

Directing for stage

Director

- The artistic & managerial eye of the production , who over take the responsibility starting from script selection to final performance
- The one who unifies various elements into a cohesive whole

Historical background of directing

Before 20th century the role of director is occupied by play writer & actor.

- In ancient Greek " the choragus "(head of chorus probably the play wright " often coordinated song & movement .
- During renaissance times, a senior members of company's called actor manager , would coordinate
- Actor manager of 19th century

The Modern Theatre Director:

Functions: Artistic and Managerial

- Decides on interpretation of script
- Casts actors
- Works with other theatre artists in designing the production
- Rehearses actors
- Coordinates all elements into a finished performance

George II , the duke of Saxe meninges (1826-1914)

- considered as the first director in concept of contemporary directing definition
- Creation of stage pictures ,Emphasized a pictorial style – focus and composition – and was particularly renowned for his crowd scenes and "ensemble
- Emphasized historical accuracy and realism (particularly in costumes and settings).
- long rehearsal ,detail acting ,
- known for his historical drama

Constantine Stanislavsky (1863-1938)

- Founder of Moscow Art theatre ,he considered as father of modern acting ,originator of Stanislavsky system, method acting
- Helped production style became more realistic instead of presentational .

Types of director

- A new question has developed: should directors be "interpretive" rather than "creative" artists? To interpret the script or fashion their own work of art, using the script as a basis?

- Interpretive director
- Translate the play from page to page as faithfully & accurately as possible
- Creative director
- Often add concepts , designs , or interpretation on top of the play wrights .

Artistic Functions as pre production phase

1. Script selection

- Professional directors either approve of scripts or are "matched"—by the producer(s).
- But most try to do the things they like best.
- Idea and spectacle are the most common elements to excite directors.

- Must learn to know what you do best, and improve on others – choose plays you can do well...
- Wilson, in *The Theatre Experience*, 6th edition, 138, suggests using the following as ideas/ jumping-off points for play selection :
 - Period
 - Central / controlling image / metaphor ,Concept / purpose: look for the "**spine**" of the play – the "**throughline**" -- the "main action" -- a general action that "motivates the play" – the fundamental drama or conflict.
Stanislavsky referred to the **super objective**

Analysis of the script to select

to help director "understand" the play – to make director's consciousness capable of staging the play.

- Depends on your point of view about directing:

- The pattern of the play – its major elements -- structure.
- How do the characters function in the play?
- What are the demands on the character ?
- What are the technical demands / requirements? -- sound, lights, costume, sets?

- The context of the play (often this is a factor)
- Biography of the playwright's life
- Playwright's canon of work (other stuff)
- Period play written
- Period play takes place
- Critical response to play and earlier productions
- Old plays are often updated, new plays often need a different combination of techniques.

Analyzing Basic element of play

- **Plot** :- the arrangement of the events ,what happens & how it happens ?

structure of plots

- **Exposition** . everything the audience need to know to understand the play, character & story
- **Development**. how the introduction complicated
- **Conflict** :-the clash of opposing forces man vs. self vs. man vs. environment vs. natural forces vs. group vs. or group vs. group
..mention specific conflict with its beauty

- **Climax**:-the last point at where the antagonist and protagonist face each other
- **Resolution** :-
- Whatever comes after climax

- **Character**:-the essence of human behavior , protagonist, antagonist
- **Language** :-the particular manner of verbal expressions, the diction or style of writing , or the speech or phrasing that suggests a class or profession or type of character.
- **Theme**:-the basic idea of the play ,the perception bind together the work of art
- **Setting**

Technical elements

- **Scenery(set)**
- the theatrical equipment's ,such as curtains , flats, backdrops , used in a dramatic production to communicate environment.
- **Costumes:-**
- clothing & accessories worn by actors to portray character identity & period.
- **Props :**
- short for properties :any thing except costume or scenery, used as part of a dramatic production ;any moveable Objects that appears on stage during a performance ,from telephone to train .

Cont,

- **Lights**
- The placement , intensity , color of light to help communicate environment , mood or feeling.
- **Sound**
- The effects an audience hears during performance to communicate character , context , or environment
- **Makeup**
- ; costumes ,wigs & body paint used to transform an actor into a character.

Fundamentals of play directing

Composition

- Composition is the rational arrangement of people in a stage group through the use of emphasis & balance ,to achieve an instinctively satisfying clarity & beauty.

PATTERSON: The technical aspect of blocking that leads the audience to see clearly what the director believes is important. It concerns itself with CLARITY—the pleasing arrangement of characters within the setting that lets the audience know where to look at a given moment. It is a still-life painting of the stage at one moment in time.

HODGE: The physical arrangement of actor-characters in a ground plan for the purpose of discovering dramatic action and of illustrating it in the simplest possible way through emphasis and contrast.

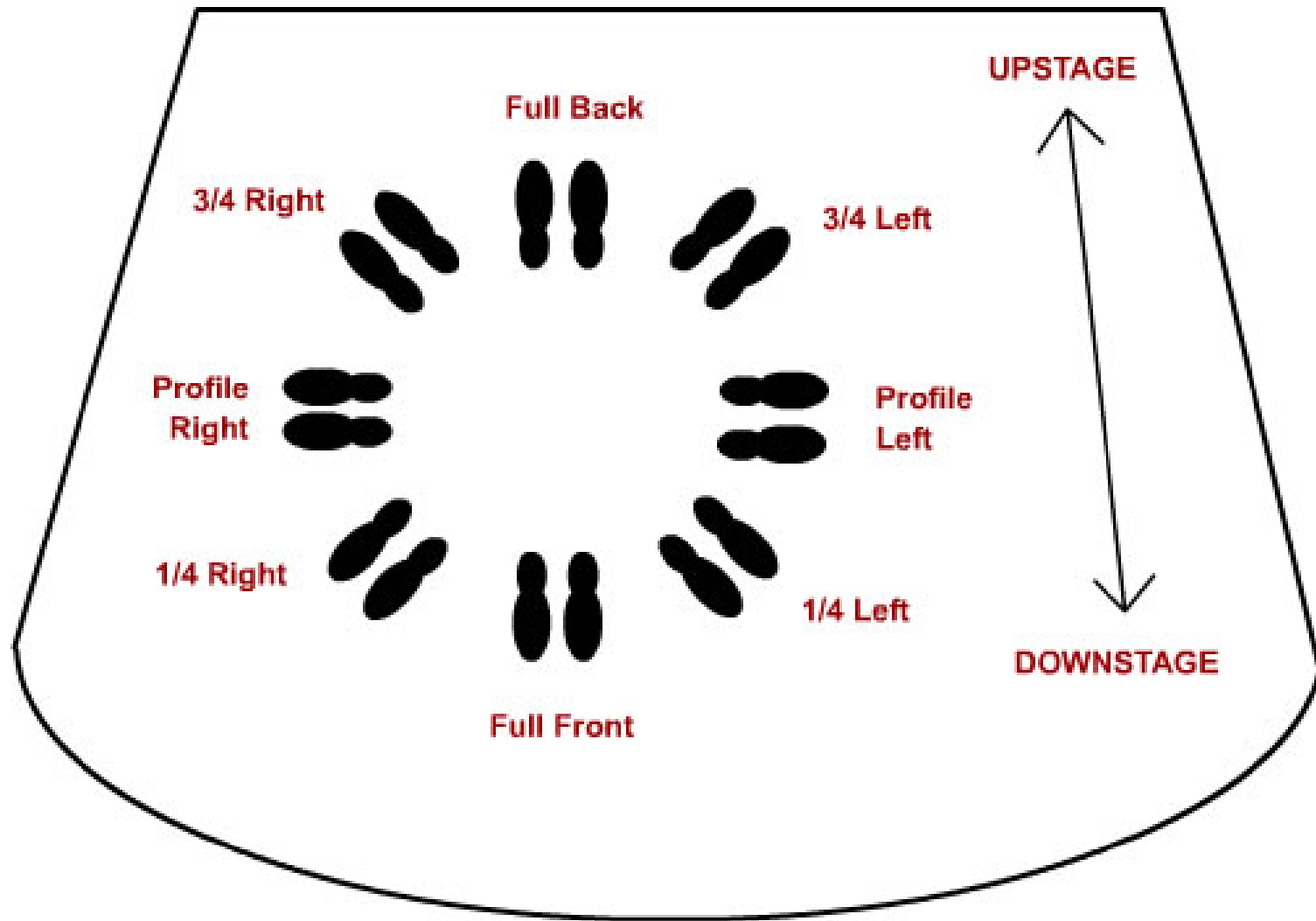
Emphasis

- Selecting the figure upon whom the eyes of the audience should rest immediately .this determined by the importance of the character in the scene being played and by the importance & length of the lines being spoken.

Method of obtaining emphasis

- **Through body position**
- In a group of people onstage standing in various body position the one with full front body position will receive the emphasis.

BODY POSITIONS



Body positions

- Strongest: full front—important lines
- 2nd strongest: full back—special cases
- 3rd strongest: $\frac{1}{4}$ front—used in shared scenes
- Weakest—profile

Stage Area & plane

If a group of people are spread over the stage without much form, the actor in the center area will take on emphasis ,In a proscenium stage, the following stage areas plane seem more emphatic than others:

- Center stage areas are stronger than L or R
- Characters closest to audience are most emphatic
- R is usually more emphatic than L
- DS areas are stronger than US

- Stage areas
 - Characters closer to the audience (downstage) vs. away from the audience (upstage)
 - Strongest stage area: DC
 - Weakest stage area: UL

Level -The attention of the observer is attracted by whatever is higher than the regular line of version , The higher the actor's head, the more focus the actor seems to get.



Line

Focus through line is achieved by having characters in a group look at the person or persons who should receive emphasis

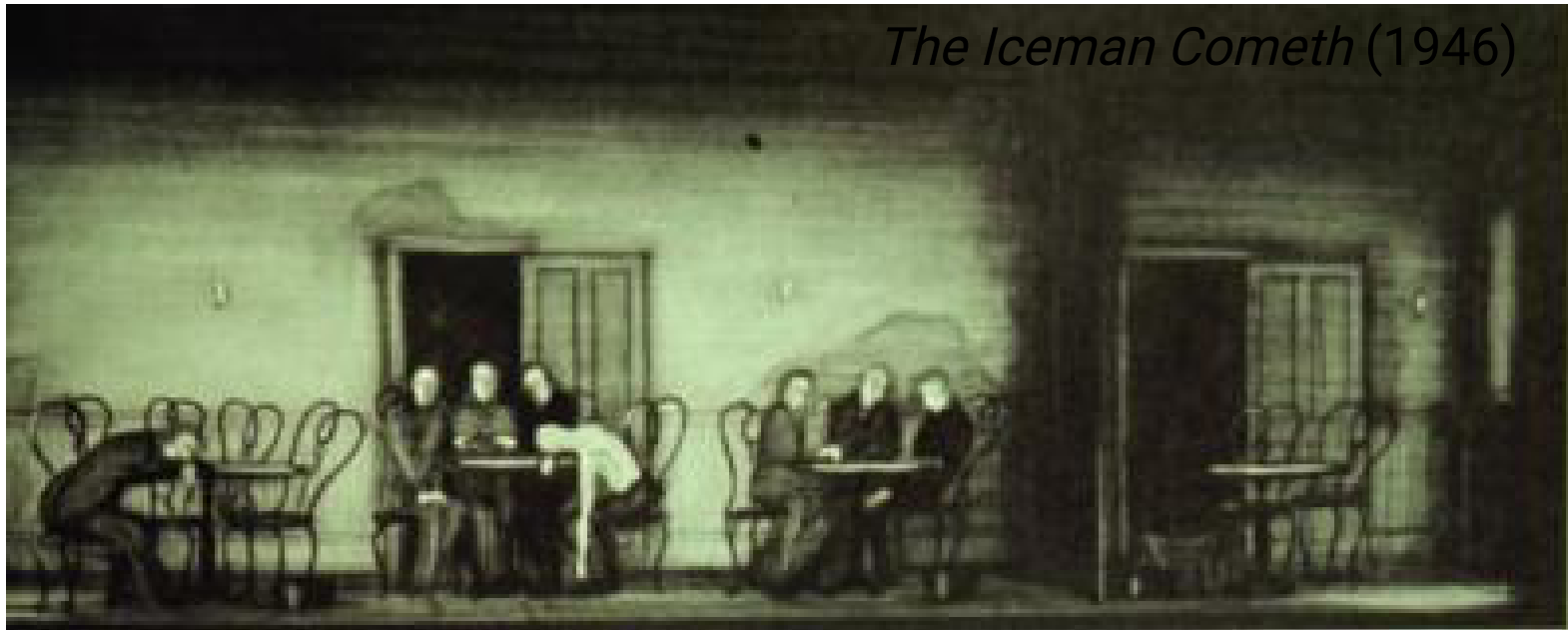


The Iceman Cometh, (1946)

Through contrast/counter emphasis

- An actor in a position that is in a sharp contrast to the positions of the other actors will receive emphasis ,even though this position is considered weak in itself.
- E.g level .the actor prone on the ground or sitting when the remainder of the group is standing will receive emphasis by sharp contrast

SPACE



Space surrounding an important character in a full stage composition is basic blocking technique to give character focus.

- Emphasis may be obtained by creating greater space around one figure as compared with that around other figures or by separating a figure from a group by a means of distance.

Emphasis with technical elements

- Light ,costume ,set &.make up
- The more you give a light, the more you use bright costume , more use of unique makeup & the bright side of stage usually gates primary emphasis

Kind of emphasis

- **Direct Emphasis**
- Figures onstage are so arranged that attention goes directly ,easily & quickly to the one important figure.
- **Duo emphasis**
- The emphasis goes to two of equal importance in a scene .
It is used when the essence of a scene in the script is carried by
Both people , or in an “equally divided scene ”

- **Secondary Emphasis** ,a way of achieving emphasis according to the character importance
- **Diversified emphasis**-multiple emphasis at a moment

Effect of composition on audience mind

- **Lines**
- dominant vertical lines create restful , oppressive , power
- Diagonal line movement instability
- Horizontal lines . Stability

balance

- When one part of the stage composition is equalized in weight

With the other, the composition is said to have balance.

Balance in setting , furniture ,costume & light

Two types of balance

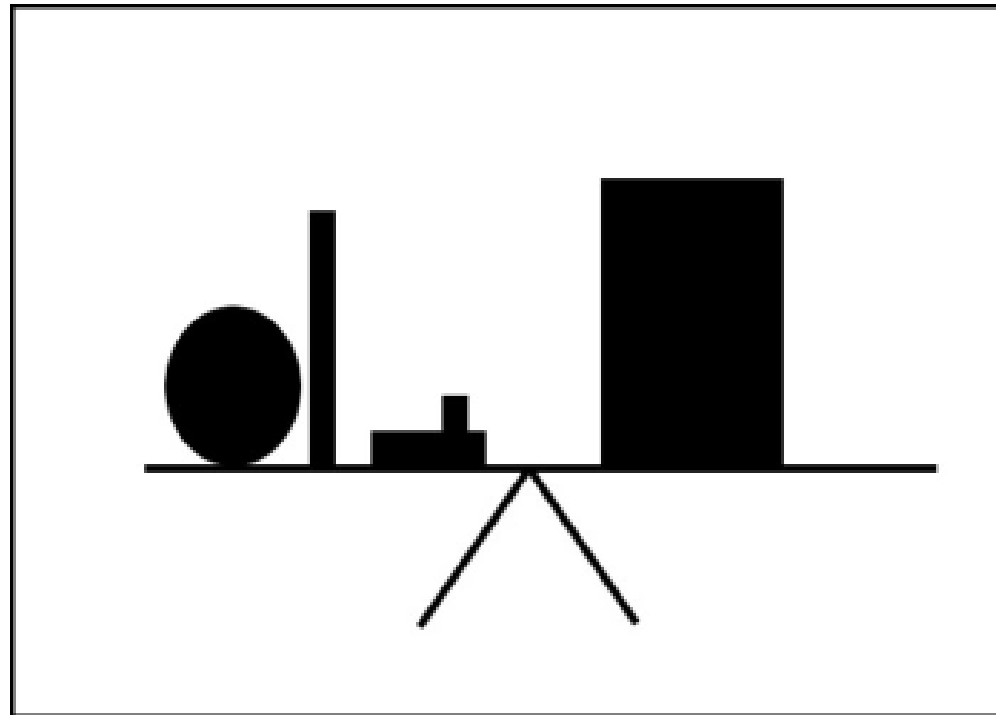
Symmetrical balance

The simplest way to obtain balance is by having an exactly equal grouping or objects on both sides.

Asymmetrical Balance

Balancing both sides by different objects or characters

BALANCE



Movement

- Movement is the stage picture in action .it comprises the moment of picturization in their ever-changing aspects . Like composition movement has both a technical value & a mood value ,

Movement



There are three sources for movement:
1. The playwright mandates it in the dialogue.

Movement



2. Movement comes from dramatic action.

Movement



3. Movement can be introduced by the director to enliven the scene. In a street scene, for example, primary action downstage might be amplified or filled-out by secondary action upstage.

Body movement

- A strong movement of the figure is stepping forward, straightening up, raising from the chair (lower to higher level), raising an arm, walking forward.
- A weak movement is stepping backward, sitting down, lowering the arm,

Values of movement from left stage to right :right stage to left

- Repeated experimentation has shown that , Left to right stage gives effect of stronger movement than right to left
- **Diagonal movement .**
- From down right to up left . weak
- From up left to down right. strong

- MOVEMENT, both strong and weak, is a tool for the director to use for dramatic effect

- Movement change the mood of the scene, If we increase the amount & size ,placement ,tension
- Movement tempo change leads to climax

When not to move

- NEVER MOVE WITHOUT A PURPOSE
- If you can't answer why you are moving, or if the answer is "because the script says to", then DON'T
- Think about the actions you need to take to accomplish your objective
- Hidden motives?
- Character interaction?
- Physical obstacles on the set?

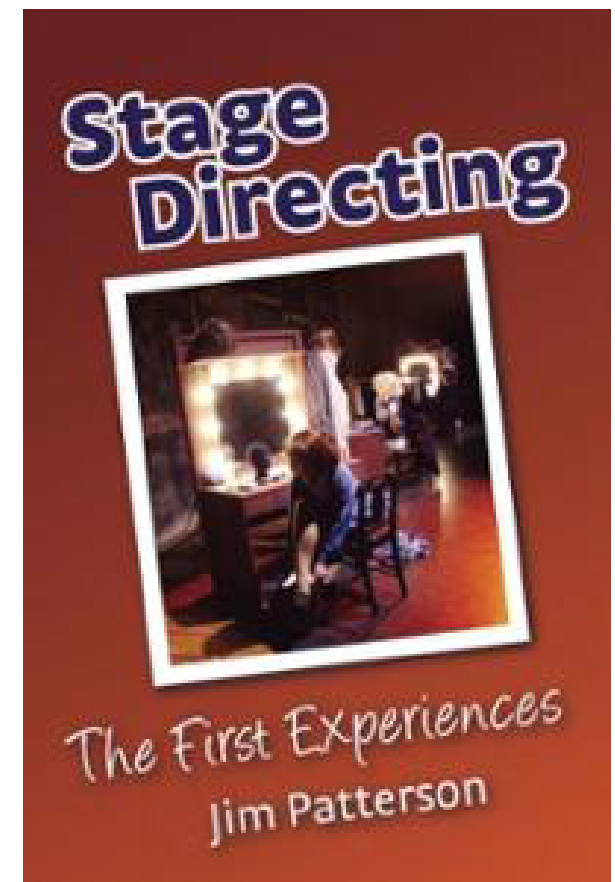
- Limit a speaking character's movement while speaking
- Important lines may not be clearly understood if the actor says them while moving
- Don't allow actors to cross another while speaking unless you want to take focus
- Don't permit business to distract from the key element of the composition

PICTURIZATION

A definition

Picturization is the storytelling aspect of blocking. It concerns itself with revealing character, emotion, and motive through movement, body language, and business. It is revealed using movement that goes from one composition to another.

--Jim Patterson (119)

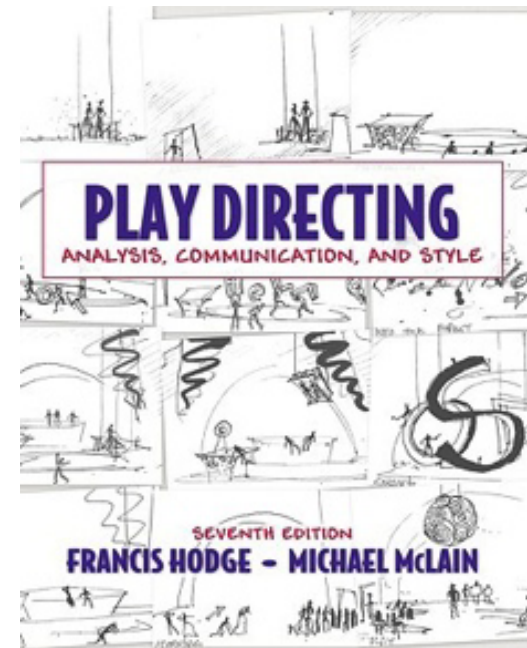


PICTURIZATION

A definition

Picturization is storytelling by a group of actors. It is brought about by the combined use of composition, gesture and improvisation with properties for the specific purpose of animating the dramatic action.

--Francis Hodge (114)



PICTURIZATION

PICTURIZATION IS GIVING MEANING TO WHAT THE AUDIENCE SEES.

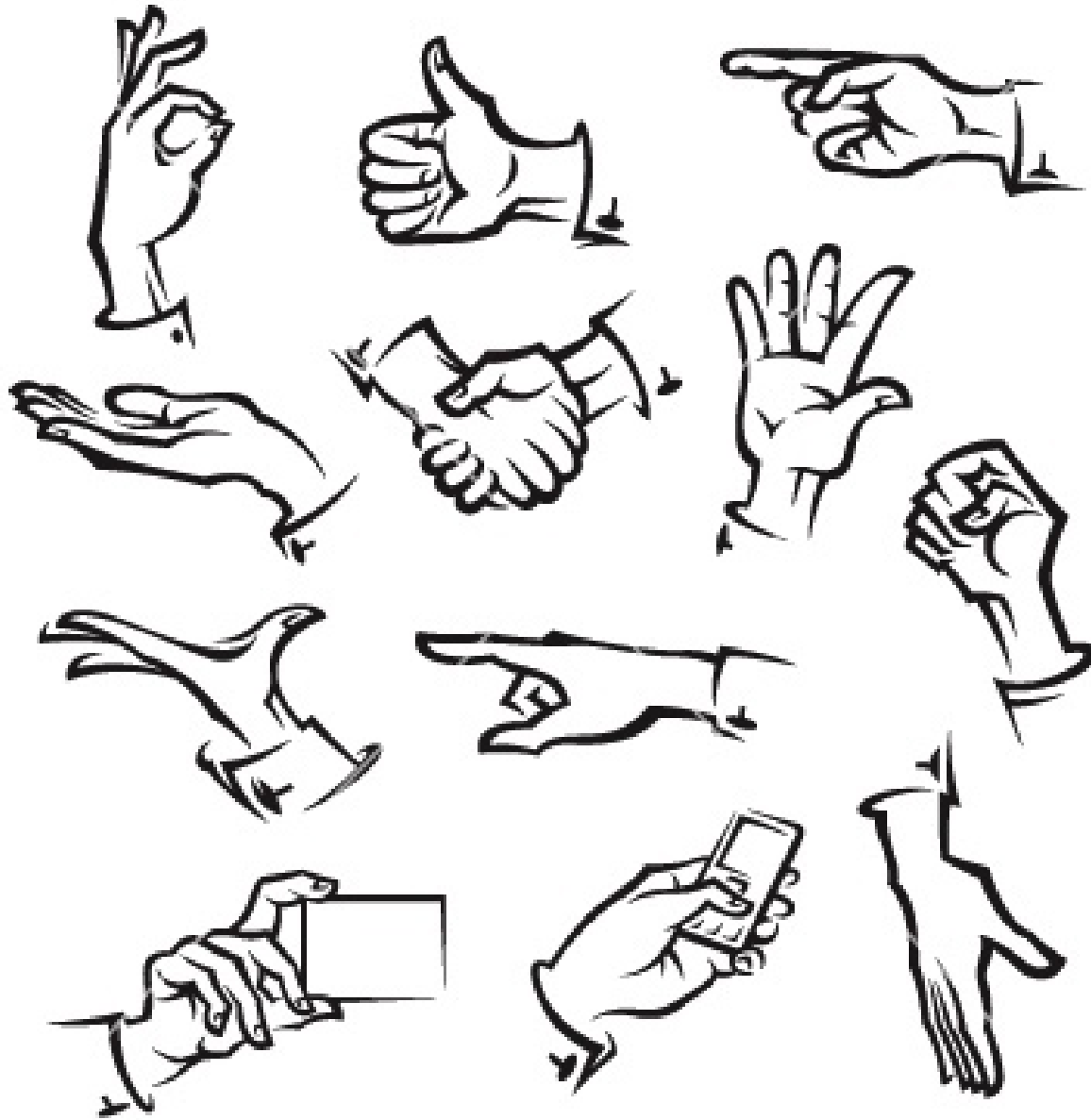
While composition is primarily concerned with the attractiveness of groupings...picturization involves the inherent meaning of how and where the actors move

- Their positions on the stage

- Their body language

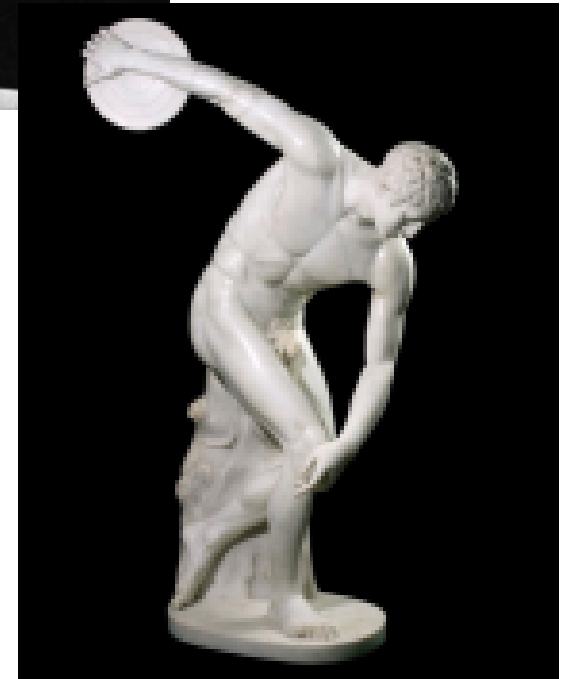
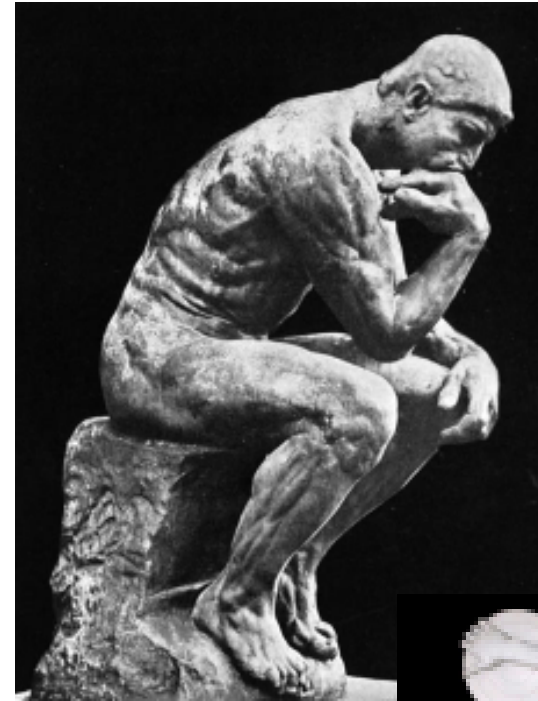
- The business they perform

Picturization is also concerned with the amount, speed and direction of movement.



Gestur
e

Body Language



What is Scoring?

- Scoring a script is the notation of the placement of beats, blocking, voice elements such as stresses, speaking tempos & other important elements of each beats .

What is a beat?

A beat is a single unit of action. A scene may comprise one or more of these*

Beat Change - The point during a scene where a new action begins.

It occurs when a new piece of information is introduced or an event takes place over which the character has no control and which by its very nature must change what the actor is doing.*

*as defined by "A Practical Handbook for the Actor"

GYPSY

ROSE (*Angrily*): So you're killing me!

HERBIE: Nobody can kill you.

ROSE: You're jealous, that's what you are! Like every man I've ever known! Jealous—because my girls come first. Well, they always did and they always will!

HERBIE: Then why did June leave?

ROSE: I don't wanna hear her name!

HERBIE: She didn't want the act any more than Louise wants this!

ROSE: Louise does!

HERBIE: She'll leave like June did!

ROSE: Never! She's gonna be a star.

HERBIE: She's gonna be a star! If it kills *you and her*, she's gonna be a star *someplace*! She's gonna be a star. Where are *you* gonna be, Rose? Where are you gonna be when *she* gets married?

ROSE: She won't be getting married for years—she's a baby!

HERBIE: Sure!

ROSE: Anyway, her career will always come first. (*She sits, looks over the music defiantly*)

HERBIE: That's right. That-is-right. (*He picks up his suitcase, and starts out*)

ROSE: Herbie . . . why does everybody walk out?

HERBIE: Maybe Louise won't.

ROSE: Don't leave, Herbie . . . I need you.

HERBIE: . . . What for?

ROSE: A million things.

HERBIE: Just one would be better. Goodbye, honey. Be a good girl.

(*He goes out the door. Music starts*)

Beat

Beat

How to score a Beat



GYPSY

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Things you should have to answer as a director under each beats

- – **purpose of each beat** :- each beats must have role ,
identify such role under each beats
- **Key words** . Picking a word or phrase in the text that you will emphasize or inflect to deliver a certain emotion or the important words you should focus during acting through pace,,tone .
pouse

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Rose: "I thought you did it for me, Momma." "I thought you did it for me, Momma..." I thought you made a no-talent ox into a star because you like doing things the hard way, Momma. And you haven't got any talent! Not what I call talent, Miss Gypsy Rose Lee! I made you! And you wanna know why? You wanna know what I did it for?! Because I was born too soon and started too late, that's why! With what I have in me, I could've been better than any of you! What I got in me-- what I been holding down inside of me-- if I ever let it out, there wouldn't be signs big enough! There wouldn't be lights bright enough!

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- **owner of the beat** ...the dominant character ,about whome mainly the characters talking

conflict -if there's any types of conflict
mention it under each beat

Subtext of each dialogue-Subtext is the underlying
meaning in text

“Read between the lines!”

It is NOT spoken but interpreted by the actor through
posture, gesture, expression & body language etc...

- **character relationship** within a beat
- **movement**. draw the movement of a.b.c on the ground plan

Tempo & rhythm

- The necessity for structuring the tempo & climax of the performance arise from the nature of the theatre it self.
- Tempo may be defined as the speed at which new impressions or ideas seem to occur for the audience's benefit.
- It could portrayed as fast, medium , slow

- In contrast ,Tempo is defined as the speed or the pace of something .
rhythm Is defined as a regular , repeated pattern of movement or sound.in other words ,rhythm is the relationships between the parts.
- Rhythm portrayed through graphis

Objective of a character within a beat

- This objective is what the character is striving for

FOR EXAMPLE:

In a piece of text you read, you might decide that your character's objective is to annoy someone, or flirt with them etc... *This is their motivation*

Super objective -

BLOCKING

Definitions

The choreography of the play established by the director and actors. (Wainstein)

The movement of the actors through the setting.
(Patterson)

The director is an image-maker...Blocking is the process of stimulating actors to image-making through groundplan, composition, gesture, improvisation with properties, picturization and movement. (Hodge)

Rehearsals

- **Read –through**
- Read through play , actors and director discuss character and vision of the play ,
- **General rehearsals**
- Rehears in parts ,scenes with particular characters
- **Run –through**
- Of acts or the whole play

- **Technical rehearsal** :-with technical elements
- **Dress rehearsal** :-like an actual performance , sometimes for an audience (selected invited people)
- **Previews**:-usually primary for the professional theatre – so the director and actors can work out some of the rough spots before opening it officially

- Opening night
- -in most professional theatre ,the directors job is then over..usually goes on to another job and the stage manager takes over any directing responsibilities.

- Cont....