

A strong image exiting a frame can make the audience anticipate the return of that image, and this phenomenon can be used to create tension—even if this expectation in the audience is on the subconscious level. Think of the yellow barrel being pulled out of the frame in *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975) after the first harpoon has been planted in the shark. Later, when that familiar frame is repeated, we find ourselves expecting the barrel to return into the frame—and to our great satisfaction and pleasure, it does.

There is yet another value to the familiar image: *dramatic economy*, a key ingredient of dramaturgy from its inception, starting with Aristotle's *unity of action*. The concept of economy is mostly the purview of the screenwriter, but it also relates to staging, camera, props, and so on. In short, every time a director considers adding a new element to do a narrative, dramatic, or even atmospheric job, she should first ask this question: "Can I do it with what I've already got?"

## C H A P T E R 2

# INTRODUCTION TO THE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS EMBEDDED IN THE SCREENPLAY

We talked in Chapter 1 about elements that appear on the screen, but there are many elements embedded in a screenplay that, if unearthed by the director, will help supply clarity, cohesion, and dramatic power to what appears on the screen.

### SPINES

There are two categories of spines we will deal with. The first is the spine of your film, or its main action. Before we get to the dramatic definition of a film's spine, an analogy using representational sculpture might be helpful. When working in clay, a sculptor first builds an armature (i.e., a skeleton, usually of metal) to support the clay. This armature determines the parameters of the final work. If the armature is designed to represent a man standing, it will be impossible for the artist to turn it into a man sitting, no matter how much clay she applies to it. Even without this exaggerated example, a poorly designed armature of a man standing, one that does not take into account the anatomy and proportions of the human skeleton, will still fall far short of supporting the artist's intent. The analogy implies that there is a scientific component to our task, and that is exactly the case. It is called dramaturgy, and the armature of dramaturgy is the spine—the driving force or concept that pervades every element of the story, thereby holding the story together.

Stage director Harold Clurman comments in *On Directing*: "Where a director has not determined on a spine for his production, it will tend to be formless. Each scene follows the next without necessarily adding up to a total dramatic 'statement.'"

After the film's spine has been determined, it is necessary to determine the spine of your characters—their main actions. It is the goal that each character desperately desires, aspires to, yearns for. It should be extremely important, perhaps a matter of life and death. The character must save the farm, win her love, discover the meaning of life, live a life that is not a lie, or any of the countless wants we humans have. And the more a character wants something, the more the audience will care about whether or not she gets it. Moreover, the character's spine should be contained under the umbrella of the film's spine. Clurman comments: "The character's spine must be conceived as emerging from the [screen] play's main action. Where such a relation is not evident or non-existent, the character performs no function in the [screen] play."

When Clurman directed Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, he came up with the following spines. For the play, "to probe within oneself for the lost something"; for Tyrone,

“to maintain his fatherhood”; for Mary, “to find her bearings, her home”; for Edmund, “to discover or understand the truth”; and for Jamie, “to free himself from guilt.”

Elia Kazan, one of America's premier theater and film directors, was a member of the Group Theater in the 1940s and 1950s and shared the same methodology with Clurman. Kazan's *Director's Notebook for A Streetcar Named Desire*, published in *Directors on Directing*, edited by Toby Cole, gives us an invaluable look at Kazan's thorough and insightful detective work. Kazan's spine for Blanche, the protagonist, is to “find protection”; for Stella, it is to “hold onto Stanley”; for Stanley, it is to “keep things his way”; and for Mitch, to “get away from his mother.”

Federico Fellini said that making a film was, for him, as scientific as launching a space rocket. But he most likely did not make conscious use of a spine for the film or for his characters. Nevertheless, there is an organic artistic unity present in his masterpiece, *8½* (1963, Italian), (analyzed in Part Five, Chapter 17). In other words, Fellini, on some level, paid attention to this important piece of dramaturgy.

The following are spines for Fellini's *8½*:

- Film's spine: to seek an authentic life
- Guido's spine: to live a life without a lie
- Guido's wife: to have a marriage that is not a lie
- Carla: to be loved (by Guido and her husband)
- Mezzabota: to deny an authentic life (by seeking escape in an inauthentic relationship)
- Gloria: to seek salvation in abstractions
- Screenwriter: to seek meaning in art
- Cardinal: to seek union with God through the church (the only authentic path)
- Woman in white: to seek the true, the good, the beautiful

Because the spines of the major characters can all be subsumed under the umbrella of the film's spine, the film achieves the thematic unity that is a basic requirement of art.

The spine is such a powerfully organizing tool that when we apply it after our first readings of the text, it might cause us to rewrite. We might find that the spines of our characters do not fit under the umbrella of the film's spine. Does this mean that we have a film that will not engage an audience? Not necessarily—but it would be more engaging if it were an organic whole. (Other directors might use other words to identify similar categories that serve as a unifying function, such as *premise* and *through-line*.)

## WHOSE FILM IS IT?

Most successful films have a protagonist, and the first question in our detective work on the screenplay is: *Who is the protagonist in our film?* Another way of asking the same question, one I believe is more helpful for the director, is: *Whose film is it?* Which character do we go through the film with? Which character do we hope or fear for—hope that she will get what she wants, or fear that she will not?

I have not included as the primary criterion for a protagonist that he or she be the one who drives the action throughout the entire film. Not that it's a bad idea. Quite the contrary; it is one of the key tenets of most dramaturgy. However, there are just too many successful films where that is not the case; for example, with Ingrid Bergman's character Alicia in *Notorious*. Also, there are many fine films where there is no central protagonist at all, or possibly multiple or serial protagonists, such as Robert Altman's *Nashville* (1975), Kenji Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* (Japanese, 1956), Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), Jonathan Dayton's and Valerie Faris' *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006), or Todd Field's *Little Children* (2006).

## CHARACTER

Paul Lucey, in his very fine book on screenwriting, *Story Sense*, states that one of the main tenets of his dramaturgy is, “Write simple stories and complex characters.”

*Although film takes place in the present, character is created in the past.* Character is everything that has gone into the making of our characters before they stepped into our film: genetic inheritance, family influence, socioeconomic conditions, life experience, and on and on. Of course, some influences are more relevant to our stories than others, and we should limit ourselves so that we do not become bogged down with the nonessential. Keep this analogy in mind: *A film is like a train ride in which characters embark on their journey with just enough baggage for that trip.*

There is an often-told story concerning character that bears repeating here. A frog was sitting by a river swollen by a recent flood, when a scorpion came up to him. “Mr. Frog, the river is much too wide for me to cross. Could you please take me across on your back?”

“Oh, no,” replied the frog, “when we get to the middle of the river, you will kill me with your sting.”

“Why would I do that?” asked the scorpion. “If I killed you, you would sink to the bottom and I would drown.”

The frog had not thought of that scenario, but it made perfectly good sense. “Okay,” said the frog, “hop on.”

“Thank you so much, Mr. Frog,” said the scorpion as he hopped on the frog's back.

The frog was a strong swimmer, and in no time at all they reached the middle of the river, but still much too far for the scorpion to walk to the other side. Nevertheless, the scorpion stung the frog with his stinger. As the frog began to die from the poison, and the scorpion began to drown because he had lost his ride, the frog asked incredulously, “Why? Why did you sting me?”

The scorpion replied, “It's my character.”

We are familiar with complicated film characters: Guido in *8½* (Fellini, 1963), Charles Foster Kane in *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), Rick in *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942), Michael in *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), Blanche and Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Kazan, 1951), John Forbes Nash Jr. in *A Beautiful Mind* (Ron Howard, 2001), Fiona in *Away From Her* (Sarah Polley, 2006), and Pierre Peders and Katya in *Interview* (Steve Buscemi, 2007).

The character studies in Kazan's *Director's Notebook on A Streetcar Named Desire* are brilliant not only in going to the central core of the character but in uncovering the undulations and modulations of that core that make the characters so compelling to watch. This psychology unearthed by Kazan prior to working with the actors points the way to behavior that will ultimately make the psychology available to the audience. This point is made paramount in Kazan's first note to himself: “A thought—directing finally consists of turning Psychology into Behavior.” The most complicated character in the play/film is Blanche, and Kazan pushes himself in the *Notebook* to discover all of the varied layers of her personality. “Try to find an entirely different character, a self-dramatized and self-romanticized character for Blanche to play in each scene. She is playing 11 different people. This will give it a kind of changeable and shimmering surface it should have. And all these 11 self-dramatized and romantic characters should be out of the romantic tradition of the Pre-Bellum South.”

No director has ever been more attuned than Kazan to the idea that everything the director does is aimed at affecting the audience. Again, his *Notebook*:

The audience at the beginning should see her [Blanche's] bad effect on Stella, want Stanley to tell her off. He does. He exposes her and then gradually, as they [the audience] see how genuinely in pain, how actually desperate she is, how warm, tender and loving she can be . . . how frightened with need she is—they begin to go with her. They begin to realize that they are sitting in at the death of something extraordinary . . . colorful, varied, passionate, lost, witty, imaginative, of her own integrity . . . and then they feel the tragedy.

Kazan's exhaustive investigation of character not only deals with the past; he also projects (in the case of Stanley) into the future: "He is adjusted *now* . . . later, as his sexual powers die, so will he; the trouble will come later, the 'problems.' He's going to get very fat later."

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstance is simply the situation the characters find themselves in. It can be, from the character's perspective, objective or subjective—real or imagined. In a feature-length screenplay, the circumstances, especially for principal characters, are more often than not made explicit in the screenplay. They are not up for grabs. But in short films the full circumstance of the character might not be contained in the text.

## DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP

The relationship we are referring to here is not the societal relationship; that is, husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, father/son, mother/daughter, and so on. These static relationships are facts of the story and will come out in exposition. What we want here is to find the ever-changing dynamic relationship that exists between any two characters—the one that supplies what I call the *dramatic juice*. And where do we find it?

*The dynamic relationship is found in the present moment, in the "now."* It is always established by looking through the eyes of the characters. It can be objective or it can be entirely subjective. The important point is always how one character "sees" another character at the present moment. For example, a bride on the day of the wedding might see the groom as her "knight in shining armor." Seven years later she might see him as her "ball and chain." Or, on the day of the wedding, the bride, instead of seeing "my knight in shining armor," sees "my ticket out of town." A father might see his son as a "disappointment," while the son might see his father as his "boss." That very same father might change during the course of the film and begin to see his son as "his own drummer," while the son might now see his father as his "Rock of Gibraltar."

## WANTS

*Wants differ from the spine in that they are smaller goals (objective is another term sometimes used) that must be reached before the larger goal of the spine can be achieved.* For example, in 8½ the protagonist's spine is "to lead an authentic life"—a life that is not a lie—but he also wants to make a great film and be a good husband. There are also smaller (but not unimportant), more immediate wants that occur in individual scenes and are called *scene wants*. For the protagonist, Guido, there are scenes in which he wants to escape, to placate, to deflect. Also, these "smaller" wants can conflict with the larger goal of the spine, and as far as dramatic purposes are concerned, it is better if they do. For example: an Ethical Man wants to live his life ethically—his spine, or sometimes called *life want*—but his wife and children are hungry. He wants to feed them, but he can only get sustenance for them by committing an unethical act.

Synonymous with want in drama is the *obstacle* to obtaining that want. This is what elicits the struggle—the dramatic journey. It is what supplies the conflict.

"Hey, will you love me for the rest of my life?"

"Of course I will."

End of film.

If, instead of acquiescence, there is rejection—"Get lost, jerk!"—we have the obligatory obstacle that sets up the obligatory conflict, but only if the character truly "wants."

There are three possibilities concerning a character's want: the character will succeed in obtaining the want, will fail, or will be sidetracked by a new, more urgent want.

It is important to make a distinction between wants and needs. To paraphrase Mick Jagger: "You can't always get what you want, but if you try, you might get what you need." This distinction often supplies the basis for irony in our stories—another very powerful tool used by storytellers since the time of the ancient Greeks.

## EXPECTATIONS

Characters might want something, but do they expect to get it? Are they afraid of what might happen, or are they confident? This psychological state is important for the audience to know so that they can more fully access the particular moment in the story. In a scene where each character's expectations are opposed, and we know about it, dramatic tension is created. (There will be more discussion later on about what the audience should know and when.)

## ACTIONS

Drama is told through the actions of your characters. These actions must be conveyed to an audience for them to fully appreciate, as well as understand, the story.

Characters perform actions to get what they want. That seems rather obvious, doesn't it? But what might not be so obvious is that characters rarely perform actions that aren't related to attaining what they want. They almost never voluntarily take their eyes off the prize, but exceptions do occur! Sometimes characters will commit actions that are not related to their immediate wants but instead are generated by their innate characters—like the scorpion.

A character can perform only one action at a time! Sandy Meisner, the famous acting teacher, constantly encountered beginning actors who thought this was not so. Perhaps they thought that it was too limiting. Meisner asked the Doubting Thomas to stand up. Then he barked out, "Turn on the light and open the window!"

Another common misunderstanding is that actors act emotions. They do not. Then where does the emotion come from? The emotional life of the actor/character comes primarily from actions that are wedded to wants that are contextualized by—embedded in—dynamic relationships and circumstance.

Dialogue is action! If I say "hello" to you, it might be a greeting, but if you come into my class a half-hour late it might very well be a reprimand. Only by fully understanding the circumstances and the wants can we arrive at the true intent of the action.

## ACTIVITY

It is important to distinguish between action and activity. Suppose you are sitting in your dentist's reception area reading a magazine. Are you waiting or reading? Most likely you are waiting. As soon as the dentist is ready for you, you will drop the magazine. So what is the reading, in dramatic terms? It is an activity that accompanies the action of waiting.

## ACTING BEATS

An *acting beat* (also referred to as a *performance beat*) is a unit of action committed by a character. There are literally hundreds of these acting beats in a feature-length film. Every time the

action of a character changes, a new acting beat begins. Each acting beat can be described by an action verb.

In the example of the student coming late to class, my action verb, "to reprimand," was an acting beat. Before that beat could take place there had to be at least one acting beat that preceded it, no matter what the circumstance or wants attendant to this particular story. What is that acting beat that must precede any exchange between characters? Awareness! For me or anyone else to reprimand someone—or to greet them—we must first become aware that they are present.

In addition to the narrative/dramatic elements already introduced, are there others that would be helpful? There are, and they go to the heart of the methodology that is offered in this book. I have found them imbedded in hundreds of dramatic scenes in films of every genre and culture. Directors who can identify these elements will obtain a clarity about their scenes that will inform their work with actors, their staging, and not least, their camera.

The three additional elements I have identified and given labels to are dramatic blocks, narrative beats, and a scene's fulcrum. Each of them has to do with the organization of action within a scene.

### DRAMATIC BLOCKS

A *dramatic block* can be likened to a paragraph in prose: it contains one overriding dramatic idea. Keeping our dramatic ideas separated gives them more force and power and makes them clearer to the audience. As in prose, when we move on to another idea, we begin a new paragraph, acknowledging to the reader the progression of thought, or in the case of a dramatic film, acknowledging narrative or dramatic change and/or escalation. Acknowledging change gives the audience a sense of forward momentum—of narrative thrust.

Identifying our dramatic blocks will help us to incorporate *spatial renderings* into our staging: "geographical paragraphs" that will contain a single strong "idea" (one *main* action). For example:

REASON SEDUCE THREATEN BEG

\* If we give each of the above dramatic blocks a significantly different spatial rendering, the series of actions will *unfold* in a more powerful way because the character's intent and increasing desperation will be made clearer—more *palpable*—to the audience. The clarity we see in the above schematic will be helpful in working with our actors, and, of course, must be taken into account when we block them and add the camera.

### NARRATIVE BEATS

Why does a director move a camera or cut from one shot to another? Why does a director have a character move from one side of the room to the other? Is what they do random, or can it be explained? If it cannot be explained, it cannot be taught. I believe it can be explained, and not just for some films but for all dramatic/narrative films.

For nearly a century the concept of a beat has been used in acting as a unit of action or nuance from the perspective of a character. However, it is also possible to think of beats from a director's perspective as units that progress the narrative.

The majority of director's beats—or as I have labeled them, *narrative beats*—are acting beats that are articulated ("framed") by the director. All narrative beats contain a heightened "story moment" (such as a significant escalation of action or changes in its direction) or render plot points essential to the story. The latter is an example of a narrative beat, which is separate from an acting beat.

Narrative beats are articulated through staging and/or camera, and the editing process acknowledges this articulation. The director, using staging and camera, either separately or in combination, indicates to the audience that something significant has happened or foreshadows that something significant is about to happen. Whether or not an acting beat is also a narrative beat depends on the style with which each director articulates his or her story. Some will affirm more narrative beats than others.

### FULCRUM

In a dramatic scene, a scene where the *character whose scene it is* wants something that is difficult to obtain, often the most important narrative beat is the *fulcrum*—the moment in the scene where things can go either way for that character. One could call this the turning point, but I prefer to use that term in regard to the film's overall dramatic structure (*turning point* is often used to denote the plot point that occurs at the end of the first and second acts). In a feature film with, say, six dramatic scenes, there might be two turning points but six fulcrums.

In the next chapter we will explore how all of the various elements introduced in this chapter are put to use in a dramatic scene by a master director.



## CHAPTER 3

# ORGANIZING ACTION IN A DRAMATIC SCENE

What distinguishes a dramatic scene from other scenes? An important difference is that in a dramatic scene one character always has a strong want that the other character or characters in the scene are opposed to. I often liken dramatic scenes to a tennis match or an arm wrestling contest. In an effective dramatic scene a question is raised—will such and such a character get what they want, or will they be defeated? This leads to conflict, the essence of drama. Much of the action in such a scene is usually contained in dialogue, though there are exceptions, and much of the character's reactions are psychological (taking place inside the character's head). Therefore it is important that the *articulation* of action in these scenes makes the interior life of the characters available to the audience.

A proper organization and articulation of a dramatic scene will not merely make it more interesting, but even more importantly, it will assure that the psychology of each moment is made available to the audience.

The Patio scene that follows is from *Notorious*. It was chosen because it is a clear, unambiguous example of a dramatic scene, rendered by a master director whose methodical preparation before shooting is reflected in his staging, camera, and editing, allowing us to fully explore the dramatic elements introduced in Chapter 2, and how they can help to render the text fully.

### DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S *NOTORIOUS* PATIO SCENE

The scene occurs early in the second act, and the synopsis of the story to this point is: Devlin (Cary Grant) is an American intelligence agent who has recruited Alicia (Ingrid Bergman), a woman who likes to drink and has had more than a few lovers. Neither one has any idea what the agency is planning for them, and before they discover what the assignment is, they fall in love.

#### CIRCUMSTANCE

In the scene just prior to the Patio, Devlin has received his instructions from the agency. He is to inform Alicia, the woman he is deeply in love with, of her first assignment: seduction of the German arms dealer Sebastian for the purpose of gaining information.

#### WHOSE SCENE IS IT? -

To fully appreciate this scene, we have to be in Alicia's head—to be privy to her psychology moment by moment. We will discover in later chapters how Hitchcock assists us in gaining this

access—in making Alicia's psychology available to us by his exquisite staging and his use of the camera as narrator.

#### EXPECTATION

Alicia's expectation is conveyed from the beginning of the scene. There is an excitement in her voice as, preparing dinner, she unself-consciously rambles on about domestic, "wifely" concerns and her thought that "marriage must be wonderful." Devlin, on the other hand, who an hour ago was on the verge of letting his guard down with Alicia, has now raised it higher than ever because he expects to be hurt. He expects that she will take the job and give herself to another man.

#### SCENE WANTS

Alicia's wanting a romantic evening—just the two of them dining alfresco over a home-cooked meal—indicates her ardent desire to *escalate* the relationship with Devlin. After this evening they will be a couple. Before his meeting with Prescott, Devlin would have wanted the same thing. Now he wants Alicia to refuse the assignment—to refuse to seduce the Nazi. He will not give his love to her unless she does.

#### DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS

For Alicia, Devlin is still the *knight in shining armor*: the man she has stopped drinking for; the man she will change her life for; the man who has rescued her from a meaningless existence. For Devlin, Alicia has returned to an earlier incarnation: *temptress*—or as Alicia herself suggests in the scene, *Mata Hari*—a woman who can hurt him if he lets her get too close, if he lets his guard down. He suggests as much to Alicia earlier in the film in response to her asking, "Are you afraid of falling in love with me?" Devlin's response: "It wouldn't be hard."

(Part of the following takes place in the kitchen and living room, and technically they would be labeled as separate scenes, but I am including them as part of the patio location because they are spatially and temporally continuous. The director must regard them as a dramatic whole to integrate them seamlessly into an overall dramatic arc that contains a beginning, middle, and end—one of the defining characteristics of a dramatic scene.)

### NOTORIOUS PATIO SCENE ANNOTATED

The following is the annotated Patio scene with the dramatic blocks, acting beats, narrative beats, and fulcrum identified. Acting beats appear in lower case type on the right. Narrative beats appear in UPPER CASE type.

#### BEGINNING OF FIRST DRAMATIC BLOCK

##### LIVING ROOM/ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Devlin enters and walks through the living room to the patio.

	ALICIA (o.s.)	
Dev,	is that you?	to greet
Ahuh.	DEVLIN	to reply

I'm glad you're late. This chicken took longer than I expected. What did they say?

ALICIA (o.s.)

to share

to inquire

## KITCHEN/ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alicia cutting the chicken.

Hope it isn't done too . . . too much. They caught fire once.

ALICIA

to excuse  
(lack of response)

## LIVING ROOM/ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

I think it's better if I cut it up out here. Unless you want a half of one yourself. We're going to have knives and forks after all. I've decided we're going to eat in style.

ALICIA (o.s.)

to relate

Alicia enters with two dinner plates and moves to the patio where she sets one of the plates on the dining table.

Marriage must be wonderful with this sort of thing going on every day.  
(She kisses Devlin, then sets the second plate on the table.)  
I wonder if it's too cold out here. Maybe we should eat inside.  
(She turns to Devlin and puts her arms around him.)  
Huh?

ALICIA

to speculate

to connect

to question

to greet

to persist

## SECOND DRAMATIC BLOCK

## PATIO/ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alicia kisses Devlin. He is unresponsive.

Hasn't something like this happened before? What's the matter? Don't look so tense.

ALICIA

to search  
(for a reason)

Troubles? Well, handsome, I think you better tell Momma what's going on. All this secrecy is going to ruin my little dinner. Come on, Mr. D, what is darkening your brow?

After dinner.

DEVLIN

to delay

No, now. Look, I'll make it easy for you. The time has come when you must tell me that you have a wife and two adorable children, and this madness between us can't go on any longer.

ALICIA

to draw (him) out

I bet you heard that line often enough.

DEVLIN

TO ACCUSE

Right below the belt every time . . . Oh, that isn't fair, dear.

ALICIA

TO PROTEST

Skip it. We have other things to talk about. We've got a job.

DEVLIN

TO ANNOUNCE

Oh, so there is a job.

ALICIA

TO CONFIRM

You ahh . . . you remember a man named Sebastian?

DEVLIN

TO QUESTION

Alex Sebastian?

ALICIA

TO CLARIFY

Yes.

DEVLIN (O.S.)

to affirm

One of my father's friends, yes.

ALICIA

to explain

He had quite a crush on you.

DEVLIN

TO IMPLY

I wasn't very responsive.

ALICIA

TO DENY

Well he's here. The head of a large German business concern.

DEVLIN

TO INFORM

His family always had money.	ALICIA	to state (a fact)
He's part of the combine that built up the German war machine and hopes to keep on going.	DEVLIN	to explain
Something big?	ALICIA	to inquire
It has all the earmarks of being something big. We have to contact him. (Alicia takes that in and turns away from Devlin.)	DEVLIN	TO DISCLOSE (nature of job)
		TO DETACH

#### BEGINNING OF THIRD DRAMATIC BLOCK

Alicia moves to a chair and sits.		TO DISTANCE
Go on, let's have all of it.	ALICIA	to submit
We're meeting him tomorrow. The rest is up to you. You've got to work on him and land him.	DEVLIN	to order
Mata Hari. She makes love for the papers.	ALICIA	TO DENIGRATE (HERSELF)
There are no papers. You land him. Find out what's going on inside his house, what the group around him is up to, and report to us.	DEVLIN	TO TAKE (COMMAND) to instruct
I suppose you knew about this pretty little job of mine all the time.	ALICIA	TO ACCUSE
No. I've only just found out about it.	DEVLIN	TO DENY
Did you say anything? I mean that maybe I wasn't the girl for such shenanigans.	ALICIA	TO INQUIRE

I figured that was up to you. If you'd care to back out.	DEVLIN	TO CHALLENGE
I suppose you told them, Alicia Huberman would have this Sebastian eating out of her hand in a couple of weeks. She's good at that! Always was!	ALICIA	TO ATTACK
I didn't say anything.	DEVLIN	TO STATE A FACT
Not a word for that . . . that little love sick lady you left an hour ago.	ALICIA	TO DECLARE (HER LOVE)
I told you that's the assignment.	DEVLIN	TO REJECT

#### FULCRUM

At this point, the scene could go either way. Alicia could accept Devlin's last words and let it kill her want. But because her want is strong and all-embracing, she cannot give it up without a fight. Alicia still has hope that she can win Devlin's heart; to make everything like it was a few hours ago. (This fulcrum is also the beginning of the fourth dramatic block.)

#### BEGINNING OF FOURTH DRAMATIC BLOCK

Well now, don't get sore, dear. I'm only fishing for a little bird call from my dream man.	ALICIA	to appease
One little remark such as, how dare you gentlemen suggest that Alicia Huberman, the new Miss Huberman be submitted to so ugly a fate. (Alicia stands.)		to protest
Alicia's challenge is the apex of this fulcrum, and she will now go on the offensive to pursue her want.		TO CHALLENGE
That's not funny. (Alicia approaches Devlin. Devlin puts a cigarette into his mouth and lights it. Alicia stops her advance.)	DEVLIN	to rebuke TO PURSUE (her love) TO FEND OFF
You want me to take the job?	ALICIA	TO BACK OFF to question

You're asking for yourself.	DEVLIN	to reprimand
I am asking you.	ALICIA	to insist
It's up to you.	DEVLIN	to refuse (help)
Not a peep. Oh, darling, what you didn't tell them, tell me - that you believe I'm nice, and that I love you, and I'll never change back.	ALICIA	to criticize TO IMPLORE
I'm waiting for your answer.	DEVLIN	TO CUT OFF

#### BEGINNING OF FIFTH DRAMATIC BLOCK

Alicia turns from Devlin.		TO CONCEDE (defeat)
What a little pal you are. (Alicia begins exit from patio.) Never believing me, hmm? Not a word of faith, just down the drain with Alicia. That's where she belongs. Oh, Dev . . . Dev . . .	ALICIA	to denounce TO RETREAT to rebuke
(Alicia pours alcohol into glass and drinks.) When do I go to work for Uncle Sam?		to relinquish (her hope) to seek solace
Tomorrow morning. Alicia looks at the food on the dinner table.	DEVLIN	to accept (job)
Oh, we shouldn't have had this out here. It's all cold now. (Devlin looks around.) What are you looking for?	ALICIA	to inform
I had a bottle of champagne. I must have left it somewhere. Fade out:	DEVLIN	TO COMPREHEND (the enormity) TO CONCLUDE to search to question
		to answer

To proceed in our investigation it will be necessary for you to acquire a videotape or digital disc of *Notorious*. Watch the film from its beginning through the end of the Patio scene.

Watch the Patio scene again. The acting beats, now available to us in the performances of the two actors, should become clear to you. Hopefully you will begin to see how the dramatic blocks are embedded in Hitchcock's "geographical paragraphs"—his use of different "stages" within the one location. And the concept of narrative beats—the director's tools for the articulation of a scene—might begin to make sense now that you see them rooted in Hitchcock's staging, camera, and editing. Hopefully the dramatic function of the fulcrum will be understood—reaching its full dramatic strength in this scene when Alicia stands and faces Devlin.

In the next two chapters you will be introduced to the narrative/dramatic functions of both staging and camera before we discuss in detail how they were used by Hitchcock to enhance the text for the Patio scene.