

## How to Create Characters by Their Actions

One of the differences between a novel and a screenplay is that the latter is a guide to the making of a film. Films, therefore, are not only acoustically accompanied moving pictures like everyday happenings but also, and even primarily, a synthesis of verbally interpreted pieces of reality. As follows, the main ingredients of a script are descriptions of actions, including one particular type of action: dialogues.

But since the romanticism even novels have changed and depend upon dialogues and actions more than on inner thoughts, feelings, and comments of the author or his first-person narrator. Accordingly, a screenwriter is well advised to learn from literature, that offers a deep fund of interesting techniques for plots, dialogues, and descriptive writing styles.

Another important source for learning about the world's visual codification is everyday actions. All of us have learned to differentiate a bus driver from a baker and a policeman from a gardener. Apart from their special clothing, these persons' actions deliver us the base for interpreting their meaning in society in general and in certain situations in particular.

Moreover, all situations can be presented verbally, as they are part of our conceptual world. In real life, a small change in someone's expression can, in specific circumstances, show us that he is going to rob somebody. And potential visual gestures can be semantically filled up with meaning. Placed in a context, signifiers gain their meanings. Imagine a five year old boy beside broken glass on the floor, crying as his mother comes in, a football player who takes off his shirt, throwing it into the audience while shouting and running, or a husband at his wife's grave.

From our knowledge of everyday life we infer to what is happening there, can so attribute character traits to the people in question, and come to imagine the parts that are not shown in the present scene. This way, even emotions can be evoked or made empathically understandable because emotions themselves are not a universal heritage of our biological past but social constructs, as films, based on language.

Only the interpretation of the situation leads to the meaning of one's physical arousal. You will not get jealous until you think that someone intends to get something or someone whom you consider yours. Conversely, you only feel envy when you see someone who has something that, in your opinion, you deserve more than he does. Surprisingly, the physical arousal is basically the same in both phenomena.

To learn the emotional alphabet you can just watch and hear which emotions people attribute to what kinds of situations and actors in these situations. Be aware of every small perceivable clue that helps people to orientate in their daily lives because this very orientation is also the base for a common understanding of films.

You can only 'communicate' a film when you stick to the system of signifiers used in everyday life, of which your script is a performing part as well. Being this performing part, films, paradoxically, can also be used as an orientation for both writing a script and living a life.