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Robert Browning's poetry in the context of the Victorian English
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Introduction

Literature has a power that can show the real world of people's inner feelings and it is also one of the most important tools in teaching young generation. "Taking care of literature guarantees bright future of each nation" says President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in one of his speeches. He also adds that "in Uzbekistan, literature, art, and culture should be protected from becoming one's own business. They should stand the whole nation's property."¹

In our country people are fascinated to reading foreign literature, especially in English prose. Each year several English fiction books are translated into Uzbek language to satisfy the readers' demand and this interest of people is growing year after year. However, English poetry, in comparison with other genres, is not taking much attention in our society. In this research, we have planned to show the beauty of English poems through Robert Browning's lyrics.

The topicality of the research: Robert Browning's poetry, especially his dramatic monologues, intends to discover the societal problems such as religious conflicts, family relations, and unequal status of females in that era. Most of his poems include such characters who are not satisfied with the changes or rules established by the authorities.

Though the Victorian era glorified in the empire's economy, foreign affair policy, and in scientific spheres, the middle class people still suffered with bad labour condition, especially, women had not only working problems, but also family inequality that stopped their participation in public events freely. Browning showed all these problems in his poetry. If most of his poems were received as love stories in his time, now they can be judged as historical materials to investigate the Victorian era.

Robert Browning together with his wife experienced the obstacles of that period: they had to leave the country because of Elizabeth's family relations. And this research paper deals with Browning's poems that written after his wife's death.

¹ President's speech given in 2017, august 3. Tashkent

Here, we can analyze the psychological changes happened in both Robert Browning's literary career and his own personal life.

Problem development status: Robert Browning's works have been analyzed and this process is still going. Innumerable works on Browning's poetry have been published. Hiram Corson, Rowena Fowler, Mrs. Sutherland Orr, Glenn Everett are the main critics of Robert Browning. They discussed Browning's poetry in details. And, of course, we will use their works, as the materials, in our research.

However, Robert Browning's life is not much studied by the critics. In this research, G. K. Chesterton's "Robert Browning", W. Sharp's "The life and work of Robert Browning" are the main sources to investigate his life episodes.

Here we should decide which methods are going to be used throughout the research. We know that Romanticism and Modernism are closely related to each other with their similar elements such as both have a task to show human's inner feelings. But Robert Browning lived in Victorian era and this literary period is believed to be a link between these two trends. The methods applied in the work are: 1) a literary criticism such as psychoanalysis in order to catch the meaning of the works. In this case, we will use the theories of Freud, Bohannon, Lacan, as they were main representatives of the psychoanalytic criticism.

But the Victorian society includes some concrete events that affected the literary field, so the only method, psychoanalytic, might not be sufficient to discover and find the appropriate answers about Robert Browning and his poetry. So we will use another method, new-historicism, in our research paper. This helps us see the difference in the attitude of the readers in different time of period.

The **aim** of our research is to investigate psychological thinking of Browning toward societal changes through his dramatic monologues.

We put several tasks in order to achieve our aim:

- to have a look through materials that give historical dates
- to discuss the common themes used by Victorian poets
- to analyze Robert Browning's life episodes that affected his writings
- to analyze the themes that were treated by only Browning's point of view

— to be aware of the role of dramatic monologues in Robert Browning's literary career

— to reflect the gender relations in Browning's selected dramatic monologues

The object of this research is to study historical and psychological situation of the era through the new-historicism and psychoanalytic criticisms.

The subject of this research is to discover the psychological and historical aspects of Robert Browning's works.

Working hypothesis of the research: Dramatic monologues occupied the main part of Robert Browning's literary career. So far, many attempts have been made to discover the peculiarities of those monologues through applying different approaches. In addition to traditional approaches such as historical-biographical approaches, psychological, new-historicism approaches have been used in this work in order to explain the character's, at the same time the author's, psychological aspects and to show the power governed the author's work.

We know that the method new-historicism is supposed to discover the differences between social events, old and current information about the period. It also gives crucial solutions to the characters' actions in different situations. In order to get more reasons to understand the connection between the author and his characters, psychoanalytic literary criticism is directed to investigate. So in this research, new-historicism has been more touched than other methods.

Methodology of the research: We started the work with classifying the poems into two distinct groups, mythological-based and real-fact based, with the help of historical approach; the biographical approach was used to see the similarities between the author's own life and the characters' psychological approach was used to judge the characters, who are based on the real dates; new-historicism was applied to show how the attitudes toward the Browning's poetry changed in the last decades.

The research was proved by works of Greenblatt's "The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance", "Practicing New Historicism", "Towards a Poetic of Culture", Michel Foucault's "Power and Knowledge and Discourse", "The New

Cultural History”, “Telling the Truth about History”, “Writing History in the global Era”. Sigmund Freud’s “Project for a Scientific Psychology” and “Interpretation of Dream”, Brenner Arlow’s “Psychoanalytic Concepts and the Structural Theory”, Jacques Lacan “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis”.

Novelty of the research work is that we analyzed the characters based on both mythological dates and historical events in Browning’s selected dramatic monologues and we applied the new-historicism which is less used to Browning’s works.

Research materials of the dissertation paper include the texts of some most famous dramatic monologues of Browning such as “My Last Duchess”, “Andrea del Sarto”, “Porphyry’s Lover”, “The Laboratory”, etc. and his long epic-poem “The Ring and The Book”.

Theoretical value of this research: The analyzed research paper allowed identifying and clarifying:

- the main themes of Victorian poetry
- specificity of the themes in Browning’s poems
- the psychological aspect of gender relations in Browning’s poems

Practical value of the research: The results of the research work can be used for scientific purposes: writing scientific articles, qualification papers, and course papers. Some results might be used in the lectures and seminars on historical background of Victorian poetry, history of psychoanalysis and history of Robert Browning’s life, his works, and his writing style.

Publications: The findings of the research have been presented and published at 2 students’ scientific-practical conferences:

1. “Brief characteristics of Robert Browning’s dramatic monologues.” // “The problems of teaching modern linguistics, literature, translation and foreign languages”, VI scientific-practical conference May 15, 2017 y.

2. “Nature treatment in Robert Browning’s poetry.” // “The problems of teaching modern linguistics, literature, translation and foreign languages”, VI scientific - practical conference May 7, 2018 y.

The structure of the dissertation includes introduction, three chapters, conclusion and list of used literature. All three chapters consist of two subchapters and each of them includes an outcome.

The introduction explains the topicality and novelty of the research theme, its theoretical and practical value; it identifies the object, subject, aim and task of the work.

The first chapter of this research is devoted to general introduction of Victorian literature and the role of poetry in Victorian era. Also, it includes the brief information about the main representatives of Victorian poetry with their main works.

The second chapter deals with Robert Browning, one of the leading figures in Victorian poetry, his life episodes that affected his literary creativity. In addition to this, his poetry is analyzed according to its characteristics in this chapter.

The third chapter starts with showing the role of dramatic monologues in R. Browning’s poems. It includes several famous dramatic monologues by R. Browning to analyze them with applying psychological and archetypical criticism. Main themes, motifs, symbols of Browning’s poetry are investigated in this chapter. In addition to this, we analyzed the interaction between men and women in selected dramatic monologues of Robert Browning.

Chapter 1 Victorian poetry in the 19th century

1.1 The role of Poetry in Victorian literature

The throne of Great Britain was gained by Queen Victoria, after the king William the IV, in 1837 and stayed on it for 64 years till her death in 1901 and it is considered one of the longest reigns not only in the history of England but also in the world history. Victorian period is now remembered as an era of important social, economic, and political changes that influenced on the world history. At that time the population grew dramatically, the British Empire led geopolitics policy, and technological industrial developments helped Britain become the most powerful country in the world stage.¹

Though the British Empire was powerful as a country, the poverty was increasing and the distance between the rich and the poor was significant. Of course, this was leading to a moral decay among the nation. The poor classes were forced to work in bad conditions while the upper classes showed their interests in the trades between Britain and its colonies. The view of the country in people's mind was also changing: if early Romantics described the country as a rich of the flora and fauna, the Victorians saw it as industrial zones.

It must be added that the stress on morality was one of the crucial factors that can describe the social conditions in Victorian Britain. People had to accept and obey the strict rules and societal codes made by government. Also, they were restricted in participating in certain activities that they could not resist openly. Unfortunately, those codes were even worse for women. The role of the Victorian women in the society was not so visible to consider as they were tied to domestic works. Obviously, they were not independent in financial decisions, so this led to commercial institutions of marriages in the society.

Now we have made a brief introduction to Victorian England and have tried to visualize the real situation of that period. Hopefully, this information helps us understand the changes in literature and poetry.

¹ www.victorian-era.org

According to the majority of historians and literary critics, Victorian Era is believed as a link between romanticism of the 18th century and realism of the 20th century.¹ Among the literary genres, novel started to reappear in literature and its main duty was to entertain the middle class that was rising at that time and to draw people's attention toward the contemporary life. Of course, the root of novel starts from the 18th century with the works of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and the others, who lived and worked in Enlightenment movement. However, it was Victorian era that the novel got its mass readership. There were several reasons that why the novel had much acceptance by people: developing in printing and publishing processes. In addition to this, an Education Act was introduced in 1870 that led literacy rate to higher. Also, the time of the daily communication among men and the time at home for women were filled by reading. As a result, after some time the demand for fiction also rose.

A moral value was centered in the Victorian novels. The authors tried to show the inner goodness of human nature. According to accepted rules of that time, there were usually well-behavioral characters and the main hero, or the protagonist, grew up in a middle class and had to experience with difficulties in the industrial fields.

The period was very productive in the amount of writers in both genders: Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Mrs. Gaskell, Bronte sisters and others.

The era was so productive in other literary fields, for example, in poetry there were such poets whose works can be considered as world literature masterpieces. The poets, who started writing literary works while Queen Victoria was on the throne, include Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Charles Swinburne, Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, Gerard Hopkins, Elizabeth Browning, A. E. Houseman and others. Moreover some poets can be added to Victorian poets list, however; they began writing in the Victorian Age but gained popularity at the beginning of the 20th-century. For example, W. B. Yeats,

¹ William Flesch, "British poetry 19th century", pp 419

Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling are among 20th-century poets but they already tried their hands at poetry during the reign of the Queen Victoria. There were also some poets, like W. Wordsworth, who had seen the French Revolution, and still in literary field when Victoria became the queen.

Despite the death of the Queen Victoria in 1901, the Victorian era, as a cultural phenomenon, came to an end in about the beginning of the First World War.

However, if we believe that the end of the Victorian period relates with the First World War, its starting point begins a little before the Queen's accession, with the surprising discoveries and inventions in science. Among the well-known Victorian poets, Browning and Tennyson were eager to show interest in those revolutionary scientific discoveries in their literary works. Of course, the most important and earthshaking achievement of that era was Charles Darwin's discovery of the evolution theory, "*Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*". It was published in 1859 and known as "*On the Origin of the Species*". In the same year, Edward FitzGerald published his famous work "*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*", translation of poems by Persian classic poet, Omar Khayyam.

*Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears
Tomorrow? – Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.*² (XXII quatrain)

He wrote it in response to his unlucky marriage and also to Tennyson's famous elegy *In Memoriam A.H. H.*

Some Victorian poets' popularities were under shadow of another Charles, this time Charles Lyell³, his *Principles of Geology* was published in three volumes between 1830 and 1833. If Charles Darwin changed the mind of people about the human evaluation, Charles Lyell made revolutionary changes in the thoughts of

¹

² The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: Translated by E. FitzGerald in 1859

³ Charles Lyell: (1797-1875), a Scottish geologist

about how the world had appeared. For the Victorian people the universe began to seem greater than ever. These scientific works influenced poetry as well: Tennyson put his ideas about the universe, inspiration taken from Lyell's theories, in his poem:

A touch of shame upon her cheek;

'I am not worthy ev'n to speak

*Of thy prevailing mysteries'*¹

Now we are going to switch from general overview of Victorian literary, scientific works into our specific focus, which is poetry.

Generally the Victorian poetry is a noteworthy re-assessment of the class by one of the chief researchers of the period. Isobel Armstrong² rescues Victorian verse from its longstanding sepia picture as a 'a moralised form of romantic verse', and discovers its frequently subversive investigation of nineteenth-century culture and legislative issues. The feel and governmental issues of Victorian poetry are united in a managed authentic dialog. Isobel Armstrong looks at its moderate and nonconformist conventions, and thinks about crafted by recognizable white collar class male artists to that of female and working-class artists. Victorian poetry splendidly exhibits the exceptional refinement of the class. In the meantime it introduces an enthusiastic test to some significant issues in contemporary Marxist, post-structuralism and feminist criticism.

The poets of the period touched on the themes such as societal, religious, and philosophical ideas of the time. Most of them criticized the country's industrialization process and destroying rural lifestyle. Also, their dissatisfaction was to the imbalance of power between the classes, because the poor people had to obey all the rules while middle class gained its power over the society.

One of the most famous writers of the Victorian time was Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who worked as an artist laureate of the United Kingdom from 1850 until his death in 1892. Much of Tennyson's verse centered on the retellings of

¹ Lord Tennyson: "In Memoriam" (1876)

² British academic, an university professor of London

established myths. He tried different things with meter, however, a large portion of his verse took after strict arranging—an impression of the strict convention of the Victorian time. His work frequently centered on the disagreement between loyalty to religion and the new discoveries being made in the field of science.

A couple Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning became noticeably popular for the love lyrics they used to write with each other. Elizabeth was already a well-known artist when she met her future spouse in 1845. He encouraged her to publish her love sonnets, which essentially expanded her fame. Additionally worth specify in a discourse of the Victorian time is a gathering of essayists and specialists called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood¹ of which Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina were a main part. In the late 1840s, a gathering of English artists sorted out the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with the aim of replacing the well known scholarly way to deal with painting. A few journalists joined this development, less formal way to deal with composing writing.

In criticizing Victorian verse it is important to remember this feeling in mind; and this is particularly true for Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, the artists who touched their period at the best number of points. The historical view of nineteenth century English verse records a progressive, yet radical move in the relationship of the artist to his public with the three artists just specified possessing a position at perfectly focused of the powers which were in resistance. A separation between the artist and society initially became visible as a component of the Romantic development; yet despite the fact that they needed to persist mishandle or disregard, the Romantics did in no sense consider themselves surrendering the writer's customary appropriate to represent his age. Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats were all definitely touchy to their age's hesitance to focus on what they were stating; however, they acknowledged disconnection as an essential result of their progressive program.

¹ Fredeman, "The Pre-Raphaelites", in *The Victorian Poets: A Guide to Research*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968)

Between the Romantics and the Pre-Raphaelites lie Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, driving the lovely melody of the large Victorian noontime. By excellence of this halfway position between the two extremes spoke to by the schools of verse which proceeded and after; their works bring into sharp concentration the decision which has been constrained on the cutting edge artist. In the normal view, these mid-Victorian artists, either unfit or unwilling to keep up the soul of aggressive independence which maintained their Romantic refrains, accomplished agreement with their group of watchers by keeping a balance with the working class profound quality of the time, and in this manner intentionally supplied masterful legitimacy. So glaring a double-crossing of the innovative motivation, the contention at that point proceeds incited a response in the accompanying age, whereby the pendulum swung back towards the conviction that craftsmanship is and should be its own legitimization regardless of ulterior intention. However, this adaptation of the lovely circumstance in the nineteenth century gravely distorts the genuine significance of an undertaking on which Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold were similar locked in. For each of them was eventually trying to characterize the circle inside which the advanced artist may practice his staff, while holding in authentic adjust the adversary cases of his private, highborn bits of knowledge and of the propensities existing in a general public dynamically vulgarized by the realism of both the nineteenth and twentieth century.

The artistic vocations of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold display various striking parallels which, since their wonderful enrichments were so dissimilar, must be clarified as far as impacts impinging on them all things considered. In the early way of each there is a reflective, even a cloistral component which was later prevented in an undeniable attempt to associate with contemporary streams of thought. Of the three, Tennyson succeeded most rapidly in fitting in with the Victorian ideal of the poet as famous bard; his reward was the laureateship as Wordsworth's successor. Browning's advancement in the society support was more progressive; however the development of the Browning Society in 1881 signaled

his possible landing inside the select organization of Victorian symbols of the hearth. Less adaptable in idyllic range, Arnold turned into an undeniable man of letters and won the esteem of the Oxford Professorship of Poetry simply subsequent to swinging to composition; and it is maybe worth considering whether his powerlessness to carry his verse into nearer accord with the requests of the age does not represent the way that he has pulled in a more prominent measure of genuine basic consideration as of later than either Tennyson or Browning.

The Victorian writer, obviously, needed to adapt him to a reading public greater in size and more various and unpredictable in its literary requirements than any that had existed up to this point. There is something astounding in the unselective voracity with which the Victorians consumed “*In Memoriam*” and Bailey's “*Festus, The Starting point of Species*”, and Samuel Grins' “*Self improvement*”, the books of Dickens and the stories of Harriet Martineau. The bad fate of their first volumes early informed Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold to a conclusion that under existing conditions creativity was no travel permit to masterful recognition. The critics were generally threatening; yet it was the objection to suggest companions which conveyed the best weight. For while the artists had a hard of hearing ear to the voice of the age as it talked through the week after week and month to month diaries, which had weakly supplanted *the Edinburgh and Quarterly Surveys*, as mediators in scholarly issues, the all around expected criticisms of a Hallam¹ or Elizabeth Barrett or Clough were another issues. What's more, companions and opponents were at one in their request that the artists took a more extensive perspective of their duties as men of letters. When all is said in done, their work drew all public criticisms on three tallies, one noteworthy and two coincidental thereto. It was unduly reflective and self-fixated and accordingly it was time and again darken content and valuable in way. Every one of the three shortcomings are chargeable to adolescence; however as ascribed unpredictably to Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, they convey extra ramifications suggestive of the oppression which the age was to practice over its craftsmen. For

¹ Kilham, John. Critical essays on the poetry of Tennyson. New York, 1960, pp 48

the perpetual inference in the assaults on these writers is that their shortcomings could without much of a stretch be cured by more thoughtfulness regarding ordinary human considerations and exercises, and correspondingly by less fascination with their own private conditions of being.

The analyses in the account and emotional modes to which Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold turned so early in their professions were positively embraced out of a want to neutralize protests of this kind. However it is obvious from the fancies of their basic notorieties that they were never sufficiently certain of their group of watchers to have the capacity to assess its reaction with any level of unwavering quality. The presence of a '*Maud or Sordello or Empedocles on Etna*', sprinkled among more admired efforts, is proceeding with confirm that the best will on the planet couldn't make up for touchy changes with winning tastes which went significantly more profound than the creators themselves constantly perceived. That they ought to have affirmed restlessness with the regularly insensitive and badly considered assessments of their verse isn't in it astonishing; yet it is to be noticed that as time went on they tended progressively to exchange this hatred to the perusing open on the loose. In their later days Tennyson and Arnold would have concurred with Browning's announcement in "*Red Cotton Night-Top Nation*" about "artistry being battle with the age/it lives in!" There is, obviously, a component of the honesty in such callings of despises for famous support; and their accepted lack of interest can't make colorful the way that each of the three poets were distinctly touchy to the changeable demands for their literary stock. In this regard they were close to displaying an awareness common to men of letters had of an innate faith in the instrumentality of writing as a social power.

Once more, the regular clarification does not cover the realities; and we are taken back to the polarity which rises up out of any nearby investigation of the relations between the artists and society in the Victorian period. The sign of the abstract identities of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold alike is a sure noble reserved quality, a headstrong immovability which is probably going to show itself at simply those focuses where the contemporary social request accepted

programmed similarity. Therefore, their refusal to be limited by current suppositions is less regularly a subterfuge to cover a dread of disappointment than a direct admission of the artist's independence from societal weights at whatever point these undermine to restrain the free play of his creative forces. Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold never went to the lengths of the artists who came after in disassociating themselves from their gathering of people. Then again, there is a basic mistake in the common idea that they uncritically shared the vast majority of the shortfalls that, properly or wrongly, are ascribed to the Victorians. Such an assessment ignores, to the point that nature of twofold mindfulness which we are presently to examine as the core of the Victorian abstract awareness.

A considerable amount of the topics and implications of Victorian poetry mirror a clashed feeling of self. On the double numerous sonnets by Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning depict a yearning for the beliefs of the Romantic period in literatures but they are hindered, because it appears the special time frame and its new utilization of dialect, the changing and regularly developing economy in the noisy city of London, and obviously, the changing perspectives of religion and its place in such an unpredictable world. Through the poems from the Victorian time of both Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Matthew Arnold, the repetitive subjects of moving religious thoughts, dialect use, and the economy are clear.

During the long rule of Elizabeth, religious disagreements were developing and the Church was separated into three distinct branches. This division was additionally combined with the way that new discoveries were being made, most quite by the disputable speculations of Darwin, however by different scholars too that contended for a more rational presence. Inspired by the works of Percy and Mary Shelley, Robert Browning's, who had already skeptical thoughts and in spite of the fact that his sentiments dispersed to some degree later in his life, various reactions toward religion are evident in his lyric "Fra Lippo Lippi"¹ in which he tells the story, full of slang and comedy, of a man that was not advised to be in the

¹ www.Victorian-foundation.org

Church, that's why spends his more physical efforts as opposed to complying with the will of the Church.

“The feelings of the poem’s narrator in “Fra Lipp Lippi” by Browning can easily be seen as Browning’s own critique and while the main theme involves art, the strict sense in which the church views artistic pursuits and products is similar to the way it requires priests to live celibate lives”.¹

While the church's prior disagreement is that art ought to be introduced as an option that is "higher" than the base portrayal of the human shape, this prevents the basic mankind from claiming the subject, God's people. Along these same lines, the way the church disallows sexual, indecent action on its priests by requesting chastity is the very same demand concerning the artists. Because of these two demands of church, narrator of any poem should depict the characters' views, behavior, and sexual intimacy according to the norms accepted by the church. Through this poem, Browning is contending against obligatory celibacy for priests and is proposing, through the story and imaginative battle of Fra Lippo Lippi, that the requests of the church conflict with human instinct.

What is most fascinating about this religious criticism in the Victorian period as found in some of its poetry is that there is likewise a specific longing for the old days of religious order. For instance, in "Sonnets from the Portuguese" Elizabeth Barrett Browning complains her loss of confidence when she likens her darling as something she can't exactly grasp, something that is far away yet familiar, the "lost Saints" that once managed her reality. It is just about a romantic time sonnet however in the last stanza: I love thee freely, as men strive for right; / I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise" (43.8) then goes on... "I love thee with a love I seemed to lose/ with my lost Saints" (43.13) and the general tone of the lyric demonstrate that there is something absent and remote about the speaker's presence. She isn't exactly associated with the universe of God and Saints yet she is likewise not associated with the romantic thoughts from earlier poetry. In obvious Victorian style she appears to be not able remove religion from the

¹ A. G. Chesterton: *Robert Browning*, pp-15

picture; it is something she appears to long for, much like a lost or dead lover from glorious days passed by. The Introduction to Victorian puts it rather concisely as "The greater part of the Victorian writers demonstrates the solid impact of the romantics, yet they can't support the certainty that the romantics felt in the power of imagination. Victorians regularly rework sonnets from the romantic movement with a feeling of belatedness and separation".¹ One can't resist the opportunity to think about whether it is the "religion question" that is annoying their splendor or only a despairing from the fast-paced, industrialized, modern world that had jumped up in this time.

Victorian poetry requests to be read with the ear. Its rhythms and rhymes request our consideration as examples of sound moving in time. But is the achievement of the Victorian poets a matter of pure sound, or is there importance too? This course paper investigates this challenged question by discussing a selection of the most famous artists of the age.

Victorian poetry utilizes each settled verse form in the English dialect and takes advantages from each beautiful subgenre, while refining upon a few, such as, the verse drama and pastoral elegy, and enhancing others, such as, the dramatic monologue.

'Fascinated as everybody must be by the music of his verse,' writes John Morley of Swinburne, *'it is doubtful whether part of the effect may not be traced to something like a trick of words and letters'*. *'Nay, he will write you a poem with nothing in it except music'*, worries R H Horne, this time about Tennyson. Such comments are typical of the criticism that emerged in the Victorian period, and the same kinds of comments are still rehearsed by readers and critics today.

Writers were freer to discuss taboo, or forbidden, subjects with open words and the advancements in print technology made the possibility for a large, different reading market. Writers could distribute innovative and irritating pieces that contained numerous and clashing implications. Each of these poets wrote during a

¹ John Drinkwater, *Victorian Poetry*, Doran's Modern Bookshelf, 1976 pp 122

time of rapid social and artistic transformation in an era where the means of producing literature were more readily available than they had ever been before.

A popular image during the Victorian period was that of young girls with golden locks. These girls were corrupted by murderous lovers, tempted by forbidden goblin fruits and looked down on lost lovers from heaven in poems of the time. The color and quality of a woman's hair was an indicator of her social station. Fair hair was also a marker for morality because as with all things Victorian, the exterior reflected the interior and appearance said more about you than anything else. The poetry and artwork of the period suggest a preoccupation with women's beauty. Victorian imaginations believed that physical beauty had the power to ensnare a lover; that is evident in the theme of strangulation found in several poems. The fact that the image of golden hair comes up again and again is not a coincidence; everything about the Victorians relied on image and the image of the curious blonde represented Victorian fears of corruption and the loss of innocence.

Browning is regularly credited with the authority of the dramatic monologue, a form that enabled him to investigate the unique psychologies of his various narrators. Browning's exploitation of sexuality through manic narrators directly influenced Dante Gabriel Rossetti's representation of the Damozel in his unconventional vision of heaven. Rossetti presents controversial views regarding the duality of the body and soul in his poem, "The Blessed Damozel" and its complementary painting.

The vision of the departed lover seems more substantial than her spirit alone, her body's presence is felt in the weight of her warm bosom and in the splashing of salty tears which are disheartening to a Christian audience who would view existence in heaven far better than life on earth. Both Browning and Rossetti created dramatic monologues with a dead woman at their center. The similarities in imagery further stress the objectification of women. By focusing on dead (or dying) women narrators are able to use them "as objects of desire without fear that their paradoxical dead/alive sexuality could be made operative"

Christina Rossetti gives a female voice regarding the matter of religion and offers editorial on the position of ladies in a male-driven economy in "Goblin Market."¹ The poem is a reaction to the necessities of the "fallen ladies" of Victorian culture and a useful example for little girls of the dangerous Victorian age. Laura, the curious sister, is tempted to "clip a precious golden lock" (Rossette 126) so as to taste the fruit she wants. Rossetti makes it clear to her readers that even somebody who has made a mistake can be recovered by a kind group of people. It is maybe true that Rossetti stays faithful in her own Christian feelings that readers could look past the violence and sexuality brimming from the poem.

Robert Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti twisted traditional values such as love and religion slightly to fit into their own poetic world. Browning is the poet whose work was perhaps the least known of the three poets; in his time Browning may have been better known for being the significant other of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

E. D. H. Johnson² educates a course in Victorian writing at Princeton and talks about the attractiveness of Victorian artists and investigates that ways they could push certain limits and improve the structures and substance of poetry. Most people consider Victorians obsessed with social conformity but the age was also a time of growth in alternative literature. Johnson disputes overly simplistic views of Victorian readership by stating that writers like Browning had to appeal to a large and diverse reading public.

John Maynard³ has published essays and articles on Christina Rossetti, D. G. Rossetti and Robert Browning, in a section of *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*. He discusses Christina Rossetti's poem in the context of Victorian's changing attitudes about sexuality and love. Modern readers of "Goblin Market" might be able to substantiate an incestuous or lesbian relationship between the two sisters if they are not careful to analyze the poem in the context of the repressed sexuality of the period which didn't have such terms readily available. Same-sex relationships

¹ Marsh, Jan. *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1994

² Ex-professor of Princeton university, Holmes professor of Belles-letters in the English department

³ A professor of English at NYU

discussed in Victorian literature were much more open to interpretation due to the lack of labels for such relationships.

In the Victorian age poetry was still considered "a workmanship for the few, not for the majority". The few generally still meant wealthy white men but more and more women were daring to cross over into more "serious" literature. This clarifies why male poets Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti were permitted to investigate more controversial imagery and subjects in their poems than Christina Rossetti.

Victorian women are at a disadvantage because they "appear to lack the credentials, the means and authority" for an easy transition into the "literary marketplace". The idea that female poets must "consume" the fruits laid down before them by their male predecessors is only one way in which critics use the term "consumption" to describe Rossetti's commentary on society.

Readers of poetry must keep the time, which the work was written, in their minds because the meanings of words, images and themes can dramatically change over time. Victorians were preoccupied with time: leisure time, time travel, daily routines that operated within strict social structures. Browning's narrator wanted to possess *Porphyria's* undying love forever so he kills her in a moment of perfection. Dante Gabriel Rossetti examines the gap between the spiritual and physical realm and the bridge that separates time on earth from eternity in heaven. He also hints at established social customs surrounding death and exposes Victorian's wishes to travel to a better place, be it heaven or a faraway fantasy world. Christina Rossetti shows how unhealthy obsessions can destroy a life in a short amount of time and how distance can make even a horrible reality a good opportunity for a didactic lesson. It is this preoccupation with time that gives a new profound meaning to youth and an obsessive fear of death which began in the Victorian era and has developed further in our own age.

Victorians were well on their approaches to advancements in innovation and regularly expanding changes between social classes. A few distinctions are clear instantly: their dress, their working conditions and requirements, their discourse,

their looks and their reading material. Ladies and youth were most focused as readers of "lower quality" material while "high qualities" were male oriented. Ladies accepted new parts in the public eye as both the "objects" of male desires and the writers of their own dreams.

Culture was changing in the Victorian period and its advancements were setting and institutionalizing its dialect and traditions at an alarming rate. We are given pictures from the period, some of which fortify the generalizations we have since a long time ago connected with Victorians and those that paint an alternate picture. The women in the poems and paintings may appear to be one-dimensional; however, women themselves started to plan their own ideas, attest their own convictions and compose their own particular children's stories where they can prove themselves as opposed to sitting tight for a "ruler" to do it for them.

1.2 Prominent poets and the influence of their works on world literature

According to most scholars, the Victorian poetry is studied by dividing it into two major groups of poets: "The High Victorian Poetry and The Pre-Raphaelites". Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold and Gerard Manley Hopkins were in the first group, The High Victorian Poetry.

Tennyson was one of the poets who used the idea of British Empire in his poetry. He was also co-author of the dramatic monologues in poetry with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was in the group of Pre-Raphaelites. However, as a master of writing the dramatic monologues were Robert Browning, because they were his great innovation of that period. Despite the early death, Elizabeth Browning was more productive poetess than her husband, Robert Browning, and she was who started to glorify the feministic poetry. The admirer of W. Wordsworth, Arnold Matthew, was considered as the precursor of the modernist revolution. And the last representative of the first group was Gerard Manley Hopkins who used an unusual style of writing and he influenced much next century poets.

It is acceptable to have contradictory ideas or uncommon themes and motifs in one literary trend to the previous one. This is true for the Victorian poetry also. If one reads the poems of any poets belong to that period, he can clearly see the difference from the previous trend, Romanticism. For example, for the Romantics, the topic of love and nature were common and even the main sources in their poetry. This can be explained in a way that the Romantics adored Nature and worshipped it. But, in the Victorian poetry, the topic of nature was just the description of places and it was a part of the things that God created on the Earth.

By the middle of the 19th century, some poets were grouped as the Pre-Raphaelites. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina Rossetti were main figures in this group. Later, they were followed by William Morris, Coventry Patmore and some others. Famous poet, Algernon Swinburne Charles started his writing as a Pre-Raphaelites, but then he decided to create his own classic style in poetry.

There were some poets, like A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy who lived on into 20th century. They mostly shared their pessimistic views in their poetry, however, they are still considered as the main figures among the Victorian poets. The earlier years, when queen the Victoria started a new epoch, English literature seemed to have entered into a period of lean years. There were influences and memories left by the Romantic poets in people's mind. It seemed it was impossible to recapture their places in poetry. However, some great poets, like Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning, tried to fulfill that empty place in readers' minds and hearts after the Romantic poets.

Here I would like to continue the work with giving brief information about the Victorian poets, their life episodes and influential masterpieces as well.

Lord Alfred Tennyson

The Oxford classicist Benjamin Jowett was provoked by his kinship with and appreciation for Alfred, Lord Tennyson to scribble down portrayals of him, supposing him to resemble Socrates. "Not a man of the world (in the conventional sense) however a man who had the best knowledge into the world, and regularly in

a word or a sentence would streak a light," Jowett said, and depicted also how "at great things he would sit laughing — laughter frequently hindered by attacks of misery." Tennyson remembered his memoir with little interest. The intrusions of trouble or, better, the unworldliness that would once in a while make it obvious when he was with companions is the genuine source and subject of his verse. The narrator of Tennyson's *The Princess* portrays his defenselessness to abnormal trancelike states where he lives and moves in a universe of shadows.¹ Those shadows constantly show up, with interesting and diligent excellence, in Tennyson's work. With regards to the unconscious states, it can be noticed that Tennyson had a type of breakdown in his 30s, and that his dad and siblings were additionally outstanding for their occasionally melancholic dispositions. For Tennyson, that sadness was difficult to recognize from his deep rooted grieving for Arthur Henry Hallam, his dearest companion (and best critic), engaged to be married to his sister but dead of a cerebral hemorrhage at 22.

Tennyson trusted his life would be less interest to the public than it was, and he wished to be recollected just for his works, as (his examples) William Shakespeare and Jane Austen were. The changing moment of his life was the passing of Hallam, which offered ascend to the great elegy *In Memoriam A.H.H.* (one of the three or four incredible elegies in all of English writing), published 17 years after Hallam's demise, and also such ballads as "Ulysses"; "Tithonus"; and, obviously, all the Arthurian lyrics in which one perfect and admired Arthur remained for another. This is not to say that Tennyson spent his life in morbid misanthropy—quite the reverse, as Jowett made clear. He stayed near his siblings, particularly Charles, who was a poet; to his spouse Emily, a profound critic of his verse; and to his children.

Tennyson was most likely constantly arranged to despairing; however the events for that despairing in his life joined to give his poems their characteristic feel. The death of Hallam agreed for him with his reading of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), which demonstrated how the fossil record set up

¹ Ricks, Christopher B. *Tennyson*. New York: Macmillan, 1972. p-34

the unfathomable artifact of the earth, while likewise indicating the amount of past life was gone everlastingly, even as new life developed and passed away.

For Tennyson, the irrelevance of life underlined the changelessness and uselessness of death, specifically the death of his friend Hallam. ¹How could verse manage the cost of any encouragement or any guard against this reality? Tennyson's answer, in the late "Parnassus" and also in the generally early sonnet "In Memoriam", is to accomplish a synchronous twofold point of view, a mix of John Keats and the fourteenth century Italian writer Dante Alighieri; "Parnassus" finishes up:

*If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer greatly care?
Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him would not falter;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer there.*

For Keats, the eternal was against the current state force of quick understanding; some portion of what is promptly experienced is the ephemerality of experience. In Tennyson, the turn to the quick and ephemeral was a steady inclination, and his poetry, with its frightful redundancies and trancelike extensions of the transient is an endeavor not to settle the fleeting but rather to make it last somewhat more.

Christina Rossetti (1830– 1894) may well be Britain's most noteworthy female poetess. She is one of the best of Victorian writers and a standout amongst the most unique. Her most standard piece is *Goblin Market*, a phenomenal beautiful test in the great Pre-Raphaelite knowledge into the relationship of such enriching components as rhyme, rhythm, sound, and redundancy to the most profound needs of human psychology under strain.

Rossetti was the youngest of the four Rossetti siblings and two years more youthful than her sibling Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who delineated *Goblin Market* when it turned out. Her sibling William Michael Rossetti was an awesome critic

¹Tennyson, Hallam Tennyson, Baron. *The Life and Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*. London: Macmillan, 1899. p-143.

and editorial manager, both of Percy Bysshe Shelley and, after her death, of Christina's own poetry. She imparted to her siblings a close ideal feeling of dialect and of the diverse modes by which it could be imitative. However, unlike Dante Gabriel, she was amazingly pedantic, in any event in her own life, and dedicated, as Woolf saw, to the Old English Catholicism that was a solid development inside Victorian culture at the time, got from the "tracts" composed by the scholar Edward Bouverie Pusey and his devotees.

What dependably returns Rossetti's verse is the exceptional prosody, the apparently insignificant improvement that trumps everything.¹ At any rate, it appears to be minor: This is the reason her contemporaries could think that *Goblin Market* was a children's ballad. Similarly, in a poem like "Passing Away" (1862) what finally counts are the rhymes (all of them the same, rhyming on /ay/) and the speaker's persistent last word, *Yea*, not only in response to the world and to her own soul but to God himself. Woolf ended her essay by describing how much of Rossetti she knew by heart, without ever reading her systematically or completely. No better characterization of her poetry can be given. It is as though she wrote nursery rhymes for adults: words that haunt and seem both inevitable and strange, but that she made fully hers, and that she *knew* she had made fully hers.²

Arnold Matthew

Matthew Arnold (1822– 1888) was maybe one of the most vital Victorian social critics. His most well known book, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), is still exceedingly persuasive today, living on in such works as Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). Arnold was a noteworthy hotspot for the reasoning of mid-twentieth century scholarly lions, for example, Lionel Trilling, who deliberately displayed their thought of what it intended to be an open scholarly on his case. Arnold additionally handed down to us the qualification amongst Hebraic and Greek culture as framing the two focal strands in our own feel. He saw the two strands as vital and as going for a

¹ Thomas, Frances. *Christina Rossetti*. London: Virago Press, 1994. p-81.

² Marsh, Jan. *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1994. p-123.

comparable end: human perfection. However, he lamented that what he called Hellenism was in the blinkered, superstitious, and philistine culture of the time a hireling of Hebraism, and he looked for an inversion: "The highest thought with Hellenism is to consider things to be they truly are; the highest thought with Hebraism is lead and submission". (*Culture and Anarchy*).

Arnold was the child of Thomas Arnold, the well known director of Rugby School, and he was in this manner raised in one of the prime wellsprings of Victorian scholarly and social qualities. He embraced and intensified those qualities in his own work and was one of the considerable champions of romantic poetry, particularly William Wordsworth (and Goethe in German), while being exceedingly reproachful of John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Arnold thought Shelley did not have a comical inclination and thus was radiant however not exactly rational, either in life or in his poetry. For Arnold, healthy state was everything—it was what made societies solid. ¹As a writer, Arnold's notoriety lays on the poems that he composed before the age of 40, (for example, "Dover Shoreline" and "The Scholar-Gypsy."")

He famously complained of his waning powers in 1853, the year that he published the first edition of his collected poems: "I am past thirty and three parts iced over." He had pretty much stopped writing poetry when he was elected to the Oxford professorship of poetry in 1857, though one notable exception was "Thyrsis," his elegy on Clough, written in 1864 or so.

There his shepherd-speaker regrets the tumbling off of his own forces:

Ah me! this numerous multi year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's vacation (ll. 36– 37), so Clough's death helps him to remember his own particular non-literal passing as an artist.

Arnold spent the majority of his life as a school auditor, a part in which he set in motion his duty to general instruction and illumination, yet one which remained for the sort of unoriginal genuineness with which his name has come to be synonymous. Arnold's most popular poem is presumably "Dover Beach," a

¹ Trilling, Lionel. *Matthew Arnold*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949. p-64.

lovely form of the notice against political agitation—the uninformed armed forces that fight by night — which practiced him such a great amount all through his profession. It is a poem much parodied but also much loved, and one that deserves both parody and love.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Elizabeth Browning (1806– 1861) had a tendency to publish over her initials, EBB, even before she met and married Robert Browning, the "EBB" initially remaining for Elizabeth Barrett Barrett. "EBB" has turned out to be pretty much customary, somewhat to respect her unequivocally women's activist autonomy from those whose names she shared: first her dad and after that her husband.¹

Elizabeth is the most deliberately feminist activist of the main writers of the English standard up to her own time. The eldest and most splendid of 12 kids, she was bright as a reader and poet, and much loved by her parents, who inspired her all around. She learned Latin and Greek at about age 10, working with her sibling's coach.

Her first poems were published when she was 15 years of age, with the solid consolation and support of her parents, however her dad, Edward Barrett, turned out to be increasingly touchy, when her mother died in 1828. Edward Barrett, after the genuine monetary inversions to his interests in Jamaica when the slave trade was abolished, demanded keeping his children with him and would not know about his daughters' wedding — an attitude that testifies to the overbearing and oppressive intensity of his love for them.

Elizabeth poetry was now being widely published and celebrated, and Robert Browning wrote her some fan letters. She admired his poetry too (he was five years younger than she was), and despite being an invalid, partly no doubt because of the oppressive demands made on her in her father's house, she eventually agreed to meet him. After an intense series of visits and letters (some of

¹ Mermin, Dorothy. *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Origins of a New Poetry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. p-49.

her feelings for him are chronicled in her secretly written *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which she only showed him after they got married), she eloped with him, and they went to Italy, whose climate was much better for her lungs (her invalidism may have been tubercular). Her father never spoke to her or acknowledged her again, except to disinherit her. The devotion, respect, admiration, and encouragement of Robert Browning, who thought her the greatest poet of her time, contrasted strongly with her father's oppressiveness and gave her space for her feminist and somewhat radical political engagement. She was strongly against slavery (and felt guilty about the source of some of her family's fortune), and Frederick Douglass admired her antislavery poems. The best account of her life is probably *Aurora Leigh*, a daring first-person narrative about a poet who learns how serious the poetic vocation can be, and how it can be both true to itself and politically engaged. Political reformation, to which EBB was committed, is predicated on the humanity of those who are oppressed, and it is poetry that can best express that humanity. As semiautobiography, the poem is striking for the grief that it shows over Aurora's dead father, though EBB's own father was not to die until after its publication. Aurora eventually marries her cousin Romney Leigh, but only after he learns the importance of what she has to teach, just as she learns the importance of his political commitments. One can see in that poem the model of a feminist writer, contributing to and engaging with the world around her as an equal.

Gabriel Dante Rossetti

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) was one of the most important members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, which began as a school of painting. Like the Pre-Raphaelite William Morris and like William Blake, Rossetti was a poet-painter, and his painting ability and beliefs affected the nature of his poetry.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Rossetti was interested in natural history, but that interest was too ambivalent,¹ since it drew the mind away from the idealisms that haunted him as well: the work of the medieval Italian poet Dante,

¹ Ash, Russell. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. New York: H. N. Abrams, 1995. p-172.

whom Rossetti adored and translated, and medieval literature in general, as well as the idealism of passionate romantic love. He was probably most destructive of all to the painter and model Elizabeth Siddal, whom he married. Unfortunately she committed suicide and Rossetti placed a manuscript volume of his poetry in her grave.

As a poet, Rossetti was influenced by John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and his older friends Tennyson and Robert Browning, whose interest in painting made Rossetti admire him all the more. Many of Rossetti's most famous poems are what the scholar John Sparrow called "visible words"—poems that appear as writing in paintings, most famously "The Blessed Damozel."

As a painter, Rossetti was committed to extreme and gorgeous detail, and the meaning of that commitment can be understood in his poetry.¹ It is passionate and gives signs of the paranoia that would haunt him later in his life in the way that passion expresses itself through a powerful obsession with detail. The best example of this is probably "The Woodspurge" (1856), in which "perfect grief" leaves him with the intensely observed botanical knowledge that he devotes his attention to in order not to think about things that hurt him more:

*One thing then learnt remains to me,
The woodspurge has a cup of three* (ll. 15–16).

Rossetti is in some ways the 20th-century American poet Elizabeth Bishop's closest precursor. Rossetti was roundly abused for the sexuality of his poetry, which is intense. It is also oddly clinical: given over so wholly to passion, he consistently steps back in his poetry to observe that passion, just as he does the woodspurge. The notorious poem "Nuptial Sleep" (1869) is a kind of rewriting of Keats's "Ode to Psyche," with the male lover waking in wonder from a postcoital sleep to see the woman sleeping there.

Thus, in what Harold Bloom calls Rossetti's greatest poem, "*The Stream's Secret*" (1869), Rossetti laments the fundamental impossibility of love and

¹ McGann, Jerome J. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game That Must Be Lost*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000. p-37

imagines the impossible, Keatsian “darkling close embrace” that would somehow replace his relentless vision of the “worshipped form and face . . .

Round which so oft the sun shone clear,

With mocking light and pitiless atmosphere (ll. 116–119).

But that hour is never to come, and her face (the poem is about Jane Morris) will always be “soul-sequestered.”

Algernon Charles Swinburne

The most striking thing about Algernon Charles Swinburne’s poetry is the overwhelming richness of his language, which tends to make people either love or hate his poetry. Those who hate it think the language gets in the way of any idea, emotion, perspective, passion, or stance that the poetry embodies or expresses; those who like it think the language is part of the sensuous intensity of experience.

Swinburne belongs to the Pre-Raphaelite poetry movement, a movement that can most generally be characterized as a commitment to perceptive truth. Therefore, according to the Pre-Raphaelites, perception must be scrupulously accurate, not only to the outside world but to the experience of the perceiver of that outside world. Perception is double-sided: It fronts both world and the mind, and the poet or painter who reproduces perception expresses thereby both the world perceived and the mind that perceives it.

Swinburne, on the other hand, was a master at the far harder task of allowing for ambiguity between the literal and figurative in metaphor.¹ In *Atalanta in Calydon*, for example, Althaea praises her doomed son Meleager for being fearless and courageous in battle, even:

in the green blossom of they life

Ere the full blade caught flower (ll. 560–561).

The “blade” here is the somewhat metaphorical blade of the flowering grass. It would flower, but how does it “catch flower”? Things burst into flower

¹ Bragman, Louis J. “The Case of Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Study in Sadism.” *Psychoanalytic Review* 21, 1934. p-213

throughout the poem, and usually that means something like a sudden blaze of bright light.

The most prominent of words to balance between the literal and the figurative in Swinburne is probably the *brand* in *Atalanta in Calydon*, which will sometimes be used figuratively and literally in close proximity; when Swinburne gives it prominence at the end of a line (for example, l. 1,911) he gets a sestina-like fatalism into the feeling of the poem.

We can summarize by saying that in Swinburne, the world presents similes which the mind absorbs as metaphor, so that the world itself becomes significant as the figurative world of the perceiver. It also becomes what characterizes the perceiver because she interacts with it, first and most intensely as its perceiving subject. There is fatalism to this: There is play in the movement between literal and various figurative uses of the word, but only at the expense of the word following us everywhere and fully characterizing what we can feel or know or perceive.

The double-bladed perception of language conduces to one logical extreme of Pre-Raphaelitism, a sadomasochistic relationship to language and to the world.¹ The world for Swinburne, as for most poets, is a painful place. As a poet, it is his vocation both to perceive the world and therefore to measure up to it, and as a poet, he does this through language. He speaks to the world the language that converts its similes into metaphors and returns those metaphors to the world. Similitude becomes transformation, encroachment, obliteration of difference between the perceiving self and the perceived world. This is what Sigmund Freud would argue the so-called death instinct aimed at, an instinct that manifests itself as aggression and repetition.

Swinburne is the best exemplification of Freud's theory of the death instinct. His poetic form and insistent meter, as well as his figurative matter, find their most intense theme in his poetry. Swinburne was flogged as a child at Eton, and he wrote poetry about flogging with excited fascination throughout his life. Probably

¹ Bragman, Louis J. "The Case of Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Study in Sadism." *Psychoanalytic Review* 21 (1934): 59-74.

the best of these poems is the still-shocking “Anactoria,” spoken by the Greek poet Sappho to or against a lover of hers. Spoken *to* or *against* Anactoria—the point in Swinburne is to eliminate the difference between the two prepositions, which is to say to eliminate the difference between pain and pleasure. To recur to the Pre-Raphaelite language of perception, the pleasure of cultivating perception culminates in the capacity to be intensely open to pain itself, so that loss and gain, hurt and ecstasy, are two versions of the same intense alertness, not only to the world but to one’s most exquisitely responsive perceptions of the world. It is this build-up of intensity in Swinburne that comes out as the controlled perversity of his theme, his obsessive repetitions, and his prosody. We could say that in Swinburne there is some of the same religious intensity that characterized so many of his contemporaries, but without any of the doctrine or belief, so that where they overlap is in a sense of poetry as the intense substitute for intense absence.

Swinburne was a vivid and outrageous social presence through much of his life, interested in sex, interested in drink, interested in literature — interested in everything. The one great fact for Swinburne was that language is how we interact with others, even with sexual partners, and how we bridge the gap, both ways, between the self and the world. He converted the object world—the self—into language, and therefore brought language to the most extreme experience, on every level, that it could possibly be, both for himself and for his readers.

Outcomes

As it is mentioned above Victorian period took not so long time. It started with the reign of Queen Victoria and when she died there was nobody to continue it. However, this short period of time was successful enough to be essential part of English Literature and Poetry as well.

It is clear now that productivity in poetry was the result of prosperity and peaceful life in that period. In fact, all poets had a chance to write freely and only personal problems such serious illnesses in health were main obstacles. However, these problems did not make poets disappoint but it made them even stronger.

The reason why almost all Victorian poets used mythological heroes has been discussed in the earlier part of the first chapter. As Victorian period came after the Romanticism, it is obvious that to have clear similarity between two of them. Most poets inherited mythological heroes from Romantic poets who had taken them earlier from another literature period, Renaissance.

Within the first part, some very important information about poets have been used in order to introduce them toward the readers, and I think it was done correctly because of the some facts which can be helpful to understand deeper meanings of the poems.

I would like to mention my earlier personal opinion again: the obstacles such health problems or losing close relatives in early life made Victorian poets only stronger not weaker. If we look back the short biographies of the poets, all of them lost their siblings or parents in their childhood. Or they had very poor health, but they tried to overcome these all difficulties and it is visible in their poems.

I think the answer for the questions is simply used in the introduction that Romanticism played as a main source for Victorian period poetry. And while analysing the poems, I understood that these all three aspects of poetry are equally used by those remarkable poets.

Chapter 2 Robert Browning-one of the best poets of the 19th century

2.1 Robert Browning's life episodes, affecting his creative work

Robert Browning, whose dramatic monologues made him one of the most prominent Victorian poets, was a brilliant English poet and a playwright.

A lot of researches have been done on Robert Browning's literary work and the process is still ongoing. However, about his personal life episodes there are a few investigations in comparison to his works. So most critics admit that it is more difficult to speak about the poet than about his work¹. One of the thousands critics of Robert Browning, G. K. Chesterton, explains this situation and suggests like: "*Browning's work has a mystery which belongs to the complex; his life much greater mystery which belongs to the simple*".

Browning himself believed that his work is much more complex than his life and he could not sometimes explain his emotions that appeared in his poetry. Once a reader asked him to explain the meaning of one of his poems, and received the following answer: "*When that poem was written, two people knew what it meant—God and Robert Browning. And now God only knows what it means.*" The statement should not bring the readers a false impression about Browning's attitude toward his poetry, because he was a real artist who won the highest place among the Victorian writers. Instead, it should be accepted as a description of Browning's feelings, his emotions and thoughts.

Robert was born and brought up in Camberwell, a district in South London, England, in 1822. He was the only son in Browning's family, of Sarah Anna and Robert Browning senior. His family belonged fully to an educated middle class. His father worked as a clerk in the Bank of England and his mother was a talented musician. He had one sister, Sarianna, who became Robert's close friend after his wife's death.

¹ G. K. Chesterton: *Robert Browning*

It is usual thing that when the biography of any writer is discussed, his/her earlier family signs are mentioned. And it is very interesting about Robert Browning. There are always some paradoxes of Browning's ancestors and his race. There are some critics who believe that Browning had a Jewish blood. As evidence they show Browning's interest in using Jewish matters in his poetry. But according to some others, this suggestion is not even worth to consider because he was interested in Jews culture just like his contemporaries or early Renaissance artists did. Or there was another sensational hypothesis that Browning had a strain of Negro. The supporters of this theory suggest that his grandmother was a descendant of Creole. And Browning was darker in his childhood, and he was often mistaken for an Italian. But this suggests that if he looked an Italian, he could not be like a Negro at all. So these ideas about Browning seem irrelevant but make readers investigate the poet's life episodes deeper.

Browning had a very little formal education at school. For some time he used to attend a local dame-school, then he left it because he could not bear to accept the strict rules to follow. Later, he went to a school run by Mr. Ready, and there, for the first time, he was discovered as an intelligent, precocious boy. However, it did not take him to have any systematic seat of education for a long time: it took him mostly at his home, his father's library.

Parents played an important role in young Robert's life, becoming educated and further famous poet. Robert's father owned a library, with huge amount of books, many of them rare, and young Robert was encouraged to use it at any time. He spent much of his time at that library, and there he got interest in both literature and art respectively. His mother's contribution in success of Robert Browning was not less than his father's. She was very close to her children, that she was always ready to listen to their expressions and show correct solutions in difficult situations. By religion, she was nonconformist and at the same time very talented musician. Thomas Carlyle called her "the type of a Scottish gentlewoman".

Robert started writing poems at very early age, so at the age of twelve, he had already written a book of his selected poems, but unfortunately he burned it

because of finding no publisher. He also showed great interest in learning classical languages, so at the age of fourteen he was fluent in ancient Greek, Latin and French, Italian as well.

Romantic poets influenced Browning's interest in poetry. Especially Romantic poet, Shelley was admired by him very much. Even he used to have an atheist and vegetarian life for some time, in the fact of Shelley's believes. But he gave up both those habits later.

Browning spent a year at University of London, studied Greek, but left it unfinished due to some unknown reasons. His attempts to study at either Oxford University or Cambridge University were stopped by his parents who were completely nonconformists, free from the Church of England. At that time, both universities were open to only those who were members of the Church.

Having inheritance musical ability from his mother, Browning tried his hand at composing several songs too. Unfortunately there were no left any records of those songs to the next generations.

He refused not only getting formal education but also he did not accepted the idea of taking formal career in life. Despite the complaints of his parents' he completely devoted himself to poetry. However, he was supported with financial aids by his parents and he stayed with them until his marriage, at the age of 34. Much of his publications were sponsored by his father.

Browning could publish one of his earlier poem, *Pauline, a fragment od a confession*, in 1833, but he did it anonymously because he wanted to know readers' reaction. The poem is rather long in lenght and written in a great deal of respect to Shelley and to some degree in his style of writing.

*Pauline, mine own, bend o'er me- thy soft breast
Shall pant to mine- bend o'er me- thy sweet eyes,
And loosened hair and breathening lips, arms
Drawing me to thee- these build up a screen¹ (1-4 lines)*

¹ Robert Browning: "*Pauline, a fragment od a confession*", 1832

Firstly, Browning wanted this poem as the first step to start showing different sides of himself, but soon he left this idea. In favour of his expectations, *Pauline* got enough readers' and critics' attentions. A month later after publication, W. J. Fox, a religious orator, criticized the poem in *The Monthly Repository*. However, it was praised by Allan Cunningham, a Scottish poet and critic, in *The Athenaeum*. After some years, one of Browning's contemporary poets, Gabriel Rossetti, found the poem in the Reading hall of the British Museum and wrote to him to ask if he was the author. John Stuart Mill¹, a British philosopher, made general feedback on the poem that the author was too interested in unpleasant subjects, such as death. Later Browning felt embarrassment by the work and he considered it as a boyish work which lacked professional writing style. Nevertheless, he put it in his collected poems in 1868 with making some minor changes in it.

He visited to St Petersburg with the Chevalier George de Benkhausen, the Russian consul-general in 1834 and started writing his next poem *Paracelsus*. It was published in 1835 and this time the work had successful critical acclaim, because it gained attention of famous writers such as Wordsworth, Dickens and others, including Alfred Tennyson. It opened him wide access to the London literary world.

*I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,
Uncomprehended by our narrow thoughts,
But somehow felt and known in every shift
And change in the spirit, - nay, in every pore
Of the body, even,)- what God is, what we are
What life is – how God tastes an infinite joy* ² (II, 1-6 lines)

Macready suggested him to write a play for the theatre, so he wrote some stage plays. *Strafford* was performed several times, but two other plays failed, even

¹ John Stuart Mill: (1806-1873), a British philosopher, political economist

² Robert Browning: "Paracelsus" (1835)

one of them was not performed at all. This led separation of Browning and Macready.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* inspired Browning to write his next long heroic poem, *Sordello*. And in order to search background information for the poem, he visited Italy in 1838. The publication of the work, in 1840, met severe laughing and received as a stupid poem with unclear ending. Among the comments, Tennyson said that only starting and ending lines of the poem were clear. And Carlyle claimed that his wife had read the poem through and could not tell whether *Sordello* was a man, a city or a book.

*Who will, may hear Sordello's story told:
His story? Who believes me shall behold
The man, pursue his fortunes to the end,
Like me: for as the friendless-people's friend
Spied from his hill-top once, despite the din
And dust of multitudes, Pentapoli¹ (Book I, 1-6 lines)*

It took Browning several years to recover his reputation in literary world after failing with publishing *Sordello*. During the years 1841-1846, *Bells and Pomegranates*, a series of eight pamphlets, was published and some of his dramatic lyrics, which helped to get readers' attention, were included in those pamphlets.

Browning started corresponding with the poetess Elizabeth Barrett in 1845. She was six years elder than Robert, but this and her physical disability did not bother them to have romance. Elizabeth, at that time, was living in her father's house and totally dependent on him. Their romance finally led to their marriage and they moved to Italy in 1846 for the sake of Elizabeth's health. They had to keep their marriage secret because of Elizabeth's father - he was against of marriage for any of his children. As a result, Mrs. Barrett was disinherited by her father, as he did for all of his children who married.

¹ Robert Browning: "*Sordello*" (1840)

“The Mrs. Browning of popular imagination was a sweet, innocent young woman who suffered endless cruelties at the hands of a tyrannical papa but who nonetheless had the good fortune to fall in love with a dashing and handsome poet named Robert Browning. ”

Robert encouraged Elizabeth to publish the second edition of her *Poems*, and it included her best known love sonnets. The book increased her popularity dramatically, making stronger her position as a respected Victorian poetess. She was one of the main competitor to become Poet Laureate.

*I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung¹ (Sonnet I, 1-8 lines)*

From the marriage till her death, they lived in Italy, mainly in an apartment in Florence. Now their home is a museum to their memory. In 1849, their only child, Robert Wiedemann Browning, was born in Italy.

Browning remembered the time they spent together in Italy with good feelings. The couple’s relationship lasted not so long, but was very important in Browning’s life. He was extremely interested in the art and atmosphere of Italy. He learned a lot and got useful experience. That’s why he described Italy as his university. However, he received serious literary attacks from the contemporary critics for his work for the desertion of England for foreign lands.

The years in Florance, Italy, Robert worked on the poems that then put together in his two-volume *Men and Women*. However, when the volumes were published, they did not get much acclaim of critics. Browning came back to England in 1861, when his wife died, and became part of the London literary stage.

¹ Elizabeth B. Browning: *“Love Sonnets from Portuguese”*

His reputation began to improve and he started working productively. He finished and published his book-length poem, *The Ring and the Book*, in 1868 and it is considered the poet's greatest work. It is a long blank-verse poem and the events in the poem are based on a murder-case that happened in Rome, around 1690s.

Do you see this Ring?

'Tis Rome-work, made to match

(By Castellani's imitative craft)

Etrurian circlets found, some happy morn,

After a dropping April; found alive

Spark-like 'mid unearthed slope-side figtree-roots

That roof old tombs at Chiusi: soft, you see,

Yet crisp as jewel-cutting. There's one trick,¹ (1-8 lines)

The dramatic monologues, for which Browning is best remembered, are narrated by the various characters, showing their individual perspectives on events. It has been praised as a *tour de force*² of dramatic poetry. Published separately in four volumes from November 1868 through to February 1869, the poem was a success both commercially and critically, and finally brought Browning the renown he had sought for nearly forty years. The Robert Browning Society was formed in 1881 and his work was recognised as belonging within the British literary canon.

Browning traveled in the last years of his life. In the early 1870s, he published a series of long poems, and among them, *Balaustion's Adventure* and *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* were the best-received. He attacked against his critics, especially Alfred Austin, in his volume, *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper*.

About that strangest, saddest, sweetest song

I, when a girl, heard in Kamerios once,

And, after, saved my life by? Oh, so glad

¹ Robert Browning: "*The Ring and The Book*" (1868-69)

² Cambridge dictionary: "*an achievement or performance which shows great skill and attracts admiration*"

*To tell you the adventure!*¹ (1-4 lines)

Some biographies of Browning mention that there was a romantic relationship between Browning and Lady Ash Burton, but he did not want to re-marry.

In 1878, he revisited Italy for the first time in the seventeen years since Elizabeth's death.

In 1887, *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance In Their Day*, was published and it presented the poet speaking in his own voice, engaging in a series of dialogues with long-forgotten figures of literary, artistic, and philosophical history. The readers were shocked by this, and he returned to the brief, concise lyric for his last volume, *Asolando* (1889), published on the day of his death.

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,

When you set your fancies free,

Will they pass to where—by death,

Fools think, imprisoned—

Low he lies who once so loved you,

Whom you loved so,

*-- Pity me?*² (1-6 lines)

Browning died in Venice on 12 December, 1889. He was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Browning was awarded many distinctions. He was made LL.D. of Edinburgh, a life Governor of London University, and had the offer of the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow. But he turned down anything that involved public speaking.

2.2 General characteristics and the nature of Robert Browning's poems

The writers lived and worked in the same period share common themes, similar symbols, even the same ideas in their works. That is why they are put in

¹ Robert Browning: "*Balaustion's Adventure*" (1871)

² Robert Browning: "*Asolando*" (1889)

one group and they are discussed with around the same topics. However, these artists get their motifs from different sources and influenced by distinct people, their interests are similar with other members of the era. When the Victorian poetry representatives are discussed, Tennyson and Browning are compared and put together at the top place of the list.

We are going to specify the general characteristics of Browning's poems, before moving to his dramatic lyrics in the third chapter, and feel the sense of his style of writing. And of course, we are going to do this with comparing Tennyson's poetry.

The first thing that needs to be solved is how important the theme of the Nature in Browning's poetry was. Most critics suggest that the Nature was not worshipped by Victorian artists as the Romantics did. Instead it was one of the themes that was used in just descriptions of places. So is this true for Browning and his works? Or did it influence him or the poet himself impressed with it? If so, is it visible and can the readers feel while reading his poems? Actually this is a huge, and a very important, part of learning Browning's poetry.

It is very confusing and difficult task to explain the treatment of Nature used by Browning. It will be an easy and simple work if we judge the love of Browning toward the natural colors, animals, flowers, the way of describing landscapes, his brief observation of nature. But our task is to explain Browning's, as a poet, soul felt the Nature when he was at work. One of Browning's critics, Stopford Brooke, said in his research: "*We have to try and catch the unconscious attitude of his soul when the Universe was at work around him, and he was for the time its centre—and this is the real difficulty.*"¹

For Tennyson the nature was a tool to illustrate human's emotion, to highlight man's action, or to give background picture when human is depicted. But Browning was in completely opposite, with some exceptions, direction. His nature illustrations do not coincide with the readers' thoughts or emotions as if they are unusual to human's natural world.

¹ Stopford A. Brooke: The poetry of Robert Browning

According to Browning's beliefs the Nature has something in common with human's expectations from it. But it is connected with people like the road and goal together reach the finish in the end. It means the Nature exists independently from us, but it appears in our long desires. Also, it has a power that makes us feel our weakness, love, knowledge, and the existence of divine powers. In one of his poem, *La Saisiaz*, he starts with description of climbing a mountain, Mont Saleve, and then a minute silence among rocks and flowers. There he states that the Nature is everywhere to teach us:

*Dared and done: at last I stand upon
the summit, Dear and True!
Singly dared and done; the climbing
both of us were bound to do. (1-4 lines)
Earth's most exquisite disclosure,
Heaven's own God in evidence!
And no berry in its hiding, no blue
Space in its outspread, (11-14 lines) ¹*

Most Victorians connect the Nature with divine creation of God, and we are also another form of God's creative joy. If both of us, Humanity and Nature, are creation of one author, then that is why we can live with Nature in harmony, express our thoughts and emotions in terms of Nature, or so that Nature can have a human soul. And this kind of belief is highly common in Tennyson's poetry.

*I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lordlover, what sighs are those
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine, 'so I swear to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.' ² (25-30 lines)*

¹ Robert Browning: "La Saisiaz" (1877)

² Alfred Tennyson: "Come Into the Garde, Maud"

However, Browning does not agree with this concept. If he had used such opinion in his poems, his poetry would be called as “pathetic fallacy”¹ as Ruskin calls. This occurs very “*seldom and even when it happens, where Nature is spoken of I human terms, it does not really occur.*”²

S. A. Brooke gives this passage, as an example, from *James Lee's Wife*:

*Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
This autumn morning! How he sets his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet
For the ripple to run over in its mirth;
Listening the while, where on the heap of stones
The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.*³ (1-6 lines)

The readers might get the feeling such great giant creatures are close to humanity but they live distinct from us. Titans such as the Earth and the Sea can live together but not with humanity. Their smile, mirth, listening make us aware of their separate existence from us, not only being images in our mind.

Browning's mind with nature can be seen in another passage in the poem, “*Fifine at the Fair*”. He describes the sunset, the night, the clouds with the purpose of his general thoughts in his usual habit. He says that these creatures are not interested in humanity. They are busy with their own activities, and we are only audience who watch them without understanding their actions. For Browning, the sunset has the last act on the stage; the clouds bother the Sun working freely; the Night offers them to have a rest for a while, and etc. Here is the passage:

*For as on edifice of cloud i' the grey and green
Of evening,—built about some glory of the west,
To barricade the sun's departure,—manifest,
He plays, pre-eminently gold, gilds vapour, crag and crest
Which bend in rapt suspense above the act and deed*

¹ From Cambridge Dictionary: when a writer or poet uses words that give human feelings or qualities to objects, nature or animals, for example by referring to the 'cruel sea'

² Stapford A. Brooke: *The poetry of Robert Browning*

³ Robert Browning: “*James Lee's Wife; VII.- Among the Rocks*”

*They cluster round and keep their very own, nor heed
 The world at watch; while we, breathlessly at the base
 O' the castellated bulk, note momentarily the mace
 Of night fall here, fall there, bring change with every blow,
 Alike to sharpened shaft and broadened portico
 I' the structure; heights and depths, beneath the leaden stress
 Crumble and melt and mix together, coalesce,
 Reform, but sadder still, subdued yet more and more
 By every fresh defeat, till wearied eyes need pore
 No longer on the dull impoverished decadence ¹(section VI)*

So it is quite visible Browning puts human apart from the Nature and its elemental life style. And the nature descriptions prove that Browning uses the pathetic fallacy in his poems. In this case, his mood in feeling and description of the Nature are sometimes close to Tennyson's.

Some critics suggest that the readers can see complete separation of a human from the Nature in some poems of Browning:

*Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement
 Still moving with you;
 For, ever some new head and heart of them
 Thrusts into view
 To observe the intruder; you see it
 If quickly you turn
 And, before they escape you surprise them.
 They grudge you should learn
 How the soft plains they look on, lean over
 And love (they pretend)—
 Cower beneath them. ²*

¹ Robert Browning: "Fifine at the Fair" (1872)

² Robert Browning: "The Englishman in Italy" (1865)

First, the Nature simply observes and then laughs at us; we do not understand their movement and surprise; they even seem pleased to see us in a bad situation. This kind of scene may be found in a poem “Childe Roland”; when the main character visits the town, the hills watches him seriously; the sunset even returns back to see him die:

*before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay.—¹*

Generally, such kind of examples can be found in a lot of Browning’s poems. And the Nature is always alive, but it is not humanised at all². Tennyson does not describe it alive, but he humanise, make it more friendly with human. The rest of the representatives of the Victorian poetry also make the Nature somehow alive, but they harmonise it in one way with human beings. So, Browning stays quite different from his contemporaries with keeping the Nature separated from man.

Now we move to discuss the next peculiarity of Browning’s poetry, his poetry of mankind. Or let’s say it in other words: Browning’s ideology of human life in his poems. From his very early poems, Browning used his special view of human nature, and of human life, and of their connection to God. That is why his view is considered entirely his own. And it admits that he was different from his contemporaries because of his originality in the idea. In addition to this, he used his concept till his last works, so it shows that he never changed his mind with the concept of human life.

It is advisable to start the discussion with stating the theory first. Then we will move gently in analysis of Browning’s works, from his first poems like *Pauline* and to his last poems such as *Paracelsus*.

¹ Robert Browning: “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower” (1855)

² Stopford Brook: The poetry of Browning

Browning raises the question to find an appropriate answer: what is the secret hidden in the world? What are the real purpose, life way, and fate of a man? In a brief statement, he suggests that *“it is God and his works, and God’s intentions in human’s soul.”*

Browning believes that each man has a task, during his life period, like to grow, to develop and to take his act in others’ lives. But he always faces the obstacles that make him slower in development. However, these series of difficulties often prevent us from unpleasant things in life and we are happy with those failures too. Here the main concept of Browning’s theory about human life appear: being satisfied with his current condition in life.

Browning never stops persuading his readers with the opinion that there is something like a soul that push us to tear the limitations. And it always increases and rises to higher position with bringing more desire to accomplish them. It is never tired, because it is the divine in us. If it starts to lessen, God renews it by spiritual influences from the nature as we see it, or from humanity as we feel it.

Unfortunately, until we find a way to fight against the limitations, and have a victory over them, the life becomes unnecessary, or useless. However, during the time we work on them, we feel that there is a infinite land, and a strong wish for getting it. As a result, this battle between being in hard times in chains and searching for freedom, makes misery of life. People might try to avoid that sorrow by examining their each action, feeling, and thoughts. But when they do these, Browning says, the situation even gets worse than before. If human chooses this world and is pleased with it, stops dreaming about new things, and says- I have everything here- love, beauty, knowledge, wealth, fame, and they are all I need, then *“we are indeed lost.”* Instead it is better to have limits in terms of obstacles than satisfaction with the achievements on the Earth, as they open us the larger light. Those limitations suggest that the true life, the infinite happiness and real beauty, is beyond this world. Our life in this Earth is just an entrance to the real life. In this case, it will be stupidity to miss an eternal achievement because of temporary difficulties.

Now it is high time, after a long discussion, to make a conclusion about human life theory used by Browning: first, because of the life limitations it is not allowed people to achieve all their desires for perfection, they are made imperfect. Second, they must, nevertheless, not stop attempts to gain that perfection which is unattainable on the Earth. The destiny requires them to do so.

It may seem as a kind of sin when the readers find the foundation of Browning's theory of human life. It is because majority of people believe the natural defectiveness, which prevents us attaining any absolute success on the Earth, made on us by God. And when they aspire, they know that only God can fulfil all desires in life:

*All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by. ¹ (73-80 lines)*

If one categorizes Browning's poetry according to its genres, there can be found huge amount of classical poems. These poems were written when Browning just started composing poems, for example *Pauline*, he wrote it at the age of twenty. And his latest poems also include poems that touched classical themes, e. g. *Development*; he was seventy seven years old. In this poem he recollects how he had been taught classical study by his father, listening to the story of Troy². He adds that his study of Greek language and literature also influenced him to write poems in classical topics.

Many researches and studies have been done on the influence of Browning and have been published many articles dedicated to his motifs. Along with the

¹ Robert Browning: "Abt Vogler" (1864)

² Edmund D. Cressman: The classical poems of Robert Browning

general influences, critics studied two particular authors, Vergil and Horace, from who Browning got his motivation. Browning used some Vergilian phrases in his book, *“The Ring and the Book”*. Besides this, according to Miss Elizabeth Nitchie, Vergilian influence is shown in Browning’s two poems: “Pan and Luna” and “How They Brought the Good News from Ghen”. In this poems, Browning affirmed later, he used the meter from Vergil poetry.

The influence of Horace on Browning was also much discussed and Miss Thayer lists forty two clear signs of Horace, most of them in, again, *The Ring and the Book*.

One of Browning’s critics, Edmund Cressman, tried to list the whole poems, not the poems based on classical themes partly, that relied on the classical themes, the sources, and states brief history and summarie of them. He puts each poem separately in chronological order.

Here, the classical poems of Browning should be sorted into three catalogues: the whole classical poems, half-classical, and the poems that just include a title from ancient times, like *“Arcades Ambo”* or *“Instans Tyrannus”*.

If we compare Browning and Tennyson, in terms of their classical poems, Browning did not get much popularity than his contemporary.

Browning’s most important poetic message regards the new conditions of urban living. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the once-rural British population had become centered in large cities, thanks to the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. With so many people living in such close quarters, poverty, violence, and sex became part of everyday life. People felt fewer restrictions on their behavior, no longer facing the fear of non-acceptance that they had faced in smaller communities; people could act in total anonymity, without any monitoring by acquaintances or small-town busybodies. However, while the absence of family and community ties meant new-found personal independence, it also meant the loss of a social safety net. Thus for many city-dwellers, a sense of freedom mixed with a sense of insecurity. The mid-nineteenth century also saw the rapid growth of newspapers, which functioned not as the current-events journals of

today but as scandal sheets, filled with stories of violence and carnality. Hurrying pedestrians, bustling shops, and brand-new goods filled the streets, and individuals had to take in millions of separate perceptions a minute. The resulting overstimulation led, according to many theorists, to a sort of numbness. Many writers now felt that in order to provoke an emotional reaction they had to compete with the turmoils and excitements of everyday life, had to shock their audience in ever more novel and sensational ways. Thus violence became a sort of aesthetic choice for many writers, among them Robert Browning. In many of his poems, violence, along with sex, becomes the symbol of the modern urban-dwelling condition. Many of Browning's more disturbing poems, including "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess," reflect this notion.

This apparent moral decay of Victorian society, coupled with an ebbing of interest in religion, led to a morally conservative backlash. So-called Victorian prudery arose as an attempt to rein in something that was seen as out-of-control, an attempt to bring things back to the way they once were. Thus everything came under moral scrutiny, even art and literature. Many of Browning's poems, which often feature painters and other artists, try to work out the proper relationship between art and morality: Should art have a moral message? Can art be immoral? Are aesthetics and ethics inherently contradictory aims? These are all questions with which Browning's poetry struggles. The new findings of science, most notably evolution, posed further challenges to traditional religious ideas, suggesting that empiricism—the careful recording of observable details—could serve as a more relevant basis for human endeavor, whether intellectual or artistic. In exploring these issues of art and modernity, Browning uses the dramatic monologue. A dramatic monologue, to paraphrase M.H. Abrams, is a poem with a speaker who is clearly separate from the poet, who speaks to an implied audience that, while silent, remains clearly present in the scene. (This implied audience distinguishes the dramatic monologue from the soliloquy—a form also used by Browning—in which the speaker does not address any specific listener, rather musing aloud to him or herself). The purpose of the monologue (and the soliloquy)

is not so much to make a statement about its declared subject matter, but to develop the character of the speaker. For Browning, the genre provides a sort of play-space and an alternative persona with which he can explore sometimes controversial ideas. He often further distances himself by employing historical characters, particularly from the Italian Renaissance. During the Renaissance in Italy art assumed a new humanism and began to separate from religion; concentrations of social power reached an extreme. Thus this temporal setting gives Browning a good analogue for exploring issues of art and morality and for looking at the ways in which social power could be used (and misused: the Victorian period saw many moral pundits assume positions of social importance). Additionally, the monologue form allows Browning to explore forms of consciousness and self-representation. This aspect of the monologue underwent further development in the hands of some of Browning's successors, among them Alfred Tennyson and T.S. Eliot.

Browning devotes much attention not only to creating a strong sense of character, but also to developing a high level of historic specificity and general detail. These concerns reflected Victorian society's new emphasis on empiricism, and pointed the way towards the kind of intellectual verse that was to be written by the poets of high Modernism, like Eliot and Ezra Pound. In its scholarly detail and its connection to the past Browning's work also implicitly considers the relationship of modern poets to a greater literary tradition. At least two of Browning's finest dramatic monologues take their inspiration from moments in Shakespeare's plays, and other poems consider the matter of one's posterity and potential immortality as an artist. Because society had been changing so rapidly, Browning and his contemporaries could not be certain that the works of canonical artists like Shakespeare and Michelangelo would continue to have relevance in the emerging new world. Thus these writers worried over their own legacy as well. However, Browning's poetry has lasted—perhaps precisely because of its very topical nature: its active engagement with the debates of its times, and the intelligent strategies with which it handles such era-specific material.

Robert Browning was famous for developing a new literary form in English literature: dramatic monologues. But the term was not used by Browning; instead he called “dramatic lyrics”. What did he mean by using this term for his poems? The word “dramatic” means that the speaker in the poem is not the same person as the poet; “lyrics” refers to the fact that it is a poem.

Some facts show that G.W. Thornbury¹ was the first person who used the term “dramatic monologue” in his collection of poems which was published in 1857. And William Stigand² was the first who applied this term to Browning’s poetry.

If one wants to analyze Browning’s dramatic monologues deeply he/she should take seven characteristics into consideration as the most critics believe that dramatic monologues should have. But not all dramatic monologues have such characteristics; some may lack specific characteristics because of not all requirements are fulfilled. But still they are called dramatic monologues.³

So, the following characteristics can be found in Browning’s dramatic monologues:

1-2 Topic and Characters

Naturally, any dramatic monologue may include different topics such as love, art, nature, philosophy, and etc. Browning also used wide range of topics in his poems. For example, love and crime are the prime topics in “My Last Duchess”.

And Browning’s characters are usually too obsessed characters, who are totally dissatisfied with the situation that they are. And Browning was interested in thoughts of the characters in their specific situations, or actions.⁴

3-4 Speaker and listener

It is obvious to have speaker and audience in most dramatic monologue poems, because the main hero is the one who tells the whole story. And through

¹ Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*, p. 135.

² William Stigand, *Robert Browning’s Poems* (Edinburgh Review, Longmans, Green&Co, 1864) p 13

³ Daniel Drappier, *Robert Browning – The dramatic monologue*, p. 13.

⁴ Michael Alexander, *A History of English Literature* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000), pp. 265-266.

his words the reader gets information about the main scene. The reader is easily sees the point of view of the speaker and his position from the beginning of the poem.

An important characteristic of the dramatic monologue is that the speaker never changes his mind. Even if it seems as if he will change his position this never happens, because Browning lets his speakers deny what they said in the very end of the poem.

5-6 Points Of View: sympathy and judgement

It is usual for Browning to use or recollect the past events in order to show point of view. Actually, the dramatic monologues are the ones which present a historical viewpoint so that the readers easily understand why they should show sympathy for the speakers or other characters. While reading a poem, the readers look at their condition and position in it with their critical eyes. That's because they observe the speaker with being aware of past events and understanding the inner feelings.

4) Language

Browning preferred more colloquial language than the language the contemporary poets used. The reason for this was that the author wanted his poems be understandable for not only literary people but also for common people of that time.

Moreover, at first sight it is also characterized by the amount of question marks, exclamation marks, inverted commas, hyphens and etc. The whole purpose of a dramatic monologue, according to Langbaum, is to present in their original concreteness or to evoke a person, an idea or a historical period.¹ These all purposes are achieved in R. Browning's poems because his dramatic monologues suited his style and interests best.

Outcomes

¹ Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*, p. 135.

Despite being an outsider in a conformist culture, because he was a nonconformist, and being rejected by the British public until his 50s, Robert Browning got his stable place in English literature as a great poet.

He had to fit to explore the world on his own terms. Apart from being a famous poet, he was a skilled musician and draftsman and an immensely learned thinker. That learning made him forceful that he refused to accept the beliefs of such officials as Matthew Arnold, whose views on culture as ultimately the domain of sweetness and light Browning ridiculed. In the end, following the tremendous success of *The Ring and the Book*, it won him the adulation that his integrity had prevented him from courting earlier on, including an audience with Queen Victoria, who was an admirer. His style was often strange, but this was because it included everything within it, even spaciousness and elegance and ease.¹

Browning is the great Victorian poet who most demonstrates the romantic sensibility. He shows how poetic power can sustain itself through the most heterogeneous knowledge of all the productions of an age that challenged poetry itself. If he is often grotesque, so are Gothic cathedrals, and it is well to remember his own line from his greatest poem, “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came”: “Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe” (l. 82)—the woe that gives depth to poetry, no matter how grotesque the world it measures and measures up to. Browning’s grotesqueness of style is an achievement of heterogeneity.² His greatest exemplar was Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose style is either lyrical or urbane, and Browning wrote in Shelleyan modes at every stage of his career. But he wrote in every other mode as well, and it suggests a narrowness of intellect to accept them all together as grotesque.

¹ G. K. Chesterton. “Robert Browning”. p. 16

² Thomas Blackburn. *Robert Browning: a study of his poetry*. p. 73

Chapter 3. The role of *Dramatic Monologues* in R. Browning' poetry

3.1 Themes, motifs, and symbols in selected *Dramatic Monologues* in R.

Browning's poetry

The dramatic monologue verse form enabled Browning to investigate and test the psyches of particular characters in particular, under specific conditions. In "*The Ring and the Book*"¹, Browning recounts a sensational story of murdering with the help of different voices, which give various points of view and numerous forms of a similar story. Dramatic monologues enable readers to go into the brains of different characters and to see an occasion from that character's point of view. Understanding the thoughts, inner sentiments, and inspirations of a character not just gives readers a feeling of sympathy for the characters yet in addition enables readers to comprehend the variety of points of view that make up reality. As a result, Browning's work helps readers understand that the nature of truth or reality changes, depending on one's viewpoint or perspective of the circumstance. Various points of view explain that no one sees the entire story or similar events similarly. Browning represented this theory by composing monologues that cooperated as companion pieces, for example, "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "Andrea del Sarto." These kinds of poems, for example, show how individuals with various behaviors react diversely to the same situations, and additionally describe how a period, place, and situation can make individuals with similar personalities create or change significantly.

Browning's some poems are about those, working in art fields such as painters, writers, poets, and some others; examples of such dramatic monologues are: "Pictor Ignotus", "Fra Lippo Lippi", "Andrea del Sarto and etc. Usually,

¹ Robert Browning: "The Ring and the Book" (1868-69)

Browning would start his poem by dreaming about an artist, or his work of art that he appreciated or hated. After that he tried to guess what type of a character or artistic philosophy would bring either success or disappointment. His dramatic monologues about an artist try to catch some of this philosophizing since his characters might estimate on the purposes of art. For example, the speaker of "Fra Lippo Lippi" recommends that any kind of art increases our ability of perception and makes us see things about our own lives.

*Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye--
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night ¹ (39-49 lines)*

As stated by some of these characters and lyrics, painting romanticizes the beauty found in reality, for example, the happiness in a lover's grin. Sculpture and architecture can memorialize renowned people, as in "The Priest Requests His Tomb at Holy person Praxed's Church" (1845) and "The Statue and the Bust" (1855). Also, art can help its inventors to make a living, so it has a reason as financial as innovative, an idea discovered in "Andrea del Sarto".

Through all his work, Browning attempted to answer questions regarding an artist's duties and to portray the connection between art and social ethic. He doubted whether artists are obliged to be moral and whether they should condemn their characters and creations. Unlike other Victorian poets, Browning populated his poems with cruel, spoiled people, who carry out violations and sins reaching

¹ Robert Browning: "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1865)

from disliking to murdering. The dramatic monologue form enabled Browning to keep up a distinct separation between himself and his characters: by directing the voice of a character, Browning could investigate evil without really being evil himself. His characters filled in as personae that let him receive diverse characteristics and recount stories about horrible situations. In "My Last Duchess," the speaker escapes with his spouse's murder since neither his audience (in the poem) nor his creator judges or condemns him. Rather, the obligation of judging the character's morality is left to readers, who discover the duke of Ferrara as a horrible, offensive individual even as he takes us on a voyage through his art exhibition.

The settings in most of Browning's poems take place in medieval and Renaissance Europe, often in Italy. Browning gained great knowledge on art, literature, history and used it to fictionalize the real events, including a seventeenth-century kill in "The Ring and the Book", and to channel the voices of real recorded figures, including a biblical scholar in medieval Spain in "Rabbi Ben Ezra".

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!

I see the whole design,

I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:

Perfect I call Thy plan:

Thanks that I was a man!

Maker, remake, complete,-- I trust what Thou shalt do!¹ (55-60 lines)

And the Renaissance painter in the eponymous "Andrea del Sarto."

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require:

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—

My serpantining beauty, rounds on rounds!²(21-26 lines)

¹ Robert Browning: "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (1864)

² Robert Browning: "Andrea del Sarto." (1855)

The remoteness of the era and area enabled Browning to evaluate and investigate contemporary issues without fear of losing his readers' support. Some critics suggest that raising the current problems might seem didactic and might be appreciated by readers but showing the moral ideas in a work taken from the centuries back to thirteenth, fourteenth would not. For example, the speaker of "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" is an Italian bishop during the late Renaissance. Through the speaker's long, important statements about monuments, Browning indirectly condemns organized religion, including the Church of England, which was in a mess at the time when the poem appeared in the mid-nineteenth century.

*And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
--Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!*¹

Dramatic monologues usually include only a single speaker speaking to no less than one silent, normally unnamed person, and they give interesting depictions of the speakers and their identities. Unlike soliloquies, in dramatic monologues the characters are always speaking directly to listeners. Browning's characters are generally clever, smart, argumentative, and good at lying. Indeed, they often leave out more of a story than they actually tell. In order to fully understand the characters and their psyches, readers have to pay attention to word choice, to logical development, and to the use of figures of speech, including any metaphors or analogies. For example, the narrator of "My Last Duchess" basically admits to killing his wife, despite the fact that he never communicates his sin inside and out. Rather than state the speaker's madness, Browning expresses it through how and what the speakers talk.

*And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first*

¹ Robert Browning: "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church" (1856)

*Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint"¹(11-18 lines)*

Browning differs from his contemporaries because he filled his poems with depiction of ugliness, brutality, and the strange things. Other Victorian poets, for example, Alfred Tennyson, and Gerard Manley Hopkins, showed the real world as the picture of beauty. Maybe Browning's use of the bizarre things and situation connects him to the writer Charles Dickens, who filled his fiction with people from all parts of society, including the nobles and the extremely poor ones. Like Dickens, Browning made characters that were equipped for extraordinary evil. The early poem "Porphyria's Lover" starts with the lover portraying the landing of Porphyria, and then it rapidly goes into a depiction of her murder at his hands. To make the picture more bizarre, the speaker chokes Porphyria with her own hair.

*So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do. (30-35 lines)*

*That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.¹(36-42 lines)*

¹ Robert Browning: "My Last Duchess" (1842)

Though the setting of "Fra Lippo Lippi" takes place during the period of the Renaissance in Florence, at the peak of its flourishing, Browning sets the poem in a back alley beside a house, not in a royal residence or a garden.

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!

You need not clap your torches to my face.

Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!

What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,

And here you catch me at an alley's end

*Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar*²(1-6 lines)

Browning was influential one in helping readers and artists comprehend that verse as an artistic expression could deal with subjects both high, for example, religious themes and romanticized stories, and base, for example, murder, madness, and such subjects that had already just been investigated in books.

Browning's enthusiasm for culture, including art, sculpture, architecture, shows up all through his works in descriptions of his characters' esthetic tastes. His characters' choices in art, music, and writing uncover critical signs about their temperaments and morals. For example, the duke of Ferrara, the main protagonist of "My Last Duchess," finishes up his monologue by pointing out a statue he charged of Neptune taming an ocean beast.

At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go

Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,

*With Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.*³(52-55 lines)

The duke's inclination for this monument specifically relates to the sort of man he, the kind of a man who might have his wife murdered yet at the same time looking affectionately and longingly at her portrait. Like Neptune, control and order all parts of life, including his spouse. Characters additionally express their tastes by the way in which they discuss art, people, or events. Andrea del Sarto, the

¹ Robert Browning: "Porphyria's Lover" (1844)

² Robert Browning: "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1865)

³ Robert Browning: "My Last Duchess" (1842)

Renaissance painter who talks in the poem "Andrea del Sarto," often uses the words gold and silver when he describes his situation. His selection of words emphasizes one of the main themes of the poem: the way he sold himself the duke likes to out.

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,(116-117 lines)

'Tis done and past: 'twas right, my instinct said:

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,(167-168 lines)

'Tis done and past: 'twas right, my instinct said:

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,(167-168 lines)

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold, (174-175 lines)

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with! ¹(217-218 lines)

From his monologue, one can discover that he now makes business on paintings; now he never paints what he considered to be a real art. His strong wish, for being wealthy, has influenced his esthetic judgment, making him to use monetary vocabulary to portray art objects.

Browning's poetry is full of images of evil and crime scenes. For instance, "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" starts with the narrator's hatred speech about a fellowman.

Gr-r-r---there go, my heart's abhorrence!

Water your damned flower-pots, do!

If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,

God's blood, would not mine kill you!²(1-4 lines)

During the next lines, the man tries to invoke images of evil pirates and a man who were sent to hell. The manner of speaking and symbols used by the characters shows evil feelings, and also refer to their evil natures.

¹ Robert Browning: "Andrea del Sarto" (1868)

² Robert Browning: "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" (1882)

*_Saint_, forsooth! While brown Dolores
 Squats outside the Convent bank
 With Sanchicha, telling stories,
 Steeping tresses in the tank,
 Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
 ---Can't I see his dead eye glow,
 Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
 (That is, if he'd let it show!)¹(25-32 lines)*

“Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” talks about frightening world of dead horses and severely ruined places.

*Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
 One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
 Stood stupefied, however he came there:
 Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!²(75-78 lines)*

Readers can face with an example of violence in “Porphyria’s Lover”, too. In this poem, the protagonist sits quietly with a dead Porphyria, whom he killed by choking her with her hair.

*I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head³,(49-52 lines)*

Browning used the images of evil and violence in order to discover all sides of human psychology, including other grotesque symbols that we usually do not face in poetry.

3.2 The interaction of men and women in Browning’s *Dramatic Monologues*

Much attention is given to gender relations in most of Browning’s poems. One of his collections was entitled “Men and Women”, and this title exactly talks

¹ Robert Browning. “Andrea del Sarto” (1868)

² Robert Browning, “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” (1849)

³ Robert Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover” (1836)

about the description of gender relations in his poetry. However, the title can cause misunderstanding because the larger amount of Browning's poems has a male speaker/narrator and a male point of view. Female characters are presented only in the talks of the male characters or as silent listeners. A reader may get an idea, from the title "Men and Women, like there is equality between two sexes because of the coordinating conjunction "and". But still, the difference stays here between "men" and "women" that "men" is placed first. It suggests that men are more involved in the discussion than women: their point of view is emphasized as the most crucial one. Despite the fact that the title refers there is equality between two genders at a certain point, women usually do not have a voice, especially in final decisions. They also never have reputation as men and maybe that is why the title can be considered as more or less deceiving readers: men and women are not considered as equals.¹ It is a good hint for readers that female characters will not be given an equal position. And it is not only true for that single title, but also this kind of situation is very common in Browning's poetry.

The role of women was in less important position and it was a subject in discussions in the Victorian period, that is why it was highly presented in poetry and literature as well. In addition, the monologues, not only in the collection "Men" and "Women" but in general, skillfully group two features which seem to be incompatible: sophistication and intellect; and lust and power.² These features are associated with men and masculine characteristics.

As it is mentioned in the second chapter, Renaissance representations, Browning's most famous characters are villains, especially in the form of erratic and passionate husbands. The well-known parts of poetry that Browning wrote are about problems in the love life of the ill-natured protagonist; the themes addressed are adultery, the ultimate possession of the lover, jealousy, etc.

Browning got pleasure from writing about such kinds of characters and he wanted to discover their evil souls and minds. So this suggests that it was the only

¹ Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, poetics and politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 287.

² Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, pp. 287-288.

reason why he produced the works about them. Browning's personal life and also his love life had been harmonized together. He and Elizabeth Barrett were very happy from the very early years when they started corresponding. It was not difficult for them eloping to Italy and spending several years together there. There are not texts or biographies written about the Browning's family that may talk about possible marital failures or problems. Robert Browning's relations with his parents and other family members were acceptable: his mother, Sarah Wiedemann, looked after her children very well and all members of the family were very close to each other. Parents were very helpful and supportive and provided their children with a good education.¹

In this part of the chapter our attention is mainly on "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess", because they are considered as Browning's most popular ones among his dramatic monologues. Other poems which we will take for our analysis are "Andrea Del Sarto" and "The Laboratory".

First of all, we begin with "Porphyria's Lover" (1836), which was part of a collection of two poems together with "Johannes Agricola in Meditation" which was called "Madhouse Cells". Probably Browning took that name, with the aim, of course, to signal to a reader about the state of the protagonist. Later he dropped the title.²

The events in the poem do not show about just a simple love story. Instead the poem includes wider themes that insist on readers thinking deeply. If it is offered to any reader who expect an ordinary love story from the poem, he/she may face complicated chain of ideas. The poem mentions class differences and the dilemma of whether or not to give that up. It is easy to understand that the male character is in a lower position than the woman³, because he lives in a rather simple, uncomfortable cottage, waiting for her to come back from a party. He even does not believe she might return, but Porphyria returns to him. However, she never thinks about that she will give up her privileges over him ("Vainer ties" (line

¹ Monica Fuller, "Robert Browning". (17/12/2001)

² Stephen Hawlin, *The Complete Critical Guide to Robert Browning*, p. 73.

³ Stephen Hawlin, *The Complete Critical Guide to Robert Browning*, p. 75

24) Porphyria is used to be in higher class in society). Or she will refuse to be attached to her current position. Now she has to deal with a dilemma but she prefers not to choose between the two (“struggling passion” (line 23): she continues with the choice between her class and her lover. In order to take his attention away from that dilemma and soften his soul, she shows her affection for him.

And, last she sat down by my side

And called me. When no voice replied,

She put my arm about her waist,

And made her smooth white shoulder bare, (14-17 lines)

One of Browning’s critics, E. W. Slinn says that there are a lot of examples in Victorian literary works to show that a class difference was a source of sexual thinking for men, because this could support them with their idea of superiority in the society.¹ Because of Porphyria’s higher position than his, his pride may be hurt. The lover does not seem too happy when she comes in: he refuses to answer her emotions, to embrace her or to kiss her. His ego may be hurt because she went to an upper-class party, where he would not be welcomed.²

Some critics suggest that the word “vainer ties” might give another meaning to a reader: the man is not Porphyria’s only darling as it shows, Porphyria is unfaithful to him. This could likewise be the reason of the lover being hurt. In the event that one adheres to the thinking that Porphyria has diverse lovers, at that point she could be viewed as a sexual property of another person, despite the fact that she needs something other than what is expected: a genuine association with her actual lover. The speaker says the words “give herself to me forever” (line 25).

Moreover, the way that she does not give him enough attention for his enjoying plays a role, and this will be a topic in “My Last Duchess”, as well. The wish of a man to have his lover most likely needs to do with the way that he is more relying upon her than she on him, though she demonstrates that she adores

¹ E.W. Slinn, *Victorian poetry as cultural critique – The politics of performative language* (University of Virginia Press, 2003), p. 155.

² Freya Maenhout: *Gender Relation in R. Browning’s monologues*. p 24

him. She appears to comprehend those gentle feelings and tries to demonstrate her love. By doing this she signs her own particular death-warrant. The adjustment in his brain happens when she looks at him and he understands that she loves him. He wants to preserve the moment and her affection for him by choking her with her own hair.

The lover is the speaker in the poem: he portrays the stormy circumstance outside, at that point Porphyria when she enters the bungalow/cottage, and his activities. There are no participants in the lyric itself: he does not address the main individual who is available, viz. Porphyria. He talks in her name and gives a record of the situation; there is no audience like in “My Last Duchess” or “Andrea del Sarto”. He clarifies his consideration and thinking to the reader, which are plainly not those of a normal person. Obviously the reader understands that he or she is managing an unreliable and a frantic speaker; the reference to his madness could now be found in the title of the gathering, “Madhouse Cells”.

Porphyria’s sweetheart is a well known case of a Browning character that is mad. He transforms his woman into a question that he needs to control, that he uses for his own good, without watching over her emotions or life.¹ The lady lays her life into his hands, believing him. The speaker does not specify any battle or protection when he puts her hair around her neck and fixes it. Obviously the speaker is an unreliable one; she may have opposed him, however she was in a defenseless position and she was unable to have conflict with the power of her lover.

The speaker demands the detachment and unfaithfulness of his darling, yet the reader can instantly place this into perspective since he or she sees how Porphyria acts in the poem. She acts like being too faithful and kind, helpful person, and consequently the accusations and doubts of her lover appear to be as unfair and unfounded.²

¹ G.P. Landow, —*Porphyria “s Lover”*. p. 12

² Breanna Byecroft, *Representations of the Female Voice in Victorian Poetry*. (Rhode Island: Brown University, English 151, autumn 2003) p. 126

No individual in his correct personality would have needed to continue everything the way it is by executing the lady that he loves. That way her magnificence will not blur and her affection for him will not change:

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,

Perfectly pure and good: (lines 36-37)

The speaker has discovered “a solution” for his concern: keeping their love untouched and untroubled by other individuals or the distinction in class. The best way to take care of the issue of the speaker – how can he manage this circumstance? – is to execute his adored Porphyria. The speaker is excessively narrow-minded, making it impossible to consider different answers that may hurt himself, for example, by murdering himself rather than her (despite the fact that this would be an exceptionally radical arrangement too). It is profoundly unrealistic that Porphyria needed to be killed. The man just considers what he needs and not what she needs – though he expresses that it was her own will to be executed in this way and that he simply allowed her desire.

The smiling rosy little head,

So glad it has its utmost will,

That all it scorned at once is fled,

And I, its love, am gained instead!

Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

Her darling one wish would be heard. (lines 52-57)

He indicates absence of sympathy, the failure to feel empathy for another or to put himself in someone else's perspective: “No pain felt she” (line 41). At that point he subtleties his words a smidgen, on the grounds that after all he cannot feel what she felt: “I am quite sure she felt no pain.” (line 42)

Likewise, the man does not appear to comprehend the result of his action. The strangled lady seems still alive to him: he opens her eyes to have a look at them and lays her head on his shoulder. He feels happy to realise that everything is impeccable at this point. The words he uses to portray the dead body are here striking:

*As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain. (lines 43-45)*

The “shud bud” is an analogy for her eyelids, and her eyes are contrasted with a honey bee, a living animal. This infers despite everything he supposes she is alive. In the following line there is a representation of the eyes: eyes are not ready to laugh, and moreover, they are not alive any more. He additionally influences it to appear as though she were alive:

*And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred, (lines 58-59)*

He looks like trying to ignore about putting an end to an existence: his speech makes it to appear as though she is reddening in light when he kisses her, however in actually it is a direct result of the choking:

*[...] Her cheek once more
blushed bright beneath my burning kiss: (lines 47-48)*

In “Porphyria’s Lover” the death of Porphyria is without a doubt depicted as something delightful. The lover does not say any negative sides of death and thinks about his actions as something great and even excellent. It appears as though Porphyria is more excellent than any other time in recent memory when she has been killed. Dead bodies are a typical theme in Victorian writing; for example, the Woman of Shalott in Tennyson’s homonymic perfect work of art for one. The body of the woman is portrayed, drifting on the stream towards Camelot. The dead lady is nearly celebrated:

The topic of “Porphyria’s Lover” can be discovered in another of Robert Browning’s famous dramatic monologues, for example, “My Last Duchess”.

In “My Last Duchess” (1842), the murder of the lady does not occur throughout the poem and has not been told explicitly: it has just happened. In this dramatic monologue the audience or listener is not the primary female character (since she is dead), yet a male servant. Therefore there is no real connection between a man and a woman.

The events written in the dramatic monologue are the accompanying: the duke of Ferrera gets an emissary of a powerful man, who has an eligible girl. In his private quarters the duke uncovers a work of art of his late spouse, his “last duchess”. Revealing that painting is something that exclusive the duke can do: the artistic creation is taken cover behind a curtain and he is the only one who can choose about who is permitted to see the painting and who is not. He discloses to his visitors the end result for her: she grinned and blushed excessively at other men, as though she did not value his generosity to her enough.

*My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. (lines 26-34)*

Due to this “disrespectful” behaviour measures had been taken, and the duke is currently looking for another spouse.

Once more, the man has finished other’s life, since she did not act how he would have preferred her to demonstrate. For this situation the duchess was very kind to others, especially to men, and smiled at them, and thus he believed he did not have her completely. This circumstance was painful for the duke, and the only fair way out was to give his wife a chance to be taken away.

*Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. (lines 43-46)*

The situation might appear as an unbelievable or even stupid to the reader, in fact that grinning at people does not appear a sufficient motivation to be murdered. This is an open signal to the reader that the storyteller is crazy, and in this manner unreliable.¹

The depiction of the duchess in the duke's words is also a crucial piece of the poem, however the principle objective of "My Last Duchess" is the investigation of the mind of the speaker. The portrayal of the duchess clarifies that the duke is clearly not in his correct personality. He does not increase any self-information before the finish of the poem: he censures others for their mix-ups to mask his own. The duke maintains a strategic distance from self-examination and declines to have a look at his mistakes, or even concede that he has issues. The composition of the duchess depicts her as a sweet and blameless young lady, which stands out from the identity of her husband. The duke likes to show his power to the emissary, who obviously should tell his lord what sort of a person his future child-in-law is. The duke retells the story since he anticipates that the emissary will advise the lady – who is the desired target – and her father about normal behaviour she should show as his wife. What is anticipated from her is a complete respect and politeness towards him; he also adds the things that hurt his pride. The bride-to-be should avoid hurting his pride at all costs if she does not want to suffer the same fate as the late duchess.

He uncovers his own identity by talking and therefore "the picture of an over-enthusiastic, over-possessive authority emerges".² The main feeling the duke demonstrates is outrage due to his late wife's behaviour, and this does not prompt self-reflection or increased self-learning.

His taste in art underlines his cruel persona, because of the fact that the "suggestion of high culture derives a theatrical quality from the insane murder of his wife." His refined nature stands out pointedly from his stupidity.

¹ Guozhi Chen, *Male Identity in Browning's Poetry* p. 45

² *Ibid.* p. 46

Toward the end there is a striking picture of Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, subduing a sea-horse, which is an image for the lady who is being generalized and controlled. Neptune obviously remains for the duke. This picture stays as a notice for the coming duchess: the duke demonstrates the emissary that his next wife must obey him and that he will not endure “loose” behaviour. The wish of the man to have or possess the lady is openly present here, much the same as in “Porphyria’s Lover”.

The painting of his late wife is in reality more reasonable for him than a real wife, since it cannot influence him to feel corrupted in any position. It transforms the duchess into a question; she moves toward becoming something which he can rule totally and who will not humiliate or agitate him. His life is lighthearted with just the painting in his life, but still he needs a spouse. The duke looks for satisfaction in the perfect marriage; however, it does not go as planned.¹

What Browning is doing in “My Last Duchess” is putting forward a defense for an unethical position. The dramatic monologue is the ideal instrument for this, because of the pressure amongst sympathy and moral judgement. Those unethical positions are a demonstration of unrestrained choice of the characters. The fact that there is a split between moral judgement and sympathy enables the reader to read the poem from the perspective of the speaker, and even care for him or her, however the reader does not need to receive that perspective or to agree with it.²

“My Last Duchess” is believed to be the perfect monologue. It involves all of the seven qualities that were recorded in Drappier’s thesis: the speaker is infamous duke; the audience comprises of one man, the emissary of the father of the next duchess; there is an event; there is an exact cooperation amongst speaker and audience, despite the fact that is amazingly uneven; the main character uncovers himself and his identity by his curious presentation; there is emotional action; and finally, the action is taking place in the present.³ Like “Porphyria’s Lover”, it is really an intriguing poem to discuss. Particularly using the frantic

¹ Guozhi Chen, *Male Identity in Browning's Poetry*. P. 75

² Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*, p. 100.

³ Daniel Drappier, *Robert Browning – The dramatic monologue*, p. 13.

heroes makes them wonderful, if not one of a kind poems. These two dramatic monologues are unquestionably an absolute necessity for everybody who wants to read Robert Browning.

“Andrea Del Sarto” (1855) is a dramatic monologue about a painter of the Renaissance time. This isn't a subject that he just took up once: Browning composed numerous more lyrics about artists, e.g. “Fra Lippo Lippi”, “Pictor Ignotus”, “Beatrice Signorini” and “Parleying with Francis Furini”. Andrea Del Sarto is not an invented character, yet a real individual who was a painter during that art movement. His artistic creations frequently delineated religious scenes, particularly the Virgin Mary. The Italian came to serve the ruler of France as court painter, however after some time he left France never to return again. He had kept the cash which he should purchase artworks with, and spent every last bit of it on a house and on his spouse, Lucrezia.

The poem is a long monologue routed to Lucrezia, who does not focus on what he is attempting to tell her. Rather, she sits tight for her lover to appear. Del Sarto presumably thinks about her matter, despite the fact that he calls the man her “cousin”; he even urges her to go to him. In his monologue he especially discusses his past accomplishments and his art abilities: he expresses that he is the better painter when contrasted with Michelangelo – whom he calls “Michel Agnolo” in the poem – and Rafael. In any case, as opposed to the Italian experts, he can't put anything unique in his artworks. Browning demands that being an ace in painting requires the specialized aptitudes, as well as the capacity to put something more into it. Del Sarto does not have the spiritually power that Rafael and Michelangelo had.¹

*There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine. (lines 74-77)*

¹ P.V. Allingham, *Robert Browning's "Andrea del Sarto" (1855): Making Do with Less* (Ontario: Lakehead University, 2004) p. 33

In a way it is Lucrezia who limits his painting and his inspiration. She acts as his model:

you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require:

It saves a model. (lines 23-25)

When he paints the Virgin Mary, for example, he generally gives her Lucrezia's face. Due to her he can't enhance his artistic creations or put "soul" into them. Rather, she takes away his inventiveness since he just has a look at her for motivation. She takes up all his consideration with the goal that he cannot swing to something unique and subsequently he cannot put more variety in his paintings. The protagonist is disturbed by Lucrezia's shallow thoughts, and cannot relate her physical beauty to her bias. He feels that in the event that she would tend to him and his work, he would have the capacity to make masterpieces. He needs her to make him complete as a man and as a craftsman, yet she has flopped in doing that. Bycroft states that Del Sarto specifically blames her for denying him of his creative potential and success.¹

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

More than I merit, yes, many times.

But had you — oh with the same perfect brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind! (lines 116-126)

Lucrezia is to be criticized for leaving France, where her husband had an acceptable position at the court, and for taking the lord's cash. Because of her action he feels like a criminal, but at the same time he accentuates it is a piece of the past: he is attempting not to blame her.

A good time, was it not, my kingly days?

¹ Breanna Bycroft, *Objectifying the Female in "Andrea del Sarto"* (Rhode Island: Brown University, 2003)

And had you not grown restless... but I know—

'Tis done and past (lines 160-162)

He cannot give himself to his job totally, because of the fact that he has his wife to take care of. Lucrezia is an extremely spoiled lady; Del Sarto gives her all that she wants. He even pays for her debts:

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own price,

And shut the money into this small hand

When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?

Oh, I'll content him,--but to-morrow, Love! (lines 5-10)

Andrea Del Sarto is consumed by his own particular viewpoint, and appears to be both “heroic and pathetic when he makes that final gesture of surrender: ‘the Cousin's shriek! Go, my Love’.”¹ Langbaum calls this “attractive” once more, and he clarifies:

but intent as he is on his strategy of self-justification, and without introducing any other perspective – indeed, because he is so absorbed in his own perspective – he yet reveals himself as more contemptible and yet, as in a way more attractive too (his absorption is attractive, it is a pole for sympathy) than he is aware.²

The protagonist here is a failed hero and artist, who demonstrates a lot of self indulgence. He attempted to build up his depiction superiorly, yet he lost his motivation all the while. His compositions just serve to pay for his wife's over the top costs, her longing for extravagance. He tries to vindicate his actions and the way that he corrupted his craft for his spouse. He does not live for his work anymore, but for his wife. Andrea del Sarto is hesitant and defenseless, which makes us to understand him, and feel friendship with him. He has to endure simply because of his wife and the relationship that they have. But actually, del Sarto

¹ Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*, p. 150.

² Ibid. p. 150.

cannot acknowledge his own particular disappointments. Since he has not intentionally grasped the things he has done previously, he cannot trick his audience: with a specific goal to have the capacity to lie, one needs to realize what the truth itself is. In his discourse he misdirects himself and he tries to conceal the way that despite everything he feels guilty for taking the cash that lord Francis of France had given to him. He tries to legitimize his actions by saying that he did everything for Lucrezia. He is not deluding his audience, yet he is concealing reality from himself. W. D. Shaw, an American critic, says the following in regards to this situation: *“though a lie posits the duality of deceiver and deceived, bad faith implies the unity of a single consciousness. [...] Andrea del Sarto lies to himself. In bad faith the deceiver and the dupe are one and the same person.”*¹ He additionally refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's meaning of being in lacking honesty: *I “must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived... Better yet I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it more carefully.”*² Del Sarto is as it were a man who unwittingly deceives himself; he misleads himself critically and that is the reason behind why he neglects to misdirect his audience. The main casualty he makes by doing this is himself.³

All through the poem the Italian painter discusses his spouse and his need to have her. Lucrezia demonstrates no enthusiasm for his masterful accomplishments and stresses by any stretch of the imagination. She likes to benefit from his cash and to love another man in the meantime; her husband does not appear to have any protests to this. At the beginning of “Andrea del Sarto” he recommends they ought to sit together as an inseparable unit, which would make him feel more youthful and give him motivation. This happens all through the whole poem, but she influences him to lose trust in himself by not focusing on her husband's words. He says that she doesn't comprehend him:

You don't understand

Nor care to understand about my art,

¹ W.D. Shaw, *Masks of the Unconscious: Bad Faith and Casuistry in the Dramatic Monologue* pp. 439-460.

² J.P. Sartre, "Bad Faith," in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), trans. H.E. Barnes p. 89.

³ W.D. Shaw, *Masks of the Unconscious*, pp. 439-460.

But you can hear at least when people speak: (lines 54-56)

All through the entire poem Andrea continues conversing with Lucrezia, however she prefers not to give any consideration. It seems like he is talking with himself to discover a reason for his burglary. He says he did everything for her and she does not welcome it or regard him for it.¹

Toward the finish of the poem he reveals to her that she should demonstrate some enthusiasm for what he does, because these attempts improve her monetarily. Lucrezia just thinks about him as her husband and not as a successful artist or something different that may be dear to her. To Andrea the domestic life is as essential as his job, yet Lucrezia has regard for neither of those. She is unfaithful to him and this explains that she is not satisfied with her life as his wife; and regardless of whether she fills in as his dream, as the model for her husband's paintings, she does not value it. Neither of the things that Andrea believes are vital means anything to her, despite the fact that she is a piece of both their marriage and his works. He tries to persuade her to rethink her feelings, and give him another opportunity. However, at last he advises her to go to her lover, who is waiting for her outside.²

Unlike the poems examined previously, “Andrea del Sarto” does not generalize the female presence – although he makes objects of her: he puts her as an image in his paintings – nor does the protagonist own the lady. He needs her female passive character to have regard for what he has improved the situation for her: he stole cash from the French lord for her (or he guarantees in any event he did it for her; he could be searching for a reason). He paints to please Lucrezia and to have the capacity to offer her a good life.

The sin he experiences shows up toward the finish of the poem as a mental disorder like hallucination: Lucrezia's golden hair transforms into the golden blocks which he has stolen from Lord Francis.

King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights

¹ Abigail Newman, *Inspiration and Unrequited Love in Browning's "Andrea del Sarto"* p. 65

² Ibid. p. 74

*When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with! (lines 214-218)*

He attempted to legitimize his activities by much or less accusing his wife for it so he would feel less regretful. Rather, Lucrezia turns into his superego and inner voice. She thinks about his disgrace and humiliation however it appears as though she could not care less. He tries to force his will on her toward the end, by advising her to go to her lover, yet there is no requirement for that: she needed to go in any case. He has no power over her and making her the scapegoat makes his guilt even worse. All things considered, he has done as such much for her and she implies such a great amount to him, but she does not care.¹

Andrea del Sarto loses the conventional patriarchal power: he has no power over his wife. The male figure additionally bombs in the household circle; he cannot remain quiet about his spouse. Despite what might be expected, he even advises her to go to the man he calls her “cousin”, despite the fact that he knows it is her lover.

This ballad remains as opposed to the past two dramatic monologues we have talked about. Porphyria's lover and the duke have a control over their spouses or lovers and demonstrate that power by murdering them toward the end. Andrea del Sarto has no power. Although he is a skilful painter, he cannot deliver compositions at the level of other Italian artists. Not at all like Browning's different heroes, del Sarto does not give off an impression of being mad; yet he experiences much feeling of guilt, which the duke and the lover do not know or have not experienced, regardless of whether they perpetrated violations that were more regrettable than del Sarto's burglary.

The ladies that are described in the poems are likewise altogether different. While Porphyria and the duchess appear like two exceptionally kind, cherishing ladies, Lucrezia seems to be egoist, greedy, shallow, and unavailable for adoring.

¹ W.D. Shaw, *Masks of the Unconscious*, pp. 439-460.

The heroes in the initial two poems presume their lovers to be unfaithful, and respond in a greatly envious way; del Sarto then again realizes that Lucrezia is unfaithful, however goes about as though he is undisturbed by it.

This poem “The Laboratory” (1844) is similar to “Porphyria's Lover” and “My Last Duchess” as in the spouse has a desire to kill his wife, and again there is the theme of adultery, just more explicit than in alternate poems. He is certain that she is undermining him, since she makes no mystery of it. The man is making a toxic drink that will execute his wife, or rather: he is watching the man in the research facility, who is making the toxin for him. At that time, his wife is with her lover:

*He is with her; and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them! I am here. (lines 5-8)*

To put it plainly, the husband is considering revenge while his wife is submitting adultery – just she knows nothing about that, since she supposes he is too powerless, making it impossible to make a move.

The quiet audience is the brewer of the elixir, and he is told about the entire circumstance in certainty: the husband tells the brewer the reason for the toxic substance. He is urged to work:

*Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder, I am not in haste! (lines 9-10).*

At the same time the listener also has to answer questions, like:

*Which is the poison to poison her, prithee? (line 4)
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly, is that poison too? (lines 15-16)
Quick – is it finished? (line 25)*

We do not learn much about the listener, except that he is an old man and that he gets a reward for his work:

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,

You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will! (lines 45-46)

There is an indication that the husband will take the toxin himself, in spite of the fact that that is not clear. He needs the lover to see her death, but he inquires as to whether it can hurt him as well: "If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?" (line 44). At the point when the spouse takes the mixture, he gives all his gold to the brewer, and says he will "dance at the King's!" (line 48). This last line is perhaps a referral to God, Paradise or death.

The reader learns from this poem that there is a clear contrast in identity between the married couple. She does not feel regretful about her adultery in any case, it is an incredible inverse: she laughs at him for not doing anything, for giving her a chance to do what she wants, regardless of whether it harms him. He says one drop of toxic substance is not sufficient to murder her, since she is not powerless like him:

*What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes, (lines 29-31)*

Because of that strength she could influence her lover to experience passionate feelings for her. Just a greater amount of the toxic substance can free her spirit from the "masculine eyes" (line 31). The toxic substance should be sufficiently solid, since he wants to prevent her heart from beating by telling the brewer:

*say, "no"!
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go." (lines 31-32)*

He supposes he is not strong, since he cannot murder her. He endeavored to let her "fall" in his creative ability, but it did not work. He watched his spouse with her lover "whispering", however was not able make a move:

*For only last night, as they whisper'd, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fix'd, she would fall,
Shrivell'd; she fell not; yet this does it all! (lines 33-36)*

One could also find the meaning from these lines as endeavoring to influence his wife to wake up, by simply observing at her, by not making a move. Nevertheless, he wishes her death, perhaps to comfort his own conscience, and not because he would really need her dead. It seems like an action of revenge on her lover rather than on her:

Not that I bid you spare her the pain!

Let death be felt and the proof remain;

Brand, burn up, bite into its grace

He is sure to remember her dying face! (lines 37-40)

The female character from “The Laboratory” remains slightly different from the other two poems, “Porphyria's Lover” and “My Last Duchess”, because of the fact that there the lady is benevolent, friendly, loving and particularly weaker than the man, while in this poem she is the one not demonstrating sympathy: she is the “evil” one. She does not shroud the way that she is undermining him; despite what might be expected, she wants him to know to influence him to feel awful. She supposes he is not brave, unfit to make an action; this is not correct, however he is not “brave” enough to witness his actions:

Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose,

It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close (lines 41-42)

It is not generally clear who the names Pauline and Elise in lines 22 and 23 allude to. One may think Pauline is the name of his wife (“Pauline” is the title of Browning's first huge work that was published earlier), because she “should have only thirty minutes to live!” (line 22), however then the name Elise is additionally said:

and Elise, with her head

And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead! (lines 23-24)

Probably Elise is his lover, though the context makes the reader uncertain. It is the only time that she is mentioned, so this remains unclear.

The man also has some secret wishes apart from murdering his wife, but he does not discuss deeper than in the following lines:

*Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invincible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree-basket! (lines 17-20)*

The narrator in “The Laboratory” expects sympathy since he wants to legitimize his decisions and his actions towards the reader and towards the brewer. He clarifies openly why he needs to harm her. The husband makes it seem as though it is all her blame, and like the Duke, he will murder her. Just here, it is clarified that he has a decently “good” explanation or reason to murder her, not at all like the Duke, who only had doubts. The spouse realizes that his wife has a lover and she does not conceal it, and he has even watched them together.

Here is a good quotation which can be applied to this dramatic monologue: “the failure of years” could refer to the failure of the marriage; “a minute’s success” would then be the poisoning, the punishment of the adulterous wife: she will pay for making the marriage fail.

Now we are going to compare the poems that we have analyzed. And we will start with “Porphyria’s Lover” and “My Last Duchess”

The women, the main female characters, in these two poems – Porphyria and the duchess – are both killed by the protagonists. If any attentive reader looks at the protagonists, from a social status, he might find a difference between them. For instance, the position of Porphyria’s lover is not said openly throughout the poem. However one might guess that he is from the working class while his lady belongs to upper class. In comparison with the protagonist in “My Last Duchess”, who is a duke, we know that he has an authority in the society. Both male protagonists expect particular wishes from their lovers: the lover asks from Porphyria to abandon her position in the society and stay with him; the duke insists that his wife should respect his position, obey all the rules made by him, and be pleased for everything what he has offered her.

The author preferred to show male authority in the poems, but a female voice is not noticeable at all. It is obvious that the male characters always try to

oppose the women and their each action, as a result there is a tragic end: the death of the women. According to Browning, the man always wants to gain total control over the woman but it usually becomes an illusion. He showed this in these poems: the speaker's aspiration is always destroyed in the end. The narrator has a certain aim that he wishes to achieve, but he cannot accomplish it. For example, the lover of Porphyria simply wants her and her affection, but unfortunately he murders her and loses everything. The duke in "My Last Duchess", who wants a good spouse, kills the duchess. What can we say about Andrea del Sarto? He expects just more attention from Lucrezia, but lets her go to her lover himself.¹

There is another clear difference between Porphyria's lover and the duke. The lover of Porphyria feels that it is necessary to give a chance to the woman to decide on life or death; he allows his lover think and decide. But the expectations which they want from each other differ greatly. Here Browning wants to see the way how two genders behave with each other when they have different tastes. Or how men (some but not all) solve the problem that they have with their spouses or lovers. These poems can teach the interaction between men and women and how love can result in violence.²

The poem "The Laboratory" can also be added to the group of lyrics which deal with domestic violence, but here the place of villain changed: instead of a madman, now it is an unfaithful wife who is conscious of what she is acting. Her husband seems as a weak, not dangerous man, but in the end murders her by poisoning. In this poem, there is no any hint to show class struggle: it is the least concerns of the speakers. Although it is about murdering, but unlike "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess" it has not happened yet. All occasions, including getting ready for murdering, and reasons the husband has are stated in the poem.

If we compare all female characters in these three poems, "The Laboratory", "Porphyria's Lover", and "My Last Duchess", we can see a clear difference. There are small hints and invisible indications of disloyalty. But in "The Laboratory" it is

¹ Breanna Byecroft, *Representations of the Female Voice in Victorian Poetry*.

² Catherine Maxwell, *Browning's "Porphyria's Lover"*, *Explicator*, 1993 fall, 52 (1), 27 – 30.

quite noticeable that the woman is cheating her husband and it is not even a secret between them.

If we talk about the voice of the woman, “The Laboratory” continues to use the same way as previous poems: the woman has no voice. She is not part of the audience, so again the reader cannot be completely sure that the speaker is trustworthy. It is possible that he is lying, but to a reader the reality and reability of the speaker may be less important than in “Porphyria’s Lover” and “My Last Duchess”.

In addition to what we analysed above, we can add that “Andrea del Sarto” also deals with a woman who is unfaithful. Only difference here is murdering or taking revenge is not planned. Browning does not portray the woman as a malicious being, like in “The Laboratory”, nor she is portrayed as a positive female character like Porphyria and the Duchess. Lucrezia is an indifferent and superficial woman who only cares about luxury. Instead of using violence against her or planning a murder, he tries to talk to her.

Moreover, setting and history are important in some of Browning’s poems. The setting of “Andrea del Sarto” is clear, since the protagonist is an actual historical person who lived in Italy. Also, “My Last Duchess” is also based on a historical character, the duke of Ferrara: he was Alfonso II of the house of Este, who married the fourteen-year-old Lucrezia de Medici, 1558. But in “Porphyria’s Lover” and “The Laboratory” there is no such a historical background.

Outcomes

Browning’s the most well-known four monologues have been discussed in the third chapter of the dissertation. And now we can summarize our findings in a brief conclusion:

The specificities of the dramatic monologue are used in Browning’s poetry very skilfully. Also, Browning used the techniques of the dramatic monologue to invent new, imaginary characters. Most of the poems are built by the conflicts “between the transience and permanence, love and selfishness, perfection and flaw,

inertia and effort, renunciation and commitment, and the physical and spiritual.”¹ The main protagonists try to find out solutions to those problems throughout the poem, but they usually never succeed. Their actions often lead to the death of the female characters.

The speakers want their listeners to show sympathy for them. Browning suggests that moral judgement is not almost possible in the dramatic monologues because of the point of the view that is used in the poems.

The male protagonists are depicted as frantic men and the readers are usually warned about their unreliability. Here we should mention that the poems do not suggest any aspects of Browning’s own life. They are not autobiographical poems that speakers might talk about their creator.

Browning chooses the characters from the upper class. Most of them are strong, powerful, and male characters. And they have a reputation, wealth, and prestige in the society. However, some of them belong to middle class, too: Porphyria’s lover, Andrea del Sarto, for instance.

In Browning’s monologues the audience is usually passive and has only relationship with the speakers in particular circumstances. Usually the speaker has a power over the audience.

In conclusion, Browning’s poetry is unique in not only Victorian literature, but also in the history of English literature. He made his fame with his dramatic monologues which we have discussed above.

¹ Guozhi Chen, *Male Identity in Browning’s Poetry*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main results that should be highlighted are the changes in the Victorian era caused by literary artists to be active in the social life, psychological aspects of personal life and thoughts of R. Browning, reflected in his poetry, and finally, findings in the dramatic monologues related to the gender relations which can be applied to discover R. Browning's beliefs toward his contemporary life time.

More than sixty years of the Queen Victoria's reign on the British throne, many things had changed: country's policy, economy, society, and even nations' thoughts to its own literature. Societal issues, such as the role of women, the treatment of the poverty, the search for inner peace, the role of the Church, and the growth of Empire, and social responsibility had all been major themes of Victorian writers.

During the era, mostly, the main representatives of the poetry made the ideas and style, which were inherited from the Romantics, more complicated and thoughtful. In their works, there was beauty of nature that had been the main source for lyrical feelings, but it was the time that changes in industrial spheres and religious conflicts were coming to its peak. So the Victorian poets had to deal with these changes and show their attitudes toward them in their works.

From the poets' questions that they had attempted to raise, we can come up with this conclusion: people should find inner peace in the Nature. Actually, W. Wordsworth inferred this in his work "Prelude", published in 1850. He summarised all his contemporaries', including writers and ordinary people, desires. We mentioned that E. Fitzgerald translated old Persian poems, written by Omar Khayyam, into English. These collections of poems were very successful and influential because of their philosophies of peace and calm were in demand to live in such an industrializing country.

Like many other poets, Robert Browning also could not stay away from the changes of the society. He tried to use those issues in his poetry, though much of his time he spent away from his country, in Italy.

R. Browning was always thankful to his parents for everything they offered him: education, financial support, and understanding his all actions. He never had a formal education like other poets but this never bothered him to be a professional writer and establish his reputation in his time. The knowledge, gained in his father's library, helped him compose the poems in a beautiful lyrical way, good sense of beauty. Although most of his famous poems, dramatic monologues, were written in blank verse, they have still musical voices that attract the readers. In this point, his mother's contribution appears in reality.

Besides the beauty in tone and voice, the topics and deep meanings of Browning's poetry differ from other Victorian writers. His life experiences affected and changed his thoughts about the surrounding world. First, he impressed a lot when he lost his wife: "*I was made and meant to look for you and wait for you and become yours forever*" - says Browning about his wife. His inspiration had been taken from his wife and even after her death he could feel it all the rest of his life. Here, we should state that Victorian poets were enough strong mentally, because some other poets also experienced R. Browning's fate, but this never stopped them writing artistic works, being activists in the society. For instance, A. Tennyson wrote his great elegy in memory of his best friend, Hallam.

When one reads Browning's best poems, he/she might not get the real meaning at once, because Robert Browning could write his meanings, expressions in few words. Again, here it is profitable to restate Browning's statement about his works: in response to one of his admirer's question, asking the meaning of the poem, he says: "*When that poem was written, two people knew what it meant: God and Robert Browning. And now, God only knows what it means.*"

Browning's main characters come from the historical past and they reveal their thoughts and loves as if they are speaking or thinking aloud. It is a typical style for Browning to have the life of a prince, a priest, a merchant or a Renaissance artist in his poetry. Through his characters, Browning shows his hate to those who waste their life without working or finding solution to the problems. Simply, he wants people to have struggle when they face obstacles. Browning

believed that people should not stop even they fail because, at least, they will find happiness in Heaven if they attempt to achieve something in life. He says: “*A minute’s success pays the failure of years.*”

Browning’s poetry can be considered as an inimitable one in the history of English literature. His invention, dramatic monologues, were new as a literary form in English poetry and it was important as it influenced some important poets of the 20th century like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and others.

Browning created his imaginary characters with the help of the techniques of the dramatic monologue and these characters might arouse several questions to the readers. Each poem was built up on the contrasts and conflicts such as love and selfishness, inertia and effort, physical and spiritual, and etc.¹ The protagonists are usually between these contrasts and have to choose a correct one, but, unfortunately, they never really succeed. Usually their actions lead to the tragic end.

As it was mentioned in the second chapter, the readers’ sympathy, toward the narrator, is one of the main elements of the dramatic monologue. And Browning’s speakers also ask this from the readers. It is because we do not usually have moral judgement in the form of the dramatic monologue.²

Most of the speakers in the poems are depicted as mad and the readers are warned about their unreliability. For instance, *Porphyry’s Lover*, which we discussed in the third chapter, refers to the madness of the protagonists. While analysing the poems, the readers might think of the author and try to find similarities between him and his characters. But Browning emphasized that neither the poems were based on his life, nor autobiographical, nor inspired by his own thoughts and experiences; his characters did not have anything to do with him.

Browning’s characters have usually good social status: they are strong, upper class, and financially well supported (For example, the duke in “*My Last Duchess*”). However, there are some characters who belong to middle class:

¹ Guozhi Chen, *Male Identity in Browning’s Poetry*.

² *Ibid-*, p 65

Porphyry's lover or Andrea del Sarto. But still, they all have a certain prestige, money and a reputation.

The last, but not the least, thing that we learnt from Browning's monologues is adultery. It is a theme which occurs in Browning's poetry repeatedly. It is the main topic in such poems like "The Laboratory", "Andrea del Sarto" and some others. It is not sometimes shown up openly, but the author hints that there is unfaithfulness.

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