



Dramatic Monologue and Robert Browning’s Contribution

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Abstract

Dramatic monologue is a poetic genre in English literature. It was a very popular and well-known poetic form practiced by the poets of Victorian period ((1837-1901). But, if we go through the realms of English literature, we can find the early form of dramatic monologue in Anglo-Saxon and Old English period. The old English poems- “The Seafarer”, “Wife’s Lament” and “Deor” were written following the characteristics of dramatic monologue. Later, William Shakespeare, John Donne, Andrew Marvell, and Robert Herrick adopted some of the elements of dramatic monologue in their poems. During the Victorian period, Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) developed the dramatic monologue into a standard poetic form and Robert Browning (1812-1889) brought an artistic perfection to it. But it is widely recognized that, Robert Browning is the developer of actual dramatic monologue in English literature. Besides them, Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Thomas Hardy also employed dramatic monologue technique in their poems. After the Victorian period, the modern poets- T S Eliot, Ezra Pound, W B Yeats, Robert Frost and W H Auden write poems following this model but the modern poems are mainly interior monologues dealing with critical modern psychology. Actually, many of Robert Browning’s renowned poems are dramatic monologues. Deep psychological tension, social problems, religious conflict, hope and aspiration, importance of Art, belief in God and world after this world, are the major themes of Browning’s dramatic monologues. This study aims to examine the fundamental elements of dramatic monologue in five selected poems by Robert Browning—“My Last Duchess,” “Andrea Del Sarto,” “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “Porphyria’s Lover,” and “Rabbi Ben Ezra” and it furthermore, analyzes Browning’s significant contribution to the development and perfection of this poetic form.

Keywords: Dramatic monologue, genre, Anglo-Saxon, pattern, perfection, interior-monologue.

1. Introduction

Robert Browning, an eminent Victorian poet, was born on May 7, 1812 in Camberwell, near London and died on December 12, 1889. He had little formal education; though he gained a vast knowledge from his father's library. At the age of seventeen, he chose poetry as his career. He was greatly influenced by P B Shelley. His wife E B Browning was also a great Victorian poet. Robert Browning had deep faith in God and Christianity. He believed in afterworld and thought that man should not be frustrated because God would sure reward him/her afterwards. This is his doctrine of hope and aspiration. In the field of dramatic monologue, Robert Browning is second to none. He perfected the poetic genre dramatic monologue and elevated it to the finest form of artistic style. He had also written many plays besides a famous translation in English namely- "*The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*" in 1877.



In a dramatic monologue, the poet does not speak himself/herself. Here, the poet sets a speaker who speaks to a/some silent listener/s. Actually, dramatic monologue is a distinctive poetic form that has been practiced by poets of different periods. A dramatic monologue is a kind of lyric poem in which a single speaker expresses his/her thoughts and feelings to a silent listener/to some silent listeners and the reaction/s of the listener/s is/are expressed through the speaker himself/herself. The characteristic features of this type of poems are-

- i) A single speaker speaks throughout the poem on a specific issue or topic.
- ii) The speaker speaks to a /some silent listener/s and the presence and reaction/s of the listener/s is/are expressed through the speaker.
- iii) There will be a sudden and dramatic beginning of it.
- iv) It is a poetic technique for lyric poem and not used in drama.
- v) It concentrates on the character of the speaker and reveals his/her temperament and feelings.
- vi) The speech takes place here at a particular moment or setting.
- vii) The speaker unintentionally or unconsciously expresses his/her own personality, psychology, motives, emotions, and values through his/her speech.
- viii) It naturally explores the inner thoughts and psychological state of the speaker.
- ix) The language of this poem resembles natural speech rather than formal dialogues.
- x) The speech of the speaker creates tension, mental conflict, irony and suspense that helps the readers or listeners to understand the background event and relationship of the speaker with the stated thing.

M H Abrams gives the definition of dramatic monologue in the following way – "*A dramatic monologue, however, is not a component in a play, but a type of lyric poem that was perfected by Robert Browning. In its fullest form, as represented in Browning's 'My Last Duchess', 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb,' 'Andrea Del Sarto,' and many other poem.*" The subject matter of this research is "Dramatic Monologue and Robert Browning's Contribution". For this study, Robert Browning's five renowned poems - "*My Last Duchess*", "*Andrea Del Sarto*", "*Fra Lippo Lippi*", "*Porphyria's Lover*" and "*Rabbi Bin Ezra*" are chosen to evaluate them as dramatic monologues and at the same time it scrutinizes the poet's contribution to this genre.

2. Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i) What are the fundamental elements of dramatic monologue?
- ii) How does Robert Browning use the elements of dramatic monologue in his poems?
- iii) What contribution does Robert Browning keep in the poetic genre- dramatic monologue?

3. Research Objectives

This research work focuses on the study of dramatic monologues and Robert Browning's contribution to them. Thus the research objectives of this study are:

- a) This study aims to examine the use of dramatic elements in the selected poems – “*My Last Duchess*”, “*Andrea Del Sarto*”, “*Fra Lippo Lippi*”, “*Porphyria's Lover*”, and “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”.
- b) It also aims to analyse Robert Browning's use of dramatic techniques in these poems and evaluate his contribution to the development of the dramatic monologue as a poetic form.

4. Literature Review

Various critics have defined the term dramatic monologue in different ways. M. H. Abrams, again defines dramatic monologue as a poem in which “*a single person, who is patently not the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem.*” - (Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (10th Ed.). Wordsworth/Cengage Learning, 2012. According to **Chris Baldick- Dramatic monologue is “A kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent ‘audience’ of one or more persons.”** (*The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press.). According to Encyclopedia Britannica- A dramatic monologue is “*a poem written in the form of a speech of an individual character.*”(Encyclopedia Britannica, “Dramatic Monologue”). So, from the above mentioned definitions and discussions, we have got a clear notion about dramatic monologue. Actually, dramatic monologue gets flourished during the Victorian period. Some Anglo-Saxon, Elizabethan and Jacobean poets also wrote poems on dramatic monologue model but the Victorian poets like- Lord Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, E B Browning, Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Thomas Hardy wrote dramatic monologues following the perfect and recognized form. But whenever we think about dramatic monologues, the name that comes first to our mind is Robert Browning. He contributed much to develop this form of poetry. He has used *a single speaker, a specific situation, implied listener/s, psychological self-revelation* and other elements as characteristic features of dramatic monologue. Browning's famous dramatic monologues are- “*My Last Duchess*”, “*Andrea Del Sarto*”, “*Fra Lippo Lippi*”, “*Porphyria's Lover*”, “*The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*”, “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”, “*The Laboratory*”, and “*Grammarian's Funeral*”. The range of this research work is not so vast. That's why only five celebrated poems of Robert Browning are selected to examine the elements of dramatic monologue in them. If we evaluate these poems gradually, the subject matter of this study will be clear to us.

“My Last Duchess”, its dramatic Elements and Browning's Contribution:

“*My Last Duchess*” is an exquisite creation of Robert Browning. It was first published in 1842 in “*Dramatic Lyrics*” but it was later included by Browning in his “*Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*” in 1845. This poem is set in the Italian Renaissance, although the poet wrote it in Victorian period. “*My Last Duchess*” is probably about the Duke of Ferrara (Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara) and his last duchess (Lucrezia de' Medici). The duke killed his duchess for a slight misunderstanding. In this poem, the duke wants to marry the **daughter of the Count of Tyrol, a neighboring County. The duke is here speaking to an envoy of the Count of Tyrol.** He gives the description of his last duchess' beauty and the cause of her death. This is a perfect dramatic monologue and here Browning has used all the characteristic features of a dramatic monologue. The poet has here adopted this genre for the character analysis and psychological revelation of an arrogant duke. When we go through this poem, it seems that-someone is speaking to his companion and we can feel reaction of the listener explicitly. The poem starts dramatically with the speech of the duke in the following way-



Lucrezia de' Medici, duchess

*“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive; I call
That piece a wonder, now:---” (Lines-01-03)*

Here we get a single speaker and a silent listener. The speaker speaks all through the poem and reveals his mind and expresses his character unconsciously. The reaction of the silent listener is expressed in the following way-

*“Fra Pandolf’s hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands
Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said
“Fra Pandolf” by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance.” (Lines---03-08)*

A dramatic situation is an element of a dramatic monologue. The dramatic situation is the duke’s negotiating speech with the envoy of the neighboring county. Here the speaker is not only speaking with the envoy, he is showing the portrait of his last duchess, her gesture and attitude. This is like a stage performance. This poem concentrates on the character of the speaker and reveals his character and temperament. The name of the duchess is not mentioned here. She is just introduced as the duchess of Ferrara. The speech of a dramatic monologue takes place at a particular moment or setting. In this poem, the speaker speaks while he was with the envoy of the Count, his would be father in law. And this poem is set in the palace of the duke of Ferrara. The speaker’s psychology, personality, motives and emotions are expressed unintentionally through his speech. The duke while speaking to the envoy, unconsciously reveals his mind and demands dowry. Actually, this his real character. In line number 49-51, the duke expresses his greedy intension of getting dowry from the Count. He tells-

*“The Count your master’s known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;” (49-51)*

In a dramatic monologue, the inner thought and psychological state of the speaker is revealed though his/her speech. In this poem, the same thing happens with the duke. He wants to show his power, pride, arrogance, demand and command to the Count through his envoy. He tells the story of his last duchess whom she killed for not evaluating his family pride, and not showing any special love for him. Here the speaker’s temper, psychology, power, pride, and command are shown through his speech. The speaker thus speaks haughtily-

*“This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive.” (Lines---45-47---)*

The speaker of a dramatic monologue speaks naturally and it seems that he or she is not in pressure. In this poem, the duke has killed his beautiful, modest, popular duchess without any apparent reason; but he is natural and he does not have guilty conscience. He smoothly narrates the story of his last duchess and the way in which he killed her. The speech of the speaker of a dramatic monologue creates tension, mental conflict, irony and suspense and all these help the readers understand the background and relationship of the speaker with the stated issue. In this dramatic monologue, the duke is very cunning who narrates the whole story of the duchess and his nature, pride, intension, greed and power normally. But when he shows the envoy the paintings of Neptune chasing a sea horse, the readers and the listeners again are in suspense. What will happen in future is a lingering issue to them. This is also an element of a dramatic monologue. The poet depicts the irony and character traits of the duke of Ferrara with the reference to Neptune. He tells-

*"Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea –horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me." (Lines---54-56)*

"Andrea Del Sarto", A Dramatic Monologue:

"*Andrea Del Sarto*" is a famous dramatic monologue of Robert Browning. It is about a famous Italian Renaissance painter Andrea Del Sarto (1486-1531). Robert Browning was inspired to write this poem after watching a painting on Andrea and his wife Lucrezia hung in the art gallery of Petti Palace. Browning also read Giorgio (George) Vasari's book "*The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects (Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori)*" published in **1550** and got inspired to write about Andrea Del Sarto. In this poem, art and morality, love and marital relationship, ambition and failure, human weakness and realization, and hope and aspiration are addressed. Browning here rightly highlights the thing that is mere technical perfection is not enough for artistic greatness, aspiration, imagination and spiritual guidance are needed to be successful. This poem is a perfect example of dramatic monologue. Most of the elements of a dramatic monologue are used here. Firstly, it has a dramatic or sudden beginning. The speaker of this poem is Andrea himself (a single speaker) and the listener is his wife Lucrezia (a silent listener). The poem begins in the following way-

*"But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish." (Lines-01-03)*

When we go through the line number four and five, we can understand the reaction of the silent listener. It is the characteristic of a dramatic monologue. The speaker makes a request to his wife and the reaction is felt like this-

*"You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear," (lines-04-05)*

A specific dramatic situation, a feature of dramatic monologue, is also introduced here. The speaker Andrea and his wife Lucrezia are sitting together in the balcony and watching the beauty of the city Fiesole from Florence. Here the speaker tries to pacify his wife and have a reconciliation with her. Self-revelation of Andrea is unconsciously revealed here and the speaker expresses his own personality through his deliberation. He appears gentle and thoughtful but morally weak, frustrated by his artistic limitations due to his wife's lack of cooperation. Browning here exposes the self-revelation of Andrea as an element of dramatic monologue.

The speaker has embezzled the money of the king of France and with that money he has built a castle for his infidel wife Lucrezia. He laments over his wrong deed but it is too late. He is like a bat that cannot come out at day light. He is known as a 'faultless painter' but he lacks inspiration. He is psychologically disturbed and waits for heavenly inspiration. He has faith in God and thinks that he will sure be rewarded by Almighty after death. Andrea tells-

*"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for?" (Lines-97-98)*

Browning reveals the mind of Andrea in the following sugar coated words. This is the revelation of his heart and indirect expression hatred to his wife.

*"Your soft hand is a woman of itself
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside."*

*Don't count the time lost, either; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require-
It saves a model. So! Keep looking so-
My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!"*

So, from this observation, we get all the elements of dramatic monologue e.g. *single speaker, silent listener, dramatic situation, dramatic beginning, self-revelation, psychological analysis, presence of conflict, and traditional conversational style* in this poem. Robert Browning has skillfully narrated the psychological depth of the character. Characterization is here done through speech and dramatic monologue is chosen to delineate the theme. The poet has also used irony, realistic conversational style and historical figure as supporting elements. In this respect, "*Andrea Del Sarto*" is a successful dramatic monologue.

"Fra Lippo Lippi", A Perfect Dramatic Monologue:

"*Fra Lippo Lippi*" is one of the finest and perfect dramatic monologues of Robert Browning. This poem was published in 1855 in '*Men and Women*' series. It is a long poem of 392 lines. While visiting Florence, Browning saw the painting '*Coronation of the Virgin*' painted by Lippo. He also read Giorgio Vasari's book- "*Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects.*" These two events inspired him to write this dramatic monologue "*Fra Lippo Lippi*". Fra Lippo Lippi, a son of a butcher, was born in 1412 in Florence. He became an orphan at the age of two and was kept under his aunt Lapaccia. When he was only eight years old, his aunt placed him in a local monastery named Carmine. There he became a famous painter and later a chaplain to the Convent at Florence. He was also appointed as Rector of St. Quirico at Legnais. He died in 1469. In this poem, Robert Browning has shared an experience of Fra Lippo Lippi when he was going back to his monastery at dead night and caught by the night guards on the way. The speaker, Fra Lippo Lippi, is talking with the night guards and sharing his life story to them. As it a dramatic monologue, we are introduced with the single speaker Fra Lippo Lippi and the silent listeners- the guards. The poem also starts dramatically-

*"I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face,
Zooks, what's to blame? You think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar." (Lines-01-06)*

Specific situation is another element of dramatic monologue. Here Fra Lippo Lippi is caught by the watchmen at the end of a street of Florence at midnight and he had to stay there for the whole night and talk with the watchmen. This is the dramatic situation of this poem. Fra Lippo Lippi's self-revelation emerges through his recollections of childhood poverty and hunger, his experience of a confined religious life, and his belief in the value of art and realistic representation. The psychological realism and artistic theory of Fra Lippo Lippi are also expressed by him. Fra Lippo Lippi did not like the confined and restricted life of a Friar. He rather preferred Carpe diem life style which is opposite to the life style of a Friar. The poet's use of irony, humor and psychological conflict is apparent in this poem and this is naturally used in a dramatic monologue. The following lines expose his psychological conflict.

*"By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici." (Lines-97-100)*

"Porphyria's Lover"; A Dramatic Monologue and Browning's Skill:

“*Porphyria’s Lover*” is a rare type of dramatic monologue that deals with the abnormal and absurd psychology of a lover. It was published in a monthly repository under the title-“*Madhouse Cells*” in 1836. The subtitle “*Porphyria’s Lover*” was given in 1949. Browning, while musing upon the nature of madness and mental condition of Christopher Smart, the author of “*Songs of David*”, got the idea of writing this poem. Critics rank it as a poem of morbid and abnormal psychology. This poem highlights many themes like- absurd love and possessiveness, obsession and madness leading to psychological unrest and insanity, power and absolute control, realization of perfect beauty and its preservation, idea of sin, morality, self-justification and isolation. This poem contains most of the elements of a dramatic monologue. The dramatic elements used in this poem are- a single speaker, a silent listener, dramatic situation, sudden beginning, self-revelation of the character, psychological character analysis, use of irony, unstable narrator and the colloquial diction. The unnamed lover of Porphyria is described here as a psychologically deranged person who wants to keep the memory of his best love moment evergreen by strangling his dear beloved Porphyria with her own hair. The lover is the single speaker and Porphyria is the silent listener. The poem begins dramatically and the setting of this poem is the house of the lover. This poem also begins suddenly.

*“The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break,
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;” (lines-01-09)*

Porphyria is present in her lover’s room but she does not speak. She is a silent listener and her reactions are felt through the speech of the lover. The special dramatic situation and character revelation are introduced through the speech of the lover-speaker. He makes an absurd plan to keep his best love memory everlasting. This is the unconscious character revelation of the speaker and it grows tension in the mind of the readers and listeners. The speaker narrates-

*“Porphyria worshipped me; surprised
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do,
That moment she was mine, mine, fair
Perfectly pure and good; I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain,
As a shut bud that holds a bee.” (Lines-33-43)*

Robert Browning has introduced an absurd, unconventional technique of the lover to keep his love memory alive for ever. His absolute possessive love begets a different psychology and it is an irony in love. The poet also uses colloquial diction to make it lively and convincing. The lover’s uncommon mentality and psychological trauma are reflected in the last three lines of this poem. The lover tells-

*“And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred
And yet God has not said a word!” (Lines-58-60)*

“Rabbi Bin Ezra”; A Dramatic Monologue:

“*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”, a renowned dramatic monologue by Robert Browning, was published in “*Dramatis Personae*” in 1864, is a philosophical poem on a famous Jewish scholar-Rabbi Ben Ezra. The speaker here reflects old age, youth, human imperfection, spiritual growth, and the purpose of human life. It is a philosophical poem and most of the elements of a dramatic monologue are used in it. Here we get the single speaker-Rabbi Ben Ezra, Silent implied listeners, dramatic situation, setting of the poem, revelation of character, psychological self-revelation, irony, argumentative beginning, conversational tone, and the speaker’s personal point of view. This poem begins dramatically according to the conventional dramatic monologue. Rabbi Ben Ezra, the speaker tells his listeners-

“*Grow old along with me!*
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith “A whole I planned,
“Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be afraid!” (Lines-01-06)

The speaker Rabbi Ben Ezra speaks alone all through the poem to silent, implied listeners. He is delivering his philosophical speech about the benefits of old age, role of God, duty of human being to God and man, vitality of youth and the like to the listeners. The dramatic setting and situation are properly applied. The self-revelation of character is also found. Rabbi Ben Ezra, appreciates the advantages of old age and tells about it. This is the psychological revelation of the speaker. **He is an aged man with philosophical prudence, appreciation of time, wisdom, youthful optimism, and spiritual maturity. All these qualities reflect his self-realization.** The speaker tells-

“*Not once best ‘Praise be Thine!*
“I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was man!
Maker, remake, complete,-I trust what Thou shalt do!” (Lines-55-60)

The speaker here calls himself and the listeners “Fool”; because what happened in this world in the past and what will happen in future, and what is happening now are from one source that is from God. Only God will sustain; He is permanent and everlasting. We have nothing to vaunt. We are just mortal, we are just clay in this world. The speaker in stanza -XXVII, tells-

“*Fool! All that is, at all,*
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee?
That was, is, and shall be;
Time’s wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.” (Lines-157-162)

The poet again presents the irony of the speech of the speaker. The speaker speaks on human realization, appreciation of old age and the duty of man. Actually, we do not do or follow them and this is the irony of the speech. This poem is also having a conversational tone and moral message. The speaker tells-

*“So, take and use Thy work:
 Amend what flaws may lurk,
 What strain o’ the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
 My times be in Thy hand!
 Perfect the cup as planned!
 Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!” (Lines-187-192)*

Browning’s Contribution to Dramatic Monologue:

Browning’s contribution to dramatic monologue is immense. He has transformed the dramatic monologue into a profound instrument of psychological characterization. In *“My Last Duchess”*, the duke does not admit that he has killed the duchess and he is proud, greedy, possessive and cruel; but the readers when read the lines- *“I gave command/ Then all smiles stopped together”*, can easily understand that the duke is the killer of the duchess and he is a proud, jealous, greedy, arrogant and commanding person. Regarding this, William O’ Raymond tells- *“It (My Last Duchess) fuses character and incident, thought and emotion.”* (Encyclopedia Britannica). The technique of self-revelation in the dramatic monologue is another device to be noted as a distinctive contribution of Robert Browning. Through this poetic device, the poet reveals the psychology of the speaker. The speaker exposes his psychology unconsciously or without being aware of it. In *“My Last Duchess”* the duke wants to present him as a sophisticated, powerful, wealthy, aristocratic, reasonable and accommodating character. But the readers through the speech of the duke can discover his pride, arrogance, possessiveness, jealousy and cruelty. This is self-revelation. In the same way, the self-revelations of Andrea Del Sarto, Fra Lippo Lippi, and Porphyria’s Lover are exposed though they did not share their mind consciously.

Robert Browning has introduced conflicting human personality in his dramatic monologue. The Duke’s personality is conflicting. He is cultured but cruel, sophisticated but morally corrupt and greedy, restricted in his speech but psychologically unstable. On the other hand, Andrea Del Sarto is artistically perfect but emotionally weak, self-aware but motivated, ambitious but resigned, and loving but frustrated. Fra Lippo Lippi is a monk but attracted to worldly life, religious but critical in religious behavior, an artist but interested in common human life style, morally imperfect but profound in artistic insight. Rabbi Ben Ezra, an old man but praises the youth, perfect but tries to attain more perfection, His spiritual and divine achievement is contradictory to his worldly activities. The lover in Porphyria’s lover is self-contradictory. He loves his beloved very much, gets her as he wishes but he kills the beloved to keep his best love memory permanent. This type of self-contradictory or self-conflicting personality is introduced by Robert Browning in his dramatic monologue. This is his innovation in the field of dramatic monologue.

Robert Browning introduces various subject matters a dramatic monologue. In *“My Last Duchess”*-power, greed, jealousy, possessiveness and cruelty are introduced, In *“Andrea Del Sarto”*, art, ambition, faithlessness, failure and marriage are mentioned. In *“Fra Lippo Lippi”*, religion, urge of youth, humanity and artistic realism are treated. In *“Porphyria’s Lover”*, love, passion, absurd psychology and self-satisfaction are revealed and in *“Rabbi Ben Ezra”*, age, time, spirituality and self-realization are introduced. Browning again developed the dramatic situation as a critical setting for the speaker of a dramatic monologue. In *“My Last Duchess”*, the duke is negotiating his new marriage with an envoy, In *“Andrea Del Sarto”*, the artist speaks with his wife Lucrezia regarding his art and tension of marriage life. In *“Fra Lippo Lippi”*, the speaker is caught at midnight by the city guard, In *“Porphyria’s Lover”*, the lover tells the situation of his beloved’s arrival to his house and the act of their enjoyment and murder event of Porphyria. Finally, in *“Rabbi Ben Ezra”*, the speaker delivers his philosophy before the listeners.

Robert Browning also introduced living poetic sounds to make his dramatic monologue more practical and appealing. He uses interruptions, questions, exclamations, parentheses, incomplete thoughts, irregular syntax, sudden shifts and colloquial expression in his dramatic monologues. The poet has also connected art and artistic

theory with his dramatic monologue. “*Andrea Del Sarto*” and “*Fra Lippo Lippi*” are the two best examples of this technique. Robert Browning has again extended the dramatic monologue form to transfer personal psychology to philosophical attitude. In “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*” the poet has used this method.

5. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach to identify the definition of dramatic monologue, Robert Browning’s contribution to this genre and the presence of dramatic monologue elements in the five selected poems of Robert Browning namely - “*My Last Duchess*,” “*Andrea Del Sarto*,” “*Fra Lippo Lippi*,” “*Porphyria’s Lover*” and “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”. The methodology is designed to examine suitable definitions of dramatic monologue and analyse how its key elements are properly employed in the selected poems. This literary framework also focuses on textual analysis, poetic diction, and coherent relationship among these dramatic monologues by Robert Browning.

Research Design:

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical design with the aim of defining the dramatic monologue and examining its major elements in the aforementioned poems, which serve as the primary texts for the analysis. The research further investigates the narrative function, symbolic significance, poetic diction, use of irony, depiction of psychological tension, and expression of self-revelation in each poem. In addition, secondary critical works and scholarly articles are consulted to provide critical support and contextualize the analysis.

Primary Sources:

Robert Browning’s renowned dramatic monologues—“*My Last Duchess*,” “*Andrea Del Sarto*,” “*Fra Lippo Lippi*,” “*Porphyria’s Lover*,” and “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”—are carefully read and critically analyzed as the primary texts of this study. This study is designed to identify and examine the major elements and distinctive features of the dramatic monologue in these poems. Different critical works are explored to identify and select appropriate definitions of the dramatic monologue and to examine Browning’s contribution to the development of the genre.

Secondary Sources:

Relevant literary criticism and scholarly works, including Sintija Čuljat’s “*Robert Browning’s Dramatic Monologue as a Medium of Intransigence*,” Melissa Valiska Gregory’s “*Robert Browning and the Lure of the Violent Lyric Voice: Domestic Violence and the Dramatic Monologue*,” the Armstrong Browning Library and Museum’s “*Robert Browning and the Dramatic Monologue*,” Asghar Moulavi Nafchi, Mitra Mirzayee, and Morteza Sobhani Zadeh’s “*Robert Browning: A Dramatic Monologue Marvel*,” M. Damjanoski’s “*The Dramatic Monologues of Robert Browning*,” P. N. Madhusudana’s “*Dramatic Monologues: A Study of Robert Browning’s Narrative Techniques*,” Shrikrishna S. Vaidya’s “*Hegemony in Robert Browning’s Dramatic Monologue*,” “*My Last Duchess*,” and Mofizar Rahman’s “*ABC of English Literature*,” have been consulted to develop a clear understanding of the definition and characteristic features of the dramatic monologue, the explicit and implicit use of dramatic elements in the selected poems, and Browning’s poetic techniques, thereby providing a theoretical and critical framework for the study.

Procedure:

Close reading and analysis of the selected poems—“*My Last Duchess*,” “*Andrea Del Sarto*,” “*Fra Lippo Lippi*,” “*Porphyria’s Lover*,” and “*Rabbi Ben Ezra*”—have been conducted to identify and categorize the elements of dramatic monologue and relevant definitions of the form. Thematic aspects, narrative structure, poetic diction, and direct and indirect references to the elements of dramatic monologue have been examined to complete the research procedure.

6. Conclusion

Robert Browning is a self-taught learned man. His contribution to English literature is praiseworthy. He is mainly renowned for writing dramatic monologue. Most of the Victorian poets wrote dramatic monologue.

Among them, Robert Browning, Lord Alfred Tennyson, E B Browning, Christiana Rossetti are very famous. Dramatic monologue is a type of poem that has been practiced by many poets of past and present. Before Victorian period, there was no clearly established form of the dramatic monologue. Robert Browning introduced various poetic and artistic elements into his dramatic monologues, contributing significantly to the development and refinement of the genre. Different critics have written about the definitions, elements of dramatic monologue and the nature of this poem. According to Armstrong Browning Library and Museum. (n.d.). *Robert Browning and the dramatic monologue*. Baylor University-“Robert Browning is considered to be the perfecter of the dramatic monologue, which had its heyday in the Victorian Period. Other Victorian poets to produce one or more dramatic monologues include Alfred Lord Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and Algernon Charles Swinburne. None, however, produced as many, or as striking, dramatic monologues as Robert Browning.” So, Robert Browning’s contribution to dramatic monologue is second to none. In the five selected poems of Robert Browning, we get the presence of all the elements of dramatic monologue aptly and that’s why they are perfectly called the best dramatic monologues of Robert Browning.

7. References

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