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Why John Stuart Mill Cannot Dismiss the Poet of Culture

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Why John Stuart Mill Cannot Dismiss the Poet of Culture
Table of Contents

**Preface**: Outline..................................................................................................................Page 2

**Section I**: First and second theory's introduction, with analysis into the opinions
John Stuart Mill positions in his essays.................................................................Page 5

**Section II**: Analysis of Robert Browning's definition in subjectivity and objectivity,
with criticism from: E.J. Slinn, Harold Bloom, Park Honan, Robert Langbaum,
Isobel Armstrong, Carol T. Christ, Rene Descartes, and David Hume......Page 21

**Section III**: Further exemplification of J.S. Mill’s definition of poetry and what Mill
thought of its function, referencing Pierre Janet and Anna Freud...........Page 34
Why John Stuart Mill Cannot Dismiss the Poet of Culture.

Preface

Thesis: In his treatises, “What is Poetry?” and “Two Kinds of Poetry,” Victorian-era critic John Stuart Mill provides careful analysis of point of view and perceived intent for those he believes have misappropriated the definition of poetry. However, poetry of culture, which Mill discards, is a long-standing concept in poetry. The speaker of any poem is established in the poetry of culture, in which he/she derives their instinctual perceptions of a thing first and is the source of the poet’s discussion. The poet of culture’s structural relationship of poet and speaker is also the form the poet of nature inverts into a speaker and object relationship to distance himself/herself from subjectivism. In explaining this complex distinction, Mill educates poetry enthusiasts in how to distinguish between the various [subjective/objective] strategies deployed in the poetics of culture and nature. Apart from acknowledging and accepting his distinctions between the differences of voice, this thesis disagrees with his final assessment of what poetry is and is not.

1. First theory’s concept (“What is Poetry?”) is introduced.
   a. An analysis of Mill’s first ten descriptions of poetry. In them, he discusses two trains of poetic writing, “eloquence” and “poetry.”
   c. Analysis of the second theory’s concepts (“Two Kinds of Poetry”), and clarifications into the statements Mill
establishes in “What is Poetry?” referencing Romantic and Victorian poetry.

2. Analysis of Browning’s definition in subjectivity and objectivity, with criticism.
   a) E.J. Slinn’s and Harold Bloom’s analyses and its parallel to thesis statement.
   b) Additional resources in support of analysis from Park Honan validating Robert Langbaum’s view.
      i. Discussion of how Browning delved into objectivity in “Porphyria’s Lover”, and wrote out of subjectivity, in “Pauline”.
      ii. “Porphyria’s Lover” as the model of objectivity and duality, mocking the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity made by Mill, referencing Isobel Armstrong.
      iii. Discourse into how introspection and objectivity is harnessed within a poet’s mind, referencing Rene Descartes and David Hume.
      iv. Closing additions from Carol T. Christ and Langbaum’s perceptions substantiating Romantic deductions.

3. Further exemplification of Mill’s definition of poetry and what Mill thought of its function, referencing Pierre Janet and Anna Freud’s concept of dissociation.
   a) Distinction in voice, once again, corroborated with an examination into the development of the Victorian monologue from the Romantic lyric, sourcing Browning’s, “The Grammarian’s Funeral” and Blake’s, “Tyger, Tyger”, as reference points.
   b) In summarizing the “subjectiveness” of Mill poetics, this argument points out, with assertions from Christ and Matthew Arnold, the origins of the objective voice and its
dependency upon its predecessor, which Mill’s perception on the politics of heard and overheard chose to debase.

Conclusion: Poetry is built on tradition. It is difficult to have one movement without the other. As tradition encourages poets and readers of poetry to aspire to greater levels of creativity and critical thinking, Matthew Arnold, in *Study of Poetry*, attests that poetry is important as it relates to the understanding of trials and tribulations of mankind: “[w]e will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry” (2). To this end, critics like Mill who assert that the subjective tradition can be passed over are fundamentally incorrect. The origin of thoughts has a repository (the self), which leads him/her down the path to speak his/her mind. In this mindset, he/she can separate the speaker from the poet. When the Victorian writes in the objective voice, he writes from a source that is subjective (a personal experience, if not, a personal thought in the form of observations and education), and in the process of creating objectivity he has to revert to his original rejection of subjectivity to achieve his task.

In other words, the Victorian is conscious of the romantic mindset. His/her awareness allows him/her to reject Romanticism and be objective, because Victorians reject Romanticism. Whether Victorians recognize their predecessors or not, they are influenced by Romantic schematics, even if they do not write in the subjective sense. Because of this, Mill’s argument is rooted in rejection. He denounces one form in favor of another, but as has been proven above the objective voice he favors develops out of subjectivism.
**Section I:** First and second theory’s introduction, with analysis into the opinions John Stuart Mill positions in his essays.

“What is Poetry?” (January 1833) and “Two Kinds of Poetry” (October 1833), written by John Stuart Mill for the *Monthly Repository*, are treatises based on rhetorical questionings of preferential points of view. Reprinted in, *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*, “What is Poetry?” defines and details what poetry is and what it should not be thought of as. If a reader were to answer the question in describing poetry as “metrical composition”, Mill would correct the individual. If the reader were to state that it is “impassioned truth tinged with emotion,” they too would be wrong. Furthermore, if one were to think that it is both metrical composition tinged with emotion, they too would answer incorrectly (1212). Mill states ideas expressed in an art form like poetry, music, or painting to be considered poetry must come from introspectively deep feelings:

> At the center of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling; and the thoughts or images will be there, only because the feeling was there. The combination which the mind puts together, the picture which it paints, the wholes which Imagination constructs out of the materials supplied by Fancy, will be indebted to some dominant feeling, not, as in other natures, to a dominant thought, for their unity and consistency of character, --for what distinguishes them from incoherence. (1222)

In other words, art forms must be dependent upon where, in the self, they spring forth from to be considered poetic. The source that produces “dominant feeling” comes from the self, when specifically isolated (1222).

Most readers recognize poetry, as “writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm” *(Merriam Webster, conn. 2)*. Although, Webster’s definition is true in most cases, the
significant difference some readers fail to acknowledge is what or who truly speaks a poem for the poet. In Mill’s thinking, the demarcation of what or who draws a line between poetry and eloquence. He explains poets of culture seek excitations from outward things for inspiration. They are, Mill believed, quickened to write for publicity. Their passions and grievances are not an act to an end, but a way of bringing attention to themselves and their thoughts. The poet of culture is spurred to writing from action outside of the self (the external world). He/she implements their imaginations, then combine their external experiences to establish their viewpoints in their works. On the other hand, the poet of nature delves into his/her profound being probing it for probable and thorough perception. This poet ponders the self and its history (experiences and education), and then investigates his/her feelings without looking outward to the world for clarity. Mill contends that they remain within the internal world he/she fabricates to establish his/her feelings for it, whereas the poet of culture strings thoughts together to make sense of his/her world for him/herself, and the reader (1213).

Mill’s careful analysis of point of view and perceived intent in “What is Poetry?” and “Two Kinds of Poetry” deliver insight for those who he considers have misappropriated the definition of poetry. However, poetry of culture, which Mill discards, is a longstanding concept in poetry. The speaker of any poem is established in the poetry of culture first and is the source of the poet’s discussion. The poet of culture’s structural relationship of poet and speaker is also the form the poet of nature inverts into a speaker and object relationship to distance himself/herself from subjectivism. In explicating this complex distinction, Mill educates poetry enthusiasts in how to distinguish between poetry beholden to feeling and poetry beholden to thought strategies deployed in the poetics of culture and nature. Apart from acknowledging and accepting his distinctions into the differences of voice, this thesis disagrees with his final assessment of what poetry is and is not.

By modifying previous interpretations and classifications of poetry, Mill substantially influenced the interpretation of poetry during his life. He admits that
his treatises are “partial philosophies” intended to create a modern perspective on poetry, as “[i]t cuts fresh channels of thought, … but traces, on the contrary, more deeply, broadly, and distinctly, those which the current has spontaneously flowed” (1212). To address the reader’s many misconceptions in poetry, Mill begins his clarification of what poetry is by referencing William Wordsworth’s *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* to begin justifying his definition, which cunningly dismisses the Romantics (poets of culture). He claims poets like Wordsworth deploy a bastardized language and concept of prose as poetry, which is in complete opposition to the poetic language that was preferred by intellectuals of that time.

However, in his preface to his book, *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth details why vernacular is more efficient in poetry than standard language:

> The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; … . (Bartleby.com, par. 5)

Wordsworth rejected the language of the intellectual’s “philosophical language,” because he contended it brought attention to the poet and disregarded the diversity of its audience (par. 5). He believed that the language of everyday life that permeated every socioeconomic level should be the language of poetry, “as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men” (par. 5). On the other hand, Mill’s treatises are centered on the philosophy of poetry that engages in intense intellectual feeling, which excludes uneducated people. The sort of poetry Wordsworth thought was pretentious and difficult for the everyday man to ascertain.

In expounding his definition of poetry, Mill describes in six points the difference between poetry and eloquence. He first states that this “one” poet addresses his subjective and biased thoughts: “The one [the poet of culture/thought] addresses itself to the belief, …” (Mill 1213). In the sonnet “The world
is too much with us”’, in *The Major Works*, by William Wordsworth, Wordsworth says: “The world is too much with us; late and soon,/ Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;” (Lines 1-2). In *Masterplots II Poetry Series, Volume 6*, Bruce L. Edwards claims “late and soon” indicates humans have become detrimental to the world since the beginning of time “late” (1), and now in the present “soon” (1). For this reason, the title of the poem is repeated in line one (6: 2457). The narrator feels mankind has become more concerned with material things “getting and spending” (2). When they should focus on their primary habitat (Earth), “Little we see in Nature that is ours;” (3) (6: 2457). This kind of language Wordsworth implements Mill argues is etched in the poet’s personal views. The language speaks for the poet and supposes an audience, “Eloquence is feeling pouring itself forth to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavoring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action” (Mill 1216). This sort of poetry serves the poet in explaining what his beliefs are, and what the public’s should be. On account of this observation, it is the poetry Mill undervalues. He minimizes it, because it discusses the poet’s viewpoints and not the object’s nature. Still, it is the language Wordsworth values, as it highlights important things in an ordinary matter of fact way.

Mill’s second claim points out that the “other” poet hones in on his feelings, and addresses his feelings within its feeling: “… the other [poets of nature/feeling addresses feeling calling upon feeling] to the feelings” (1213). For example, in “The Poet’s Mind”, by Lord Alfred Tennyson, in *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*, the speaker interprets the function of an object (the mind) from an omniscient standpoint. As an egotistical edict, the poem details the workings of a superior mind. Because the speaker observes this object closely, it is difficult to discern whether he is referring to Tennyson or another poet’s mind. Instead of speaking from the poet’s perspective, the poet uses the object (a poet’s mind) as a point of reference. In this manner, the object, as the speaker, begins the evaluation of this enlightened object, in comparison to an everyday person’s mind. As a result, the reader might appreciate a poet’s intellectual high ground:
Vex not thou the poet’s mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet’s mind;
For thou canst not fathom it. (Tennyson 1-4)

The speaker illustrates that the combination of crystallized and fluid intelligence, in the poet conveys crowning intellect:

Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind. (5-7)

The speaker is an object of cerebral excellence, with unwavering confidence in its ability to think intelligently: “Clear and bright it should be ever” (5). Because the speaker is omniscient, he trusts the things the poet’s mind thinks and feels for him. As a result, “The Poet’s Mind” effectively expresses what the speaker feels objectively about the mind of a poet: “Bright as light, and clear as wind” (7). Mill describes this action of being neutral as a mental condition true poets strive to achieve, but that only certain poets possess: “Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation” (Mill 1216). “The Poet’s Mind” examines the framework of the poet/speaker relationship and how objectivity functions to develop and direct our concept of how we feel about a thing/idea deep within the self in seclusion. Until this day, it is something Victorians presume is difficult for poets of culture to achieve: “For thou canst not fathom it” (Tennyson 4).

The third point that Mill makes for the subjective poet, “the one [poets of culture/thought] does its work by convincing or persuading, ...” (Mill 1213), is illustrated in Wordsworth’s, “The world is too much with us”, in which he praises nature. He reports that human rationale has been corrupted by possession, “we lay waste our powers” (2). Instead of being more involved with our immediate surroundings, Wordsworth claims we intently gravitate towards unproductive false ambitions like materialism: “Little we see in nature that is ours;” (3). The poet feels it is necessary for him to invoke society into recognizing that their perceptions in life are displaced. Wordsworth feels he has to, not only, save lives, but prevent humans from irreparably damaging the world he loves: “we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!” (4). In the process, the poet
projects his subjective desires. Edwards confirms the narrator depicts humanity’s disdain and disregard for the luxury nature is (6: 2457).

Mill is put off by the abovementioned poetry. He points out that the basis of this kind of poetry is to make an impression on groups of people:

But when he turns round and addresses himself to another person; when he turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end... by that desire of making an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence. (Mill 1216)

Wordsworth insists society needs to be reacquainted with nature, because it should matter most in our lives. However, the poem does not conclude the poet cannot subconsciously venture his intellectual aptitude without looking out, as Mill’s other poet can. In fact, the poem depicts both Wordsworth’s visual and internal sentiments on environmental absorption and protection.

The fourth point Mill makes about introspective poetry is the poet’s ability, in privacy, to initiate genuine objectiveness, “... the other [poetry of nature/feeling] by moving,” (1213). In other words, Mill implies poets of feeling stimulate readers by exhibiting concentrated internal analyses of an object:

Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude, and bodying itself forth in symbols, which are the nearest possible representations of feelings in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet’s mind. (1216)

The speaker, in the epithet of “The Poet’s Mind,” explains the equivalence between God and a poet like this: “[I]nwoven beams” [God’s supremacy] is adapted for human comprehension, and then transmitted to the speaker through a beam to exceed other minds (B). Simultaneously, the poet concentrates this activity, and then converts it into poetry “crisping the sapphire” (C). The sapphire (the mind), receives and absorbs God’s insight, and it also has the capacity to reflect the same insight, “in the midday” to the people (D). At length, divinity flows from God to the poet, “Clear as summer mountain streams (A), then back to “the golden sands” and “blossom-starred shore” [Heaven] (E-F). The speaker’s observation of this ethereal reality is detailed, as moments of “unhallowed laughter!” (G). This feeling for the speaker is spiritual ecstasy. He
is one with his feelings, and is not turning around to address others. He is appreciating the moment.

The fifth point that Mill makes concerning the poet of culture indicates this kind of poet programs readers: “the one [poets of culture/thought] acts by representing a proposition to the understanding”. (1213). Wordsworth anticipates, “the world is too much with us”, will serve as a wakeup call. He applies human characteristics to nature, so the reader perceives tranquility in nature and what it has to offer us: “This Sea that bears her bosom to the moon;/ . . For this, for everything, we are out of tune;” (5-8). Wordsworth disappointed with the world’s obsession of material things wants to enlighten society. The poet of culture creates sympathy, so that his language persuades people to preserve nature in every essence, “—Great God! I’d rather be/ A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;” (9-10). Edwards explains pagans who are interpreted as irrational persons, for adoring nature, see nature’s true value in the same way Wordsworth did (6: 2458). Wordsworth understands his feelings and tells them to the people, so they understand him. Mill explains this sort of poet, as “… those who best understand the feelings of others, are the most eloquent” (Mill 1216). Yet, Mill comprehends the explanation of one’s personal thoughts to another, as ineffective. He philosophizes a poet’s intention must remain unknown to the reader, and must be articulations for the reader to decipher.

The final point Mill makes in distinguishing voice, between eloquence (poetry of culture) and poetry (poetry of nature), exhibits what the poet of nature intends for the reader to understand: “the other [the poet of nature/ feeling] by offering interesting objects of contemplation to the sensibilities,” (1213). In “The Poet's Mind”, the listener is singled out. He is a person of false ambition overcome by negativity:

Dark –brow’d sophist, come not anear;
All the place is holy ground’
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here. (8-11)

In the poem, only people of faith can have knowledge. Sinners must renounce iniquity to earn paradise. The second speaker, in first person, indicates this:
“Holy water will I pour/ Into every spicy flower/ Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around” (12-14). The second speaker, God, will only bestow His divine gifts to those who deserve it. The concept of this sort of poetry illustrates how reflective objectivity can be in assisting people understand things openly.

Through the lens of Mill’s analysis, we have observed two kinds of voices and what they proclaim. On the one hand, the poet of culture projects his/her experiences and openly discusses those things with his/her reader. On the other hand, the poet of nature projects feelings of animate and inanimate things and desires the reader willingly analyze them for the sake unbiased thinking:

What we have said to ourselves, we may tell to others afterwards; what we have said or done in solitude, we may voluntarily reproduce when we know that other eyes are upon us. But no trace of consciousness that any eyes are upon us must be visible in the work itself. ... But not otherwise possible than if he can succeed in excluding from his work every vestige of such lookings-forth into the outward and everyday world, and can express his feelings exactly as he has felt them in solitude, or as he feels that he should feel them, though they were to remain forever unuttered. (Mill 1216)

Still, Mill explains that the first six points of analyses defined, above, in “What is Poetry?” that list the two kinds of voices and what they assert could not clearly define poetry, because novelists also possess a skillset that implores thought and feeling produced by poetry: “Many of the finest poems are in the form of novels, and in almost all good novels there is true poetry” (1213). In addition, he argues that detailed clarifications are important, in order that the mental phenomenon of thinking and feeling are not confused with interest excited by incident (external things) and the presentation of feeling (introspection) (1213).

The previous six points defined the difference, in voice. In the next four points of “What is Poetry,” Mill explains the rationale that distinguishes the “one” (eloquence), and the “other” (poetry).

First, Mill classifies that a poet who connects to a thing excited outside of the self, and then discusses this thing with an audience creates poetry encouraged by external incident: “… eloquence of intercourse with the world”
William Blake, in “The Chimney Sweeper”, from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, is preoccupied with the ill treatment of children. Discerning the world (the church and state) and the society he lives in, Blake motivates public response. In order to boost social morale for the children, he pronounces his personal beliefs in God to encourage confidence that there is hope beyond reality: “And the Angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,/He’d have God for his father & never want joy” (19-20). The children do not have child-like dreams, they dream of heaven and death. Muriel Mellown, in *Masterplots II Poetry Series, Volume 1*, states Blake’s cognizance of religion is a precept that is evident in his references to an “Angel” (19) and “God” (20). He implements religion as a tool in mental fortitude, and as an end goal for the sweepers struggles on earth (1: 376). Blake’s themes are excited by incidents outside of the poet (the poor treatment of the children), but integrity and a moral compass also inspire them.

In assessing the intellectual nature of poets, Mill’s second point indicates that in presenting feeling a “true” poet refrains from thinking of and looking out to an audience: “… the other [poets of nature] from the representation of feeling” (1213). Mill endorses and observes this process closely, because this poet is influenced to center-in on his/her unfiltered feelings in solitude. Browning’s dramatic monologue, “Porphyria’s Lover”, from *My Last Duchess and Other Poems*, concerns a sexually aggressive woman engaged in an affair outside of wedlock, with a man of low socioeconomic status. In thinking that Porphyria’s real ambition is to die for him, he is ready to be with her for eternity:

Too weak, for all her heart’s endeavor,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever. (22-25)

As a man sitting before a beautiful woman, the speaker’s passivity throughout much of the monologue is sidestepped by his internal impulses. In *Masterplots II Poetry Series Supplement, Volume 9*, Carolyn F. Dickinson states that Porphyria has succumbed to her passion (9: 3363). The speaker is an anonymous object to her, and as a male he must exhibit his manhood, “Porphyria worshipped me;
surprise/ Made my heart swell, and still it grew/ While I debated what to do” (33-35). He strangles her with her own “yellow hair” (18), and destroys her perceived source of power (her beauty) over him:

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
Perfectly pure and good: I found  
A thing to do, and all her hair  
In one long yellow string I wound  
Three times her little throat around,  
And, strangled her. ... (36-41)

In his head, the disorganized elucidation of this event is a confession to a crime excelled by obsession. The monologue interprets a sociopath manipulating the sequence of events, in order to make sense of his senseless act, “... No pain felt she;/ I am quite sure she felt no pain” (41-42). Dickinson acknowledges the speaker is attempting to escape judgment for the killing, from the reader and God. She died without suffering, so it is an excusable murder (9: 3364). In these moments, the reader comes to realize that he/she is overhearing someone talking to himself, or is listening in on someone’s inner thoughts. In this murderer’s mind, strangling Porphyria preserves his feelings for her. She wanted to die by his hands; he is “quite” sure of it (42). Mill explains the basis of this poetic approach, as achieving a couple of important interpretations. One, it mocks and exposes the irony of things we desire in life, for example, love; and two, it brings the reader deeper into the understanding of limitless inquiry in unconscious feeling. In other words, Mill says we should not be afraid of our feelings no matter how warped they might be. The latter being the one thing Mill states is not the mind-set of poets excited by incidents outside of themselves, but is the defining quality of poetry: “... the peculiarity of the poetry appears to us to lie in the poet’s utter unconsciousness of a listener” (Mill 1216).

In his third point, Mill reiterates his first judgment that instead of acknowledging their deepest sentiments poets of culture debate the influence of their feelings to that of their immediate environment: “In one [poet of culture], the source of emotion excited is the exhibition of a state or states of human sensibility; ... ” (1213). “London”, from the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, illustrates the sufferings of Londoners. In it, Blake disturbingly
describes how the government has demoralized the public. It is evident to him that the soldiers’ lack of confidence and uncertainty about the causes they defend and/or fight for is exhausting their morale. As a result of his concerns, Blake is excited to act by the eventual incidents his inactions can cause. He suspects that the public and military losing confidence, in government, could only lead to further chaos. Therefore, he must stand up for his native city:

How the Chimney-sweepers cry  
Every blackening Church appalls,  
And the hapless Soldier’s sigh  
Runs in blood down the Palace walls. (9-12)

Blake feels that remaining silent could be more detrimental. Because of this, he chooses to advocate for the people’s well-being and projects his sentiment for the public to the monarchy. Melissa E. Barth, *Masterplots II Poetry Series, Volume 3*, states that the revelations in this poem cast a negative light on the Church and the monarchy. They, above all agencies, are supposed to be easing the suffering of the children who are helpless against the world, and the military that service and protect the country (3: 1256). As his emotions are attached in succession to form a coherent thought, the reader hears the poet’s feelings concerning the circumstances in London. However, Mill’s treatise rejects this sort of poem as poetry, because he/she comes to know of London’s suffering through hearing it from the poet himself, and not from overhearing how he feels about it. Therefore, to him, it does not constitute “true” poetry, because “… we should say that eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard” (Mill 1216).

In his final and fourth assertion on intellectual nature, only poets of nature can illustrate profound sentiments in their works: “… in the other, excitement is caused of a series of states of mere outward circumstances” (1213). Browning, in “My Last Duchess”, from *My Last Duchess and Other Poems*, details a Duke’s reaction to his wife’s social [outward] behaviors with detached details to reveal the Duke’s persona. That is, the speaker reveals the Duke’s true character in a stream of consciousness, as a deranged murderer. At the beginning of the monologue, the reader is lured into a conversation the Duke and his guests are having. The reader is not directly part of the conversation, but will be able to
discern the mannerisms of the poet and the speaker by overhearing the Duke. As a result, the reader will learn who incriminates whom to the reader and his visitors:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hand
Worked busily a day, and there she stands
Will't please you sit and look at her?/ (1-5)

Lois A. Marchino, *Masterplots II Poetry Series, Volume 4*, states Browning's objective perspective (separating the poet from the speaker) permits the reader to measure the outward conditions of the Duke's conversation amongst his guest, in which the reader will be better prepared to investigate the veracity of the Duke's indictment of his wife (4: 1444). Overhearing the eerie explanation of the painting, the Duke suddenly requests for them (reader included) to join the other guests: “… Will't please you rise? We'll meet/ The company below, then. I repeat,” (47-48). The Duke draws the “strangers” (7) that includes his newest fiancée’s father, attention away from the notion he might one day kill his daughter too. In drawing the guest away from the Duchess’ painting, Marchino points out the Duke wishes to impose his only concern his newest wife (an object) and nothing else: “… as I avowed/ At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go/ Together down, sir” (52-54). As they are heading down to join the other guests, the Duke subconsciously points out his sculpture of a godly male subduing a sea-horse. Unwittingly, he incriminates himself as a controlling figure, and as a man who has anything he wishes done for him: “… Notice Neptune, though./ Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,/ Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!” (54-56) (4:1444-5). The reader, also, as a viewer, is placed at the scene of the discussion, and is persuaded to visualize the dead Duchess who seems “alive” (2). In a diabolical twist, the reader is lured into the mindset of a madman in a series of events from viewing the painting; listening to the Duke describe it; hearing him discuss his position in life; and, eventually being reminded of his manipulative prowess in showing a sea-monster being quieted. The reader comes to realization of all this information by overhearing the speaker of the
poem. The poetic perspective Mill ascribes as the source of true poetry, “... we should say that eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard” (Mill 1216). As a result of this technique, we are led by the poet’s introspection of a killer, and are given insight of a madman. Even though, Browning himself is not one.

However, Mill’s thoughts on eloquence and poetry state that no matter the interest a reader has for eloquence or poetry, eventually his/her definition of poetry will be based on a matter of preference: “So much is the nature of poetry dissimilar to the nature of fictitious narrative, ... seems to presuppose or to super induce a comparative indifference to the other” (1213). This observation does not, however, prevent him from referring to poetry depicted from experience, as “the simplest our nature has to offer ... [it is] excited by outward things and does not turn to themselves for the contemplation of the world within themselves” (1213). His claim that the real mark of a poet, the other, the one that stays within the realm of the self, “that which would enable them to find ample excitement nearer at home” is elitist and undemocratic (1214). It is also biased and condescending to think readers who are inclined to prefer novels are simpletons, because they follow poets that lack cognitive insight: “The poet of culture sees his object in prose, and describes it in poetry; the poet of nature actually sees it in poetry” (1222). Conversely, “What is Poetry?” states poetry is supposed to be only an exhibition of profound feelings effectively interpreting diverse understandings of a thing, and not how the poetry of nature is superior to other forms of poetry.

What Mill rebukes is the inclusion of personal experiences and the audience the poet of culture projects to; more specifically, poetry that works to persuade and influence public opinion. He reasons it distracts the poet from reaching poetic uniqueness (perspective in aloneness), as eloquent writers simultaneously compose their work with publicity in mind. In contrast, the poet of nature is not sidetracked by incomparable and irrelevant thoughts of and from the public. He avoids contradictory thoughts and instances to be the teller of feelings. For these reasons, Mill declares for a poem to be poetry the poet must
not tell things how he/she experiences them, but in how he/she feels about them when examining his/her feelings of an object or thing (1214).

Unlike “What is Poetry?” an abstract on the components of poetry, Mill’s second essay on poetics, “Two Kinds of Poetry” (1833), furthers his distinction between eloquence and poetry. On one hand, he states that the style of self-conscious interpretations of an event derives from the attitude of the time. The poet, who writes in this style, catering to the culture of the time is more likely to project external experiences and influences. On the other hand, Mill notes that the unselfconscious style, which derives from a poet with a natural tendency to sharpen his “unselfconscious mind”, illustrates an actual reflective view of a thing (1214). This poet reflects on and describes the basest internal analysis of a thing, whereas the other poet echoes general stimulations of a thing:

Doubtless he is a greater poet in proportion as the fineness of his perceptions, whether of sense or of internal consciousness, furnishes him with an ampler supply of lovely images, the vigor and richness of his intellect with a greater abundance of moving thoughts. For it is through these thoughts and images that the feeling speaks, and through their impressiveness that it impresses itself, and finds response in other hearts; and, from these media of transmitting it increase of intensity is reflected back upon the feeling itself. But all these it is possible to have, and not be a poet; they are mere materials, which the poet shares in common with other people. What constitutes the poet is not imagery, nor the thoughts, nor even the feelings, but the law according to which they are called up. He is a poet, not because he has ideas of any particular kind, but because the succession of his ideas is subordinate to the course of his emotions. (1225)

Mill further reasons, in “Two Kinds of Poetry,” eloquent poets fail his idea of poetry because they are incapable of sustaining long periods of strong inner unselfconsciousness. He argues that poets of culture engage in internal dialogue that is rehearsed to ensure they can persuade public perception, in place of poetry that establishes heightened insight and unadulterated perceptions of a thing (1213). On account of this reasoning, Mill emphasizes poets of culture fail to achieve the actual aim of poetry to describe in abstract terms deep
intuitiveness. For example, the killer’s insatiable desire for Porphyria, in "Porphyria’s lover," is evident in his choice of words in describing the beauty that captivates and compels him to act on his lust:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{I found} \\
&\text{A thing to do, and all her hair} \\
&\text{In one long yellow string I wound} \\
&\quad \ldots \\
&\text{As a shut bud that holds a bee,} \\
&\text{I warily oped her lids: again} \\
&\text{Laughed the blue eyes without a stain. (37-45)}
\end{align*}
\]

The idea that is perceived internally by the lover/killer, “I found/ a thing to do...” (37-38), by the means of sensory perception, is framed by the poet of nature in contemplation of continually accessing his/her deepest sentiments to establish new insight on how a lover/killer feels. Mill argues:

\[
\text{But, where any of the impressions are vivid and intense, the associations into which these enter are the ruling ones; it being a well-known law or association, that, the stronger feeling is, the more quickly and strongly it associates itself with any other object or feeling. (Mill 1222)}
\]

The disruption of subjectivity is what makes poetry of thought and feeling different. It is particularly visible in the evolution and distinction developed in the new genre (dramatic monologue and monodrama), which followed cultural poetics and provided a platform for the new idea Mill expounds: “... but the appearance of a difference is itself a real difference” (1212). More importantly, the Victorian mythus invigorated monotonous thought, which long plagued the poetry of culture.

Mill strives in validating his analysis, in which a true poem must be able to delineate feeling that waits thought upon feeling: “The one [poetry of nature, the natural poet] writer has a distinct aim, ... and he conveys it clothed in the feelings which it excites in himself, or which he deems most appropriate to it” (1222). The first speaker, in “The Poet’s Mind”, excited by the prowess of a poet’s mind expounds on it’s heightened sense of perception, which to the speaker is unmatched: “Vex not the poet’s mind, ... Bright as light, and clear as wind” (1-7). The article “the” objectifies the mind of a poet. Meanwhile, personification
assists the thoughts of the speaker in crystallizing his positions on a poet’s mind. Personifying the mind of a poet allows the speaker to gauge its codes of function, which allow it to exorcise and enlighten minds. The first person pronoun “I” indicates this, “Holy Water I will pour” (12). As the mind pours holy water “into every spicy flower” (13) it will cure those minds that are inferior to its. As a result, these tropes allow the speaker to separate itself from the object to depict its superior being. At the same time, the conscious speaker can detail his most intense perspectives of a poet’s mind. Further, as the poem progresses, the reader can distinguish when the mind becomes the speaker. Simultaneously, it allows the reader to think openly about a poet’s mind.

On the contrary, eloquent writers (poets of culture) rely on streamlining ideas. Namely, their works consist of successive thoughts that wait upon emotional responses to communicate their feelings through thoughts. At times, this approach falls short of independent insight:

The difference, then, between the poetry of a poet, and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetic mind, is, ... The other merely pours forth the overflowing of his feelings; and all the thoughts which those feelings suggest are floated promiscuously along the stream. (1222-3)

For example, in “London”, the speaker delegates himself to reveal the degrading conditions his fellow Britons live in, and the effects it has on their quality of life. The capitalization of “Man” (5) and “Infants” (6) indicates that “Londoners” symbolize a vast array of civil and political inequalities that Europeans are always encountering: “In every cry of every Man,/ In every Infant’s cry of fear,” (5-6). It is easy to understand that Britons were greatly suffering under the ruler-ship of the monarchy, “In every voice; in every ban,” (7). The narrator hears cries of a grim future, and expects his experiences to remain unchanged. He, also, hears the figurative manacles the monarchy has wrapped around their minds, which allows them to accept such hostilities: “The mind-forg’d manacles I hear” (8). By all means, the monarchy rules the country and the people. It is how it insures its sovereignty. Their ruler-ship, however, is stymying the mental and spiritual
progression of its people, instead of encouraging it. Barth better explains the imprisoning avenues:

Not only does he find this suffering in individual misery, but Blake also says that the legal dictates he hears carry with them threats to human freedom. He concludes the second stanza by equating laws with “Mind-forg’d manacles” – strictures that limit the human imagination, the human heart, and the human soul. (3: 1254)

Blake’s poem imparts his truths and experiences, but it is an act of telling a sequence of events. The reader can put the poem’s words and images into perspective, but the reader will not know how acutely affected the poet is by these predicaments. On these accounts, the poetic form Mill emphasizes of the unselfconscious nature, in which he bases his strongest viewpoints, is addressed for the encouragement of a more objective and internal approach. He points out it ascertains intimate thought patterns to gain a sounder and less biased view of a thing being discussed by the self, which is best suited for poetry. Because the poet of culture’s work lacks this experimentation, Mill states it is not poetry: “There is an air of calm deliberateness about all he writes which is not characteristic of the poetic temperament” (Mill 1223). To that end, the reader gets little to no insight into the feelings of the poet other than his observation, which impels the poet to write about his people’s plight.

Mill’s favored modus operandi contends the strongest of the poet’s feelings supplants the connection of mind and soul, in connecting objects and ideas with the poet’s emotions or those of its character’s: “At the center of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling; and the thoughts or images will be there, only because the feeling was there” (1222). As a result of this favored argumentation, Mill explains to readers and writers what to assess in distinguishing poetry from eloquence:

[t]he combination which the mind puts together, the picture which it paints, the wholes which [I]magination constructs out of the materials supplied by [F]ancy, will be indebted to some dominant feeling, not, as in other natures to a dominant thought, for their unity and consistency of character, --for what distinguishes them from incoherencies. (1222)
Again, what the reader gains from Mill’s essays is a distinction of two forms, and a memorandum into which voice he sees as superior to the other.

Section II: Analysis of Robert Browning’s definition in subjectivity and objectivity, with criticism from: E.J. Slinn, Harold Bloom, Park Honan, Robert Langbaum, Isobel Armstrong, Carol T. Christ, Rene Descartes, and David Hume.

Browning, in *Browning’s Essay on Shelley: Being His Introduction to the Spurious Letters* (1903), defines his outlook on the objective and subjective perspective in lessons learned from his Romantic mentor, Percy Shelley. Browning states that the things fashioned by the objective poet are emphasized for the purpose of reproducing things external, as a “‘fashioner’” is best suited for poetry that furthers intellect. The subjective poet, on the other hand, has the opposite tendency. Although equally talented and gifted with the perception of man and nature, he is impelled to embody the thing he perceives. He is rather a “‘seer’” than a fashioner of things (33-39). Browning, before Mill’s excoriation of his older works, believed the aspiration of a poet is to objectify his subject matter. It is a form Browning begins to design in “Pauline,” in which a seer views things first and then the fashioner completes the vision of that object. E. Warwick Slinn’s essay, “Experimental Form in Victorian Poetry”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry*, explains the impact of poetic hybrids like “Porphyria’s Lover”:

This desire to compose a new poetic form, one that would adapt established styles to contemporary needs, and particularly one that would combine narrative and speculative commentary with the requirements of aesthetic unity, typifies many Victorian poets. … And in the twentieth century it led in turn to standard critical discussions of Victorian experiments with form. (46)

The Victorian genre educates poetry enthusiasts in better understanding how previous modes of poetry function, not only during the Victorian era, but also in future movements. In restructuring previous paradigms, Victorian poets reveal the effects of adapting established styles (46). The new poetic form ushers in the
process of being obliged to thought, along with the inversion of the poet/speaker relationship (Mill 1220). As a result of this process instigated by Mill, Browning retools his new works, in Madhouse Cells. Slinn further explains the evolution of Browning’s process that occurred between Romantic and Victorian influences:

At the same time, the one generic exception is the dramatic monologue, and this innovative form helps us to understand what is at stake in other modes of poetic experimentation in the period. … With its hybrid combination of lyric and drama, the dramatic monologue produced an intensive focus on the exigencies and processes of human subjectivity. (47)

Harold Bloom, also, cites Browning's popular explanation between the subjective and objective perspective in his book, Robert Browning. Bloom contends his point of view, influenced by Browning on voice in a metaphorical manner:

An objective poet reflects or mirrors the outer world, making it clearer and easier to understand by writing about what takes place outside himself. The subjective poet, however, is like a lamp projecting from his inner flame, a light by which the reader sees everything in a new way. (88)

The semantics behind the terms of subjectivity/poet of culture/eloquence and objectivity/poet of nature/poetry can be confusing as the concept of voice unfolds throughout this discourse. In illustrating their dramatic (objective) characters as mirrors reflecting reality in the world, Victorians project voice from the “inner flame,” the source that generates the object’s voice and is the voice of the poet of sensation/feeling (88). For them, voice produces perspective, imagination, and idiosyncrasies of a character’s mind.

Victorians admittedly perceive Romantic influences in works by such poets as Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge. Yet, Victorian poets only perceive it before entering the harsh and intolerant environment of objectivity that asked for realism and not the beautification of things. Robert Langbaum, in his essay, “The Victorian Idea of Culture”, from The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature, cites Sir Henry Taylor, who explains his unwelcomed and disdained perspective on subjectivity in the preface of his verse drama, Philip Van Artevelde (1834), during the era of Romanticism:
The reaction (in 1824) was against too much feeling and imagination at the expense of realism, intellect and morality. Passing on to Shelley, Taylor condemns him for a too exclusive pursuit of beauty for a visionary quality that presents us forms ‘never to be seen through the mere medium of eyesight’. (41-42)

Mill's essays function as a baseline in defining the “heard” (Romantic) and “overheard” (Victorian) voice. In keeping with this mind, heard poetry is not poetry, but a narrative of an experience conveyed to the public. He adds there is also a poetic nature eloquent writers lack: “There is a mental and physical constitution or temperament peculiarly fitted for poetry. ... But the poetry of one who is a poet by nature will be clearly and broadly distinguishable from the poet of mere culture” (Mill 1221). But as Slinn, Browning, and Langbaum have alluded above, the poetry Mill prefers and claims is true poetry derives from the poetry he rejects. In other words, the form the Victorian establishes is achieved by disregarding Romantic requirements.

Blake's “The Chimney Sweeper” is an illustration of the poetics of experience at work. The young speaker decries the physical and psychological torment he and fellow sweepers endure cleaning congested chimneys. In the first stanza, the sweeper's hopelessness is exacerbated when his mother dies: “When my mother died I was very young,/ And my father sold me while yet my tongue,/ could scarcely cry weep, weep, weep, weep,” (1-3). Mellown identifies that the always-nurturing role of a mother is absent. Under the supervision of his father, who is insensitive to his adolescent needs, he is sold for his father's personal income subjecting the speaker to being a thing (1: 374). Unfortunately for the boy, he has no other resources and must clean chimneys in order to provide for himself: “So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep” (4). Mellown reasons the poet’s experiences in 18th century London highlight moments of cruelty to children that the poet feels are inhumane, and which the speaker indirectly asserts is demoralizing to children and England overall (1: 376). Blake eloquently contextualizes the internal and external challenges these young boys face, so that the reader can sympathize with the socio-economic condition in which the sweepers live.
Isobel Armstrong, in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics*, concurs with Mill’s antagonistic essays distinguishing what poetry is and is not: “One [eloquence] is the knowledge granted by expressive feelings and psychological experiences effectively through emotions. The other [poetry] is the knowledge granted by the scientist” (136). Armstrong observes Mill’s disdain for poetics that probes a poet’s subjective experiences, which she claims does nothing to educate the reader. Instead, she favors, a poet that objectively acquaints him/herself with his/her object with proper internalization (137). Armstrong’s acceptance of Mill’s aesthetics validates that a poet who depicts an object and applies laws and values that are common to the object’s existence, rather than referencing his/her own interactions with an object from his/her feelings best defines an object as it is to the speaker of the poem. This process of writing, for Mill and Armstrong, constitutes “true poetry” (Mill 1213). The intuition of perceiving things objectively enables the writer of the Victorian monologue to avoid an audience, but to intently remain within his/her world of contemplating an object. It is a poetics of addressing the self in a meticulous manner, so that the reader comes to the poet’s knowledge of the object, by overhearing the speaker’s thoughts on it.

Browning’s dramatic monologue “My Last Duchess” illustrates the concepts just mentioned. The speaker, Duke Ferrara (the object), talks to an unknown person referred to as “stranger” (7). The perspective of this poem is articulated to the reader in an overheard conversation that is being held in front of the dead Duchess’ portrait. This literary strategy, which allows the poet to be both subjective and objective, positioning the reader as a listener in close proximity of the speaker, further objectifies the speaker’s mindset. Marchino explains that part of the purpose of the monologue is to simultaneously conjure up sentimentality from the reader while leaving them uninformed (4: 1444). This practice and method of the poet of nature allows for the reader to scrutinize the poet intent’s and the theme of the poem.

The Duke interpreting the subtle qualities of the portrait, “That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall” (1), and setting both the speaker and the reader at
the scene of the poem, persuades the reader to pass judgment on the dead wife that appears “alive” (2). Marchino points out that the Duke’s ostentatious speech excoriating his former lady, as a woman with many faults, is the Duke’s misconception. Without an audience to whom his unflattering judgments of the Duchess would be projected, the Duke could not project his false interpretations of a licentious woman. In other words, the Duke wishes his unbeknownst readers would despise the Duchess and view her untimely death as a consequence of her unwomanly ways (4: 1445). Yet, the adulterous impulses of an unfaithful woman the fixated Duke would like the reader to believe are, instead, modest qualities like courtesy and compassion for others: “The depth and passion of its [her] earnest glance” (8).

In *The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Tradition: The Poetry of Experience*, Robert Langbaum disputes Mill’s distinction on poetic knowledge. Langbaum’s academic assertion emphasizes that all poetry, whether derived from thoughts or feelings, are one in the same:

> The formulation is that formulation itself must never be allowed to settle into dogma, but must emerge anew every day out of experience. It must be lived, which is to say that it must carry within it its subjective origin, its origin in experience and self-realization. (20)

Referencing Mill and pre-Victorian poetics, Langbaum’s analysis concludes that the Romantic lyric (poetry of culture) shaped the formation of the Victorian monologue. His apprehensions also reveal a truth that poetic formulations develop from a poet’s “subjective origin” and naturally reference the thoughts and times of a poet’s life:

> Although many romantic careers look like a working back to what had been originally rejected, it would be a mistake to suppose that the position returned to could ever again be the same as the original position. For the position returned to has been chosen, and that makes it a romantic reconstruction rather than a dogmatic inheritance. (20)

Langbaum further theorizes that the poetics of culture is poetry that positions itself as both objective and subjective. Therefore, Mill’s correlation is preposterous, when he understands that interest invested in poetry is first based
on experience, whereupon the experience becomes internalized. In addition, “What is Poetry?” functions best in offering a compare and contrast of style on thoughts and feelings, instead of actually debasing poets of culture.

Like Langbaum, Park Honan, author of *Browning’s Characters*, concludes that Browning’s reconstruction of the lyric in the monologue helps dramatize his characters as another person. He states that Browning, in expounding his poetic practice with Shelley, developed the formation of his new style, but never perfected it until “Porphyria’s Lover”:

Had Browning imitated his mentor [Shelley] more exactly in the matter of form and character presentation, . . . a young Browning willing and able to imitate the lyricism of his romantic predecessor, but consciously or unconsciously disposed to do more with character, to heighten it, above all to dramatize it. (16-17)

Browning did not profusely imitate Shelley, because the Romantic lyric style did not allow Browning to fully utilize his own poetic strengths. Instead, Mill’s denouncement of Browning’s “Pauline” was enough incentive for Browning to rethink his own voice to mock Mill:

To begin with Mill, Browning’s poems, ‘Porphyria’ (later known as ‘Porphyria’s lover’) and ‘Johannes Agricola’, constitute a running dialogue with his [Mill’s] ideas. The two *Repository* monologues emerge as parodies of his aesthetics and their politics. . . . (Armstrong 136).

Browning, like any poet, preferred his own identity and voice. In pursuit of his vision, he inadvertently invented a new form by inverting the poet/speaker relationship. As a result, the formation of past formulations (Sentimental and Romantic lyricism) helped him form the monologue, a hybrid of the Romantic lyric and prosopopoeia (137). Although Armstrong concurs with Mill on objectivity that acquaints a poet with his/her object through proper internalization, she unlike Mill recognizes the dramatic monologue is a formulation of past formations (137). We can understand why Mill is indifferent to it, but he cannot invalidate the poetics of culture as not being poetry.
As it breaks from cultural norms, the discoveries made in “Porphyria’s Lover” are essential to understand the new textual strategies adopted in the monologue (Armstrong 115). Mill criticized “Pauline” for being composed in the confessional form, because it failed to fulfill the critic’s aspirations in the makeup of objectified poetry. Armstrong clarifies why Mill and other critics of the time were confused by Browning’s Romantic poems:

I should think it a sincere confession, though of a most unlovable state, if ‘Pauline’ were not evidently a mere phantom. All about her is full of inconsistency – he neither loves her nor fancies her. He loves her yet insists upon talking love to her - if she existed and loved him, he treats her most ungenerously and unfeelingly. (Armstrong 115)

Browning “subjectifies” the details of a personal relationship and passes over objectivity throughout the design of the poem. In the subjective sense, he describes his history and obsession with an enigmatic woman, “Love me---love me, Pauline, love naught but me;/ Leave me not. All these words are wild and weak;” (Browning 903-904). However, Browning thinks he conceived the kind of poem he strove to write, “And I be first to deny all, and despise” (991). But, he has only begun to develop his new poetic style, and he understands that. He indirectly describes his recognition of it this way, “Still this is all my own, this moment’s pride” (993). As a retort to Mill’s views, “Porphyria’s Lover,” which included his new voice, degrades Mill’s thinking of Browning’s prior works (Armstrong 136).

Armstrong observes Browning’s Madhouse Cells like this; first, she explains how Browning mocks the idea of the overheard voice in “Porphyria’s Lover” by listening to the speaker question his objectified experiences and actions, “They [“Porphyria’s Lover,” “My Last Duchess,” and “Johannes of Agricola in Meditation”] achieve what was not achieved in ‘Pauline,’ … which simultaneously expresses utterances and reverses the objectified feeling,” (Armstrong 138); for example, “And yet God has not said a word!” (Browning 60). She, then, states the monologue illustrates Browning’s expertise in the new objective form, in which the speaker is also aware; “…so that the speaking
subject is at once self-analytical and capable of being the object of analysis which goes beyond the self (138); for example, the speaker pounders: "While I debated what to do" (35). After confessing to the convoluted course of events, the speaker (not the poet) wavers between sanity and insanity illustrating to the reader that the poet (not the speaker) is semi-conscious of the subjective and objective mindset: “I am quite sure she felt no pain” (42).

Dickinson agrees the speaker is unsure if he read into Porphyria’s thoughts and actions correctly, or whether he killed her out of impulse to do so (9: 3363). In other words, the lover (the speaker) reverts back to objective reasoning, as he attempts to deceive his subjective self into believing her death was painless. In hindsight, the poet (Browning) explains away his speaker’s actions. He makes them seem sensible to the speaker’s self, because her death was quick. In the process, Browning indirectly implements the heard voice of the Romantic lyric to reason his thoughts. He then rejects it in utilizing the objective voice, “the drama of soliloquy ‘unconscious of being seen,’” to not only conjure up antithetical thoughts, but to project those thoughts through the lover (the object) (Armstrong 139). Specifically, the speaker internally tells the poem to himself from the objective perspective. He, then, elaborates those innermost feelings the speaker is thinking, which allows the reader to overhear the speaker’s normal and abnormal logic. Regardless, the speaker does not sense condemnation from his thoughts or actions. He is encouraged to believe he has done the right thing murdering his lady, since God has remained silent. God, unfortunately, does not disapprove of the lover’s actions (Line 60). Dickinson argues the narrator points out, as final proof of his moral correctness, that if God has not condemned him, “I” the reader cannot (60) (9: 3363).

In illustrating the irony in love, Browning depicts the demented notions of his character’s mind. A concept Honan illustrated had become Browning’s intent in previous poems, to be ironic (Honan 88). “Porphyria’s Lover” helps Browning explore rigid contradictions of love, as opposed to the idealized perception of love that is typically recognized in poems. Dickinson confirms Browning’s psychoanalysis of the obsessive mind. She states he engages this psyche to not
only expose some of the dangers of obsession, but also indirectly asks that the reader scrutinize the extent he/she can believe the realness of his character’s actions (9: 3364). That is, the reader in a roundabout way is asked to question the poet’s morals and the object’s voice (the speaker of the poem). These devices that exclude an audience, as they help the reader better understand the poetics of solitude, are what Mill and Armstrong endorse:

Subsequently Browning refined the dialogic process and made it more complex by introducing a silent listener within the monologue itself, so that the poem is a doubly a text, and the rudiments of this structural politics are all here in these early poems. (Armstrong 145)

In short, Browning’s work advocates for a distinctive voice that speaks directly to its listeners.

Add to this, Browning satirizes Mill’s theoretical speaker who adapts a psychological formulation built on sensory perceptions (sight, scent, hearing, touch, and taste), in order that the ethereal feeling the poet’s speaker discusses can confess itself to itself (Mill 1216). As the mind initiates interpretation of sensory information in order for the self to represent and understand things, Mill’s poet of nature replicates the experiences of his/her speaker. This “other” psychological landscape is established to support and understand the workings of an object (the subject of a poem), throughout the monologue in order for the object’s voice (the speaker) to be internally dramatize. In *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from Objections and Replies*, “Meditation II”, the seventeenth century philosopher, Rene Descartes, illustrates how a human being experiences internal thinking and recognizes his/her sensory perceptions in a series of layered inquiries:

If the ‘I’ is understood strictly as we have been taking it, then it is quite certain that knowledge of it does not depend on things of whose existence I am as yet unaware; so it cannot depend on any of the things which I invent in my imagination. … But what then am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? (19)

Before an individual can reconstruct his/her environment in their mind, the self must establish empirically fact and fiction. When the self is conscious of reality, images, and ideas form an imagination that can then reinvent external things for
an individual. The internalized thinking Descartes describes above helps make his existence evident to him: “But what then am I? … A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions” (19). This self-aware and conscious protocol is similar, if not, identical to the thinking process Mill observes in the poet of nature. Except, Mill’s poet of nature distinguishes between thought and feeling, and not reality and illusion like Descartes’ human does. Mill, also, perceives the poet of nature must possess keen awareness to fulfill poetic uniqueness, “… and the wiser thinkers understand and acknowledge that poetic excellence is subject to the same necessary conditions with any other mental endowment [particularly psychologically and philosophically], …” (Mill 1220). Mill explains the poet of nature, unlike the poet of culture, internalizes what he perceives to arrive at his object’s own diction and insight, clarifying philosophical understanding in and out of reality for his speaker:

… and that to no one of the spiritual benefactors of mankind is a higher or a more assiduous intellectual culture needful than to the poet (It) is true, he possesses this advantage over others who use the ‘instrument of words,’—that, of the truths which he utters, a larger proportion are derived from personal consciousness and a smaller from philosophic investigation.’ (Mill 1220-21)

Poetry of nature occupies feeling. It does not interrupt the mind in meditation. It does not impede by looking out at the public, expecting feedback to sustain poetic feelings. It (feeling) and the poet capture the mind of the poet and allow consciousness to stream. It is independent of culture. Feeling prevents the awareness of thought to invade and disrupt deep contemplation, unless, it arrives as a package that speaks profoundly for a feeling:

… or indeed like all strongly pleasurable or painful sensations in an impassioned nature, it pervades the entire nervous system. States of feeling, whether sensuous or spiritual, which thus possess the whole being, are the fountains of that which we have called poetry of poets, and which is little else than a pouring-forth of the thoughts and images that pass across the mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it. (1224)
Still, the poet of nature references his own sensory preceptors (the basis of eloquence) to scaffold an inner world of reasoning and experience for the speaker he dramatizes. It is a world essentially assembled from the sensory preceptor’s initial contact with whatever the object is.

On account of Armstrong’s analysis of Mill’s essays, she too endorses the idea that eloquence is not the sort of poetry that: “the true poet is unself-conscious and alone with his affective, …” (Armstrong 137). “True poetry”, as Armstrong explains it, eliminates evidence that the poet is the speaker of the poem (137). However, the poet of soliloquy, as Armstrong describes him/her, must exercise certain mental make-ups first established in the subjective mind since the “one” strives in portraying separation from the “other” to be distinct. Their forms of thought, however, must be understood in that they are entirely correlative and cannot be separated. David Hume, author of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, “Of the Origin of Ideas,” explains his idea of sense perception like this:

> These faculties [imagination, solitude, introspection] may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment. The utmost we say of them, even when they operate with greatest vigor, is, that they represent their object in so lively a manner, that we could almost say we feel or see it: But, except the mind be disordered by disease or madness, they never can arrive at such a pitch of vivacity, as to render these perceptions altogether indistinguishable. (14)

It is this abstraction of force (feeling) and vivacity (thought) that has created division between poetry, which strives to reach an access of deep feeling that excludes an audience and eloquence. The division that persuades interest by rendering topics that stay in tune with the poet’s vigor to conjure up emotions in its audience continues to this day. Because of the above-mentioned friction, one can undoubtedly sense there is a reciprocal relationship between poetry of culture and poetry of nature. In *the Poetry of Experience*, Langbaum explains that although there is not a clear-cut division between the two forms there is a return to former concepts of poetry in the monologue from the lyric:
It makes no difference whether the romanticist arrives in the end at a new formulation or returns to an old one. It is the process of denial and reaffirmation, which distinguishes him both from those who have never denied and those who, having denied, have never reaffirmed. (20) Although Robert Browning refashions himself in a form of rejecting the sense of self, he cannot refute his Romantic influences in the monologue. Hume explains the impossibility of someone completely denying the anatomical prerogative that references the self and its experiences first, in order to consciously imitate (objectify) force and vivacity:

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon nearer examination, that it is really confined within narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than a faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. (Hume 15-16)

However, Browning with renewed essence augmented the inner-self. As a result, his new work distanced itself from the influences and persuasions of indoctrination that relied on the excesses of thought like the poet of culture does (Garnett 36).

Mill and Armstrong, as champions of science and objectivity, contend that a true poet does not write from his reflective standpoint, but within the moment he is in unison with the thing that captures his/her feelings. She like Mill believed a poet must be conscious of his feelings and interpretations of it, so that the poet does not reflect on thought. Armstrong insists Browning, like other poets of his time, became a true poet when he controlled and cured excessiveness and no longer conflated his poems (Armstrong 136). Nevertheless, any expression (thought), after the initial force (feeling), will still be an imitation of the initial experience (force), “These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they can never entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment” (Hume 14). Hume’s philosophy on ideas notes how Mill’s logic on subjectivity and objectivity is challenged, in discussing force and vivacity in a fictional world:
In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: The mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will. Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones. (16)

Hume’s analysis of force and vivacity serves both poets of culture and nature. It particularly serves Browning, a poet of solitude and introspection, whose poems Armstrong points out chart “conditions of extremity” like sex and faith: “Browning takes those areas which were coming progressively to occupy the status of private experience of the self in his culture—sexuality and religion—as test cases” (Armstrong 138). In “Porphyria’s Lover,” Browning characterizes a killer, and in return the killer (speaker) reveals his darkest impulses. Therefore, one must study, whether he is projecting experiences or thoughts, as he has experienced or observed them. Browning’s career, however, suggests he was a law-abiding person. In his defense, Hume describes certain psychologies in men this way: “A man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate or cruelty, nor can a selfish heart easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity” (Hume 17). On the contrary, Browning, in the fictional world of literature, can achieve the most absurd personal contradictions. For example, Porphyria’s lover awaits her arrival, as she is also fascinated with him:

When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall. (Lines 6-13)

The unnamed speaker living in a cottage and not a house, and describing her “dripping cloak and shawl” and “her soiled gloves” (11-12) indicates he might be of a lower socioeconomic status than she is. That is, her clothing describes an elegant woman. He may be, either, having an illicit relationship with a married woman, or a woman of unknown means who can travel by herself at night without answering to anyone. Regardless of their class differences, the speaker demonstrates his power over Porphyria by not responding to his own name:

And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,  
She put my arm about her waist  
...  
And spread, o’er all, her yellow hair,  
Murmuring how she loved me. (14-21)

In this instance, Dickinson explains that the cloak of anonymity and the act of not responding to his own name is evidence that the narrator [speaker] is not himself, and has dissociated himself for the murderous act that follows (9:3362-3). Evidently, the poem’s speaker, as Hume would deduce, is assimilating a murderer’s psyche: “It is readily allowed, that other beings may possess many senses of which we can have no conception; …” (Hume 17). As the poet is not a killer, he can only give the reader an impression (from his reality) of what they might be like, “... because the ideas of them [killers] have never been introduced to us in the only manner by which an idea can have access to the mind, by wit, by the actual feeling and sensation” (17). For the objective/dissociated voice to work, a murderer’s mind cannot be reflected upon the poet’s prior knowledge of a killer, but in the immediate impression (force/feeling). It must be reflected in how a killer presents him/herself in the poet’s mind at that very moment he or she thinks of a killer, in an abrupt intellectual moment.

Section III: Further exemplification of J.S. Mill’s definition of poetry and what Mill thought of its function, referencing Pierre Janet and Anna Freud.

In describing the psycho-philosophical perspective of an object/thing through a dispassionate evaluation, Armstrong asserts what Browning achieves and how he separates himself from the Romantic sense of thinking (Armstrong 136). As a solipsistic soliloquist (poet of nature), Browning devises his monologue by internalizing something he is not. The reader, in turn, has to internalize the speaker’s content to make sense of the poem’s subject matter. The omission of dialogue and an audience warrants debate between the reader and the text alone, and it also warrants scrutiny of the poet and the speaker: “Mental phenomena are externalized as events so that they are the equivalent of a set of incidents which can be publicly examined and mediated”
Therefore, it is a preposterous correlation to try and debase poets of culture, when Mill understands that interest invested in poetry is subjective. “What is Poetry?” and “Two Kinds of Poetry” function best in offering a compare and contrast of style on feelings and thoughts, and who can interpret that for the poet, whether it is the poet or an object.

Analytical and theoretical assessment of the above mentioned scholars illustrate contradictions, on whether poetry should remain free from external imaginations. For example, Mill and Armstrong assert rehearsed interactive dialogues, in which one’s private thoughts are exchanged with the world, remain excluded from their works. Because, they corrupt the poet’s point of view should be an analysis beholden to the reader to determine. Langbaum, Browning, Honan, and Slinn, on the other hand, acknowledge the purpose of exchanging thoughts. They thought the general public must be informed through the communal process of rapport that is both educative and democratic.

The second stanza, of Blake’s, “The Chimney Sweeper” is an illustration of an informative kind of poetry. In it, the poet makes use of an omniscient narrator to encourage hope in the young boys to live, particularly, in Tom Dacre. Tom’s absent childhood is illustrated to reveal what a sweeper’s day to day consist of: “Hush Tom never mind it, for when your head’s bare,/ You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair” (7-8). A low or bald haircut averted heavy soot build-up and thwarted inhalation that led to many early deaths. However, it also meant they lived longer, therefore, employers got more labor from the child workers. Because of this, the omniscient narrator encouraged acceptable reason for the situation the children were living in (1.375). Mellown points out Blake’s poem exchanged thoughts and feelings and educated the public, as the poem later caused the Chimney Sweeper’s Act to be enacted in 1788, outlawing child labor in England (1.374).

By all means, Mill’s argument underlines the dramatization of a poet’s experience as the standard for poetic realness. On account of this thinking, an experience communicated publicly is not poetry. Nonetheless, this thinking is theoretically debatable. In fact, Mill contradicts himself in claiming a person in
excitement is capable of poetry: “All persons, even the most unimaginative, in moments of strong emotions, speak poetry, ...” (Mill 1221). The analysis of “The Chimney Sweeper” above verifies two things, the poem integrates external imaginations and the exchange of thought that educated the public (government and labor force). If the poet of culture is at fault, he is guilty of not being internally dramatic enough. In this case, it is ludicrous to even deliberate the idea that the inclusion of the poet as one of the characters ceases the work as poetry and relegates it to prose.

Mill adds poetry should always be an idea in which feeling spontaneously exemplifies itself. In the mind, the feeling must slowly define what these ideas are, whereupon the feeling and ideas select the diction to expound the experience. A system of words and thinking he states is the poet of nature’s domain:

In all others, poetry is something extraneous and super-Induced; something out of themselves, foreign, to the habitual course of their every-day lives and characters; a world to which they make occasional visits, but where they are sojourners, not dwellers, and which, when out of it, or even when in it, they think of, peradventure, but as a phantom-world, - a place of ignes fatui (false illuminations) and spectral illusions. (1221)

Wordsworth, in, “Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,” achieves Fox’s idea of educating through one’s own poetic capability, even though, Mill would disagree in how he arrives at the educational process (Armstrong 136). Wordsworth, as an adult, reminiscences his childhood memories and his adulthood experiences, at the abbey. The reader hears the narrator’s retold elucidations of a thing, which holds true to the Romantic scheme that a poet of culture’s impulse to write stems from his/her external influences and the self. Wordsworth returning to the abbey, and hearing the natural acoustics surrounding him, after five years, engages the nostalgias of his youth:

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountainous-springs,
With a soft inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs. (1-5)
Claire Robinson points out for *Masterplots II, Poetry Series, Volume 3*, that the speaker distinguishes his keener sense of perception. He acknowledges that his awareness as a man, compared to his adolescent views, has heightened. That is, his perception of things are better illuminated, and allow him to metaphorically parallel his encounters in the wilderness to the world around him. As an adult, for instance, he has applied animate characteristics like a “murmur” to inanimate things (an inland) (4). As a result, he is able to distinguish one of nature’s many voices: the sky is “quiet” (8). Because of the poet’s maturation, he can now analogously correlate nature’s principles with human ones (3:1236).

Wordsworth’s first experience, “The hermit sits alone,/ Though absent long,” (23-24), and the abbey’s grandeur are before him now. “These forms of beauty have not been me” (25) invokes peculiarly vivid memories, which reveal the poet’s insight. The poet’s memories are not focused upon how he responds to things (nature), but how he focuses in the moment he arrives at them: “As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:” (26). In short, he details nature emotionally, not visually. However slight his emotions are, Wordsworth recollects them differently, and retrieves memories in fragments relative to his emotions.

Armstrong confirms Mill’s preference in poetics of solitude and thorough introspection, averting superficial thoughts like in the resonation of Wordsworth’s memories not the poem. The dramatic monologist focuses on an emotion and retrieves the incident as a feeling and not a thought, unlike the Romantic lyricist who recites from external stimuli recalling things in a chronological fashion that Mill insists restricts the description of a thing: “Random, sequential associations interfere with pure experience, …” (Armstrong 137). Mill faults the poet of culture for his dependence on stream of consciousness that he describes as digressive. Mill contends the poet’s frame of thought in this approach struggles to articulate his/her course of deep feeling: “Their associations, to use the language of philosophers, are chiefly of the successive, not the synchronous kind; and, whether successive or synchronous, are mostly casual” (Mill 1222). He essentially states the dramatic lyrical process, which refrains from illustrating sequential association but implements instantaneous experiences and diction
associated to feeling, shapes an emotion in the poet. In the process of this mentality, feelings are projected to the reader in its purest unfiltered and unadulterated essence. Wordsworth can recall memories, because they are solely his. But, Mill’s theoretical thinking declares poets like Wordsworth are not poets, but poets like Tennyson and Browning are. The poet, in “Tintern Abbey”, synthesizes his thoughts. In fact, the poem passes over feeling, because it does not assimilate nature through his feelings. Instead, it focuses on both the abbey’s adjusted landscape (external factors) and memories (thoughts) from his childhood. Mill would have suggested Wordsworth focus and describe all of his feelings concerning, his internal experience (his feelings of the abbey alone) above all. The poem nonetheless touches upon the sympathy of humanity that mankind can relate to, particularly, the maturation of a person (3:1236-7). Indeed, this poem discusses Wordsworth’s impression of the world, as it illuminates his talents in perception. And, it features his talent for signifying the things he perceives, but a reader walks away understanding that these are the poet’s views. There is no ambiguity in his poetry, unlike the ambiguous nature of the monologue.

A dead Porphyria (at her lover’s hands) is freed from her societal obligations. At the same time, her body adjoins the narrator’s love alongside Porphyria’s for eternity. She is a “perfectly pure” love (37), who sought an escape from her high life to be with him. In strangling her, he carried out her indirect wishes:

And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria’s love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard. (55-57)

Accordingly, they will be together forever, “And all night long we have not stirred,” (59); it was an intimate experience her lover wished perpetually, too. The narrator, for the most part, believes this. Nevertheless, the reliability of the poem’s perspective, whose perception of reality is difficult to define, depicts the poem as both an emotional expression and a mental text (Armstrong 141). The reader has the difficult task of understanding, whether it is the poet’s or the
speaker’s feeling being illustrated. However, even then, the reader never unmistakably knows:

... it is possible to turn these poems around and to see them as psychological texts rather than psychological expositions, a second poem created with exactly the same words as the first. This takes us some way into understanding the extraordinary complexities opening out in Browning’s work. (Armstrong 141)

This kind of synchronous poetic approach that taps into feeling Mill prefers over sequential associative poetics that focus on a poet’s thoughts. The poetry from Browning and Tennyson, on the other hand, is a sort of dissociative poetics.

To further clear up the distinction between the two kinds of poetry, insight into the workings of repression and denial gives a more convincing understanding of the two. To explain, dissociation is a psychological defense against overwhelming traumatic experiences. It plays a role in how an individual deals with stress after an incident. While observing patients suffering from hysteria, the French psychologist, Pierre Janet, commenced his studies on the conception of dissociation in *The Dissociation Theory of Pierre Janet*. His description of dissociation (although, not specifically identifying with the actual exploration of this hypothetical analysis) helps one understand the thinking behind the duality of the monologue, and the reasons why certain content, particularly, extreme sexuality, religion, and prosopopoeia function best in this schema. For example, the speakers in “Porphyria’s Lover” and “My Last Duchess” are in a state of mind in which their emotions overwhelm them and cause them to act immorally:

Dissociation represents a process whereby certain mental functions [self-imposed mental solitude/ as in meditation] which are ordinarily integrated with other functions presumably operate in a more compartmentalized or automatic way usually outside the sphere of conscious awareness or memory recall. (http://www.onnovdhart.nl/articles/dissociationtheory.pdf Ludwig, 1983, p. 93)

In a similar way, Victorian poets adopted this mindset in which a feeling is compartmentalized. That is, to bar external ideas from integrating their mind of a
thing, in order to strain a feeling, they consciously dissociate from the outside world. In this frame of mind, the world cannot intrude upon their feelings. This mental phenomenon is embraced by the poet of nature when writing, and is similar to the mindset of trauma victims who dissociate from a bad experience in order to deny its painful reality. It is an imposed way of being, so that the reader has a physiological effect on his/her works. In other words, the poet of nature’s skill-set parallels a sort of cognitive dissonance confronted by a trauma parallel in experience to the poet. The poet of culture’s ability, on the other hand, lies in integrating the world alongside his/her experiences of a thing. To the him/her the world and its happenings are his/her contents (Mill 1221-2). His/her perception of things is his/her source of reference, including the world and its current events that help formulate his/her repository ideas.

In the Freudian sense of dissociation, the healthy consequences of denying reality outside of the feeling being experienced by a person is how the poet of nature expounds instantaneous feelings. In matching the mentality of a defense mechanism, the poet of nature gives the illusion that someone other than him/herself is uttering his/her words. For a traumatized person to avoid or escape an aversive inner feeling, he/she seeks to reduce anxiety in the mind by either trying to solve the problem, or by the ego triggering a defense mechanism to help it deal with the id and the superego (Freud 32-34). To rephrase it, the ego (the largely conscious executive part of personality that mediates among the demands of the id, superego and reality) functions unconsciously, in certain situations to alleviate stress, or to distort, transform, or falsify reality in some way to keep anxiety down or away in a person’s mind. The poet of nature, on the contrary, forces the conscious mind to be subconscious in order to transform and legitimize his/her imaginations and without rationalizing the feeling. The type of defense mechanism that Anna Freud, in *The Ego and Defense Mechanisms*, categorizes is the most basic of defense mechanisms, repression, which parallels the sort of mental awareness Victorians reference:

The individual drive excitations always penetrate out of the id into the ego; there they provide access to the movement apparatus [the cerebral cortex] with whose assistance they
can implement their satisfaction. In the more fortunate cases the ego has nothing to object to the intruder [memory of the trauma], yields it its powers and is limited to perceiving it: the ego feels the urges of the drive movement, the rising tension with the accompanying unpleasurable feeling [trauma] and eventually the solution of the tension is the satisfying pleasure experience [denial and/or repression]. (34)

As repression can prevent inappropriate thoughts from becoming conscious, Victorian poets avert irrelevant thoughts from entering their consciousness. In this way, the poet prevents the self’s feelings from peering outside of the understanding where thought degrades feeling. To put it another way, the poet who is able to focus more intently on a feeling’s course no matter how obtuse or unorthodox is closer to his/her object’s diction, more than he/she is to his/her own. This dissociative mental technique ascribed to poetics indiscriminately probes moral and immoral thoughts making it complicated to discern the poet and the speaker. Still, poetry of nature is a distinctive but not superior form of poetics in comparison to its predecessor (poetics of culture). Yet, Mill makes his defense in detailing the differences in the two, and defining which is “true poetry”:

And such poetry, to all who know enough of nature to own it as being in nature, is much more poetry, is a poetry in a far higher sense, than any other; ... feeling, when excited and not voluntarily resisted, seizes the helm of their thoughts, and the succession of ideas and images becomes the mere utterance of an emotion; not, as in other natures, the emotion a mere ornamental coloring of the thought. (Mill 1225)

“What is Poetry?” and “Two Kinds of Poetry” makes clear the distinction between poetry of nature and poetry of culture. They amplify the understanding that the poet of culture is influenced by external excitations (thoughts), “In a mind entirely uncultivated, which is also without strong feelings, objects whether of sense or of intellect arrange themselves in the mere casual order in which they have been said or heard, or otherwise perceived” (1222); whereas, the poet of nature calls on his intuitions to sense the complexities of his/her feeling or feelings:

[S]ince the common element of all poetry, that which constitutes poetry, --human feeling, --enters far more largely into this than into the poetry of culture; not only because the
natures which we have called poetical really feel more, and consequently have more feeling to express, … . (1225)

Mill's excoriation of “Pauline” highlights what the intent of his theories is, to clarify the idea of poetry and disparage poetics of culture.

Langbaum, on the other hand, states poets of nature want to do what poets of culture already do, in attempting to reject their Romantic route, which is to find new ways to voice things (21). Victorians who include a reader overhearing a speaker, in addition to the exclusion of dialogue and an audience, furthers the difference between person/poet/speaker and speaker/object. Subsequently, it illustrates the dissociative standpoint Romantics stimulated in the Victorian age, inversion of poet/speaker association:

His [Victorian] characters obsessively read themselves, and if we understand the poems in terms of expressive psychological moments, they effectively suppress the fact that they are being read or 'heard'. They obliterate the active, critical presence of the reader because they obliterate their status as texts. (Armstrong 141)

In short, the reader reads utterances (out-loud thoughts). Within this dissociated and sometimes warped reality, the speaker, in “Porphyria’s Lover,” discloses moments of intimacy with his imaginary lover’s deceased body:

Laughed the blue eyes without a stain,
   And I untightened next the tress.
About her neck; her cheek once more
   Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss: (45-48)

Certainly, the speaker is detached from reality. Nevertheless, he continues to interact with Porphyria, as if she were still alive:

The speaker's certainty that she ‘felt no pain,’ which he repeats, is further evidence of a bizarrely delusional personality. … It is clearly a demented lover, however, who takes possession of the corpse and interprets its existence as ‘glad’ that its ‘will’ is fulfilled since his love is ‘gained’. (9:3363)

If Mill intended to elucidate a point of view, he did. He explicated how the poet of nature’s perspective develops from an escape of cultural poetics: “[a]ll other appearances may be fallacious, but the appearance of a difference is itself a real difference” (Mill 1212). The Victorian monologist exhibits the speaker’s ideations
that establish his/her object’s psychological mind-frame. Victorians, in brief, mentally investigate the concepts of an object, in a meditative fashion and insight encourages the speaker to detail the object. Ironically, the speaker, in the monologue, can never fully remove him/herself from the poet. An opinion Mill strongly accepts yet cannot happen, as is detailed by Browning in “Porphyria’s Lover” who can never accomplish his goal of possessing his woman forever (Armstrong 139).

In his essay, “Experimental Form in Victorian Poetry”, Slinn alludes to the same thinking Langbaum puts forth in his text, in which poetic norms have long been tweaked and reshaped to suit the needs of a particular era. He states that as these needs are implemented in poetry’s structural shift, “like old forms ballads, odes, and pastorals are redesigned and integrated into the lyrical ballads and lyrical dramas,” positive changes occur for poetry (47). Poetic theory indirectly tasks and encourages the interruption of not only linguistic habits, but also of the psychological ones. As the Victorian writes in the objective voice, he writes from a source that is romantically subjective (a personal experience, if not, a personal thought in the form of observations and education). In the process of creating the objective voice, the Victorian has to revert upon his original rejection of sentimentality to achieve his task. This streamline of consciousness rests and begins with the conscious and subjective mind, “In each monologue, formal properties of art are tied to the dramatization of human experience. This link means that the principle of aesthetic unity is enacted as a feature of personal desire while it is simultaneously subverted as an impossible deal” (51).

The poet of nature analyzes feeling in the moment that it is raw, as it naturally presents itself. His/her feeling is unheard; it is shaped and molded in his/her mind without regard for public perception of his/her thing. It (feeling) is then divulged, but only after the poet has exhausted it. Poets of nature seek assessment by the reader. The poet of culture, on the other hand, observes his experiences and integrates them, as he/she is best able. His/her thoughts are heard; they are shaped to influence events. They seek advocacy. Closely examining Mill’s essays, as they illustrate a distinction between subjective and
objective perspectives, they embellish in puzzling evaluations. In essence, his essays contrast one form to the other, then rhetorically asks which one is “true poetry or not?” Mill, undoubtedly, answers his rhetorical question, in this explanation “--when the expression of his emotions; or of his thoughts, tinged by his emotions, is tinged also by that purpose…then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence” (1216). Mill perceives lyrical poetry as eloquence, and his slighted opinion echoes those perceptions over and over. Therefore, his essays are not a discussion; they are declarations into what poetry is.

Slinn, in a similar way, disputes Mill's logic as well. Slinn states, as Langbaum pointed out, Victorians strove to reject a quest that was a Romantic concept from the beginning and before of the Victorian age:

Where the Romantic Lyric rests upon a shifting relationship between speaker and nature, the Victorian Lyric emphasizes linguistic self-consciousness and textual defensiveness. Both forms, however, manifest a tension between visionary and ordinary experience. This tension, Bornstein claims, provokes a potential for self-division, in that ‘the Romantics tend to mitigate and the Victorians to exacerbate’. (56)

The Victorian poem is a complex poem, since it simultaneously dramatizes and objectifies the self. This duality is noticeable, as the Victorian poet reverts back to his rejection of Romanticism to propel raw insight forward. Slinn cites Armstrong’s analysis stating:

Her crucial point is that the doubleness is structurally, built into the basic processes of the poem. ... In other words, a poem that presents itself as lyric expression turns that expression around so that the utterance itself, as well as representing the speaker’s outpouring of personal feeling, becomes the object of analysis and critique. (56)

For these reasons, one form cannot be displaced in favor of the other, when the latter develops out of the former.

Langbaum’s compelling analysis sheds further light into the qualms romantic writers faced in light of Victorian poets. In, The Poetry of Experience, he recognizes poetry from the nineteenth century had twentieth century detractors who believed their poetics were either too traditional or rejected tradition altogether:
The curious thing about the twentieth century’s reaction against the nineteenth is that we have leveled against the nineteenth century two apparently opposite charges. On the one hand, we have accused the nineteenth century of not being untraditional enough, of trying to compromise with the past, to cling through false sentimentality to values in which it no longer really believed. On the other hand, we have accused the nineteenth century of breaking with the past, of rejecting the tradition, the ‘main current,’ to use Eliot’s phrase, of Christian and humanist culture. (10)

Although Langbaum rejects this sort of argument posed by twentieth century thinkers, Mill, as a critic of eighteenth and early nineteenth century poetics, exhibits the mind frame of nineteenth century critics:

The combination which the mind puts together, the picture which it paints, the wholes which [I]magination constructs out of the materials supplied by [F]ancy, will be indebted to some dominant feeling, not, as in other natures to a dominant thought, for their unity and consistency of character, --for what distinguishes them from incoherencies. (Mill 1222)

The “dominant feeling” Mill thinks the poet should focus on, in time, becomes the impetus and identity of later nineteenth century poets; whereas, the “dominant thought” has always been the repository of poets up until the early nineteenth century (1222). Langbaum, however, stresses the romantic scheme of poetics paved the way for other poetics, “… even if it includes the rejection of the romantic route by which they arrived at it, remains within the romantic tradition as long as it has been chosen” (Langbaum 21). In other words, the romantic voice Mill rejects consciously and unconsciously leads to the development of other voices, for example, the Victorian one and later on the Modernist one. Mill, in implicating the period of Sentimental and Romantic age poetics as being sulkily biased, positively influences what late eighteenth and nineteenth century poets thought of their works. He encouraged what romanticists, aimed to establish in their time period, but never achieved. However, Victorians get credited with the achievement of separating the poet and the speaker. The concentration of harnessing deep feelings that call upon thoughts and not thoughts that call up feelings; for example, as Browning’s monologue details, in “The Grammarian’s
Funeral: Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe,” *The Dramatic Monologues*.

However, in a poem like “The Grammarian’s Funeral,” not only does the poet exercise dominant feelings to call upon his thoughts on learning, it tasks a speaker other than himself to objectify his dominant feeling on learning. In this monologue, the speaker switches between the first person plural form (we, us, and they). In addition, the speaker also implements the use of demonstrative pronouns (this and that), which points out a person or thing as possible other speakers. Lastly, the speaker, also, utilizes indefinite pronouns (other and another), as they do not refer to specific individuals but disguise the speaker/s. These different speakers further distance the poet from the speaker, in order to best objectify the discussion. Catherine Swanson, literary critic for *MasterPlots, Poetry Series II, Volume 3*, states Browning’s works implement these points-of-view to dissociate the poet and the speaker:

> It is important to bear in mind the distance between the speaking persona of the poem and the poet himself; throughout ‘A Grammarian’s Funeral,’ Browning is careful to include elements [pronouns] that make the reader question the objectivity and accuracy of the speaker’s (or speakers’) observations. (3:879)

As the title indicates, someone has died and a funeral procession is underway. The reader, as in “My Last Duchess”, is thrust upon the setting of the poem, “Let us begin and carry up this corpse,/ Singing together” (1-2). The reader or someone from the village, other than the students, sees the casket being carried away and is asked to sing alongside the pallbearers. In the first eight lines of the poem, the reader overhears the speakers (we) discussing the excitement it is to leave the stagnant atmosphere they come from. They are aware of the positive effects venturing has on the personality, and the dangers of not seeking growth:

> Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
> Each in its tether.
>
> Look out if yonder be not day again
> Rimming the rock-row! [mountains?] (3-8)
It displeased romanticists that poets would be encouraged to break with the norm of tradition. However, in breaking from the old tradition of romanticism, like Browning had, parts of the romantic tradition were needed to build the new tradition, particularly the kind he and other Victorians, namely, Tennyson, aspired to achieve. It was a tradition of not only separating the poet and the speaker, but keeping psychological positions separate: “The dramatic poet, as Fox says in his essay on Tennyson, can project himself into the subjectivity and associative complexity of any psychological state” (Armstrong 144). To clarify, the Victorian executes the idea of sourcing feelings to exacerbate experiences/thoughts that can be overheard by an audience. Whereas, the poet of the Romantic Age exacerbates thoughts to extrapolate feelings in order to convey them to an audience, as Blake illustrates, in “The Tyger”. In this poem, the process that paints a picture is influenced by a dominant thought. Whereas, in “A Grammarian’s Funeral,” the picture is painted by dominate feeling (Mill 1222). Each method is stimulated by different philosophies of thought.

In an oxymoron, the first two lines, of "The Tyger", consists of the speaker’s paradoxically internalized thoughts of a tiger, which he rephrases as questions posed to the tiger:

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry? (1-2).

The tiger explained, as "burning", suggests it has an appetite for innocence, "bright" (1). The forest symbolized, as being an ominous place "night", suggests it is a metaphor for the turmoil of experience (2). In lines three and four, the speaker asks the tiger, perhaps himself, a rhetorical question. There is no answer, but it leads to more questions, "What immortal hand or eye,/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" Thomas M. Curley, literary critic for Masterplots Poetry Series, Volume 6, observes Blake’s depiction of tigers and forests: “The tiger is a fiery, luminescent intrusion in the dark forests of the world of experience; … ” (6: 2306). On account of his curiosity, the poet further interrogates the reasoning behind the existence of a tiger and a forest. As a
result of asking the tiger question after question, the speaker opens his questions to a higher power. He indirectly asks what the reasons for the existence of a tiger and a forest are? To which, there are no responses. In this moment, the poem is said to an audience (God) and is heard. The idea that an "immortal hand or eye" may have designed things implies the poet's agnostic thinking (3); because of this, the poem is both subjectively and objectively observed. Curley echoes what the poet seems to discern, when he ascertains his inquiries: “The poem asks how a being of divine might ("hand") and divine design ("eye") could create this terrible beauty (3-4)” (6: 2306). Hence, the poetic notion Mill scorns, the sort of poetics that cultivates its own ideas, in relation to its direct thoughts outside of feeling, which “The Grammarian’s Funeral” details.

Titus Lucretius, in his text, On The Nature of Things, says, “Nothing comes from nothing” (2). For this reason, it is difficult to accept that the former completely abandons the latter. Victorians had to begin somewhere, and that somewhere had to be something substantial to build from. It was the romantic ideal, if not something older. Armstrong observes that Mill, Fox, and most Victorians disregarded and overlooked public acknowledgement of the link between objective and subjective forms, but Browning had not: “As Browning makes clear, objective and subjective forms are never produced as pure forms distinct from one another” (Armstrong 148). In referencing Langbaum’s critique on the evolution of romanticism in Modern poetics, to give perspective into the squabbles of Romantic and Victorian criticism, Armstrong points out that modernists like T.S. Eliot formulated a modern tradition based upon the thinking of past traditionalists who would reject the process of modern minds:

The interesting thing is that both ideas, the idea of the past and of the superior individual as giving meaning to an otherwise meaningless world, derive from that same nineteenth century romanticism against which Eliot is in reaction. ... As literature’s reaction to the eighteenth century's scientific world-view, romanticism connects the literary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The nineteenth century is for example both anti- traditional and traditional in the same sense as the twentieth. (Langbaum 11-12)
In the same way, Romanticism connects the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it also connected the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Therefore, this new “Mythus” (elements of a poetic movement) Langbaum details is established from past traditions (14). In rejecting or attempting to erase past traditions, it is logical to see how new poetic ideas rely on fragments of the past to build their new future “an enduring truth”:

The famous romantic sense of the past derives its special character from the romanticists’ use of the past to give meaning to an admittedly meaningless world. ... The romanticist sees the past as different from the present and uses the past to explore the full extent of the difference, the full extent in other words of his own modernity. (12)

“The Tyger”, exhibits the common fear of a tiger, the forest, and condemned agnostic thinking, but also the rationale thinking of the eighteenth century. More specifically, the poet discerns the thinking of the superstitious mind. He rationalizes the backward thought people have of a tiger, a forest, and, in his present time, their opinions of God. Thus, he provides distinctiveness to a “meaningless world” (Langbaum 12). Simultaneously, Blake puts all these things into perspective and embraces his post-enlightened mind. The second stanza exhibits the poet’s internal (objective) thoughts, as the first stanza exhibited his subjective views: “In what distant deeps or skies/ Burnt the fire of thine eyes?” (5-6). However the idea of a supreme being was shaped in the poet’s mind, as a young man or an adult, his bombastic question is posed to his audience. Whether it may be God, the tiger, the forest, his reader, or all of the above, he asks indirectly for a specific answer. Indeed, the poet is unsure who created the “tyger” or the “forest”, for that matter, the entire universe, including mankind (3-4). Yet, he contemplates whether it was Lucifer, “In the distant deeps?” Or, God, “In the distant skies?” (5). Obviously, the poet questions who truly created irreverent things, such as, tigers or forests. The poet has dual senses, as a seer and an observer of his world; he ponders good and evil. As a result of thinking of these two entities (good and evil), he is suspicious as to who holds the real power over creation and its influence on men:
In what primordial deep or mysterious steep (as in the Genesis account of the universe’s creation) did the being fashion this fiery beast? Where did the being get the rebellious pride of Satan, a Daedalus, or a Prometheus to defy the natural order of things and seize the fire engendering this monstrous creature? (Curley 6: 2306)

In the next two lines (7-8), the poet’s internal frame of mind is overheard. As he ponders his thoughts, they are projected to his audience: "On what wings dare he aspire?/ What the hand, dare seize the fire?” The poet, as he had done in the previous two lines, thinks about the aforementioned creations more deeply. But, this time he thinks them to himself. He needs to know what God was thinking, "on what wings," when he boldly created a tiger and a forest, "What the hand, dare seize the fire?" (8). Blake desensitizes backward superstitions, so that the reader is cognizant of his/her essence. In short, he highlights the narrowness of thinking in the past that is broader in the present.

Unfortunately, Mill ignores that at one point or another all mythus lose their vigor, and out of that monotony a new mythus will ultimately develop. Once a form like Romanticism is no longer engaging, it ceases to be influential and is no longer renowned in newer movements like Victorianism. Langbaum cites Thomas Carlyle, author of, Sartor Resartus who notes: “the old Mythus may be dead, but mankind must have a new one to replace it” (14). If not, time will naturally augment social and cultural growth, which will influence the literary structure of that time. What Mill intends to influence by way of dismissing eloquence is to give greater meaning to Victorian poetics. However, new opinions over time modify older and previous forms.

In Victorian and Modern Poetics, Carol T. Christ, points out the questionable science of Mill’s thinking in the Modernist movement that succeeds Victorian poetics. Her investigation, in fact, illustrates a relationship in poetics that spans decades. This connection, in how Victorianism spurns Romanticism, is fairly evaluated in looking at the connection between Victorian and Modernist poetics. For example, Christ reveals T.S. Eliot’s acceptance of Browning’s inversion of the poet/speaker into his works. Browning also influenced Ezra Pound’s experiments with persona, and Yeats’ idea of the mask, who Yeats
credits Oscar Wilde for stimulating in him, who acknowledges Browning as the motivation (15). As the romantic sense of poetics is not just a form of poetics, it is an ideology of thinking about things, their values, their traditions, and is best proven within the romantic “Mythus”. In short, the romantic archetype is the catalyst behind progressive thinking, and it is how Victorians spread their theories:

The whole conscious concern with objectivity as a problem, as something to be achieved, is in fact specifically romantic. Objectivity presented no problem to an age of faith like the Middle Ages, which considered the object and its value as equally given. Nor did it present a problem to a critical and rationalist age like the Enlightenment, the whole point of which was to undermine the established order of values by driving a wedge between the object and its value. It was the romanticists with their new reconstructive purpose who, starting with an inherited split between object and its value and wanting to heal that breach, saw objectivity as desirable and difficult to achieve. (Langbaum 29)

Victorians loosely acknowledged previous poetic standpoints like the poet/speaker association (Slinn 47). They rejected tradition and shaped an innovative form of thought inverting the previously accepted association. In experimentation of their speaker/object mind-frame, the speaker illuminates feeling in a voice other than the poet’s (Langbaum 21-2). Although, Romantics kicked off, as Langbaum points out, a poetic reconstructive approach on the nineteenth century, “The new Mythus was to be made out of their imaginative insights into the three main aspects of reality--the past, nature and the self” (14). Notwithstanding, this imaginative aptitude grounded the romantic mentality. And yet, the Victorian, in believing he has rejected tradition, he has actually reinforced it (29). In the romanticist, the awakening had already occurred:

The change of direction begins when he (the romantic) discovers his own feelings and his own will as a source of value in an otherwise meaningless universe. He is at this stage tearful and defiant because he is in the process of discovering his own life and freedom through exhibiting as much emotion and will as possible. (16)
The Romantic is hyper-conscious and enlightened. In his thinking, it is up to him to reconstruct the external world. It is up to him to question and process everything internal and external. In the fourth and fifth stanza, these ideals display the impact they will have on the Victorian. For instance, the fourth stanza of, “The Tyger,” repeats much of the third stanza’s sentiments, as:

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp? (13-16).

Curley confirms the poet is describing an omnipotent deity who has the “tyger” under his control, and is worriless around it (6: 2306). Whether the reader is atheist or monotheist, the idea of a creator is pondered and recognized. The tools: "the hammer" (13), "the chain" (13), and, “the anvil" (15) that the poet thinks should be used to create delicate things, are being used to craft ungodly things. The poet, moreover, indirectly asks himself what the creator was thinking, when he designed them. In questioning God's creations, the poet questions mankind, reality, and God empirically: "In what furnace was thy brain?" (14).

The poet's strong desire to learn what God was anticipating, when he created a tiger and a forest, is so demanding that it spills into the fifth stanza:

.. what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?
When the stars threw down their spears
And water’d heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee? (15-20)

True to his subjective thoughts, Blake opens the poem for objective debate: “The whole conscious concern with objectivity as a problem, as something to be achieved, is in fact specifically romantic” (Langbaum 29). The poet asks these particular questions to encourage what his readers think is God's justification, "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (20). Surely, it is impossible that Holy and righteous God could have created the tiger and the forest. However, Curly suggests He could have: “The all-powerful being paradoxically created this evil and destroyed it, in the same way that this being made the lamb, and its opposite
the tiger (19-20) (6:2307). In other words, God created things along with its antithesis.

“A Grammariam’s Funeral”, in contrast, illustrates how the wedge between poet and speaker functions in elegy, where previous examples were based in dramatic monologues, (“Porphyria’s lover”, “My Last Duchess”, and “The Poet’s Mind”), and a monodrama based in prosopopoeia (“Ulysses”) (Langbaum 29). It becomes evident in this poem what the romantic never succeeded for himself the Victorian reveals in the split from traditional norms. However, this does mean, as Mill would have us believe, that Victorian works cast-off Romantic works, as non-poetic.

The title of the monologue denotes the life of a scholar. As his students transport him from a countryside village, the speaker describes his admiration for the grammarian: “The funeral party is composed of students of the grammarian, including the speaker(s), who praise their master enthusiastically for his devotion to scholarship and his choice of a life of learning over a more conventional existence” (Swanson 3: 879). Where they are journeying from, to where they are travelling to, the speaker expects to radiate without restraint. He explains the excitation like this:

That’s the appropriate country; there, man’s thought
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gatherer for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer. (9-12)

The self “chafes” (12), because either the speaker is metaphorically speaking, comparing the self to a candle that is not getting enough oxygen to stay lit; or, it does not have the necessary tools to balance its educational pursuit alongside its social life. The speaker also an academic devotee (perhaps a Victorian) wishes to improve his quality of life, but does not believe in the means (Romanticism) to achieve his objective. In this convoluted miasma, the reader loses approximation of the speaker. As the speaker who was once projecting his thoughts outward, he is now projecting his thoughts inward: “Chafes in the censer” (12). He is self-questioning, where beforehand he was thinking out loud. Swanson articulates how the poet achieves his illustration:
Browning uses his form and language to heighten the poem’s thematic tension between appearance and reality, between the high praise the students lavish on their master and the more shadowy, contradictory portrait of the grammarian that emerges through their posthumous encomium. (Swanson 3: 879)

As the main speaker, on behalf of the group (we), the narrator emphasizes the excitement they are feeling leaving the “vulgar thorpes” (3):

Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture! (13-16)

The apparent main speaker of the poem exhibits delight in leaving the “common crofts” (3). Life has not been fulfilling in his village. He strives for things it does not offer, and senses there is something bigger than just learning and being educated. To the speaker, there must be a city, where culture thrives: “On a tall mountain, citied to the top, / Crowded with culture!” (15-16). If the speaker is a pallbearer or the dead grammarian, he neither knows where he is going, or has a strong desire to be delivered to a mythological place on a mountain top. Swanson illustrates what the students could be thinking, since they never reveal their schoolmaster’s true influence on them:

Despite the praise of the grammarian’s lofty idealism, there is much in the poem that seems to decry his austere way of life. … The students themselves make unwitting acknowledgment of a connection between death and a life of selfless devotion to scholarship when they say, “Seek we sepulture,” implying that the pursuit of genius leads to death. (3: 880)

In this work, Browning displays the separation that twentieth century traditionalists and modern thinkers wanted to see outright prohibited in subjective works. As a romantic antagonist, Browning disregarded the ideals that stemmed from a deep belief within the self that he learned to deny and urged others to deny for poetic distinction:

In thinking that they have broken with the nineteenth century, the twentieth-century traditionalists make the historical mistake of identifying romanticism with subjective denial. They forget the direction of romantic thought. They forget
that in arriving themselves at an objective position they do not reverse but fulfill the direction of romantic thought. Their very rebellion against the last century is in the tradition of romanticism, which would have every man and every generation start again from the beginning. While the position they arrive at, no matter what it is, even if it includes the rejection of the romantic route by which they arrived at it, remains within the romantic tradition as long as it has been chosen. (Langbaum 21)

In denying the romantic tradition, Victorians fulfill and arrive at the new “mythus” out of their romantic subconscious. Transferred through the self, Victorian integrated culture is driven by the romantic ideal to ignore the nearest poetic ideal. Rejecting the form of personality that they saw as a dead-end, they created something different. “A Grammarian’s Funeral” like “Porphyria’s Lover” establishes this difference, by looking away from the overused position of subjectivity. However, poets grow in the former and mature in their newness and will continue to evolve, because poetic essence is to fulfill the direction in which the imagination takes the poet:

The former gives rise to the sense of a reality or truth that is ahistorical or transcendent (the idealist emphasize Romantic aesthetics), whereas the latter suggests process and incompleteness (the gaps of romantic irony). Fundamental to this organic concept of form, therefore, is a conflict-- one that romantic practice could not ultimately avoid -- between form as embodied essence (complete product, unified perfection) and form as material process (sensible effects, dynamic shaping empty ceremony [unanswered and ambiguous]). If Romantic poems accentuate the former, then Victorian poems strive to accommodate the latter. (51)

In contrast to Mill’s definition of poetry, Langbaum’s like Slinn’s assessment differ from Mill’s. Langbaum and Slinn acknowledge Romantics for a specific skillset and Mill does not:

The Romanticist, on the other hand, by projecting himself into the object, playing its role, knows himself in the object. He therefore knows both himself and the object empirically, through the reciprocal process of experience or self-objectification. Farther than this the doctrine of concrete experience cannot go. To know an object, the romanticist must be it. (25)
In the first stanza of “The Tyger,” an anonymous speaker opens his question to a deity. In the final two lines of the last stanza, his questioning is an outspoken rationalization, “What immortal hand or eye,/ Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?” (23-24).

In this moment, the poet is the object of curiosity. The poem intends to leave the reader without any conclusive answer to any of the poet’s questions. It suggests that the creation of such horrors like a tiger by the Creator of goodness is divine, even if man fails to realize it (6:2307). The poet loses himself in scrutiny to ultimately achieve the answers he is seeking. He efforts to know his object (a tiger) empirically, and is willing to take his questions as far they may take him: “To know an object, the romanticist must be it” (Langbaum 25).

Victorians, on the other hand, symbolize the purpose of knowing their object and detailing its values. For whether the romanticist projects himself into the past, nature, or another person, he never forgets that he is performing a role. Except that Mill like Victorians thought greater objectivity could be attained, in becoming and remaining as the object. To the Victorian there is no role; he/she is the host object for which they speak, whereas, in Romanticism, the object and the poet are heard.

In her essay, “The Dramatic Monologue”, published in, The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry, Cornelia D.J. Pearsall, states objectivity makes poets more acutely aware of his/her own style and focus: “This tendency makes the genre especially useful in cases where both the speaker and the poet are attempting to create reactions and larger social transformations in the world outside the poem” (79). For the romanticist, the process of experience is a process of self-realization, not only for him/herself, but also for proceeding poets. For Victorians, the process of discovery and experience through an object and its impact on society is important. Catherine Swanson explains what the purpose of duality has the on the monologue:

Other images add to the ambiguity of the grammarian’s portrayal. Despite the students’ admiration of him as a heroic figure the grammarian is described as bald, “cramped and diminished,” with “eyes like lead.” ... Browning uses imagery
such as this deliberately to set up tension between the positive and negative aspects of the grammarian and his life’s work. (3: 880)

The gift the speaker says the grammarian possessed became unbearable for him to own, and no sooner would he have liked to depart with the responsibility of such a gift than to part with it respectfully, in death: “When he had learned it,/ When he had gathered all books had to give!/ Sooner, he spurned it” (66-68). As Pearsall states above, Victorian thinking acknowledged that past traditions were not to be adhered moving forward, because it focused on the poet’s thoughts. In “A Grammarian’s Funeral”, the focus is both on the positive and negative outcomes of dedication and its transformation on an individual:

> The majority of dramatic monologists are not criminals or charlatans, only searchers after some transformation, whether spiritual, professional, or personal. And yet these speakers display a marked tendency toward adopting extreme positions, including those not represented in any way as disturbing or insane. ... From inception, dramatic monologues roam through much of the world and myriad historical periods, themselves at once responding to and propelling the larger Victorian appetite for exploration and appropriation of other cultures, however distant geographically or chronologically. (Pearsall 73)

Undoubtedly, Mill rejects poetry of culture/ eloquence. Fortunately, Langbaum’s and other academic text offer a counterpoint to Mill’s biased view. Mill’s insult that cultural poetics are innately sensible and not dissociative enough does not validate his dismissal of it being un-poetic. He cannot discharge it as not being poetry, as the roots of the poetry he advocates for grows out of the sensibility he decries. Poets of nature pieced together their form extrapolating the profound effects Romanticism had on them. In fact, Victorian poetry exemplifies how it incorporated romantic structural devices, specifically, the inversion of poet/speaker:

> Victorian and Modernist poetics do indeed define themselves within a Romantic tradition which modern criticism has admirably described. ... Even while they write with a Romantic tradition, each of the major Victorian and Modernist poets reacts against the subjectivity, which he associates with
Romanticism by attempting to objectify the materials of poetry. (Christ 2-3)

Victorian rejection of Romanticism’s subjective and onerous restrictions is what creates objectivity. In the most conscious of these poets, the contemplation of creating something separate from what they had come to know brings realization to the voice they sought. It is this new speaker that eventually utters what this new “Victorian” poet feels about an object deep in mental solitude. Christ points out Tennyson incorporated myth to attain his objective voice that discussed his personal emotions on life and poetry, in “Ulysses and The Poet’s Mind”. Browning, on the other hand, forms the dramatic monologue to separate the poet from the speaker, to parody Mill’s theory, in “My Last Duchess” and “Porphyria’s lover”:

Both Arnold and Tennyson use myth and legend to attain a resonance and objectivity greater than mere personal emotion could offer. Browning and Tennyson evolve forms of the dramatic monologue to separate the poet from the poem and thus objectify its presentation of personality” (3).

Victorians alter and refashion their romantic customs by looking to appease the critics of their time, in doing so they evolve poetry.

By all means, the romanticist and the Victorian focus on the mental action that helps them reflect the external world. In poets of culture, it is depicted in his/her experiences, as a lamp projecting light. They source the self’s experiences to illustrate its union of the mind, with the world and its things that are oftentimes overly subjective. In poets of nature, their source is based within the call of his/her psychoanalytical feelings. He/she mirrors his/her experiences, in feeling first and thinking second, alienating the self, so that the object he/she is conscious of is viewed objectively. Christ sites Matthew Arnold’s, “Preface to the First Edition of Poems,” in, The Poems of Matthew Arnold, to detail the logic in how Victorian poets transcend their subjectivism, as Arnold states romantics are told their thinking, “is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry” (5). But, the Victorian was bothered with dialogue of the mind and its distorting power. Therefore, he chose to cast-off the precedence of Romanticism (subjectivity and dialogue), and stumbled upon greater objectivity in separating
the poet from the poem and excluding an audience. However, the Victorian’s development is not fully possible without him knowing Romanticism’s structural functions. In knowing Romanticism’s workings, the Victorian poet is able to counteract the schematics of his predecessors. As the romantics were preoccupied, exclusively, with the self’s perspective of things, the Victorian preoccupied himself in seeing the object as in itself. He/she saw it for what it was, and not for what he/she thought it was. Because of these poetic philosophies, Mill chose, subjectively, to devalue subjectivity, in service of objectiveness.

As has been noted, poetry is built on tradition. It is difficult to have one movement without the other. As tradition encourages poets and readers of poetry to aspire to greater levels of creativity and critical thinking, Matthew Arnold, in *Study of Poetry*, attests that poetry is important as it relates to the understanding of trials and tribulations of mankind: “[we] will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry” (2). To this end, critics like Mill who assert that the subjective tradition can be passed over are fundamentally incorrect. The origin of thoughts has a repository (the self), which leads him/her down the path to speak his/her mind. In this mindset, he/she can separate the speaker from the poet. When the Victorian writes in the objective voice, he writes from a source that is subjective (a personal experience, if not, a personal thought in the form of observations and education), and in the process of creating objectivity he has to revert to his original rejection of subjectivity to achieve his task. Victorian is conscious of the romantic mindset. His/her awareness allows him/her to reject Romanticism and be objective, because Victorians reject Romanticism. Whether Victorians recognize their predecessors or not, they are influenced by romantic schematics, even if they do not write in the subjective sense. Because of this, Mill’s argument is rooted in rejection. He denounces one form in favor of another, but as has been proven above the poetry of of nature he favors develops out of cultural poetics.


