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***Dramatic Monologue in Bidart's Work "Half-Light" (2017)***

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**ABSTRACT:**

This paper aims at investigating dramatic monologue in Frank Bidart's poems. It discusses the way Bidart was affected by certain poets in terms of the implication of the dramatic monologue device and the power that affected his implementation and his application of this particular genre. Bidart proposes that a poet has a lot of inner consciousness. He receives various voices so he can visualize how to begin from varied places and keep a certain distance from the voice that expresses out of its sense, agony, or annoyance. Bidart has to examine the reasons for definite feelings at a particular point in time because one's emotional state should not be considered for granted. However, a poet should keep some distance from the characters in the poem as well as keep a sort of skepticism concerning oneself. This study suggests that Bidart's dramatic monologue is a contemporary genre that is significantly established at the last stage of his script with the release of his poetic work "*Half Light*". The study analyzed two poems of Bidart's work including *Old and Young*, and *Thirst*. Results of the study showed that Bidart's poetic forms and themes relate to many issues including the point of time in which the poet published his poems, the setting and situations, and the poet's psychological state of mind.

**Keywords:** Frank Bidart, monologue, poet, half, dramatic, poetry, light  
**Introduction**

Readers and critics are praised to be the most energizing poets nowadays. Frank Bidart is a poet of many poetic collections such as "*Half-Light*" (2017). Bidart was born in 1939 in California State in the United States of America. He received education from California University and Harvard University, lately. He published his first poem "*Golden State*" in 1973 which represented the nature of the relationship between the son and his father. "Herbert White" was his second poetic work (1977) that discussed the aspects and characteristics of dramatic monologue. Bidart was appraised by varied critics for his "*the Sacrifice*" collection that was released in 1983. The collection included a collection of five poems visualizing the sense of

guilt. Lately, Bidart published two new collections *Music Like Dirt* (2002), *Star Dust* (2005), *The Third Hour of the Night* (2013), and *Metaphysical* (2017). For his eminent poetic work during the period 1965-2016, Bidart received the Pulitzer Prize for his poetic collection “*Half-Light*”. Then, Bidart was chosen to be the lead and chancellor of the American Academy of poets (2003-2009). Bidart lived an energetic time and featured a special style of life and genre of writing poems (Halliday, 2019). He shows a unique manner of daring feelings and themes. Bidart’s poetry was featured by reflecting personal impressions by gathering memories that represent our belongings which are referred to as the materialization of memory, selection, and longing by which we preserve our experience (Jeffrey & Keniston, 2016). Therefore, such memories collection resembles the experience of the vague collection of a lifespan’s gatherings (Hammer, 2008). Bidart’s poetic work shows personal background of sophisticated myths that created part of his melodies. His previous literary works reflect his awareness particularly in “the Book of the Body” (1977) and “the Sacrifice” (1983) composed in a collection titled “in the Western Night (1990)” that comprised “the First Hour of Night” poetic work. It is worth mentioning that Bidart’s poetic work was pretentious by the creativity of relevant poets who affected Bidart's work (Hammer, 2008, p.63).

Bidart composed many poetic collections in which he received many awards for his excellence and creativity through the years 2013-2018. Bidart’s lyrics attained many spectators throughout a period when the main movement and confessionalism were declining where New Surrealism, New Formalism, and language poetry developed (Anderson, 2015). Though, Bidart’s lyrics ignored the features of these activities. His poetry was reflected as “post-confessional by opponents (Anderson, 2015). Furthermore, Bidart associated the literary practice of dramatic soliloquy with the characters, structures, design, and plot (Anderson, 2015). Bidart uses the concept an “other” as a character that undergoes mental crisis in most of his literary work. Anderson (2015) states that Bidart’s situations are hyperbolic and social (Anderson, 2015). They are generally certain features of Bidart’s voice that help bridge the reader and accept a generally impassable mind (Anderson, 2015).

### **Figures Affected Bidart’s Poetic Work**

Many eminent figures in the field of poetry affected Bidart’s journey of writing poems such as Eliot and Pound. For him, Eliot was perhaps the most chosen figure amongst the 20th-century poets (Rosana, 2008). In addition, Bidart was charmed by Pound for being more liberated compared to other poets that Bidart used in his writing to an excessive extent. This made critics in the field address Bidart as

an occult Poundian writer as shown in “*Cantos*”, which is an extensive writings that present Bidart’s creativity among the other belongings that could include any theme in the domain (Gale, Cengage, 2016). The cause behind this distinct concern in Pound’s writing is establishing a base that Bidart could implement in his writings, which reveals in his infrequent themes and characters (Gale, 2016). Other poets than Eliot and Pound who influenced Bidart’s poetic style were Brower, Robert Lowell, and others who took the interest Bidart during his education at Harvard University (Chiasson, 2002). These poets presented special effect on Bidart’s writings.

The knowledge Bidart received from dominant writers assisted in initiating new approaches. One of the important effects that appear on Bidart is viewed in his approach to using the notion of dramatic strategies that formed his poetic work (Chiasson, 2002). Bidart admits actual commitment to those writers and critics, particularly to Frost and Brower as well as the genre of reading he showed; his connection via Lowell to memoirs or confessionalism. The effect of poets on Bidart is observed in his approaches, which he used for demonstrating vibrant voice in the writing (Chiasson, 2002). With this inspiration and learned knowledge, Bidart used a special metaphor for representing poetry. Chiasson (2002) explains that the issue of poetic work is mainly one of the results of a suitable pattern of speech for Bidart. Poets differ in perceiving poetic work. Yet, Chiasson (2002) shows that Wallace Steven’s figurative poles can be called mind and world. Bidart would be called spirit, body, voice, or form as well as being expressionist in poetic work (Chiasson, 2002). Further, illustrating the notion of an organic process implemented by Bidart as a metaphor to reveal the decreation and recreation proces as a Poundian effect (Niemann, 2008). The organic process idea links the content of poem with its surface pattern. It is an innate process that shapes as it grows itself from within, and the richness of its improvement is one and similar to the excellence of its outer style (Niemann, 2008). This reveals that the content and form of poetic work are interrelated concerning the shape implied in the poem that can be explicitly viewed in Bidart’s poems. He implements a distinctive poetic style exposing the inner struggle between voice and form (Niemann, 2008).

### **Dramatic Monologue as a Literary Genre**

Various literary forms including drama, short story, novel, epic, lyric, and related literary forms have been the focus of meticulous analysis. Though, one of the mythical literary forms that showed reasonably little concern for abandoned issues is a dramatic monologue. An explanation for the abandonment of this literary form is appearing common and simply understood for taking many

connected genres' features (Sessions, 1974). However, one of the primary efforts to understanding dramatic monologue was taken by Stopford A. Brooke who dedicated one episode of his work to discuss the implementation of dramatic monologue by Tennyson (Sessions, 1974). Thus, dramatic monologue refers to the speaker, audience, and occasion. It is slightly akin to lyric as defined by Claud Howard (Sessions, 1974). Additionally, Sessions (1974) adds that the incessant interaction between the speaker and the audience is one more element that can be included in the definition of dramatic monologue (Sessions, 1974). Dramatic monologue connects openly to tragedy and comedy life (Sessions, 1974). Dramatic monologue can be connected to life catastrophe since it reveals subjects, which reflect human agonies. It is related to recollected past experiences and tortures that are explained in Bidart's poems. Different eminent critics presented changing extents of style while implementing this genre.

Though, what distinguishes the type of dramatic monologue is the eminent existence of the three components including occasion, audience, speaker, or the circumstances in which the speakers and audience. Dramatic monologue, therefore, is viewed as a speech genre that involves an existing speaker in dramatic circumstances that are distinctive for the hearer. However, Bidart's character is taken completely to practice the interest he generates concerning the voice. Mentioning occasion component, Sessions (1974) shows that Browning described the interaction, which occurs between speakers and hearers as an absolute affair that happens in a certain situation. This may be taken as a measure of an individual's life. However, Hobsbaum (1975) provides one more measurement of the components of the poet in dramatic monologue. He states that one of the greatest qualities of the dramatic monologue is that it is pronounced by a character that is not the poet. This discusses the notion that the poet when composing dramatic monologue attempts to provide the audience with the feeling that the themes revealed in the poem are not individual but rather collective themes. Thus, to make the audience exceed in their decision concerning the experience revealed, the poet in dramatic monologue inclines to keep away his emotional state behind another eccentric person that is the utterer of the poem, consequently that his articulated moods would be that of people in common. That is, via dramatic monologue, writers can show specific individualities allowable only in dramatic monologue patterns in which dramatizing an attitude could be viewed as an outsider (Hobsbaum, 1975). Howard and Curry emphasize the importance of the speaker's moods being influenced by the hearer.

Exploring the “occasion” components or setting of monologue, Hobsbaum (1975) shows one more distinctive component that separates this literary genre of drama from others. Whereas the storyline in the play is “sequential”, the narration happens at a setting in a distinct point in time, an explicitly determined present merely by recapping and adopting the protagonist’s character in previous experience (Hobsbaum, 1975). One of the original artworks of dramatic monologue is associated with Drayton’s poet, which states since there is no assistance people should be happy and go on in their life-circle where the voice, audience, and occasion are recognized (Sessions, 1974). To provide an inclusive description of monologue genre, Phelps considers dramatic monologue as sequence of comments typically confessional, discussed either verbally or in an epistolary pattern to another individual or audience (Sessions, 1974). Outlining the growth of dramatic monologue, Sessions (1974) states that dramatic monologue experienced two phases of development one includes its original use by Browning, and the other phase extends from Browning’s time till contemporary day. He adds a monologue emerged as a reaction to the necessity for a contemporary genre of literary manifestation that would appear more openly and compulsorily in the contemporary phases of the existing culture and literary work (Sessions, 1974). This momentary overview of dramatic monologue calls for further analysis.

### **Dramatic Monologue Development**

Dramatic monologue has experienced many phases of expansion. The developmental phase is the first phase of the growth of dramatic monologue. In this stage, the dramatic monologue has been historically followed till the point of reaching climax and perfection being affected by resources from other literary genres receiving a lot of contributions from different entities (Howard, 2019). Therefore, the Elizabethan phase in which the growth of dramatic monologue at this phase experienced sensible and sensible constructs (Howard, 2019). This era expanded from the Elizabethan Age till its implementation by Browning, and from Browning until the present era. The Elizabethan phase helped develop dramatic monologue showing its main features, which paved the way for greater success. Phase three, however, is referred to as the Victorian phase. This phase showed that dramatic monologue achieved its ultimate progress and was ranked as a contemporary genre of poems. Therefore, the Victorian age’s features were joined as the absolute era of monologue’s growth. Concerns in sociology, components in the poem, life issues in 19<sup>th</sup> century, and desire for equality caused an excessive interest in eccentric depiction and therefore in a dramatic monologue that provided a comprehensive representation of oddity (Howard,



2019). Tennyson and Browning were eminent poets of this phase; they used dramatic monologue lengthily and showed ultimate contribution to it. The Miller's Daughter is one of Tennyson's earlier monologues that is reflected in its attractiveness, easiness, and rhythmic undertaking.

In conclusion, the source and implementation of monologue indicate that this genre developed as an effect of sensible and insensible growth. But in Browning, involvement from diverse sources created the play. Browning was the ultimate accomplishment of monologue, which resulted from pervading dramatic essence into the long-standing form of poetic origin; dramatic monologue developed into hybrid genres of poetry and drama. Distinct qualities of such a genre validated its organization as a contemporary form of poetry. This is understood from its widespread implementation and environment since it is the utmost democratic type of poetry. This contemporary distinctive genre of poetry has a related significant role from a modern and significant poet. Bidart's unconventional style helped in the success and development of dramatic monologue in a mode that added to its success once more. The idea of the dramatic monologue has perceived vital phases of development that prolonged over many centuries, which presented the birth of this notion until it grew to be a glowing image during the era of Bidart.

### **Research Methods**

The researcher implements a qualitative research design approach to analyze the use of dramatic monologue in Bidart's poetic work "Half-Light" which includes three original poems *Sun, Old and Young*, and *Thirst*, but only two of them were included in the analysis of this study are "*Old and Young, and Thirst*". Therefore, data analysis is grounded on pertinent literary approaches. The researcher examines stanzas in the three poems by looking at figurative language features such as persona, punctuational devices, italics, metaphors, typography, and syntax. The researcher herself and poetic texts are the research instruments. She reads the verses and stanzas in the text that relate to the use of linguistic devices (persona, punctuational devices, italics, metaphors, typography, and syntax) in the three selected poems. The study was carried out during the scholastic year 2022/2023 at Um Al Qura University in Saudi Arabia

### **Literature Review**

Research has undergone various changes in the study of poetic genres. The contemporary movement attempts to examine every type of genre separately. This reflects the reality that traditional approaches to examining literary work are based on the age of the field in which varied literary genres are shown currently (Howard, 2019). Therefore, this approach takes every literary genre under analysis into emphasis

which has the benefit of improving every category of these genres keeping them vibrant to prose audiences and critics. Another benefit is that the indispensable growth of literature is highlighted (Howard, 2019). What assured achievement of this contemporary approach is that it is not limited only to the main types such as plays, heroic episodes, and novels. It correspondingly includes such categories as short stories and lyrics. Howard (2019) states that one of the drawbacks of this approach is its failure to provide a full cure for the dramatic monologue literary genre (Howard, 2019).

Howard (2019) showed this catastrophe as partially related to the current growth of dramatic monologue as well as the absence of escalating its contribution to diverse poetic genres. The literature gap as stated by Howard (2019), is embodied in the fact that only one literary work and scarce studies have been inscribed on this type of genre, but none has attempted to conduct further research instead of illustrating the practice of its established form. To deal with this gap, Howard suggests tracing the basis of a monologue by analyzing the work of famous poets who played a significant role in the growth of this literary genre until it was established as a distinctive genre of poetry. A dramatic monologue is a type of genre in poems composed as views exposed by speakers. [Abrams](#) (2005), states that the implementation of dramatic monologue reveals three characteristics when it is implemented in poetry:

- i. The person who does not articulate the speech that creates the entire poem in a particular setting at a cute point in time (single person).
- ii. An addressee is a person who communicates and addresses the rest of the audience; they express, utter, and react only based on the evidence in poetry.
- iii. The principal controller of the poet's selection and preparation of what is said exposes the audience in a manner to achieve its interest, character, and appeal (Abrams, 2005).

That is, a monologue involves three components the occasion, audience, and speaker. The occasion, unconditionally, refers to the tenacity of the poem. Whilst, the speaker is the narrator who narrates and shares feelings. The audience associates with the listener who is involved in the monologue. Howard (2019) provides a momentary investigation of Browning's "*Patriot*" to help develop the three components in a monologue. He added, three distinctive characteristics of dramatic monologue exist in this poem. The first characteristic is an occasion that occurs in the poem. Browning's purpose was to present indecisiveness of public views via "the Patriot", who was formerly a worshipped protagonist, but regrettably encountered his finale by those worshippers (Howard, 2019).

The second characteristic is the speaker. He is personified as a representative of a “patriot”. As stated previously, the voices of “speakers” in dramatic monologue incidentally reveal the torture or inner fight of a poet; a notion revealed in Bidart’s poems. A similar notion was exposed in Browning’s “patriot” who provided dedication to society. However, he was agonized by his worshippers. Though, he stayed real and ethical. His torture exposed nostalgic thoughts “‘Tis God shall repay”. Patriot's lifecycle is a memory of the organic cycle that was mentioned previously by Niemann. This reveals the development of “death” and “evolution”, in which the voice or poet communicates with agonistic thoughts. The third characteristic is the spectators. In Browning’s poetry, they exist through listeners who experienced the agony and final feelings of a “patriot”. Howard (2019) points out that dramatic monologue shows a contradiction in terms of the epic length. The former (monologue) is described as a short genre whilst the latter (epic) is classified a lengthy genre.

. According to this length alteration, the epic is the most appropriate type of genre for offering a lengthy narration of actions, whilst a monologue is proposed to provide short performance of an occasion. Yet, Howard (2019) points out another important change compared to dramatic monologue is the “antithesis” of epic. While epic represents festivity of universal importance of the hero’s knowledge, a monologue echoes “individuality”.

Being distinguished from epic, dramatic monologue is similar to poetry (Howard, 2019). Commonly, poetic and dramatic monologues bear resemblance to one another in different phases. Both of them show personal’s knowledge. Furthermore, both of them possess similar notions of organic harmony. Every one of them, in each portion, adds to a unified impression (Howard, 2019). Though, what differentiates poetic from monologue is that although a poem is subjective since it reveals sentimental conclusions, a monologue is measured as creation of feelings (Howard, 2019). One more difference between poetic and dramatic monologue is that; in poems, poets articulate feelings openly being overturned in dramatic monologue. In a dramatic monologue, poets incidentally articulate feelings via speakers who speak at a certain time to some specific audience, therefore satisfying three components of dramatic monologue. This previous notion is entirely different from poetic monologue where feelings continue openly from the distanced individual (Howard, 2019). However, dramatic monologue not only shows the similarity and closeness of poetic work but also the similarity and familiarity with the drama genre. Howard (2019) states that this familiarity is represented by the word dramatic. Therefore, the link between poetry and drama is represented through dramatic monologue. Drama, thus,



is associated with the poetry genre, and monologue is presented through exclusive individual communication. In addition, dramatic monologue is connected with drama by showing the word dramatic and representing the feelings of speakers' poets in a dramatic setting.

Dramatic monologue varies from the drama in certain aspects. It varies in form and style. Drama forms, therefore, require the use of setting as acts and scenes, whilst dramatic monologue does not require a plot. In drama, actions go via sensitive passions and moods to reach climax, whilst in monologue, these intensified movements are initial to a dramatic occasion where speakers act. Therefore, this represents the scene in which the voice of the dramatic monologue seems to look like the climax of the drama. Furthermore, in a monologue, no phases of instructions or actions of human beings are given, which expose struggle and intensified feelings of characters. Feelings are openly articulated by voice through the occasion on which the speaker acts. Though, this is done not to transfer drama but to intensify it (Howard, 2019). Yet, one last significant point is the dissimilarity between monologue in drama and dramatic monologue form. A monologue in drama reveals simple thoughts audibly, from the character's part, whilst thinking to continue spontaneously and originally in a mode that articulates his uniqueness, the dramatic soliloquy is affected by the character of the audience. Furthermore, monologue suggests a lack of spectators, which is compared with the opposite position in dramatic soliloquy (Howard, 2019).

Having discussed concepts and definitions related to dramatic monologue, much research has contributed to the study of Bidart's concept of dramatic monologue recently. Figlerowicz (2018) examined Bidart's poetry which related to temporality issues and connects with an individual's acceptance of oneself. Bidart implements the poetry genre to characterize the voice's inconsistent efforts to explore their present as emphasized at an explicit event of previous memories. Bidart's literary work "*Hours of Night*" explains this subject in logical and emotional style. Tucker (2016) examined Shock Troupers: Browning, Bidart, and Drama of Prosody. The investigation explored the contribution of a shock to poetic novelty which is of minor concern. Tucker embraces the contrast between Robert Browning's (1836) "Porphyria's Lover" and Frank Bidart's "Herbert White" (1973). Authors claim original soliloquies and are concerned with the formal approach in which a lyrical influence holds readers' devotion immediately. Though, Bidart's couplets are generated communally. He interlinks literary and political discourses with isolated monologues one transmits to oneself. The oddest and most stimulating aspect of Bidart's commitment to the existing past is

that it also involves a commitment to fictional and social past texts (Jeffrey & Ann, 2016, p.124).

### **Bidart's Contribution to Dramatic Monologue Development**

Adding to dramatic monologue's development, Bidart's reveals distinct harmony between his lyrics. That is, his poetic collection shows a comprehensive process including several smaller ones. Through this comprehensive development, Anderson defines it as the "concept of the self" that is preserved vigorously although it is used in a particular state of affairs with specified inner feelings of the character. What offers Bidart's contribution to the common sense of universality, is an amalgamation of distressed imaginary characters that spell out features of poet's biography (Anderson, 2015). A dramatic monologue is an appropriate approach that suits Bidart's lyrics and simultaneously Bidart confirms to be the most modern style or genre to be used nowadays. This is because dramatic monologue shows the reality that cannot be best articulated in openly personal style, confessional poet, fictional voices, authenticity, or accuracy (Anderson, 2015), which makes Bidart a post-confessional poet. Bidart reinforces departure from the previous Confessional movement (Anderson, 2015). He is different from relevant confessional lyrics in different respect being distinguished in his framing of poems or free verse. Such a genre of poetry has not been implemented earlier throughout the 1950s and 1960s, which is viewed in his original two books, "Book of the Body" and "Golden State". These books are a point of parting from outdated space, punctuation, and confessional content (Anderson, 2015). Bidart enhances shade of legitimacy to imaginary speakers, their words develop to be active reflections. Furthermore, Bidart's punctuation and lineation dramatize the dead end in which realization, ethics, and frame themselves exist (Anderson, 2015). Though, in the situation of "Ellen West" and "Herbert White", Bidart showed an outstanding utility of "irregular typography than does his poems (Anderson, 2015). Use of typography in Bidart's verses is indispensable to reflect the way a voice counterparts the strength of mental power.

Early explained features of Bidart's lyrics show the significant role he has played in developing dramatic monologue in terms of its revival and development. Therefore, departing from conventional confessional tendency is another contribution of Bidart to the progress of dramatic monologue. To conclude, Bidart is considered a great contributor to dramatic monologue. He is the one who articulated segregation from Confessionalism through using dramatic monologue as shown in "Ellen West" and "Herbert White" poems (Anderson, 2015). Bidart's monologue includes exceptional features that place him in the edge of history. He includes mentally sick people in

communal fabric that creates their identities. For instance, defining Herbert White as a paedophile necrophile, the poem breaks in developing memory that concludes outrageous movements. With “Ellen West”, the poem emphasizes development of distinctiveness disposed to changeable variations (Anderson, 2015).

Thus, Bidart’s implementation of dramatic monologue generates an “other”, who struggles against voice. Another indication of Bidart’s influence in developing monologue is the exclusive implementation of “feint” that splits poetry from confessional form (Anderson, 2015). Bidart drove monologue to universal merits that support audience identify psychological characteristics of persona, a Victorian monologue feature (Anderson, 2015). With mental characteristics of persona with what is titled as “anti-self” existing in the voice of dramatic monologue, Bidart offers himself the necessary universe and freedom that are not common amongst Confessional poets, where the lack of obstructions between voice and poet restricted concentration of drama implemented into crafting, which Phillips relates to as poet’s “personal mythology” (Anderson, 2015). Though, the voice in the monologue reveals which independent truth Bidart’s monologues covers. Highlighting voice, Bidart illustrates.

*“How he can write in voices so different from his own: “Once I finally get the typed page to the point where it does seem ‘right’—where it does seem to reproduce the voice I hear—something very odd happens: the ‘being’ of the poem suddenly becomes the poem on paper, and no longer the ‘voice’ in my head. (Frank Bidart’s Interview, [poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org))*

Bidart remarks distinctive use of “voice” exposing the poem’s autonomy and separation from confessional conventions. Bidart, by utilizing “voice”, provides himself a galaxy by which he views and be viewed to express whatever remembrance that he could not express earlier. Therefore, based on previously discussed arguments, Bidart’s exceptional use of monologue exposed how contemporary revived fictional genres to free himself and others from fascinating tortures. The next section will illustrate some late verses composed by Bidart attempting to use and confer his role in developing a dramatic monologue

### **Discussion of the Analysis**

This section of the study discusses the results of the analysis of Bidart’s poetic collection “Half-Light” which comprises two poems Old and Young and Thirst. Therefore, data analysis examined the use of figurative language features applied by Bidart such as persona, punctuational devices, italics, metaphors, typography, and syntax. Based on the analysis of poetic texts in the three poems, it is viewed that Bidart’s poetry is constantly involved in moral guilt personally

and culturally. His powerful poetry is shown in the implementation of “tone” that results because of internal feelings. Bidart considers such poems as a reaction to inner command and try to expose all indirect inflections of individuals’ voice (Swiggart, 2000). Therefore, Bidart’s implementation of dramatic monologue shows the unsettling insight of conscious guilt, a remarkable style of narrative plot that relates to mental speech with a slight dependence on confessional lyrical devices as well as a thematic emphasis on the suffering occasioned by people’s vague intermixed soul and body.

Mariani (2019) highlights that “*Half-Light*” is a collection of poems (1965-2016) in 700-plus pages. This collection of poems relate to “self” (in Yeats’s meaning) or anti-self bent via transfigurative myth (Mariani, 2019). Assortment of “*Half-Light*” reproduces Bidart’s disturbing memories when his father and mother got divorced when he was young sending him off without admitting sexuality. However, for Bidart, monologue is a personal space for overlooking universe from contemporary viewpoint to free his disturbing experience. Mariani (2019) observed that Bidart could never see himself but in his poems, and then not even eventually there (Mariani, 2019). While writing a monologue, Bidart provides a message to write down not only his profound panic, desertion, and guiltiness, but also the need to admit love for others. Therefore, Bidart’s expressions indicate that, the poet enjoyed poems that connect “something passionate with persona (Levinson, 1992).

### **1. Thirst**

In this poem, Bidart shows his creativity by writing another poem “*Thirst*” in his poetry collection “*Half-Light*”. Here, Bidart reveals to the audience one of his solemn desires in this universe, feeling “thirsty”. His thirst exposes how honorably thirsty the universe is:

*“The miraculous warmth that arose so implausibly from rock had, within it, thirst.*

Same as water, when morals are not provided sufficiently, individuals make their souls get thirsty and dry. Such dryness leads to the desire to please yearning for what is missed and unspoken as stated by Bidart. As is always, Bidart’s use of personal pronouns shows how he creates a “voice” to reveal internal thoughts to the audience. Whatsoever pronoun is utilized, it develops to be generating a similar self to gossip to the audience about what the poet wishes. Therefore, with Bidart's primary implementation of “you” in the third line of “*Thirst*”, one can assume that Bidart is speaking to himself to discover his feeling from a distance that may provide him with calm thinking (Halliday, 2019). Though, this does not show that Bidart is struggling to reveal his longing, rather “you” is a personification of “I”

referring to the poet and “you” representing readers. “You” is, therefore, considered a style of collective meaning that includes the needs and struggles of people in common. What differentiates Bidart’s use of pronouns in monologues is the struggle, which speaks of inevitable facts about all people’s lives that may not motivate all poets related to “you” (Halliday, 2019). Bidart’s distinctive use of pronouns differentiates dramatic monologue from other genre. This provides Bidart freedom and privilege compared to other poets and the conventional utility of dramatic monologue. Therefore, Bidart generates another transfer toward using personal pronouns. Linking the personal pronouns “you” and “it”, Bidart improves other elements of the poem as illustrated below.

*“As if, each time, that is all you are allowed. The way back to it is never the same”.*

If the pronoun “you” is viewed as indirect spectators and simultaneously the audience, the query, therefore, is what that “it” is. Use of “it” shows that Bidart is looking back at previous ruminations. Though, he desires to look back with a “glimpse” that might represent means of pleasure. Bidart also articulates the meaning of torture since retreating is “never the same”. It is the “way back” that characterizes the avoidness of this universe, which is driven in a cruel sphere to provide happiness with much torture. Therefore, “it” rests high in the poet’s “promise” to achieve it:

*“Once you have been there, always the promise of it. However, once more, Bidart makes another utilization of the “you” and “it” to assume that each one’s pursuit is to have “it”.*

The use of “half the time” shows Bidart alienation of not giving “all the time” discovering desires. This indicates the case of “distraction or exhaustion” that Bidart suffers from. It is a case that makes manhood a target. Therefore, Bidart joins two personal pronouns “I” and “you” in the following line as if the speaker is talking to an indirect readers:

*“I hope you’re guessing Orgasm or Love, or Hunger for the Absolute, or even The Sublime”.*

Commenting on this association of the “I” and “you”, Halliday (2019) spectacles:

*“What is the effect of “I hope you’re guessing . . .”? It is a deft shift of tone from the vatic to the candidly chatty – for a moment Frank Bidart sounds like the sort of poet who enjoys dissolving (or plays at dissolving) the space between writer and reader so that we seem to be conversing at a bar with the poet who is drafting a poem in front of us (Halliday, 2019)”.*

This shows influence of combining poets and readers, therefore, developing to be one unit of feeling, or, this means, both the voice and



audience share the knowledge and similar pursuit of confidence. Halliday (2019) states that certain poets might utilize a similar method of combining the personal pronoun “I” and “you” in one line only to shock distanced readers, which Bidart does not do. He “*hopes we’re guessing Orgasm, or Love, or Hunger for the Absolute, or even The Sublime*” (Halliday, 2019). Halliday drives ahead visualizing Bidart meaning of “*I hope you are guessing*” stating:

*“I think the audible and intended effect of “I hope you’re guessing” is a wearily wistful sound as if to say “I know that my theme is not unfamiliar (Halliday, 2019)”.*

Bidart moves to describe the kinds of pleasure that he/others are struggling with in this lifecycle. Therefore, along with “*thirst*” that controls the poem's commencement, Bidart is lamenting damage of pleasure understood as “*Sublime*”. Based on the feeling of dissatisfaction of not being able to achieve enjoyment, Bidart continues by stating: “*Each time you think that you can predict how to get there the next time, soon you cannot*”. These feelings expose human torture being deceived by his ability to achieve what cannot be added. This savagery of life, which continuously confuses human life satisfies the poet with struggles. Therefore, there is always faith:

*“You have been a mile above the storm, looking down at it; and, at the same time, full of almost-insight, obliterated at its center”.*

A faith in the “voice” of “singer” that depicts victory over sorrow is revealed loudly through “*microphone*” existing at “*the height of her powers*”. A distinguishing feature of Bidart’s monologues is his attitude towards feminine role as a cause of cultural downgrading and refusal of women. Therefore, providing “*height of ... powers*” to female contribution show no actual pleasure moving to be achieved without accepting all societies equivalently. Yet, what is contrasting to “*the singer’s voice*” is the difference from other poets composed by Bidart involved in the basis of pleasure. Halliday (2019) states that it is outstanding for Bidart to express happiness by “*enjoying someone else’s art*”, which a specimen in “*Thirst*” and “*Ecstasy*” poems (Halliday, 2019). Halliday (2019) also asks a query that specifies one more variance in “*Thirst*” as in “*singer*”, which is inferred by Bidart.

*“Bidart ends his dramatic monologue or rather his address to himself and other audience wondering. Creature coterminous with thirst”* (Halliday, 2019).

Bidart delicately asserts that people do not long for preference, given that the final line in the genre infers this is avoidable truth. Halliday (2019) emphasizes the exceptional association of “*coterminous with*” as “*synonymous with*” or “*indistinguishable from*” (Halliday, 2019). Bidart discovers himself as a “*creature coterminous*

*with thirst*" that still has desires. He sees himself as one of the "*queers of the universe*." The persona is used through the implementation of "you" in the final line of poet shows Bidart's creativity in his "voice" to make facts connected to "him". Highlighting on this, Halliday (2019) declares that Bidart's identity, persistently dwelling in Half-Light, is an exceptional, thought-provoking, and unforgettable creative accomplishment (Halliday, 2019). Reflecting on Bidart's "voice", Swiggart (2000) states voices show "*as if their*" unachievable idea has to be achieved but their mental, physical, and rational struggles are all active. This is because the responsibilities provided are unbearable (Swiggart, 2000). Swiggart (2000, p.128) quotes in "*Ellen West*" stating "*I shall defeat Nature*". This shows Bidart's sensible role in pleasing their wish to end with "*Thirst*" by free will through suffering and precious memories. Bidart's "voices" are conscious and can define logically devastating gravities, but still intends to overthrow this logic through a pure free will (Swiggart, 2000). Therefore, voices in Bidart's collection never wish to tell their past memories. They wish to replace them with random occasions with more eloquent ones (Swiggart, 2000).

As argued previously, one of Bidart's distinctive approaches is the use of punctuation, *italics*, and *capitalization*. Bidart's primary collection was featured by his unconventional implementation of typology and punctuation (Hammer, 2008). The use of this distinctive approach dramatized the great mental states of the poet's struggle in receiving their voice (Hammer, 2008). Bidart was fighting through his style to discover a suitable pattern that can reveal the spiritual and cognitive tension of his speakers. Discussing Bidart's use of punctuations and typography, Moldaw (2004) explains that Bidart's involved the use of grammar that takes words with different nuances of feelings since the era of Henry James (Moldaw, 2004). Moldaw (2004) indicates that Bidart's poems are voice-driven and their exteriors represent inner and outer plays (Moldaw, 2004). Moldaw (2004) adds Bidart's use of capitalization, italics, and punctuation is "*deployed as notational devices*" that reinforce Bidart's inner voice (Moldaw, 2004). This implementation of punctuation can simply be found in Bidart's "*Thirst*". *Thirst* involves eighteen short lines of prose disjointed by bullet points. Observing the style of poem as alienated (Halliday, 2019) reveals that this method would be a daring selection for writers, in contrast with radicals who insistently represent the use of white space, italics, capitalization, and punctuation all over Bidart's collection being remarkably tranquil and unsure.

Furthermore, Halliday (2019) states that because of the lack of metaphor implementation, excluding two events, this poem, therefore, rests on bullets and white-spacing of "*poetic effectiveness*" (Halliday,

2019). Therefore, punctuational techniques are purposely used by Bidart to make readers understand the meanings behind “*the pauses, emphases, urgencies, and languors in the voice*” (Moldaw, 2004, p.48). Additionally, strategies state thoughts, in which readers are overloaded with poetic’s density, which exposes that Bidart’s collections are shaped out of “*compelling necessity*” (Moldaw, 2004, p.48). Therefore, Moldaw moves to the point of discussing Bidart’s collections, particularly his collections “*Desire*” and “*Music Like Dirt*” being featured by a universe of “*lava-like glaze, as if they were fired in the kiln of a volcano*” dynamicity (Moldaw, 2004, p.48). This supports compelling necessity of Bidart’s collections. *Compelling necessity* is necessary to Bidart’s poetries to provide genuineness to the idea of dramatic monologue. Moldaw (2004) states that the notion of the use of punctuational strategies used by Bidart is not “divisionary; rather they provide a nuance of compulsive attention to detail. These devices provide an image that Bidart’s collections are created through “*investigation and transparency*”. This transparency reflects the poet’s style, and “*insights*” while composing a poem with “*sincerity of intention that, while never artless, seems without guile*” (Moldaw, 2004, p.49). It is necessary to mention that poems as an image of Bidart’s idea but not Moldaw’s view. Bidart showed an initial declaration of “*record*” or perceptions (Moldaw, 2004).

Bidart’s originality in using italics, capitalization, and punctuation devices show a dramatic monologue experience. Therefore, Bidart’s exceptional use of these devices, mainly typography, is one more influence on dramatic monologue development. By using italics and punctuation, Bidart gives special consideration to “*speaking tone of voice*” (Swiggart, 2000, p.130). This exposes that Bidart’s implementation of these devices intends to shed more light on the speaker’s voice and honest thoughts. Bidart attempts unbreakably to increase and decrease voice and its passionate by implementing italics, capitalization, spacing, typography, linebreaks, and systematically advanced classification of punctuation (Swiggart, 2000). Therefore, merits illustrated earlier subject matters, tone, and form that play important roles in developing dramatic monologue influences Bidart’s style. One more poem that represents Bidart’s implementation of a monologue is “*Old and Young*”.

## **2. Old and Young**

Old and Young is another masterpiece of Bidart’s collection. It represents Bidart’s manifestation of creativity, abilities, and techniques that he used to reveal the human dilemma. Though, this poem exposes one more dimension unlike that of the previously analyzed poetries. The persistent notion of “*voice*” is distinctive of Bidart’s poetries which is deceptive in “*Old and Young*” with

additional height. Rowe (2019) indicates that Bidart's poems are described by restraints of realizing the inner circle of life. It is an add-value to mention two expressions of great importance to Bidart's "*insight*" and "*illusion*". Unger (2018) states that Bidart's "*insight*" provides readers with necessary freedom to exceed the absolutes and illogicalities of our being. Unger (2019, p.10) adds in Bidart's collections, "*insight*" appealed directly visible as appropriate as keeping the term empathy aside. Nevertheless, if "*insight*" is an image of freedom concerning Bidart's privilege to voice, then, "*illusion*" is an additional word that characterizes the torture of this sphere. Unger (2019, p.10) states that "*insight*" and "*illusion*" are opposing ends. They prevail throughout Bidart's extensive expertise showing a type of torture and difference in the struggle between "*master*" and "*disaster*". Besy states, if not all, Bidart's collection is a type of feeling that disrupt restraints and obstruct the poet's mode of salvation and cleansing the feelings of guilt through history. Therefore, opponents reflect on Bidart's collection as a personal attempt to explain, firstly, his problem because of his past. *Voice* in Bidart's poems is restricted by another perception, called personification. Thus, Rowe (2019) states that Bidart's bias displays how the setting of being independence can communicate through diverse heights, layers, and constructions where arguments find specific use via multifaceted investigations of aesthetic embodiments.

Bidart's voice continuously shows existential catastrophes in which the soul and body are in struggle (Rowe, 2019). Voice describes why Bidart constantly holds thoughts of "*thirst*" with an eternal desire for an escape from this appealing emotion. Bidart's bias is one more feature that is to be provided in dramatic monologues. He played an important role in philosophical and psychological viewpoints. The psychological component is continually existing with Bidart as a soul and as a poet. His disturbing thoughts relate to his desertion by his parents. Since the break-up or separation of his parents, Bidart cannot feel happy, particularly with his mother and father, not recognizing his sexuality. His mother's adoration was an unreturned love. Bidart's torturing memory makes him feel anguished with many disgraceful feelings. Therefore, critics attempted to tie this painful past knowledge to Bidart's compositions. The dramatic and psychological notion of previous knowledge and development is perceived as the basis of the unavoidable destiny of adults is a dominant and persistent idea in Bidart's collections (Rowe, 2019). This idea is revealed in "*Old and Young*". Having this idea in mind, "*mirror*" contributes significantly to accepting Bidart's disturbance. "*Mirror*" involves many clarifications among which sorrow is the

subject because of the writers' oedipal multifaceted. Therefore, “*Old and Young*” is a thought that views the other in a “*mirror*”.

Additionally, Bidart uses “*you*” to ultimately reveal monologue and dialogue with himself through his internal perturbing self. The term “*someone*” is inferred spectator that speakers are expected to observe. This persona, who is being observed, can be Bidart “*himself*”. Though, “*Old and Young*” refers to voyage taken by Bidart through time to integrate incompatible pasts while watching in a “*mirror*”. Through the lines of the collection, Bidart surprises readers by questioning themselves, if there ever a show was initiated where two persons do not talk openly to each other. Therefore, he shows this idea by stating:

“*This is the place in nature we can meet*” (Rowe, 2019, p.136).

Therefore, the “*mirror*” operates intermediate in which Bidart can escape away from art but to art. Bidart’s “*mirror*” and answer to the separations and inconsistencies of human sorrow is, as it has continuously been, poetry, and creating art (Rowe, 2019). Besides, while examining the contribution of “*Herbert White*”, Bidart admits “*White*” is the opposite of me, the mirror is the reverse of my being in the universe (Rowe, 2019). It develops to be evident that the metaphor of “*mirror*” is psychologically and philosophically used by Bidart to reveal to readers what happens inside him. Bidart’s “*mirror*” operates as an escape from explicit self-conflict. It characterizes social incapacity to encounter inner disgraces and shocks. “*Mirror*” is certainly a human desire used to overwhelm conflicting historical memories, though; a man with his insufficiencies might not have the ability to encounter himself:

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Bidart has shown his important role in the development of dramatic monologue. Though not a contemporary poetic genre, but a recovered form of poetry, Bidart with his exceptional use of figurative devices that vary from the utility of his metaphors, grammar, and typography has provided original dimensions to dramatic monologue. With these contemporary dimensions, dramatic monologue appeared as an intermediate where personal memories and torture can be exposed or unconfined. Though, it cannot be stated that Bidart is indebted to dramatic monologue in every detail. As much as dramatic monologue succeeded once more, it also developed to provide an actual chance to prompt himself and resolve his dilemma. One main significant point is that Bidart provided many characteristics to dramatic monologues to keep them significant so that one can discover that freshly revitalized fictional form from different viewpoints. With Bidart’s influence, the dramatic monologue can be examined from numerous viewpoints; fictional,



psychological, or even philosophical. With his ironic, although, previous and contemporary involvement, Bidart has complemented his contribution to dramatic monologue.

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