge do I have?

Film Scanning and Audience Responses:

- “. . . there are three types of audience response: *dominant readings* in which the audience accepts the preferred reading; *negotiated readings* in which the audience generally agrees with dominant values, but may disagree with certain aspect; and *oppositional readings* in which the audience rejects dominant values . . .” (Abrams, Nathan, and Bell, 2000: 48).
- “Umberto Eco has gone further in claiming that all media texts, including films, can also be *aberrantly decoded*.” (Abrams, Nathan, and Bell, 2000: 48).



Coffee Break:

The Most Important Bit . . .

Film Scanning II: Seminar Discussion and Practitioner DVD Commentary

The Filth & The Fury (2000)

- Chapter 1: “Social Chaos.” (00:01:19 – 00:04:43).
- Closed DQ/cp world (English working class) clashes with ER/dq Queen’s Jubilee celebrations (England, 1978).
- The Sex Pistols were a response to **Life Conditions**.
- John Lydon ‘replies’ to Malcolm McLaren (“Visioning”).
- BBC archival footage of race riots (**Surface values**) overlays “clash of ideologies” (**Hidden Values**) and competing values systems in socioeconomic niche-space (**Deep Values**).
- Real “clash” in shared conceptual/psychological space.
- Further information: Jon Savage’s *England’s Dreaming* (New York: Verso, 1992) and Greil Marcus’ *Lipstick Dreams* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

Falling Down (1992)

- Chapter 12: “Breakfast.” (00:39:37 – 00:43:54).
- William Foster (Michael Douglas) demonstrates **ARRESTED** passive-aggressive behavior. Alternates between **C-P/a-n** ('I') impulsive needs and **D-Q/e-r** ('We') social guilt ("I'm sorry, it [the gun] went off by accident.").
- Rick (Brent Hinkley) and Sheila (Deedee Pfeifer) react with **d-q/E-R** rules and hierarchical ‘crisis management’.
- “**ARRESTED** thinking is evidenced in undue stress, gastro-intestinal disorders, passive-aggressive behaviors and other forms of personal and social frustration.” (Beck & Cowan, 1996: 79).

The Insider (1999)

- Chapter 3: “Interview In South Beirut.” (00:12:20 – 00:14:47).
- Based on Vanity Fair article (Marie Brenner’s “The Man Who Knew Too Much”).
- Pre-interview exchange between Mike Wallace (Christopher Plummer) and Sheikh Fadlallah (Cliff Curtis) highlights cultural and proxemic differences.
- Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino) reveals ‘strategic’ E-R mind-set when he uses C-P ‘tough talk’ and Neuro-Linguistic Programming ‘pattern interrupt’ to deal with Hizbollah interpreter (Alan De Satti) and Hizbollah Head Gunman (Sayed Badreya).

Wall Street (1987)

- Chapter 12: “It’s A Free Market.” (01:30:40 – 01:34:24).
- Gordon Gecko’s (Michael Douglas) E-R/f-s (**ORANGE/green**) philosophy of Mergers & Acquisitions and currency speculation mirrored Lee Iacocca, Michael Milken and late-1980s George Soros. Gecko’s nemesis, Sir Larry Wildman (Terrence Stamp) was based on British magnate Sir James Goldsmith.
- Oliver Stone’s F-S/D-Q (**GREEN/Blue**) humanist critique of rampant E-R/C-P (**ORANGE/red**) “robber-baron”/mercantile Corporatism.
- Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) deploys D-Q/e-r/b-o (**BLUE/Orange/Purple**) arguments (family, company, tradition) whereas Gecko ends conversation with E-R/D-Q (**BLUE-ORANGE**) gambit.

Enemy Of The State (1998)

- Chapter 3: “Shopping Spree.” (00:31:29 – 00:33:54).
- Sequence with Thomas Brian Reynolds (Jon Voigt), Hicks (Loren Dean) and Fiedler (Jack Black) demonstrates ‘strategic’ E-R (ORANGE) use of Business Intelligence ‘data-mining’ and ‘pattern recognition’ capabilities.
- Technological capabilities used in response to Reynold’s **Problem of Existence** (getting hold of incriminating video footage).
- National Security Agency scenes inspired by early reports of Echelon tracking system.

Primary Colors (1998)

- Chapter 18: “The Hair Slut.” (00:59:51 – 01:03:18).
- Based on the novel by Newsweek journalist Joe Klein.
- Klein’s cynicism was diluted by the film’s Democrat Party backers (director Mike Nichols, scriptwriter Elaine May, star John Travolta). Worth comparing with D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hedegus’ The War Room (1993).
- Sequence depicts E-R/d-q (**ORANGE/blue**) ‘crisis management’ by public relations team.
- Based on the Genevieve Flowers allegations.
- Exchange between Libby Holden (Kathy Bates), Richard Jemmons (Billy Bob Thornton) and Adrian Lester (Henry Burton) highlight differing conceptual worldviews.

Fight Club (1999)

- Chapter 3 and 4: “Insomnia” and “Nesting Instinct.”
(00:03:41 – 00:05:24).
- TNCs will ‘colonize the future’ (Zia Sardar).
- “White Collar” blues & postmodern consumer alienation.
- E-R (ORANGE/green) “reject” of “A Brand Called You.”
- IKEA apartment sequence parallels the dotcom bubble (1995-2000), Naomi Klein’s No Logo (New York: Picador, 1999) and Douglas Rushkoff’s The Merchants of Cool (PBS, 2000).
- Sociocultural critique (LL) amplifies Christopher Lasch and John Ralson Saul’s fears about globalization.

The Matrix (1999)

- Chapter 12: “The Real World.” (00:38:19 – 00:42:43).
 - Epistemological Layer (“Structural Mapping”, Slaughter).
 - Depicts one scenario of Fourth-Order change (Bateson).
 - Platonic dianoia (intellectual understanding) (UL).
 - Social Construction of Dystopia/Hyper-Reality (LL).
 - “Overshoot-and-Mutate” scenario of AI evolution (UL).
 - E-R/f-s (ORANGE/green) techno-utopian “up-stretch” attempt to H-U (TURQUOISE) planetary management (LR).
 - “The Terror of the Situation.” (George Gurdjieff).

Film Scanning Techniques: Cinema Studies 101 & Media-driven Environmental Scanning

Film Scanning: ‘Stimulus Events’

‘*Stimulus Events*’ (Muzaffer Sherif, McKenzie Wark):

- *Psycho* (1960) shower sequence (00:44:17 – 00:47:35).
- Zapruder Film of JFK’s assassination (1963).
- Apollo moon-landing footage (1969).
- America’s Cup win (1983).
- Live Aid concerts (1985), Collapse of Berlin Wall (1989) and Persian ‘Gulf War’ footage (1990 – 1991).
- Footage of Rodney King’s beating (1991).
- **Media Virus montages:** *Natural Born Killers* (1994) (01:49:30 - 01:50:22) and *Wag The Dog* (1998) (01:00:32 - 01:01:54).
- Sydney Olympics ceremonies (2000).
- Timothy McVeigh’s execution (2001).

Film Scanning: “From What . . . To What?”

- Spiral Dynamics® question: “From What . . . To What?”
Example: Michael Apted’s *7 Up* (1964) to *42 Up* (1998).
- **Auteur Homages:** From the ‘Odessa Steps’ sequence (00:53:50 - 00:55:43) of *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925) to . . . “The Station Steps” sequence (01:28:43 – 01:30:47) of *The Untouchables* (1987).
- “In both instances, the filmmakers wish to portray the unbridled savagery of a cruel regime—whether led by Nicholas II or Al Capone—and to imply that their own, current governments, in having opposed these earlier regimes, prove the morally superior authority. Though the villains are reversed—in one case the state and in the other the enemy of the state—the motive remains the same, and so the allusion succeeds.” (Horton and McDougal, 1998: 138).

Examples of Cinema Studies Modes

- **Critical Modes:** Feminist, Queer, Psychoanalytic, Semiotic, Marxist, Postmodern, Post-structuralist.
- **Epistemological Modes:** World Cinema and major Film Movements (German Expressionism, Soviet Montage, Italian Neo-realism, French New Wave, Japanese Cinema, Hong Kong Cinema, Dogme 95).
- **Genre Studies:** Western, Gangster, Melodrama, Gothic Horror, Film Noir and ‘Alternative’ (problematic).
- **Industry Studies:** early film (1895 – 1920s), Pre-Code film (1930 – 1934), Classical Hollywood (1934 – 1960), ‘The Brat Pack’ and New Hollywood (1966 – 1995), ‘New New Hollywood’ and Digital Era (1995 – Present).

Auteur Theory Premises

- [Andrew Sarris:] “. . . the first premise of the *auteur* theory is the technical competence of a director as a criterion of value . . . the second premise of the *auteur* theory is the distinguishable personality of the director as a criterion of value . . . the third and ultimate premise of the *auteur* theory is concerned with interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art.” (Abrams, Nathan, Ian Bell, and Jan Udris, 2000: 69).

Auteur Theory Timeline

- **1954:** ‘A certain tendency of the French cinema’ by Francois Truffaut (*Les Cahiers Du Cinema* no. 31). Truffaut idolizes films by Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Nicholas Ray and others.
- **1954 – 1960:** Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, Claude Chabrol and Eric Rohmer form ‘La politique des auteurs.’ “An argument intended to provide debate and change, not as a ‘theory’.” (Abrams, Nathan, and Bell, 2000: 164).
- **1962:** Village Voice critic Andrew Sarris.
- **1968 – 1975:** Rise of film schools and the ‘Brat Pack’ (Coppola, Spielberg, Lucas, Scorsese, Schrader et. al.).
- **1975 – Present:** ‘Auteurs’ created by Hollywood studios and publicity to draw multiplex crowds.

Structural Mapping and Film Scanning

- **Pop-oriented Mapping:** fan coverage, publicity and reviews in primary media outlets.
- **Problem-Oriented Mapping:** ‘event’ films (signifier) that ‘index’ or amplify current media issues (signified).
- **Critical Mapping:** using Cinema Studies critical modes and Futures Studies methods to critique and ‘surface’ assumptions and agendas.
- **Epistemological Mapping:** using global Cinema and Media output to address the *global problematique*, the ‘civilizational challenge’ and simulating the trajectory of macrohistory.

Detecting Gravesian Systems: A Check-List of Recognition Principles

- 1. Step outside your **vMEME** Profile.
- 2. Identify the prevailing **Life Conditions**.
- 3. Ask the “Why?” question.
- 4. Different **vMEMEs** may brighten in different situations.
- 5. Realize that an organization is a mixture of **vMEMEs**.
- 6. Remember that **vMEMEs** ebb and flow as conditions get better or worse.

(Beck & Cowan, 1996: 116-117).

Scanning Problems

- **The ‘Error of Is/To Be’:** “X is Y” and systemic causation (Alfred Korzybski).
- **NLP Meta-Model Errors:** “Generalization, Nominalization and Distortion.”
- **Scanning Myopia:** Surface Values only recognized.
- **Attribution Error:** ‘Mind-Reading’ others and little awareness of personal mind-sets/inter-subjectivity.

Scanning Solutions

- ‘Appropriateness’ to milieux.
- Know your personal biases and perceptual filters.
- Practice depth psychology and contemplative traditions.
- Engage in inter-subjective dialogue (Habermas).
- Refer to ‘primary’/‘source’ footage and documents.
- Consider ‘information ecology’ and systemic effects.
- Remember the role of ‘asymmetric information.’
- ‘Information overload’ cure: a flotation tank trip.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

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