

Silverado and The Aspect Compass

Guide to watching Silverado

The Power of Story.



Different parts of the human brain understand differing amounts of spoken and written language. Some parts of the brain have virtually no such language, and instead communicate in terms of images, feelings, intuition, dreams, and visions. More than other forms of communication, it appears that Story involves virtually all parts of the brain.

To fully use The Aspect Compass, you must develop an awareness of your own inner cardinal aspects. The Aspect Compass assigns an aspect of your psyche, of your personal psychology, to each of the cardinal points on a compass.

These aspects represent the parts of your brain that are most involved in:

- self-regulation and executive skills (The Chief in the North),
- emotions and relationships (The Artist in the East),
- analytic and other cognitive abilities (The Scout in the South), and
- behaviors and actions (The Warrior in the West).

Everyone has some internal representation of these characters and by understanding the classic fears and gifts of each of these aspects, a person can take more conscious control of his or her own brain.

Each of the cardinal aspects (The Chief, The Artist, The Scout, and The Warrior) have various lesser aspects in which they will appear. For instance, The Scout has aspects such as The Explorer, The Scientist, The Magician, and many others. All of these archetypes possess The Scout's constant search for information, knowledge, and answers. The Scout's role in traditional societies is to leave the tribe, learn information about the world, and report back.

The Scout requires all sorts of skills in order to succeed, but in its positive forms is driven by a need to seek Truth and Honesty. Without these gifts, variants of the Scout emerge: The Exploiter, The Mad-Scientist, The Evil Magician, and others.

In Native American, and other tribal traditions, a very important aspect of The Scout is The Trickster. The Trickster is a great teacher of Humility. The Trickster, most famously represented by Coyote, possesses The Artist's child-like joyful qualities, however The Trickster's actions frequently backfire upon oneself.

There is also a progression through the aspects, beginning in the East, where all human beings are born Artists, having plenty of emotions, but few thoughts, behaviors, or self-regulation. We become toddlers and The Scout begins to explore the world, with The Warrior emerging as more

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and more complex behaviors appear. The Chief develops to provide more regulation and, hopefully, teamwork, among the different parts of the brain.

Hopefully, the above words make some sense to your own inner Scout and Chief (based in the pre-frontal and frontal lobes of the brain). However, The Artist and The Warrior (based in the base of the brain) don't understand concepts in terms of words. That's where stories, especially heroic stories, show us a vision of an idealized way to move through the world.

You can learn much more about The Aspect Compass model in the Becoming Centered book. You'll also read about the Eight Fears of All Human Beings and the Eight Gifts of The Elders that are referenced below.

Read the Character Analysis section of this guide and then begin to watch Silverado. Every few scenes take a look at the corresponding Scene Analysis section of this guide to help you "see" the cardinal aspects in story, and hopefully within yourself.

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Character Analysis

Silverado presents an ensemble of classic Western-genre film heroes, villains, and other characters. Its heroes are Emmett, Jake, Paden, and Mal; each of whose character largely draws upon one of the cardinal aspects: The Chief, The Artist, The Scout, and The Warrior.

None of the heroes are necessarily the perfect, idealized, representation of the cardinal aspect; however, they do illustrate a lot of the positive qualities of their respective aspects.



Emmett (The Chief)

Emmett comes close to representing the archetypal ideal. As The Chief, Emmett has already encompassed the developmentally earlier aspects of The Artist, The Scout, and The Warrior. He has accepted The Gifts of The Elders associated with each of these earlier aspects: Respect, Love, Truth, Honesty, Bravery, and Humility. When he uses all these gifts, he also accepts the gift of Wisdom, associated with The Chief.



Jake (The Artist)

Jake embodies the flashy, fun-loving, innocence of The Artist. Jake follows his heart and moves through the world with artistic style. He sometimes comes across as child-like, because of his joyful energy. While Emmett has a mission to complete, Jake just seems to be having fun. As The Artist, Jake also represents the important Artist variant of The Lover. When we first meet Jake (in jail) it's because of that aspect. However, what we see throughout the story is that Jake is Respectful and Loving in his relationships with others.

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Paden (The Scout)

While the other three heroes are fairly static characters, Paden is in the process of transformation. We meet him at a low point, alone and dying in the desert. He's given up to Fear of The Cold and Fear of Being Alone.

As a character undergoing transformation, Paden is not quite the full Scout, who has accepted The Artist's Gifts of Respect and Love and The Scout's Gifts of Truth and Honesty. He models himself after only a variant of The Scout, that could be called The Gambler. Paden has excellent analytic and cognitive skills, always figuring the odds, but struggles with Respect and Love. In his past, he's followed Cobb, The Variant-Warrior (the Bully), however, he has self-awareness, and seeks Truth and Honesty.



Mal (The Warrior)

As The Warrior, Mal is a man of relatively few words, preferring to let straight-forward action speak for him. He's focused on family, possesses a Code of Conduct, that includes being measured in his use of force. He embodies the Gifts of Bravery and Humility, frequenting saving the day but having to accept that he can't fully save his own family.

All of the other characters could be described in terms of representing a cardinal aspect. However, it may be illustrative to point out the four villains that best represent dark variants of each of the cardinal aspects.



McKendrick (The Figure Head)

McKendrick is the leader who has rejected all The Gifts of the Elders. He neither experiences or expresses Respect and Love; he doesn't seek Truth or Honesty; he acts without Bravery or Humility; and ultimately he lacks Wisdom. He does little to regulate the men he commands. He lacks all moral compass, makes poor choices, and ultimately, as a leader, he's ineffective.

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Cobb (The Bully)

Cobb appears to be at that most successful point in his life. However, his success is built upon bullying, lies, and moral corruption. There's no one he truly Respects or Loves, he has created an illusion of being a legitimate lawman and saloon owner that has no basis in Truth or Honesty. As a warrior, he possess bravado, rather than Bravery, and lacks Humility.



Slick (The Hustler)

Like Paden, Slick represents The Gambler. However, as a Hustler, Slick is not to be trusted. He appears to have never developed The Artist's ability to form mutually beneficial relationships with others. Along with no true expression of Respect and Love, he's rejected the Gifts of Truth and Honesty, which makes him a sociopathic variant of The Trickster.



Tyree (The Maniac)

Tyree's is another sociopathic character. He represents a variant form of The Artist that has rejected the Gifts of Respect and Love. He is at once both overly-emotional and under-emotional. He has no interest in Truth or Honesty and emotionally and as a warrior he's The Maniac. Others instinctively understand that he's a dangerous lunatic.

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Scene by Scene Analysis

1. We meet Emmett

We see that Emmett is very strategic in his fighting style. Thoughtful action is a hallmark of The Chief.

Plot note: Emmett looks hard at the brand on the horse he gets from one of his attempted assassins.

2. Emmett meets Paden

When one travels, one is in the realm of The Scout. You're in The South, a state-of-mind associated in Native American mythology with wandering, seeking, transitions, and possible transformation.

The Chief's inclination is to regulate The Scout. Emmett gives Paden water.

Paden's first spoken line, the first spoken words of the movie, is "Pleased to meet you." An expression of Appreciation, which is a core way in which The Chief in all of us creates a sense of Oneness with others.

3. Emmett and Paden around the campfire

Paden, in his role as The Scout, engages in analytic thinking with Emmett, The Chief; exploring a logical reason why three men would have tried to kill Emmett in the opening scene.

Paden also explains how he had been mistreated and left for dead. He started out trying to self-rescue, but he gave up. He gave into the archetypal fears of Fear of The Cold and Fear of Being Alone, basically shutting down and waiting to die.

4. Emmett and Paden ride together

The Chief shows Compassion, the other key method for generating a sense of oneness, by riding with Paden, past some Native American teepees to a fort / town associated with the 5th Cavalry Regiment. Emmett gives Paden some money, even though presumable as someone recently released from prison, Emmett doesn't have a lot of money. Paden says that he's good for it, but Emmett never asks to be repaid.

5. Paden gets back his horse

Paden had previously acknowledged that what he was going to miss the most of what was stolen from him is his horse. Here we see that Paden does encompass The Artist's emotionality as he passionately gets himself a gun with the money Emmett gave him.

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However, in the gun-fight, Paden is fully the analytical and unemotional Scout as he calmly shoots his attacker.

6. Enter Cobb (the Shadow-Warrior)

Cobb superficially appears to be friendly toward Paden; however, he makes a comment, “Where’s the dog?” that while not yet understood by the audience, seems indicative of causal cruelty. Cobb expresses a desire for Paden to follow him, but Paden is clear that his path is different.

7. Enter Tyree

Tyree also makes a comment about the dog, illustrating his alignment with Cobb on the dark side of aspect variant characters, where villains operate.

8. Emmett and Paden ride to Turley

Symbolically, Paden has now clearly chosen to ride with Emmett and not with Cobb. They travel from the deserts of the South to the mountains of the West, where they meet a variant of the Scout, a Trickster, named Baxter. Baxter’s been hired, for his knowledge of the terrain, to lead a wagon train to Silverado. Emmett and Paden both seem to realize that something is false about Baxter.

9. Enter Mal

Mal has just come from a physically challenging journey and is mission-focused on buying himself a drink.

Note the Mal’s fighting style is very straight-forward and direct. Unlike Emmett or Paden, Mal is able to win his fight without killing anyone. He’s run out of town by Sherriff Langston, another representation of The Warrior, but not before he accomplishes his mission of having that drink!

Sherriff Langston is neither a hero nor a villain. He’s a mission-focused aspect of The Warrior, who takes actions based on logical thought, and not so much on emotion.

10. Emmett and Paden met Jake at Sheriff Langston’s jail

Right away we see that Jake has a child-like joyous quality. “Emmett...Emmett! I’m glad to see you!”

“All I did was kiss a girl.” We see that Jake, The Artist, is in trouble because of The Artist’s variant as The Lover. Jake struggles a bit with sequencing (a Scout cognitive skill), but with help from The Chief he explains what happened.

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Emmett says “Jake, I’m going to ask you once. Was it self-defense?”. Here we see The Chief bring Values into Jake’s situation.

As The Chief, Emmett embodies all the developmentally earlier aspects, including The Trickster (a variant of the Scout), and says “Blind Pete always said you’d hang.” He communicates to Jake that he’ll be breaking him out of jail at dawn.

11. Emmett and Paden walk away from the jail

Emmett tells Paden he’s going to have to bust Jake out of jail because he’s family. Paden lets Emmett know that here’s where they part ways. Paden used to be an outlaw (when he rode with Cobb and Tyree) and he’s now determined to follow a better path. But first, a drink.

12. Emmett and Paden in the saloon

Again, we see Paden act with the impulsivity of the dysregulated Artist, and immediately get into another gun fight. However, we also see Paden as the unemotional, icy, and calculating gunman.

13. Paden and Jake in jail

Paden, The Scout, is initially all logic, “No reason to run. It was a fair fight with plenty of witnesses.” Jake, with his artistic innocence says, “Yeah, that’s what happened with me too.”

Jake, using an artistic style, picks the lock. Paden, in full Trickster mode, knocks out the deputy.

14. Jail break and posse

Note, all of heroes use their gun skills to avoid killing any law men.

15. Mal to the rescue

Jake: “This a friend of yours?”

Paden: “He is now.”

Jake: “Who is he?”

Paden: “A guy who got run out of town.”

Emmett: “Just like us.” The Chief embodies integrity and creates a sense of oneness.

Mal doesn’t say anything, just tips his hat. The Warrior tends to let actions speak rather than words.

16. Our four heroes ride together

When they get to the wagon train, as is traditional and archetypal, The Chief (Emmett) speaks first.

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The Warrior (Mal) is action-oriented and uses few words. “How long they been gone?” and Mal then gets on his horse, letting his actions speak for him.

17. The Robber’s Canyon

The Trickster figure in Native American traditional stories, often times portrayed by Coyote, is a great teacher, often times focusing on showing people what *not* to do, and teaching humility. People generally do not enjoy being on the receiving end of Coyote’s teachings.

In this scene we see Emmett and Paden as Tricksters.

18. Mal, Jake, Emmett around the campfire

Mal touches upon his recent past of working at a meat processing factory in Chicago. We see Jake’s artistic enthusiasm when he asks Mal about Chicago, “Was it wonderful?!, and of course Mal’s understated reply.

Paden joins them. He’d been “looking in” on Hannah, who had just been widowed. The others immediately sense that Paden was not acting from compassion but from lust, again showing that he still has not fully accepted The Artist’s gifts for Respect and Love. Jake, who does more fully represent the fully Gifted Artist, comments, “Geez Paden, her old man ain’t even cold yet.”

19. Paden and Hannah in Silverado

Of the four heroes, Paden is the most on a path of self-development. In this scene, Hannah represents an aspect of The Chief that could be called The Wise Woman. Her discussion with Paden about the fading nature of superficial beauty and the virtues of building a family and a community, push him forward in his own search for Truth and Honesty.

20. Emmet and Jake on the porch of their sister Kate’s house

Emmett greets his nephew Augie first with Respect (he kneels down and shakes his hand) and then with Love (he pulls Augie in for a hug).

21. Mal meets up with his father.

Again in The Warrior’s signature under-stated fashion Mal declares “That ain’t right.” In Arthurian Mythology, the Knights of the Round Tables replaced the previously accepted belief that “Might Makes Right” (because God favors the mighty) to their motto of “Might For Right”.

22. Jake and Emmett in the Kate’s kitchen.

Here we see the classic Western theme laid out of conflict between the farmers and the cattle barons who want their herds to continue to have free range.

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23. Mal and his father confront McKendrick's men

Again we see The Warrior's very straight-forward style.

24. Paden meets Stella

Paden meets another Wise Woman. We see that despite Paden earlier refusing to follow Cobb, that fate seems to have other plans.

25. Mal's father, Ezra Johnson, is assassinated

26. Paden and Emmett at the saloon

Cobb, the variant-Warrior demonstrates that he's The Bully, as he shames and assaults Kelly. We, once again, see Cobb's casual cruelty, devoid of Respect and Love.

We also meet Slick, the Hustler variant of the Scout.

27. Jake and Augie

Again we see The Artist's child-like qualities.

28. Mal and his sister, Rae

Mal, as The Warrior, is focused on family. That's why he returned to Silverado. However, Rae is rejecting of him because of his having left his family, for Chicago, in the first place. Here we see The Warrior's need for not only Bravery, but also Humility.

29. The Dance

Hannah is again the Wise Woman. We see how Emmett is direct and Respectful, and a seeker of Truth and Honesty.

30. Paden and Stella (almost) have a drink together.

We see that Paden is still trying to personally develop and mature.

31. Tyree and Jake tangle over Phoebe, and Paden intervenes

We see Tyree as the Maniac, emotionally dysregulated. Paden demonstrates the cool unemotionality and logic of The Scout.

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32. Emmett returns the horse he acquired in the first scene to McKendrick

33. McKendrick meets with Cobb

McKendrick, The Figure Head variant of the Chief especially fears Emmett and assigns Cobb to kill him, and potentially Mal as well.

34. Back at the saloon

Cobb tells Stella about his history with Paden. Cobb wants Paden to do nothing as he goes after Emmett, Jake, and Mal. Here we see one possible future path for Paden.

35. Emmett prepares for the coming fight

Tyree, The Maniac variant of the Artist, doesn't simply ambush Emmett and shoot him; instead he has to be artistic in his sadism.

Mal saves Emmett, again utilizing very measured force. "I don't wanna kill you and you don't wanna be dead."

36. Mal and a wounded Emmett back at the Ezra Johnson's cave.

Emmett is worried about his brother. Mal states that he'll get Jake and bring him to Emmett.

37. Mal goes to his sister Rae for help.

Mal shows that as The Warrior, he also has the traditional skill-set of The Scout, identifying that McKendrick's men are watching Kate's house.

Slick readily agrees to help Rae find Jake.

38. Slick sets up Mal

Cobb, The Bully (Warrior), wants Mal, the true Warrior, to betray Emmett.

39. Paden visits Mal in jail

40. Paden and Rae

Paden speaks Truth to Rae about Mal being a hard man, and that it's going to cost him.

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41. Jake gets to Kate's house.

Kate's house is also the Land Office. McKendrick burns the law and record books. McKendrick also takes Augie, The Innocent Child (a variant of The Artist).

42. Rae steals Slick's knife

43. The Fire

Stella, the Wise-Woman-Chief, organizes the bucket brigade.

44. Emmett is still too injured

45. Paden and Stella talk

46. Rae visits Mal in jail

It seems appropriate that Slick's knife ends up in a man's back, and still "betrays" Rae who gets shot.

47. Back to Paden and Stella talking

In this pivotal scene, Stella, an aspect of The Chief, helps Paden mature and progress. She states the situation: "Cobb's using me to stop you. So good people are being hurt because of me."

She moves to The East, the domain of emotions, and says: "That makes me mad. Some people think because they're stronger or meaner they can push you around. I've seen a lot of that."

Then she moves to beliefs, which is one way that The Chief regulates the thinking of The Scout. She helps The Scout find Truth and Honesty. "But it's only true if you let it be. The world is what you make of it."

Finally, she moves to The West, the domain of actions, and says: "He can't hurt me if he's dead."

48. Emmett and Mal at the Johnson Cave.

Mal tells Emmett that McKendrick took Augie, The Innocent Child. Emmett immediately gathers his inner Warrior energies.

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49. Cobb and Tyree discover Mal's escaped

50. Augie's a captive at McKendrick's ranch.

51. Paden rides with Emmett and Mal

52. Stampede

We see that our heroes utilize strategy, have an agreed upon plan, and work together on the fly to be a highly effective team.

McKendrick flees, illustrating that as a warrior, the Bully is also The Coward.

53. The bad guys take positions in Silverado

Note that they appear to have no real leadership.

54. The good guys ride to Silverado

55. Stella and Rae

56. Slick finds Rae

57. Jake vs Tyree

58. Mal vs Slick

59. Emmett vs McKendrick

60. Paden vs Cobb

61. Epilogue

Paden has now completed his Scout journey and has replaced Cobb, without becoming Cobb.