

Andrea Del Sarto

Browning

Key facts

- source - Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*
- dramatic monologue - musings of a defeated man
- speaker - an historical Renaissance painter, Andrea del Sarto
- melancholic tone; depressive, desperate thought
- form - pentameter blank verse, mostly iambic

Lucrezia



Andrea's painting

Portrait of Baccio Bandinelli



Portrait of a man



Questions

- Should Andrea pursue high art or commercial art?
- Is the creation of art incompatible with a “normal” life, a life of mundane duties and obligations?
- Does his refusal to directly confront Lucrezia reveal a kindness in him or a weakness, a fear of recognizing his own inability to confront her and by extension himself?
- Does del Sarto seem to think that he compromises the integrity and genius of his art somehow by loving Lucrezia so much?

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Andrea's painting Madonna



Andrea's
painting Holy
Family



Madonna of the Goldfinch



“That arm is wrongly put –”





POETIC FORMS & GENRES

Dramatic Monologue

MONOLOGUE

- A **monologue** is a speech delivered by a single person. In a play, when a character utters a monologue expressing his or her private thoughts, this is called a **soliloquy**.
- **Prosopopaeia**: a classical rhetorical device in which a writer uses another person or object to communicate.
- Monologues popular in medieval religious verse
- Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: each tale spoken in a different character's voice.

MONOLOGUE - HISTORY CONT'D

- Renaissance and Elizabethan writers such as Marlowe, Drayton and Raleigh all wrote monologues
- Restoration and Augustan verse did not much use this form.
- Nor did Romantic poets, who tended to write as though they themselves were the speaker.
- Robert Browning made the **dramatic monologue** a popular form in the Victorian Period.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

- ***Men and Women*** (1855) a collection of 51 poems - all but the last one are written in the voice of characters.
- E.g. 'Fra Lippo Lippi': in the voice of the 15th century real-life Italian monk and painter, Filippo Lippi
- Explores the conflict of a religious life or a life of leisure, and the importance of art and beauty.

M. H. Abrams notes the following three features of the *dramatic monologue*:

- A single person, who is patently *not* the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment
- This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker.
- The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character

- The Dramatic Monologue was important for the Victorian poets, Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson in particular, and especially Browning, who wrote some of the most well-known Dramatic Monologues in English poetry.
- After them, the Modernists of the twentieth century, including T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, also used the Dramatic Monologue though often in a more problematised manner.
- A decline in certainties from the Romantic period onwards: the poet is more inclined to examine individual, subjective experience rather than refer to external authority (Robert Langbaum in *The Poetry of Experience*)

- By the early twentieth century, Modernists felt that their culture was fragmented and disintegrating, along with the whole idea of truth
- Modernist dramatic monologue deliberately undermines the naturalistic conception of character.
- e.g. 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (T. S. Eliot 1917): a distinct character speaking in the poem, or a voice more closely associated with the poet? Some critics have called these sorts of poems 'Mask-lyrics'.