

Analysing Dramatic Communication

Short Glossary of Concepts

Dramatic communication differs from narrative by its multimodal 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.

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).

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

Techniques of Characterization

see diagram from Manfred Pfister. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. 1993, 184.

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