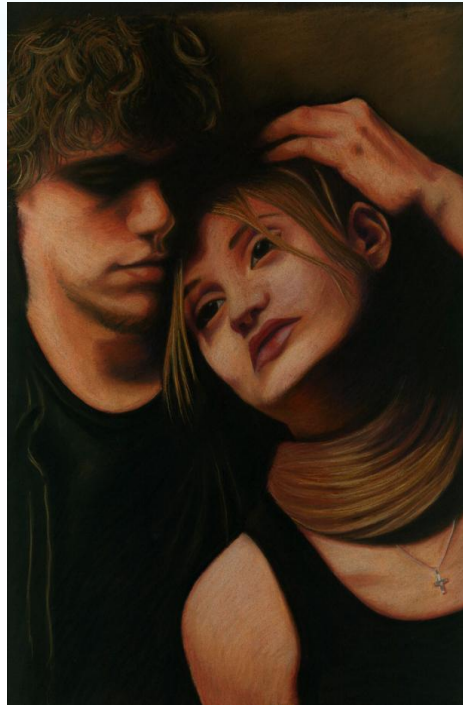


Use of Dramatic Monologue in Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover'



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What is a dramatic monologue?

A type of poetry or a poetic device in which there is an individual speaker who addresses a silent listener and presents a dramatic scene through arguments and counter arguments. The speech is made at a highly intense emotional moment.

Contd.....

Combines two words-dramatic and monologue.

Dramatic: i) Relating to drama

ii) Has character revelation

iii) Action based

Monologue: i) A long speech by one actor in a play or a movie

A dramatic monologue differs from a soliloquy, the former being a poetic device and the latter a dramatic device. Basically dramatic in nature.

Soliloquy

- Talking to one-self
- Revealing unspoken reflections
- A stage device, used in the presence of an audience.
- Single character on the stage.
- Reveals the character's innermost thoughts uttered aloud
- Often attacked as an unnatural device
- Accepted with “willing suspension of disbelief”
- Hamlet's soliloquy stands as one of the best examples

Dramatic Monologue

- A drama of the soul
- A poetic form- part drama, part poetry
- Presented in the form of a speech addressed to a silent listener.
- Dramatic way of presentation
- Addressed to a silent listener/listeners

Contd.....

- Aimed at character study or ‘psycho-analysis’ of the speaker
- Presented from the speaker’s subjective point to view
- Reveals the speaker’s innermost thoughts through his speech
- Speaks in self-justification.

Interior Monologue

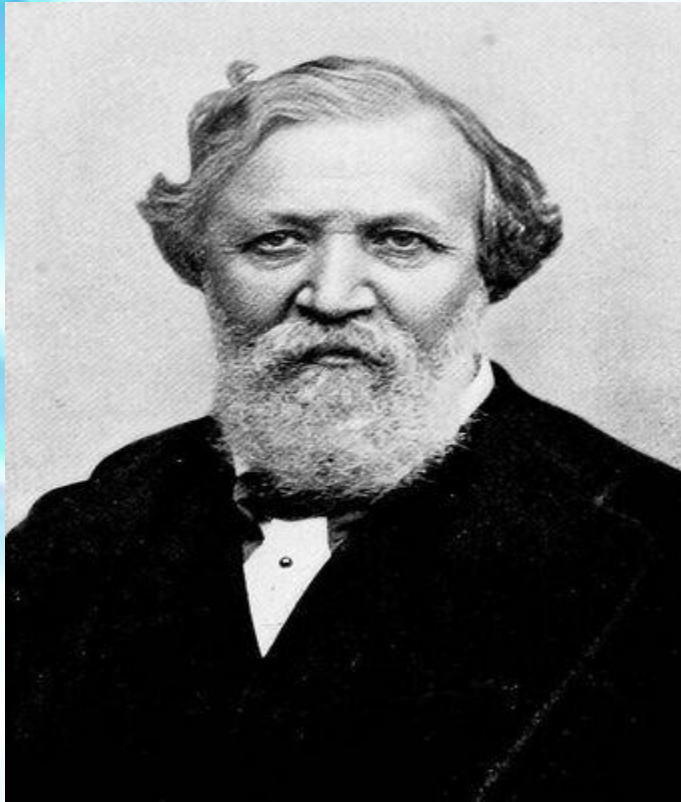
- Used both in dramatic and non-dramatic fiction.
- A narrative technique.
- A literary genre presents thoughts as a monologue in the form of a silent inner speech
- Presented in the first person and in the present tense.

Contd.....

- Unstructured free flow of thoughts.
- Depicted as overhead thoughts
- Lacks punctuation
- Different from soliloquy and dramatic monologue where there is an audience or a silent listener.

Robert Browning- Father of Dramatic Monologue

(7 May 1812-12 Dec 1889)



- English Victorian era poet and playwright
- Created a portrait gallery in verse
- Master of dramatic verse, use of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture

Contd.....

- Perfected dramatic monologue as a miniature drama
- Married to Elizabeth Barret Browning, an admirer of his writing.
- Supported by an educated father
- Accomplished writer, scholar and musician at an early age
- Precursor to Modern thought

Contd.....

- Buried in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.
- An optimist in an age of doubt and pessimism
- A psycho-analyst who preceded Freud
- Poetry of hope, faith and courage
- Influenced by Shelley

Famous Works

Pauline, A fragment of Confession (1833)

Paracelsus (1835)

Sordello (1840)

Dramatic Personae (1860s)

The Ring and the Book (1868-69)

The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Published in Dramatic
Lyrics in 1842)

Contd.....

My Last Duchess

Dramatic Lyrics (1842)

Porphyria's Lover (1836)

Men & Women (1855)

Rabbi Ben Ezra

Asolando

Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (1845)

Honours

- Browning Society formed to study his works in 1881.
- An honorary DCL (Doctor of Civil Law) from Balliol College at Oxford University.

Porphyria's Lover as a dramatic monologue (Written in the winter of 1833 during a visit to St. Petersburg, Russia.)

- First appeared under the title 'Madhouse Cells'.
- The Speaker - a lover with an abnormal, insane mind.
- Conversation with himself, therefore a monologue.

Contd.....

- Presence of a beloved-the dead mistress
- Faith in divine intervention
- Gripping narrative
- Exploration of the character of the speaker
- Soul-dissection
- Response to conflict between morality and aesthetics

Contd.....

- Porphyria's character through the subjective mind of the speaker
- Story of how he killed his own mistress in a state of conflict, a step to eternalise the moment of love.
- Strong possession - exposes the dark heart of the speaker
- Written from the perspective of the lover

Other Themes

- A study in abnormal psychology
- Power v/s Helplessness
- Modern poem-precursor to T.S. Eliot & Ezra Pound
- Brutal act of a deranged man
- Female Silence
- Turmoil of the human mind
- Optimism-Fake or genuine