

THEATRE ON THEATRE  
12 Dramas of the Means

David Cole

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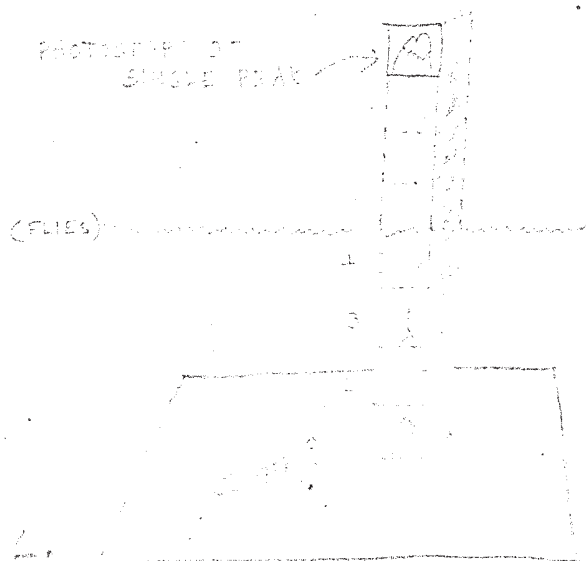
Because It Was (Not) There

Theatre on Theatre

1

Center, a Mountain Climber; just up-left of him, the mountain he is going to climb.

The "mountain" is a stack of carton-like dull black blocks rising into the flies. On the front faces of the blocks (which make a continuous surface) is painted a steep slope, in Christmas card style: a few dark pines, the lower reaches of a marshmallowy snow-cap, half of a passing cloud.



The Climber stands facing out, squinting as if into glare, as he absently checks his pockets and pouches, fastens

pack-straps, etc.

He takes one quick, appraising look up the slope, rubs his hands together, and starts to "climb."

He "climbs" by removing each block in succession out from under the stack, beginning with the lowest, #1, then #2, then #3. After he has eased each block out from under he tosses it into the unlit area up-stage, so that it lands with its painted side away from the audience. After each toss it seems to cost him an inordinate effort to recover his balance.

With each block he removes, another block that had been hidden up in the flies comes down into view. On the front faces of these newly visible blocks the painting of the slope is continued, so that with each block that comes in sight more and more of the snow-cap is revealed.

However: on the front face of the fourth block that becomes visible above (as a result of his removing #4 below), instead of a continuation of the painted snow-cap there is a large, detailed photograph of a remote and forbidding peak.

Startled, the Climber takes a big step backward and tries to readjust. He seems just to have succeeded in re-setting his expectations when on the cyclorama, hitherto dark, there appears an enormous projected photograph of an endless

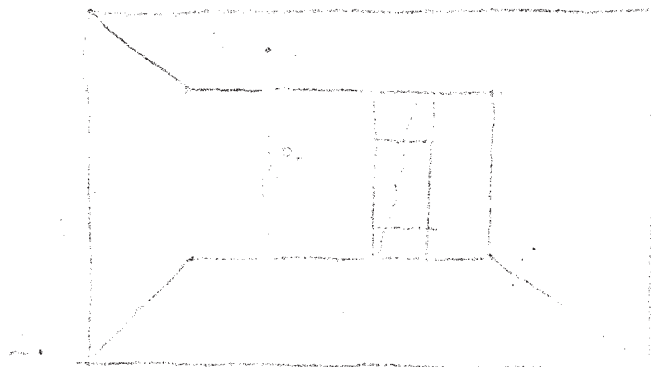
range of snowy peaks. Overcome, the Climber staggers several steps back from the vision. The lights dim quickly to black, in synchronization with his backward steps.

(Note: Blackouts between sections should be as brief as possible.)

## 2

The stack of cartons is gone from the stage. The cyclorama is lit an intense sky-blue with a hint of cloud. Projected onto it, about 1/3 of the way from stage-left, is a magnified projection of a segment of the slope from 1. Being a magnification, the projection shows only one complete block-face (one of the lower ones, below the snow-cap) and a little of the block-faces just above and just beneath that one.

A rope hangs down over down-right-center. When the lights come on, the Climber, lit from directly above, is about halfway up to the flies on it, and still climbing. He pulls himself up another yard or so, locks his feet and right hand on the rope, and lets go with his left hand, so that he leans toward the projected slope and can gauge how far he has come.

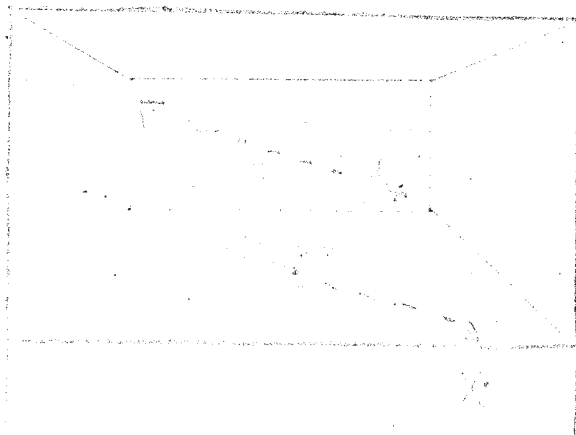


He exhales his discouragement, brings his left hand back to the rope, and resumes climbing. The moment he comes within reach of the flies, the lights go suddenly down.

3

The rope is gone from the stage. The entire cyclorama is filled by a projection representing the terrain at the foot of the mountain as viewed straight downwards from thousands of feet above: patchwork fields, etc. (The style of the projection should not be that of an aerial photograph, but of a piece with the painted slope in 1.) The tiny, precise shadow of an airplane moves across the projection along the trajectory indicated.

Meanwhile, at a much slower pace, the Climber is inching his way "up" a cliff-face represented by the stage floor: that is, he is crawling flat on his belly from up-right towards down-left. In each hand he grips an enormous, foot-long, eyed spike. His method of advance is to reach out with one hand, thrust the spike he carries in that hand into the stage floor, pull himself along to that point, and hold; then reach out with the other hand, thrust in its spike a little further ahead, pull himself to that point, etc.



REPRODUCED FROM THE  
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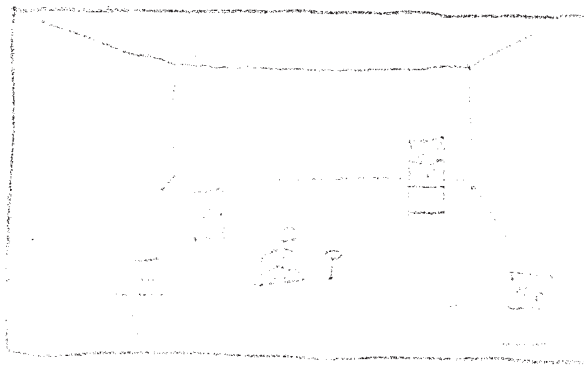
At length he makes it to extreme down-left, reaches over the apron, plants a spike at X, and rests a moment, panting, gathering strength. Then, in one movement, he pulls himself over the apron; the lights go down in synchronization with his movement.

4

At the summit.

The cyclorama is unlit. One of the spikes is fixed at exact stage-center. The Climber sits to the right of it, his knees drawn up to his chest, his hands clasped around his knees, resting, squinting out, as at opening.

All around him are neighboring peaks, each composed of two or three (all black) blocks, each with a jagged-edged white cloth like a table cloth thrown over it for a snow-cap.



NEIGHBORING  
PEAKS

STAGE

The Climber explores his perspective ad lib, finally stretches, looks at his watch--and suddenly remembers: the flag! He



kneels over the spike, center, and fixes a stiff red pennant to it; then, still on his knees, shifts his weight back to inspect it. Lights dim.

5

No lights on the cyclorama. The Climber, center, is "descending" by the same technique <sup>by which</sup> he "ascended" in 1: i.e., he is now stacking up blocks, the front faces of which make a continuous painting of the top section of the mountain, from the summit down. On the topmost block-face (a) the summit and flag are painted (the neighboring peaks and actual flag of 4 are gone). When the lights come up, he has already piled up blocks a and b (slipping each successive one under all the rest, so that the stack rises). The lights stay up only long enough for him to slip block c under the rest, but four or five other blocks lie about within reach, their painted faces away from the audience.



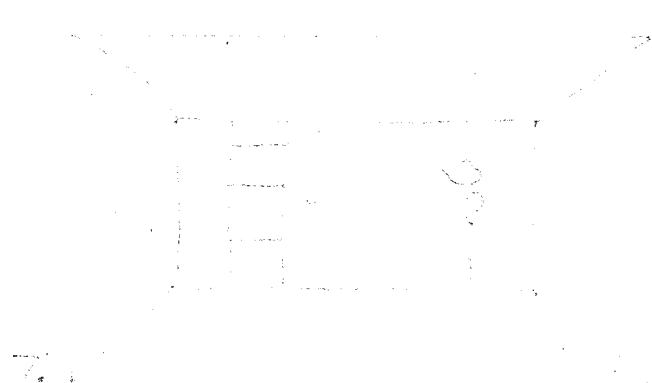
CLIMBER

As in 3, the stage floor is a cliff-face--only now seen from below, looking straight up. That is, the cyclorama is now filled by a projection of the sky with a cloud gliding smoothly across it from left to right. And the Climber "descends" by crawling backwards (i.e. feet first) on his belly, from up-center toward down-center, using a series of spikes (placed as shown in diagram) for hand- and foot-holds.



At the moment when he gets one leg over the apron, the lights quickly go down.

The stage is the mirror image of 2:



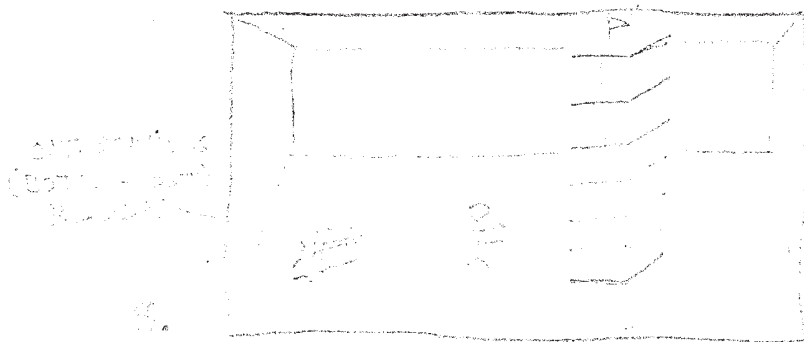
Only, the projection is of not quite so high a magnification, so that sections of the painted faces of four, rather than of three block-faces, show. The Climber is of course now descending the rope.

By a darting shadow that suddenly looms and recedes on the sky section of the cyclorama, and by the fending-off motions which the Climber makes with his free hand, it appears that he is being buzzed by a large bird.

Just as the Climber is about to put his foot on the stage floor, the lights go suddenly down.

8

Nearly the full stack of blocks, as in 1; only, the block which has the summit and flag on its front face is now just beneath the flies.



The Climber now slips block #1 under all the rest--and the summit is pushed up out of sight.

The Climber steadies the whole stack by flattening his

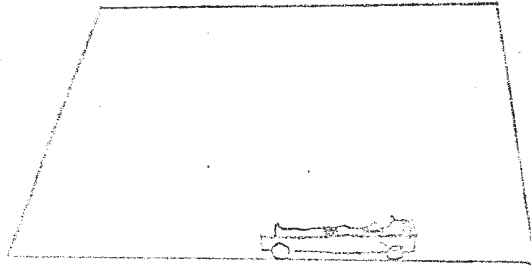
palms against it where it is wobbly or carelessly piled. Standing right of the stack, with both arms above his head --one palm pressed against the front face of one block, the other palm pressed against the onstage, side face of the next block<sup>down</sup>--he sneaks a glance back over his right shoulder, as if gauging a height he is just about to let himself drop. Then he jumps back, as if that were jumping down off, and when he hits the stage floor his knees buckle as if he were hitting it from a considerable height. He straightens up, brushes his hands on his jacket, and looks upward to where he just now jumped from. He means only to check. But he is held by the sight of the summit. He takes a step back to see upward with less strain; then another step. He has forgotten about taking his gaze off the mountain.

Lights down.

A TOUCH OF AUTUMN IN THE AIR

## A TOUCH OF AUTUMN IN THE AIR

Down-center, at the apron, a Sunbather in black bikini and dark glasses lies face up on a wheeled wooden pool-side couch, which is facing sideways to the audience. A white terrycloth beach jacket has fallen from her shoulders and hangs down off the couch:

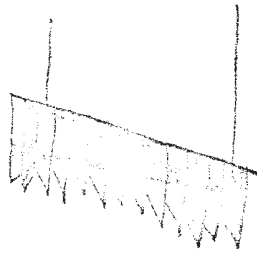


Slow count of 15.

Then sharply pointed red and yellow fence posts begin to fall from the flies; first a red one over up-left, then a yellow one over up-right, then an ever more rapid rain of posts of both colors over all areas of the stage. The posts come down point first, each at the end of a roughly knotted coarse rope. Each post drops the length of its rope (no two ropes are the same length), recoils with a jerk, and quivers into stillness, perhaps clacking up against other dangling posts in the process.

At one point, when the rain of posts is particularly heavy, a whole fence-length of irregularly alternated yellow and red posts, held together by red cross-planks, comes

crashing down at the end of two uneven lengths of rope:



The Sunbather seems totally unaware of any of this.

When the last post to fall has come to rest, the creak of a pulley begins to be heard: a yellow post is lowered straight and slow<sup>To</sup> within an inch of the Sunbather's breast.

A brief pause, as if for the Sunbather to react. She does not.

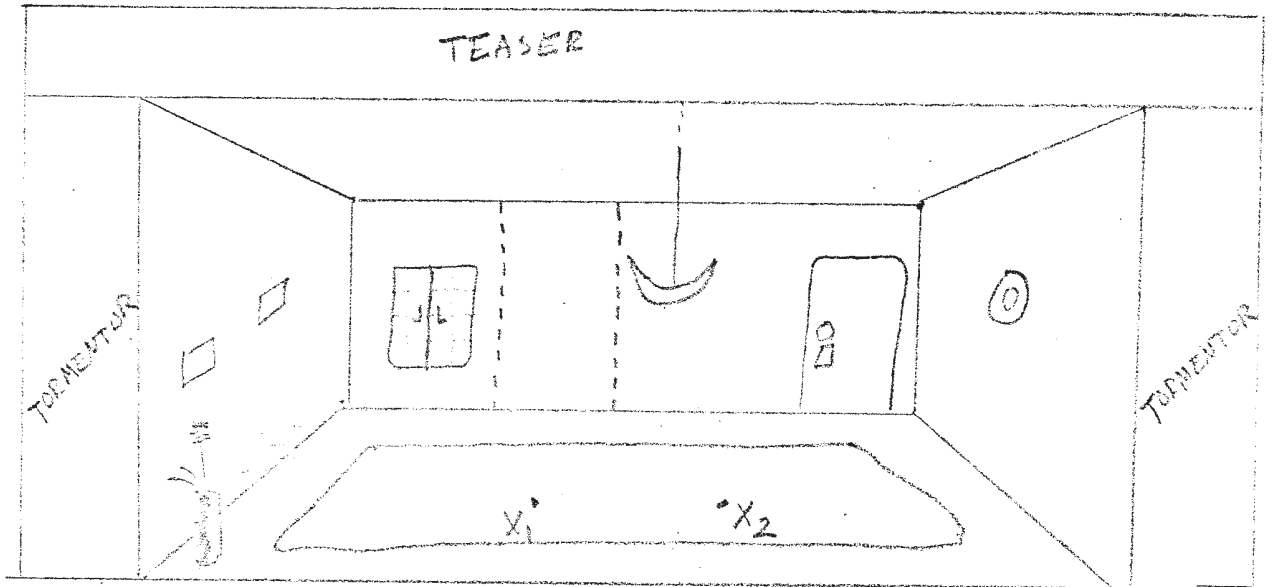
The pulley-squeak starts again: a red post is lowered straight and slow to within an inch of the Sunbather's crotch.

Slow count of 10. The Sunbather casually gathers her beach jacket around her shoulders.

WANTS IN



WANTS IN



The setting is a roofless, not very well constructed box-set of a room, as above. The walls are yellowed. A rich maroon carpet covers most of the floor. Down-right is a grayish umbrella stand, out of which protrude, as if it were a vase, several skimpily leaved pale branches and a giant tufted reed. The door, which opens into the room, is an amateurish piece of set-building, but boasts an incongruously real shiny brass knob and lock. The window in the upstage wall is a heavy casement, its handles and pane-dividers of wrought iron, its 16 small panes of different, randomly arranged colors. On the stage-left wall hangs a small, gold-framed convex reducing mirror. On the stage-right

wall are two rectangular patches a little paler in color than the rest of the wall, where pictures used to hang; the down-stage patch is a little nearer the floor than the up-stage patch. Both the "mirror" and the "patches" conceal large vertical slits at those points on the flat. Center hangs a white luminous chandelier in the shape of a symmetrical scythe-blade, the only source of brightness on a dimly lit stage. In front of the entire set hangs a scrim, fully transparent till noted. (The meaning of the dotted lines in the diagram, and of  $X_1$  and  $X_2$ , will be explained in the course of the action.

## 1

At rise, the audience catches just a glimpse of a trousered leg and a black leather valise vanishing through the door, and sees the door slam behind. Receding footsteps. Long pause.

## 2

Sharp knocking on the door; pause.

Sharper knocking; briefer pause.

The doorknob is jiggled from outside.

## 3

The moment the doorknob stops being jiggled, a very bright flashlight beam comes in through the window. The flashbeam slowly explores the room, changing color as it passes through different panes of the casement. It is

gradually joined in its search by the beams of narrowly focused stage-lights coming in from different directions. Once the flashbeam or one of the stage beams has illuminated an area of the set, that area stays lit--as if it had been kindled.

The flashlight abruptly clicks off; all other lights stay on. The room is now quite brightly lit.

## 4

Very long pause. The audience, having scanned every inch of the set in search of a next development, is just beginning to wonder whether something has gone wrong when they notice that the leaves on the branches in the umbrella stand are quivering slightly. This is at first inexplicable. Then a faint hissing noise becomes audible, and a cloud of purple vapor is seen to be entering the room through the keyhole of the door up-left.

## 5

Hissing abruptly off. Another long pause as vapor settles or drifts away and the rustle of the leaves dies down. Silence.

## 6

The silence is abruptly broken by a pointed saw piercing through the up-stage wall, a little right of center. The saw moves rapidly in and out with a steady rasp, until it has cut out 7/8 of a rectangle nearly the size of the window. Then it seems suddenly to hit a pipe

4

or girder, for the rasp changes to the whine of metal on metal and the blade makes no further progress. Finally, the saw is given an exasperated shove in toward the set, and left quivering in the wall.

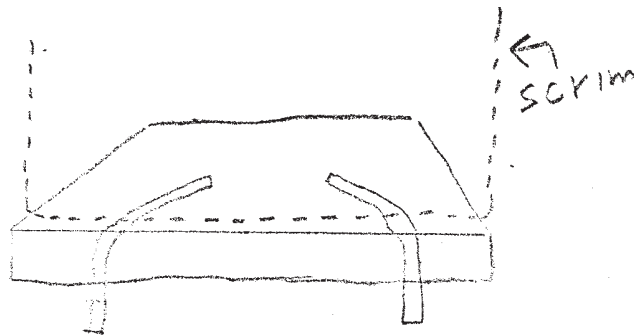
7

One beat after the final saw-thrust, an elaborate ceremonial spear shoots in through the stage-right wall via the slit concealed by the more up-stage pale patch; and holds, jutting out from the wall. Half a beat after that a golf club--a driver--shoots in through the more down-stage pale patch; and holds, jutting out from the wall. Two beats after that, a small Christmas tree erupts through the slit in the "mirror" on the opposite wall; and likewise holds, jutting out. No sooner is the tree in place than some rod-like object (it cannot be seen what) begins prodding up under the carpet at X<sub>1</sub>.

8

All five prods--the saw, the spear, the golf club, the tree and the carpet-prod--twitch and probe about in different directions, looking rather helpless and out of synchronization with each other. At length the first four subside into motionless protrusion. The carpet-prod, from now till the end, never ceases its restless upward probing, but does now subside to the extent that it is only pushing up about six inches under the carpet.

A jangling is heard and slowly two long thin shiny semi-rigid bands of copper rise up out of the orchestra pit\*. buckle of their own weight in upon the stage, and are slipped by those manipulating them under the lower edge of the scrim:



The two bands slowly approach each other. As they do, the saw spear, golf club and tree all quiver excitedly. But the bands seem to run out of energy when they are still several feet apart, and fall back into the orchestra pit. The saw, spear, golf club and tree all slump a little, and are still. A pause, during which the only movement on stage is the restless poking of the carpet-probe.

10

Suddenly a paper airplane, and then another and another--6 or 8 in all--swoop down into the set from over the tops of its walls. The colors of the planes echo the colors of the panes in the casement window.

---

\*In theatres that lack an orchestra pit, the area between apron and auditorium floor must be masked so as to conceal those who manipulate the bands.

As if cued by the paper planes, and even before the last of them has arrived, the scythe-chandelier begins to swing back and forth, moving down a little lower with each swing. The carpet-prod reaches a little higher than usual, as if to meet it. The wall-prods give a quiver with each stroke of the scythe-chandelier.

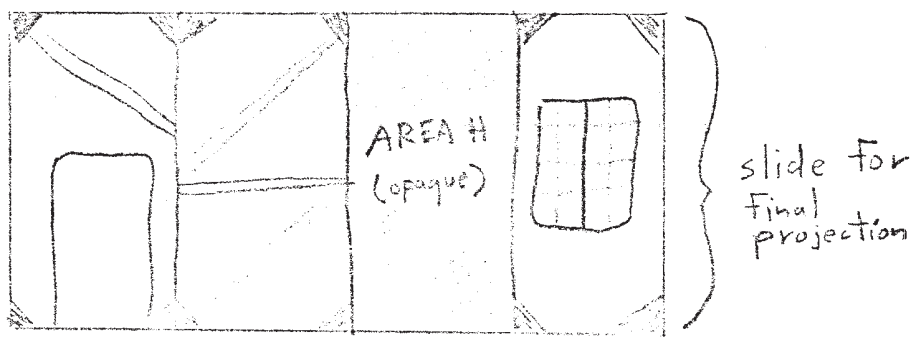
After 6 or 7 strokes, a tremendous boom, like that of a battering ram, begins to be heard in synchronization with each stroke; and indeed, one of the flats comprising the up-stage wall--the section between dotted lines in the set-sketch, above--begins visibly to give way before the force of something battering it from behind. It comes loose from the rest of the up-stage wall, and begins to sway in toward the room. On each stroke the lights onstage go down a little more, and on each stroke the battering noise seems to be echoed from more and more different directions: the wings, the flies, the theatre lobby, under the audience's feet...

Finally the flat gives. In synchronization with its caving in toward the room (its impact is never heard), the lights go all the way down, the scrim becomes opaque, and a projection gives the audience the view of the room that whoever knocked in the flat would now have. The projection holds for 15 seconds, and then--blackout.

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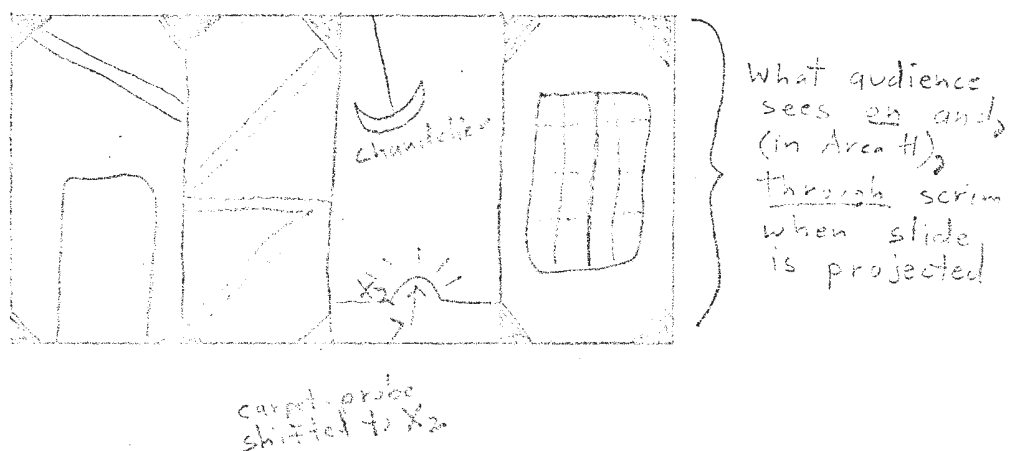
(continued)

This reversal in the audience's perspective is accomplished as follows. Onto the scrim is now projected a photograph of the reverse of the up-stage wall--by which is meant, not the exterior façade implied by the up-stage wall, but the actual reverse of the piece of stage scenery which comprises the set's up-stage wall, complete with flat-frames, braces, lashing, etc.:



The cross-hatched area must be opaque on the slide, so that when the slide is projected the corresponding area of the scrim will still be transparent.

Then through Area H of the scrim; the audience will actually see into the room as the Breaker Down of the flat would. They will see the swinging chandelier, as he would, whenever it passes by Area H; and they will see the carpet-prod where he would see it, if in fact the location of the carpet-prod is now shifted from  $X_1$  to  $X_2$  (see set sketch, p. 1):



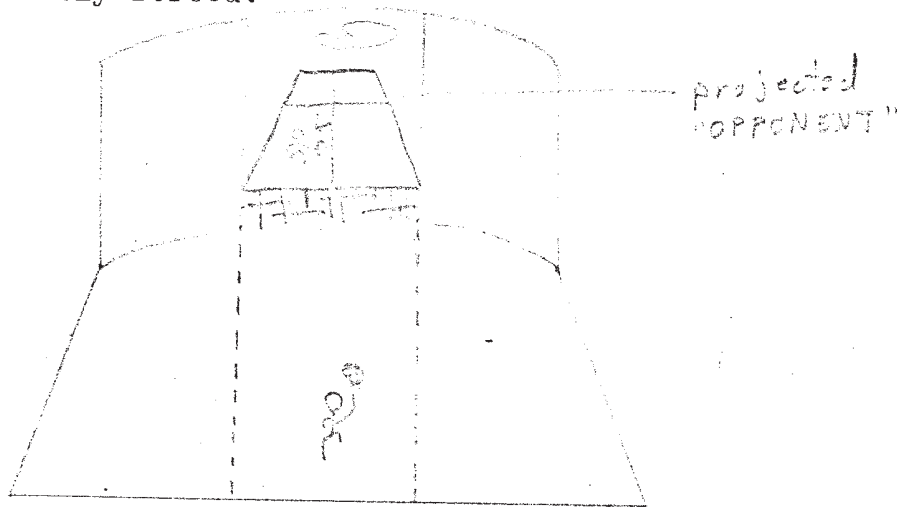
TWO OR THREE I: THE VOLLEY



TWO OR THREE I: THE VOLLEY

1.

Lights up on a stage bare except for what is projected on the center segment of the cyclorama (the two side-segments are curtained off). The projection is of the view a tennis player has of the net, opposite court, and sky above and beyond the opposite court. The mesh of the net is sketchily rendered in thick, black irregular lines. The perspective of the opposite court is violently forced.



Only the segment of the stage-floor between the dotted lines--the TENNIS PLAYER's court--is lit. The TENNIS PLAYER is volleying with an "OPPONENT," a white silhouette projected on the (itself projected)opposite court. At each of the TENNIS PLAYER's shots, the "OPPONENT" is reprojected at the appropriate spot and in the appropriate position to return that shot (this will of course involve foreshortening and varying the size of the projected "OPPONENT"). The TENNIS PLAYER, too, darts about his court to return the shot implied by each successive projected position and posture of the "OPPONENT."

The PLAYER and the "OPPONENT" (neither of whose faces can be made out) wear identical all-white tennis outfits. The only difference is that the "OPPONENT" wears a bright red baseball cap; the PLAYER is bareheaded.

The volley between the two continues during the entire piece.

## 2

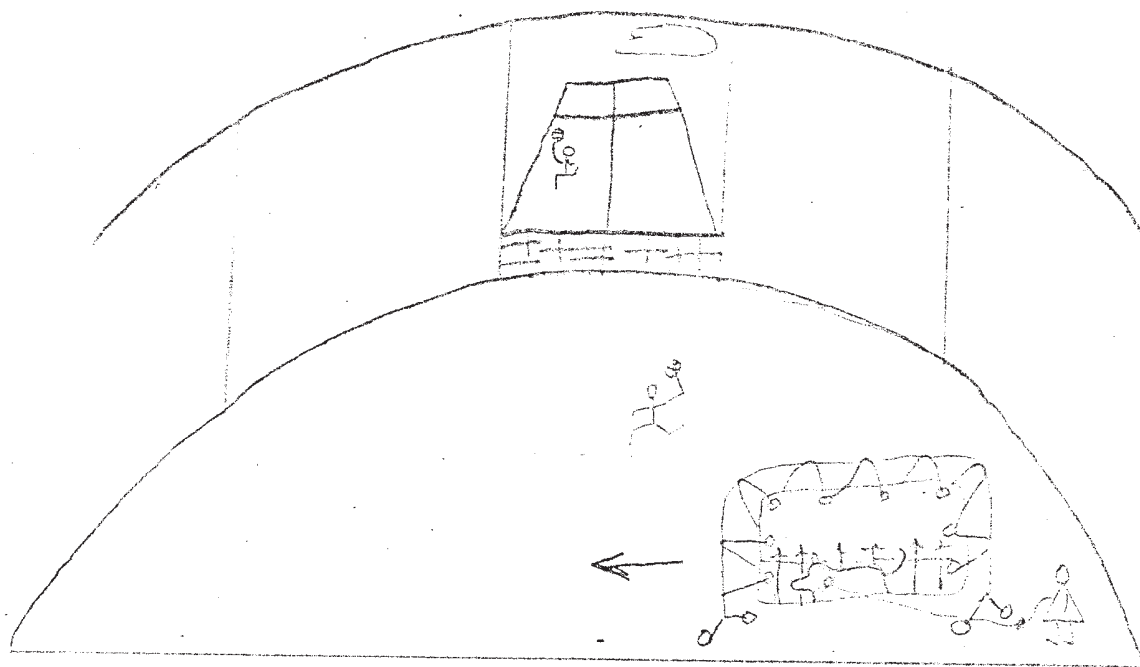
The bark of a dog begins to be heard, growing quickly louder.

A LADY in a fashionable coat enters down-left; she holds the end of a slack red leather leash in one hand. Before she has taken more than a few steps onto the stage, the leash pulls taut and she is obliged to hold up. She looks off left impatiently, tapping her foot. Suddenly, the object attached to the other end of the leash slides on--to her, and then past her.

We now see that at the other end of the leash there is--not a dog, but a painting-on-wheels of a dog.

The painting-on-wheels is a rectangular canvas stretched out between the uprights and top bar of a rolling dress rack. The canvas is lashed to the rack by a white crisscrossing rope strung through conspicuous brass eyelets which run around the canvas' border. On the canvas is painted, in some detail, a dog sniffing at one of the spikes of a wrought iron fence. The leash joins the painting at an (actual) brass stud on

the dog's (painted) collar. The painting does not show the lower part of the dog's legs.



The LADY and her "DOG" (i.e. the painting-on-wheels) cross the stage very much as they entered: the "DOG" bounding ahead, pulling the LADY after him; then <sup>coming to</sup> sudden, stubborn halts which the LADY must wait out. They exit down-right. The barking quickly dies away.

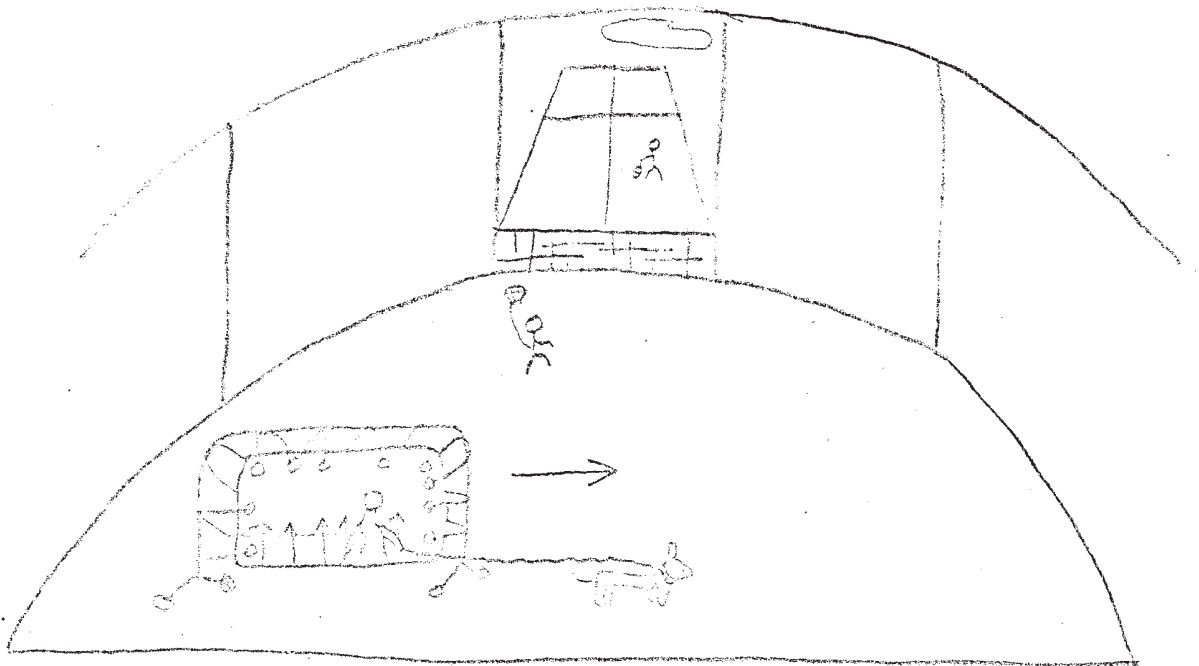
3

During all this the tennis game has continued (though the painting-on-wheels has sometimes blocked it from view), and it continues now the LADY and her "DOG" are gone.

4

After a time, the bark growing quickly louder is heard again. Again, enter the LADY and DOG--only this time it is the "LADY," who, from the thighs up, is painted on the canvas

alongside the wrought iron fence (the leash is attached to her painted hand), and it is the DOG that is real. And this time they cross the stage in the other direction (i.e. from down-right toward down-left), and exit down-left:



5

At one point, just before the "LADY" and DOG exit, both PLAYER and "OPPONENT" are concealed by the painting-on-wheels. When they again become visible, the PLAYER is wearing a bright red baseball cap, and the "OPPONENT" is projected as bareheaded.

The volley continues just long enough for the audience to register this change--and then, blackout.

TWO OR THREE II: SUFFICIENT INDUCEMENT

TWO OR THREE II: SUFFICIENT INDUCEMENT

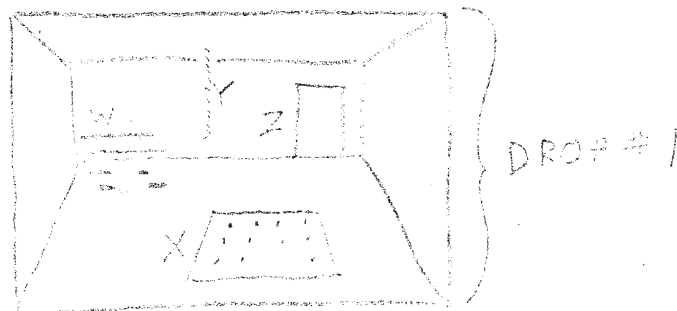
The successive drops for this piece all hang from a single horizontal bar, like pages from the spine of a book that has been turned sideways. Thus each drop can be flipped back over the bar when it is time for the next one.

Throughout, until noted, someone (later seen to be the GYMNAST) is heard exercising just offstage. The sound heard--and hence, presumably, the offstage exercise--changes as indicated from time to time, but never in synchronization with the scene changes or blackouts.

1

In the darkness before the lights come up, the grunt-collapse noise of pushups is heard, continuing offstage till noted.

Lights come up on Drop #1 (rest of stage dark and empty), which depicts, in simple style, three of the walls, the ceiling and the floor of a gymnasium complete with a set of parallel bars (W), an exercise mat (X), a scaling rope (Y) and a doorway in the far wall (Z):

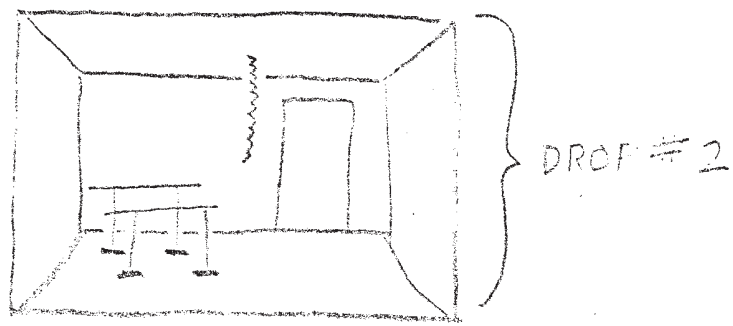


Lights hold just long enough for the drop to impress itself on the audience, and then go quickly down.

Offstage sound continues.

2

Bright lights come quickly up on the following drop, which has been substituted for Drop #1:



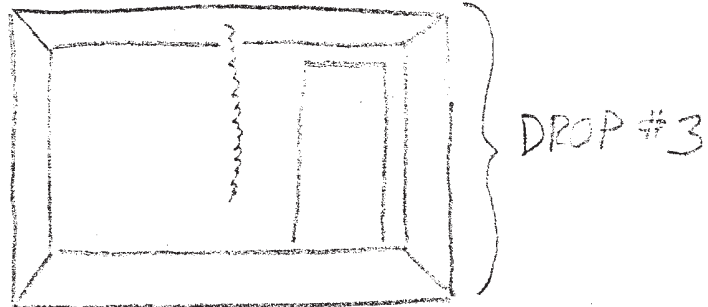
And now there is a dimly lit, actual mat on the stage floor, down-left.

Lights hold just a bit longer than is necessary for this change to register; then go quickly down.

During the blackout, the offstage exercise sounds change to a Down/back/together/up rhythm, which continues till noted.

3

Bright lights come quickly up on the following drop, which has been substituted for Drop #2:



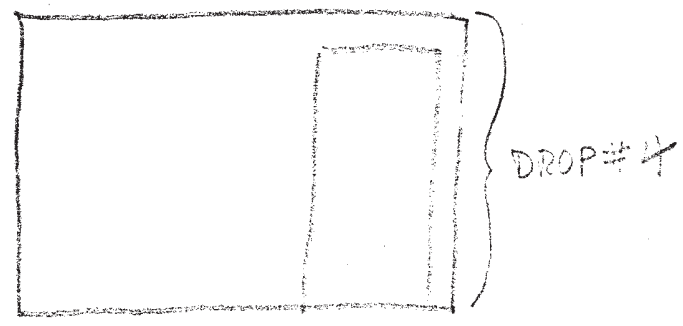
Now in addition to the actual mat, there is an actual set of parallel bars on the stage floor, up-right.

While the lights are up on this scene, the offstage exercise sound is heard to change from the down/back/together/up rhythm to a frenetic jogging in place, which continues till noted.

As if in response to this change in sound, the dim lights on the mats and bars intensify suddenly, hopefully; wait for a moment; and then go back to their original level. Then all lights go quickly down.



Bright lights come quickly up on the following drop, which has been substituted for Drop #3:



Now, in addition to the actual mat and actual parallel bars, there is an actual, dimly lit scaling rope on the stage, hanging down over up-center.

Lights intensify hopefully for a moment, then fade to black.

During the blackout, the exercise sound again changes to the LIFT/rattle/rattle/rattle of a light barbell being lifted and "pressed" in 4/4 rhythm.

At this aural change, the lights flash on, as if they might have missed something. The stage, however, is exactly as they left it. They flash off again; flicker pettishly on and off several times; go gradually down; hold just short of darkness for a long moment; and then go off.

Exercise sound continues in blackout.

Bright lights come quickly up. There is no drop at all on the stage.

Now, in addition to the actual mat, bars and rope onstage, there is an actual door frame, dimly lit, at up-left.

The lights' coming up cues off the offstage exercise sound. Silence.

All lights intensify very slightly, almost imperceptibly.

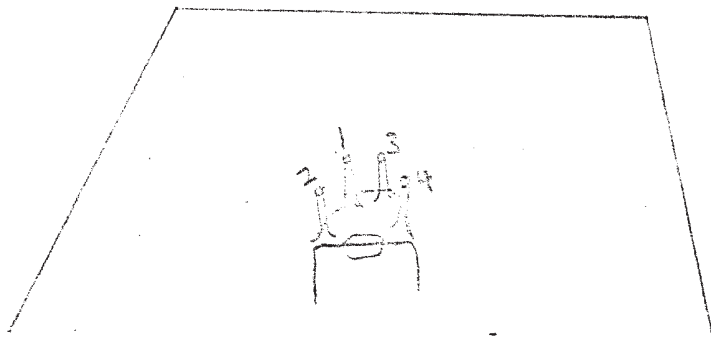
Suddenly the GYMNAST, dressed in a grey sweat-suit that covers his feet like booties and his head like an eyeless sack, appears in the door frame. His hands on the door frame, he leans into the room for a moment; then, pushing off from the door frame, he does a flying somersault onto the mat, and lets the momentum carry him offstage, down-right.

The lights snap off, one instrument at a time, in quick succession.

LIVING AND FROZEN LIGHT I: EQUAL IN HIS SIGHT

## LIVING AND FROZEN LIGHT I: EQUAL IN HIS SIGHT

Center, a long altar-table, covered to the floor with heavy black cloth. The altar-table is built in forced perspective, i.e. its sides actually slant upwards and converge rearwards. On each corner of the altar-table stands one of four identical brass candlestick; an elliptical white cloth hangs over the down-stage edge.



The entire piece is performed behind a scrim, to the continuous accompaniment of some tedious organ postlude along the lines of The Liturgical Organist, Vol. I, #144 or #185.

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### 1

At rise, the CELEBRANT, in a black robe that more resembles a graduation gown than a vestment, is bending over the white candle which he has just kindled in the up-right candlestick (#1), shielding the flame. The other three candlesticks are empty.

As soon as the flame is sure, he exits with measured pace,

right.

Brief pause.

He sticks his head back on to check something; quickly withdraws again. Immediately, he re-enters, comes up behind the altar--his measured pace beginning to get a little hurried--and pops down behind it. Sound of a cupboard behind the altar being rifled through. CELEBRANT pops up again. He looks puzzled and nervous. He is out of candles!

He exits again, right, this time hurriedly, remembering his measured pace only when he is almost offstage.

Sound of a great pile of stuff being rifled through offstage.

CELEBRANT re-enters, his confidence renewed and his stride even, as at the outset. He carries a small unframed canvas about the height of the candlesticks, its painted surface clutched up against his breast.

He stops at the down-right corner of the altar-table, turns the canvas around, and leans it, painted side out, against the down-right (#2) candlestick. When he steps back, satisfied, we see that the painting is a fairly realistic depiction of a white candle burning in a brass candlestick-- of candlestick #1 with its lit candle, in short.

Exit CELEBRANT. Sound of heavy shears cutting through heavy cardboard.

3

CELEBRANT re-enters, carrying a cardboard cut-out of a lit candle in a candlestick. The cut-out is the same size and shape as candlestick #1 with its candle; it is pure unpainted silhouette, the natural color of the cardboard. CELEBRANT leans it up in front of the up-left candle-stick (#3) and rubs his hands with satisfaction.

Then, as if suddenly remembering, he takes a thin balsa slat which he has had under his arm since re-entering and sticks it in the down-left candlestick (#4). He steps back and studies the arrangement hopefully from all angles-- but the slat just doesn't look like a candle.

Suddenly he has an idea, snatches the slat out of candlestick #4, and exits with it. Sound of hammering offstage.

4

CELEBRANT re-enters with the slat. To the end of it is now tacked an 8"X10" color photo of a candle flame (just the flame). He reinserts the slat in candlestick #4 and steps back, satisfied.

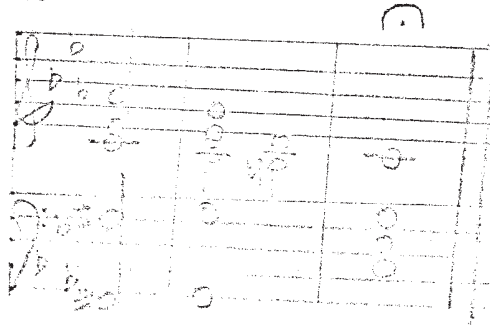
5

He now kneels facing the altar he has prepared.

The moment he reaches his kneeling position, music cuts off, and all lights behind the scrim black out. The onstage scene is now replaced by a projection of itself on the scrim. The style of the projection is schematic: mere

line-drawings of the CELEBRANT and altar. All four candlesticks are represented as identical schematic candles in identical schematic candlesticks.

Four beats after the appearance of the projection, the following organ cadence is heard in whatever key the postlude is in:



Projection and chord off simultaneously.

LIVING AND FROZEN LIGHT II: THE UPRISING



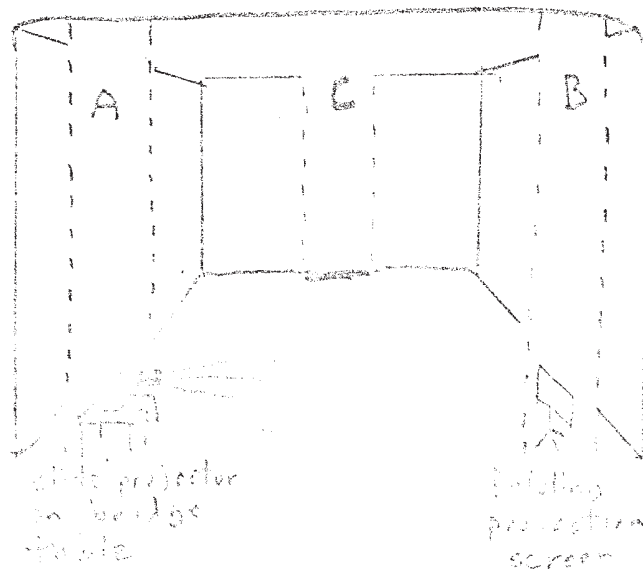
## LIVING AND FROZEN LIGHT II: THE UPRISING

This piece is called THE UPRISING because it dramatizes how light in the theatre refuses to stay confined to picture-planes, but insists on coloring, having its effect across, and determining our perception of, stage space.

The stage is bare and dark; the only scenery is three tall, narrow projection screens reaching from floor to flies and capable of being quickly hauled up and let down by their weighted hems (top fastening immovable). Screen A hangs over down-right, Screen B over down-left, and Screen C over up-center.

At rise, all the screens are up out of sight.

Down-right, on a bridge-table that Screen A would just conceal if lowered, stands an automatic slide-projector, its lens directed straight across the stage towards off-left. Down-left, placed so that Screen B would just conceal it if lowered, a folding projection-screen stands at a 60-degree angle to the apron.



Dotted rectangles indicate where Screens A, B and C — up out of sight at rise — hang when lowered.

1

At rise, the slide-projector is flashing onto the folding screen (copies of) 4 or 5 of the slides which will later appear on Screens A, B and C: the brick wall, the sunset, the highway, etc. (Slides which are to figure in later surprise effects should not, of course, now be shown.)

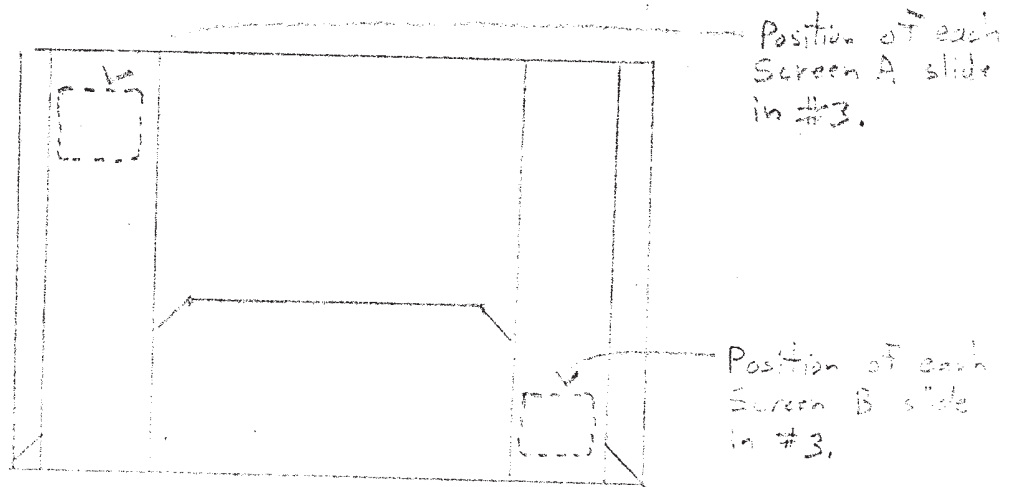
As this slide show enters its second repetition, Screen B begins to be lowered. When it is all the way down, the folding screen behind it is completely hidden from view--but the slide show continues.

Somewhat more rapidly, Screen A is lowered. When it is all the way down, the projector and table behind it are completely hidden from view--but the slide show continues, though all the audience now sees is the trembling beam of the (hidden) projector crossing the stage to the (hidden) folding screen. A click-CLICK is heard at each slide change.

2

At length there comes a louder click-CLICK that, rather than ushering in the next slide on the hidden projector, seems to shut off that projector and cause the first slide which now appears on Screen B to do so. This slide, which fills only the lower third of Screen B, shows an undifferentiated section of red brick wall, rendered in watercolors. The bricks should be somewhat oversized; the wall-section as a whole should have about the same dimensions as the (now concealed) folding screen.

In what follows, the slide that appears on (the upper third of) Screen A should in each case appear to be dictating the coloring of the slide that appears responsively on Screen B. Ideally, the sounds of the slide-change mechanisms in the projectors for Screens A and B should be distinguishable, so that the visual impression of B "responding" to A will be aurally reinforced. The positions of the Screen A and Screen B slides in each of these "responses" is shown below:



Projection on Screen A

"Responding" projection on Screen B

photo of a gorgeous sunset

photo of the moon amid clouds

side view photo of a 6-light bank of alternating green and purple stage lights

Expressionist watercolor of a green sun with childishly affixed, spoke-like purple beams

(click-CLICK): Expressionist purple-green sun reappears

(click-CLICK): Expressionist purple green sun reappears

(angry click-CLICK): Expressionist purple-green sun inexorably reappears

the wall, streaked with coppery late afternoon light

the wall by moonlight.

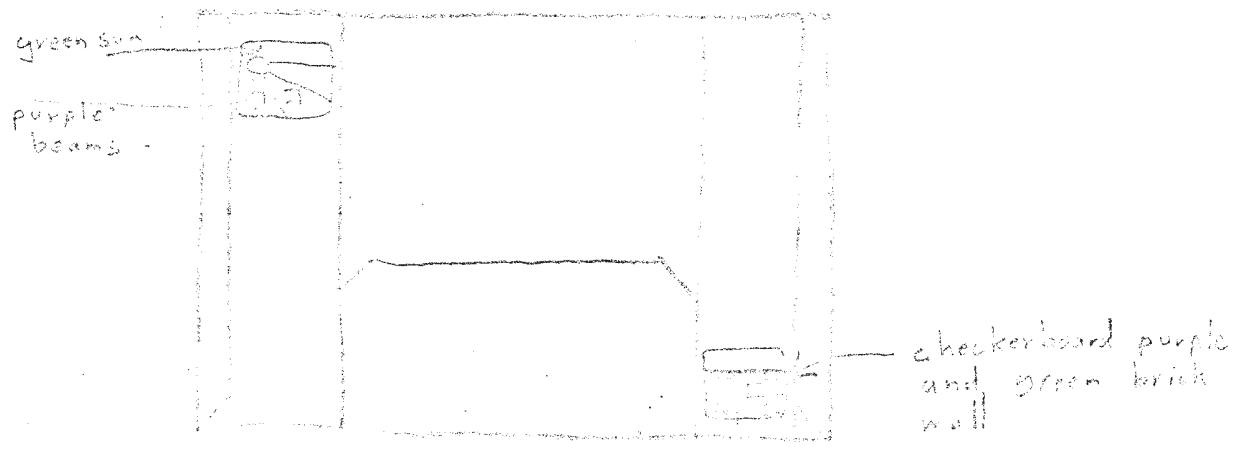
the wall, as lit by such a bank of lights from such an angle

(a slight delay): the original watercolor of the unlit red brick wall

(click-CLICK): the original watercolor of the unlit red brick wall

(slight pause; click-CLICK): no slide appears--just the empty rectangle of white light.

(desperate delay; click-CLICK): the wall appears, its bricks now alternately colored green and purple like a checkerboard (see diagram below):



4

With the appearance of the purple and green brick wall on Screen B, there is a tremendous roar heard, as if of a wounded lion, and the purple and green sun vanishes from Screen A.

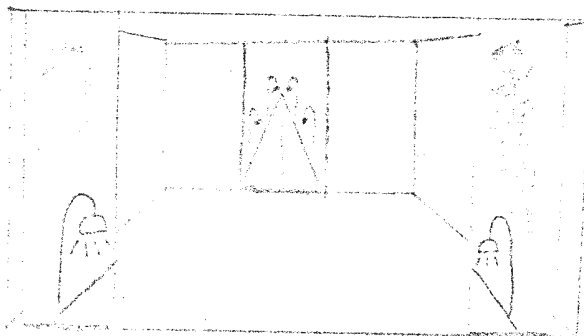
A second later, the wall flicks off Screen B, and simultaneous with its disappearance, Screen C drops down all at once, with a crash, at up-center.

Screens A, B and C are now all in place, and all blank.

5

The photo of a beaming highway lamp against a night sky comes onto Screen A. A moment later, the photo of another lit lamp, symmetrical to the first and also with night sky behind it comes up on Screen B.

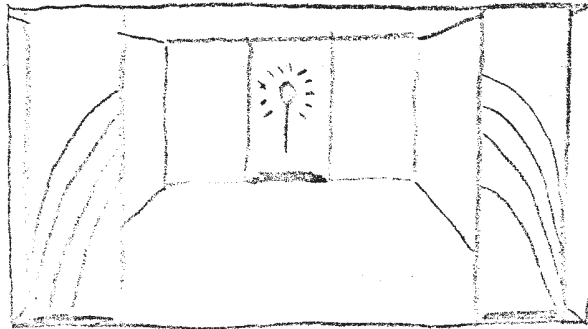
Brief pause. Then a photo of the highway by day, vanishing toward the horizon with unlit lamps to either side of it, appears on C.



All three slides flicker rapidly in unison, and flash off.

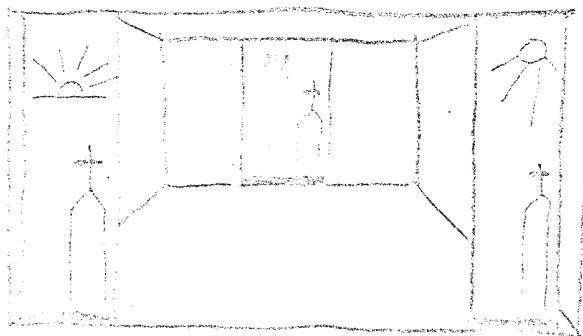
The photo of a large candle, upright in mid-air with a corona around it, appears on C.

Brief pause. Then stylized rainbow arc-sections of a magnified corona appear on A and B, thus:



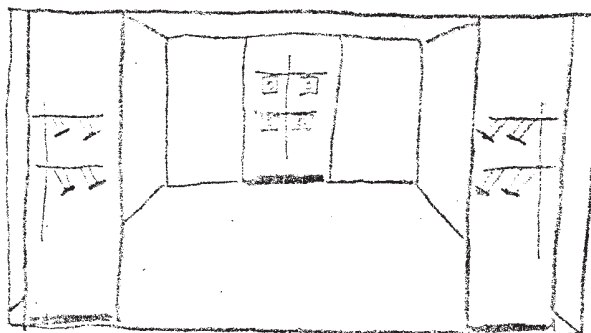
All three slides flicker rapidly in unison, and flick off.

The photo of a church steeple at sunset appears on A; a moment later a photo of the same steeple from the same angle, only in bright sunlight, appears on B; a moment later a photo of the same steeple from the same angle, only on an overcast day, appears on C:



All three slides flicker rapidly in unison, and flick off.

Photographs of clusters of stage lights appear simultaneously on A, B and C. All the photographed instruments have purple or green filters, and the angle of the photograph should in each case be such as to suggest that the cluster is focused on center stage:



Brief pause, and then an orange flash-bulb explodes in the air over center-stage.

A tremendous animal roar, as in #4. The slides on A, C and B flick off in that order.

No sooner is B blank than a grossly magnified fragment of the purple and green Expressionist sun of #3 appears on A, filling the entire screen.

But now, not content with dominating just a single screen, the projection begins to pan slowly across the stage toward its old antagonist, B, spilling purple and green light grotesquely over the rear wall of the stage as it moves left.

Screen C is drawn up frantically, as if to escape being

8

overrun; it is gone by the time the moving colors reach up-center.

The original slide of the unlit brick wall swerves on and off Screen B, as if trying to escape and being pulled back again; but at length has to stay on.

10

The purple and green sun-projection continues to head inexorably toward the red wall-projection on Screen B.

At the moment the moving light hits Screen B, there is a poof-ing or popping sound and, simultaneously, a total blackout.

11

Almost immediately, pale even work-light comes up. All colors and projections are gone from the stage, and Screen C is back in place.

Screen B is slowly drawn halfway up, giving it a lamed look. The folding screen that had been behind it in ##1-2 is gone. What is now revealed behind it is a painted flat showing a red brick wall splashed with (painted on) greenish purple streaks that look like wounds.

Slow dim to black.



SCRAP METAL: A GENERATOR

## SCRAP METAL: A GENERATOR

By a "generator" I mean a piece where the physical and visual ordering of the stage provides the actors with what they are accustomed to get from the script or from other actors: a matrix of situation and relationship that can create or release physical and emotional response.

Total darkness. Three rough male voices, very unlike in timbre, are trying to get together on "O Little Town of Bethlehem." One gives a starting pitch which the others are unable to match. One breaks off to correct the others' version of the melodic line. No one knows the words past a certain point. Etc.

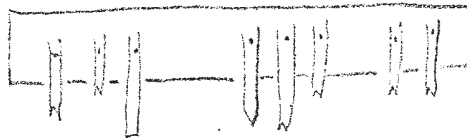
This music-making is suddenly cut off by a rapid series of three very obviously tape-recorded mortar explosions. After which, silence--except for the running on of unrecorded tape, which continues throughout the piece.

Slow count of 7. Then a long, piercing woman's scream. As the scream gradually tapers off, the lights--in inverse proportion to the tapering off--come up. Just left of center stands a young WOMAN. She wears a gauzy Greek gown, that could also be a nightgown. Her dark hair is rigidly set and sprayed. She is holding out from her, in both hands, a 12"X18" panel of green sheet metal. The upper part of the panel is shiny new and clearly rectangular, but the lower section is torn and twisted into grotesque curlicues. She is looking at the panel

without comprehension. But as she looks, comprehension of what it really is seems to rush in upon her and she drops it in horror, gasping hysterically.

She now for the first time looks about the stage, which is strewn with the following objects:

- \* a jagged concrete girder-end with rusty reinforcing rods springing out of it in wild twists and curves
- \* a detached and smashed auto headlight with red and green wires dangling out the back
- \* a rusty, twisted length of sectional stovepipe
- \* a beat-up 1"X4" board with the ends of some of the balsa slats it apparently once supported still sticking off from it;



- \* a brass doorknob still set in a jagged patch of the door it once opened
- \* a mysteriously regular and unscathed parallelepiped of shiny black plastic, with not so much as its surface scuffed

The actress playing the WOMAN goes and relates in turn to each of these "generating" objects. For each, as for the

green panel, she must work out a subtext in which the object figures as the body, or body fragment, of a loved one.

(Subtexts based on obvious physical similarity between an object and a body-part should be avoided.)

It is important that the pieces of wreckage be all very different from each other, and not suggest fragments of a single exploded object.

The order in which the actress confronts the objects, and their positions on the stage, are her decision, but the shiny black parallelepiped must come last. She rushes to it in relief, the one unscathed object in this chaos. But as she picks it up, it comes apart in her hand along a jagged flaw. At this, her face contracts into the soundless scream of the tragic mask, and the lights immediately go down.

PERIAKTOI: A GENERATOR

### PERIAKTOI: A GENERATOR

By a "generator" I mean a piece where the physical and visual ordering of the stage provides the actors with what they are accustomed to get from the script or from other actors: a matrix of situation and relationship that can create or release physical and emotional response.

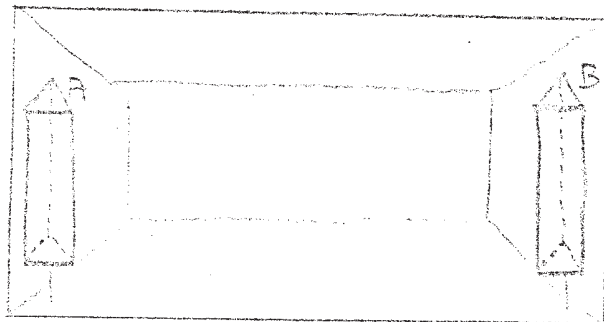
The periaktos was a revolving prism-shaped object used to suggest scenes and changes of scene in the Greek theatre. It looked something like this:



When different scenes were painted on each face, a change of scene could be suggested simply by rotating the periaktos.

---

One periaktos (A) is placed down-right, another (B) down-left. Between them they frame the stage, otherwise empty except for a cyclorama:



Thus, whatever is represented on the visible face of each

periaktos at a given moment defines the (in itself, blank) stage space between periaktoi. The role of the actor is to respond to this space constantly being redefined around him.

The sequence of periaktoi settings given below is thus a "generator." The actors--in any number or combination--are to use the sequence of spaces implied by the periaktoi the way they are accustomed to use a script or improvisation premise: as a stimulus and context for their creative work.

The length of the action generated by a given setting of the periaktoi can vary. Props, fragments of costume, etc. may be introduced.

It will be noted that there are more than 3 settings specified for each 3-faced periaktos. Several painted scenes will have to be tacked onto each face, so that a scene already shown can be removed by stagehands when the face on which it appears is away from the audience.\* In this way an unlimited number of scenes can be shown on each periaktos.

(continued)

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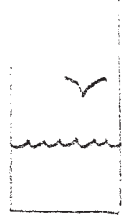
\*Projections onto the periaktoi-faces would of course be a simpler solution, but turning the periaktoi into projection screens would destroy the basic stage image of the piece: rotating "poles" defining a space between them.

SETTING DEPICTED ON PEARL'S 2  
(down-right)

1. Arcadian landscape



2. Open sea



3.

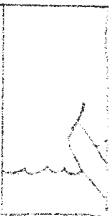
4.



5. Fore of a ship on open sea



6. Sinking fore of a split ship on open sea.



7. Halfway down the slope of a steep ravine; stars in background



8. Jagged-toothed upper jaw, seen from the side

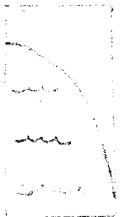


SETTING DEPICTED ON PEARL'S 3 3  
(down-right)

Arcadian landscape



Tropical beach



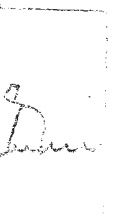
Open sea



AFT of a ship on open sea



Sinking aft of a split ship on open sea



Halfway down the steep slope of the deep ravine; moon in background.



Jagged-toothed lower jaw seen from the side





SETTING DEPICTED ON PERIKTOS A  
(down-right)

9. Pilaster on the left side of a receding road.



10. Pilaster-lined corridor sharply receding to a vanishing point



11. Painting of a receding Roman street as it might have looked in late classical times



12. A classical Roman looking off into the distance to his left



13. An ape, looking off into distance to his left



14. A paramecium



SETTING DEPICTED ON PERIKTOS B  
(down-left)

Pilaster on the right side of a receding road.



Pilaster-lined corridor sharply receding to a vanishing point



Photo, from the same angle, of that same Roman street today.



A man in modern dress looking off into distance to his left



SETTING DEPICTED ON PERIPHERY A  
(down-right)

15. (paramecium)  
↓

16. The starry sky; nebulae



17. View of stars through a window



18. Half of that window on the stars as seen from across the room



19. Photo of stage-right half of stage



20.  
↓  
21. #19 on blank Periphery

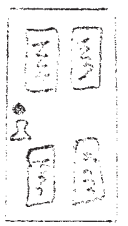
22. ↓

SETTING DEPICTED ON PERIPHERY B  
(down-left)

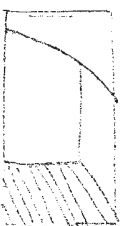
The starry sky; nebulae



↓  
Closed doors with keyhole.



↓  
Photo of stage-left half of stage



↓  
#20 on blank Periphery

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

## ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

In each of the following tableaux, an actor is brought in contact with a piece of scenery that looks at once like two different things, and responds to it in a manner that would be equally appropriate to either.

Each piece of scenery acquires its ambiguity by being cut in the silhouetted shape of one object, and having the other object painted on it. The painted-on object should be nearly as large as the silhouette-shape it is painted on, so as to challenge the claim of the silhouette to be what the piece of scenery represents.

The tableaux are separated by blackouts as brief as possible.

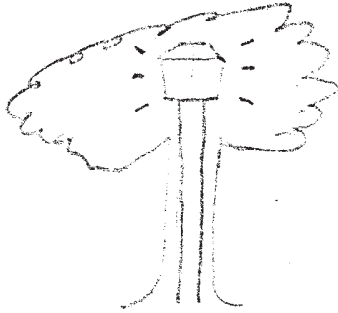
The actor doing the reacting wears a black leotard.

(continued)

1

Shape of silhouette cut-out: Leafy tree.

Painted on the cut-out: Old-fashioned gas lamp-post, with glowing purple panes.



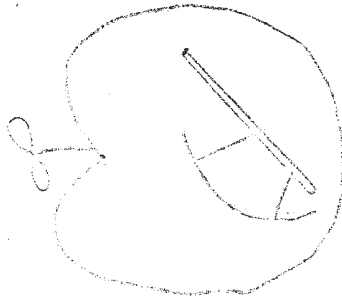
Reaction of actor: Circles the lamp-post/tree uncertainly, as if drunk or lost; finally collapses exhausted at its base.

Blackout.

2

Shape of silhouette cut-out: Enormous apple with stem, fallen on its side.

Painted on the cut-out: Round-edged medieval battle-axe, resting on its blade in the ground (though no ground is depicted).

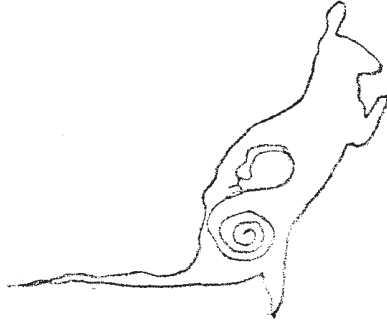


Reaction of actor: Enters; sees apple/axe; looks up over his shoulder in amazement to see where such an enormous projectile could have fallen from.

Blackout.

Shape of silhouette cut-out: Kangaroo.

Painted on the cut-out: Fork-tongued green snake, coiled to strike.

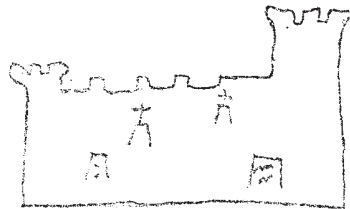


Reaction of actor: Comes near the kangaroo/snake, tempts it to attack, then springs deftly back out of danger.

Blackout.

Shape of silhouette cut-out: Crenellated rampart, with a high tower at one end and a lower tower at the other.

Painted on the cut-out: A graveyard. (The gravestones should echo the shape of the crenellations, and, by the forced perspective of their arrangement, imply the ground of the yard, which is not depicted.)

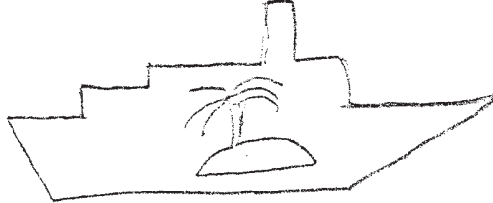


Reaction of actor: Hurries by, his eyes straight ahead of him, hardly daring to look at what he is passing.

Blackout.

Shape of silhouette cut-out: Steamship.

Painted on the cut-out: A hump of a desert island, with palm tree.

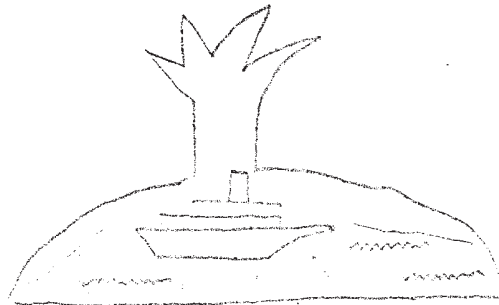


Reaction of actor: Swims desperately (in place) toward the ship/island.

Blackout. Light holds on swimming actor during scene change to #6.

Shape of silhouette cut-out: The humped desert island with palm tree of #5.

Painted on the cut-out: The steamship of #5, as seen across a stretch of water at sunset.



Reaction of actor: Still swimming desperately (in place) toward island/ship.

Lights down on scenery.

Slow count of five.

Lights down on swimming actor.

FALL FROM A HEIGHT



# FALL FROM A HEIGHT

## Prologue

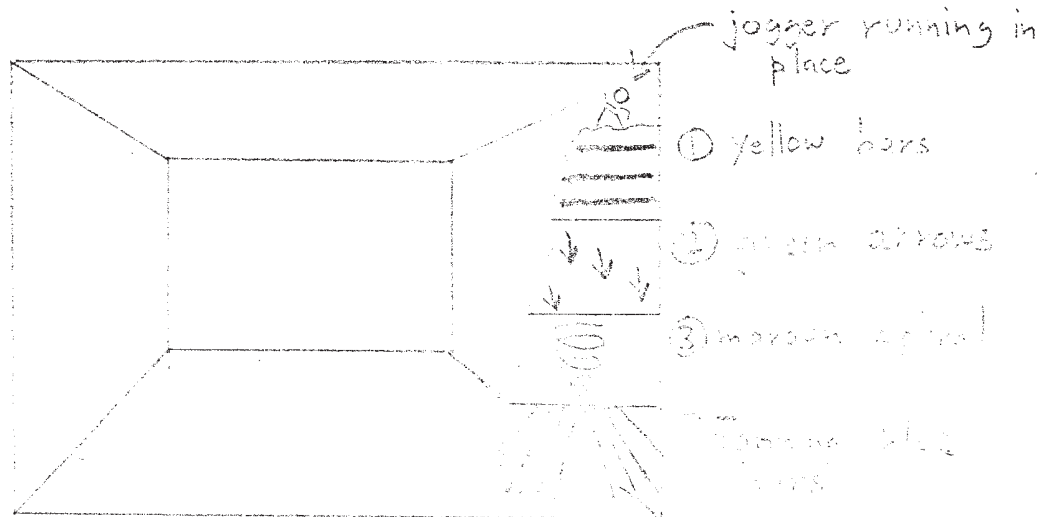
At extreme left-center the edge and part of the face of a 15-foot cliff (as seen from the side) protrude onto the stage. The nearly 90-degree slope is irregular and somewhat jagged, but is neatly divided into four equal vertical "strata," which are painted as follows:

#1(topmost): Thick, evenly spaced yellow horizontal bars

#2: Short, thick, green arrows, irregularly spaced, pointing downwards

#3: A thin, maroon spiral, pointing downwards

#4: Heavy blue bars fanning downwards and out from the top-center point of the stratum



The cyclorama is sky-blue.

At rise a MAN in a gray jogger's outfit is running in place—but as if running away—very close to the cliff's edge. His arms are flung out before him; he keeps looking back over his shoulder at his pursuers. He is running in a direction that would carry him over the cliff's edge if he were not running in place.

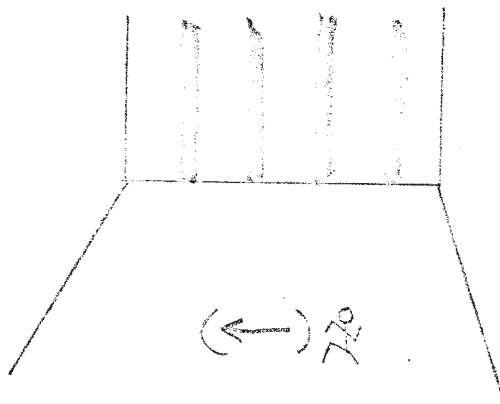
He runs in place long enough for the visual pattern of the cliff's strata to establish itself in the audience's mind. Then, gradually, his running in place begins to bring him nearer and nearer to the edge. (This should give the impression of being inadvertent; the audience should fear for the actor's safety). Just as he seems on the verge of falling off--blackout.

The rest of the piece shows his "fall," "down" past the four "strata" of the cliff. (The actual cliff is now drawn offstage and not seen again.)

(continued)

The Fall cast Stratum #1

The pattern of Stratum #1, the heavy yellow bars, is projected onto the cyclorama--but with the bars running vertically, rather than horizontally, so that "downward" is now visually defined as "across the stage":

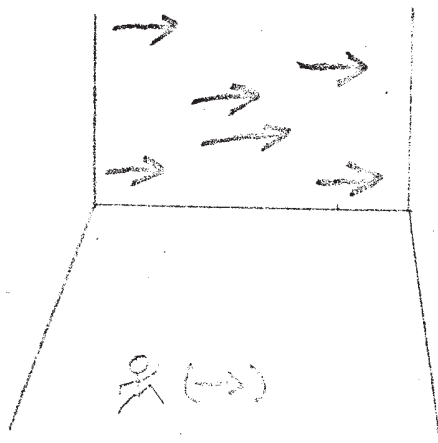


Accordingly, the MAN now "falls" past Stratum #1 by hurtling across the stage from left to right. As soon as he disappears right, lights down.

(continued)

The Fall past Stratum #2

The pattern of Stratum #2, the green arrows, is projected onto the cyclorama--but with the arrows now horizontal and pointing left, which is thus defined as "downward":



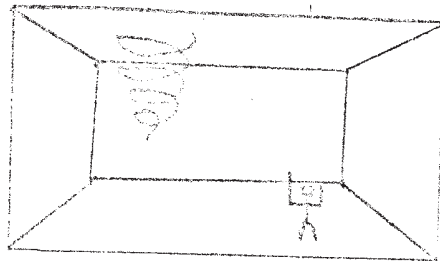
Accordingly, the MAN now "falls" past Stratum #2 by hurtling across the stage from right to left. As soon as he disappears left, lights down.

(continued)

The Fall past Stratum #3

When the lights come up, the maroon spiral of Stratum #3--not a painting or projection, but an actual spiral (of plastic tubing, or whatever)--is hanging down over up-right.

Down-left the MAN, in place and facing out, mimes falling feet downwards through space. His mouth is wide open in a (silent) scream; his arms alternate in frantic upward clutches, as if there were handholds flashing by every ten feet if he could only catch hold of one.

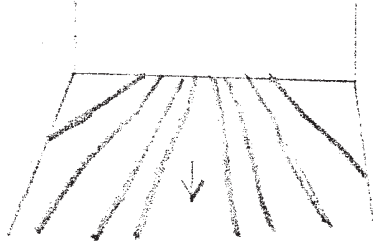


Movement accelerates; and blackout.

(continued)

The Fall past Stratum #4

The pattern of Stratum #4, the outward-fanning blue bars, is projected onto the stage floor, thus defining "downward" as "from upstage toward downstage":



Accordingly, the MAN now "falls" past Stratum #4 by hurling from up-center toward down-center, his arms flung out before him.

Just as he appears to be on the verge of (really) falling off the apron, the lights go down.

A cymbal clash is heard for the body's "impact."

Epilogue

Work-lights slowly come up on a bare stage.

Down-center, just where the MAN was last seen, a heavy quilt covers an uncertain mass--the "body."

The quilt is patchwork. The patches, numerous but large enough to be made out by the audience, are randomly arranged miniatures of the four "strata" (yellow bars, green arrows, maroon spiral, blue fanning bars).

HANDS: A METONYMY

## HANDS: A METONYMY

A "hand-board" and its frame constitute the entire playing-area.

The "hand-board" is in fact a curtain of scrim or some other material opaque from the front, transparent from behind. In it are cut 16 slots, thus:

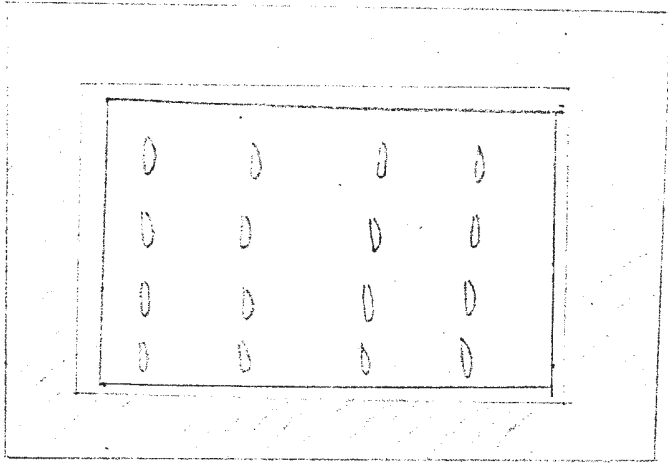
|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| D1a | D1b | D1c | D1d |
| D2a | D2b | D2c | D2d |
| D3a | D3b | D3c | D3d |
| D4a | D4b | D4c | D4d |

Each slot is large enough for a hand and part of a forearm to come through; and each is manned by an actor (or actress), who sticks his left or right hand (whichever is easier for a given maneuver) through it when and as specified. Since each slot must be manned by a different person, the slots must be far enough apart for 16 actors to position themselves behind, yet near enough so that hands coming out of adjoining slots can meet, or nearly.

The hand-board is masked on all four sides by a rectangular black frame--wide enough on all 4 sides, and far enough out from the hand-board, so that stagehands who are to thrust objects in front of the board (see #13 ff.) can work in



complete concealment:



In fact, ideally, the whole hand-board/frame structure should be elevated 5 or 6 feet off the stage-floor, like a puppet stage.

The cast should include at least one black hand and one hand with a conspicuous jeweled ring. These hands will often appear through different slots, so the audience will get the impression that all 16 hands are constantly changing slots. (In fact, hands should change slots no more often than necessary.)

NOTATION: The slots are numbered in 4 vertical Columns (a,b,c,d) and 4 horizontal Rows (1,2,3,4). Thus every slot has both a letter and a number, as shown in the first diagram.

A letter/number combination--la,3c, etc.--refers to the slot and whosever hand is in it at the moment, not to any particular individual actor.

Words or phrases in quotation marks indicate the total human action that the hand or hands should at that moment give the metonymic impression of performing (e.g. "turns its back," "cringes").

All directions are from the audience's point of view, except where noted.

1

Like orchestra musicians the hands "enter" at random, one or two at a time, and each takes its position in a slot. Most just "look around" and "stretch"; several "do warm-up exercises" (rapidly shaking loose, opening and closing fists, 5-finger exercises). One hand holds an open book, as if a face behind the hand-board were reading it. Some hands try several slots in quick succession, as if "getting the feel" of each before finally settling on one.

From here through the end of #9, the actors should use their right hands only.

2

When the last hand is in place, all 16 hands in synchronization wave at the audience.

3

A whistle blows.

To the continuing beat of a muffled, barely articulate voice calling "HUP! TWO! THREE! FOUR!" the hands perform the following sequence of calisthenics:

| <u>Beat Called</u> | <u>Hands Performing Action</u> | <u>Action</u>                         |                                 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>HUP!</u>        | All                            | Palm out, like a cop stopping traffic | } repeat for a total of 4 times |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | All                            | Palm flapped down                     |                                 |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | All                            | Palm out                              |                                 |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | All                            | Palm flapped down                     |                                 |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 8 on left                      | Palm out                              | } repeat for a total of 4 times |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 8 on left                      | Palm down                             |                                 |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 8 on right                     | Palm out                              |                                 |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | 8 on right                     | Palm down                             |                                 |

(continued)

| <u>Beat Called</u> | <u>Hands Performing Action</u> | <u>Action</u>   |   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>HUP!</u>        | Row 4                          | Palm out; and hold  | } |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | Row 3                          | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | Row 2                          | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | Row 1                          | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | Row 1                          | Palm down   | } |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | Row 2                          | Palm down   |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | Row 3                          | Palm down   |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | Row 4                          | Palm down   |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 1a,1c;2b,2d;<br>3a,3c;4b,4d    | Palm out; down on TWO!  | } |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 1b,1d;2a,2c;<br>3b,3d;4a,4c    | Palm out; down on<br>THREE!   |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 1a,1c;2b,2d;<br>3a,3c;4b,4d    | Palm out; down on<br>FOUR!  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | 1b,1d;2a,2c;<br>3b,3d;4a,4c    | Palm out; down on HUP!  |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 2b,2c;3b,3c                    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 1b,1c;2d,3d;<br>4b,4c;2a,3a    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 1a,1d;4a,4d                    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | All                            | Palm down   |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 1a,1d;4a,4d                    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 1b,1c;2d,3d;<br>4b,4c;2a,3a    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 2b,2c;3b,3c                    | Palm out; and hold  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | All                            | Palm down   |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 4a,1d                          | Sharply fling all fingers out from<br>a closed fist into a "blossom";<br>and hold |   |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 3a,4b;1c,2d                    | Same  |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 2a,3b,4c;<br>1b,2c,3d          | Same  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | 1a,2b,3c,4d                    | Same; and then all return to closed<br>fist                                       |   |
| <u>HUP!</u>        | 1d,2c,3b,4a                    | Sharply fling all fingers out from<br>a closed fist into a "blossom";<br>and hold |   |
| <u>TWO!</u>        | 3a,2b,1c;<br>4b,3c,2d          | Same  |   |
| <u>THREE!</u>      | 2a,1b;4c,3d                    | Same  |   |
| <u>FOUR!</u>       | 1a,4d                          | Same; and then all return to closed<br>fist                                       |   |

(continued)

| <u>Beat Called</u>   | <u>Hands Performing Action</u>                 | <u>Action</u>  |
|--|--|--|
| HUP!<br>(no regular rhythm after this point; each column points as soon as it gets the idea of pointing) | Column a                                       | Each hand points its forefinger accusingly toward Column b; and holds                              |
|  | Column b                                       | Each hand points its forefinger accusingly toward Column c; and holds                              |
|  | Column c                                       | Each hand points its forefinger accusingly toward Column d; and holds                              |
|  | Column d                                       | "Panics" momentarily--but recovers, and each hand points its thumb accusingly back toward Column c |
|  | Column c                                       | Like a reflex, each hand points its thumb accusingly back toward Column b                          |
|  | Column b                                       | At once, each hand points its thumb accusingly back toward Column a                                |
| Column a   | "Panics"--and all 4 of its hands are withdrawn |  |

The hands in Columns b,c and d make breezy complacent gestures of dismissal, as if to say, "That was simple enough."

2a emerges timidly. All the hands in Columns b,c and d immediately turn their accusing forefingers on him, and he quickly withdraws.

3a makes the same experiment, with the same result.

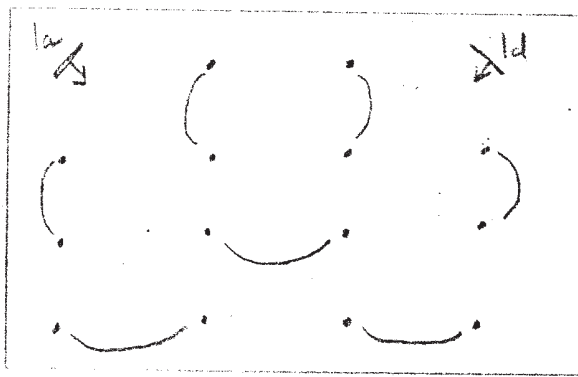
Long pause.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, all four hands of Column a emerge in unison. 1a holds a revolver, 2a a knife, 3a a club, and 4a an arrow. Each brandishes his weapon toward Columns b,c and d, who "cringe before" and "attempt to placate" Column a.

The whistle blows. Column a drop their weapons (which are not heard to fall, however) and all 16 hands

relax into "conversation"--as if everything up to this point had been only a pretense and now they are taking a break.

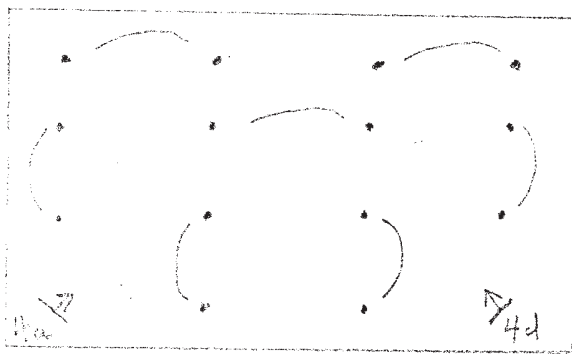
The "conversation" is strictly within the pairs indicated below:



Each hand "converses" by bunching all its fingertips together into a proboscis which it shakes and waves at its partner.

1a and 1d provide a sort of frame for the conversing hands; the centers of their palms point in the direction indicated by the arrow.

The whistle sounds and the hands instantly change partners, as shown below. Now it is 4a and 4d who, excluded from the conversation, frame the conversing hands:



After a while, 4d tries to distract 4c, 3c and 3d away from their respective two-way "conversations" and get them all

7

talking with each other and him.

As soon as they realize what he is trying to do, 4c, 3c and 3d "pointedly turn their backs" (i.e. the backs of their hands) on him.

But this only has the effect of making 4d eager to reach an even wider audience. He emerges from his slit nearly up to his elbow, gestures over the "heads" (i.e. fingertips) of 4c, 3c and 3d to the other hands.

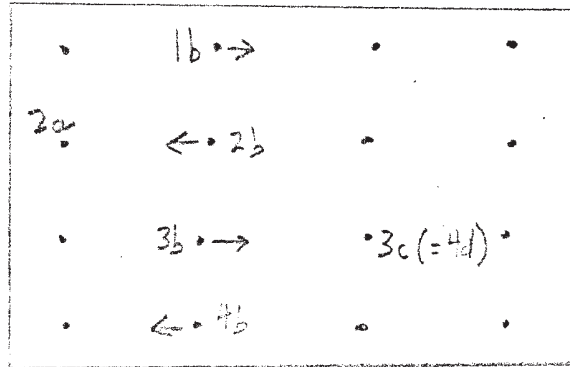
These others, one after one, "coldly" turn to "face" him (i.e. their palms are now toward him, fingertips out toward audience); 4c, 3c and 3d also turn to face him. 4d "harangues" the other 15 hands frantically. But at the very height of his harangue, they all in synchronization--all but 2a-- "turn their backs" and in another synchronized motion disappear behind the hand-board, their sudden passage back through their slots creating a whipping noise.

8

4d, "discouraged," sinks back up to the wrist in his slot. But after a few moments, he notices 2a and "greet" 2a "tentatively"; 2a waves back "shyly".

Immensely encouraged, 4d disappears for a moment, the scrim between 4d and 3c rustles slightly, and 4d reappears-- the same hand of the same actor--through slot 3c. 2a waves "encouragingly". 4d (now 3c) seems about to pull back for a still nearer advance when--

Four rigid right hands--fingertips toward audience, palms facing as arrows indicate--appear in Column b, forming a "wall of sentries" between 2a and 3c:



2a and 3c try to "get back in contact" over the "wall"--but to no avail. Slowly, in synchronization with each other, they sink back through their slots out of sight. In a sharp one/two motion the four hands in Column b each reverse their directions and then snap back to their original positions. Then Column b, too, slowly sinks back out of sight.

Pause. Then suddenly 3 straight-arm fists in synchronization come banging out, up to their elbows, through slots 1b, 3c and 3d. As soon as the fists reach their point of farthest extension, the arms begin to "wilt" and slowly recede back into the slots. Even as they are "wilting" another barrage of fists--3b, 2c, 1d, 2d--comes bursting through.

Repeat 4 or 5 times with a different pattern of slots each time. During this fist-sequence in particular, the black and jeweled fists should each appear in conspicuously different positions on the hand-board.

The final barrage of fists should come through the

4 slots in Row 1: la,lb,lc,ld.

11

When fists la,lb,lc, and ld reach their point of farthest extension, instead of "wilting" they remain out, and begin very slowly sifting sand through their fingers, so that there are 4 parallel streams of sand descending from Row 1 down over Columns a,b,c and d.

One or two at a time, the hands in Rows 2,3 and 4 come "venturing forth" and clutch upward for the stream of sand, as if it were a stream of water and they thirsty mouths. Eventually, all 12 hands in Rows 2,3 and 4 are out and "drinking," though of course the flow to each hand in Rows 3 and 4 is impeded by the hands above.

12

Hands la,lb,lc and ld run out of sand. Rows 2,3 and 4 turn "imploringly" up toward them for more. Hands la,lb,lc and ld open and turn themselves over to shake out the last few grains of sand--and then themselves turn upward in the same imploring gesture that Rows 2,3 and 4 are making to them.

All 16 hands implore upward.

The imploring intensifies.

13

As if in response to the imploring, a shower of pale blue and yellow balloons descends from behind the top of the frame of the hand-board. The hands reach out for them,



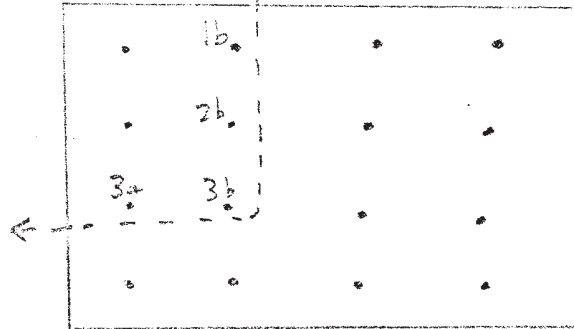
puncturing some, missing some, capturing others. Whenever a hand captures a balloon, it takes hold of the tied end and whirls the balloon vigorously. Then when a balloon is "whirled out," the hand releases it and it, too, drops.

14

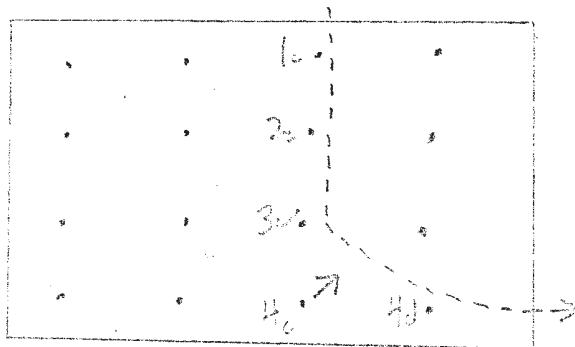
When all the balloons have either fallen, been punctured, or been released, the hands stretch, slacken and "relax" (i.e. hang down loosely).

15

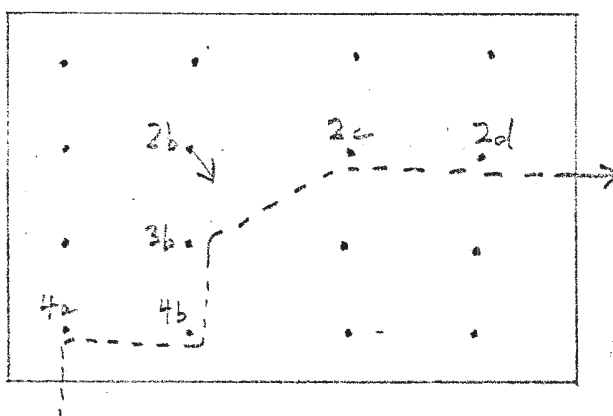
A rope is suddenly dropped down before Column b, as low as Row 2. The hands dispose of it by the following route:



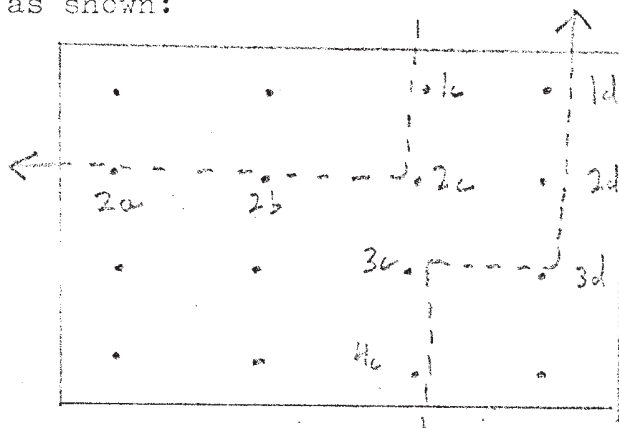
Brief pause. Then a rope is suddenly dropped down before Column c, as low as Row 3, and disposed of thus (4c clutches upward in vain to have a role in the transmission):



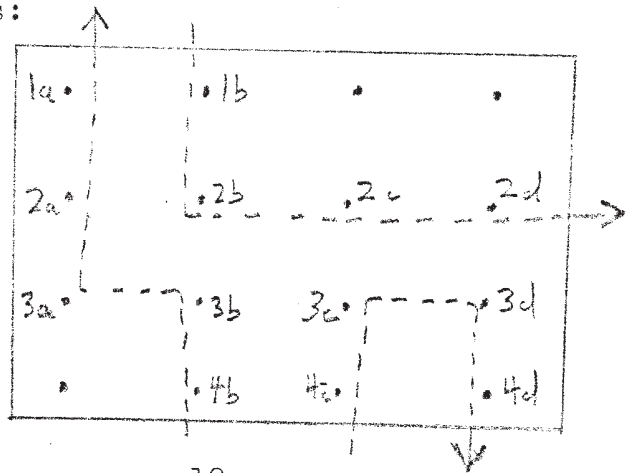
Slightly longer pause. Then, from below, a rope is flung up before Column a, like a rearing snake. 4a gets hold of it, seems to "deliberate" for a moment, and then starts it along the route that takes it off as follows (2b waves as the rope goes by):



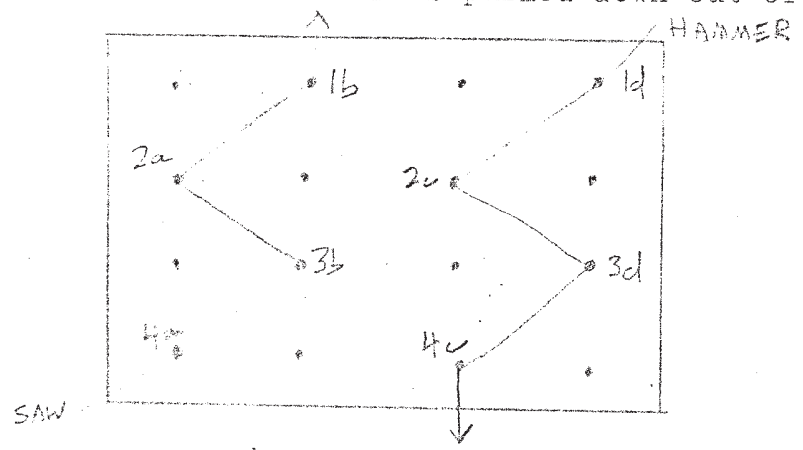
Brief pause. Then, simultaneously, one rope is dropped down in front of, and another flung up in front of, Column c. The upper rope winds up in hand 2c, the lower in hand 3c. 2c and 3c "consult" and "communicate their intentions" to each other--and then the two ropes are disposed of as shown:



Very brief pause. Then, simultaneously, two ropes are thrown up before Column b and Column c, and caught by 4b and 4c respectively; and a third rope is dropped down in front of Column b and taken hold of by 1b. 1b, 4b, 4c and the intervening hands "consult"--and then the three ropes are passed off thus:

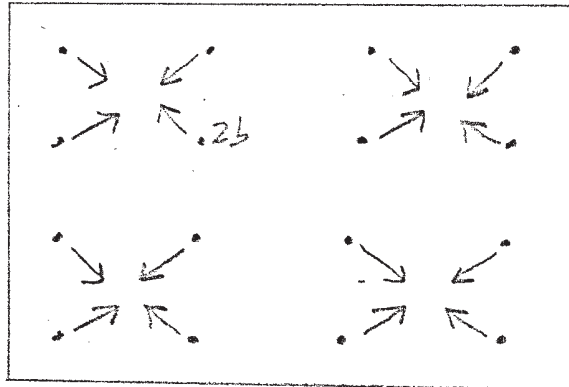


The moment the last rope-end has disappeared, an oversized cardboard cut-out of a hammer is thrust diagonally down, handle first, into hand 4d. At the same moment, an oversized cardboard cut-out of a saw is thrust diagonally up, handle first, into hand 4a. The tools are disposed of as shown. ~~The saw is jerked up out of hand 1b and at the same moment the hammer is pulled down out of hand 4c:~~

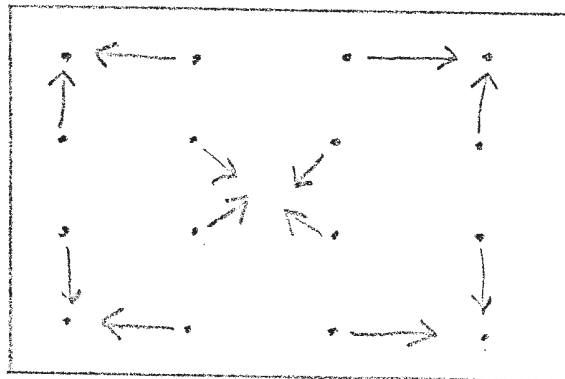


The moment hammer and saw are gone, simultaneous hammering and sawing noises begin to be heard. These continue and grow louder till noted.

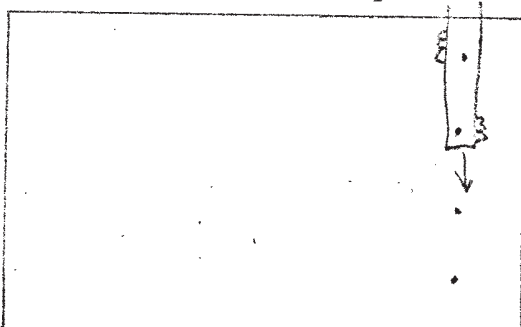
"Alarmed" by the noises, the hands--each formed into a proboscis, as in #5--"take counsel" in small groups, first like this:



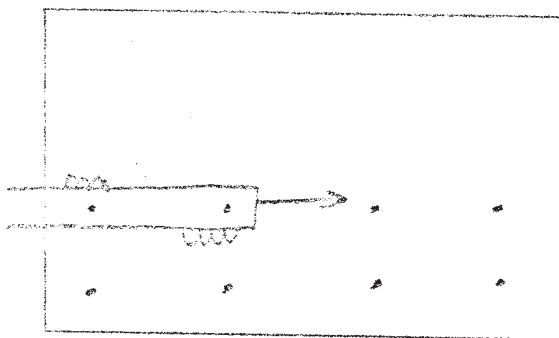
then, on a cue from 2b, they regroup thus:



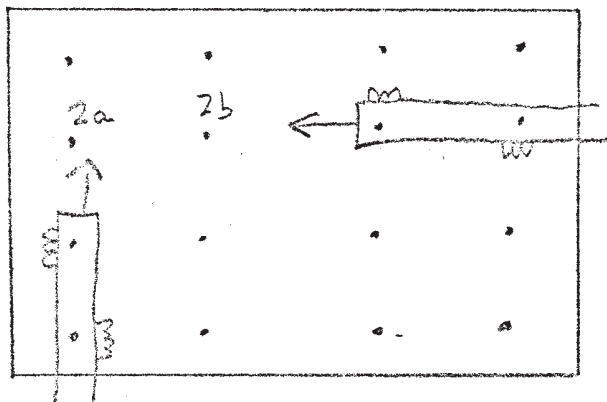
While the hands are thus "consulting," a 1"X4" plank shoots down in front of Column d, to just below Row 2. All hands stop "talking". The hands in Column d take hold of the plank, successive hands on alternate sides, and dispose of it straight down (It is longer than the height of the hand-board, as are all subsequent vertical planks):



No sooner is it gone than another plank shoots on from the left across Row 3, to just before Column c. The hands in Row 3 take hold of it, successive hands on alternate sides, and dispose of it straight across Row 3, toward the right (It is longer than the width of the hand-board, as are all subsequent horizontal planks):



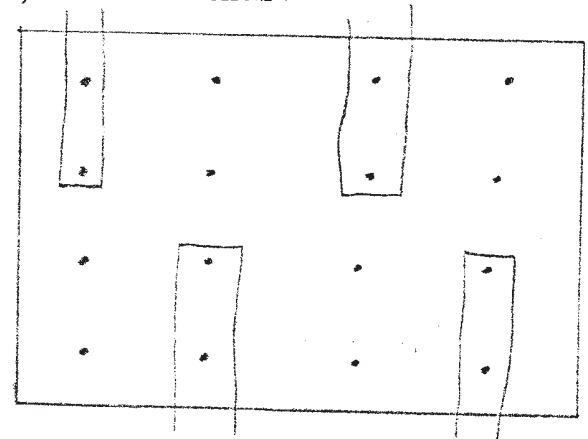
No sooner is it gone than two more planks--a horizontal one and a vertical one--appear in front of the board. The vertical plank shoots up in front of Column a, to just above Row 3; the horizontal plank shoots on from the right across Row 2, to just beyond Column c:



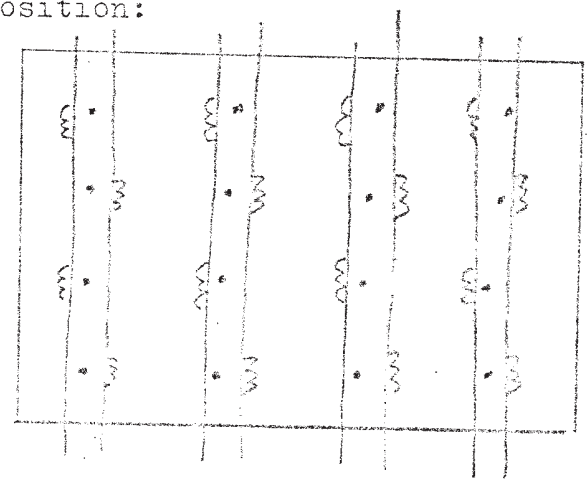
The hands begin to pass these off as they did the planks in ##22 and 23, in the directions shown above. But 2b grabs the end of the horizontal plank and holds it up till the vertical plank has disappeared, then passes it on to 2a, and so off the board

(continued)

No sooner is the horizontal plank gone than four planks appear, and hold thus:



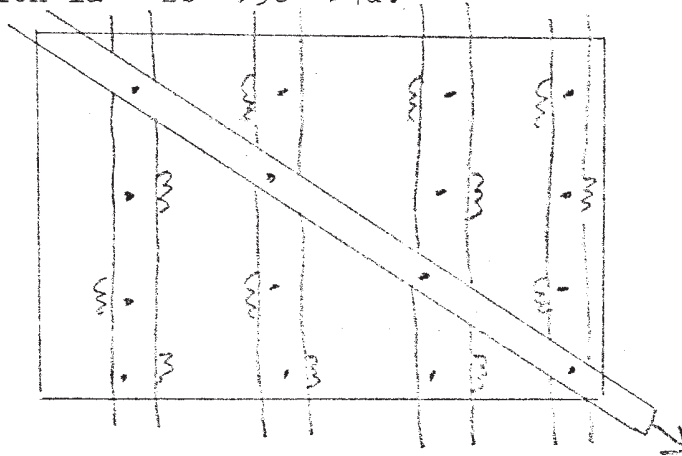
The hands begin to pass these planks, too, off-- those in front of Columns a and c downward, those in front of Columns b and d upward. But when the planks reach this position:



they will not budge any further, despite the feverish clutchings, pullings and pushings of the hands.

(continued)

As the hands struggle with the four planks, a fifth, diagonal plank slides slowly across the hand-board in the direction 1a → 2b → 3c → 4d.



As this plank moves, the sawing noise fades quickly out, and the hammering noise intensifies. All hands intensify their efforts to dislodge the four vertical planks.

Three beats after the diagonal is in place, the lights go quickly down.