JOHN STUART MILL'S EVALUATIONS OF POETRY
AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON HIS
INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The education of John Stuart Mill was one of the most unusual ever planned or experienced. Beginning with his learning Greek at the age of three and continuing without a break of any kind to the age of fourteen, it constituted an almost total control of Mill's every waking activity, with the important exception of his visit to France at fourteen, until his appointment to the East India Company in 1823. It emphasized the "tabula rasa" theory, the effect of external circumstances on the developing mind, Hartley's Associationist theory, and the judicious use of the Utilitarian theories of the "pleasure-pain" principle. Conceived and carried out by Mill's father, James Mill, and his close friend, the Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the education was planned to develop John Stuart Mill as their disciple, reasoner, and advocate who would help the advance of the Utilitarian philosophy. Dependent on John Stuart Mill's native intelligence and docility, this carefully planned education was unusually
successful, but it was successful at the price of Mill's emotional development.

Mill's education was so much a part of his life that the development of his thought cannot be understood without some appreciation of its nature. A biographical approach is essential to an understanding of Mill. This is particularly true of the development of his poetic theory which itself was developed in a response to his efforts to integrate his views of poetry with his former philosophy. His interest in poetry derived from the time of his mental crisis in 1826, when he discovered that his preoccupation with the improvement of mankind did not provide him with the emotional satisfaction that his personal life demanded. Wordsworth's poetry, with its emphasis on the restorative powers of external nature, its sensitivity to human feelings, and its adherence to observed truths and quiet, contemplative moods, was so suited to Mill's temperament and situation that his reading it marked one of the great turning points in his life. After reading Wordsworth, Mill recovered his spirits, and not only recaptured his enjoyment of life, but also acquired a life-long devotion to poetry.

Mill's poetic views were an outgrowth of his experience with Wordsworth's poetry and his desire to
integrate all new ideas into his philosophy. Responding to Wordsworth's view that the feeling expressed in a poem gives importance to the action and situation, Mill placed his greatest emphasis on feeling as the essential characteristic of poetry. He agreed with Wordsworth that poetry is spontaneous, and that the thought in a poem is subordinate to the feeling. He explained the latter in terms of Hartley's Associationism. His lifelong concern for truth found its justification in his insistence that the object of poetry was to convey truthfully the feelings to which the poem gives expression. However, his poetic views were much narrower than Wordsworth's inasmuch as he neglected the imagination, and he excluded fiction from poetry in his unusual emphasis on identifying poetry with the lyric.

In his efforts to integrate his poetic theory with his philosophical views, Mill followed Wordsworth's thinking that poetry is the opposite of science, and by emphasizing that the common purpose of science and poetry was their devotion to truth, Mill saw their unity in his conception of the complementary nature of their methods of conveying truth, the one by logic and the other by intuition.

Mill's poetic theory tended to be narrow in the
light of its overemphasis on feeling, its insistence on confining the word, poetry, to the lyric alone, and its relative devaluation of the imagination. Nevertheless, with its Wordsworthian overtones and its sense of purpose, it was essentially a Romantic theory. Its contention that the highest truths are intuitively known by the poet or artist underlined Mill's attempt to find a union of science and art in a devotion to truth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. FORMATIVE INFLUENCES IN JOHN STUART MILL'S EARLY LIFE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Education (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sojourn in France (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return To England (60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE LAST STAGE OF MILL'S EARLY EDUCATION</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Continued Education And His Growing Independence (63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Mental Crisis (70)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Response to Wordsworth (90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE INFLUENCE OF POETRY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MILL'S THOUGHT</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Re-assessment Of His Ideas In The Light Of His Experience With Wordsworth's Poetry (109)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growth Of His Own Poetic Views (133)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Attempt To Integrate Science And Art (171)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOTNOTES</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOHN STUART MILL'S EVALUATIONS OF POETRY
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For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimm'd its fire,
Show'd me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.

- Stanzas From The Grande Chartreuse.
  Matthew Arnold.

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;

- The Prelude Book XII 1.208-215.
  Wordsworth.
The conventional but superficial view of John Stuart Mill is the one that presents him in desiccated terms. This view of him has some of its origins in his own prose style, which has had much to do with fostering the conception of him as a humorless person, restricted in feelings and interests. Although such an opinion is ill-informed, nevertheless it has gained such wide credence that it has affected the serious student's approach to Mill, and it must be taken into account in any serious consideration of his life and work. Recently, John M. Robson, writing in the University of Toronto Quarterly has had a comment to make on this view:

John Stuart Mill is often held up to scorn as a cold, mechanical thinker for whom ethics is no more than political economy. Swathed in mournful black, hard-visaged and ice-veined, Mill stands for the Victorian virtues to which we (thank heaven) cannot pretend. The picture is patently a caricature, failing to do justice to the man or to his thought, but correcting it seems difficult. Mill is himself mainly responsible for the difficulty, his Autobiography being little more than the history of his education and opinions. His first biographer, Bain, was plus royalist que le roi, and recent biographers (most notably Packe), while reopening important evidence, appear strangely unable to relate his personal experience to his thought. Actually, though most of Mill's work seems to hide rather than to reveal the man, and most of his correspondence is public rather than private, even in his System of Logic there is material to show more than a superficial relation between his life and thought. What the evidence shows, in fact, is that Mill not only
had emotions and was motivated by them, but recognized their place in a complete moral and social theory.

Professor Robson has recognized the difficulty of relating Mill's personal experience to his thought, together with the failure of his biographers to deal with this critical aspect of his life. Not only has this superficial and misleading view of Mill prevailed in English-speaking lands, but it has also found expression in France. A representative opinion of this kind is that of M. Emile Faguet of the French Academy:

Stuart Mill, quoique penetre d'admiration et de sympathie pour Comte et plein de confiance en lui, borne strictement sa correspondance a des considerations philosophiques. Jamais il ne s'abandonne; jamais il ne s'épanche... ah! bien, oui! jamais il n'a de personnalite dans les lettres qu'il ecrit. Ce n'est qu'apres plusieurs annees de correspondance qu'une seule fois, en une seule page, et l'on en est tout etonne, il parle du chagrin que lui a fait la mort d'un ami. On sent l'homme qui estime que la pensee de M. Stuart Mill peut interesser M. August Comte, mais que M. Mill lui-meme, ne peut avoir aucune espec d'intet pour M. Comte et ne regarde en aucune facon M. Comte.

"Jamais il ne s'abandonne!" Even here there is a hint of another side of Mill, one that is held in check, one that is not readily seen, for M. Faguet continues:

Et que ce soit modestie, il est possible; et que ce soit fierte, il se pourrait encore; et l'on ne saura jamais quels intimes rapports il y a entre la fierte et la modestie; et, si la vanite est un amour-propre devenue malade, peut-etre la modestie est une fierte que se porte bien; et je n'en sais rien; mais ce que je sais,
M. Faguet concentrates here on Mill's 'distance' as a writer and speculates on the causes of that aloofness. Is it pride or modesty? Or does it have a different origin?

Far more revealing than Mill's formal writings is the cumulative testimony of his friends and their recollections of him in their letters and journals, the gleanings of casual and informal moments that disclose unguarded truths. Of particular interest is Caroline Fox's description of John Mill's appearance. She recorded her impressions in Falmouth at the time of the fatal illness there of John's younger brother, Henry:

March 16 (1840)—His eldest brother John is now come, and Clara brought him to see us this morning. He is a very uncommon-looking person—such acuteness and sensibility marked in his exquisitely chiselled countenance, more resembling a portrait of Lavater than any other, that I remember. His voice is refinement itself, and his mode of expressing himself tallies with voice and countenance. He squeezed Papa's and Mamma's hands without speaking, and afterwards warmly thanked them for kindesses received.  

That he could be interesting company is borne out by her entry of March 20; referring to the occasion of a visit to Pendennis Cavern, she writes: "J. S. Mill proposed leaving the lighted candles there as an offering to the gnomes. He was full of interesting
John Morley has a number of important things to say about Mill both in his correspondence and in his book, *Recollections*. In the latter book he is particularly interesting:

Strange is the spell of personality, and Mill's personality was transparent. In his collective influence he made innumerable pulses of knowledge and thought vibrate in his generation. Respect for him became an element of men's own self-respect. How of wit or humour, you ask? He was perfectly patient of a playful sally levelled at bad reasoning, or perverse feeling, or questionable act; but for himself, we were content with his swift detection of a sophism or trenchant exposure of a fallacy, performed with a neatness, finish, and celerity that was a very passable substitute for wit. It was, in truth, a vast deal more pleasant, amusing, and to the point than most of that which passes current for facetiae. He laid it down somewhere that though seriousness must be the fond of all characters worth thinking about, yet a certain infusion of the laughing philosopher is a prodigious help towards bearing the evils of life, and must have saved many a one from going mad.

Morley then reminds us of some of Carlyle's ill-natured remarks about Mill:

Goose N. came down to me today--very dirty--very enthusiastic--very stupid and confused, with a daily newspaper 'containing two articles ineffably sublime and heart-interesting upon Mill.' Two more blusterous bags of empty wind I have seldom read. 'Immortal fame!' 'First spirit of his age!' 'Thinker of thinkers!' What a piece of work is man with a penny-a-liner pen in his hand.
Morley adds a comment on Carlyle's own testimony to the agreeableness of Mill's talk and to the readiness of Mill to make sacrifices to help him. Commenting further on the warmth of Mill's personality, Morley gives some of his own impressions which would seem to blunt the edge of some of Fitzjames Stephen's remarks:

Fitzjames Stephen, who led the first effective attack on Mill's pontifical authority, said he was cold as ice, a walking book. On the contrary, he was a man of extreme sensibility and vital heat in things worth waxing hot about. In truth he sometimes let sensibility carry him too far. One notable afternoon in European history, I saw him in an instant blaze into uncontrollable anger. It was July 14, 1870. He was sitting in his garden, and I brought him the news that France had declared war upon Prussia. He violently struck his chair and broke out in a passionate exclamation, "What a pity the bombs of Orsini missed their mark, and left the crime-stained usurper alive."9

In a letter dated October 7th, 1843, John Sterling, writing to Ralph Waldo Emerson, has the following to say about Mill:

On Sunday last I had indeed a visit from an old Friend who delighted me by his cordial candour,—John Mill, son of the historian of India, and in many ways notable among us now. His big book on Logic is, I suppose, the highest piece of Aristotelianism that England has brought forth, at all events in our time. How the sweet, ingenuous nature of the man has lived and thriven out of his father's cold and stringent atheism is wonderful to think,—and most so to me, who during fifteen years have seen his gradual growth and ripening. There are very few men in the world on whose generous
affection I should more rely than on his, whose system seems at first (but only seems) a Code of Denial.

There were many who did not experience the "generous affection" of which Sterling spoke; seeing Mill from a greater distance they did not have the same perspective of generous warmth, but even they were aware of something in Mill that brought out the generous and noble in themselves; James Sully was one of these:

For all his seemingly cold self-restraint, Mill appealed to the humaner side of me as neither Spencer nor Bain appealed. More than one student in our Baptist College had something like a pupil's combined reverence and fondness for him. It was in my third year, when philosophy became a leading subject of study, that Mill first stood as Liberal candidate for Westminster (1865). Accompanied by a fellow-student, I went down to hear him speak just before the election. The other political party, with the customary eagerness to score off opponents, had been plastering the street walls of Westminster with alarming-looking quotations from Mill's writings. And the evening on which we heard him he was pretty hotly plied with questions. He quietly but firmly refused to have anything to say about his religious opinions, herein setting an example not always rigidly followed by later candidates suspected of heterodoxy. But on other matters he was frank enough. I remember to-day what a thrill of fearful expectation—instantly displaced by a feeling of joyous relief—shot through me as I heard a man in the hall ask Mill whether he had actually used certain words by no means flattering to the working classes and Mill at once reply in a quiet, almost an indifferent, manner that he had used the words quoted; which plucky answer
was instantly followed by loud cheers. The scene burnt itself into my memory: the sunken face, the large, calm brow, and the thin voice of the thinker, against the robust heads and commanding voices of his interrogators. The Garibaldi procession had shown me the great simplicity of the soldier; the meeting in the Westminster Hall revealed to me another simplicity no less great, that of the thinker schooled by long practice to so scrupulous a care in utterance as to have forgotten the very possibility of such a thing as prevarication.  

There is among Mill's friends and contemporaries, ample testimony to the warmth, generosity, and spirit of John Stuart Mill. It was no "made" or "manufactured" man who evoked the responses already noted. Sterling, who reported to Mill the view that he was regarded by many of his contemporaries as a manufactured man, gives his own affirmation of Mill's warmth of personality in the letter already quoted. There is, in fact, a great deal of evidence to show that there was another side to John Stuart Mill's nature, a sensitivity, a generous warmth, an inwardness which, although it sometimes appeared hesitantly, nevertheless gave indications of a steady development which may be associated with a significant shift in his attention away from the defined areas of general interest favoured by his father and Jeremy Bentham, a
shift that exercised an important influence on his views of the nature of human happiness and the role of poetry in the cultivation of the feelings.

An explanation for the variety of impressions generally held of Mill may be found in the observation that Mill's writing, in general, gives very little hint of his real character and personality. However, this question carries with it a deeper question, the one that would seek the reasons for the degree of detachment in his writing, the 'distance' which Faguet has remarked on. The degree of detachment in much of his writing is so marked that one finds little direct evidence of his interests and preferences in his published works. Why this should be so must be sought in the origins and sources of his thinking, and in the discipline that shaped his mind and determined his approach to life.

A better understanding of the problem of Mill's detachment, may be achieved by considering other views of this self-same question when seen as a recurrent literary phenomenon. In their famous controversy, The Personal Heresy, Professors C. S. Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard explored some of the misconceptions that may affect one's approach to a poet. In this context,
C. S. Lewis has sounded some important warnings about what we should expect from a writer. He notes in one of his essays that "Poetry is widely believed to be the 'expression of personality': the end which we are supposed to pursue in reading it is a certain contact with the poet's soul; and 'life' and 'works' are simply two diverse expressions of this single quiddity." Following this assertion he states his own position in the controversy: "In this paper I shall maintain that when we read poetry as poetry should be read, we have before us no representation of a man, a character, or a personality at all." Again, in setting forth his views, he stresses an objective or impersonal theory of poetry, noting the duty of the reader "To see things as the poet sees them" and he adds "I must share his consciousness and not attend to it; I must look where he looks and not turn round to face him;". Lewis emphasizes repeatedly that in reading a poem one is sharing a state of consciousness, and not contemplating the poet's personality: "What we share in reading Wordsworth is just Wordsworth's point of view as it happens to exist in him as a psychological fact;". In his essay, Tradition and the Individual Talent, Mr. T. S. Eliot has supported much the same viewpoint when he says: "the progress of an artist is a continual
self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality." 17 In his negative rejoinder to Mr. Lewis's contentions that the poet's personality must be absent from his writings, Mr. E. M. W. Tillyard seeks to differentiate the normal personality of the poet from the personality implicit in his writings: "In other words by 'personality' or 'normal personality' I do not mean practical or everyday personality, I mean rather some mental pattern which makes Keats Keats and not Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones. ...And I believe we read Keats in some measure because his poetry gives a version of a remarkable personality of which another version is his life." 18 Without becoming embroiled in this famous controversy one can be sure that the outlines and patterns of the poet's or writer's personality in his work should be implicit rather than explicit.

Throughout his life Mill was fascinated by the Greeks. They were his heroes in a number of ways. When he published in 1834 and 1835 a series of translations from Plato's dialogues in the Monthly Repository, he was content for most of the passages to let Plato speak for himself, but he was moved to add his own comment to his abstract from the Georgias. This is
a passage about which he felt warmly; it is also
typical of his prose style with its cool and balanced
argument. Underneath the surface, however, one may
detect the warmth of feeling.

Argument may show what general regulation of the desires, or what particular course of conduct, virtue requires: how to live virtuously, is a question the solution of which belongs to the understanding; but the understanding has no inducements which it can bring to the aid of one who has not yet determined whether he will endeavour to live virtuously or no. It is impossible, by any arguments, to prove that a life of obedience to duty is preferable, so far as respects the agent himself, to a life of circumspect and cautious selfishness. It will be answered, perhaps, that virtue is the road to happiness, and that "honesty is the best policy." Of this celebrated maxim, may we not venture to say, once for all, without hesitation or reserve, that it is not true? The whole experience of mankind runs counter to it. The life of a good man or woman is full of unpraised and unrequited sacrifices. In the present dialogue, which, though scanty in conclusive arguments, is rich in profound reflections, there is one remark of which the truth is quite universal: that the world loves its like, and refuses its favour to its unlike. To be more honest than the many is nearly as prejudicial, in a worldly sense, as to be a greater rogue. They, indeed, who have no conception of any higher honesty than is practised by the majority of the society in which they live, are right in considering such honesty as accordant with policy. But how is he indemnified, who scruples to do that which his neighbours do without scruple? Where is the reward, in any worldly sense, for heroism? Civilisation, with its laissez-aller and its laissez-
faire which it calls tolerance, has, in two thousand years, done thus much for the moral hero, that he now runs little risk of drinking hemlock like Socrates, or, like Christ, of dying on the cross. The worst that can well happen to him is to be everywhere ill spoken of, and to fail in all his worldly concerns; and if he be unusually fortunate, he may, perhaps, be so well treated by the rest of mankind, as to be allowed to be honest in peace.\textsuperscript{19}

So objective was Mill in writing about the subjects commanding his attention that he seldom permitted his personality to intrude into an argument. Always, careful craftsman that he was, Mill kept his eye steadily on the purpose of his writing. Rarely did he expatiate on his own feelings; yet this quality of never introducing into his writings his own personality and his own emotions has added fuel to the fire raised by the frequent criticisms that he was "a manufactured man". Far from complaining or making trivial charges of a personal nature, his critics would have been better occupied by reading the testimony of such contemporaries of Mill as John Morley:

> From anything like literary vanity no mortal could have been more free. He once told me that after revision and re-vision of a piece of his own, he felt so little satisfied of its exact conformity to his purpose, that he could only bring himself to send it to the printer by recalling how he had felt the same of other writing that people thought useful. Apart from this, which is a secondary point,
we met a personal modesty that almost spoke the language of fatalism. This was one of his attractions—so singular a contrast to the common self-applause that exaggerates a secondary service into a supreme achievement, or sets down good fortune to one's own foresight and penetration.  

Mill's strict discipline over his emotions and his failure to give fuller expression to his feelings, indicate a personality restrained and held constantly in check. His written expression, reflecting his close control in the use of words, never gives a ready impression of the personality known to his friends and acquaintances. For a more complete understanding of Mill's thought and personality one must turn to his beginnings.  

The frequent misunderstanding of Mill's nature and purpose makes it especially necessary to seek out the man who so seldom emerges into full view, makes it necessary, in fact, to seek out, so far as one can, the boy and the young man whose natural inclinations were overlaid by tasks and purposes that were by his own admission well beyond his capacity. No one can ignore the directions and channels of his early thoughts and feelings; directions and channels calculatedly predetermined by his father and Jeremy Bentham, who,
in mutual consultation, had carefully laid down the outlines of his education, hoping thereby to raise up a supporter and interpreter of their own mutual philosophy, Utilitarianism. To appreciate the effects of this education on its young recipient, one must examine the more outstanding features of John Stuart Mill's boyhood, begging the reader's indulgence while doing so, and giving in return an assurance that the time will not be spent idly in the pursuit of biographical gossip.

In the mental and moral growth of the vast majority of mankind, the play of sheer haphazard chance is strikingly apparent. In sharp contrast, the most pervasive influence in the mental and moral growth of John Mill was his father's conception and application of the doctrines of Hartley's Associationism and John Locke's "tabula rasa." Having himself experienced the difficulties of an obscure origin, James Mill had observed that ability was the means whereby a man might advance himself; in the words of Michael St. John Packe, Mill Senior reached conclusions that were characteristically 'sharp, swift' and final', never dreaming that they might by some chance be wrong or incomplete. Determined to do the
best for both his son and the world at large, and having no doubts about what that best was, he transformed his conclusions into an educational theory which was designed so that with the least possible delay and confusion, its recipient might reach a logically predetermined mental state.

It would be extremely difficult to imagine a father and a son more closely associated than the two Mills. From the age of three until the age of fourteen, John Mill spent the greater part of each very long day in the strenuous intellectual company of his father, a company that was no haphazard family arrangement, but a carefully planned circumstance embracing most of the hours of the waking day in a steadily growing symbiosis: the young boy growing under the mental stimulation and direction of his father, and the latter in turn deriving a growing satisfaction from viewing the maturing incarnation of his own vision.

James Mill, John's famous father, was a man of singular force and energy, raised in a hard environment where ability alone counted. Had he been as a youth more pliable in will and less energetic in mind, he would most likely have continued in the tradition of his own father, a humble tradesman, or
at best he might have fulfilled the more modest hopes of his ambitious mother by occupying a country pulpit in Scotland. But from the first, his response to life was an exhaustingly active one. By his mental keenness, his strength of will, and by his disciplined persistence, he responded so well to the exhortations of his ambitious mother that he won, in that age of patronage, the generous support and encouragement of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart of Fettercairn, and with their support he gained his entry into the great University of Edinburgh. The formidable forces that had raised James Mill in the world were the forces that he brought to bear on his son.

Paradoxically, James Mill's ultimate success in London depended on his initial failure as a candidate for a post in the Scottish church. Mr. Packe records the testimony that Mill's abstruse argument and immaculate reasoning were quite lost on the untrained minds of the humble Scottish countryfolk in his occasional congregations. Whatever the reasons, the Church passed him by in granting its permanent appointments and at the age of thirty years, James Mill had found himself in the unimagined situation of having the best education that Scotland could afford, but of
being unable to secure a living. Yet the same intense determination that had characterized his application to his youthful studies continued to sustain him. Armed with his energetic view of destiny, and convinced that when fate does not move easily one must give her a shove, he ceased to wait on the Church, or preferment, and abandoning the doubtful future offered by his homeland he resolutely turned to England for opportunity. Before he had been long in London, he had secured an important editorial post, the first of several remunerative positions from which he was to launch himself as an independent writer, editor, and leading public servant. The sacrifices of his mother and his family together with his own perseverance now began to bring their many rewards, and the strenuous elements that had made for his own success were soon turned to the forging of the educational theory that was to govern the development of his son.

The theory that James Mill applied to his son's mind and character with all the force and compression of a steam mould was distinguished by two complementary views: that the mind was a soft malleable substance (tabula rasa) as blank as a clean sheet of paper, and that the circumstances determining the pattern of
this putty-like blank were as external as those which determined the development of any other physical organ. Mr. St. John Packe explains this view with his usual clarity:

According to James Mill's theory, all minds started as much alike as all stomachs or all hands or any other physical organs. They were all blank sheets, forced to record every experience which the senses introduced to them; and, in the event of a repeated sequence of experiences, to recall the order in which they came about, so that the last events in the sequence could be predicted from the first with such certainty that they could be said to have been caused by them. Thus, minds differed only in so far as they recorded different chains of experiences, and from them formed different habits of association. As every new experience either confirmed, altered, or added to all that had gone before, it became a part of the composition of the mind itself, and the mind never ceased to change and grow throughout its life. But as it grew older, it became more crowded, and the effect of each experience grew less; whereas when it was young, the force of each new impression upon the comparatively unsullied sheet was very powerful. Whoever had power to regulate the sequence and the strength of the experiences which flowed in upon a young mind, decided the habits of association it would form, and to that extent determined both the character and the ability of the later man.21

James Mill was unusually qualified to 'regulate the sequence and the strength of the experiences' which flowed into the mind of his son, and he was unusually determined to do so.
From Bentham, Mill had learned that men's actions were regulated by the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. With these principles in mind it seemed obvious to him that a judicious use of the available pleasures and pains would not only build up a desirable chain of associations but would also be conducive through experience to a more vivid knowledge of the consequences of various actions. By persuading the child that he would be happier if everyone around him were happy, Mill hoped to encourage him to practise habitual unselfishness in his own interest, well aware that it would be equally easy to make him selfish through the facile assumption that his own happiness was naturally in conflict with the happiness of others. Once again, Packe provides an excellent summary of the viewpoint:

In short, all that an educator need hope to do was to help a child to reason accurately: for that granted, it would act unerringly towards its own final happiness, which was good, and would avoid evil, which was definable as a miscalculation of chances. Finally, since "the first sensations experienced produce the greatest effects", it was necessary on the intellectual side to prevent a child from cluttering its youthful brain with idle emotions, dreams or recreations. It should be tied down to the strict development of its faculties: anything which did not assist the main course of character and reason would
only cloud the vision and dissipate the clarity of mind. From these premises James Mill set out to educate his son. With Helvetius, he believed that "l'éducation peut tout".²²

There have been very few boys in the world's history who have been so effectively 'tied down to the strict development of his faculties' as John Stuart Mill. Unfortunately, the interpretation of what properly constituted his faculties was too much in the firm hands of his father, and notwithstanding the good intentions of the latter, the interpretation was far too narrow to provide for the properly rounded development of his son.

Some time in the year 1808, when James Mill was thirty-five years of age, he made the acquaintance of Jeremy Bentham.²³ Both men benefitted from the association, not only in new knowledge and perspectives, but also in a new outburst of enthusiasm. Bentham, now at the age of sixty, had acquired an international reputation as an attacker of social injustices. Packe gives us a summation of the catalytic effect that the two men had on each other, and notes in particular that James Mill observed that Bentham attacked social abuses with impunity, and escaped the jailing that might have been anticipated in that authoritarian age:
This was a revelation to James Mill. He quickly learnt that under the massive protection of Bentham's influence he could act without fear of his overlords, who he now saw were not competent to suppress the truth. For Bentham too there was fresh knowledge. From what Mill told him, he at last perceived that it was no mere matter of exposing the wiles of lawyers to a duped and outraged nation. The whole fabric of society, it now seemed to him, was thoroughly corrupt, and sinister interests lay behind every discriminative anomaly in the constitution. While he struck furiously at King and clergy, nobleman and pander—at anyone who stood on the side of keeping things as they were—the cool craft of his associate unerringly directed his raging, and still more the attention of his influential followers, to each momentary weakness in the machinery of privileged government. Though so different in temperament that their relations were on occasion inharmonious, each was indispensable to the other. Their impact generated an intellectual fire which burnt all through the century, and from which, in certain winds, the embers still emit a glow.

One of the notable effects of this intellectual fire was the education of John Stuart Mill, and as might be expected from so close an association, both men took an interest in it. Hugh S. R. Elliot, in his edition of The Letters of John Stuart Mill, has noted in his introduction a letter from Jeremy Bentham to James Mill, written when the latter had become quite sick, apparently from the gout. Elliot has the following
When John was six years old, and his father's health seemed very precarious, Bentham wrote one of his characteristic letters, offering to undertake the guardianship of the child. It is addressed to James Mill from Queen's Square Place, dated Saturday, 25th July 1812, and runs as follows:-

"If in the meantime any such thing as dying should happen to you (for we are all mortal ! ! ! !), you having however between the act of such dying as aforesaid and the act of receiving these presents, time to make your will (which to the purpose in question may be done by word of mouth, but if you cannot write it yourself better have it set down in writing and read to you), if you will appoint me guardian to Mr. John Stuart Mill, I will, in the event of his father's being disposed of elsewhere, take him to Q. S. P. and there or elsewhere, by whipping or otherwise, do whatsoever may seem most necessary and proper, for teaching him to make all proper distinctions, such as between the Devil and the Holy Ghost, and how to make Codes and Encyclopaedias, and whatsoever else may be proper to be made, so long as I remain an inhabitant of this vale of tears, after which—but this must remain for God's providence to determine ...."25

Thus, with a somewhat heavy jocularity, Bentham evinced a serious interest in the continued good education of John Stuart Mill. The reply dated three days later, provided his answer:

"July 28th, 1812.
I am not going to die, notwithstanding your zeal to come in for a legacy. However, if I were to die any time before
this poor boy is a man, one of the things that would pinch me most sorely, would be, the being obliged to leave his mind unmade to the degree of excellence, of which I hope to make it. But another thing is, that the only prospect which would lessen that pain, would be the leaving him in your hands. I therefore take your offer quite seriously, and stipulate, merely, that it shall be made as good as possible; and then we may perhaps leave him a successor worthy of both of us.26

The serious nature of the underlying intent overrides the initial attempt at humour. The phrase, "to leave his mind unmade", provides an important insight into the mind of James Mill: it certainly emphasizes how intent he was on controlling the education of his son.

Testimony to the extent of the control exercised over John's education may be found in the witness of his father's correspondence, and the comment of friends. Graham Wallas, in his biography of Francis Place, quotes a letter from James Mill to Place under the date of December 7, 1814; the letter was written from Ford Abbey where Mill and his family were living in shared residence with Jeremy Bentham. The relevant text gives some indication of what was expected of the Mill children:

My two children, John and Willie, are with me at six A.M., and then we have half a day's work done before any other body is up in the house. John is now an adept in
the first six books of Euclid and in Algebra, performing simple questions with great ease, while in Greek he has read since he came here the last half of Thucydides, one play of Euripides and one of Sophocles, two of Aristophanes and the treatise of Plutarch on education. Willie has read along with him several lives in Cornelius Nepos, and has got over the most difficult part of the task of learning Latin, while John wants but little of being able to read Latin with ease. His historical and other reading never stands still, he is at it whenever he has any time to spare. This looks like bragging, but as I tell you the untoward part of my circumstances, it is but right you should hear that which gives me pleasure also. There are few to whom I talk of either.

Wallas provides a further emphasis on the point of view governing John Mill's education by commenting further on how far a child's mind is a tabula rasa on which the educator can produce whatever effects he desires:

"Wakefield," wrote Place, "is a believer in innate propensities, ... and so fully is he satisfied of the truth of his theory, that he expects to see your John's innate propensities break out presently and form his character .... The position I take against him is, that the generality of children are organized so nearly alike that they may by proper management be made pretty nearly equally wise and virtuous." 28

There seemed thus to be very little doubt about the educational theory being applied so rigorously to the younger Mill, and the emphasis is on close 'management'
rather than on any relaxed system of guidance. In August of 1817, when John was eleven years old, Place went to stay at Ford Abbey for a while, and in a letter to his wife, has the following to say about the education of the children there:

I cannot but admire the children here, who give no one any trouble; they have a hard time of it, learning their lessons from six every morning to nine, and saying them, and learning others from eleven to one; and learning again in the afternoon—learning, too, with a precision utterly unknown by others; even little Jim spells words of four syllables well; and Clara reads, as she herself says, "Natural History." 29

What the younger children had to do, John had to do too, for he was charged with the duty of teaching his younger brothers and sisters, a duty added to those of his own particular studies. Of this duty, he has the following to say in the early draft of his autobiography:

In my eighth year I commenced learning Latin by means of teaching it to a younger sister, who afterwards repeated the lessons to my father. From this time other sisters & brothers being successively added as pupils, a considerable part of my day's work consisted of this preparatory teaching; & it was a part which I especially disliked. The principal advantage which, as far as I am aware, arose from it, was that I myself learnt more thoroughly & retained more lastingly the things which I had to teach as well as learn; perhaps too, the practice it afforded in explaining difficulties to others, may even at that age have been useful. In
other respects the experience of my boyhood is not favorable to the plan of teaching children by means of one another. The teaching, I am sure, is very inefficient as teaching, & I well know that the relation between teacher & taught is a most unfavorable moral discipline to both. I went through the grammar & part of Cornelius Nepos & Caesar's Commentaries in this manner, but afterwards added to the superintendance of these lessons, much longer ones of my own which I repeated to my father in the usual manner.30

Of the content of his education, its very early start, and the unusually close working relationship with his father, Mill has spoken at considerable length in his autobiography. He notes:

A man who in his own practice so vigorously acted up to the principle of losing no time, was likely to adhere to the same rule in the instruction of his pupil. I have no remembrance of the time when I began to learn Greek. I have been told that it was when I was three years old. My earliest recollection on the subject is of learning what my father termed Vocables, being lists of common Greek words, with their signification in English, which he wrote on cards & gave me to learn by heart. Of grammar I learnt, until some years later, nothing except the inflexions of the nouns & verbs but after a course of vocables, proceeded at once to translation; & I can faintly remember going through AESop's Fables, the first Greek book; which I read. The Anabasis was the second. I learnt no Latin until my eighth year. Before that time I had read a number of Greek prose authors, among whom I remember the whole of Herodotus, Xenophon's Cyropaedia and Memorials of Socrates, some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius, part of Lucian, a little of Isocrates, & I think part of Thucydides;
I also read in 1813 the first six dialogues of Plato (in the common arrangement) from the Euthyphron to the Theaetetus inclusive, which last dialogue had been better omitted, as it was utterly impossible I should understand it. But my father, in all his teaching, demanded & expected of me not only the utmost that I could do, but much that I could by no possibility have done. What he was himself willing to undergo for the sake of my instruction may be judged from the fact, that I went through the whole process of preparing my Greek lessons in the same room & at the same table at which he was writing, and as in those days Greek & English Lexicons were not, & I could make no more use of a Greek & Latin Lexicon than could be made without having begun to learn Latin, I was forced to have recourse to him for the meaning of every word which I did not know; & this incessant interruption he, one of the most impatient of mankind, submitted to, & wrote under that interruption several volumes of his History & all else that he had to write during those years.31

If the reader experiences a feeling of exhaustion at such long lists and extensive quotations, one can only point out that no adequate appreciation of John Stuart Mill's early education can be arrived at without them. If such lists are exhausting to the reader, the latter may imagine then how exhausting they must have been in their daily embodiment to the small boy who daily gave most of his waking hours to their understanding. Yet this was only a beginning.

Recalling when he wrote the Autobiography that, during his early years, his evenings were occupied with arithmetic, he also recalled the disagreeableness of
these lessons. In addition to his lessons he reported to his father on his reading during the course of frequent walks which appear to have been pleasant. Then he gives a long catalogue of histories, both ancient and modern, to which he gave his attention, much of it apparently with real pleasure.

In 1819, before his sojourn in France, John wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Bentham, the brother of Jeremy, setting forth one of the more complete résumés of his studies:

Acton Place, Hoxton, July 30, 1819

My Dear Sir,

It is so long since I last had the pleasure of seeing you that I have almost forgotten when it was, but I believe it was in the year 1814, the first year we were at Ford Abbey. I am very much obliged to you for your inquiries with respect to my progress in my studies; and as nearly as I can remember I will endeavour to give an account of them from that year.

In the year 1814, I read Thucydides, and Anacreon, and I believe the Electra of Sophocles, the Phoenissae of Euripides, and the Plutus and the Clouds of Aristophanes. I also read the Philippics of Demosthenes.

The Latin which I read was only the Oration of Cicero for the poet Archias, and the (first or last) part of his pleading against Verres. And in Mathematics, I was then reading Euclid; I also began Euler's Algebra, Bonnycastle's principally for the sake of the examples to perform. I read likewise some of West's Geometry.

Aet. 9.—The Greek which I read in the year 1815 was, I think, Homer's Odyssey. Theocritus, some of Pindar, and the two Ora-
Crown. In Latin I read the six first books, I believe, of Ovid's Metamorphoses, the five first books of Livy, the Bucolics, and the six first books of the Aeneid of Virgil, and part of Cicero's Orations. In Mathematics, after finishing the first six books, with the eleventh and twelfth of Euclid, and the Geometry of West, I studied Simpson's Conic Sections and also West's Conic Sections, Mensuration and Sphercs; and in Algebra, Kersey's Algebra, and Newton's Universal Arithmetic, in which I performed all the problems without the book, and most of them without any help from the book.

Aet. 10—In the year 1816 I read the following Greek: Part of Polybius, all Xenophon's Hellenics, the Ajax and the Philoctetes of Sophocles, the Medea of Euripides, and the Frogs of Aristophanes, and great part of the Anthologia Graeca. In Latin I read all Horace, except the Book of Epodes; and in Mathematics I read Stewart's Propositiones Geometricae, Playfair's Trigonometry at the end of his Euclid, and an article on geometry in the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia. I also studied Simpson's Algebra.

Aet. 11—In the year 1817 I read Thucydides a second time, and I likewise read a great many Orations of Demosthenes and all Aristotle's Rhetoric, of which I made a synoptic table. In Latin I read all Lucretius, except the last book, and Cicero's Letters to Atticus, his Topica, and his treatise, De Partizione Oratoria. I read in Conic Sections an article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (in other branches of the mathematics I studied Euler's Analysis of Infinites and began Fluxions, on which I read an article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica), and Simpson's Fluxions. In the application of mathematics I read Keill's Astronomy and Robinson's Mechanical Philosophy.

Aet. 12—Last year I read some of Demosthenes, and the four first books of Aristotle's Organon, all which I tabulated in the same manner as his Rhetoric.
In Latin, I read all the works of Tacitus, except the dialogue concerning oratory, and great part of Juvenal, and began Quintilian. In Mathematics and their application, I read Emerson's Optics, and a Treatise on Trigonometry by Professor Wallace, of the Military College, near Bagshot, intended for the use of the cadets. I likewise re-solved several problems in various branches of mathematics; and began an article on Fluxions in the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia.

Aet. 13—This year I read Plato's dialogues called Gorgias and Protagoras, and his Republic, of which I made an abstract. I am still reading Quintilian and the article on Fluxions, and am performing without book the problems in Simpson's Select Exercises.

Last year I began to learn logic. I have read several Latin books of Logic: those of Smith, Brerewood, and Du Trieu, and part of Burgersdicius, as far as I have gone in Aristotle. I have also read Hobbes' Logic.

I am now learning political economy. I have made a kind of treatise from what my father has explained to me on that subject, and I am now reading Mr. Ricardo's work and writing an abstract of it. I have learnt a little natural philosophy, and having had an opportunity of attending a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered by Mr. Phillips, at the Royal Military College, Bagshot, I have applied myself particularly to that science, and have read the last edition of Dr. Thomson's system of chemistry.

What English I have read since the year 1814 I cannot tell you, for I cannot remember so long ago. But I recollect that since that time I have read Ferguson's Roman and Mitford's Grecian History. I have also read a great deal of Livy by myself. I have sometimes tried my hand at writing history. I had carried a history of the United Provinces from their revolt from Spain, in the reign of Phillip II., to the accession of the Stadholder, William III., to the throne of England.
I had likewise begun to write a history of the Roman Government, which I had carried down to the Licinian Laws. I should have begun to learn French before this time, but that my father has for a long time had it in contemplation to go to the Continent, there to reside for some time. But as we are hindered from going by my father's late appointment in the East India House, I shall begin to learn French as soon as my sisters have made progress enough in Latin to learn with me.

I have now and then attempted to write Poetry. The last production of that kind at which I tried my hand was a tragedy. I have now another in view in which I hope to correct the fault of this.

I believe my sister Willie was reading Cornelius Nepos when you saw her. She has since that time read some of Caesar; almost all Phaedrus, all the Catiline and part of the Jugurtha of Sallust, and two plays of Terence; she has read the first, and part of the second book of Lucretius, and is now reading the Eclogues of Virgil.

Clara has begun Latin also. After going through the grammar, she read some of Cornelius Nepos and Caesar, almost as much as Willie of Sallust, and is now reading Ovid. They are both now tolerably good arithmeticians; they have gone as far as the extraction of the cube root. They are reading the Roman Antiquities and the Greek Mythology, and are translating English into Latin from Mair's Introduction to Latin Syntax.

This is to the best of my remembrance a true account of my own and my sisters' progress since the year 1814.

I hope Lady Bentham, and George, and the young ladies are in good health.

Your obedient, humble servant,
JOHN STUART MILL.

It is noteworthy that this list is by no means a complete
one. Mill, himself, admits that he has difficulty remembering all that he has read; consequently, one may assume that further additions could be made. Indeed, the Autobiography lists numerous histories and a considerable body of English poetry that have not been listed here at all. Bain comments on some of the omissions. It is necessary to remember too that the studies listed for John's sisters, Willie and Clara, were also his responsibility as part of his teaching duties.

In reviewing the enormous volume and weight of John Mill's studies, one tends to think only of the drudgery involved. However, Mill has noted that he derived considerable pleasure from much of his studies and reading. In particular he enjoyed the reading of history. He writes in the Autobiography:

I made notes on slips of paper while reading, & from these I used in the morning walks to tell the story to him. I say the story, for the books were chiefly histories, of which I read in this manner a great number: Robertson's histories, Hume, Gibbon; but my greatest delight, then & for long afterwards, was Watson's Philip 2n & 3d. The heroic defence of the Knights of Malta against the Turks, & of the Dutch revolted provinces against Spain, excited in me an intense & lasting interest.
After adding further comment on his delights in Greek history, he adds boyishly that in English history he cared little for anything except the wars and battles. He relates his delight in reading Anson's *Voyage* and a collection of voyages round the world, from Drake to Cook and Bougainville. He also recalls a number of books of childhood, some of which his father especially borrowed for him; of these he remembers particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, which he said continued to delight him all through his boyhood.

In his eighth year Mill made his first acquaintance with the Greek poets by reading the *Iliad*. His father gave him Pope's translation after he had laboured on the original Greek. He recounts how he read this, the first English verse that he had cared to read, some twenty to thirty times through. He also notes with astonishment that Pope's version of the *Iliad* was less popular among boys than he would have supposed.

John Mill relates how throughout his boyhood he frequently attempted to write what he called histories in imitation of his father who used to give him the manuscript of part of his history of India to read. His father encouraged him in this activity but never
asked to see what he had written. (Regrettably he later destroyed these early attempts at writing.) He also wrote many English verses, the first in imitation of Pope's *Homer*, others as prescribed exercises, some in imitation of writers such as Thomson, the author of *The Seasons*. He adds his father's comments on the two primary advantages of writing in verse: the one that some things could be expressed better and more forcibly in verse than in prose, the real advantage according to James Mill; and the other that people in general attached more value to verse than it deserved. There are echoes of the eighteenth century in these reasons with their implied reliance on the discursive statement.

John Mill was exposed to a very considerable number of the English poets. Once again, we have his own word for this in his autobiography:

I remember his giving me Thomson's "Winter" to read, & afterwards making me attempt to write something myself on the same subject. I had read very little English poetry at this time. Shakespeare my father had put into my hands, at first for the sake of the historical plays, from which however I went on to the others. My father was never a great admirer of Shakespeare, the English idolatry of whom, he used to attack in unmeasured terms. He had little value for any English poetry except Milton, Goldsmith, Burns, & Gray's Bard, which he preferred to his Elegy: perhaps I may also add Beattie.
I remember his reading to me (unlike his usual practice of making me read to him) the first book of the Fairie Queene: but I took little pleasure in it. The poetry of the present century he set no value on — & I hardly saw any of it till I was grown up to manhood, except Walter Scott's metrical romances, which he borrowed for me & which I was much delighted with — as I always was with all animated narrative. Dryden's Poems were among my father's books & many of these he made me read, though I never cared for any of them except Alexander's Feast, which like the songs in Walter Scott I used to sing internally, to a music of my own. Cowper's short poems I read with some pleasure but never got far into the longer ones — & nothing in the two volumes interested me like the little prose account of his three hares. In my thirteenth year I met with the poems of Campbell, among which Lochiel, Hohenlinden, the Exile of Erin & some others gave me sensations I had never before received from poetry. Here too I made nothing of the longer poems, except the opening of Gertrude of Wyoming, which appeared to me the perfection of pathos.

In this account of his early acquaintance with poetry, Mill has revealed himself as being very much like many other boys; there is indicated, for example, a love of nature, the romantic past, battle, sentiment, and an admiration for the heroic, much as one would expect to find among most intelligent youths of his age. There are other features evident too: one notes, for example, that he says he used to "sing internally" songs from Dryden and Sir Walter Scott to a music of his own, and one further notes the hint of restraint.
contained in the word "internally."

One need hardly labour the point that John Stuart Mill's education was almost exclusively intellectual. There was no provision in it for games, sports, play, boyhood companions, and very little allowance for physical activities. He lived and studied in an adult atmosphere, for even his relations with his brothers and sisters were largely restricted to those of the teacher with his pupils. There were bright spots in his days. There is a lightening of the mood when he recalls in the *Autobiography*, the walks he used to take with his father:

> But the lessons were not the most important part of the instruction I was receiving. Much of it consisted in the books I read by myself and in my father's discourses to me, chiefly during our walks. From 1810 to the end of 1813 we were living at Newington Green, then an almost rustic neighbourhood. My father's health required considerable and constant exercise and he walked habitually before breakfast, generally in the green lanes towards Hornsey. In these walks I always accompanied him, and what I chiefly remember of them, (except the bouquets of wild flowers which I used to bring in) is the account I used to give him daily of what I had read the previous day.37

One notes his emphasis and the implications of his reference to the lessons as 'not the most important part of the instruction'. It is not difficult to
feature the small boy with his slips of paper in hand, casting sidelong glances in 'the green lanes', and gathering, when permitted, the bouquets of wild flowers. In 1870, when Mill was a widower, 64 years of age, he visited the Amberleys, and Kate's Journal of Tuesday, 27th September bears the following entry, an echo of those earlier walks:

We go to the Forest of Dean to picnic. They 3 walked and I drove by them, Miss Taylor came home with me; we walked up the hill through Bargain Wood which they admired very much everywhere and Mill was always noticing the flowers and hedgerows. 38

Writing about a visit from Mill in 1873, Morley has some similar remarks to make about Mill's interests. He writes about Mill's interest in nature:

Then when he got here, he chatted with something of the simple amiableness of a child to my wife, about the wild flowers, the habits of insects, and notes of birds, in which she is profound: but he was not less so. Then I drove him to Ash, and one of the most delightful days of my life came to its end, like all other days, delightful and sorrowful. He is a wise, good, and kind man, all superlatively. 39

Although Mill was interested in a wide range of subjects, he appears always to have had a particular interest in the scenes and objects of nature. Caroline Fox, writing about 1840 when Mill was thirty-four, records her recollection of an occasion when he gave
particular expression to this inclination: "He spoke of the extreme elation of spirits he always experienced; in the country, and illustrated it, with an apology, by jumping."40 There are many indications of his interest in nature early in life, but there is little stress on the importance of this interest in his life until well on in his more mature years. There is not, for example, any indication of his kicking his heels or jumping in such a free manner when he was a boy. One is forced to conclude that the pressure of his studies and the unusually close working relationship with his father had an inhibiting effect on the growth of this interest during his boyhood.

It was at the age of twelve that John Mill entered a more advanced stage of his studies, a stage in which his father introduced him to the history and rules of logic. The Organon, several Latin treatises on the scholastic logic, and Hobbes constituted some of the highlights of his studies. In addition, his father sought by question and explanation to convey an understanding of syllogistic logic. In the course of these studies, James Mill sought to demonstrate by reading, analysis, explanation, and questioning the principles of logic and dialectics. Demosthenes
and Plato figured large in these exercises. John recalled at the time of writing his autobiography, how even at the age of twelve, the analytic method took hold of him and became part of his own mind. It was also at this time of more searching methods that his relations with his father seemed to enter a period of greater strain.

In his edition of Bentham's writings, the editor, Bowring, cites a statement of Jeremy Bentham in which the latter gives presumably an early impression of James Mill:

He will never willingly enter into discourse with me. When he differs, he is silent. He is a character. He expects to subdue everybody by his domineering tone—to convince everybody of his positiveness. His manner of speaking is oppressive and overbearing. He comes to me as if he wore a mask upon his face.41

One feels that this judgment is too harsh, and indeed one feels that one must treat it with a certain amount of reservation, for there is ample evidence to suggest that James Mill could be very engaging company among his peers. Nevertheless, there appears to be at least a grain of truth in it. Mill was a Scot who had come a very long way, and one is not surprised to note a dour intensity in his nature. Packe notes that long after his death, John leapt to his defence against the
slights contained in Bowring's biography, but he also notes that with the great respect for his father there was also fear. 42

Mrs. Grote, in her *Personal Life of George Grote*, gives the following early impression of the son:

John Stuart Mill, the eldest son of James Mill, in 1817, then a boy of about twelve years old, was studying, with his father as his sole preceptor, under the paternal roof. Unquestionably forward for his years, and already possessed of a competent knowledge of Greek and Latin, as well as of some subordinate though solid attainments, John was, as a boy, somewhat repressed by the elder Mill, and seldom took any share in the conversation carried on by the society frequenting the house. 43

The son gives considerable support to the view that his early education, thorough discipline that it was, contained elements of repression. Writing in his autobiography of this time when he was twelve, John has the following comments to make about a disagreeable feature of his reading lessons:

In going through Demosthenes and Plato, as I could now read these authors as far as the language was concerned with perfect ease, I was not required to construe them sentence by sentence but to read them aloud to my father, answering questions when asked: but the particular attention which he paid to elocution (in which his own excellence was remarkable) made this reading aloud to him a most painful task. Of all things which he required me to do, there was none which I did so constantly ill, or in which he so perpetually
lost his temper with me. ...These rules he constantly impressed upon me, and severely took me to task for every violation of them: but I even then remarked (though I did not venture to make the remark to him) that though he reproached me when I read a sentence ill, and told me how I ought to have read it, he never shewed me: he often mockingly caricatured my bad reading of the sentence, but did not, by reading it himself, instruct me how it ought to be read.44

Here, by John Stuart Mill's own admission, there is clearly fear, the fear of making a remark to his father, and with this fear there is the repression of his own thoughts and feelings. Elsewhere in the Autobiography there is plenty of evidence to support the impression of a strict, unrelenting pressure not infrequently accompanied by parental anger. Speaking of his studies during the year of 1819, when he was thirteen, the younger Mill notes about his father's system of instruction:

Such a system of instruction was excellently suited to form a thinker; but it required to be worked by a thinker, as close and vigorous as my father. The path was a thorny one even to him, and I am sure it was so to me, though I took the strongest interest in the subject. He was continually provoked by my failures both where success could, and where it could not, have been expected; but in the main his method was right, and it succeeded. I do not believe that any scientific teaching ever was more thorough, or better calculated for training the faculties, than the mode in which logic and political economy were taught to me by my father.45
Notwithstanding his observations about the 'thorny' nature of these studies, he recognizes their value, and the essential fact that 'it succeeded.' At another point in the Autobiography, he concludes, almost with approbation while suggesting that his father's anger might have been unreasonable but, that "A pupil from whom nothing is ever demanded which he cannot do, never does all he can."\(^{46}\)

With his submission to his father's forceful methods, went a close containment of any notions of self-conceit:

He kept me, with extreme vigilance, out of the way of hearing myself praised, or of being led to make self complimentary comparisons between myself and others. From his own intercourse with me I could derive none but a very humble opinion of myself; and the standard of comparison he always held up to me, was not what other people did, but what could and ought to be done.\(^{47}\)

Added to the restraint on his egotism was a close direction of his moral and religious views. He writes that it would have been totally inconsistent with his father's ideas of duty to permit him to hold notions at variance with his own convictions and feelings respecting religion.\(^{48}\) He acknowledges his own submission and his dependence on his father when he relates the advice his father gave him on the eve of his French journey, advice in which he was told that he would find that he knew many things that
other youths of his age would not know, but that whatever he knew more than others was not ascribable to any merit in himself but rather to the very unusual advantage that had fallen to him. Mill concludes with his own dutiful recognition; "to which as to all other things which my father told me, I gave implicit credence...."49

In the course of editing the early draft of John Stuart Mill's autobiography, Stillinger has noted a number of significant changes in the published version. Harriet Mill had a good deal to do with the early editing of the published version, exercising a restraining hand on Mill's first written language with the result that the generally known version displays much less candour than the earlier one. In Stillinger's words "she read and 'improved' the remainder of the draft."50 Stillinger further records some of the more material effects of the later changes Mill made in the Autobiography:

Here and there Mill toned down his recollections of family relationships and especially of his father. Indirect references to his mother, in speaking of his father's "ill assorted marriage", "to which he had not, and never could have supposed that he had, the inducements of kindred intellect, tastes, or pursuits" are charitably omitted.
His father's "authority and indignation" is rewritten as "displeasure"; and the fact that he "often mockingly caricatured" Mill's bad reading is discarded, along with mention of the futile "short sharp contest(s)" between them over differences in opinion and his father's "asperities of temper" .... By changes of this sort, with the addition of several sentences comparing his father with Bentham, the later draft comes considerably closer than the earlier to being, in the passages describing him, a eulogy of his father. 51

Stillinger's examination of the early draft of Mill's autobiography together with the insight gained on the editorial policy practised in preparing it for publication leave no doubt that the early draft has much to reveal. Noting that the omission of certain terms used in the first draft had created a "more formal and generalized" later version, Stillinger adds: "Mill's successive revisions within the early draft show the same kind of progress from private to public, and from public to more public, voice."52

In the passage just quoted from Stillinger's Introduction to his edition of The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's Autobiography the references to James Mill's "ill assorted marriage" and the indirect allusion to John Mill's mother, contained in the citation, "to which he had not and never could have supposed that he had, the inducements of kindred intellect,
tastes, or pursuits" carry with them a marked disparagement of his mother. Stillinger's final version of the early draft reads as follows:

Personally I believe my father to have had much greater capacities of feeling than were ever developed in him. He resembled almost all Englishmen in being ashamed of the signs of feeling, and by the absence of demonstration, starving the feelings themselves. In an atmosphere of tenderness and affection he would have been tender and affectionate; but his ill assorted marriage and his asperities of temper disabled him from making such an atmosphere.  

Implicit in this passage are the dutiful son's respect for his father and a regret for that lack of tenderness which would have created the atmosphere that the son desired. There is also, by the very reticence in speaking of his mother, the implication of a silent accusation against her for not having provided the tenderness, the absence of which he lamented.

Although John Stuart Mill is demonstrably not the icy Victorian figure of legend, he does appear cold and detached in his dealings with his mother. A number of his letters to her have been preserved, and they carry the customary inquiries about health and they end with the customary terms of affection, but there is something wanting in them, the warmth between a son and his mother. When Mill later in
life broke with his family over their coolness about his marriage and the fancied slights given to his wife, he caused his mother and his brothers and sisters much anguish. Packe has written a full account of these unhappy events, even to the point where Mill betrayed no particular emotion at the time of his mother's death. Yet his behaviour was not that of an unemotional person. He was warm-hearted and generous in his relationships with his many friends and acquaintances, and his uxorious behaviour in marriage has long been a topic of interest. Mill, himself, provides one key to his attitude and behaviour in the early draft of the *Autobiography*; discussing at further length, the relationship between his father and his brothers and sisters, Mill comments:

But in respect to what I am here concerned with, the moral agencies which acted on myself, it must be mentioned as a most baneful one, that my father's children neither loved him, nor, with any warmth of affection, any one else. I do not mean that things were worse in this respect than they are in most English families; in which genuine affection is altogether exceptional; what is usually found being more or less of an attachment of mere habit, like that to inanimate objects, and a few conventional proprieties of phrase and demonstration. I believe there is less personal affection in England than in any other country of which I know anything, and I give my father's family not as peculiar in this respect but only
as a too faithful exemplification of the ordinary fact. That rarity in England, a really warm hearted mother, would in the first place have made my father a totally different being, and in the second would have made the children grow up loving and being loved. But my mother with the very best intentions, only knew how to pass her life in drudging for them. Whatever she could do for them she did, and they liked her, because she was kind to them, but to make herself loved, looked up to, or even obeyed, required qualities which she unfortunately did not possess.

The earlier critical allusions to his mother are given added force by these strictures. Mill is clearly on the side of his father, and these lines written some time after October, 1852, express his disappointment both for his father's sake and for his own. He acknowledges his mother's kindness, but he withholds from her the description of 'loving', and somewhat casually dismisses her life of drudging for her family as being, servant-like, her chief contribution to them. It seems evident that Mill was judging his mother against an ideal, one that she could not meet. His standards, determined in large part by his acquaintance with such women as Lady Bentham, his wife, Jane Welsh Carlyle, Caroline Fox, and others were unusually high, demanding that high standard of mind and tenderness of heart that he later referred to in a letter to Frederic Mistral.
The explanation would seem to be that John Mill wanted from his mother not only a tenderness of heart but heroic virtues as well. He naturally wanted someone who could share his mental life with him, but unfortunately she was too submissive and lacked the mental vigor necessary to keep pace with her husband and son. Since he could not share his thoughts with her, John's letters and conversation with her followed perfunctory and unsatisfactory formulas. John Stuart Mill's mother, like Isabel Fenton before her, must have knowingly sacrificed her relationship with her son in order to facilitate his education, and she paid for it in the loss of his close affection. She was not, like his father, or later on his wife, of heroic mould. In fact, throughout the silent years of his childhood she had been a nonentity, and Mill treated her as if she were a stranger.

One of the most remarkable features of John Stuart Mill's unusual education was the extraordinary degree of restraint and submission that he displayed under his father's exacting tutelage. It is safe to say that most other boys would have found various ways of frustrating the tasks which Mill always attacked with energy if not actual enthusiasm. There was hardly a murmur from him at any time. Some of Place's comments on his application to his tasks have been noted.
During his sojourn in France, Lady Bentham made the following comment in a letter from France to James Mill. She is seeking the father's consent for John's continued stay with them in France, and she notes how everyone "in grand committee had resolved that he should remain with us" unless his father should desire otherwise. She adds:

Upon all occasions his gentleness under reproof, and thankfulness for correction are remarkable; and as it is by reason supported by examples we point out to him that we endeavour to convince him, not by command that we induce him to act so or so, we trust that you will have satisfaction from that part of his education we are giving him to fit him for commerce with the world at large-.56

With his knowledge that many fanatics espouse bad causes, James Mill held a strong aversion bordering on intolerance for many intellectual errors, a dislike that bore, in the words of his son, something of the character of a moral feeling.57 Implicit in this attitude is James Mill's energy in all intellectual matters, a perfectionism when seeking the solution to a problem; this attitude was allied to his stand on moral matters. John Mill described him as inculcating the principles of the "Socratici viri".58

With an outlook on life that partook of the
character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Cynic, and with a predominance of the Stoic in his character, it is not surprising to learn that James Mill placed very little emphasis on pleasure, deeming that the greatest miscarriages in life derived from the over-valuing of pleasures. He held this view notwithstanding the teachings of the Utilitarians, concerning the greatest happiness of the greatest number. His attitude to pleasure and the emotions is summed up in the Autobiography:

He never varied in rating intellectual enjoyments above all others, even in their value as pleasures, independently of ulterior consequences. The pleasures of the benevolent affections he placed high in the scale; and used to say that he had never known a happy old man, except those who were able to live over again in the pleasures of the young. For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt: he regarded them as a form of madness; "the intense" was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great stress laid upon feeling. Feelings, as such, he considered to be no proper subjects of praise or blame; ...

Concerning his relations with his own father, John Mill said that his father had greater capacities of feeling than were ever developed in him. Adding that his ill-
assorted marriage and his asperities of temper prevented him from developing the needed tenderness and affection, he continues:

It was one of the most unfavourable of the moral agencies which acted on me in my boyhood, that mine was not an education of love but of fear. ... I do not believe that fear, as an element in education, can be dispensed with; but I am sure that it ought not to be the predominant element; and when it is carried so far as to preclude love or confidence on the part of the child to those who should be the unreservedly trusted advisers of after years, and perhaps to seal up altogether the fountains of frank and spontaneous communicativeness in the child's character, it is an evil for which a large abatement must be made from the benefits, moral and intellectual, which may flow from any other part of the education.62

There is a wistful air, a faint sadness in the reference to those who 'should be the trusted advisers of after years'; Mill undoubtedly loved his father and wished for his affection, companionship, and approval, but he also undoubtedly feared him. Perhaps the last word on this aspect of his education is provided by Caroline Fox, who recalled some plaintive remarks he made to her:

This method of early intense application he would not recommend to others; in most cases it would not answer, and where it does, the buoyancy of youth is entirely superseded by the maturity of manhood, and action is very likely to be merged in reflection. "I never was a boy," he
said; "never played at cricket: it is
better to let Nature have her own ways."63

In the light of his own remarks and the observations of friends and acquaintances, there can be little doubt that John Stuart Mill's education was marked by repression both in opinion and feelings, but that he strove constantly to please his father and to rise to his demands, and in so doing was strained to the point of overwork.

Inevitably one wonders, when considering his education, just how John Stuart Mill managed to endure the whole exhausting process. It is certain that very few boys could ever survive such a course of overheated intellectual instruction without rebelling or collapsing under the strain. With very few holidays, if any, without playmates, and without the play, the dirt, and the mud, of childhood, he nevertheless progressed and even seemed to thrive under the demanding restraint and strain that would have been too much for many an adult. The only reasonable answer to this question would seem to be that he experienced an extraordinary and tenuous sense of satisfaction in the close working relationship he had with his father. Caroline Fox has written her recollection of a conversation that grew out of the mention of John Ster-
John Mill speaks thankfully of the tissue of circumstances which had located them here: amongst others, he said, was the pleasure of making John Sterling and us known to each other; for, said he, it is very delightful to introduce those who will appreciate each other. He talked enthusiastically of him; I remarked on his writing being more obscure and involved than his conversation even on deep subjects. "Yes," he said, "in talking you address yourself to the particular state of mind of the person with whom you are conversing, but in writing you speak as it were to an ideal object." "And then," said I, "you can't ask a book questions;" which, I was proud to be informed, was what Plato had said before me, and on that ground accounted books of little value, and always recommended discussions. "Certainly," he added, "it is of little use to read if you can form ideas of your own ... but there is an exquisite delight in meeting with a something in the ideas of others answering to anything in your own self-consciousness; then you make the idea your own and never lose it." 64

Although Mill seems to have derived much satisfaction from addressing the 'ideal object' of a book, it seems evident that he preferred the joys of discussion, the 'exquisite delight in meeting with a something in the ideas of others answering to anything in his own self-consciousness.' The one with whom he had carried on most of his discussions had been his father, and we may assume that his delight in discussion was one of the sources of pleasure that permitted him to endure the
great demands of his educational programme, all restraint and repression notwithstanding. One infers that his Platonic and Socratic education with its heavy dependence on the spoken word, had made him more than usually susceptible to the relationship with sensitive minds, and at the same time more than usually dependent on the presence and companionship of such minds. Here, perhaps, are the very roots of his dependence on his father, and later on Harriet, his wife.

Until just a few days before his fourteenth birthday, John Stuart Mill had spent most of his days as, in his own words, 'an habitual inmate' of his father's study, learning at his father's elbow, and meeting his father's friends. In this close atmosphere, under the dominating presence of his father, the experiences he had were so firmly controlled by his father that even their emotional tone was determined for him. One could say that not until his journey to France and his year's stay there did Mill have many experiences of his own. His was hardly an individual life, and, in fact, one could say that with only small exceptions his experiences to this date were his father's experiences. Not until he
went to France and lived there did John Stuart Mill really have any lengthy and significant experiences of his own. His sojourn in France was for him almost a new birth.

A record of John Mill's impressions, thoughts, and activities has been preserved in his journal and notebook; these documents, written in France during his stay there in 1820 and 1821, and subsequently edited in 1960 by Anna Jean Mill provide an essential account of his life during his sojourn in that country.

For a number of years prior to John Mill's journey to France, James Mill had contemplated the possibility of a lengthy stay in that country, but his appointment to the India Office had eliminated the project from his mind. However, when Sir Samuel Bentham, the brother of Jeremy Bentham, had sent an invitation to John to join him and his family for an extensive visit he accepted the offer. Accordingly, in 1820, James Mill consented to the visit and John set out from London on May 15. His departure for France marked the first time that he had been away from his family for any considerable period of time, and it marked the first time that he had left the strict daily control of his father. He was just short
of his fourteenth year.

John Mill's journal took the form of a series of letters conscientiously giving a day-by-day account of his activities and observations. Detailed descriptions of his journeys, the inns he stayed at, and his travelling companions fill the first part of his journal. Later entries include expense items and letters in French. What is particularly interesting is the changing pattern of John's activities and preoccupations. At first, he dutifully tried to carry on his reading and studies, much as he had done at home, but the obstacles raised by his travel and the removal of the Benthams to Toulouse interrupted his attempts at following a regular programme. It is amusing to note that the Benthams contrived by various means to break up his routine; Lady Bentham, a very intelligent and definite person, seems to have had much to do with this, but Sir Samuel had also expressed the view that John was too bookish. It was certainly a kind of life different from any John had ever encountered, for he was continually being interrupted and engaged in conversation either with other members of the family or with French servants and neighbors. In spite of the promptings of his conscience he had far less opportunity to read than he had expected, for, pending
the departure for Toulouse during the first part of his visit, the books were all packed with his assistance and the library was locked against him. The Bentham family liked John, but they were determined to change some of his ways. Writing to James Mill in September of 1820, Lady Bentham requested that John should be allowed to remain with them, and in addition to praising his docility, she commented: "... he has travelled in the coach with Bentham, Clara, and myself and we have been considerably successful in getting the better of his inactivity of mind and body when left to himself."

His journal therefore reveals a significant change in the pattern of his activities. Music, dancing, bathing, and walking occupied a large part of his time. There were reading and study too, but increasingly other pursuits occupied his attention and took over from his studies. Fencing, riding, and swimming were demanded of him in spite of his protests; an increasing number of physical activities vied for his time, although his studies always claimed some of his attention. Sir Samuel and Lady Bentham were evidently determined to provide him with the social and physical activity he needed to offset
the excessively intellectual regime he had lived under in England. It was at this time too that he was initiated by George Bentham, then about twenty, into the fascinations of botany, fascinations that created for him a life-long hobby. Entomology, with its field trips and butterfly-catching also claimed his time. At the University of Montpellier he attended lectures in science, particularly in chemistry, and in the course of his attendance there made friends with a youth who was to become one of France's most distinguished chemists, Antoine Jerome Balard.

Repeated expeditions to the river Garonne for bathing, wading, and picnicking were recorded in his journal with comments on the pleasure he felt. On one occasion, July 30, he seems to have enjoyed himself to an exceptional degree:

**July 30.** At four o'clock with Dr. Russell and his sons, and Mr. George, to the forest of Buzet on the Alby road, on an entomological expedition. The road is very beautiful; after crossing the canal, we passed through a very fine long avenue of trees, and through the village of La croix Daurade, after which we crossed the river Ers, and passing several hills and pretty vallies, we passed through the villages of Castel-Moron, Garidec, and Gemil. - On this road, in order to obtain
a fine lake and island, a round hole has been dug in a garden and heaped up in the middle; a bridge has been thrown across, but the poor people seem never to have thought of finding water for their ditch, and accordingly it remains dry, except in rainy weather, when it is a little puddle. However it is still an elegant lake. We left the horses at Gemil and walked on to the forest of Buzet where we had a chase of insects for some hours. The wood is very pretty. The heat of the day brought out many butterflies, and my collection is neither small nor trivial, as it contains some very rare kinds. We breakfasted as at Bouconne and La Ramette with this exception that as there is a little stream through this forest, we found a little water, though for its clearness, it is true, much cannot be said. There is a little broken bridge over the rivulet.

The particular entry from which this passage is taken is much longer, but there is enough here to indicate that this John Mill is not the same confined boy who spent each day at his father's elbow; these more robust joys that he alludes to have a spontaneity that his life had seldom revealed before, and carry with them evidence of the growing enchantment with nature that persisted throughout his life.

In August, 1820, he wrote to Richard Doane:

Me voici dans les Pyrénées, initié aux deux métiers de botaniste et d'entomologiste. C'était dommage de perdre l'occasion, qui ne s'offrira peut-être plus. J'espère que vous vous trouvez encore dans un aussi bon état de santé que quand j'ai eu le plaisir de vous voir.
Aware that the opportunity to become a botanist and an entomologist might not easily return, John Mill was seizing the opportunity before it vanished. Whether for botanizing or mountain-climbing, John's repeated expeditions are their own witness to his interest and enthusiasm.

John Mill returned from France in July, 1821 to enter a new stage of his development. It was an important stage, for he was showing an interest in new enthusiasms. James Mill, after noting how efficiently John resumed his tutorial duties with his brothers and sisters, took a careful look at his returning son. Packe has supplied much of the material needed to complete one's understanding of this period of Mill's life.

James Mill carefully scrutinized the boy who had so calmly eased his irritation. He was older in many ways: fourteen months was a long time in such a crowded childhood. Was he not also grown a little independent? He seemed to have learnt something new, something he had not been taught. Besides, he even seemed to have made a friend for himself while at Montpellier. Who was this young Balard the boy kept speaking of, kept writing to? A budding scientist, apparently; well, it might be worse, but it would have to be carefully watched. That was the trouble with tabula rasa: since every experience helped to form decisive associations, you had not only to impress your own influence on the boy, you had to censor all the others. ...But now
that John was moving on his own, travelling in France, walking freely about London, there was no telling what impressions he was picking up. There was no time to watch him everywhere.

Already there were dangerous symptoms. Why was he rushing round to Bentham's pulling out every book he could find about the French Revolution, tearing through them with an eagerness that went beyond due diligence? For John had not been taught about the Revolution: he had only been taught that the French, in a lamentable lapse of reason inexorably punished by its consequences, "had put the King and Queen to death, guillotined many persons, one of whom was Lavoisier (their greatest scientist), and had ultimately fallen under the despotism of Bonaparte."67

The younger Mill, giving evidence of the freer and broader existence he had led in France, was also revealing signs of feelings and enthusiasms that might lead him afield, away from the paths and directions so sedulously prepared by his father.

As Packe points out, John Mill had suddenly discovered that the democratic principles that he had read about were something more than academic principles and were, in fact, the dreams that had animated men and "had borne down everything before them in France thirty years earlier, and had been the creed of the nation."68 He has observed that his new appreciation of these principles and their application took an immense hold on his feelings, so much so that the greatest glory
he was "capable of conceiving was that of figuring, successful or unsuccessful, as a Girondist in an English Convention."69

With John Stuart Mill's return to England, the first important period, the educational period of his life, came to an end. This first stage was marked on the one hand by the continuous pressure of his father's educational programme, and on the other by his obedient and earnest response to the duties required of him. He had never failed to do what was asked of him, and James Mill had good reason to be pleased with the product of his planning. His admonishment to John on the eve of his departure for France was tacit evidence of that. Yet underneath the placid, unruffled surface of his childhood, John Mill's life gave signs of a different spirit struggling to free itself from the controls of his planned existence, and reaching out for the human feeling and affection that his father's educational plan had failed to provide.
CHAPTER II
The third chapter in John Stuart Mill's autobiography, entitled "Last Stage Of Education, And First Of Self-Education," is especially notable, for it records a number of important developments in his further mental and spiritual growth, the chief of these being his heightened awareness of ethical considerations in human affairs, his acquaintance with Charles Austin, his organization of the small Utilitarian Society, and his appointment to the London office of the East India Company. These developments taking place within two years of Mill's return from France contributed significantly to his growing independence and a consequent diminution of the close relationship with his father that had governed his life for so long. Mill has written about these developments with attentive care.

Not long after returning from his year in France, John Mill received from his father a copy of Bentham's speculations; this was provided as a corrective to the influences that might arise in the readings in law that he was then pursuing in the company of John Austin. The work that contained Bentham's principal speculations was Dumont's *Traité de Législation*. Notwithstanding his earlier familiarity with the purport of Bentham's thought, John Mill had never acquired a full understanding of Bentham's philosophy. Now, with this reading,
he obtained a new insight into the nature and application of Bentham's Utilitarian creed. He wrote almost ecstatically about his reactions to his reading of this important work:

When I laid down the last volume of the Traité, I had become a different being. The 'principle of utility' understood as Bentham understood it, and applied in the manner in which he applied it through these three volumes, fell exactly into its place as the keystone which held together the detached and fragmentary component parts of my knowledge and beliefs. It gave unity to my conceptions of things. I now had opinions; a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy; in one among the best senses of the word, a religion; the inculcation and diffusion of which could be made the principal outward purpose of a life. And I had a grand conception laid before me of changes to be effected in the condition of mankind through that doctrine. The Traité de Legislation wound up with what was to me a most impressive picture of human life as it would be made by such opinions and such laws as were recommended in the treatise. The anticipations of practicable improvement were studiously moderate, deprecating and discountenancing as reveries of vague enthusiasm many things which will one day seem so natural to human beings, that injustice will probably be done to those who once thought them chimerical. But in my state of mind, this appearance of superiority to illusion added to the effect which Bentham's doctrines produced on me, by heightening the impression of mental power, and the vista of improvement which he did open was sufficiently large and brilliant to light up my life, as well as to give a definite shape to my aspirations.  

The youthful enthusiasm that might so easily have been
misdirected was now safely guided into those channels that would provide for the practical improvement of mankind. James Mill, observing the reactions of his son to Dumont's translation must have felt a quiet and solid satisfaction on recognizing that John's interests and enthusiasms were running in the desired direction.

The familiar intellectual regimen continued. Readings in Hartley, Berkeley, Hume, Dugald Stewart, Reid were combined with Locke's *Essay On The Human Understanding*, Helvetius' *De l'Esprit*, a book greatly admired, and further essays by Bentham, the latter written under the pseudonym of Philip Beauchamp. At this time John began to carry on his own mental cultivation by writing more extensively. In the *Autobiography* he elaborates on the nature of these essays, noting that his particular proficiency seemed to be in the realm of 'dry argument'. He also recalls his father's response to his first argumentative essay was one of great satisfaction, and, as he learned from others, even pleasure. The withholding of the full measure of praise suggests that James Mill's reserve had not broken down; there was still a dampening reticence on his part, preserving some small
distance at least between himself and his maturing son. In the *Autobiography* John, commenting on these exercises, observes that he continued to write papers on subjects often very much beyond his capacity, but with great benefit both from the exercises themselves and from the discussions that they led to with his father. Perhaps the human contact and sharing of opinions during these discussions provided the compensation needed under the sustained intellectual pressure.

A growing influence in his development now acquired increased importance. He began to converse on general subjects with his father's friends and visitors. Two of these men in particular had a considerable influence over him, Mr. Grote and Mr. John Austin. Undoubtedly his father, with his ideas of a controlled environment, encouraged these conversations. Mill writes with agreeable memories of his talks with Grote on political, moral, and philosophical subjects which gave him in addition to the useful instruction 'all the pleasure and benefit of sympathetic communion' with a man of high intellectual and moral eminence. John Austin exerted a great moral influence over him, and Mill recalls especially the highmindedness in his conversation and demeanor. However, the influence of Charles
Austin over him was different from that of others and evidently profound: it was not that of a man over a boy or of a teacher over a pupil, but of an intellectual equal, and the impression of this friendship was a lasting one.

Mill's growing independence made a further advance in 1825 when he wrote several articles on Ireland and the Catholic Question for the *Parliamentary History And Review*. Referring to these articles he wrote in the *Autobiography*:

> These writings were no longer mere reproductions and applications of the doctrines I had been taught; they were original thinking, as far as that name can be applied to old ideas in new forms and connexions: and I do not exceed the truth in saying there was a maturity, and a well-digested character about them, which there had not been in any of my previous performances.

Almost at the same time he became a member of a second small society, a study group that he helped to establish in London. This study group, consisting of a dozen or more members, engaged in careful and exhaustive discussions on a number of topics of interest, chiefly in political economy. Mill remarked about this group and its activities that he always dated from their conversations his own real inauguration as an original and independent thinker. At the same time he was also
heavily engaged in public speaking and debating as well as writing, the latter being chiefly for the *Westminster Review.*

Out of these conversations and friendships arose a number of intellectual activities that were to exert directive influences in his life. Packe has provided a full account of the circumstances that led Mill and his friends to establish their debating and study clubs, the Utilitarian Society, and its successors, The Mutual Improvement Society, and The London Debating Society.72 So far as is known, the first two smaller societies did not include non-Benthamites. It was the much larger and more influential London Debating Society that attracted the most attention. In many respects it was modelled on the Cambridge Union Society, and had in its membership in August 1825 over a hundred names, several members of Parliament, some Lords, all among the leading young men of the country with their representation of a considerable range of opinion.73 The London Debating Society was to play an important part in John Mill's life, introducing him both to new ideas and to new friends. Here he met John Sterling, one of the closest friends he ever had, Greville, Southey, Gustave d'Eichthal, Frederick Maurice, and Wordsworth. Through his activities in this society he became acquainted with the Saint-Simonians, Auguste...
Comte, Carlyle, de Tocqueville, and Coleridge. Some of these new acquaintances and influences were later forgotten or rejected; but others, such as Wordsworth, were more productive and left impressions and ideas that remained with Mill for life.

During his boyhood, John Stuart Mill's life, with the exception of his visit to France, had always been subject to close external direction and pressure. With the loosening of the ties between him and his father and with the decline in the old awe and fear that he had felt, Mill felt a growing need for companionship. Typically he wished to link his companionship with his conceived purpose:

From the winter of 1821, when I first read Bentham, and especially from the commencement of the Westminster Review, I had what might truly be called an object in life; to be a reformer of the world. My conception of my own happiness was entirely identified with this object. The personal sympathies I wished for were those of fellow labourers in this enterprise.  

So busy was he during this new and expansive period of his life that one wonders how he kept up the pace. Packe has provided an impressive summary of Mill's activities at this time:

So, in the single year 1825 when he was nineteen, John Mill set out to edit Bentham, founded the Debating Society, discussed Political Economy three hours a week at Grote's house in Threadneedle
Street, wound up the Utilitarian Society, contributed major articles to the Westminster Review, went for long country walks with Graham and Roebuck, carried out his mounting duties at the India House with conspicuous success, and continued to be solely responsible for the education of his brothers and sisters. He also found time to write an article to lead off the first number of the Parliamentary History And Review, a periodical sponsored by Mr. Marshall, a worthy Leeds manufacturer and friend of his father. To fill up the remaining cracks of leisure he decided to learn German; languages never bothered him, and he took a course of lessons with Sarah Austin, who was an expert, and began to address her from that time forward by the pet name "Mutterlein". The intellectual activities in this fantastic list were none of them of a transitory nature and all of them continued unabated into 1826. Retribution inevitably followed.

The inevitable retribution was his well-known mental crisis.

Long after his crisis, when writing his autobiography, Mill said that he came across some lines from Coleridge's Dejection that exactly described his feelings at that time:

A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet or relief
In word, or sigh, or tear.

Mill's problem was that he had 'no natural outlet' for his feelings.

Mill has described in some detail just how his crisis rose to disturb the smooth and channelled flow of his life:
This did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others in struggling to promote it, seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin". In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At which my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.76

With painful clarity Mill saw the full implication of his answer. Once his fundamental assumption was revealed to be invalid, the carefully imposed superstructure of his planned life seemed to disintegrate and collapse. As with a mathematical solution, once the basic premise had been proved wrong, everything else, all of his prodigious toil and effort seemed futile. At this time his arduous education seemed to
have failed him, but why it should have failed was not at first apparent. Of this conclusion and his distress he wrote in the Autobiography:

In vain I sought relief from my favourite books; those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always hitherto drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling minus all its charm; and I became persuaded, that my love of mankind, and of excellence for its own sake, had worn itself out. I sought no comfort by speaking to others of what I felt. If I had loved any one sufficiently to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I should not have been in the condition I was. I felt, too, that mine was not an interesting or in any way respectable distress. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy. Advice, if I had known where to seek it, would have been most precious. The words of Macbeth to the physician often occurred to my thoughts. But there was no one on whom I could build the faintest hope of such assistance. My father, to whom it would have been natural to me to have recourse in any practical difficulties, was the last person to whom, in such a case as this, I looked for help. Everything convinced me that he had no knowledge of any such mental state as I was suffering from, and that even if he could be made to understand it, he was not the physician who would heal it. My education, which was wholly his work, had been conducted without any regard to the possibility of its ending in this result; and I saw no use in giving him the pain of thinking that his plans had failed, when the failure was probably irremediable, and, at all events, beyond the power of his remedies.

The numbing shock of his pitiless introspection displayed no outward signs. He went about his usual occupations in a mechanical manner. It is doubtful that his companions noticed anything dramatically
changed in his appearance other than the visible effects of the fatigue that had precipitated the crisis, but inwardly, behind his pride and reserve Mill felt that he had lost all interest and all feeling. He later said that two further lines from Coleridge gave a true description of what he felt at this time:

Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And hope without an object cannot live.  
("Work Without Hope," 13)

He felt that he not only lacked hope, but that he also lacked any belief that could engender hope. His former beliefs seemed to be so shaken that he had been left without any belief in anything or anyone, and had arrived at a state wherein he entertained a feeling of the 'something approaching to misanthropy' of which he later wrote to his friend, John Sterling.

Mill's education had rested upon certain premises that he had never questioned before. Two of these premises went hand in hand, and James Mill, in planning his son's education, had made careful use of them. They were Bentham's doctrine of Utility and David Hartley's theory of association. According to the latter theory all the complex contents and processes of the mind are derived from the simple sensations combined by their contiguity in the original experience. Thus, in James Mill's reasoning, if one were to inter-
fuse the necessary experiences with the appropriate pleasures and pains, one should produce the desired mental combinations which could be reproduced mentally when required. Without repudiating these theories, John Mill became aware that their application in his education was the source of many of his difficulties:

My course of study had led me to believe, that all mental and moral feelings and qualities, whether of a good or of a bad kind, were the results of association; that we love one thing, and hate another, take pleasure in one sort of action or contemplation, and pain in another sort, through the clinging of pleasurable or painful ideas to those things, from the effect of education or of experience. As a corollary from this, I had always heard it maintained by my father, and was myself convinced, that the object of education should be to form the strongest possible associations of the salutary class; associations of pleasure with all things beneficial to the great whole, and of pain with all things hurtful to it. This doctrine appeared inexpugnable; but it now seemed to me, on retrospect, that my teachers had occupied themselves but superficially with the means of forming and keeping up these salutary associations. They seemed to have trusted altogether to the old familiar instruments, praise and blame, reward and punishment. Now, I did not doubt that by these means, begun early, and applied unremittingly, intense associations of pain and pleasure, especially of pain, might be created, and might produce desires and aversions capable of lasting undiminished to the end of life. But there must always be something artificial and casual in associations thus produced.81

Mill now detected a weakness in his education: it
seemed to him that the powers of analysis so carefully
developed in him were the very means of destroying the
effectiveness of the bonds so painstakingly woven.

Analytic habits may thus even strengthen the associations between causes and effects, means and ends, but tend altogether to weaken those which are, to speak familiarly, a mere matter of feeling. They are therefore (I thought) favourable to prudence and clear-sightedness, but a perpetual worm at the root both of the passions and of the virtues; and, above all, fearfully undermine all desires, and all pleasures, which are the effects of association, that is, according to the theory I held, all except the purely physical and organic; of the entire insufficiency of which to make life desirable, no one had a stronger conviction than I had.

Concluding that his education had failed to create those feelings in necessary strength to resist the dissolving power of analysis, Mill felt that neither selfish nor unselfish pleasures could appeal to him, and that it would be impossible now to begin anew the formation of a character which was now 'irrevocably analytic'. Desperately he felt that he could only live another year in this state of mind.

It is significant that Mill's escape from his sense of futility and from his doubts and fears should have come through the medium of literature. In the Autobiography he has related how his reading in Marmontel's Memoires brought him to the passage which relates the
father's death, and how, at this point he was reduced to tears. The passage concerned is dramatic and symbolic, and has a dream-like quality which must have captured Mill's attention completely. Marmontel speaks here of his own tearful reunion with his family after his father's death:

Je ne sais quelle force que la nature nous reserve, sans doute, pour le malheur extrême, se déploya tout-a-coup en moi. Jamais je ne me suis senti si supérieur à moi-même. J'avais à soulever un poids énorme de douleur; je n'y succombai point. J'ouvris mes bras, mon sein à cette foule de malheureux; je les y reçus tous; et, avec l'assurance d'un homme inspiré par le Ciel, sans marquer de faiblesse, sans verser une larme, moi qui pleure facilement: "Ma mère, mes frères, mes soeurs, nous éprouvons, leur dis-je, la plus grande des afflictions; ne nous y laissons point abattre. Mes enfants, vous perdez un père; vous en retrouverez un, je vous en servirai; je le suis, je veux l'être; j'en embrasse tous les devoirs; et vous n'êtes plus orphelins."

A ces mots, des ruisseaux de larmes, mais des larmes bien moins amères, coulèrent de leurs yeux. "Ah! s'écria ma mère, en me pressant contre son cœur, mon fils! mon cher enfant! que je t'ai bien connu!" et mes frères, mes soeurs, mes bonnes tantes, ma grand'mère, tombèrent à genoux. ...J'étais accablé de fatigue; je demandai un lit. "Hélas! me dit ma mère, il n'y a dans la maison que le lit de.... Ses pleurs lui coupèrent la voix. - Eh bien! qu'on me le donne, j'y coucherai sans répugnance." J'y couchai. Je ne dormis point! mes nerfs étaient trop ébranlés. Toute la nuit je vis l'image de mon père, aussi vive, aussi fortement empreinte dans mon âme que s'il avait été présent. Je croyais quelquefois le voir réellement. Je n'en étais point effrayé; je lui tendais les bras, je lui parlais. "Ah! que
n'est-il vrai, lui disais-je, que n'êtes-vous ce qu'il me semble voir! que ne pouvez-vous me répondre, et me dire du moins si vous êtes content de moi!"83

With Mill's tears came a feeling of relief. He was not a stock or a stone. He could feel again. Cheerfulness returned together with an enjoyment in sunshine and sky, a delight in books and conversation, and once again in public affairs. The cloud began to lift, and once again Mill found it possible to find an interest in life. Reading Marmontel had released him from his despair, but it had not buttressed the beliefs that had guided his life. All his prodigious toil had not brought him happiness. As he regained his spirit, almost unconsciously he began to look about him for ways in which to construct anew where his ideas had lain so lately in disarray.

The scene from Marmontel has a peculiar, timeless quality. The simple scene, the chorus imploring the hero, the outstretched arms, the hero's stoic courage in the face of tears and the awareness of overwhelming loss, all present themselves like an ancient Greek tableau, the economy of words contrasting with the sequence of actions. In the background one discerns some haunting parallels between the situation of Marmontel and that of John Mill. Each has lost a
father on whom all depended: Marmontel, by death; Mill, by the deprivation of a relationship through a stoic and unbridgeable reserve. Each family was dependent: Marmontel's for physical and emotional sustenance; Mill's for education and pride. Each son is a hero to his family, but for different reasons, and here a sharp contrast intervenes: Marmontel received the open manifestations of love and dependency, but Mill, separated from his mother by his father's requirements, and from his brothers and sisters by the necessity of his acting as their preceptor, received very few manifestations of love in his spartan life; he complained in his autobiography about the lack of tenderness on his father's part and of the inadequacy on his mother's part. The whole scene was suggestive of Mill's situation, but with the tears added and the forbidding reserve cast aside. There can be little doubt that in some measure, Mill identified himself with Marmontel, and in doing so obtained the emotional release he so desperately needed. Mill's admiration, so often given generously to the stoic hero, was obviously given to Marmontel, and seemingly to himself. Nevertheless the solace and relief found in Marmontel were only partial and incomplete.

Of the lowest point in his depression, when everything
seemed dark, Mill wrote:

Thus neither selfish nor unselfish pleasures were pleasures to me. And there seemed no power in nature sufficient to begin the formation of my character afresh and create in a mind now irrevocably analytic, fresh associations of pleasure with any of the objects of human desire. 84

He had become conscious of the elements of his education and of the principles that had dictated its nature. In our own times, F. R. Leavis, writing of the remoteness from natural rhythms of the civilization celebrated in The Waste Land, has said "There are ways in which it is possible to be too conscious; and to be so is, as a result of the break-up of forms and the loss of axioms noted above, one of the troubles of the present age....." 85 At this particular juncture in his mental life, John Stuart Mill was too conscious, and too remote from the natural rhythms of life, and it would seem that his reading of the pathetic scene portrayed by Marmontel permitted him to find empathy with the eldest son of this French family on whom so much weight was placed. Mill's unconscious response to the scene in Marmontel not only gave him a needed emotional relief, but by the nature and time of its occurrence it presented him with an implication that he quickly seized: it is possible to be too conscious of one's purpose.
From the experiences of this period of his life, Mill later said that he learned two things:

The experiences of this period had two very decided effects on my opinions and character. In the first place, they led me to adopt a theory of life very unlike that on which I had before acted, and having much in common with what at that time I had never heard of, the anti-self-consciousness theory of Carlyle. I never indeed varied in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct aim. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their attention fixed on something other than their own happiness: on the happiness of others, either individually or collectively; on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or favorite pursuit followed not as a means but as an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life (such was now my theory) are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken en passant, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinizing examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation, exhaust themselves on that; and if otherwise fortunately circumstanced you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it or thinking about it, without either forestalling it in imagination, or putting it to flight by fatal questioning. This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life.... The other important change which my opinions at this time underwent, was that I, for the first time, gave its proper place, among the prime necessities of human well-being, to the internal culture of the individual. I ceased to attach almost exclusive importance to the ordering of out-
ward circumstances, and the training of the human being for speculation and for action.

I had now learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. I did not, for an instant, lose sight of, or undervalue, that part of the truth which I had seen before; I never turned recreant to intellectual culture, or ceased to consider the power and practice of analysis as an essential condition both of individual and of social improvement. But I thought that it had consequences which required to be corrected, by joining other kinds of cultivation with it. The maintenance of a due balance among the faculties, now seemed to me of primary importance. The cultivation of the feelings became one of the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophical creed. And my thoughts and inclinations turned in an increasing degree towards whatever seemed capable of being instrumental to that object.

Mill now sought the 'due balance among the faculties' he spoke of, and it is significant that he should have done so in conjunction with his statement that he never lost sight of 'that part of the truth' which he had seen before, and that he 'never turned recreant to intellectual culture' or ceased to value the power and habit of analysis. Mill's method, notwithstanding his reputation as a radical thinker, was essentially conservative; it was characterized by a continual, albeit cautious, building and expanding. The balance between the faculties that he was seeking was to be a
balance in which neither intellect nor feeling was to predominate, and it was to be linked with a seeking of the enjoyment of life *en passant*, in a manner reminiscent of Arnold's "disinterestedness."

John Stuart Mill's education presented him with a situation that his father had not foreseen. James Mill had placed his faith in the power of reason to guide mankind; all that an educator need do was to teach men how to reason accurately and all would be well; at least that was the theory that guided the education of his son. James Mill had also assumed, with a faith drawn from his own experience, that the logical solutions arrived at by accurate reasoning would be of a benevolent nature. John Mill wrote about his father's faith in the power of reason:

On politics, an almost unbounded confidence in the efficacy of two things: representative government, and complete freedom of discussion. So complete was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind, whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to them by word and in writing, and if by means of the suffrage they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted. He thought that when the legislature no longer represented a class interest, it would aim at the general interest, honestly and with adequate wisdom; since the people would be sufficiently under the guidance of educated intelligence, to make in general a good choice of persons to represent them, and having done so, to leave to those whom they had chosen a liberal discretion."
In that 'melancholy winter of 1826-27' John Mill became aware of a serious weakness in the faith he had dutifully accepted from his father: it made no allowance for individual feelings. It was true that this faith had been founded on the ethical standard of Utility or general happiness, but the 'felicific calculus' was too abstract, too remote to help him establish his own position; in this faith in Utility supported by the power or reason, there was no adequate recognition of the importance of the individual feelings in self-motivation. Recognizing in the Autobiography the weakness of his father's point of view, Mill conceded the validity of the charge that he was a 'mere reasoning machine':

I conceive that the description so often given of a Benthamite as a mere reasoning machine, though extremely inapplicable to most of those who have been designated by that title, was during two or three years of my life not altogether untrue of me. It was perhaps as applicable to me as it can well be to any one just entering into life, to whom the common objects of desire must in general have at least the attraction of novelty. There is nothing very extraordinary in this fact: no youth of the age I then was, can be expected to be more than one thing, and this was the thing I happened to be. Ambition and desire of distinction, I had in abundance; and zeal for what I thought the good of mankind was my strongest sentiment, mixing with and colouring all others. But my zeal was as yet little else, at that period of my life, than zeal for speculative opinions. It had not its root in genuine benevolence or sympathy with mankind; though these qualities held their due place in my ethical standard.
Nor was it connected with any high enthusiasm for ideal nobleness. Yet of this feeling I was imaginatively very susceptible; but there was at that time an intermission of its natural aliment, poetical culture, while there was a superabundance of the discipline antagonistic to it, that of mere logic and analysis. Add to this that, as already mentioned, my father's teachings tended to the undervaluing of feeling. It was not that he was himself cold-hearted or insensible; I believe it was rather from the contrary quality; he thought that feeling could take care of itself; that there was sure to be enough of it if actions were properly cared about.

Mill's father, by placing the emphasis in his son's education on logic and analysis, and by reducing the attention given to feeling, had unintentionally and unknowingly created an imbalance in his son's outlook. John Mill concluded, after his reading of Wordsworth, that one of the causes of this imbalance was a lack of poetic culture. He also concluded that he lacked a genuine sympathy for mankind.

Although lamenting his father's lack of tenderness, Mill still retained his profound respect for him, and he conceded that James Mill had solid ground for distrusting the role of feeling in human affairs:

Offended by the frequency with which, in ethical and philosophical controversy, feeling is made the ultimate reason and justification of conduct, instead of being itself called on for a justification, while, in practice, actions the effect of which on human happiness is mischievous, are defended as being required by feeling,
and the character of a person of feeling obtains a credit for desert, which he thought only due to actions, he had a real impatience of attributing praise to feeling, or of any but the most sparing reference to it, either in the estimation of persons or in the discussion of things. In addition to the influence which this characteristic in him, had on me and others, we found all the opinions to which we attached most importance, constantly attacked on the ground of feeling. Utility was denounced as cold calculation; political economy as hard-hearted; anti-population doctrines as repulsive to the natural feelings of mankind.

The difficulty was that James Mill had leaned hard against the wind of feeling, and his son, emulating his admired father, had leaned too far and had lost his balance. Undoubtedly he had lost his balance through too sensitive a response to the feelings he experienced in his father's presence, and through too anxious a desire to please this father who, like the heroes of old, could do everything right.

The real weakness in John Mill's vision of life lay in its generality and in its abstract diffuseness: one can love an individual or one can love an object, but notwithstanding one's readiness in sympathy, one cannot love mankind. Neither can one love happiness. Northrop Frye, in a recent article, has summed up this situation:
One cannot pursue happiness, because happiness is not a possible goal of activity: it is rather an emotional reaction to activity, a feeling we get from pursuing something else. The more genuine that something else is, the greater the chance of happiness: the more energetically we pursue happiness, the sooner we arrive at frustration.  

Mill was aware of the nature of his problem: 

All those to whom I looked up, were of the opinion that the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and the feelings which made the good of others, and especially of mankind on a large scale, the object of existence, were the greatest and surest sources of happiness. Of the truth of this I was convinced, but to know that a feeling would make me happy if I had it, did not give me the feeling.  

Mill was in need of a wider and a more concrete experience than his education had provided, an experience that would include the sharing of the personal sympathies he had spoken about and had found in Marmontel. Thus, while seeking to hold firmly to what his father had given him, John Mill now looked for the means to nourish his neglected feelings.  

In a letter written to his friend, John Sterling, in 1829, Mill revealed some of the thoughts that had come to him at this time and subsequently. The occasion of the letter was Mill's move toward a reconciliation between Sterling and himself after a particularly sharp exchange of views in the Debating Society.
I am now chiefly anxious to explain to you, more clearly than I fear I did, what I meant when I spoke to you of the comparative loneliness of my probable future lot. Do not suppose me to mean that I am conscious at present of any tendency to misanthropy—although among the very various states of mind, some of them extremely painful ones, through which I have passed during the last three years, something approximating to misanthropy was one. At present I believe that my sympathies with society, which were never strong, are, on the whole, stronger than they ever were. By loneliness I mean the absence of that feeling which has accompanied me through the greater part of my life, that which one fellow traveller, or one fellow soldier has towards another—the feeling of being engaged in the pursuit of a common object, and of mutually cheering one another on, and helping one another, in an arduous undertaking. This, which after all, is one of the strongest ties of individual sympathy, is at present, so far as I am concerned, suspended at least, if not entirely broken off. There is now no human being (with whom I can associate on terms of equality) who acknowledges a common object with me, or with whom I can co-operate even in any practical undertaking without the feeling, that I am only using a man whose purposes are different, as an instrument for the furtherance of my own.

Implicit in this letter, with the admission of loneliness and the desire for a fellow soldier who could share his burdens, is the reference to Mill's difficulty in finding anyone who could meet him on an equal footing, and his refusal to use people who could not. It is paradoxical that his mental crisis should be the result of the very success of his education: there were, in
fact, very few people anywhere capable of sharing his views on a basis of equality.

That Mill was not impervious to feeling no one who knew him well could possibly doubt. An incident in 1823 bears ample testimony to that. At that time, when he was seventeen, he risked ruin in order to bring the iniquities of infanticide before the public, and to suggest birth control measures to prevent it. It does bear out the fact that John Stuart Mill was capable of a hot indignation so strong that there could be no doubt about his susceptibility to feeling.93

Before his visit to France in 1820, Mill's imagination and feelings found their principal expression in his studies. His father's plans saw to that. During his year in France, however, he experienced a new kind of living. Freed from his father's constant supervision, he was at liberty to engage in a far greater range of mental and physical activity: he studied and read in spite of the many obstacles placed in his way, he walked, he studied music, he swam, he began his lifelong study of botany, he hunted butterflies, and he delighted in the beauty and peace of nature in stream, forest, and mountain. Most important of all, he shared the company of congenial companions and the convivial hospitality of French country
folk. While there he brought to his life a degree of spontaneity that he had never known before.

Mill had always derived great pleasure from music; it was, as he tells us, the only one of the imaginative arts in which from childhood he had taken delight. During his period of gloom he sought repeatedly for relief in music, but he found none. After his spirits began to recover he found what he described as extreme pleasure in Weber's Oberon. However, a shadow remained: he reflected on the tendency of music to fail as a source of pleasure, enjoyment fading with familiarity: he felt that it was too dependent on novelty. Added to this shadow was another: he was tormented by the exhaustibility of musical combinations; the five tones and two semi-tones of the octave could be put together only in a limited number of ways, and of these ways, he believed that only a few would be beautiful. Thus his delight in music was vitiated by questions and doubts; it was too transitory and intermittent to provide him with the inspiration and emotional relief that he needed. He was very much in the same situation as an insomniac whose mind is too constantly active and who must become absorbed in some interest that will require passive
reception and unconscious involvement.

Now he turned to poetry. Herbert Grierson has remarked that poetry is concerned with "the spontaneous expression of man's sense of values, the record of his joys, his loves and hates, his need of beauty, of pleasure, the demand of the spirit of man that he shall not only live but live well." If poetry was to have anything for Mill it would have to provide some spontaneous expression of his interests, and it would have to restore his faltering sense of meaning in his own life. In his boyhood he had obtained much enjoyment from poetry, but it was a boyish enjoyment derived from the simple enjoyment of good narrative, heroic deeds, nationalist pride, and descriptive scenes from nature. Such poetry, full of exciting adventure in a schoolboy world of secure values, was not sufficient for the gnawing emptiness of his existing condition.

One of the first poets Mill turned to was Byron:

In the worst period of my depression, I had read through the whole of Byron (then new to me), to try whether a poet, whose peculiar department was supposed to be that of the intenser feelings, could rouse any feeling in me. As might be expected, I got no good from the reading, but the reverse. The poet's state of mind was too like my own. His was the lament of a man who had worn out all pleasures, and who seemed to think that life, to all who possess the good things of it, must necessarily be the vapid, uninteresting thing which I found it. His
Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them which I had; and I was not in a frame of mind to desire any comfort from the vehement sensual passion of his Giaours, or the sullenness of his Laras.95

Mill's reaction to Byron on this occasion was not that of a literary critic; there was little objective assessment; there was a very personal evaluation in which the poet's state of mind with his turbulence, mockery, and constant and moody self-concern held out very little for Mill. It was unlikely that Byron would bring meaning to a man whose heroes were his father, Bentham, and the great men of philosophy, a man who could think at the moment of his despair:

I felt, too, that mine was not an interesting, or in any way respectable distress. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy.96

Mill's view of Byron at this time was not much different from the one he voiced later in a quarrel with his friend, Roebuck,97 in 1828, or even later in 1837 in an essay he wrote on Armand Carrel:

Just as Byron, and the cast-off boyish extravagances of Goethe and Schiller which Byron did but follow, have been the origin of all the sentimental ruffians, the Lacenaires in imagination and in action, with which the Continent swarms, but have produced little fruit of that description, comparatively speaking, in these islands; so, to compare good influences with bad, did Scott's romances, and especially 'Ivanhoe', which in England were only the
amusement of an idle hour, give birth (or at least nourishment) to one of the principal intellectual products of our time—the modern French school of history.

In casting around for mental and emotional support Mill often thought of the words of Macbeth to the physician:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd; Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow; Raze out the written troubles of the brain; And with some sweet oblivious antidote Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff Which weighs upon the heart?

(Macbeth, V, iii, 40-45)

Byron could not provide Mill with any "oblivious antidote". Mill was not burdened with a sense of sin, conflict, and satiety as was Childe Harold. He had not abandoned all of his positions on truth, knowledge, and the improvement of mankind. Actually he wanted to be more involved in the life of mankind; his real fear was that he was only a reasoning machine. The mood of Childe Harold, for example, was far removed from any that Mill could share:

But soon he knew himself the most unfit Of men to herd with Man: with whom he held Little in common; untaught to submit His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd, He would not yield dominion of his mind To spirits against whom his own rebell'd; Proud enough in desolation; which could find A life with itself, to breathe without mankind.

("Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," III, xii, 100)
James Mill had never permitted his son to develop any overweening pride. Instead, he had given him a lively sense of humility and an acute sense of his own shortcomings. Mill's concern was for "the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and the feelings which made the good of others," the object of existence.

If Byron's vision of the world held little for Mill, Wordsworth's vision was exactly what he needed. He found what he was seeking in the miscellaneous poems of the two-volume edition of 1815. His lengthy statement about his impressions constitutes a key passage in his autobiography:

In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more efficiently than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere
outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connexion with a struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind.

Mill's response to Wordsworth was governed, he tells us, by his love of rural objects and natural scenery, with mountains being of special importance since they had become his ideal of natural beauty from the days of his early Pyrenean travels. In the kind of natural beauty which is so integral a part of Wordsworth's poetry, were laid the foundations for the deep enjoyment he experienced in reading Wordsworth, an enjoyment that Mill emphasizes could not have occurred if Wordsworth's poems had not expressed something more than a mere description. Mill evidently became deeply absorbed in what he terms the 'states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty', so deeply absorbed that his mind was captured by Wordsworth to the point where the poem became for him his own interior monologue. Mill gives testimony here to the power of Wordsworth's poetry and to its ability to
capture and hold his attention; to permit him to read well in the sense that I. A. Richards has suggested is absolutely necessary for good reading:

It is better to say that the question of belief or disbelief, in the intellectual sense, never arises when we are reading well. If unfortunately it does arise, either through the poet's fault or our own, we have for the moment ceased to be reading and have become astronomers, or theologians, or moralists, persons engaged in quite a different type of activity.100

Mill's supreme tribute to Wordsworth's poetic power comes in the passage in which he dismisses his philosophy but eulogizes his poetry; to accept Wordsworth in this spirit, Mill must indeed have read as Richards suggests we must read.

At the conclusion of the Poems came the famous Ode, falsely called Platonic, 'Intimations of Immortality:' in which, along with more than his usual sweetness of melody and rhythm, and along with the two passages of grand imagery but bad philosophy so often quoted, I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it.101

In reading Wordsworth Mill had found a mind with which he could share experiences without violating his
fundamental beliefs. Not only could Mill share Wordsworth's absorption in nature, but equally important he could find sustenance for his interest in and sympathy with his fellow-men:

I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. And the delight which these poems gave me, proved that with culture of this sort, there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis.102

The greatest difficulty in assessing Mill's precise reaction to Wordsworth's poetry is that Mill invariably expresses himself in generalizations when referring to his reading of poetry. Apart from one or two quotations, he does not give the details that would permit a full expansion of his thoughts. In other fields of interest he gives many precise details, but in the realm of poetry he nearly always writes in general terms. Yet so lasting was his response to Wordsworth's poetry, so critical was the experience of this reading in his life, so formative was this in his later thinking that one is compelled to return again and again to the poems themselves, seeking for the expansion of meaning that they must have held for him.

Mill tells us that the miscellaneous poems in the
two-volume edition of 1815 were the poems that appealed so strongly to him. The first poems in the 1815 edition are, "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold", "To A Butterfly", "The Idle Shepherd-boys"; these would have had an appeal but there is more serious matter at hand. Mill's response to Wordsworth was something more than the dreamy response to flowers and butterflies that Roebuck thought it. It was a recollection of past pleasures presented in a context of social and natural reality, much as the leech-gatherer is presented in "Resolution and Independence", with the 'certain colouring of imagination' thrown over it. This poem—contrasting the fresh joys of nature with the harshness and wretchedness of the old leech-gatherer's lot, offers deeper layers of meaning. Wordsworth presents the sheer unpremeditated delight of rural life:

All things that love the sun are out of doors;  
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;  
The grass is bright with rain-drops;— on the moors  
The hare is running races in her mirth;  
And with her feet she from the plashy earth  
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,  
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.  
("Resolution And Independence," II)

Contrasting with this fresh delight Wordsworth presents the intervening cares of man:

Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;...  
But there may come another day to me—  
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.  
("Resolution And Independence," V, 32)
To the poet's question, "How is it that you live, and what is it you do?", the old leechgatherer answers, relating the problems inherent in his way of gaining a livelihood. This he does so cheerfully and uncomplainingly that Wordsworth gives his own response:

I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
("Resolution And Independence," XX, 137)

One may reasonably suppose that Mill would find himself contrasting his lot with that of the leechgatherer, and like Wordsworth laughing himself to scorn.

In a letter written to John Sterling in 1842 Mill remarked on his admiration for the poem "Michael". Here again there are overtones of the social problems of Mill's day, the simplicities of rural life contrasting with the problems faced by the young countryman who has betaken himself to the city. Wordsworth presents the old shepherd, Michael, making a covenant with his son to build a sheep-fold after the son's departure. Wordsworth's skill in presenting with masterful understatement the pathetic loss of hope and courage would not be lost on Mill:

and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
("Michael," 464)

As in the other poems there was much that linked up
closely with Mill's interests and experiences. Such lines as the following seem to speak directly to Mill's perplexities, and in doing so to articulate and explain the very core of his difficulties:

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never:
("Intimations of Immortality," 148)

And farther on:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower,
    We will grieve not, rather find
    Strength in what remains behind;
    In the primal sympathy
    Which having been must ever be;
    In the soothing thoughts that spring
    Out of human suffering;
    In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
("Intimations," 177)

On many later occasions Mill paid further tribute to poetry and particularly to Wordsworth's poetry. In a letter written in 1841 to Robert Barclay Fox, he commented on the power of poetry to make one feel reality, and in giving his testimony to the importance of poetry in his own life he presents further evidence of what Wordsworth did for him:

...the great simple elemental powers and constituents of the universe have however inexhaustible capabilities when any one
is sufficiently fitted by nature and cultivation for poetry to have felt them as realities, that which a poet alone does habitually or frequently, which the majority of mankind never do at all and which we of the middle rank perhaps have the amazement of being able to do at some rare instants when all familiar things stand before us like spectres from another world—not however like phantoms but like the real things of which the phantoms alone are present to us or appear so in our common everyday state. That is truly a revelation of the seen, not of the unseen—and fills one with what Wordsworth must have been feeling when he wrote the line "filled with the joy of troubled thoughts."\textsuperscript{104}

Other lines taken from the same poem, "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", bring echoes of thoughts occurring elsewhere in Wordsworth's poetry and particularly appropriate to Mill's situation:

These beauteous forms, Through a long absence, have not been to me As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din Of towns and cities, I have owed to them, In hours of weariness, sensations sweet, Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; And passing even into my purer mind, With tranquil restoration:- feelings too Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps, As have no slight or trivial influence On that best portion of a good man's life, His little, nameless, unremembered acts Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, To them I may have owed another gift, Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood, In which the burthen of the mystery, In which the heavy and the weary weight Of all this unintelligible world,
The reference to the affections that "gently lead us on" finds echoes in Mill's philosophy. He must have approved the following lines especially with their emphasis on the world of the senses and the suggestion implicit in them that we must base our philosophy on a sensuous approach to the world about us:

Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

("Tintern Abbey," 102)

Wordsworth's reliance on 'nature and the language of the sense' as the foundation, the anchor of his thought would have a special appeal to Mill who relied on the experience of the senses as the ultimate test of truth.

Professor Geoffrey Durrant in his recent book on William Wordsworth has summed up much that is important in Wordsworth:
The problem for Wordsworth was to come to terms with what seemed to him to be the facts of the universe, without accepting a bleakly mechanistic view of the world and of man's place in it. Solitude is a recurrent theme in Wordsworth's poetry; the task of the poet was to transform the desolation of mere loneliness into the 'bliss of solitude'—that 'blessed mood' in which the human mind irradiates and transforms the world which it perceives, giving life and meaning to what otherwise would be essentially dead. It is the poet who most often achieves this transformation. Many of Wordsworth's poems are about the poet, either explicitly or by implication, because for Wordsworth the poetic power was the saving grace through which all men could in varying degrees be rescued from the 'visionary dreariness' of a life without joy. Since men could no longer look to the gods or angels to work miracles for them, they must work their own miracles of the mind. The poet, as 'a man speaking to men', was one who had devoted his whole life to this task; he was able to be the guide and leader of his fellow-men in their search for a mode of experience that would transform the world without falsifying it. This task involved a courageous clear-sightedness, and a thorough-going overhaul of the language of poetry as the instrument of a new mode of perception.  

The implications of Wordsworth's view of human life in its relation to nature would not be lost on John Mill who had said of himself that he was one of the very few examples of young men who had not thrown off religious opinions because he had never had any. He would be well aware that Wordsworth had made an advance in his views of nature and of life, notwith-
standing the qualifications that he might add in the way of religious views and unacceptable philosophy, and that he like Mill, and even more than Mill, had seen some of what T. S. Eliot has called the horror and the glory of human life. Professor Durrant has spelled out the full implication of the advance that Wordsworth had made. John Mill's crisis was very likely linked to a feeling of ultimate futility; if so, his debt to Wordsworth is even deeper than he has suggested. Professor Durrant has given his summation of Wordsworth's contribution on this issue:

If every event in the world and even in the mind of man can ultimately be explained by natural laws it seems that man himself is a fleeting consciousness imprisoned in the body, and doomed to extinction when the body dissolves. Modern man has perhaps come to terms with this view; if so, it is partly because such imaginative minds as Wordsworth's have ventured boldly into a new and unfamiliar world of thought. Wordsworth had the courage to follow in the footsteps of the man of science, and to imagine a world in which man is finally alone, and in which he faces certain extinction. There is, however, nothing depressing or morbid in this vision; on the contrary, the challenge is invigorating, the delight in unclouded perception is keen, and the dominant mood is of a calm suffused with joy.107

Thus Mill found in Wordsworth a realism that he could respect, linked to his love of nature and his own expressed desire for the sympathy and companionship
of his fellow-creatures. In the calm, quiet moods of poems such as "Tintern Abbey" he could find his own happy recollections of the morning walks he took with his father along the green lanes toward Hornsey that he spoke about, and some of his own idyllic days at Ford Abbey which he recalled in affectionate terms:

The sojourn was, I think, an important circumstance in my education. Nothing contributes more to nourish elevation of sentiments in a people, than the large and free character of their habitations. The middle-age architecture, the baronial hall, and the spacious and lofty rooms, of this fine old place, so unlike the mean and cramped externals of English middle class life, gave the sentiment of a larger and freer existence, and were to me a sort of poetic cultivation, aided also by the character of the grounds in which the Abbey stood; which were riant and secluded, umbrageous, and full of the sound of falling waters.

The immediate effect on Mill of his response to Wordsworth was a lightening of his spirits, and with this lightening of spirits came a renewal of his interest in the matters at hand. Mill declared his new views at a meeting of the Debating Society and in doing so astounded everybody, antagonized old friends, and won new ones. In particular he clashed with Roebuck who appears to have been impatient over the views advanced on Wordsworth's merits. Roebuck and Mill had been close companions, but Mill was unable to persuade
him to see any merit in Wordsworth, whom he dismissed as a poet of butterflies and flowers, preferring Byron, whose poems he regarded as poems of action and human life. Mill tried persistently to persuade Roebuck, whom he never ceased to admire, to appreciate what Wordsworth's poetry had to offer, but Roebuck, the man of action, was contemptuous.

He saw little good in any cultivation of the feelings, and none at all in cultivating them through the imagination, which he thought was only cultivating illusions. It was in vain I urged on him that the imaginative emotion which an idea, when vividly conceived, excites in us, is not an illusion, but a fact, as real as any of the other qualities of objects; and far from implying anything erroneous and delusive in our mental apprehension of the object, is quite consistent with the most accurate knowledge and most perfect practical recognition of all its physical and intellectual laws and relations. The intensest feeling of the beauty of a cloud lighted by the setting sun, is no hindrance to my knowing that the cloud is vapour of water, subject to all the laws of vapours in a state of suspension; and I am just as likely to allow for, and act on, these physical laws whenever there is occasion to do so, as if I had been incapable of perceiving any distinction between beauty and ugliness.

Whatever his difficulties with old friends, Mill now incorporated his new views into his whole outlook. He and Roebuck, formerly such close companions, began to drift away from each other, although each retained a great respect mixed with incomprehension for his former
colleague. There was compensation for Mill, however; he made new acquaintances of Frederick Maurice and John Sterling. In Sterling Mill found one of the most valued friends of his life, a young man whose outlook and personality were such that Mill later paid him the tribute of saying that he was one of those few men in the world who, quite apart from their work, benefit the world immeasurably by their mere existence.

The fundamental importance of Wordsworth in determining the future direction of much of Mill's thinking can scarcely be exaggerated. Mill's response to Wordsworth's poetry constituted a water-shed in his life. Thereafter, his interests took turnings and his thoughts acquired emphases and overtones that James Mill had not envisioned or provided for in his closely controlled education. John Mill was now doing his own thinking and in doing it he was striking out in new and strange directions. The most logical outcome of his new way of thinking appeared in the form of a theory of poetry. How this was to fit into Mill's philosophical outlook posed a number of challenging questions. Writing to Carlyle in January of 1834, Mill said that his state of mind before the change in his thinking had been one of logical Utilitarian narrowness of the most restricted kind,
and that reacting against this he had gone to the very opposite extreme. He forsook his former intense philosophic intolerance, but he still tried to hold on to his former views, never entirely abandoning them, but striving to reset his old ideas into the new context of his thinking. In his own words, "I found the fabric of my old and taught opinions giving way in many fresh places, and I never allowed it to fall to pieces, but was incessantly occupied in weaving it anew."\textsuperscript{110} In this constant reweaving of both the old and the new is to be found an important feature of Mill's developing philosophy and poetic theory.

In 1834 in some notes that he wrote for his translation of Plato's \textit{Gorgias}, John Mill wrote an especially significant statement of the new emphasis in his thinking. His father had always assumed that knowledge would automatically lead to virtue and its consequent action. John Mill now takes an entirely different viewpoint:

\begin{quote}
All valid arguments in favor of virtue, presuppose that we already desire virtue, or desire some of its ends and objects. You may prove to us that virtue tends to the happiness of mankind, or of our country; but that supposes that we already care for mankind, or for our country. You may tell us that virtue will gain us the approbation of the wise and the good; but this supposes
\end{quote}
that the wise and good are already more to us than other people are....

The love of virtue, and every other noble feeling, is not communicated by reasoning, but caught by inspiration or sympathy from those who already have it; and its nurse and foster-mother is Admiration. We acquire it from those we love and reverence, especially from those whom we earliest love and reverence; from our ideal of those, whether in past or in present times, whose lives and characters have been the mirrors of all noble qualities; and lastly, from those who, as poets or artists, can clothe those feelings in the most beautiful forms, and breathe them into us through our imagination and our sensations. It is thus that Plato has deserved the title of a great moral writer. Christ did not argue about virtue, but commanded it; Plato, when he argues about it, argues for the most part inconclusively, but he resembles Christ in the love which he inspires for it, and in the stern resolution never to swerve from it, which those who can relish his writings naturally feel when perusing them. And the present writer regrets that his imperfect abstract is so ill fitted to convey any idea of the degree in which this dialogue makes the feelings and course of life which it inculcates commend themselves to our inmost nature, by associating them with our most impressive conceptions of beauty and power.
CHAPTER III
The years between the autumn of 1826, the time of his mental crisis, and the summer of 1840 were the years in which John Stuart Mill came to mental maturity. These were among his most productive years, for during them he wrote many of his most important essays, developed his poetic theory, and brought his book on logic almost to completion. Referring to 1840 he wrote in the Autobiography:

From this time, what is worth relating of my life will come into a very small compass; for I have no further mental changes to tell of, but only, as I hope, a continued mental progress; which does not admit of a consecutive history, and the results of which, if real, will be best found in my writings.112

The years from 1840 onward might not admit of a consecutive history, but those approaching 1840 demanded it.

In the opening phase of this new period of his life, Mill was aware of the need to re-examine and re-assess his older, taught ideas prior to striking out in new directions of his own choosing. His way of cultivating his own mental growth, already noted, was, in his own metaphor, to weave the fabric of his old and taught opinions into a whole with his newly acquired ideas. He tells us that he was never content to remain, for even a short time, confused and unsettled.113
His immediate task was to arrange and integrate the new ideas arising from his recent experience with Wordsworth's poetry, and then to bring them into some sort of harmony with his former outlook.

It is still customary, as it was in Mill's time, for many people to view poetry largely as a form of relaxation and entertainment. Wordsworth tried to counter this view, making plain in "The Preface To The Second Edition Of Lyrical Ballads" that poetry, notwithstanding any entertainment it might provide, is a serious matter, concerned with truth and values:

Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry, as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature.

By claiming for poetry something other than amusement and idle pleasure, and asserting it to be a form of
writing having general truth as its object, Wordsworth was demanding that it should be taken seriously; by saying that it possessed the ability to carry truth into the heart by passion without depending on external testimony or evidence alone, he was claiming for it the ability to convey intuitive, as distinct from logically known truths.

Mill fully supported Wordsworth's claim that poetry is, in fact, a serious form of writing meriting careful attention. He could vouch for this from his own experience, but the claims for intuitive ways of acquiring truth raised deeper problems. He had to accommodate these concepts in his philosophy if he was to attain to the coherence and integrity in his thinking that he sought. The orientation of his education required him to follow the dictates of logic as carefully as possible and to strive to reach the truth, however unpalatable it might be. Mill, as he tells us, never repudiated his intellectual culture, although he did, of course, modify its forms and emphasis. His father's opinion that people attached more importance to verse, and by implication to all poetry, than it deserved, had created a mental obstacle to his acceptance of poetry, leading him to subordinate it
in his mental life. His response to various forms of poetry had always been sensitive, but there are indications in his autobiography that his response to poetry during his childhood would have been much more lively if he had followed his natural inclinations; his response to Dryden, Pope, and Campbell has already been noted. He learned from his mental crisis, as he tells us in the Autobiography, that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and that they needed to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. In keeping with his desire to weave the fabric of his changing opinions ever anew, Mill attempted within the range of his philosophy to integrate, as far as he was able, the methods of logic and poetry.

Writing to John Sterling on October 20th, 1831, Mill stated what he considered to be the special function he was most suited for at that time:

The only thing which I can usefully do at present, and which I am doing more and more every day, is to work out principles: which are of use for all times, though to be applied cautiously and circumspectly to any: principles of morals, government, law, education, above all self-education. I am here much more in my element: the only thing that I believe I am really fit for, is the investigation of abstract truth, and the more
abstract the better. If there is any science which I am capable of promoting, I think it is the science of science itself, the science of investigation of method.\textsuperscript{116}

Mill thus considered himself best suited to advancing the study of logic, and a considerable portion of his time during the years leading up to 1841 was devoted to writing his book, \textit{A System Of Logic}. In the latter work he established the framework within which his investigation of the laws or principles governing the discovery of truth could be carried out:

Truths are known to us in two ways: some are known directly, and of themselves; some through the medium of other truths. The former are the subject of Intuition, or Consciousness; the latter, of inference. The truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred .... Whatever is known to us by consciousness, is known beyond possibility of question. What one sees or feels, whether bodily or mentally, one cannot but be sure that one sees or feels. No science is required for the purpose of establishing such truths; no rules of art can render our knowledge of them more certain than it is in itself. There is no logic for this portion of our knowledge.\textsuperscript{117}

Mill therefore defines truths in general by the methods of their discovery, the methods of logic and intuition.

That Mill was giving much attention to the contrasting ways of arriving at truth is borne out by his letters. In a letter written on August 2nd, 1833, to Thomas Carlyle, he has the following to say about
his developing views on truth and art:

Of logic, as the theory of the processes of intellect, I think not wholly as you, yet nearly: he who has legs can walk without knowledge of anatomy, yet you will allow that such knowledge may be made substantially available for the cure of lameness. By logic however I meant the antithesis of Poetry or Art: in which distinction I am learning to perceive a twofold contrast: the literal as opposed to the symbolical, and reasoning as opposed to intuition. Not the theory of reasoning but the practice. In reasoning I include all processes of thought which are processes at all, that is, which proceed by a series of steps or links. What I would say is that my vocation is, I think, chiefly for this last; a more extended and higher one than for any branch of mere "Philosophy of Mind" though far inferior to that of the artist.

It is interesting to note that at this point in his career, Mill had not yet worked out his system of logic fully; his views on poetry were also still incomplete. He seems to have been groping for a satisfactory conception of the relationship between poetry and logic, and he suggests that this relationship is of the kind found in the unity that one observes in opposites: he thinks of reasoning as being opposed to intuition and the literal as opposed to the symbolical. There is an implied unity in the devotion to truth, but his neat oppositions are mechanical and unsatisfactory. He does not establish why logic should be the antithesis of
poetry or art. The distinction he draws between theory and practice is likewise unconvincing. This letter is useful not for his casual and informal statements about the relationship between logic and poetry, but rather for the uncertainty he conveys with such tentative statements as 'I am learning to perceive a twofold contrast.' He does state his belief that the intuitive method of the artist is superior to the method of the logician. With honesty and humility he adds that he considers himself principally fitted for the vocation of the logician. One leaves a reading of this letter with the impression that Mill was ill at ease in dealing with art and that his uneasiness found its source in his inability to move freely outside the logical categories in which his mind had been cast.

John Stuart Mill's experience with Wordsworth's poetry had taught him that his education was incomplete. It also taught him that the truths derived from poetry do not always follow neat logical sequences. He seemed to recognize that just as different people formulate their concepts of truth in different ways, even so, each of these various ways must be imperfect in some measure however small. Hence all truth formulations are partial and incomplete in some degree. He had learned this lesson from the St. Simonians, and in a
letter to Gustave d'Eichthal on November 7th, 1829, he gave his own summation of the lesson he had learned:

As the great danger to mankind is not from seeing what is not, but from overlooking what is; since clever and intelligent men hardly ever err from the former cause, but no powers of mind are any protection against the evils arising from imperfect and partial views of what is real; since not errors but half truths are the bane of human improvement, it seems to follow that the proper mode of philosophizing and discussing for a person who pursues the good of mankind and not the gratification of his own vanity, should be the direct opposite of the philosophie critique of the last century: it should consist, not in attacking men's wrong opinions, but in giving them that knowledge which will enable them to form right ones that will push off the wrong ones, as the new leaves push off the withered ones of the last year. The great instrument of improvement in men, is to supply them with the other half of the truth, one side of which only they have ever seen: to turn round to them the white side of the shield, of which they seeing only the black side, have cut other men's throats and risked their own to prove that the shield is black.

Aware of the enrichment in his mental life that he had experienced by reading Wordsworth's poetry, Mill sought consciously to promote his own further mental growth.

Some time in 1830, James Mill and Lord Macaulay clashed in written debate, Macaulay delivering a slashing attack on the reasoning in the elder Mill's Essay on Government. This event was of far-reaching
consequence to John Mill, for to his dismay he found himself agreeing with a number of the points scored by Macaulay, and he detected weaknesses in his father's reasoning method, the one on which he had been nurtured. The defects and inadequacies which he felt that he had detected in his father's reasoning, faults largely derivative from the deductive method, impelled him to reconsider his own methods and led him to apply himself to a consideration of the inductive method of reasoning and to a study which later contributed to his book on logic. The immediate effect of his new speculations and experiences was that he became less sure of his own knowledge and much less dogmatic. He wrote to Carlyle on January 12th, 1834, recalling his state of reaction from what he termed his logical-utilitarian narrowness:

Now when I had got out of this state, and saw that my premisses were mere generalizations of one of the unnumerable aspects of Reality, and that far from being the most important one; and when I had tried to go all round every object which I surveyed, and to place myself at all points of view, so to have the best chance of seeing all sides; I think it is scarcely surprising that for a time I became catholic and tolerant in an extreme degree, and thought one-sidedness almost the one great evil in
human affairs, seeing it was the evil which had been the bane of my own teachers, and was also that of those who were warring against my teachers. I never was tolerant of aught but earnest Belief; but I saw, or seemed to see, so much of good and of truth in the positive part of the most opposite opinions and practices could they but be divested of their exclusive pretensions, that I scarcely felt myself called upon to deny anything but Denial itself. I never made strongly prominent my differences with any sincere, truth-loving person; but held communion with him through our points of agreement, endeavoured in the first place to appropriate to myself whatever was positive in him, and if he gave me any encouragement, brought before him also whatever of positive might be in me, which he till then had not. A character most unlike yours; of a quite lower kind, and which if I had not outgrown, and speedily too, there could have been little worth in me.  

In this letter Mill revealed some of the disarming generosity and humility of spirit which only his close friends knew lay behind his reserved manner. It was a spirit reminiscent of the one guiding his behaviour on that memorable occasion when, on the eve of his departure for France, his father had told him that he would likely discover he knew more than other youths of his own age, but that it was no credit to him that he did and indeed would be a matter of disgrace if he didn't. Mill's mind was as open to instruction then as it had been before, but with the
difference that now there was a new, underlying caution which experience had taught him. Now, in his new mood of open toleration, he sought from Carlyle, as from others such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, that special imaginative insight that he had become convinced great artists possessed. Nevertheless, his new caution warned him that all methods and all systems carried some dangers with them.

At the time he had clashed with Roebuck in the Debating Society he had made the acquaintance of John Sterling who became over the years one of his closest friends. In him he found some of the friendship he had been seeking at the time of his mental crisis. In the Autobiography he wrote of him in the warmest terms:

With Sterling I soon became very intimate, and was more attached to him than I have ever been to any other man. He was indeed one of the most loveable of men. His frank, cordial, affectionate, and expansive character; a love of truth alike conspicuous in the highest things and the humblest; a generous and ardent nature which threw itself with impetuosity into the opinions it adopted, but was as eager to do justice to the doctrines and the men it was opposed to, as to make war on what it thought their errors; and an equal devotion to the two cardinal points of Liberty and Duty, formed a combination of qualities as attractive to me, as to all others who knew him as well as
I did. With his open mind and heart, he found no difficulty in joining hands with me across the gulf which as yet divided our opinions.\textsuperscript{122}

In 1829 a further sharp debate took place in the Debating Society; this time it was Sterling with whom Mill clashed. Sterling resigned shortly after from the Debating Society and Mill wrote him a more personal letter than was his custom. He wrote this letter on April 15, 1829:

There is now no human being (with whom I can associate on terms of equality) who acknowledges a common object with me, or with whom I can co-operate even in any practical undertaking without the feeling, that I am only using a man whose purposes are different, as an instrument for the furtherance of my own. \textit{Idem sentire de republica}, was thought by one of the best men who ever lived to be the strongest bond of friendship: for republica I would read "all the great objects of life," where the parties concerned have at heart any great objects at all. I do not see how there can be otherwise that \textit{idem velle, idem nolle}, which is necessary to perfect friendship. Being excluded therefore from this, I am resolved hereafter to avoid all occasions for debate, since they cannot now strengthen my sympathies with those who agree with me, and are sure to weaken them with those who differ.\textsuperscript{123}

Mill, whose whole life had been directed towards the mental whetting of debate now abandoned it for a time;
he attached greater importance to his friendship with Sterling than he did to the promulgation of his views in public argument. He was prepared to avoid argument rather than antagonize the people he respected and liked.

Shortly after writing this letter Mill withdrew from the Debating Society:

After 1829 I withdrew from attendance on the Debating Society. I had had enough of speechmaking, and was glad to carry on my private studies and meditations without any immediate call for outward assertion of their results.124

Mill has left further evidence of the new trend in his thinking in a letter he wrote to Carlyle on the 18th of May, 1833, in which he set forth some of the differences between them and sought to understand how misunderstandings on fundamental issues arise:

First, then, I have read your paper on Diderot. Of the man, and of his works and of his contemporaries, so far as I think at all, I think very much as you do: yet I have found more to differ from in that article of yours than in anything of your writing I commonly do. The subject seems to have carried you, and me as your reader, over a range of topics on which there has always been a considerable extent of undiscussed and unsifted divergence of opinion (pardon this galimatias of mixed metaphors) between us two; on some of which too I sometimes think
that the distance has rather widened than narrowed of late. That may be my loss, and my fault; at all events it seems to me that there has been on my part something like a want of courage in avoiding, or touching only perfunctorily, with you, points on which I thought it likely that we should differ. That was a kind of reaction from the dogmatic disputatiousness of my former narrow and mechanical state. I have not any great notion of the advantage of what the "free discussion" men, call the "collision of opinions," it being my creed that Truth is sown and germinates in the mind itself, and is not to be struck out suddenly like fire from a flint by knocking another hard body against it: so I accustomed myself to learn by inducing others to deliver their thoughts, and to teach by scattering my own, and I eschewed occasions of controversy (except occasionally with some of my old Utilitarian associates). I still think I was right in the main, but I have carried both my doctrine and my practice much too far: and this I know by one of its consequences which I suppose would be an agreeable one to most men, viz. that most of those whom I at all esteem and respect, though they may know that I do not agree with them wholly, yet, I am afraid, think, each in their several ways, that I am considerably nearer to agreeing with them than I actually am.125

Mill had discovered that there were serious dangers in his deliberate avoidance of debate and controversy. Nevertheless, Wordsworth had taught him that there were other ways of presenting truth than by debate, and
he was aware that his education had ignored certain essentials of human well-being. Fundamentally, Mill never wavered in his conviction that reason was the key to new truths, but he was also aware that great artists seemed to arrive at important truths in a flash of genius that he could neither emulate nor understand. He continued to seek means of understanding the ways of the poet.

In the summer of 1831, Mill went on a walking tour in the Lake District, and while there visited William Wordsworth. Mill has left a disappointingly laconic journal of his tour, but that autumn, on the 20th of October 1831, he wrote a long letter to John Sterling, to whom he gave an expanded version of his visit and of his very favourable impressions of Wordsworth, the man.

First of all, I went this summer to the Lakes, where I saw such splendid scenery, and also saw a great deal both of Wordsworth and Southey; and I must tell you what I think of them both. In the case of Wordsworth, I was particularly struck by several things. One was, the extensive range of his thoughts and the largeness and expansiveness of his feelings. This does not appear in his writings, especially his poetry, where the contemplative part of his mind is the only part of it that appears: and one would be tempted to infer from the peculiar
character of his poetry, that real life and the active pursuits of men (except of farmers and other country people) did not interest him. The fact however is that these very subjects occupy the greater part of his thoughts, and he talks on no subject more instructively than on states of society and forms of government. Those who best know him, seem to be most impressed with the catholic character of his ability. I have been told that Lockhart has said of him that he would have been an admirable country attorney. Now a man who could have been either Wordsworth or a country attorney, could certainly have been anything else which circumstances had led him to desire to be. The next thing that struck me was the extreme comprehensiveness and philosophic spirit which is in him. By these expressions I mean the direct antithesis of what the Germans most expressively call onesidedness. Wordsworth seems always to know the pros and cons of every question; and when you think he strikes the balance wrong, it is only because you think he estimates erroneously some matter of fact. Hence all my differences with him, or with any other philosophic Tory, would be differences of matter-of-fact or detail, while my differences with the radicals and utilitarians are differences of principle: for these see generally only one side of the subject, and in order to convince them, you must put some entirely new idea into their heads, whereas Wordsworth has all the ideas there already, and you have only to discuss with him concerning the "how much," the more or less of weight which is to be attached to a certain cause or effect, as compared with others: thus the difference with him turns upon a question of varying or fluctuating quantities, where what is plus in one age or country is minus in
another and the whole question is one of observation and testimony and of the value of particular articles of evidence. I need hardly say to you that if one's own conclusions and his were at variance on every question which a minister of a Parliament could to-morrow be called upon to solve, his is nevertheless the mind with which one would be really in communion: Our principles would be the same, and we should be like two travellers pursuing the same course on the opposite banks of a river.126

This letter is a testimony to the very favourable opinion that Mill formed of Wordsworth; Mill was especially impressed by the breadth of Wordsworth's interests, his interest in current political problems, the catholicity of his ability, and his great comprehensiveness and philosophy of mind.

Mill's admiration for Wordsworth received further attention and emphasis in an article he wrote for *Tait's Magazine*. This essay, entitled "Use And Abuse Of Political Terms," strongly supported the mental cultivation that Mill considered to be a necessary condition for mental activity:

Men who, for want of cultivation, have the intellects of dwarfs, are of course the slaves of their imagination, if they have any, as they are the slaves of their sensations, if they have not; and it is partly, perhaps, because the systematic culture of the thinking faculty is in little repute,
that imagination also is in such bad odour; there being no solidity and vigour of intellect to resist it where it tends to mislead. The sublimest of English poets composed an elementary book of logic for the schools; but our puny rhymsters think logic, forsooth, too dry for them; and our logicians, from that and other causes, very commonly say with M. Casimir Périer, *A quoi un poète est-il bon?*

For Mill, the necessary conditions for good poetry had to include wide interests and a wide and deep cultivation of the intellect; by a similar process of reasoning, the logician requires poetic culture. Mill is not here stressing the differences between logic and poetry; he is stressing their complementary nature and their inter-dependence.

In the letter to Sterling already quoted, Mill added some specific remarks about Wordsworth's views on poetry itself:

Then when you get Wordsworth on the subjects which are peculiarly his, such as the theory of his own art—if it be proper to call poetry art, (that is, if art is to be defined the expression or embodying in words or forms, of the highest and most refined parts of nature) no one can converse with him without feeling that he has advanced that great subject beyond any other man, being probably the first person who ever combined, with such eminent success in the practice of the art, such high powers of generalization and habits of meditation on its principles. Besides all this, he seems to me the best talker I ever heard (and I have heard several first-rate ones);
and there is a benignity and kindliness about his whole demeanour which confirms what his poetry would lead one to expect, along with a perfect simplicity of character which is delightful in any one, but most of all in a person of first-rate intellect. You see I am somewhat enthusiastic on the subject of Wordsworth, having found him still more admirable and delightful a person on a nearer view than I had figured to myself from his writings; which is so seldom the case that it is impossible to see it without having one's faith in man greatly increased and being made greatly happier in consequence.  

Mill's enthusiasm for Wordsworth was, as he indicated, something much more than a purely literary response: he admired Wordsworth's intellect, and his character, finding them both of eminently high quality. He was greatly impressed also by Wordsworth's theory of poetry, and in the article in Tait's Magazine already quoted, he lamented that Wordsworth should have written so little on his theory, particularly in view of his many stimulating thoughts on this subject and their notable merit. Mill makes a particularly interesting observation when he remarks that Wordsworth's benignity and kindliness confirmed what his poetry would lead one to expect. He had assumed that Wordsworth's character and personality would be marked by integrity, and he was pleased to find that they were.
In the same very long letter to Sterling, Mill comments on his acquaintance with Robert Southey:

I also saw a great deal of Southey, who is a very different kind of man, very inferior to Wordsworth in the higher powers of intellect, and entirely destitute of his philosophic spirit, but a remarkably pleasing and likeable man. I never could understand him till lately; that is, I never could reconcile the tone of such of his writings as I had read, with what his friends said of him: I could only get rid of the notion of his being insincere, by supposing him to be extremely fretful and irritable: but when I came to read his Colloquies, in which he has put forth much more than in any other work, of the natural man, as distinguished from the writer aiming at a particular effect, I found there a kind of connecting link between the two parts of his character, and formed very much the same notion of him which I now have after seeing and conversing with him. He seems to me to be a man of gentle feelings and bitter opinions. His opinions make him think a great many things abominable which are not so; against which accordingly he thinks it would be right, and suitable to the fitness of things, to express great indignation: but if he really feels this indignation, it is only by a voluntary act of the imagination that he conjures it up, by representing the thing to his own mind in colours suited to that passion: now, when he knows an individual and feels disposed to like him, although that individual may be placed in one of the condemned categories, he does not conjure up this phantom and feels therefore no principle of repugnance, nor excites any.129

Mill's comments on Southey are of special interest; they indicate certain critical deficiencies in Southey that
troubled him. Mill was looking for integrity and had great difficulty in reconciling the tone of Southey's writings with what he had learned of him as a man. Mill arrived at what seems to be a rather shrewd conclusion about Southey: he was not all of one piece; he lacked the unity that Wordsworth possessed.

The same long letter to Sterling which contained Mill's observations on his visit to Wordsworth in the Lake District also contained some extensive comments on another of Mill's new acquaintances, Thomas Carlyle, with whom Mill was now beginning a long and productive correspondence. Mill's acquaintance with Carlyle is of special importance as it too had an important influence on Mill's intellectual development; its special interest lies in its very difference and contrast with the influence of Wordsworth. Where the growth of Mill's acquaintance with Wordsworth led to an increase in his appreciation of him as both a man and a poet, the growth of his relationship with Carlyle led to the exposure of an increasing number of points of disagreement. Nevertheless, Carlyle exerted a considerable influence on Mill's maturing views of life, politics, and art.

Another acquaintance which I have recently made is that of Mr. Carlyle, whom I believe
you are also acquainted with. I have long had a very keen relish for his articles in the Edinburgh and Foreign Reviews, which I formerly thought to be such consummate nonsense; and I think he improves upon a nearer acquaintance. He does not seem to me so entirely the reflexion or shadow of the great German writers as I was inclined to consider him; although undoubtedly his mind has derived from their inspiration whatever breath of life is in it. He seems to me as a man who has had his eyes unsealed, and who now looks round him and sees the aspects of things with his own eyes, but by the light supplied by others; not the pure light of day, but another light compounded of the same simple rays but in different proportions. He has by far the largest and widest liberality and tolerance (not in the sense which Coleridge justly disavows, but in the good sense) that I have met with in any one; and he differs from most men who see as much as he does into the defects of the age, by a circumstance greatly to his advantage in my estimation, that he looks for a safe landing before and not behind: he sees that if we could replace things as they once were, we should only retard the final issue, as we should in all human probability go on just as we then did, and arrive again at the very place where we now stand.

Mill says that his impression of Carlyle has improved on nearer acquaintance. He finds in him the widest liberality and tolerance, but he sees a lack, too.

Mill's comment about Carlyle that he sees with his own eyes, but by the light supplied by others is an interesting use of metaphor; usually when using metaphors, Mill is careful to make their application quite clear. There could be some obscurity here,
although the general meaning seems clear enough: Mill seems to believe that Carlyle does not see things objectively enough with his own unprejudiced eye; on the contrary his eye would seem to be prejudiced by the light or emphasis of others. Once again, a famous writer falls short of the high standard that for Mill marked the intellect and character of Wordsworth.

Mill's keen interest in the inner, emotional life of man appeared not only in his letters but also in his more formal writings. In October, 1832, the Monthly Repository published his essay, "On Genius." At the very beginning of this essay he sets the tone that prevails throughout:

You have shown that, without being indifferent to politics, you can see a deeper problem in the existing aspect of human affairs, than the adjustment of a ten-pound franchise; and that with no inclination to undervalue the intellect of these "latter days," you do not write it down transcendent because steam carriages can run twenty-five miles an hour on an iron railway; because little children are taught to march round a room and sing psalms, or because mechanics can read the Penny Magazine. You do not look upon man as having attained the perfection of his nature, when he attains the perfection of a wheel's or a pulley's nature, to go well as a part of some vast machine, being himself nothing. You do not esteem the higher endowments of the intellect and heart to be given by God, or valuable to man, chiefly as means to his obtaining first, bread; next, beef to his bread; and, as the last felicitous consummation, wine and fine linen. Rather, you seem to consider the wants which point to these bodily necessaries or indulgences, as having for their chief use that they call into
existence and into exercise those loftier qualities. You judge of man, not by what he does, but by what he is. For, though man is formed for action, and is of no worth further than by virtue of the work he does; yet (as has been often said, by one of the noblest spirits of our time) the works which most of us are appointed to do on this earth are in themselves little better than trivial and contemptible: the sole thing which is indeed valuable in them is the spirit in which they are done. Nor is this mere mysticism; the most absolute utilitarianism must come to the same conclusion.

Mill has emphasized the view that all of the mechanical and material achievements notwithstanding, that man must be judged by what he is, by the spirit, by the inwardness with which he has entered into his work, and which has supported him until he has completed it.

Writing to Thomas Carlyle on the 5th of July, 1833, Mill returned again to the importance of the poet and poetry. He wrote this with the view that the logician constitutes a complement to the poet:

The same person may be poet and logician, but he cannot be both in the same composition: and as heroes have been frustrated of glory "carent quia vate sacro," so I think the vates himself has often been misunderstood and successfully cried down for want of a Logician in Ordinary, to supply a logical commentary on his intuitive truths. The artist's is the highest part, for by him alone is real knowledge of such truths conveyed: but it is possible to convince him who never could know the intuitive truths, that they are not inconsistent with anything he does know; that they are even very probable, and that he may have faith in them when higher natures than his own affirm
that they are truths. He may build on
them and act on them, or at least act
nothing contradictory to them. Now this
humbler part is, I think, that which is
most suitable to my faculties, as a man
of speculation. I am not in the least a
poet, in any sense; but I can do homage to
poetry. I can to a very considerable ex-
tent feel it and understand it, and can
make others who are my inferiors under-
stand it in proportion to the measure of
their capacity. I believe that such a
person is more wanted than even the poet
himself; that there are more persons liv-
ing who approximate to the latter charac-
ter than to the former. I do not think
myself at all fit for the one; I do for
the other; your walk I conceive to be the
higher. Now one thing not useless to do
would be to exemplify this difference by
enlarging in my logical fashion upon the
difference itself: to make those who are
not poets, understand that poetry is higher
than Logic, and the union of the two is
Philosophy. 132

In this letter, with obvious humility, Mill says that
he conceives of himself as a logician, and because
the artist knows the intuitive truths, the very
premises of logic, the logician is necessarily in
a dependent and inferior position. He suggests,
very significantly for one trained as a reasoner,
that these intuitive truths, if they are not inconsis-
tent with what the logician knows, may be taken on faith,
for these are truths that he, the logician, may never
know, and is indeed incapable of knowing. This is the
extreme position that Mill takes on intuitive truths,
for after he had passed the time of his maximum reaction to his original training, he retreated from this new position he had taken up. Accordingly, Mill affirms once again the importance of the poet: by him alone are intuitive truths conveyed. Here, Mill entertains the same idea as he expressed in his notes on Plato: the love of virtue, and every other noble feeling, is not communicated by reasoning, but caught by inspiration or sympathy from those who already have it.

During the years immediately following his mental crisis, and the awakening experience of Wordsworth's poetry, Mill was untiringly active and assiduous in cultivating his deepening interest in poetry. His visit to William Wordsworth in the Lake District, arising from his desire to know the man as well as the poetry, and his subsequent comments about his meeting with Wordsworth provide evidence of his conviction that the poetry was a reflection of the inner man. Mill also gave evidence in his writings that he felt that poetry was too serious to be dismissed as entertainment, and that, in fact, poetry is integral with its complement, logic, in the formation of philosophy. There was a steady movement towards integrating poetry fully into his philosophy.
In January and November of 1833, Mill published in the *Monthly Repository*, two essays entitled "What Is Poetry?" and "The Two Kinds Of Poetry." These two essays contain some of Mill's most explicit statements of his views on the nature of poetry, and because of their sequence and relative formality they must be considered important in the formation of his poetic theory. However, they must be viewed with an element of caution as they must take their place in the sequential and developing growth of Mill's thought. As with his other ideas, they are a part, and an important part of his mental biography, but they must be seen in their context. There were no subsequent dramatic shifts away from the positions he took up in these essays, but there was a steady growth and development.

In the first of these essays, "What Is Poetry?" Mill seeks to examine the nature of poetry without confining the idea of poetry to a narrow definition. He follows the time-honoured method of stating at first what poetry is not. It is not to be confounded, he says, with metrical composition. He then adds that poetry refers to the essence of all art, and here he employs the word in its widest possible sense:
That, however, the word "poetry" does import something quite peculiar in its nature, something which may exist in what is called prose as well as in verse, something which does not even require the instrument of words, but can speak through those other audible symbols called musical sounds, and even through the visible ones, which are the language of sculpture, painting, and architecture; all this, as we believe, is and must be felt, though perhaps indistinctly, by all upon whom poetry in any of its shapes produces any impression beyond that of tickling the ear. To the mind, poetry is either nothing, or it is the better part of all art whatever, and of real life too; and the distinction between poetry and what is not poetry, whether explained or not, is felt to be fundamental.

Mill then gives his intention of trying to find the boundaries which poetry itself has set, rather than forcing the idea of poetry within the bounds of an arbitrary definition. This is Mill, the logician, speaking as he wisely and cautiously attempts to find the limits of his problem rather than attempting to define it. He gives his purpose as that of seeking to clear up the conception already attached to poetry by bringing before the minds of his readers as a distinct principle that which they had previously known as a vague feeling.

Mill then turns to the purpose of poetry:

The object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions; and therein is poetry
sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely, not prose, but matter of fact or science. 135

By contrasting science, which does its work by inference, with poetry, which does its work by moving, Mill has suggested a complementary relationship between the two. Again there is an echo of what he wrote about poetry and reason in his comments on Plato's Gorgias.

After distinguishing poetry from its logical opposite, matter of fact or science, Mill reduces his field of discussion still further by examining another distinction, this time between poetry and the novel:

To present thoughts or images to the mind for the purpose of acting upon the emotions, does not belong to poetry alone. It is equally the province (for example) of the novelist: and yet the faculty of the poet and the faculty of the novelist are as distinct as any other two faculties; as the faculty of the novelist and of the orator, or of the poet and the metaphysician. The two characters may be united, as characters the most disparate may; but they have no natural connection.

Many of the finest poems are in the form of novels, and in almost all good novels there is true poetry. But there is a radical distinction between the interest felt in a novel as such, and the interest excited by poetry; for the one is derived from incident, the other from the representation of feeling. In one, the source of the emotion excited is the exhibition of a state or states of human sensibility; in the other, of a series of states of mere outward circumstances. 136
Mill notes that many poems are in the form of fictitious narratives and that many of these contain good poetry, but that an important distinction exists between the two forms of literature, and that this distinction arises because one of them is derived from incident while the other is a representation of feeling. To emphasize his point about the essentially dissimilar natures of poetry and fictitious narrative, Mill suggests that a really strong passion for either of the two seems to pre-suppose a comparative indifference to the other.\(^{137}\) Mill seeks to differentiate further between fiction and poetry by reviewing the appeal that narrative has made at various ages and various times:

In what stage of the progress of society, again, is storytelling most valued, and the storyteller in greatest request and honor? -- in a rude state; like that of the Tartars and Arabs at this day, and of almost all nations in the earliest ages. But in this state of society there is little poetry except ballads, which are mostly narrative, that is, essentially stories, and derive their principal interest from the incidents. Considered as poetry, they are of the lowest and most elementary kind: the feelings depicted, or rather indicated, are the simplest our nature has; such joys and griefs as the immediate pressure of some outward event excites in rude minds, which live wholly immersed in outward things, and have never, either from choice or a force they could not resist, turned themselves to the contemplation of the world within.\(^{138}\)
Mill considers ballads to be the lowest and most elementary kind of poetry depicting the simplest of feelings that are occasioned by outward events. He suggests that the ballads fail as poetry because the feelings they convey arise from the immediate pressure of some outward event; they do not arise from within as, in Mill's view, poetry must. It is possible that Mill was influenced in this context by Wordsworth's idea of emotion recollected in tranquillity. It seems apparent that Mill associates the various forms of narrative such as the ballad and the novel with immaturity and lack of depth in both man and society.

He then turns to poetry and identifies an appreciation of it with more mature qualities than those required and displayed by the ballad and the novel.

But poetry, which is the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of the human heart, is interesting only to those to whom it recalls what they have felt, or whose imagination it stirs up to conceive what they feel, or what they might have been able to feel, had their outward circumstances been different.

Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life. The two kinds of knowledge are different, and come by different
ways, come mostly to different persons. Great poets are often proverbially igno-
norant of life. What they know has come by observation of themselves; they have found one highly delicate, and sensitive, and refined specimen of human nature, on which the laws of human emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study; and other knowledge of mankind such as comes to men of the world by outward experience, is not indispensable to them as poets: but to the novelist such knowledge is all in all; he has to describe outward things, not the inward man; actions and events, not feelings; and it will not do for him to be numbered among those who, as Madame Roland said of Brissot, know man but not men. 139

Poetry is concerned with the human heart, with the most inward aspect of man. It requires a self-consciousness that fiction, for example, does not require. The truth of poetry is different from the truth of fiction: the truth of poetry reveals the soul, the very heart of a man's inner being; the truth of fiction reflects the outer circumstances of life.

Mill then reminds us that the differences between poetry and fiction do not bar their being combined in the same work; such a work might be called either a novel or a poem. The union of poetry and incident, if effected with each in its highest kind, produces the dramatic. There may be a great imbalance between the two clearly defined areas of poetry and incident or there may be an almost perfect balance between them.
Mill suggests that it is the combination of the two excellences, that of the story and that of poetry, which makes Shakespeare so generally acceptable. For some he is a great story-teller, but for others, a few, he is a poet.

Mill's efforts had been directed to limiting poetry to states of feeling and excluding it from the delineation of external objects. He then proceeds to refute the claim that there is descriptive poetry.

But an object which admits of being described, or a truth which may fill a place in a scientific treatise, may also furnish an occasion for the generation of poetry, which we therefore choose to call descriptive or didactic. The poetry is not in the object itself, nor in the scientific truth itself, but in the state of mind in which the one and the other may be contemplated.

Mill returns again and again to the point that poetry is not in the object itself, but in the state of mind in which the object or scientific truth is contemplated. He then gives an example of the central problem experienced by the poet in dealing with descriptive poetry:

Descriptive poetry consists, no doubt, in description, but in description of things as they appear, not as they are; and it paints them not in their bare and natural lineaments, but arranged in the colors and seen through the medium of the imagination set in action by the feelings. If a poet is to describe a lion, he will not set about describing him as a naturalist would, who was intent upon stating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
He will describe him by **imagery**, that is by suggesting the most striking likenesses and contrasts which might occur to a mind contemplating the lion, in the state of awe, wonder, or terror, which the spectacle naturally excites, or is, on the occasion, supposed to excite. Now this is describing the lion professedly, but the state of excitement of the spectator really. The lion may be described falsely or in exaggerated colors, and the poetry be all the better; but if the human emotion be not painted with the most scrupulous truth, the poetry is bad poetry, i.e. is not poetry at all, but a failure.

Mill makes a number of interesting statements here, some of which have come under attack. He says that description in poetry consists in description of things as they appear, not as they are. We are left to infer what he means here. Mill does add that the poet paints things as they appear through the medium of imagination which has been made operative by the feelings. He then suggests that the poet will not describe the lion as would a naturalist or a traveller who is intent upon stating the truth. He says he will describe him by **imagery**, by suggesting the most striking likenesses that might occur to a mind contemplating the lion in one of a number of states of mind, and as a consequence the lion may be described falsely. On first examination, it appears that Mill is granting poetic license to depart from the truth, and to deal in false colors. Abrams
But he indicates that poetry differs from science in being exempt from the criterion of truth; science asserts a proposition for assent or denial, but poetry merely presents an object for aesthetic contemplation.  

Abrams goes on to suggest that at the root of the difficulty is Mill's use of the word, describe. Quoting Alexander Smith he suggests that poetry expresses rather than describes the poet's emotion. Actually, there appears to be a good deal of confusion here all round. Mill's use of the word, describe, does not appear to be a happy one, but there are other problems. It is suggested here that Mill does not indicate, as Abrams seems to imply, that poetry differs from science in being exempt from the criterion of truth. It is true that Mill says that "The lion may be described falsely or in exaggerated colours, and the poetry be all the better; but if the human emotion be not painted with the most scrupulous truth, the poetry is bad poetry." Unless Mill is very confused he seems to be suggesting a priority in truths: external truths opposed to internal emotional truths, with the latter having the priority. Truth is not an absolute, nor does Mill seem to suggest that it is. The truth in poetry, as Mill always indicates, is the inner truth, the truth
of feeling, the truth of a state of mind. Consequently, it would seem that if there are two truths to be dealt with, an inner truth and an external truth, that so far as poetry is concerned, the inner truth must take precedence over the external truth, even if the latter must then appear in false colors. Mill has said that the "object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions; and therein is poetry sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely not prose, but matter of fact or science." Mill seems to be defining poetry in terms of its function, and assuming that we will do the same. A possible source of dissatisfaction is here in Mill's use of the word, "truth", and in his making assumptions that do not appear to be fully justified.

Mill then proceeds to further limit the application of the word, poetry. He refers to Ebenezer Elliott as saying that poetry is impassioned truth, and he compares this with the comment of a writer in Blackwood's Magazine as referring to poetry as "man's thoughts tinged by his feelings." He then concludes:

There is in either definition a near approximation to what we are in search of. Every truth which man can announce, every thought, even every outward im-
pression, which can enter into his consciousness, may become poetry when shown through any impassioned medium, when invested with the coloring of joy, or grief, or pity, or affection, or admiration, or reverence, or awe, or even hatred or terror; and, unless so colored, nothing, be it as interesting as it may, is poetry.

Mill now draws a further distinction, that between poetry and eloquence. He observes that eloquence, as well as poetry, is impassioned truth; eloquence as well as poetry is thoughts colored by the feelings. The assumption that eloquence should always be truth seems to need a qualification. Mill adds that the distinction between poetry and eloquence is equally fundamental with the distinctions already drawn between poetry and narrative, and poetry and description. He continues:

Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or uttering forth of feeling. But if we may be excused the seeming affectation of the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard. Eloquence supposes an audience; the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling, confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude, and bodying itself forth in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind. Eloquence is feeling pouring itself forth to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action.

He then adds emphasis to his point about the difference between poetry and eloquence. He does this by
referring to all poetry as being of the nature of soliloquy:

Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world. The persons who have most feeling of their own, if intellectual culture have given them a language in which to express it, have the highest faculty of poetry; those who best understand the feelings of others are the most eloquent.

In referring to the arts, Mill said that one finds in music two perfectly distinct styles: one the poetry of music and the other, the oratory of music. The same distinction holds true for the arts of painting and sculpture.

Mill's extension of the word, poetry, to the fields of music, acting, painting, and religion, while illustrative of his points and therefore interesting, must be viewed in the present context as peripheral to the main literary emphasis. This wider use of the word does raise a problem, however, as one must read with close attention to be sure of Mill's particular meaning. Throughout his discussion of the various forms of art he returns time and again to the basic opposition that he has established between poetry and eloquence.

After extending his opposition between poetry and
eloquence to the various fine arts, Mill then turns his attention to the question of beauty in art.

The direct aim of art as such, is the production of the beautiful; and as there are other things beautiful besides states of mind, there is much of art which may seem to have nothing to do with either poetry or eloquence as we have defined them. Take for instance a composition of Claude, or Salvator Rosa. There is here creation of new beauty; by the grouping of natural scenery, conformably indeed to the law of outward nature, but not after any actual model; the result being a beauty more perfect and faultless than is perhaps to be found in any actual landscape. Yet there is a character of poetry even in these, without which they could not be so beautiful. The unity, the wholeness, and aesthetic congruity of the picture still lies in singleness of expression; but it is expression in a different sense from that in which we have hitherto employed the term. The objects in an imaginary landscape cannot be said, like the words of a poem or the notes of a melody, to be the actual utterance of a feeling; but there must be some feeling with which they harmonize, and which they have a tendency to raise up in the spectator's mind.

In accepting the view that the direct aim of art is the production of the beautiful, Mill is adopting a scale of values in his conception of art. The foregoing passage just quoted is interesting for a number of reasons. In it Mill recognizes that an artist can create truly creative art that is not conformable to anything in the actual world. He then suggests that there must be some feeling with which this creation will harmonize. Disappointingly, Mill has nothing to
say about the new experiences that art may bring, nor does he say anything about the role of imagination in the act of new creation.

Mill finally closes the essay with the following statement:

There is no generic distinction between the imagery which is the expression of feeling, and the imagery, which is felt to harmonize with feeling. They are identical. The imagery in which feeling utters itself forth from within, is also that in which it delights when presented to it from without. All art, therefore, in proportion as it produces its effects by an appeal to the emotions partakes of poetry, unless it partakes of oratory or of narrative. And the distinction which these three words indicate, runs through the whole field of the fine arts. 150

Mill's last sentence here gives an indication of his method: by establishing certain fundamental similarities and differences he has been able to generalize about the whole field of art. His method is essentially that of the logician.

In the second of his two famous essays on poetry, the one entitled "The Two Kinds of Poetry," Mill sets the context of his thought by the expression Nascitur poeta: the poet is born, or as we should say more idiomatically, poets are born. While acknowledging many misapplications of the foregoing aphorism, Mill says that it is likely as true as any such saying is:
i.e. truth which has been 'compressed and bent out of shape' and therefore truth which needs an explanation.

After insisting that poets are subject to the same demands as any of the other spiritual benefactors of mankind Mill concludes that there are definite poetic natures. He says that a poetic temperament will not of itself make a poet, but that the poetry of one who is a poet by nature will be clearly distinguishable from that of one who is not. He adds:

One may write genuine poetry, and not be a poet; for whosoever writes out truly any one human feeling, writes poetry. All persons, even the most unimaginative, in moments of strong emotion, speak poetry; and hence the drama is poetry, which else were prose, except when a poet is one of the characters. What is poetry, but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?

The point of view that Mill is suggesting here is that all people who write out truly any human feeling write poetry. In other words, he is once again emphasizing that poetry is spontaneous, involuntary, and devoid of calculation for ulterior ends.

He then asks:

Whom, then shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together. This constitution belongs (within
certain limits) to all in whom poetry is a pervading principle. In all others, poetry is something extraneous and superinduced: something out of themselves, foreign to the habitual course of their everyday lives and characters; a quite other world, to which they may 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 ignis fatui and spectral illusions. Those only who have the peculiarity of association which we have mentioned, and which is one of the natural consequences of intense sensibility, instead of seeming not themselves when they are uttering poetry, scarcely seem themselves when uttering anything to which poetry is foreign. Whatever be the thing which they are contemplating, the aspect under which it first and most naturally paints itself to them, is its poetic aspect. The poet of culture sees his object in prose, and describes it in poetry; the poet of nature actually sees it in poetry.

Mill's use of language here leaves something to be desired when he says that 'the poet of culture sees his object in prose' and the poet of nature 'sees it in poetry'. This explanation does not seem to be very helpful. His main argument here that poets are those whose emotions are the links of association, for their ideas, finds its basis in Hartley's Associationism. John Mill was holding to the teaching of his father on this topic. James Mill, in his *Analysis Of The Human Mind* set out the Associationist view of the operations of the human mind in the act of learning or 'forming
associations': under this doctrine the poet was as subject to the laws governing the association of ideas as anyone else, and his imagination consisted of "trains of ideas." In his essay reviewing Tennyson's poems he wrote, "In both, there is what is commonly called imagination--namely, fancy:" and in a special footnote he gave it very brief attention:

It may be thought, perhaps, that among the gifts of nature to a poet, ought also to be included a vivid and exuberant imagination. We believe, however, that vividness of imagination is no further a gift of nature, than in so far as it is a natural consequence of vivid sensations. All besides this, we incline to think, depends on habit and cultivation.

It is disappointing that Mill should rest his theory of the imagination on the Associationist theory without a more searching investigation. As Abrams has pointed out in his discussion of Coleridge's theory of the imagination, "Mechanism is false, not because it does not tell the truth, but because it does not tell the whole truth." That Mill should not have ventured into Coleridge's territory on this theory is not only disappointing, but it is also puzzling, especially since Mill was greatly impressed by Coleridge's thought. At any rate this indicates the limit of Mill's interest and thought in the study of poetry and the problems of
creative art. For Coleridge, in his Biographia Literaria raised objections to Associationism that Mill, had he read it, would have had to answer. Mill sums up the Associationist view of the natural poet:

Thoughts and images will be linked together, according to the similarity of the feelings which cling to them. A thought will introduce a thought by first introducing a feeling which is allied with it. At the centre of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling: and the thoughts or images are only there because the feeling was there. All the combinations which the mind puts together, all the pictures which it paints, all 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 incoherencies.

Mill's comment that at the centre of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling finds support not only in the Associationist theory but also in Wordsworth's dictum that "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling."

Mill concludes this part of his discussion:

The difference, then, between the poetry of a poet, and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetical mind, is that in the latter, with however bright a halo of feeling the thought may be surrounded and glorified, the thought itself is still the conspicuous object; while the poetry of a poet is Feeling itself, employing Thought only as the medium of its utterance. In the one feeling waits upon thought; in the other, thought upon feeling.
In the poetry of the cultivated mind that is not naturally poetic, the thought will be dominant; in the poetry of the naturally poetic mind, the feeling is dominant. It is interesting to note that Mill found emphasis on the element of thought in Wordsworth's poetry and concluded that it was this element that was primary in Wordsworth's mind. Accordingly, he concludes that Wordsworth was a poet of culture.

Mill now proceeds to a discussion of the characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry, seeking thereby to illustrate the view he has developed of Wordsworth:

On the other hand, Wordsworth's poetry is never bounding, never ebullient; has little even of the appearance of spontaneousness; the well is never so full that it overflows. There is an air of calm deliberateness about all he writes, which is not characteristic of the poetic temperament; his poetry seems one thing, himself another; he seems to be poetical because he wills to be so, not because he cannot help it: did he will to dismiss poetry, he need never again, it might almost seem, have a poetical thought. He never seems possessed by a feeling; no emotion seems ever so strong as to have entire sway, for the time being, over the current of his thoughts. He never, even for the space of a few stanzas, appears entirely given up to exultation, or grief, or pity, or love, or admiration, or devotion, or even animal spirits.163

When Mill says "he seems to be poetical because he wills to be so, not because he cannot help it," he is assuming that the poet writes under a compulsion.
He passes judgment on Wordsworth's 'air of calm deliberateness,' considering it as not being characteristic of the poetic temperament. He says that Wordsworth never seems 'possessed' by a feeling; this is not entirely clear. Once again Mill seems to be looking for spontaneity and intensity rather than deliberate calculation, and he is apparently inclined to judge by these limited criteria. One of his final comments on Wordsworth is that "the genius of Wordsworth is essentially unlyrical."^164

Mill now narrows his consideration of poetry by giving his attention to lyric poetry:

Lyric poetry, as it was the earliest kind, is also, if the view we are now taking of poetry be correct, more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other: it is the poetry most natural to a really poetic temperament, and least capable of being successfully imitated by one not so endowed by nature.^165

Having in mind his strictures on narrative, description, and eloquence, one can see why Mill shied away from any literary form that seemed to involve imitation or calculation in speech or purpose. Abrams clarifies this problem posed by Mill's view of the lyric:

The lyric form--used here to include elegy, song, sonnet, and ode--had long been particularly connected by critics to the state of
mind of its author. Unlike the narrative and dramatic forms, most lyrics do not include such elements as characters and plot, which can be readily explained (according to the common mirror-interpretation of mimesis) as imitations of external people and events. The majority of lyrics consist of thoughts and feelings uttered in the first person, and the one readily available character to whom these sentiments may be referred is the poet himself.

By identifying poetry with the lyric form, Mill was restricting poetry to a form that was a direct reflection of the author's mood and feelings.

Mill considered Shelley to be the natural poet; comparing him to Wordsworth, he has the following judgment:

Shelley is the very reverse of all this. Where Wordsworth is strong, he is weak; where Wordsworth is weak, he is strong. Culture, that culture by which Wordsworth has reared from his own inward nature the richest harvest ever brought forth by a soil of so little depth, is precisely what was wanting to Shelley: or let us rather say, he had not, at the period of his deplorably early death, reached sufficiently far in that intellectual progression of which he was capable, and which, if it has done so much for far inferior natures, might have made of him the greatest of our poets. For him, intentional mental discipline had done little; the vividness of his emotions and of his sensations had done all. He seldom follows up an idea; it starts into life, summons from the fairyland of his inexhaustible fancy some three or four bold images, then vanishes, and straight he is off on the wings of some casual association into quite another sphere.
Shelley lacks the mental discipline and the mental
culture to complement his natural ability.

Mill then begins to sum up his position in this
important essay:

What constitutes the poet is not the
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.168

Mill gives his final consideration to the com-
parison of the logician and the poet:

Whether the superiority will naturally
be on the side of the logician-poet or
of the mere poet—whether the writings of
the one ought, as a whole to be truer,
and their influence more beneficent,
than those of the other—is too ob-
vious in principle to need statement:
it would be absurd to doubt whether
two endowments are better than one:
whether truth is more certainly arrived
at by two processes verifying and cor-
recting each other, than by one alone.169

In his essay on the "Writings Of Alfred de Vigny,"
published April 1838, Mill gives his thoughts on the
nature and function of verse:

In regard to verse writing, we would even
exceed the severity of Horace's precept
against mediocrity; we hold that nothing
should be written in verse which is not
exquisite. In prose, anything may be said
which is worth saying at all; in verse,
only what is worth saying better than prose
can say it. The gems alone of thought and
fancy, are worth setting with so finished
and elaborate a workmanship; and even of them, those only whose effect is heightened by it: which takes place under two conditions; and in one or other of these two, if we are not mistaken, must be found the origin and justification of all composition in verse. A thought or feeling requires verse for its adequate expression, when in order that it may dart into the soul with the speed of a lightning flash, the ideas or images that are to convey it require to be pressed closer together than is compatible with the rigid grammatical construction of the prose sentence. One recommendation of verse, therefore, is, that it affords a language more condensed than prose. The other is derived from one of the natural laws of the human mind, in the utterance of its thoughts impregnated with its feelings. All emotion which has taken possession of the whole being—which flows unresistedly, and therefore equably—instinctively seeks a language that flows equably like itself; and must either find it, or be conscious of an unsatisfied want, which even impedes and prematurely stops the flow of the feeling. Hence, ever since man has been man, all deep and sustained feeling has tended to express itself in rhythmical language; and the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm; provided always the feeling be sustained as well as deep; for a fit of passion has no natural connection with verse or music, a mood of passion has the strongest.  

Briefly, Mill takes the view that verse should be reserved for the exquisite, the best, the gems of thought and fancy, and that it should be condensed and flow smoothly, equably, and rhythmically. He finishes by saying that "the one unpardonable sin in a versified composition, next to the absence of meaning, and of true meaning, is diffuseness."
Mill's essays on literature give formal, sequential statements of his views on poetry, but they do not give a complete picture of the development of his thought and theory. For this one must turn to his letters, his "System of Logic," and his other essays on political economy, ethics, religion, and society. In effect, when tracing the growth of his ideas, one must always look to relevant biographical details, for as Mill himself said, he was always occupied in weaving the fabric of his opinions anew.

One of the ideas which recurs again and again in Mill's correspondence is that of intuition. For a long time it quite baffled him, and even towards the end of his life his letters revealed a constantly questioning attitude about this idea and the word that seeks to contain it. It was a word that the Romantics were fond of. Coleridge, in the *Biographia Literaria*, wrote a special note on it:

I take this occasion to observe that here and elsewhere Kant uses the term intuition, and the verb active (intueri, germanice anschauen) for which we have unfortunately no correspondent word, exclusively for that which can be represented in space and time. He therefore consistently and rightly denies the possibility of intellectual intuitions. But as I see no adequate reason for this exclusive sense of the term, I have reverted to its wider signification authorized by our elder theologians and metaphysicians, according to
whom the term comprehends all truths known to us without a medium.\textsuperscript{172} Mill had become persuaded that some artists arrived at important truths intuitively; however, he evidently had some feeling of conflict about the term, as his correspondence reveals, for under his father's tutelage he had learned to suspect such words as feeling and intuition. In a letter to Carlyle, written on the fifth of July, 1833, Mill expresses himself on this and related topics.

This brings to my mind that I have never explained what I meant when writing once before in this strain I called you a Poet and Artist. I conceive that most of the highest truths are, to persons endowed by nature in certain ways, which I think I could state, intuitive; that is, they need neither explanation nor proof, but if not known before, are assented to as soon as stated. Now it appears to me that the poet or artist is conversant chiefly with such truths and that his office in respect to truth is to declare them, and to make them impressive. This, however, supposes that the reader, hearer, or spectator is a person of the kind to whom those truths are intuitive. Such will of course receive them at once, and will lay them to heart in proportion to the impressiveness with which the artist delivers and embodies them. But the other and more numerous kind of people will consider them as nothing but dreaming or madness: and the more so, certainly, the more powerful the artist, as an artist: because the means which are good for rendering the truth impressive to those who know it, are not the same and are often absolutely incompatible with those which render it intelligible to those who know it not. Now
this last I think is the proper office of the logician or I might say the metaphysician, in truth he must be both. The same person may be poet and logician, but he cannot be both in the same composition: and as heroes have been frustrated of glory "carent quia vate sacro," so I think the vates himself has often been misunderstood and successfully cried down for want of a Logician in Ordinary, to supply a logical commentary on his intuitive truths. The artist's is the highest part, for by him alone is real knowledge of such truths conveyed: but it is possible to convince him who never could know the intuitive truths, that they are not inconsistent with anything he does know; that they are even very probable, and that he may have faith in them when higher natures than his own affirm that they are truths. 173

Mill believed that the highest truths are intuitively known by the artist or poet, and he concluded that the ability to know these truths in this intuitive manner is a natural gift which enables such persons to dispense with explanation or proof. It was in fact a way of going direct to the heart of a matter and of discerning its essential truth. He adds that it is the duty of the artist or poet to make such truths impressive so that the intuitively sensitive reader can lay them to heart. Mill's writing in this part of his letter is not clear, likely for the reason that he was not yet clear in his own mind about the whole mysterious intuitive process. He adds that the majority of people will be incapable of responding to this intuitively gathered knowledge, and will even consider the poet's
intuitions as madness, but that it is possible to convince the person who is incapable of intuitive truths, and he adds the key words about the truths that must not be inconsistent with anything he knows and that he may accept them on faith as coming from people with higher natures than his. Mill's father would have been astonished by this admission. How did Mill come to such a position verging on the gullible? He reached this point by assuming that there were two valid ways of arriving at truth: the intuitive for certain gifted people and the logical for the majority of persons, among whom he unassumingly placed himself. About his own meagre capacities he had the following to say in concluding this famous letter:

Now this humbler part is, I think, that which is most suitable to my faculties, as a man of speculation. I am not in the least a poet, in any sense; but I can do homage to poetry. I can to a very considerable extent feel it and understand it, and can make others who are my inferiors understand it in proportion to the measure of their capacity. I believe that such a person is more wanted than even the poet himself; that there are more persons living who approximate to the latter character than to the former. I do not think myself at all fit for the one; I do for the other; your walk I conceive to be the higher. Now one thing not useless to do would be to exemplify this difference by enlarging in my logical fashion upon the difference itself: to make those who are not poets, understand that poetry is higher than Logic, and that the union of the two is Philosophy.
Mill cast himself in the role of logician and in so doing returned to firmer ground.

In his new more uncommitted approach to knowledge (it was 1833) with its attendant avoidance of debate and argument, the only way Mill could deal with Carlyle was the tentative way in which he did; he simply suspended judgment in many of his dealings with Carlyle. John Holloway has indicated the source of major difficulty in Carlyle for anyone seeking his answers by means of reason:

One of the things that most disturbs a modern reader of his work is constant dogmatism. Through Carlyle's prose the nerve of proof—in the readily understood and familiar sense of straight-forward argument—simply cannot be traced; and the succession of arbitrary and unproved assertions tends to forfeit our attention. Yet this is only a subordinate difficulty, because although proof is clearly missing, it is by no means clear what would supply this lack, as it is by no means clear what needs proof. The general principles which would summarize Carlyle's 'system' are broad sweeping gestures, hints thrown out, suggestions which leave us quite uncertain about their detailed import.

Mill made repeated comments on Carlyle's style and on the difficulties it created. On one occasion, September 5, 1833, in a letter to Carlyle, he commented:

—About that Cagliostro and that Teufelsdreck, by the way, it has frequently occurred to me of late to ask of myself and also of you, whether that mode of writing between sarcasm or irony and earnest, be really de-
serving of so much honour as you give to it by making use of it so frequently. I do not say that it is not good: all modes of writing, in the hands of a sincere man, are good, provided they are intelligible. But are there many things, worth saying, and capable of being said in that manner which cannot be as well or better said in a more direct way. The same doubt has occasionally occurred to me respecting much of your phraseology, which fails to bring home your meaning to the comprehension of most readers so well as would perhaps be done by commoner and more familiar phrases: however this last I say with the most perfect submission because I am sure that every one speaks and writes best in his own mother tongue, the language in which he thinks.¹⁷⁶

This protest against Carlyle's style gave evidence of deeper difficulties. Mill's approval of all modes of writing was subject to the condition of intelligibility. However, he ends his remarks deferentially, indicating his readiness to accept Carlyle's judgment on the matter even though it was causing him difficulty in comprehension. Mill preferred clarity and sense to the dramatic features of Carlyle's idiosyncratic style.

Mill wrote to Carlyle on March 2, 1834, revealing his continued perplexity over the conflict between the claims of logic and intuition. This time he referred to mysticism instead of intuition, but again the emphasis was on the non-logical, direct means of apprehending truths, whatever they might be. He was still
puzzled and mystified.

I would say something in acknowledgment of your so kind answer to my letter of "revelations" but I really cannot, just now, say anything of what I would say. I would rather ask of you, to speak more and more freely to me on those subjects and unfold to me more and more your whole mind in regard to them. I will also ask one or two questions more: Is not the distinction between Mysticism, the mysticism which is of Truth, and mere dreaming, or the substitution of imaginations for realities, exactly this, that mysticism may be "translated into logic?" I mean in the only sense in which I ever endeavour so to translate it. You will understand what I mean. Logic proves nothing, yet points out clearly whether and how all things are proved. This being my creed, of course none of my mysticism, if mysticism it be, rests on logic as its basis; yet I require to see how it looks in the logical dialect before I feel sure of it. And if I have any vocation I think it is exactly this, to translate the mysticism of others into the language of Argument. Have not all things two aspects, an Artistic and a Scientific; to the former of which the language of mysticism is the most appropriate, to the latter that of Logic? The mechanical people, whether theorists or men of the world, find the former unintelligible, and despise it. Through the latter one has a chance of forcing them to respect even what they cannot understand—and that once done, they may be made to believe what to many of them must always be in the utmost extent of the term "things unseen." This is the service I should not despair of assisting to render, and I think it is even more needed now than works of art, because it is their most useful precursor, and one might almost say, in these days their necessary conditions.177

Mill's effort to understand Carlyle's point of view is
evident in this letter. Also evident is his need to follow the logical way of thinking for which he had been so carefully trained. He was trying to accept the superior intuitive insight of the artist; at least that is how he felt about Carlyle at this stage in his development. Again he was questioning if truth does not have two aspects, the artistic and the scientific, with the artistic having the language of mysticism or intuition, and the scientific, the language of logic. In this dualism Mill was seeking his answer to the opposition that was troubling him. Mill was seeking to bridge the gap between the poet and the logical scientist, but it is not likely that he fully appreciated yet that the difficulties he was experiencing were those that would occur to any formally trained mind when surrounded by people whose minds did not operate in logical sequences. Later, in his essay "Aphorisms", published in 1837, he expressed this point of view.178 If he had read Shakespeare at this time, he might have found his burdens lightened by the speech of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

*Theseus:* I never may believe These antique fables, nor these fairy toys. Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold,
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed to bear!
Hippolyta: But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy,
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

(A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 2-27)

The long and interesting correspondence between Carlyle and Mill stressed their points of agreement in its early stages, but gradually the fundamental differences were uncovered, and Mill found himself forced once again into a polemical situation. At first, following his determination to avoid argument and to seek the partial truths that he felt that he had previously missed, he avoided reference to their differences, and Carlyle felt that in Mill he had found a disciple. Gradually, however, their profound differences were exposed. Carlyle, writing on October 16, 1832, had the following to say to Mill:
Your letter gave me insight into many very pleasant things in your own faithful way. I beg you will by no means let me lose sight of London; least of all, of your circle therein; many things of value for me, lie in it, which may yet become of more value. In London alone of all places in this country have I found some men (belonging to this century and not to a past one) who believed that Truth was Truth: of such men, how obstructed otherwise soever, all may be hoped, for they have attained the source of all. Considered as European Thinkers, our poor Utilitarians make the mournfullest figure: yet in this one fact, that they were the re-originators of any Belief among us, they stand far above all other Sects. Young minds too will not end where they began; under this point of view, you and certain of yours are of great interest for me; indeed, I may say, form the chief visible encouragement I have to proceed in this rather hazardous course of mine.179

Carlyle's disparaging remarks about the poor Utilitarians, his reference to Truth as Truth, as if he were discussing an absolute might have drawn some questions from Mill, but in his reply to this letter, written on October 22, 1832, he made a rather mild defence, observing that there were scarcely any left of the old narrow school of Utilitarians, and adding that he had been enabled to remake all of his own opinions.180 Later, in a letter to Carlyle on January 12, 1834, Mill rather stoutly declared that he was a Utilitarian and likely to remain one.

Mill made many valiant attempts to understand Carlyle's point of view, but he had too much to contend with. Not only did he have to submit to Carlyle's dog-
matism and dramatic idiosyncrasies, but he also had to deal with Carlyle's ideas, many of which ran strongly counter to his own beliefs. As Holloway has already observed, the nerve of proof could not be traced in Carlyle's prose, and Mill was too carefully trained a reasoner to submit to any ideas for long without testing them. Mill acknowledged Carlyle to be an artist. However, Wordsworth was also an artist, one who could write in a simple straightforward style that submitted to the tests of reality and reason. Mill could disagree with much of Wordsworth's philosophy, but still find much to command his complete attention; phrases and feelings to which Mill could unhesitatingly assent; words and phrases that conveyed their thoughts and feelings in the contemplative manner that he had consciously sought.

Mill's relationship with Carlyle was of a different order; he shared many views with him, but he also differed with him over many ideas, and no matter how much he tried to avoid it or conceal it, conflict was just below the surface. He paid tribute to Carlyle's ability, but found in his friendship with him neither the emotional satisfaction of Wordsworth's poetry nor yet the full satisfaction from ideas. The relationship was unsatisfactory and finally led to the sort of summation he has
given in the Autobiography:

I have already mentioned Carlyle's earlier writings as one of the channels through which I received the influences which enlarged my early narrow creed; but I do not think that those writings, by themselves, would ever have had any effect on my opinions. What truths they contained, though of the very kind which I was already receiving from other quarters, were presented in a form and vesture less suited than any other to give them access to a mind trained as mine had been. They seemed a haze of poetry and German metaphysics, in which almost the only clear thing was a strong animosity to most of the opinions which were the basis of my mode of thought; religious scepticism, utilitarianism, the doctrine of circumstances, and the attaching any importance to democracy, logic, or political economy. Instead of my having been taught anything, in the first instance, by Carlyle, it was only in proportion as I came to see the same truths through media more suited to my mental constitution, that I recognized them in his writings. Then, indeed, the wonderful power with which he put them forth made a deep impression upon me, and I was during a long period one of his most fervent admirers; but the good his writings did me, was not as philosophy to instruct, but as poetry to animate.

...I did not, however, deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could only when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove, but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out. I knew that I could not see round him; and I never presumed to judge him with any definiteness, until he was interpreted to me by one greatly superior of us both—who was more a poet than he, and more a thinker than I—whose own mind and nature included his, and infinitely more.181
The one who interpreted him to John Mill was, of course, his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill. For Carlyle's superiority of ability and intelligence over Mill, as for Harriet Taylor Mill's alleged superiority over both, one would have to assume on Mill's part a great generosity of spirit, or somewhat ironically, hero-worship.

Mill's acknowledged failure to understand the workings of Carlyle's mind induced a renewed caution in his dealings with what he conceived to be Carlyle's methods. Writing to John Sterling on September 28, 1839, Mill asserted:

> Whether I have any better vocation for being a philosopher, or whether you will think so when you see what I am capable of performing in that line, remains for the future to decide. I hope to give materials for the decision before long, as I can hardly fail to finish my Logic in the course of next year. I have endeavoured to keep clear so far as possible of the controversy respecting the perception of the highest Realities by direct intuition, confining Logic to the laws of the investigation of truth by means of extrinsic evidence whether ratiocinative or inductive. Still, I could not avoid conflict with some of the subordinate parts of the supersensual philosophy, which for aught I know may be as necessary to it as what may appear to me its fundamental principles and its only important results. 182

Mill declared that he was avoiding the controversy between the method of logic and the method of intuition. His decision and experiences in his letters to Carlyle
now came to bear directly on how he viewed the relationship between science and art.

During the years 1829 and 1830, Mill wrote five essays which have been published under the heading *Essays On Some Unsettled Questions Of Political Economy*. In the fifth of these essays, the one entitled "On The Definition Of Political Economy," Mill made some comments which later served to guide him in formulating the relationship between science and art in his book on logic. Mill, writing about what he calls "the essentially distinct, though closely connected ideas of science and art" states:

These two ideas differ from one another as the understanding differs from the will, or as the indicative mood in grammar differs from the imperative. The one deals in facts, the other in precepts. Science is a collection of truths; art, a body of rules, or directions for conduct. The language of science is, This is, or, This is not; This does, or does not, happen. The language of art is, Do this; Avoid that. Science takes cognizance of a phenomenon, and endeavours to discover its law; art proposes to itself an end, and looks out for means to effect it.

In 1843 Mill published his *System Of Logic* in which he elaborated on his previous speculations on the relationship between art and science. In his work on logic he establishes his view of a science as an in-
quiry into the course of nature. He then proceeds, after indicating that he is using the word art in the all inclusive sense as applied to practice:

The relation in which rules of art stand to doctrines of science may be thus characterized. The art proposes to itself an end to be attained, defines the end, and hands it over to the science. The science receives it, considers it as a phenomenon or effect to be studied and having investigated its causes and conditions, sends it back to art with a theorem of the combinations of circumstances and according as any of them are or are not in human power, pronounces the end attainable or not. The only one of the premises, therefore, which Art supplies is the original major premise, which asserts that the attainment of the given end is desirable. Science then lends to Art the proposition (obtained by a series of inductions or of deductions) that the performance of certain actions will attain the end. From these premises Art concludes that the performance of these actions is desirable and, finding it also practicable, converts the theorem into a rule or precept.

In this statement, Mill has set up the conditions for the acceptable relationship between art and science. In effect, it states that the artist is free to select his own ends and objectives, but that he must submit his statements and, presumably acts, to the scrutiny of the scientist and logician, who will then be free to submit them to the rigorous tests of logic. Art has the advantage of supplying the first premise, but logic or science then has the privilege of submitting the premise to the tests of reason.
Mill continues with a further expansion of this theory:

The grounds, then, of every rule of art are to be found in the theorems of science. An art, or a body of art, consists of the rules, together with as much of the speculative propositions as comprises the justification of those rules. The complete art of any matter includes a selection of such a portion from the science as is necessary to show on what conditions the effects which the art aims at producing depend. And Art in general consists of the truths of Science, arranged in the most convenient order for practice, instead of the order which is the most convenient for thought. Science groups and arranges its truths so as to enable us to take in at one view as much as possible of the general order of the universe. Art, though it must assume the same general laws, follows them only into such of their detailed consequences as have led to the formation of rules of conduct, and brings together from parts of the field of science most remote from one another the truths relating to the production of the different and heterogeneous conditions necessary to each effect which the exigencies of practical life require to be produced.

He thus establishes the very important point that although Art consists of the truths of science, it is free to rearrange these truths as it sees fit for its purpose. Mill continues:

But although the reasonings which connect the end or purpose of every art with its means belong to the domain of Science, the definition of the end itself belongs exclusively to Art, and forms its peculiar province. Every art has one first principle, or general major premise, not borrowed from science; that which enunciates the object aimed at, and
affirms it to be a desirable object. The builder's art assumes that it is desirable to have buildings; architecture (as one of the fine arts), that it is desirable to have them beautiful or imposing.\(^{187}\)

Consequently, it may be assumed that poetry, like architecture as one of the fine arts, may desire to convey or express feeling, and that science will determine the conditions governing that expression. The poet's freedom consists in choosing what he wishes to express, but thereafter his work must submit to the tests of reason or logic.

Although Mill did not publish his *System Of Logic* until 1843, he had begun the work much earlier, at the very beginning of 1830, when he tells us he had begun to put on paper some of his early thoughts on logic.\(^{188}\) His *Five Essays On Some Unsettled Questions Of Political Economy* had been written, he tells us, in 1829 and 1830. In the fifth of these essays he set forth his outline which he later expanded into his full statement on the relationship between science and art. His theory of this relationship was that science and art both deal with truth but in different ways, and for different purposes:

And Art in general consists of the truths of Science arranged in the most convenient order for practice, instead of the order which is most convenient for thought. Science groups and arranges its truths so as to enable us to
take in at one view as much as possible of the general order of the universe. 189

Science and art deal with the same truths but in different orders and different ways for different purposes. Art motivates to an end; science provides the required information or knowledge for the end that art elects. Accordingly, Mill finds the truth of science and art to be a union in the devotion to truth, and their difference a difference in method and priority.

In his essay on Bentham, so highly praised with its counterpart on Coleridge by F. R. Leavis, Mill refers to one of Bentham's reputed animadversions on poetry:

Another aphorism is attributed to him, which is much more characteristic of his view of this subject: "All poetry is misrepresentation." Poetry, he thought, consisted essentially in exaggeration for effect: in proclaiming some one view of a thing very emphatically, and suppressing all the limitations and qualifications. This trait of character seems to us a curious example of what Mr. Carlyle strikingly calls "the completeness of limited men." Here is a philosopher who is happy within his narrow boundary as no man of indefinite range ever was; who flatters himself that he is so completely emancipated from the essential law of poor human intellect, by which it can only see one thing at a time well, that he can even turn round upon the imperfection and lay a solemn interdict upon it. Did Bentham really suppose that it is in poetry only that propositions cannot be exactly true, cannot contain in themselves all the limitations and qualifications with which they require to be
taken when applied to practice? We have seen how far his own prose propositions are from realizing this Utopia: and even the attempt to approach it would be incompatible not with poetry merely, but with oratory, and popular writing of every kind. Bentham's charge is true to the fullest extent; all writing which undertakes to make men feel truths as well as see them, does take up one point at a time, does seek to impress that, to drive that home, to make it sink into and colour the whole mind of the reader or hearer. It is justified in doing so, if the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion. All writing addressed to the feelings has a natural tendency to exaggeration; but Bentham should have remembered that in this, as in many things, we must aim at too much, to be assured of doing enough. 190

Here is Mill's answer not only to Bentham's criticism of poetry but also to his own doubts and questions about poetry and its methods. Here also in one of his most important writings was a significant statement that was consistent with his theory of poetry. Mill acknowledges that poetry is selective in its presentation and displays a tendency toward exaggeration, but he points out that the real justification for the method of poetry is found if 'the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion.' He then gives a very practical answer to the objections raised by Bentham and his followers, against the methods of poetry: he reminds his readers that Bentham, in order to avoid the charge of exaggeration and distortion of the truth, went to such absurd
lengths as to become incomprehensible.

But in his later years and more advanced studies, he fell into a Latin or German structure of sentence, foreign to the genius of the English language. He could not bear, for the sake of clearness and the reader's ease, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make, he insisted upon imbedding as parentheses in the very middle of the sentence itself. And thus the sense being so long suspended, and attention being required to the accessory ideas before the principal idea had been properly seized, it became difficult, without some practice, to make out the train of thought. It is fortunate that so many of the most important parts of his writings are free from this defect. We regard it as a reductio ad absurdum of his objection to poetry. In trying to write in a manner against which the same objection should not lie, he could stop nowhere short of utter unreadableness, and after all attained no more accuracy than is compatible with opinions as imperfect and one-sided as those of any poet or sentimentalist breathing. Judge then in what state literature and philosophy would be, and what chance they would have of influencing the multitude, if his objection were allowed, and all styles of writing banished which would not stand his test. 191

Here Mill has subjected the criticism raised by Bentham to the tests of intelligibility and practicality. His reminder about opinions that are imperfect and one-sided echoes the import of his remarks to Gustave d'Eichthal about the imperfect nature of statements
on truth. The implication is that there is a practical limitation to the statement or formulation of a truth; beyond a certain point one's efforts to be completely accurate become themselves an exaggeration and consequently lead to distortion and incomprehensibility. At this point one has reached the limit of language.

When Mill had completed his System Of Logic he had laid down the framework within which he placed his theory of poetry. The poet or artist has one significant freedom: the freedom to choose the object at which he aims; this is his first premise. Thereafter, science will guide him in achieving his aim and will test him by the rules of logic. This theory has a strong logical bias, as Mill acknowledged. It does not seem to be so satisfactory from a poetic or artistic point of view; it is too general and it seems to suggest certain limitations to the play of imagination. For example, would a logician be suitably prepared to criticize a poem which by a free play of imagination doesn't follow the sequences of logical thought? To consider an extreme example, what would such a theory do for a poem such as The Waste Land? It may be unfair to ask such questions because The Waste Land had not been written when Mill was forming his theory.
Nevertheless, logic is supposed to be universally applicable. Perhaps the real answer is given by Mill himself who while in the process of writing his *System Of Logic* wrote a letter to John Sterling on November 4, 1839:

> You may think it presumptuous in a man to be finishing a treatise on logic and not to have made up his mind finally on these great matters... But mine professes to be a logic of experience only, and to throw no further light upon the existence of truths not experimental, than is thrown by shewing to what extent reasoning from experience will carry us. Above all mine is a logic of the indicative mood alone—the logic of the imperative, in which the major premise says not *is* but *ought*—I do not meddle with.  

Mill was admitting that as a logician he was not prepared to deal with the logic of the imperative, the logic of the artist or poet. In saying this, he was setting the limits of his theory of poetry.

One of the chief sources of difficulty in a study of Mill's work is his use of language. Abrams has already commented adversely on his use of the verb, describe. Karl Britton writes that "Mill's theory of language is deficient, and leads him to an incorrect view of mathematics and an inadequate view of science." He also comments:

> Mill writes as if words had their meanings
independently of each other and of their context of utterance: as if discourse consisted in putting words together in a certain order, very much as bricks are put together in a wall. This of course will not do. The meaning of a word is, the meaning that it has in its context.  

Mill's first biographer, Alexander Bain, seems to have been more preoccupied with the grammatical and syntactical qualities of Mill's writing than with the mental qualities displayed. Bain, in fact, was not very complimentary about Mill's written expression. He writes:

I have already expressed the opinion that the language faculty in him was merely ordinary. Great cultivation had given him a good command of expression for all his purposes, but nothing could have made him a Macaulay. ...Critically examined, his style is wanting in delicate attention to the placing of qualifying words generally. He had apparently never thought of this matter farther than to satisfy himself that his sentences were intelligible.

Bain's remarks about Mill's use of language carry the suggestion of a greater sensitivity to an audience than to language; he places his emphasis on the functioning of Mill's personality in the presence of an audience rather than through the medium of written language.

Not only could he shape arguments to the reason, properly so called, he could also address the feelings. The Liberty and the Subjection Of Women, as well as his political writing generally, exemplify what might be called impassioned oratory; they
leave nothing unsaid that could enlist the strongest feelings of the readers. His best Parliamentary speeches appealed to the understanding and to the feelings alike, and he seldom, so far as I can judge, lost ground for want of suiting himself to a most difficult assembly. Although he could not clothe his feelings with the richness of poetry, he could warm with his subject, and work by the force of sympathy.  

In his essay, "Sedgwick's Discourse" Mill referred to the Ancients in matters of style:

The necessary effect of imitating "models" is, to set manner above matter. The imitation of the classics has perverted the whole taste of modern Europe on the subject of composition: it has made style a subject of cultivation and of praise, independently of ideas; whereas, by the ancients, style was never thought of but in complete subordination to matter. The ancients (in the good times of their literature) would as soon have thought of a coat in the abstract, as of style in the abstract: the merit of a style, in their eyes, was that it exactly fitted the thought. Their first aim was, by the assiduous study of their subject, to secure to themselves thoughts worth expressing; their next was, to find words which would convey those thoughts with the utmost degree of nicety; and only when this was made sure, did they think of ornament. Their style, therefore, whether ornamented or plain, grows out of their turn of thought; and may be admired, but cannot be imitated, by any one whose turn of thought is different.

Mill's admiration for the functional style of the Ancients was undoubtedly an affirmation of his own idea of style.
In his essay on Coleridge, Mill's style appears in a form that F. R. Leavis has described as classical. In this essay one can follow Mill as he turns his attention first to one side and then to the other, carefully scrutinizing the topic under examination:

Thus it is in regard to every important partial truth; there are always two conflicting modes of thought, one tending to give to that truth too large, the other to give it too small a place; and the history of opinion is generally an oscillation between these extremes. From the imperfection of the human faculties, it seldom happens that, even in the minds of eminent thinkers, each partial view of their subject passes for its worth, and none for more than its worth. But even if this just balance exist in the mind of the wiser teacher, it will not exist in his disciples, still less in the general mind. He cannot prevent that which is new in his doctrine, and on which, being new, he is forced to insist the most strongly, from making a disproportionate impression. The impetus necessary to overcome the obstacles which resist all novelties of opinion, seldom fails to carry the public mind almost as far on the contrary side of the perpendicular. Thus every excess in either direction determines a corresponding reaction; improvement consisting only in this, that the oscillation, each time, departs rather less widely from the centre, and an ever-increasing tendency is manifested to settle finally in it.

Now the Germano-Coleridgean doctrine is, in our view of the matter, the result of such a reaction. It expresses the revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the
eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic. In every respect it flies off in the contrary direction to its predecessor; yet faithful to the general law of improvement last noticed, it is less extreme in its opposition, it denies less of what is true in the doctrine it wars against, than had been the case in any previous philosophic reaction; and in particular, far less than when the philosophy of the eighteenth century triumphed, and so memorably abused its victory, over that which preceded it.  

Mill's style is one that he derived from writing his early argumentative essays for his father. It is formal, detached, straightforward, and clear. It is marked by generalizations and a careful development of ideas moving sequentially from point to point. The statements are usually very direct and seemingly unambiguous, although there are particular problems raised by his use of such words as the verb, describe; Karl Britton's remarks on this have already been noted. Mill's writing displays, in brief, a polished mature style marked by a careful, sequential movement from one idea to another.

In his essay, "On Liberty", Mill stressed the duty that one must bear toward himself:
The term duty to oneself, when it means anything more than prudence, means self-respect or self-development, and for none of these is any one accountable to his fellow creatures, because for none of them is it for the good of mankind that he be held accountable to them.199

Here Mill was drawing the line between the individual and society; he was setting a limit to the right that society should have in exerting power over the individual. He suggested the limit to the power of society in relation to the individuals that compose it in a letter to Gustave d'Eichthal, written on October 8, 1829:

The united forces of society never were, nor can be, directed to one single end, nor is there, so far as I can perceive, any reason for desiring that they should. Men do not come into the world to fulfil one single end, and there is no single end which if fulfilled even in the most complete manner would make them happy.200

The subject of self-culture and its importance for the development of the individual recurs again and again in Mill's writing. It was closely linked to his ideas on poetry, art, and religion, for it was concerned with belief, motivation, and feeling, and the individual's concern with values in life. On January 12, 1834, in a letter to Thomas Carlyle, Mill wrote:

Though I hold the good of the species (or rather of its several units) to be the ultimate end (which is the alpha and omega of my utilitarianism) I believe
with the fullest Belief that this end can in no other way be forwarded but by the means you speak of, namely by each taking for his exclusive aim the development of what is best in himself. I qualify or explain this doctrine no otherwise than as you yourself do, since you hold that every human creature has an appointed task to perform which task he is to know and find out for himself; this can only be by discovering in what manner such faculties as he possesses or can acquire may produce most good in the world; meaning by the world a larger or a smaller part of it as may happen.

Throughout his letters and essays Mill shows a constant concern for the individual, and this concern always brings him back to the love of truth and the love of virtue and an examination of the means available for the cultivation of these values.

On February 1, 1867, Mill, who had been elected Lord Rector of the University of St. Andrews, gave his Inaugural Address, in which he repeated some views on poetry that he had given on other occasions:

If we wish man to practise virtue, it is worth while trying to make them love virtue, and feel it an object in itself, and not a tax paid for leave to pursue other objects. ...Now of this elevated tone of mind the great source of inspiration is poetry, and all literature so far as it is poetical and artistic. We may imbibe exalted feelings from Plato, or Demosthenes, or Tacitus, but it is in so far as those great men are not solely philosophers, or orators, or historians, but poets and artists. Nor is it only loftiness, only the heroic feelings, that are bred by poetic cultivation. Its power is as great in calming the soul as in elevating it—in fos-
tering the milder emotions, as the more exalted. It brings home to us all those aspects of life which take hold of our nature on its unselfish side, and lead us to identify our joy and grief with the good or ill of the system of which we form a part; and all those solemn or pensive feelings, which without having any direct application to conduct, incline us to take life seriously, and predispose us to the reception of anything which comes before us in the shape of duty. Who does not feel a better man after a course of Dante, or of Wordsworth, or, I will add, of Lucretius or the Georgics, or after brooding over Gray's "Elegy", or Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"? I have spoken of poetry, but all the other modes of art produce similar effects in their degree.

Abrams writing of the literary methods and theories of the early nineteenth century makes the following observation:

The romantic 'movement' in England is largely a convenient fiction of the historian, but one document, Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads of 1800, written to justify on universal grounds an 'experiment' in poetic language, does have something of the aspect of a romantic manifesto. In part the Preface (together with the passages and appendix Wordsworth added in 1802) owes its special position to the fact that it presented a set of propositions about the nature and criteria of poetry which were widely adopted by Wordsworth's contemporaries, including those who were least in sympathy with what they supposed to be Wordsworth's own poetic aims. All these propositions rely upon the basic assertion, which usually serves as the definition of poetry,
that:

(1) Poetry is the expression or overflow of feeling, or emerges from a process of imagination in which feelings play the crucial part.\textsuperscript{203}

Abrams adds a recapitulation of the more salient features of Romantic theory as set out in Wordsworth's statements and then adds in summary:

The most important function of poetry is, by its pleasurable resources, to foster and subtilize the sensibility, emotions, and sympathies of the reader. Romantic poetry remains poetry with a purpose, but in place of 'solas and doctryne', its aim becomes primarily to cultivate the affective elements of human nature. As Wordsworth put what became a commonplace of his age: 'The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure,' to widen their sympathies, and to produce or enlarge the capability 'of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants.'\textsuperscript{204}

The qualities of Mill's poetic theory, with its emphasis on feeling, spontaneity, of utterance, and the born poet, echo Wordsworth's statements and place it within the same Romantic purview.

While Mill was aware of the theological bias of his thought and of some of the limits imposed by his mode of thinking, there were other limits of which he seemed unaware. Abrams, in pointing out that for most theorists of Wordsworth's generation the lyric became the essentially poetic form,\textsuperscript{205} adds the following observation:
The resort to the lyric as the paradigm for poetic theory—which first manifested itself at the time of the lyric revival in the generation of Gray, Collins, and the Warton --was of course accompanied, in the romantic period, by a cultivation of this form to a degree, and in a variety of excellence, which was without precedent in literary history. It was not only that romantic poets exploited the song, the elegy, and the ode. They also tended to lyricize those poems which Aristotle had characterized as 'possessing a certain magnitude,' by substituting for character, plot, or exposition, other elements which had earlier constituted the materials only of the pettier forms. As A. C. Bradley said of 'The Long Poem in Wordsworth's Age,' the centre of interest is inward. It is an interest in emotion, thought, will, rather than in scenes, events, actions ....'206

Mill, by addressing his attention to the lyric and the inward state, was following in the Romantic tradition, but by seeking to confine poetry to the lyric207 was also adding a limitation of his own to the idea of poetry.

It has been noted already that Mill said that the truth of poetry and the truth of fiction were different truths.208 By excluding fiction per se from poetry, Mill was adding the severest restriction of all: he was restricting the scope and freedom of the imagination. His reasons for placing this limitation on poetry seem to derive largely from his undervaluing of the imagination. His adherence to the associationist theory that his father had derived from Hartley led naturally
to the sort of mechanical view of the imagination that Coleridge abhorred. It has already been indicated that Mill viewed the imagination as being no special gift of nature.\textsuperscript{209} He felt that it had to be disciplined and controlled by Benthamic standards of literal truth. He presented this view in one of his essays on religion:

To me it seems that human life, small and confined as it is, and as, considered merely in the present, it is likely to remain even when the progress of material and moral improvement may have freed it from the greater part of its present calamities, stands greatly in need of any wider range and greater height of aspiration for itself and its destination, which the exercise of imagination can yield to it without running counter to the evidence of fact; and that it is a part of wisdom to make the most of any, even small, probabilities on this subject, which furnish imagination with any footing to support itself upon. And I am satisfied that the cultivation of such a tendency in the imagination, provided it goes on pari passu with the cultivation of severe reason, has no necessary tendency to pervert the judgment; but that it is possible to form a perfectly sober estimate of the evidences on both sides of a question and yet to let the imagination dwell by preference on those possibilities, which are at once the most comforting and the most improving, without in the least degree over-rating the solidity of the grounds for expecting that these rather than any others will be the possibilities actually realized.\textsuperscript{210}

It is curious that Mill's preoccupation with the necessity of adhering to the evidence of fact should
have prevented him from seeing that there are priori-
ties in the kinds of truth and that too close an adher-
ence to fact inhibits the free play of the imagination.

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, in their *Theory Of*
*Literature* suggest some of the outstanding features of
imaginative literature:

If we recognize 'fictionality', 'invention', or
'imagination' as the distinguishing trait of
literature, we think thus of literature in
terms of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac,
Keats rather than of Cicero or Montaigne,
Bossuet, or Emerson. Admittedly, there will
be 'boundary' cases, works like Plato's
*Republic* to which it would be difficult to
deny, at least in the great myths, passages
of 'invention' and 'fictionality', while they
are at the same time primarily works of philo-
sophy. This conception of literature is des-
criptive, not evaluative.211

In the light of such a view of literature Mill's ex-
clusion of fictionality and invention from his poetic
theory seems narrow indeed.

Mill's emphasis on feeling as the essential charac-
teristic of poetry and his concomitant neglect of the
imagination have a peculiar significance in relation to
his poetic theory, symbolizing the conflicting influences
of the eighteenth century ideas that had governed his
education and the Romanticism which had become so deeply
influential in his life. Sir Maurice Bowra, in dis-
dussing the Romantic view of the imagination, helps to
place Mill's poetic theory in clearer perspective.
Speaking of the Romantics he says:

So far from thinking that the imagination deals with the non-existent, they insist that it reveals an important kind of truth. They believe that when it is at work it sees things to which the ordinary intelligence is blind and that it is intimately connected with a special insight or perception or intuition. Indeed, imagination and insight are in fact inseparable and form for all practical purposes a single faculty. Insight both awakes the imagination to work and is in turn sharpened by it when it is at work. This is the assumption on which the Romantics wrote poetry. It means that, when their creative gifts are engaged, they are inspired by their sense of the mystery of things to probe it with a peculiar insight and to shape their discoveries into imaginative forms. Nor is this process difficult to understand. Most of us, when we use our imaginations, are in the first place stirred by some alluring puzzle which calls for a solution, and in the second place enabled by our own creations in the mind to see much that was before dark or unintelligible. As our fancies take coherent shape, we see more clearly what has puzzled and perplexed us. This is what the Romantics do. They combine imagination and truth because their creations are inspired and controlled by a peculiar insight.212

With his associationist view of the imagination and his reservations about the role of fiction, Mill set sharp limits to his poetic theory.

Northrop Frye, with his theory of myths, provides us with a deeper insight of Romanticism and a clearer conception of the limits of Mill's theory:

The Romantic myth is the form in which the Romantic poet expresses the recovery, for man, of what he formerly ascribed to gods,
heroes, or the forces of nature. When man is recognized to be a myth-making animal, mythical language is also recognized to be the language, not for what is true, but for what could be made true. Mythology, thus, with Romanticism, as we have seen, ceases to be fables about the actions of superior powers and becomes a structure of human concern. It thereby takes over some aspects of religion. This does not mean that poetry becomes a religion or a substitute for religion. It means that what was formerly a structure of belief understood rationally, through doctrinal and conceptual statement, is now, from the Romantic movement onward, increasingly understood, and interpreted imaginatively, as a structure of what might and could be true. 213

Viewed in this light one might wonder if there was not a final irony in that Mill, who consciously excluded fiction from poetry, placed his poetic theory within the context of the modern myth of progress.
CHAPTER I


3 Ibid., p. 155.


5 Ibid., p. 71.


7 Ibid.


9 Morley, Recollections, p. 55.

10 A Correspondence between John Sterling and Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1897), p. 71.


14 Ibid., p. 4.

15 Ibid., p. 12.
16 Ibid.
18 Tillyard, p. 35.
20 Morley, Recollections, p. 59.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 15.
23 Ibid., p. 11.
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