SCENE ANALYSIS

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Step1 : Define Conflict

- Who drives the scene?
  - Any **Character** or **Force** might drive a scene – even an inanimate object or an act of nature.
- What does he/she (or it) want?
  - **Desire** is always the key.
- What opposing forces block this desire?
  - Identify the source of **antagonism**.
- What do the opposing forces want?
  - They are in **direct conflict** with each other.

Step2 : Note Opening Value

- Identify the value at stake
- Note its charge, positive or negative
- For Example –
  - **Freedom**. The protagonist is at the negative, a prisoner of his own obsessive ambition.
  - **Faith**. The protagonist is at the positive, he trusts in God to get him out of this situation.

Step3 : Break the scene into beats

- What is a **BEAT**?
  - A beat is an exchange of action/reaction in character behavior.

- When does a beat change –
  - As long as the action and reaction are same it's the same beat. A new beat doesn't occur until the behavior of the character/s changes clearly.

Step 4: Note Closing Value and Compare with Opening Value

- Adding values to the character's situations as **Positive** or **Negative**
- If the two values are the same – the activity between the characters is a **non-event** or **flat scene**
- If the value has undergone **change**, then the scene has **turned**

Step 5: Survey Beats and Locate Turning Point

- Identify certain **shapes** or **patterns** forming an **arc** with the progression of each beat
- Within the arc locate the **moment** when the major gap opens between expectation and result, turning the scene to its changed end values
- This precise moment is the **Turning Point** in a scene

ANALYSIS: Casablanca 1942

- Step1: Define Conflict
  - Rick's feeling of anger/abandonment
  - Desire – To win Ilsa back
- Step2: Identify the value at stake
  - Love governs the scene
  - Rick's value is in the NEGATIVE
  - Yet, Rick (and audience) sees hope, so its leans toward the positive
- Step3: BEAT Breakdown
  - Break the scene into Beats.
  - Total no. of beats - 11
- Step4: Note Closing Value and Compare with Opening Value
  - Central Plot turns sharply rom a hopeful/positive to a negative
  - Ilsa makes it clear – she doesn't love Rick, moreover she never did
- Step5: Survey Beats and Locate Turning Point
  - Gap open's in the middle of the 11th beat
  - On the revelation that Ilsa was married to Lazlo
  - With this turning point HOPE is shattered

Conclusion

- Each scene has its own graph differing in in levels of conflict and quality of actions
- Ill-written scenes may lack conflict because desires are not opposed, may be anti-progressive because they are repetitious or circular, lopsided because their Turning Points come too early or too late
- But above all, every pacing of a beat progression and turning points differ within each filmic style and there is no single formula to write scenes