

XI.—Dialogue in the Menandrian Monologue

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It is somewhat of a paradox to term a speech at one and the same time a monologue and a dialogue, but this is the case with respect to many of the speeches of the characters of Menander in the plays of the New Comedy. It is the purpose of this paper to catalogue the various instances of dialogue in the monologue, to show how fond Menander was of the use of this device, and to demonstrate that his purpose in using it was to give variety and liveliness to the monologue so that it would serve to enhance rather than to retard the flow of dialogue in his plays.

A discussion of the types¹ and of the grades² of monologues is not pertinent to our present study. The first thing to be noted is the prominence of the monologue in the New Comedy. This is attested by Bickford, Legrand and many other commentators.³ The effect of this large proportion of monologues in the plays of Menander should obviously be to create an intrusive and artificial interruption of the dialogue. Yet, this is not the case. In Menander's skilled hands the monologue seldom becomes merely an annoying delay to the rapid progress of the dialogue, a static expression of joy, anger, fear, despair or triumph. In his plays the monologue, whether one of emotion, exposition or characterization, takes on all the liveliness and variety of dialogue itself. As Leo notes: "Die Charaktere des Demeas und Moschion in der *Samia*, des Onesimos und Charisios in den *Epitrepontes*, des Moschion in

¹ Cf. J. D. Bickford, *Soliloquy in Ancient Comedy* (Diss. Princeton 1922); F. Leo, "Der Monolog im Drama," *Abh. der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philol.-Hist. Klasse* (Berlin 1908).

² J. Grimm, *Kleine Schriften* III; H. Otter, *De Soliloquiis quae in litteris Graecorum et Romanorum Occurrunt Observationes* (Diss. inaug. Marburgi Cattorum 1914).

³ Bickford (above, note 1) 25 n. 1: "The average percentage [of lines of soliloquy] in Plautus is 17, in Terence 12, in Menander 32." Ph. Legrand, "Daos, tableau de la comédie grecque pendant la période dite nouvelle," *Annales de l'Université de Lyon* (Lyon 1910) 418: "Quant aux monologues [in the New Comedy], ils abondent . . ."; 541: "En somme, nous devons reconnaître que, dans le corps des pièces comme au début, les comiques de la *nea* ont abusé du monologue narratif."

der *Periceïromene* sind auch in den bewegtesten Dialogscenen nicht lebensvoller als wenn die Personen mit sich selber reden."⁴

An examination of the internal construction of Menander's monologues will show how he obtained this vivid, conversational effect. It is by means of direct quotation. I have included the speeches of Davus and of Syriscus in the arbitration scene of the *Epitrepontes* in this category since in length and form they have all the characteristics of a monologue.

Quotation in the Menandrian monologue takes four forms.⁵

- (1) The speaker addresses himself:

Ep. 593⁶

Samia 111, 308

- (2) The speaker quotes the words of another:⁷

Ep. 170, 248–9, 568, 570–1, 574–9, 712⁸

Per. 129–33

Samia 12, 27–8, 30 ff.

Kolax 114–15 (where the speaker quotes what he imagines the other will say)

- (3) The speaker quotes a dialogue:

Ep. 85–93

Samia 37–46.

⁴ Leo (above, note 1) 89.

⁵ The line numbers to the plays of Menander are those used in *Menander Reliquiae*, Pars I, 3rd ed., B. G. Teubner: Leipzig, 1938 ed. Alfred Koerte. K = Th. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* III (Leipzig 1888).

⁶ Koerte, v. Arnim, Wilamowitz and van Leeuwen make the *δαιμόνιον* speak to Charisius thus: τὸ δαιμόνιον. ἐνταῦθ' ἔδειξ'· ἄνθρωπος ὢν, ὃ τρισκακὸν δαίμον, μεγάλα φουσῆς καὶ λαλεῖς. For the opposite view (i.e. reading ἔδειξ[α]) cf. Leo (above, note 1) 102, n. 1. The practice of having a character address himself is more thoroughly Menandrian than to imagine the *δαιμόνιον* as speaking. Nowhere else in Menander do we find a personified abstraction or a god, if so it be imagined here, speaking except in a prologue. Charisius (588) begins by addressing himself in an *Ich-Monolog* and then, about 595, he opposes himself in his own person. Cf. Parmenon's monologue in the *Samia* (296–312).

⁷ Quintilian (*Inst.* 11.3.91) mentions two other instances of direct quotation which probably occurred in monologues: "cum mihi comoedi quoque pessime facere videantur, quod, etiamsi iuvenem agant, cum tamen in expositione aut senis sermo, ut in *Hydriæ* prologo, aut mulieris, ut in *Georgo*, incidit, tremula vel effeminata voce pronuntiant."

⁸ This may not be a monologue, although it is possible that Smicrines is berating Sophrona *in absentia*.

- (4) The speaker quotes his own previous or anticipated words or thoughts:

Ep. 78–9, 351–3, 357–8, 609–11

Per. 297 ff.

There are a few examples of direct quotation in the fragments, but it is difficult to decide whether they occur in a monologue. Quotations of what the speaker believes he would say under certain circumstances occur in *Kolax* 49 ff. and in 23 K; the former is undoubtedly in dialogue, the latter probably occurs in dialogue as is shown by the trochaic tetrameter. In 532 K the speaker quotes what he contemplates saying. His *λαλεῖτε, προσκοπέσθε* are addressed to people in general, but there is no evidence that the speech is a monologue. In 562 K the speaker, probably a soldier, evidently quotes the questions which people put to him about his wound and his answer; again there is no indication that the speech is in a monologue.

The most obvious device, that in which a speaker addresses himself, is used by Menander the least. It is noteworthy that this form of address often produces the effect of heightened pathos. While Demeas in the *Samia* is describing the blameless behavior of his son in an effort to convince himself of the supposed guilt of Chrysis, the pathos grows. In his anger he begins to abuse her (v. 133) since his decision has been made, and he tries through words addressed to himself (v. 134) to convert his compassion to his will. We see how, just as in tragedy, the pathos leads to address to self (cf. *Medea* 1242), the narration being addressed to the public since the chorus no longer existed.⁹ But the most important effect of this device is that for which Menander constantly strove in his monologues and which has been described perfectly by an author who was not referring specifically to Menander:

Auf was man aber mit der Feststellung des apostrophierenden Momentes im Monolog hinauskommen wollte, war vielleicht das dialogische Element in einem übergeordneten Sinne, mit dem der Monolog zugleich ein verkappter Dialog ist, um so die monologisierende Einzelstimme wieder im dialogischen Grundverhältnis aufgehen zu lassen.¹⁰

⁹ W. Schadewaldt, "Monolog und Selbstgespräch. Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der gr. Tragödie," *Neue philol. Untersuchungen* herausgegeben von Werner Jaeger, 2. Heft (Berlin 1925) 248 n. 1.

¹⁰ J. Soltau, *Die Sprache im Drama* in the series *Germanische Studien*, Heft 139 (Berlin 1933) 73.

Menander is ever conscious that he is writing for the stage and that the medium of expression in that form is dialogue. Although he was not concerned with eliminating the monologue entirely (nor would his audience probably have been pleased if he had), he endeavored to make even of the expository monologue a kind of reported dialogue. Thus, in the *Samia* the 67-line monologue of Demeas (1-67) ceases for at least 20 lines to be monologue at all. It is interspersed with the quoted comments of the nurse and of the maids, and at v. 37 it suddenly turns into outright dialogue between the old nurse and the servingmaid. These quoted speeches, incidentally, are wonderfully consistent in their colloquial tone with the characters of the speakers quoted, so that we must imagine the monologist as being a rare mimic. In fact, as can readily be seen from the plays of Plautus, these soliloquies must all have been delivered with an abundance of animation in tone, manner and gesture.

The skillful adaptation of quoted speeches to the character of the person quoted may be illustrated by a few specific examples. When Onesimus quotes his master's speech (*Ep.* 574-9), the words are not only appropriate to Charisius but actually copy his style of speaking elsewhere in the play. The terms ἀλιτήριος, βάρβαρος, ἀνηλεής remind us of Charisius' fondness for such self-abuse as he exhibits it in his own monologue, e.g. ἀναμάρτητος (588), ἀκέραιος ἀνεπίπληκτος (590), τρισκακόδαιμον (593).

Although we have no other speech by Myrrhina and it is questionable whether she actually appeared on the stage in the *Periceïromene*, her language as quoted by Davus is quite characteristic of the woman we imagine her to be. With its garrulousness (Davus evidently is not allowed a single word after delivering his message), its short sentences, its impatient imperatives, and the intuitive conclusion that Davus must have been to blame, the language is highly feminine. It gives us a picture of the busy housewife interrupted at her domestic chores by a bearer of annoying tidings. The language is not so much angry as it is scolding.

Perhaps the best example of a quoted dialogue is in the *Samia* (30-46) where Demeas quotes the conversation of the old nurse and of the servingmaid. With her baby-talk, her repeated "Oh dear me"s and her reproachful address to the poor maid (ὦ τάλαν) the chattering old woman becomes an actual character although she never sets foot on the stage. She is a "type," granted, but

only a master craftsman could create a living type out of nothing but a few lines of dialogue. Even the "little" maid is characterized. She is impatient of the old woman, but essentially kind-hearted. Her epithet *δύσμορ'* (40) is a mild one and she respectfully calls her by her title *τίτθη* (43). And, although there is danger of reading too much into a word, the emphatic use of *αὐτός* and *αὐτή* seems to indicate servility and a certain lack of education. Parmenon's monologue (*Samia* 296–312), although it contains no direct quotation, is really a kind of logical dialogue in which Parmenon represents himself in the third person as arguing with himself in the first person.

The last device of Menander for giving the monologue the overcast of dialogue and for enlivening dialogue itself is the quotation by the speaker of his own words whether previously spoken or to be spoken at some future time. The scene in the *Epitrepontes* (288–380) in which Habrotonon explains to Onesimus how she will conduct her interview with Charisius could easily have been written entirely in *oratio obliqua*. Yet, in 341–2, 351–4 and 357–8 Habrotonon quotes the exact words she will use. Thus, we hear the actual conversation between them and, in fact, the scene which will take place indoors is acted out before us. Such writing cannot be laid merely to happy fortuity; it is due to a conscious effort on the part of the poet to present his play to the audience by the most vivid and natural means.

Cohoon¹¹ in his study of the rhetorical elements in the arbitration scene of the *Epitrepontes* finds it difficult to justify the use of direct quotation either by reference to the precepts of Aristotle and Quintilian or to the actual practice of the Attic orators. He concludes that Menander must have used it to throw light upon the character of the speaker and that a propensity for using direct speech is the mark of humble or simple-minded men. Neither of these explanations is quite satisfactory. Of the examples of direct quotations in Menander only eleven are spoken by slaves compared with eight by free men. This figure is not overwhelming enough to convince one that direct quotation is characteristic of simple men, and even the slaves in Menander can hardly be so-called. Moreover, his attempt to show that the quotations cited

¹¹ J. W. Cohoon, *Rhetorical Studies in the Arbitration Scene of Menander's "Epitrepontes"* (Diss. Princeton 1915).

by the speaker from his opponent's oration reflect the former's ability seems too subtle. Engrossed in the fast-moving details of the plot, the spectators could hardly be expected to make such an analysis. It seems much more likely that Menander's chief purpose in employing direct quotation is everywhere the same, i.e. to give an informal, dialogistical effect to the necessary set speeches of exposition. We must not forget, as Menander never did, that he was writing for the stage and that direct quotation is an excellent device from a dramatic point of view in that it allows the actor to play two parts with the appropriate gestures for each. Facial expression was impossible because of the masks, and action was limited, but there must have been frequent resort to gesture; the sight of Syrus mimicking the gestures and even the words (note how *ἀρέσκει* 170 echoes *ἀρέσκει* 113 and *ὡς εἶπεν, ὡς ἀνείλετο* 154 echoes *ὡς εἶπον, ὡς ἀνελόμην* 87) of Davus must have been lively in practice and, to some extent, amusing to the audience.¹²

Throughout the Menandrian monologue and longer speeches this underlying feeling that we are actually witnessing a colloquy prevails. A speaker himself frequently reminds us of this fact and causes, as it were, a temporary interruption in his discourse by anticipating an objection of a listener and answering it himself. For examples we need only look at *Epitrepontes* 137, 170 and 734, although it must be admitted that two of these instances occur in the arbitration scene and may be reminiscences of rhetorical prolepsis. The anastrophe here, though also a rhetorical device, gives an effect of dialogue.

Where did Menander derive the idea of using direct quotation to give variety to the monologue? If we turn to the Old Comedy, Aristophanes fails to furnish any exact parallel for the Menandrian usage. In the first place, he uses the monologue infrequently because of the presence of the chorus. Secondly, when direct quotation

¹² K. Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer* (Leipzig 1890) calls attention to the fact that Euripides alone of the tragic poets makes extensive use of gestures in his tragedies (p. 200). Perhaps the best evidence we have of the importance of the adaptation of gesture to the emotion of the character portrayed by the actor is in Terence's *Phormio* 890: *Nunc gestus mihi voltusque est capiundus novus*. For a discussion of gestures in Terence see Leo, *RhM* 38 (1883) 331 ff.; W. Blancke, *The Dramatic Values in Plautus* (Diss. Pennsylvania 1918) 23-31; J. W. Basore, *The Scholia on Hypokrisis in the Commentary of Donatus* (Diss. Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1908). Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.65-184 discusses gestures appropriate to the orator; many of these must have been used on the stage. There is probably much truth in Post's assertion that in rhythmic movement and posturing Greek plays were closely akin to the Oriental drama.

does occur, the words quoted are seldom those of a principal character in the play, but rather a few words denoting the attitude of people in general towards the question at issue.¹³ The only examples really similar to Menander's are found in *Lysistrata* 507–520 where Lysistrata quotes the conversation between a hypothetical husband and wife and in *Knights* 40–72 where Demosthenes quotes the fawning words of Paphlagon. Neither of these examples occurs in a monologue. In the latter instance Demosthenes is addressing the audience.

Soliloquies (except in the prologue) are not numerous in Euripides for the same reason, but there is one place where direct quotation abounds, namely, the messenger speeches in which are reported actions and events unsuitable for presentation on the stage.¹⁴ There is, however, a subtle difference in the Euripidean and the Menandrian method of using quotations which may best be expressed by saying that in Euripides the quotation seems to be more a part of the narrative. This was probably due to the fact that Euripides was interested in the monologue as a means of developing plot; Menander used it as a means of characterization as well. The capacity of language (and direct quotation is an emphatic use of language) for denoting character is attested by Menander himself who has one of his personages say: *ἀνδρὸς χαρακτήρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται* (143 K).

Perhaps the best evidence in favor of the premise that Menander used direct quotation to enliven the monologue is the popularity of such quotation in Plautus and Terence. It is to Menander's credit that he seems not to have abused the use of quotations in the monologue as did his Roman imitators. The exaggerated lengths to which even a careful writer like Terence carried this device is shown by Pamphilus' monologue in the *Hecyra* (382–401) where he quotes sixteen lines of what Myrrhina had said to him.

The answer probably is that, with the loss of the chorus as an active participant in the action, the ready adaptability of the monologue for exposition made it the conventional technique for plot development in the New Comedy. Menander, however, was astute enough to realize the danger of monotony which accom-

¹³ Cf. *Ach.* 11 ff. and 33 ff. In the former instance the words of a herald are quoted; in the latter those of Dicaeopolis' home town.

¹⁴ A good example is the messenger's speech in *Helen* 1526–1618.

panied this innovation and to combat it by the only possible means — internal quotation. By this device his monologues frequently become animated dialogues giving the actor ample excuse for gesticulation and imitation. One need only observe the actual speech habits of modern Mediterranean peoples such as the Greeks or the Italians to be convinced that on the comic stage of antiquity these spirited monologues, far from being artificial, were realistic and entertaining, and that they represent another facet of Menander's art in holding up the mirror to life.