

A STUDY TO DISCOVER  
WHAT BROWNING THOUGHT ABOUT ART

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE . . . . .	4
III. FRA LIPPO LIPPI . . . . .	15
IV. ANDREA DEL SARTO . . . . .	22
V. THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB . . . . .	26
VI. PICTOR IGNOTUS . . . . .	29
VII. MY LAST DUCHESS . . . . .	32
VIII. PIPPA PASSES . . . . .	34
IX. THE RING AND THE BOOK . . . . .	38
X. CONCLUSION . . . . .	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	43

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the problem of the analysis of the major art poems of Robert Browning to discover what he thought about art--painting, sculpturing, and architecture. The fact that Browning was intensely interested in art has raised the question as to what were his beliefs concerning art. The poet's frequent reference to the individual arts and artists, his spending his married life and many other years in Italy, and the interweaving of his deep philosophical truths within his art poems are indications of his enthusiasm for art.

Previous writers and scholars have discussed and interpreted Browning's art poems, and certain ones have compiled lists of poems in which the separate arts and individual artists have been named. In this study references have been made to these works, but to this writer's knowledge there is no similarity of purpose or design between this and previous studies.

This problem has called for a careful study of Browning's poems bearing on the subject of art and a noting of ideas on art contained in these poems. The leading encyclopedias and critical works on Browning have been consulted in order to secure authoritative interpretations of his poems.

The ideas having been collected, the problem resolved itself into an attempt to classify them as ideas of Browning or as ideas of his characters. This phase of the problem, raised especially during the study of the dramatic monologues, involved the much-disputed question: does Browning give us objective portraits of historical or imaginary characters who express their own opinions; or does he treat his characters subjectively, giving through them his own thoughts and opinions? Because the leading critics<sup>1</sup> are not agreed as to whether or not Browning expresses his ideas through his characters, and because Browning himself admits that he has sinned when he does allow his characters to speak for him, it has required much care and consideration to classify these ideas on art satisfactorily.

Each chapter in this study deals with a separate art poem. It is not the plan to give an analysis of the entire poem but only sufficient interpretation and explanation to make the situation clear preceding the discussion of the ideas on art found within the poem. The main issues having been pointed out, the next step is a discussion of the various ways of looking at them, giving the points of proof used in reaching the decision as to whether or not these ideas are Browning's or those of one of

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<sup>1</sup> Stopford A. Brooke, Poetry of Robert Browning. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman, 1911.) p. 281.

Robert Browning, The Poems of Robert Browning with a biographical sketch by Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clark (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Publishers, 1896), p. 111.  
(N.B. Throughout this thesis all quotations from Browning's poetry will be taken from this text.)

George Willis Cooke, A Guide Book to the Poetic and Dramatic Works of Browning. (Boston: Expression Company, 1908), p. 341.

Mrs. Sutherland Orr, Life and Letters of Robert Browning. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1891), p. 2.

his characters. At the close of each chapter a summary of the findings and conclusions is given.

While this study involved the reading of all the poems having more than slight reference to the arts or artists, yet only those major art poems and portions of poems containing definite ideas on art are included in this analysis.

The order of the chapters follows primarily the chronological sequence of the history of art which is portrayed through the different poems of Browning.

The result of this study cannot be taken as final in the sense that a complete solution has been obtained, inasmuch as it does not represent a thorough search of all of Browning's works; but it does record and evaluate findings in the field and, because of the abundance and variety of the evidence examined, offers a tentative conclusion of considerable value.

## CHAPTER II

### OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

In the poem, "Old Pictures in Florence," the poet is speaking without the intermediary of any character; therefore, the problem of determining whether or not Browning is expressing his own ideas is not presented. However, the problem of interpreting the poet's ideas remains.

The explanatory notes accompanying the text states that "Old Pictures in Florence" is a plea for the Catholic appreciation of all exponents and schools of art."<sup>1</sup> Granted that this statement meets the general approval of the Browning critics, we will next seek to find the poet's idea of the relation to historic periods of various new impulses of art.

This "spontaneous soliloquy of a genuine art critic" reveals a belief in the indebtedness of one period to another, and in the "onflowing movement" belonging to all periods collectively. But the poet would "emphasize the supreme importance to the world of assimilating the work of the pioneering artists from whom their successors derive vitality";<sup>2</sup> therefore, after declaring that the supreme artists, the Michaels and Raphaels,

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. xxx.



are safe in heaven and have no need of praise, Browning exclaims:

Much they reckon of your praise and you!  
 But the wronged great souls--can they be quit  
 Of a world where their work is all to do,  
 Where you style them, you of the little wit,  
 Old Master This and Early the Other,  
 Not dreaming that Old and New are fellows:  
 A younger succeeds to an elder brother,  
 Da Vincis derive in good time from Dellos.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, he points out the interdependence of the artists of the "Old and New," the younger succeeding to an elder brother and Da Vincis deriving in good time from Dellos.

Because Browning teaches the indebtedness of one period of art to another and because he offers no special praise to the supreme masters of art, we are not justified in concluding that he preferred the work of one specific group of artists to that of another. If he is pleading for an appreciation of every period of art and if he realizes the interdependence of the schools of art, we may expect to find that he is ready to defend the artists of each period.

The title, "Old Pictures in Florence," suggests the chief emphasis to be upon Italian painters. Further study reveals that the poet is defending Italian artists, those "whose decaying work is still unapprehended, yet who were the pioneers in the development of the perfected art of the great Italian masters."<sup>4</sup>

It might appear that many of these artists ranging throughout the years of the early thirteenth to the early fifteenth century had already

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ll. 48-64, p. 339.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 494.

received due praise from art historians and did not need Browning's defense, but Clark points out that there are plenty "who are bored beyond measure by the dingy, ancient pictures to be found in the chapels and cloisters of Florence, cracked by age and melancholy by means of the whitewashings they have had, and from which they can never quite recover."<sup>5</sup> The poet does mention some artists who he feels are so nearly masters that he will not trouble the artists' ghosts who are standing sadly by to assist him in finding a specimen of their work.

Not that I expect the great Bigordi,  
Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric, bellicose;  
Nor the wronged Lippino; and not a word I  
Say of a scrap of Fra Angelico's.<sup>6</sup>

The poet is not interested in collecting from the great Italian painters for the lack of admiration because he realizes they have received due praise, and he is emphasizing here the necessity of respecting the work of the neglected pioneer artists. Much the same point of view is expressed by Pater in speaking of the sculptors when he says that they are "more than mere forerunners of the great masters of its close, and often reached perfection within the narrow limits which they chose to impose on their work. . . . Their works have been much neglected and often almost hidden away amid the frippery of modern decoration, and we come with surprise to the place where their fire still smoulders. One longs to penetrate into the lives of the men who have given expression to so much power and

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<sup>5</sup> Helen Archibald Clark, Browning's Italy. (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1907), p. 212.

<sup>6</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 201-205, p. 340.

sweetness, but it is a part of the reserve, the austere dignity and simplicity of their existence, that their lives are for the most part lost or told but briefly: from their lives as from their works all tumult of sound and color has passed away."<sup>7</sup>

By way of emphasizing the importance and beauty of the art of the Italian Renaissance, Browning draws a comparison of Greek art and early Italian art. He first "instructs" us concerning Greek art.

"If you knew their work you would deal your dole."  
 May I take upon me to instruct you?  
 When Greek art ran and reached the goal,  
 Thus much had the world to boast in fructu --  
 The Truth of Man, as by God first spoken,  
 Which the actual generations garble,  
 Was re-uttered, and Soul (which limbs betoken)  
 And Limbs (Soul informs) made new in marble.<sup>8</sup>

He points out the resemblance between Greek art and the perfected ideal, "the truth of man as by God first spoken." Although "actual generations" have perverted God's original plan, the Greeks re-uttered or reproduced the original, and soul and limbs were made new in marble.

Browning then explains to the ghosts of the Italian painters what might be considered as the reaction of an individual after comparing the art of these two periods.

So you saw yourself as you wished you were,  
 As you might have been, as you cannot be;  
 Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there;  
 And grew content in your poor degree  
 With your little power, by those statues' godhead,  
 And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,

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<sup>7</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 81-90, p. 340.

And your little grace, by their grace embodied,  
And your little date, by their forms that stay.<sup>9</sup>

The poet, a lover of all art, recognizes in the work of the Greek artists a beauty of matchless form, a perfection of the bodily. These perfect forms which the Greeks were able to produce represent the completion and the perfection of a plan which the artist had in mind when he began his work. Because the Greek artist was able to bring his vision to completion and his reach did not exceed his grasp, Browning attributes that art to time only, while the Italian artist, regarding bodily form to a lesser degree than did the Greek and stressing the soul more intensely than the Greek, worked for eternity. The poet expounds this idea as he proceeds further with the comparison of these two periods of art.

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,  
You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day  
And cried with a start -- What if we so small  
Be greater and grander the while than they?  
Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?  
In both, of such lower types are we  
Precisely because of our wider nature;  
For time, theirs -- ours, for eternity.

To-day's brief passion limits their range;  
It seethes with the morrow for us and more.  
They are perfect -- how else? they shall never change:  
We are faulty -- why not? we have time in store.  
The Artificer's hand is not arrested  
With us; we are rough-hewn, nowise polished:  
They stand for our copy, and once invested  
With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., ll. 91-99, p. 340.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., ll. 113-130, p. 342.

Again and again throughout his poems Browning introduces this idea, the glory of aspiration, which, according to his theory, seems to be the keynote of his philosophy of life, as well as of art.

Professor Dowden interprets these lines to mean that

. . . . the glory of Christian art lies in its rejecting a limited perfection, such as that of the art of ancient Greece, the subject of which was infinite, and the lesson taught by which was submission, and its daring to be incomplete and faulty, faulty because its subject was great with infinite fears and hopes, and because it must needs teach man not to submit but to aspire.<sup>11</sup>

In a similar tone Berdoe writes:

Greek art reuttered the truth of man, and Soul and Limbs, each betokened by the other, were made new in marble. Our weakness is tested by the strength, our meagre charms by the beauty of the matchless forms of Greek sculpture. This taught us the perfection of the body, but the artists one day awoke to the beauty and perfection of Soul, and then they worked for eternity, as the Greeks for time. This Greek art was perfect; these bodies could be no more beautiful. Consequently, so far there was arrest of development; they could never change, being whole and complete. Having learned all they have to teach, we shall see their work abolished. But in painting souls, the artificer's hand can never be arrested, for the soul develops eternally, and things learned on earth are practiced in heaven.<sup>12</sup>

It seems then that Browning uses the early Italian art to illustrate his theory of art--the idea of growth and aspiration. This interpretation corresponds to that of Dowden, who setting forth Browning's idea re-

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Dowden, Robert Browning (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1904), p. 119.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Berdoe, editor, The Browning Encyclopaedia (New York: The Macmillan Company, eighth edition, 1916), p. 291.

marks thus:

The true glory of art is, that in its creation there arise desires and aspirations never to be satisfied on earth, but generating new desires and new aspirations, by which the spirit of man mounts to God himself. The artist who can realize in marble or in color, or in music, his ideal has thereby missed the highest gain of art.<sup>13</sup>

At the time Browning is making these reflections on art, he is living in Florence; and as he leans and looks "over the aloed arch of the villa-gate this warm March day" he beholds the unfinished bell-tower Giotto raised. The poet is startled as he instinctively recognizes the greatness of the dramatic feeling and invention in the mind of the artist. The incompleteness of this tower interests Browning. He exclaims, "What's come to perfection perishes. . . . Thyself shalt afford the example, Giotto!"<sup>14</sup> Later on in the poem the poet writes enthusiastically of his vision of Italy's having secured political independence from Austria and celebrating the occasion by completing Giotto's bell-tower.

To end now our half-told tale of Cambuscan,  
And turn the bell-tower's alt to altissimo:  
And fine as the beak of a young beccaccia  
The Campanile, the Duomo's fit ally,  
Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,  
Completing Florence, as Florence Italy.<sup>15</sup>

These two attitudes would seem to be inconsistencies as if the poet at one moment favored imperfection, then suddenly anticipated completion of

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<sup>13</sup> Dowden, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>14</sup> Browning, op. cit., l. 130, p. 342.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., ll. 275-280, p. 344.

that imperfect object. The idea of imperfection used here refers to the fact that the plan as conceived by the artist remains unfinished. On the other hand, the artist may produce perfect specimens as did the Greeks when they represented perfect bodily forms in statuary. Their art might also be considered perfect in so far as the artists were able to bring to completion their original plan. The phase of the idea of imperfection which is consistent with Browning's idea of aspiration and relates to the early Italian art is further expressed in these lines of this poem:

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate--  
 That, when this life is ended begins  
 New work for the soul in another state,  
 Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:  
 Where the strong and the weak, this world's Congeries,  
 Repeat in large what they practiced in small,  
 Through life after life in unlimited series;  
 Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.<sup>16</sup>

These lines are interpreted by Clarke as saying that "the quality of imperfection appeals to the human mind as long as it is itself in a state of imperfection, but once having passed on to another phase of existence, with a soul fully developed by the lessons learned through life's imperfections, then delight and joy and peace will be the portion of the soul attuned to perfection."<sup>17</sup>

It would seem reasonable then to conclude that the poet's reflecting over these early Italian artists directs him into political and philo-

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., ll. 161-169, p. 343.

<sup>17</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 225.

sophical channels, both of which, in spite of his praise of imperfection, lead to the inference that perfection is best. If such a conclusion can logically be drawn, then we find no contradiction in Browning's ideas; and we are content to let "Old Pictures in Florence" represent his defense of these early Italian artists.

If the poet is defending this art for its own special quality, we point out that it is the stress of the soul that appeals to Browning as a particular quality of the early Italian art. In a dedicatory letter to a friend he writes: "The historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the artist's intention to portray the soul rather than to attain the perfected bodily form would appeal to Browning. Furthermore, a study of the soul fits in with the idea of aspiration which pervades the work of Browning, ever urging the human soul to love and achievement.

To defend our conclusion that the poem represents a defense of the early Italians rather than a statement of the poet's belief in the superiority of this art over early Greek art as pointed out by some of the critics, among whom are Clark<sup>19</sup> and Dorchester,<sup>20</sup> we would state that careful examination has revealed no grounds for inferring the poet's preference other than those which have herein been refuted. The poet does declare:

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<sup>18</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Boston Browning Society Papers (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900), p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 214.



But at any rate I have loved the season  
 Of Art's spring birth so dim and dewy;  
 My sculptor is Nicolo the Pison  
 My painter--who but Cimabue?  
 Nor even was man of them all indeed,  
 From these to Ghiberti and Ghirlandajo,  
 Could say that he missed my critic need.<sup>21</sup>

Of these artists ranging from the latter thirteenth to the latter fifteenth century, Browning speaks high praise; and his omission of the supreme masters would indicate that his intention within this poem was not to give praise to every worthy artist but to defend the work of the neglected artists of this particular period.

In conclusion, a summary of the points made in this chapter will be given. The main purpose of the poet's writing the poem seems to be that he may plead for the appreciation of the artists of the neglected period, the early Italian artists. Following the statement of the author's purpose these ideas of art are pointed out and discussed: the indebtedness of one school of art for another, the supreme masters' having no need of further praise, and the appreciation of "Art's spring birth so dim and dewy."

The greater part of the discussion has been centered upon the point of controversy whether or not Browning preferred the art of the early Italians above the perfected art of the ancient Greeks. The attempt has been made to show that his inclusion of his philosophy of aspiration, his interest in the study of the soul, and his enthusiasm for the Italian artists are not sufficient to indicate that he believed the early Italian art

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<sup>21</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 178-184, p. 343.

superior to the ancient Greek art. The more reasonable conclusion to draw is that since Browning lives in Florence and often views the decaying works of the neglected painters, he is paying them a tribute as pioneers in the development of the perfected art of the great Italian masters.

### CHAPTER III

#### FRA LIPPO LIPPI

While the poem, "Old Pictures in Florence," represents the point of view of the author, the modern man, reflecting on the early periods of art, the greater number of poems analyzed in this study introduce the readers to the artists themselves who reveal their own peculiar individuality through the dramatic monologue.

"Fra Lippo Lippi" portrays one scene in the life of the painter, Fra Lippo Lippi, who represents the realistic and secular phase of the developing Renaissance. The curious situation of the one scene gives a picture of the character at "life's minute" and reveals a painter corresponding to Vasari's account of him.<sup>1</sup>

In an incidental way the monologue gives these facts concerning the artist's early life: the death of his father and mother; his being cared for by "Old Aunt Lapaccia"; her placing him in a convent at the age of eight years; the "pure waste" of teaching him Latin; his use of leisure to draw men's faces on copy books, scrawl them within the antiphony's marge, join legs and arms to long music-notes, find eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's, and make a string of pictures of the world betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun on the wall, the bench, and the door.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

Such a show of artistic talent makes the monks "look black," but the Prior, recognizing the boy's talent, bade him "daub away." Being thus encouraged, the boy continues painting. First he paints every sort of monk; then, folk at church; later he paints all.

On examining these pictures "the monks close in a circle and praise loud till checked"; but the learned Prior pulls a face and stops all that in no time exclaiming:

"Your business is not to catch men with show,  
 With homage to the perishable clay,  
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,  
 Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.  
 Your business is to paint the souls of men--  
 . . . . .  
 Give us no more of body than shows soul!  
 . . . . .  
 Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms."<sup>3</sup>

Here the Prior utters his idea of art corresponding to that of the earlier painters, notably such men as Giotto and Fra Angelico, who strove to isolate the soul by disregarding the physical elements.

Fra Lippo continues in his monologue to state his views of art upholding the value and significance of flesh and giving his view of the relation between painting of body and painting of soul and their relative importance.

"Now, is this sense, I ask?  
 A fine way to paint soul, by painting body  
 So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further  
 And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white  
 When what you put for yellow's simply black,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ll. 179-192, p. 128.

And any sort of meaning looks intense  
When all beside itself means and looks naught."<sup>4</sup>

Fra Lippo believes in representing the soul truly, but he is arguing against representing the body awkwardly in order that the soul may be more truly represented.

Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,  
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,  
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,  
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,  
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint--is it so pretty  
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,  
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?  
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,  
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,  
And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?<sup>5</sup>

Here the painter offers an example to strengthen his point of view. He believes that if he were painting the pretty face of the Prior's niece, the effect would be heightened three-fold if the proper emphasis were placed upon the flesh and the soul.

Now we have two conflicting theories of art; the one, of the Prior representing the earlier Renaissance painters who had been inspired probably by the introduction of Christian ideals to stress the soul by subordinating flesh; the other, of the painter, Fra Lippo, who is a pioneer in a movement of the Renaissance period to paint things as they are and to stress the value and significance of flesh.

The question then arises as to whether or not either of these theories corresponds to Browning's ideas of art, or stated in other words: is Brown-

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ll. 198-205, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., ll. 206-214, p. 128.

ing giving his own views through his characters? The fact that these theories are spoken by characters portrayed by the poet involves the problem of determining whether Browning presents these characters to be his mouthpiece, or whether these characters speak their own ideas. We shall continue to examine these theories in the light of this problem.

In considering the Prior's idea of art, we find that it coincides with the idea of the artists of the early Renaissance whom Browning pictured in "Old Pictures in Florence."<sup>6</sup> Both instances reveal a preference for that art which pictures the soul. Browning is interested in the study of the soul because it illustrates so well his doctrine of aspiration, but it was concluded in the former chapter<sup>7</sup> that he did not prefer the art which depicted the soul above the art which represented perfect bodily form. While the comparison in "Fra Lippo Lippi" is not between the same periods of art as the comparison in "Old Pictures in Florence," yet the major principle is very similar. The Prior's idea represents the romantic art which stresses the portrayal of the soul by subordinating the flesh; Fra Lippo's idea of painting things as they naturally are corresponds to a certain extent with the manner of the ancient Greeks who portrayed perfect physical bodies. Since it was pointed out that Browning was not stating his preference for the romantic art in the previous poem, again we conclude that the Prior is not giving Browning's idea of art.

As far as the idea of Fra Lippo is concerned, we find that he believed in painting the physical as nearly perfect as possible. He painted

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 13.

"faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true as much as pea and pea," but he also hoped to add soul. In an inquiring manner he himself exclaims:

"Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,  
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash  
And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?"<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, in that respect his belief and practise differ from that of the ancient Greeks; but we can not be sure yet that Browning is not giving us his own idea through Fra Lippo. We must examine the situation further.

Fra Lippo's period, the first half of the fifteenth century, marks the transition into a new period of art, the breaking away from the ascetic; and Fra Lippo is thus a pioneer of the period representing the more realistic and secular art than of the preceding period. This idea corresponds to the thought of the writers of the history of art. It is found that gradually the new art of Fra Lippo conquered the old.

The whole life of Florence was soon painted as it was. . . . Only so much of the old clings that all this actual Florentine life is so painted into the ancient religious subjects . . . All this spiritual religion gone out of it, it is true, but yet, another kind of religion budding into it--the religion, not of the monastery, but of daily common life.<sup>9</sup>

In the discussion of "Old Pictures in Florence" it was pointed out that throughout his defense of the different schools of art Browning is showing the indebtedness of one school of art for another and is urging that

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<sup>8</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 213-216, p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> Brooke, op. cit., p. 208.

due respect be shown to those artists pioneering a period. For this reason if Browning be consistent, he must necessarily be favorable toward Fra Lippo.

That Browning is very sympathetic toward Fra Lippo is apparent throughout the entire monologue. He apologizes a little for Fra Lippo's pranks by not following closely the facts as given by Vasari<sup>10</sup>; he allows Fra Lippo to expound his theory at great length, a fact indicating that the poet was more favorable toward him than toward the Prior who is given a space so brief. Browning also represents Fra Lippo as a keenly observant and capable artist, one portraying an intense quality of human sympathy thus commending himself to others and making himself an all-important factor in the development of art. In these different ways Browning shows that he is in sympathy with the artist.

Notwithstanding Browning's sympathetic treatment of Fra Lippo, it would hardly be logical to say that his theory of art exactly coincides with Fra Lippo's, but it must be concluded that he is favorable to it. And in the light of the conclusions of the former chapter<sup>11</sup> it would seem reasonable to believe that Browning is not stating his preference for any certain period of art but is again defending a pioneer in a new school of art, one who is breaking away from the spirit and practises of his predecessors.

In summarizing this chapter, therefore, we would state that in "Fra Lippo Lippi" we have found two distinct ideas of art, the one represented

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<sup>10</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. 470.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., p. 12.



by the Prior, the other, by Fra Lippo Lippi. Because the idea of the Prior corresponds closely to the romantic art of the early Renaissance, and because it was shown in the chapter, "Old Pictures in Florence," that Browning did not regard that art as superior to the art of other periods, we conclude that Browning is not giving his idea through the Prior. Likewise we conclude that notwithstanding the sympathy for Fra Lippo's actions and the seeming defense of his art, Browning is not giving his own idea through Fra Lippo. To be more consistent with the poet's former procedure and his belief revealed in "Old Pictures in Florence," we have pointed out that Browning does not mean to show his preference for any period of art, but rather he would defend the different periods and particularly those individuals who are pioneers in the on-flowing movement of art.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANDREA DEL SARTO

Being unable to secure a copy of the picture of the painter, Andrea del Sarto, and his wife for Mrs. Browning's cousin, Browning wrote this poem instead. According to Clark, the picture portrayed through the monologue by the painter himself is exactly the same as that given by Vasari<sup>1</sup> of the actual man.

The principal facts in his life are revealed through these harmonizing sources. Andrea was born in Florence during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, shortly following the period of Fra Lippo Lippi; his artistic talent was shown early and developed through his associations with other artists of note; after gaining the respect and admiration of the public, he became infatuated with the wife of a cap-maker, and after the death of the husband he married the beautiful Lucrezia, thus disgracing and obscuring for a time the name he had made for himself; later through the influence of this wife he dealt dishonestly with the King of France, a generous patron, who had bestowed money and favor upon him.

This monologue states quite clearly and concisely Browning's theory of art--that the true glory of art lies in its representing not merely bodily perfection but also the desires and aspirations which cannot be satisfied on

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<sup>1</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 268.

earth. Andrea himself realizes that his work is perfect in its technique.

"I can do with my pencil what I know,  
 What I see, what at the bottom of my heart  
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep --  
 Do easily, too -- when I say, perfectly,  
 I do not boast, perhaps: Yourself are judge,  
 . . . . .  
 I do what many dream of all their lives,  
 --Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do  
 And fail in doing."<sup>2</sup>

But Andrea also realizes that in spite of his perfected technique he is not a successful artist. He compares his work with that of other craftsmen of his time.

There burns a truer light of God in them,  
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,  
 Heart, or whatever else, than goes on to prompt  
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine,  
 Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,  
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,  
 Enter and take their place there sure enough,  
 Though they come back and cannot tell the world.  
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.  
 The sudden blood of these men! at a word --  
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.  
 I, painting from myself and to myself,  
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame  
 Or their praise either. . . . .  
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray  
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!"<sup>3</sup>

That the reason for the difference in his art and that of his great contemporaries, Raphael, Michel Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci, is known to Andrea is also evident.

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<sup>2</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 50-59, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ll. 82-99, p. 134.

"Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,  
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

. . . . .  
Had you, . . . . ., but brought a mind!  
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged  
'God and the glory! never care for gain.  
The present by the future, what is that?  
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!  
Raphael is waiting: up to God, all three!  
I might have done it for you. So it seems."<sup>4</sup>

Andrea's work represented the desire to paint the human body with scientific perfection based upon the principles followed by the Greeks. Had Andrea's wife supplied the inspiration, the soul of the painter's work, the story of his career would have been different.

"Andrea del Sarto" has much of Browning's idea. It was written during his married life when Mrs. Browning provided the inspiration for the poet's work; and it seems that we see in the poem an expression of gratitude that his wife inspires his writing, while Andrea, because of baser motives guiding his choices, must labor at his art without the inspiration of his wife to add soul and inspiration to his work.

"Faultless but soulless is the verdict of critics on Andrea's work," says Berdoe<sup>5</sup>; and Sim expresses a like opinion.

The last word of the poem is the limitation of the artist. Perfection alone is not art's greatest note; it is Art's business to suggest--its incompleteness itself suggests the completion; a great artist's life, like his art, must remain unfulfilled--artist and art must suggest something beyond--truth beyond technical truth; wonder beyond the perfection of colour; the divinity of love beyond the earthly prototype in woman's beauty; moral beauty beyond the body's beauty; spirit beyond the soul's beauty.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ll. 163-174, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Berdoe, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Frances M. Sim, Robert Browning--The Poet and the Man (New York: Appleton and Co., 1923), p. 47.

Another modern art critic, Symonds, gives expression to what every critic must feel in regard to this artist's pictures. "His silver-gray harmonies and liquid blendings of lines cool, yet lustrous, have a charm peculiar to himself alone. We find the like nowhere else in Italy."<sup>7</sup> And yet Andrea cannot take rank among the greatest painters of his period. What he lacked was precisely the most precious gift--inspiration, depth of emotion, energy of thought."

The degrading influence of the relationship of Andrea and Lucrezia upon his work is indicated by the gray tone pervading the poem "with an air of helpless resigned melancholy" and setting forth "the fatal quality of facile craftsmanship joined with a flaccid spirit."<sup>8</sup>

This chapter can be summarized easily since it seemingly contains contradictory ideas, and critics are almost wholly agreed on the interpretation of the material with which it is concerned. An attempt has been made here to point out that "Andrea del Sarto" states more clearly than any other of Browning's poems his doctrine of art--that the true glory of art lies in its portraying aspirations of the soul which can never be realized on earth.

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<sup>7</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>8</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. 472.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB

Following the sequence of the history of art is the poem, "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," a monologue by the bishop, who appears as an utterly unlovable old man who loves art but uses it to satisfy his own personal desires.

It has been pointed out that Fra Lippo and Andrea were actual types of artists, each in his respective period; it will be noted that "Pictor Ignotus" and "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" represent two imaginary characters, one an artist and the other a lover of art. These imaginary individuals possess characteristics which place them in the period of art directly following Andrea del Sarto. It is apparent that, in the bishop, Browning wished to portray a type which might easily have been produced by the influences at work during the period in "Rome, 15--" when "gross worldliness, luxury, and hypocrisy had become the distinguishing marks of the clergy and were manifested in the art which they encouraged for their own glorification."<sup>1</sup>

The bishop's monologue reveals this situation and these facts:

The Bishop on his death-bed calls his sons about him to request of them the erection of a beautiful monument over his grave; his dying words reveal his aesthetic taste, his selfishness and love of luxury, his hatred of a rival, and his fear that

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<sup>1</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 281.

the greed of his sons will cause them to disregard his request; the Bishop's beautiful mistress, the death of Gaudolf, the love of beauty for its sensual delight, his yearning to have his burial place marked with the finest of tombs are graphically described in his dying address to his sons.<sup>2</sup>

His frequent reference to materials for his tomb shows the bishop's appreciation of fine things.

"Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:  
 Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?  
 Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black--  
 'Twas ever antique--black I meant. - -  
 Nay, boys, ye love me--all of jasper, then!  
 'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve."<sup>3</sup>

The bishop's jealousy and selfishness are revealed through his repeated reference to Old Gandolf, the bishop's predecessor and rival. In order that his own tomb may be grander than his rival's, the bishop gives directions for the material and the location of his tomb.

Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,  
 Put me where I may look at him! True peach  
 Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!<sup>4</sup>

Of this poem Ruskin has said:

"It is nearly all that I said of the Central Renaissance,-- its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of self, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin--in thirty pages of the 'Stones of Venice' put into as many lines. It illustrates the kind of admiration with which a southern artist regarded the stone he worked in; and the pride which populace or priest worked into the pavements of their cathedrals, and the shafts of their tombs."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cooke, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 53-69, p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ll. 15-33, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> John Ruskin, Modern Painters (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1905), V. 6, Ch. xx, Sec. 32.

That Browning is in sympathy with the bishop's regard for Greek statuary and for the beauty of jasper and fine marble may be supposed since he is a lover of art; but Browning disapproves of the bishop's lack of genuine piety and of true ethical standards. Through the bishop's speech the poet reveals his disapproval of such a life encumbered with fleshly appetites. The reader is made to feel that, to the poet, the bishop represents an inconsistency, a union of art and immorality; and the poem, "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," represents Browning's idea, corresponding to that of history, of the utmost grossness of the art of the "Central Renaissance."

To summarize then in conclusion, we have pointed out that this poem portrays a character study of the bishop, who is a representation of Browning's idea of the hypocrisy of the clergy and its selfish love of art.



## CHAPTER VI

### PICTOR IGNOTUS

Another poem giving a picture of this decadent period of art is "Pictor Ignotus." In contrast with the sub-title of "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," Browning gives the suggestion here that Pictor Ignotus represents the painter of "Florence, 15--." May we not infer that the poet is picturing for us again through a monologue a character to represent his idea of the condition of art during this period in Florence in contrast with the art in Rome as represented by the bishop at the same time?

'Pictor Ignotus' shows us the personality of the typical often unknown monastic painter of the Renaissance period, the nature of his beautiful but cold art, and the conditions of servitude to ecclesiastical beliefs and ideals which shaped both personality and art.<sup>1</sup>

In "Pictor Ignotus" the personality portrayed is very different from that of the bishop's. The two influences--to paint religious pictures and to paint life--are seen in him; but in "Pictor Ignotus" the personality of the man is stronger than the age, and he chooses to suppress in himself the aspiration toward painting human life because he could not bear to subject his art to just the sort of criticism the bishop might give it. To the bishop church traditions were merely a form, but in Pictor Ignotus religion had entered into his very soul.

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, op. cit., p. xxx.

Pictor Ignotus confesses that he has failed because his high conception of art and his extremely sensitive disposition will not permit him to submit his pictures to the world and "endure the thought of ignorant criticism by people who had no comprehension of the aim or purpose of the artist."<sup>2</sup>

"Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked  
 With love about, and praise, till life should end,  
 And then not go to heaven, but linger here,  
 Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,--  
 The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear!  
 But a voice changed it. . . . .  
 They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough!  
 These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,  
 Count them for garniture and household stuff,  
 And where they live needs must our pictures live  
 And see their faces, listen to their prate,  
 Partakers of their daily pettiness."<sup>3</sup>

Clark suggests that:

While such a being might think the reasons for his not painting pictures like the youth so much praised were because of his dislike to merchandise his art, or because he did not wish to have them sullied by blundering criticism, the truth is that the feeling itself is a sign of the self-consciousness which leads to imitation rather than to real creative force.<sup>4</sup>

This interpretation may be questioned, but it is true that Pictor Ignotus chooses to continue painting for the church and thus remain in servitude to ecclesiastical beliefs and ideals which shape both personality and art.

"Wherefore I chose my portion. If at whiles  
 My heart sinks as monotonous I paint

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<sup>2</sup> Pearl Hogrefe, Browning and Italian Art and Artists (Lawrence: Kansas University, 1914), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 36-54, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Clark, op. cit., p. 278.

These endless cloisters and eternal aisles  
 . . . . .  
 With the same cold calm beautiful regard,--  
 At least no merchant traffics in my heart;  
 The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward  
 Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart:  
 Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine  
 While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke,  
 They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,  
 . . . . .  
 So, die my pictures! surely, gently die!"<sup>5</sup>

Had Pictor Ignotus possessed creative power beyond that found in this period, perhaps he would not have been content to let his pictures die.

As in "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" so in "Pictor Ignotus" we find no direct expression of an idea on art; but we do find a personality whose failure Browning wishes us to study with him--a striving soul who aspires but is unsuccessful.

In the analysis of this poem an attempt has been made to point out that the poet has portrayed through this imaginary painter's monologue his idea of the Italian art following the great Italian masters. From the discussion we may conclude that Pictor Ignotus represents the utmost idealism of Florence in contrast with the bishop who represents the hypocrisy of the clergy in Rome.

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<sup>5</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 56-69, p. 124.

## CHAPTER VII

### MY LAST DUCHESS

"My Last Duchess" is likewise a monologue wherein is revealed a picture presenting Browning's idea of the appreciation of art found in cruel and unscrupulous persons. We get the picture not through direct statements of the author, but from inferences drawn from the speech of the duke.

The duke is a connoisseur of art, a patron of the Renaissance, whose proud cold nature is capable of appreciating only the body of art. He takes pride in collecting specimens of art and an emotional delight in possessing the portrait of his beautiful murdered wife. As he lifts the curtain to permit the envoy to view the likeness of his late duchess, he remarks about the painting in the same tone as he mentions other works in his gallery.

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands  
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
Will't please you sit and look at her?"<sup>1</sup>

After mentioning the subject of the dowry of his next duchess, the duke suggests joining the company below and calls the envoy's attention to a piece of statuary.

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, op. cit., 11.1-5, p. 2.

"Notice Neptune, though  
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me."<sup>2</sup>

The duke's aesthetic taste includes an appreciation for both statuary and painting.

It is interesting to note the similarity between the subject of two of the monologues describing the state of art during this period.

A comparison is made by Miss Hogrefe.

Both the duke and the bishop are fond of power and prestige, both are jealous and envious, each displays his attitude toward woman and toward art . . . . Each values art, particularly sculpture, as something for display, something luxurious and (contrary to the highest ideas of art) something beyond the power of common people to appreciate. The poems deal with the same period; "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" represents the attitude of the clergy, and "My Last Duchess" is a summary of the secular attitude.<sup>3</sup>

A study of the poem, "My Last Duchess," shows that Browning appreciates the beautiful with the duke as he did with the bishop, but he disapproves of the duke himself. The speaker of the monologue makes himself repulsive to the reader through the revelation of his life and the spirit in which he manifests his artistic taste.

The analysis of this poem is concluded with the statement that in "My Last Duchess" is found again a character portraying Browning's idea of the early period in the history of Italian art.

This closes the study of the monologues which have followed the sequence of the history of art as recorded by Vasari.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ll. 54-57, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Hogrefe, op. cit., p. 19.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PIPPA PASSES

From the analysis of the dramatic monologues which have followed the sequence of art history we will turn to "Pippa Passes," a dramatic poem which reveals four critical periods in four different dramas of Italian life and symbolizes "the unconscious messenger of good spiritual tidings to so many souls in dark places."<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the controlling motive throughout the entire poem, Browning uses each of the four dramatic episodes to present distinct ideas through the portrayal of a crisis in the moral development of the characters. The second episode deals with art--an artist class with its jealousies leading to revenge.

Jules, a French artist, has been tricked into marrying a model, Phene. Love for Phene having entered his heart, he is disturbed in mind and meditates upon pursuing his former ideals of sculpturing.

"When I think that once  
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven  
Without you! Shall I ever work again,  
Get fairly into my old ways again,  
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,  
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?  
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth--  
The live truth, passing and repassing me,  
Sitting beside me?"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sim, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 16-24, p. 201.

This love seems to beget in the life of Jules an enthusiasm for his art. He beholds the materials with which he works and compares them with the real flesh:

"Why, before I found  
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself  
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff  
For better Nature's birth by means of art:  
With me, each substance tended to one form  
Of beauty--to the human archetype.  
But of the stuff one can be master of  
How I divined their capabilities!"<sup>3</sup>

Jules continues, naming the varied "stuff" with which he has formerly enthusiastically worked -- the chalk, the steel, and the marble. These are

"Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,  
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?  
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised  
By the swift implement sent home at once,  
Flushes and glowing radiate and hover  
About its track?"<sup>4</sup>

Phene is happy in Jules's love of her, but she cannot understand his ideas of art. She remembers the speech taught her by the art students who propose to reveal to Jules how he has been trapped into marrying a supposed Greek girl but only an ordinary model. As she recites the speech, the truth breaks upon Jules, who angrily interrupts her in his plan to seek revenge upon those who have played the trick. At this crucial moment Pippa passes singing her little song, the page's song to Queen Cornaro:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ll. 81-89, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ll. 90-94, p. 203.

"Give her but a least excuse to love me!  
 When -- where --  
 How -- can this arm establish her above me,  
 If fortune fixed her as my lady there,  
 There already, to eternally reprove me?  
 . . . . .  
 Is she wronged? -- To the rescue of her honor,  
 My heart!  
 Is she poor? -- What costs it to be styled a donor?  
 Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.  
 But what fortune should have thrust all this upon her!"<sup>5</sup>

Jules is touched and changed by the song which brings freedom to both his love and his powers. He loves Phene more perfectly, seeing her soul; and she, under the influence of his nature, "feels within her the flutter of her soul."<sup>6</sup> The sensitive spirit of Jules recognizes the power of her giving her love and the inspiration of her soul, and he surrenders himself to the influence of this power. That he realizes the significance of this awakening is revealed through his meditations.

"This body had no soul before, but slept  
 Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free  
 From taint or foul with stain, as outward things  
 Fastened their image on its passiveness:  
 Now, it will wake, feel, live--or die again!  
 Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff  
 Be Art--and further, to provoke a soul  
 From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!"<sup>7</sup>

Jules realizes the value to his work of Phene's love and likewise her soul. He possesses the inspiration which Andrea did not receive from Lucrezia; his work, therefore, will "wake, feel, live."

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., ll. 253-270, p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clark, Browning Study Programmes (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1900), p. 329.

<sup>7</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 293-300, p. 210.



A point of contrast in two individuals associated with art is found in Jules and Andrea. Both were skilled artists, and both were in love with a woman. But because Andrea allows his baser motives to govern his choice and Lucrezia fails to inspire his painting, Andrea's work falls short of that of the masters whom he surpasses in some respects. Phene, however, through giving her whole self to Jules, influences his powers and supplies the inspiration which adds new power to his art.

It may be concluded then that the second part of "Pippa Passes" presents through the artist, Jules, Browning's idea of art as shown also in "Andrea del Sarto," that the true glory of art lies in its portraying aspirations of the soul which can never be realized on earth.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RING AND THE BOOK

The climactic idea of Browning on the subject of art is found in his masterpiece, "The Ring and the Book." At the close of the twelve books, wherein he has given the testimony of at least nine characters regarding the Italian murder story, Browning speaks his own mind in vindication of the method he has used. It is here that he clearly states his idea that art is truth.

So, British public, who may like me yet,  
(Marry and amen!) learn one lesson hence  
Of many which whatever lives should teach;  
This lesson, that our human speech is naught,  
Our human testimony false, our fame  
And human estimation words and wind.  
Why take the artistic way to prove so much?  
Because it is the glory and good of Art,  
That Art remains the one way possible  
Of speaking truth, to minds like mine at least . . .  
But Art,--wherein man nowise speaks to men,  
Only to mankind,--Art may tell a truth  
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,  
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word.  
So may you paint your picture, twice show truth,  
Beyond mere imagery on the wall, --  
So, note by note, bring music from your mind,  
Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived, --  
So write a book shall beyond the facts,  
Suffice the eye and save the soul beside.  
And save the soul! <sup>1</sup>

This is Browning's own message to his readers, an interweaving of his theory of life and of art. The highest art is truth; and, if the

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, op. cit., ll. 831-864, p. 329.

poet is to be artistic, he must not use his skill for creating something beautiful but must express the truth concerning human life and character.

The great poem is a proof of the falsity of human testimony; and the poet's manner of presenting the facts, of giving each actor's version of the story, is the artistic way of telling the story, since the reader may form his own judgments as he gathers the truth from the poet's creation.

This idea, that art is truth, spoken in the poem by Browning himself, is the chief idea on art brought out in the poem, "The Ring and the Book."

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

The art poems, the subject of the preceding chapters, show, above all, the poet's intense interest in the subject of art. These poems reveal the author's sympathy with all art--painting, sculpturing, and architecture. They also serve as a fairly accurate history of Italian art during the early centuries, but he did not write them for historical purposes. He explains that his stress lay on the incidents in the development of the soul. It would seem reasonable, therefore, to conclude that he used enough historical setting to create an atmosphere in which he might place a personality in whom he sees possibilities of using to expound his thoughts and ideas or to present an interesting character study.

In this conclusion will be given a summary of the poet's ideas on art which have been found in his major art poems, in the second part of "Pippa Passes," and in "The Ring and the Book."

It was pointed out that in "Old Pictures in Florence" Browning expounded these ideas on art: the schools of art are indebted to each other; he is not concerned with giving praise to the supreme masters, who have already received much praise; he is urging a greater appreciation for those early Italian artists whose works are now decaying.

It was concluded that in this poem the poet is not stating a preference for early Italian art above ancient Greek art, but he is paying a tribute to the artists whose decaying works he often views in Florence.

"Fra Lippo Lippi" presents two ideas on art, that of the Prior and that of Fra Lippo; but it was shown that these characters were not speaking Browning's ideas. As in "Old Pictures in Florence," so in "Fra Lippo Lippi" it seems that the poet is defending art for art's sake and not stating a preference for a certain period of art. He is particularly defending those individuals who are pioneers in a new period as Fra Lippo was.

In "Andrea del Sarto" the poet states his idea of art through Andrea; the true glory of art lies in its expressing aspirations of the soul which can never be realized on earth.

The three dramatic monologues, "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," "Pictor Ignotus," and "My Last Duchess," are examples of the poet's placing imaginary characters in a<sup>n</sup> historical atmosphere to portray his idea of the state of art in a particular period. These poems portray three types of personalities and reveal the author's idea of art during the early Italian period. The bishop and Pictor Ignotus give the poet's idea of art in Rome and in Florence respectively. In Rome the sensuality and hypocrisy of the clergy cause them to misappropriate the use of art to their own selfish gratification. In Florence the close conformity to idealism in art and the lack of a creative spirit are revealed. The ap-

preciation which the Duke of Ferrara has for art corresponds to that of the bishop, who expresses his delight in art in a selfish and emotional manner.

Through Jules, the sculptor in the second part of "Pippa Passes," Browning again speaks his doctrine of art which was given in "Andrea del Sarto," that the true glory of art lies in its expressing aspirations of the soul which can never be realized on earth.

Although the poet's purpose in writing the poem, "The Ring and the Book," was not to present his ideas on art, yet he employs a method in its writing which he in turn uses to explain his idea of art, as well as of life: namely, that art is truth.

The art poems of this great English poet stand as the grandest memorial to him. Their tone and teaching exemplify his own life which Italy now commemorates in Venice by a tablet on which is inscribed the poet's own words,

Open my heart and you will see  
Graved inside of it, "Italy."

How fitting thus to commemorate the life and death of a lover of art and of Italy!

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