

The last time I saw *Romeo and Juliet* at Stratford, Ontario, the Juliet started the vial speech center stage, on a bed. Within a few lines she had bolted down left. Soon she had moved up right, then up left, then down right, and before the speech had ended, she had wandered about some more, before drinking the potion on the bed, and falling asleep. I blamed the director. The track-meet he had forced his young actress to run, had made her text all but indecipherable. I believe that Juliet is so conflicted, so tormented by her raging imagination, she is unable to move.

By all means create a physical geography for your characters, so they know where they are and can think in different directions; but don't make them move unless the text demands it. Monologues are characters sharing problems with an audience. The bigger the problems, the more stillness the character might need to solve them.

Educational Shakespearean competitions often give points for stage usage, as though the more ground covered the better the speech. That is almost never true! Usually, it is only through physical stillness, that the actor can fully experience the conflicting thoughts and emotions raging within their characters.