

**ATHOL FUGARD: THE PORTRAYAL OF SOME OF HIS WOMEN
CHARACTERS**

Suzanne Vermaak, B.A. Hons., H.E.D.

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Magister Artium in the Department of English Language and Literature
(Faculty of Arts) of the Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër
Onderwys.

Supervisor: Professor Dr. Annette L. Combrink, M.A., D.Litt., U.E.D.

POTCHEFSTROOM

June, 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank

- * My supervisor Prof. Annette Combrink for her patience, guidance and motivation
- * The staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library for their assistance
- * The Centre for Science Development of the Human Sciences Research Council for their financial assistance
- * Norman Geldenhuys of Compu Fundi for his technical assistance
- * My parents for their unquestioning support and my sister Louise who assisted with the typing
- * My husband and two children for their help, encouragement and absolute faith in me. Without them this would not have been possible
- * God, Who gave me the ability to write

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT

Abstract	i
Opsomming	iii

CHAPTER I: PREFACE

1

1.1	Problem statement	1
1.2	Aims of the dissertation	2
1.3	Method	2

CHAPTER II: TRADITIONAL VERSUS SEMIOTIC APPROACHES TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT

5

2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	Traditional drama theory	7
2.3	Towards a new methodology	12

CHAPTER III: DRAMATIS PERSONAE

25

3.1	Introduction	25
3.2	The psychological approach to dramatic character	26
3.3	Actant, dramatis persona and the dramatic model	28
3.4	The relationship between dramatic character, actor, spectator	31

CHAPTER IV: FICTIONAL TIME AND PHYSICAL TIME IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

37

4.1	Introduction	37
4.2	Time experienced as "present moments"	37
4.3	Performance time and proposed time	39

CHAPTER V: SPACE IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT	41
5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Space in the dramatic text	42
5.3 Space in the performance	43
CHAPTER VI: LANGUAGE IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE	46
6.1 Introduction	46
6.2 Character, dialogue, action	46
6.3 Language in the dramatic text and in the performance	47
6.4 A semiotic approach to language	48
CHAPTER VII: THE DIDASCALIES	54
7.1 Introduction	54
7.2 The function of didascalies in the dramatic text	56
7.3 The didascalies in the performance	65
SECTION B: THE PORTRAYAL OF FUGARD'S WOMEN CHARACTERS: ANALYSIS OF SOME OF HIS PLAYS	67
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	67
1.1 Fugard's women characters	68
1.2 The influence of existentialism on Fugard's women characters	71
CHAPTER II: PEOPLE ARE LIVING THERE	78
CHAPTER III: HELLO AND GOODBYE	107
CHAPTER IV: THE ROAD TO MECCA	128
CHAPTER V: A PLACE WITH THE PIGS	156
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY	179

ABSTRACT

The fact that women characters play a central role in most of the dramas of Athol Fugard urged this dissertation. Due to its limited scope, however, not all women characters could be explored, therefore a line was drawn from two of Fugard's earlier plays, **People are Living There** and **Hello and Goodbye**, through to **The Road to Mecca** and finally to one of the later plays, **A Place with the Pigs**, in an attempt to find some form of development in the women characters portrayed in these plays.

These women characters are explored against a semiotic background in order to emphasize that they are not merely vehicles of (dramatic) communication, but also reflect social, ideological, institutional and esthetic norms.

Section A, therefore, explores the relationship between dramatic text and performance text. The points of view of some traditional critics and some semioticians are compared and a conclusion reached. Whereas the dramatic text consists of a network of verbal signs which appear in the form of written words involving linguistic, literary and cultural codes, the performance consists of many (more) types of signs which not only include words, but also body language, costumes, sets, lights and props.

This comparison then automatically leads to a study of the *dramatis personae* in a play, and the relationships which are established with both the reader of the play and the spectator of the performance. This interaction also involves the actors of the characters themselves.

Finally, fictional and physical time as well as dramatic space are explored, as this is the background against which the characters develop. In the dramatic as well as the performance text, the characters express themselves through language which in turn is inseparable from the *didascalies* which help the reader to interpret mood, background, feelings and character traits. They also enable the actor to portray the role which is then performed before an audience who will gain insight into the character.

In *Section B*, four of Fugard's plays in which women characters dominate the action are analysed against the theoretical background. The Section starts with the coarse and unrefined characters of Milly and Hester in **People are Living There** and **Hello and Goodbye** respectively, who come from poor backgrounds and live in squalid surroundings, but who assert themselves forcefully in that they triumph over their circumstances. They are not typical of the times in which they live in that they are not male-dominated and subservient housewives. From them, Fugard's writing progresses towards **The Road to Mecca**, in which Miss Helen and Elsa are more refined and emancipated characters, yet with inner struggles that need resolving. The play also explores Miss Helen's struggle as an artist to remain creative.

In the last play, **A Place with the Pigs**, Praskovya is initially portrayed as a simple woman cast in the role of a traditional housewife supporting her husband, but her firm belief in religion, and consequently what is right and what is wrong, gives her the strength to stand up for her rights. She asserts herself very strongly and in the process helps her husband to face reality and the consequences of his actions.

Fugard's women characters, it is maintained by way of conclusion, do not conform to the expectations of others. According to the existentialist tradition of Sartre and Camus, they avoid the loss of their true self by living according to their own vision of the truth. To do so is to risk conflict with others, but not to do so, is to "lapse into something akin to spiritual death" (Bruwer, 1984:47).

OPSOMMING

Die feit dat die vrouekarakters 'n sentrale rol speel in die meeste van Athol Fugard se dramas het aanleiding gegee tot hierdie verhandeling. As gevolg van die beperkte omvang van die verhandeling, was dit nie moontlik om al die vrouekarakters te bespreek nie, daarom word 'n lyn deurgetrek vanaf twee van Fugard se vroeër dramas, **People are Living There** en **Hello and Goodbye** deur **The Road to Mecca** na een van sy latere dramas, **A Place with the Pigs**, in 'n poging om 'n sekere mate van ontwikkeling na te speur in die vrouekarakters soos uitgebeeld in hierdie dramas.

Hierdie vrouekarakters word ondersoek teen 'n semiotiese agtergrond ten einde te beklemtoon dat hulle nie slegs (dramatiese) kommunikasiemiddele is nie, maar ook sosiale, ideologiese, institusionele en estetiese norme verteenwoordig.

Afdeling A van die verhandeling ondersoek daarom die verhouding tussen die dramateks en die opvoering. Die menings van sommige tradisionele semiotici word vergelyk en sekere gevolgtrekkings word gemaak. Waar die dramateks hoofsaaklik bestaan uit 'n netwerk van verbale tekens wat manifesteer in die vorm van geskrewe woorde wat linguistiese, literêre en kulturele kodes omvat, bestaan die opvoering uit verskillende soorte tekens wat nie slegs woorde insluit nie, maar ook lyftaal, kostuums, die stel, ligte en rekwisiete.

Hierdie vergelyking gee outomatiese aanleiding tot die karakters in 'n drama en die verhouding wat ontstaan met beide die leser van die drama en die toeskouer van die opvoering. Hierdie interaksie betrek ook die akteurs by hulle karakters.

Laastens word gekyk na die saak van milieu, omdat dit die agtergrond vorm waarteen die karakters ontwikkel. In die drama- sowel as die opvoeringstekes druk die karakters hulle uit deur middel van taal, wat op sy beurt weer onafskeidbaar is van die *didaskalieë* wat die leser help om atmosfeer, agtergrond, gevoel en karaktertrekke te interpreteer. Dit help ook die akteur om sy rol te vertolk voor 'n gehoor wat dan insig sal verkry in die karakter.

In *Afdeling B* word vier van Fugard se dramas waarin die vrouekarakters dominant is ontleed teen die teoretiese agtergrond wat reeds genoem is. Die afdeling begin met die growwe, onverfynde karakters van Milly en Hester in **People are Living There** en **Hello and Goodbye**. Beide kom uit 'n arm agtergrond en woon in armoedige omgewings, maar hulle neem sterk standpunt in vir hulle regte en triomfeer uiteindelijke oor hulle omstandighede. Hulle is nie tipies van hulle tyd nie, omdat hulle nie gedomineer word deur mans nie en ook nie die rol van onderdanige huisvrou speel nie. Hiervandaan ontwikkel Fugard se karakterisering van die vrou in die rigting van **The Road to Mecca**, waarin Miss Helen en Elsa baie meer verfynd en bevryd voorgestel word, maar tog nog sterk innerlike konflik ervaar wat opgelos moet word. Miss Helen se stryd as kunstenaar, naamlik om kreatief te bly, word ook verken.

In die laaste drama onder bespreking, **A Place with the Pigs**, word Praskovya aanvanklik geskets as 'n eenvoudige vrou in die tradisionele rol van huisvrou wat haar eggenoot in alles getrou ondersteun, maar haar vaste geloof in haar godsdiens, en gevolglik ook in wat reg en verkeerd is, gee haar die krag om op te kom vir haar regte. Sy neem sterk standpunt in en in die proses help sy haar eggenoot om die werklikheid, asook die gevolge van sy daade, in die gesig te kyk. Dit is dus duidelik dat Fugard se vrouekarakters nie aan tradisionele verwagtinge voldoen nie. In ooreenstemming met die eksistensiële tradisie van Sartre en Camus vermy hulle die verlies van hulle werklike self deur te leef in ooreenstemming met hulle eie siening van die waarheid. Om dit te doen, is om konflik met ander uit te lok, maar om dit te laat, is om "in iets te verval gelykstaande aan geestelike dood" (Bruwer, 1984:47).

SECTION A: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT

CHAPTER I: PREFACE

Thesis statement

Harold Athol Lannigan Fugard has already established himself as a great playwright both in South Africa and overseas. The characters from his long list of plays include people from various racial groups, both male and female. A close reading of his plays reveals, however, that female characters often play a dominant role.

Wide reading of secondary sources has revealed that while there are scattered references to the portrayal of Fugard's women characters, no systematic study has been undertaken.

1.1 Problem statement

In a reading of all of Fugard's plays, the following questions posed themselves:

- 1 Why are so many of the women characters portrayed as the main characters in the plays, and could one perhaps, knowing his personal background, find some reason in his background or in his pattern of relationship with women for this dominance?
- 2 What types of women are portrayed in Fugard's plays (especially the plays under discussion in this dissertation) and are there any similarities or divergences in their characters?
- 3 Is there any sense of development within the women that he portrays, or are they simply stagnant and/or stereotyped?

1.2 Aims of the dissertation

In an attempt to answer the three questions outlined above, the aim of the dissertation is threefold:

- 1 To trace the (putative) influence of women on Fugard's life in order to determine to what extent his personal background and his relationships with women might be seen to have influenced his writing, especially with regard to his portrayal of (especially tough, resilient) women characters;
- 2 to analyse some of the women characters who appear in his plays, and to illustrate that although these women are shown to suffer great hardship they are indomitable and survive to infuse their hostile surroundings with a range of possibilities far beyond mere survival; and
- 3 to trace a certain line of development that can be perceived in Fugard's women characters, from the unrefined Hester to the cultured, if mystically inclined, Helen, to the deeply religious Praskovya. The scope of this dissertation unfortunately does not allow an analysis of all Fugard's plays and all his female characters, therefore the following plays have been selected: **People are Living There, Hello and Goodbye, The Road to Mecca** and **A Place with the Pigs** as being representative of what I perceive to be important phases in the development of Fugard's dealing with this particular issue.

1.3 Method

Since literary criticism is not an activity based simply on the exercise of common sense or literary sensitivity in a theoretical vacuum, the theme under discussion is thus also examined in terms of an appropriate theory. Grobler (1988:9) asserts that there is no possibility of a "non-theoretical" criticism. Due to the fact that Fugard's plays can both be

read as literature and enacted on a stage, the frame of reference used in this dissertation is that of drama and theatre semiotics.

The approach to drama and literary criticism described as semiotics differs from traditional literary criticism in that it analyses a dramatic text in a non-linear way. Traditionalist critics believe that the dramatic text is fulfilled through performance, while semioticians believe that performance fills out the text. A semiotic approach is opted for as literature reflects the social and aesthetic norms of society, and represents the cultural and temporal contexts of a particular community.

Both the dramatic text and performance text are linked to their social contexts, and as such "semiotics can best be defined as a science dedicated to the study of production of meaning in society" (Elam, 1980:1).

As such it is equally concerned with processes of signification and with those of communication, i.e. the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged. Its objects are thus at once the different sign-systems and codes at work in society and the actual messages and texts produced thereby. Ferdinand de Saussure was the first to propose a comprehensive "science of signs" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:47). Language is also a system of signs and the text, therefore, is the carrier of multiple signs or structures be they social, ideological, institutional or aesthetic.

Section A of this dissertation therefore supplies a theoretical base for studying Fugard's dramas. This base is founded in the semiotics of theatre and drama. As a drama is implicitly written to be performed, this dissertation explores the connection between dramatic text and performance text. It leans heavily on a thesis by Marisa Mouton called **Dramateorie Vandag: Die Bydrae van die Drama- en Teatersemiotiek** (1988) and **The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama** (1980) by Keir Elam. After studying the works of various critics, both traditional and modern, the conclusion was reached that the work by Mouton is comprehensive and encompassing of a point of view which needs to be brought to the

attention of more readers and critics of drama. As her work is written in Afrikaans a number of her ideas have been translated into English.

Section A then analyses the relationship between the dramatic text and performance text. Chapters I and II represent the views of both traditional and modern critics of this relationship. Chapters III to VII explore this relationship even further by referring to the *dramatis personae*, time, space, the use of language and the *didascalies*. These issues are all linked to character as encountered both in the dramatic text and performance text and therefore form a relevant theoretical background for the exploration of Athol Fugard's women characters.

Section B comprises an introduction in which Fugard's relationship with women in general, and the influence of Sartre and Camus on his works, are outlined. In chapters II to V Fugard's dramas in which women characters figure prominently, are analysed.

CHAPTER II: TRADITIONAL VERSUS SEMIOTIC APPROACHES TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT

2.1 Introduction

It seems necessary to explain the concepts drama and theatre before endeavouring to trace the relationship between dramatic text and performance text. Elam (1980:2) claims that theatre refers to the "complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: that is, with the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and with the systems underlining it". By drama is meant "that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular ('dramatic') conventions". Any reference to theatrical then indicates the interaction between performers and spectators, whereas the term dramatic indicates the network of factors relating to the represented fiction.

Elam (1980:3) also states that a related distinction arises concerning the actual object of the semiotician's labours in this area; that is to say, the kinds of text which he is to consider in his analyses. The researcher in theatre and drama is faced with two quite dissimilar - although intimately correlated - types of textual material: that produced in the theatre and that composed for the theatre. The former is referred to as the theatrical or performance text and the latter as the written or dramatic text.

The relationship between dramatic text and performance text has intrigued theorists for a long time. Traditionally, discussion of theatre has been polarised along lines of what Susan Bassnett-McGuire refers to as "binary opposition: written text versus performance; scholars versus practitioners; historians versus reviewers" (1980:47). Attempts to bind the divisions together have been unsuccessful, since the terms on which the binding process is undertaken, are often the same as those that initially led to the split.

This "duality of dramatic text" (Prochazka, 1984:102) is blamed on the present-day method of teaching drama at universities, not only in South Africa, but also in America. Whereas language departments offering courses in the theory of drama concentrate on literary criticism or analysis of the dramatic text, all aspects of the drama which concern the performance of the text are the responsibility of the "drama" department. An American critic, Bernard Beckerman, states reasons why this split occurs and stresses the influence this split of the dramatic text and performance text has on education: "Usually when we refer to drama, we mean the written script, and when we refer to theatre, we mean the production of that script. This assumption is deeply ingrained in our thoughts. It pervades our entire system of education and criticism. Our teaching of drama in schools and universities is predicated upon this division. One studies dramatic literature, and one studies theatre, and though there is a growing recognition of the interaction between the two, departmental organisation, personal prejudice and incorrect theory all conspire to reinforce the chasm between the enduring and thereby superior drama and the dazzling but transitory theatre" (1967:29).

John Fuegi pleads for a new dispensation in his article, **Toward a Theory of Dramatic Literature for a Technological Age**: "Particularly within departments of literature many critics seem to have reached a critical impasse where their basically 'literary' aesthetic of the drama ... has been completely outstripped both by modern playwrights and by modern technology. To ignore the relation of text to performance may well be convenient in a short-range sense, but we may be sure that this will continue to deaden a lively art form, to engender critical error, and to limit scholar-teachers of students so trained" (1974:440).

John Alter (1981) explains the split between dramatic and performance text from the fact that although the performing arts (music, ballet, opera, etc.) possess a similar dual relationship, it is only in theatre where the text acquired autonomy. The dramatic text acquired autonomy to such an extent that many texts are only read and the researcher seldom gets the opportunity to attend a performance. Due to the autonomy of the

dramatic text two separate educational systems developed, i.e. literary criticism and the drama department.

In conclusion it can be asserted that the split between the dramatic text and the performance, and the subsequent development of two separate fields of study can be explained from a historical point of view.

2.2 Traditional drama theory

As long ago as the period of great Greek theatre, Aristotle, though well aware that a drama is intended to be performed, nevertheless treated it primarily as a literary work because he was convinced that "the spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry. The tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance and actors" (*in* Schmid & Van Kesteren, 1984:138). Thus he founded the tradition of dramatic theory which tries to describe and analyse the drama in terms of literature only.

Susan Bassnett-McGuire (1980:47) insists that even today critics and reviewers are the first to insist on the purity of the written text, on the need for directors and actors to somehow remain faithful to that text: in short, the written text acquires an authority over the authority of those actually performing it. With traditionally "sacred" texts, such as the plays of Shakespeare, the purity of the written texts assumes an almost metaphysical value.

She emphasises that the written texts were not absolute in Shakespeare's own time. A combination of factors such as the availability of actors, the size and shape of the performance space, the technical apparatus required, etc., determined the shape of the play. Yet even if the play text is read as a piece of literature, with no regard for its performance dimension, the stress is still on the predominance of the written text as a performance structure. However, if the performance of the dramatic text is eventually evaluated, the critics would refer back to the written text.

Later theorists like Diderot, Lessing and Brecht, all of them dramatists and theorists of the theatre, dramatically changed the art of acting of their time. Being interested in the art of acting, they knew quite well that a drama is but completed by its staging, although it can be read as well. They therefore insisted that a drama is basically a theatrical piece and cannot be defined without regard to its possible staging. Erika Fischer-Lichte (1984:138) comes to the conclusion that the unending quarrel about the nature of drama, whether it is a literary genre or a theatrical piece, is perfectly futile. The one does not exclude the other. Drama is a work of literature in its own right which does not need anything but simple reading to enter the consciousness of the public. At the same time, it is a text that can, and mostly is, intended to be used as the verbal component of the theatrical performance.

It is against this background that the work of drama and theatre semiotics will be judged in section 2.3.

In conclusion it seems clear that traditional theorists agree that the dramatic text is written as a theatrical piece to be performed. Nicoll (1962:37) defines the dramatic text as a "literary work written, by an author or by several authors in collaboration, in a form suitable for stage representation". To substantiate this claim that traditional theorists agree that the dramatic text is written to be performed, this dissertation will quote liberally from Marisa Mouton's substantial work, **Dramateorie Vandag** (1988) in subsections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3. She asserts that the theorists mentioned above (i) emphasize the practical link between dramatic text and performance, (ii) acknowledge that the aim of the text is to be performed, and (iii) encourage a historical study of the dramatic text.

2.2.1 The practical link between dramatic text and performance

Marisa Mouton (1988:7) accepts that if the playwright writes the text with the sole purpose of it being performed, the dramatic text will inevitably be influenced by the performance itself. The fact that the performance is a physical representation of fictional characters in a

specific time and space forces the playwright to bear in mind the physical details and constraints of production, as well as those referring to time and space, when the play is written.

Mouton (1988:8) points out that Cole's work called **Playwrights on Playwriting** (1960) represents the point of view of well-known playwrights as to the influence of the performance on the dramatic text. Practical problems which crop up at the performance of a text often lead to the dramatic text being changed. That gave rise to the so-called "workshop" method where the playwright works in close collaboration with the director and the rest of the team in order to solve problems which crop up due to the interaction between the written text and the performance.

The most important constraint with which the playwright has to cope is that of time and space. Mouton (1988:8) quotes Zola on this issue: "Each genre of literature has its own conditions of existence. A novel, read alone in the comfort of one's own room, is not a play which is acted before two thousand spectators. The novelist has time and space before him. All kinds of liberties are permitted him; he can use one hundred pages, if he wishes, to analyse at his leisure a certain character; he can describe his surroundings as much as he pleases; he can cut his story short, can retrace his steps, changing scenes twenty times - in a word, he is absolute master of his medium. The dramatist, on the contrary, is enclosed in a rigid frame; he must obey all kinds of necessities. He moves only in the milieu of obstacles".

This "milieu of obstacles" determines to a great extent the appearance of the dramatic text.

As fictional time is so important, Levitt (1971:24-25) claims that the point in the story at which the curtain goes up affects the structural pattern of a play. He calls this starting point the "point-of-attack". If a playwright dramatizes the whole story or a major portion of it, it is called an early point-of-attack. The resulting structural pattern will be diffuse. If a playwright dramatizes only a part of the story, it is called a late

point-of-attack. The resulting structural pattern will be concentrated and fewer characters will be used.

Each point-of-attack has its own structural pattern and its own characteristics. Historical narratives, epic poems, pastorals, religious stories and biographies abandon the Unities and move from one place to another consuming days and years, e.g. Christopher Marlowe's **Dr Faustus**. In contrast, the structural pattern of a late point-of-attack play is concentrated because the action is confined to the few remaining moments or hours before the climax. Because the play begins so late in the story, the selection of scenes is limited by what came before. This kind of play conforms to the Unities. An example is Ibsen's play, **Ghosts** and virtually all Athol Fugard's plays.

Another restriction with which the playwright has to cope is space. Scenes generally change only between acts for practical reasons. A playwright who knows the theatre and a stage can apply his knowledge in the text, thereby reducing the restriction of space and changing it into an advantage. "Whatever its method of production, a play, in being performed, must be performed somewhere, and the dramatist, familiar with his theatre and its physical characteristics, will obviously use them to support his presentation of meaning" (Mouton, 1988:10-11). Athol Fugard succeeds in manipulating space most imaginatively and creatively to enhance the quality of a play (e.g. in **Boesman and Lena**), because he is not merely a playwright, but also an actor and a producer.

Finally Mouton (1988:11) reminds us of the role of the audience during a performance. The imagination of the spectator comes alive, not only to gather and arrange the information about time and space, but also to expand on this information and to visualize it in his/her mind's eye, thus overcoming the restrictions of time and space that occur in a performance.

2.2.2 *The dramatic text: aimed/directed at performance*

As traditional theorists believe that a play is primarily intended for the stage, they frequently discuss the dramatic text as directed at performance. Bernard Beckerman (1970:13) is the first to insist that drama is not made of words, but of activities: "Unfortunately dramatic theory has not sufficiently addressed itself to a close analysis of theatrical activity, primarily because it has seen theatre as a composition of words rather than of activities. It has tended to split motion from action, and then to concentrate upon the discussion of action. This seems to be a serious error, because, in failing to concern itself fully with activity before examining the concept of action, dramatic criticism and theory are ignoring the foundation of theatrical art". Beckerman arrives at the point where he asserts that the medium of a play is not language but human presence, and that we must return to the source of drama, the theatre itself.

In his book, **Drama, Stage and Audience**, Styan is of the opinion that the script on the page is not the drama any more than a clod of earth is a field of corn. He reminds us that "drama is not made of words alone, but of sights and sounds, stillness and motion, noise and silence, relationships and responses" (1975:vii). The dramatic text is merely one of three components comprising the theatrical event: script, actor and audience. He explains it thus: "The playwright who is setting down his play on paper works perforce by a code of words. The text is a coded pattern of signals to the spectator" (1975:6).

These three components are, however, merely the outline of a more complex situation. To quote Styan (1975:9-10) again, the simplest ingredients of the play as an event are, however, complicated by other people and other factors. Behind the script there is an author; behind the actor there may be a promoter, a producer or a director; behind the audience lies a whole society.

If the dramatic text is seen as mere literature, however, other components are involved. The dramatic text is still the starting point,

but behind the script "lie the genre conventions which it adopted or refused; behind the actor's technical conventions of playing lie the demands of a particular playhouse, its shape and equipment, which condition, encourage and limit the performer's ways of signalling; behind the audience and its society are their conventional presumptions and the esteem in which the theatre is held" (Styan, 1975:12).

2.2.3 A historical study of the dramatic text

Styan feels that every dramatic text, as well as its performance, falls into a recognizable time zone of human activity, therefore he classifies it as "a[n] historical event" (1975:108). Every playwright writes for a specific audience, within the restriction of the conventions of theatre and drama at that given time in history. According to Styan (1975:137) the bulk of the history of theatre is an account of how the various parties to the play (audience, actors) join in with the best features of the physical theatre and the development of its conventions. He gives an historical survey of drama and theatre from Classical drama, the Elizabethan Period, The Restoration to Modern theatre, analysing the conventions that directed theatre and the world view and social background of the audiences. He concludes that a knowledge of a play's elements of performance must bring us nearer to a complete dramatic criticism.

2.3 Towards a new methodology

The earliest works written to establish a discussion of theatre in semiotic terms can be traced to central Europe. In the 1930s and 1940s there were various attempts by Czech writers and theatre practitioners to analyse the components of theatre. Otakar Zich, Jan Mukarovsky, Jiri Veltrusky, Jindrich Honzl and Petr Bogatyrev were the first writers to study the theory and practice of theatre and establish the basis for its analysis in terms of structures and systems of signs.

2.3.1 Otakar Zich

Zich expressed his opinions on the essence and function of the dramatic text in an extensive work called **Esthetics of Dramatic Art** (1931). He defines what he calls "dramatic art" (e.g. certain type of theatre, genre of theatre) as a "work of art showing the interaction of characters through the actors acting on the stage" (in Schmid & Van Kesteren, 1984: 104). The relation of the visual component to the acoustic one of the given performance is the inseparable sign of this conception. Zich was trying to find out whether a dramatic text can substitute for what he calls a dramatic work. He feels that if the acoustic component is more or less determined by the text, the notion of visual component is fairly arbitrary and subjective in comparison to the form of this component in the performance. It is clear that he differentiates between acoustic and visual signs.

Zich not only shows clearly that dramatic art is reduceable to text, but he also shows how text can participate in the conception of a performance. He concludes that only those dramatic texts which are intended by their authors to be autonomous as merely literary texts belong to literature. For Zich text is only a part of performance, the conception of which may be influenced by some of its components, but he denies its independent poetic existence which is often in contradiction to the dramaticality.

Elam (1980:6) points out, however, that Zich does not allow special prominence to any of the components involved. He criticizes Zich because he "refuses ... to grant automatic dominance to the written text, which takes its place in the system of systems making up the total dramatic representation".

2.3.2 Jindrich Honzl

In his article, **Dynamics of the Sign in the Theatre** (1940), Jindrich Honzl summarizes Zich's point of view when he says: "Everything that makes up reality on the stage - the playwright's text, the actor's acting, the stage lighting - all these things in every case stand for other things.

In other words, dramatic performance is a set of signs" (in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:49).

Moreover, as Honzl points out, since theatrical conventions also change and the theatre of a given time and place will highlight certain components and rank them above others in hierarchical scale, "the changeability of this scale will correspond to the changeability of the theatrical sign" (in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:49).

The audience's ability to read signs adds an extra dimension of complexity. Honzl notes how there are times when one or more of the components "submerges below the surface of the spectator's conscious attention" (in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:49). This would be the case when what is visualized on stage cancels acoustic perceptions, or when the audience's focus on dialogue pushes visual components into the background.

Honzl feels very strongly about the changeability of the theatrical sign and stresses the need for discussing the theatre in terms of the relationship of component signs to the whole: "We have undertaken a task that can test the trustworthiness of many definitions of theatrical art and decide whether those definitions make provision for the old and new types of theatre that have originated in different poetic or dramatic personalities, as the result of many technical inventions, and so on. I am also of the opinion that we should restore respect for the old theory of theatrical art which sees its essence in acting, in action" (1940: 91-92).

2.3.3 *Jiri Veltrusky*

In the article **Dramatic Text as a Component of the Theatre** (1941), Veltrusky tries to prove that the means of dramatic text predetermine the forming of individual components of staging. Prochazka quotes Veltrusky on this issue: "Though the concrete forming of every single component is not always clearly and explicitly determined, its total meaning and its position in the structure are always given" (1984:108). Veltrusky shows how sound values inherent in the text influence the vocal performance of an actor, how the gaps resulting from the removal

of author's notes are filled up. He shows the mutual relation between author's notes and direct speech. The central problem is the relation of the text and stage figure as two elementary semiotic systems of the total theatrical sign. He calls it the "sign system of acting" and the "sign system of language represented by drama" (Prochazka, 1984:109).

Veltrusky's article introduces quite a few new ideas, but his radical thesis of predetermination gives rise to some objections. He overestimates the value of the author's notes and underestimates the semantic possibilities of kinesic and paralinguistic means. He feels that when solving the problem of the relation of dramatic text and performance, we must consider the mediating meaning of so-called director's script (provided it is not identical with the dramatic text). On the other hand, it should be seen that Veltrusky showed - especially when analysing the direct speech - various aspects of text (e.g. in sound values of speech, some relations in text, etc.,) which every theatrical interpretation must obtain.

2.3.4 *Taduez Kowzan*

Kowzan's book, **Littérature et Spectacle** (1970), is a useful point from which to begin an investigation of the current state of theatre semiotics, since it attempts to codify theatre in very straightforward, clear terms. He defines theatre in terms of eight organizational groupings which are listed by Susan Bassnett-McGuire (1980:48). As it falls outside the scope of this dissertation to discuss these groupings in detail, let it suffice to say that Kowzan also developed a model for the constituent parts of theatre. He established which signs have reference to the actor and which are outside the actor, which are auditory and which are visual, which exist in space and which exist in both time and space. Kowzan distinguishes between two kinds of sign: the natural (which includes phenomena unprovoked by man, like thunder and lightning as a sign of a storm and skin colour as a sign of race, etc.) and the artificial (which is created by living creatures in order to signify or communicate something). He is quoted by Elam (1980:20) to have said that even if these signs are only reflexes in life, they become voluntary signs in the theatre. Even if they have no communicative function in life, they

necessarily acquire it on stage. He concludes that theatre, therefore, is made up entirely of artificial signs.

2.3.5 Petr Bogatyrev

Susan Bassnett-McGuire (1980:49) points out that the stress laid by the Czech semioticians on analysing the nature of the sign in theatre is very clearly expressed in an article by Petr Bogatyrev, **Les Signes du Théâtre**, in which he discusses the flexibility of the theatrical sign. He gives the now famous examples of the multiplicity of meaning of costumes and props - an ermine cape is a sign of royalty in the theatre regardless whether the cape is actually made of rabbit fur, just as red liquid poured from a decanter is a sign of wine even though it may be red cordial. On the other hand, in the case of the starving man on stage eating a loaf of bread, that loaf may have no separate sign value in its own right and exist merely as a functional object to be utilized by another actor, for the sign here is not the loaf but the act of eating it. Elam (1980:10) quotes Bogatyrev to this effect: "... each is a sign of a sign and not the sign of a material thing".

In addition an article may have a multiple sign function, and Bogatyrev argues that a costume might simultaneously stand as a sign both of a character's nationality and of his economic situation. Signs in the theatre, then, assume a set of values and functions in their own right, and are infinitely mutable and complex.

2.3.6 Steen Jansen

The line of approach to theatre begun by the Czech theorists emphasizes the need for a special language with which to discuss the flexibility of theatre art, and ideally for a language that can be utilized both by those who create the performance and those who see it. Those involved with the process of creating the performance will inevitably perceive it through a different time continuum, since for them each rehearsal and each performance is a variation not of a constant, but of an ideal, while for a spectator-critic the time sequence is different, since the performance exists for them in a single circumscribed moment.

Susan Bassnett-McGuire (1980:50) points out that one of the complaints so often made about the impossibility either of performance analysis or of an all-encompassing critical methodology is precisely this question of multiplicity, since the performance at any given time will never be identical to any other. But such a complaint can only be upheld if analysis of theatre is treated exclusively as an analysis of the final product offered at a given moment, instead of considering all the stages of the theatrical process as coexistent in a symbolic relationship with each other.

Steen Jansen, a Dutch semiotician, notes that it is through the process of rehearsal that the breakdown of a play into signifying units is determined. In rehearsals solutions are tried, rejected, modified, shifted and realigned in a series of tests that will show whether or not a given situation remains comprehensible. The variations that take place throughout the rehearsing of a play are not deviations from any single ideal, they are merely elements of the total process, and one of the most important aspects of that process is the establishing of those distinct units that make up the play as a whole.

Jansen defines the fundamental characteristic of the play text as dramatic structure thus: "It is a coherent succession of distinct units, called dramatic situations; a dramatic situation is a compound of a successive-simultaneous nature of dramatic elements" (in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980:50). What Jansen is trying to establish here is one of the central problems, not only for theorists, but also for practitioners: how to establish what the basic units are, over and above the formal division of a piece into acts, scenes, etc. Attempts to establish basic units from a written text alone, or from a single reading of a performance, are bound to be overly restrictive. Yet, as every actor and director knows, units are established during the rehearsal process - units that may not correspond to a literary breakdown of the text in terms of plot structures at all.

2.3.7 Keir Elam

Traditional drama theory asserts that the written text is a condition for the performance. It suggests a linear approach, i.e. the dramatic text is only realized when performed.

In his book, **The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama** (1980), Keir Elam, however, suggests that the dramatist writes the dramatic text with the performance in mind. An author writing for the stage will visualize characters and events as he wants them to appear on stage, therefore the fact that a play is to be performed will influence the playwright throughout the writing process. What Elam is actually suggesting is a reversed linear process where the performance is a prerequisite for the dramatic text.

In order to visualize characters and events on a stage, the playwright uses a system of signs referred to by Elam as "ostension". He defines ostension thus: "In order to refer to, indicate or define a given object, one simply picks it up and shows it to the receiver of the message in question. Thus ... in order to indicate what drink one desires, one holds up a glass of beer to whoever is doing the ordering ... What happens is not that one shows the actual referent ... but that one uses the concrete object as the expression of the class of which it is a member: the thing is 'de-realized' so as to become a sign" (1980:29-30).

Ostension, then, is what distinguishes a performance from a narrative in that it allows the audience to see and hear the fictional characters (in the person of the actor), the fictional space (the stage and setting) and the fictional objects (props). "Semiotization involves the showing of objects and events (and the performance at large) to the audience, rather than describing, explaining or defining them. This ostensive aspect of the stage 'show' distinguishes it, for example, from narrative, where persons, objects and events are necessarily described and recounted" (Elam, 1980:30).

Because ostension influences all aspects of a performance, it also influences the use of language by the fictional characters. Elam asserts that the linguistic sign is very important to the drama, "deixis ... being

the primary means whereby language gears itself to the speaker and receiver (through the personal pronouns 'I' and 'you') and to the time and place of action (through the adverbs 'here' and 'now', etc.), as well as to the supposed physical environment at large and the objects that fill it (through the demonstratives 'this', 'that', etc.)" (1980:26-27).

Elam (1980:72) is also of the opinion that deixis is irrevocably linked to gesture in a dramatic performance: "Deixis ... has exactly the role in linguistic discourse of defining the protagonist ('I'), the addressee ('you') and the context ('here') and thus of setting up a communicative situation. Deictic gesture, indicating the actor and his relations to the stage, is of decisive importance to theatrical performance, being the primary means whereby the presence and the spatial orientations of the body are established". It is gesture, then, that constitutes the essential mode of ostending body, stage and on-stage action in actual space.

Elam (1980:73) emphasizes that it is through deixis that an important bridge is set up between gesture and speech. The 'I' of the *dramatis personae* and the 'here and now' of the dramatic communicative context are related to the actor's body and the stage context through the indicative gesture accompanying the utterance. Gesture, in this sense, "materializes the dramatic subject and his world by asserting their identity with an actual body and an actual space. Without simultaneous kinesic markers, language would remain merely 'ideal' in the theatre, a series of unorientated - and thus unmotivated - 'virtual' propositions, just as without the movements whereby he 'orchestrates' his utterances the actor cannot physically possess or control his own speech, but is rather determined by it (Elam, 1980:74-75).

Elam often refers to work done by Serpieri on deixis and gesture and also supports his point of view by the so-called "segmentation of dramatic text" (1980:145). The basic unit is the individual deictic orientation adopted by the speaker. Each time the speaker changes indexical direction, indicates a different object, addresses a new 'you', or enters into a different relationship with his situation or fellowman, a new semiotic unit is set up. He gives the example of the 'I' who can address a single person, a crowd or himself, or even the gods or some distant figure. At the same time, he can deictically indicate his own

body, the scene, the present moment, his addressee or a distant object. Within a given dramatic macro-sequence, a number of micro-sequences will be distinguished according to the deictic strategies manifested by the participants. These minimal units will not always correspond with the individual lines or speeches of the interlocutors but rather with their changes of semiotic axis within the exchange.

2.3.8 *Cesare Segre*

Marisa Mouton (1988:22) points out that Segre supports Elam's theories on deixis and performative use of language in his articles, **A Contribution to the Semiotics of Theater** (1980) and **Narratology and Theater** (1981). Segre stresses the differences between a narrative text and a performance: "... the relationship between a text for the theater and its representation had to be defined, for it is obvious that the text has been composed primarily in view of such presentation" (1980:39).

The first difference indicated by Segre between the narrative text and a performance lies in the difference between mimesis and diegesis as defined by Aristotle in his **Poetics**: "... drama is mimetic: the actors imitate gestures and give utterance to verbal exchanges attributed to the characters. In narrative, on the other hand, it is the discourse of the writer which brings into being a verbal equivalent of the action (diegesis), within which the speeches of the characters are referred in direct or indirect form" (1980:40).

Segre then distinguishes between narrative communication and theatrical communication. In the case of the narrative, the subject of the utterance addresses himself to the receptor, reader or listener, through the possible mediation of an I-narrator or of an I-character-narrator. It is he who explains in the third person (he/they), events concerning the characters: "The first-person utterances of the characters are referred from within third-person diegesis realized by the subject of the enunciation, its sender" (1981:96). This does not mean that diegetic elements are not present in theatre. In narration it is HE which is superimposed on I, whereas in theatre, I is superimposed on HE.

In theatrical communication, however, the mediation of the I-narrator or character-narrator is eliminated. Segre (1981:96) explains it thus: "The text in its substance is made up of the statements of the various I-characters; these may embrace, in diegetic form (HE-narrator), the narration of events off-stage ... The relationship between the I-sender and a YOU-receiver is veiled, although the possibility remains - particularly in the prologues and epilogues, in choruses and in asides - that there be direct communication between an I-character and a YOU-receiver (the public)". In theatrical communication there is no mediator between the fictional characters (senders) and the audience (receivers). The various I's are flesh-and-blood actors who move within a specific reality (stage). It is not reality that we deal with, however, but what Segre calls a "reality-index" (1980:40), specifically set up as such, hence the scenic functions: the actor stands for a character, the stage stands for an indoor/outdoor scene, etc.

For Mouton (1988:23) the second difference between a narrative text and a performance lies in the management of time in each case. Segre (1980:42) refers to this as the difference between discourse-time and utterance-time. In a narrative, the past dominates. The present is merely a mode of evoking the past when it is intended that the evocation of the past is taken as direct. In a performance, however, it is always the present which is predominant; both the past which is referred to, and intermediate periods, are incorporated into the present of the act of uttering. Segre (1980:42) quotes Szondi on this issue: "Dramatic action always unfolds in the present [...], the present moves on and is transformed into the past, but as such is no longer present. The present passes, effecting a change, and from its antithesis a new and different present comes into being. The passage of time within the drama is an absolute succession of 'present moments'. The drama itself, as an absolute, guarantees and creates of itself a time of its own".

A third difference between a narrative text and a performance is formulated by Segre himself when he claims that "in the diegetic text the relationship between actions and motivations is in whole or in part elaborated by the writer; the unfolding of events may well be ... their explication" (1980:43). The narrator can explain the relationships between a character's actions and his motives, i.e. the superimposed HE

is also useful for judging the statements of the various I's. In the theatre, however, we know no more than we see, or what the characters tell us about their feelings. Therefore the spectator must play an active part in interpreting what he sees or what is hinted by the author.

Finally Marisa Mouton (1988:24) claims that Segre indicates a fourth difference between a narrative communication and a theatrical communication in that the spectator plays an important role in a performance. Although he does not participate in the action on stage, he participates in the performance through a theatrical system of signs. Areas not enlarged upon, moments of emptiness, reference to events not represented, are entrusted to reconstruction on the part of the spectator. Segre informs us that "the receiver must not merely arrive at motivations by comparing the behaviour and statement of the characters; he must also integrate a story starting from those aspects of the past which come to light in the present of which he is a spectator" (1980:44). He explains that shifts in diegesis from a past to a narrative present, give way to a fictitious present in the theatre which relies for its interpretation on intervention of the spectator. This fact is what distinguishes the spectator of the drama from the reader of other texts.

2.3.9 *Jean Alter*

On studying the title of Alter's article, **From Text to Performance** (1981), one realizes that he is the first critic to explore the actual process of transition from dramatic text to performance. Whereas Elam concentrates on the dramatic text as a prerequisite for a performance, Alter explores the relationship between the performance and the dramatic text which precedes it.

Alter (1981:113) claims that a semiotic approach to theatre as a total artistic experience identifies the presence of two categories of signs, i.e. dramatic text and performance. He claims a vast difference between the two categories. The dramatic text consists of a network of verbal signs, which usually appear in the form of written words, which involve linguistic, literary and cultural codes. A performance, however, offers a network of many types of signs which in addition to words, include body language, costumes, sets, lights, props, etc. Each type belongs to a

semiotic system with a discreet code, but Alter refers to all of them as staging signs.

The concept of theatricality for Alter (1981:115) lies in the tension between the text and the performance which stems from the interaction of verbal and staging signs whereby the latter partly transform the former. In order to describe the semiotic process when text becomes performance, Alter distinguishes among three texts: literary text, total text and staged text.

According to Alter (1981:116) many critics still refer to the text of a play as a special type of literature, to be read as literature. In this text all signs, be they parts of speeches or staging directions, play an equal role, determining a referent which is located outside the text in a historical or imaginary reality.

The same written text may also be read as theatre, i.e. "as a graphic notation of a performance, referring to that performance" (Alter, 1981:116). Alter explains that in such a case all signs interact and combine to determine a referent which is located on some future stage, conceived as real or imaginary. He states that such reading assumes that the play is written to be performed. The text should be approached as a performance and consequently experienced as a performance. Alter then calls this "totality of signs of a play thus visioned ... the total text" (1981:116).

Alter calls the third text the staged text and defines it as "the totality of verbal signs which appear as such both in the text and in the performance" (1981:116). He states that the staged text and the total text can never be identical, due to alterations which occur. These alterations can either be "inevitable" or "contingent" (Alter, 1981:116-118). Alter then describes the transition from text to stage in detail. He identifies the transition as a "process of interpretation" (1981:118). The text is viewed as a network of signs which are sufficiently ambiguous and complex, admitting an indefinite number of parallel referents. The performance, on the other hand, will then stress one or several of these referents, i.e. interpret the text.

This transition from text to performance is consequently described by Alter as a transformational process: "This transformational activity affects the verbal signs of the text at the time when, enriched with staging signs, they undergo together a double shift in function: from signs to referent, and from referent to new signs. Two referential operations thus occur, both involving the same signs. The resulting difference in the nature of the referents cannot reflect therefore any difference in the signs themselves; it must lie in various ways in which they interact and combine" (1981:119).

Alter (1981:120) also suggests that there is tension between these two referents. The first one keeps the number of staging signs as low as possible, minimizing their impact, preserving the integrity of the verbal signs. The second referent maximizes the impact by multiplying the staging signs and undermining the verbal signs. Both procedures must occur simultaneously for the text to be transformed into the performance.

It becomes clear after studying his article that although the emphasis is on performance, it cannot be separated from the text.

CHAPTER III: DRAMATIS PERSONAE

3.1 Introduction

In view of the fact that character portrayal is the main issue of this dissertation, it is essential to study the *dramatis personae* as defined by drama and theatre semioticians. Various names are attributed to these characters, e.g. dramatic characters, fictional figures, persons, types, individuals or actants. Be the terminology as it may, the expression preferred in this dissertation will be *dramatis personae*.

Most theorists prefer to label the *dramatis personae* in such a manner that they are not only distinguished from people in real life, but also that their individual characteristics or functions are distinguished. Pfister (*in* Mouton, 1988:88), for example, refers to "figures" in order to point out the difference that exists between the ontological status that exists between the fictional dramatic figure and a person in reality. States (1985b:88) distinguishes between personality, character and identity. Those critics who base their theories on the actantial model of character, like Greimas and Übersfeld, distinguish between characters, actors and actants. (This will be discussed in more detail later in section 3.3.)

Marisa Mouton (1988:88) is of the opinion that three possible theoretical approaches are relevant to the study of *dramatis personae*:

- A In earlier theoretical works, as in more recent ones, the psychological approach is used to analyse dramatic character. The most relevant work is that of Van Laan (1970) in which he establishes who the dramatic character is, i.e. the characteristics which make up the dramatic character and how he is established, i.e. the techniques used to create the character.
- B In modern drama and theatre semiotics, the actantial model created by Souriau (1950) and expanded upon by Greimas (1966) acts as the theoretical basis. This model emphasizes the functions performed by the dramatic characters, i.e. these characters are no longer regarded as fictional individuals.

- C The third approach to define dramatic character is based on the model created by States (1985a). He emphasizes the relationship between the dramatic character and the actor, as well as the role of the spectator.

These three models are discussed in detail in the next section. This dissertation is based on the mode of analysis espoused by Marisa Mouton (1988) as all the relevant information studied for this dissertation has already been dealt with exhaustively in her thesis.

3.2 The psychological approach to dramatic character

Styan states that the psychological approach treats a character "as a life, or a play as a case history" (1975:23). The psychological approach is applied to dramas in which the playwright creates a realistic fictional world for the reader or spectator. Critics often refer to the individual characteristics of the dramatic character in an attempt to find out who the character is. (Reference has already been made to Van Laan (1970) supporting this approach.) A study is also made of the specific techniques used to create these dramatic characters - appearance, costume, possessions and milieu. "As with his name and status, the specific techniques employed depend a great deal on the audience's particular frame of reference" (Van Laan, 1970:78).

Marisa Mouton (1988:90) points out that in studying the psychological approach to dramatic character she discovered that it was done so extensively by critics like Van Laan, Pfister and Platz-Waury that very little information could be added to their research. They often try to establish whether the dramatic character is a fictional individual (like Hamlet) or whether he is simply a type; how the reader/spectator gets to know this fictional character; how consistent the behaviour of the dramatic character is within the frame of reference of his personality; and whether the reader/spectator identifies with the dramatic character.

Marisa Mouton (1988:91) then quotes four techniques as pinpointed by Van Laan (1970:79-90) according to which it can be established how a character was created. They are listed here as they are relevant later:

1. Audience foreknowledge. A spectator may have foreknowledge of a mythological or historical character, as well as the world view for which a play was written. This will obviously increase appreciation and understanding.
2. Extratextual signs. Some of these devices are purely verbal, i.e. a label name can be used to epitomise the character's nature or function or both. This is a remnant of the morality tradition. Other devices can be visual, e.g. appearance, costume, possessions and milieu.
3. The relationship between characters. Character is rarely defined in isolation from its context, and this context includes the numerous effects arising from the simultaneous presence of other characters. One character is evaluated by another, giving the audience insight into the character's immediate involvement in a peculiar set of circumstances.
4. The character's activity and speech: Insight into the dramatic character is gained by self-revelations: the things he does, the things he says, and the way in which they are said. Soliloquy is an important device in this context.

Van Laan (1970:72) reaches the conclusion that what is normally called a character is therefore two separate things. On the one hand, he is a series of impressions woven into the composite pattern formed by the entire play. On the other hand, the character is a perception that takes place in the consciousness of the spectators and consists of the realizations and attitudes that the received impressions awaken.

Marisa Mouton (1988:91-94) is not satisfied with these four techniques as the only way in which the reader/spectator can get to know the dramatic character. She therefore quotes the techniques listed by Pfister as being important to depict dramatic character. He distinguishes between techniques attributed to the character itself and those attributed to the narrator. In the written text the narrator's contribution towards the creation of a character is to be found in the list.

of characters and the didascalies. These sources of information are not easily traced in the actual performance of the text, however. The written didascalies are expressed visually and audibly in the performance, whereas the list of characters appears on the programme of the performance.

In recognising both the visual and auditory techniques (which form part of the performance) and the didascalies (which form part of the dramatic text), Pfister mixes the techniques found in both dramatic text and performance.

Pfister (in Mouton, 1988:92) regards the role of the actor as an important fact in determining dramatic character. All the visual and auditory aspects given to the reader of the dramatic text (especially by the didascalies) must be incorporated by the actor in a performance. As the importance of the actor will be discussed in section 3.4, let it suffice to say that the physical appearance of the actor who plays the role of the fictional character is an important aspect in aiding the spectators to visualize or comprehend the character he represents. The role of the actor poses a problem, though. It is often difficult to distinguish in a performance what behaviour is part of the fictional character and what is characteristic of the actor, especially if it is a gesture.

Elam (1980:132) quotes the theory by Hamon who has suggested that a semiotic approach to character should begin, not by deciding the status of the object a priori, but by considering it in the first instance as an empty sign, or as a "sort of articulated morpheme, a migratory morpheme manifested by a discontinuous signifier (a certain number of distinctive features) which points to a discontinuous signified (the 'meaning' and 'value' of the character)".

Elam (1980:132-133) then proceeds to list the various factors that may be grouped under the mobile "sign" of the *dramatis personae*. He admits that not all these categories will be equally predominant in all forms of drama - in folk drama the action and type factors will prevail, in modern drama the plot and discourse factors. But at all levels the individual status of the *dramatis personae* emerges and is defined through the relationships established between the figures involved.

3.3 Actant, *dramatis persona* and the dramatic model

Elam (1980:126-127) informs us that the actantial model derives from Vladimir Propp's analysis of folk tales and A.J. Greimas's extension of structural semantics to literature. Narratology of this kind presupposes the presence within any given narrative of a "deep structure" responsible for generating the surface structure of events. In particular, the individual agents or characters involved are found to cover a very limited number of what Greimas calls actantial roles, that is, "universal functions analogous to ... the syntactic functions of language" (Elam, 1980:127). It is claimed that a single actantial model accounts for the varieties of structural configurations discovered in different narratives and plays, for, however many the individual characters and whatever the form of their relationships, the underlying actants remain the same.

Greimas's notion of the actant is inspired not only by Propp, who identifies seven actantial roles, but also by the dramatic theorist Etienne Souriau. He defines only six actants which, he claims, are valid for drama of all periods and genres. To these he gives colourful astrological names and conventional symbols (Elam, 1980:127-130).

1. **The Lion**, or incarnated thematic force of the drama, residing in its principal character (the protagonist) ... This character represents and puts into play the force which generates all the dramatic tension present.
2. **The Sun**, or representative of the Good or Value sought by. The Good or Value is, for example, the crown, liberty, the holy grail, etc. It may be embodied in a particular individual...or remain an ideal end.
3. **The Earth**, or receiver of the sought by: the protagonist desires the Good not necessarily on his own behalf but often for another individual or even a community...
4. **Mars**, or the opponent. The protagonist has to deal with a rival or antagonist who offers an obstacle to the fulfilment of his goal.

5. **The Scale**, or arbitrator of the situation, whose role is to attribute the Good to, for example or. This role might be covered by God or the gods in deus ex machina fashion, by the ruler of the community, or by the representative of the Good itself, as when the object of love chooses between the protagonist and his rival.
6. **The Moon**, or helper, whose function is to reinforce any one of the other five by assisting the protagonist.

Any one of Souriau's six functions may be fulfilled by more than one character simultaneously, just as important figures may cover more than one of the listed roles. Nor is the configuration of roles necessarily stable within a given drama - it is possible, say, for the representative of the Good to change and subsequently become the opponent.

Souriau's model seems to deal successfully with structurally simple dramas whose characters are largely determined by their function in the action. The usefulness of the model diminishes, however, when applied to complex plays.

Marisa Mouton (1988:95) informs us that Greimas, on the other hand, claims the existence of the actant, the *dramatis persona* and the actor. The actant is described as a specific function which is performed. Thus it can be (but need not be) equal to character. It can also be an abstract unit (e.g. like love) or representative of a group (e.g. the Greek chorus). Character and actant can therefore be distinguished from each other, as the actant may be present in more than one character, or more than one actant may be present in one character.

Greimas derives his six actantial roles from the structure of language which he claims is in itself dramatic "since the sentence is in reality nothing but a play which homo loquens presents to himself" ... the content of the actions changes continually, the actors vary, but the utterance-play remains always the same" (Elam, 1980:130).

The six actantial categories which Greimas puts in opposition are:

- the subject and object which are equivalent to Souriau's lion and sun
- the sender and receiver which are equivalent to Souriau's scale and earth
- the helper and opponent which are equivalent to Souriau's moon and Mars.

Because Elam claims that Greimas's actantial model is too rigid, Marisa Mouton (1988:96) introduces another semiotician, Anne Übersfeld, who made certain modifications to this theory in an article called **The Pleasure of the Spectator** (1980). Her version of Greimas's model is as follows:

Sender (D1) -> Subject (S) -> Receiver (D2)
 Assistant (A) -> Object (B) <- Opponent (Op)

A main source of power (D1) motivates the subject (S), that searches on behalf of a receiver (D2). In this process the subject (S) is assisted by an assistant (A) and opposed by an opponent (Op). Mouton (1988:96) reaches the conclusion that whereas Greimas emphasizes the subject, Übersfeld emphasizes the object as the area where most of the conflict arises. As an example Übersfeld explains that the assistant can change into an opponent or vice versa. Two or more actantial structures may be present simultaneously in one play.

Übersfeld's version of the actantial model supports Elam's criticism of Greimas's model.

3.4 The relationship between dramatic character, actor, spectator

In recent drama and theatre semiotics a group of critics approaches dramatic character from a completely different point of view, i.e. his relationship with the actor and the audience. Marisa Mouton (1988:97) points out that although a discussion of the actor and audience may create the impression that the emphasis is on theatre text and not dramatic text, the relationship between the actor and spectator is also important for the reader of a text.

The earliest reference to the relationship between actor, audience and dramatic character was made by the Prague Structuralists. Bogatyrev's article, **Semiotics in the Folk Theater** (1938) and Veltrusky's **Man and Object in the Theater** (1940), claim that the spectator, although absorbed by a character's personality in a specific situation, remains constantly aware that the character is performed by an actor. Bogatyrev calls it the "dual perception of the audience" (in Mouton, 1988:98), whereas Veltrusky refers to it as "the beholder's share" (in Schmid & Van Kesteren, 1984:437).

Some years later, Passow wrote an article called **The Analysis of Theatrical Performance** (1981), in which the relationship between the dramatic character, actor and audience is discussed in more detail. He quotes Dietrich Steinbeck on this issue: "... theater does not exist as a 'thing' with a fixed locus, but rather as a progression with the character of an event. Theater is dependent on the spectator and his presence and intentional collaboration" (p. 238).

Passow divides the relationship between dramatic character, actor and audience as a productive force into three categories:

First of all, he refers to Lazarowicz who has made the mutual dependence of the productive forces involved in theatre very clear. He uses the term "triadic collusion" (1981:238) to define this collective contribution. He elaborates further: "Actors, authors and playgoers all participate in their own way in creating the fictional world on the stage. The author drafts a unique system of literary signs, namely a play, which is not addressed to readers but to playgoers and actors. The actors, normally under the guidance and supervision of a director, transpose this system of literary signs into a system of theater-signs, which comprises verbal and non-verbal elements. The playgoers' activity, however, consists of their observing the dramatic information in an attitude of 'external concentration' ... of apperceiving and structuring it, in understanding, experiencing and finally making it part of their personal fund of aesthetic knowledge" (1981:238).

Passow (1981:238) concedes that of this triad, dramatic text and more recently the role of the spectator have both been analysed (if not

thoroughly). However, the analysis of the structural construction of the performance and the signs used, as opposed to the analysis of the literary text, is still lacking. The reasons for this he blames on the theatre performance covering a long period of time and being highly complex in construction. A great variety of means of expression such as speech, mime, gesture, stage design, light, sound, etc. are combined into a message. These can complement, contradict or strengthen each other. Each performance of a text may differ in detail because man is acting and man is participating as a spectator. The character of the work makes it impossible to examine it in exactly the same form as often as one likes. This does not relieve theatre research of its duty to try every conceivable approach to analyse presentation, however, therefore semiotics has presented and still presents itself as a basis for systematic investigation.

Passow's second claim as to the relationship between dramatic character, actor and audience is based on yet another term used by Lazarowicz, namely "contrat theatral" (1981:239). This contract or agreement between the audience and actors constitutes that the acting is make-believe; it is reality which is represented - real events are not happening.

Passow claims that in accordance with this agreement, almost all scholars who argue about the phenomenon of theatre concentrate exclusively on the functional relations of the make-believe world on the stage and the relations between the stage and the audience. Thus three aspects of interaction (or communication) in the theatrical event can be differentiated: (a) the interaction between actors on stage (scenic interaction), (b) the interaction between actor and audience, and (c) the relations of the spectators with each other. For Passow the purpose of the theatrical event is the interaction within the theatre between, on the one hand the fictitious stage characters in their artificial world, and on the other hand, the appreciation, feeling, understanding and experiencing of this make-believe world by the spectator.

This leads to Passow's third category, namely the dual character of the theatrical performance where the spectator perceives not only the dramatic character performed by the actor, but also the actor himself.

The actor on the stage is "at the same time a part of reality (a person who treads the stage), and a representation of reality (that is, something other than what he is)" (Passow, 1981:239). That is to say, the actor is not only what he presents, namely the character of the play, but he always remains a "creative person who is undertaking a professional job" (p. 239).

The spectator does not only interact with the characters and the world of the invented plot, but also never completely forgets that an actor is facing him on the stage. Thus he is able to cheer enthusiastically the hero of the play when he has defeated his foe or applaud the actor for a successful personification (or show his displeasure at an inferior effort).

Passow concludes by saying that interaction between the dramatic character, actor and spectator can best be perceived within five categories:

- A. "scenic interaction within the 'make-believe world' (fictitious scenic interaction) and
- B. the interaction of the audience with this 'make-believe world' (audience-stage interaction in the field of fiction),
- C. the interaction of the members of the theater company among each other (real interaction on stage),
- D. the interaction of the audience with the actors (real audience-stage interaction) and
- E. the interaction within the audience" (1981:240).

Passow (1981:240) proceeds to illustrate these five aspects in practical terms. Normally a doctor on the stage (as a dramatic role) has not studied medicine, and the injured man in the play is not bleeding. Yet the "doctor" is able to dress the "wound" professionally (A = make-believe world). A trained doctor in the audience, in spite of his professional duty to offer assistance, will not help the wounded man, but plays along with the fictitious (B). If, however, during the performance, the actor is

hurt (C = real interaction on stage) or a spectator in the audience falls unconscious, he takes action (D = real audience-stage interaction or E = spectator interaction).

Another interesting article which explores the relationship between actor, dramatic character and audience is **The Actor's Presence: Three Phenomenal Modes** by B.O. States (1983a). From the point of view of the actor, States distinguishes three "pronominal modes" (p. 360) in which he (the actor) may speak to the audience. He emphasizes that they are modes - not styles - through which the actor relates to himself, the audience and the dramatic character. These three modes are:

"I (actor) = self-expressive mode
 You (audience) = collaborative mode
 He (character) = representational mode" (States, 1983a:360).

In the analysis we find that States (1983a:361) refers to the self-expressive mode as the mode in which the actor "seems to be performing on his own behalf". In dramatic theatre, self-expressiveness asserts itself in the actor's particular style. He comes in and out of focus as an artist during a performance. The audience observes him now as the character, now as the artist in a moment of genius (or even in a moment of flaw). But as States reminds us, even in theatre there are degrees of artist presence. He distinguishes roughly between "doing" and "being" (1983a:362). When the artist in the actor comes forth, we are reacting to the actor's particular way of doing his role.

States explains that the collaborative mode exists between the actor and the audience when the distance between them is broken and the spectator given more than a passive role to play. He claims that the invitation to collaborate varies, of course, from the "implicit to the explicit and from the token to the literal; the guiding characteristic is that the stage uses some form of the 'you' address in its relation to the audience" (1983a:365). This mode is created by the prologue or epilogue, the monologue or the aside, in that the audience actually has the status of a confidant.

Finally States (1983a:369-375) defines the representative mode as the mode which represents not only the actor, but also the entire performance, i.e. it represents a fictional world with fictional characters. All of the actor's artistic energies seem to be bent toward becoming his character and, for the audience, they cease to be artistic energies and become the facts of his character's nature. States feels it has nothing to do with credulity; the audience simply "sees through the 'sign language' of the art to the 'signified' beyond" (1983a:370). They seem to disappear into the play because it is about people - an enactment of significant human experience.

The question may arise now whether it is justified to discuss the actor in a section on *dramatis personae*. Up to this point of the discussion the emphasis has been on the role of the actor - firstly Passow explains how the audience experiences the relationship between the actor and the dramatic character, and secondly States explains the relationship between the actor and the character he portrays on stage. That it is valid is obvious, if one bears in mind that it is impossible to separate dramatic text from performance text in any theoretical study.

Marisa Mouton (1988:102) is of the opinion that it is this duality with which the audience views/experiences the relationship between the actor and the dramatic character - i.e. his interest as to the development of the dramatic character, as well as his interest in the actor as a personality - which is explored by the dramatist and can be traced in the text.

In the above discussion the emphasis is on dramatic character - his stature, his relation to the actor and how he is experienced by the spectator. Dramatic character, however, cannot be separated from the dramatic environment in which he finds himself, i.e. he cannot be separated from fictional time, space and context of the dramatic world. These will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV: **FICTIONAL TIME AND PHYSICAL TIME IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE**

4.1 Introduction

Although time plays an important role in the dramatic text as well as the performance, only a few studies are available in which this is discussed.

Traditionally theories on time were based on the model of Aristotle in **Ars Poetica** in which he defined the three unities - action, time and space. In practice, however, very few dramas adhere to the restriction of twenty-four hours during which the dramatic action must take place; consequently this criticism became obsolete.

Very little has been done by present day drama and theatre semiotics to explore dramatic time. Only a few articles are available to illuminate this theory.

4.2 Time experienced as "present moments"

Segre (1980:41) contrasts the use of time in the theatre and the narrative text. What the audience sees on stage during a theatre performance unfold during a time-span which is identical with that of the utterances which make it up, an irreversible time analogous to time as lived.

The action of the drama as performed on stage always takes place in the present. Segre (1980:42) quotes Szondi who writes that "dramatic action always unfolds in the present ... the present moves on and is transformed into the past, but as such is no longer present. The present passes, effecting a change, from its antithesis a new and different present comes into being. The passage of time within the drama is an absolute succession of present moments." The drama itself, as an absolute, guarantees and creates of itself a time of its own.

Segre (1980:42) also states that Nojgaard speaks of an intensification of time, whereas Übersfeld claims that it is the unity of time which theatricalizes the story. Non-coincidence of the time-span of the

performance and the supposed time-span of events themselves is affected either by breaks during which temporal coincidence no longer holds good by convention, or else by means of added information which restores stretches of the past. He comes to the conclusion that it is predominant in the theatre - both the past which is referred to, and intermediate periods, are incorporated into the present of the act of uttering.

Elam (1980:117) feels that there is a fictional now proposed by the *dramatis personae* - the temporal deixis which "actualizes" the dramatic world. The action, therefore, takes place in a perpetual present time. This Elam terms "discourse time".

In narrative, on the other hand, it is the past which predominates, so much so that it may be consigned to a book. The present is merely a mode of evoking the past when it is intended that the evocation of the past is taken as direct.

The main difference between the narrative genre and the dramatic genre lies in the fact that the narrative text relates the action which occurs in a fictional world (*diegesis*), whereas the dramatic text represents the fictional events. Segre (1980:40) states: "As Aristotle says in Book Three of the **Poetics**, drama is mimetic: the actors imitate gestures and give utterance to verbal exchanges attributed to the characters. In narrative, on the other hand, it is the discourse of the writer which brings into being a verbal equivalent of the action (*diegesis*), within which the speeches of the characters are referred in direct or indirect form".

The dramatic performance, then, occurs in the present, therefore the spectators are under the impression that the characters are speaking now and that their actions occur now. However, the present in the performance also reaches out towards the future. These expectations of what is to follow keep the audience interested and create tension in them as to what conclusion will be reached. Mouton (1988:111) tells us that "our sense of what is happening is in fact indistinguishable from our sense of what will or may happen ... This creates the peculiar tension between the given present and its yet unrealised consequent, 'form in suspense', the essential dramatic illusion. This illusion of a

visible future is created in every play ... The future appears as already an entity, embryonic in the present".

As this dissertation is mainly about character, it must be emphasized that this sense of the dramatic performance occurring in the present is enhanced by the presence of the *dramatis personae*. Contrary to the narrative text where a narrator relates the action, the different characters (*dramatis personae*) in both the dramatic text and performance are introduced directly. There is no mediator for the *dramatis personae* in the dramatic and performance texts. They speak to the audience directly and their actions are immediately perceptible.

According to Mouton (1988:113) the dramatic dialogue which resides in the fictional here and now can be found in the dramatic language of the characters.

Segre (1980:45) feels that all the discourses pronounced in the theatre are performative in nature in the sense that they present themselves as institutionally tied in with the dynamics of the action. At the same time co-ordination between utterance and stage space is brought about by an intense use of deixis. He quotes Serpieri who feels that the specific nature of the theatre lies in the organisation of the words as movements of the characters in reciprocal relationships or with respect to objects or spaces on stage.

4.3 Performance time and proposed time

Another characteristic of time in the dramatic text as well as in the performance text is that the audience as well as the reader can distinguish between performance time (which varies between two to three hours), and proposed time (as covered by the fictional events). The relationship between these two times can vary from dramas where we find a correlation between the performance time and the proposed time, e.g. Athol Fugard's **Hello and Goodbye**, to dramas where we find a severe discrepancy between these two times, e.g. in Fugard's **The Guest**.

Elam (1980:118) is of the opinion that the changing situations and events presented in the now of discourse (together with those referred to

as then) appear in a certain temporal order in the play which does not always correspond to their logical order. In Fugard's **Boesman and Lena** their chronological journey or "trek" is interrupted by references to their past and what happened that morning when the bulldozers flattened their "pondok". Elam (1980:118) calls the order in which events are shown or reported "plot time".

From the information derived from the plot, the spectator is able to abstract the actual temporal ordering of events, including those merely reported, and so mentally constructs chronological time.

Elam (1980:118) also reminds us of historical dramas where the events of the drama are taken to be set in a particular historical period. He calls it "a more or less definite then transformed into a fictional now". An example is yet again Athol Fugard's **The Guest** in which Eugene Marais's life is depicted as if happening now, in the present, although he died in 1936.

Man's captivity by chronological time and his incapability to stem the tide of time are often depicted in dramas by means of accelerating or delaying techniques. The placing of the dramatis personae in a specific fictional time and their experience of that fictional time are observed by a spectator or reader who experiences this fictional depicting of time from a specific physical time (performance time or reading time).

In conclusion, then, I support Marisa Mouton's (1988:119) point of view when she asserts that the role of time in both the dramatic text and performance is versatile. All aspects of the fictional dramatic world are influenced by time: the fictional events occur at a specific time and possess their own tempo and course of time; the dramatis personae are placed in a fictional time and experience this subjectively; the dramatic language which shows its connection with the present is actualized deictically; and the structure of the drama is greatly influenced by the way in which time is managed.

CHAPTER V: SPACE IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE TEXT

5.1 Introduction

All characters, or *dramatis personae*, perform within a specific space and all action takes place within the confines of that space. There is a distinction, however, between space as indicated by a dramatic text, and space as indicated by a performance text. The dramatic text is a product of language in which any reference(s) to fictional space in which the characters exist, is received by the reader through a reading process which occurs gradually. In contrast, space on the stage is a physical component which is observed and experienced by the spectator directly and at once.

The concept of space in the theatre is subdivided into mimetic and diegetic space. Marisa Mouton (1988:122) quotes a definition by Issacharoff to explain the distinction: "In the theatre, mimetic space is that which is made visible to an audience and represented on stage. Diegetic space, on the other hand, is described, that is, referred to by the characters. In other words, mimetic space is transmitted directly, while diegetic space is mediated through the discourse of the characters, and thus communicated verbally and visually".

Although this definition equates mimetic space with performance space which is found during the actual performance, this term can also be applied to the dramatic text where it indicates an imaginary space in which the fictional characters find themselves.

Likewise, the diegetic space which indicates the space outside the proposed space of the stage can also indicate references to space which exist outside the specific scenes which are described in the text.

In sections 5.2 and 5.3 the concept of space in both the dramatic text and performance text will be described separately.

5.2 Space in the dramatic text

When the dramatic text is read, information on space either enhances information on the fictional world or on the space created on the stage.

The fictional world of the *dramatis personae* in which the action takes place can be revealed in two ways to the reader, as indicated by Marisa Mouton (1988:124):

- a) by means of direct reference by the characters, which in turn can be mimetic or diegetic in character;
- b) by means of didascalies or stage directions, which can also be mimetic or diegetic. Even before reading the actual plot, the reader is introduced to the fictional space in which the characters find themselves by means of the stage directions. Any change of fictional space is indicated in the text itself, therefore the reader can immediately reorientate himself. Descriptions which are auditory in nature may suggest fictional space outside the given space.

Information in the dramatic text on the actual performance space on the stage may be given either by the didascalies or the *dramatis personae* themselves. An example may be taken from Athol Fugard's **A Place with the Pigs** in which this description of a pigsty appears in the didascalies:

A pigsty, in a small village, somewhere in the author's imagination. A dark, unwholesome world. One of the pens has been converted into a primitive living area ... only bare essentials but all of them obviously already in use for quite a few years. Walls are covered with an attempt to keep track of the passing of time ... It is a noisy, restless period in the sty - the pigs are waiting to be fed ... (1988:1).

The reader expands on the information by using his own imagination, thereby creating his own fictional world. If he has a sound knowledge of theatre and the practicalities of the stage his fictional world will be more

objective, whereas relying on his imagination only, his observation of the fictional world will be more subjective.

5.3 Space in the performance

During a performance the audience experiences a physical space, i.e. the stage, which resembles a fictional space in which the characters perform. Moreover, the audience also experiences a physical space which adjoins this fictional space, i.e. the auditorium. The simultaneous presence of both physical and fictional space of the characters as well as the audience complicates the study of space during a performance. Elam (1980:56) states that the stage is, in the first instance, an "empty space", distinguished from its surroundings by visible markers (a raised platform, a curtain, or simply a conventional distance signalling the boundary between the acting area and the auditorium) and potentially "fillable" visually and acoustically. The first factor that strikes us when we enter a theatre is the physical organization of the playhouse itself: its dimensions, the stage-audience distance, the structure of the auditorium (and thus the spectator's own position in relation to his fellows and the performers) and the size and form of the awaiting stage. The performance itself begins with the registering of information supplied by the stage space and its use in the creation of the opening image. It is not unknown for audiences to gasp or even applaud at this initial sensation of witnessing a well-arranged scenic pattern. Even with the unfolding of the time-bound theatrical discourse, these constraints remain the primary influences on perception and reception.

Elam (1980:62) bases his analysis of physical, fictional and what he calls "interpersonal space" on a theory called proxemics, developed by Edward T. Hall. Proxemic relations are defined by Hall as the "interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture" (in Elam, 1980:62). This science is founded on the well-tested hypothesis that man's use of space in his architectural, domestic, urban, workplace and aesthetic activities is neither casual nor merely functional, but represents a semiotically loaded choice subject to powerful rules which generate a range of cultural units. What makes this relatively recent science of special

interest is the claim by Hall and his colleagues that they have rendered the code rules explicit, with the result that it is possible to determine the semantic content assigned to a set of distance units.

Elam (1980:62-63) then refers to Hall's division of performance space into fixed-feature, semi-fixed feature and informal space. Fixed-feature space involves static architectural shape, i.e. space which cannot be changed. Semi-fixed-feature space concerns such movable objects as furniture and the set. It also includes auxiliary factors like lighting and informal theatrical spaces, stage and auditorium arrangements. Informal space has as its units the ever-shifting relations of proximity and distance between individuals, i.e. the interplay between actor and actor; actor and spectator; spectator and spectator.

Hall (in Elam, 1980:65) then subdivides informal space into four segments: (i) "intimate" distance in which persons nearly touch, or have actual physical contact; (ii) "personal" distance, which is a distance of 1/2 to 1 1/2 metre; (iii) "social" distance which is 1-4 metres and finally (iv) "public" distance which is 4-8 metres.

Elam (1980:65) also claims that the spaces between stage vehicles (called the interstitial aspects of the performance) are as important semantically as the vehicles themselves. Most directors predetermine the arrangement of bodies on the stage in order to create visual patterns and establish certain relationships.

Performance spatiality is not limited, however, to the actual interstitial areas marked out by fixed, semi-fixed and dynamic theatrical components. Any representation will also create what Suzanne Langer (in Elam, 1980:67) defines as virtual space, that is an illusion or image which goes beyond the formal relationships established within a defined area. The stage thus creates a domain which does not coincide with its actual physical limits; the spectator constructs this space mentally from the visual clues that he receives. The spectator does not observe or listen to the performance passively, but he is actively engaged in transforming the world created on stage by using his own imagination.

Finally, space in a performance is also characterized by certain body movements and gestures, called kinesic factors. Elam (1980:69) points out that if fixed and semi-fixed space have traditionally borne close relationships with pictorial codes, informal space relates directly to the most dynamic aspect of theatrical discourse, i.e. the movement of the body on the stage. Each character is set in a specific space which he can define or expand by using gestures or body movements. A journey by train can be represented by the actors mimicking the slow rocking movement made by the train.

Elam (1980:72) defines the indicative character of the kinesic signal as deictic, since deixis "has exactly the role in linguistic discourse of defining the protagonist ('I'), the addressee ('you') and the context ('here') and thus of setting up a communicative situation. Deictic gesture, indicating the actor and his relations to the stage, is of decisive importance to theatrical performance, being the primary means whereby the presence and the spatial orientations of the body are established". The "I" of the *dramatis personae* and the "here and now" of the dramatic communicative context are related to the actor's body and the stage context through the indicative gesture accompanying the utterance. Gesture, in this sense, materializes the dramatic subject and his world by asserting their identity with an actual body and an actual space.

CHAPTER VI: LANGUAGE IN THE DRAMATIC TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

6.1 Introduction

Language is a complicated aspect of drama as it cannot easily be separated from other components which make up a dramatic performance. Marisa Mouton (1988:133-153) has discussed all aspects of language in the dramatic text as well as the performance in detail, but as this dissertation is about character, the emphasis will be on the *dramatis personae* and the dramatic action. A few of Mouton's sub-headings will be used as they so aptly summarize all important aspects.

6.2 Character, dialogue, action

Theorists like Styan, Nicoll and Van Laan emphasize the close relationship between character, dialogue and action. In other words, the character of the *dramatis persona* is determined by what he says and what he does.

The dramatist is confronted by one problem, however: how to express in the dramatic text as well as the performance what a character thinks. He can make use of either a monologue or an aside in which the character directly expresses his innermost feelings, but if he wants to do it more subtly in a non-verbal way, the character will use gestures, movements or facial expressions. Sometimes the character's actions will even belie his words to portray the opposite of what he says. An example is Trinculo and Stephano in Shakespeare's **The Tempest** where their claims to courage are contradicted by their actions.

Not only what a character says, but also how it is said and consequently not just what a character does but how it is done, determines the way in which the spectator perceives his character. The aspects of character, dialogue and action are so closely related that it is difficult to determine whether the character of the *dramatis personae* is determined by his dialogue and actions or whether his actions and dialogue determine the character. Thus Barthes says that "the character and the discourse are each other's accomplices" (*in* States, 1985b:87).

6.3 Language in the dramatic text and in the performance

Dialogue is, of course, influenced by the didascalies (in the dramatic text) and by metalingual and extralingual aspects (in the performance).

6.3.1 Dramatic text

On reading the dramatic text one is immediately struck by the difference between the dialogue section, in which the words of the characters are given, and the didascalies, which give information about and to the characters. The difference between these two aspects can be observed at a glance as the didascalies are often printed in italics and they are written in brackets. Therefore the reader can never confuse information given in the didascalies with the actual words spoken by the character.

Marisa Mouton (1988:135) points out that the didascalies contain information which enables the characters to act out the correct emotion or feelings, like pain, anger, frustration laughter, etc. Didascalies also direct the movements of the characters to the back, right, left of the stage, exit, etc. Furthermore, didascalies also contain metalingual aspects such as when to stutter, or use a higher tone of voice, and extralingual aspects like gestures, facial expressions, movement, etc.

6.3.2 Performance

The dialogue sections (actual words of speaker) are the only sections that correspond in the dramatic text and the performance. When the same text is performed by different actors, the metalingual and extralingual aspects will differ in each production, because the didascalies in the dramatic text are converted into visual and auditory elements in the performance. Whereas the reader (or implicit spectator) of a dramatic text must use his/her imagination to translate the didascalies, the spectator in a performance does not have to make the effort, as he/she sees or hears them incorporated in the acting. The visual and auditory aspects which accompany the dialogue exert great influence on the interpretation of the character by the spectator.

On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the characteristics of the fictional character and the actor. The actor can perform some of the metalingual aspects (like stuttering, or a very high/low tone of voice), but other aspects (like the quality of his voice) are a part of his person and transferred to the personality of the fictional character. The same applies to extralingual aspects like gestures. It proves that it is difficult to distinguish between the personality of the fictional character and the actor during a performance.

6.4 A semiotic approach to language

6.4.1 *Language in the drama*

Whatever the properties ascribed to *dramatis personae* as individuals in a fictional world, and whatever personal, actantial, social and other rules they are seen to fulfil as functions of dramatic structure, it is in the first instance as participants in speech events that they are usually perceived. It is the discourse level of the drama - the dialogic exchange of information - bearing utterances which constitute, at the same time, a form of interaction in itself - that is most immediately present to the spectator.

In his book **The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama** (1980), Elam devotes an entire chapter to dramatic language. He pinpoints three important aspects in connection with language in a drama and in a performance (compare Mouton, 1988:149-153): (i) deixis; (ii) the way in which dramatic language attempts to create a fictional world; and (iii) the speech-act theory.

6.4.2 *Deixis*

According to Elam (1980:139) deixis "is what allows language an 'active' and dialogic function rather than a descriptive and choric role". Elam feels that it is the verbal signs that actualize the dramatic world. For its inhabitants (the dramatic characters and the spectators) a possible world is "actual" to the extent that it can be referred to as the spatio-temporal here and now. This view is supported by Serpieri who claims that "the *dramatis personae* must be 'seen' (and 'heard') to establish

relationships between each other or with the objects or space of the stage through deictic, ostensive and spatial relations. From this derives the involving, engrossing force of the theatrical event ... because the theatre is mimesis of the lived, not the detachment of the narrated" (in Elam, 1980:113). In other words, the I-here-now orientation forms the basis for the dramatic context and contrasts with the he-there-then orientation of narrative language usage.

The deictic reference used in dramatic language is called "shifters" (empty verbal index) by Jacobsen. Elam (1980:140) explains it thus: the deictic reference presupposes the existence of a speaker referred to as "I", a listener addressed as "you", and a physically present object indicated as "this". It resides in "shifters" in so far as it does not in itself specify its objects, but simply points to the already contextual elements. Elam explains that an expression such as "Will you give me that, please", will remain ambiguous until uttered in a context where the "shifters" you, me and that have evident referents. It remains incomplete until the appropriate contextual elements (speaker, addressee, time, location) are duly provided.

Sometimes the gesture is crucial in completing these contextual elements. An utterance like "Look at that beautiful blonde", may be self-sufficient in a specific situation, whereas "Look at that!" will normally be accompanied by a nod or sweep of the head, an eye or a hand movement, thus in its incompleteness, its need for physical contextualization, the dramatic discourse is invariably marked by a performability, and above all by a potential gesturality which the language of narrative does not normally possess. In the words of Styan "the words as spoken are inseparable from the movements of the actors who speak them" (1971:2). Elam (1980:143) concludes that it is the spatial deixis which takes priority over the temporal. The utterance must be anchored above all to the physical here represented by the stage and its vehicles. It is especially important where there are several temporal levels at work in the presence of the speaker within a strictly defined space. The 'now' of discourse registers the instant of his spatial presence. In other words, it is in language that the here-and-now-character of the drama is revealed.

6.4.3 *The way in which dramatic language attempts to create a fictional world*

Elam (1980:148) emphasizes that dramatic language creates a fictional world in which the characters exist: "If the most immediate function of dramatic language is the indexical creation of a dynamic context, it is clear that the utterances tied to the here-and-now must also come to fulfil a larger 'referential' role in carrying information concerning the dramatic world at large". In order for something to be referred to in the course of the dialogue, it has to be granted a certain kind of existence. It is sufficient for the referent to exist as what Bonomi (*in* Elam, 1980:150) calls an "object of discourse". Objects of discourse are those entities, real or not, which we are able to talk about.

These objects of discourse must be perceived as stable and consistent entities. To make this stability and consistency possible, Elam (1980:151) applies the principle of co-reference; thus subsequent references to a specific object are assumed to concern the same entity. If referring to a character or object, that object is named and all successive references to that entity will refer to the same entity. If the speaker says, for example, "John Brown has a red car", all successive references to John Brown or the red car will denote the same individual or object and not a homonymous individual or identical car in this or some other world.

6.4.4 *Speech-act theory*

We have seen how language is used in the I-you exchange to "indicate or ostend, to refer to and, in general terms, to create the dramatic macro- and micro-contexts" (Elam, 1980:156). But what takes place between the participants in the communicative event is constitutive of the drama in another crucial sense. The speech event is, in its own right, the chief form of interaction in the drama. According to Honzl (*in* Elam, 1980:157) the dialogic exchange does not merely refer deictically to the dramatic action but directly constitutes it.

Speech-act theory, then, is concerned with linguistic phenomena, less in their formal aspects than as elements of a "rule-governed form of

behaviour" (Searle, 1969:12). This theory of language as a mode of social action was first proposed in the 1960s by John Austin in reaction to the traditional philosophical treatment of utterances as statements, or mere vehicles for true or false propositions (Elam, 1980:157). It was Austin's aim to show that in issuing utterances we are not only producing a certain propositional content, but are doing things such as asking, commanding, attempting to influence or convince interlocuters, etc.

Austin (in Elam, 1980:158) then defined three types of speech act:

- i) Locutionary act: A meaningful utterance is produced in accordance with phonological, syntactic, morphological and other rules. Serpieri (1981:168) simply refers to this act as a linguistic act in a merely technical sense.)
- ii) Illocutionary act: This act is produced in saying something, such as asking a question, ordering someone to do something, promising and asserting the truth of a proposition. Serpieri (1981:168) claims that this act effects transformation in the relationship between the interlocuters.
- iii) Perlocutionary act: It is performed by means of saying something such as persuading someone to do something, convincing one's interlocutor, moving him to anger, etc. Serpieri (1981:168) claims that it is this act which produces real and measurable results.

Elam (1980:158-161) explains that these classes of acts are not alternatives, but levels of the pragmatic make-up of the utterance. In saying to somebody else, "Give me ten dollars, please," one performs the utterance act of producing an acceptable English sentence, the propositional act of referring to oneself and the ten dollars, the illocutionary act of requesting the ten dollars and if one is lucky the utterance may have the perlocutionary act of persuading the listener to give one ten dollars. Not all illocutionary acts will have a perlocutionary effect, however, while it is impossible to perform a successful perlocutionary act without performing an illocution.

Sometimes the legitimacy of certain illocutions is questioned. Searle (1969:60) then came up with three conditions for a successful speech-act:

- i) Preparatory conditions: the speaker must be authorized to perform the act;
- ii) Sincerity conditions: the speaker must mean what he says, believe it to be true;
- iii) Essential conditions: he is obliged by a promise to undertake the action indicated.

An actor does not merely recite the lines from a dramatic text; he interprets them. By using the illocutionary mode of stress, intonation, kinesic markers and facial expressions, the actor is able to suggest the intentions, purposes and motivations involved. Elam (1980:166) asserts that if dramatic discourse were illocutionarily self-sufficient on the page, the performance would be all but superfluous.

It is, however, not always possible to determine finally and absolutely from the written text all the illocutions performed in a play, although the use of explicit performative verbs ("I beg you") and the reactions of the interlocutors, will often assist the process of interpretation. For such a purpose, however, one requires an adequate classification of act-type and illocutionary acts. This was supplied by Searle and summarized by Elam (1980:166-167).

It may be argued that it is the actor and not the dramatic character who performs the illocution on the stage, as he actually speaks the words, and not the dramatic character. Elam (1980:170) disagrees with this assumption, however, in that he feels the actor performs the basic utterance act of articulating the lines. He has no illocutionary intentions in saying them. Responsibility for the utterance as a full speech act, with all its possible moral and social consequences, is attributed to the dramatic and not the stage speaker. Elam feels that actors, as opposed to the fictional characters they portray, "... do not command, question and assert by their use of imperatival, interrogative and declarative sentences respectively. For example, they, as opposed to the characters they portray, cannot be charged with having asserted

something false, having issued an unwise command, etc., for they only pretend to assert and command these things" (1980:170).

Elam therefore concludes that it is the audience's task to interpret the physical articulations on stage as higher-order speech events in the dramatic world. In order to do so, it must project both a set of intentions on the part of the speaker and a semiotic competence on the part of the listener. This is a major aspect of the spectator's role in the construction of the dramatic world. This is emphasized by Serpieri who states: "The theater is a simulated environment in which occur performative acts that cannot achieve results in reality but that display themselves ludically, allowing the spectator to make the necessary semantic judgement, to become emotionally involved, to identify himself with what is displayed ..." (1981:168).

CHAPTER VII: THE DIDASCALIES

7.1 Introduction

Traditionally the dramatic text can be divided into two sections: the dialogue of the characters and the stage directions. These stage directions can either be referred to as side text (as opposed to the main text), or didascalies, a term which is more inclusive as it includes "everything which is neither dialogue nor soliloquy" (Savona, 1982:26).

In the modern drama, stage directions are not only written to assist the director, they are also written to be read. For example, one needs only to look at the text of Tennessee Williams' **The Glass Menagerie** to see that the didascalies of a play are to be read as much as they form a part of the performance. Without the prologue, which introduces the setting as well as the conception of the play (a memory play), **The Glass Menagerie** would lack context and meaning. The didascalies in this play are an integral part of the work, giving Tom Wingfield's gossamer memories, recalled when the whole world was on fire, meaning and shape.

J.L. Styan is of the opinion that the stage property (as described by the didascalies) is also a device of great importance in implementing meaning and transitions in a play: "In a good play all the agencies of the dramatist from the literary meaning of the word to the non-literary effects of motion and stillness are brought into use as an integral expression of meaning which is indivisible in performance ... A stage property can be a vivid token of expression and understanding" (1982:48).

Whether an inanimate object is used for more than decorative purposes, whether to foreshadow, or carry the action over "dead spots", or to assist the plot, it becomes an essential structural feature, contributing to meaning in the scene and clarifying the relations between scene and play. Levitt (1971:46-47) points out that the stage properties in Shaw's **Arms and the Man**, for example, are used for setting the scene and also for overall symbolic purposes. The stage direction calls for some paper-backed novels, a box of chocolate creams, and a portrait of Sergius on

Raina's chest of drawers. "At first these seem to be merely the realistic clutter of an inhabited room, but soon, as Raina picks them up or otherwise draws attention to them, they become full of meaning; from the novels her illusions about life have sprung, the portrait brings her fiancé's presence on the stage even though he is away at the war, and the chocolate creams (since this is a comedy) symbolize the reality of experience as represented by Bluntschli. They become identified with the chocolate he carries in his cartridge box instead of ammunition, and in the end, when Raina agrees to marry him, he is her 'chocolate cream soldier'". Levitt (1971:47) stresses that the stage property is of particular importance because its "conspicuousness commands attention and excites curiosity". Its presence on stage invites us to look ahead and anticipate what is to come (e.g. the crutches in Fugard's **Hello and Goodbye**). Used as a plot device around which some or the whole of the action revolves, it can link scenes by foreshadowing action in a later scene (like the pistol on the writing table in Ibsen's **Hedda Gabler** and the broken tree in Arthur Miller's **All my Sons**).

Shaw's **Arms and the Man** serves as an example of a stage property used as a structural device to implement the action in static situations and carry it over "dead spots" when Raina helps Petkoff on with his overcoat and he searches in vain for the photograph in his pockets. The coat and photograph act as a catalyst to incite action which leads to the unmasking of the characters and the natural conclusion of the play.

Marisa Mouton (1988:169) indicates that whereas the playwright is the original or first creator of the dramatic text and subsequently the didascalies, the producer is the second creator, because he plays such an important role in interpreting and realizing the didascalies visually and orally. Creative roles are also played backstage by the designer of the decor, costume designer and sound technicians, and on the stage by the actors. The producer has the power to interpret the text and didascalies in five ways: he can confirm the written language signs by performance signs on the stage, or he can emphasize them, limit them, deviate from them or undermine them.

7.2 The function of the didascalies in the dramatic text

7.2.1 The title

According to Marisa Mouton (1988:170) the main function of the title of a dramatic text is to name the fictional world of the drama. By naming it, the most important aspect of the fictional world is highlighted, be it an important fictional character, events or symbol. The title can become a key enabling the reader to interpret the play.

7.2.2 List of characters

The list of characters at the beginning of a play is obviously given to identify the fictional characters and to supply information about their ages, vocations, family ties and nationalities. In doing this, the author writes under the pretence of referring to existing human beings.

These names at the beginning of a play not only supply information, they also determine the structure of the text itself, because they introduce the dialogue spoken by each character. They also determine the importance of each character as the list of characters is hierarchical, placing the most important characters at the top of the list.

The list of characters can also supply information about the character itself as, especially in traditional dramas, many character names give an indication to the personality of the fictional character. This device is used to convey information about the character to the reader as directly and quickly as possible. Carlson (1983:283-296) devotes an entire article to character names. In the opening lines he states the function of character names thus: "In the highly concentrated narrative world of the drama, the names given to characters potentially provide a powerful communicative device for the dramatist, seeking to orientate his audience as quickly as possible in his fictitious world. Thus from the very beginnings of drama we may see working a variety of onomastic codes, differing from era to era, but always an important part of the general semiotic system of theatre. Through these codes audiences have traditionally been provided with information not only about the character who bears a particular name, but also about his actantial role

in a total dramatic structure, about his place in a pattern of relationships, and about intertextual relations between the drama in which he appears and other dramas of the same or of contrasting genres" (p. 283).

Names can imply social position, therefore certain names or types of names in every society seem more "proper" for the leaders of society and others for those near the bottom of the social ladder. A memorable confrontation of names with a heavy weight of ethnic and social connotations occurs in **A Streetcar named Desire** where Williams set the faded aristocratic elegance of Blanche Dubois against the crude vitality of Stanley Kowalski. Changing fashions in names require that the realistic dramatist be sensitive to the associations of names within his society. Names like Luke, Ned and Flora, although fashionable for heroes and heroines during the nineteenth century, have an antiquated and rural feeling today. Once elegant names like Percival, Marmaduke or Sebastian now suggest comic affectation, effeminacy, or even decadence.

7.2.3 *Stage directions*

Levitt (1971:36) informs us that "stage directions are of two kinds: written and spoken". As printed commands in the dramatic text they differ from the dramatic discourse in that they are printed in italics and they are instructions concerning the time and place of the events, actions, movements, entrances and exits, sound effects, stage properties, costumes, or setting.

As "announcements" in the dialogue of the play, they serve as a verbal stage direction "to announce the arrival of a character (often detailing the personality and history of that character) and serve to indicate the action which is taking place offstage" (Levitt, 1971:36).

Written stage directions also serve the function of the narrator as the playwright, unlike the novelist, is unable to fulfil the role himself. They supply information about the diegetic time and space, actions and characters. Savona emphasizes this concept when he states that "the voice of the didascalies, then, partially resembles that of the narrator in

a novel" (1982:27). They also serve as instruments to explain ambiguity in the dialogue and communicate stable information.

Marisa Mouton (1988:173) points out that didascalies indicating a gesture or facial expression which contradict the dramatic discourse of the character at that given moment, are accepted by the reader as information which reveals the true personality of the fictional character. This contradiction between the verbal expression and didascalies may produce a comic effect as in Beckett's **Waiting for Godot**. The characters and their reactions are also typical of the absurd world in which they find themselves:

VLADIMIR: Well? Shall we go?

ESTRAGON: Yes, let's go.

They do not move. (p. 94)

The didascalies supply information not only about the fictional world in which the characters find themselves, but also information on how this world can be realized on stage. An example is the elaborate details given about the setting in Williams's **A Streetcar named Desire**:

The exterior of a two-storey corner building on a street in New Orleans ... The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables to the entrances of both. It is first dark of an evening early in May. The sky that shows around the dim white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolences of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is evoked by the music of Negro entertainers at a bar-room around the corner. In this part of New Orleans you are practically always just around the corner, or a few doors down the street, from a tinny piano being played with the infatuated fluency of brown fingers. This 'blue piano' expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here (p. 115).

The atmosphere of decay is in direct contrast to Blanche's delicate appearance carrying a valise and expecting her sister to live in the same style they have been accustomed to at Bella Reve.

The didascalies can supply visual and auditory information about a character. Visual information is very important, therefore some playwrights include a detailed physical description of the character supplying information about age, colour of hair or eyes, physical disabilities, etc. These physical descriptions often serve the purpose of emphasizing the characteristics of the fictional character. Note the stark contrast between the description of Mitch and Stanley in **A Streetcar named Desire**:

They are about twenty-eight or thirty years old, roughly dressed in blue denim work clothes. STANLEY carries his bowling jacket and a red-stained package from a butcher's (p. 116),

and the description of Blanche:

BLANCHE comes around the corner, carrying a valise. She looks at a slip of paper, then at the building, then again at the slip and again at the building. Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous to this setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and ear-rings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district. She is about five years older than STELLA. Her delicate beauty must avoid the strong light. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth (p. 117).

The physical appearance of a character - dress, hat, crown, walking-stick, sword, pistol, etc. - can acquire a special meaning and play a central role in the development and conclusion of events. Likewise, facial expressions together with gesture and movement (or lack of it) can either emphasize or contradict a verbal expression. In Williams's **A Streetcar named Desire** Blanche's physical description (being as delicate as a moth) is starkly contrasted to the fact that she is hiding

something, that her character is not what it seems, i.e. not as white and spotless as her name and appearance indicate:

BLANCHE sits in a chair very stiffly with her shoulders slightly hunched and her legs pressed together and her hands tightly clutching her purse as if she were quite cold. After a while the blind look goes out of her eyes and she begins to look slowly around. A cat screeches. She catches her breath with a startled gesture. Suddenly she notices something in a half-opened closet. She springs up and crosses to it, and removes a whisky bottle. She pours a half tumbler of whisky and tosses it down. She carefully replaces the bottle and washes out the tumbler at the sink. Then she resumes her seat in front of the table (p. 119).

Certain gestures have conventional meanings such as rubbing hands together when cold or nervous, scratching head when uncertain, twiddling fingers when bored, etc. In **A Streetcar named Desire** Blanche's nervousness is emphasized by the way in which she smokes, drinks and trembles all over. In Checkov's **The Cherry Orchard** Trofimow's shock is portrayed thus (albeit comically) by the didascalies:

TROFIMOV: [horrified]. This is dreadful! What's she saying? [Walks quickly towards the bathroom, his head between his hands.] This is dreadful ... I can't, I'm going ... [Goes out, but returns at once.] Everything's finished between us! [Goes out through the door into the hall] (p. 377).

In Williams's **The Glass Menagerie** the reader/audience experiences Amanda's disappointment in Laura from the didascalies accompanying their dialogue:

AMANDA: Deception? Deception? [She slowly removes her hat and gloves, continuing the sweet suffering stare. She lets the hat and gloves fall on the floor - a bit of acting.]

LAURA: [shakily]: How was the D.A.R. meeting? [AMANDA slowly opens her purse and removes a dainty white handkerchief which she shakes out delicately and delicately touches to her lips

and nostrils.] Didn't you go to the D.A.R. meeting, Mother? (p. 242)

When two characters confront each other they sometimes touch physically as in Williams' **A Streetcar named Desire** when the confrontation which threatened between the two characters from the beginning reaches a climax:

STANLEY: Oh! So you want some rough-house! All right, let's have some rough house! (He springs towards her, overturning the table. She cries out and strikes at him with the bottle top but he catches her wrist.)

Tiger - tiger! Drop the bottle-top! Drop it! We've had this date with each other from the beginning!

(She moans. The bottle-top falls. She sinks to her knees. He picks up her inert figure and carries her to the bed...) (p. 215).

Sometimes gestures and movement are not restricted to the individual, but they are seen as part of a group. This we get at dances, parties, group fights, games, etc. The reaction of the individual may then be contrasted to that of the group as in Chekov's **The Cherry Orchard**. The guests are dancing happily when the news of the sale of the cherry orchard reaches Andryeevna:

LIUBOV ANDRYEEVNA: Has the cherry orchard been sold?

LOPAKHIN: It has.

LIUBOV ANDRYEEVNA: Who bought it?

LOPAKHIN: I did.

[A pause]

[LIUBOV ANDRYEEVNA is overcome; only the fact that she is standing beside a table and a chair prevents her from falling. VARIA takes a bundle of keys off her belt, throws them on the floor in the middle of the drawing-room and walks out.]

Yes, I bought it. Wait a moment, ladies and gentlemen, do, please. I don't feel quite clear in my head, I hardly know how to talk ... [Laughs.] ... Yes, the cherry orchard's mine now! Mine! [Laughs.] My God! the cherry orchard's mine! Come on, tell me

I'm drunk, tell me I'm out of my mind, say I've imagined all this ... [Stamps his foot.] ... Well, never mind. [The band is heard tuning up.] Hi! You musicians, come on now, play something, I want some music! Now then, all of you, just you wait and see Yermolai Lopakhin take an axe to the cherry orchard, just you see the trees come crashing down! We're going to build a whole lot of new villas, and our children and great-grandchildren are going to see a new living world growing up here ... Come on there, let's have some music!

[The band plays. LIUBOV ANDRYEEVNA has sunk into a chair and is crying bitterly.] (p. 383-384).

It is from the didascalies that we learn about Lopakhin's triumphant joy and Andryeevna's shocked grief at losing the orchard which has been in her family for so long.

The didascalies also supply auditory information about the fictional character by describing aspects of the character's voice and by describing all other aspects of sound made by the characters. Although auditory information is more readily associated with the performance itself, it is nevertheless often supplied in the dramatic text as well. Information about a character's voice can supply us with information about tone, tempo, influence of dialect, state of mind, etc. It can also indicate coughing, snoring, yelling, etc.

In Chekov's **The Cherry Orchard** the tone of voice of the two characters is an indication of their state of mind:

LIUBOV ANDRYEEVNA: [agitated]. Well, what happened? Was there an auction? Speak, tell me!

LOPAKHIN: [embarrassed, fearing to betray his joy]. The auction was over by four o'clock ... We missed our train and had to wait until half-past nine. [With a deep sigh.] Ugh! My head's going round ... (p. 382).

Another fine example of auditory information is found in Chekov's **Three Sisters**:

MASHA: [absorbed in her book, whistles a tune under her breath].

OLGA: Masha, stop this whistling How can you? (p. 250).

CHEBUTYKIN: [tearfully and crossly] Expensive presents! ... Get along with you! [To the orderly.] Put the samovar over there. [Mimics IRENA.] Expensive presents! (p. 256).

SOLIONY: [in a high-pitched voice as if calling to chickens]: Cluck, cluck, cluck! There's nothing our good Baron loves as much as a nice bit of philosophizing (p. 260).

A final example comes from Williams' **A Streetcar named Desire** where Stanley and Stella's dependence upon each other is reflected in the emotional intensity of their voices:

[There he throws back his head like a baying hound and bellows his wife's name: 'Stella! Stella, sweetheart! Stella!'

STANLEY: Stell-ahhhhh! ...

STANLEY: [with heaven-splitting violence] STELLL-AHHHHH!
... they stare at each other. Then they come together with low, animal moans ...] (p. 154).

7.2.4 *Space as indicated by the didascalies*

Some playwrights give an elaborate description of the space on stage in order to assist in creating the right background or indicating requisites to be used. An example of this technique is found in Fugard's '**Master Harold' ...and the Boys**:

The St. George's Park Tea Room on a wet and windy Port Elizabeth afternoon.

Tables and chairs have been cleared and are stocked on one side except for one which stands apart with a single chair. On this table a knife, fork, spoon and side plate in anticipation of a simple meal, together with a pile of comic books.

Other elements: a serving counter with a few stale cakes under glass and a not very impressive display of sweets, cigarettes and cool drinks, etc.; a few cardboard advertising handouts - Cadbury Chocolate, Coca-Cola - and a blackboard on which an untrained hand has chalked up the prices of Tea, Coffee, Scones, Milkshakes - all flavors - and Cool Drinks; a few sad ferns in pots; a telephone; and old-style jukebox.

There is an entrance on one side and an exit into a kitchen on the other (p. 1).

Opposed to this, other playwrights merely supply a scanty description of the space on stage as in Chekov's **Three Sisters**:

A drawing room in the Prozorov's house; it is separated from a large ballroom at the back by a row of columns. It is midday; there is a cheerful sunshine outside. In the ballroom the table is being laid for lunch (p. 249).

When space cannot be represented visually as toward the end of Checkov's **The Cherry Orchard**, the illusion of space is created by means of the sound of chopping wood:

A distant sound is heard, coming as if out of the sky, like the sound of a string snapping, slowly and sadly dying away. Silence ensues, broken only by the sound of an axe striking a tree in the orchard far away (p. 398).

7.2.5 Time as portrayed by the didascalies

Marisa Mouton (1988:193) asserts that as all events are portrayed in time, certain changes in time may occur in the fictional world of the drama. If the age of the character changes it is indicated by the

didascalies which will indicate grey hair or shuffling footsteps, etc. The passage of time from day to night is indicated by lighting as indicated by stage directions in the written text. Mouton uses the example from Wilder's **Our Town**:

The stage at no time in this act has been very dark; but now the left half of the stage gradually becomes very bright - the brightness of a crisp winter morning (in Mouton, 1988:193).

Time changes are not only indicated visually; they can also be of the auditory kind. The most common device is the chiming of a clock which not only indicates the passing of time, but also man's mortality. A fine example is found in Fugard's **People are Living There** when Milly transfers her aggression to the clock (which strikes regularly throughout the play) in an attempt to postpone her fiftieth birthday: "The clock chimes, then one stroke. The sound of a vicious blow. The clock strikes seven more times. It is eight o'clock" (p. 22). Milly does not want to admit the passage of time, because she feels that she has wasted ten years of her youth:

MILLY: Ten o'clock. I counted nine and then it struck again.

DON: Then it's ten o'clock.

MILLY: No. Don.

DON: All right, so it's eleven.

MILLY: No, no! It's nine o'clock (p. 36).

In conclusion to this section on the didascalies and the written text, it can be stated that a vast amount of information concerning the fictional characters, time and space is supplied by the didascalies in the dramatic text. Except for the title, list of characters and stage directions the playwright may also make use of a prologue and/or an epilogue. The function of the prologue is to introduce the fictional world to the reader/audience, while the epilogue concludes events.

7.3 The didascalies in the performance

Written didascalies obviously disappear in the performance, but visual and auditory didascalies in the dramatic text are realized on the stage,

therefore, instead of reading them, the spectator hears and sees them. The director plays an important role in determining the extent to which the didascalies will be included in the performance.

The title of the play is reproduced in writing on the programme and posters advertising the production of the play. Likewise the list of characters is reproduced on the programme, but unlike the written text which includes information on the character, the programme will indicate which actor performs the fictional character. This orientates the spectator as to which actor will portray which character during the performance.

The didascalies, therefore, do not disappear during the performance; the definite distinction between dialogue and didascalies as found in the dramatic text only becomes less noticeable in the performance, and in fact, becomes part of the performance.