

Robert Browning's view of Art and Life in his poems.

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Write what you know about Browning's view of art and life.

Or, write a note on Browning's attitude to art and life.

Or, discuss Browning's attitude to art as revealed in "Andrea del Sarto" and "Fra Lippo Lippi".

Robert Browning (1812-1889) is a prominent Victorian poet. He often explores the themes of art and life in his poetry. His works frequently explore the complexities of human experience. His dramatic monologues provide deep insights into his views, particularly on the nature of art and its relationship with life. Let's explore Browning's perspectives through the lens of four of his notable poems: **"The Last Ride Together," "Andrea Del Sarto," "Fra Lippo Lippi," and "My Last Duchess."**

"Fra Lippo Lippi"-Art as a Reflection of Life: In "Fra Lippo Lippi," Browning handles the conflict between artistic freedom and religious constraints. Lippo, a monk and painter, argues for the depiction of realistic and earthly beauty in his art. He challenges the church's demand for purely spiritual subjects. He says,

*For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;*

Lippo's words suggest that art has the power to reveal beauty in everyday life. It encourages people to appreciate the world around them. Browning advocates the idea that art should reflect reality. It connects with human emotions. It bridges the gap between the sacred and the ordinary.

"The Last Ride Together"-Embracing Life's Moments: In "The Last Ride Together," Browning explores the theme of acceptance. He finds solace in the present moment. The speaker faces rejection in love. He takes a final ride with his beloved. Despite his initial despair, he finds peace in the experience. He suggests that the journey itself holds value regardless of

its outcome.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?

Why, all men strive and who succeeds?

These lines reflect the speaker's realization that failure is a common human experience. Browning suggests that the meaning of life lies in the effort and the moments shared rather than the ultimate success or failure.

"Andrea Del Sarto"-The Struggle of the Artist: "Andrea Del Sarto," is often referred to as "The Faultless Painter". This poem presents the struggles of an artist caught between his desire for perfection and the limitations imposed by his circumstances. Andrea, a painter, laments his inability to achieve the greatness of his contemporaries due to his lack of ambition and his overbearing wife. He says,

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,

Or what's a heaven for?

Here, Browning emphasizes the importance of aspiration. Andrea's lament reveals the tragedy of settling for less and the necessity of seeking something greater, even if it remains out of reach. This perspective highlights the value of aiming high in both art and life as it enriches the human experience.

"My Last Duchess"-The Power of Art and the Human Psyche: "My Last Duchess" provides a darker view of art and life. It highlights themes of power, control, and the objectification of beauty. The Duke in the poem reveals his authoritarian nature through his treatment of his late wife. His views of her are shown as a mere object to be controlled and displayed. The Duke coldly describes:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,

Looking as if she were alive.

The Duke's jealousy and need to dominate are starkly evident. Through this character, Browning satirizes the misuse of power and the dehumanization of individuals.

In these four poems, Browning acknowledges humans may fail but should celebrate life's journey. He supports artistic freedom, realism, and the connection of art with human emotions. Browning warns against power's dangers. He highlights the moral aspects of art and relationships. It offers a deep understanding of life and art.

LxNotes