

## BROWNING'S TECHNIQUE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS IN HIS POETRY

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### ABSTRACT

*Browning is the self-confessed poet of the human soul. He said, "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of the soul, little else is the worth study." Most of his poems are psychological analysis of the characters who speak. The characters speak out all about themselves, revealing their inner self, their feelings, their mind, their attitudes etc.*

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### Introduction

Browning is primarily the poet of man. His poems confirm his acknowledged preoccupation with interior drama ("Action in character, not character in action.") Browning's verse masterpieces in this mode include "Porphyria's lover", "My last Duchess", "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church", "Andrea del Sarto", "Love Among the Ruins", "The Last Ride Together", and "The Ring and The Book". Browning found and studied humanity not only in the English towns and villages but on the Roman campagna in Venetian gondolas, in Florentine streets, in the show bound forests of Russia, on the coast of Normandy and the salt plains of Brittany.

### Characterization of Browning

The Characters of Shakespeare's Hamlet as revealed in his soliloquies was much too famous in his day. Browning was a great lover of Shakespeare's dramas, particularly of the soliloquies in his plays. So he chose for himself the human soul as a subject of his poems. He analysed the elements of spiritual experience in his poems. First of all, he composed an autobiographical poem entitled Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession. Here the poet expressed the elements of his own experiences of life. His next poem Paracelsus was composed in dramatic form in this poem, he diligently makes a psychological study in the spiritual experience of Paracelsus, a scholar and physician of the Renaissance Period. Paracelsus, acquires as much knowledge as he can under the conviction that knowledge can perfect life.

In Paracelsus, Browning analyses the elements of his inner conflict desires, frustrations etc. The analysis of his soul amply shows Browning's "Knowledge of the causes of spiritual growth and decay, his subtle analyses of motive and counter motive, his eloquence of pleading a cause, the enkindled power and beauty of his language, when blown upon by passion."

His next poem was Sordello. In its preface, he clearly writes that he is a poet of spiritual experiences. He states, "This historical declaration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires of my stress lay on the incidents in the development of the soul, little else is worth study."

Another peculiarity of Browning's Characterisation is that his characters are all drawn from the city. Unlike William Wordsworth, Browning has no touch of the recluse about him, he is the child of cities and not of rural solitudes. The faces in city streets are sacred to him; they wear for him the very mask of the deity. Moreover, as a poet of man, Browning is not interested in the mass of men and women, but in the life and character of individuals. He was hugely interested in all human beings but it would be quite untrue to say that he loved humanity. He is the poet of man and not of men.

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### Psycho-Analytical Patterns of Browning's Characters

Browning is largely a poet of lovely and solitary human natures who has no relatives to bother about he is essentially a poet of single characters in solitude and as Browning deals little with the commonplace in human nature, so he passes by the a light concern with those which they enter by passion or choice. The bond of Kinship, the love between parents and children, brothers and sisters, so prolific of poetry elsewhere, is singularly rare and unimportant in Browning's. Works he portrays love between men and women only or sexual love as a kindling theme. The characters of husband, of wife or of lovers vibrate for him with a poetry more thrilling than that of any other poet of his generation. His choicest and loneliest figure are lovely and unattached. Pippa, David, Pompilia, Sordello, Parcelsus, Mildred have no ties of home or blood.

Browning evinces a keen interest in the worst of human nature; he is as much interested in the noble and the generous as in the wicked and the crooked. He has a dramatic interest in villainy, crime and abnormality of every kind. The more subtle and complex the crime, the greater is Browning's interest in it. In *Porphyria's Lover*, the beloved is murdered by her lover. Murderers cheats, villains and depraved natures, of all shades find their place in the poems of Browning.

Browning also exhibits the seamy side of life as does Wordsworth. His characters are divisible into good and bad; even his rogues have much good in them. The poet shows that there is some good in those sinners whom even the sinners have abandoned. He shows that even a mean imposter like Sludge has a human soul. The poet is at his best in the depiction of complex human natures. He illustrates his philosophy of life, his faith in God and his faith in the essential goodness of human nature through his poems.

Browning's technique of Psycho-analysis in his poetry involves the presence of a particular poetic form, it is called dramatic monologue. It is a kind of comprehensive soliloquy. It establishes the fact that the poet has made the human soul, a subject of his psychological study and poetic theme. He wants to investigate the whole province of the soul and the interplay of its reactions to the influence of environment. Infact, the dramatic monologue is the theatre within whose stage walls Browning represents the inner drama of a soul. It may be well compared with Shakespeare's soliloquy.

Dramatic situation forms the most important element in Browning's poems. The situation becomes dramatic because it provokes a storm of thoughts and feelings in the central character. It creates inner conflict in the mind of the speaker. The spiritual conflict should be so intense as to force the speaker to make self-exploration and self disclosure. In *Porphyria's Lover*, the lover sits beside his beloved whom he has strangled to death. There is a great conflict in his mind. She was his beloved but he has murdered her. Then he begins his self-disclosure. He says that his beloved come to see him in the stormy atmosphere of the night. Her parents did not like him. She has come to meet him secretly. She took off her wet cloak and shawl and fell into his embrace. It was the happiest moment. Suddenly he decided to kill her because he wanted to make her his own forever. So he strangled her to death with a string of her own yellow hair. Is it a sin? In response to this question, he says:

And thus we sit together now,  
And all night long we have not stirred,  
And yet God has not said a word

Another example of intense dramatic situation is depicted through the *Last Ride Together*. The lover begins self-revelation, when he and his beloved last ride together. It is the moment of highest joy for him. He tells that his beloved has rejected his marriage proposal but she has agreed to ride with him for the last time. When they ride together, he calls the present moment as the experience of heaven itself. Thus Browning catches his characters in a psychological moment of introspection and lets us see in their minds the causes and results of their previous actions.

Browning's art of characterization is revealed through the poet's psychological insight. He conceives a character with a particular dominant tendency. For example, he conceives of *Andrea Del Sarto* as an infatuated lover devoid of any lofty ideal in life. He sends his own wife to her lover. He is conscious of his unfaithfulness and evil intentions. Yet he sends her away to her illicit lover. In *Evelyn Hope*, Browning creates a character of a middle aged man, an ideal lover, who loves Evelyn's hope for love's sake. He has a firm belief that though they are parted in this birth, they would reunite in the next birth.

**Conclusion**

Browning's real interest was not in the external aspects of the characters. His real interest was in the incidents in the development of a soul." That is why, he does not define the physical charms of even of his female characters. We know their beauty only by the passion which they excite. He was interested in the study of the soul, in psychological analysis, in probing deep into the mental processes of his characters, in analysing their motives and in laying bare their souls before his readers. He was interested in rendering the 'inner man', in painting the 'inner landscape'. His purpose was primarily "soul dissection" and his sensibilities found the best expression in his dramatic monologues.

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