

IN DEFENSE OF STAGE DIRECTIONS.
SOME REMARKS ON LANGUAGE IN MODERN DRAMA

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I

A surprising growth of various hypotheses about the relation between a play's text and its performance makes one reconsider the problem. The most radical of the stances taken by the "theatricalists" is the one called "text" theory.¹ It claims that play as a written text is nonessential to drama. A play is but a transcript of arbitrarily arranged linguistic and nonlinguistic sounds which a director can use as a pretext for creating a piece of theater art. In consequence, a dramatic text is viewed as a formless raw material to be shaped by theater artists. Other theatricalist hypotheses acknowledge that "to a degree" a dramatic text does determine the structure of a dramatic performance. The degree determines the extent of liberties that a regisseur can take with a dramatic text and ranges from a faithful rendition of a play's text to creating in the performance its "structural homology". Structural homology consists in "functional translation" of a text's elements into their artistic equivalents in a dramatic spectacle (cf. Osiński 1967). A regisseur follows here not the letter, but a vaguely defined "spirit" of the play. Thus he preserves a play not as an artistically coded message—which would be just—but, at best, as a structure of "meanings".

¹ The theories of plays as a "script" and as a "blueprint" are the ones most popular among English and American theoreticians. The scenario theory is represented by, for example, Robert Scholes and Carl H. Klaus (1971). The "text" theory derives from Artaud and was generally adopted by the animators of the Great Theater Reform. Recently, R. Schechner (1973) presented the theory in a new guise. The problem of play as a theatrical score is presented in Z. Raszewski (1958) and differently discussed in J. Sławiński (1976).

In order to defend the "liberal" directors, theatricalists raise here the problem of integrality of dramatic texts by alleging that the term "play" denotes the lines only. Only what is spoken during a performance constitutes a play ("proper" or "pure"). Whatever disappears in any performance is a dramatically superfluous embellishment (cf. Skwarczyńska 1949). From this Stefania Skwarczyńska deduces the existence of two different and unrelated texts within one artistic composition. One "text" comprises all the lines and the other — everything else. The above follows from her assertion that stage directions are meant as suggestions for the regisseur only. The reader should mind the lines only. What right has a reader who wants to stage a play to consult stage directions — which are "not meant for him" — Skwarczyńska does not explain. Generally, like other theatricalists, she diminishes the importance of stage directions and mistrusts plays containing them. Stage directions for her are the effect, and a sign, of a playwright's novelistic leanings. Treated as co-important with lines, they indicate that the writer is writing a novel in the form of a play and not a play proper. Thus, according to this approach, Amiri Baraka's *Slave ship* (1970), a play mostly composed of "stage directions", would have to be placed way within the territory of novelistic untheatrical plays. This signals a snag somewhere in the premises underlying the theatricalist hypotheses.

In many cases, and especially with modern drama (what with the complexity of situations found there!) Abbé d'Aubignac's demands, echoed by theatricalists, that plays be free of "mundane" stage directions and that all information of the place of action, the characters' behavior, etc., be communicated in the lines only, prove totally unrealistic. There are also other fallacies of the theatricalist approach. If a play comprises the lines only, then the information provided in the play's title or in the acts' titles, the information about the characters' linguistic and physical behavior, the dramatic place, etc. would have to be disregarded. But is it not self-evident that any valid analysis has to respect and consider all the play's elements and their unviolable unity?

Besides, the postulate of modal uniformity of language as a "must" in drama makes one brand the whole genre an artistic imperfection. This paradoxical position results from the theatricalistic assumption that the unity of dramatic texts springs from modal uniformity of the language used. This in turn hinges upon overlooking a peculiarly dramatic mode of language used in lines.

This dramatic mode of language is "language in the projection to the level of phonic spoken language" (Winogradow 1970:388). The chief virtue of Winogradow's definition proposed in "Language in works of artistic literature" is that it brings together two notions: that of "language to be spoken", which implies the presence of phonic components in the structure of the lines, and

the notion of "spoken ethnic language". The latter term refers to speech in its context of action and situation "realistically" rendered by literary language. On this basis it may be postulated that the unity of a dramatic text springs from various relations of relevance and interdependence existing between lines and stage directions. Such a solution of the problem can be a basis for a fruitful enquiry into the ways in which dramatists communicate with the audience and the role that stage directions of various kinds play in this process.

II

When realism made verse impossible in drama, playwrights faced the problem of enhancing the "vehicle" value of prose. They strove to develop a mode of language corresponding in its informative power to the "patterned language" of masters of poetic drama; a prose with the power of poetic language. For Jan Mukařovský (1970) the distinctive feature of poetic language is "overstructuring": increasing the information carried by a single unit. The Tartu School sees it in terms of patterns imposed on a text and its various linguistic components. Thus, overstructuring enhances the literary language's communicative powers through activation of all resources of language in its various modes, uses, registers and styles. Although Mukařovský talks about the language of poetry, overstructuring seems common to all artistic uses of language. And language as a "phonic spoken language" seems a peculiarly dramatic type of overstructured language. It is the "realistic" artistic language of the drama: In this paper I will concentrate on ways of enhancing the language's potential through semantic activation of its phonic components, with special attention to ways in which it is signalled in dramatic texts.²

My task is greatly facilitated by recent developments in phonetics. Phoneticians have discovered that in conversations the information the listener retrieves from the sound continuum produced by the speaker is greatly dependent on the meaning of the intonation patterns used. Since intonation patterns usually reveal the speaker's attitude towards the listener, to the topic or to the world in general (Uldall 1972:250), their meaning is called "affective" or "attitudinal" (Bolinger 1972:137ff.). The few intonation contours currently used derive their exact meaning from their immediate linguistic and situational contexts. Thus the meaning of an utterance is generated in a conjunction of its linguistic elements and its intonation. Bolinger distin-

² It should be added that I will consider only ethnic language and only in such usages when no operation leading to a critique of language or communication has been performed on it. This aspect of language in contemporary drama is discussed in Sinko (1977).

guishes four types of texts differing in the degree of lexicalization (or "grammaticization") of the information they carry.

1. A rather highly grammaticized layer, including accents (syllabic prominence *per se*), terminals (rise, fall), and levels (parentheses, paragraphs and other discourse divisions).

2. A partially grammaticized layer, covering the behavior of accented syllables in relation to reference points (which may include other accents). This is the layer of "controlled" affective meanings: the speaker conveys his attitudes and along with them the information that they are part of his message.

3. An ostensibly ungrammaticized layer, that of the behavior of unaccented syllables. Here are the "uncontrolled" affective meanings: the speaker conveys his attitudes and along with them the information that they override his message. But this of course is a message too... .

4. A genuinely ungrammaticized layer, that of levels dictated by emotion: wide or narrow range, extra-high pitch, etc.

(Bolinger 1972 : 137)

As can be seen, the layers are arranged in the order of increasing informative importance of supralinguistic elements included in the message. Teresa Dobrzyńska (1968:183) calls the phonic component "inscribed" into the text and communicating the speaker's intent a "pragmatic operator bound to intonation". It seems to be one of the major modern devices for increasing the informative power of dramatic language. It satisfies both the demand for dramatic economy and the necessity to overstructure language.

Dobrzyńska distinguishes two techniques of expressing emotion in drama: "A. The first of these consists in producing a separate phonic element and removing it outside the text. B. The second technique of manifesting emotions by the speaker consists in imposing upon the text a definite phonic segment" (Dobrzyńska 1968:183). In both cases intonation is semantically active. The transformation introducing this operator delexicalizes certain elements of the base (fully lexicalized) sentence and shifts them to the suprasegmental level. There their meaning is expressed by intonation, non-systemic accent, non-grammatical pause, shift of sentence stress, pace, etc. This transformation is capable of operating simultaneously on several sentences. It produces the "separate phonic segment". Such a "paralexical phenomenon", as Pszczołowska (1969:139) calls it, is the material base for an intonational contour signalling the emotional meaning of the utterance. An item with such characteristics may be called a "phonic gesture".

The technique of imposing intonational contours upon utterances merits more attention. Some literary scholars (cf. Wóycicki 1960) claim that punctuation marks indicate the shape of intonational contours, but their opinions are tentative and based on uses of punctuation marks in literary texts only. Recent evidence supplied by the phoneticians' transcripts of live utterances

support such opinions and indicate that since punctuation marks indicate the shape of intonation contours, stress boundaries of a tone unit, pace, and other phonic features, they are indeed notation signs of an utterance's intonational scheme. Thus an utterance's prosodic and intonational features may be inscribed into a text by means of punctuation marks.

But the "rhetorical" or "declamatory" (cf. Degler 1967) use of punctuation marks is only one of the techniques of raising the language to the plane of speech. A full set of "graphic indicators" (Degler 1967:64) includes also: a) different types of print, and b) segmentation plus linear arrangement of the text.

An analysis of dramatic texts for their graphic indicators of intonation is difficult and not always feasible because to get valid results one needs a text free of editorial intervention and an assurance that all the graphic markers were put in the text by the author himself consciously and purposefully.³ Several plays by Thornton Wilder fulfill these requirements and have been used as sources of examples.

The key to Wilder's technique of play-writing is *The skin of our teeth* (1942). This mature play presents the whole range of Wilder's graphic markers. Later he introduced this system of notation into the rewritten text of *Our town* (1938) — the most valuable source for this kind of analysis, *The merchant of Yonkers* (1938) and a number of his short plays. A comparative analysis of the texts reveals that all three types of graphic indicators are editorially free. They are used systematically and consistently, which seems a sufficient guard against "intentional fallacy" when Wilder's intentions in his use of punctuation are judged on internal evidence only.

Wilder's stylistically marked employment of punctuation marks results in their somewhat unusual usage. For example, he uses hyphens in the sentence pre-initial position:

So — people a thousand years from now — this is the way we were in the provinces north of New York at the beginning of the twentieth century. — This is the way we were: ... (Wilder 1957 : 32).

A hyphen in such a position replaces the normal on-glide intonation characteristic of precontours with an extra-long pause and a higher starting point for the contour's head. The change from a down-glide to a level tone in a phrase or a sentence conclusion Wilder marks by adding three dots.

No, not yet... Frank, I'm worried about you (Wilder 1957 : 40).

And they've asked a friend of mine what they should put in the cornerstone for people to dig up... a thousand years from now... (Wilder 1957: 32).

Here the semantic effect is that of hesitation or loss of finality. Coupled with

³ For this assumption see Wóycicki (1960 : 35) and Dogler (1967 : 61—72).

an accumulation of long vowels and extended over a polysentence text it produces the effect of musing.

As intonation shaping devices Wilder frequently uses also groups of two different punctuation marks. In such cases the projected contours and their semantic values become more complex. In this way, for example, Wilder uses combinations of a comma (or a period) and a hyphen. The phrase or sentence that follows it gains thus the appearance of an afterthought or an explanation.

I've arranged his clothes and seen to it that he's put warm things on, — Frank! they are too young! (Wilder 1957: 51)

We're more civilized now, — so they say (Wilder 1957: 73).

I was afraid we'd run out and eat our meals in silence, that's a fact. — Well, you and I been conversing for twenty years without any noticeable barren spells (Wilder 1957: 53).

Generally, then, the declamatory use of punctuation turns a semantically neutral suprasegmental into a semantically marked one. The phonic component thus introduced into the lines not only indicates the appropriate intonation but is also a method of stylizing the literary language as spoken ethnic language.

Wilder, like many other playwrights, uses also italics and capitals. A single word italicized is the word to which the sentence stress has been shifted. A whole phrase or sentence in italics indicates rising and narrowing of pitch for the whole contour. A word printed in capitals demands enunciation with pitch rise to "high", level tone and a relatively great volume of voice. When the "scream quality" thus marked extends over the whole contour, the whole sentence or phrase is in capitals. This practice is so common that examples seem unnecessary.

Wilder's third method of shaping the phonic organization of his plays is less common and demands some attention. It is his use of segmentation and linear arrangement. A characteristic "beginning" and "ending" intonation as well as a uniform pace and emotional tone for what is in between is a feature common to each segment resulting from any of his several systems of segmentation. Following K. Stanislavski, J. G. Barry (1970) calls such segments "beats".

Drama... seems to move toward its purpose in changing directions and at various speeds. When the purpose is changed, a beat is said to have closed. The analytic unit of drama called a "beat" is thus very well like a paragraph in prose, and can be divided as arbitrarily in some cases (Barry 1970: 82—3).

Further on Barry makes his meaning more precise by saying that a change in the direction of a "vector of purpose" in the action of even a single character participating in a scene marks the end of one beat and the beginning of another. From this it follows that changes of vectors of purpose can result in several beats even if only one character participates in a scene.

Wilder seems to be fond of "paragraphing" some of the longer lines. In print the beginning of each such paragraph is indented. On the level of meaning, it is accompanied by a change of register or style, often connected with a change of topic and purpose which unify the paragraphs. Good examples of such "paragraphed" speeches are the Stage Manager's speeches introducing the acts in *Our town*, in *The skin* — the Announcer's introductory comments, Sabina's speech following it, and many others. In the Stage Manager's "cornerstone speech" (Wilder 1957:32), for example, each new paragraph introduces a new purpose and pace. The paragraphs' changing objectives change the style from a friendly chat to bragging, to a musing digression, to a communication of a resolve, and finally to a direct address to an audience "a thousand years from now". Very often the transition from one paragraph to another is additionally signalled by apostrophic introductory sentences, a conversational introductory word, or a "metatextual" remark from the Stage Manager.

"I think this is a good time to tell you

"Y'know,

"See what I mean?"

(Wilder 1957: 31-2)

It slows down the play's pace, and, especially in *Our town*, corroborates with the other elements of the play in creating the atmosphere of musing over the irrevocably lost past.

Another interesting characteristic of these paragraphs is that in the intonationally and semantically privileged positions of paragraph beginnings and endings Wilder placed these statements which he wanted to reach the audience full force. The pauses following the statements provide the time necessary for the ideas to sink into the audience's "collective mind". Wilder's dissatisfaction with people missing the importance of these statements (Wilder 1957:xii) confirms this observation. But primarily, Wilder's paragraphing varies the lines' "speech melodies" by adding a juncture signalling intonations and thus superimposing several intonational schemata. In short paragraphs the discourse ending intonation is often dropped and the paragraphs are followed by an extra-long pause. The pause suggests unspoken thoughts presumably filling the Stage Manager's mind.

A comparison of *Our town* or *The skin* with *The matchmaker* lends further support to the observations presented. An inventory of graphic markers from *The matchmaker* differs from a similar inventory made for the two other plays. Significantly missing are the graphic indicators of an abrupt tone change or slowing down of speech pace. The "change of tone" indicators are rendered superfluous by the stronger situational contexts capable of determining the speeches' tone by themselves. The disappearance of many interphrasal commas, so common in the serious plays, results not only in speeding up the enunciation but also in joining simple intonational contours into complex ones. More

numerous are also sentences with syntactic structures demanding complex intonational contours. Generally, it seems that while in his serious plays Wilder used mainly simple contours, the phonic stratum of *The matchmaker* is dominated by complex contours. The subdivision of longer lines disappeared also. The several speeches comparable in length to the Stage Manager's or Sabina's are written as single continuous utterances. Not only are they unified by a single topic but, unlike the speeches in *Our town*, they also are free of internal fluctuations of styles of address (cf. apostrophe, description, narration, digression, etc. in the "cornerstone speech"). Additional are the exigencies of the generic form: comedy does not tolerate the slow pace that Wilder's paragraphing entails. Slow pace, appropriate for *Our town*, killed Reinhardt's 1938 production of *The merchant*.⁴

In this context Wilder's use of the New Hampshire idiom has to be mentioned, too. Maria Prussak (1974:191) says that "a text containing elements of a style characterized by constant intonational canons refers (the reader — AC) to these patterns". On her scale of technical solutions of inscribing she rates such texts very high. A non-standard spelling is as important factor in shaping the text's phonic stratum because any departure from a standard written language ("misspellings", characteristic contractions and reductions, etc.) entails a characteristic speech melody which allows the non-standard pronunciation. In drama viewed as an orchestrated sequence of sounds, "speech melody" styles contribute new speech melodies and various organizations of the suprasegmental and paralinguistic elements, thus enriching the play's phonic stratum. Similarly, dialectal stylistic (syntactic and lexical) choices demand intonations different from those normal for the literary language. Such stylistically marked lines serve also another purpose. They are used for their characterizing potential because, as Wilder says,

Since in the drama... there is no occasion for the intervening all-knowing author to instruct us as to his or her [character, AC] nature, a far greater share is given in a play to ... highly characteristic utterances... (Wilder 1970:87).

The "highly characteristic utterances" bring to life the elderly Mrs Forrest in spite of the fact that her lines are spoken by the Stage Manager, a character already endowed with his own peculiar manner of speaking. Thus Wilder's means of inscribing the phonic component into dramatic text include not only punctuation marks, various types of print and segmentation, but also lines whose style suggests characteristic contours, pitch ranges, pace, volume and other related intonational phenomena.

⁴ Such, for example, is the interpretation of the fate of the first production of this play presented by M. Goldstein in (1965).

III

Foregrounding my argument for the indispensability of stage directions in dramatic text, I have been using Pszczołowska's notion of inscribing the phonic components into dramatic texts. A second way of introducing the suprasegmental information into texts she calls "describing" (Pszczołowska 1969:140). This immediately refers us to stage directions, which are the basic means of such a "describing". This fact can be considered the first indisputable argument for the organic unity of such stage directions and lines.

Phoneticians usually discuss the meaning of intonation on the basis of utterances with marked intonational patterns. Usually these are either contracted sentences or one-syllable dialogue responses the meaning of which is carried by the intonation patterns. Gunter's (1972) examples, for instance, consist of two-line dialogues whose first lines (the stimulus) signal the situation in which the second lines (the element studied) are uttered. Each response (the lexico-syntactic unit) is followed by a statement of its meaning (its relevance) and a description of the intonation used. Gunter contends that in contexts a meaningless utterance like *Bah!* becomes meaningful and that its meaning is carried by its intonation (the complex of suprasegmental elements). This is another explanation of phonic gestures, and one which corroborates Dobrzyńska's conclusions. English, like other languages, lexicalized its most common phonic gestures; items such as *Ouch!*, *Whew*, *Oh*, *Wow*, etc. In texts their meaning is never dubious: it is the meaning of the intonation pattern that the sound sequence commands.

The problem is more complex when neither the situation nor the graphic markers are clear enough indicators of the intonation. This is frequent with utterances opening a new beat. A change of purport, and possibly a change of dramatic situation, may demand an unexpected shift in the organization of suprasegmentals. In such cases descriptions of intonation are mandatory. They appear either as statements of the lines' relevance or purport — "To cut it off" (Albee 1971:64), the utterance's aural and emotional qualities — "Weary sigh", or its attitudinal value — "Ironic" (Albee 1971:63). This makes them very similar to the phoneticians' descriptions of the meaning of contours in their examples. Playwrights' descriptions are only terser and command the reader to supply the stated suprasegmental characteristics of the utterance himself. In dramatic texts such descriptions are called "stage directions".

At a first glance stage directions seem to fall into three categories: (1) these pertaining to the play's phonic stratum, (2) these dealing with the dynamic aspects of the spectacle, and (3) character descriptions. But an analysis of stage directions from modern plays (and there they are most common) indicates that always, more or less directly, they describe the lines' meaning. Some of them describe precisely the intonational and aural properties of lines. Such stage

directions must be considered an integral part of lines. This is true also of stage directions elucidating the meaning of an otherwise undefined demonstrative pronoun or identifying the addressee of an utterance. Neither of these kinds of stage directions can be said to be redundant because their information eliminates misunderstandings.

The same applies to stage directions substituting for utterances. Such stage directions describe the semantic value and the type of phonic unit not transcribed (although not necessarily untranscribable). James Schevill's stage direction in *The space fan* reading: (Melinda) "Lets out a cheer" (1966:16) indicates that stage directions substituting for phonic segments may easily be transcribed. Moments of silence or unexpected pauses are also features of characters' behavior and are as revealing as utterances. In modern dramas using the poetics of indirection, in Barrault's or Chekhov's plays for example, silence becomes often more important than words themselves. In such plays silence often marks high points of dramatic intensity. Hence their importance and participation in the linguistic stratum of the play.

Speech pauses, junctures within one continuous utterance or pauses belonging to the prosodic properties of lines need no other markers than graphic indicators. But any deviation from the standard, a lengthening or a shortening, since it influences the phonic contour of the utterance, must be additionally marked. This applies also to a dialogue situation when one of the interlocutors fails to speak. Such a pause is either marked directly in the lines or a "silent line" (although extremely rare) may do this duty. A number of such "lines" may be found in J. Cocteau's *La voix humaine* (1930).

Stage directions are the only way to inform the reader about any non-linguistic but dramatically meaningful sounds. Since very often they co-occur with a speech or a gesture, they either simply enrich, variously for the characters and the audience, the repertory of acoustic signals, or additionally introduce a leitmotif, underscore a scene or even the whole dramatic narrative. (This makes them a means of authorial interpretative intervention into dramatic representation.) Such sounds as "A low, soft, gurgling sound" or "A touch of Spanish music heard through the space sounds" (Schevill 1966:22) perform all these functions and, as untranscribable, can be signalled only through stage directions. An end of such a sequence, if not witnessed directly in the lines, has to be indicated in stage directions. Schevill stops this "gurgling sound" with "The sound stops abruptly" (1966:22).

Although in drama language and sound in general are of first importance, elements of "spectacle" follow close behind. Stage directions dealing with this aspect of the play are, for theatricalists, most liable to redundancy. But are they really?

To simplify the matters a little, let's assume that all information on a play's spectacle aspect is given in stage directions. Language and spectacle

would then be two "pure", independent channels of dramatic communication (Balcerzan and Osiński 1974). With positive correspondence, when the visual signals reinforce our inferences based on aural perception, the information given by stage directions may enrich our understanding of the dramatic action to a small degree only. In converse degree such stage directions could be said to be redundant. But only to a degree: after all, the information that somebody does what he says he is doing is also a valid information. True redundancy, even here, is extremely rare and most often can be found in overwritten apprentice plays. Schevill's *The space fan* or Wilder's 1938 version of *Our town* seem fair examples. The 1957 version prunnings eliminated all the stage directions Wilder considered redundant, which improved the quality of the text changing the play not a whit.

But when words contradict what dramatic action shows, then they stand in relation of negative correspondence. Since the meaning of a situation so constructed rests on this collision, the reader has to be informed about it. This task is normally delegated to stage directions. Since their information is essential, again there can be no question of redundancy.

In presentational drama the situation of stage directions is still more complex. In some of Wilder's plays, like in those by Dürrenmatt, Artaud or Cocteau, stage props become physically active actors. In such a play, a character's behavior and the meaning of the whole play is clear only if the reader is fully informed. And that includes information on how the props "behave". The same is true when pantomime renders the play's spectacle partially independent of its "spoken action". In *Our town* pantomime acts described in stage directions are absolutely essential to the play: they reveal the mimicking person's social role and the character thus employed acquires symbolic dimensions. Thus Wilder uses pantomime as a characterizing and augmenting device. Used in this way, pantomime supplements and replaces spoken action. Consequently, the stage directions pertaining to pantomime or the "behavior" of props are again non-redundant.

Authorial descriptions constitute a third group of stage directions. This makes them superficially resemble "novelistic intrusions". Stage directions in this group are of two kinds: these describing the character and these describing the dramatic place. Character descriptions establish "folk psychology"-based preconceptions about characters. Folk psychology holds, for example, that appearance reveals the mind, and actions — a man's true self. This way it justifies conjectures about, let's say, a character's manner of speaking on the basis of his behavior or appearance. Peter Luke's opening of *Hadrian VII* (1970) with a description of Baron Corvo's habits is a textbook example of folk psychology in operation. This is not to say that character descriptions do not fa-

cilitate visualizations. But I would argue that satisfying the reader's appetite for visualization is not the primary function such stage directions perform.

The same applies to descriptions of the dramatic place. In modern plays, not unlike in Dickens' novels, the place reflects the nature of the focal character or dramatic action. Although stage directions describing characters or locales are less common and probably less important than the ones dealing with the lines, the information they provide is also relevant and cannot be passed by lightly.

One more remark has to be made. All stage directions are "objective" in the sense that they provide only the information accessible to direct observation. No information on the inner workings of psyches is given. They seem to be given from the audience's point of view and not from the playwright's. Even stage directions reading "Surprised, and grudging a point" (Albee 1971:91) refer, I would contend, not so much to a character's inner state as to his observable behavior and the suprasegmental features of his utterances. The fundamental difference between authorial comments in the novel and stage directions is that the information of novelistic comments is already processed for its significance: it is formulated and handed to the reader piecemeal, while a playwright never interprets the spectacle for the reader. The reader himself has to infer the significance of the dramatic actions.

Earlier I have said that stage directions differ from the lines because the lines are texts projected to the level of spoken language while stage directions are texts written in the stylistic variant of literary language called "written language". However, there are plays in which the feature of voice is inscribed into stage directions also. Theatricalists would consider such a play a closet drama and unstageable. I would suggest, however, that the shift from "written language" to "speech" in stage directions results from a surreptitious introduction of a character not announced in *dramatis personae*: that a fictional author or animator of the presentation has been introduced. It is *his* voice that is heard in the stage directions. In *Our town* Wilder personalizes the speaker of the stage directions in the figures of the Stage Manager. The Radio Announcer in D. Thomas' *Under the milkwood* is a similar character. Terrence McNally's *And the things that go bump in the night* (1966) is a good example of a play in which the author indulges in self-presentation by lending his personal voice to stage directions. In spite of such "violations" of the character of stage directions, all the plays have had highly successful productions. Cases like these do not invalidate the remarks on the nature of drama made here, but rather indicate the complexity of the problem.

It seems that the evidence culled from different sources and presented here makes a very strong case for stage directions and their undeniable place in the plays. Any further argument *contra* theatricalists that a play is everything, only and exactly what is in the text of the play, would be superfluous.

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