Due to an influx of more time and a sudden fancy for a chick flick, I watched both *Groundhog Day* and *The Rules of Attraction* this weekend, with a quick look at *Timecode*.

*Groundhog Day* depicts the unfortunate travels of Phil Connors, who becomes stuck within February 2nd in Punxatony, Pennsylvania. He transitions from a weather forecaster with a huge ego to a confused guy to a use-everything-to-his-advantage player to a crazed-suicidal-psycho-who-can’t-take-it-anymore to a modest man that helps out as many people as possible. He becomes an expert, learning the heart of the town. The movie itself is procedural as its characters follow set patterns. Phil himself embraces and utilizes this repetitious setting. We proceed through his daily day, watching as he goofs up and compensates for his mistakes in the next twenty-four hours. He interacts with random people, learning the schedule of the town. He first robs a money truck, but eventually times his day so that he rescues three old ladies in a car and he saves a kid from falling out of a tree. The procedural aspect of the movie carries us on an ephemeral, yet ever-lasting February 2nd. Events throughout the day continue to repeat, but Phil’s protagonistic interaction is renewed daily. Each time he talks to people, he remembers a facet of their lives, but they don’t remember ever talking to him. The movie proceeds inexorably through Phil’s time-warped journey through Groundhog Day to find himself, allowing us a spatial aspect of navigation through the thought patterns and nuances of the small town of Punxatony.

*The Rules of Attraction* is an interesting tidbit of a movie that travels in memories and a maze of associations. In the beginning of the movie, we see the majority of Camden College at “the End of the World Party,” where glances trigger memories that flow along the details of characters’ lives. Lauren, in love with Victor, decides at the last drunken minute to lose her virginity to a random film student from NYU. Her scenario plays by, and then is caught on rapid rewind. This ends at a new beginning: Sean sees Lauren walk out, and his heart breaks as he scowls and tears up a purple note. Another scene plays out; he, the emotional vampire, stalks out new prey in the form of a blonde fling. From across the room, we see Paul shoot a smoldering gaze in Sean’s direction. Scenes play out, are rewound and told from a different perspective with a different storyline. Misunderstandings are understood only by the viewers. Explanations appear as transitions, relevant or otherwise. The end becomes the beginning, with a cut-off twist.

The procedural qualities of the movie help us down the paths of these characters’ emotional buildups, in a maze of drugs, sex, and college. The movie is a database of characters’ emotions that allows us to spatially navigate their fulfilling journeys, their mishaps and mistakes, their desperate struggles therein. Though not up to the stellar quirky quality of *Groundhog Day*, *The Rules of Attraction* did explore several facets of relationships in the extremes of college atmosphere. Independently-made and briskly desperate, *Rules of Attraction’s* omniscient style of rewind plays through the flamboyant characters, leaving a whirlwind in its wake. It achieves a balance in following each person
one at a time, as opposed to *Time Code*, which tries to accomplish four quadrants of character, leaving us with too much of a headache. Both *Rules of Attraction* and *Time Code* weave interactions throughout the stories, but *Rules* plays with time, whereas *Time Code* plays with space.