4.1.2. Dimensions of deviation

Dramatic speech also deviates from ordinary speech in its employment of an aesthetically functionalised language. Its deviatory character is revealed in the way it violates the norms of the linguistic primary codes (by the use of innovative word formations or archaisms, for example) and in the introduction of other structural features (such as rhetorical stylisation or metre). Thus, the language of the French classical tragedy is very different to ordinary language – and not only because of the use of metre. Distance from everyday speech is also a prominent feature of the modern verse-dramas of T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry. At the same time, however, this distance can be reduced to the point of assimilation – which is the case in naturalist theatre, in the contemporary English 'kitchen-sink' dramas and the German neo-naturalism of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Franz Xaver Kroetz. But even when playwrights come as close as they possibly can to a faithful reproduction of ordinary speech, there is always an element of deviation – if only in the fact that in reproducing it they expose and clarify its characteristic stylistic features. In the plays of Kroetz, this technique of verbal reduction becomes a stylistic principle in itself which is employed to demonstrate the close link between the restricted verbal codes of his figures and their restricted awareness:

> MARY: It's all over if ya gotta drag everythin' through the dirt.
> KARL: Nothin's over.
> MARY: You're taking advantage cause ya have me. Ya take it out on me cause ya don't like me no more, cause ya can't find another.
> KARL: Cause I'm fed up with ya.
> MARY: Don't think I don't know it. Don't think I'm stupid.
> KARL: Ya'd talk different if ya knew the way ya looked.
> MARY: Ain't got no mirror.
> KARL: Go buy yaself one.
> MARY: Ain't got no money.
> KARL: Then I'll buy ya one.[3]

In addition to the historically and typologically extremely diverse ways that dramatic speech might deviate from ordinary speech, there is a second dimension that is concerned with the deviations from the established conventions of dramatic language. If the first dimension of deviation can be defined in terms of the synchronic juxtaposition of dramatic and ordinary speech, the second may be defined within the diachronic coordination of conventions governing stage language. To clarify what we mean we can return to the above-mentioned examples. In resurrecting the poetic ornamentation of the Elizabethan verse-drama and transposing the stylistic practices of modern poetry on to drama, Fry's verse-dramas represent a conscious and radical departure from the pointed arguments

and witty prose of the earlier problem plays by G. B. Shaw and John Galsworthy and the West End comedies by the likes of Noël Coward and Terence Rattigan. Following in the anti-idealist tradition of Marieluise Fleisser and Ödön von Horváth, Kroetz's dramatic language is directed against the norms and elaborate codes of a dramatic language which is orientated towards the codes of the ruling classes. Dramatic speech is thus always located in the area of tension that occurs between at least two dimensions of deviation, as a result of which a reduction of the level of deviation from ordinary language is often in inverse proportion to the level of deviation from the established conventions of dramatic language, and vice versa.

4.2. The polyfunctionality of dramatic language

4.2.1. Polyfunctionality

A dramatic utterance always fulfils several functions in the internal communication system simultaneously, though one of these may dominate over the others.[4] We can illustrate this by taking one sentence from the dialogue from Kroetz's play *Michi's Blood* that was quoted in the previous section:

> KARL: Ya'd talk different if ya knew the way ya looked.

The dominant feature here is the appellative function directed at the partner: Karl wishes to influence Mary; he hopes to make her reconsider and revise her relationship with him. At the same time, however, this speech also has an expressive function: Karl's character is reflected in his use of language; his language characterises him. This expressive self-characterisation is in part intentional (he wishes to appear as the superior partner who does not actually need to be with the unattractive Mary), but it is also in part involuntary and unintentional (his verbal usage exposes him as a member of a lower social class and as a man of limited intelligence and brutal tendencies). Finally, this speech also fulfils a referential function: Karl presents his interpretation of the relationship between himself and Mary and portrays her as an unattractive woman.[5]

Unfortunately, the three functions discussed in this first paragraph do not do justice to the complexity of language. In order to achieve a more sophisticated framework for analysis we should therefore like to return to Roman Jakobson's model of verbal communication that we introduced and applied in our analysis of the relations that take place in the external communication system (see above, 2.4.2.). Each of the positions in his communication model – sender, receiver, content, message, channel and code – corresponds to a communicative function. The emotive or express-

ive function associated with presenting one's own position to the object is linked with the sender and the 'conative' (or appellative) function that is used to exert influence is linked to the receiver. The referential function used to present a speech object is associated with the speech content, whilst the poetic function that refers back reflexively to the specific essence and structure of the sign is linked with the message – as the verbal supersign. The phatic function employed to create and maintain the communicative contact is associated with the channel and, finally, the metalingual function used to focus on the code to make the audience aware of it is linked to the code itself.

These categories will become clearer and more definite when we actually apply them to the analysis of dramatic speech. Of course, at the same time it must be remembered that these functions operate in both the internal and external communication systems. The hierarchical structure of the functions within the internal communication system and the relationships between them that apply to each individual utterance do not normally coincide with those that apply to the same speech within the external communication system. Important functional discrepancies do actually occur. In Macbeth's letter to his wife (I, v), for example, the referential function predominates in the internal communication system as a result of Macbeth's overriding concern to inform his wife of the witches' prophecy and the impending visit of the king. Because they are already well aware of all this, however, the spectators are primarily concerned with the appellative function directed at Lady Macbeth as the receiver, in so far as they are interested above all in seeing how she will receive and react to the news.

4.2.2. Referential function

The referential function dominates strongly in the conventional forms of dramatic report such as the expository narrative (see above, 3.7.2.), the messenger's report (see above, 3.6.2.3.) and teichoscopy (see below, 6.2.2.2.). These particular elements of the plot are presented in the purely verbal form of the narrative which, for economical or technical reasons, cannot be enacted directly on stage.

If this kind of narrative report is only given a referential function in the external communication system because the information it conveys is redundant in the face of the addressee's existing level of awareness in the internal communication system, then the result will be a tendency to produce epic communication structures. Even if the reporting figure does not go so far as to step outside his role or address the audience directly and explicitly, the receiver will still regard himself as the primary addressee in view of the absence of a referential function for the report in the internal communication system.

The dramas of both classicism and naturalism avoided such epic tendencies. In these plays, the referential function of spoken reports is not redundant in either the internal or the external communication systems. We can demonstrate this by quoting the report of Max Piccolomini's heroic death delivered by the Swedish captain in Schiller's *Wallenstein's Death* (IV, x):

We lay, not thinking we should be attacked,
In camp at Neustadt, with but slight defences,
3020 When towards evening there arose a cloud
Of dust towards the woods, our vanguard rushed
Into the camp and cried, The enemy!
We scarcely had the time to leap into
The saddle, when the Pappenheimers came
3025 Full gallop through the outworks in their charge,
And soon across the ditch as well, that ran
Around the camp, they sprang in hostile frenzy.
But reckless bravery had led them on
Before their comrades, far behind them marched
3030 The infantry, only Pappenheims had dared
To follow boldly where their bold commander led. –
. . .
Ahead and on the flanks we now attacked
Them with the force of all our cavalry,
3035 And drove them back into the ditch, wherein
Their swiftly-mustered ranks our infantry
Presented them a bristling wall of pikes.
Now neither forwards could they move, nor back,
Hemmed right between us in a fearful press.
3040 The Rhinegrave called out to their leader then
To yield himself in honourable surrender,
But Colonel Piccolomini –
                              . . . we knew
Him by his helmet's crest and flowing hair,
3045 All loosened by the swiftness of his charge –
Points to the ditch, and sets, the first of all,
His noble steed to leap it, after him
The regiment – but ah! it was too late!
His mount, pierced by a halberd, rears itself
3050 In pain and fury hurls its rider down,
And over him goes thundering the charge
Of horses, heedless now of rein or bridle.
. . .
But then, when they had seen their leader fall,
3055 The troops were seized with a despairing rage,
Now no man thinks of how he may be saved,
Like savage tigers now they fight, their fierce

Resistance spurs our side to the attack,
And on the struggle goes, and will not end,
3060 Until the last of them has met his death.

Both Thekla, the addressee of the report in the internal communication system, and the audience have known since Act IV, Scene v that Max has been killed in the battle against the Swedes, but neither Thekla nor the audience is aware of the actual circumstances of his death. They are first communicated in this messenger's report. In this case, then, the predominance of the referential function is guaranteed by the fact that the speaker, in accordance with the conventions of the messenger's report, only appears in this particular scene and thus can have no pretensions in the direction of arousing interest in himself as a dramatic figure. He also scarcely even attempts to present himself in any expressive function. Hence the complete absence of personal pronoun in the first person singular. Instead, he submerges his own individuality into the collective 'we' and remains in the background, both as a narrative medium and as a participant in the action he relates. In his report he does not try to emphasise the appellative function and speak to the addressee directly, but restricts himself to presenting the most vivid account possible of what happened. To illustrate the events, the speaker employs a number of deictic references to time and space, ensures that all details serve the context of the events being related, structures the narrative in a particular rhythmic and syntactic way so as to reinforce mimetically the hectic nature of the events, and recalls past events with a vigour that culminates in the change in tense from preterite to historic present (lines 3046ff. and lines 3056ff.).

Although the referential function predominates in the captain's report it is by no means the only one. For the vivid style of the report is not just intended to make it as lively and precise as possible, but also to stimulate the interest of the listeners in both the internal and external communication systems and to maintain communicative contact between speakers and listeners. Admittedly, this phatic function is more important in the external communication system than it is in the internal, because Thekla, as Max's fiancée, would presumably follow the story of his tragic end with total involvement whatever its outer form might be. The degree of her commitment to her beloved, which the captain had been aware of since her fainting fit on first hearing the news of his death (IV, v and ix), also explains the appellative function of the report: the captain wishes to spare the bereaved more grief than is absolutely necessary and, in the introductory dialogue, declares himself unwilling to talk about the painful events at all. Later on, he expresses the wish to break off his report – in a brief dialogical exchange between lines 3052 and 3053 – and strives to

console Thekla by emphasising Max's heroic behaviour. Thekla's mimetic and gestural reactions to the report – signalised in the secondary text after lines 3031 and 3042 – are the correlative of this appellative function. The captain's tactful and protective behaviour demonstrates that he, too, has an expressive function after all. He is not an entirely neutral narrative medium and is characterised implicitly by the style and manner of his report.

Finally, the captain's report also has a poetic function – though only in the external communication system. The aesthetic structure of the speech – the metre and rhythm, the pattern of repeated vowels and consonants, the rhetorical figures (such as the polyptoton in line 3031) and the above-mentioned techniques of illustration and recall etc. – means that the verbal supersign is relieved of its automatic connection to what is being described and draws attention to itself in reflexive self-reference. This poetic function is also associated with Schiller's desire to locate this report in the historical tradition of dramatic messengers' reports and his hope that the audience would recognise it as a particularly complex example.

Thus, we have seen that even a dramatic speech in which the referential function predominates can fulfil other functions. Conversely, it is of course also true that the referential function is a feature not only of reports, but also of every dramatic speech. Thus, in our analysis of the functions of dramatic speech we must always remind ourselves of the already postulated axiom of its polyfunctionality and of the need to describe both the ways the various functions might dominate and the hierarchical correlations linking them.

4.2.3. Expressive function

The expressive function of an utterance relates back to the speaker of a speech and is always of great importance, especially within the external communication system, since the technique of bringing a figure to life by the choice of what he or she talks about, his or her verbal behaviour and style are some of the most important characterisation techniques in drama (see below, 4.4.2. and 5.4.2.3.). An utterance has an expressive function in the external communication system even when the speaker's primary intention is to describe a state of affairs, persuade the dialogue partner to do something or to establish communicative contact. Ben Jonson's emphasis on the close connection between speaker and utterance is thus especially true of dramatic speech:

Language most shows a man: speak that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's form, or likeness, so true as his speech.[6]

On the other hand, as a conscious feature intended by the speaker, the expressive function does not have any permanent role. It may be found in a particularly pure, and therefore dominant, form in abrupt exclamations – as, for example, in the following exchange between Franz and Weislingen in Act V of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*:

> FRANZ (beside himself): Poison! Poison! From your wife! – I! I! (He rushes off)
> WEISLINGEN: Marie, go after him. He is desperate. (Marie exits) Poison from my own wife! God! God! I feel it. Martyrdom and death![7]

The elliptically abbreviated form of Franz's exclamations still have the important referential function of informing his master that he has been seduced by Adelheid into poisoning him. At the same time, however, their repetition (known in rhetorical terms as *geminatio*) does no more than refer back to the speaker and his condition of extreme excitement. This also applies to Weislingen's exclamations, which merely express his reactions to the events rather than any intention of informing or influencing the other figures.

Another form of dramatic speech in which the expressive function frequently occurs in isolated and dominant form is the soliloquy of reflection and deliberation. Without going into the particular problems of monological speech here (see below, 4.5.), it should be noted that the predominance of the expressive function results from the speaker's desire to articulate his own self-awareness as a way of clarifying his own position to himself, of justifying his actions or reaching a decision. This applies to the following remarks by Macbeth in one of his numerous soliloquies, for example:

> I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
> The time has been my senses would have cool'd
> To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
> As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors;
> Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
> Cannot once start me.   (V, v, 9–15)

This speech scarcely refers to any specific situation outside the consciousness of the speaker, and the large number of pronouns in the first person singular clearly demonstrates that in these attempts at self-articulation, the speaker is not only the subject but also the object of his speech. The monological speech situation also hinders the growth of a referential or appellative function.[8]

4.2.4. Appellative function

Conversely, it is true that of all these functions it is the appellative function in particular that is dependent on dialogue and the importance of this function increases in proportion to the degree the dialogue partner is involved (see below, 4.5.1. and 4.6.). The more the speaker tries to influence or change the mind of the dialogue partner and the more he or she reacts to the latter's reservations and objections, the stronger the appellative function will be. One special form of exerting influence or persuasion is the imperative, or command, which of course assumes the existence of a certain relationship of authority and dependency in the dialogue partners. In the types of dramatic speech in which the appellative function predominates, the general nature of dramatic speech as verbal action (see above, 1.2.5.) becomes especially evident: acts of persuasion and imperatives represent speech acts which, independently of whether the attempt to persuade is successful or not, or whether the imperative is carried out or not, actually alter the dramatic situation (see below, 4.3.). It is therefore not surprising that a predominant appellative function is particularly common in dramatic speech and that dialogues in which one partner attempts to persuade or win over the other have been virtually obligatory components of plays over long periods in the history of drama.

Dialogues with a predominantly appellative function are often used to mark dramatic climaxes with a high level of suspense. An example of this is the dialogue between Odoardo and Emilia in Lessing's play *Emilia Galotti* (V, vii). Emilia sees suicide as the only solution to her tragic dilemma and attempts to persuade her father to hand over the very same dagger with which he had just intended to kill Gonzaga and Marinelli:

> EMILIA: In heaven's name, no, father! This life is all the wicked have. No, father, give me, give me that dagger.
> ODOARDO: Child, it is not a hairpin.
> EMILIA: Then a hairpin will serve for a dagger! It does not matter.
> ODOARDO: What? Is that what we have come to? No, no! Remember: for you too there is nothing more precious than life.
> EMILIA: Not even innocence?
> ODOARDO: That can resist any tyrant.
> EMILIA: But not every seducer. Tyranny! Tyranny! Who cannot stand up to tyranny? What men call tyranny is nothing; the seducer is the true tyrant. I have blood in my veins too, father, warm young blood like any other girl. My senses are senses too. I cannot promise anything; I cannot vouch for myself . . . Give it to me, father, give me that dagger.
> ODOARDO: And if you knew what it was like, this dagger!
> EMILIA: And even if I do not know! A friend unknown is still a friend. Give it to me, father, give it to me.

ODOARDO: What then if I give it to you – there! (Gives it to her)
EMILIA: And there! (She is about to stab herself but her father snatches it from her hand again)
ODOARDO: See, how quick! No, that is not for your hand.
EMILIA: Then it is true, I must take a hairpin if I – (She puts her hand to her hair to find one, and takes hold of the rose) You, still here? Off with you! You do not belong in the hair of a – what my father wants me to become!
ODOARDO: Oh my daughter!
EMILIA: Oh my father, if I could only read what is in your mind! But no, it cannot be that either, or why did you hesitate? ... Long ago I believe it cannot be that either, or why did you hesitate? ... Long ago I believe there was a father who, to save his daughter from shame, took steel, the first that came to hand, and plunged it into her heart – gave her life a second time. But all such deeds are deeds of long ago. There is no such father in the world today!
ODOARDO: There is, my daughter, there is! (Stabbing her)[9]

The predominance of the appellative function in Emilia's speeches is shown by the double repetition of her appeals to her father to give her the dagger, and the intensity of her appeals is increased by the use of rhetorical figures. The constant repetition of direct forms of address – 'my daughter', 'my father' etc. – and the brevity of the individual speeches also serve to intensify the references to the dialogue partner, and thus the appellative function. Emilia repeatedly introduces new arguments in her attempt to change her father's mind and there is, in fact, not a single speech – and not even a single section of her speeches – that is not subordinate to the overall appellative function, either in the form of a demand or arguments in support of that demand. Thus, she claims that denying her the dagger would not prevent her from committing suicide since other weapons would be available to her, that to die counts for little in comparison to the loss of her innocence, that her innocence is powerless when confronted with the force of seduction, that the dagger, whoever gives it to her, is the gift of a friend, that a father who denies her her death in such circumstances disgraces himself morally since he is thus condoning the loss of her innocence. Finally, the argument that ultimately convinces her father is her reference to the story of Virginius and Virginia as an example of a heroic father-ethos. She does not develop this chain of arguments independently, however, but rather by constantly responding to the objections and counter-arguments of her dialogue partner, as her repeated references to individual words, phrases and sentences from her father's speeches clearly indicate.

Although the appellative function has been shown to be probably the most important one in the internal communication system of dramatic texts, this is generally not at all true in the external communication system. In comparison with expository or narrative texts, the appellative function

of dramatic texts that is directed at the receiver generally seems to be much less pervasive – didactic dramas and *drames à thèse* apart, of course. It is significant, however, that the direct appeals to the audience inherent in these last two categories frequently presuppose the establishment of a mediating communication system by the introduction of epic commentator figures or figures that are supposed to act as a kind of authorial mouthpiece. This aspect cannot in any way be generalised into a constant feature of the genre and the appellative attitude towards the audience has been manifested historically and typologically in a number of extremely diverse ways. These range from the dramaturgical theory of objectivity (such as naturalism) which merely strives to communicate plain facts to the audience without indulging in direct appeals to a dramaturgy of partisan commitment, whose appeal is ideologically unambiguous, and from texts designed to satisfy the receiver's desire to be amused to those that confront him with ethical questions.

4.2.5. Phatic function

Unlike its appellative counterpart, the phatic function, which is associated with the channel between speaker and listener and is designed to create and maintain the contact between them, is of greater relevance to the external communication system. By 'channel' and 'contact' we do not just mean the purely physical link which enables the dramatist to convey information from sender to receiver; we are also referring to the psychological willingness of both parties to communicate with each other. Thus, the phatic function is served in the external system by such diverse factors as the spatial lay-out of stage and auditorium so as to guarantee the best possible acoustics and visibility (see above, 2.2.1.), the title and the use of advertising to arouse interest, and, finally, the receiver's involvement in the play as a result of either the structures of suspense, the use of epic communication structures and the possibilities for identification with one or more of the figures in the text itself.

On the internal level, the phatic function helps create and intensify the dialogical contact between the various figures. Thus, some of the phenomena that we have already included in the appellative function also function phatically. Examples of this are occasions when the dialogue partner is addressed by the speaker in order to ensure that communicative contact will occur or when he reacts to the former's utterances, thus confirming the communicative contact. However, the phatic function becomes especially important when, in the wake of disrupted communication, contact first has to be established, or when 'maintaining contact' becomes the predominant or even the sole concern of dialogical communication. This last characteristic is particularly common in modern

plays, in so far as they frequently portray the increasingly problematic nature of human communication and the attempt – and failure – to break out of a sense of solipsist isolation and alienation by entering into a dialogical relationship. Thus, the dialogues in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* seldom reveal any intention on the part of the two tramps to discuss their own characters in any depth, to convey information or to influence anyone. Instead, their incessant chatting often merely has the function of enabling them to stay in contact with one another and simulate a kind of communication for which, in reality, the prerequisite conditions have already been withdrawn:

> (Silence)
> VLADIMIR and ESTRAGON (turning simultaneously): Do you –
> VLADIMIR: Oh, pardon!
> ESTRAGON: Carry on.
> VLADIMIR: No no, after you.
> ESTRAGON: No no, you first.
> VLADIMIR: I interrupted you.
> ESTRAGON: On the contrary.
> (They glare at each other angrily)
> VLADIMIR: Ceremonious ape!
> ESTRAGON: Punctilious pig!
> VLADIMIR: Finish your phrase, I tell you!
> ESTRAGON: Finish your own!
> (Silence. They draw closer, halt)
> VLADIMIR: Moron.
> ESTRAGON: That's the idea, let's abuse each other.[10]

The extreme reduction of the expressive function, i.e. the almost complete absence of references in the individual utterances to an individual expressive subject, is shown here in the similarity and interchangeability of the speeches. The referential function is restricted to a discussion of the intention of saying something – though this intention is itself no more than a purported one from which everyone strives to escape; and the appellative function, which usually features strongly when insults are exchanged, has been eliminated since the two figures have no real intention of insulting each other. The insults, like the attestations of politeness, are all part of a word-game construed to pass the time. Speaking has become an end in itself, a purely phatic form of communication whose sole remaining purpose is constantly to reassure the figures that a channel of communication does actually still exist. That they are not even aware that this is itself a failing only emphasises the fact that this dialogue has been reduced to one single function.

4.2.6. Metalingual function

The metalingual function is associated with the code and, like the phatic function, is generally only present in latent form. However, situations do arise – in both ordinary speech and dramatic dialogue – in which it can step into the foreground. This always occurs whenever the verbal code used is explicitly or implicitly developed as a central theme. On the internal dramatic level, the motivation behind such attempts to draw the audience's attention to the verbal code may often stem from a disruption in the communication process – that is when communication no longer functions because of excessive discrepancies between the codes, or, more precisely, the subcodes of the individual dialogue partners, thus causing them to speak about their language in metalingual terms. These discrepancies are often conditioned sociologically, as, for example, in the following dialogue between the homeless alcoholic Loach and Ash, the former teacher, in Peter Nichols's play *The National Health* (1970):

> ASH: . . . My wife couldn't have children. . . .
> LOACH: Was it to do with her underneaths?
> ASH: I'm sorry.
> LOACH: To do with her womb, was it?
> ASH: Yes.
> LOACH: Womb trouble.
> ASH: That sort of thing, yes.[11]

Loach, inhibited by the awareness of the discrepancy between his own and Ash's linguistic registers, between his own 'restricted' and his partner's 'elaborated' code (Basil Bernstein), is obviously searching for a word referring to the lower abdominal region of a woman which would not be an insult to a more delicate taste, and he hits upon the unusual circumlocution of 'underneaths'. Ash, in turn, finds the whole subject matter of female sexuality and female sexual parts highly, if not traumatically, embarrassing. He either does not understand Loach's reference, or, more likely, pretends not to have got the point of his question: 'I'm sorry.' In a second attempt to make himself understood, Loach falls back on the standard expression 'womb' and now Ash cannot but acknowledge having got the message. His curt 'yes' is, however, at the same time a stylistically encoded signal that he does not want to pursue this matter any further and enter a discussion of the painful details of his wife's sexual anatomy. Loach, insensitive to Ash's clear signals that the communication is terminated, goes on and elaborates: 'Womb trouble.' Again, Ash does not take up Loach's expression but, as he is hoping to win over Loach's friendship and therefore does not want to emphasise the difference between their respective codes and registers, concludes the conversation with the non-committal comment, 'That sort of thing, yes.'

Although the technique of drawing attention to the verbal code in this way is particularly common in modern dramas, it is by no means entirely new, as a detailed analysis of Shakespearean dialogues would demonstrate. Furthermore, in order to foreground the metalingual function, it is not necessary to make the verbal code explicit. It suffices to refer to it implicitly, either by juxtaposing a number of contrasting codes or by emphasising one particular code that clearly deviates from the generally accepted norm, thus making the audience aware of the code in the communication process.[12]

However, metalingual references to the code, whether implicit or explicit, do not always have to be associated with disrupted communication – as the above examples might possibly suggest. On the contrary, the predominance of the metalingual function may also be motivated by a high degree of verbal virtuosity or games with the rules of the code. Word- or language-games of this sort are especially common in comedy, something to which the innumerable puns in the dialogues of Shakespeare's comedies testify.

In the external communication system the metalingual function has a bearing not only on the primary verbal code, but also on the conventions of dramatic texts as a system of secondary codes. In such cases, then, it is not the reference to language but that to drama and the theatre that allows the metalingual function to become predominant. Here, too, the references to the code can be either explicit or implicit. The most explicit way of doing this is to establish a mediating communication system, which is what happens in the Brechtian type of epic theatre (see above, 3.6.2.); however, it can also be conveyed to the audience in a more indirect form through the speeches of the figures themselves, as the following extract from Lessing's comedy *Minna von Barnhelm* (V, ix) illustrates:

> FRANZISKA: And now, madam, it's time to stop teasing the Major.
> MINNA: Stop your pleading! Don't you know that the knot will untie itself at any moment?[13]

In her use of the knot metaphor, Minna von Barnhelm is referring to the traditional notion that dramatic intrigue must first be allowed to thicken before being resolved. Her metaphorical and indirect reference to dramatic convention is then taken over by the spectators who apply it directly to the play itself. By Act V, Scene ix, he or she is entitled to expect that the knot will soon be unravelled in the form of the dénouement, in accordance with the conventions of the classical comedy of intrigue.

Finally, the devices that can be used to foreground the metalingual function implicitly in the external communication system are 1) the contrastive juxtaposition of differing conventions in a single text, as may be observed in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* in the contrast

between the play-within-the-play with its extremely primitive structure of dialogue, figures and plot, and the formally complex main play; and 2) the high degree of deviation from dramatic conventions familiar to the receiver. Thus, in the early plays of Edward Bond, for example, the receiver is constantly aware that the language used has been reduced drastically in comparison to the language of classical drama. Similarly, to an audience unschooled in literary history experiencing a play by Corneille for the first time, for example, the high level of verbal stylisation will appear as an unfamiliar and rather baffling convention and may direct the audience's attention back on to the code itself.

4.2.7. Poetic function

The poetic function is manifested in the way a message refers to itself, and thus draws the audience's attention to its structure and constituent parts. In ordinary speech, this dimension is dispelled by the fact that the message is made to refer automatically to the object. Normally, the poetic function only applies to the external communication system and not to the communication processes taking place between the various figures. Failure to recognise this situation may lead to serious misinterpretations in attempts at practical criticism. One example will serve as an illustration of such a misunderstanding. Shakespeare's *Richard II*, especially after Act III, Scene ii, contains a number of speeches by the central protagonists that are characterised by their great poetic intensity. This has led a number of notable critics such as Mark Van Doren[14] to regard King Richard himself as a poet who, in his tendency to indulge in poetic speech, neglects political action and thus fails tragically as Regent. The arguments against this interpretation are already inherent in the fact that the causes of his failure are portrayed as a series of misjudged political decisions made in the first two acts, and that his speeches do not attain their high level of poetic intensity until his fall has already been sealed. This interpretation is also undermined in principle by the fact that the poetic function of these speeches operates predominantly in the external, rather than the internal, communication system. To put it simplistically: the poetry here is Shakespeare's, not Richard's, and it is not appreciated as poetry by Richard's dialogue partners on stage but by the audience in the auditorium.[15] The fact that Richard's speeches do not essentially reach this level of intensity until Act III indicates that in view of Richard's passivity and reduced freedom to act, Shakespeare now focusses on the stream of consciousness in the mind of his hero. In addition, by giving him such a poetically charged language, Shakespeare wishes to arouse more sympathy on the part of the audience for the failed hero.[16]

Of course, it is possible to make broader generalisations on the basis of

the evidence produced by this example. Thus, the poetic function of metre in a verse-drama, for example, is only relevant to the external communication system and not to the internal system for, if the opposite were true, the figures would presumably express their astonishment at this 'unnatural' manner of speaking.[17] This does not mean, though, that there is no poetic function that can be effective on the internal level, but to achieve it would require explicit or implicit references to it in the utterances of the dramatic figures: explicit in so far as speakers or listeners describe a particular utterance as aesthetically stylised and poetic (which is repeatedly the case in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*); implict in so far as the speeches of one particular figure, in marked contrast to the others', are conspicuous for their high degree of poetic stylisation. The second of these applies, in part, to King Richard's speeches, whose imagery and euphony set them clearly apart from the prosaic sobriety of those of his opposite number, Bolingbroke. Our allocation of the poetic function of Richard's speeches to the external communication system must therefore be qualified – though not to the extent that we would agree with the exaggerated thesis that Richard and the poet are the same person (see below, 4.4.1.).

4.3. Verbal communication and action

4.3.1. The identity of speech and action

If we agree with A. Hübler's definition of action as 'the transition from one situation to another in the sense of a development, a transition which, depending on the kind of situation involved, is selected deliberately from a number of different possibilities rather than simply causally determined'[18] then it is clear that this kind of deliberate change in the dramatic situation often takes place in the utterances of one of the figures. In situations that involve giving an order, betraying a secret, uttering a threat, making a promise, persuading another figure to do something or any other similar speech act, a dramatic figure completes a spoken action which changes the situation and thus the relationships of the figures to one another intentionally.[19] Such spoken action, or actional speech, is common in dramatic texts and it clarifies that identity of speech and action that we discussed in the context of the performative aspect (see above, 1.2.5.) and the predominance of the appellative function (see above, 4.2.4.). Of course, dramatic texts also contain actions that are enacted non-verbally rather than verbally (such as embraces, stabbings or threatening gestures). But even these types of wordless behaviour are generally accompanied by verbal acts that help to plan, justify or declare the intention behind the non-verbal act.

4.3.2. The non-identity of speech and action

4.3.2.1. Speech related to action

From this, it is already clear that the distance between speech and action is likely to be variable. Complete lack of distance – that is, when they are identical – is a special case that, in dramatic texts, deviates both quantitatively and qualitatively in relevance from other kinds of texts. Although dramatic speech is always performative speech – speech as a form of action – as defined by speech-act theory, the identity of speech and of action designed to change a situation does not apply to every dramatic speech. Thus, although commentative attempts to explain or justify an action are also actions that take place in language, they are nevertheless definitely not identical to the action commentated on itself, which is supposed to alter the dramatic situation. This kind of commentative speech is a form of reference, or contrast between speech and action, that frequently occurs in dramatic texts, whether it takes the form of the active figure commenting on either his action or that of another figure or whether there is an epic mediating commentary. In all such cases the speaker distances himself to some degree from the situation in which he finds himself in order to reflect on it. On the occasions when speech and action are identical, however, he remains completely immersed in the situation that he hopes to change by speaking.

4.3.2.2. Speech unrelated to action

When speech is contrasted with action it is not identical to it but nonetheless still refers to it directly. The distance between speech and action can be increased further by abandoning such direct references to action that are features of commentative speech. It is then possible to say that speech and action are unrelated and that they run parallel to each other. Thus, there are certain dialogue passages in dramatic texts – especially in comedies and modern dramas – which are structured like a conversation[20] and which, because they have been distanced from the dramatic situation as a self-contained phatic conversation-for-conversation's-sake, constantly revise their thematic orientation. Examples of this are the witty banter of servants and clowns in Shakespeare's comedies and the dialogues in the plays of Samuel Beckett. The latter are based on the axiom that an action that is intended to alter the dramatic situation is impossible, thereby negating a priori the whole notion that speech can be related to action.