

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

Dramatic Monologue

Alan Sinfield



Dramatic Monologue

First published in 1977, this book looks at the versatile literary form of dramatic monologue. Although it is often associated with Browning and other poets writing between 1830 and 1930, the concept has been employed by diverse poets of multiple periods such as Ovid, Chaucer, Donne, Blake, Wordsworth, Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes. In this study, Alan Sinfield demonstrates and analyses the range and adaptability of the form through detailed examples. He shows that the technique maintains a shifting and uncertain balance between the voices of the poet and of his created speaker; when extended, as in *Maud*, *Amours de Voyage*, *The Ring and the Book*, and *The Wasteland*, the use of dramatic monologue raises questions of personality and perception.

In the second part of the text, the author discusses the origins of Victorian and Modernist dramatic monologue in the dramatic complaint and the Ovidian verse epistle of earlier periods, offering a new interpretation of the value of dramatic monologue to Browning and Tennyson. Through his writing, Alan Sinfield successfully highlights the eternal vibrance of the form.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Dramatic Monologue

Alan Sinfield



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

First published in 1977
by Methuen & Co. Ltd

This edition first published in 2013 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 1977 Alan Sinfield

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

Disclaimer

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and welcomes correspondence from those they have been unable to contact.

A Library of Congress record exists under ISBN: 78313374

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-83766-8 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-203-78455-6 (ebk)

Dramatic Monologue

Alan Sinfield

Methuen & Co Ltd : London
Barnes & Noble Books : New York

First published 1977
by Methuen & Co Ltd
11 New Fetter Lane London EC4P 4EE
© 1977 Alan Sinfield

Typeset by Inforum Ltd., Portsmouth
and printed in Great Britain by
J.W. Arrowsmith Ltd., Bristol 3

ISBN 0 416 70540 5 (Hardback)
ISBN 0 416 70630 4 (Paperback)

This title is available in both hardbound and paperback editions. The paperback edition is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Distributed in the USA by
HARPER & ROW PUBLISHERS INC
BARNES & NOBLE IMPORT DIVISION

Contents

Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
1 Two poems by Browning	1
2 A broader view	8
3 Manners of speaking	23
4 Super-monologues	35
5 Before the Victorians	42
6 The Victorians	53
7 'So I assumed a double part'	65
8 Conclusion	74
Bibliography	77
Index	81

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Preface

Dramatic monologue, like several other topics in the *Critical Idiom* series, is both a poetic form with certain properties and the favoured mode of a particular literary period (about 1830-1930). Part of my theme is that dramatic monologue is not confined to one century, and the first half of the book is about its potential as a form, working roughly from simpler aspects to the more complex. The second half is chronologically organized and seeks to explain why the Victorians developed the naturalistic monologue and relied so heavily upon it, how Pound and Eliot changed it and why it returned to occasional use.

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to friends and colleagues who by commenting on drafts of this book or discussing it with me helped to make the writing of it a stimulating experience: Peter Nicholls, Patricia Thomson, Manfred Pfister, John Ginnell, Martin Monks.

Alan Sinfield