

## ROLE OF LINES IN COSTUME DESIGN

**Deepak S. Garud**

*Asst. Professor, Center for Performing Arts, Sppu Pune - 7*



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Drama is a composite art and the words; story of a playwright needs a balanced amalgam of theatrical elements to transform the words or written story into a live drama in a proscenium arch or space given.

The costume designing in theatre is an important element, which is called as backstage craftsmanship. The costume is one of the most visible signs of civilization. In context of theatre and characters, the term costume can be referred to as a dress in general or dress of particular class, period, sex, age, caste, creed, religion, region, occasion, occupation, and indicators of social, economical, psychological status of characters. The headset, particular cap or headgear is a part of costume.

*"The costumes are like a second skin on performers. The characters are visually incomplete without them. For me, it is very important to work with costume designers that are able to communicate the message I am aiming to express accurately and realistically"* . - *Christos Strepkos, Play Director, Patras, Greece.*

**The objectives of costume: to show**

- Time period.
- Location.
- Culture and heritage.
- Social status of a character.
- Economical status of a character.
- Psychological status of a character.

The line is inbuilt structure of costume. Line is a basic element, gives a shape and meaningful form to the costume. The lines in visible or invisible form, helps the costume designer to fulfil the objectives of costume and its interpretation according to the particular play and character. The role of line in costume designing gives meaningful impact, if used in

the homogeneous manner in co-ordination with the other elements i.e. texture and colour. Each and every visible object of this world is having a particular shape of an inbuilt important element which is called a line. The pattern of lines fulfils the term of shape.

The line can be defined as :

‘A line is straight path that is endless in both directions’.

‘A line is a path tress by moving point’.

‘Geometrically it connects two points’.

We see lines all around. The line is a vital element of any design or art work. One can find the lines of visible or invisible / illusory form in each and every shape in nature, including human body. The line is a major element in creative, meaningful aesthetical value or sense.

**The main objective of lines in costume design is:**

1. To help to bring out psychological traits of character
2. To emphasize or minimize actor’s physical characteristics

The desired expressions of lines can be opted by cut of garment, seaming, application of trim, overall silhouette.

**Aspects of Line in costume design :**

- Path
- Thickness.
- Continuity
- Sharpness
- Contour
- Consistency
- Length
- Direction

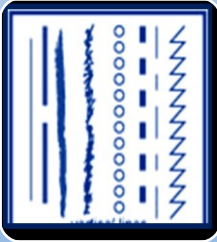
**Types of line:** There are two types of lines

Straight line: depending on the direction the straight line is divided into four subtypes

- ❖ Straight Vertical
- ❖ Straight Horizontal
- ❖ Straight Diagonal
- ❖ Zigzag

Curve line: Curve line may be extreme or very gentle curve or subtle almost straight or approaching a full circle means Circular and Semi circular lines

**Characteristic of line and application in costume:**



**Vertical lines:** straight up and down and perpendicular to horizontal lines. The vertical line gives an illusion of added height of the character. These lines are used to portray the character as confident, self reliant, and dominant.



**Horizontal lines:** straight up and down and perpendicular to vertical lines. The horizontal line gives an illusion of Shorter the height, calmness, stability, constructive.



**Diagonal lines:** lines that straight in any direction except vertical or horizontal / either rising or falling, used to convey the speed, motion, action in upward direction of prosperity and downward direction of deterioration.



**Curve Lines:** lines that bend in any amount of degree; they may be gently wavy to tightly wound spirals. The Curve line gives effect of grace, royalty and a sense of attitude. It can also be used to give a feminine feel. The curve lines often used to give softer visual impact and emphasize the gracefulness of a character.



**Zigzag Lines:** are a series of diagonal lines joined end to end. It is used for a character that is in dwelling mind or in a state of Confusion like.

**Application of variety of Vertical lines, Horizontal lines, Diagonal lines, Zigzag lines, Curved lines in costume design:**

- be long, short or anything in between
- be thick, thin
- be smooth or rough
- be continuous, implied, dotted, dashed
- change direction
- change in degree of curve (curved Lines)
- be any of the above combined

**Lines and colours:**

As the colours are related to the emotions, the colour lines are used in costumes to describe the mood, nature, topography, culture, traditions, contemporary relevance of a character i.e. A character of a light coloured costume with prominent vertical blue lines shows the positivity and kindness whereas a dark colour costume with a prominent red or black lines shows the ambition and the greed to achieve the desired aim at false/ negative intention

**Line and character:** while designing a costume for a character of positive attitude calm, wealthy, and of helping nature, it is required to think over a social status, topography, mental health, and the situation in which the character is. If the character is from contemporary urban society then the use of vertical lines will give the appropriate meaning. If the character carrying gray shades and under influence of negative mindset the use of combination of Diagonal and Zigzag lines will help to showcase his / her negativity and attitude of snatching fever and suppressing other by any false act. To bring out the different shades of a brave, self respecting, kind heart, sublime character, the use of straight vertical lines and curved lines in a particular pattern i.e. edges of costume; collar, collarbone flap, sleeves and the bottom of costume with curved lines. The use of perpendicular highlighting lines will also be feasible.

**Lines in costume and its coordination with other back stage elements:**

As we know that the drama is a composite art and combination of all the theatrical components for purposeful expressions are depend upon a balanced amalgam of each co-related elements. If after opening the curtain, one get a response to a set but not to the costumes or lights or music means, its failed to give altogether impact on an expression. The co-relation in all back stage elements including their altogether effects to support an actor is very much important. Hence the use of lines in costume should match with line patterns used for scenic design. The colours of the lines should not only match with the line pattern of the set but, should be in opposite colours also. The source light, colour of light should be used in

such a manner that should not be given merging effect. The hand props, the stage props, should be designed in such a way to highlight the type of lines that used for the purposeful expression of the character to it. While designing a costume for children plays for an imaginary character, the lining colours are used for makeup and the colour lines used for costumes should be in opposite with the same pattern.

### **Lines in costume and physique of actor:**

The costume is a basic element to assist in creating the appearance of the characters that actors portray during a Play. The process of transformation of an actor into a character starts in greenroom after makeup and dressing up costume.

The lines of costumes help to get the coherent visible appearance of dissonance of the physique of actor and physique of character. The use of vertical lines in costume giving a tall appearance of short height actor and horizontal lines carrying opposite effect. The use of lines of costume can emphasize or minimize actor's physical characteristics.

Unfortunately in modern trend theatre very few costume designers are utilising lines for purposeful expression. Mostly are not serious about this important aspect of costume. Trend of hiring of costumes and paucity of funds is also one of the reasons behind.

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