Notes *Perrine’s* “The Nature of Drama” Chapter 1 pp. 1068-71

Points of View in Writing

In narration, there are several different points of view (perspectives): first-person (''I''), second-person (''you''), and third-person (''he/she''). There are also varying degrees of knowledge that a narrator can possess, including the third-person omniscient and third-person objective points of view.

Third-person objective: The narrator tells a story from the third-person point of view (''he/she'') as an impartial observer: readers gain knowledge in a factual, objective manner.

Omniscient narrator: can describe events and other characters to an unlimited degree unconstrained to delivering

only facts.

“Of the four major points of view open to the fiction writer, the dramatists are practically limited to one—The objective, or dramatic” (*Perrine’s* 1069).

**The objective (dramatic) point of view:** the writer tells what happens with only what can be inferred from the story's action and dialogue. The narrator never discloses anything about what the characters think or feel, remaining a detached observer.

Ways around this limitation (*Perrine’s*):

1. Commentary can be placed in the mouth of a character but then we might wonder if that is the author’s view or the character’s.

2. A soliloquy can present a character’s thoughts as he speaks to himself. The character is presumed to be telling the truth as he/she knows it.

3. An *aside* is when the character addresses the audience. The character is presumed to be telling the truth as he/she knows it.

COMPARISON OF A PLAY TO WRITING

The dramatist has a captive audience; whereas, the writer must use words to captivate readers.

Settings present limitations on stage. Lions attacking and massive armies at war on land or events at sea would be problematic. Small events are also not possible, like a fly falling into a glass of milk.

Settings cannot change quickly. The play relies on dialogue.

Long ago and in recent times, sets were/are sparse so scene changes can be quick. Actors can sometimes carry props. A change in scene can be done with curtains dropping or more often now, with lighting.

Plays also depends on the audience to develop emotional responses of other attendees. People laugh or cry increasingly more readily when they see these emotions in others.

Plays must have “well-defined plot, swift exposition, strong conflict, dramatic confrontations” and be “separated by an intermission or intermissions” (1070-71). The meaning of the play must be evident in single scenes since the audience cannot revisit previous scenes.

There should be no long sessions of a single voice. An audience would get bored.