Előd Pál Csirmaz

The Tomb of the Author in Robert Browning's Dramatic Monologues

Abstract

Even after the death of the Author, its remains, its tomb appears to mark a text it created. Various readings and my analyses of Robert Browning's six dramatic monologues, *My Last Duchess, The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church, Andrea del Sarto, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," Caliban upon Setebos* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* suggest that it is not only possible to trace Authorial presence in dramatic monologues, where the Author is generally supposed to be hidden behind a mask, but often it even appears to be inevitable to consider an Authorial entity. This, while problematizes traditional anti-authorial arguments, do not entail the dreaded consequences of introducing an Author, as various functions of the Author and various Author-related entities are considered in isolation. This way, the domain of metanarrative-like Authorial control can be limited and the Author is turned from a threat into a useful tool in analyses.

My readings are done with the help of notions and suggestions derived from two frameworks I introduce in the course of the argument. They not only help in tracing and investigating the Author and related entities, like the Inscriber or the Speaker, but they also provide an alternative description of the genre of the dramatic monologue.

Contents

1 Introduction

It has been a critical commonplace for a long time to suggest that the Author is dead, that it died a common death with Man, or that it is continually sacrificed in the process of writing. Lately, it has also become common to suggest that despite its discontinued existence, the Author has the capability to return, based on Seán Burke's treatise, its primary aim being to deconstruct texts announcing its death.

In this work I undertake the task of investigating to what extent and in what ways the Author can be considered present or absent in a class of poems in which the position of the Author is widely considered to be exceptional: exceptionally absent in the seeming dominance of the Speaker of a dramatic monologue, exceptionally hidden behind the Speaker–mask prohibiting the Readers from guessing Authorial judgment on the Speaker, or even exceptionally present in the gap opened between the expressed intent of the Speaker and its textual performance bordering on an unintentional confession. In other words, I consider what remains of an Author after its alleged death, figuratively speaking, how its *tomb* marks a text it authored. I concentrate on Robert Browning's oeuvre in order to ease the task of considering the biographical Author in my analyses, and also as, in my view, Browning's oeuvre, historically, is situated in a period that could be regarded as transitional between the Romantic (in Robert Langbaum's sense) and the modern, in ways anticipating even the postmodern technique of dislocating and relativising a central, an Authorial voice. My aim was to provide readings of poems that span as many possible set-ups according to as many characteristics as possible, while limiting the number of dramatic monologues analysed in order to be able to give a detailed analysis of each. I have selected Browning's *My Last Duchess, The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church, Andrea del Sarto, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," Caliban upon Setebos* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* Apart from my readings of these poems, other reviews, contemporary or later ones, shall also be considered to determine Authorial presence as felt by other readers.

In the first part of the thesis, I provide an overview of anti-authorial arguments and their critiques, and introduce some basic concepts with which the presence and functions of Author-related entities will be examined during my readings. I start the second part with a brief consideration of theories regarding dramatic monologues in general, and continue with the readings of the poems treated separately, one by one. Alongside my investigation of the Author, I also test a closely related suggestion regarding an internal structural characteristic supposed to be true of dramatic monologues in general.

2 The Theory of the Author

"Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment."
~~Shakespeare~~ *Polonius*
Poster scribbled over in a classroom of the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University

2.1 A History of the Death of the Author

In M. H. Abrams' classification of eras of criticism, found both in *The Mirror and the Lamp* and in "Orientation of Critical Theories," the Author as the main point of reference seems to have been born at the point of transition from mimetic and pragmatic critical theories to expressive ones:

> But once the theory emerged that poetry is primarily the expression of feeling and a state of mind […] a natural corollary was to approach a poem as a revelation of what Carlyle called the 'individual specialties' of the author himself. […] For good or ill, the widespread use of literature as an index—as the most reliable index—to personality was a product of the characteristic aesthetic orientation of the early nineteenth century. ("Literature as a revelation of personality" 18–19)

The death of the Author, according to the lineage presented by Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author," started with Mallarmé, continued with Valéry, Proust and the Surrealists (168–169).

The closeness of the dates of the birth and the death of the Author presented by these sources (Mallarmé was born in 1842 and died in 1898) shows the problematic nature of fixing the times of or attributing to movements or changes in metanarrative-like orientations the birth and the death of the Author. The above presented trials to do so inevitable exclude other uses and functions of the Author as, for example, unificator of discourses; moreover, what they entail, namely, that the Author came into existence at a specific point in time and (will) cease(d) to exist at another, echoes the notion of the modern episteme by Michael Foucault in *The Order of Things,* which episteme is the only home of the subject, of man, and of the Author, and with its end (will) disappear(ed) all three of these entities (Burke 62–115).

Seán Burke, in fact, criticises vehemently the lineage presented by Barthes. In *The Death and Return of the Author,* in which he undertakes the task to deconstruct anti-authorial texts mainly by Barthes, Foucault and Derrida (the modern edition of Blake's unholy trinity as far as the godlike transcendental author is concerned), he lists Mallarmé and T. S. Eliot, descriptors of a "certain compositional mood whereby the poet attempts to empty himself of personal concerns" (10); the Russian Formalists, Czech and French structuralists, Ferdinand de Saussure, Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan, whose work centred around the establishment of a structural science of language, literature and the psyche (10–12); and finally, New Criticism and again the Russian Formalism as movements against biographical positivism in criticism (14) as precursors to the death of the Author announced by Barthes in the poststructuralist 'era.' As a further example, one might also add Mark Schorer to the group of T. S. Eliot, as he likewise called for the separation of the personal from the work of art via *technique.*

Burke deconstructs Barthes's texts mainly on the basis that he allows the author to return while, at the same time, tries to uphold the idea of its death (a notion also subverted by Barthes's concentration on the oeuvre in *Sade Fourier Loyola* and his notion of 'founder of language') (Burke ch. 1). Burke does the same with Foucault's notion of the *epistemi,* which are absolutely discontinuous and have total control over discourse in a given era, on the basis that the argument in *The Order of Things* exalts Nietzsche to a supra-*epistemi* level as he is able to talk "out of" the present *episteme* and about the coming one. Burke also sees the notion 'founder of discursivity' intro-

duced in "What is an Author?", rightfully, subverting the very notion of *epistemi,* whose ability to control discourse would render authors passive and insignificant. The status of the text of *The Order of Things* is also considered, which, speaking "about" and not "for" the modern *episteme,* cannot possibly belong to it. Seemingly, Foucault has referred to Nietzsche in order to distract attention from the supra-*epistemi* location of his own text and himself. (Burke ch. 2) Burke sees the same problems emerging with Lacan's anti-subjectivist texts. Here not *epistemi,* but a linguistic unconscious controls all utterance and text, still, Lacan appears to suggest that he "speak[s] *of* rather than *in* a language prerequisite to any subject" (Burke 101), therefore rendering his treatise self-contradictory.

Of Grammatology by Derrida, in Burke's view, repeats the pattern of *The Order of Things* inasmuch as while it denies the importance and even the existence of authorial subjects, it gives Rousseau a privileged place and even cites biographical evidence in the readings of Rousseau's texts. In fact, Burke suggests that later on, Derrida attempted to modify his anti-subjectivist standpoint, and arrives at the conclusion that the very notion of deconstruction renders the author and authorial intention, which is to be reconstructed from a text in order to be deconstructed, important and existent, if not straightforwardly central. (ch. 3)

From this brief overview of a criticism of anti-subjectivist and anti-authorial texts it is apparent that one of the central problems emerges when a text (or, better to say, theory) postulates that not the Author but something else (epistemi, language, etc.) controls discourse, as this set-up immediately rules out the existence of a text that appears to situate itself outside the constraining forces. Also, the fundamental difference between a transcendental author and a supradiscourse constraint remains unclear, as is the reason why a preference for the latter is better.

Most of the analysed texts, and specifically, Burke's arguments, however, appear to say little of texts which do not address the question of the placement of the Author directly, and specifically, of literary texts of that kind, as these texts do not entail the contradiction between their arguments and their situatedness which Burke's deconstructions are mostly based on. In order to extract from anti-authorial texts statements, theories or fragments of theories that could be more or less directly used to address the question of the presence of the Author in literary texts, I propose a series of notions of the Author around which theories of its death may be grouped.

2.2 From the Methodological to the Ontological and Back: The Functions of the Author and its Death

The fact that the Author and its death can be interpreted and viewed in several, often contradictory, ways is also emphasized by Burke, who distinguishes between two levels: the methodological, in which the death of the Author is an optional basis of critical approaches to literary texts, and the more transcendental notion of the death of the Author as a prerequisite and axiom of all discourse. He attributes many of the inherent contradictions in the analysed texts to the non-segregation of these two meanings: "Much confusion, in fact, arises from the neglect of this distinction, from confounding the death of the author as a speculative experimental approach to discourse with authorial absence as the truth of writing itself" (175). Based on the texts he analysed and other treatises on the death of the Author, however, more centres of the various meanings of 'Author' and the 'death of the Author' can be established, which could also be called the *functions* of the Author in (literary) discourse. I have managed to establish

the following four categories of 'meanings': the extratextual / biographical author, the death of the Author as a technique of writing, the methodological death of the Author, and finally, the transcendental Author. Sometimes these categories are based on oppositions; at other times, they can be seen overlapping. The importance of the proposed separation of the functions of the Author is that later, the investigation of the presence and/or fulfilment of these functions can be narrowed down in my analyses of Browning's dramatic monologues. The listing of these functions will also serve as a backbone to my review of texts read by Burke and of other essays on the death of the Author not treated in his book.

A. The Extratextual Author

I grouped together meanings of the Author under this heading which refer to the material, biographical entity. As such, it is necessarily extratextual and often regarded as existing prior to the text.

One of the essays in which the usage of the 'Author' is dominantly in this sense, is Russell A. Potter's "Authorship." Dealing with the effects of the dawn of the Internet, the World Wide Web and instant publication on the notion of the Author, he treats copyright, legal and financial issues at length. Citing the New Critics and Foucault, and then arguing against them that "despite all these multiple notices and certificates of death, however, the 'Author' has continued a lively postmortem existence" (148–149), he writes:

> As the name of the Critic supplants that of the Author, the weary student may be forgiven for thinking that this brave new critical world bears an uncanny resemblance to the old world of 'Authors' and their affects that those critics worked so diligently to defuse.
>
> One of the reasons that this is so, curiously enough, is that the very media which were supposed to disperse and alienate the affective 'aura' of the author have instead resuscitated the power of authorial presence. We are never so easily persuaded of authors' dramatis personae as when *we see them interviewed on television, banter with them in an on-line chat, or listen while driving to their voice reading from a cassette tape.* (149, emphasis added)

This argument against the death of the Author is clearly based upon its biographical function. It is worth noting that the movement of New Criticism argues against recurring to the Author in criticism, that is, on a methodological level (see, for example, Burke 138–139). The functions of the Author listed by Foucault in "What is an Author?" are extremely complex, but, at the first level of approximation, they can be regarded as connecting a transcendental Author to discourses, either unifying texts in oeuvres or unifying writer and narrator. Arguing against these postulates on the basis of a biographical view shows how easily the categories or levels of functions are mixed up, rendering the validity of a whole argument questionable.

This is not to say that there are no connections or overlaps whatsoever between the categories I am presenting. The extratextual, biographical Author is connected to its 'methodological death' in criticism and reading if, for example, authorial intention to be avoided is not reconstructed from the text but from, to borrow Barthes's term, biographemes. It is connected to its death as a prescriptive requirement for writing in the case of T. S. Eliot, for instance, who argues that emotions / feelings of the living

author should not find their way directly to the writing ("Tradition and the Individual Talent" passim). But the material, biographical author is in most cases in opposition to the transcendental one, the two which Potter's essay seeks to bring together and apparently equates.

It is because of the strong connections mentioned above that I shall discuss other arguments also making use of the biographical / extratextual function of the author in the following sections, as I think their main focus is on other 'meanings' of the 'Author.' However, to illustrate that treating this function is by no means restricted to Potter's essay, one could cite *The Pleasure of the Text* by Barthes: "As institution, the author is dead: *his civic status, his biographical person have disappeared"* (qtd. in Burke 29, emphasis added). Barthes also appears to argue against the biographic view of the Author when he, arguably, separates the pre-textual Author and the Scriptor "born simultaneously with the text" ("The Death of the Author" 170).

B. The Death of the Author as a Technique of Writing

The earliest proclamations of the death of the Author appear to describe a technique to be followed by writers who wish to produce anything that is worth of interest. T. S. Eliot, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," does this in two senses: first, by encouraging tradition and a network of literary works (a discourse), in which "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (72), and in "what happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (73); and second, by suggesting that an artist should separate in herself the sufferer / experiencer entity and the creative one (74–76). Eliot connects these two theses in his likening the artist to a catalyst, which renders him similar to the passive authors in Foucault's *epistemi.*

Somewhat later, Mark Schorer sounded similar prescriptive requirements. In "Technique as Discovery," he regards *technique,* that is, the mode by which one treats the experience to write from, a necessary step in creating valuable novels. Based on the analyses Schorer provides, it appears that a technique is deemed appropriate if it separates the experience from the author. He repeats twice: "Technique objectifies" (7, 9). In the absence of such technique and separation, the work of art is not as good as it could be. "The point of view of Moll is indistinguishable from the point of view of her creator [Defoe]" (6), "Lawrence [in his *Sons and Lovers*] is merely repeating his emotions, and he avoids austerer technical scrutiny" (13) he complains, and concludes that this way, the novels became uninterpretable and, ultimately, turned upon themselves and destroyed any 'meaning' they could momentarily present and preserve. The separation, or mastering of the original experience echoes the requirements made by T. S. Eliot, and, if one may put it this way, calls for the death of the writer (not necessarily the extratextual Author only) in, or before the writing s/he creates.

Notably, a similar requirement may be argued to have surfaced much earlier. The famous phrases from Wordsworth's "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems,*" similarly to the above two essays, appear to argue for the careful evaluation of an experience before it is used as material for writing:

> For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings:
> but though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached,
> were never produced […] but by a man who […] had also thought long
> and deeply. (2:242)

> It [poetry] takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity
> (2:250)

Both of these excerpts contrast feeling or emotion to a contemplative phase (thinking, recollection) in which it is transformed and made fit for poetry. In this respect, the above definitions of poetry closely echo Schorer's notion of *technique* there applied to prose. Pushing them to the extreme, they again require the sacrifice (death) of the original experiencer before writing begins.

Let me point out that many of the above arguments could be regarded as using the notion of the 'Author' in the biographical sense discussed in the previous section, as they are calling for the exclusion of the original experiencer or sufferer from literary works. However, the fact that whether this exclusion took place or not is often determined based on the produced text (most notably in Schorer's case), therefore, what has to be dealt with is not only a biographical, but also an intratextual Author reconstructed from the very text s/he is supposed to be separate from. This is also why I have grouped these arguments in a separate category.

C. The Methodological Death of the Author

In this diverse category, I have collected arguments which call for the death of the Author from the point of view of reading / criticism, or regard the Author as a result of the act of reading, that is, as an a posteriori intratextual[1] entity.

T. S. Eliot's article may again be cited as referring to this 'meaning' of the Author. When he argues for an "impersonal theory of poetry" (74) suggesting that criticism should be directed at texts rather than their authors, he, it can be suggested, argues for the exclusion of the author as a method to approach literary texts.

Barthes in "The Death of the Author" also approaches the death of the Author from a methodological point of view. He criticises the current method of critics to discover the Author "(or its hypostases: society, history, psyché, liberty)" in a work of art, thus closing its interpretative field and explain it away (171).

Foucault also makes similar suggestions. In "What is an Author?", when he describes how *work* has taken the place of the missing Author, the death of the Author in criticism is already set in the past: "It has been understood that the task of criticism is not to reestablish the ties between an author and his work or to reconstitute an author's thought and experience through his works" (140). This presentation of the death of the Author is also from a methodological point of view.

Criticism or reading based on the 'Author' immediately leads to an important problem: that of the treatment of Authorial intention. Burke treats this issue at length (138–149). He cites various approaches to intention: the school of New Criticism, which attempts to do away with it as it is irrelevant and cannot be reconstructed; the movement of New Pragmatism which postulates that authorial intention is equal to textual performance, and finally, Derrida and deconstruction, who (which) regard authorial intention as capable of controlling portions of the text, but not its totality, thus textual meaning is different from and can be contrasted to a reconstructed authorial intention to deconstruct it. The suggestion that Derrida and deconstruction appears to make an often intratextual, reconstructed author central becomes especially important if contrasted to other suggestions of Derrida on the nature of subjects and authors, to be discussed in the next section.

---

[1] Throughout the text, I use 'intratextual' also in the sense of 'derived from the text,' even if the resulting entity is not intratextual in the strict sense.

Foucault's essay could be cited on one more instance in this section, as it appears to suggest that the "author–function" is constructed by the consumers of discourse:

> The third point concerning this "author–function" is that it is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. (143)

This notion of the Author is undoubtedly a posteriori, and, as it appears to be derived from discourse, in a sense, intratextual. Foucault repeats the positioning of the Author in the Readers: "these aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author […] are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts" (143). This situating of the Author, similarly to the case of Derrida, can and shall be contrasted to a more transcendental or rational view on it also expressed in the same essay.

D. The Transcendental Author

In the last category I have grouped uses of the notion of the 'Author' which see it as transcendental, a subject whose ontological status reaches beyond materiality; which see it, if determined, as a guarantee of textual meaning, regardless whether it is based on a biographical entity or not; and finally, which see it as an entity whose death is an inherent property of writing and discourse.

That Barthes, in "The Death of the Author," (also) refers to a transcendental Author which is to be done away with, is straightforward, as it is equated with the / a "final signified" and coordinated with society, history, psyché, liberty; God, reason, science and law (171). Moreover, its death characterises all writing: "Writing is [the] space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing. // No doubt it has always been that way" (168).

Arguing on the basis of the postulate of metaphysics as an "all-inclusive *episteme*" (Burke 120), Derrida, presenting all texts as regulated by this metadiscourse, appears to suggest in *On Grammatology* that writing subjects are either lost or irrelevant. "The names of authors or doctrines have here no substantial value. They indicate neither identities nor causes" (qtd. in Burke 121); "there is not, strictly speaking, a text whose author or subject is Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (qtd. in Burke 120). Thus, it could be argued, Derrida makes the loss (death) of the Author an inherent property of writings regulated by this episteme.

Foucault's "What is an Author?" recurs to an Author which can be seen transcendental in a different sense. When he suggests that the Author is a function of discourse which regulates its "existence, circulation and operation" within a society (142), or when he situates the Author as the unifier of and mediator between writer and narrator: "the 'author–function' arises out of their scission—in the division and the distance of the two" (144), reference cannot be made to a material entity. Instead, the author–function can be seen emerging as a necessity, as a requirement of discourse in both cases. Here, it is not the death of, but the Author(–function) itself that is seen as a property of discourse in general, thus lifting it above the material level to the hypothetic, logical, in a certain sense, transcendental one.

From this brief list of arguments about the functions of the Author it is clear that many texts on which the notion and the tradition of the death of the Author rests overlook the distinction between the various functions or instances of the Author, the distinctions between a priori and a posteriori, extratextual and intratextual, material and transcendental Authors. (Burke also calls attention to this fact, although he traces this absence of distinction between two levels only, the methodological and ontological. Also, the examples he gives are not from within one text; he contrasts fragments from different works of the same author. [175]) Not only Potter argues against the death of the transcendental Author on the basis of the continued existence of the biographical one; it is not only Eliot who regards the death of the Author as a method of writing *and* as a method of criticism, arguing for, on the one hand, the death of the biographical, on the other, that of the reconstructed Author; but Barthes's essay can also be seen as cutting in every direction: proclaims the death of the extratextual Author, leads critics out of the darkness of the search for a reconstructed one, while regarding the Author transcendental at the same time.

Foucault's views on the author–function, as a result of psychological operations *and* something that appears to be a property of discourse, seem to be reconcilable, as these two views reflect, for example, the position of language which can be seen as the product of subjects one the one hand and as an objectively existing system prior to them on the other. However, Foucault still appears to accept, without question, the "empty slogans" now not untrue, merely insufficient, that "the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death" (141), which entail an Author transcendental prior to its death, a view hardly reconcilable with any of the positions on the author–function he takes.

Derrida, based on Burke's reading, can be similarly seen as blending Authors—the methodological one postulated by deconstruction and the transcendental one based on the antisubjectivist nature of metaphysics.

In order to avoid the blurring of the distinctions between the various functions of the Author, or Author–functions, which, as could be seen, can seriously undermine the validity of arguments, I shall follow these two stratagems in my analyses of dramatic monologues: first, I shall narrow the scope of functions to be analysed, and shall primarily concentrate on the presence, the absence and the role of the extratextual / biographical Author—regarding the arguments calling for the necessary death of the Author as a technique of writing as referring to the biographical writer—and on those of the Author (re)constructed in the act of reading. I shall deal with the transcendental function of the Author only as a function of discourse.

Second, I shall attempt to break down the Author into a series of entities, assigning one function to each. This way, a clear distinction between the functions can be easily upheld.

2.3 A History of Separation

An attempt to separate author-related entities is not new. Let me therefore, before investigating the consequences of such a division and the properties of the resulting entities, briefly review some texts containing examples of such a separation.

Barthes, in "The Death of the Author," might be contrasting *Author* and *scriptor* when he writes: "The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it […] the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text" (170)

provided that he uses *scriptor* not merely as a synonym of *Author* and *writer.* The unintentionality of the Author–Scriptor opposition in Barthes's text is supported by the fact that despite the dual opposition he sets up, "Author", "Author–God", "writer" and "scriptor" can all be found in the text (in its English translation), and it is often unclear whether there is any difference between *Author* and *Author–God* and to which side of the duality *writer* would refer to. However, that Barthes intentionally contrasted *scriptor* to *Author* is supported by his suggestion that "[s]ucceeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions" (170). In conclusion, Barthes's essay can be argued to propose a distinction between a pre- and extratextual and a post- and intratextual Author.

Foucault's "What is an Author?" appears to refer to the very same two entities in a passage partly quoted already:

> It would be as false to seek the author in relation to the *actual writer* as to the *fictional narrator;* the "author–function" arises out of their scission—in the division and distance of the two. (144, emphasis added)

Here, the Author appears not to be identified as the extratextual, biographical entity (the *actual writer*)—as it happens, despite the usage of the word *writer,* in Barthes's essay—but the three entities are situated in an interesting triangle, the 'author–function' being, or becoming, or being constituted by, in a sense, both of the others. Still, at the base of this arrangement the same duality appears which Barthes describes.

To complicate matters further regarding this—let me add, quite natural and widespread—dual view on the Author, one could cite Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's essay titled "Six Authors in Pursuit of *The Searchers"* in which he problematizes this set-up. Criticising the idea that the author is naturalised as a sub-code of a text, that is, "the author (external to the text) records his presence through the signs of [a] sub-code," he claims that "the author as effect of the text cannot simply be objectified in the form of a sub-code. Nor can this supposed sub-code be then re-related, *tel quel,* to the author as producing subject" (222). His argument for these theses is that the authorial sub-code cannot be put alongside with non-authorial ones. He sees the Author as surfacing on various levels the 'text,' and based on this observation he proposes either to postulate the existence of many authorial sub-codes or to regard the Author as a system (223).

In fact, a system-like longer series of entities appears in the series of essays by Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Barbara Johnson progenerated by Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter.* Lacan, in his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," in fact, considered only the series of characters through which the two purloinings are related; he talks about the "double and even triple subjective filter" (34). Derrida, in turn, in the "Purveyor of Truth," accuses Lacan of not recognizing layers above the narrating characters:

> But what the Seminar treats is only the content of this story […] Not the narration itself. […] One might be led to believe, at a given moment, that Lacan is preparing to take into account the (narrating) narration […] But once it is glimpsed, the analytic deciphering excludes this place, neutralizes it [which] transforms the entire Seminar into an analysis fascinated by content. (179)

Derrida postulates the existence of a further layer, in his term, *frame,* that of fiction, which is generated by the *inscriber,* and states: "Lacan excludes the textual fiction from within which he has extracted the so-called general narration" (180). He lists the *narrating narrator,* the *narrated narrator,* the *author* and the *inscriber* as entities authoring various frames of Poe's (?) text (179).

Johnson, in her "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida," reads Derrida's reading as, at first sight, one that argues for identifying literary language with a framed one: "Lacan, says Derrida, misses the specifically literary dimension of Poe's text by treating it as a 'real drama' " (127). She quotes Stanley E. Fish concluding, in a similar manner, that "literature is language… but it is a language around which we have drawn a *frame"* (qtd. in Johnson 128). However, in her reading, Derrida also appears to subvert the logic of the frame, claiming that while it is obligatory to draw a frame around a text, it is, at the same time, impossible to do so. Johnson suggests that Derrida in this way sought to challenge the limits of the spatial logic of frames (128–129).

One is still left with an abundance of entities related to or situated in, below or around the Author whose functions and qualities are defined in often contradictory ways. As an attempt to unify these entities with narrating characters in narrations (as Lacan brings Poe and the characters to the same level), I shall propose a model in which many of these entities can be situated. Based on this model, the definition of literariness by frames can be connected to other arguments on what property constitutes an artistic text. Being a simple and abstract model, it, however, will not venture into explaining how the enclosed text deconstructs the frames around it; it remains in a pre-poststructural world of thought.

2.4 A Theory of Embedded Communicative Schemes[2]

The model of messages or narrations retransmitted or re-quoted via a series of Author-related entities or narrating characters is based on the model of communication presented in Roman Jakobson's essay titled "Linguistics and Poetics."[3] This model contains six elements or *factors:* the (textual) *message* is coded and sent by the *addresser;* it is received and decoded by the *addressee.* The message is provided with a *context* it may refer to; a *contact* (a channel) is established between the addresser and addressee which makes the transmission of the message possible, and finally, a common *code* (language) is shared by the two parties which renders the message intelligible for the decoder. (Jakobson 35)

Six functions of language are paired to these six elements, depending on which element in the model appears to be the most salient in the message. A *referential* message is primarily denotative and focuses on the context. An *emotive* one reflects (expresses) the addresser's attitude; if the message is oriented toward the addressee, it is *conative.* To these three functions are added the *phatic* function, which focuses on maintaining and enhancing the contact, and the *metalingual,* which focuses on the code, when clearing up, for example, misunderstandings based on an unknown word or phrase. The final function, when the message is oriented on itself, is the *poetic* one.

---

[2] The model described in this section originates from my idea outlined in an essay written for the seminar *Literary Theory* ANN-312.22 led by Veronika Ruttkay in the 2004 autumn term at the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University.

[3] Jakobson refers to A. Marty, who launched the term 'emotive'; K. Bühler, whose model of language was confined to the addresser, message and addressee, and, accordingly, to the referential, emotive and conative functions; and B. Malinowski, who introduced the term 'phatic' (Jakobson 35–37).

However, Jakobson is quick to point out that "[a]ny attempt to reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification. Poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function" (37). As it will be apparent from the proposed model, self-focus, although in a slightly different sense, can indeed be connected to a hypothetical literariness of a text.

The model of retransmitted messages builds on the multiplication of the above described model of communication by inscribing all six factors of a quoted message (communication) in the message of the superordinate communication. In the ensuing argument, let me focus on the topmost two levels of this retransmission, as it is on the upper levels that author-related entities that might be overlooked are situated. Addressers on lower levels (characters), the communicative schemes of which are not embedded in each other, but are coordinated, are easily recognised as distinct. See Figure 1 for a representation of two layers of communication. In accordance with the notation used in the illustration, factors and functions in uppercase refer to those of the outer, while those in lowercase italic letters refer to those of the embedded communication. Thus ADDRESSER, the most general one, is the extratextual Author; the ADDRESSEE the extratextual Reader. MESSAGE, expectedly, is the literary work itself. CODE, CONTACT and CONTEXT can be established based on the circumstances of the writing and the reading of a work: whether they happen simultaneously, or in a deferred way; what language is used, and in what cultural, social and historical the work was (is) written and is read. Let me now turn to the functions of the embedded communication.

The *addresser* can be regarded to be the intratextual Author, as it is generated solely by the work, the MESSAGE. Following Lacan's reading of Poe's story, it can be postulated that it is the Narrator, and the *message* is the narration, as opposed to the whole work, the MESSAGE. If, following Derrida's framing, the presence of a further frame (that of fiction, whose addresser is the Inscriber) is to be accounted for, the model should include not one, but two embedded communications, one embedded in the other. If the inquiry is continued maintaining the dual model, that is, that the *message* is in fact the narration, then the *message* excludes the title, the occasional subtitle, motto, etc. of a work. As they are included in the MESSAGE, they can be interpreted as enriching the *context* of the *message* against which it is interpreted. (An observation of special importance in the analyses of Browning's poems.)

In the case of the upper levels of this hierarchical model of literary texts, and in cases where characters use direct quotation to retransmit a message, CODE=*code* can be generally postulated. Leaving the interpretation of the *contact* aside for the moment, what one is faced with is the question of the *addressee,* which will, in fact, destroy the symmetry of the model by cutting it in half.

The *addressee* might be regarded to be the implied reader or the Reader-in-text, who is the formal addressee of the *message* by the *addresser,* in reality intended for the Reader (ADDRESSEE). The *addressee* might be directly pointed at whenever the Author-in-text appears to address her directly, as in, for example, the supposedly *conative* preface by William Makepeace Thackeray, "Before the Curtain," to his *Vanity Fair.* However, such a text might be better regarded to be authored by an addresser situated between the ADDRESSER and the Narrator, as it may even make references to portions of the text traditionally not considered to be included in the narration (chapters, titles, remarks situated outside the time and place of the narration, etc.). In other words, even a direct address appears to fail to assign a place or at least to point to and thus define the intratextual Reader. The addressees of the embedded communi-

cations seem even harder to separate than their addressers (extratextual Author, intratextual Narrator, Scriptor, etc.), which suggestion might be explained by the fact that while messages may originate from apparently distinct sources, all of them are addressed to the ADDRESSEE, or, at least, are intended to be overheard by him. (Please note that an addressee might be easily definable on lower levels, where the addressers are characters engaging in dialogues. In these cases, the corresponding addressees, in most cases, are other characters. However, at the present moment, my analysis is restricted to the upper levels of communicative schemes.)

Two arguments present themselves as possible ways of explaining away the situation of embedded addressees. The first solution can be reached via the notion of the representation of the Reader in the literary work. On the one hand, it can be regarded to be the *addressee,* as this is the entity the narration (fiction) is addressed to. On the other hand, as the narration is presented from the Narrator's (*addresser*'s) point of view, and this is the standpoint the Reader perceives elements in the narration from, the Reader also seems to be represented by the *addresser.*

Please note that the presence of a character in or around the narration who is presented as one listening to the narration, that is, an auditor, does not undermine this argument. Non-silent auditors, like Mr. Gigadibs in Browning's *Bishop Blougram's Apology* (see lines 996–1004), when they speak, simply seize the point of view and become addressers themselves. Throughout silent auditors, like Lucrezia in *Andrea del Sarto,* seem to merely modify or add to than to define the point of view the Reader is forced into.

It could be argued that this interesting set-up of representations merge the *addresser* and the *addressee* in the reception of a literary work. Thus, *addressee* can now be situated: it is equated to the *addresser.*

It is worth noting that theories and movements related to the methodological death of the Author, in many instances, appear to call for a view on literary texts where not only its Author is dead, but it is also stripped of the historical context of its composition, and, in some cases, the context of its reading: it is attempted to analyse the text as it is. In other words, the MESSAGE is stripped of its CONTEXT, ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE. In this framework, it then comes as no surprise that the agents of the *message,* the *addresser* and the *addressee,* having no available antecedents, are turned on and are identified with each other.

The behaviour of the MESSAGE in this, reduced environment, is also predictable: it becomes self-reflexive, that is, POETIC; and it was the prominence of this function which Jakobson argued to mainly coincide with literariness (37).

The second argument, based on the suggestion that all messages are addressed to the Reader, postulates that there are no embedded addressees at all. The reason why the problem to find a suitable interpretation for the Reader-in-text-s—the existence of which is postulated solely on the basis of the model of communication—is so problematic to settle is that these entities can be easily regarded nonexistent. This entails that embedded communications are reduced versions of communicational schemes *pretending* to be full embedded ones. In other words, they are not independently interpretable, and they do not retransmit or re-quote messages originating from lower levels in the proper sense of the verbs. All messages originate from the ADDRESSER, the extratextual author, and reach the Reader via one of the mask-like embedded addressers.

If so, the messages are not distorted fundamentally by the nonprocess of not requoting them. This fact is what makes it possible for readers to merge the Author with the Narrator so easily. It cannot be resisted to quote Lacan doing so in his "Seminar":

referring to Dupin's remarks on the meaning of certain Latin words, he remarks: "No doubt *Poe* is having a good time" (37, emphasis added); criticising Dupin's treatment of mathematicians, he refers to "Poe's experience" (38).

In fact, the conclusion that embedded communications are reduced can also be reached from my first argument. Both arguments render the embedded addressees rudimentary: the first by equating them with the addresser, the second by suggesting that they are nonexistent.

Furthermore, the notion of reduced communicative schemes echoes Jakobson's *quasi-quotation.* However, the following excerpt makes it apparent that he regards all factors of all implied communications distinct and existent, whereas I argue for their reduced nature as far as the upper levels of embedded communications are concerned. His term 'simultaneously' is also made more concrete as the embeddedness of communicative schemes in my model. Jakobson writes:

> For instance the poem 'Wrestling Jacob' is addressed by its title hero to the Saviour and simultaneously acts as a subjective message of the poet Charles Wesley to his readers. Virtually any poetic message is a quasi-quoted discourse with all those peculiar, intricate problems which 'speech within speech' offers to the linguist.
> The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous. The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee, and besides in a split reference. (50)

Foucault also uses the term "quasi-discourse" in reference to literary texts, to novels and poetry, in which one finds a "plurality of egos" (144).

Literariness is also related to quotedness in Brett Bourbon's *Finding a Replacement for the Soul, Mind and Meaning in Literature and Philosophy,* chapter 2, "The Logical Form of Fiction." Investigating the ontological status of objects in fictions and the truth-value of fictional assertions, Bourbon suggests that fictional statements are not meant, but are not lies, either. He sees a way out by suggesting that fictions are quoted (51, 58, 75). He also connects this suggestion to the assertion that a quoted utterance lacks a speaker (59, 76). While the first suggestion is in line with my argumentation on viewing literary discourse as a hierarchy of embedded communications, the relationship between the second, quite Barthesian statement and my position is twofold. On the first level of approximation, I postulated the existence of all factors for all communicative schemes, including the addressers of embedded, quoted ones. This is clearly in opposition with Bourbon's suggestion. Together with the reduction of the addressees, however, the status of embedded addressers was also problematized. In this sense, the two standpoints can be seen as converging.

Bourbon also considers what constitutes fictionality. He arrives at the conclusion that fictional-ness is situated outside the logical form of sentences. In his view, the Reader perceives a text as fiction because he is sent a signal outside the text that it is to be taken fictionally (62–68). However, Bourbon is quick to add that "whatever conventions we take as signalling that something is fictional (not real) they cannot *constitute* the fictionality of the story" (65). Having made little references to the nature of such signals, one may connect the notion of fictionality (literariness)-signals to Foucault's view on the author–function determining the functionality of discourses in societies. (Names of) Authors may well serve as signals as to how their texts are to be read.

This model, in other words, connects literariness defined as *framedness* by Derrida, as *qoutedness* by Bourbon and Jakobson, and as *poeticness* by Jakobson. Its importance for the analyses of Browning's poems lies in the fact that it helps to explain how the Author, the Speaker / Narrator and other embedded addressers co-exist in dramatic monologues. It provides a background against which the fact that the outer form (rhyme and rhythm patterns) and the language of dramatic monologues are almost always exclusively controlled by the Author can be explained, and the hierarchy it postulates explicates why speakers quoted by the Speaker in dramatic monologues also conform to these formal constraints (consider, for example, Agnolo's words quoted by Andrea in *Andrea del Sarto* [ll. 189–193].) The postulate of the reduced nature of embedded communicative schemes may also throw light on the question why Speaker and Author, as I shall attempt to show, are often attempted to equate even in dramatic monologues. And finally, it is on the basis of the segregation of MESSAGE and *message* that I regard texts surrounding the narration (the monologue proper in dramatic monologues) as not originating from the Speaker, but from an entity above, in most cases, from the Author. Based on the suggestions of this model and on the closereading of such portions of the poems (generally, the title and the subtitle) it can be suggested that the presence of the supposedly dead Author can still be felt in these passages.

2.5 A Representational Framework

I have suggested that I shall primarily focus on the biographical and the constructed Author in my analyses. Let me therefore further elaborate the notion from the previous section that the agents of the MESSAGE are represented in a text by the agents of the embedded *message.* Specifically, I shall postulate that the extratextual Author (the ADDRESSER) gains representation in the form of the (an) intratextual Author or the Narrator (the *addresser,* or one could even use 'lyrical I').[4] Let me consider a few concepts that will have crucial importance when investigating this representational relationship and the 'internal' structure of dramatic monologues.

   Many of the following concepts and supposed connections are based on Éva Babits's theoretical collage presented during her lectures at Mihály Fazekas Grammar School, Budapest, 1997–2001. While it became evident to me that her ideas were influenced by a variety of theories, their selection and unification was undoubtedly her own work; a work so thorough and meticulous that it rightly deserves a direct citation. However, I have modified and added to this framework at many points, mainly influenced by my further studies.[5] Especially relevant was John Fizer's review of the theo-

---

[4] If the intratextual Author is to be analysed as different from the Narrator or the Speaker of a literary work, that is, if Derrida's way of postulating two frames around the narration is to be followed, then the representative relationship occurs between the addressers of the uppermost and the lowermost of the three levels.

[5] The main points of differences, regarding the concepts to be introduced, are: - I have introduced layer III, mainly based on, but slightly altering Potebnja's theory. Ms Babits only dealt with layer I (the external form) and layer II (the internal form). - Ms Babits introduced the notions of theme, lyrical I, image, base image, element of reality and the imaged. However, they were introduced via exercises only; their formal definitions are in each case my own work. - Ms Babits suggested the notion of metathesis and the investigation of the 'distance' between theme and the imaged to capture its effect. In my model, with the introduction of layer III, metathesis is now situated between layer III and layers II & I. I have

ries of Alexander A. Potebnja, describing Potebnja's suggestion on the threefold structure of literary works.

Alexander A. Potebnja (1835–1891) was a Ukrainian intellectual. While René Wellek does mention him in his *A History of Modern Criticism,* and perceives him as one anticipating Croce and Vossler (Fizer v), his theory has remained virtually unknown to the Western world (Fizer 1). This, according to Fizer, is due to the fact that Potebnja himself "did not regard criticism as his main intellectual concern," focusing, instead, on linguistics. The reception of his work in the Russian Empire was, at the beginning, similarly limited. Later, however, it seems to have raised widespread interest, which was terminated by Socialist Realism in the 1930s (Fizer 1–2). I shall present relevant elements from Potebnja's theory alongside with the concepts I wish to introduce.

This framework postulates the existence of three layers both in the process of composition and that of reception of a work of art; the processes being regarded symmetric. See Figure 2 for a diagram of the layers, the processes and related concepts.

Layer III is situated outside the work. In the compositional process, it is the original experience, problem, etc. experienced by the Author which becomes represented—according to this model—in the work of art. In reception, layer III is the interpretation of the work by a Reader. Generally, it is supposed that the original experience of the biographical Author is irrecoverable from the text and that interpretation differs among readers. In opposition to the text, which—with a gross oversimplification—can be regarded as existing objectively, layer III is classified, recurring to the subjective–objective dichotomy, as subjective.

Layer I is the textual level. It is the message transmitted, but it can be argued that it also contains connotations, associative elements generally available to members of the interpretative community the artistic discourse is taking place in. (I have disregarded the case of deferred communication, in which the interpretative community in which a work emerged is considerably different from the interpretative community the Reader belongs to. Let me add that, according to Potebnja, no meaning can be generated outside a particular time and place, [Fizer 3] that is, outside a particular interpretative community. "External forms that are either 'ahead of time' or 'behind time' rather than 'in time' are, in Potebnja's view, hardly aesthetically significant" [Fizer 39]. According to Fizer, this is the point, in fact, where Potebnja and other scholars referring to an 'internal form' or 'representation' [Croce, Vossler, Spitzer] have opposite views [2–3].)

Layer II can be defined as the structures generated by the text in the Reader during the act of reading. Theoretically, it contains all possible structures; it is during interpretation (generation of layer III) that the Reader emphasizes certain structures and suppresses others. As a psychological detour, let me point out that this framework requires the generation of neither layer II nor layer III during reading to be conscious processes. It postulates, moreover, that the conscious and verbalised version of the Reader's interpretation is necessarily simplified and abstracted (see *theme*).

Layer II, therefore, has a dual nature. On the one hand, strictly speaking, it exists only in the Reader and is a result of reading; on the other, during its generation, in theory, no inter-Reader differences have yet been introduced. It is supposed, in other words, that layer II is identical across readers.

---

introduced the notion of alienation, and suggested that alienation and metathesis are essentially the same processes.

In Potebnja's theory, similar three layers can be found: the external form (layer I), the internal form (layer II) and signification, content or idea (layer III) (Fizer 23, 37). While his views agree mine in suggesting that signification "changes markedly in every new perception" (qtd. in Fizer 23); in that the internal form tends to expire, reducing the structure of literary (Potebnja talks of poetic) works "to two constituents—external form and signification—and its potential polysemy to a referential monosemy" (Fizer 27, see also 33); and in that one of the main differences between poetic and non-poetic (scientific, in the extreme) texts is that the latter lack internal form (Fizer 36). Despite these similarities, there are also a number of differences between my framework and Potebnja's theory. In his view, the poetic work *contains* its internal form (Fizer 23), which, like the external one, is internalised in the act of reading (Fizer 28). Fizer even suggests that Potebnja treats these two forms as "linguistic givens" (47). Opposed to this view, I hold that it is only the external form (layer I) that is transmitted and internalised in the strict sense. While the 'quasi-objectivity' of layer II might tempt one to regard it as coded into the text, I would argue against such view partly because it has the danger of simplifying the investigation of the internal form (layer II) to linguistic categories. Nevertheless, I shall also, at many instances, group layers I and II and oppose them to layer III in my proceedings.

The linguistically coded nature of layer II in Potebnja's theory possibly makes more sense if one considers his suggestion that the word has a threefold structure similar (in fact, identical) to that of literary texts (Fizer passim, esp. 37)—a notion entirely missing from the framework I am presenting.

Similarly to Potebnja, I regard one of the central structural building-block of layer II the **image.** In the present framework, it functions as a sample structure with which it is attempted to analyse and describe the structures on layer II. Potebnja goes as far as equating image with the internal form (layer II) (Fizer 40). Describing the threefold structure of the *word* and the *work,* however,

> [w]hile it was relatively simple to define the internal form of the word, inasmuch as Potebnja equated it with its etymon, the image of the work of poetic art eluded an easy definition. His theory, in spite of the central importance of internal form, gave no definition of the image. (Fizer 40–41)

My definition of the image is relatively simple and flexible. It is a set of related elements,[6] with a special element, the **imaged** at its centre, which is described and enriched by the others related to it.

This framework goes further, however, in forcing a prescribed structural set-up on layer II. It postulates that images themselves are ordered hierarchically. Images at the centres of these hierarchies are the **base images.** Sometimes it is possible to select one base image for a whole work. As it is assumed that the experience is represented, or 'expressed,' by layers II & I, base images can be associated with portions of this experience, or, in the case of one central base image, the experience itself. In the latter case, the imaged of this one base image is regarded as the imaged of the literary work.

Potebnja's 'main image' might be related to my 'base image,' however, as the following excerpts show, main image, for Potebnja, is an idea that precedes the work, or a complex which consists of subordinate images.

---

[6] By 'element' I mean a lexeme or simple phrase usually capable of evoking visual associations; most often nouns or short noun phrases. The category, however, can be widened to include various content words.

> A complex artistic work is exactly the same kind of development of the main image as the complex sentence is the development of one emotional image (qtd. in Fizer 45)
>
> Individual images, in order to yield content, are to be arranged in some relation of subordination and interdependence. The main image is either a complex that consists of subordinates or an idea of the intended object, graspable in the sensibly perceptible form. (Fizer 45)

While I agree with Potebnja that inter-image relations are necessary, in my framework, the base image is an image on its own, which is merely related to other images. It is not lifted out of the hierarchy and out of layer II, as an emotional image is lifted out of a sentence or an idea of an object from the set of images. In my framework, the base image is homogeneous with the rest of the images.

It is also worth noting that while Potebnja himself did not define image, Fizer attempted to abstract a definition from his arguments. According to him, Potebnja regarded the construction of images as happening either step by step, combining representations in words (a mode, according to Potebnja, preferred by narrative) *or* suddenly, at certain points in the text, where the internal form of a word dominates those around it (a mode preferred by lyrical texts) (Fizer 48). My definition of the image appears to be a combination of these two modes inasmuch as every image is postulated to have a centre while is enriched by a series of other elements at the same time.

I define the **theme** of a work of art as its experience or interpretation abstracted to a level which is common to all interpretations and the experience. (In this framework it is supposed that it is possible to do so based on the similarity of Readers in an interpretative group. However, in a less simplistic model of composition and reception of artistic works this postulate clearly should be refined or done away with. For the sake of the present argument, however, let me suppose that generally it is possible to determine the theme of certain works. 'Theme' is also used sometimes synonymously with 'the central problem in the experience.') **Metathesis** refers to the relationship between the represented theme / experience / interpretation on layer III and the representer layers II & I. In other words, it relates the experience centred around the theme and representations centred around the imaged of a work. If there is no metathesis in a work, that is, when layer III is directly rendered into layer I, and layer II is missing, the text is considered to become non-artistic, as suggested above.

The **lyrical I** is the addresser of the embedded communication, the intratextual Author provided the existence of two layers of communicative schemes is postulated (see, however, footnote 4 for a possible extension). What this framework adds to this model is that—pushing its various suggestions to the extreme—it supposes that one of these represents the other. As if building on the problematized status of the Reader in the model of embedded communications, this framework does not consider the possible representation of the Reader in the artwork.

I termed the relationship between the Author and its representation, the lyrical I **alienation,** mainly because I generally suppose them to be distinct and connected by nothing else than the representational relationship. I regard metathesis and alienation parallel and hardly separable processes, as one describes rendering the object, the other the subject of an experience into the object and the subject of a representation. Thus, alienation, similarly to metathesis, is required for artistic texts, as far as the scope of the present framework reaches. This requirement, let me point out, echoes the notion of the death of the Author as a necessary step (technique) in writing. As it

has been suggested, T. S. Eliot and Mark Schorer, among others, refer to the alienation of the experience from the original experiencer, the Author.

Equalling alienation and metathesis has the important consequence that—as far as theme can be regarded 'objectively' derivable from a text, and therefore regarded, in a limited sense, intratextual—general Authorial presence, that is, the extent of alienation manifests itself in the internal structure of an artwork, in the extent of metathesis, in the span between theme and imaged.

What this framework provides, therefore, is a model of the representation of the Author and its experience in a work of art, together with a few concepts and suggestions to investigate this representation. These tools will prove useful in the analyses of Browning's poems, in determining the status of the intratextual and the extratextual Author, and in investigating the 'deadness' of the latter in dramatic monologues.

The above concepts also allow a suggestion—based on preliminary analyses of some dramatic monologues—regarding the internal structures of the poems. It is based on the observation that the Speaker appears to be the most central and most thoroughly described element. In this sense, it may well occupy the position of the imaged around which layer II is organised. In other words, the suggestion is that the lyrical I and the imaged are equal in dramatic monologues.

This suggestion clearly differs from Robert Langbaum's suggestion on the essential nature of dramatic monologues, and even from other descriptions of this 'genre.' The differences shall be elaborated and both theories will be tested on specific cases in the coming sections.

Based on the suggestion that the lyrical I and the imaged are representations, however, their equality could be applied to the represented layer, layer III. In other words, my suggestion would entail that the Author is the theme in dramatic monologues. This, inferred proposition shall also be discussed, especially from the point of view of the irrecoverableness of layer III.

2.6 Conclusion

Based on my brief review of texts announcing the death of the Author it can, I think, be suggested that the direct application of these theories to literary texts is made problematic by two considerations. First, as Burke's deconstructionist attempts show, the problematic nature of anti-authorial arguments surface when the status of the their texts is considered. If applied directly to literary texts not addressing the problem of the Author, they appear either to relapse into a prescriptive methodological argument excluding the Author from the scope of analyses, or into an argument which suggests little of the death or the survival of the extratextual Author as it addresses primarily the status of a transcendental entity. Second, many anti-authorial texts appear not to uphold meticulously a distinction between the various types of Authors the existence of which could be considered, required or prohibited in literary discourses.

It was in order to ease the application of such arguments that I made an attempt to separate the functions of the Author in a hierarchy based on a model of communication and restrict the scope of my analyses to a number of these functions. The concepts of the representational framework shall also aid the analyses of literary works by providing tools to describe and trace the relationship between extratextual and intratextual entities.

The analyses of specific literary works in which I investigate to what extent the Author can be or is regarded dead might help, in my view, to determine the scope of applicability of anti-authorial arguments and the possibility of translating them into interpretative or critical strategies.

3 The Practice of the Dramatic Monologue

The dramatic monologue, in particular, offers itself as an especially challenging genre on which anti-authorial arguments can be tested as—on the first level of approximation—the Author is usually regarded to be hidden in or absent from these artworks to an exceptional degree. I have selected the poems to be analysed from Robert Browning's oeuvre as he authored a wide variety of dramatic monologues. Concentrating on a single Author also has the benefits of having to trace only one extratextual, biographical entity in the analyses.

Before proceeding to the readings, let me briefly consider some possible definitions of the genre of the dramatic monologue as they may well provide an insight into how the various Author-related entities are treated. Some suggestions in these arguments shall also be tested during the readings. Also, as I shall consider other readings, both contemporary and later, beside my analyses, let me also briefly summarize general reactions and approaches to dramatic monologues in the Victorian era.

3.1 The Dramatic Monologue

A. Defining the Dramatic Monologue

Glennis Byron's book titled *Dramatic Monologue* offers a lengthy review of the history of the definition of the genre. Her review starts with Beth Sessions' influential article published in 1947 (8), which, however, is based on a book of the same author published in 1933 (Langbaum 76). Sessions described seven required characteristics of dramatic monologues, and regards poems not meeting all of these requirements as imperfect examples of the genre (Byron 8–10). Unsurprisingly, *the* perfect dramatic monologue is Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess,* which did indeed meet the established criteria. Notably, Sessions' approach is vehemently criticised by Robert Langbaum, whose definition(s) of the dramatic monologue shall be considered in the next section in detail.

Continuing her review, Byron refers to Langbaum, but concludes that his approach, as it considers the way a dramatic monologue affects the Reader, is dependent on a fixed reader response (12). According to Byron, critical attention then turned to the text itself, concluding that while (as New Critics do) all poetic works can be considered to have dramatic features, in dramatic monologues, signals can be found that the Reader is not to equate the Speaker and the biographical Author (13). As my readings shall show, this might indeed be the case in Robert Browning's dramatic monologues, the most accessible and apparent signals being the titles (and subtitles) of the poems.

Byron continues by citing Alan Sinfield, in whose view the dramatic monologue pretends to be a first-person lyric while being a third-person narrative. "[A]n invented speaker masquerades in the first person which customarily signifies the poet's voice" (qtd. in Byron 14). It might be worth pointing out that this view is in apparent contradiction with that of New Criticism.

Recurring to Langbaum, Byron continues with arguments which see a split as the defining factor of the dramatic monologue. The resulting, supposedly different understanding of the Speaker and the Author / Reader, in her view, implies that two voices control one utterance in a dramatic monologue (15). Byron, however, quickly amends this suggestion by the observation that not every poem usually discussed as belonging to this genre is characterised by such a split. She refers to Loy D. Martin, who argues that the split between the voices is not on the level of argument, but on the level of character, that is, if "persons" are created around the voices, then they will be perceived as distinct even if they agree (Byron 16–17). Byron concludes the section "Poet and Speaker" of her review of the definitions with Isobel Armstrong, who sees a dramatic monologue as an utterance offering itself to both subjective and objective, both subject-centred and analytical readings (Byron 18–19).

It can be seen that attempts at defining the genre of the dramatic monologue and, particularly, determining the relationship between Author and Speaker in it resulted in a wide variety of standpoints. The problematic characteristics of the dramatic monologue may well make this genre, residing, in a sense, on the borderline between Romanticism and Modernism, a field on which anti-authorial arguments can be tested and challenged.

Let me, however, before proceeding, consider Robert Langbaum's arguments on the nature and the features of the dramatic monologue.

B. The Paradoxes of Robert Langbaum

Perhaps one of the most often cited treatise on the genre of dramatic monologue is Robert Langbaum's *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition.* From this book originates the notion that a (successful) dramatic monologue achieves its effect via a split between the audience's moral judgement on and sympathy for the speaker. In fact, however, this is not the only definition of the dramatic monologue found in Langbaum's work. Let me therefore briefly summarize and contrast his definitions, also taking into consideration the suggestion on the internal characteristics of dramatic monologues derived from my representational framework.

According to Langbaum, the dramatic monologue, like the novel, "teach[es] us how to reinvalidate moral judgment in an empiricist and relativist age" (4), that is, in Romanticism. It is to this end that sympathy, a "sympathetic identification" is necessary with the speaker, which should be in contradiction with the (traditional) moral judgment on her or him. In Langbaum's words, while the dramatic monologue "requires sympathy for the speaker as a condition of reading the poem" (86), "it is safe to say that most successful dramatic monologues deal with speakers who are in some way reprehensible or odd," in other words, there is to be a "split between moral judgment and our actual feeling for him [the speaker]" (85). That the case is not always so straightforward, as sometimes, judgment may in fact be in line with sympathy (as, arguably, can be the case in Browning's *Andrea del Sarto*), is shown by the fact that Langbaum is quick to add: "[the split] is also at work where sympathy is congruent with judgment although a step ahead of it" (105). This latter modification of his thesis problematizes the original suggestion to a point where it hardly states anything.

This is not the only way, however, in which Langbaum tries to grasp the *differentia specifica* of the dramatic monologue. In contrasting it to the soliloquy, Langbaum makes the observation that in a soliloquy, the meaning is also exposed, which presupposes the existence of a point of view outside the speaker which s/he in some cases

may adopt (155). In a dramatic monologue, corresponding to the dialogue in dramatic form rather than to the soliloquy, the speaker "is absorbed in his own strategy" (155). It is not possible to leave the established point of view, to change the perspective or for the speaker to change his or her mind (152–157). Langbaum summarizes the differences in the following way:

> The soliloquist is concerned with truth, he is trying to find the right point of view; while the speaker of the dramatic monologue starts with an established point of view, and is not concerned with its truth but with trying to impress it on the outside world. (146)
>
> The difference is that the soliloquist's subject is himself, while the speaker of the dramatic monologue directs his attention outward. […] It is not enough for [the soliloquist] to think his thoughts and feel his feelings, he must also describe them as an observer would. (146)

The notion that "the soliloquist's subject is himself" may easily be related to my idea that in dramatic monologues, the lyrical I is identical with the imaged (while, naturally, subject and imaged are by no means refer to the same thing and are derived from two distinct frameworks). It still does not undermine my proposed 'rule' for dramatic monologues, partly because the listed differences, and partly because the soliloquy / dramatic monologue distinction is problematized by Langbaum himself. One may find, for example, that Langbaum's suggestion that "it is a favourite device with Browning to have the speaker negate in the end his own argument" (184) clearly contradicts the prohibition for a speaker in dramatic monologues to leave her point of view. This contradiction can be explained away by suggesting that this negation is merely a recurrence to the *real* motives of the speaker which are unuttered but have been sensible throughout the monologue. But the notions that the speaker does not "expound" a meaning but merely pursues one (189), that the goal of the speaker in *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"* is self-understanding (198), that there is progress and self-revelation (199) stand in opposition with the idea that objectifying self-spection is characteristic of the soliloquy, while the speaker of the dramatic monologue is concerned with expressing his point of view and impressing it on the outside world. Langbaum even goes as far as suggesting that in *"Childe Roland"* the speaker becomes separate from his environment, just as a soliloquist would when taking an outer point of view: "the disparity in tense isolates from the dramatic business of the quest the knight's pattern-making dialogue with himself" (198).

The problematizing of the soliloquy / dramatic monologue opposition, however, does not end here. It also appears to be contradicted by Langbaum's suggestions regarding the role of the extratextual Author and Reader in dramatic monologues.

It is most notable that while Langbaum considers the true Authorial opinion on the Speakers usually unclear, even unknowable (106), he thinks it necessary that the Author *be there* behind the Speaker in dramatic monologues. Wordsworth's *The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman* and *The Affliction of Margaret* are not true dramatic monologues according to Langbaum, as

> Since we are not aware of the poet inside them, there is no means of ingress for us either. There is nothing to apprehend through sympathy, no core of character that is beyond what the speaker says, and therefore no disequilibrium between the speaker's utterance and the meaning of the poem. (72)

On Yeats's dramatic monologues, he remarks:

> It is because we sense in both speakers a consciousness beyond what
> Jane can intellectually and Ribh can historically lay claim to, because
> we sense the *poet's* consciousness in them, that we sympathize with
> their points of view understanding them as experience. It can be said of
> the dramatic monologue generally that there is at work in it a con-
> sciousness, whether intellectual or historical, beyond what the speaker
> can lay claim to. This consciousness is the mark of the *poet's projec-*
> *tion into the poem;* and it is also the pole which attracts our projection,
> since we find in it the counterpart of our own consciousness. (94, em-
> phasis added)

In other words, according to these excerpts, Langbaum clearly considers the Author as
not dead in dramatic monologues; in fact, s/he must be alive if the dramatic mono-
logue is to be a dramatic monologue at all.

It is worth noting that Langbaum, throughout the chapter titled "The Lyrical Ele-
ment," argues that the motive of a speaker of a dramatic monologue is insufficient for
the amount of story told. The dramatic monologue thus becomes primarily lyrical and
self-expressive. This is also a disequilibrium (a further one) that Langbaum considers
characteristic of dramatic monologues (188). In his view, it is to shift the speaker to
the centre, to make the situation merely a projection of him (196), in the end, it is "to
establish the speaker's existence" (200). Langbaum reaches the conclusion that this
characteristic (along with other ones treated shortly) forces the reader to look for a
resolution outside the poem, in the supposed 'life' of the speaker (201). It is notable
that according to the excerpts quoted above, we are to look for the extended life of the
speakers in the poet him- or herself.

In Barthes's essay, the elevation of the Reader is achieved via the debasement of
the Author. In Langbaum, it seems, the reverse process is taking place. That the Read-
er adopts the speaker's point of view and identifies with her (137) is not a surprising
suggestion. To amend this statement with the idea that even the Author does so, in
other words, that both extratextual agents are represented by the Speaker (52, see also
105) already in the poetry of experience, in Romantic poetry prior to the dramatic
monologue, is not unprecedented, either, but is made significant in my argument as it
echoes the suggestions made during the investigation of embedded communicative
schemes. But Langbaum, it seems, goes even further. When he further describes the
dichotomy between soliloquy and dramatic monologue, he raises the idea that dra-
matic monologues are not addressed to the audience directly (155). After an analysis
of T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,* Langbaum connects an extreme
version of this train of thought to the superfluous, lyrical element in dramatic mono-
logues:

> In introducing the speaker's other self as auditor, Eliot makes explicit
> what is implicit in all the dramatic monologues. All those inadequately
> motivated and ineffectual utterances are addressed ultimately across
> the dramatic situation and across the ostensible auditor to some projec-
> tion of the speaker for whom the superfluous element of the utterance
> is intended. (190)

This statement is repeated: "[T]he utterance is in its ultimate effect a private dialogue
of the speaker with himself" (196–197). With the suggestions of the ostensible auditor

and that the Author and the Reader are both identified with the Speaker, these views echo, in some sense, the model of embedded communications which also renders addressees on the topmost levels rudimentary, or, alternatively, suggests that embedded addressers and addressees are identical. One should not forget, however, that Langbaum does furnish the communication with an intratextual addressee: the doppelgänger of the Speaker.

The self-addressedness, in any case, contradicts what Langbaum postulated when established the soliloquy–dramatic monologue opposition, namely, that the dramatic monologist tries to impress her point of view on the outside world, she is "concerned only to exert force on the scene around [her]" (155), while it is the soliloquist who reflects on his own position.

In conclusion, it can be said that all definitions of the dramatic monologue Langbaum puts forward is problematized nearly to the point where they become tautological assertions. We are, therefore, despite the extended critique of Langbaum of the attempted characterisation of the dramatic monologue before his work, still left without a usable definition of the genre. It has been apparent, however, that on the theoretical level, Langbaum considers the author to be prominent in dramatic monologues, a postulate problematized by his own readings of specific poems.

C. The Reception of the Dramatic Monologue

It is suggested widely that the interpretative strategy prevalent in Browning's time did not accept too easily the assumption that a lyrical utterance is independent of its ultimate addresser, the extratextual Author, in the sense that the 'I' of the utterance cannot be identified with the poet, and thus, the poet appears to temporarily assume and discard personalities at his or her will (see, for example, Hesse 82–84). Elizabeth Barrett suggests that Browning's masks be thrown away:

> I do not think that, with all that music in you, only your personality should be dumb, nor that having thought so much & deeply on life & its ends, you should not teach what you have learnt, in the directest & most impressive way, the mask thrown away however moist with the breath. (qtd. in Hesse 83)

Frederick James Furnivall (1825–1910), in turn, appears to be downright irritated by the concept of the *mask.* He complains about these mediators "whose bodies I would fain kick out of the way, in order to get face to face with the poet himself, and hear his own voice speaking his own thoughts, man to man, soul to soul" (qtd. in Hesse 83).

However, these opinions appear to be extreme. As reactions collected in *Browning: The Critical Heritage* suggest, there arose, as expected, no special difficulties on the readers' part in interpreting dramatic monologues employing characters similarly to the method of dramatic works. The interpretative strategy required for dramatic monologues by no means appears as unprecedented. Robert Langbaum goes as far as suggesting that the dramatic monologue evolved directly from the Romantic "poetry of experience," and that its precursors are to be found among the works of Hopkins and Wordsworth (71–72). Here, naturally, 'dramatic monologue' means not only that the Speaker of a poem is not equal to its Author, but also the characteristics Langbaum strove to capture in his treatise.

It seems that the dramatic monologue introduced a *partly* new approach to the relationship to speakers in literary works. Regardless whether readers found it difficult to

interpret a poem in the seeming absence of its Author, or did it easily, it is still to be seen to what extent did they read the Author 'into' the text; whether it was supposed that the Author was 'hiding' behind the Speaker, was totally missing from the text, or was present in it as the true addresser, or none of the above variants; whether the apparent lack of moral judgment on reprehensible speakers was seen as a fault on the Author's part, or managed, as Langbaum thinks it the true goal of dramatic monologues, to regenerate morals and judgements in the Readers (4).

3.2 The Selection of Poems

I have tried to select some of Browning's dramatic monologues for close scrutiny in a way that they span most of the types of dramatic monologues found in Browning's oeuvre. Characteristics that I took into account were the following ones:

– Whether the poems selected represent a varied use of the Auditor, as the presence or absence of an intratextual addressee might influence greatly an interpretation based on the model of embedded communications.

– Whether there are portions of the poem which tempt an interpretation regarding them as—like the title and/or the subtitle—originating from the Author. The paragraphs enclosed in square brackets in *Caliban* or the epilogue segregated typographically from the rest of the text in *Bishop Blougram's Apology* (line 971 and onwards) are examples of such portions.

– As I think that the grammatical tense of a monologue may significantly alter its internal structure, the situatedness of the Speaker and the relationship between the Speaker and the unfolding events, I included in the poems to be analysed *"Childe Roland to the Dark tower Came"* in which the tense, unlike in the majority of Browning's monologues, is past. The poem, however, is not alone in this respect in Browning's oeuvre: *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* or *Porphyria's Lover* might be cited as further examples.

– I strove to include dramatic monologues from many of the collections published by Browning, so that the conclusions that can be drawn from the analyses would not be restricted to a narrow temporal window and thus, arguably, to a particular and specific creative strategy.

– The investigation of the treatment of sources by Browning may make it possible to assess the extent of Authorial control and pinpoint Authorial presence. This is why I analysed more poems with accessible and easily distinguishable sources, like *Andrea del Sarto, "Childe Roland"* or *Caliban upon Setebos.*

– It also turned out to be worthwhile investigating the placement of the Author in a poem which, although appears to conform to the formal requirements of the dramatic monologue, is widely held not to be one, in order to see whether a different relationship between its Speaker and Author as determined by my reading can account for the judgment passed on the poem by other readers. This is why I included *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

– Another important factor was whether an appropriate number of relevant reviews, responses and readings could be found to a particular poem, both from Browning's lifetime and after. For secondary sources contemporary with Browning, I primarily relied on *Browning: The Critical Heritage* edited by Boyd Litzinger and Donald Smalley, thus material reprinted in their collection also influenced my choice of poems.

Based on the above listed characteristics, I have selected *My Last Duchess, The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church, Andrea del Sarto, "Childe Ro-*

land to the Dark Tower Came," Caliban upon Setebos and *Rabbi Ben Ezra* for detailed analysis. I shall investigate the poems in chronological order.

I treat poems in isolation to be able to focus, as much as possible, on the texts themselves in my 'intratextual' closereadings; recurrent features, however, shall also be pointed out. During the closereadings, I shall attempt to determine the presence and the relationship between various addresser and addressee entities. I shall try to uncover structural properties that may account for the perceptible presence or absence of the Author. In reading the Author out of a poem, I, in a sense, will recur to and apply the measures used by critics calling for the death of the Author as a technique in writing. In other words, arguments for the methodological death of the Author are reversed in the ensuing analyses: rather than presupposing the absolute absence of the Author, it is attempted to point out its presence in the text.

The presence of the extratextual Author as suggested by my reading shall also be compared to the extent of metathesis in the particular poem, as this latter property was argued to signal Authorial presence on a general level. Moreover, I shall also investigate whether my suggestion regarding the Speaker (lyrical I) and the imaged holds for the selected poems or not. Whenever appropriate, the reading shall be amended by an 'extratextual' one in which I consider the sources of and intertextual allusions in the poems. My conclusions will be contrasted to other readings of the same poems. These readings (reviews or analyses) are considered as pieces of evidence regarding the treatment of the Author by audiences ranging from the Victorian to the (post)modern.

3.3 *My Last Duchess*

This relatively short poem was published first in 1842, in the collection titled *Dramatic Lyrics,* under the title of *Italy and France: I. Italy.* Then, *My Last Duchess* was paired with the poem later to be known as *Count Gismond;* the poem was given its new title in 1849. The monologue is uttered by an Italian Duke and relates the fate of his late wife, which, in turn, casts an unfavourable light on the Speaker.

A. Reading

A.1 Intratextual Reading

It is the new title that I begin my reading with. It is apparent that unlike in the case of many other dramatic monologues (*Andrea del Sarto, Caliban upon Setebos, The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church* to name a few) the title does not define the Speaker or an action of her or him taking course during the poem to follow. Instead, it only names an element that is talked *about,* like Setebos in the Caliban-monologue. This observation, and the fact that the Duchess indeed appears to be described in detail in the poem, foreshadows the possibility of regarding the Duchess as the imaged, which conclusion would contradict my assumption that in dramatic monologues in general, the Speaker occupies this position. As I shall attempt to show later, despite the title, the latter conclusion can be supported based on the text of the poem.

The (new) title, however, also proves to be worth of interest in another aspect. The possessive first person singular pronoun "My" suggests the interpretation that the title is uttered not by the Author (or the Inscriber), but by the Speaker, the Duke himself (especially retrospectively, after reading the poem). This is an exceptional case among Browning's dramatic monologues, and might be due to the fact that the poem was re-

titled after its composition. The Reader is not left, however, without a definition of the Speaker. It can be found in the subtitle, which cannot be uttered by the Speaker, hence in this textual element, the existence of an addresser above the Speaker—an (intratextual) Author—is secured.

Apart from the Speaker and the Author, *My Last Duchess* is also furnished with a silent Auditor. His passive role is similar to that of Lucrezia in *Andrea del Sarto,* and, like in that poem, the passivity might be regarded a consequence of the genre, of the fact that it is the Speaker's words which must constitute the text of the poem. This way, other characters are either speechless or their words need to be repeated by the Speaker. This solution, however, would, in my view, appear unnatural.

The situation here, however, is further complicated by the hierarchy between Speaker and Auditor. The passivity of the latter is further emphasized by the Speaker's (verbal) power over the Auditor, and by the fact that the Duke appears to ask questions *instead of* him: "for never read / Strangers like you that pictured countenance, […] But to myself they turned […] And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst, / How such a glance came there" (ll. 6–13).[7] Please note that in *Andrea del Sarto,* the Speaker appears to react to real gestures or questions of the Auditor. Here, the question was not asked. The Duke reacts to a situation he has created. It is also worth pointing out that for the Reader, the Auditor in *My Last Duchess* is defined at the very end, starting at line 49. This situation, which is so unlike the set-up in *Andrea del Sarto,* will be of special importance in situating the Author in a reading focusing on the text.

The entities established so far appear to be all which are more or less straightforwardly defined in this poem. Similarly to other dramatic monologues of Browning, not even direct quotations introduce, beyond doubt, further addressers. Words attributed to Frà Pandolf in lines 16–18 are introduced by the Duke by "*perhaps* / Frà Pandolf *chanced* to say" (ll. 15–16, emphasis added). The doubly emphasized hypothetical nature of this assertion problematizes the interpretation of the addresser and the addressee of the quoted sentences: they can well be interpreted as originating from the Duke in an attempt to support his judgment on the Duchess by an example. As Michael G. Miller points out, different interpretations of the addressee of these sentences may even lead to diametrically opposed interpretations of the nature of the Duchess herself. The direct quotation in lines 37–39, in turn, consists of hypothetical words of the Duke himself.

Taking up the problem of the imaged, let me now turn to investigating whether the suggestion that in dramatic monologues the Speaker occupies the place of the imaged, as derived from my representational framework, holds for this poem, which is often regarded to be the archetypal dramatic monologue. I shall argue that despite first impressions, the real imaged of the poem is the Duke.

While the middle part of the poem (ll. 13–35) is indeed about the Duchess, no visual image of her emerges from the text. Her actions are described instead, which are selected and rendered by the Duke. Addresses ("Sir" in line 13 and 25) and interjections ("how shall I say?" [l. 22] and "I know not how" [l. 32]) do not allow the Auditor (and thus, the Reader) forget that it is the Duke who controls the description. The Duchess's actions are also often directed toward the Duke (see "My favor" [l. 25] and "My gift" [l. 33]). These frequent linguistic signs, in my reading, direct attention from the Duchess herself to the attitude of the Duke. In other words, the Reader appears to be urged to read the Duke instead of the Duchess.

---

[7] All references to poems are given using line numbers only.

While it would be hard to visualize the Duchess or her portrait, one can find a number of visual elements in the section about her: *cheek, wrist, throat, heart, breast; dropping daylight, bough of cherries, orchard, white mule, terrace.* The first group of elements are body parts (similar elements dominate *Andrea del Sarto*), which describe the Duchess strictly from the point of view of, and in relation to the Duke. The latter elements, similarly to the linguistic signs listed above, focus not on the Duchess, but her surroundings—the estate of the Duke. Based on these observations, the suggestion might be risked that even the middle section of *My Last Duchess,* apparently about the Duchess, describes the Duke instead.

The central, most described position of the Duke can also be argued for on other bases. Of the characters of the narrative layer of this poem, the Duke, the Duchess, the envoy, the Count, his daughter and Frà Pandolf, he is the one of whom the most information is conveyed. I have argued above that the Duchess is hardly described at all; as for the envoy and Pandolf, we only know about their existence or presence and their reason for it. What the Reader is let to know about the Count and his daughter is conveyed in a few words only, intermingled with an assertion by the Duke about his own goals and motives.

Furthermore, if one takes into consideration the two temporal layers of the poem, the present of the Duke and the envoy and the past of the Duchess, then the Duchess, the only rival of the Duke for the position of the imaged, recedes further into the background. The present of the poem, controlled exclusively by the Speaker, frames the past, thus making it a subordinated episode. The episode of the Duchess merely describes the Duke; it is used to further illuminate his figure.

It can be seen, therefore, that the Speaker of *My Last Duchess* indeed can be regarded to be the imaged of the poem.

Having determined the imaged of the text, let me turn to investigating the extent of metathesis in *My Last Duchess* in order to determine, based on the postulates of the representational framework, whether the presence of an extratextual Author should be supposed to be felt by readers. If the theme of the poem is regarded to be power, more specifically, misused power, then, on a theoretical level, its representation centred around a historical figure from the 16th century who, in his self-assurance, transfers absolute social power to the domestic sphere, thus misusing it,[8] can be regarded as a metathesis wide enough to generally obscure layer III, the original experience along with the extratextual Author. Please note that this interpretation of the theme is in accordance with the view of Langbaum, who considers the Duke's power and freedom the main attractions for readers (83), and that of "Mr. Browning and the *Edinburgh Review"* which suggests that Browning's aim was to present a socially secure tyrannical figure exercising his power (264).

Despite the wide metathesis which, in my view, renders the extratextual Author generally untraceable in the poem (the Speaker appears to usurp even the title), there can be found some specific points where Authorial presence may still be perceived. One such point, unsurprisingly, is the form of the poem (let me set aside the problems presented by the mere fact that the poem is in English). *My Last Duchess* consists of rhyming couplets of iambic pentameters. The rhymes are always perfect, that is, both the nuclei and the codas of the last syllables are identical. Similarly, apart from occasional trochaic inversions at the beginning of lines, extremely few deviances can be found from the iambic rhythmic pattern (with the exception of line 30). While the

---

[8] Please note that this misuse is most probably not a misuse in the historical context of the poem, or in the historical context presented by Browning. It appears to be a misuse in my reading; other readings and interpretations from Browning's time shall be considered in the next section.

heavy use of enjambment renders the flow of speech more natural, overall, the form of the poem is highly artificial and therefore appears to originate outside the situation depicted in its narration; it originates from the Author. The hierarchy of addressers suggested by the theory of embedded communications is easily applicable to the present situation: the 'form' originates from the Author while the 'content' of the speech from the subordinated Speaker. It also explains why, if one interprets Pandolf's words as quoted and not invented by the Duke, they conform perfectly to the rhythmic and rhyme pattern and the language of the poem.

The Author, however, may also be felt to be present in the structure of the poem in the sense that the Author is the entity that controls the order of the pieces of information reaching the Reader. That we are informed of the Auditor's real identity—in the situation of the Speaker, well-known from the beginning—only at the end of the poem can be seen as a design originating from outside the narration. This 'punch-line' set-up, in my reading, also secures a perceivable presence for the Author.

And lastly, similarly to the case of *Andrea del Sarto,* a hinted interpretation can be traced in *My Last Duchess* to a certain extent. Based on the observation that the Duke's behaviour in both temporal layers—the present of the envoy and the past of the Duchess—is similarly and expressedly aggressive, the suggestion might be risked that the Reader seems to be pushed toward the interpretation which condemns the Duke and exalts the Duchess. The aggressiveness of the Duke, in my reading, is over-expressed. Not only he has total control over the envoy's physical state (making him sitting down and standing up) and over his words, posing questions instead of him, but he also has total control over the Duchess, over his people (he "gave commands" [l. 45]), and, it appears, in his view, over morality. This over-expressedness, in my reading, turns the Reader's attention from the embedded narration to an external addresser, the Author, and may even render the narrated situation less probable.

A.2 Extratextual Reading

I shall continue my reading with considering historical and literary sources to Browning's poem. *My Last Duchess,* it appears, relies less directly on one or a few sources like *Andrea del Sarto* does on Vasari's text and other biographies of the painter. It might be for this reason that critics list a number of works that might have influenced Browning, even if the parallel that can be established between the texts spans a few lines only.

Lou Thompson calls attention to the fact that lines 21–24 of *My Last Duchess* bear a resemblance to lines 873–75 of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (23). In both excerpts the speakers describe wives passed away (in Chaucer's case, Blanche of Lancaster, former wife to John of Gaunt); both excerpts deal with the gladness and the looks of the woman, and even the word 'glad' appears in both excerpts in a line-final position. The descriptions, however, are diametrically opposed as Chaucer's poem praises the wife:

> for were she never so glad,
> Hyr lokynge was not foly sprad,
> Ne wildely, thogh that she pleyde. (qtd. in Thompson 24)

Browning's Duke does the exact opposite: "She had / A heart […] too soon made glad, / […] she liked whate'er / She looked on, and her looks went everywhere" (ll. 21–24).

This intertextual relation—and the irony it entails—appears to further support the perceivability of the Author in *My Last Duchess*—unless, naturally, we suppose that the Duke himself is alluding to Chaucer.

Joseph A. Dupras, in his "Browning's 'My Last Duchess': Paragon and Parergon," points out that the elements of painting and curtain recall the tale of Zeuxis and Parrhasius (7); paired with the countenance of the Duchess, they recall Olivia's line from *Twelfth Night, or What You Will,* when she unveils: "But we will draw the curtain and show you the picture" (Act I, Scene v, qtd. in Dupras 7). Similarly to alluding to Chaucer, these connections, if read by the Reader, may further enhance the presence of the Author.

The most important extratextual source of *My Last Duchess,* however, is the one uncovered by Louis S. Friedland (quoted both by Dupras and Ian Lancashire). According to Friedland, Browning based his poem on the story of Alfonso II (1533–1598), fifth duke of Ferrara (1559–1597), whose first wife, Lucrezia de' Medici, died aged 17, three years after their marriage (Lancashire n. 1). "Alfonso contrived to meet his second to-be spouse, Barbara of Austria, in Innsbruck in July 1565. Nikolaus Marduz, who took orders from Ferdinand II, count of Tyrol, led Barbara's entourage then" (Lancashire n. 1).

Neither Dupras, nor Lancashire, however, refer to a painting or other representation of Lucrezia. The painting (or fresco) is most probably Browning's invention, introduced to bring almost to life and confront the Duke with his now doubly framed last Duchess.

In my reading, while the Author may be seen as sufficiently dead in *My Last Duchess,* which conclusion is supported by the theoretical consideration regarding its theme and metathesis, certain points could be found in the text where the Author might be perceived as surviving. Let me now consider other interpretations to see whether the Author is indeed seen as still present to a certain extent, and in order to test whether this presence is centred around the points I have collected.

B. Reading Reading

B.1 My Last Duchess and Browning's Audience

Litzinger and Smalley reprint a number of reviews of *My Last Duchess.* As the following overview of the more detailed ones shows, while many of these responses deal with the problem how the utterance of the Duke could have taken place, they are often contradictory, and sometimes diametrically opposed to each other.

It is of the improbability of the Duke's utterance that William Stigand complains about. In a review of Browning's career, he writes:

> [S]o artificial a production, where the whole of the speaker's life or character is to be derived from his own words, must always retain something of an air of improbability. […] [I]n the piece called 'My Last Duchess', it is very unnatural that the Duke should betray himself so entirely to the envoy who comes to negotiate a new marriage as to let him have the same opportunity of knowing as we have ourselves that his cold austerity and pride had been the death of his late wife. (253)

While he does not explain what feature of the poem made him feel the narrated story improbable, it can be assumed that if one interprets a work in a way that it lacks the probability necessary to create and sustain a layer in which and against which characters can be satisfactorily explained, then this fault, and even the message itself, is attributed to the extratextual Author—simply because in an interpretation which finds a 'story' improbable, most probably, no characters are 'real' enough to be considered as addressers of the message.

The unsigned review "Mr. Browning and the *Edinburgh Review"* was written to refute Stigand's article:

> Thus, in the Last Duchess […] Mr. Browning's main aim or idea was to set forth an historical fact, the security of insolence and lust reached by one of the Italian tyrants of the Sforza breed. That the Duke should speak in accordance with such a nature is precisely what the *Reviewer* picks out as 'very unnatural'. (264)

While this argument can be seen as supporting the idea that the Duke's speech is probable enough, and that, therefore,—continuing my previous argument—the character of the Duke is strong enough to overshadow the Author as addresser, this article does recur to an explanation of Authorial intention, whereas for the mere assertion that the Duke's speech is natural, citing Authorial intention would not have been necessary. In my view, this is because the monologue is felt to be unnatural even by this reviewer, but it is attempted to determine the probability of such an utterance in the historical context the poem sets it in.

It can be seen that the improbability I established in my reading based on the overstated power of the Duke extending to both temporal layers of the poem does surface in other readings, too. The careful alignment of the structure of the poem I referred to may also contribute to the surprise of the Reader about the identity of the Auditor and consequently to a feeling that the Duke's speech could not have happened.

A third review from Browning's lifetime can also be argued to deal with the same problems from the point of view of the questionable consciousness of the utterance. Richard Henry Stoddard suggests that

> He [Browning] excels Shakespeare, I think, in the art—if it be art— with which he makes his characters betray what they really are. They may deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive us. 'My Last Duchess' is a fine instance of this art […]. (372)

It is worth pointing out that reading the Duke's utterance as an unconscious betrayal of himself is in opposition with the previous reading which considers it in accordance with the Duke's "security of insolence and lust"—which social security, I think, would have been rather consciously felt and used by the Duke.

The three controversial readings of *My Last Duchess* quoted above (out of the four references to this poem in Litzinger and Smalley) show that while the Speaker is attempted to be analysed separately from the Author, and, in accordance with what I have suggested, no direct recurring to the Author or to his biography can be found during the poem's interpretation, the Author is still sought when the readers are faced with the problem of the probability of the Speaker's utterance.

B.2 Readings Since

The debate about the probability of the Duke's speech, about the conscious nature of it and, in a wider sense, about whether the Author or the Speaker controls the poem appears to have continued since the reactions quoted above.

Dorothy M. Mermin, in an essay analysing the role of the Auditor, remarks that the Duke has "extraordinary freedom to speak" and is characterized by "extreme self-consciousness about his own words" (140). This view, like that of "Mr. Browning and the *Edinburgh Review*," is in diametrical opposition with Stoddard's reading.

Langbaum and Dupras also appear to hold different views on the identity of the entity controlling the structural set-up of the poem. One of Langbaum's analyses of *My Last Duchess* includes this sentence, which is neither preceded nor followed by other remarks on the same issue: "It is because the *duke* determines the arrangement and relative subordination of the parts that the poem means what it does" (83, emphasis added). Dupras appears to suggest the very opposite: *"Browning* structures 'My Last Duchess' by deferring information about a prospective marriage […]" (9, emphasis added). While the difference in the method of reading might be a consequence of the almost forty years between the publications of these works,[9] the controversy suggests that it is not at all too easy to leave the Author rest in peace gained with his alleged death while reading *My Last Duchess.*

It is worth pointing out that if the improbability of the speech of the Duke can be linked to Langbaum's idea that motives for speaking in a dramatic monologue are never adequate, then another of Langbaum's remarks on *My Last Duchess* can be seen as explaining from another point of view why readers recur to extratextual sources; in the cases quoted from Browning's lifetime, to the Author himself:

> In *My Last Duchess,* it is because the duke's motive for telling the story is inadequate, and because the situation is never resolved in that the utterance is not quite directed to the auditor and does not accomplish anything, that *we look for a resolution in the duke's life outside the poem.* (201, emphasis added)

Here Langbaum talks of the duke's life as reaching beyond the frames of the poem, but this argument can be easily linked to the phenomena discussed above.

Michael G. Miller's reading, or, rather, metareading, is of special importance here as it shows the consequences of regarding an extratextual entity the direct addresser of the text of the poem instead of the Speaker. Miller analyses "a common undergraduate assessment of the Duchess as at best a flirt, at worst a faithless wife" (32). According to Miller, this (mis)interpretation is based on the (mis)assessment of the addressee of Frà Pandolf's words. If they are directed to the Duchess, then they would transgress social limits unless they are (were) encouraged by the Duchess—hence the unfavourable conclusion about the Duchess' nature. Miller argues that during the course of the original event, the sitting for the painting, these remarks were addressed to the Duke as a compliment. Miller suggests that this is a misreading which is supported by the text, by the Duke's merge of direct quotation with paraphrase so that the Reader does not know whether Pandolf used the first or the third person when referring to the

---

[9] Langbaum's book was first published in 1957. It is the third, 1985 edition that I am quoting. Dupras' article was published in 1996. Langbaum, despite his argument against character-based reading in Shakespeare (ch. 5), can be seen as recurring to the same method here. Dupras appears to distinguish between Speaker and Author.

Duchess. However, Miller continues, these sentences are to be seen through both by the envoy and the Reader. He is quick to add that this device is not a conscious trick on the Duke's part, but an unconscious betrayal of his unexpressed thoughts (another contribution to the consciousness–debate).

Setting the question of consciousness aside, let me add that the above described situation is further complicated by the fact that it is not at all sure whether Frà Pandolf in reality said anything the Duke quotes. It can also be supposed that by quoting the remarks, the Duke (consciously or not) aims at further debasing the Duchess—what is sure that these quotations are used to further illustrate her alleged nature. If so, then it becomes of special importance which entity is regarded as the direct addresser of these sentences. If the Duke, then they are interpreted along with the Duke's other arguments for the rightful decision to stop all smiles together. If, however, an extratextual entity is supposed as the speaker of these lines (a Frà Pandolf existing outside the narration, or even, in an indirect nature, the Author if these quoted sentences are read as if not filtered through the Speaker), then it is easier to interpret these sentences as referring directly to an episode which has happened in, but before the reality of the poem, thus supporting the interpretation Miller seeks to refute.

The probability, consciousness and reliability of the Speaker's speech in *My Last Duchess* can all be seen as interpreted in opposing ways by different readers. In my view, these differences are the results of the different perceptions about the embedded addressers of the poem—in the end, of the different perceptions about whether an extratextual authority, the Author can be perceived behind the whole or behind specific parts of the monologue.

C. Conclusion

It can be seen that my reading predicted quite successfully whether and at what points the Author is looked for by other readings of *My Last Duchess.* Especially the points of the structural set-up of the poem and the questionable probability of the Duke's speech appear to have surfaced in most of the readings. On the general level, however, as the investigation of metathesis suggested, the Author can be regarded to be sufficiently absent from the poem (unlike, for example, in *"Childe Roland,"* in which poem a general presence can be perceived); indeed, the poem appears to have been read in almost every possible ways except what a general Authorial presence would have suggested: as a direct or allegorical statement. Moreover, the poem also appears to conform to the description of the internal structure of dramatic monologues I have suggested.

The Author in *My Last Duchess,* therefore, can hardly be regarded absolutely dead in the Barthesian sense. While the entity is generally missing from the poem, it can be read 'out of' the text and is recurred to when the Reader is faced with a problematic point in the interpretation. Stigand and the article refuting his arguments directly refer to Authorial intention; at the other end of the scale Miller can be found, who can be seen recurring to the Author not directly but via the question who addresses to whom portions of the text.

The Author has a continued existence here not in the way Potter means, as Browning is unlikely to participate in on-line chat, and not necessarily in the way Barthes sees it, in a way which closes and narrows the potential of a text. Instead, the Author seems to be referred to as a complex of the generator and a generated Author, as an addresser entity linked to the extratextual Author. In this sense, traces are left behind

of the Author even after its death and after its loss via metathesis: the earthly remains of an entity buried in the text of the poem.

3.4 *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*

The Bishop Orders His Tomb was published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* in 1845 under the title *The Tomb at St. Praxed's.* It was retitled in 1849 (Cervo 204). It is supposedly spoken by a dying Bishop who describes in detail a sepulchre to be built for him, and offers riches to his Auditors so that they should follow his instructions.

A. Reading

A.1 Reading the Text

As in many other dramatic monologues, in this poem, the title and the subtitle provide a refuge for the Author. While nothing in the title and the subtitle goes against an interpretation regarding the Speaker as their addresser, in my view, the somewhat ironic wording of the title suggests that it originates from the Author, or another entity outside the communicative scheme of the Speaker.

As the two direct quotations ("Do I live, am I dead?" in lines 13 and 113, both uttered by the Speaker) do not introduce further entities, there are no more addressers in the poem. However, there are more addressees—the group of "[n]ephews—sons" (l. 3) the Bishop is talking to. The fact that only one of them is named, Anselm, who, in my reading, is unmisinterpretably presented as the Speaker's son (see "Child of my bowels" in line 64), draws attention to the fact that the Bishop has disregarded the requirement of celibacy—precisely, it must be added, in the century when Reformation questioned this discipline (see also Wikipedia s.v. "Clerical celibacy"). While the special attention to Anselm might be interpreted as a result of the Speaker's paternal feelings or of his (unconscious) shame at the fruit of his 'sin,' I think it more signals a technique employed by the Author to emphasize and illuminate the way of live of the Bishop. Several other such hints, in my reading, are traceable in the poem.

The first line of the poem, unlike other Biblical allusions (see lines 51 and 101) is not integrated into the monologue; the Speaker addresses the Auditors only in the second line:

> Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
> Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back? (ll. 1–2)

The first line echoes Ecclesiastes 1:2, and appears to pass judgment on the Bishop's goal to get a more magnificent tomb than that of his predecessor. As the lines do not cohere, in my reading, the addresser of the first line is more the Author than the Speaker—at this point, therefore, my reading suggests a perceivable authorial presence.

An interpretation suggested by an entity above the Speaker, the Author, may also be hinted by the distribution of the interjection "Ah God." Line 3 contains "ah God, I know not!" at the point when the Bishop addresses the Auditors flocking around him as "sons" and begins to describe *she,* who is usually referred to as his child's (or children's) mother (see lines 4, 96, 105). In line 39, one finds "Ah God, I know not, I!" when the Speaker reveals the location of a large lump of *lapis lazuli* he had saved for

his sepulchre—and, immediately before uttering the name of the stone, the Bishop utters the same interjection again: "Some lump, <u>ah God,</u> of *lapis lazuli"* (l. 42, underline added). From this list it seems that the interjection signals a hesitation before relating or alluding to an action usually considered not righteous or appropriate for a bishop—pursuing earthly love and treasures.

Based on this observation, their distribution might be deduced from a psychological reading of the character of the Bishop. However, two observations problematize such an approach. The first one is that a similar (or any kind of) interjection is not present elsewhere, at points when the Speaker mixes earthly and divine elements, bordering on blasphemy: when the blueness of the *lapis lazuli* is described "as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast" (l. 44); when church ceremony is described as "God made and eaten all day long" (l. 82; the "all they long" adverbial, in my reading, further pushes the interpretation toward the very action as opposed to its significance), or when the Bishop is willing to pray to Saint Praxed for "brown Greek manuscripts, / And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs" (ll. 74–75) for his Auditors. The second observation is that the Bishop's relation to *she* is, most probably, well-known to the Auditors from the beginning. His admitting having fathered a child (or children) is a surprise (or a shock) to the Reader only. The use of the interjection at that point, therefore, in the reality of the narrative layer, is not justified. Because of these observations, I read these interjections as originating more from the Author. These elements, like the naming of Anselm only, may serve to emphasize the fallible nature of the Bishop by calling attention to the (past) actions related.

Body parts, which also appear to be important in this poem, although to a lesser degree than in, for example, *Andrea del Sarto,* may also hint an unfavourable judgment on the Bishop. In the monologue, only his extremities are referred to, and of the four references, three are to the lower ones. The Speaker arranges his body and bedclothes to create the stone effigy that—he appears to fear—will never be realised:

> I fold my *arms* as if they clasped a crook,
> And stretch my *feet* forth straight as stone can point,
> And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
> Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work
> (ll. 87–90, emphasis added)

He also describes the tomb to be built in relation to his legs: "The odd one [of the nine columns] at my *feet* where Anselm stands" (l. 28, emphasis added); "So, let the blue lump poise between my *knees"* (l. 47, emphasis added). In my reading, the references to the (lower) extremities evoke a sense of materiality. The Bishop's torso, heart or head—parts, in my view, more associated with the 'divine spark,' the soul—are not described and are never referred to. Moreover, the last two references (lines 28 and 47), the first of which associates the son with a column placed at the legs, the second of which refers to a bulge at the same place, may even be read as phallic allusions, further supporting a sense of earthliness.

In my reading, an interpretation of these give-aways as originating from the Bishop's guilty conscience is problematic, as no such sign of guilt surfaces when the Bishop describes, in a surprisingly easy tone, the mother and Old Gandolf's (imagined or real) envy: "Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!" (l. 5), "Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes" (l. 96), "They [your eyes] glitter like your mother's for my soul" (l. 105), "As still he [Old Gandolf] envied me, so fair she was!" (l. 125). Thus, I regard the focus on these signs of materiality as originating more from the Author; in

other words, even if to a small degree, but this technique may also signal Authorial control, presence.

The reaction of the Auditors—it is apparent from line 113 and onwards that, despite the fact that the Bishop continues talking, they leave—may also provide a hint as to how the poem and the Speaker is to be interpreted. Their leaving cannot be justified based on the information the Reader is provided with during the monologue. The fact that the Bishop promises them a villa in a wealthy suburb of Rome among other riches (see lines 45–46, 64–66, 70, 102–103 and Abrams et al. 2:1360 n. 2)—which is emphasized often enough and from many different points of view that it, most probably, is not taken as a fancy of the Speaker—makes their leaving surprising, if not suspicious. In my reading, it also signals an ultimate judgment passed on the condemnable nature of the Speaker, which is in line with all other hints at a judgment deduced from other layers of the poem. Because of the inconsistency described above, I read this hint, too, as originating from the Author.

So far, I have suggested that at many points in *The Bishop Orders His Tomb* the Author is present to a certain degree, mostly via elements which appear to suggest an interpretation to be accepted by the Reader. Let me now attempt to determine the extent of the metathesis in general in this poem, as it, according to the postulates of the representational framework, may signal the removedness, the deadness of the Author from the poem on a general level.

The many concrete elements, in my reading, construct detailed structures—images—on layer II in *The Bishop Orders His Tomb.* The many visualizable elements (*corner, carrion, pulpit, choir, seats, aery dome, angels, sunbeam,* to list the nouns which, according to my reading, create a visual model of the view from the Bishop's future grave in lines 18–24) enrich layer II with images centred around the future tomb of the Bishop, which, in turn, is used to describe the Bishop himself. Unlike the Speaker in *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* the Bishop is also defined in relation to characters 'real' on the level of narration: *she,* Old Gandolf, Anselm, the other Auditors, even the Pope. All these elements appear to describe to Bishop, who thus occupies the position of the imaged on layer II. It can be concluded, therefore, that this poem conforms to my suggested rule regarding the Speaker and the imaged in dramatic monologues.

Detailed structures on layer II, according to my experience, in most cases entail in themselves a relatively wide metathesis, as they constitute a detailed model the original problem, the theme is represented by. If one regards the abstract notion *vanity* as the theme of *The Bishop Orders His Tomb* (it being a notion which cannot be easily abstracted further), then the metathesis between this theme and its representation set in Italy during the late Renaissance, centred around a figure rarely associated with vanity, a bishop, is, in my reading, wide enough to make layer III (the original 'problem' of the Author and Authorial intention) difficult or impossible to access. As it can be seen, the abundance of images and the 'distance' between theme and imaged (according to my interpretation) both suggest that metathesis has taken place in this poem.

The fact that the metathesis is wide in *The Bishop Orders His Tomb* merely suggests that the Author is irrecoverable, or dead, on a general level. At specific points, Authorial intention, a hinted judgment is traceable in the poem. In other words, while the Author can be seen sufficiently absent from this dramatic monologue, it still cannot be stated that he is wholly dead. Not only the very form of the poem, an artificial blank verse, and the use of the English language make it necessary to assume the existence of an addresser entity above the Speaker; even Authorial intention, to a certain extent, appears to be traceable in the text.

A.2 Reading Outside the Text

The original contexts of the Biblical allusions are also worth taking into considera-
tion. While both the allusion in line 51 ("Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years")
to Job 7.6 ("My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope"
[Authorized Version]) and the one in line 101 ("Evil and brief hath been my pilgrim-
age") to Genesis 47.9:

> And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage
> *are* an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years
> of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the
> life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. (Authorized Version
> Gen 47.9)

express, on the surface, grief over the shortness and hopelessness of life—in them-
selves surprising as they are uttered by a bishop—their original contexts appear to
provide extra twists. Job utters the quoted sentence in an answer to Eliphaz (Author-
ized Version Job 4–5); his argument is to be answered by Bildad (Authorized Version
Job 8). Against the arguments of Eliphaz and Bildad suggesting that God is righteous,
therefore Job must have sinned thus deserving his misfortunes, Job claims that he
does not understand the causes of the tragedies that befell him. While his belief is un-
faltering, his speech may be read as questioning, to a certain extent, God's actions,
expecting him to help: "Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through
visions: / So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than life" (Authorized
Version Job 7.14–15); "And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take
away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the
morning, but I *shall* not *be"* (Authorized Version Job 7.21). A sentence taken from
this argument may well portray the Bishop as identifying himself with Job's position
at this point in his narrative—as a person at odds with God. The second half of Ja-
cob's speech to Pharaoh also appears to condemn the Bishop: it is, via his temporary
identification with Jacob, himself, who appears to say—had he finished the quota-
tion—that in ways he is less than his forefathers, that is, his predecessors.

In my reading, these subtle ironies—if they were indeed intended and it is not only
in my reading that they surfaced—also hint an unfavourable judgment on the Bishop,
and increase a perceivable Authorial presence in the poem.

B. Reading Reading

William Stigand's reading of the poem is particularly interesting as he considers the
monologue a manifestation of the opinion of the Author:

> [I]n the 'Bishop ordering his Tomb' on his death-bed we never lose the
> peculiar accents of Mr. Browning's quaintness for a moment. It is, for
> example, Mr. Browning who is speaking through the Bishop's mouth
> when he says—
>> And then how I shall lie through centuries,
>> And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
>> And see God made and eaten all day long,
>> And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
>> Good strong thick stupifying [sic] incense smoke! [ll. 80–84]

> These lines have a characteristic aptness about them, but no bishop
> would describe Church ceremonies in this way. (253)

Stigand sees the Author surface at a point which I have also listed in my reading. However, my reading of the poem suggested that Authorial presence in general is not as perceivable as Stigand claims.

Nathan A. Cervo's reading is also worth citing, as he appears to point out another point of Authorial presence. His reading is based on contrasting Browning's poem to some passages from Saint Anselm's (1033/34–1109) works suggesting that the name 'Anselm' in Browning's poem alludes to the historical person. He suggests that the dramatic monologue presents a parody, in a sense, of the teachings of Saint Anselm. By this extratextual source, like by the contexts of Biblical allusions, the Speaker appears to be judged; he is regarded as a "grotesque parody" (205). While Cervo does not attribute this possible interplay between the cited texts to the Author, I think it again slightly enhances a feeling of Authorial control traceable throughout the poem.

C. Conclusion

In *The Bishop Orders His Tomb,* therefore, the pattern of Authorial presence is similar to that in *My Last Duchess.* While generally the extratextual Author remains inaccessible, it, nevertheless, proved to be possible to read the (an) Author out of the poem and pinpoint the structural characteristics which, it seems, may have contributed to the Authorial control felt by, for example, William Stigand as expressed in his reading. Despite the fact that the portions of the text I pointed out in my reading appear to secure the existence of the Author, it, as suggested by the fact that the metathesis was found to be wide, remains in the background throughout.

Unlike *My Last Duchess,* the interpretation of this poem appears not to cause or have caused special problems. A (re)constructed Authorial intention needs not to be cited as it seemed it was needed in the case of the previous poem to deal with the dubious probability and consciousness of the utterance. That the interpretation of the Bishop is seemingly so straightforward, however, raises the suspicion whether it is not the result of an interpretation successfully hinted for the Readers by an Author behind the Speaker. In my view, the interpretation of this poem is made not so complicated by the choice of its imaged and the fact that knowledge about values and lifestyles related to the Christian religion is shared by 21st-century and Victorian audiences. In this respect, these audiences appear to belong to one interpretative community. As the choice of the imaged and the Speaker is under Authorial control, this suggestion, along with the other points of Authorial presence, makes the Author an entity which cannot be, in my reading, circumvented in this poem.

3.5 *Andrea del Sarto*

Andrea del Sarto was first published in 1855 in Browning's collection titled *Men and Women.* Based primarily on Giorgio Vasari's account of the Florentine painter, the poem illuminates Andrea's failure in his art, the bad influence of his wife and his own weakness to alter his situation.

A. Reading

A.1 An Intratextual Reading

As in the previous analyses, the proposed theory based on embedded communicative schemes provides a way of establishing the addressers of various portions of the poem. The title defines the Speaker, who is the (an) addresser of the whole poem, with two exceptions: the title and the subtitle. The addresser of these portions, as I have suggested earlier, cannot be the Speaker or the Narrator: it is either the Author or the Inscriber; in either case, they provide intratextual evidence for the existence of communicative layers above that of the Speaker. Most probably, the form of the poem, blank verse, also signals that there is an entity, and addresser beyond the Speaker. The sophisticated, artful format of the Speaker's utterance, contradicting the sincerity and incidentality signalled by its contents, renders, in my view, an interpretation regarding the Speaker as an ultimate and therefore real-life, extratextual addresser impossible.

Direct quotations can also be investigated in the poem as they might introduce further speakers mediated through the Speaker. As it turns out, in only one direct quotation it is absolutely clear that a new, subordinate speaker is being introduced. The first instance is a vain sigh (ll. 102–103) uttered by Andrea himself. The second one consists of words Lucrezia could have said (ll. 128–131), thus the speaker is Andrea again. The third case quotes what men *will* say (ll. 177–179), so the speaker must be Andrea; and the fourth relates the words of Agnolo (Michelangelo) in an anecdote (ll. 189–193). Agnolo can be regarded as a distinct speaker, however, his point blends so completely with that of Andrea that his distinctness is hardly perceivable.

As for addressees, or auditors, the poem presents Lucrezia as one, although it is questionable whether she is listening to the Speaker's words at all. Later on, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the Auditor's existence is so dependent on the Speaker, that it may not be able to serve as an independent addressee. The situation one is presented with this way echoes, on the one hand, the (problematic) set-up suggested by Langbaum, that the Speaker addresses himself *across* the Auditor, and, on the other hand, the model of embedded communications which postulates that embedded addressees (Auditors) are necessarily rudimentary.

Having established the existence of the Speaker and an entity above it, the Author (let me refer to this entity as the 'Author,' while bearing it in mind that this entity can be regarded as derived from the text and therefore, in a sense, intratextual. For this reason it might be also referred to as the 'Inscriber'), let me investigate whether at some points it can be argued that the Author 'speaks over' the Speaker, where the message is not retransmitted via Andrea, where the direct addresser, arguably, is Browning himself. This inquiry is in line, in a sense, with Langbaum's suggestion that the poet should be felt behind the speaker, while is in opposition with his assertion that the true opinion (judgment) of the author on the speaker usually cannot be known from intratextual evidence only (106).

If a contradiction is found between two statements in the poem verbalised approximately to the same degree, then it can be supposed that they originate from distinct sources. As *Andrea del Sarto* does have distinct sources (the texts of Giorgio Vasari and Filippo Baldinucci [see Hogg 68], *and* Browning), if one statement originates more or less directly from Browning's sources and the other from Browning himself, this fact might be signalled by an intratextual contradiction. One such contradiction can indeed be found in the poem. While Andrea states that he is "unmoved by men's blame / Or their praise either" (ll. 91–92), he fears what the Paris lords might be say-

ing about him: "I dared not, do you know, leave home all day, / For fear of chancing on the Paris lords. / The best is when they pass and look aside, / But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all" (ll. 145–148), he is constantly worried about men's opinion (ll. 56, 64–66, 76–77, 180), quotes Michelangelo's praise (ll. 189–193) and would like to see himself as the fourth in the Michelangelo–Raphael–Leonardo triad. Please note that this instance of contradiction cannot be easily explained away as a give-away or unintentional self-revelation by the Speaker, as the two sides of the contradiction are expressed equally directly (compare especially lines 91–92 with lines 145–148, quoted above). It can, therefore, be supposed that one of the sides of this contradiction originates from Browning more or less directly. As shall be seen, this conclusion can indeed be justified by extratextual evidence.

Contradictions are not the only points where authorial presence might be traced. If the Reader finds that emotionally or with other techniques it is hinted that s/he is to trust the Speaker's words and accept them as true, then the Speaker becomes not independent of the perceived authorial viewpoint; in the extreme case, the Speaker is interpreted as the Author's mouthpiece.

Several such techniques can be found in *Andrea del Sarto.* The setting, autumn, dusk to evening, reflects well the depressed mood of the Speaker, and creates an emotional atmosphere in which this depressedness is most probably accepted without questioning its basis.

Commonplace-like morals, the majority of which transfers responsibility to God ("At the end, / God, I conclude, compensates, punishes" [ll. 140–141], "God is just" [ll. 213], etc.), and one of which actually provides the Reader with an interpretation of Andrea's situation ("In this world, who can do a thing, will not; / And who would do it, cannot, I perceive" [ll. 137–138]) are not contradicted by facts of Andrea's life as presented. The Reader most probably finds that based on the related episodes of Andrea's life, he failed in several respects, and that based on the morals he utters, he is aware of his unsuccessfulness. The one question the poem most probably leaves unanswered is whether Lucrezia is to blame for Andrea's fate. Otherwise, by the morals, a complete interpretation is hinted.

This set-up is unlike that of the dramatic monologues in which Browning explores possible psychological bases of abhorred acts. In *Porphyria's Lover,* the Speaker's judgment that the strangled girl's head is "So glad it has its utmost will" (l. 53) is contradicted by the fact that its owner is no longer alive. In *My Last Duchess,* the object of the whole monologue is thwarted by the related murder. In *Andrea del Sarto,* not the judgments or the morals of Andrea can be interpreted as instances of strong authorial presence, but the fact that everything is in line with these morals, and thus the Reader appears to be pushed toward the hinted interpretation.

Let me point out at this point, that this structural set-up contradicts the rule set up by Langbaum, namely, that good dramatic monologues are based on a split between sympathy and moral judgment, in other words, between a subjective scale of values of the Speaker the Reader adopts in the process of identification and an objective scale represented by the Victorian (and, arguably, present-day) society. No such tension is to be found in *Andrea del Sarto;* which may account for the fact that Langbaum misses to mention this poem in the chapter in which he introduces this rule, but treats it at length in another.

Let me now turn to investigate the proposal regarding the lyrical I (the Speaker) and the imaged derived from the representational framework. As has been suggested, the

imaged of a work of art occupies a central position. If it can be shown that the Speaker indeed does so, and that other elements in the poem are arranged around it in a way that they describe it, then it can be inferred that the Speaker serves as the imaged.

First, let me investigate the building blocks of images, the elements, with special attention to visual ones. Notably, all visual elements appear to originate from a level extremely close to the Speaker. They seem to be restricted mainly to body parts (which have also been abundant in *My Last Duchess* and *The Bishop Orders His Tomb*) and, in a few cases, personal tools of the painter (see *chalk,* line 196). With the exception of occasional landscapes (see lines 41–44 for a description of a chapel and around line 90 for a vague description of a mountain), body parts dominate the visual layer of the poem. Lucrezia is visualized via her *face (×2), heart, hand (×3), breast, hair,*[10] *ears* (ll. 1–34); even in the contemplative part, counting is done on *fingers* (l. 72), other painters' personality is described via their *brain*s and *heart*s (l. 80); what Andrea criticises in Raphael's painting is an *arm* (l. 111); in the description of King Francis one finds *finger, beard, mouth, smile, arm, breath* related to the Speaker's *shoulder, neck* and *ears;* the court has *eyes* and *hearts* (ll. 154–161). The list could be continued.

While this apparent focus on body could be paralleled with Andrea's judgment on his own abilities, that he is able to paint a body, but without a soul (see line 113, for example), it also makes the visual layer of the poem highly personal, which puts the Lyrical I (the entity from whose point of view the body parts of others can be seen) into the centre (as body parts can be argued to be perceived as very 'close' to the observer in both senses), that is, puts the Lyrical I into the position of the imaged.

It can be also attempted to group elements of the poem not visually (spatially), but following a temporal logic. It seems that parts of Andrea's contemplation fall into one of the following categories: past, present or future.

The episode in France, where there was no Lucrezia, is in the past, as the possibilities available to Andrea at that time are already lost. Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo might be argued to form a kind of present for Andrea, as he is constantly comparing himself to them. In this sense, other painters in whom "there burns a truer light of God" (l. 79) also belong to the present. In the present, unlike in the past episode in France, there is Lucrezia. And finally, the scene in "New Jerusalem" (ll. 261–266) refers to a future hoped for. What is apparent in this threefold structure is that it may be said to span a whole world, as it incorporates all three stages of time, and that this world is divided from the viewpoint of, or, in other words, is centred around the Lyrical I, Andrea. Based on this analysis, the conclusion that the Lyrical I occupies a central position could again be reached.

And finally, it can be shown that even the figure of the Auditor, Lucrezia appears to be dependent on the Speaker. In the middle part of the poem, all references to her (including the word *you,* the address *Love*) gradually disappear, hand in hand with the physical existence of Lucrezia. No clues are given as to what happened between their holding hands (ll. 21–22) with Andrea sitting by the window (ll. 13–15), and her being at the window at a distance from Andrea who is now inside (l. 211). In fact, the physical existence of both characters is swept away by Andrea's contemplation in the middle part.

Lucrezia's disappearance might support an interpretation according to which the limitations of Andrea are in reality internal, and he only projects them onto Lucrezia, or Lucrezia serves as an embodiment of these limitations.

---

[10] See line 26 and footnote 3 in Abrams et al. 2:1385.

The dependence of the figure of Lucrezia on the Speaker is also emphasized by the fact that apparently no verbal communication takes place on Lucrezia's part. Andrea's questions: "You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?" (l. 4) "Must you go? / That Cousin here again?" (ll. 219–220) refer more to gestures than to verbal messages. The only exception to this might be Andrea's explaining whom he is quoting in lines 199–200: "(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo? / Do you forget already words like those?)", which might be a reaction to a question of Lucrezia. Still, on the whole, Lucrezia is presented as dumb, which fact may support the feeling that she is portrayed as absolutely dependent.

That said, it is worth noting that, like in *My Last Duchess,* such portrayal may be a consequence of the genre. However, the apparent dependence of Lucrezia can still be argued to be perceived by the Reader regardless of its true reason.

It is also worth mentioning that Lucrezia gains an existence independent of Andrea only when the Cousin appears or is referred to. That is, pushing this statement to the extreme, Lucrezia exists only in relation to either Andrea or the Cousin—in other words, in relation to men.

The fact that Lucrezia, for the most part, appears to be defined only from the point of view of the Lyrical I, and that she can be argued to describe the Lyrical I in the sense that she represents the limited nature of his artistic abilities, again puts the Lyrical I in the position of the central, most described element, the imaged.

All of the above outlined three arguments support the conclusion that in *Andrea del Sarto,* the Lyrical I is indeed the imaged of the poem at the same time.

Having determined the imaged of *Andrea del Sarto,* the extent of its metathesis may be determined by comparing it to the theme. In my view, the problem that appears to be central in this poem can be abstracted to the notion 'failure,' both in relation to the personal and the artistic. If this interpretation can be accepted, then the metathesis rendering the theme of failure into a representation centred around an artist who failed does not appear to be surprisingly wide. Let me, however, attempt to determine the extent of metathesis from other points of view.

My list of visual elements above shows that the poem does contain elements that are able to create and enrich images, structures on layer II. Theoretically, in their total absence, no distinct layer II is generated, making the metathesis nonexistent. The visual elements, however, appear to be one-sided. While in *My Last Duchess* body parts are complemented by elements from the estate of the Duke, here, no such other salient elements can be found. While in *My Last Duchess,* images centred around the sitting-scene, the habits of the Duchess, etc.; and in *The Bishop Orders His Tomb,* a series of images of his future sepulchre can be found, in *Andrea del Sarto,* the elements, in my reading, do not appear to structure themselves into a series of images. There are, naturally, exceptions to this suggestion, like the view of Fiesole (ll. 41–45), the micro-image of the loving hands (ll. 21–22) or the somewhat less coherent image of the French court (ll. 153–164). Compared to the length of the poem, however, these images appear to be too scarce to dominate layer II, which fact might be a result of the more contemplative, of the more emotive than the somewhat conative tone of the previous poems. The scarcity of images, in any case, implies the same conclusion, that the metathesis, although wide enough as the original experiencer is transliterated into a person from the previous centuries, is somewhat narrower than in, for example, the previous dramatic monologues. This suggestion is also supported by the presence of commonplace-like phrases, at which points, in my reading, layer II is nonexistent. In these cases, assertions are rendered directly via general concepts, that is, layer III is rendered directly into layer I.

From investigating the internal structure of the poem and possible points where strong authorial presence can be supposed, let me now turn to contrasting the text to extratextual sources.

A.2 An Extratextual Reading

Andrea's portrayal by Browning shall be compared to Giorgio Vasari's account in order to see whether authorial presence suggested by my intratextual reading is accompanied by a traceable deviation from Vasari's text.

James Hogg asserts that Browning based the poem not only on Vasari's *Le Vite de' più eccellenti Architetti, Pittori et Scultori,* but also on Filippo Baldinucci's text (67–68); however, I shall focus on Vasari's text only. He also suggests that Browning *probably* used the 1550, first edition of Vasari, in which "Lucrezia del Fede is depicted in the darkest colours" (68). (For a brief comparison of the two editions, see Vayer 19–22.) I used three sources of Vasari's biography. Excerpts from Mrs Jonathan Foster's translation of the 1550 account are reprinted in *Browning: Men and Women and Other Poems* (henceforth cited as Vasari F). It is the second, 1568 edition that Zoltán Zsámboki's Hungarian translation is based on in *A legkiválóbb festők, szobrászok és építészek élete* (henceforth cited as Vasari Z). It is chiefly used to refer to incidents related in parts of the biography omitted from Vasari F. And finally, an online portion of Andrea's biography is accessible in the *Medieval Sourcebook* (cited as Vasari A). Its translator and source have not been established. However, based on the fact that its portrayal of Lucrezia resembles very much that of Vasari F, and even contains passages missing from Vasari Z,[11] it is highly probable that it is based on the 1550 version, but is the work of a different translator. Its importance is in the fact that in this excerpt, the relation of an incident missing from Vasari F but present in Vasari Z can be found. The main points of difference between Browning's poem and Vasari's description of Andrea are the following:

Browning appears to have invented the figure of the Cousin. (Hogg suggests the same [70].) Jealousy is indeed mentioned by all three versions (Vasari F 44; Vasari Z 517; Vasari A par. 3), but it is never made clear whether Andrea had practical reasons for this feeling. Moreover, Andrea did paint to order before his marriage (attested to by all three sources), so the idea in the poem that because of Lucrezia, he must now paint to please customers can be considered to be an exaggeration. This difference, it seems, could be traced based on intratextual analysis, where it was argued that the interpretation hinted by the Author puts Andrea's failure and Lucrezia's part in it into the focus.

Vasari Z also makes it clear that Andrea drew and painted studies often before embarking on the task of a larger work (passim). The poem states the opposite: "No sketches first, no studies, that's long past" (l. 68). This approach might well reflect Browning's technique of writing. Unlike the previous difference, this one could not be detected based on the text itself.

---

[11] Compare "His disciples still remained with him, it is true, in the hope of learning something useful, yet there was not one of them, great or small, who was not maltreated by his wife, both by evil words and despiteful actions: none could escape her blows, but although Andrea lived in the midst of all that torment, he yet accounted it a high pleasure" (Andrea F 45) and "For though his pupils stayed with him, hoping to learn something from him, there was not one, great or small, who did not suffer by her evil words or blows during the time he was there. // Nevertheless, this torment seemed to him [Andrea] the highest pleasure" (Vasari A, par. 3–4). The ideas expressed in these excerpts are wholly missing from Vasari Z.

The last point of difference, however, is clearly signalled by intratextual evidence. Vasari relates an episode in which a friar, Fra Mariano dal Canto alle Macine lures Andrea into a competition with his friend and fellow painter, Francia, so that he could pay less for his work. His argument was that Andrea could achieve fame by painting a beautiful fresco (Vasari Z 513; Vasari A par 2). This episode, along with other suggestions of Vasari, proves that Andrea was far from being unmoved by men's praise or blame, as suggested in the poem in line 91. As it has been pointed out, this statement is in contradiction with other elements of the poem itself, too. (It should also be noted that it is not hinted by Vasari that Andrea was a man of independence, in fact, he states that he was timid [Vasari F 41; Vasari Z 537]. To complicate the matter of Andrea's personality further, the note accompanying Vasari Z suggests that Vasari overstates Andrea's timidity based on his paintings [Vasari Z 509].)

This instance of authorial presence is further supported by considering Browning's own position. In a letter to Elizabeth Barrett postmarked on 11 February 1845, he describes in a lengthy paragraph his relationship with his audience and the critics. "Not being listened to by one human creature would, I hope, in nowise affect me" (*Letters* 18), he writes, and, after likening his poems to cabbages grown in his garden, and considering what positive effects people think favourable reception might have on his life, exclaims: "[B]ut you see! Indeed I force myself to say ever and anon, in the interest of the market-gardeners regular, and Keatses proper, 'It's nothing to *you,* critics, hucksters, all of you, if I *have* this garden and this conscience' " (*Letters* 18–19). "He is, he insists, and intends to remain, quite independent of his critics, and of the public as well" (Litzinger and Smalley 1), summarizes this paragraph the "Introduction" to *Browning: The Critical Heritage.* In this respect and at this point in *Andrea del Sarto,* Browning appears to have projected his own ideal status, despite Vasari's account, into the text.

A.3 Conclusion

In my reading of *Andrea del Sarto,* the Author is far from being totally absent from the poem. This suggestion appears to hold for various functions of the Author. The presence of a generated methodological Author can be felt in the form of the poem, in the text surrounding it, and in the occasional discrepancies in the poem itself. This presence, in turn, could be related to the process of composition of the poem, to the usage of sources and to elements from the biography of its Author—in other words, to a presence of the generator extratextual, biographical Author. That is, if to a limited degree only, but the Author could be traced in a genre in which it is supposed to be dead to an exceptional degree, where a clearly indicated mask is placed in front of the Author. This conclusion is also attested to by the slightly narrower metathesis.

However, as this presence is still quite limited, *Andrea del Sarto* cannot be said to contradict, by its existence and the artistic value attributed to it, the tenets which call for the death of the Author in artistic writing. This is also because the arguments for this technique of writing can be read in a way that they do not call for the total effacement of the Author, only "surrendering" its personality. Moreover, the example of this poem, precisely because I strove to maintain the distinction between the various functions of the Author, can hardly be used against arguments set out to do away with the transcendental Author.

It does show, however, that the Author easily surfaces even in readings confined to the text (as much as I was able to), and that despite the fact that their presence is often connected, it can be fruitful to separate the intratextual and extratextual, the generated

and biographical Authors. It shows the problematic nature of anti-authorial arguments at points where, probably based on their opposition to biographical positivism enlarged into a transcendental anti-authorialism, they project the death of the Author to the extratextual, real-life Author and to the intratextual addresser constructed by the act of reading.

My reading of *Andrea del Sarto* also suggests that its internal structure, as investigated by the tools of the representational framework, conforms to the supposed set-up of dramatic monologues. In my reading, sympathy with and judgment over Andrea, however, was not compatible with Langbaum's definition of the dramatic monologue (shown to be in itself problematic).

Let me now turn to other readings of *Andrea del Sarto* to see to what degree the Author is / was perceived to be dead in it, and whether authorial presence is / was perceived at the points mentioned in my reading.

B. Reading Reading

B.1 Reception in Browning's Time

Let me relate four relevant reactions to *Andrea del Sarto* that could be found in Litzinger and Smalley. The first reactions attest to the fact that a mask indeed could be interpreted and dealt with, as expected, without any difficulty or reservation. The third and the fourth one, conversely, present a way of reading that supposes a closer connection between Speaker and Author thus securing the Author's presence in this dramatic monologue.

David Masson writes the following about the poem:

> In the piece entitled 'Andrea Del Sarto', we have a companion-portrait, equally vivid, of a painter of graver and more melancholy nature. These two poems [*Andrea del Sarto* and *Fra Lippo Lippi*] are, in fact, biographies in miniature, and, probably, give a more perfect idea of the two men as they lived, and of the principles on which they painted, than many more extensive accounts of them. (182)

In Masson's reading, the Speaker, because of the historical faithfulness, is independent of the Author; apparently nothing remains of the Author in the text, the Author is really dead.

Margaret Oliphant's comment might be interpreted in the light of the observation that *Andrea del Sarto* is one of the few dramatic monologues in which the Speaker's disposition is most probably compatible with judgment, with, as far as I see it, the then accepted morals of the society. Oliphant remarks, "Only very few of his *Men and Women* is it possible to make out: indeed, we fear that Andrea and the Bishop Blougram are about the only intelligible sketches, to our poor apprehension, in the volumes" (188). Other dramatic monologues (and poems in general) of Browning's were generally held to be obscure, even unintelligible. That none of the reactions to *Andrea del Sarto* considers it obscure, and Oliphant goes as far as judging it intelligible, might be a consequence of its morals being compatible with those of the Readers and thus of the lack of a tension, a split in Langbaum's sense; of the lack of uncertainty. From this fact, however, it would be hard to determine whether readers like Oliphant regarded the Author transparent or missing (by attributing all ideas, morals to the Speaker) or strongly present (by suggesting that Andrea was chosen because his suggestions, ideas or situation is similar to that of the Author). The statement could be

risked, however, that since the interpretation of this poem is not hindered by strong tensions, judgements on the Speaker by himself are also attributed, to a certain extent, to the Author.

An unsigned review in *The Dublin University Magazine* presents a closer relationship between Author and poem: "Still, the words of a man [Browning] who thinks are always worth reading. 'Andrea del Sarto' will repay a careful perusal" (190). For this reader, the Author is felt at work 'behind the lines'; he is the one ultimately responsible for the text. This type of reading is in opposition to Masson's approach, who regards Andrea's portrayal faithful to the historical figure. Moreover, a reaction that praises the thinking of the Author regarding this poem makes it possible to imagine reactions that might have praised or criticized the style of *Andrea del Sarto*. Indeed, as it has been pointed out, the textual level can be considered to be under the total control of the Author, not the Speaker.

The last remark on this poem makes it apparent that the Author indeed is felt to be there behind the figure of Andrea. Richard Henry Stoddard suggests that "Nothing in literature is more masterly than the faultless painter's unconscious betrayal of his unknown shame" (372). As if the shame is really unknown to Andrea, he simply cannot betray it, this situation can occur only if the Speaker utters things that originate not from him, but from behind (or above), from the Author. One might even argue (even if *unknown* above means suppressed or unacknowledged) that what makes this betrayal apparent for the Reader is the Author's hinted judgment on him, which can be traced in the hints pointed out in my reading that facilitate this interpretation.

This can well be an instance of authorial presence to which Langbaum refers when he considers the presence of the Author 'behind' the Speaker necessary for a tension between meaning and utterance (72).

Reactions to *Andrea del Sarto* contemporary with the poem posited various relationships between its Author and Speaker. The majority of the readings, however, could be interpreted as regarding the Author present in the poem and contributing to its interpretation. While this might be regarded as a consequence of the influence of an interpretative strategy at odds with so direct a notion of a mask in front of an Author, I regard them as pieces of evidence that the Author (at this point, it is unclear whether the intratextual or the extratextual one) is not entirely dead for the Readers, that the Author, even after its necessary transcendental death in discourse, leaves traces, its textual remains, its tomb in the poem.

B.2 Reading Readings of Later Days

In considering some readings of *Andrea del Sarto* well after Browning's, let me proceed, at start, in an approximately chronological order.

It appears that many of the readings that appeared after or during the 1950s focus almost exclusively on the character of Andrea. Langbaum (the 1st edition of his work appeared in 1957) relates the actions of Andrea at length: "But Andrea is using his account to make love to Lucrezia, to persuade her […] He is trying to impress her" (148–149), then goes on describing what Andrea does not see or realize but what he still expresses (149). This psychological reading is extended as far as internalising the environment of Andrea into his psyche. It seems as if Andrea was creating time, light and weather: "But he does not see that he is a voluptuary *creating* the ideal conditions for his pleasure—that the hour, as he sees it, washes away with an enchanting vagueness all moral issues, while both season and hour stimulate soft regret and self-pity" (150, emphasis added). While selecting a dramatic monologue's setting could be re-

garded as one of the last refuges where the Author still survives, Langbaum appears to vest Andrea with the power to control layers of the reality presented by his monologue traditionally regarded as being outside his jurisdiction. In this sense, Langbaum, in his reading of the poem, appears to consider the Author as dead as possible—contradicting his own assumption that in a dramatic monologue something is to be felt behind the Speaker.

Richard D. Altick's reading (1968) also concentrates on the feelings and actions of the Speaker. His reading, centred around the question of the inadequateness of self-deception in Andrea's case, appears to gradually turn into a prose paraphrase. Still, he does not go as far as Langbaum in nullifying the Author. He too notices the "close relationship in this poem between technique and content" (226), but attributes this effect to the Author: "In 'Andrea del Sarto' *Browning's* artistry intensifies the ultimate psychological revealment" (226, emphasis added). The tone and the mood of the poem are likewise not attributed to the Speaker (227). Altick, in other words, appears to maintain that certain levels of a text fall under authorial control. The almost exclusive focus on the Speaker in the rest of his reading, however, renders the Author more dead than in some contemporary reactions to the poem.

James Hogg (2000) presents no exception to this line. His reading, interrupting and intermingled with a review of readings of *Andrea del Sarto,* hardly exceeds a prose paraphrase (70–71), and, as in the previous readings, its focus is on the actions and probable feelings of the Speaker. Many of the readings he cites also analyse the poem (or, rather, Andrea) in a psychological manner, including William Lyon Phelps, who argues that "[i]t is *natural* that he, whose paintings show perfection of form without spirit, should have married a woman of physical beauty devoid of soul" ([1912], qtd. in Hogg 72, emphasis added); Mark Roberts, according to whom Andrea "*chose* Lucrezia and the life that went with her, because that was the kind of man he was" ([1966], qtd. in Hogg 73, underline added); and Norton B Crowell, who wonders whether Andrea and Lucrezia can decide whose fault the whole situation is ([1972]. qtd. in Hogg 73). However, Hogg cites three authors who appear to discover the extratextual Author in the poem. Thomas Collins regards the poem a statement expressing Browning's idea that "flesh and soul" are to be integrated in order to achieve meaning ([1967], Hogg 72); Betty Miller, according to Hogg, sees a parallel between Lucrezia and Elizabeth Barrett thus establishing a biographical link ([1952], Hogg 73), and David Shaw argues for an artistic parallel between Andrea and Browning ([1968], Hogg 73–74).

C. Conclusion

The Author appears to be more alive in *Andrea del Sarto* than in the poems previously analysed. What is, I think, even more important, is that here, ties could be established to the pretextual, biographical Author, while such connections could not be discovered by my readings in the cases of *My Last Duchess* or in that of *The Bishop Orders His Tomb.*

Other readings of *Andrea del Sarto,* as my brief overview suggests, see the Author as present to varying degrees. What is notable, however, is that whenever the Author is excluded from a reading, the reading almost always considers the psychology of the Speaker—as if one addresser entity, the Author has been abandoned merely to focus on a rounded-off, psychologized, and therefore, in the strict sense, extratextual version of the Speaker. In this sense, most of the cited readings look 'outside' the poem for an interpretation, and for such an action, arguably, an entity outside the narrative

level of the poem need to be presupposed. This fact, in my view, shows the difficulty of reading a text criss-crossed with the traces of the Author without recurring to an extratextual entity.

3.6 *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"*

"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" was published in Browning's collection titled *Men and Women* in 1855. According to Abrams et al., the poem, relating an apparently aimless quest set in a nightmare-like landscape, was composed three years earlier (2:1373). One of the most important features of the poem which sets it apart from many other dramatic monologues of Browning is that the past tense is used throughout. At first sight, the past tense might be regarded as a consequence of the intention to integrate a quotation from Shakespeare's *King Lear* into the poem, which is set in simple past. The two occurrences of this line in Browning's poem—one is the title, the other is a part of the very last line—, however, are direct quotations, therefore, their presence do not require a similar tense in the body of the text. I think, however, that the fact that this line is extracted from an extract in Shakespeare's play from a ballad-like song did influence the Author who then was, in a sense, compelled to write the very ballad the line is taken from—a task that, on the level of form, requires the conventions of story-telling, thus the use of the past tense. In my reading, I also attempt to investigate the effect of this choice.

A. Reading

Similarly to its tense, the title and the subtitle of the poem also differ from those of many other dramatic monologues of the same Author. The title is a quotation, to be uttered by the Speaker. The subtitle sets a reference (similarly to the subtitle of *My Last Duchess,* for example), but reference here is not to a historical person, but to an extract from a literary work. The Speaker is defined in neither; he is not even named, as Arnold Saphiro points out (94). The imperative of the subtitle, however, makes it apparent that it is addressed by an entity above the Speaker, the Inscriber or the Author. Despite the lack of a direct reference to a personage, the subtitle does contain an indirect one: to Edgar in Shakespeare's play. Indeed, parallels can be established between the environment around the Speaker, and the past adventures of "Poor Tom" as related by Edgar.

My suggestion that the poem follows the conventions of storytelling is problematized by the fact that there is no Auditor defined. Still, many textual elements can be found which support the conclusion that the poem is addressed to an audience. "For mark!" appears in line 49 before relating an incidence belonging to the realm of miracles. The "so" in "So, on I went" (l. 55) and "You'd think" (l. 60) could also be cited as techniques usually employed by storytellers to maintain the connection with their audience. The most direct address, however, is the one in line 167: "How thus they had surprised me—*solve it, you!"* (emphasis added). In my reading, it sounds like a jovial storyteller posing a riddle to an audience of children. The absence of an Auditor, and the *in medias res* beginning, however, questions these conclusions. The contradiction might be resolved by suggesting that the above addresses, in the absence of an Auditor, address directly the Reader. Please note that in the theory of embedded communications I have argued that all addressees might be mutually identified with each other. The reduced nature of embedded communicative schemes also makes it

possible to conceive a message addressed by an embedded Speaker to an (intratextual?) Reader situated on an upper level.

Direct quotations in *"Childe Roland,"* similarly to other dramatic monologues, can be regarded as uttered by the Speaker himself.[12] Therefore, their presence introduces no other addresser entities. While the Speaker does name the speaker of lines 62–66 (it is "Nature"), it can be argued that these words originate from the Speaker himself. As I shall attempt to show, at least half of the abomination of the landscape is generated by the Speaker by relating his thoughts triggered by the sight. Shapiro goes as far as suggesting that the Speaker attributes malicious intent to the landscape, to Nature. He also cites several sources suggesting the same (89–90). If this is so, then personifying these intents in the openly allegorical figures of Nature and the hills (speaking as the audience of a circus in Roman times, see line 192) does not introduce addressers distinct from the Speaker.

As the only more or less directly defined entities of *"Childe Roland"* are the Speaker and the Author, it comes as no surprise that it is often attempted to relate the two, as readings cited in the next section show. Such a connection, in my reading, is suggested by the text at several points, as the Speaker's contemplation can be related to Browning's literary career. Lines 19–24 describe the joy of success not even sought for anymore:

> For, what with my whole word-wide wandering,
>> What with my search drawn out through years, my hope
>> Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
> With that obstreperous joy success would bring,
> I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
>> My heart made, finding failure in its scope. (ll. 19–24)

Starting at line 37, one finds

> This, I had so long suffered in this quest,
>> Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
>> So many times among "The Band"—to wit,
> The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
> Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
>> And all the doubt was now—should I be fit? (ll. 37–42)

Intratextually, these portions are signalled by the lack of visual elements and the abundance of nouns general in meaning. The text generates meaning on the level of notions; layer II here is nonexistent, layer III can be directly generated from layer I, and, in my reading, it is supposed by readers that during the process of composition, layer III was directly rendered into layer I. In other words, what one hears here is taken more to be the voice of the Author, especially as elsewhere, as I shall show, the Speaker uses language rendered via images, via layer II.

Extratextually, the laments of these extracts can be related to Browning's literary career. He had received a great amount of negative criticism, and was generally held uninterpretable—hence the lines 37–38. Probably as a consequence of this alienation, he expressed many times that he is not seeking success: "A poet's affair is with God" (qtd. in Litzinger and Smalley 1); similar ideas appear to be expressed in lines 19–24.

---

[12] For the sake of brevity, let me refer to the Speaker as 'he,' noting that nothing goes against an interpretation regarding the Speaker female.

In Litzinger and Smalley the poet is described in 1850 as a man whose popularity lagged behind that of his wife, and who, unlike Elizabeth, was not even considered for the Poet Laurateship (ultimately given to Tennyson). In 1852, the year of composing *"Childe Roland,"* Browning's essay to be prefaced to a volume of Shelley's letters was withdrawn along with the book as the letters "were shown to be spurious" (Litzinger and Smalley 12–13).[13] The last thing Browning had published was *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* in 1850, and *Men and Women* was not to appear until 1855. As far as a person's 'state of mind' can be inferred from these biographemes, it might not be meaningless to suggest that in the passages quoted above, a self-image of the extra-textual Author is represented.

Continuing this line of reasoning, the hills could be interpreted as hostile critics, while the "lost adventurers my peers" (l. 195) standing "ranged along the hillsides, met / To view the last of me" (ll. 199–200) may represent literary predecessors Browning might have regarded great but unacknowledged. Shunning 'earthly' success might also be expressed in the Speaker's goal to "fail as they" (l. 41), and blowing the "slug-horn" may refer to the continuation of writing, to the re-starting of writing, to starting writing—the very poem that has ended. This interpretation, however, is weakened by the suggestion that the Speaker is already considered to be part of "The Band" of the knights gone to the "Dark Tower" (ll. 38–40), and, seemingly, his very reward at the end is to be part of their group. Still, I think, the suggestion can be maintained that the intratextual features of the passages quoted above may compel the Reader to search for an interpretation of *"Childe Roland"* considering its Author.

Having suggested both that layer II and thus metathesis is at work in the poem generally, and that instances of the Author do appear directly in the text, thus there is no metathesis at specific points, let me turn to investigate metathesis itself, its existence and extent in *"Childe Roland."*

The are more similes and metaphors in this poem than what would be expected on the basis of, for example, *Andrea del Sarto* or *My Last Duchess.* As such figures connect two elements in a descriptive relationship, they are miniature images. Indeed, generally, I have found that an abundance of such figures (together with symbols) signal a heavy use of images, and therefore suggest the existence of layer II and metathesis. Before partly refuting this conclusion, let me point out that it is via these figures that the Speaker appears to create a Nature even more frightening. It is the Speaker who introduces leprosy in the simile "As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair / In leprosy" (ll. 73–74), successfully evoking a revolting visual image. He likens the river to a serpent (ll. 109–110), evoking the image of the reptile, while it is not seen, in the strict sense, in his environment. Likewise, he introduces the image of a tortured baby when describing the cry of a small animal he unintentionally killed (ll. 125–126): "ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek" (l. 126). It is he who introduces images of cruel social hierarchy and medieval pogroms in the simile "Mad brewage set to work / Their brains, no doubt, like galley slaves the Turk / Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews" (ll. 136–138), and it is he who attributes evil motives to still hills "Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight" (l. 177).

But the Speaker can be heard creating his own environment outside rhetorical figures. He imagines the "skull-like laugh" (l. 10) of the cripple only; it is only his description of the cirque which includes "Toads in a poisoned tank, / Or wild cats in a

---

[13] Mike Tierce quotes Harold Bloom and Browning and suggests that "[T]he poem is a poetic version of Browning's assertion in his essay on Shelley ('dated a month before the completion of Childe Roland') that 'an absolute vision is not for this world' and that any poet must accept the doctrine of 'perfection in imperfection' " (10).

red-hot iron cage" (ll. 131–132). Seeing a strange machine, he immediately asks: "What *bad* use was that engine for […] that harrow fit to reel / Men's bodies out like silk?" (ll. 140–142, emphasis added). Inherent malice is hinted doubly, by the general adjective "bad" and the quite visual description of a merely supposed use. It is based on this technique, it appears, that many readings regard the landscape a projection of the Speaker's mind.

Let me, however, return to the question of metathesis. The reason why the frequency of figures does not immediately result in a wide metathesis in the case of this poem is the fact that the Speaker often recurs to contemplation without images, without metathesis. This is not restricted to the two stanzas quoted above; even rhetorical figures can be found in which an element is likened to a general notion devoid of any visual content. From the cripple, the Speaker turns "quiet as despair" (l. 43)—here, despite the use of a simile, the nouns hardly enrich layer II, both of them being too general to trigger specific associations or visual images. Only the overall negativity is enhanced; the structures on layer II, in my reading, are left intact. Similarly, the description of the mouth, itself used to describe another element, hardly contributes to layer II in "Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him / Like a distorted mouth *that splits its rim / Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils"* (ll. 154–156, emphasis added). Descriptions in *"Childe Roland"* can often be seen as being replaced by relations of action involving elements too general to contribute to the landscape. The Speaker can again be heard generating the landscape by suggesting that "'tis a brute must walk / Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents" (ll. 71–72), but the noun "brute" is too universal, even too common (and repeated) to describe anything than negativity in its widest sense. In these cases my reading suggests that the Speaker must appear as talking 'out of' the description. His contribution to the landscape appears so alien to description that it is, rather, interpreted as a kind of contemplation.

This effect is most apparent at the description of the horse (ll. 76–84). The few adjectives and colours describing the animal are intermingled with the Speaker's remarks. The horse is taken to have been "Thrust out past service from the devil's stud" (l. 78); the Speaker is not sure whether it is "Alive? he might be dead for aught I know" (l. 79), and finally concludes that "I never saw a brute I hated so; / He must be wicked to deserve such pain" (ll. 83–84). Based on other, more successful 'asides' of the Speaker, these remarks are, in my reading, taken as intended to enhance the effect of the vision. But they are not successful in this respect. "Browning is not in proper control of the tone here" (333) concludes C. C. Clarke analysing the same passage, although on slightly different grounds.

Taking into consideration that the text continues with a commonplace-like line ("I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart" [l. 85]) and with a contemplation of knights once friends to the Speaker, but later facing disgrace, the horse-episode might get an alternative interpretation. It successfully introduces a contemplative tone that is continued for four stanzas, until the Speaker encounters the river. Here, it is expressed directly that the new sight bounces the tone back—to descriptive: "when something on the dismal flat / Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train" (ll. 107–108).

This alternative analysis, while provides a reason for it, still leaves this and other portions of *"Childe Roland"* interpretable only as non-descriptive, as lacking metathesis. The extended simile of the Speaker likening himself to an old man fearing not to die and thus offend his loved ones (ll. 25–36) presents itself as an ironical, even humorous, anecdote. As such, it hardly contributes to the visuality of the poem (apart from the nouns *banners, scarves* and *staves* it includes). The decisive moment for the Speaker, first thinking that his progress came to a halt, then feeling that he was

trapped, and then realizing that he had achieved his goal, is also rendered in the contemplative tone (ll. 163–176). This portion even contains the direct address "solve it, you!" (l. 167) quoted above.

Overall, the extent of metathesis seems to be extremely varied in *"Childe Roland."* While parts with a supposedly lesser degree of alienation do not suggest a general interpretation of the poem, but merely provide localized remarks and possible ties to the Author, this varied nature of the metathesis may well lead Readers to regard portions with wide metathesis to be without real metathesis—to represent the author via a badly disguised allegory.

In this respect, that the Speaker of *"Childe Roland"* is often regarded to be close to the Author, this poem differs from most dramatic monologues of Browning. In my opinion, the contemplative tone that mostly triggers this interpretation (although not always) is (was) made possible by the use of the past tense. The suggestion might be risked that, although it is not at all clear whether the narration happens simultaneously with or after the events related, the use of past tense, in the composition process, alienated the Speaker from the events of the narration—thereby creating a "cleft" through which contemplative, even—arguably—biographical elements could percolate into the poem. Langbaum also suggests that alienation is apparent in the poem based on the tense used in a remark quoted at the analysis of his views (198).

Having established the extent of metathesis, let me attempt to determine the imaged of *"Childe Roland."* This task is made all the more difficult by the fact that nothing appears to be known of the Speaker. It is clear that directly, not him, but elements of the Nature are described, but even visual centres (imageds) such as the horse, the river, the machine–wheel, the cirque, are not described enough to occupy the position of the one central imaged of the poem. In my view, either it is to be concluded that layer II of *"Childe Roland"* does not have a centre, or one is compelled to suggest that although the landscape appears to be described in general, nothing is described in it in particular—at least to the extent to become the centre of the representation. In this latter case, the one element present at every description can be regarded as the imaged—the Speaker.

This conclusion is also supported by the suggestion that many elements in the landscape actually originate from the Speaker. If this statement is pushed to the extreme, and it is suggested, as above, that the landscape is a projection of the Speaker's mind, then the conclusion that the Speaker is the imaged is straightforward. Thus, even *"Childe Roland"* appears to conform to this "rule."

Finally, let me consider another extratextual source of *"Childe Roland"*—Shakespeare's *King Lear*. As suggested above, Edgar's monologues about Tom's way of life do contain elements that reappear in the landscape of *"Childe Roland."* In his speech starting with "Who gives anything to poor Tom?" we find "whom [Tom] the foul fiend hath led through *fire* and through *flame,* through *ford* and whirlpool, o'er *bog and quagmire"* (1:1153; ll. 3.4.51–53, emphasis added)—in Browning's poem, *sheet of flame* (l. 201), *mud* kneaded up with blood (ll. 74–75), fording a river (l. 121) can all be found. Even a horse is present in Edgar's monologue. There, the horse appears in a row of incidents tempting Tom to commit suicide, but the context of all other above listed elements do match that of the elements in Browning's poem. *Toad* and *rat,* used in *"Childe Roland"* by the Speaker to describe the landscape (ll. 131 and 125) also appear in *King Lear,* in another monologue of Edgar describing Tom's usual meal (1:1155; ll. 3.4.124–127). Apart from these elements, a thematic parallel may also be established, as the plot of *King Lear* appears to revolve around sight, seeing as knowledge; likewise, in Browning's poem, the Speaker begins to see what was

invisible to him up to the end of his journey, "After a life spent training for the *sight"* (l. 180, emphasis added).

I do not think, however, that these literary parallels (like the intertextual connections of *My Last Duchess,* for example) enhance the presence of the Author, especially as the parallel is stated in the subtitle. A strong Authorial presence—either felt or even created by the Reader—, because of the varying degree of metathesis, still characterizes the poem.

B. Reading Reading

B.1 Assessments of the Contemporary Audience

This Authorial presence, it seems, can be traced in contemporary reactions. The two reviews of *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"* cited here assess the literary value of the poem in opposite ways. G. Brimley and T. C. C. (whom has not been identified) think it an uninterpretable allegory:

> The poem consists of thirty-four stanzas of six lines each, and is, we suppose, allegorical; but from beginning to end we can discover no hint as to what the allegory means […] This seems to us very much like making a fool of the public […] (169–170)

While there is no direct reference to the Author (apart from the fact that "fooling the public" is most probably attributed to him), reading *"Childe Roland"* as an allegory agrees with my reading and my assessment of the effect of its varying degree of metathesis. In this sense, supposing that *"Childe Roland"* is an allegory is to seek for clues for interpretation outside the poem, in the realm of the Author (as happens in, to a lesser degree, in *My Last Duchess*). David Masson, while holds *"Childe Roland"* a valuable piece, can find no meaning, either. His reference to the Author is more direct, and is emphasized by his italics:

> [T]his poem deserves all in all to be regarded as the greatest thing in the volumes. The notion of the poem […] is that of expanding one of those snatches of old ballad and allusion which have such a mystic effect in Shakespeare. […] Mr. Browning offers us *his* imaginative rendering of these gloomy hieroglyphic words. […] How it holds the imagination, and is felt to be coherent and significant in meaning, though no one will venture to explain what the meaning is! (181)

While in these readings a certain recurrence to the Author can be seen, it is in later analyses that the Speaker in *"Childe Roland"* is considered to be extremely close to the Author; even to the degree of regarding the poem as an allegory of Browning's quest for literary power.

B.2 Later Readings

It is Mike Tierce who sets out to analyse *"Childe Roland"* on the basis that

> One of the accepted allegorical readings of Robert Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" is that the ominous landscape is the outward manifestation of Browning's recognition of his own poetic

failure. From this point of view, Roland's quest becomes an attempt to reestablish Browning's own, seemingly inadequate, artistic powers. (10)

While this reading agrees mine in paralleling elements in the poem to Browning's literary career, there are several differences. First of all, my reading does not allow to regard the whole poem as a consistent allegory; only specific portions could be interpreted as such. And second, I paralleled Browning's career to the Speaker's contemplations, not a supposed attempt on the Author's part to regain literary power.

Tierce, however, does not seem to be able to support his thesis, as his reading often appears far-fetched. From the appearance of the "distorted mouth" (l. 155) he concludes that "[t]he implication is again that the poet produces only distortion" (11). With a strange logical leap, he suggests that "[b]ecause Browning believed that 'a poet's affair is with God,' he associates his own failed poetry with Satan" (11)—merely in order to be able to fit the "devil's stud" (l. 78) and the "fiend's glowing hoof" (l. 113) into his reading. He does suggest, however, an intriguing interpretation of Cuthbert and Giles, the comrades the Speaker contemplates about, inasmuch as he relates Cuthbert to Shelley and Giles to Wordsworth. The latter parallel is drawn mainly on the basis of Browning's *The Lost Leader* (11–12).

Tierce's reading is important in the view of my argument as it provides an example of how a poem with an often narrow metathesis is—expectedly—attempted to be treated as a direct allegory of its Author.

Shapiro, on the other hand, appears to provide a counterexample, as he strictly maintains that the Speaker is a character independent of the Author. In his paper analysing parallels between *"Childe Roland"* and *King Lear,* he suggests the following about Authorial intention: "Browning means to reveal in '»Childe Roland«' a certain type of human being and to determine what sort of mind sees things as the speaker in this poem" (91). As this sentence, and the focus on Shakespeare's play show, however, Saphiro also seeks "meaning" outside Browning's poem—in this respect, he appears to follow Mike Tierce.

C. Conclusion

A rather strong and varied Authorial presence appears to characterise *"Childe Roland,"* which poem, in this respect, differs from those analysed so far. As in *Andrea del Sarto,* the constructed Author could be linked to the extratextual one, although these links were rather vague. Authorial presence as signalled by the characteristics of the poem determined using the suggestions of the representational framework apparently has surfaced in other readings. In my view, it is the exceptional amount of features in the text that narrows the metathesis and draws the Authorial entity (or entities) closer to the Speaker that welcomes an allegorical reading, searching, now almost exclusively, for meaning in an extratextual realm.

The poem is also unlike the previously investigated ones that it included no Auditor in the level of the narration. This fact may also have contributed to the perceived proximity of the Speaker and the Author, as both entities appear to address the Reader.

"Childe Roland," in my view, is an example for a poem which can hardly be, and, based on the cited readings, it seems, is not read without the creation of an Author, whether knowledge about the biographical Author is used in the construction or not. If this suggestion is not too far-fetched, then it problematizes, to a certain extent, the re-

quirements of the methodological death of the Author and renders other arguments calling for the eradication of all Authorial entities fallacious. However, I think that the generation of an Author (whether it is held to be equivalent to the biographical Author or not), if done while upholding the separation of addressers and limiting its control to an addresser entity, does not close the potential and the polysemy of the text read. Thus, in this sense, the critical methods criticised by, among others, Barthes and Eliot can, theoretically, still be avoided.

3.7 *Caliban upon Setebos*

Caliban upon Setebos: Or Natural Theology in the Island was composed around 1860 (Abrams et al. 2:1409) and was published in *Dramatis Personae* in 1864. Strictly speaking, it is a contemplation on the ways of the god of Caliban's mother, but the poem can also be (and is) read as a contribution to the contemporary debate on the role of religion in society.

A. Reading

A.1 The Text

The title of the poem defines its Speaker and the subject of Caliban's monologue. As in the case of *My Last Duchess,* because of the continuous presence of Setebos and because he appears to be mostly described by Caliban, the question again arises whether Speaker is the imaged of the poem, as I generally supposed, or Setebos. Let me return to this problem later.

   Continuing the investigation of texts surrounding the main part of the poem, one is faced with the subtitle: "Or Natural Theology in the Island." "Natural" here may well signify a theology of nature or from nature, that is, a theology induced from observations (deism, in a sense) as opposed to a theology based on revelation. And indeed, the Speaker throughout the poem likens his god, Setebos, to himself by attributing the same qualities and motives to the god as the ones he finds in himself. The motto ("Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself") clearly condemns this type of theology. It is from Psalms 50.21; the sentence is spoken by God, and, most importantly, it is addressed to the wicked. This kind of foreshadowing an interpretation of a dramatic monologue is unusual in Browning's oeuvre (excepting, naturally, *The Ring and the Book*); the inclusion of the motto, as it clearly refers to an extratextual, authoritative source, and as the monologue proper has not started yet, signals, in my reading, strong authorial presence for the readers.

   How the monologue starts is likewise unusual (while, arguably, a similar device can be found at the end of *Bishop Blougram's Apology*). The first paragraph of the poem is enclosed in square brackets, it constantly refers to the Speaker in the third person, and the identity of its addressee is unclear. Based on the typographical notation and that the Reader does not yet know that Caliban will indeed refer to himself in the third person, this section may be taken as a kind of instruction in a theatrical script. As such, it is spoken by an entity above the Speaker: the Inscriber, or even the Author. There are numerous textual differences between this section and the body of the monologue which support this suggestion. Here, Caliban is only talked about in the third person, while in the body, the first person is also often used. In fact, it is not only until 98th line that the reader is forced to accept that third person verbs may refer to Caliban. Up to that point, in my reading, the interpretation of the words "Thinketh"

starting every paragraph remains unclear. Also, Caliban often makes use of the archaic -th third person ending (a possible pun on the style of the Bible), while such a device is missing from the first paragraph. And finally, this part describes Caliban's actual state from an outside point of view. Not only such (self-)descriptions are missing from the body of the poem, but almost all actions of Caliban related in it (with the possible exception of wine-making in lines 68–74) are hypothetical.

There can be found, however, one ellipsis and an interjection in the first part: "Because to talk about Him vexes—ha, / Could He but know!" (ll. 17–18). This fact supports the opposite conclusion that even this part is uttered, presumably by the Speaker.

This, latter, conclusion is, in my reading, further supported by the last paragraph of the poem similarly enclosed by square brackets and even segregated from the rest typographically, by a line. In this section, -th endings and interjections are abundant, suggesting that its addresser is indeed Caliban. This last paragraph, I think, forces the Reader to reinterpret the first one; a conclusion can be that these sections represent silent thoughts of Caliban. However, the features of the first paragraph listed above may still lead to an ambiguous (non-)interpretation of it. These sections, it seems, provide a frame to the poem via which the Reader is led from the Author of the motto to the Caliban of the natural theology—and back. They are, in a sense, twilight zones between Author and Speaker.

Unlike many other characters of Browning, Caliban is not furnished with an Auditor (unless, as it turns out in the end, Setebos' raven, overhearing his speech, is considered one). This fact, in my reading, does not problematize the status of the poem as a dramatic monologue; rather, it makes it more apparent that what Caliban expresses is more an argument than a state of mind. As an argument, a theology, it is almost directly applicable to the Victorian debate over the reinterpretation of religion in the light of a somewhat differently structured society and scientific and technological results (see Abrams et al. 2:1402–1403). This referentiality, in my view, supports an interpretation which perceives an entity behind Caliban, an entity which, situated outside the layer of Caliban's island, is capable of wilfully hinting these connections—the Author.

With an argument similar to the one in which I suggest that the imaged of *My Last Duchess* is not the Duchess but the Duke, it can be shown that the imaged of *Caliban upon Setebos* is not Setebos but Caliban. The subtitle and the motto not only furnish the poem with an interpretation, they also direct attention to the Speaker from the entity the monologue is about. The subtitle speaks of a "theology," not a 'theos,' thus directing attention to how the theology in question is evolving and to the subject of the theology from its object. In the motto, again a special theology and its makers (the "wicked") are put into the focus; the "I," the object of that theology and the addresser of the sentence, is taken for granted.

The poem itself is structured in a way that Caliban describes Setebos by describing himself first, and then suggesting that Setebos does alike: "As it likes me each time, I do: so He" (l. 108), "Would I not smash it with my foot? So He" (l. 126), "[Caliban] Shall some day knock it down again: so He" (l. 199). Caliban and Setebos are mutually described by each other, and therefore, Caliban is described on two levels. First, he describes himself in hypothetical situations likening himself to a god over figures of clay, crabs, and small animals. Second, he describes himself by describing a god likened to himself. The focus, in my view, remains on Caliban. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the first paragraph, whose addresser can be regarded to be

'above' Caliban, describes almost exclusively the Speaker, not the one the Speaker describes.

The mutual description is also strengthened by links which almost equate, in a sense, Caliban with Setebos. The use of the third person in self-reference, in my reading, not only signals that Caliban uses the language not according to accepted norms, but also makes Caliban and Setebos less and less separable. Their motives and actions are regarded to be similar, and even the element of the moon, the very first element used to describe Setebos (" 'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon. // 'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match" [ll. 25–26]) is re-introduced later as the creation of Caliban: "And, with a fish–tooth, scratched a moon on each" (l. 194). If Caliban and Setebos, therefore, in a special sense, equalled, then Setebos cannot occupy the position of the main described, the imaged, without Caliban being at least as described as him.

But the conclusion that Caliban occupies the central position in the poem can also be reached by considering visual elements in the text. *Mire, slush, pompion (pumpkin), sea, fish, otter, leech, auk, badger, [mag]pie, ant, seed, gourd, honeycomb, finch, maggot, thyme, bird, clay,* to list a few from lines 1–76, are all from the immediate environment of the Speaker. They, therefore, are related to and describe the Speaker more than a supposedly transcendent figure, Setebos, which fact further supports that Caliban is indeed the imaged of *Caliban upon Setebos.*

It can be concluded, therefore, that this poem conforms to the imaged = Speaker suggestion generally made about dramatic monologues.

If Caliban is the imaged of the poem, that is, he is the centre of a representation containing a strange island with meteors and hurricanes, then, in my view, for the modern reader (and I would risk the suggestion that even for the Victorian one) the transliteration from layer III, the Author and the theme, to this representation is wide enough not to perceive directly an Authorial standpoint. One may even suggest, turning the assertions of my representational framework on themselves, that it is so wide that it signals that the text is to be read almost allegorically—which may also be supported by Browning's use of intertextuality, of a literary, not historical source. In this case, despite the wide metathesis, the Author returns—but not at specific points, not in the layers I set out to investigate with the tools of the representational framework, but on the level of 'content,' of 'interpretation.' This recurrence of the Author, apart from the points described above, could also be described by exploring Browning's use of the Caliban found in *The Tempest.*

A.2 Shakespeare's Caliban

Interestingly, Shakespeare's Caliban mentions Setebos only twice, but it seems that the two references, one at the beginning, the other at the end of the play, span more or less the same change of attitude than the one experienced in Browning's poem. The first reference is in act 1, scene 2:

> CALIBAN. [*aside*] I must obey—his art is of such power,
>   It would control my dam's god Setebos,
>   and make a vassal of him. (16; ll. 1.2.373–375)

This time Caliban appears to situate Setebos as someone other's god, not his—making himself capable of arguing, debating with him, or even of disregarding him. Yet, at the end, when with Stephano and Trinculo he is driven to Prospero's presence, he exclaims: "O Setebos, these be brave spirits, indeed: / How fine my master is! I am

afraid / He will chastise me" (31; ll. 5.1.263–265)—as if he turned to Setebos for protection from Prospero. In Browning's poem, similarly, Caliban turns and worships Setebos at the end, faced with danger.

Caliban's search for a god and his mistake in it are also hinted in Shakespeare's text; it is likely that these hints formed the basis of the argument of Browning's poem. Caliban asks Stephano "I prithee be my god" (22; l. 2.2.153)—at the end, he utters the moral:

> CALIBAN. […] and I'll be wise hereafter,
>   And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
>   Was I, to take this drunkard for a god!
>   And worship this dull fool! (31; ll. 5.1.297–300)

These two poles express an interpretation of Browning's poem as precise as the motto prefixed to it. The similarities between the poem and the play continue even on the level of words. Many elements of Caliban's environment, it seems, were taken from *The Tempest,* although from the very opposite contexts. "Honeycomb" is uttered by Prospero when threatening Caliban in line 1.2.330 (16); it is used in the poem when Caliban makes wine (l. 69). "Raven" is used by Caliban in *The Tempest* when cursing Prospero with his mother's curses in line 1.2.323 (16); it appears in the poem as Setebos' spy (l. 286). "Crab" and "jay," used in the poem in Caliban's illustrations of his god-like actions (see lines 100 and 118) appear in the play when Caliban promises to lead the drunkards to the riches of the island and make Stephano his god (22; ll. 2.2.173–175). The element of moon is also of special importance in the play: Stephano constantly addresses Caliban as "moon-calf" (21, l. 2.2.111; 22, 2.2.140; 23, 3.2.22–23), and he claims to have dropped from the moon immediately before Caliban asks him to be his god (22; ll. 2.2.141–143). Stephano thus echoes Setebos' placement in the "cold o' the moon." Equating the moon and Setebos, however, is problematized by Prospero's remark, according to which Caliban's mother, Sycorax, was "a witch, and one so strong / That could control the moon" (31; ll. 5.1.271–272)—that is, according to the equation, Sycorax could have controlled Setebos, while the opposite is suggested in Browning's poem. While this symbolism could not be carried far, the frequent mentions of the moon in Shakespeare's play may well have provided the basis of the astrological start of Caliban's monologue.

Despite these similarities, however, on the level of the narration, numerous differences can be found between the play and the poem. Important episodes of the play involving Caliban are left out, including Stephano, Trinculo, the plotting and the robes-masque. The main adversary of Caliban in the poem appears to be Setebos, while in the play, Prospero. Maltreatment by Prospero does appear in the poem, but now it includes blinding Caliban: "Also a sea beast, lumpish, which he [Prospero] snared, / Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame" (ll. 163–164); "This blinded beast / Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose, / But, had he eyes, would want no help" (ll. 181–183), while no trace of such an action can be found in Shakespeare's play.

The element of violating Miranda in Shakespeare's work is not wholly missing from Browning's poem, but, in my view, is treated ambiguously. In a lengthy description of Prospero, 19 lines after the last, and 8 lines before the first self-reference by Caliban (both in the third person), one finds line 160, of which let me also quote the surrounding lines:

> A four-legged serpent he [Prospero] makes cower and couch,
> Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,
> *And saith she is Miranda and my wife:*
> 'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
> He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
> (ll. 158–162, emphasis added)

In my reading, "my" in line 160, despite the fact related above that Caliban uses the third person to refer to himself in this portion of the poem, does not refer to Prospero. Lacking other alternatives, I am thus forced to read the line in a way that "my" refers to Caliban, although the reason why Prospero would declare Miranda to be Caliban's wife, and in what sense, remains unclear. Still, it can be suggested that the element of violation does appear in the poem.

It, however, is given an additional twist by the mention of Caliban's offsprings in line 272, when he describes what he would do if he was caught by Setebos thinking aloud, immediately after offering to cut a finger off: "Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best." In Shakespeare's play, although Caliban had wanted to "people[…] the isle with Calibans" (16; ll. 1.2.351–352), no hints can be found suggesting that there were more Calibans. Interestingly, even Browning's poem appears to fail to suggest the existence of a mate.

These differences suggest that Browning, unlike in *Andrea del Sarto,* for example, treated his source quite liberally. If this is so, then the main differences (not necessarily the omissions, but the additions) might be attempted to explain away on the basis of a meaning abstracted from the poem or of a reconstructed authorial intention. Blindness, for example, might suit an impotent thinker at the mercy of the elements and grasshoppers. It might also symbolize Caliban's blindness to a 'true' theology. The sacrifice of children might have been introduced to further ridicule Caliban's submission contrasted to his thinking about Setebos; it may also recall elements from pagan rituals, which are then connected to Caliban's "Natural Theology."

If the poem is read 'against' Shakespeare's character, then these differences, in my reading, signal an interpretation, a judgment on Caliban's theology strongly hinted by the Author. These differences, in other words, may support a feeling of Authorial presence in readers.

B. Reading Reading

Reactions to *Caliban upon Setebos* in Browning's lifetime, based on Litzinger and Smalley's collection, appear to have been varied. The majority do not fail to perceive references to contemporary theologies—and, as I have suggested in my reading, they generally attribute it to the Author.

In an unsigned, untitled review from *The Athenaeum* one finds:

> This revelation of what 'Caliban' 'thinketh' would have delighted Shakespeare himself, who could have been the first to have acknowledged that it faithfully represented the inner man of his original creation. Only a great dramatic poet could have written this poem. […] [T]he reader will hardly fail to make out a good deal of the satire which Caliban's theology reflects upon ours. (220)

This reading agrees with mine in putting Caliban in the focus and in attributing the "revelation," and possibly the irony, to the Author. Edward Dowden appears to sound the same suggestions, complementing them with a remark on the love of God:

> In his 'Caliban upon Setebos' the poet has, with singular and almost terrible force, represented what must be the natural theology of one who is merely an intellectual animal, devoid of spiritual cravings, sensibilities, and checks. It is these which discover to us not only the power of God but the love of God everywhere around us, and which enable us to perceive that there is a supreme instance or manifestation of God's love, which is very Christ. (428)

His reading matches Langbaum's suggestion, who argued that dramatic monologues and examples of poetry of experience "reinvalidate moral judgment" (4) in Readers. According to Dowden, this effect is achieved by a contrast between Caliban's and our theology, by a contrast between Caliban and Author—as also suggested by Langbaum. It is not sure, however, whether dramatic monologues without such a clear reference to contemporary issues can achieve the same effect.

Robert Bell's remark also refers to Christian love—but in his case, it is turned against the Author himself:

> But clever as 'Caliban' is, it is a mistake. The subject is exceedingly repulsive, and almost unfit for separate artistic treatment. As part of the strange machinery of a play brimful of characters, Caliban is invaluable; and while his character is abundantly conveyed in the strong touches of the great master, he is always kept studiously in the background. More than once Mr. Browning, in his desire to say the best he can of things, has affirmed that mere beauty is something; but what plea can he set up for mere ugliness—ugliness so extreme as to fill the gazer with instinctive detestation and loathing? […] The poem is a mistake; yet we value it highly, as a true index to the character of the poet's mind. In the excess of his Christian love and sympathy, we have no doubt that he sees some points of sympathy between himself and the whelp of Sycorax. But his error lies there; though the point of sympathy is discernible, it is swamped in the solitary full-length figure of the monster. In Shakespeare, Caliban is far more *likeable* than in Mr. Browning's poem. (226–227)

In an unfavourable comparison to Shakespeare, Bell reaches the conclusion that Browning must have sympathised with Caliban if he wrote a poem about (on) him. He is apparently reluctant to temporarily accept the point of view of Caliban; and he appears to be unable to read the poem as an index to contemporary thinking. Please note that recurring to the Author when faced with inability to interpret also happened in the case of *My Last Duchess,* where the Author was cited to point out or to explain away the seeming improbability of the Duke's speech.

C. Conclusion

While in my reading I predicted that *Caliban upon Setebos* will be read as an allegory, or even as a satire, based on the apparently and exceptionally wide metathesis and the use of intertextuality, Bell's review, notably, does not treat is as such. In my view, this

might be a consequence of the fact that in this poem, unlike in *"Childe Roland,"* the metathesis is wide throughout; no portions apparently rendered directly from layer III to I can be found in this poem that might trigger such an interpretation more forcibly.

This fact is also related to my suggestion that Authorial presence in *Caliban upon Setebos* can be linked less to specific points in the text than to a general interpretation. In this respect, this poem appears to differ slightly from those analysed so far, as it is unlike the other ones in that it has closer ties to contemporary issues. If this is so, then an Author or its hypostasis, the Age (a historical situatedness) is, in my view, irreducible in an analysis of this poem, and even if a reading is attempted without one, an Authorial standpoint, hinting a judgment on Caliban, will remain in the text.

3.8 *Rabbi Ben Ezra*

Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* also appeared in *Dramatis Personae* in 1864, and it was probably composed two years earlier (Abrams et al. 1418). It apparently contains a speech of the 12th-century scholar.

A. Reading

The very first thing that presents itself as notable regarding the text of the poem is the lack of a subtitle. In the cases of many other dramatic monologues, the title and the subtitle define the Speaker together, usually from different points of view. In *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came:" (See Edgar's Song in "Lear")* and in *My Last Duchess: Ferrara* the title appears to originate from the Speaker, while the subtitle from the Author, defining the Speaker either in relation to extratextual history or an extratextual literary source. In *Caliban upon Setebos: Or Natural Theology in the Island* and in *Andrea del Sarto: (called "The Faultless Painter")* the title defines the Speaker while the subtitle passes judgment over him, either a contemporary one or one more closely related to the Author. Many other dramatic monologues are also furnished with several titles: *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix: (16—); Bishop Blougram's Apology: [A Bishop addresses his Critic]; Saul: [David tells how he loosed Saul from his madness]* (Abrams et al. 2:1356, Gollanz 114, 208, respectively), to cite just a few. Even dramatic monologues without subtitles appear to define more than the Speaker: *Porphyria's Lover* defines the Speaker in social relations; *A Toccata of Galuppi's* refers to a piece listened to by the Speaker; *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* defines at the same time the place and the genre of the ensuing poem (Abrams et al. 2:1349, 1363, 1350, respectively). With *Fra Lippo Lippi* (Abrams et al. 2:1373) as one of the very few exceptions, it can be suggested that generally, in dramatic monologues, Browning aimed at situating the Speaker in a well-definable context even before the monologue proper begins. This is not the case in *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* As I shall attempt to show, this non-situatedness is reflected in the poem itself inasmuch as the Speaker, for intratextual reasons, is read to be extremely close to the Author—in the extreme, the Speaker may even be regarded as a mere mouthpiece of the extratextual Author.

Despite the fact that many sentences in the poem can be read as addressing someone directly, no Auditor is defined in the course of the poem. Its lack is made all the more apparent by the fact that the one the Speaker appears to address varies.

The addressee of the first line, "Grow old along with me!," is most probably not God, the addressee of lines 181 and onwards: "But I need, now as then, / Thee, God, who moldest men" (ll. 181–182). To complicate matters further, it is noted in Abrams

et al. that the addressee of lines 154–156 may be Omar Khayyám, whose *The Rubái-yát* was available in English in 1859 (Abrams et al. 2:1417 n. 9):

> Thou, to whom fools propound
> When the wine makes its round,
> "Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize today!"
> (ll. 154–156)

This abundance of addressees makes it impossible to define an Auditor (either a single person or an audience of a group); indeed, the very lack of one is a prerequisite of the fluctuation experienced in the poem. This fact, paired with the non-situatedness of the Speaker, makes the poem appear as if its Speaker employed the first or the second "voice of poetry" in T. S. Eliot's sense; a fact that may cause readers not to regard the poem as a dramatic monologue.

The non-situatedness, in my reading, is further enhanced by the frequent references to "us." While this technique characterizes the first part of the poem only, and although most instances of "our," "we" and "us" can be interpreted as general subjects and pronouns, in my reading, they further disperse the Speaker's identity by enlarging the applicability of his statements to generality and by linking the Auditor–Reader with the Speaker himself: "Rejoice *we* are allied [...];" "Be *our* joys three parts pain!" (ll. 25, 34, respectively, emphasis added), to cite a few examples.

The list of entities so far consisting of an Author and a Speaker closely linked might be lengthened by addressers introduced by direct quotations. While they do appear to introduce further characters, they turn out to support the generality, the non-situatedness of the monologue. The embedded addressers thus introduced, like "Nature" in *"Childe Roland,"* are all allegorical:

> *Youth* sighed, "Which rose make ours,
> Which lily leave and then as best recall?" (ll. 8–9, emphasis added)

> Should not the *heart* beat once, "How good to live and learn"?
> //
> Not once beat, "Praise be Thine! [...]"
> (ll. 54–55, emphasis added)

> *A whisper from the west*
> Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
> Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."
> (ll. 94–96, emphasis added)

They, like the Speaker, are not rooted in a constructed or reconstructed 'reality' based on history or literary works, like Frà Pandolf in *My Last Duchess* or Agnolo in *Andrea del Sarto*—who, in turn, as I argued, are heavily dependent on the Speaker in each case. Here, this dependency is stated outright as figures like "youth," "heart" and "a whisper" are, in my reading, immediately interpreted as mouthpieces for arguments set forward by the Speaker. This relation, interestingly, appears to mirror that between the Speaker and the Author.

Based on the above arguments, the extent of metathesis in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is expected to be narrow. It may be still worthwhile to investigate it more directly.

Nouns and adjectives used in the poem are all—with a few exceptions—general in meaning. Words like *life, time, hand, youth, flower, star, year* and *doubt,* according to

the postulates of the representational framework, are hardly capable of triggering associations with which to enrich layer II. In Potebnja's terms, they are words the internal form of which has (had) been worn out. The inclusion of *rose* and *lily* may contribute more to layer II (with their possibly symbolic interpretations), but, in my view, these elements are also so frequently employed that they fail to generate a concrete, possibly visualizable meaning potent with associations. Describing a star with *flame* (l. 12) is, similarly, an expected metaphor, as is the description of "low kinds" without doubt as "Finished and finite *clods,* untroubled by a *spark"* (l. 18, emphasis added). With this quotation, all nouns in the first three stanzas of the poem have been listed.

It seems that in *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* Browning deploys a technique opposite to what the unsigned, untitled review in *The Athenaeum* appears to prize in his previous poems:

> The 'Golden' he thinks has been almost worn out in poetry; it has become so familiar that 'gold' is no longer a precious metal. He [Browning] thinks it will be good to try 'brass' for a change; or iron might prove a tonic, and steel give our poetry something of sterner stuff. 'Roses', again, have run riot to such an extent, and been used for sole comparison so long, that he thinks it were well if poppies had their turn. (219)

In my reading, with the use of such general elements, the poem's structure inevitably lacks a well-defined layer II. In other words, metathesis is either nonexistent, or extremely narrow.

Still, the conclusion that *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is (almost) without metathesis is not so straightforward, as there are more metaphors (even symbols) to be found in the poem. These, however, as it turns out, fail to enrich layer II to the extent they do in, for example, *"Childe Roland."* The figure in line 18 has already been quoted. Interestingly, its very words are repeated in line 28, talking now not of *them, the low kinds,* but of *us:* "A *spark* disturbs our *clod"* (emphasis added). The repetition, in my reading, further diminishes any effect the figure could have. Line 24 could have had the capability to provide a visual parallel to the already stated judgment over the *low kinds:* "Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?", were not the general "bird" and "beast" used here. "Maw" is specific enough, but the image thus introduced is not developed further. There are, however, some more successful figures in *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* Body is described as a "rose-mesh" (l. 62); things apparently escaping the attention of the masses are referred to in a double personification as "all the world's coarse thumb / And fingers failed to plumb" (ll. 139–140). However, in my reading, these figures are less unexpected than, for example, the sentence of one urging the Grammarian of *A Grammarian's Funeral* to leave books aside: " 'Time to taste life,' another would have said, / 'Up with the curtain!' " (ll. 55–56). The element of the curtain is specific enough to trigger, in this context, the image of the half-darkened room, and with it, the smell of age-old books—or even the start of a / the performance, both in the theatrical sense and in the sense of 'action.' *A Grammarian's Funeral,* describing a problem (theme) in certain points similar to that of *Rabbi Ben Ezra,*[14] makes use of elements more concrete, more visualizable. Compare, for exam-

---

[14] The main opposition in both cases appear to be between the aged / learned and the young / ignorant / seize-the-day people, although this opposition is treated from different points of view and is reached from different grounds. In *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* for example, a religious overtone is also apparent.

ple, the list of nouns from the first three stanzas of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* related above to the nouns of the first eight lines of *A Grammarian's Funeral:*

> Let us begin and carry up this *corpse,*
>   Singing together.
> Leave we the common *crofts,* the vulgar *thorpes*
>   Each in its *tether*
> Sleeping safe on the *bosom* of the *plain,*
>   Cared for till *cock-crow:*
> Look out if yonder be not *day* again
>   Rimming the *rock-row!* (1–8, emphasis added)

All the nouns, with the exception of *day,* appear to be more concrete, more visualizable than the ones in *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* If the situatedness of the Speakers of the former poem, as given by its subtitle *(Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe),* is also considered, what can be concluded is that *A Grammarian's Funeral* provides an example for a poem in which a similar theme undergoes a wider metathesis.

Almost directly expressed ideas and self-reference, in my reading, also make it apparent that the metathesis is narrow in *Rabbi Ben Ezra;* moreover, they may even more closely link the Speaker to the extratextual Author. While it may be the case that Browning disagrees with the Speaker,[15] commonplace-like statements, as in *Andrea del Sarto,* may create a feeling that the extratextual Author generated during reception agrees with them. One of the most striking examples for this is the partly already quoted "Rather I prize the doubt / Low kinds exist without / Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark" (ll. 16–18). Also, the self-awareness shown by naming explicitly the rhetorical figures used—"a paradox / Which comforts while it mocks" (ll. 37–38) and "Aye, note that Potter's wheel, / That metaphor!" (ll. 151–152)—is likewise unparalleled in the dramatic monologues I analysed, and, in my reading, as it throws light on an imagined composition process, makes the Speaker even less separable from the Author.

Based on these observations, it can be concluded that there is little (or no) metathesis in *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* which implies, according to the representational framework, that the Author generated in the act of reception is extremely close, or identical to the Speaker (as, in the absence of metathesis, alienation could not have taken place, either). Indeed, readings of the poem I shall discuss in the next section appear to support this conclusion.

If the conclusion is upheld that the poem lacks metathesis, then an imaged cannot be searched for, as it exists only if a representation on layer II is generated according to the structures defined in the representational framework. The Speaker of *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* therefore, cannot be the imaged—which conclusion is in accordance with the suggestion based on the non-situatedness of the Speaker that *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is not a

---

[15] My representational framework, as it postulates that the processes of composition and reception are symmetric, and deals with only one layer III, cannot capture a case in which the generator extratextual Author and the generated extratextual Author (both on layer III) significantly differ. This, however, is of little importance here as I primarily concentrate on the reception process. If the framework is to be extended to include such cases, then the symmetry should be disregarded, and the whole framework should be based not on two, but three embedded communicative schemes. This way, the (re)constructed, intratextual Author may occupy the position of the generated Author, while the generator Author remains the extratextual Author. The Speaker / Narrator / lyrical I can be identified as the third embedded addresser. This theoretical set-up, however, also has its drawbacks.

dramatic monologue in the proper sense. Indeed, this is the usual judgment passed over this piece.

B. Reading Reading

The editors of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* also exclude *Rabbi Ben Ezra* from the genre of the dramatic monologue. "Browning makes little attempt to present [the Speaker] as a distinct individual or to relate him to the age in which he lived. Unlike the more characteristic monologues, *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is not dramatic but declamatory" (Abrams et al. 2:1413 n. 1). Langbaum does the same, but on the basis of a lack of splits he considers so characteristic of dramatic monologues in general:

> Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is a dramatic monologue by virtue of its title only; otherwise it is a direct statement of a philosophical idea, because there is no characterization or setting. Because the statement is not conditioned by a speaker and a situation, there is no way of apprehending it other than intellectually; there is no split between its validity as somebody's apprehension and its objective validity as an idea. (105–106)

Langbaum repeats most of this statement word by word on page 140. The use of the adjective "direct" may reflect that Langbaum's reading agrees mine—besides considering the poem not a dramatic monologue—in seeing the Speaker as not far removed from the (reconstructed) Author.

C. Conclusion

The case of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* tested, in my view, whether the tools and concepts based on the model of embedded communications and the representational framework used in my analyses are capable of registering a difference between a poem which is held to be a dramatic monologue only apparently and other dramatic monologues. In this respect my reading seems to be successful; it not only pointed out the presence of an Authorial entity, it suggests that the (generated or generator) Author is directly present in the poem. Such a strong presence appears to be unique to this poem of Browning considering his other dramatic monologues I referred to or analysed.

   Let me point out that it is not the fact that in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* metathesis is not in operation that excludes the poem from the category of dramatic monologues—it is this fact paired with the suggestion that in dramatic monologues the Speaker occupies the position of the imaged.

4 Conclusion

The readings of the six dramatic monologues of Robert Browning show that it is possible to trace the Author in these texts. In the cases of *Andrea del Sarto* and *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came,"* even direct and close links could be found to the biographemes of Robert Browning. Moreover, other readings and reviews I cited attest to the fact that it is not only possible, but it is actually done by both contemporary and more modern readers to recur to an extratextual entity especially when one is faced with difficulties during interpretation. In readings of *My Last Duchess* and of *"Childe Roland"* Authorial intention and the biographical Author were cited for this

reason, as happened in the case of *Andrea del Sarto,* where, if not the Author, then another generated extratextual psychologized entity, the "nature" of the Speaker was cited to aid the process of interpretation.

Based on these observations it, I think, is possible to suggest that during the reading of these poems an Authorial entity (intratextual or extratextual) above the Speaker is inevitably created. This fact, in my view, is reflected in some arguments reviewed by Glennis Byron and in some of Robert Langbaum's theses, where it is suggested that a double voice, and therefore, an Authorial sub-voice is actually a characteristic of dramatic monologues. It appears that an addresser entity above the Speaker is always created whenever a textual sign or discrepancy is found hinting the existence of an entity superordinated to the lyrical I. The fact that such textual signs could be pinpointed in dramatic monologues, in a genre where it was, at times, supposed that it is not possible to "get face to face with the poet himself, and hear his own voice speaking his own thoughts" (Furnivall, qtd. in Hesse 83) shows that it might be also possible to extend this suggestion and claim that all texts are furnished with an addresser above the textual 'I.'

If this is true, then the applicability of anti-authorial arguments appears to be restricted. The existence of the Author thus created, an addresser entity, which is not intertextual, and therefore, cannot unify oeuvres or discourses, and appears not to control the message to the extent metanarratives like "psyché", "God" or "reason" would in modernist thinking, appears not to contradict the death of the transcendental Author in the Barthesian or the Foucaultian sense. It does, however, question whether the methodological death of the Author can be sustained, and as in some instances the generated Author was seen to be linked to the biographical one, it also problematizes the applicability of the tenets regarding the necessary eradication of the a priori Author from texts during writing.

My readings also appear to support the suggestion that, using the notions of the representational framework, the Speaker in dramatic monologues occupies the position of the imaged. This postulate predicted correctly that *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is not a traditional dramatic monologue—indeed, according to some readings, it is not even dramatic. However, *Rabbi Ben Ezra* differed from the rest of the poems analysed in that in it, the extent of metathesis was found to be extremely narrow, which, in turn, excluded even the existence of an imaged.

In order to further support my suggestion about this general characteristic of the internal form of dramatic monologues, let me consider a text not regarded as a dramatic monologue, William Blake's *A Poison Tree,* a poem included in his *Songs of Experience.* In this work, the lyrical I is present throughout and is described as active; that is, the role of the Speaker exceeds being an uninvolved narrator. This is, I think, important, as it creates the basic possibility of regarding the 'I' as a 'person,' a character similar to the Speakers in Browning's dramatic monologues. The theme of the poem, based on its apparently direct statements, could be the notion *anger* or *wrath.* Consider, for example, the first stanza:

> I was angry with my friend:
> I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
> I was angry with my foe:
> I told it not, my wrath did grow. (1–4)

Determining the imaged, in my reading, poses no special problems either, as the elements and the visual representation of the poem are centred around a *tree,* which, finally, "bore an apple bright" (10), the poisonous fruit of unexpressed wrath and pretence. In my reading, the perceived distance between *anger* and *tree* is large, in other words, representing *anger* as a *tree* is unexpected, which fact suggests that in *A Poison Tree,* metathesis is wide. The same conclusion can be reached by considering the (visual) elements in the poem, which are abundant, but, it must be noted, are also somewhat general; but not as general as elements that were found in *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

Based on this short analysis, *A Poison Tree* is an example for a poem in which metathesis is existent and can be considered wide, while its Speaker (lyrical I) is not equal to its imaged. Indeed, the poem is usually not read as a dramatic monologue. This negative evidence, I think, supports that my suggestion may be a usable approach to describing the internal structure of dramatic monologues. However, it, naturally, is far from being a perfect definition of the genre; I regard it as a small contribution to the arsenal of approaches already available to this challenging class of poems.

If my suggestion can be upheld, then, according to the representational relationships I postulated, it might entail that the representational antecedents of the imaged and the Speaker (lyrical I), the theme and the Author, also coincide; in other words, that the theme, the problem of such texts is the Author. While this suggestion could be interpreted in the light of theories which suggest that artworks are created to understand the place of 'self' in the 'world,' or the 'meaning' of the state of being 'human,' it is applied to a class broader than that of dramatic monologues; it can even be argued that the same is true of all creative actions inside or outside the realm of arts. This, in my view, is also a suggestion which points outside the domain of the representational framework, thus *theme* and *author* are interpreted differently in it. The suggestion extending the supposed equality of the Speaker and the imaged to the level of the original experience and the Author, to layer III, is, therefore, appears as far-fetched. The original suggestion, however, still holds.

It might also be worthwhile pointing out that Langbaum's view, suggesting that the monologue serves to achieve a private illumination in a dialogue of the Speaker with itself (196–197) appears to echo my suggestion that the Speaker serves as the centre of the represener model, of layer II in dramatic monologues. Another suggestion of Langbaum connected to his notion of the necessary sympathy between Speaker and Reader, that "[w]e take his excursion into sympathetic identification with the speaker in order to refresh and renew moral judgment" (4), however, does not appear to be supported by the readings of Browning's poems I cited—with the possible exception of *Caliban upon Setebos* as read by Edward Dowden.

Taking into consideration that my readings managed to predict some of the points where a stronger Authorial presence was felt by other readers, and that the investigations led to a possible insight into the internal characteristics of dramatic monologues, I think it could be risked to suggest that the notions and analytical tools based on the model of embedded communications and the representational framework proved to be usable, and, to a certain extent, effective. It seems to me that they also successfully mediated between theoretical considerations on the various and possible functions of the Author and tracing their presence 'in practice,' in the poems I selected for reading.

Not only the notions introduced turned out to be useful. In my view, and based on the experience of the above readings, taking into consideration the Author as an addresser, as a generator and generated entity may also prove to be useful in literary

analyses, even outside the class of poems I set out to investigate. If a separation of the various functions of the Author—possibly determined on other grounds than I did—is upheld, that is, if the presence and domain of the Author is investigated and determined meticulously, then I do not think its inclusion makes it able, as some anti-authorial arguments appear to fear, to close the potential polysemy of a text and furnish it with a "final signified." The Author that has to be taken into account is already dead: it is absent according to the postulates of the representational framework, and dead according to authors calling for the death of the Author as a necessary step in writing. The Author, the consideration of which appears to be in many cases inescapable, is what remains of it after it has been buried in its own text, which then, it seems, remains marked with the textual remains, the literary tomb of its once creator.

5 Postscript

After the submission of my thesis I have realized that it may be more fruitful to distinguish between the extratextual and intratextual Authors based not on the hierarchy suggested by the theory of embedded communicative schemes but on the type and origin of information used in the construction of these entities. This suggestion is based on the observation that, strictly speaking, even the biographical Author is constructed; its supposedly extratextual status rests on the fact that a large amount of extratextual (biographical) information contributes to its generation. Moreover, this definition of the 'extratextual' is in line with the implicit usage of this term in my thesis. The model of embedded communicative schemes still provides, in my view, a useful system aiding the analysis of various addresser entities.

Please also note that the same theoretical considerations prohibit abandoning the presupposed symmetry of the composition and reception processes in the representational framework (contrary to my suggestion in footnote 15) as it is, theoretically, guaranteed by this symmetry only that anything can be inferred (and even known) about the process of composition. Different extratextual and intratextual Authors may still be introduced if various reader-responses are to be predicted based on different sets of information (textual only, including literary sources, or including biographemes) using the methods and tools associated with the framework.

6 Works Cited

Whenever possible, I included the year of original appearance in parentheses of texts cited in my review of anti-authorial arguments.

Abrams, M. H. "Literature as a revelation of personality" In *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition.* London: Oxford University Press, 1953. Rpt. in *Theories of Authorship.* Ed. J. Caughie. 1981. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 17–21.

Abrams, M. H., et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.* 7th ed. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000.

Altick, Richard D. " 'Andrea del Sarto': The Kingdom of Hell is Within." *Browning's Mind and Art.* Ed. Clarence Tracy. Edinburgh and London: n.p., 1968. 18–31. Rpt. in *Browning: Men and Women and Other Poems.* Ed. J. R. Watson. 1974. London: Macmillan, 1994. 225–238.

The Athenaeum. 4 June 1864 [untitled, unsigned review]: 765–767. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 219–221.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." (1967) Trans. S. Heath. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader.* Ed. D. Lodge. London: Longman, 1988. 167–172.

Bell, Robert. [Untitled review.] *The St. James Magazine* 10; July 1864: 476–479. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 223–228.

Blake, William. *A Poison Tree.* Abrams et al. 2:58.

Bourbon, Brett. "The Logical Form of Fiction." In *Finding a Replacement for the Soul: Mind and Meaning in Literature and Philosophy.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004. 50–79.

Brimley, G., and T. C. C. [Untitled review.] *Fraser's Magazine* 53; January 1856: 105–116. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 165–173.

Browning, Robert. *Andrea del Sarto.* Abrams et al. 2:1385–1390.

———. *Bishop Blougram's Apology.* Gollanz 114–145.

———. *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church.* Abrams et al. 2:1359–1362.

———. *Caliban upon Setebos.* Abrams et al. 2:1403–1409.

———. *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came."* Abrams et al. 2:1367–1373.

———. *A Grammarian's Funeral.* Abrams et al. 2:1392–1395.

———. *My Last Duchess.* Abrams et al. 2:1352–1353.

———. *Porphyria's Lover.* Abrams et al. 2:1349–1350.

———. *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* Abrams et al. 2:1413–1418.

Browning, Robert, and Elizabeth B. Barrett. *The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett.* Vol. 1. London: John Murray–The Ballantyne Press, 1923.

Burke, Seán. *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Byron, Glennis. *Dramatic Monologue.* The New Critical Idiom. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Cervo, Nathan A. "Browning's *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church.*" *Explicator* 61.4 (Summer 2003): 204–206.

Clarke, C. C. "Humor and Wit in 'Childe Roland'." *Modern Language Quarterly* 23.4 (December 1962): 323–336.

Derrida, Jacques. "The Purveyor of Truth." (1975) Trans. A. Bass. *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading.* Ed. J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. 173–212.

Dowden, Edward. "The Transcendental Movement and Literature." *Contemporary Review* 30; July 1877: 297–318. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smally 427–429.

The Dublin University Magazine 67; June 1856 [untitled, unsigned review]: 667–81. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 189–190.

Dupras, Joseph A. "Browning's 'My Last Duchess': Paragon and Parergon." *Papers on Language & Literature* 32.1 (Winter 1996): 3–20.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." (1919) *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader.* Ed. D. Lodge. London: Longman, 1972. 71–77.

Fizer, John. *Alexander A. Potebnja's Psycholinguistic Theory of Literature: A Metacritical Inquiry.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute–Harvard University Press, 1988.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" (1969) Trans. D. F. Bouchard and S. Simon. *Critical Theory since 1965.* Ed. H. Adams and L. Searle. Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, Florida State University Press, 1986. 138–148.

Gollanz, Israel, ed. *Men and Women by Robert Browning.* The Temple Classics. London: J. M. Dent & Co. 1899.

Hesse, Beatrix. "The Private Life of Robert Browning, According to Henry James." *Private and Public Voices in Victorian Poetry.* Ed. S. Coelsch-Foisner & H. Klein. Studies in English and Comparative Literature 16. Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2000. 79–88.

Hogg, James. "A Victorian Everyman: Robert Browning's 'Andrea Del Sarto'." *Private and Public Voices in Victorian Poetry.* Ed. S. Coelsch-Foisner & H. Klein. Studies in English and Comparative Literature 16. Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2000. 67–77.

Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics." (1958) N. trans. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader.* Ed. D. Lodge. London: Longman, 1988. 32–57.

Johnson, Barbara. "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida." In *Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading.* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. 110–146.

Lacan, Jacques. "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'." Trans. J. Mehlman. *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading.* Ed. J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. 28–54.

Lancashire, Ian, ed. [Representative Poetry Online edition of Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*] Updated 28 November 2002. <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/288.html>. Cited 23 September 2006.

Langbaum, Robert W. *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Litzinger, Boyd, and Donald Smalley, eds. *Browning: The Critical Heritage.* The Critical Heritage Series. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1970.

Masson, David. [Untitled review.] *The British Quarterly Review* 23; January 1856: 151–80. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 178–182.

Mermin, Dorothy R. "Speaker and Auditor in Browning's Dramatic Monologues." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 45.2 (Winter 1976): 139–157.

Miller, Michael G. "Browning's *My Last Duchess.*" *Explicator* 47.4 (Summer 1989): 32–34.

"Mr. Browning and the *Edinburgh Review.*" *The Saturday Review* 14; 7 January 1865: 15–17. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 262–267.

Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey. "Six Authors in Pursuit of *The Searchers*" *Screen* 17 Spring 1976. Rpt. in *Theories of Authorship.* Ed. J. Caughie. 1981. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 221–224.

Oliphant, Margaret. "Modern Light Literature—Poetry." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 74; February 1856: 135–137. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 188.

Potter, Russell A. "Authorship." *Unspun: Key Concepts for Understanding the World Wide Web.* Ed. Th. Swiss. New York: New York University Press, 2001. 148–161.

Saphiro, Arnold. " '»Childe Roland,«' *Lear,* and the Ability to See." *Papers on Language & Literature* 11.1 (Winter 1975): 88–94.

Schorer, Mark. "Technique as Discovery." In *The World We Imagine.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968. 3–23.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear.* Abrams et al. 1:1109–1191.

———. *The Tempest.* In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare: The Cambridge Text.* New York: Gallery Books, 1988. 11–32.

Stigand, William. [Untitled review.] *The Edinburgh Review* 120; October 1864: 537–565. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 230–260.

Stoddard, Richard Henry. "Robert Browning." *Appleton's Journal* 6; 11 November 1871: 533–536. Rpt. in Litzinger and Smalley 372.

Thompson, Lou. "Browning's *My Last Duchess.*" *Explicator* 42.1 (Fall 1983): 23–25.

Tierce, Mike. " 'Chile Roland': A Poetic Version of Browning's 'Perfection in Imperfection' Doctrine." *American Notes & Queries* 23.1/2 (September/October 1984): 10–14.

Vasari A *see* Vasari "Andrea del Sarto."

Vasari F *see* Vasari "The Most Excellent…"

Vasari Z *see* Vasari "Andrea del Sarto kiváló firenzei festő…"

Vasari, Giorgio. "Andrea del Sarto kiváló firenzei festő élete." *A legkiválóbb festők, szobrászok és építészek élete.* Trans. Zoltán Zsámboki. Notes by Lajos Vayer. n.p.: Magyar Helikon, 1978. 505–537.

Vasari, Giorgio. "Andrea del Sarto." *Medieval Sourcebook: Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574): Lives of the Artists, selections.* Updated 8 September 1998. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vasari/vasari17.htm>. Cited 28 August 2006.

Vasari, Giorgio. "The Most Excellent Florentine Painter, Andrea del Sarto." *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects.* Trans. Mrs Jonathan Foster. London: n.p., 1851. Rpt. in *Browning: Men and Women and Other Poems.* Ed. J. R. Watson. 1974. London: Macmillan, 1994. 43–48.

Vayer, Lajos. "Bevezető [Introduction]." *A legkiválóbb festők, szobrászok és építészek élete.* By Giorgio Vasari. Trans. Zoltán Zsámboki. n.p.: Magyar Helikon, 1978. 9–23.

Wikipedia. "Clerical celibacy." Updated 2 October 2006. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerical_celibacy> Cited 8 October 2006.

Wordsworth, William. "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems.*" 3rd ed. (1802) Abrams et al. 2:239–251.
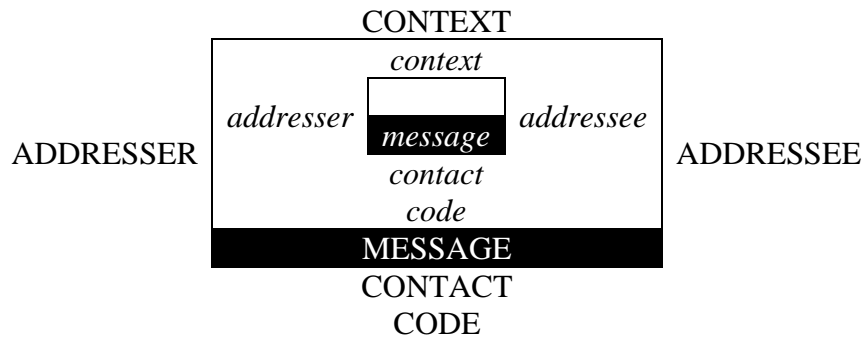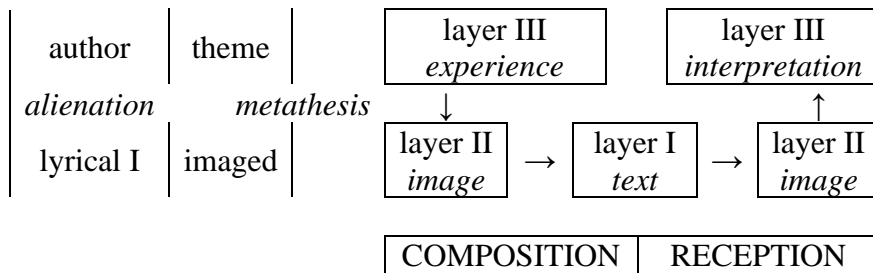
7 Illustrations

CONTEXT

context

addresser   *message*   *addressee*

ADDRESSER   *contact*   ADDRESSEE

code

MESSAGE

CONTACT

CODE

Figure 1

author	theme
alienation	*metathesis*
lyrical I	imaged

layer III *experience*		layer III *interpretation*
↓		↑
layer II *image* →	layer I *text* →	layer II *image*

COMPOSITION	RECEPTION

Figure 2