

Analysing Drama

... comprises the analysis of (1) story, (2) dramatic communication, (3) information management, and (4) characterisation.

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

In order to describe the structure of a play,

- distinguish and reconstruct the various storylines which may exist
- describe the relationship and the connections between the different storylines
- distinguish between events that are represented on the stage and events that are merely mentioned in the speech of characters
- distinguish between the order in which the events occur and the order in which they are represented or reported on the stage and analyse each.

2. Dramatic Communication

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 (imperatives; questions; alliances, rank; etc.)

3. 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).

4. Techniques of Characterization

