

The Thought-Process Presentation in the Speech Event of Browning's *My last Duchess* (1842)

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper addresses the presentation of the thought-process within the speech event illustrated in *My Last Duchess* (1842) by Robert Browning (1812-1889). Consequently, the paper will make a critical analysis of the main poetic interlocutor's mind- style. Thus, the speech event in the poem, and therefore the mental pattern, express verbally the Duke's moral weakness, As such, the study of Browning's style can reveal the implicit guilt within the poem's sign system of the well-articulated utterances embracing the embedded narrative. Browning organized his stylistic resources to concentrate on the supremacy of certain key- words, which embrace the inner meanings. His style is an effective poetic discourse manipulated in ways that signal it as different from ordinary, non- poetic language, even though the material of the poet may be an

exceptional topic like the marginalization of women. He can rarely be called a didactic poet. However, his style in the selected poem exposes, explains, and educates the readers about the conditions of women in Europe during the Renaissance, preventing the victimized women from speech. More important than the Duke's eloquence is the Duchess that keeps silent. Her silence is more eloquent.

It is the hypothesis of this paper that Browning's distinguished style is achieved by letting the oppressor of woman do the eloquent talking rather than by letting the victimized woman speak. Thus, the poem discloses the real marginalization of women. As such, the poetic style will create the speech event where the speech presentation enables the addresser to send a message (victimization) to an addressee (the recipient) via a code (the style of the poem). The poetic style will turn into an integral part to support the poetic thesis, not only the poetic image. The function of style in Browning is more organic and more integrated with this kind of texture.

Hence, in the case of Browning, stylistics is the discipline most appropriate to study the poetic elements and poetic features that trigger and play an important role in passing the poet's intention across to the recipient. This is because the connection between the text and the context in Browning's poetry is a subtle and symbiotic alliance. The implications of this research are much related to the manipulation of silence and speech in the art of conversation as represented in the poetic discourse based on facts.

THE CASE IN VIEW

This section is a demonstration of the case in view and a preparation for the critical analysis of the main male speaker's mind-style in one of Robert Browning's best-known poems: "My Last Duchess" (1842). Browning's poetic style substantiates the assumption that he is an exceptional writer among his Victorian

peers in that what applies to him, as far as Modern and Post-Modern terminology is concerned, goes beyond the reach of his contemporaries. "Browning is almost alone amongst Victorian poets...." (Ford, p. 77). He writes in such a manner that reveals him to have "a strong original talent" (Ibid). This is particularly the case when we consider what such a poet may achieve with his technical devices and particular method of writing. The language he employs is essential to his distinctive style, which mirrors the mentality of the speaking voice. In *My Last Duchess*, he presents the case of a victimized woman. Her oppressed voice is silenced. Yet, it is far from absent. Browning speaks through the medium of the woman's victimizer to recite an embedded narrative that indirectly but unmistakably expresses the gender-based oppression. Aesthetically, his poetic idiom grows into the agent of authenticity in terms of the woman's dilemma as well as the power of articulation in accordance with gender status.

The presentation of the thought-process that reveals the mind-style is carried out by the poet within the framework which Roman Jakobson calls "speech- event". According to Katie Wales in *DICTIONARY OF STYLISTICS* (1989), the speech- event is defined as follows:

As developed by Roman Jakobson, speech event describes an influential model of the canonical situation of discourse, or context utterance, and what he considers to be six key constituents of communication and related functions. These constituents are not all easily defined or distinguished, but in any situational context (1) an addresser (2) sends a message (3) to an addressee (4) which requires a code (5) the language system of meaning. Contact (6) is maintained between them by voice and gestures, or by psychological or social factors. Language oriented to any one of these constituents has a different function: to addresser, the emotive; to addressee the conative; to context (which includes also the non-linguistic world generally) the referential; to contact, the phatic; code, the metaphysical and to message the surface, in effect), the poetic, the literary discourse is itself a double, even multiple speech event, requiring more than one set of participants (Author to Reader; Narrator to Narrator; Character to Character). (Pages 428-429, emphasis ours)

Undeniably, this particular poem has been one of the most frequently anthologized poems. Likewise, it is one of Browning's most frequently revisited texts by the critics and analysts. The current research attempt uses the available, relevant, and literary material written about Browning. Moreover, the current research chooses its own path to break new grounds: to apply concepts and key-terms from Roman Jakobson, Roger Fowler, and other scholar specialized in narratology, linguistics, and additional disciplines, to a poetic text written in the Victorian Age on the Italian Renaissance.

Thus, in the light of Jakobson's views above, the speech event in *My Last Duchess* is based on a very distinguished speech situation (the Duchess's mysterious death), sending an encoded, cryptic message to the representative of the future- bride to the Duke. He had silenced his late spouse to death, with signs and systems in the eloquent presentation of the Duke to imply inner warnings to be deciphered only by virtue of the context within the speech event that throws light on his past speech acts. The social and psychological factors are well-handled by the poet to reveal the male interlocutor. He, in accordance with Jakobson's model, poses as the influential and dominate male in the socially canonical situation of male supremacy, revealed in behavior, speech, and thought- patterns. So, in the surface structure of the Duke discourse, there is eloquence as well as politeness. In the deep structure of the selfsame discourse, there are alarming signs, the least of which is the silence of the woman's voice. In a related context, Raghukul Tilak voices this opinion concerning *My Last Duchess*:

... the present monologue is a remarkable piece of character- study not only of the Duke but also of the last Duchess, and the messenger of the neighboring count forms the listener. (p.82)

The poet implicitly understands the role of arbitrary biological determinism in the male-dominated social outlook towards women, which almost denies them their citizenship, and manages to utilize the male-world concepts and misconceptions in life-like, but twisted situations. Browning chooses a high-ranking woman to show how a man from the uppermost social classes crushes

her down. The poet knows that dialogue is missing from the discourse because there is hardly any equality between these two species, even if they belong to the same class. Meanwhile, he exposes man's prejudiced and dogmatic thoughts in his use of mind-style situations. Let us regard these lines:

That is my last Duchess painted on the wall,

Looking as if she were alive, (lines 1 and 2)

..... They [strangers] would ask me, if they durst,

How such a glance came there (lines 11 and 12)

..... Sir, 't was not

Her husband's presence (lines 13 and 14)

The syntathized quotation above proves that there is a speech event where there is an addresser (the Duke) who sends a message (about his last Duchess) to an addressee (the representative of the Count of Tyrol) which requires a code (the painting on the wall) through a language system of hidden meaning (the inner and embedded story of Duchess Lucrezia's demise) and contact, which is maintained by the voice and tone of the Duke's narrative statement. The lines above, highly suggest but hardly state the Duke's aggressiveness. In the fourteen lines that form the early couplets of the poem, the lexical item "Durst" carries much weight. Indeed, the line "... they would ask me, if they durst" is stylistically the most important evidence of the Duke's mind- style, and a good indicator as to how Browning's style is successful in showing the victimizer while the victim herself silent.

In the light of the above, this paper seeks to indicate (and thereby conceptualize) the distinctive stylistic features that Browning uses to uncover and denounce the male domination in the world of the poetic text, which happens to reflect the context of the state-of-affairs in the corporeal world. His style reflects the willingness to get rid of the predominant false consciousness, and may well be regarded as one of the true attempts to utilize the platform of poetry for a more objective and impartial understanding of gendered inequality. It is in the hypothesis of this paper that the distinguished poetic style plays an active role in preventing these poems from turning into pamphlets openly calling for women's rights. Style in these particular poems is an integral part rather than an ornament.

BROWNING AND LANGUAGE

According to John Schad's *Victorians in Theory: From Derrida to Browning* (1999), Browning's language reflects what he describes as "monstrous angels" (p. 84) and this is "most obviously approached in Browning by his recurring interest in the play, or movement, between monster and angel, ape and god" (p. 84). Thus, Duke Alfonso II is a monster despite his high- style language, Duchess Lucrezia is an angel, despite her speechlessness and decisive muteness in all the twenty- eight heroic couplets of the monologue:.

Likewise, regarding Browning's language, Amrollah Abadian remarks the following:

Browning was ... very individualistic. Therefore, he allowed himself considerable license with the language. His English was not that of the universities, and it appeared eccentric to his contemporaries ... Browning's grammar is his own. His sentences are frequently interrupted by a long parenthesis. His most characteristic punctuation is the impatient dash. He omits articles and relative pronouns, and he likes to heap alliterations on his verse.

(p. 337)

Let us regard this example of roundabout, semantic double- negatives:

The Count your master's munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretence

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed:

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed

At starting, is my object. Nay, well go

Together down, Sir

(lines 49- 53)

In the above, the lexical- items (No, the prefix dis- that has negative function, the adverbial Though which has a negative connotation, and the item Nay) serve as double negative to demonstrate the sophisticated method of expression in the Duke's complicated and cumbersome syntax as reflected by Browning.

STYLISTICS VIS – A - VIS BROWNING

Browning's style is different from that of his contemporaries because his language is quite distinguished from theirs. The ambiguity in his poems can hardly be removed by the conventional, non- stylistic analysis. Thus, it is essential to review stylistics in this section as far as it helps decode Browning's poetry. Stylistics is a word derived from style; it is a discipline which studies different styles. It can refer to the study of the proper use of words or language in proper places. Widdowson (1975, p 3) defines stylistics as "the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation". Carter (1989, p 14) is of the view that it is generally recognized that the style of a work can depend on linguistic levels-often

simultaneously and that one fairly crucial factor is our expectation concerning the literary form or genre employed.

Haynes (1989, p. 3) confirms that the study of style is the study of distinctions: looking at what was said against what might have been said. For instance, this paper deals with how Browning is different. Style is almost synonymous with variety. Style refers in a simple way to the manner of expression which differs according to the various contexts. Style, being a versatile field, is defined depending on one's field of study. Adejare (1992) makes this clear when he says that style is an ambiguous term. Lawal (1997, p. 6) however, describes style as an aspect of language that deals with choices of diction, phrases, sentences and linguistic materials that are consistent and harmonious with the subject matter. He adds that it involves the narrative technique of a writer in terms of choice and distribution of words and character. This is exactly what can be noticed in Browning. Lawal (1997, p. 6) also adds that it may be reckoned in terms of the sociolinguistic contexts and it may also be reckoned or analyzed on linguistic, semantic and even semiotic terms.

What fascinated the researchers into doing this stylistic, analytic work is the uniqueness of stylistics as it combines both linguistics and literary studies. The choice of words by Browning is marked by a wide scope. The researchers embark on this project and choose this significant poem by Browning as the data. Stylistics is important in the fields of language and literature, particularly when it comes to this very poet.

Many attempts have been made by different scholars to define stylistics. To Freeman (1971, p.1) "stylistics, is a sub-discipline which started in the second half of the 20th century". It can be seen as a logical extension of moves within literary criticism early in the 20th century to concentrate on studying texts, rather than authors. To Leech and Short (1981, p.13) "Stylistics is simply defined as the (linguistic) study of style, is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language". They are also of the view that the researchers study style to explain something, or some aspect that needs to be explained. In general, literary stylistics has, implicitly or explicitly, the goal of

explaining the relation between language and artistic function. Short and Candlin (1989, p.183) are of the view that "stylistics is a linguistic approach to the study of the literary texts. It thus embodies one essential part of the general course - philosophy; that of combining language and literary study". Browning, in particular, merits such an approach for his profundity and intellectual depth. These lines embody the necessity of stylistic applications to find the relation between the language uttered and the artistic function:

Sir, 't was all one! My favour at her breast,

The dropping of daylight in the west

(lines 25 and 26)

Obviously, the great medal of honor which the Duke bestowed upon the Duchess is indeed costly. It is irritating for the Duke to discover that it was a thing taken for granted, like the sunset. Only the stylistic approach can show us the real depth of the intentional meaning. Widdowson (1975, p.3) defines stylistics as "the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation". He takes the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is a means of linking the two. He also proposes that stylistics occupies the middle ground between linguistics and literary criticism and its function is to mediate between the two. In this role, its concerns necessarily overlap with those of the two disciplines.

Carter (1988, p.161) is of the same view with Widdowson. He also believes that stylistics is essentially a bridge discipline between linguistics and literature and there are always arguments about the design of the bridge, its purpose, the nature of the materials and about the side it should be built from. Thus, in the case of Browning, the literary and stylistic features of his poetry can only be fully understood by the aid of linguistic argument and stylistic explanations.

Wilfred L. Guerin (pp. 77-78) states:

The context (for example, the nature and personality of the speaker in the poem) must be identified also". In Browning's *My Last Duchess*, one must understand not only the personality of the Duke, who is

speaking, but also something of the nature the man to whom he addresses his remarks. Only to the extent that the reader understands that what the Duke is saying is revealed largely by how he says it can he really fathom the full implications of the Duchess' story. One of the beautiful ironies of the poem, after all, is the reader's awareness of implications that the Duke does not consciously intend. (Emphasis ours)

According to the same author above, there is more to stylistics than meets the eye:

Stylistics, defined in a most rudimentary way, is not the study of the words and the grammar an author uses, but the study of the way the author uses his words and grammar- as well as other elements- both within the sentence (where some would see it) and within the text as a whole. (p. 286, emphasis belongs to the source)

Stylistics, thus, is the study of the devices in languages (such as rhetorical figures and syntactical patterns) that are considered to produce expressive or literary style. Stylistics is therefore a field of study that functions in a manner comparable with literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other as its morphological make-up suggests: the 'style' component relating it to literary criticism and the 'istics' component to linguistics. Widdowson (1975, p.3) claims that stylistics can serve as a means whereby literature and language as subjects can, by a process of gradual approximation, move towards both linguistics and literary criticism, and also a means whereby these disciplines can be pedagogically treated to yield different subjects. Thus, in the case of *My Last Duchess*, the stylistic approach is most effective in exposing the self-important and morbid mentality of a supposed great man. Carter (1988, p. 4) proposes that practical stylistics is a process of literary text analysis which starts from a basic assumption that the primary interpretative procedures used in the reading of a literary text are linguistic procedures. He adds that stylistic analysis can provide the means whereby the study of literature can relate a piece of literary writing to the experience of language to extend that experience. Carter (1988, p.10) sub-categorized it into five sections: Linguistic Stylistics, Literary Stylistics, Style and

Discourse, Pedagogical Stylistics, and Stylistics and the foreign language learner. The discussions in this paper combine many of these sub- categories, to varying degrees, in accordance with the context.

My Last Duchess and Mind-Style

Mind- style has an active role to play in this poem. Hence, it is essential to discuss it in this paper. Therefore, it will be good to review Roger Fowler's explanation of this concept:

We may coin the term 'mind-style' to refer to any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self. A mind-style may analyze a character's mental life more or less radically ; may be concerned with relatively superficial or relatively fundamental aspects of the mind; may seek to dramatize the order and structure of conscious thoughts, or just present the topics on which a character reflects, or display preoccupations ,prejudices, perspectives, and values which strongly bias a character's world-view but of which s/he may be quite unaware.

(Fowler, p.103)

Paul Simpson goes further to say that the mind-style indicates "the viewing position of a participating character-narrator whose account of actions and events is the one we must as readers share (Simpson, pp. 26-27). From these two quotes, supported by the earlier definitions of stylistics, it will be evident that Browning utilizes the mind-style first for the voicing of the male opinion, which in some substratum layer has the feminine antithesis embedded, or rather buried. So, Browning's method is to use the voice of the disapproving male for the

articulation of the dead women's attitudes. Consider what the Duke of Ferrara says in the opening two lines of *My Last Duchess*:

*That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive.*

(Lines 1-2)

These lines are based on real accounts documented in the history of Italy in the sixteenth – century. According to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, this poem is based on the incidents in the life of Duke Alfonso II ,Duke of Ferrara Dukedom in Italy, whose first wife the young Duchess Lucrezia died in an accident only after three years of marriage. After her accidental death, the Duke of Ferrara negotiated, through a mature and trusted negotiator, the marriage of the niece of the Count of the Tyrol territories(Sokhanvar:847).According to Ian Ousby, this poem was first published in a verse collection entitled *DRAMATIC LYRICS* (1842). Ousby implies that the death of the Duchess was hardly an accident: it was a murder (Ousby, p. 274). The Duke as a politician and as a statesman uses cumbersome syntax. Owing to the queer and complicated syntax of the poetic text, the contents of the twenty- eight heroic couplets, the fifty-six lines and 448 words in the poem are hereby squeezed by the researcher into a compact abridgement, which would read like this:

My last Duchess is a piece of wonder. There she stands. Look at her. The husband's presence called no joy into the Duchess. She was too easily impressed. She liked whatever she looked on. It was all one: my favor, the daylight, the officious fool, and the white mule she rode. Each would draw from her the approving speech or the blush. She ranked my gift with anybody's gift. I choose never to stoop. She smiled whenever I passed her. But, who passed without much

the same smile?! Thus, I gave commands. Then, all smiles stopped together. The Count [of Tyrol]'s fair daughter's self is my object. Notice Neptune taming a sea horse for me! (Emphasis ours).

In the above, Browning's words have been retained. The synopsis of the speech event and as well as the speech act connected to it has come from the poem itself to focus on the core of the poem's deep structure of intended meaning. This will help to distinguish the items that embody the fulfillment of mind-style. It is noticed that the choice of words and expressions that comprise the diction betrays the social attitudes, the marital doubts, and the class prejudices associated with the gender affiliations. The lexemes which the Duke utters are presented in such a style as to give the impression of dignified self-importance to mark the speaker's lack of focus on anything but his Ego as (a) an important gender species, (b) an important class species, and (c) an important cultural species. Thus, even the tone of voice is stylistically adapted to indicate that the duke moves from one subject to another without a real point of focus. He deletes, or ignores, many details in his marital bond with his 'last Duchess', but he focuses only on what he regards as an insult to his honor. It is unmistakable to see that he accuses his wife of infidelity when he suggests that she smiles to him just as she smiles to everybody else.

The mind-style of the duke is conspicuous in the mode of his expressions and phrasing. It is a kind of wording which eventually forces the reader of the poem to decode the item 'smile' as an occurrence much more serious than "a change of facial expression to express amusement, pleasure, or affection" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Obviously, the facial expression of the Duchess (Smile) as an action had, as a reaction from the Duke, consequences which were fulfilled in the form of decisions (orders to put an end to the smiles), which is the Duke's perverted mind-style to admit indirectly that he instigated murdering her. Therefore, the deletion of such details from the poem is intentional, essential, and helpful to achieve brevity. It is an important element in a transformational process of meaning from a superficial facial expression (smile) to a serious but implicit accusation of marital infidelity. What remains to say here is unsaid by the

poet in the text but connected with the context: the wife's unfaithfulness, explicit or implicit, automatically provides the pretext for the jealous husband to give commands to stop the smiles altogether, without taking the trouble to investigate the matter. This is simply because the Duke wants to avoid looking like the fool among his household. Thus, the style of the poet reveals the intricate workings of a diseased mentality in the subconscious areas of the pathological mind, regardless of the artistic, cultural, or class affiliations. Let us regard these lines which prove that the Duke had morbid doubts:

..... she had

A heart – how shall I say- too soon made

Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere. (lines 21- 24)

Browning's style is faithful to the Duke's speech- event and mental state, that the Duke incriminates the Duchess because she has a heart quickly made glad, and because she also likes to use her pair of eyes to see what is around her. She is also a culprit because there are other things and other people in the world that impress her, in addition to her husband. Notice, too, how the Duke takes a moment to stop in thought, to decide which adjective to use with his wife's heart: "... she had/ A heart- how shall I say? – too soon made glad". The Duke, tactfully, avoids saying "simple, silly, stupid, misguided" in relation to the heart. He chooses the rather long- winded neologism "Too soon made glad".

What Duke Alfonso II is thinking here fits what Mikhail Bakhtin proposed, according to Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Philips:

Mikhail Bakhtin proposed that thought is internal dialogue, resulting from the internalization of public debate ... The social dialogues that form the basis for the self are made up of cultural narratives and

discourses which position individuals in particular social categories such as gender.

(p. 109)

The Duke is incapable of developing any idea outside an emphasized confirmation of his gender and marital superiority. His style is his thought, and his thought betrays his mind-style which is unable to elaborate even on the artistic masterpieces which he claims to be an expert of. His last remark on the enormous sea-god Neptune taming the sea horse is quite open and clear: this small and peaceful creature is so tiny, so small, so weak, and so harmless, that it is absolutely unnecessary for a huge being like the mighty Neptune to suppress and tame it. This is the poetic part where Browning, rather than the Duke, is the one actually articulating the words. It seems that the poet needs to communicate to the reader that, rather than being a wild and untamed sub-human creature, the late Duchess was as weak and innocent as a sea-horse, or as harmless and as defenseless as the sea-creature in the hands of the ruthless and massive Neptune. So, the disconnected ideas, images, and impressions crossing the Duke's mind reveal his willingness to control and exert power on another human being through the monopoly of gender, class, influence, and prejudice. The complex, uneasy, uncomfortable syntax of the poem belongs to the Duke's troubled mind rather than Browning the distinguished English poet. Thus, the mind-style of this poem reveals mental sophistication, which in turn reveals social and gender inflexibility. The Duke's style, thus, is a synonym of implicit crudeness, fossilized dogmas, and moral stagnation. Only by the approach based on stylistics, could the inner workings of the poet's detailed style be spotted and recognized for analysis. The Duke as a perverted human being is capable of both thought illustration through thought-expression that speaks out his mind. He carries in the poem's couplets the experience, the characteristics, motives, as well as the contents of his thought. In this respect, this agrees with Mark Turner's view of the narrative thought in the context of creative writing, as expounded in his *The Literary Mind*: "... narrative ... thought ... appears ... to be inseparable from ... personal

experience. It also appears to be a fundamental target value for the developing human mind" (p. 25)

As such, Duke Alfonso II stresses his male identity as the gendered affiliation of authority. His oppression of his wife helps him to theorize about his own personality: "*I choose/ Never to stop*" (lines 42 and 43). This is much in line with Jorgensen and Philips:

... identities are theorized and empirically explored as resources that people enlist as the business of talk ... The focus is on the ways in which particular identities are used in talk in a specific context to perform social actions such as legitimizing a particular attitude.

(Jorgensen and Philips, p. 109)

In this way, and in a connected context, the identity of the Duchess is explored and focused on by the Duke in her reported acts, actions, and reactions, rather than direct speech- acts:

..... she thanked men,- good! But thanked

Somehow- I know not how- as if she ranked

My gift of a nine- hundred- years- old name

With anybody's gift, *(lines 31-34)*

Here, it should be noticed that the Duke reports his wife as thankful to 'men', not 'people'; moreover, his complaint is based on the old time- honored pretext of "Good, but!" or "Yes, but!" in line 31. The Duchess never ranked his "gift of nine- hundred- years- old- name with anybody's gift", at all. That is an illusion created by the Duke to misguide his addressee (the representation of

Tyrol, as well as the reading public), via the line of "as if". Thus, the Duchess' in her passively and silence, gives sufficient proof that she is truly above suspicious of dishonoring her husband's reputation, via the acts of kindness and grateful reactions to her Dukedom's subjects and citizens.

Hence, the cruel husband used the poetic discourses in the poem to rationalize, legitimize, and sanctify the lethal oppression he committed against Duchess Lucrezia, his murdered wife. His narrative is true to his experience of practice of marital violence and he is proud to make it a target value in other arts such as painting and sculpturing. Thus, the poem is not less than a manifestation of his perverted thought- process presentation in the speech event.

Conceptually, the poem is not only a monologue, but an extended monologue embracing an embedded narrative. Also, from a conceptualized perspective regarding Browning's poetic style, the devices and distinctive features of his method are functional and organically at work, rather than a purely aesthetic addition function.

RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND SUGGESTIONS:

My Las Duchess is a highly- organized poem that displays mental processing based on linguistic, cognitive, and moral elements: or, thought- presentation in unity with speech- presentation in the speech event. It functions within (but goes beyond) its socio- cultural codes and contexts. Browning's style is distinctive in the articulation of his poetic utterance, necessitating the application of terms from disciplines and systems not usually connected with Victorian Age, to which he belonged chronologically. In Browning's poem, the poetic, aesthetic, linguistic, social, and gender- based dimensions intermingle creatively. By virtue of the stylistic approach, analysis and interpretation are made possible. The poem

achieves a powerful effect, mostly depending on the implications of male-domination expressions that fill the embedded narrative of the Duke's monologue. In this respect, the stylistic approach reveals the poet's epistemological depth, his knowledge of human nature, as well as the latent communicative significance of the first speaker in this monologue.

Browning's style is intensive when it is linked with the matter of the Duchess as an individual, private case. The same style becomes extensive and more inclusive of the matter of the western women when it is used as a clue to gendered-based speculation of how women were subjected in the past centuries. Thus, the stylistic analysis of *My Last Duchess* brings to light the unwritten and the unspoken potentials of the poetic utterances, as this discipline has the gift of literary perceptiveness.

Browning's method is to make the murdered Duchess speak through her murderer, her husband, the Duke. The literary audience learn enough about the sad life she must have lived with a man who has a twisted mentality, through her silence, which is filled with the cruel words of Alfonso II of Ferrara. Browning's distinctive style implies that if the Duchess herself lives such a scary life, certainly the lower-class women live more miserably. The discourse structure, which is the manifestation of Browning's style in this poem, is based on the poet's attention paid to the mind-style of the poetic narrative in the speech event of the dramatic monologue. Browning, as revealed in this paper, may have been the first creative author in the Victorian Age, to hit upon the practice of mind-style in the utterance of his embedded narratives, owing to his concentration on the thought-process of the main speaker's narrative voice. It can be noticed, in conclusion, that the contents of the male thoughts in the case of the Duke include; a woman, an inflated male-ego, an inner sense of bitter humility, and the burning desire (and hence the willingness) to get even. Thus, the speaker reveals his world-view that betrays his diseased prejudices against his wife. Indirectly, it is understood that if the Duke as a symbol of male authority deals with his own household violently and cruelly, he can be expected to do worse with the citizens and natives of the Dukedom of Ferrara.

Browning's poetry anticipates the seminal works of such 20th century figures as Mikhail Bakhtin and Roger Fowler. Browning's dramatic monologue is indeed very similar to Bakhtin's concept of the internal dialogue, which in turn is very close to Roger Fowler's definition of mind-style. This may perhaps be one of the reasons why Browning's grammar, language, and style were decidedly different from the style of his contemporaries. It is suggested that a similar stylistic method may be applied to Browning's longer and mature works, notably his *Ring and the Book* (1869), his best-known blank-verse poem.

Thus, the literary function of Browning's poetic discourse goes beyond the stylistic effects of aesthetic embellishment and artistic decoration, but carries out an essential function of exposing the mind-style of the pillars of society. As such, Browning never really detached the poetic text from the real life context. In this, he has the place of honor in the textual organization of an irregular open-ended variety of stylistic potentialities, keeping the call to do justice to women distant from the direct, politically-motivated appeals that decrease the literary value of poetry.

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Appendix

My Last Duchess

Robert Browning (1842)

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:' such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. 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.
Sir, 't was all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace -- all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, -- good! but thanked
Somehow -- I know not how -- as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech -- (which I have not) -- to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark' -- and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
-- 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 smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

عملية عرض الفكر في الواقعة الكلامية الموصوفة في قصيدة (شريكة حياتي الدوقة الراحلة ١٨٤٢) لروبرت براوننج

الكلمات المفتاحية (الاسلوب الذهني ، الواقعة الكلامية، التعبيرات المرتبطة بالسياق، التمييز
على اساس الجنس البشري)

يتطرق البحث في نهجه التحليلي الى تطبيق مصطلحات أقرب الى النقد الروائي الحديث والمعاصر، على
نص شعري فكتوري ذي طبيعة سردية عالية ومتعددة الابعاد، تخلو من التبسيط الاختزالي المخل بعمق
الواقعة الموصوفة في ثنايا القصيدة. ويتناول التحليل في هذه المحاولة لغة الشاعر روبرت براوننج
(١٨١٢-١٨٨٩) وأسلوبه الشعري في قصيدة عنوانها هو

(دوقتي الراحلة) بتركيز على أسلوب التفكير الذهني لدى الصوت المتحدث الرئيس في النص

الشعري ويظهر أسلوب براوننج جلياً في تفننه بإظهار مظلومية المرأة في عصر النهضة الإيطالي عبر
مقاطع كلامية

يسود فيها صوت الرجل تزامناً مع صمت مطبق من طرف الصوت النسوي. ويبرهن البحث ان للأسلوب
الفني

الرفيع غرضاً عضوياً أساسياً في بناء القصيدة يتجاوز أخلاقياً وجمالياً وبما يتفوق على إضفاء المحسنات
اللفظية والبلاغية على الابيات الشعرية. ولقد جرى تطويع مفاهيم اتى بها رومان ياكبسون، و ميخائيل
باختين و روجر فاولرو وجون شاد و سواهم من علماء السرد المتعمق في أبحاث العرض الفكري و النسق
الذهني المتناوب ما بين ثنائيات الإفصاح و الامتناع عن البوح، والفعل الكلامي المتبوع بالصمت لتحليل
الحالة الكلامية بجانبها الخارجي و الداخلي او بشقيها الظاهر والباطن.

والله وليّ التوفيق

عملية عرض الفكر في الواقعة الكلامية الموصوفة في قصيدة (شريكة حياتي
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الكلمات المفتاحية (الاسلوب الذهني ، الواقعة الكلامية، التعبيرات المرتبطة بالسياق، التمييز
على اساس الجنس البشري)

بحث مقدم من قبل

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