



---

# **Victoria University Of Bangladesh**

**Name: Lamia Akter**

**Program: BA In English**

**Student ID: 1822510031**

**Course Title: 19th century English Literature**

**Courese Code:ENG 309**

## **Essay on the feminist elements as you find in the poem My Last Duchess by Robert Browning**

Form of poetry is referred to as a dramatic monologue. In the sense that they have a theatrical quality these poems are dramatic. Specifically the poem is intended to be read aloud to a group. The poem is referred to as a monologue because it contains only the words of one individual speaker and contains no dialogue from any other characters. Think about one individual remaining solitary on a stage addressing a group of people. You are unquestionably a member of that audience but the poem typically implies that the speaker is primarily addressing a specific audience.

Poets choose to write poems like these in order to convey a character's perspective through their words. However, the tricky part is that the poet's views frequently conflict with those of that character. The speaker is usually attempting to persuade someone and they may or may not be telling the whole truth. In some poems what the speaker doesn't say is just as interesting and revealing as what they do say.

Here is a portion of Robert Browning's My Last Duchess a dramatic monologue. The dramatic monologue is the most important type of objective poetry which we have dubbed dramatic. It is dramatic not because it is meant to be performed on stage but rather because it conveys the thoughts and feelings of an imagined character rather than the poet. They are monologues because only one character speaks at a time Mono which means one in Greek. The dramatic persona and the poet's identities are combined and the poet, in a sense speaks through his mouth. The most significant author of dramatic monologues in English is Robert Browning.

The dramatic monologues can be used to investigate the characters' personalities particular mental states and moral crises. In his discourses the writer Browning portrays an incredibly wide assortment of characters, gone for from all strolls of life weaklings rebels specialists researchers Dukes cheats bums killers and holy

people like Pippa, all group his image exhibition. His characters are from a variety of countries and ages not just one.

One character is at the center of each monologue and the monologue's substance is what goes through his soul. Cazamian refers to them as soul reflectors or studies in practical psychology because they give us a glimpse into the characters' inner workings. In addition to these main characters some minor characters are sketched briefly but clearly with a few deft touches in each monologue. They are the listeners the majority of the time, but from time to time they also play the dramatic role of the interlocutor explaining the speaker's mood or self-analysis. In this way in *Andrea Del Sarto* Andrea is the speaker Lucrezia is the audience and her sweetheart and the three opponent craftsmen are likewise presented in a roundabout way. The overall effect is enhanced when the speaker's mood and temperament are skillfully woven into the nature background. The speaker of the aforementioned poem uses his references to the autumnal, gray landscape as a background to accentuate his own depressed and world-weary state. The speaker of each monologue is put in the most crucial or significant situation of his life and the monologue embodies his responses to that situation.

The monologues begin abruptly but they are very arresting and at the same time what has happened before is cleverly suggested or brought out through reflection and retrospective meditation. As a result the opening scene of *My Last Duchess* features a reference to the deceased Duchess's picture and a clear indication that it is being shown to someone. In a similar vein, the speaker may proceed with self-reflection following this abrupt beginning fully expressing his feelings, thoughts and meditations. There is no logical or chronological progression because the speaker's thoughts wander freely between the past and the future. The unity is emotional rather than logical, and the past and future are focused on the present.

### **Examples of Dramatic Monologue:**

#### **My Last Duchess by Robert Browning**

Robert Browning's dramatic monologue titled *My Last Duchess* (1842) addresses the social issues that women faced in Victorian society. The Victorian morality code in which a woman must strictly adhere to certain social norms, and class consciousness are the subjects of the poem. In addition, Browning provides insights into the Duchess's character as well as a monologue-style sketch of the speaker's personality and the male dominion. As a feminist poem it is clear that Browning is attempting to establish oppression in patriarchal society as well as the woman's objectification for a male gaze and desire.

The dramatic monologue relies heavily on the speaker and the audience's presence. In the poem, the Duke of Ferrara is portrayed as the speaker, and the guest who is listening is the Duke. The situation is laid out in a monologue in which Fra Pandolf's portrait of the Duchess is pointed out to the guest and the listener is informed that the painting was done by him. The poem clearly depicts the psychological aspect, as the image of the painting evokes a sense of emotion that causes the guests to feel a conflict inside as they perceive the Duchess's sincere, passionate glance.

However, as a dramatic monologue it provides insight into social realism. The Victorian period was a class cognizant society and particularly the lady were limited to specific ordinary standards. In the poem, the Duke recalls his previous knowledge of the Duchess and criticizes her actions and behavior. She was portrayed as an immoral woman who smiles at men and treats others with equal respect. The Duke noticed that her actions and behavior were impulsive and immoral, so he stopped smiling euphemistically implying that she had been killed. It clearly exemplifies Victorian ideals of an Angel in the house society in which a woman must be chaste and pure. The poem also depicts the objectification of women, using a portrait of a woman to elicit a male gaze and desire and establish male superiority. The Duchess was depicted as an immoral woman, but the Duke's wealth and social standing are shown through her image.

In addition Browning uses a dramatic monologue to sketch the Duchess's personality. The process of recalling Duke's thoughts and ideas provides a sketch of the Duchess's personality. The Duke informs his guest that the Duchess liked everyone she saw indicating that she was having an extramarital affair. Even though he disagrees with it claiming that she is passionate or overly emotional, he asserts that her response was considerate and accords equal honor with the same blush on her cheeks. He goes on to argue that she smiles at every man who passes her attempting to portray her as an immoral woman. In contrast to the Duke's emphasis that he would lower himself if he argued with the Duchess about her behavior the Duke also portrayed her as a woman who disrespects her own social position which she equally values and smiles at others.

Lastly, the Duke's character is outlined throughout the process of reminiscing about Duchess which becomes an essential component of the dramatic monologue. Browning depicts the speaker's or Duke's character in a way that demonstrates the social realism of men's attitudes toward women. The Duke portrays himself as a sexist man because he dislikes the Duchess's manners of thanking other men and is ignorant of her social status. He is also stereotyping the Duchess's personality and her kind attitude in a negative light. Additionally one can observe Duke's character as a typical man who demonstrates dominion as well as power. The Duke is shown to be a man of dominion and superiority through his power and social status by the Duchess's refusal to bow down to others and her opposition to the Duke's giving equal values and smiles to others. When the Duke flatters the generous master of the guest in order to obtain the dowry from the marriage, he reveals his sycophantic nature by claiming that the Duke wants the Count's beautiful daughter rather than the dowry.

Robert Browning's chilling poem *My Last Duchess* is about the importance of women to a duke's life.

The speaker informs the reader in the poem's opening lines that a visiting emissary is attempting to negotiate a new marriage for the Duke. He also talks about how a portrait of his late wife inspired him to get married recently. He says that her actions upset him and that she did something he didn't like. The Duke must now choose a new bride after the Duchess passed away in the end.