

Programm: <https://srn2022.univie.ac.at/preliminary-program/>  
14th Screenwriting Research Network International Conference: **Globalizing Screenwriting**

## Analyzing Screenplays presented on the international market: Development, Practice and Benefits of “The SSO- or \*40-Steps-Method” From practical use to theory and back again

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Practitioners | Script Analysts | Teachers | [www.dfkfilms.com](http://www.dfkfilms.com)  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022, HS 415 Panel 4, 10:30

The multilingual team of dfk\*script\*service analyzes 150 scripts per year from all over the world. Based on the concrete needs in film production and investment, domestic and worldwide distribution we offer analysis, evaluation, and improvement of scripts. Our basic tool is the newly developed and approved technique: the Story-Step-Outline (SSO) | \*40-Steps-Method. For many years, we worked with this highly objectifying method for current film projects as well as for classics in teaching. This tool is designed to deconstruct the script into a concrete number of events, and sheds light to the author’s intentions in a psychoanalytical way.

In a challenging learning process between theory and practice, the SSO | \*40-Steps-Method was brought to life by

- experiences in film production and distribution,
- the encounter with František “Frank” Daniel – the best teacher of script writing and analysis. This political refugee was as decisively as discreetly involved in the worldwide successful ONE FLEW OVER THE COCKOO'S NEST and many others,
- Paul Schrader’s’ meticulous and unique approach to script writing (his early work),
- studies of drama theories, psychoanalysis, and the best films/scripts.

Every successful film is based on a great script. The story, the characters and their universe, the topics and every other aspect must be fully worked-out AND fully adapted to the specifications of the 7<sup>th</sup> art. Our research and our experience show: a fully developed story for cinema consists of around 40 Steps in a 90 to 120 minute film. This is as true for classics as it is for current films:

- SOME LIKE IT HOT | 121' | 40 Steps
- THELMA & LOUISE | 130' | 42 Steps
- AMADEUS | 153' | 45 Steps
- AMERICAN BEAUTY | 122' | 41 Steps
- TITANIC | 194' | 54 Steps

based on the analysis of the 156-page original screenplay dated Mai 7, 1996.

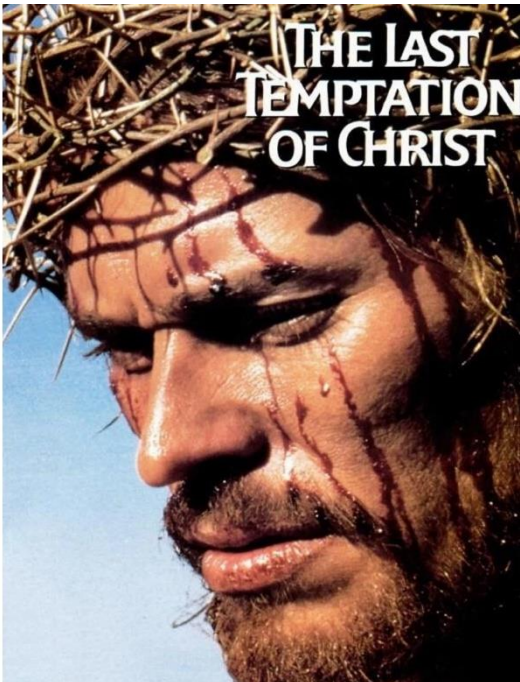
Too many European films hardly achieve 25 steps. The detailed SSO | 40\*-Steps Script Analysis identifies the existing story-steps. It allows to ask questions and to provide comments on every story-step for making a good script great. We improved and discussed our approach on 3 continents with very divers filmmakers, producers, and experts.

European screenwriters waste  
**30 - 50 %**  
of the potential of their stories.

story-step-outline-method  
de-dramatize the script  
in order to  
re-construct the story behind

Paul Schrader: Story Steps Steps  
THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST	
1	1. JESUS AWAKENS
2	2. MAKES CROSS
3	3. REVENGE OF ZEALOTS
4	4. MARIAMNE WEDDING FLAUNT
5	5. ZEALOT CRUCIFIED
6	6. JESUS TO MONASTERY
7	7. JUDAS RECRUITS
8	8. JESUS VISITS MIA
9	9. ARRIVES AT MOUNT
10	10. JESUS SNAKES
11	11. OFFERS NECK TO
12	12. JESUS SAYS MIA
13	13. BERTHAIDES
14	14. COLLECTS JOHN ANDREW
15	15. JESUS DEBATE
16	16. VISITOR OF THE
17	17. WEDDING FEAST
18	18. BAPTIST
19	19. JESUS TALKS TO
20	20. JESUS TEMPT
21	21. REJECTS WHORE
22	22. THE ANGEL
23	23. HERK TOUS
24	24. REJECTED IN
25	25. GOES TO JERUSALEM
26	26. RAISES LAZARUS
27	27. CONFRONTATION
28	28. SEES PILATE
29	29. JESUS TALKS ON
30	30. MARIAMNE
31	31. PHILIP SUNDAY
32	32. DISCLOSES
33	33. THE POWER
34	34. OF THE
35	35. JESUS
36	36. DISCLOSES
37	37. CIVIL
38	38. ANGEL
39	39. TAKES
40	40. JESUS
41	41. ALL
42	42. JESUS
43	43. PHILIP
44	44. PHILIP
45	45. THE
46	46. RETURNS



Paul Schrader's handwritten story steps reflecting the story developing and script writing process of THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST  
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**SHORT BIOS**

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**Academic studies**  
Political Science | Free University Berlin  
Screenplay | German Film and Television Academy (dffb)

**Screenplay expert**  
Guest lecturer at the dffb, the Free University Berlin and the Academy of German Economy for Further Training:  
– Script writing | Script analysis  
– Writing for TV-series | Development of TV-series  
– Journalism for press and public relations | Journalism for environmental issues  
– Tutor for the intensive dfk\*films Berlinale workshop for European students.

**Worked as**  
– Head of departments | Managing director for institutions in culture, media and further training;  
– Writer for ORF, RTL, SAT1, ZDF and production companies in Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Finland.  
– Active for dfk\*films and [dfk\\*script\\*service](http://www.dfkfilms.com/script-service) since 2002 as writer, story editor and script analyst.

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based in Zürich, Switzerland

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### **Academic studies**

Psychology, Journalism and Sociology at the University of Zürich.

### **Further Training**

Script analysis and script writing workshops with František “Frank” Daniel, Paul Schrader, Robert McKee and many more. Studies of story and script writing theories.

### **Tutor and Board Member**

Co-founder and board member of FOCAL, the Swiss foundation for further training for film professionals; as well tutor at film schools and workshops in Europe and Africa.

### **Expert in film business & screenplay**

- Distributor (260 films released in Switzerland, theatrical and tv)
- Producer (24 films, 116 awards at film festivals, amongst them a Golden Palm and the Jury Prize at Cannes, Silver Bears at Berlin, Golden and Silver Leopards at Locarno, Oscar and Golden Globe Nominations, French Césars, Italian Donatellos, etc.)
- World Sales (154 films, the first awards for Turkish and Indian films at international film festivals)
- Story editor and Script analyst, not mention or pen named, ghost analyst/writer.

After teaching together with Frank Daniel and Paul Schrader dfk developed the basic of a very refined script analysis approach: “The SSO- or \*40-Steps-Method” (link: [40-story-step-outline-system](#)).

The production “YOL” (The Way) was awarded with the Golden Palm at Cannes and was released again as completed and restored film 2017 at the Cannes Classics programme as “[YOL – The Full Version](#)”.

### **dfk\*films | dfk\*script\*service**

Since the establishment of CACTUS’ Scenario Service department in the 90s and its successor DFK FILMS LLC Zürich more than 3000 screenplays and treatments were analyzed on behalf of distributors, film producers and investors.

All these projects with their screenplays were looking for financing on the international market to attract investors or to sign pre-sales’ license agreements.

The statistics of the script\*service confirmed that 97% of the negative and 76% of the positive evaluations turned out to be correct regarding the failure or the success of the films’ theatrical releases.

We are happy to share our expertise, our skills and practical experience through workshops, further education and lectures.

In Europe, Africa and most recently in China we trained established and aspiring film professionals in English, German and French.