

Texas Southern University

Digital Scholarship @ Texas Southern University

Theses (2016-Present)

Theses

5-2023

The Whispering Voices Behind the Poetry of Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold: Three Theoretical Approaches to Selected Works: Formalist, Psychoanalytic, and Marxist

Gabriel M. Cisneros

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Cisneros, Gabriel M., "The Whispering Voices Behind the Poetry of Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold: Three Theoretical Approaches to Selected Works: Formalist, Psychoanalytic, and Marxist" (2023). *Theses (2016-Present)*. 52.

<https://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/theses/52>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses at Digital Scholarship @ Texas Southern University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses (2016-Present) by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship @ Texas Southern University. For more information, please contact haiying.li@tsu.edu.

**THE WHISPERING VOICES BEHIND THE POETRY OF
ROBERT BROWNING AND MATTHEW ARNOLD:
THREE THEORETICAL APPROACHES OF SELECTED
WORKS: FORMALIST, PSYCHOANALYSIS AND MARXIST**
THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate School
of Texas Southern University

By

Gabriel Cisneros, B.A.

Texas Southern University

2023

Approved By

Michael A. Zeitler
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Gregory H. Maddox
Dean, The Graduate School

Approved By

<u>Michael A. Zeitler</u>	<u>10/27/2022</u>
Chairperson, Thesis Committee	
<u>Charlene T. Evans</u>	<u>10/27/2022</u>
Committee Member	Date
<u>Michael D. Sollars</u>	<u>10/27/2022</u>
Committee Member	
<u>Haiqing Sun</u>	<u>10/27/2022</u>
Committee Member	Date

© Copyright by Gabriel Cisneros 2023
All Rights Reserved

The Whispering Voices Behind the Poetry of Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold:
Three Theoretical Approaches of Selected Works: Formalist, Psychoanalysis and Marxist

By

Gabriel Cisneros, B.S.

Texas Southern University, 2023

Professor Michael A. Zeitler, Advisor

Throughout the literary world, many critics have attempted to pinpoint the root cause for the sudden changes in style and attitude about writing the poetry that ultimately chased Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold into developing their own style in which to convey their innermost compassion for humanity. They hid their injured poetic souls; they hid their innermost thoughts, but they expressed themselves through their characters. By expressing themselves as the voice behind the speaker, they were able to create an artificial mask and utilize the mask as a method of capitalizing on the very essence of what the dramatic monologue tried to express and established: a poetic play. But by creating this avenue, Browning and Arnold were able to create a niche for themselves in the closing years of the Victorian Age.

Of course, one can understand that there are limitless factors that can contribute to the direction of a person's development from childhood to adulthood, and also the time that elapses between each event and how their points of view changed along the way. But in studying Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold, there are a few choice factors that should be considered as foremost when analyzing these two poetry writers. In the case of

Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold, the key factors should focus on are their family upbringing, their cultural values, and the literary pressures they were experiencing. I will demonstrate that through the applications of formalist, psychoanalysis, and Marxist materialism theories are the keys for unraveling the personas of these two Victorian poets.

The formalist critic focuses on the lasting impact it forms on the readers' mental imagery of the poem and how the readers reflect to the poem's flexibility, while also allowing the readers to find whatever they may wish to find in it. The formalist critic also applies to the appropriateness of the poem's structure. This method allows the readers to form a pattern, to evoke an idea of where the poet is going with the theme or the plot of the poem. On the other hand, the theory of the psychoanalytic critic probes the development of the human psyche. The psychoanalytic critic focuses on what and how certain personal experiences and events affected these two poets and what compelled them to alter their lives and to alter their writing styles so abruptly. In the case of the Marxist materialist theory, I will show that the status of both these poets contributed to the transformation of their attitudes, and how their class status enhanced the shaping of their views about their surroundings.

This study will focus on their experiences growing up and their experiences concerning their relationship with other family members, and their encounters with their contemporaries. In this study, I will present the argument that both these authors were strongly influenced by parochial expectations, by social upheavals, and by literary pressures from other contemporary poets. The emphasis is to demonstrate how in each poem these influences surface to reveal how these factors played a major role in molding

their true personas. This study will take into consideration the historical and personal events that were taking place at the time, such as the aftereffects of the long-lasting change of the transference between ideologies from Hellenist to Hebraic, and the Industrial Revolution, which obscured anything that stood in its way. It was a golden age for innovation, but a trying time for literary works, but this was the time that Browning and Arnold were producing their finest works.

Furthermore, in this argument I will show that the poems of Browning, such as “My Last Duchess,” “Porphyria’s Lover,” and “Fra Lippo Lippi,” and Arnold’s “Dover Beach,” “The Buried Life,” and his literary criticism on various poets reveal how each influence surfaces in their poems. This study will shed light on how each historical event was relevant in forming the poet’s resilience and state of mind, in developing their particular views about the world they lived in. This study further explores the possible and probable consequences that peer pressure had on both these writers. The focus of each analysis will be upon revealing clues to their character, to their attitude, and, with the emphasis on the direction each poet took in order to overcome the stigma of exclusion. This overview reveals how each poet managed to get included into the company of elite writers and into the realm of great poets whose works are read worldwide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
2. CHAPTER 2: ROBERT BROWNING.....	12
3. CHAPTER 3: MATTHEW ARNOLD.....	35
4. CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68

VITA

1969-1972 Robstown Senior High School, Robstown, Texas
1985-1990 B.A., Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas
Major Field English

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

The Metamorphosis of Robert Browning And Matthew Arnold

Towards the end of the 19th century, English literature was undergoing a defining and transformative period. The two poets, Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold, who brought the Victorian Age to a close, were considered misfits in a field dominated by elite poetic writers. They both experienced difficulty in establishing themselves as serious poets, noteworthy to be included among the luminary writers of their time. Many of the established poets of the time shunned them because they often stirred controversy with their attitudes towards poetry, with their flamboyancy of style, and with their thoughts on sensitive subject material. They both developed a core religious belief which was strongly influenced by parochial upbringing and were both strongly influenced by Europe's ancient past. Both these poets utilize the dramatic monologue as their primary medium through which they reveal how these influences manifested and underlined their writings. They both chose distinct directions with their work: one chose to captivate his audience by dramatizing the distinction between perception and perhaps in the lives of ordinary people, and introduce a real-life quality to his work that brought his characters and events into sharper focus; while the other poet was unable to produce poetic works (so he thought) that would measure up to "...the grand style..." of the masters of the past (Abrams 2158). Fortunately, for one poet, these influences would prove to be the warning

sign from which to steer clear away, while they prove to be the unfortunate undoing of the poetic talent of the other, and proved to be the focal point of undermining his poetic confidence.

The most apparent difference between the two was their personalities. Robert Browning considered a “clumsy barbarian” by his contemporaries; the other an “elegantly ...dressed ... [joking]... dandy” who irritated the more solemn writers of the day (Abrams 2077, 2157). Their distinct outlook at what the Industrial Age wrought upon the social classes in England is revealed through their character’s memory flashbacks. Browning chose conjecture to portray the lives of his characters, and wrote for his own pleasure: entertaining and shocking his audience with macabre twists to his plots. The other, Matthew Arnold, wrote in a more apprehensively, restraint manner, wrote in a more (what he considered) *animated* and appropriate style—to appease his own ‘requirement’—and to supersede his contemporaries. But both writers, in their own way, in closing the Victorian Age, did manage to prepare and change the landscape of English poetry as it transitioned into the modern poetry of the twentieth century. Both writers stood at the crossroads of the nineteenth and twentieth century; both stood at the precipitous dawning of a modern world which loomed across a sea of change, a daunting specter of uncertainty; both writers confronted their fears in distinct fashion; and both writers conquered their apprehensions: one through deceitful frivolity, the other through intellectual seriousness.

To draw a better picture of the differences between the two, it would be useful to apply the usage of masks. In ancient Greek plays, masks were used to establish the play’s message, and to indicate what the themes and desired moods the actors were to express.

Through such preliminary enticements the audience was prepared for either a triumphant Victory and Fortune, or an avenging Tragedy and Gloom. The sad mask of Melpomene indicated impending tragedy, while the gleeful mask of Thalia indicated glad endings. And, in an ironical literary twist of fate, the two poets closing this era flinched into hiding behind the masks of Melpomene and Thalia: one for the sake of "... avoid[ing] exposing himself too explicitly before his readers" and the other as a "... 'critique souriant' [smiling critic]" hiding behind the curtain of criticism (Abrams 2078, 2157). And by all indications, in reading Browning's work one could easily infer that Browning wore the mask of Melpomene because of his depiction of epicurean, sordid characters. And just as easily, one could infer that Arnold (due to his ["merry...manner ..."]) wore the mask of Thalia because of his high-mindedness, through which he infuses his melancholy onto his characters (Abrams 2157).

However, the opposite is quite surprisingly evident by their intentions in their poems. They both firmly stood their ground on their distinct views on what constituted good poetry writing. Browning's portrayal of shady misfits in his poems stood in stark contrast to Arnold's virtuous, righteous-longing, characters. A major difference was that Browning's monologues were mixed with historical facts and with purely conjured up plots that brought an insightful, thought- provoking reality to the lives of his characters. Arnold, on the other hand, developed this peculiar theory of mixing in epochal fact with a present-day realist's approach to his work that strongly reflected his Hellenistic's and his father's ideals of "...connect[ing]...[with]...modern life" (Abrams 2157). And after both writers received constant criticism from their fellow contemporaries, both chose different approaches to their style of writing poetry. Browning retreats towards an introverted

omnipresent approach and became "...a poet preoccupied with masks" (Abrams 2079). While the case with Arnold, once his smiling mask is removed, it revealed his forlorn shortcomings as incapable of writing the poetry that equaled his more talented peers, sadly becoming "one of the dudes of literature" retreating into the safe cave of criticism, abandoning his poetic endeavor altogether (Abrams 2157).

The greatest injury that mankind has inflicted onto himself is influence. Influence has been at the core of every civilization's advancement, or its demise since time immemorial. English culture and literature were not spared from the devouring influence of two merging civilizations that brought transformative societal upheavals: what Arnold himself calls the Hellenic and Hebraic world. These two rivaling civilizations in turn engendered the advent of the misinformed and misguided modern, western world. What these two ideals did was to lay the foundation for the known world to divide into two separate camps of thought. From the Hellenic world, one school of thought gleaned the epic historical and mythical adventures of the Greek heroes and their polymorphous gods. Gods who were heavily involved in intervening and directing human affairs. While the other camp developed a monotheistic ideology, its adherents were straddled with the fear of not offending a jealous God. Furthermore, for the followers there were grave consequences for those who did not adhere to strict Hebraic tenets. The impact that these two rival influences had on Browning's and Arnold's literary output can, at best, be summed up as suppressive. Browning quietly rebels and dismisses them as foreshadows of his characters' persona, but his parochial religious influence remains a constant reminder which lingers in the back of his mind and which surfaces throughout his poems. While Arnold was more dogmatically vocal, more obsessively critical and yet

surprisingly, more reverently embracing of them. A close reading of their works reveals the underpinnings of their thought processes and reveals how these two civilizing influences shaped and contributed to their poetic writings.

Browning was not swept in by the strong and alluring current of Greek literature. Instead, he was more captivated by the Hebraic influence as demonstrated by the motives and actions of the Pagan Christians that parade his poems. Throughout his works, Browning reveals a fascination with the propensity of dark motives that permeate human thinking and is intrigued by the human capacity of inflicting injury others, all in stark contrast to Hebraic tenets. Not only was he not lured by the mythic Hellenic sway, for a time, he dabbled in “atheism and liberalism,” rejecting the Hebraic influence as too constraining for society (Abrams 2078). And in total contrast to Arnold, Browning does not concern himself with social conditions, or debating religious dogma, nor does he squabble with political or literary matters. And in deference to Arnold, he does not concern himself with duplicating the ‘old grand style’ of the epic poetry of the past. He did not concern himself with flowery language, nor sceneries of landscapes. He, instead, embarks on a new experimental style in which he introduces an unheard of shocking, psychological outcome to his work. His work focuses solely on the psychological stability and/or instability of his characters’ hidden personas. And although he distances himself from his characters’ presence, his Hebraic influence constantly surfaces by his use of the suffering servant theme which clearly is personified through the mindset of his innocent victims.

Browning was not from the romantic school, or from the pastoral group. He was not a modernist in the sense that he did not write about present-day events, nor did he

utilize the Industrial Revolution's upheavals as fertile ground for his poetic themes. Rather, he was a unique individual who hewed his own originality by making use of historical personage and conjuring up fictional lives to satisfy his personal observance of the "...development of the human soul..." (Abrams 2081). Three of Browning's poems, "My Last Duchess," "Porphyria's Lover," and "Fra Lippo Lippi" demonstrate how Browning detaches and distinguishes himself from his contemporaries. Through these poems Browning reveals that he is more interested in momentary one-on-one relationships between humans than being concerned with far away conquering, drawn-out adventurism. Browning's originality stems from the fact that he steers clear of comparing or measuring himself up to the masters of the past, and after hearing harsh criticism from his contemporaries, he definitely steers clear from his fellow present-day poets' styles. He accomplishes this by not embellishing his work with minute details of his characters' outward appearances, or with heroic vainglorious deeds, but by exploring the common everyday worldly human activities. Browning's greatest achievement is imbuing his work with a strong, scintillating, omnipresent feel to his settings that relegates any descriptive, detailed, background as an afterthought. Browning's poetic genius stems from his talent of telling a story from the soul of the character inside looking outwardly.

This is not the case with Matthew Arnold. Arnold lived pretty much under the watchful eyes of his well-known father, and grew up in a period in which many celebrated writers were still living and others who had recently died. But inwardly, his longing to be included among this elite group became Arnold's life-long masking of his poetic and melancholic literary work. Under the constant reminder of the excellence of the ancient writers, and the constant pressure of his contemporaries, urging him to

produce original works, Arnold suffered from poetic timidity. Arnold's work is sprinkled with a mishmash of historical, pastoral, romantic, and personal reflections of his feelings. In deciphering Arnold's poems, one is left with a sense that he is uncertain of himself. He seems to undermine his confidence, and appears as too exuberant of his intellect, and this gloomy ambiguity leaves him "...dissatisfied with the kind of poetry he was writing" (Abrams 2159). And, in order to escape from his self-shackled creativeness, he retreats to the sanctuary of criticism. In this arena he feels free to "...fashion [an]... objective image of human culture" (Culler *xviii*). And as an ebullient critic he feels at liberty to judge "...the whole human race" (Culler *xviii*). He imposes his opinions and ideas on what (he thought) constituted well-written "...classical poetry..." drawing the ire of many of his contemporaries in the Victorian poetic age. This lofty posture came at a poetic price, for it entrapped his poetic fate to "...his own requirement..." (Abrams 2159). It is not that Arnold was incapable of producing quality poetic works, he did. But, he expected too much of himself, expected too much for his work to equal or rival his contemporaries, and, inadvisably, expected to measure up to the great poets of the past. This grandiose expectation had an artistically debilitating consequence to his poetic potential, and probably stymied what could have been (for him) a vainglorious output of classical poetic grandeur.

Unlike Browning, Arnold was swept up by the Hellenic ideals and was carried away by the tide of well-written epic works. Especially the monumental works of the Greek Homer, and angered by the Hebraic treatment of the ancient mythical works by the Roman Ovid in particular. The great writers of the past so captivated him that he imposes an unrealistic challenge to himself and to his contemporaries to produce works

of like quality. This attitude resulted in his fellow writers castigating him as an ostentatious writer, and caused many to dismiss him from his poetic glory. The majority of his literary peers did not consider Arnold to be of their artistic caliber as exemplified in the rebuke from Tennyson: “Tell Mat not to write any more of those prose things ...” but to give us some poetry of his own creativeness, of his own originality (Abrams 2158). The sad thing about Arnold was the fact that he did produce many good poems. Some of these poems give glimpses of many writers that influenced his artistic capability. Perhaps not up to the standards of the great poets he so much admired, but of notable acknowledgement and acceptance.

Matthew Arnold’s dilemma is a self-imposed barrier from which he cannot so easily climb over. By placing and pursuing so lofty a goal as to belonging “...to the class of the very best...” he ensnared the very essence of his own poetic potentiality (Culler 309). And by believing in his own theory that all worthwhile poetry “...must bring joy... must inspire and rejoice the reader ... [must] convey a charm, and infuse delight,” he hamstrung his own attempts at writing the very poetry that he imposed on his fellow writers (Abrams 2159). With this stringent reasoning, he left no room for other facets of human life to enter into the realm of everyday living. Hence, in Arnold’s proper poetic view there shouldn’t be any room for poets to portray human sufferings, or for poets to portray “nothing but hunger, rebellion, and rage,” nor for poets to entertain for the sake of entertainment (Abrams 2159). In Arnold’s egotist mind, there should be a “high standard” and “strict judgement” in order to avoid the fallacy of valuing certain poems (and poets) too highly (Culler 307). Befitting words for a poet whose poetic struggles exhibit the very failings of meeting the requirements that he so much indulges in.

The Hebraic influence had quite the opposite effect on Arnold than it did on Browning. The impact it had on him caused him to refrain from expressing his opinions or his thoughts about anything pertaining to objectionable dark, or uncharacteristic motives of human shortcomings. But in contrast, it is through these shortcomings that Browning tactfully broaches the subject of the human psyche. In reading Arnold's poems, one gets the sensation that he longs for a return to a bygone era of orderliness (everything within a set standard), respectfulness (measuring up to the classics), and cleanliness of body and soul (devotedly adhering to Hebraic tenets). There is no mention of sordid, or heinous ordeals in most of his writings, no mention of deviousness, lasciviousness, or illicit behavior of carnal improprieties. This Hebraic conduct was a culmination of his father's "...mind and character," and the ever-present pressure of his literary surroundings along with his dogmatic religious expectations. And, in addition to these obligations, Arnold struggled with his "...youthful frivolity..." and his callous approach to academic excellence (Abrams 2157). With these perimeters already placed ahead of him, the young Arnold had little latitude for failure, little time to engage with everyday people, and less likely, little time to have experienced the harsh realities of the life that the lower working classes endured.

And like his father before him, who was an educational reformer, it was not until Arnold became an inspector of schools, when he was able to see the cultural and educational gaps between the English and European society that he took his career seriously. He became cynically concerned and aware of England's literary evolution in comparison to European achievements. He became England's modern-day John the Baptist crying from an industrial, mechanical wilderness, challenging his contemporaries

to produce quality works such as the ancient Hellenic and Hebraic writers achieved. And, like John the Baptist, “who was truly a transformative figure, forming a link between the Old and New Testament,” Arnold forms the link between the Nineteenth and Twentieth century English literature (Elwell npn). And, like the Prophet, who confronted the hypocrisy of the religious establishment, Arnold confronts the “...inadequacies of puritanism...” [to] “...change the course of society” (Abrams 2161). From a biblical context, John the Baptist believed that he was preparing people for the coming of a new age, a new way of life, and in like manner, Arnold (through his own insolence) believed that he was the “formulator of ‘ideals,’ considering himself as the ‘healer’ of a sick society” ushering in a new dawn of English culture and prosody (Abrams 2159). And in a paradoxical irony, Arnold can also be seen as a modern-day Prometheus, self-ordained to save English society by bringing light to the “...vast blockheadism” which he considers to be the culprit (Abrams 2161).

It is through these influences that Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold formed the core essence of their personalities. And it is through these influences that distinguish them separately from their contemporaries. The ‘clumsy barbarian’ and the ‘smiling critic’ proved to be the bridge into the twentieth century, providing the English literary culture with a rich mixture of past and present events, a mixture with factual or conjured up scenes that make up the bulk of their poetic input that has enlightened the world. They both present their views from two different perspectives: Browning from the inside looking outwardly and Arnold from the outside looking inwardly. Browning by manipulating personage from everyday life and by gleaning personage from historical records to plant the seeds of dramatizing deceptive perceptions. And Arnold by

constantly connecting the past with the present as a reminder to himself and to his contemporaries not to forget the inescapable origins of their beginnings.

Through Robert Browning's poems of "My Last Duchess," "Porphyria's Lover," and "Fra Lippo Lippi," and Matthew Arnold's poems of "Dover Beach," "The Buried Life," and "Criticism; Literature" one can see the various influences which color their works, and which rises to the surface, unmasking their hidden agendas. But to actually appreciate what these two poets accomplished; one must acknowledge the arduous struggles they endured in order to be included into the elite class of brilliant Victorian writers. It is to Robert Browning that the "...main road of 20th century poetry" passes through, and through which much is owed by the reintroduction of the dramatic monologue, but it is through Arnold's poetry and through his intellectually critical essays which enables one to appreciate him as a writer out to "...delight the world and also to change it" (Abrams 2076, 2162).

CHAPTER 2

ROBERT BROWNING: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN, WOMEN, AND GOD

In the literary history of 19th Century Victorian English poetry, one poet stood out as the most misunderstood, yet, he was one of the most ingenious poetic innovators of the his era. This poet remained relatively obscured for many years laboring under his more famous wife, Elizabeth Barrett. In fact, Robert Browning remained largely unacknowledged for many years under the shadows of Barrett and other notable poets, such as, Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Matthew Arnold. He finally emerged as a poet of noted conjectural talent in his own right. His psychological *fictus* into the morbid motives of his characters reveal his views on relationships between men, women and God. His macabre thoughts startled and captured the attention of the literary world. Robert Browning is better known for his manipulation of historical events, artists, and works of art through which he conveys his conjured views on behaviors and motives behind the characters of his chosen poems. There are various reasons why scholars and critics argue as to why Robert Browning was so misunderstood. But in order to give justice to Robert Browning's psychoanalytical profile, it would be wise and fair to separate his life into three areas of interest: the manly Browning; the effeminate Browning; and the religious Browning.

Could it have been that Robert Browning was perhaps more ‘street-wise’ than the writers of the Romantic or the Victorian Period as to why he was misunderstood? Or, could it be as the biography of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* suggests, that Browning was troubled by the roles he had to maintain in order to gain the respect of his parents and his contemporaries? He had a “cheerful religious position,” on the one hand, yet his works are filled with “murderers, sadistic husbands, mean and petty manipulators” on the other (Abrams 2080). But in the case of Robert Browning, his roles are masked through the technique of the dramatic monologue. Although Browning’s use of this technique was meant to obscure him out of any involvement in his poems, it, however, resulted in revealing his views about women, men, and God.

In many of his works, such as “My Last Duchess,” “Porphyria’s Lover,” and “Fra Lippo Lippi,” Browning gives the impression that he doesn’t have many positive, or acceptable views about women and men, and, has a rather dubious opinion of God. He, somewhat, implies that strictures on moral conduct has resulted in more ruin and misery for society, and he blames women’s deference and an absent God. A careful reading of Browning’s life and work does reveal a personal conflict that must have troubled him. On the one hand, he appears to side with women as misunderstood souls, and on the other, he seems to justify the cruel actions men meted out against them. But looming in the depth of his mind is the ever -present question of the absence of divine intervention.

Browning’s early years reveal a peculiar reason for his rather dark outlook on relationships between men, women and God relatively to the changing world around him. The Renaissance was well established replaced by the Industrial Revolution; there was freedom from indentured servitude, and mobility for the common people, along with new

innovations that made life easier. But, it also brought with it new societal adjustments for a changing way of life. In fact, in an ironic twist of fate, instead of giving people relief from forced labor, it forced them to find labor in order to survive and fend for themselves. The Industrial Revolution also brought about new material from which writers could create poetry and stories that befitted the societal upheaval. They now had a front row seat to witness people's daily struggles unravelling before them as they grappled with their new imposed reality. Browning was keen enough to make use of this new frontier by dramatizing people's lives through monologues.

Browning's early life reveals a young boy who was strongly influenced and molded from two opposing perspectives: first by his doting religious mother, and second, by his intellectually, strict father. In an article written by Charlotte Riedberger titled "*Robert Browning: Toward a Psychoanalytic Reading,*" she states that "[t]here is evidence that ... Robert's mother [was] tyrannical in [her] claims over [her] children" (Riedberger 3). The article paints a picture of a mother /son relationship that borders on an unhealthy affection towards one another. Is it possible that this bond could have confused Browning's views "as demonstrated in his concern with loving relationships, can rightly be assumed to stem from his failure ... [to ward] off incestuous longings?" (Reidberger 1). There are clues throughout his works that imply that it could be possible. In the article, Riedberger quotes Sigmund Freud that individuals who suffer from too close a bond are subject to "anxiety [and] is a warning to ... impending ...incestuous desires" (Riedberger 3). This article continues to broach the subject of Browning's dim view of relationships, and expresses that Browning himself recognized "that even as a grown man he could not sit by her otherwise than an arm around her waist" and, wrote

Browning himself that “my room is next to hers, and the door is left ajar” (Riedberger 3). An argument could be made that Browning was “...undoubtedly (sic) suffering from tormenting guilt...” as he “...once declared: I desire in this life...to live and just write out certain things which are in me, and so save my soul” (Reidberger 1). This could be inferred as the beginning of his struggled in separating himself from his reality and his conjuring dark, dismal views on normal relationships.

On a positive note, however, this mother/son bonding led to the development of his persona, shaped his views on relationships between men, women and God. This personal inner chasm divides him into a man who needs and seeks the comforting shelter of women (Elizabeth Barrett as the soothing mother figure). This as well, however, left a void of he not quite entrusting women with the capability of fidelity as his works reveal. Another side to Browning was his relationship with his father. He, seemingly, cowers away from strong, authoritative men, such as his father, and his contemporaries (John Stuart Mills). Hence, his withdrawal from revealing too much of himself through his works of dramatic monologues.

It is a fact that Browning’s parents kept him away from a formal education for an education at home. He was taught various subjects that had little to do with poetry, such as, “foreign languages, music, boxing, and horsemanship” (Abrams 2078). This could be taken as an indication that Browning was torn between being the man his father might have wanted him to be, perhaps rugged and firm, manly, or being the gentle and compassionate man his mother probably would have liked him to develop into. What is known is that the nature of Browning’s relationship with his father was a “...oedipal conflict between son and father” (Reidberger 3). And, if how he describes his

“possessively tyrannical” father-in-law’s treatment of Elizabeth Barrett is any indication of the parochial standards of the time, then, it can be inferred that there must’ve been some tension between the two (after all he lived with them until he was 34) (Abrams 2079). One can comprehend the struggle he must have gone through, with his mother pushing him to be compassionate (effeminate) towards women, and his father pulling him to be masculine (manlier) and perhaps more detached from the influence of women. But in the back of Robert Browning’s mind stood the looming presence of God. With Browning, God stood between his parents’ wishes and his own worldly objectives, and took center stage as the greater force.

One positive outcome that criticism of Browning produced was the fact that it made him an independent thinker and writer. By being brought up by two people with clearly opposite objectives, Browning enjoyed the best of two worlds, of which his admirers were quite “...disappointed — almost appalled — [that he did not] look like a poet” (Abrams 2079). While his earlier and contemporary writers were restricting themselves to following a set of poetic standards, Robert Browning “could live and think as he pleased” (Abrams 2079). With this kind of ‘worldly freedom’, he was at poetic liberty to inject, to explore plausibility and/or to conjure up the morbid themes and settings for his poems. What Browning did was to exploit his own dark thoughts and his suppressed fear of God, and transferred them unto the men and women that color his dramatic monologues. Rather than applying himself to writing about the social or political issues of the day, Browning capitalizes on historical and made-up events based on the lives of famous and common everyday people.

After a scathing critique by John Stuart Mill, in which he berates Browning for “parading a “morbid state “of self-worship,” Browning opts to convey his thoughts through the characters of his works (Abrams 2078). Perhaps unbeknownst to him at the time, was the fact that he was expanding on a new approach to writing poetry: the dramatic monologue. Robert Browning is credited for using the dramatic monologue more than any other Victorian Age writer. This approach allows the characters to have lives of their own, to speak for themselves, to be in control of their own actions and destinies. By creating an omnipotent perch for himself, Browning is able to detach himself from any involvement in the thoughts and actions of the characters. By utilizing this method, Browning is at liberty to imbue morbidity into the minds of his characters. He is at liberty to create drama, to conjure up images of his characters’ heinous actions and motives. Thus, he escapes the yoke of responsibility by obscuring much of his own persona. But, here lies the crux of the man behind the mask. What many may consider to be the thoughts and actions of the characters, are, in essence, the machination of Browning himself.

As mentioned before, Browning was not the originator of the dramatic monologue. Others, (Coleridge and Keats) had made use of it during the Romantic period, but in different forms, such as odes or Shakespearean sonnets. But their sole purpose was to produce different approaches, or to induce drama to their poetry. John Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn” is one such example. In Keats’ ode, the author “...builds the formal order of his great odes from the ruins of the Shakespearean sonnet...” for an ideological goal: “...for the mind, that poem will replace, as well as transform, the life it finds” (Martin 24). But Keats becomes a narrator, standing beside and leading a captive

listener from start to finish. The difference between Browning's and Keats' monologues, is that Keats' monologue does not allow for the listener/viewer to question the drama, or to judge the motive, nor to deviate from the storyline of the object presented. Whereas Browning's monologues, the listener/viewer is given freedom to explore a wide range of plausibility of the characters' thought processes, or to draw his/her own conclusions of the objects in question. But in Coleridge's words "the common end of all narrative...is ... to make those events, which in real or imagined History move..." (Martin 24). And this combination of Keats' "lyric speaker" and the remnants of the Shakespearean sonnet is Robert Browning's dramatic monologues' formation.

In his most famous monologue "My Last Duchess," Browning reveals his thoughts concerning the relationship between men and women, as well as, revealing some troubling aspects of his own psychological make-up. Here's a classic example of Browning manipulating real events of people's lives through a fictional piece of art. The art work itself is meant to direct the attention of a listener/viewer away from the tragedy that the speaker describes. The poem is centered on the life of Alfonso II, the Duke of Ferrara in Italy. Browning likely came across this account of the Duke's history while he lived in Italy. The Duke's wife, Lucrezia, a young girl, died in 1561, after three years of marriage, which cast suspicion on the Duke concerning her untimely death. And through a fictional painter, Pandolf, and a fictional portrait of the Duchess, Browning, who in this poem, is hypothetically representing the Duke, negotiates through an agent to marry a niece of the Count of Tyrol (Abrams 2085).

In the opening lines of the poem, Browning manipulates the Duke's disposition and attitude towards his wife. But in actuality, Browning is injecting his conjuration of

what might have taken place in this historical account. What Browning is asking the readers to do is to place themselves in the Duke's position. In *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism, Vol. 79*, an essay by John Maynard titled "The Decade's Work in Browning Studies" he states that Browning reduces men and women "...merely into dramatis personae [by] ...a shifting series of dramatic hypotheses, unified only by a self-perpetuating consciousness" (Maynard 180). A careful reading of "My Last Duchess" reveals the parents' influence that inculcate his dual outlook towards women and men. As mentioned earlier, his training in boxing and horseback riding shows Browning the man (the Duke), and his studies in foreign languages and music reveal his softer, gentler—and in Nina Auerbach's article, "Robert Browning's Last Word" "Browning's feminism"—side (the Duchess) (Maynard 181).

"My Last Duchess": The Dark Side

In a psychoanalytic approach to "My Last Duchess," Browning refers mainly from the male perspective. The Duke's attitude is one of arrogance and superiority. The opening lines sets the stage for Browning's manipulation of the Duke's character:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,

Looking as if she were alive.

Through these lines, Browning conjures up what he assumes to be the real reason why the Duke had intention and justification to dispose of the Duchess, and proceeds to "...reveal the inner workings of a single character's psychology, values, tastes, and motivations" (Allingham, npn). The Duke expects the Duchess to worship him, to mind every detail of her behavior, to acknowledge that she is to be his in every manner and nuance. By

reducing the Duchess to an inanimate object, he regains his status as sole possessor of all that is in his domain:

I call

That piece a wonder now: Fra' Pandolf's hand

Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

.....

But to myself they turned (since none puts by

The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

But this only reveals the repulsiveness of the Duke and demonstrates how “callous precision of an insane rationalist whose dissociation of logical...” norms, borders on “a jealous and emotionally insecure child, [who] wants to show complete possession of the [Duchess] ...” (Allingham, npn).

She had

A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er she looked on, and her looks
went everywhere.

The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the White mule She rode 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.

It is without a doubt that the Duke dislikes the Duchess' flirtatiousness, or so he wrongly suspects it, and “interprets the Duchess's plain enjoyment as impudence and rebellion against her superior, surrogate father, and master” (Allingham, npn). The reason for his commissioning the painting is to still the Duchess' “...lack of discernment...”

while definitely trying not to expose himself as “...one who could not master her...”
(Allingham, npn).

— E’en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir,
She smiled, no doubt,
Whene’er I passed her; but who passed without
Much
The same the smile?
This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together.
There she stands
As if alive.

Through these lines above, Browning exposes the “...psychopathic Duke [as someone who] finds satisfaction only in manipulating and controlling others...”: a la Browning’s dramatic monologue (Allingham, npn). He exposes the Duke as “...the devil incarnate, inured to murder and ignorant to Christian virtues, a creation intended to be a symbol of pride, materialism, and viciousness of Christian evil, blind to his own probable damnation” (Allingham, npn). It is known that Robert Browning’s mother was a “...kindly, religious-minded woman...” which probably had a profound impact on his own Christian outward views of relationships between men, women, and God (Abrams 2077). But, what Browning is shedding light on is the fact that 15th century European religious belief was still struggling in transitioning from polytheism to monotheism. This is evident by the line: “Notice Neptune...taming a seahorse...” (Abrams 2086). Browning is implying that during these times men mistakenly, such as the Duke, assumed the role of God on earth. Browning portrays the Duke as the epitome of his father-in-law, portraying him as if he is the only man who has the power to ‘command’, and act as if he were God to judge and determine the fate of those around him. This is classic Robert Browning, manipulating the dramatic monologue to befuddle his audience, and to

obscure his own conjurations of what relationships between women and men must have been like in the age of Kings, Knights, and Dukes of 15th century Europe.

Furthermore, in “My Last Duchess” Browning infers that even 19th century men still harbored the same attitude as the Duke’s. He implies that this is a sign of a sinister, disturb, individual bent on obtaining whatever he wants, and at any cost. Browning ends the poem by implying that the Duke is somehow justified for what he had to do with the Duchess.

I repeat, / The Count your master’s known munificence / Is ample warrant
That no just pretense / Of mine for dowry will be disallowed; / Though his
fair daughter’s self, as I avowed / At starting is my object.

By ending the monologue at a negotiating point, it leaves the listener/reader with the impression that women are not to be tolerated. It leaves women with no room for error, but to exist solely for the pleasure and convenience of men. What Browning is asking the listener/viewer to do is to overlook and “...suspend the moral judgments of others and judge for ourselves two studies of human nature, the one a portrait in pigments, and the other a portrait in words” (Allingham npn). There is no reason to assume that this view is not Browning’s actual introspection. His own suppressed suspicion, which reveals his innermost feelings towards women and men in general.

“Porphyria’s Lover”: The Compassionate Browning

In “Porphyria’s Lover,” Browning stages the setting of a raging storm to capture the essence of the state of mind that jealousy can induce in men towards women. Nothing in the poem points to an offence, to an infraction, or to a sign of disrespect that the woman commits towards the man. This is the effeminate and insightful side of Robert

Browning at his obscuring best, infusing and creating a fictional event that never happened. But in this work, Browning again befuddles his listener/reader by compelling them into believing that the Lover is a cold, murdering, madman. Robert Browning deliberately word plays with the literary world through this poem. It is all conjuration; it is all deception by word play. In fact, there is no record that a person has ever been named ‘Porphyria’, because it is actually the name of a medical condition. “*Porphyria*” is an incurable blood disease that disables and kills thousands every years. Its discovery dates back to the mid-1700s, well before Browning wrote “Porphyria’s Lover” (Best 5). Although this poem is narrated from a male perspective, it is really shedding light on an ailment that some women suffer from. But this is Browning expressing his compassion for women, whom he felt were emotionally misunderstood.

In “*The Signet Mosby Medical Encyclopedia*,” the condition of *porphyria* is described as “a group of inborn disorders” [of which] [t]here are three major kinds of *porphyria*” (Glanze 622). But for the purpose of establishing the connection to this misunderstood poem, only one of the conditions will be addressed: Acute intermittent porphyria. Under this condition “[w]omen are affected more often ...” and suffer a variety of maladies, such as, “...starvation or crash dieting...” as well as, “... nerve damage, seizures, coma, [and] hallucinations ...” (Glanze 622).

In a deliberate start to the poem, Browning compares a raging storm to the supposed jealousy of the man:

The rain set early in tonight, / The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite, / And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.

But is it really jealousy, or is it Browning setting the stage to compel the listener/reader into believing that the man is angry? What Browning is alluding to is that men in general are incapable of trusting women. What Browning wants the listener/reader to hone in on is the picture of a man who apparently is suspicious that, perhaps, Porphyria must have been out seeing someone else, and now, innocently comes to him in the midst of a raging storm. But another view, from the effeminate Browning's compassionate angle, could it be that the man is genuinely concerned that she is out in this kind storm? Perhaps he is totally beside himself and aggrieved that she is having one of her hallucinative spells (hallucination being one of the symptoms of *porphyria*).

In the next few lines, the man begins to paint the picture of what is really happening to her, as well as, to himself. What appears to be a serene scene, in essence, is the man's weariness of seeing Porphyria struggle with this malady. Note how Browning uses choice words for the man to express what he sees and how he feels about it:

When glided in Porphyria; straight / She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate / Blaze up, and all the cottage
warm; / Which done, she rose, and from her form / Withdrew the dripping
cloak and shawl, / And laid her soiled gloves by, untied Her hat and let
the damp hair fall, / And, last, she sat down by my side / And called me.

It's apparent that the woman is aware that the man is upset, because she hurriedly 'glided' to set 'straight' the situation, and 'kneeled' to appeal her case to his 'cheerless' disposition. But, this is a scene that the man has experienced before. By exclaiming that she finally 'called me' is solely to express to the listener/reader that that is one of her routines whenever she is afflicted by the disorder. But:

When no voice replied, / She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth / White shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced, / And, stooping, made
My cheek lie there, / And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,

Murmuring how she / Loved me — she
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor, / to set its struggling
 Passion free / From pride, and vainer ties dis sever,
 And give herself to me forever.

The listener/reader can clearly begin to see the picture unfold. A disheveled woman seeking comfort in the hands of her lover and getting the cold shoulder. She coquettishly and gently tries to offer herself upon him by gently putting his arm around her waist and gently placing his face in her hair. Picture, if you will, a woman who sees her reality slipping away, professing her need for her lover to return her appeal. But with her heart too weak because of her condition and her remembrance of her former self, she in vain tries to repair severed ties, and would gladly give herself to her mate. Browning gives us a glimpse of the emaciated woman, but also gives us a clue at the distress of the man.

The next scene reveals more of the strained situation the man is under, and reveals how he acknowledges that:

But passion sometimes would prevail, / Nor could tonight's gay feast
 restrain / A sudden thought of one so pale / For love of her,
 and all in vain: 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.

Throughout these lines the 'Lover' reveals just how much he really loves her, but he cannot bare the thought of losing her to this malady. He is all too aware that her love for him is all in vain; that there is not much time left between the two; so he relents, and for a moment he accepts her for who she is: a person not in tune with nature's stormy reality, a person being driven in by 'wind and rain' as if the storm is ushering her in for her own safety. He is compassionate enough to 'look' at her once 'happy and proud' eyes for the last time.

He reminisces about other times when, perhaps, she could have been his without question, but at:

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.

The 'Lover', unable to restrain himself any longer, finally succumbs to the pressure. His memory of former good days long past, and his living and witnessing the demise of his once radiant Porphyria proved to be his unraveling. But by injecting a bit of religion by using words such as 'pure and good' and feeling no 'pain', Browning makes certain that the man is somewhat removed from guilt, and thus, through the man's eyes Porphyria is no longer suffering.

As a shut bud that holds a bee, / I warily opened her lids: again / Laughed
the blue eyes without a stain. / And I untightened next the tress/About
her neck; her cheek once more / Blushed bright beneath my burning
kiss: / I propped her head up as before, / Only, this time my shoulder
bore / Her head, which droops upon it still: 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!

In this monologue, Browning exposes the impact the misdeed has on the man. The sheer notion that the man appears to express any remorse is nothing more than Browning's cleverness in obscuring his own morbid ideation of life and death. Words such as 'without a stain', 'utmost will', and 'scorned at' are the background words of Browning's religious upbringing, and his idea of what happens to a person's soul after death. In spite of the crime Browning conjures up in his poem, his mother's religious influence and his own religious conviction are interwoven in the poem. Browning, as well as, the 'Lover' believes that the soul of the person (Porphyria's) would be set free, free without blemish and free without suffering. In his book *Very Sure of God*, E. LeRoy

Lawson states that Browning was well “[a]ware of the imprecision of words in conveying life’s deepest emotions...,” because “[i]n a profound sense, he worshipped a home-made God” (Lawson 25).

In the poem’s final lines, Browning gives the illusion of the man mocking death and challenging God, and also gives the impression that the ‘Lover’ is content and glad:

Porphyria’s love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus, we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

What Browning accomplishes in this poem is quite the opposite of what he wants his listeners/readers to understand, or to misunderstand according to his word play. In any case, both views are quite acceptable, because they both fit the narrative. On the one hand, most listeners/ readers will only understand that a murder was committed by the hands of a jealous man. But that is exactly what Browning wants them to believe. The ‘Lover’ was not killing “Porphyria’s love”: no, he was killing *porphyria* the disease. And in painful, heartfelt remorse, the man understands that she has suffered long enough, and knows that it was “her darling one wish” to be freed from this malady. And in comforting words, the ‘Lover’ acknowledges that “...we sit together now...all night long...,” as his way of giving her a final loving, farewell, having given her, her final rest in her lover’s arms. So no, this is not the act of a heartless, madman, but the compassionate ‘mercy killing’ of the woman he truly loves. In the final line, what appears to be the man’s challenge to God, in essence, is his seeking of approvable and forgiveness from God. In this poem, Browning is using God as “... a rhetorical God to emphasize that what the

speaker had to do was so morally correct that a God of any sort from any religious denomination would not be critical” (Best 4)

“Fra Lippo Lippi”: The Lure of Sin

Now we come to the religious and ‘street-wise’ Robert Browning. The true persona of Robert Browning comes full circle through “Fra Lippo Lippi.” Not only does this poem capture the life of the painter/monk, but it also reveals Robert Browning’s attitude towards life, and his attitude towards the strictures that society imposed. Moreover, what better way to obscure one’s self than to hide behind an egregious holy man, a man devoted to abstinence of worldly pleasures? In this manner, all the worldly beliefs, sinful desires, questionable actions, and sordid motives belong to the monk’s experience. Hence, Browning pins all blame on the monk’s views and behavior, clearly steering away from his own egregiousness: “I’ll tell my state as though ‘twere none of mine”” (Abrams 2076).

In Browning’s early years in Italy, he must have felt as literarily isolated as the painter/ monk felt artistically. The monk felt that his paintings should capture the reality of life, and not through embellishment of false portrayals. Likewise, Browning felt that his poems were “...a misfit among his more pharisaical contemporaries” (Abrams 2104). With harsh criticism being hurled at him by his fellow poets and readers, and with his parents’ influence clashing with his worldly views, Browning capitalizes on his forced-upon independence. Through “Fra Lippo Lippi,” Browning reveals much of his rebellious stand towards the strictures of societal mores. He reveals his pleasures of the new way of life, and conveys it through the monk. “I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!” could

just as easily be Robert Browning's own harps to his fellow poets: 'I am poor brother Robert Browning, a fellow poet by your leave!' (l. 1). Both the monk and Browning reject their contemporaries' critical views on liberal creativeness and both reject the idea that reality should be contained and should be obscured and falsely represented.

In "Fra Lippo Lippi," "[o]ld Hippy-Hop o' the accents," dons his "street-wise" persona and explores the renaissance adventures experienced by the Italians (Abrams 2077). And through Fra Lippo, he expresses his rebellious thoughts on the strict norms of a fading society, and his tacit approval to the new advent of the bold renaissance experiment. It is highly probable that as a sheltered young man, Browning who was "...rarely absent from his parents' home" did not experience much of the outside world, nor street life for that matter during his adolescent years while in England (Abrams 2077). It was not until he left for Italy that he "...seemed to thrive [among] ...lively street scenes ... (Abrams 2079). And in many respects, in today's terms, Browning would be considered a late bloomer when it comes to knowledge of street-life in general. In much the same way, Lippo, (Browning in the guise of the monk), is himself a late bloomer.

Fra Lippo experiences the sting of being "...shut within my mew..." and regrets not being allowed "[t]o roam the town and sing out carnival ..." nor to partake in worldly pleasures (l.46-47). Like Browning, Lippo laments the fact that at the age of eight he was removed from a life on the street and taken into a convent and made a monk. This could just as easily be Browning lamenting the fact that at an early age, he too experiences being removed from public education for an education at home. And likewise, through "Fra Lippo Lippi," Browning sets out to challenge and break the old traditional taboos concerning creative expression.

In his article “You Think You see a Monk”: The Illusion of “Fra Lippo Lippi” Leonard S. Goldberg captures the essence of the monk’s and Browning’s rebellion. There is ample reason to believe that before the poem was written ca. 1853, and Elizabeth Barrett dying in 1861 that her health must have started to decline during these years. But also, these must have been the years that Browning must have become aware of his impending widowhood and began venturing out onto the ‘lively street’ of Italy. Likewise, the monk, like Browning, having heard the “... sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of song” and “...flesh and blood...” “[w]here sportive ladies leave their doors ajar...” partook in the revelry that he had been sheltered from (ll.6, 52). What Goldberg infers is that both Browning and the monk complain that they were deprived of the pleasures of “... inaccessible ladies,” [settled with] the demands of wealthy patrons, the ghostly, repressive voice of institutional authority ... [and]... a life spent among images...remains deeply restrictive...” (Goldberg 1). They both find that by renouncing “... the world, its pride and greed...” would free them from an oppressively imperfect world (l.98).

In “Fra Lippo Lippi,” the three sides to Robert Browning’s persona converge to finally allow the readers to see the man behind the mask: Browning the man; the effeminate Browning; and the religious Browning. Through “Fra Lippo Lippi,” Browning reveals his inner most turmoil by expressing his personal disdain for deceitful men in authoritative positions, which reflect his father’s influence. Note how Browning distances himself from his effeminate side by his negative depiction of women, and notice how he seems to justify all by his Christian upbringing.

Through the monk’s eyes, Browning directs his angry opinion of the lascivious world that men have created. In lines 100-133 reveal much of Browning views of how he

sees the brutality and harshness of the real world. Could it be that Browning, as a young child being thought horse riding and boxing, saw the way men were towards one another that it triggered his disdain towards authority? It is plausible that Browning having spent many hours in his father's extensive library was conflicted at being the manly Browning, the effeminate Browning, and the religious Browning. Both he and the monk paint "...pictures of the world..." that they don't like.

To "[l]ose a crow and catch a lark" is at the heart of the monk's and Browning's disheartening (l. 137). Both the monk and Browning allude to the idea that if a devious crow can be made to appear like a melodious lark, the world will overlook sinful acts: "it's the life!" (l.171). Through the skill of hues and words, they paint a panoramic overview of the deviousness of man. Both are dismayed that society hides behind righteousness in order to save itself from itself. Both hate the idea that they have to create a façade to falsely represent the realities of the world.

What starkly stands out upon reading "Fra Lippo Lippi" is Robert Browning's negative description of women's roles. As mentioned in the beginning, the effeminate Browning seems to have trouble in finding the positive in women. The illusiveness of Browning's intent in depicting haughty women are twofold: one, is not to reveal unmanliness; two, to shed light on the degradation women endure under the tyranny of men. Furthermore, what also stands out is the constant convenient fact that he seemingly finds reasons for man's brutal pretext. In "Fra Lippo Lippi," women are sportive and inviting "...at an alley's end...;" women are lustful and gullible "...that white smallish female with the breasts, / She's my niece...;" women are treacherous, "...Herodias ...who danced...and got men's heads cut off!" (ll. 5, 195-97). This is nothing more than

Browning masking his effeminate nature, masking his "...amo," for women so as not to appear weak to other men (l. 111).

Browning's religious upbringing surfaces in "Fra Lippo Lippi." This serves to further enhance the premise that Browning was struggling with his dubious views on religion and God. It is quite clear that in "Fra Lippo Lippi" Browning had a certain restraint when it came to moral boundaries. As mentioned earlier, God's omnipresence stood in the background setting of Browning's dramatic monologues. "Fra Lippo Lippi" is imbued with biblical references that reveals his mother's religious influence. In a contrasting way, Browning seems to straddle the limits of his inquisitiveness: He was not all credulous nor incredulous. In the poem, Browning weaves in and out of the moral and immoral behaviors of both women and men—of course, under the watchful eyes of God and church. In *Very Sure of God*, E. LeRoy Lawson sums up Browning's assumptions: "The poem ...symbolizes men's limited ability to ascertain complete empirical truth and his unlimited capacity for blending fact and fancy into a higher form of truth" (Lawson 121).

"Fra Lippo Lippi" is a prime example of Robert Browning's manipulation of an historical figure to create an event in which he could convey his views upon the literary world and to the society in which he lived. In "Fra Lippo Lippi," the three sides to Browning's upbringing are on full display. His disdain for abusive, deceitful men; his dislike for strictures on societal activities; and, his dubious expectation of Divine involvement, are at the heart of his poems. Both Lippo and Browning are lamenting the fact that they have lost touch with the real world, but not because they wanted to be that way, but because they were forced to. What Lippo and Browning are telling the reader is

to enjoy life while in the present, as Sydney Herbert Mellone in *The Convex Glass: The Mind of Robert Browning* befittingly state: “It is better . . . to act evilly than to lapse into atrophy of soul” (Crowell 2). In this view, “Lippo stands with Browning at the place of meaning, between the present and the future, the carnal and the holy, the secular and the divine” (Bloom 136).

In expanding the dramatic monologues, Robert Browning brought readers closer to the real lives of the common person. He gave voice to the non-heroic, gave dignity to the least in society, and brought to the forefront the realities of relationships between men, women and God. Robert Browning is the gateway between a fading 18th century past into a dawning modern 19th century new day. Robert Browning can be credited with bringing a sort of ‘street poetry’ into recognition. Through the dramatic monologue, he is the grand puppeteer controlling the character’s fate. Through the dramatic monologue, Browning is at liberty to apply his conjuring gift of creating the drama of deceit.

The drama of deceit is aptly applicable to Browning’s works of “My Last Duchess,” “Porphyria’s Lover,” and “Fra Lippo Lippi”. In the intent of avoiding any involvement in his works, he, ultimately, reveals much about himself. Browning reveals his struggle with his manliness to appease his father and contemporaries. He struggled with his effeminate side to appease his mother and the women in his life. And, of course, his struggle with his religious belief in order to appease God, and to appease his conjuring world. But, in spite of Robert Browning masking himself away from his work, in the words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, as quoted by S.S. Curry in *Browning and the Dramatic Monologue* “If a man comes to tell us that he has discovered perpetual motion, or been swallowed by a sea serpent, there will yet be some point in the story where he

will tell us about himself almost all that we require to know” (Curry 86). “*Iste perfecit opus!*” (1.377) (Abrams 2112).

CHAPTER 3

MATTHEW ARNOLD: THE BURDEN OF A GREAT POTENTIAL

Born into a progressively changing period in which England was teeming with great discoveries and a flourishing confidence in literary prowess, Arnold was up against luminaries who were widely known the world over. In the fields of industrialization, inventions, the sciences, and explorations of faraway lands, as well as, in literature, there were individuals who were leaving their legacies for the world to marvel. Arnold's life was steep with these daunting challenges that would have intimidated anyone who would have been bold enough to venture into these fields. Luminaries, such as Charles Darwin, who in 1859 published his controversial studies *On the Origins of Species* which the western world mistakenly saw it as a scientific challenge to the theories of evolution and creationism. It dominated the second half of the century and became all the rage and focal point of Victorian Age religious dogma. It was at this moment that English life and the western world at large began its evolving march towards the modern language that is prevalent today. But this new inquisitiveness of science versus religion had the effect of luring the public's attention away from literary accomplishments that also were taking place. It also had the effect of diminishing Arnold's poetic and literary appeal. It is unfortunate that Arnold had to be faced with such a steep mountain to climb to gain a measure of recognition from such formidable competition.

And then, of course, there was Charles Dickens and his *Pickwick Papers* which were popular reading for his increasing working-class audience, and his novels whose vivid portrayal of English social life dominated the reading public's attention. Dickens wrote with such clear description about conditions of English life that even today there remain many memorable and relatable characters that are etched into the English psyche. To further compound the battleground theater into which Arnold was confronted with, there was the *Penny Dreadfuls*, inexpensive little pamphlets with fantastical, fictional tales that were popular with the working class. It was during this period that the reading public's appetite and attention shifted away from the more intellectual writing that was the domain of academics and aristocrats. The public wanted writing that would entertain them, writing that would appeal more to the imagination rather than to try and decipher the precision and complexity of poetry. With such an audience shift from academic writing to commercial writing flourishing during that time, Arnold was further ostracized and obscured from gaining any literary traction and exposure.

Not only did Arnold had to contend with the changing events in the world he was born into, but he also had to contend with the enormous popularity of the great poets who lived and died just before his time. These gifted geniuses such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, John Keats, and his present-day counterparts, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Robert Browning thoroughly dominated the poetry landscape during the Victorian Age. The literary world's attention was so much focused on them that Arnold practically had little chance to attract an audience and to truly blossomed into his poetic potential. Their interesting personalities and their epic poetry accomplishments completely captivated the literary world's attention. So

dominant were their shadows cast over Arnold's poetic output that Arnold struggled to simply keep himself and his poetry from being an afterthought in the reading public's interest. So, faced with such an assembly of talent, Arnold's path towards poetic recognition was greatly overshadowed, greatly diminished, thus publicly relegating him to a lower -tiered standard which piqued his state of mind. With such an affront of poetic geniuses of the past and with the geniuses of his present time, Arnold was compelled to produce works that he hoped would rival and measure up to his contemporaries. And thus Arnold "...engages in an inexhaustible dialogue with the work of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats" (O'Neill 3).

Arnold began to realize that his poetry was not quite as alluring and captivating as his competition's poetry; his work began to suffer in quality and originality. And when he realized that he had reached the end of his creative poetic output, he also realized the error of his self-imposed burden: the burden of trying to carry the torch of a great poetic potential. And the moment that he breached the border line of poetry, he became "...dissatisfied with the kind of poetry he was ... writing" (Abrams 2159). It became apparent to him that his poetic potential and his poetic radiance had ebbed away at a crucial juncture in his poetry career. Unable to recapture his poetic muse, Arnold chose to embrace the role of being a critic and decided to abandon his poetic career in favor of writing literary criticism. And although he found solace in literary criticism, he also found discord, scathing discord, from his contemporary poets who urged him to stop writing literary commentaries and to produce his own work with quality and originality instead of criticizing others.

It was during this transitional period in his writing life that Arnold endured his harshest criticism from his fellow poets and other notable writers. This snub helps to further isolate him from the poetry scene and forever drives a wedge between him and his pursuit of poetic recognition. When he was "...elected...Professorship of Poetry...", he slowly faded away from being a respectable poet in favor of being a serious critic which further irritated the world of English poetry (Abrams 2158). But to keep himself from falling completely out of the English literary world altogether, he perches himself on the cliff of criticism where he felt superior, where he felt that he had the authority to judge the poetry of others, and where he felt that he can shout to all other poets that their poetry should reflect the qualities of the ancient writers.

Arnold's poetic career was greatly hampered by the dominance of the Industrial Revolution and completely overshadowed by the various political and social events that were occurring on the world stage. And, to further compound Arnold's poetic upstaged, there were the writers who lived and died during his lifetime. Who can forget the illustrious William Wordsworth whom Arnold admired and at one time was Arnold's neighbor, and who probably had the most impressionable impact when Arnold was a young boy? William Wordsworth was known as "the best poet of the age" and it was his "drinking in ... [of] ...natural sights and sounds ... [and] getting to know ...solitary wanderers ..." that gave Arnold the impetus to reflect on his own experiences with nature's beauty and to reflect on his inner spirit (Abrams 1364-65). It was through Wordsworth in which one can hear his whisperings to Arnold that "... 'suffering' is 'permanent, obscure, and dark' ...," and instilled into Arnold the idea of the "...nature of infinity" (O'Neill 3). Although Arnold's relationship with nature was not as passionate as

Wordsworth's, he incorporated Wordsworthian philosophy into his poetry whenever he felt that the poem's evocative emotion needed it.

Throughout Arnold's poetry, one can hear Wordsworth's voice echoing behind Arnold's description of trickling rivers, the flowing and ebbing of ocean currents, which Arnold used to connect with the reflectiveness of the human spirit. It was through Wordsworth's harsh life experiences which influenced and urged Arnold to develop "the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry" (Abrams 1366). Arnold saw this as the beginning of the new modern English vernacular, but he also saw it as the loss of the great English poetry that he felt would never be recaptured. In this realization, Arnold was right. He sensed that change was coming. He recognized that along with this change there was also the inevitable loss that may never be experienced again—lost forever.

It seems that Arnold was not only influenced by Wordsworth's poetry, but he seemed to have been afflicted by the same tragedies that befell Wordsworth: constantly without money; the loss of his children; a disillusionment with life; and, finally "a saving" of one's "...true self;" imparting unto Arnold "two consciousness: himself as he is now and as he once was" (Abrams 1365-67). This melancholic malaise is prevalent throughout Arnold's poetry. This affliction which Arnold witnesses in Wordsworth's career, he also experienced himself and it imbued him with the sense of a quest—a quest for the search of the hidden stream that lies beneath and beyond human reach.

And then, there was George Gordon, Lord Byron, whose "daring, dashing, and grandiosity" was perhaps Arnold's most favorable impression of the poet's personality and poetry (Cullers 354). Lord Byron, who was the Victorian Age's romantic poet, had a mixed influence on Arnold's views on poetry, as well as, on societal issues. To Arnold,

Lord Byron was the quintessential "... greatest talent of our century...", but yet, Arnold finds a way to somewhat diminish him by "...estimating and ranking him ..." as if Byron and all poets were beneath his watchful eye (Cullers 355). Lord Byron reinforced in Arnold the idea of the "...European enthusiasm for the Greek cause..." and who probably (besides Arnold's father) alarmed and compelled Arnold to involve himself into the development of English school reform (Abrams 1603). As Inspector of Schools, and having access to travel the European continent, he has the chance to compare the literary accomplishments of the other countries in contrast to the accomplishments of the English educational level and literary output.

More than that, Byron also imbued Arnold's brand of youthful 'dandiness' because Byron stood "...outside the jurisdiction of the ordinary criteria of good and evil" (Abrams 1600). This proved to be one of Arnold's blunders on judging and criticizing Byron because Byron was a naturally gifted poet, whose words simply poured out eloquently and spontaneously. Arnold did not possess such prolificacy at wordsmithing as Byron's energetic poetry demonstrated. But more than that, Byron also imparted unto Arnold a sense of romanticism, a sense of a deeper inner connections to the human soul. Byron is asking Arnold to see it through the eyes of the soul instead of seeing the world through the eyes of the outer shell of the human body. Arnold desperately tried to emulate and capture in his poetry in the essence of Byron's capacity for human emotion. Obviously, he is not a romantic and his dry, unromantic, feeble attempts at Byronic passion failed and eluded him. But throughout Arnold's poetry, fragments of Byron's romantic personality surfaces. However, Arnold's usage of Byronic romance was solely used to distract the reader from a lull in his poetry. Arnold used Byronic instances to

reconnect with the present time and at the same time to remind society that there was a way to revived itself, and that through the love of one another there might be an answer to the pursuit of the unknowable.

Arnold had a great admiration for radicalism, and to him the great liberal radical was the inimitable Percy Bysshe Shelley. Shelley's "...war against all injustice and oppression ..." took center stage in the rebellious young Arnold's mind (Abrams 1711). Shelley impressed upon Arnold the longing and yearning of a long-lost nature of man, a something that beats in the inner soul of which man has been unable to return to. Shelley's influence is what compelled Arnold to question his own dubiousness about the state of humanity. Under the enchanting trance of Shelley's poetry, Arnold attached himself to the pursuit of finding an inner answer as to what continued to elude and prevent "...the return of man to his natural state of goodness and felicity" (Abrams 1711). But, by taking Shelley's appearance and personality into account, Arnold began his own journey into the depth of his own inquisitive nature, and like Shelley, became an example "... of intellectual and emotional immaturity ..." (Abrams 1713-14). Instead of complimenting Shelley's poetry, Arnold chose to belittle the man by focusing on the man's personal life and features.

And in the case of John Keats, Arnold took his cues of embracing the "condition of imaginative surrender" to allow himself to reflect upon the past (O'Neill 3). To Arnold, Keats implores for the search of sensuousness, to search for the inner compassion of the human soul. Keats urged in Arnold to explore the possibilities of finding an answer within the human spirit and urged the possibility of perhaps there being an outside chance of a return to the simplicity of the past. This is the great loss that Arnold mostly lamented

about throughout his poetry. Keats supplied Arnold with “imaginative receptivity” which allowed Arnold to associate the conditions of the past with the conditions of the present (O’Neill 3). Arnold wasn’t just experiencing the advent of marvelous inventions and incredible discoveries, he was in fact witnessing and living through the changes that the beginning of the 20th century was bringing with it. Arnold was simply caught in the middle of two ideologies that through the centuries were merging into one: the Hellenic and Hebraic. Keats message to Arnold was to imagine what the Hellenic human conditions must have been like at the ending of its era and what the conditions were like at the beginning of the Hebraic new worlds. Arnold concluded that both worlds were mired in a seemingly hopeless predicament: the inability to overcome its violent nature in inflicting misery upon themselves. For Arnold both these worlds did not supply the answer that he so ardently sought.

Dover Beach: A False Serenity

Close your eyes. Listen. Nature is not silent, nor is it obscure. It is thrilling with the rhythmical beat of all that exist in the world, a kind melody that is both pleasant and mysterious, that is both near and at the same time far away. Man has always sought solace in Nature, a kind of respite from the troubles of the world that only Nature can soothe. These are the sounds and sights of all the living things imploring the human spirit to rejoin it, to realize that Man is a major part of it. Nature beckons the human spirit to partake in the celebration of life with the living. There is peace in Nature, a kind of peace that escapes the human body and mind, but the kind of peace that only the soul is quite aware of. It is these two entities that exist in the human body that mankind has been

unable to emerge to become whole, to become one with the rhythm that Nature is offering man. There is beauty in ugliness, and ugliness in beauty. It is a marvel to gaze upon Nature's face, to search for its mysterious secrets, to search for its source of tranquility—but also to search for the source of its grimacing pain—the ravages that eons of geologic torment has wrought upon its suffering existence. Yet Nature remains a source of wondrous awe, but also a source of wondrous fear that compels Man to explore his own duality: Man the good, or Man the wicked.

Man's curiosity has always felt the strong yearning to explore the mysteries of Nature, to decipher his surroundings, to uncover some kind of truth, some semblance of spiritual guidance. He seeks from Nature a direction as to where to go, or at least to know where Nature is leading him. Man ceaselessly wrestles and searches deep within himself for this lost connection and ask Nature to provide answers, to reveal to him the causes of his worldly turmoil. No. Man demands that Nature should be the one to blame, the culprit behind what is happening to his world. Nature answers: It is Man who is the sole source of all the problems that afflict his condition on this Earth. For it is Man and his insatiable need for change, his insatiable thirst for belligerence and destructiveness that has forced even Nature to withdraw its solace from him.

In Arnold's melancholic state, he sees that Nature has been replaced by the interference of Man's artificial creations and by his illusory replacement of Divine guidance. But, Nature in its resiliency continues to implore Man that changes must be made in order for him to rejoin the family of the living. This is the influence and message that Wordsworth conveys to Arnold: "... 'a psychology of expressive feeling'" (O'Neill 3). Listen! Look! Nature beckons Wordsworth is telling Arnold. Listen to the meditative

ocean's currents splashing its vengeance against the peaceful walls of sanity; listen to the babbling river of consciousness, listen to the sweet alluring brook gently humming its lullaby to retrieve Man away from a world of uncompassionate cruelty. Furthermore, Nature is warning Man to abandon his pursuit of artificial construction and to abandon his propensity for destruction that is wreaking injury upon Nature, and wreaking emotional and mental distress onto himself. In essence, Wordsworth's influence upon Arnold is a clear message that Nature can sometimes give a false appearance of serenity above surface, but that hidden underneath it might be a roiling, "noiseless current strong, obscure and deep" (O'Neill 3). Ultimately, Wordsworth is telling Arnold that it's Man's spiritual responsibility and that it is incumbent upon him and his present-day reality to search for both the beauty and the ugly in Nature to truly understand the scope of humanity's crisis.

In "Dover Beach" and "The Buried Life," the influences of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats coupled with the raging ideological clashing of the Hellenic and Hebraic world-without-end attitudes surface throughout the poems. Arnold seeks 'solace' from Wordsworth, but for directions in his 'quest' for answers, he looks to Byron and Shelley, and finally, from Keats he gets the 'surrender' that provides him with his melancholic introspective journey into his laments about the state of human affairs (O'Neill 3).

Arnold starts "Dover Beach" with the tranquility that Nature employs in order to soothe the troubled mind of man:

The sea is calm tonight.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits—

But the one problem that Arnold faces is one of interpersonal, emotional, and a genuine lack of compassion towards the role that Nature plays in Wordsworth's poems. Arnold merely uses Wordsworthian expressions to set up his melancholic deliverance of bad tidings looming under the calm surface that the scenery depicts.

on the French coast the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Arnold is suggesting that on the European side of the world something is dying, something that in former days was worshipped intensely, believed in fervently. He is implying that now the 'gleam' of this once cherished life has been tarnished, has lost its appeal, and has lost its direction. But that now only England and its 'glimmering' cliffs stood as the last bastion against the upwelling sea of change, and he forlornly wished that England would remain as the last beacon of hope. Arnold is sounding the alarm that a change is coming to the world, that it is inevitable, but he can't quite make out what it is, and in an unromantic Byronic attempt, he inserted his next line: "Come to the window, sweet is the night air!" He tries to implore his companion to join him in his quest to help him find a deeper meaning in what this life is trying to express to him. But in Arnold's case, his romantic overture miserably fails him, and his personal laments of his inner sadness overtake his emotions. And although he has company, Arnold finds himself yet alone, abandoned to his quest for a deeper meaning that perhaps is unknowable, or unanswerable. It seems that Arnold cannot escape his inner turmoil, cannot shake loose from his foreboding self—even for the sake of romance.

It is only when he returned to Wordsworth for solace, only when he returned to Nature's welcoming arms that he found the elusive peace that restored his sense of belonging, but it also evoked his vision of humanity losing its sense of direction: "Only, from the long line of spray/where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land" did he returned to his melancholic thought. He compared the sound of the ocean currents as an onslaught against the walls of the fortress of human resistance. He evoked feelings of relief when the 'spray' staved off the effects of suffering, and he metaphorically painted a grayish scene of a 'moon-blanch'd land' suggestive of dreariness and haplessness. But the power of Nature awakened him and rebuked him:

Listen! You hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

 Cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

He stands helpless as to what think as he gazes into the vastness of the ocean. He is at a loss as to what action can be taken to prevent the changing assault upon the natural world and the changing assault upon the sensibilities of the human race.

Arnold reflects to the past in an effort to imagine if the same assault happened to the Hellenic world when it encountered the face of Change. Did the Hellenic world feel as hapless to the mighty wave of change that usurped its very foundation? Was the Hellenic demise a result of its failure to adhere to its core spiritual belief? Or, was it the result of their emphasis on heroic values of valor in the face of danger that separated

them into states constantly waging war against each other? This reflectiveness back to the Hellenic world impacts upon Arnold that human misery is a never-ending cycle from civilization to civilization. In the introspective world of Arnold's mind, he turns to Sophocles to see if he saw the same doomed state of the human condition that he sees:

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery;

It is this influence from the Hellenic period that Arnold sees as a dying world, a fading world unable to return to its former glories. Gone were the Hellenic multitude of gods; gone were the Hellenic heroic warriors; and gone were the epic histories of its famous battles. The Hellenic world had been subtly overtaken by a new way of life and by a new belief.

Arnold's influence by the Hebraic world surfaces as he laments that it too is losing something that he feels might be irretrievable. He compares the two worlds as being unable to control Man's incorrigible ways. He sees that The Hellenic way of battles did not solve the problem. He sees that The Hebraic way of faith is losing its grip:

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, ...round earth's shore

 But now I only hear
 Its melancholic, long, withdrawing roar

Arnold compares the roaring sound to that of the many lamenting voices. He compares the sound of the ‘roar’ to fading spiritual voices losing their power to attract as it did before. In his vision he hears the voices drown out by the gentle, lapping sea of forgetfulness:

Retreating,
 down the vast edges drear
 of the world.

In another attempt at Byronic poetry, Arnold again turns to his companion for support, for comfort. He acknowledges that it is up to humans to solve the crisis of its lost connection to his once ‘good’ self. That it is up to humans to realize that the only solvable way is truth. The truth of what is before you, and not what may lie ahead of you:

Ah, love, let us be true
for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,

Arnold returns to his mentor to confirm that he is right: that Nature and its beauty can be alluring, but that in reality it can only offer a semblance of solace, a semblance of serenity. Arnold’s melancholy deepens as he lets another attempt at Byronic romance to escape from him as he sinks into the depths of his lamentations. He agrees with Wordsworth that ‘suffering’ is ‘permanent’ and that world:

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

Arnold realizes that the Hellenic and Hebraic world had both lost its stronghold on humanity's destiny. That humanity is left:

. . . . here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

That humanity is forever lost and apt to repeat the same failures of the Hellenic and Hebraic. Arnold alludes to his stands against the 'blockheadism' that he so much disdained, and he compares this to the gathering clouds of ignorance where in the past wars were waged over issues of frivolity:

Where ignorant armies clashed by night.

Arnold uses the word 'night' to suggest that there is something dark about the human spirit. He is intrigued by the human propensity for inflicting injury on one another. He is implying that wars should not be fought in the dark where one cannot tell friend from foe.

“The Buried Life”: The Imprisoned Soul

It has been said that the eyes are the windows to the soul. It is through the eyes that most people believe that the truth of a person can be revealed, but it may not be as revealing as one might think. There is such a thing as perception, in which what one sees is not always the truth that one seeks. Matthew Arnold, in his introspective personality, shackles himself to his search for some hidden, deeper meaning to life that he can't quite figure out. He looks towards nature for answers, believing that perhaps the answer lies somewhere in the wilderness of the trees, or perhaps in the gentle summit of rolling hills, or perhaps through the soothing, trickling flow of streams. Maybe the answers lie outwardly in the natural world, or maybe the answer has always been deep within

himself? Arnold appears entranced with his thoughts as he searches deeper within himself in his poem “The Buried Life.” The influence of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and his Judeo-Christian upbringing emerge. Through the writings of these poets Matthew Arnold’s lack of originality is revealed. He borrows numerous passages from these poets’ works to help him compose the poem. What is also revealing is Arnold’s personal fear of the unknown, his fear of his inability to pinpoint just what is the source of this ‘something’ that troubles him, and what he thinks should deeply trouble the soul of men?

He opens the poem by addressing the lack of seriousness that he hears from people. He does not hear people searching deeper for a more meaningful truth, a more positive outlook for a rather dull existence. All he hears is the laughter and the ‘mocking’ opinions that men have concerning the meaning of life. He is perturbed by how lightly men have taken the seriousness of life:

Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,

Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!

I feel a nameless sadness o’er me roll.

Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,

We know, we know that we can smile!

But there’s a something in this breast, (ll. 1-5).

This stanza is comparable to Wordsworth’s lines from “The Two-Part Prelude” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*:

With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale. (l. 447).

There was a darkness—call it solitude

Or blank desertion ... (ll. 124-25).

That I by such inquiry am not taught
To understand myself, nor thou to know

With better knowledge of how the heart was framed (l.453-55).

The second half of the stanza in the “The Buried Life,” the lines:

To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne. (ll.7-8).

are lines that echoes a similarity to Wordsworth’s lines in his second part of the ‘Prelude’:

Thus often in those fits of vulgar joy
.

of which Arnold was essentially lamenting that it brought no relief from the pain that the soul felt, and from which it desperately tried to free itself from until it:

Wearied itself out of the memory ... (ll. 411, 426).

And then Byron’s influence surfaces to conclude the first stanza:

Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine, and let me read there, love! thy
inmost soul. (ll. 9-11).

In Lord Byron’s “Don Juan,” there are similar words that mirror Arnold’s lines in the “The Buried Life”:

. . . gazed upon each other
. . . looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mixed all feelings, friends, child, lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and express

When two pure hearts are poured in one another (Canto IV, sta. 26).

In the second stanza of “The Buried Life,” Arnold reveals his thoughts about the powerlessness that he feels in being unable to fully express himself. He believes that there is an unexplainable force that prevents him from doing so. He questions this inability; he questions the reason this supposed power does not allow him, or his companion to truly express themselves. His Judeo-Christian influence leads him to believe that there might be dark forces at play. He laments that love, above all, which he feels is the very essence of human expression is suppressed. Why? He asks:

Alas! Is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?

He further reasons that this stifling suppression is not just within him or his companion, but that it is within every human on earth. He sees that much of humanity has changed from the innocent honesty of former days. He is saddened that humans are more dishonest towards each other, more suspicious of each other, and more distrustful of each other. He reasons that at one time there was the purity of commonality, but that now there is ‘something’ that separates men from their inner selves and their outer selves:

I knew the mass of men conceal’d
Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal’d
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved[.]

He acknowledges that at one time men were free to express themselves, were unafraid to speak out their thoughts, and express genuine feelings of emotions. But now, he sees that something has forced them to hide behind a façade of guilt. He regrets that men are not what they once were. He sees them as behaving indifferently to others, and behaving indifferently to themselves as well. He tries to reason with this inner sadness, with this ‘something’ from within that has somehow ‘trick’d’ them and forced them to withdraw inwardly. He sees a flicker of hope, but deep inside the light that once shone brightly has now been dimmed. He reasons that there is yet hope because in every man the heart still ‘beats’ from within which he feels is the last defense against this darkness that blinds the human eye. These lines echoes Percy Shelley’s lines from *Prometheus Unbound: Act II*:

Child of Light!

Through the vest which seems to hide

.

Through the clouds ere they divide them

Shrouds thee wheresoe’ver thou shinest (ll. 54-59).

In the third stanza of “The Buried Life,” Arnold reflects back to his Judeo-Christian roots, back to his own understanding of what he considers to be the driving force that directs and preoccupies man’s worldly pursuits: Fate, the divine selector of destiny. He understands that the fate of man is riddled with ‘distractions’ that will cause him to veer off course from the real goal of finding his true inner self and connecting to his true outer self for the meaning of his existence. In the poem, Arnold acknowledges that man is fickle, subject to sudden changes and impulses that govern his surroundings, and for this reason he hides his ‘identity ...[h]is genuine self.’ He urges man to obey ‘his

being's law' (Soul). He urges man to listen, to follow Fate's guidance, for it implores him to delve into the 'deep recesses of our breast' and find the 'unregarded river of our life.' In the final lines of the third stanza, Arnold is allusively implying that Fate knows that this 'something' is what's keeping the man blind, keeping him in the darkness of his 'capricious play,' keeping him from discovering the 'buried stream.' He sadly laments that man seem to be 'eddy' blindly, going in circles with 'uncertainty,' and seemingly to remain in this state 'eternally.'

In the fourth stanza, Arnold and Wordsworth combine to intertwine each other's words in a melodic, panoramic depiction of life during the Industrial Age. One can hear Wordsworth's influence whispering to Arnold throughout this stanza. Consider the lines from Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have
. sensations sweet . .
. along the heart . . .
. even into my purer mind,

feelings/Of unremembered pleasure/of a good man's life (ll.25-32).

These are lines that echoes Arnold's lines in the "The Buried Life":

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,

But often, in the din of strife

There rises an unspeakable desire

After the knowledge of our buried life

A thirst and restless force

In tracking out our true, original course (ll. 45-50).

Both Wordsworth and Arnold paralleled each other's words, both sensed that something of the inner man had been shackled, had been silenced. In their intertwining thoughts, they sensed that this loss was the result of the changes that industrialization brought. Wordsworth expressed that he too has felt the 'din' of urbanization, he too has felt disturbed by the 'lonely' way of life in cities. Wordsworth remembered when man was of a 'purer mind,' more in tuned with the rhythm of nature. He recalled when 'a good man' had a more innocent, inner spirit before: "...all this unintelligible world" (Tintern Abbey, l.40).

Arnold shared the same observation that Wordsworth did. He saw that even when the streets were crowded in urban cities, he could still sense that this shackling feeling was still present in the people's faces. The quest for a more meaningful answer to the question of this inner 'nameless sadness' still "course[d] through our breast, /...course[d] on forever unexpressed" (ll. 62-63). He acknowledges that many men have tried in "...vain to speak and act / Our hidden self ..." only to be stifled with 'inward' thoughts that are nothing more than bothersome 'nothings' (ll. 64-65). Arnold implies that these meandering musings 'benumb' a man's soul when the time for his departure is 'call[ed].' He concurs that although this despondency is 'vague and forlorn' yet there is still hope because there is a 'distant' soothing voice from the depth of the soul that beckons man to reconsider his path. Arnold suggests that man should embrace his 'melancholy' as a pause and to embrace it as a quest for a more meaningful answer to the question of life's mysteries, and to know: "Whence our lives come and where they go" (l. 54).

In fifth stanza of “The Buried life” Arnold once again returns to his companion for succor in his fervent pursuit for the tenderness he finds in the touch of a ‘beloved hand.’ He says to his partner that after all the trifling ‘rush and glare’ of urbanity, finally, with weary eyes they can clearly read the truth in each other’s soul. He complains that the industrial world is noisy, that the urbane world has ‘deafened’ man’s ear. He reasons that because of this ‘din of strife’ man cannot hear “... the tones of a loved voice ...” (l. 83). He has forgotten how to listen to his soul’s inner music, has also forgotten to listen to nature’s peaceful, alluring melody, imploring him to rejoin the family of all living things. He implies that if this voice cannot be heard then the ‘pulse’ of this nameless sadness will stir again, and the soul of man will withdraw back into its entombed body peering silently outward—unable to express itself again. Arnold surmises that once “the eye sinks inward ...” the soul of man “... becomes aware of his life’s flow,” and once again becomes aware of its shortened time, for it “... hears its winding murmur.” It ‘sees’ itself ‘gliding’ through the meadows, sees itself as part of the sun, and sees itself mingling with the breeze (ll. 86-90).

The fifth stanza of “The Buried Life” is riddled with the influence of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” One can see how closely Arnold mirrors Wordsworth’s poem almost word for word. Consider these lines from “Tintern Abbey”:

. . . again I hear
 These waters, rolling
 With a soft inland murmur. Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusions; and connect

The landscape with the quiet sky (ll. 2-8).

The closing of the final stanza, finds Arnold compromising with the fact that man has no choice but to pursue “in the hot race’ whatever means it requires to unchain itself from this melancholy that keeps his soul imprisoned. He knows that there will come a ‘lull’ in the ‘chase’ of that ‘elusive ...rest.’ He feels a strange ‘unwonted’ calmness in his heart, and to pacify his imprisoned soul “... he thinks he knows ... where his life rose ... [and] where it goes” (ll. 91-98). Both Arnold and Wordsworth conclude that man must return to the welcoming arms of Nature in order for the soul to be liberated; both conclude that urbanization has forced people to exist in a world which lacks meaning and in a world that gives people a false sense of belonging.

The ‘critique souriant’: The Lessons not Learned

Arnold’s venture into the arena of criticism was not quite welcomed with open arms by his contemporaries. Instead, he was received with much disdain. Many of his fellow poets were bothered by his failure to produce more original, and better-quality poetry. Indeed, many of his contemporaries were frankly incense that Arnold had altogether dropped creating poetry. In fact, some were amused, but were not very surprised that he would abandon writing poetry in favor of writing criticism. But it was during this time in Arnold’s life that his passion towards poetry began to wane. Arnold begins to question the quality of his own poems, begins to compare them to the works of past and present poets. He convinces himself that his poems were lacking in ‘animation.’ He complained that his poetry, as well as those of his contemporaries’ poetry, did not

arouse the same emotional-laden effects that poetry writers of the past evoked. His indignation that if poetry was not written in the 'grand style' of the masters of the past, it did not merit to be included in with the high-quality standards of classical poetry. And although most of his contemporary poets largely ignored and disagreed with his literary criticism, they did implore him to write more of his own poetry.

Arnold's ideas of what constituted quality poetry was not widely accepted as a true measure of a poem's beauty, nor was it accepted as a true measure of its effects on the reading public's sensibilities. His ideas were widely seen as Arnold's attempt at establishing a ranking and categorizing system based on his own criteria. Ultimately, Arnold succumbs to the pressure of the same high expectations he imposes on his contemporaries. This self-imposed challenge to himself and to others proved to be his poetic death knell. Finally, he came to the realization that his poetic creativity had ebbed away. He laments that he could not produce the very poetry that he challenged his contemporaries to deliver. Arnold's "high seriousness" demanded too much emphases to be placed on the style and achievement of the past writers that many of his present contemporaries saw as archaic (Abrams 2160).

Arnold's literary criticism was not much respected as is evident by Alfred Lord Tennyson's snubbing comment: "Tell Mat not to write any more of those prose things ..." (Abrams 2158). But Tennyson meant it more as an encouragement to try to convince him to give poetry another, rather than an attack on Arnold. But Arnold's views on poetry began to suffer until he became "dissatisfied with the kind of poetry ... [he] was writing" (Abrams 2159). It was not until Arnold was appointed the position of Professorship of Poetry that he took a harsh view of English society when compared to the achievements

of the European counterparts. One can infer that at this very juncture of his poetic life, Arnold does not realize the changes his transformation is inflicting upon him, and begins his sad journey away from poetry and then, suddenly he fades away from the poetic world.

Unlike the criticism of his contemporaries which was directed at the Victorian middle class as being too materialistic and too indifferent towards the poor, Arnold's criticism was different. It was not directed at the ruling class, nor directed towards the excesses of an urbane society, but rather, directed at people with lower educational aspirations, which he called the "Philistines." This is a clear indication of just how powerful Arnold's Hellenic and Hebraic ideological influence had on him. Arnold is referring to the lack of interest that foreigners demonstrate, which he warns can influence the rest of English society. Arnold seems to be targeting the Arabic population (unbelievers) which had migrated to England and to Europe, referring to them as a subculture that needed enlightenment from their 'dull' existence. According to Arnold and to English expectations, those in the middle class were suffering from this same lackadaisical malaise of disinterest in knowledge. He determines that those who lack in the four "powers": conduct, intellect and knowledge, beauty, social life and manners" were inadequately prepared to mingle with a civilized society (Abrams 2160).

When Arnold turns his criticism towards the very poets that he so much revered, such as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and others, he begins to find (supposed) flaws in the works of the predecessors that he so freely borrowed words from. His condescending attitude made him a target for vicious attacks on his personal views regarding what qualities must be included in a poem for it to be considered good poetry. The lesson that

Arnold fails to acknowledge is that this self-serving “claims to eminence” is extremely shortsighted and offensive to his contemporaries. In Arnold, “... [t]his ungracious quality ...exasperates ...those who agree or disagree with him in matters of literary ...” craftsmanship (Whipple 432).

Arnold manages to find flaw in Wordsworth’s work. His childhood mentor is not spared his critical analysis. Arnold finds that Wordsworth’s poems are ‘... altogether inferior, quite uninspired, flat and dull ... unconsciousness of its defects ...’ (Culler 336). Arnold determines that all good poems require the classification adopted by Greeks: it must be epic; it must be dramatic; and it must be lyrical. But Wordsworth is neither epic, nor dramatic, nor lyrical, but he is insightful, connective, and reflective to the inquisitiveness of man in relation to nature. Arnold finds that Wordsworth’s idea of a supposed philosophical ‘system’ forms the core of his poetic style. And since Wordsworth constantly reminds man for the need to reconnect with nature, he constantly reflects back to solace of nature and back to his childhood days in which he alludes to a “...divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds...” onward. Arnold simply did not grasp Wordsworth’s philosophy. Better yet, Arnold quite simply reverses Wordsworth’s words: “Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion” to his own interpretation to read that philosophy is the reality and poetry the illusion (Culler 341). It is through this illusion that Arnold simply mistaken as his destiny. It is through this illusion that Arnold’s melancholy increases and ultimate leads him to this inner sadness. Arnold’s fails to learn a valuable lesson from Wordsworth that: “...thoughtless follies laid him low / And stain’d his name” (Culler 344).

George Gordon, Lord Byron did not escaped Arnold's comparison to the 'high style' that he sets for himself and to Byron. Arnold paints Byron as a poet whose "... great defect is flippancy and a total want of self-possession" (Culler 359). Byron, says Arnold, does not have a "great artist's profound and patient skill—a skill which ... must [be] watch ... to do justice to it (Culler 349). Byron had a free-spirited personality; he very much enjoyed and indulged in worldly activities. But Byron had the one gift that Arnold did not possess, nor could ever emulate—the ability to spontaneously form poetic passages as rapidly as he thought of them. Poetic words seemed to spew out naturally for Lord Byron. Yet Arnold writes that Byron's poetry was sloven and tuneless, and was rather 'barbarian' in nature. He criticizes his poems as nothing more than "a string of passages" (Culler 349). The one thing that Arnold should have learned from Byron was that the poet "... had a strong and deep sense for what is beautiful in nature, and for what is beautiful in human action and suffering" of which Arnold had from time to time demonstrated throughout his poems—the lack of compassion (Culler 360). Byron seems to warn Arnold about his quest to reveal his feeling of sadness that pervades his mind in "Dover Beach" and "The Buried Life":

He heard it, but he heeded not; his eyes

Were with his heart, and that was far away (Culler 361).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Throughout Arnold's career as a poet and critic, his work demonstrates the difficulty his poetry and criticism encountered. Both endeavors were met with both interest and disdain by his contemporaries. And in respect and fairness, as a poet and critic, Arnold struggled to be included among the elite writers of the day. But this snobbery was partly because of his personality rather than to his poetry. Arnold was both right and wrong in many aspects and assessments of the human condition that he observed while traveling abroad. The one important thing that Arnold did notice was that he was transitioning from his poetic, melancholic state of thinking which was giving way to a more robust and enlightened discourse through criticism. Arnold was also aware that the Hellenic and Hebraic ideologies were subtly and slowly converging into a combined religious belief that the Western people's minds were embracing. But now, this slow conversion was being challenge by a more aggressive modern, urbane way of thinking. Nature had been supplanted by industrialization; religion was uprooted by the challenge of evolution; and, man's dialogue with his mind initiated a quest for more meaningful answers concerning life's mysteries. These were the three main influences that altered Arnold's persona, and forever altered his passion for poetry.

Arnold's work can be separated into tree main characteristics that makes him unique in nineteenth-century poetry. Arnold's uniqueness is predominantly that of a Victorian poet. Arnold's characteristics are the core traits for his affinity towards

Hellenic philosophy which permeates his poetry. His "...mastery of mood-creating detail, the sacrifice of narrative to philosophical ideas, and a very special type of Hellenism" are at the center of Arnold's personal mindset (Williams 2). He feels that the genius of the Hellenic world has disappeared. He laments that the habits of Greek thought have been replaced by Sophist arguments, whose sole intent is to sow confusion. He acknowledges that because of the Greek demise, the "modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts ..." creeping in (Culler 203).

Although Arnold exists and embraces his Hellenic influence, his world is essentially Hebraic by way of his Judeo-Christian upbringing. Throughout his work in poetry and criticism he never mentions his religious preference, but his work is steeped with references to Hebraic ideals. Arnold considers that the Bible, the church and Christianity should be persevered because they were stabilizing forces that might cure "... the ills of a sick society" (Abrams 2161). But Arnold saw the same erosion of influence that he saw of the Hellenic world. Both these ideologies were steadily losing their power of faith to the allure of the materialistic world. Arnold scolds his own countrymen because their higher classes were "materialized," their middle classes "vulgarized," and their lower classes "brutalized" (Whipple 429).

For a poet who demanded that his contemporaries write poetry that brought joy and enlightenment to the readers, Arnold's poetry clearly does not deliver that at all. In fact, his poems are completely devoid of this quality. In most of his poetry Arnold speaks of sadness, joylessness, and bleakness in stark contrast to a cold world of stone which he blames that modernization created. Arnold's poetry has these characteristics: "...moral and intellectual skepticism and despondency;" but, when he writes criticism it is "moral

and intellectual superciliousness ... [and] when he writes in verse from his inner self, from his “heart of heart,” he moans; when he writes in prose he is prone to assume the air of “a superior being” (Whipple 429).

The same cannot be said about Robert Browning. Browning did not involve himself in looking back to the histories of neither the Hellenic nor the Hebraic world. But he certainly must have read about them in his father’s extensive library. He did not involve himself in politics, nor ventured to change society as Matthew Arnold did. He was not interested in the modern marvels of the Industrial Age. In fact, Browning seems to operate outside the perimeters of the world around him. The one thing that Browning did that separated him from the others was that he utilizes historical personages from past events and builds his conjectures around them. He seems to exist outside the realm of influence. Whether he deliberately chose to remain hidden from the public eye probably will remain his prerogative and a source of question for many of his followers.

Browning was more interested in the lives of everyday, ordinary people rather than to get drawn into debates of literature, politic, or religious matters. The things that influenced Browning were not realistic, nor were they based on the world of nature such Wordsworth, Shelley or Keats, and certainly not in the world of Arnold. Browning spends most of his time avoiding the scrutiny of his contemporaries. The ironic thing about Browning is that he writes about public people, yet he avoids being in the public eye. Robert Browning’s poetry involve people who were very much in public arenas, such as people in highly visible positions, such as Dukes, Counts, Monks, villain, murderers, sadistic husbands, mean and petty manipulators and even more minor characters that populate his poetry.

Although both these men encountered strong head winds in their pursuit for recognition from their formidable contemporaries, they did manage to garner their appropriate respect and sealed their place in the literary and poetical world at the closing of the Victorian Age. They both left their legacies as misfits in a world that demanded for them to be different from their predecessors. And they were different in ways that behooved their contemporaries as well as the reading public at large. Both were generally misunderstood for reasons that were more personal rather than for their poetic and literary output. One was considered a ‘barbarian’ and the other an intellectual pariah. But history proved to be their savior, coming to their rescue to cement their contributions to the world of poetry and literature.

Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold will both be remembered as the two poets that ushered in new styles of writing poetry. While both in their early years were viciously criticized for their work and personalities, both did manage to change the landscape of writing poetry. Through Browning we get the freedom to write poetry as one well pleases, unencumbered with the traditional and conventional methods imposed by the ‘grand style’ of past writers. Through Arnold we get the introspective, meditative, search for deeper meanings to the questions of the mysteries life. The struggles that these two men endured in pursuing their place among the elite writers of their time can be captured in Homer’s epic poem, “The Iliad” and in the movie adaptation of Troy:

Men rise and fall like the summer wheat

But these names will never be forgotten

And in the movie version, our hero Odysseus states:

If they ever tell my story

Let them say that I lived during the time of giants

Let them say that I during the time of Hector, tamer of horses

Let them say that I lived during the time of Achilles

Now in the case of Browning and Arnold, if they ever told their story:

Let them say that they lived during the time of giants of the poetic world

Let them say that they lived during the time of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley,
and Keats

Let them say that they lived during the time of Tennyson.

Fate has a way of erasing all the pains and troubles that life throws at us. And, nature beckons us to rejoin the peaceful family of the living. Let the gentle woods soothe the restless soul, let the murmuring streams quiet the questioning heart, let the ocean waves spray its cooling waters to pacify a fearful spirit. For Fate and the rhythmical beat of nature well know that there will be another Browning agreeing that all is alright with God in the heavens. Both Fate and nature know that there will be another young Arnold gazing at the vastness of sea and wondering if there will ever be an end to this pursuit for answers on the mysteries of life. Both know that the great healer of misery, Father Time, will continue forever forward in spite of man's meandering ways. And the currents of the oceans will stop their onslaught against the walls of sanity. And then there will come a time when it stops its rage and its gentle the currents will softly lap the moon-blached beach signaling that a new dawn has arrived as if nothing ever happened.

The various influences that Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold encountered during their careers greatly altered their trajectory concerning their poetry. One can only wonder if John Stuart Mills hadn't harshly criticized Browning for parading a morbid

state of self-worship, what kind of poetry we would have gotten from Browning. Would we have forever never heard of the dramatic monologue? And what if Alfred Lord Tennyson hadn't requested for Arnold to stop writing literature, what kind of poetry would we have gotten if Arnold had not stopped writing his poetry? Would he have finally found the answers to the mysteries of where life rose and where it goes? These are the questions that will never find answers. But from these two writers, as with most things in life, there gains and losses. We gained new approaches to writing poetry, new vernacular to the language, but what has been lost are the great epic poems of yesteryear.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, Meyer Howard, ed. Et.al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: 3rd Ed.*
W. W. Norton. New York, 1975.
- Allingham, Philip V. "Applying Modern Critical Theory to Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess." *Victorian Web*. Lakehead University, Thunder Bay. Ontario, 2007.
- Best, J. T. "Porphyria's Lover" "Vastly Misunderstood Poetry." *Victorian Web*. Thunder Bay, Ontario, 2007.
- Bloom, Harold. *Modern Critical Views: Robert Browning*. Chelsea House Publishers. New York, 1985.
- Crowell, Norton B. *The Convex Glass: The Mind of Robert Browning*. The U of New Mexico Press. New Mexico, 1968.
- Culler, A. Dwight. *Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold*, Riverside Ed.
Houghton Mifflin. Yale U P. Boston, 1961.
- Curry, S. S. *Browning and the Dramatic Monologue*. Haskell House. New York, 1965.
- Ellis, Heather, "'This Starting, Feverish Heart': Matthew Arnold and the Problem Manliness."
Critical Survey, vol. 20, no. 3, 2008, pp. 97-115. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41556286.
Accessed 4 Feb. 2021.
- Flexner, Abraham. "Matthew Arnold's Poetry From an Ethical Stand-Point." *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1895, pp. 206-218. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2375151.
Accessed 4, Feb. 2021.
- Glanze, Walter D. *The Signet Mosby Medical Encyclopedia*. C. V. Mosby. U. S. 1985.
- Goldberg, Leonard S. "You Think You see a Monk": The Illusion of "Fra Lippo Lippi."
Philological Quarterly, Vol. 81, 2. Spring 2002.

- Lawson, LeRoy E. *Very Sure of God*. Vanderbilt U P. Nashville, Tennessee, 1974.
- Martin, Loy: Subject. *The Browning's Dramatic Monologues and the Post-Romantic* Johns Hopkins U P. Baltimore and London, 1985.
- Maynard, John. "The Decade's Work in Browning Studies." Vol. 79. *Browning Re-viewed: Review Essays, 1980-1995*. *Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism* (1998).
- Moyer, Charles R., "The Idea of History in Thomas and Matthew Arnold." *Modern Philology* Vol. 67, No. 2 (Nov., 1969), pp. 160-167. U of Chicago P.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/436005>.
- O'Neill, Michael. "'The Burden of ourselves': Arnold as a Post-Romantic Poet." *The Yearbook Of English Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2006, pp. 109-124. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20479246. Accessed 4, Feb. 2021.
- Peterson, Wolfgang. Producer. Movie: "Troy" 2004.
- Raymond, William O. *The Infinite Moment and Other Essays in Robert Browning*. 2nd ed. U of Toronto P. Canada, 1950.
- Riedberger, Charlotte. "Robert Browning: Towards a Psychoanalytic Reading" Trinity College. Dublin, 1996.
- Whipple, Edwin P. "Matthew Arnold." *The North American Review* Vol. 138, No. 330 (May, 1884), pp. 429-444. U of Northern Iowa. www.jstor.org/stable/25118379.
- William, Stanley T. "Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Poetry," *The Sewanee Review* Vol. 29, No. 3 (Jul., 1921), pp. 315-321. The Johns Hopkins U P.
www.jstor.org/stable/27533446.