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Men and Women and the Arts of Love
Erik Gray

The two most prominent topics of Robert Browning’s *Men and Women* (1855) are love and art. The former receives less critical attention, even though, as Wendell Stacy Johnson notes, “the specific subject of love between men and women is the major one of this collection. Of the fifty-one pieces in the two volumes of *Men and Women*, more than half are about love and marriage.”ⁱ The conspicuous role of art and artists, on the other hand, has always attracted comment; while the volumes were still in preparation, Browning wrote to a friend, “I am writing . . . ‘Lyrics,’ with more music & painting than before,” and Elizabeth Barrett Browning informed her sister Arabella that “there will be in them a good deal of Italian art . . . pictures, music.”ⁱⁱ The treatment of “music & painting” is not limited to those monologues spoken directly by or to professional artists, like “Andrea del Sarto” or “A Toccata of Galuppi’s,” but is carried on throughout *Men and Women*. The two topics are explicitly brought together in the final poem of the collection, “One Word More,” which serves as epilogue. Here Browning, speaking *in propria persona*, directly addresses the relationship between art and love, and in particular he considers which of the arts is best capable of expressing human passion.

Yet the question of the differing relations between love and the different forms of art is not restricted to “One Word More” but has implicitly been at the center of the collection all along. *Men and Women* thus constitutes a type of *paragone*.ⁱⁱⁱ The *paragone* was a genre of Renaissance aesthetic philosophy in which one form of art was compared to others and declared superior; notable examples include Leonardo da Vinci’s

treatise on painting (pub. 1651) and, in English, Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* (pub. 1595). Very few of Browning's poems follow this model of explicitly arguing for the superiority of one art form – the exception being “Abt Vogler,” from the 1864 collection *Dramatis Personae*, to which I return at the end of this essay. But the *paragone* developed in later centuries so that, without declaring a single winner, the author evaluated the advantages and limitations of different arts, as G. E. Lessing does in his landmark *Laocoon: On the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766).^{iv} This is the pattern followed by “One Word More” and several other poems in *Men and Women*, as well as by the collection as a whole, which constantly considers and distinguishes between painting, music, and poetry as expressions of love. In this way *Men and Women* forms one of the nineteenth century's most important investigations into the relation between aesthetic and erotic feeling.^v

The attitudes of the speakers follow an irregular yet recognizable development over the course of the collection, and in what follows I trace their shifting perceptions of the relationship between love and art.^{vi} At the beginning of *Men and Women*, perhaps surprisingly, the two are set in stark opposition: many of the earliest speakers lump all the arts together, considering them as divorced from, even antithetical to, the experience of erotic love. Gradually, however, love and art come to be seen as naturally affiliated. Notably, both are shown to be forever alternating between objective (self-conscious) and subjective (unself-conscious) modes, and both thus participate in the Browningsque paradox of success-through-failure. Various poems then highlight individual art forms, portraying the advantages and disadvantages of each for expressing different aspects of romantic love, culminating in “One Word More” and Browning's own decision to

embody his love in verse. But Browning is, typically, less intent on reaching a single conclusion than on exploring how the varieties of art enrich our understanding of the complexities of human love.

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The first poem in *Men and Women*, “Love Among the Ruins,” concludes with a curt declaration: “Love is best.”^{vii} Taken out of context, as it often is, this line can be misleading. In the poem love is not being placed in a hierarchy, at the top of a scale of good things, but is rather being set in opposition to all other human achievements. “Love Among the Ruins,” in its form and its rhetoric, depends upon a series of strict binaries: long lines (11 syllables) alternate with short (3 syllables); stanzas describing the present alternate with those describing the past.^{viii} Above all the poem establishes a dichotomy of public and private. The past is associated with a teeming civilization, “a multitude of men” with their “temples,” “Colonnades,” and other cultural achievements; the landscape of the present, by contrast, is blank save for a single “girl” who waits for her lover, the speaker (ll. 31, 63-64, 55). As various critics have noted, this binary is unstable, since at key moments in the poem the two sets of terms become ironically conflated.^{ix} For the speaker, however, the contrast remains absolute. He perceives civilization, with all its arts and sciences, as essentially extroverted: the ancient king “looked upon the city every side, / Far and wide” (ll. 61-62). He pictures the beloved’s gaze, by contrast, as focused and personal:

she will stand

Either hand

On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace

Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech

Each on each. (ll. 67-72)

Love in this presentation does not feed upon music and poetry and art but rather, in its total fixation upon the other, “extinguish[es]” the very possibility of their appreciation. In any case, the ancient civilization seems to have left behind no love songs or statues of Venus; its one remnant consists of a solitary tower – architecture, the least personal and passionate of the fine arts. Hence the speaker concludes by casting love, not as a function of culture and its glories, but as their antithesis: “Shut them in, / With their triumphs and their glories and the rest! / Love is best” (ll. 82-84).

Numerous subsequent poems draw the same sharp contrast between passion and cultivation. The speaker of “Evelyn Hope,” for instance, counterpoises the possibility of love against his having “Gained me the gains of various men, / Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes” (ll. 43-44). The speaker here is one of Browning’s disturbingly obsessive characters – an older man addressing the corpse of a sixteen-year-old girl. Yet the speaker of “Respectability,” who is not ironized in the same way, and whom Browning makes no particular effort to distinguish from himself, expresses a similar opinion. He considers his love, with its “warmth and light and bliss,” not only to be independent of society and its cultural achievements – “The world’s good word! – the Institute!” (i.e. the Académie Française) – but to stand in opposition to them and to be the stronger for its defiance (ll. 16, 21). Many speakers reiterate this distinction; even when art is not directly opposed to breathing human passion, it inevitably falls far short of it. Constance in “In a Balcony” describes

Things painted by a Rubens out of naught
 Into what kindness, friendship, love should be;
 All better, all more grandiose than the life,
 Only no life; mere cloth and surface-paint,
 You feel, while you admire. (ll. 130-34)

The Queen in the same poem takes up the same image, applying it to herself:

Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts [...]
 Professing they've no [...] love but for yourself, –
 And you the marble statue all the time
 They praise and point at as preferred to life,
 Yet leave for the first breathing woman's smile. (ll. 405-11)

Even Cleon, the most cultivated of all – acknowledged master of poetry, music, painting, and sculpture – differentiates absolutely between such accomplishments and the lived experience of love. Writing to the king who has praised his ability to live through art, and who has sent him a beautiful slave-girl as a gift, Cleon makes the distinction clear: “I can write love-odes: thy fair slave's an ode. / I get to sing of love, when grown too grey / For being beloved: she turns to that young man, / The muscles all a-ripple on his back[!]” (296-99).

The most systematic of all in opposing art to love is the speaker of “The Last Ride Together.” Like Cleon, he insistently distinguishes between life and the mere conception of life, between perception (however refined) and performance; unlike Cleon, he categorically denies that the two can ever coexist: “What hand and brain went ever paired? / What heart alike conceived and dared?” (ll. 56-57). The speaker of “The Last

Ride” is, as usual, ironized; he himself has signally failed to gain his love. Yet the distinction he draws between ideal conception and actual experience resonates with that of many other speakers, as well as with the opinions Browning himself expresses in his “Essay on Shelley,” as I describe below. It is therefore worth attending when the speaker apostrophizes poet, painter, and musician in turn, arraigning each for having failed to attain true love or beauty, specifically because they dedicated so much effort to its mere depiction. “What does it all mean, poet?” he demands. “Are you – poor, sick, old ere your time – / Nearer one whit your own sublime / Than we who have never turned a rhyme?” (ll. 67, 74-76). He then reiterates the Queen’s and Cleon’s image of how people turn away from even the most beautiful representation of love to gaze upon actual human beauty.

And you, great sculptor – so, you gave
 A score of years to Art, her slave,
 And that’s your Venus, whence we turn
 To yonder girl that fords the burn! (ll. 78-81)

In a reversal of the situation in “Cleon,” it is the artist who is here depicted as a “slave.” The speaker, meanwhile, like the speaker of “Love Among the Ruins,” dismisses the handiwork of many years in favor of a single “girl.”

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Yet however absolute it may seem, “The Last Ride Together” manages to suggest that the relationship between art and love is more complex than the speaker admits. First, the very fact that the speaker bothers to enumerate different types of artist and to address them individually, rather than just dismissing them all together as futile dreamers, implies

that there are significant distinctions to be drawn between them – that one art may come closer to expressing or realizing living passion than the others, or at least that different arts fall short in different ways. Second, for all his attempts to distance himself from the artists he describes, the speaker nevertheless begins by equating them with himself. Perceiving the unsuccess of his love affair – “Since nothing all my love avails, / Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails” – he looks to the poet, sculptor, and musician for company in his misery: “Fail I alone, in words and deeds? / Why, all men strive and who succeeds?” (ll. 3-4, 45-46). The equation implies that both love and art fail or succeed in similar ways, and for similar reasons.

Both these implications find ample corroboration elsewhere in the collection. “Fra Lippo Lippi,” for instance, depicts the arts of painting and song in very different terms. The former is associated with Lippo’s monastic constraints, his vow “to never kiss the girls” (l. 225). Much as Lippo strives to break with the older order of painting and to align his work more nearly with the world of “flesh and blood,” still, as he ruefully admits, “the old schooling sticks”; painting remains, for him, an art of solitude and stasis (ll. 60, 231). Song, by contrast, captures all the flutter and fugitiveness of love.

I’ve been three weeks shut within my mew,
 A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
 And saints again. I could not paint all night –
 Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
 There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of song, –
Flower o’ the broom,

Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!

Flower o' the quince,

I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?

Flower o' the thyme – and so on. Round they went. (ll. 47-57)

Lippo's painting may be as spirited as his blank verse, but it still cannot compete with the *stornelli* – the snatches of popular rhyme – that irrupt into his workshop and into his monologue. The movement of lyric poetry (its “feet and little feet”), its breadth (“sweep”) and breath (“whifts”), carry an erotic charge that even Lippo Lippi cannot paint.

A similar distinction, but with finer gradations, appears in “The Statue and the Bust.” The two failed lovers, whose passivity undermines their passion, are aptly represented by their frozen likenesses – the bronze statue of the duke, the porcelain bust of the lady. Yet sculpture is not the only art that the poem invokes to describe the course of their love affair. When the lady still intends to act upon her feeling and elope with her lover, she draws inspiration from the literature of romance: “‘Tis only the coat of a page to borrow, / And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim, / And I save my soul” (ll. 73-75).^x Yet this dream of becoming a living “page” soon gives way to a more passive form of reading:

And she – she watched the square like a book

Holding one picture and only one,

Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was done. (ll. 145-48)

The lady's love thus moves down a scale of activity: from the literary page, to the more static but still colorful art of illumination, to the cold and "pale-faced" bust (l. 180). Nor does her descent end there; the sculpture depicting her eventually disappears, leaving nothing but architecture – the blank, inexpressive wall of the palace – as testament to her passion.^{xi}

It would not be true to say, therefore, that art and love in *Men and Women* are necessarily set in opposition; just as often they are depicted as complementary. If in "The Statue and the Bust" great sculpture represents failed love, "Andrea del Sarto" suggests a more direct correlation between aesthetic and erotic achievement. Andrea's painting and his marriage are both wanting, and for precisely the same reason: the failure in both cases, by a characteristic Browning paradox, lies in perfection. Andrea, according to the poem's subtitle, is a "Faultless Painter," and he takes pleasure in his ability to do things, in his own words, "perfectly" (l. 228). His attraction to his wife, meanwhile, similarly derives from a sense of her perfection, her "perfect brow, / And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth" (ll. 122-23). Yet the grandeur of the poem lies in Andrea's recognition that such perfection constitutes a limitation – "All is ... perfect with my art: the worse!" (ll. 98-99).

The idea that imperfection lies at the heart of artistic beauty is familiar from Romantic aesthetics. It figures for example in the Romantic valorization of fragmentary form (Browning's first published poem was called "Pauline; A Fragment of a Confession"), and it underpins the poetics of Browning's hero, Percy Shelley. In his *Defence of Poetry* (pub. 1840), Shelley describes as inevitably inadequate the poet's attempt to recapture on the page his primal moment of inspiration; hence, even "the most

glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet.”^{xii} Browning echoes this notion in his “Essay on Shelley” (1852): he praises the poet who “struggles” towards “an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained,” and he condemns the more technically accomplished artist who is “too easily satisfied with a lower field of activity than a steadier aspiration would reach” (1:1002, 1004-5). In the poem Andrea likewise recognizes the superiority of imperfect artists – those who “strive to do, and agonize to do, / And fail in doing” – over himself, who paints “easily ... perfectly” (ll. 71-72, 63).

The notion that love, too, depends upon a flaw or inadequacy is even more established. Aristophanes in Plato’s *Symposium*, for instance, famously proposes that we love because we are incomplete. According to Aristophanes’ etiological fable, human beings were originally perfectly spherical, self-contained, eight-limbed creatures, until Zeus clove them in two; since then we have obsessively sought out our other halves, in a perpetual but futile quest for lost wholeness. (Andrea appears to allude to this fable in his comment, “And thus we half-men struggle,” l. 140).^{xiii} Aristophanes’ image is taken up later in the same dialogue, as Martha Nussbaum points out, by Alcibiades, when he describes Socrates, his paragon of love, as a sort of Russian doll, split down the middle.

As Nussbaum writes:

Socrates, [Alcibiades] tells us, is like one of those toy Sileni made by craftsmen. On the outside they look unremarkable, even funny. But what you are moved to do, what you cannot resist doing once you see the crack running down the middle, is to open them up. (They can be opened up because they have this crack or scar, and are not completely smooth.) [...] By using such toys as images, Alcibiades

reminds us that the urge to open things up, to get at and explore the inside concealed by the outside, is one of our earliest and strongest desires, a desire in which sexual and epistemological need are joined and, apparently, inseparable. We long to probe and bring to light what is concealed and secret; and when we see a crack, that is, to us, a signal that this aim can be fulfilled in the object.^{xiv}

Yet Andrea is as intolerant of such a “crack or scar” in his wife as he is in his art – “How could you ever prick those perfect ears, / Even to put the pearl there!” he laments (ll. 27-28).

By contrast, the speaker of “Two in the Campagna” freely admits that there must be a “fault” or “wound” in all love relations: “Where does the fault lie? What the core / O’ the wound, since wound must be?” (ll. 39-40). “Two in the Campagna,” which comes near the end of *Men and Women*, has often been read as one of the most autobiographical poems in the collection; certainly it comprises one of Browning’s most direct statements about the nature of love. At the climax of the poem, the speaker laments that the feeling of unity enjoyed by lovers is always necessarily evanescent – a “good minute” that quickly disappears.

I kiss your cheek,

Catch your soul’s warmth, – I pluck the rose

And love it more than tongue can speak –

Then the good minute goes. (ll. 47-50)

The instability of the good minute derives from the fact that, as so many of the preceding dramatic monologues have illustrated, character exists in a state of constant flux.

“Browning’s love poetry ... examines and erodes the great human myth of continuing

love, and the high Romantic myth of a continuing, stable identity with which it supports itself,” as Isobel Armstrong writes. “The greatest of his love poems are those which are full of fear that the other will continue to vanish before even the most passionate efforts of the lover’s creating imagination.”^{xv}

Yet the “fault” in this case lies not simply in evanescence, I would argue, but more particularly in *alternation* – a fundamental motif for Browning, and one that provides the most distinctive link between his conceptions of love and of art. “Two in the Campagna” exhibits a constant alternation between nature and culture, or spontaneity and self-consciousness, each of which both gives rise to and cancels out the other, in an endless cycle. The poem divides neatly into two. The first half describes nature, unself-conscious (“Five beetles, – blind and green they grope / Among the honey-meal,” ll. 17-18) and uninhibited (“Such primal naked forms of flowers,” l. 28). Yet just as in “Love Among the Ruins,” these natural forms lie atop the remains of an ancient civilization, in which they remain rooted even as they hide it. The “yellowing fennel, run to seed” emerges “from the brickwork’s cleft, / Some old tomb’s ruin” (ll. 12-14); and the Campagna as a whole is haunted by the culture that once occupied it.

The champaign with its endless fleece
 Of feathery grasses everywhere!
 Silence and passion, joy and peace,
 An everlasting wash of air –
 Rome’s ghost since her decease. (ll. 21-25)

The language of continuity in the first four lines – *endless, everywhere, everlasting* – is belied and contradicted by the final line. The wild-seeming landscape, we are reminded,

is not eternally changeless. It once hosted a mighty civilization, now vanished; and the natural beauty and fecundity that inspired the Romans to build there formerly might yet invite human encroachment once again – as it has inspired the speaker and his beloved to “[sit] down on the grass ... This morn of Rome and May” (ll. 3-5). Culture and nature (“Rome and May”) feed and depend upon each other but can never fully coincide; they exist only in alternation, since each displaces the other.

In the second half of the poem the same cycle is repeated on a more personal scale. Looking upon the Campagna, the speaker yearns for nature’s freedom from inhibition or constraint: “How say you? Let us, O my dove, / Let us be unashamed of soul, / As earth lies bare to heaven above!” (ll. 31-33). Yet the speaker’s call for total spontaneity is thwarted by the very self-consciousness of his rhetoric – the stilted “How say you?”, the clichéd “O my dove.” Since the good minute is defined as a moment of perfect communion – of “love ... more than tongue can speak” (l. 49) – the speaker’s impulse to express and record his feeling in words is necessarily countereffective. The problem only grows greater in the stanzas that follow.

I would I could adopt your will,
 See with your eyes, and set my heart
 Beating by yours, and drink my fill
 At your soul’s springs, – your part my part
 In life, for good and ill. (ll. 41-45)

The dream of natural unity is once again stymied by the awkwardness of the language, which is by turns reminiscent of a legal document (“adopt your will”), mechanical synchronization (“set my heart beating by yours”), and theatrical performance (“your part

my part”). Hence there follows the shortest and most definitive sentence in the poem: “No.” Self-consciousness is too embedded in all forms of human interaction, including language itself, to allow lovers to merge as the speaker desires.^{xvi}

Yet if love demands the dropping of social conventions and is threatened by any attempt at articulation, it also requires these things. When “the good minute goes,” the fault lies not with self-consciousness but with its absence.

Already how am I so far
 Out of that minute? Must I go
 Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
 Onward, whenever light winds blow,
 Fixed by no friendly star? (ll. 51-55)

The speaker now longs to exchange the flux of nature (“the thistle-ball”) for some “bar,” a “Fixed” point that will preserve his moment of passion. Both “fix” and “bar,” not coincidentally, are terms from the fine arts, and they have already appeared as such in *Men and Women*. “Fix” can mean “To make (a colour, a drawing, photographic image, etc.) fast or permanent”; thus the lady in “The Statue and the Bust” calls for the sculptor who “fixes a beauty never to fade” (l. 168).^{xvii} The speaker of “Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha,” meanwhile, repeatedly refers to musical “bars” (ll. 37, 48, 85). Yet in both cases the uses are equivocal. The sculptor preserves love by “fixing” it, but also records its demise; the “bars” of Hugues’ intricate music both convey his deepest meaning and, frustratingly, bar or block its communication.^{xviii} Once again, then, “Two in the Campagna” presents us with a cycle. The good minute of love and communion is only achieved when the usual trappings of social interaction are transcended. Yet the moment

immediately slips away unless the lovers make a conscious attempt to express and preserve it. Yet again, however, the effort to seize and freeze the moment inevitably destroys it.

The same cycle that characterizes Browning's conception of love characterizes his conception of art as well. Daniel Karlin describes Browning's poetics as follows: "the composition of poetry takes place in two stages: *conception* (the instant of primary vision in which the poem is perceived whole and perfect) and *execution* (in which the timeless moment of conception is broken up into the sequential articulations of language)." Both stages are necessary, but they are also, as Karlin notes, in "opposition."^{xix} In his "Essay on Shelley" Browning depicts this alternation of inspired conception and self-conscious execution as taking place, not only during the composition of an individual poem, but over the course of a poet's career, and even over the whole course of literary history. The essay begins by distinguishing two types of poetic faculty, the objective and the subjective. The former is associated with culture and "the doings of men," the latter with solitude, nature, the "silence of the earth and sea" (1:1003). In a prefiguration of the imagery of "Love Among the Ruins," the objective poet is compared to "an open watch-tower in the midst of the territory it is erected to gaze on," while the subjective poet is said to carry his visions "on the retinas of his own eyes: we must look deep into his human eyes, to see those pictures on them" (1:1002). Ideally, Browning suggests, the two faculties would coexist in full force in the same person; but of such an artist "there has yet been no instance" (1:1003).

Instead, the best we can hope for – and even this is merely a distant prospect – is that a single poet should produce works of great objective and subjective power *in turn*:

“Nor is there any reason why these two modes of poetic faculty may not issue hereafter from the same poet in successive perfect works” (*ibid.*). Such alternation, Browning goes on to say, has heretofore characterized literary history, with its successive ages of poetry. “There is a time when the general eye has, so to speak, absorbed its fill of the phenomena around it,” and “Then is the opportunity for the poet of loftier vision” – the subjective poet – “to lift his fellows” (1:1003-4). Soon, however, “the world is found to be subsisting wholly on the shadow of a reality,” and “Then is the imperative call for the appearance of another sort of poet,” the objective poet (1:1004). The latter’s vision will then “endure until, in the inevitable process, its very sufficiency to itself will require, at length, an exposition of its affinity to something higher...” (*ibid.*). And so on. Like the alternating feeling of love and expression of love in “Two in the Campagna,” these two poetic faculties call each other forth and cede to each other in turn.

This analogy is strongly suggested by Browning: just as “Two in the Campagna” uses the imagery and terminology of art, so the “Essay on Shelley” employs the language of love. Thus Browning refers to Shelley’s devotees as “the poet’s original lovers” (1:1007). Among these he clearly counts himself; he has undertaken the task of writing the preface to some of Shelley’s letters, he explains, as a sign of almost courtly devotion, “knowing that the alacrity to fulfil an humble office conveys more love than the acceptance of the honour of a higher one” (1:1012-13). More generally, he claims that every reader of subjective poetry is likely to become a lover of the poet: “in our approach to the poetry, we necessarily approach the personality of the poet; in apprehending it we apprehend him, and certainly we cannot love it without loving him” (1:1002). Although the essay focuses specifically on poetry, its implications are clearly wider; just as the

terms “objective” and “subjective” are not restricted to poetry but apply to all the fine arts, so too does the analogy with love.

Browning thus suggests a resolution to the dichotomy proposed by some of his own characters. The speaker of “Love Among the Ruins,” as we have seen, perceives a strict division between art (associated with culture, self-consciousness, public display) and love (associated with nature, spontaneity, private vision). But together the “Essay on Shelley” and “Two in the Campagna” – both of which incidentally echo the imagery of “Love Among the Ruins” – suggest that *both* sets of terms, at different moments, correspond to both art and love. Many of the greatest poems in *Men and Women* explore this connection. Their speakers are not always artists: since art (like love) involves a dyadic relationship, the poems just as often adopt the viewpoint of the auditor, viewer, or reader as of the composer, painter, or poet. But each examines the particular links between love and a different form of art.

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“Fra Lippo Lippi,” as mentioned above, strongly implies that song comes nearer than painting to capturing the ever-evolving nature of erotic attraction. “A Serenade at the Villa,” which follows a few poems later in the collection, introduces a further distinction, suggesting the superiority of music alone over music with words. The speaker of “Serenade” describes the various methods he used to woo his beloved as he stood beneath her window the night before.

What they could my words expressed,

O my love, my all, my one!

Singing helped the verses best,

And when singing's best was done,
 To my lute I left the rest. (ll. 16-20)

This hierarchy, moving upward from poetry to song to pure melody, seems intuitive. Music is the most subjective of the arts, by Browning's definition – the most universal, the least tied to the objective world of things and “the doings of men.” It is thus the best positioned to approximate the wordless transcendence of the “good minute” of love.

Yet its universality is also music's greatest liability as a vehicle of love. Love (at least erotic as opposed to divine love)^{xx} demands exclusivity: a lover grows jealous if the beloved's words or attention are directed too much elsewhere. This is a general rule, but it applies particularly to Browning's depictions of love. As Karlin writes, “the relation between lovers in [Browning's] work passionately excludes other kinds of relation, seeing them as intrusion or threat”; this is what Karlin calls Browning's “principle of exclusion” or his “erotic elitism.”^{xxi} Yet this sense of exclusivity or specificity is just what music by itself cannot provide. However seductive a melody may be, it is almost impossible to personalize. In both “Fra Lippo Lippi” and “Serenade at the Villa,” for example, the music is not heard but merely overheard. The snatches of song that so arouse Lippo are not actually addressed to him but are ambient sounds. The serenade, by contrast, *is* directed by a single person to a single person – but so ineffectively that the speaker is obliged to inform his beloved of the fact the following morning: “That was I, you heard last night” (l. 1). As a means of communicating love between individuals, music is at best imprecise.

The non-objectivity of music – meaning not only its lack of specifiable reference but also its lack of a specific object or addressee – figures centrally in “A Toccata of

Galuppi's." The speaker, as he plays a piece of music, feels convinced that the composer is speaking directly to him:

Oh Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!

I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;

But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind! (ll. 1-3)

So intimate does the communication feel that the speaker ventures to switch from a formal manner of address – “Oh Galuppi” – to the more familiar use of the first name: “Baldassaro.” He is presumably unaware that he has ironically mistaken the composer’s name (it should be “Baldassare”). Yet the speaker is no fool: he is fully cognizant that, however confident he may feel of Galuppi’s meaning, the same music might speak very differently to someone else. The piece he is playing is not only wordless – a toccata, intended to display the pianist’s sense of touch – but appears to be actively anti-discursive: the speaker twice imagines how its original audience would “break talk off” or “leave off talking” to listen (ll. 16, 27). The wordlessness necessarily renders the meaning more disputable; every listener will supply his or her own lyrics. To the eighteenth-century Venetians, the speaker imagines, the music’s theme was *carpe diem* – love each other while ye may.

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,

Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions – ‘Must we die?’

Those commiserating sevenths – ‘Life might last! we can but try!’

‘Were you happy?’ – ‘Yes.’ – ‘And are you still as happy?’ – ‘Yes. And you?’

– ‘Then, more kisses!’ – ‘Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?’

Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to! (ll. 19-24)

To the speaker, however, the same piece conveys a rather different message – *memento mori*: “Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned” (l. 35). Even when the music seems to be talking of love, moreover, it does so in a hubbub of different voices. The speaker fondly wishes to imagine that Galuppi has a specific message just for him; but he knows all the while that a toccata can communicate no such thing.

Yet this very sense of frustrated desire for direct discourse renders the experience of a music listener similar to that of a lover. The speaker of “Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha” – like the previous speaker, a musician addressing a dead composer – explicitly draws the comparison. “Seems it surprising a lover grows jealous?” he demands as he tries to interpret Hugues’ music (l. 103). He begs Hugues to forego his usual showy heteroglossia – his “mountainous fugues” – and speak to him, for once, directly.

Hist, but a word, fair and soft!

Forth and be judged, Master Hugues!

Answer the question I’ve put you so oft:

What do you mean by your mountainous fugues?

See, we’re alone in the loft. (ll. 1-5)

The question the speaker poses to Hugues here and throughout his monologue (“What do you mean?”) is the same as that posed by the speaker to his beloved in “Two in the Campagna”: “do you feel ... As I have felt?” – or more bluntly, “How say you?” (“Campagna,” ll. 1-2, 31). The desire for a more perfect, and more personal,

communication – “See, we’re alone,” the speaker tells the musician; “Let’s have a colloquy” (“Hugues,” ll. 5, 9) – characterizes lover and musician equally.

In contrast to music, visual art would seem to fall short as a medium for love because it is too *objective* – too precise. In “The Statue and the Bust” the lovers turn to sculpture only when their love has come to a standstill – when it has reached a fixed point and so, essentially, died. Similarly, in “Andrea del Sarto,” Andrea is able to paint his wife’s loving look (“You, at the point of your first pride in me”) specifically because that feeling no longer persists: “That’s gone you know” (ll. 37-38). Love may be wordless, but it nevertheless involves a strong sense of narrative, of ongoing development. As Richard Terdiman writes, “Love is written as a history. Its ineffability is impermanent, its silence engenders narrative. It tends toward representation by inflecting toward the livable and the writable.”^{xxii} But painting, as Lessing explains at length in *Laocoon*, is ill-equipped to represent change or open-endedness – or, it would therefore seem, love. (For the same reason, as Alexander Nehamas has recently pointed out, there exist very few paintings representing friendship: “Friendship is manifested only through a series of actions that occur over time, and painting has trouble with subjects that are temporally extended.”)^{xxiii} And yet what the visual arts lack in narrative movement, they make up for in exclusivity. A work of visual art is the only kind that exists in a single form, as a unique instance.^{xxiv} Hence a painting or sculpture, unlike a poem or a piece of music, can be exclusively possessed by an individual; it can likewise be desired, coveted, pursued. In this sense the work of visual art, despite its static nature, approximates a human love object more nearly than any other art form.

Browning had explored the connection between the possessiveness of the lover and of the art collector in “My Last Duchess” (1842), where it appeared grotesque. In “Old Pictures in Florence,” by contrast, which follows shortly after “Andrea del Sarto” in *Men and Women*, the same connection is drawn much more positively. The speaker here is Browning himself, in his role of aesthetic *amateur*: “I have loved the season / Of Art’s spring-birth so dim and dewy” (ll. 177-78). At the beginning of the poem he laments that some of his most beloved Florentine frescoes have suffered decay. (This is another way in which works of visual art, unlike other art forms, resemble a human lover: they are liable to aging, and even extinction.) But the speaker devotes most of the poem to picking a lover’s quarrel with his favorite artists:

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours,
 Could you play me false who loved you so?
 Some slights, if a certain heart endures
 Yet it feels, I would have your fellows know! (ll. 17-20)

The tone is facetious, yet it nevertheless comes from the “heart.” The speaker’s complaint is that Giotto and his “fellows” have never given him an intuition when one of their lost works was about to resurface, leaving them instead to be discovered by “dealers and stealers” (l. 228) who cannot cherish them as he would have done.

No matter for these! But Giotto, you,
 Have you allowed, as the town-tongues babble it, –
 Oh, never! it shall not be counted true –
 That a certain precious little tablet
 Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover, –

Was buried so long in oblivion's womb

And, left for another than I to discover,

Turns up at last! and to whom? – to whom? (ll. 233-40)

The speaker does not object to Giotto's painting having had another "lover" in the past; to the contrary, he seems to esteem it the more for having formerly have found favor in the eyes of Michelangelo ("Buonarroti"). But it fills him with jealousy to think that "another than I" should now possess it, and he madly refuses to give up his suit: "Nay, I shall have it yet! *Detur amanti!*" (l. 244). *Detur amanti* ("Let it be given to the one who loves") – Browning repeats the judgment of Solomon; the painting truly belongs to "the one who loves" it most.

If music and painting each have their advantages and disadvantages as conveyors of love, poetry seems to combine the strengths of both – the personal precision of painting, the temporal movement and flexibility of music. Very few poets figure in *Men and Women*.^{xxv} But of course Browning does not need to depict fictional poets in order to exhibit poetry's aptitude for representing love, since his whole collection demonstrates that power. Browning comes closest to making this claim explicit in "The Guardian Angel," another of the poems spoken essentially in his own voice. In it he describes the painting of an angel by Guercino, then recounts how he and his wife were so moved by its beauty that he wrote the poem in response, which he is now sending to a friend far away.

I took one thought his picture struck from me,

And spread it out, translating it to song.

My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend? (ll. 52-54)

“My love is here” carries two possible meanings. It could refer to the speaker’s wife (“My angel,” l. 46), who is being contrasted with his friend: she is here, he is elsewhere. But it can also mean that his love for his friend is conveyed *here*, in these lines of verse. The line thus both distinguishes between love and friendship and equates them. (The equation is hinted at even in the first reading, in the chime of “dear” with “here.”) This is a simple ambiguity, but it helps to show why poetry can serve as such a successful vehicle for sentiments of love. Language may be an impediment to perfect communion between individuals, as the speaker of “Two in the Campagna” laments. But language, and especially poetic language, is also peculiarly capable of performing two things at once – of being precise (this poem is dedicated to my old friend) and at the same time fruitfully open-ended (this poem conveys my love to him; this poem asserts that my love remains here, away from him). The “Essay on Shelley” acknowledges this dual capacity: although Browning says that “perfect” objectivity and subjectivity will never coincide, he recognizes that, in poetry, a “running-in of the one faculty upon the other is, of course, the ordinary circumstance” (1:1003).

The express aim of “One Word More” is to bring these two faculties together in a single poem of love. “One Word More,” the fifty-first and final poem of *Men and Women*, dedicates the completed volume to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

There they are, my fifty men and women

Naming me the fifty poems finished!

Take them, Love, the book and me together:

Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also. (ll. 1-4)

The final line echoes “The Last Ride Together,” in which the speaker posits an unbridgeable gap between inchoate feeling and conscious achievement: “What hand and brain went ever paired? / What heart alike conceived and dared?” (ll. 56-57). Apparently responding to his own character’s rhetorical question, Browning asserts that, on very rare occasions, “heart and brain” do collaborate to produce a work of art that fully expresses love. The key, as always, is exclusivity.

[N]o artist lives and loves, that longs not
 Once, and only once, and for one only
 (Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
 Fit and fair and simple and sufficient –
 Using nature that’s an art to others,

Not, this one time, art that’s turned his nature. (“One Word More,” ll. 59-64)

In other words, no art is essentially superior to the others in this regard. Rather, the art that best expresses love is the one that has been kept in reserve for this sole purpose.

According to legend, Browning says, Raphael the painter “once, and only once” wrote sonnets to his beloved, and Dante the poet once drew a picture for Beatrice; those single works expressed their love more fully than a masterpiece in their usual medium could have done – indeed, all the better for being, as works of art, so imperfect.

Browning himself, however, breaks his own rule. He is a poet, but he still resorts to poetry to express his love.

I shall never, in the years remaining,
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
 Make you music that should all-express me;

So it seems: I stand on my attainment.

This of verse alone, one life allows me;

Verse and nothing else have I to give you. (ll. 109-114)

And yet Browning claims that this poem does differ from all his others, because it is not a dramatic monologue. “Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly, / Lines I write the first time and the last time,” he instructs, and you will perceive that “[I] speak this once in my true person, / Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea” (ll. 119-20, 137-38). The explanation sounds plausible but is, on consideration, merely specious. In the first place, quite a few of the other poems in *Men and Women* (not to mention Browning’s earlier volumes) are lyrics, spoken as much in his “true person” as this one. Secondly, for much of “One Word More” the speaker’s voice is difficult to distinguish from that of the earlier dramatic speakers. The lines quoted above, for instance, detailing the arts that Browning will never perfect (“I shall never . . . Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues”) echo Cleon’s similar disclaimer: “I have not chanted verse like Homer, no – / Nor swept string like Terpander, no – nor carved / And painted men like Phidias” (“Cleon,” ll. 139-41). Similarly, when Browning looks for a metaphor to describe his wife, he chooses the moon – “yourself my moon of poets” (“One Word More,” l. 188) – just as Andrea does: “My face, my moon, my everybody’s moon” (“Andrea del Sarto,” l. 29). Finally, even though Browning singles out this poem as belonging specifically to his wife (the subtitle dedicates it “To E.B.B.”), and although the speaker casts this poem as private speech – “mine and yours – the rest be all men’s, / Karshish, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty” (ll. 135-36) – nevertheless it was still published and sold in the same volume as all the others.

And yet these very contradictions – rather than its personal voice, or its specific dedication, or even its singular meter^{xxvi} – are what help make “One Word More” such a brilliantly successful love poem. For a work that lays so much emphasis on singularity of utterance, the poem contains a surprising number of repetitions. “Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also” reappears nearly verbatim as “Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also” (ll. 4, 142). Not only does the repetition strike a self-defeatingly anxious note, but it draws attention to the uncomfortable ambiguity of “lie,” which might otherwise have escaped the reader’s notice. Even the injunction for love to speak out “Once, and only once, and for one only” is, ironically, repeated (ll. 60, 70). Yet “One Word More” does not try to hide these imperfections; instead, like “Two in the Campagna,” it explicitly acknowledges the frustrating insufficiency of its medium: “Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things” (l. 143). Poetry, like love, both demands language and balks at it. As Karlin writes, “The lover and the writer share a common preoccupation with language and feeling,” and also a common sense that language is “inherently inadequate to the task – self-corrupted and self-destroying.”^{xxvii} But poetry’s peculiar ability to acknowledge and even celebrate its own limitations, as “One Word More” does, renders it particularly able to express the paradoxes of love.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that Browning declares poetry the “winner” of this implicit *paragone*. As the very title “One Word More” implies, there can be no final word; there is always something more to be said. Nine years after the publication of *Men and Women*, Browning published “Abt Vogler,” in which he returns to a comparison between the different arts. Vogler is a musician, but unlike the speakers of “A Toccata” and “Master Hugues” he does not struggle to interpret another’s music,

since he improvises his own compositions. He even “extemporiz[es],” as the subtitle informs us, “upon the musical instrument of his own invention,” so that no foreign medium intervenes between his conception and execution; for Vogler, inspiration and performance, “hand and brain,” are truly one. Hence when he compares his own art to painting and poetry, he finds both of the latter wanting. Painting, he says, lacks a sense of unfolding “process,” while poetry too explicitly reveals the “laws” of its structure.

For think, had I painted the whole,

Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth:

Had I written the same, made verse – still, effect proceeds from cause,

Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;

It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws. (ll. 43-47)

Music, by contrast, transcends conscious aesthetic laws and so constitutes an act of almost divine power: “But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can, / Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!” (ll. 49-50).

Yet Vogler is also keenly aware of the fact that his music ceases to exist at the very moment of its perfection. Like the speaker of “Two in the Campagna,” therefore, he longs for some bar that should fix it in place. Perhaps surprisingly, the specific art form that Vogler names, as the one towards which all his music aspires, is architecture.^{xxviii}

The poem begins with Vogler’s ardent desire that his musical improvisation could achieve the permanence and stability of King Solomon’s palace.

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,

Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,

Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed

Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk [...]
 Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
 And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,

This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise! (ll. 1-10)

With the mention of the “palace” and its “pinnacled glory” (l. 24) we are returned to “Love Among the Ruins” at the very beginning of *Men and Women*, where architecture (“the domed and daring palace,” l. 19) appears as the most durable but also the most impersonal of the fine arts. Here, by contrast, its permanence renders the building, in Vogler’s eyes, a suitable signifier of true passion, a fitting way for an amorous king “to pleasure the princess he loved!” “Abt Vogler” thus redeems even architecture as a means of expressing erotic feeling, and so reminds us that, in Browning’s estimation, any art can potentially be the art of love.

ⁱ Wendell Stacy Johnson, *Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 198.

ⁱⁱ Browning to Joseph Milsand, 24 February 1853, and EBB to Arabella Moulton-Barrett, 2 March 1853, respectively; both quoted in *The Poems of Browning*, Vol. 3, ed. John Woolford, Daniel Karlin, and Joseph Phelan (London: Longman, 2007), p. 738.

ⁱⁱⁱ On the *paragone* see most recently Rudolf Preimesberger, *Paragons and Paragone: Van Eyck, Raphael, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2011). In his chapter on marriage in Victorian poetry, Eric Griffiths notes that the English term “paragon” combines erotic and aesthetic notions, since it can mean “a point of comparison, a competitor, and a marriage-partner as well as something supremely excellent”; see Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 172.

^{iv} Lessing’s work was translated into English as early as 1836; see *Laocoon, or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting*, tr. William Ross (London: J. Ridgway & Sons, 1836). The core of the treatise’s argument, in which painting and literature are held up for direct comparison, comes in chapters 16-19.

^v On the topic of Browning’s aesthetic theories, considered in connection with his ideas about love, see Elizabeth Bieman, “An Eros Manqué: Browning’s ‘Andrea del Sarto,’” *SEL* 10 (1970), pp. 651-68, and John Woolford, “‘The Mesmeric Effort’: Picture, Language and Silence in Browning’s Theory of Representation,” *Browning Society Notes* 27 (2000), pp. 5-20.

^{vi} After 1855 Browning never again published the poems of *Men and Women* together in the same order; the poems' sequence is consequently less important to my argument than the variety of viewpoints they offer. But it nevertheless remains valuable to consider *Men and Women* as a single coherent collection. The poems' reflections on the relation between art and love enrich one another when the pieces are read all together, rather than intermingled among Browning's other poems, as they were in the collected editions that appeared later in his lifetime.

^{vii} Line 84; all quotations from Browning's poetry refer to *The Poems*, ed. John Pettigrew and Thomas J. Collins (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), and are hereafter cited parenthetically by line number. Quotations from Browning's "Essay on Shelley" refer to the same edition, and are cited parenthetically by page number.

^{viii} This was clearer in the first edition, where these stanzas are separate. In later editions, beginning in 1868, pairs of stanzas were printed as a single long stanza, and this is how the poem is usually reprinted today; but the alternation still occurs every six lines. The only exception comes in lines 49-60, which dwell almost entirely on the present.

^{ix} See Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 18-19, and Kerry McSweeney, *Supreme Attachments: Studies in Victorian Love Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 29-30.

^x Among the many literary precedents for this ploy of dressing up as a page-boy, the most proximate is EBB's "The Romaunt of the Page" (1838), a popular success with the Victorian public as well as a particular favorite of Browning's.

^{xi} Similar moments, in which architecture ironically replaces a more personally expressive form of art, occur in both "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "Andrea del Sarto." Lippo,

having painted a fresco to please his ecclesiastical patrons, is rewarded by having the pious public scratch it away in their religious fervor: “We get on fast to see the bricks beneath” (l. 332). Andrea, painting to please his estranged wife and her lover, also sees walls in place of pictures: “When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, / The walls become illumined, brick from brick, / Distinct . . . / Let us but love each other. Must you go?” (ll. 215-19).

^{xii} Percy Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, in *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, 2nd edn., ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 531.

^{xiii} See Bieman, “An Eros Manqué,” p. 656.

^{xiv} Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 189-90.

^{xv} Isobel Armstrong, “Browning and Victorian Poetry of Sexual Love,” in *Robert Browning*, ed. Isobel Armstrong (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975), pp. 283, 289-90. On this topic see also Pratul Pathak, *The Infinite Passion of Finite Hearts: Robert Browning and Failure in Love* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992).

^{xvi} Kerry McSweeney identifies this more generally as a “distinctive feature of the love poetry of the Victorians: a self-consciousness about the experience of loving that leads to introspection and analysis” and to eventual difficulty; see McSweeney, *Supreme Attachments*, p. 16.

^{xvii} *OED* “fix,” v. 5(a). Similarly the speaker of “Women and Roses,” addressing the “women . . . Sculptured in stone, on the poet’s pages,” asks “How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze you?” (ll. 6-7, 18). The usage in “The Statue and the Bust” recalls the moment in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* when Paulina warns Leontes not to touch the supposed

statue of Hermione, “O, patience! / The statue is but newly fix’d; the color’s / Not dry” (5.3.46-48).

^{xviii} The paradox is made clearer by the use of the same two terms in “By the Fireside,” which serves as the pendant poem to “Two in the Campagna” – it employs the same stanza and describes a similar good minute shared by two lovers wandering in the countryside. In “By the Fireside,” however, love is assured by being unfixed and unbarred. Had the speaker “fix[ed]” his companion, they would have remained mere “Friends – lovers that might have been”; but instead, “a bar was broken between / Life and life: we were mixed at last” (ll. 198-200, 233-34).

^{xix} Daniel Karlin, *The Courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 177-78. The same description, not coincidentally, could apply just as well to Shelley’s poetics.

^{xx} Two poems in *Men and Women*, “An Epistle of Karshish” and “Saul,” deal directly with divine love (*agape*); both present it as bridging the perceived gap between feeling and doing. Karshish, contemplating Lazarus’ belief in God’s self-sacrifice, marvels, “So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too” (l. 305). David, the speaker of “Saul,” foresees the same event and concludes “all’s love, yet all’s law” (l. 242). David arrives at his vision of divine love by analogy with his own human love for Saul, for which he struggles to find sufficient expression: “And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?” (l. 232).

^{xxi} Daniel Karlin, “Browning’s Poetry of Intimacy,” in *Robert Browning’s Poetry*, 2nd edn., ed. James F. Loucks and Andrew M. Stauffer (New York: Norton, 2007), pp. 610,

611, 618. Karlin's article originally appeared in *Essays in Criticism* 39 (1989) and was revised for the Norton edition.

^{xxii} Richard Terdiman, "Can We Read the Book of Love?", *PMLA* 126 (2011): 478.

Writing more specifically about Victorian poets, Patricia Ball notes their shared conviction "that change – whether of growth or decay – is integral to love." Yet she also distinguishes "change" from narrative, observing that most Victorian love poetry "is hostile to narrative in the simple sense, even while it appropriates some story-telling characteristics." See Ball, *The Heart's Events: The Victorian Poetry of Relationships* (London: Athlone Press, 1976), p. 4.

^{xxiii} Alexander Nehamas, "The Good of Friendship," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 110 (2010): 269.

^{xxiv} Unique in space, at least. A musical performance – or any performance – is unique in time; but the composition itself can be infinitely repeated and reinterpreted by different performers.

^{xxv} Poetry is listed as one of Cleon's many attainments, and the central character in "How It Strikes a Contemporary" is called a "poet" (l. 1), although not in any literal, or even specifically literary, sense. Only "Transcendentalism," therefore, truly features a poet (in this case as addressee) – and even he is accused of entirely mistaking his art and writing mere prose "thoughts" (l. 3).

^{xxvi} "One Word More" is written in trochaic pentameter, a meter Browning reserved for this one poem.

^{xxvii} Karlin, *The Courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett*, p. 175.

^{xxviii} This association recalls the German Romantic concept, voiced by both Friedrich von Schelling and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, that architecture is “frozen music.” On the importance of architecture as a representative of all the arts (particularly due to its role in classical mnemonics), see Donald S. Hair, “Browning’s Palace of Art,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 48 (1978), pp. 115-29.