

technique: storyboard analysis

Film directors use storyboards to study the logic of their films. Each shot (continuous piece of film) has a logic associated with its set-up (two-shot, reverse angle, eye-line match, etc.) and can be represented by one or two boards. A shot relates the point of view (POV) with the virtual or actual vanishing point (VP), or objects that stand for the POV and VP. This primary relationship determines the dynamics of the field and its relation to the tonal 'domain' of the sequence of shots. Shot examples shown are from Michaelangelo Antonioni's film *Blow-Up* (1966).



The 'landscape orientation' (view-line is at a right angle to the dominant figural motion) shows how the set's landscape serves to frame the motion. The camera can track the motion by following the figure laterally, can pan (swivel the camera from a fixed position), or remain fixed as an index of the figure's speed and direction. The VP is off-screen; the POV is connected to the motivation for the movement



When the camera view line faces the figural motion, the camera establishes a 'here' position that the subject approaches. A long lens can slow this motion, emphasizing effort/futility. A shorter lens can give the sense of rushing. The audience becomes more sympathetic with the subject's POV. The VP is linked to the time of approach, with the camera being 'un-addressable'.



The long shot establishes detachment and identity with the landscape as frame/ground. The small figures at a distance emphasize the mystery of their actions and motives. The camera cannot move further without engaging and disturbing the 'objective recording' of their actions. The VP is established by the figures; the POV is the invisible observer, off-screen, in the Lacanian position of the Other.

1. reverse-engineering a storyboard

To create an analytical storyboard sequence, extract film stills using screen captures while playing the DVD. Pay attention to the shot structure (continuity) so that a still is able to represent the dynamics and logic of a shot. Use PhotoShop to remove color and detail. These illustrations used the 'chalk and charcoal' filter, which is able to control highlights, blacks, and texture. Adjust the size and resolution of the image to fit your purposes (print, screen, etc.).

2. cone of vision analysis

Using the typology developed for the VP/POV in/out analysis, discover the role played by each in relation to the frame. The primary frame is the edge of the film frame; other frames may be established within that frame, such as the apartment of the photographer in Hitchcock's *Rear Window* or the flanking trees in the third frame (left, bottom) that establish a 'chiaroscuro' effect. Distance can establish a third kind of frame, one where the tiny size of figures prevents a clear understanding of what is happening, as if they were in a room with a window, seen from the outside.

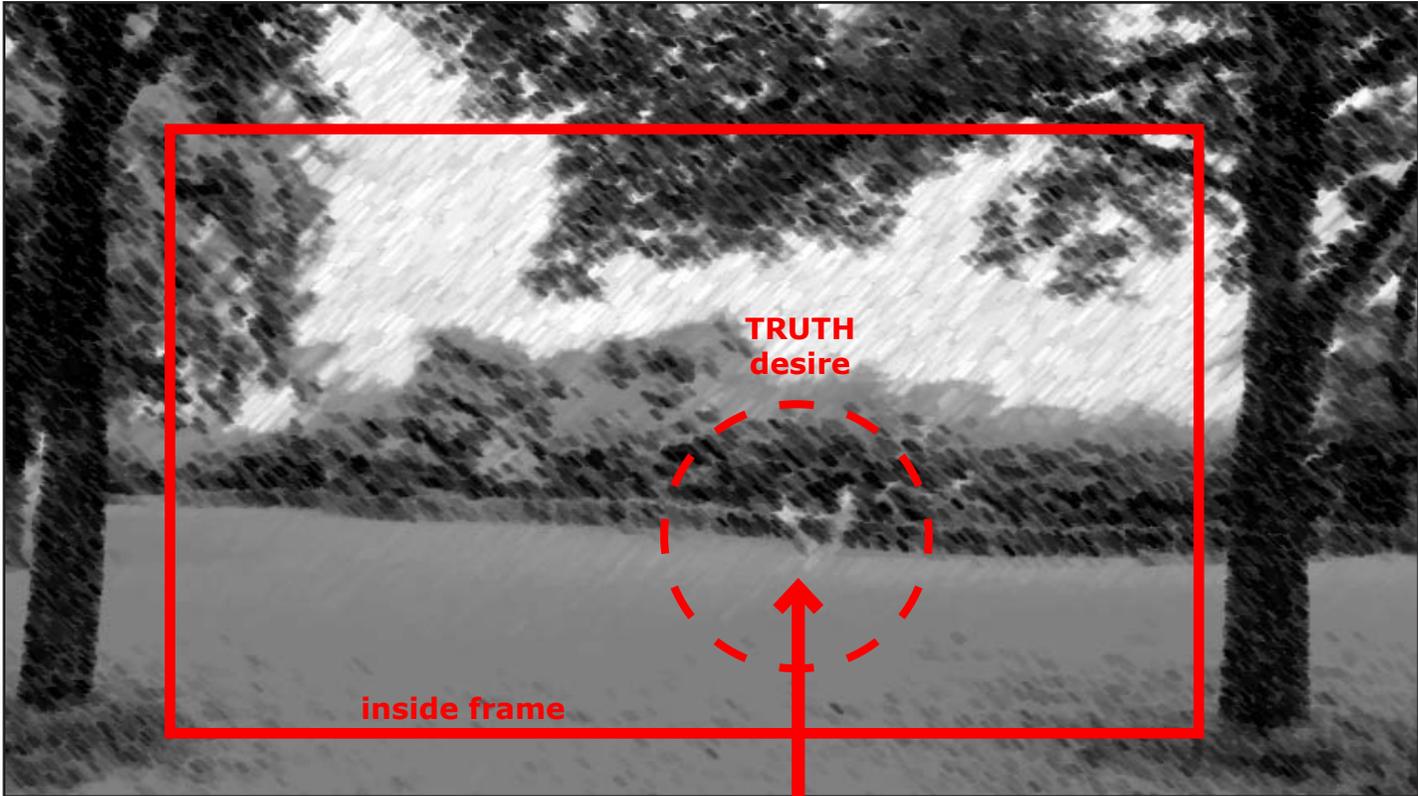
With the cone of vision as a framework, show how movement or camera angle creates the 'logic' of the shot, requiring certain types of shots to precede or follow it (as in a reverse-angle shot of a conversation). The Lacanian 'positions' of the frame are Subject-Production, with the subject's fixity being a prominent issue because the POV is determined by the frame. The VP has to do with the position of Truth, by its nature inaccessible, but the margin defining the VP can be materialized and brought very close, as a margin of visibility/invisibility (the edge of an object, such as a building, beyond which someone is hiding, for example).

Use the B&W graphic to mark up, showing the function of the scene's components and the implied dynamics. Indicate POV and VP roles and locations, if possible. Note which elements, textures, effects, etc. will be 'stored' in the audience imagination for later use, such as the expanse of grass in the park in the early scenes, repeated at the end of the film with the tennis match.

3. typologies

Combining shot sequences shows how a particular narrative part plays its role in the story. This narrative should be considered in terms of the required 'plot points' that turn the plot in a radically unexpected direction. The first plot point uses misdirection to frame the larger middle narrative, typically an obstacle sequence based on a goal or problem that must be resolved. The second required plot point can be a delayed moment of 'suture' (discovery of a traitor in the midst of a task-group; discovery of an unnoticed frame, such as a dream or fiction that we had taken for 'reality'). Where venatic time (obstacle/goal-structured) dominates, forensic time (exposition, memory, flashbacks) provides context and interrupts the venatic flow. If a plot point is set to revise context or 'global readings', then a 'festal' (suspension of reality) time can dominate. Festal time can be both highly structured (ritual) or highly chaotic (parties, wars, riots, etc.). The time mode establishes a dominant mode of action.

In the example of *Blow-Up*, the photographer begins in a casual forensic mode that is established by parks in general: places to get away from the business-like flurry of the 'venatic' city streets. When he spots the couple he initiates an informal 'chase' to see what they are up to. His camera indicates that he is 'looking for something in the present', the key activity of the venatic. When he analyzes his negatives and identifies what looks like a body, action turns forensic again, this time as a combination of venatic searching and forensic reflection. The final imaginary tennis game is in the festal time of unreality, where the photographer participates despite the absurdity of missing equipment.



frame

OTHER / POV