

Poetry

Monologue

Monologue is an extended, uninterrupted speech or poem by a single person. The person may be speaking his or her thoughts aloud or directly addressing other persons, e.g. an audience, a character, reader or an inanimate object.

As a literary device, it is common in dramatic genres (plays, animated cartoons, film etc) and also found in prose fiction. The term can be applied to poems, which usually take the form of the thoughts or speech of a single individual.

The term "dramatic monologue" is used both for monologues in plays and in the poetic genre.

Persona in poetry is understood as the **speaker** in the poem and revealed through the **voice** speaking in the poem. Persona may be the voice of the poet --in a neutral sense-- or a created character. Persona also implies a situation or context for the poem's speaker. Through voice we hear and feel the emotional contour of the poem and its underlying theme.

Persona and Voice

When trying to determine a poem's persona, ask yourself:

1. Who is speaking in the poems?
2. What are the speakers' point of view (first person, singular or plural, second person, third person singular or plural)?
3. How do the word choices, sound patterns and diction indicate the voice?
4. What do the speakers in these poems reveal about themselves and their situations?
5. What words and images show the voice, and persona in these poems?

Interpret the voice in the poem:

1. What are the speakers saying? (the literal meaning of the words)
2. What do they think they are saying?
3. What do you think they are saying?
4. The judgment: what do you, as the reader, think of what they are saying?

Ask yourself questions to develop the persona for your poem.

1. What is your persona's/character's name? Nickname?
2. What are your persona's/character's facial features: hair color? Eye color?
3. What are his/her physical traits? a birthmark? a scar?
4. What are his/her favorites things?
5. Who are your persona's friends and family? Who does she surround herself with? Who are the people your persona is closest to? Who does he wish he were closest to?
6. Where was your persona born? Where has she lived since then? Where is home?

7. Where does your persona go when she's angry?
8. What is her biggest fear? Who has she told this to? Who would she never tell? Does she have a secret?
9. What are her goals, desires, challenges and habits?
10. Has she ever been in love?
11. What does this persona need to say? or do? or have? or obtain?
12. What is your character's mood: melancholy, lamenting, angry, excited, hopeful, afraid, or humorous?

Mirror

Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful,
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.