

Mise en Scène

# Mise en Scène= “meez on sen”

- ◇ French for “placing on stage”
- ◇ Arrangement of visual weights and movements within a given space
- ◇ Defined by the frame that encloses the images

## 4 Distinct Formal Elements

1. Staging of the elements
2. Physical setting and décor
3. Manner in which the material is framed
4. Manner in which the material is photographed.

*Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock)





*The Good Thief*



*Finding  
Neverland*

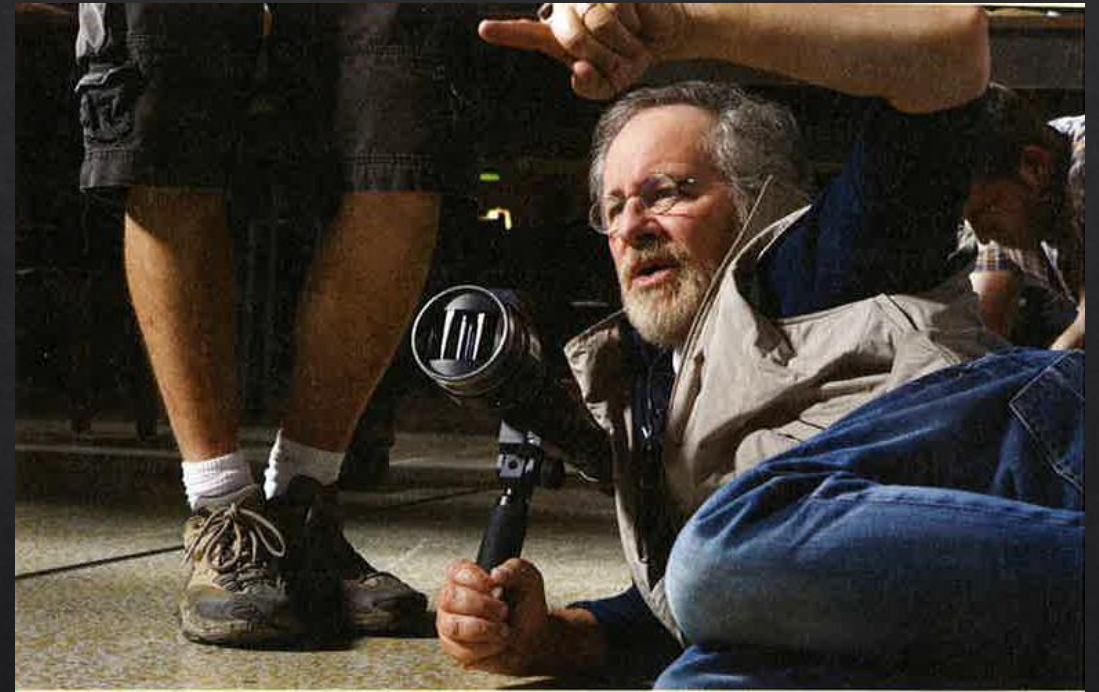


# THE FRAME

- ◆ Generally deals with long/extreme long shots
- ◆ Selects and delimits subject
- ◆ What's left out is as important as what's included



Steven Spielberg- *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*



*Manhattan* (Woody Allen)

# THE FRAME

## Symbolism

**Area near TOP-** power, authority, aspiration

**Area near EDGE-** insignificance

**Area near EDGE-** insignificance

**Area near CENTER-**  
Generally most important

**Area near BOTTOM-** subservience, vulnerable, powerless

### **OFF CAMERA**

- Curiosity
- Imagination



Widescreen uses

*Unleashed*



*Little Children*



Negative Space- “empty space” in a frame.  
Gives sense that something is missing



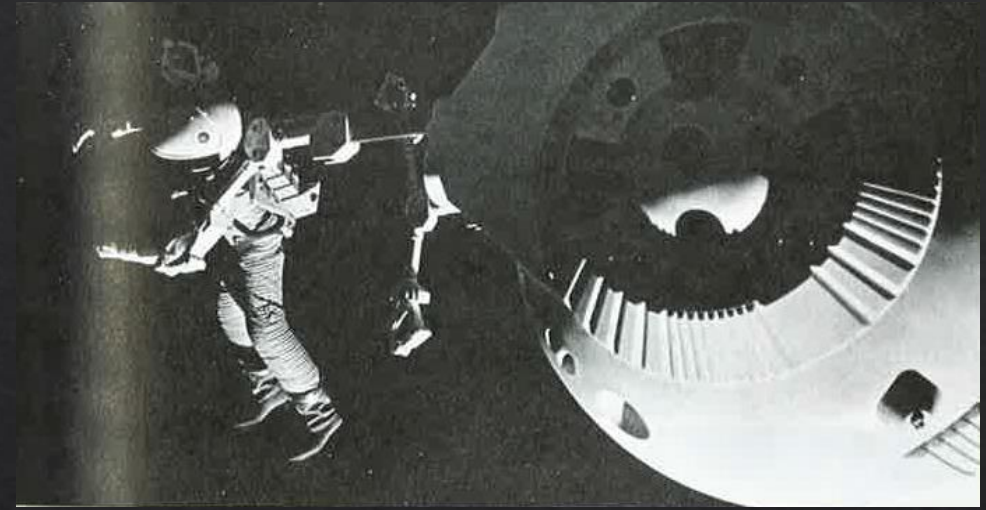
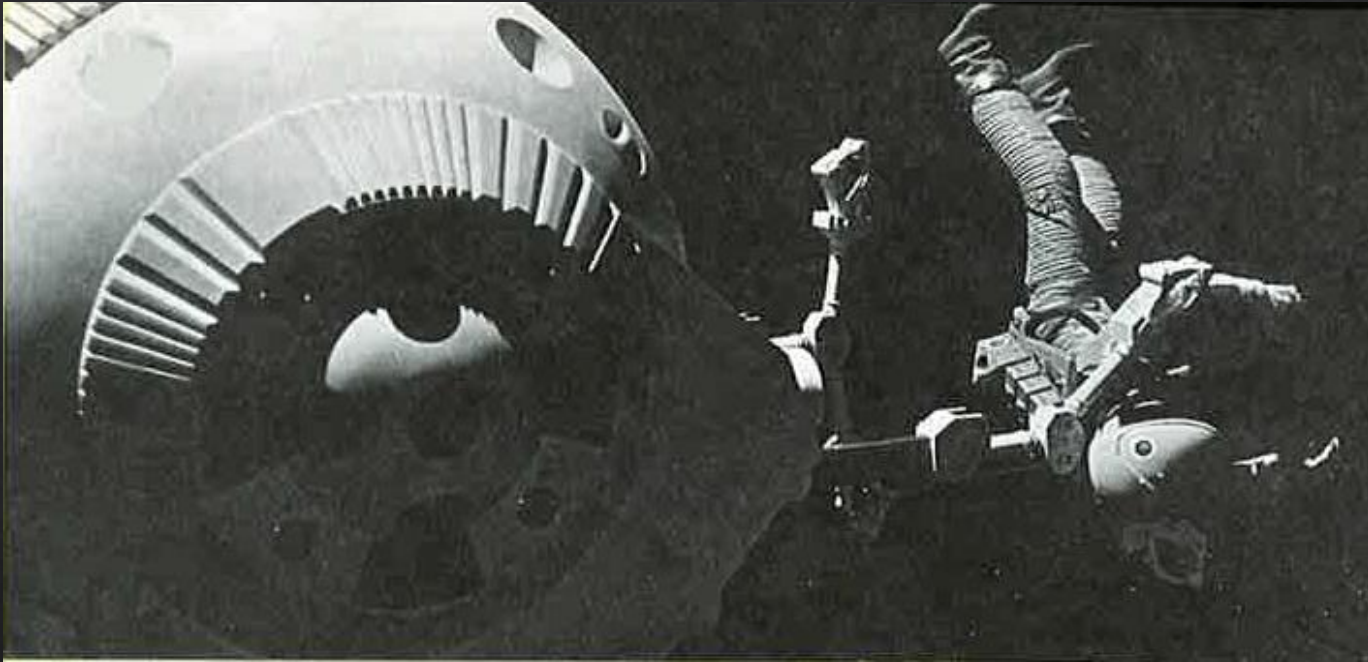
*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*

Highly Symmetrical Designs-  
stress stability harmony



*Greed*

Left to Right-  
The way we typically scan a shot



*2001: A Space Odyssey*

Rule of Three- (from visual arts)

3 objects are more visually interesting than...

1 object (emphasizes uniqueness)

2 objects (emphasizes a pairing sharing equally)



*Dreamgirls*



*Once Were Warriors*



*The End of August at the Hotel Ozone*



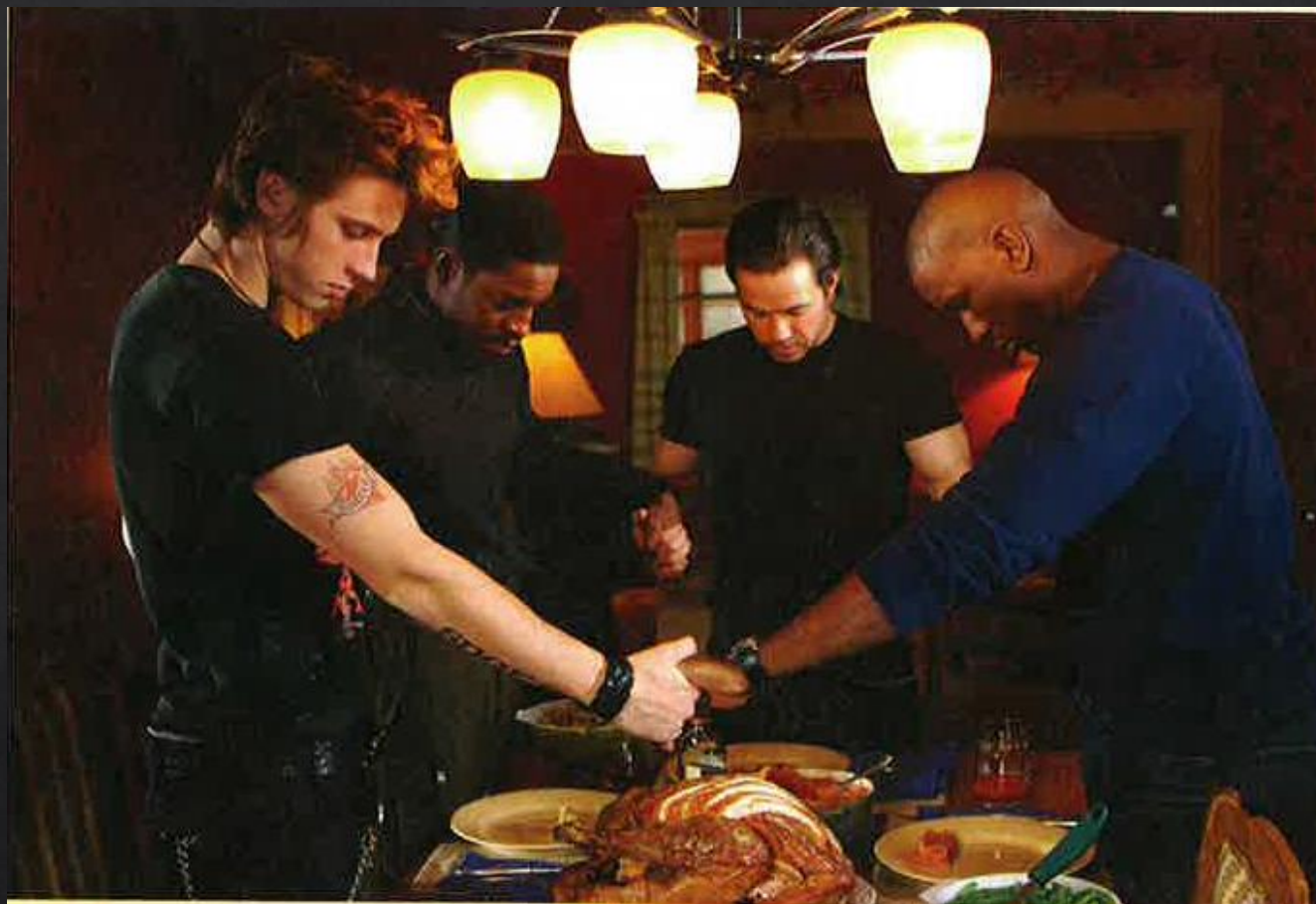
*Mystic River*

# Composition and Design

- ◇ We tend toward balance and harmony, but directors will choose to intentionally alter this
- ◇ The human eye can detect up to 7-8 major elements of a composition simultaneously
- ◇ Dominant- the area of the image that immediately attracts our attention
  - ◇ Stands out from other areas of the image
  - ◇ Color, light, size
- ◇ Subsidiary Contrasts- subordinated elements of the image. Complementing and contrasting with the dominant



# Very Balanced



*Four Brothers*

# Very Unbalanced



*Cry Wolf*



*Macbeth*



Design is infused  
with  
thematic ideas

*Swimming Pool*



Design is infused  
with  
thematic ideas

*Rush Hour 3*

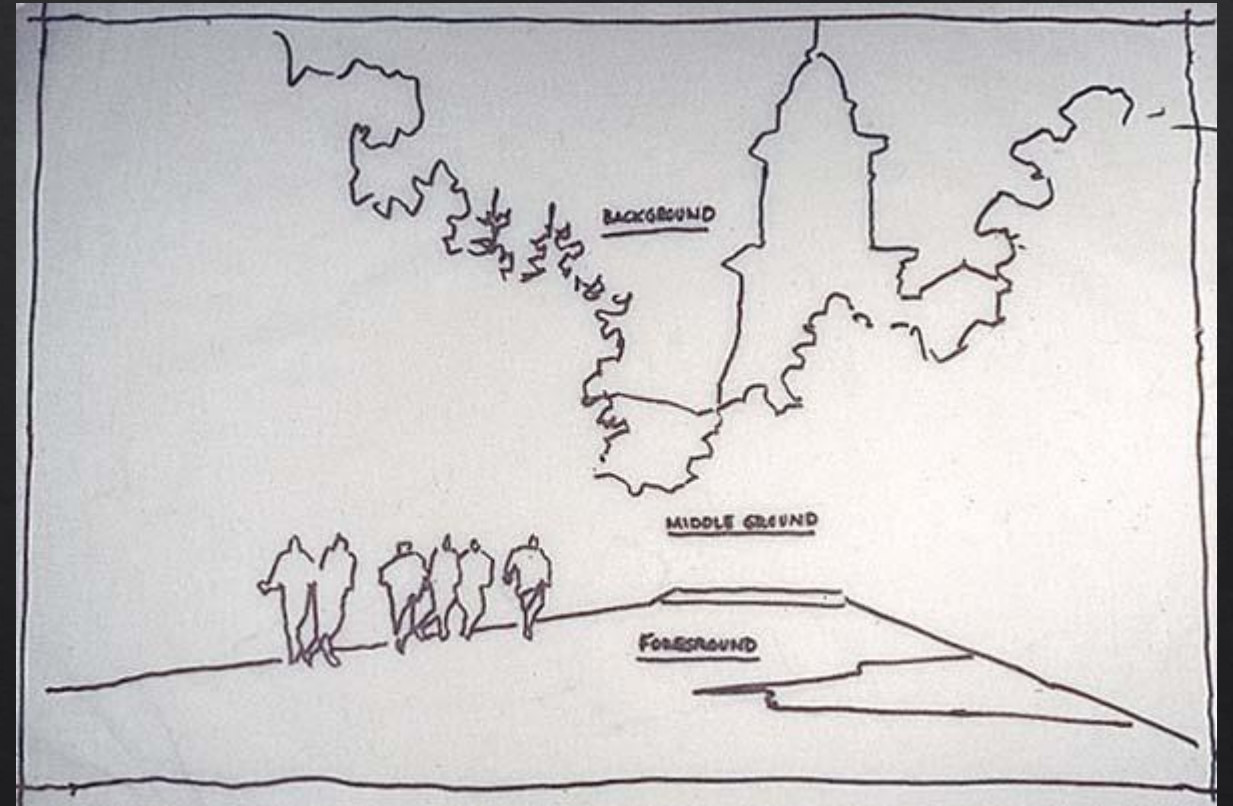


Design is infused  
with  
thematic ideas

*Jules and Jim*

# Territorial Space

- ◇ Background
- ◇ Middleground (generally where figure is)
- ◇ Foreground
  
- ◇ Space- is a medium of communication



# Space: Object in foreground



*The Graduate*



# Space: hierarchy of power



*The Grifters*

# Space: social relationships



*Michael Clayton*

# Space: psychological relationships



*A History of Violence*

# Space: psychological relationships



*Igby Goes Down*

# Density of Texture- how much is “going on” in the image

1. High Density- a lot visual information in the frame



*The Blue Angel*

2. Low Density- very stark imagery.



*THX 1138*

# Framing- how close/long the shot is

1. Tightly Framed- not a lot of room around the subjects= confinement



*The Grand Illusion*

2. Loosely framed- plenty of room around the subjects= freedom

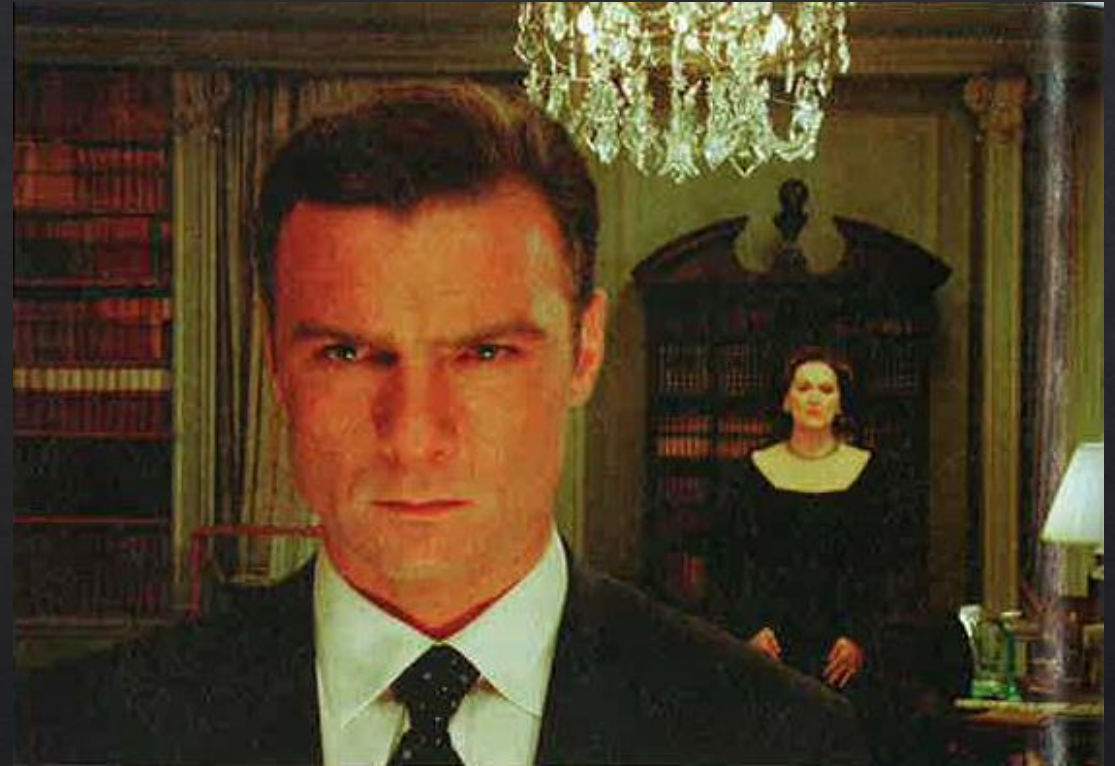


*Ghost World*

# Types of Photography

## 1. Full front

- Facing Camera
- Most intimate
- Looking “at” us



*The Manchurian Candidate*

# Types of Photography

## 2. Quarter Turn

- High degree of intimacy with less emotional involvement



*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*



# Types of Photography

## 3. Profile

- Looking off frame to the right or left
- Unaware of being observed



*Sahara*

# Types of Photography

## 4. Three Quarter Turn

- More anonymous/  
antisocial
- Partially turning back  
on us
- Rejecting us



*All or Nothing*

# Types of Photography

## 5. Back to Camera

- We can only guess what's going on internally
- Alienation from world
- Concealment/  
Mystery



*Red Desert*

# Proxemic Patterns- relationship of organisms within a given space

## 1. Intimate Distance (extreme close up/ close up)

- ◇ Skin to skin – 18 inches
- ◇ Love/comfort/tenderness
- ◇ Lovers/family
- ◇ Strangers- intrusive
- ◇ Excludes others



*Hustle & Flow*

# Proxemic Patterns- relationship of organisms within a given space

## 2. Personal Distance (medium shot)

- ◇ 18 inches– 4 feet
- ◇ Touch if necessary
- ◇ Friends/ acquaintances
- ◇ Privacy, not exclusion

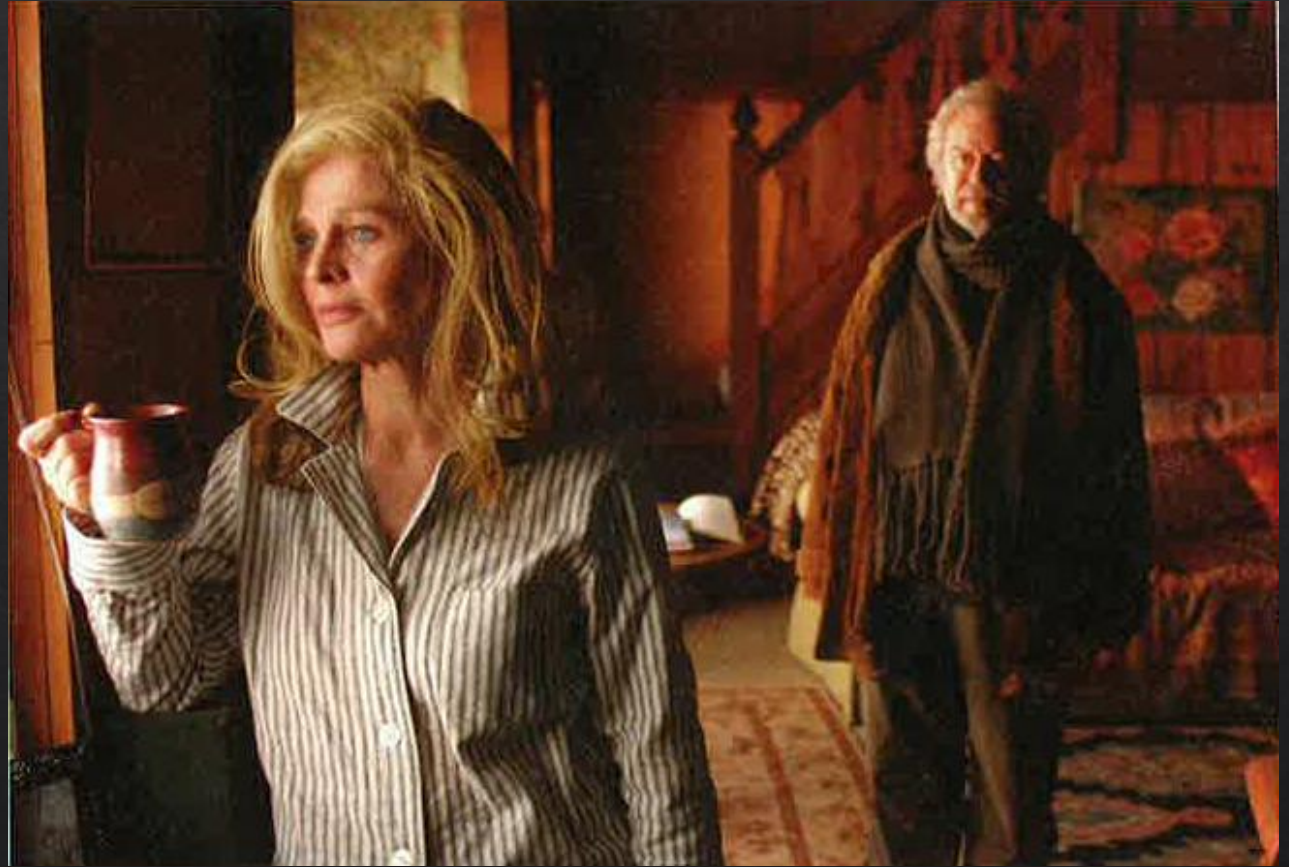


*Garden State*

# Proxemic Patterns- relationship of organisms within a given space

## 3. Social Distance (medium, full shot)

- ◇ 4 feet– 12 feet
- ◇ Impersonal/ business gatherings
- ◇ Friendly, more formal
- ◇ Necessary with 3+ members



*Away from Her*

# Proxemic Patterns- relationship of organisms within a given space

## 4. Public Distance (long, extreme long shot)

- ◇ 12 feet– 25 feet
- ◇ Formal, detached
- ◇ Displays of emotion= bad form



*Zabriski Point*

## Our eyes identify with the camera

- ◆ Close-up of a character we like= greater identification with them
- ◆ Close-up of the villain= revulsion
  
- ◆ In general: more distance between camera and subject, more emotionally neutral we remain (banana peel)



*“long shot for comedy, close-up for tragedy”*  
*- Charlie Chaplain*



*Gold Rush*



*City Lights*

# Open Form

- ◆ Found rather than arranged
- ◆ More realism



*Mrs. Sorrel*

# Closed Form

- ◆ Precisely placed and carefully constructed
- ◆ More formalism



*Notorious*



*The Weather Man*



*The Brave One*