

A Spiral Dynamics® Field Manual for Film Scanning

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Surveying the Emergence of Human Values Systems

One dynamic model of human values systems was developed by Union College professor of psychology [Clare W. Graves](#) from the mid-1950s until his death in 1986. It has subsequently become commercially available, through the work of Graves' students [Dr. Don Edward Beck](#) and [Christopher C. Cowan](#), as the [Spiral Dynamics®](#) model.¹ Other perspectives on the Gravesian system have recently become available.²

Graves' research into what he called the 'emergent cyclical double helix model of mature adult biopsychosocial systems intelligences' found eight complex adaptive systems of human values (which [Beck](#) and [Cowan](#) termed ^VMemes or 'values-attracting meta-memes'). These are summarised in **Appendix 1 (The Eight ^VMeme Codes/Systems)**, and in many studies.³ It is not my purpose here to revisit this territory. The notation used below for each ^VMeme has entering (**blue/ORANGE**), peak (**ORANGE**) and exiting (**ORANGE/green**) phases. If the reader is familiar with chaos theory and complexity each ^VMeme can be understood as a 'complex adaptive system'. The Gravesian model explores systems *in* people not typologies *of* people.

Beyond its proprietary assessment instruments, one overlooked aspect of Graves' model was its exploration using action research and ethnographic interviews of lifespan development. Graves' work was used by Arnold Mitchell, amongst other resources, to create [SRI International's](#) famous [Values & Lifestyles](#) psychographic indicators. These are presented as a series of psychohistorical 'snapshots'⁴. A comparable film series is Michael Apter's *7Up* (1964) to *42Up* (1998). In-depth analyses of film scenes and sequences using the Spiral Dynamics® methodology is given in this **Field Guide** section. Only a brief selection of clips⁵ has been presented here: they may be keyed to demographic/psychographic indicators for presentations. An outline of the Film Scanning method is given in **Appendix 2 ('Film Scanning' Knowledge Cycle)**. These interpretations are probabilistic filters of the filmmakers' final product, not direct analyses of objective reality (even in non-fiction films).

Contemporary culture is both layered and self-reflexive. For example, cinema's most affecting imagery includes Sergei Eisenstein's 'Odessa Steps' sequence in *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Years later an excerpt from this sequence (00:53:50—00:55:43) turned up as an *auteur* homage in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* (1987) during a shootout on the railway station's steps (01:28:43—01:30:47).

¹ Don Beck and Christopher C. Cowan (1996). *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc, Oxford and Cambridge.

² Ken Wilber (2000). *A Theory Of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality*. Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boston. Jenny Wade (1996). *Changes of Mind: A Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness*. University of New York Press, Albany.

³ Wilber (2000). *Ibid.* pp. 9—13. Alex Burns (2001). 'Expanded Bibliography for Spiral Dynamics®', 4 June 2001. http://www.spiraldynamics.com/documents/bibliography/Burns_biblio_060401.htm.

⁴ Beck & Cowan. *Ibid.* 34—39.

⁵ All clip times are for Australian editions of DVDs. International times may vary slightly depending on edits and production versions being viewed (mass-market release, director's cut, special edition).

New Hollywood's content management systems enabled cinematographers to copy German Expressionism's non-Euclidian camera angles (00:42:52—00:44:04) from *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (1919) in the bomb defusing sequence (01:44:00—01:44:41) of *Die Hard* (1987). During a visit to a cinema playing Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1957) in *12 Monkeys* (1995), Cole claims that 'the movie never changes' (01:42:12—01:44:30). *Shadow of the Vampire* (1999) rewrote the production history of *Nosferatu* (1922) as postmodern pastiche. The creative process involves 'data-mining' the cultural memepool for compelling and innovative imagery.

Spiral Dynamics® certification offers several exercises, including viewing the film *Pleasantville* (1998), and an ethnographic meme hunt using disposable cameras and self-reporting descriptions, that offer learning experiences in an 'action research' context. The 'Film Scanning' process builds on this approach, adding insights from cinema and new media studies, and critical/depth futures tools. It may be applied in brainstorming and 'exploratory' sessions, focus groups, and workshops to discuss issues of human values, lifespan development, and cultural macrohistory.⁶

Problems of Existence

Clare W. Graves' dynamic *biopsychosocial systems* became activated in response to **Problems of Existence** that faced individuals, groups and entire societies (Beck & Cowan, 1996, 29). Although older systems remained online, these crises prompted the adaptive search to cope with new conditions. They awaken **Mind Capacities** and **Multiple Intelligences** within. The discovery of 32 Soviet surface-to-air missiles in Cuba by a U2 overflight (00:12:41—00:16:30) began the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis in *Thirteen Days*. Clashes between different morals provoke a bitter argument (00:45:57-00:48:44) in *Spy Game* (2001). The loss of a forest map in *The Blair Witch Project* (00:36:44—00:40:01) triggers group in-fighting. *Run, Lola, Run* (1999) opens with a sequence (00:01:57—00:03:13) that describes how existential crises simultaneously define our identity and are a process of questioning. *Run, Lola, Run* then quickly establishes its plot through a series of escalating mistakes (00:06:43—00:10:36) involving Mani, his girlfriend Lola, the gangster Ronnie, a lost money-bag, plans to rob a department store, and a 20-minute deadline. Just as Graves anticipated, the characters' individual solutions awaken different values systems. **Problems of Existence** also provide 'plot points' in structuralist models of screen-writing.

Life Conditions

^V**Memes** form in response to **Mind Capacities** within and **Life Conditions** (LCs), the historic times, geographic places, existential problems, and social circumstances.⁷

'This interface of existence *conditions-without* (from nature and human activity) and latent *capacities-within* is what Graves called the 'double helix aspect of his theory'.⁸

⁶ Sohail Inayatullah. 'Macrohistory and the Future'.
<http://www.metafuture.org/Articles/MacrohistoryandtheFuture.htm>

⁷ Beck & Cowan, Ibid. 52—55.

⁸ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 52.

LCs are usually depicted to establish settings and provide character back-stories. They are ‘scanned’ in scene establishing shots. LCs in films based on historical events often convey the narrative approach of the director and screenwriter. *Apollo 13* (1995) opens with a montage (00:00:45—00:1:51) about the U.S. space program and geopolitical pressures. *JFK* (1991) also opens with a lengthy ‘historic montage’ (00:00:00—00:07:04) on the Kennedy, Johnson and the Vietnam War, and later segues into a dialogue by Mr. X (01:45:20—02:02:11), based on the ‘power critique’ of the late Colonel Fletcher Prouty. *Casino* (1995) establishes the grim reality about Las Vegas (00:04:56—00:07:53). The dual narration by Rothstein (Robert De Niro) and Nicky (Joe Pesci) reveals their different worldviews. *The Filth & The Fury* (1999) opens with a startling montage (00:01:19—00:04:43) about 1976 England; *The Clash: Westway to the World* (2000) offers an alternate perspective on the same period (00:01:32—00:03:13). The latter documentary also highlights how The Clash were inspired by their daily existential problems (00:15:15—00:15:54), such as being ‘bored with the U.S.A.’ (00:13:33—00:14:46). The shift in textual interpretations such as Shakespeare may reflect different LCs.

Epidemiological Memetics

‘Viral marketing’ became a phenomenon in marketing circles during the late 1990s. Underlying this mini-cycle, which was partly fuelled by the dotcom speculative bubble (1995—2000), was growing public awareness of the emerging science of memetics, which had been explored since the mid-1970s by [Richard Dawkins](#), [Daniel C. Dennett](#) and [Douglas Hofstadter](#).

The ‘viral’ spread of the Rodney King tape and ‘reality TV’ imagery⁹ made an epidemiological form of memetics¹⁰ briefly popular in media studies. Oliver Stone evoked this period with a ‘media virus’ montage (01:49:30—01:50:22) at the close of *Natural Born Killers* (1994), while Terry Gilliam traced the co-evolution of bio-politics and epidemiological memetics in a *Twelve Monkeys* (1995) scene that traces the path of a ‘killer virus’ (01:25:24—01:27:27).¹¹

Pop memeticists cited ‘the old shoe’ spin-doctoring scene (01:00:32—01:01:54) in *Wag The Dog* (1997) which was recycled by Team Bush in the War on Terror (Fahey, 2002). Oliver Stone’s *JFK* (1991) focused its testimony on the Zapruder film of U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s assassination (02:36:39—03:08:33), while *Thirteen Days* (2001) chronicled JFK’s speech on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis (00:48:46—00:50:16). *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) opened with a fake *verite* documentary sequence on social rumors (00:02:45—00:08:49); the filmmakers also harnessed the Internet for a ‘viral marketing’ campaign. Memes also embodied subcultures: *The Filth & The Fury* (1999) featured John Lydon’s sneer, “Ever get the

⁹ Douglas Ruskoff (1994). *Media Virus! Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture*. New York: Ballantine Books.

¹⁰ Aaron Lynch (1996). *Thought Contagion: How Beliefs Spread Through Society*. New York: Basic Books. Susan Blackmore (1999). *The Meme Machine*. New York: Oxford University Press. Robert Aunger (2002). *The Electric Meme: A New Theory of How We Think*. New York: The Free Press.

¹¹ During 1998 research interviews the authors [Richard Brodie](#), [Aaron Lynch](#), [Douglas Rushkoff](#) and [Howard Bloom](#) all denied an explicit link between mid-1990s ‘killer virus’ fears and the publishing interest in the epidemiological form of memetics.

feeling you've been cheated?" (01:38:30—01:39:00), which signaled the Sex Pistols' demise.

The battleground between pop and scientific memeticists meant that this new science is still undergoing a Kuhnian revolution. Yet some films, such as Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1978), offer case-studies in how cultural information propagates. The film's plot is linked by the discovery of a "basic tonal vocabulary": a five-tone meme (00:39:23—39:27) which is decoded (00:43:20—43:29) as a likely extraterrestrial communication that can alter the Earth's morphogenetic field and pass from person-to-person (00:46:28—00:47:12). Spielberg links the tone to an abduction scene (00:51:34—00:51:41) and passing spacecraft (01:41:30—01:43:29). The closing quarter of the film plays with inter-communication (01:48:13—01:48:50 and 01:52:50—01:56:08) during the final landing. Spielberg and composer John Williams indulged in self-parody with references to the *Jaws* theme (01:55:31—01:56:08) and melodramatic soundtrack flourishes (02:08:14—02:08:31). Perhaps the most poignant scene featuring this meme is the wordless communication between researcher Claude Lacombe and an extraterrestrial (02:06:30—02:07:36).

Epidemiological memetics answered some of the reasons why certain scenes replicated across our 'ecologies of mind'.¹² The shower sequence (00:44:17—00:47:35) from *Psycho* (1960), which used 'a formalist strategy of montage editing' and 'the emotive content of the music' to influence our minds. The breathtaking chase sequence (01:07:17—01:14:28) in *The French Connection* (1971) that bended the 'cop thriller' genre. Or using Richard Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries' as a psychological operations tactic in a gritty helicopter attack (00:35:15—00:43:11), during *Apocalypse Now Redux* (2001), which ends with the speech 'I love the sound of napalm in the morning' (00:47:04—00:48:01).

OPEN—ARRESTED—CLOSED Continuum

An overlooked Spiral Dynamics® tool is the **OPEN—ARRESTED—CLOSED** continuum,¹³ based on Milton Rokeach's book *The Open and Closed Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1960). Checking for OAC status involves scanning for **OPEN** ('potential for more complex level functioning'), **ARRESTED** ('caught by barriers in self/situation') and **CLOSED** ('blocked by biopsychosocial capacities') during a situation intervention.¹⁴ OAC status may be unmasked during psychologically stressful events, such as Heather's on-camera confessions in *The Blair Witch Project*: 'I'm going to die out here' (01:07:07—01:09:13).

Falling Down (1992) provides examples of **OPEN**, **ARRESTED** and **CLOSED** states in its triumvirate of William Foster/D-Fens, police officer Prendergrast and Surplus Store owner who is a Holocaust Revisionist. During a confrontation with D-Fens, the Surplus Store owner regresses to **CLOSED** psychological blindness and ideological rigidity (00:58:21—01:03:43). D-Fens has **ARRESTED** passive-aggressive behavior (00:39:37—00:43:54) during an argument with Whammy Burger manager Rick (whose management style is too **blue/ORANGE**). During the final

¹² Gregory Bateson (1973). *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. St. Alban's [England]: Paladin.

¹³ Beck & Cowan. *Ibid.* 76—82.

¹⁴ Beck & Cowan. *Ibid.* 77.

confrontation between D-Fens and Prendergrast, the police officer remains calm under pressure, follows the ‘rules of engagement’, adjusts to a new **Problem of Existence**, and offers D-Fens alternate possibilities (01:38:33—01:42:13), signs of **OPEN** state thinking.

Five Steps in the Pathway of ^VMeme Change

Initiatory and character-driven scriptwriting paradigms have explored structures for dynamic change in contemporary films. The Spiral Dynamics® method for tracking ^VMeme change¹⁵ offers a dialectical method useful for Film Scanning. Graves noted shifts from **ALPHA** equilibrium, to **BETA** questioning, to **GAMMA Trap** dystopian imagery and hopelessness if the Reform Option is unachievable, to the **DELTA** surge of new possibilities/utopian ideals and a **New ALPHA** equilibrium.

The Nine Inch Nails concert film *And All That Could Have Been* (2001) features this five-stage cycle in a three-song sequence designed by Trent Reznor and video artist Bill Viola to ‘pace-and-lead’ the audience midway through the industrial band’s performance. The concert segues from the **DELTA** surge of ‘Gave Up’ (00:30:00—00:31:14), where claustrophobic lighting effects obscure the release of three large video display screens, into a moment of silence. The jazz-influenced drum, bass and piano syncopated introduction to ‘La Mer’ (00:31:19—00:32:22) signals the beginning of Reznor and Viola’s sequence, the **New ALPHA**, and evolves towards the closing image of the ‘feminine daemonique’ (00:33:36—00:36:00). **BETA** lyrics and sea imagery signals a shift to ‘The Great Below’ (00:37:01—00:37:48). The Reform Option is briefly considered (00:38:43—00:39:22) before plunging into the **GAMMA Trap** of ‘The Mark Has Been Made’, where guitar power chords underpin **BEIGE** fire and water imagery (00:42:19—00:43:52). Finally the sequence ends by segueing into ‘Wish’ (00:44:20—00:45:42) and back to **DELTA**. Nine Inch Nails’ music, like most heavy metal and dystopian imagery, captures the viewer by **BETA** hooks spends much of its time in **GAMMA Trap/DELTA** oscillations, but never achieves the **New ALPHA** closure.

BEIGE: The Instinctive ^VMeme (*Survival/Sense*)

Automatic, autistic, reflexive.
Centres around satisfaction of human biological needs.
Driven by deep brain programs, instincts, and genetics.
Little awareness of self as a distinct being (undifferentiated).
Lives ‘off the land’ much as other animals.
Minimal impact on or control over environment.

Life Conditions: “My existence centres on survival. Energy is devoted to staying alive and meeting the needs of my physical being so I am not hungry or thirsty. I must reproduce my kind so I respond to sexual urges as they occur. I do not know what you mean by ‘future,’ laying plans, saving for a rainy day, or ‘self.’ My body tells me what to do and I am driven by senses talking to my brain, not so much a conscious mind.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 85—92.

¹⁶ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 197.

Microcosmos (1996) surveys the pre-**BEIGE** world of Darwinian natural ecosystems. **BEIGE** systems unfolded with the Palaeolithic mutation in deep brain systems, instinctual responses and genetics that ‘bootstrapped’ human consciousness.¹⁷ Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) portrays this process in the famous ‘Dawn of Man’ prologue (00:04:27—19:02), influenced by the *en vogue* ‘killer ape’ hypothesis. The bone-to-spacecraft cut (18:55—19:02) reveals how **BEIGE** territorial imperatives underpin the **ORANGE/green** drive to colonise space.

We rarely experience a ‘pure’ form of **BEIGE** after early childhood development. Neo’s ‘slimy rebirth’ in *The Matrix* (1999) samples birth/perinatal imagery (00:33:26—00:33:43). Ripley’s frantic escape in *Alien* (1979) during the *Nostramo*’s self-destruct sequence (01:34:57—01:38:00) illustrates how **BEIGE** systems take-over during life-threatening events. Andy Dufresne’s escape (01:52:50- 01:59:30) in *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) combines **BEIGE Problems of Existence**, “Red” Redding’s **PURPLE—BLUE** memories and Dufresne’s **BLUE—ORANGE** revenge on the Prison Warden.

PURPLE: The Clannish ^VMeme (*Kin Spirits*)

Obey desires of the mystical spirit beings.
Show allegiance to elders, custom, clan.
Preserve sacred places, objects, rituals.
Bond together to endure and find safety.
Live in an enchanted, magical village.
Seek harmony with nature’s power.

Life Conditions: “We seek safety and security for our kind through trust in blood relationships, extended family bonds, and magical powers which reach into the spirit world. We honour our ancestors’ ways as sacred for they are even with us. Our path is full of seasonal rituals, rites of passage, traditional music and dance. We seek to live in harmony with nature and her ways through our ceremonies.”¹⁸

The **PURPLE** system underpins cartoon, fantasy, and science fiction content imagery. In this alternate universe, the usual rules don’t apply: *Chicken Run* (2000) features a humorous debate about the **BLUE—ORANGE** strategic planning skills of chickens (00:13:05—00:14:25). Ginger’s story of a **New ALPHA** paradise provokes a **CLOSED—BETA** response (00:15:57—00:17:23) from other chickens who cannot perceive new options.

A flashback about the **PURPLE—RED** persona of villain Keyser Soze (00:56:38—00:59:39) provides a **PURPLE** turning point in *The Usual Suspects* (1995). A hallucinatory Navaho Indian ritual (00:38:41—00:44:00) in *Natural Born Killers* (1994) evokes the shamanic power of tribal Elders and the spirit world (Beck & Cowan, 1996, 208-211). This **PURPLE** thread also features in *Apocalypse Now Redux*, when the editing cuts between Captain Willard terminating Kurtz ‘with extreme prejudice’ and the ritual sacrifice of a buffalo, as The Doors’ *The End* plays on the soundtrack (02:58:29—03:02: 21). Bands from Pink Floyd and Jefferson

¹⁷ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 197—198.

¹⁸ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 203.

Airplane to Depeche Mode and U2 have incorporated **PURPLE** imagery and aesthetics into their live stage design.

RED: The Egocentric^V Meme (*PowerGods*)

In a world of haves and have-nots, it's better to be a have.
Avoid shame, defend reputation, be respected.
Gratify impulses and senses immediately.
Fight remorsefully and without guilt to break constraints.
Don't worry about consequences that may not come.

Life Conditions: "Life is a jungle. It's survival of the fittest. I'm tough and expect those around me to be tough or else. I take charge of people and can win over nature, bending her to my will. Respect and reputation matter more than life itself, so you do what it takes to avoid being shamed or put down. You don't take anything off anybody, not if you're worth anything. You always get them back. Whatever you need to do, you do without guilt. Nothing and nobody can stand in your way. Right now is all there is, so I'll do what makes me feel good. You can't worry about what hasn't happened yet. I'm all I've got, and I'll make it or die trying."¹⁹

Spiral Dynamics® practitioners have noted that few healthy ('for-better') portrayals of the **RED** values system exist in contemporary culture, and Hollywood films only reinforce this deficit in social imaging.

Perhaps the most resonating scene the opening confrontation in *Dirty Harry* (1971) when Clint Eastwood snarls: 'Do you feel lucky, punk?' (00:12:54—00:14:11). This line became a sound-bite which overlooked how the Dirty Harry character evolved from the first film until *The Dead Pool* (1988). Detective Jimmy 'Popeye' Doyle's question 'Did you ever pick your feet in Poughkeepsie?' (00:04:42—00:07:05) highlights the strategic **BLUE—ORANGE** ruse of a 'tough' **RED** persona in *The French Connection* (1971). *60 Minutes* journalist Lowell Bergman intervenes, using a **RED** persona,²⁰ in a pre-interview debate about **BEIGE** proxemics²¹ and **RED/blue** cultural differences, at the beginning of *The Insider* (1999). Most film portrayals are either of **RED** outlaws to **BLUE—ORANGE** society or strategic masks.

¹⁹ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 215.

²⁰ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 216—217.

²¹ A term coined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall to explore the cross-cultural dimensions of personal space and time. See Hall's book *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1966.

BLUE: The Purposeful V Meme (*TruthForce*)

Find meaning and purpose in living.
Sacrifice self to the Way for deferred reward.
Bring order and stability to all things.
Control impulsivity and respond to guilt.
Enforce principles of righteous living.
Divine plans assign people to their places.

Life Conditions: “A single guiding force controls the world and determines our destiny. Its abiding Truth provides structure and order for all aspects of living here on Earth and rules the heavens, as well. My life has meaning because the fires of redemption burn in my heart. I follow the appointed Pathway which ties me with something much greater than myself [a cause, belief, tradition, organisation, or movement]. I stand fast for what is right, proper, and good, always subjecting myself to the directives of proper authority. I willingly sacrifice my desires in the present in sure knowledge that I look forward to something wonderful in the future.”²²

BLUE values systems amplify the Traditional perspective of Manichean dualism, regimented order, rightful authority and hard work. This system resonates with themes in Alfred Hitchcock’s films, the Pre-Code era (1930—34)²³ and melodramatic film conventions. The oscillating swing from individual/elite to a collective/communal focus means that group dynamics become crucial. Two notorious examples are the **PURPLE—BLUE** group hypnosis of Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* (1934) and Philip Zimbardo and Ken Musen’s documentary *Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Study* (1992). The **BLUE** world, as Mickey explains during the Superbowl television interview in *Natural Born Killers* (01:12:25—01:17:31), is ruled by Fate.

Despite its avowed individualism, contemporary culture remains influenced and supported by **BLUE** social structures. In the past, these structures and norms included the duel for personal honor (00:52:47—01:00:21) in *Onegin* (2000). The Paris Island sequence of *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) highlights why the U.S. Army needs regimented order for combat situations (00:07:14—00:09:34). The Chosen in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* attend a final church service before departing (02:04:02—02:04:44). The Traditionalist focus of city libraries and knowledge of literary classics and moral tales (00:24:07—00:28:14) proves necessary to tracking the serial killer in *Se7en* (1997).

Yet **BLUE** systems can have their gnawing limits, too. In *The Clash: Westway to the World*, the band members note the failure of traditional authority (00:04:35—00:05:28) yet adopt hard-line tactics to maintain group-cohesion (00:14:46—00:15:14). Choices are simple: as Andy Dufresne explains to “Red” Redding in *The Shawshank Redemption*, ‘It comes down to a simple choice: get busy living, or get busy dying’ (01:36:17—01:42:45).

²² Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 229.

²³ Thomas Doherty (1999). *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930—34*. New York: Columbia University Press.

ORANGE: The Strategic ^VMeme (*StriveDrive*)

Strive for autonomy and independence.
Seek out ‘the good life’ and material abundance.
Progress through searching out the best solutions.
Enhance living for many through science and technology.
Play to win and enjoy competition.
Learn through tried-and-true experience.

Life Conditions: “I want to achieve, and win, and get somewhere in my life. The world is full of opportunities for those who’ll seize the day and take some calculated risks. Nothing is certain, but if you’re good, you play the odds and find the best choices among many. You’ve got to believe in yourself first, then everything else falls into place. You can’t get bogged down in structure or rules if they hold back progress. Instead, by practical applications of trued-and-true experience, you can make things better and better for yourself. I’m confident in my own abilities and intend to make a difference in this world. Gather the data, build a strategic plan, then go for excellence.”²⁴

ORANGE values systems have brightened with the growth of neo-liberal economics and globalization. Hence **ORANGE** advertising and distribution dominates the global media. The increasing collusion of news editorial and legal departments is examined in an *Insider* scene (01:36:25—01:39:56) about the mergers and acquisitions risk of ‘torturous interference’. Gordon Gecko’s ‘Greed is Good’ speech (01:12:11—01:15:44) imprinted many viewers with the suggestion that financial speculation was an **ORANGE** strategic remanifestation of **PURLE—BLUE** Manifest Destiny. In this speech Gecko set-up a dichotomy between **BLUE—ORANGE** stereotypes and the **ORANGE/red** individual investor.

Gecko’s real philosophy, and Oliver Stone’s critique of rampant Corporatism, is revealed in a later scene (01:30:40—01:34:24) when Budd confronts him with arguments centered on **BLUE** icons (family, company, tradition), and Gecko ends the conversation with a **RED/blue** gambit. Gecko’s **ORANGE/green** perspective on the construction of social reality is mirrored by the popularity of strategic thinking and scenarios in pragmatic futures. The EXCOM team in *Thirteen Days* deploys **ORANGE** multiplistic option-generation (00:25:18—00:26:41) when it shifts from a pre-emptive strike (‘there is more than one option here’) to other scenarios (‘the scenario calls for a blockade of Cuba’). Later the EXCOM team uses **orange/GREEN** ‘tit-for-tat’ insights from game theory (‘what if this is a series of accidents?’) to defuse the international crisis (01:55:48—01:56:55).

Many **ORANGE** depictions focus on empirical technology and intelligence augmentation, such as the National Security Agency’s intelligence-gathering and data-mining system (00:31:29—00:33:54) in *Enemy of the State* (1997). Political spin-doctors in *Primary Colors* (1998) use **ORANGE** image management techniques (00:59:51—01:03:18) in a sequence based by *Newsweek* journalist Joe Klein on Genevieve Flower’s allegations about former U.S. President Bill Clinton. This technological thread is exemplified by the *Enemy of the State* credit sequence, a montage of surveillance video and ‘reality TV’ images (00:04:15—00:06:04), and the

²⁴ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 244.

Spy Game credit sequence (00:08:00—00:08:13), which ends with a hyper-fast zoom in on the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia (00:09:42—00:09:48). Years later, programmer Jim Doyle will wreak revenge on Centrabank icon Simon O'Reilly (a Gecko copy) in *The Bank* (2000) by engineering a calamitous equities trade (01:22:23—01:30:14).²⁵

Peak **ORANGE** is portrayed in the documentary *Startup.com* (2000). The dotcom entrepreneurs battle over a name during a concept pitch session (00:09:02—00:10:07) and 'the vision thing' (00:16:19—00:17:59). They face rejections from the venture capital firms Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers (00:12:10—00:13:24) and General Atlantic Partners (00:13:42—00:14:59), before almost closing an investment round, *sans* legal counsel and laptop, with Hyland Capital Partners (00:22:23—00:27:13). This unapologetic **ORANGE** business culture is reflected in Hollywood script markets, industry 'tell-all' biographies and the doyens of the 'high concept' film: Don Simpson, Jon Peters and Peter Guber, and David Geffen.

Yet upsurges against **ORANGE** systems are appearing on the horizon. Some of these can be traced to 'late capitalism' critiques in films like *Alien* (1979), where the *Nostramo*'s doomed crew unmask The Company's true mission, discuss how to kill the Alien, and compare different values systems (01:20:45 – 01:24:00). The most emotionally searing scene in *The Filth & The Fury* comes when John Lydon speaks out about the commercialism surrounding Syd Vicious's murder-suicide (01:35:00—01:36:28). The **ORANGE** solution is co-option of surface imagery: *Fight Club* (1999) warns on the one hand about 'Planet Starbucks' and how corporations will 'colonize the future' (00:03:41—00:05:24), yet its protagonist is not immune to the 'IKEA nesting instinct' and white-collar blues.

An ambiguous example of **ORANGE** values systems is Morpheus' 'Blue or Red Pill' proposal to Neo in *The Matrix* (00:24:42—00:31:43). To appreciate this ambiguity, consider that audiences have different responses: *dominant* readings (accepting the preferred reading), *negotiated* readings (agreeing with dominant values but disagreeing with specific points), *oppositional* readings (where dominant values are disavowed) and *aberrant* readings (when unusual values are 'decoded'). Most viewers took the *dominant* reading of an initiatory ordeal, *negotiated* readings noted the **PURLPE** horror conventions during Morpheus' interview of Neo, and *aberrant* readings focused on the LSD-like imagery during 'waking up' as a sign of dual psychosis. Yet an *oppositional* reading is ultimately the most disturbing. Morpheus and his colleagues find a highly suggestible human (Neo). During the interview Morpheus uses Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Ericksonian hypnosis techniques to persuade Neo of his convictions. Having undergone a 'conversion experience' Neo now continues with Morpheus' mission to embody 'The One'. Sometimes your 'own right mind' is really another's text.

²⁵ The film referred, obliquely to the collapse of the Long-Term Capital Management hedge fund. Alex Burns (2002). 'Apocalypse Roulette: The Rise and Fall of Long-Term Capital Management'. <http://www.disinfo.com/images/linda/ApocalypseRouletteShort.pdf>

GREEN: The Relativistic ^VMeme (*HumanBond*)

Explore the inner beings of self and others.
Promote a sense of community and unity.
Share society's resources among all.
Liberate humans from greed and dogma.
Reach decisions through consensus.
Refresh spirituality and bring harmony.

Life Conditions: "Life is for experiencing each moment. We can all come to understand who we are and how wondrous it is to be human if we will only accept that everyone is equal and important. All must share in the joy of togetherness and fulfilment. Each spirit is connected to all others in our community; every soul travels together. We are interdependent beings in search of love and involvement. The community grows by synergising life forces; artificial divisions take away from everyone. There is an abiding order in the universe for those who are open to it. Bad attitudes and negative beliefs dissolve once we look inside each person and uncover the richness within. Peace and love for all."²⁶

Over the past few years the **GREEN ^VMeme** has been the most controversial Gravesian values system within sections of the Spiral Dynamics® community. Its relativistic mode of thinking has underpinned the 'postmodernist turn', which, in the author's opinion, is probably more accurately described as a **CLOSED BLUE—GREEN** response to **CLOSED ORANGE/green** attempts to 'upshift' to the Second Tier. This fallout is mirrored in a *Startup.com* scene when the mother of 'fired' govWorks.com cofounder Tom Herman says, 'Caring for people and how they feel—is not part of this new world' (01:31:23 – 01:33:00).

The epistemological revelations in *The Matrix* provide a glimpse of Second Tier *gnosis* amidst the social constructionist critique of artificial intelligence (00:38:19—00:42:43). Yet the reasons given for this future dystopia fall apart under lengthy analysis. Perhaps answering critics who judged *Videodrome* (1983) as an **orange/GREEN** synthesis of Marshall McLuhan's media and Jean Baudrillard's simulacra, David Cronenberg ends *eXistenZ* (1999) with a jarring question about what happens when game violence and immersive environments overlay the subjective universe (01:21:40—01:22:28). This scene viscerally illustrates the dangers of extreme post-conventional relativism,²⁷ and its nested Chinese boxes (01:21:40—01:30:01), without the need for confusing 'Mean Green Meme' jargon.

Video game logic also forms the multi-strand narrative structure (Thompson, 1999; Cowgill, 1999) of *Run, Lola, Run*, one of the most interesting depictions of **GREEN** relativistic structures, which the film explores through slight variations of repetitious scenes. These branching points represent 'alternative futures' as flashbulb-like memory fragments. Lola bumps into a pedestrian, who responds with 'stupid slut' (00:12:47—00:13:06); 'fucking bitch' (00:35:10—00:35:10); and enigmatic silence (00:53:53—00:54:04). Later in her trip, Lola is approached by a bicyclist who asks 'Could you use a bike?' (00:15:17—00:15:44); reveals in another story trajectory that

²⁶ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 260.

²⁷ Wilber. Ibid. 27.

the bike is ‘stolen’ (00:36:15—00:36:35); and in a third possibility, sells the stolen bike to the street tramp who stole Mani’s money-bag (00:54:53—00:55:47). When Lola arrives at her father’s bank, she first bumps into Ms Jager (00:18:40—00:18:50); is under surveillance in the corridor (00:38:14—00:38:20), confronted (00:40:30—00:40:45), and counteracts by holding her father hostage (00:42:33—00:42:39); and in the final sequence Ms Jager is passed by Lola’s father (00:57:25—00:57:34). Each story trajectory in *Run, Lola, Run* captures how the **GREEN** system discovers the uncertainty inherent in everyday choices (Beck & Cowan, 1996, 270).

The **ORANGE** appropriation of **GREEN** perspectives and **PURPLE** iconography is evident in Baz Luhrman’s *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), whose melodramatic storyline is dominated by a series of loosely connected **orange/GREEN** music videos. Opening with the *Sound of Music* (1965) theme, Luhrman proceeds to sample Nirvana’s *Smells Like Teen Spirit* (00:11:32—00:13:40); Marilyn Monroe’s *Diamonds Are A Girl’s Best Friend* routine (00:13:40—00:18:10), via Madonna’s *Material Girl* (00:15:42—00:15:52); David Bowie’s *Diamond Dogs* (00:23:03—00:23:43); Elton John’s *Your Song* (00:26:31—00:30:04), Madonna’s *Like A Virgin* (00:59:31—01:03:01) and The Police’s *Roxanne* (01:14:58—01:18:29). While some of these interpretations are audacious, they also illustrate the difficulties in finding ‘pure’ **GREEN** imagery.

Moral Crises: Depicting The Gravesian ‘Great Leap’

Clare W. Graves contended that humans often faced a ‘great leap’—a life-changing experience, moral crisis or direct confrontation with a global crisis—before Second Tier systems came online within the human brain.²⁸ Many speculative and futures-oriented films have focused on these crises, such as the Cold War spectre of Mutually Assured Destruction in the title sequence (00:00:23—00:02:06) for *Thirteen Days*.

Film characters may not necessarily awaken Second Tier systems, but some kinds of moral crises that *might* bring these systems online. The Cassandra Complex (‘I want the future to be unknown’) and breakdown of consensus reality (01:32:29—01:34:46) in *12 Monkeys* captures the jarring and instantaneous ‘change in worldviews’ that a personal confrontation with the ‘global problematique’²⁹ often brings. Rutger Hauer’s improvised ‘Time to Die’ speech (01:41:57 – 01:43:05) in *Blade Runner* (1981) reflects Erik Erikson’s research on psychological crises in lifespan development. The painful ‘firing’ sequence (01:15:29—01:27:37) in *Startup.com* is a real-world example that may prompt psychological evolution to greater complexity or regression to ‘safer’ environs.³⁰ Finally, although it was a **Problem of Existence** for the crew of *Apollo 13* (1995), the technical malfunction (00:47:48—00:00:51:41) also forced National Aeronautics & Space Administration staff to use systems thinking and crisis response mechanisms to bring the astronauts back safely.

²⁸ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 274.

²⁹ A term coined by the [Club of Rome](#) to describe the environmental predicament facing global humanity since the late 1960s.

³⁰ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 61—63.

Searching For the Elusive Second Tier

Accept the inevitability of nature's flows and forms.
Focus on functionality, competence, flexibility, and spontaneity.
Find natural mix of conflicting 'truths' and 'uncertainties'.
Demand integrative and open systems.
Discovering personal freedom without harm to others or excesses of self-interest.
Experience fullness of living on an Earth of such diversity in multiple dimensions.

Life Conditions: "Viability must be restored to a disordered world endangered by the cumulative effects of the first six systems on the earth's environment and populations. The purpose of living is to be independent within reason; knowledgeable so much as possible; and caring, so much as realistic. Yet I am my own person, accountable to myself, an island in an archipelago of other people. Continuing to develop along a natural pathway is more highly valued than striving to have or do. I am concerned for the world's conditions because of the impact they have on me as part of this living system."³¹

While depictions of Second Tier **Problem of Existences** have existed in speculative and futures-oriented films since the early 1970s, realistic depictions of Second Tier responses to these crises have been fleeting. *Baraka* (1992) highlights the anthropology of different human cultures and interconnected milieux. *Earthlight* (1998) documents how astronauts perceive the Earth as an integrated system from outer space,³² yet features a **GREEN** 'sensitive' New Age soundtrack.

Depictions of Second Tier consciousness, perhaps because of the co-evolution of the 'Movie Brats' and the Age of Aquarius, has been dominated by psychedelic and science fiction imagery. The Stargate trip (01:56:58—02:06:07) and Star Child imagery (02:13:14—02:14:42) in *2001: A Space Odyssey* was, thanks to Douglas Trumbull's effects and Arthur C. Clarke's eschatology, one of the first depictions that resonated with a mass audience. The enigmatic answer to 'life, the universe, and everything' (00:13:18—00:17:50) in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1981) parodied the post-de Chardin/*2001* tradition of representing the Hegelian Overmind with oblique religious imagery. *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* offered the ultimate *deus ex machine* to dystopian imagery: rescue of the fragile individual by a future civilization (01:50:57 – 01:53:36).

³¹ Beck & Cowan. Ibid. 275.

³² Frank White (1987). *The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Laurel Clark (2003). 'From Space With Love: A Doomed Astronaut's Final E-mail' <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/02/04/1044318607256.html>

Appendix 1: The Eight^V Meme Codes/Systems.

(Adapted from Don Beck and Christopher C. Cowan's *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change*. Boston, MA & Oxford: Blackwell University Press, 1996).

Level	Color Code	Popular Thinking Name		Cultural Manifestations System & Personal Displays
8	Turquoise (HU)	<i>Wholeview</i>	Holistic	ecological thinking; holistic structures; collective individualism; planetary spirituality; communitarian sense; minimalist living; macro-view perspective; whole-Spiral networking
				“Sacrifice self now for larger, conscious, spiritual whole that networks globally and focuses on the good of all living entities as integrated systems.”
7	Yellow (GT)	<i>FlexFlow</i>	Ecological	integrative and open natural systems; self-principle; multiple realities; experiential never at knowledge
				“Express self as self desires, but the expense of others or the earth.”
6	Green (FS)	<i>HumanBond</i>	Consensus	community structures; consensus-driven leadership; egalitarian feelings; authenticity; sharing; caring; liberate from greed & dogma
				“Sacrifice self now, to obtain now, for self and others.”
5	Orange (ER)	<i>StriveDrive</i>	Strategic	enterprise structures, success-driven leadership; materialism; consumerism; image/status; personal growth; search out best solutions; tried-and-true experience
				“Express self calculatedly to achieve what self desires, but so as not to arouse the ire of others.”
4	Blue (DQ)	<i>TruthForce</i>	Authority	moral compasses; authoritarian structures; meaning; discipline; traditions; rules; chain-of-command; lives for later.
				“Sacrifice self now to the one true way and obey rightful authority so as to deserve reward later.”
3	Red (CP)	<i>PowerGods</i>	Egocentric	egocentric personalities; empire structures; power-centered leadership; immediate gratification; conquest; action; impulsive; fights remorselessly to break constraints; glitz; lives for now
				“Express self impulsively and without guilt lest one suffer unbearable shame.”
2	Purple (BO)	<i>KinSpirits</i>	Animistic	animistic beliefs, tribal orders, harmony, rituals; taboos superstitions; tribes; folk ways & elders lore.
				“Sacrifice self to the wishes of the and the ways of the ancestors to placate the spirits.”
1	Beige (AN)	<i>SurvivalSense</i>	Instinctive	survival senses and deep brain systems; undifferentiated self-sense; food; water; procreation warmth; protection; stays alive
				“Express self instinctively and automatically for biological survival.”

Appendix 2: ‘Film Scanning’ Knowledge Cycle.

- A critical method of media synthesis.
- A lens/tool for simulating the nested values systems *within* people.
- A way to open up greater conceptual space and discuss new strategic options.
- A way to challenge mental models, subjective filters, and organizational memory.
- A way to ‘chunk’ critical/depth perspectives in a Knowledge Management system.

1. Situation Analysis.

- What is your current situation? (Opportunities—Threats brief).
- What are your strategic goals? (Strategic Anticipation/Foresight capabilities).
- What is your time-limit?
- Decide what to analyse.
- Decide which clips and films to utilise.
- Step outside your mental models, subjective filters, and organizational memory.

2. ‘Film Scanning’.

- Watch the clips (usually several times).
- Note key scene and sequence times.
- Note any relevant *mise-en-scene* elements.
- Remain self-aware and ‘awake’ during viewing process.
- Use several different critical perspectives during viewing process.
- Be aware of [General Semantics](#) errors (‘to be’, ‘is’) that mis-map territory.
- Use depth perspectives (SD, [CLA](#)) and notation during viewing process.
- Where are the gaps? What strategic information is missing? (NLP [Milton Model](#)).
- Transfer notes to [Information Visualization](#)/Knowledge Management system.

3. Analysis and Synthesis.

- Study any included supplementary material (notably production commentaries).
- Research film production, interviews, and political economy (context).
- If fiction: Source text? Adaptation issues?
- If non-fiction: Source events? Press coverage? Adaptation issues?
- Map film structure (contours and discontinuities) using script and scenario models.
- Chunk key information (Pareto’s 80/20 rule) from critical and depth perspectives.
- Connect film ideas to Situation Analysis.
- Reframe options from Opportunities-Threats brief and Strategic Anticipation brief.

4. Dissemination.

- Assemble seminar notes and report summary.
- Discuss with relevant ‘community of practice’.
- Review critical feedback and update summary ‘on-the-fly’ if needed.
- Disseminate via ‘DIY’ DVD commentaries and PowerPoint presentation if possible.
- Repeat ‘Film Scanning’ cycle if necessary.