

### Analysing Drama

... comprises the analysis of plot structure, dramatic communication and information management, and characterisation

**Story:** the chronological succession of events in the sequence of their occurrence, abstracted from the text

**Plot:** the logical (causal or other) connections between these events

In order to describe the **plot structure** of a play,

- distinguish and reconstruct the various **plotlines** which may exist, and
- describe the relationship and the connections between the different plotlines.

Then go on to relate the plot structure to the other structural components.

### Analysing Dramatic Communication – Short Glossary of Concepts

**Dramatic communication** differs from narrative by its multimedial form of presentation, and by the general absence of narrative mediation.

**Exposition** is “the transmission of information to do with the events and situations from the past that determine the dramatic present” (86). It must be distinguished from the “dramatic introduction” although both may coincide.

**Monologue** may be defined by two alternative criteria:

- Structural criterion: “length and degree of autonomy of a particular speech”
- Situational criterion: “the speaker’s solitude” (=soliloquy)

**Soliloquies** may be

- conventional or motivated;
- premeditated or spontaneously improvised;
- actional or informative.

“**Aside**”: The speaker does not address any other person on the stage; but he or she is not alone. Asides may be addressed to the audience.

**Dialogue** will be analysed according to the relative length of individual speeches; the number of interruptions; the domination of one speaker or one idea.

**Information Management and ‘Congruent’ or ‘Discrepant’ Awareness:**

- What differences are there between the levels of awareness of the various dramatic figures at any particular stage?
- What differences are there between the levels of awareness of fictional figures and audience at any particular stage? (50)

**Dramatic Irony** is “the superior awareness of the audience adds an additional layer of meaning to either the verbal utterance or the non-verbal behaviour of a figure on stage in such a way as to contradict or undermine the meaning intended by that figure” (56).

### Techniques of Characterization

see diagramme opposite =>

Page numbers in this handout all refer to Manfred Pfister. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. Trans. John Haliday. Cambridge: CUP. 1991 [1988].

from: Manfred Pfister. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. 1993. 184.

