The Dramatic Monologue
Author(s): Ina Beth Sessions
Source: *PMLA*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Jun., 1947), pp. 503-516
Published by: Modern Language Association
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/459275
Accessed: 18-04-2020 01:53 UTC

XXIX

THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

THROUGH the years detailed attention has been given to the lyric, epic, short-story, drama, novel, and other literary forms, but comparatively few references have been made to the dramatic monologue. A beginning towards the understanding of this neglected form was made by Stopford A. Brooke, who devoted one chapter to a discussion of Tennyson's use of the dramatic monologue in his *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*.[1] S.S. Curry in his *Browning and the Dramatic Monologue* made a study of three characteristics of the form: speaker, audience, and occasion. He likewise gave a short history of the *genre*, and analyzed the methods for presenting examples of the form orally.[2] R. H. Fletcher classified Browning's dramatic monologues.[3] Claud Howard traced the development of the type in his pamphlet *The Dramatic Monologue: Its Origin and Development*.[4] Phelps devoted one chapter to analyzing the content of Browning's dramatic monologues.[5] Bliss Perry defined the type, mentioned the same characteristics Curry had enumerated, and stated that the form is somewhat akin to the lyric.[6] The present writer stressed the necessity for definiteness of each of the aforementioned characteristics and suggested that continuous interplay between speaker and audience be added as a clear-cut, fourth characteristic. Examples in both American and continental literature were grouped as follows: typical, formal, and approximate.[7]

Perhaps a reason for the relative neglect of this interesting *genre* is that it seems to be a familiar form easily understood because it has appropriated several characteristics of related types.[8] When, however, a leading anthology continues to classify both *Locksley Hall* and *Rizpah*[9] as

[1] Stopford A. Brooke, *Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1903). In a letter to the present writer, July, 1933, Dr. L. P. Jacks of Oxford, son-in-law of Brooke, wrote: "I think he (Brooke) would have said Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer' is about the best dramatic monologue in English."

[2] S. S. Curry, *Browning and the Dramatic Monologue* (Boston: Expression Company, 1908). References in this paper refer to the third edition, 1927.

[3] R. H. Fletcher, "A Classification of Browning's Dramatic Monologues," *Modern Language Notes*, XXIII, April (1908), 108 ff.

[4] Claud Howard, *The Dramatic Monologue: Its Origin and Development* ("Studies in Philology," IV; Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1910).

[5] W. L. Phelps, *Browning How to Know Him* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1915).

[6] Bliss Perry, *A Study of Poetry* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1920).

[7] Ina Beth Sessions, *A Study of the Dramatic Monologue in American and Continental Literature* (San Antonio, Texas: Alamo Printing Company, 1933).

[8] Note the relationship between the dramatic monologue and such types as the lyric, letter, soliloquy, monologue *per se*, and drama.

[9] *Locksley Hall* conforms to the dramatic monologue requirements only in the opening

dramatic monologues,[10] and when there is no universally accepted classification[11] for a host of important poems of this type, further analysis of the form becomes desirable. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is further to define and discuss the dramatic monologue as an independent and important type of literature and to analyze its sub-classifications.

Brooke was of the opinion that dramatic monologues "belong directly to the tragedy and to the comedy of life."[12] Tennyson's *Rizpah*, *Despair*, and *The First Quarrel* were given as examples of tragedy; and all dialect examples were listed as illustrations of comedy. Brooke did not overlook poems of social or ethical implications, as can be noted in his discussion of the second *Locksley Hall* and *The Wreck*.

In comparing Tennyson and Browning as writers of the dramatic monologue, Brooke stated that the former "scarcely varies at all" in his use of the type; whereas, the latter's examples are "sometimes lyrical, sometimes narrative, sometimes reflective."[13]

When Curry discussed the *genre* he said that as Browning exemplified it the dramatic monologue was "one end of a conversation" and that a definite speaker was present in a dramatic situation.[14] Further, he said that "usually" a well-defined hearer was present, "though his character is understood entirely from the impression he produces upon the speaker."[15] In elaborating on the occasion, he explained that the "conversation" is not an abstract affair but "takes place in a definite situation as a part of human life."[16]

The evolution of the dramatic monologue, said Curry, can be traced in the "conflict between poet and stage, between writer and stage art-

---

stanza. *Rizpah* is a Perfect example of the type. (See Table I for a list of the characteristics of the Perfect form.)

[10] Lieder, Lovett, and Root, *British Poetry and Prose* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1938), II, 518; 550.

[11] In Snyder and Martin's, *A Book of English Literature*, 4th ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), II, *Rizpah* (p. 522) is called a "tragic ballad," and *Ulysses* (p. 495) is termed "one of the noblest of dramatic monologues." In the Lieder, Lovett and Root anthology, *Ulysses* (p. 517) is said to contain a speaker who "soliloquizes." Neither of these anthologies classifies the dramatic monologues *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto*, and *The Bishop Orders His Tomb in St. Praxed's Church*, although both books properly list *My Last Duchess* as an example of this type. In the Harcourt, Brace and Company publication *The College Survey of English Literature* (vol. 2, 1946), *Ulysses* is listed as a dramatic monologue (p. 490); and so are *Locksley Hall* (p. 491), *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* (p. 537), and *My Last Duchess* (p. 538). The editors of this anthology state that "Browning varies the technique of his dramatic monologues: the Spanish monk soliloquizes, but the Duke of Derrara . . . talks to the envoy" (p. 538).

[12] Stopford A. Brooke, *op. cit.*, p. 436. [13] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

[14] S. S. Curry, *op. cit.*, p. 7. [15] *Idem.* [16] *Idem.*

ist."[17] The form did not evolve in direct opposition to the play, but rather as a "new and parallel aspect of dramatic art."[18]

Two of the best points that Curry made were that the dramatic monologue derives its unity from the character of the speaker; and that the "listener as well as the speaker must be realized as continuously living and thinking."[19] On the other hand, Curry is confusing when he says the letter is nearest to the monologue,[20] then shortly adds that the "monologue . . . is nearer to the dialogue than to the letter."[21]

Examples cited by Curry as dramatic monologues do not conform to any one set definition. Poems as different as Browning's *Clive*, Pippa's soliloquies in *Pippa Passes*, *The Flight of the Duchess*, and Tennyson's *Ulysses* are termed the same literary form. Now, Curry did say that he recognized variations in form and would even admit a "partial introduction of dialogue,"[22] without feeling that the effectiveness of the dramatic monologue form had been disturbed. Neither a rule for form nor for variation was given, however, and the resultant difficulty in determining classifications is obvious.

According to Fletcher, Browning's "dramatic monolog is found to be represented as a literal transcript of words spoken, written, or thought at some definite time by some person who may be either historical or imaginary."[23] This definition holds true in the whole poem with the exception of a few instances where "there is a brief introduction or concluding descriptive or narrative paragraph supplied by Browning himself or by some other person not the monologist."[24] Examples give in vivid fashion "some action of external crisis or of moral signifiance" and a character analysis of one or more people. Theoretically, soliloquies are not dramatic monologues, but practically the two forms "shade into each other," and in Browning's poetry it is impossible to distinguish them sharply.

Claud Howard, in his discussion of the type, said its development passed through two stages: one from the origin of its use to Browning; the second from Browning's day until the present.[25] The type arose "in response to a need for a new form of literary expression which would reveal more directly and forcibly the new phases of modern culture and experience."[26]

Howard seemed to agree with Curry in stressing the importance of the speaker and in saying that the speaker's thoughts are influenced by the hearer. He agreed, too, that the letter is the earliest form of literature which reveals the "dramatic monologue attitude of mind."[27] When this

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 10. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 11. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 33. [20] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 19. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [23] R. H. Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[24] *Idem.* [25] Claud Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 11. [26] *Ibid.*, p. 12. [27] *Idem.*

attitude appeared in poetry, however, Howard said it was spoken first through the lyric. The transition to the love lyric incorporating speaker and hearer gave the "form in which the first tendencies toward the dramatic monologue are found."[28]

One of the earliest illustrations of the love lyric, according to Howard, was Chaucer's *To Rosamonde*. One of the first examples of a dramatic monologue with the three characteristics of speaker, audience, and occasion was Drayton's sonnet beginning "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part."[29]

After the Elizabethan era the lyric gave way to poems like the ode and elegy, and for many years, Howard noted the monologue did not develop. In Burns' love lyrics one may observe, however, that the hearer becomes increasingly important. As examples, he cited *Ae Fond Kiss*, *My Bonnie Mary*, and others of this type. Howard stated, too, that Byron also used the form effectively, as for example, in *Maid of Athens*.

In the Victorian age, several characteristics contributed to the monologue's development. Among these Howard enumerated the importance of sociology, the rise of subjectivity over objectivity, and the spread of democracy. He recognized that Tennyson used the form but did not perfect it; and that *Northern Cobbler* is an advance over *Northern Farmer* while, he adds, *Rizpah* is better still. Howard overlooked the real importance of the last-named poem. As will be seen later in this paper, *Rizpah* is an illustration of the highly perfected form of the dramatic monologue.

Concluding his study of the development of the type, Howard stated that the "period of conscious art" arrived with Browning. In the dramatic monologues of this Victorian poet, dramatic occasion and spirit superseded the lyrical, and style and characterization were greatly improved. As a final word, Howard said that although the monologue declined after Browning, there have been such examples as Harte's *Dow's Flat* and Riley's *Nothing to Say*, and numerous examples in dialect.

Poems as varied in their characteristics as Browning's *The Patriot*, *Saul*, *Abt Vogler* and Tennyson's *Rizpah* were listed by Howard as examples of dramatic monologues.

Phelps defined the *genre* as follows: "With very few exceptions . . . the dramatic monologue is not a meditation nor a soliloquy" but is a "series of remarks usually confessional, addressed either orally or in an epistolary form to another person or to a group of listeners. These other figures, though they do not speak, are necessary to the understanding of the monologue."[30] In his chapter on this form Phelps interpreted meanings but did not analyze the differences in form. He listed these poems as

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 13. [29] *Ibid.*, p. 15. [30] W. L. Phelps, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

examples: Browning's *Karshish, Ghent to Aix*, and *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, in addition to such illustrations as *Andrea del Sarto* and *My Last Duchess.*

Perry thought of the dramatic monologue as that form wherein "The inter-relations of drama, of narrative, and of lyric mood are peculiarly interesting."[31] Recognizing the conventional three charasteristics of speaker, audience, and occasion, Perry further stated that the *genre* is a "dynamic revelation of a soul in action, not a mere static bit of character study."[32] He was interested, likewise, in the fact that the dramatic monologue touches the lyric in two ways: (1) many examples use "distinctively lyric measures";[33] (2) self-analysis revealed in dramatic monologue is in the very nature of a lyric impulse.[34]

In the study of the dramatic monologue which the present writer made, the significance of form, with its possible classifications, was not adequately revealed.[35]

In observing the varying opinions regarding the monologue[36] which have been thus detailed, one is aware of the wide range in the examples cited. This range is quite evident in, say, *The Patriot* and *Rizpah;* or in *Locksley Hall* and *My Last Duchess.* Some of the listed poems are explained to have no hearer; others are said to reveal not the speaker's character nor the hearer's, but the character of the people described by the speaker. In one of these examples, *The Flight of the Duchess*, both speaker and audience were said to be "almost entirely lost sight of."[37] And Pippa's soliloquies, in *Pippa Passes*, were said to be "practically monologues."[38] *La Saisiaz* was said to satisfy the conditions of a monologue by the writer who defined the form as "one end of a conversation." And the writer who cited *The Patriot* as a "typical" dramatic monologue goes on to explain that the audience was "doubtless composed of sheriff and officers."[39]

Not all the discrepancies in previous discussions have been pointed out,[40] but a sufficient number have been noticed to substantiate the claim that a working definition which will cover varing examples is needed. For

[31] Bliss Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 267. [32] *Ibid.*, p. 268. [33] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 270. [35] See Footnote 7.

[36] "Monologue" and "dramatic monologue" are used interchangeably in this paper, unless otherwise indicated.

[37] S. S. Curry, *op. cit.*, p. 54. [38] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[39] Both Curry and Howard refer to *The Patriot* as a dramatic monologue. The guess here as to the audience is made by Howard.

[40] Formal mention of M. W. MacCallum's *The Dramatic Monologue in the Victorian Period* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1925), was not made because the discussion has little bearing on the presentation here. He did state that the long monologue is a difficult and not a "wise" form in which to write. The "strain" involved in such a lengthy work as *The Ring and the Book* is too much for the monologue form. Further, he added that drama is now recovering lost ground and the dramatic monologue is not likely to flourish.

more detailed clarification and differentiation, this extended definition of the type is suggested: A Perfect dramatic monologue is that literary form[41] which has the definite characteristics of speaker, audience, occasion, revelation of character, interplay between speaker and audience, dramatic action, and action which takes place in the present. Judged by these seven characteristics, a poem or prose work may be a perfect example of the dramatic monologue type, or it may be some kind of approximation. For convenience in classification and discussion, the following table is offered:

TABLE I

Sub-classifications of the Dramatic Monologue

Perfect	*Approximations*		
Example	*Imperfect*	*Formal*	*Approximate*
1) Speaker	1) Shifting of center of interest from speaker; or,	1) Speaker	1) Speaker
2) Audience	2) Fading into indefiniteness of one or more of the last six Perfect characteristics.	2) Audience	2) Lacking one or more of the characteristics listed under the Formal or the Imperfect.
3) Occasion		3) Occasion	
4) Interplay between speaker and audience			
5) Revelation of character			
6) Dramatic action			
7) Action taking place in the present.			

The Approximations, as is apparent from Table I, are each successively more deficient in the essential characteristics which are present in the Perfect examples. Their names, Imperfect, Formal, and Approximate, are chosen to indicate the progressive loss of one or more characteristics. The advantages of this sub-classification are apparent from a careful analysis of the varying qualifications of such poems as Browning's *My Last Duchess*, *Evelyn Hope*, *The Lost Mistress*, *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*, *Count Gismond*, and many others.

A Perfect example of the dramatic monologue type conforms to the aforementioned seven characteristics, and *My Last Duchess* is one of many poems which splendidly illustrate all of them. The Duke is the speaker; the envoy is the audience; the arrival of the envoy to discuss wedding plans furnishes the occasion; interplay between speaker and audience is constant throughout the poem; the speaker reveals his own

[41] The dramatic monologue is usually discussed in its poetic form, but there does appear the prose type like Margaret Prescott Montague's "Up Eel River," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXI, no. 5 (1923), 636 ff.

character at the same time he is sketching that of the Duchess; action is dramatic, involving the death of the Duchess and the Duke's plans for his next wedding; and, finally, the action unfolds as the poem develops, giving the reader the impression that this is the original occasion. Not a single characteristic is vague or uncertain. Deftly the poet has intermingled the character sketch of both Duke and Duchess, at the same time revealing the responses of the audience.[42] The hearer has a certain influence on the speaker, and remarks and questions on his part are inherent in the replies of the Duke. The presence of the audience is made clear when the Duke asks: "Will't please you sit and look at her?" The envoy inquires about the expression on the Duchess' face, and the reply is,

> . . . so, not the first
> Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
> Her husband's presence only called that spot
> Of joy into the Duchess' cheek.

Other remarks, such as,

> Will't please you rise? We'll meet
> The company below, then.

and

> . . . Nay, we'll go
> Together down, sir.

involve the audience in the active interplay.

It is essential that interplay be active between the speaker and audience, constantly contributing to the flow of ideas. Finest interplay reveals character and centers on the climactic effect on the speaker; that is, the speaker must be the leading dramatic figure.

The occasion is the concatenation of circumstances which initiates the action of the piece. More than this, it provides the background and the personalities involved. Thus, reference to the occasion in the following discussion refers to all those elements of circumstance, thought, and action which participate in the dramatic sequence. The occasion is the basis on which the dramatic monologue is constructed. Intensity of dramatic action, one of the characteristics of the literary type, is inherent in the *original* occasion, which provides dramatic action in the present. The

[42] S. S. Curry says: "In the monologue the speaker must suggest the character of both speaker and listener and interpret the relation of one human being to another" (p. 32). Also, he says that the monologue "usually" has a "well-defined listener" (p. 7). However, he does not prove these two points when he cites as examples of dramatic monologues *The Patriot* and *Incident of the French Camp*. In these poems there is no definite audience nor is the character of the audience suggested.

most powerful dramatic monologues are those which present this original event. If, however, this event be transferred to a later stage and the principals in the action give a rehearsal, something of the original flavor and excitement may live again but it will be in modified strength.[43] If the person involved, or some one familiar with the original episode, reminisces about the event, the chances are the version will be in a calm strain, with more of the lyric or narrative than the dramatic quality present. On the other hand, if the event, though a thing of the past, be assumed by the writer to originate with the opening lines, the poem is more dynamic, the action more powerful in its effect on the reader, and —a vital point— the reader journeys along with the speaker, thus vicariously participating in the unfolding action.

In *My Last Duchess*, the occasion is fraught with interesting complications and is sketched with precision. As mentioned above, the Duke is planning another wedding, and has received an envoy from the Duchess-to-be. The Duke desires to communicate certain significant information to the envoy; he wants to impart the importance of his ancient name; he must make it clear that his late wife should have reserved an appreciative politeness for him that she did not show to others; he wants it understood that because

> She liked whate'er she looked on
> And her looks went everywhere.

it was necessary to order "all smiles stopped together." The reader gets the impression that if the next Duchess does not heed the Duke's demands there is likely to be an addition to the portrait gallery. The occasion is delicate in innuendoes and in the feeling that the poem is to have a sequel or two.

Count Gismond is an example of an Imperfect dramatic monologue which presents a delayed narration. The original event happened in the long ago and now as the poem opens the speaker reviews for a friend the incident which occurred on "that miserable morning" when, in gaiety and all garlanded, she was about to "present the victor's crown" at which moment Gauthier stepped forward to challenge her character. Then "out strode Gismond" who hurled the lie in the accuser's face and felled him. Midst the "shouting multitude" the gallant defender won the girl's heart and took her south "many a mile" to their new home. As the speaker is relating these facts of her girlhood, she notices Gismond at the gate "in talk with his two boys," and when finally he comes in she pretends she was chatting about "how many birds it struck since May."

Count Gismond is not so dramatic as *My Last Duchess* because the action of the original event has been transferred to a much later stage.

[43] See following discussion of *Count Gismond*.

Had the poem opened with the gala queen-crowning activities, and Gauthier and Gismond waged a fight suddenly in the midst of present events, the effects on the reader would have been more exciting. As it is, the air of the poem is quiet, more of the narrative spirit prevailing throughout. From the standpoint of a dramatic monologue, it has speaker, audience, and a little interplay, this last being indicated in the question:

> I? What I answered? As I live
> I never fancied such a thing.
>
> See! Gismond's at the gate.

and in the reference made in the lines,

> . . . though no word
> Could I repeat now, if I tasked
> My powers forever, to a third
> Dear even as you are.

The audience is named Adela, but her interruptions are not sufficiently clear to acquaint the reader with more of her type nor of her reason for being present. She has apparently called on her friend, but no reason is given for the visit nor for the introduction of the story about Gismond. The occasion, therefore, is not fully detailed. The contrast in *My Last Duchess* is marked.

The prerequisites of dramatic action, and action which takes place in the present, go hand-in-hand with the above discussion on occasion. These two characteristics are almost as important as the speaker, audience, and occasion. Action cannot be passive; it must be electric and it must be unfolding with the speaker's words. The audience must be a participant in the original occasion, and the action must all be in the present time. Dramatic effectiveness is lost if all these characteristics relate only to past action.

Regarding subject-matter, the best dramatic monologues are concerned with a cross section of life of more than passing interest and progressing towards results typifying universal experience. Mere communication of trivial facts is no substitute for character revelation. Thus it is that a *My Last Duchess*, or *Andrea del Sarto*, or *Fra Lippo Lippi*, or *Rizpah* will reveal the speaker's character as the dominant interest, although the character of a second person may likewise be delineated. Best results of such delineation are, for the most part, obtained in brief pictures; lengthy character sketches are more difficult to handle.[44]

[44] This statement raises the question as to whether it is possible to maintain dramatic excitement in such long poems as those in Browning's *The Ring and the Book*. See MacCallum's comment in footnote 40.

The *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* is another Imperfect dramatic monologue with speaker, audience, occasion, interplay, character revelation, and dramatic interest. The only lacking prerequisite is that the "audience" does not hear the speaker, despite the fact his every move induces imprecations. The whole situation is at once amusing and awesome. The speaker, a monk, reveals his jealous hatred of a kindly fellow monk. He watches the good man moving about his beloved flowers and is highly delighted when the buds fall from the stems:

> Gr-r-r there go, my heart's abhorrence!
> Water your damned flower-pots, do!
> If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
> God's blood, would not mine kill you!
> . . . . . .
> What? your myrtle bush wants trimming?
> Oh, that rose has prior claims.
> . . . . . .
> (He-he! There his lily snaps!)
> . . . . . .
> How go on your flowers? None double?
> Not one fruit sort can you spy?
> Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
> Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

The speaker is a traditionalist in theology, and Brother Lawrence's liberalism is anathema to him:

> When he finishes refection,
> Knife and fork he never lays,
> Cross-wise, to my recollection,
> As I do in Jesu's praise.

When vesper bell rings, the speaker shows no softened feelings:

> 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratia,*
> *Ave, virgo!* Gr-r-rr you swine!

The action which unfolds in this poem, as the reader follows the speaker's words, is more vivid than the narrative delineated by the speaker in *Count Gismond.*

Thus far, it has been noted that *My Last Duchess* is a Perfect dramatic monologue, and that *Count Gismond* and *Soliloquy of The Spanish Cloister* are Imperfect examples of the type. There are other poems that should be analyzed for contrast, which illustrate the Formal and Approximate types. The term Formal indicates that the form of the dramatic monologue is presented; there is a speaker or there could not be a monologue at all; there is an audience, without which there would be no

genre as has been defined in this paper; there is an occasion, which characteristic is a minimum necessity because the speaker and audience are thrown together in some accountable way. Here, then, is the skeleton form of the type under discussion. If a poem or bit of prose has these three characteristics, but does not develop interplay or character revelation or dramatic action and so on, then the work is recognized as having the form of a dramatic monologue.

For an example, one might study Browning's *A Woman's Last Word*. There is a speaker and an audience: "Let's contend no more, Love." The occasion seems to be the aftermath of a quarrel:

> What so wild as words are?
> I am thou
> In debate, as birds are,
> Hawk on bough!

The audience apparently does not interrupt as the speaker continues:

> I will speak thy speech, Love,
> Think thy thought.
> . . . . . .
> That shall be to-morrow
> Not to-night:
> I must bury sorrow
> Out of sight.
>
> —Must a little weep, Love,
> (Foolish me!)
> And so fall asleep, Love,
> Loved by thee.

In this situation, the most dramatic interplay, obviously, has just about concluded; and the woman is making the final speech before sleep. The dramatic action has dwindled with the conclusion of the active interplay. In having thus speaker, audience, and occasion, this poem is recognized as a Formal dramatic monologue.[45]

The Approximate type is that example which approaches the Formal or the Imperfect, or which is one conforming to neither of these. Of necessity it must have a speaker; but it lacks one or more characteristics which mark the Formal or the Imperfect, and if it does not resemble these it is independent of all the types mentioned, having as its claim to

[45] The contrast might be noted between this piece and *Andrea del Sarto*, where another quarrel has been in progress. In the latter, however, the speaker makes the request:

> "But do not let us quarrel any more"

and continues his appeal for many lines which are frequently interrupted by Lucrezia, the audience. It is a Perfect example, having all seven characteristics.

notice only the fact that it approaches the dramatic monologue form. For example, the poem *Evelyn Hope* has a speaker and an occasion but the "audience" is dead, and the speaker talks musingly to the young girl whom he loved. There is a certain amount of character revelation:

> . . . God above
> Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
> And creates the love to reward the love;
> I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
> Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
> Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
> Much is to learn, much to forget,
> Ere the time be come for taking you.

Thus the speaker tells his love for a girl too young for him in this life, and his belief she will be his in some future life. In taking farewell of her, he furnishes the occasion for the poem. Here the form of the dramatic monologue is approached, or approximated, but not completed.

With the aid of the Table of Classification, it is relatively easy to decide which literary form a poem has. There are, however, more items to discuss than just the labeling of type. Many questions arise, for instance, about the extent of dramatic effectiveness of a poem in which the speaker veers from the audience to a third party. In *Count Gismond,* for example, the speaker shifts her attention from the hearer to Gismond, who has just entered.

> Our elder boy has got the clear
> Great brow; though when his brother's black
> Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here?
> And have you brought my tercel back?
> I was just telling Adela
> How many birds it struck since May.

It would seem that such a conclusion is not so effective as that of *My Last Duchess* where the speaker, coming to the end of his narrative about the late Duchess and her portrait, says,

> . . . Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
> Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
> Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
> Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
> As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll
> Meet the company below, then.
> . . . . . .
> . . . Nay, we'll go
> Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
> Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
> Which Claus of Innsebruck cast in bronze for me!

The Duke never takes his attention from the hearer, and this concentration creates a powerful effect on the reader.

There is the question, also, concerning shifts in person. In *Evelyn Hope*, the speaker begins by saying,

> Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
> Sit and watch by her side an hour.

Then, in stanza two, he says, "Sixteen years old when she died!" In stanza three, he speaks directly to the girl,

> Is it too late, then, Evelyn Hope?
> . . . . . .
> And, just because I was thrice as old
> . . . . . .
> . . . Must I be told?
> We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

Once more it is evident that drama fades when there is shift in attention or in person.

The element of time is important in the dramatic monologue. It has already been pointed out that in *A Woman's Last Word* the most important moments for excitement have passed. In *The Lost Mistress* the most emotional time has likewise just ended.

> All's over, then: does truth sound bitter
> As one at first believes?

In Browning's *The Laboratory*, a Perfect dramatic monologue, the occasion is the background for the unwritten sequel to the poem. A girl has come to a chemist to have a potent poison mixed. In a few minutes she is to dance at the king's, and at that gay affair she plans to administer the poison to her rival. The question may be raised, is this the correct time for the most intense dramatic effect, or would the poem be more exciting if it were based on that moment at the dance?

Mention was made earlier that *Locksley Hall* is not a dramatic monologue except in the opening stanza.[46] Tennyson has presented here a young man who says to his companions:

> Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
> Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle horn.

With the beginning of the second stanza, there is apparently no hearer, nor is there evidence of one in the remainder of the poem:

> 'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
> Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall.

[46] See footnote 9.

Tennyson's *Ulysses* gives the impression in three places that an audience is present, but there is no interplay. The speaker is too old in travel and adventure to settle down with an "aged wife," by a "still hearth," so he says:

> This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
> To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle.

He sees the port and the vessel, and he addresses his old companions:

> . . . Come, my friends,
> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
> Push off, and sitting well in order smite
> The sounding furrows.

The air of the poem is that of a pure monologue, with the speaker uninterruptedly talking. With its three characteristics, however, of speaker, audience and occasion, the poem is a Formal dramatic monologue. It is not on the same level as *My Last Duchess*, nor is it a soliloquy.

The number of dramatic monologues and Approximations of one kind or another which are available for analysis runs into the hundreds, and a working knowledge of the essential form and its characteristics and variations is valuable to the student of literary types. The *genre* appears in the works of many writers—Browning, Tennyson, Amy Lowell, E. A. Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, to mention but a few.

The above discussions and suggestions in no wise exhaust the study of the dramatic monologue. They but indicate the range and possibilities of the type, and support the claim made in the beginning that this literary *genre* is an independent and important type of literature.[47]

INA BETH SESSIONS

San Antonio, Texas

[47] One of the most interesting comments concerning the dramatic monologue was made by Dr. J. B. Wharey of the University of Texas in a letter to the writer on January 17, 1935: "The dramatic monologue is, I think, one of the best forms of disciplinary reading—that is, to use the words of the late Professor Genung, 'reading pursued with the express purpose of feeding and stimulating inventive power.' In a very peculiar sense, the dramatic monologue demands that the reader be constantly alert, that he catch the significance of every word, that he clearly visualize the dramatic situation. The reader, like the author, must be able to lose himself in the speaker; he must exercise whatever of creative imagination he possesses. No other art-form so 'feeds and stimulates inventive power'. "