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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by John William Warren entitled "Walter Savage Landor's Views on English Life and Literature: A Critical Study of His English Imaginary Conversations." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR'S VIEWS OF ENGLISH LIFE AND LITERATURE: A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS ENGLISH IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

John William Warren

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J. W. W.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Walter Savage Landor,--*euge et vale*!--Little wilt thou care for us or our criticisms. Why livest thou in Italy, being an English gentleman of genius, education, rank, and estate? This, perhaps, is no business of ours; yet, with all thy wayward fancies and sweeping contempts, and, shall we say it, moody bigotries, thou hast, we verily believe, an English heart; nor need England be ashamed of thee (except when thou dost unwarrantably arraign her,) wherever thy home be fixed, or in whatever tongue, (for thou hast the gift of tongues,) flow forth the continuous stream of thy written or oral eloquence. Old friend--farewell![1]

When John Wilson's review of Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (from which the preceding excerpt was taken) appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 182 , Landor had lived in Italy continuously for nine years; and it was not until eight years later that he returned to visit in his native country. This apostrophic epilogue alludes to Landor's strong convictions and to their unfortunate consequences which ultimately led to his self-exile to Italy. But above all, the reviewer perceives a basic trait of Landor's character that is demonstrated repeatedly in the Imaginary Conversations to be treated in this study: Landor has "an English heart."

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[1]John Wilson, "*Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*. By Walter Savage Landor, Esq.," *Blackwood's Magazine*, XV (1824), 466.

It is significant, in this respect, that the best poetry and prose of Landor was produced by a man no longer a spiritual citizen of his native land. In reference to this self-exile, Landor declared, "My country is now Italy, where I have a residence for life, and nothing but the education and settlement of my children would make me at all desirous of seeing England again."[2] But the fact that he wrote as many Conversations about English personages as he did indicates his continued interest in his homeland. Of the compiled one hundred and fifty-six Imaginary Conversations in T. Earle Welby and Stephen Wheeler's edition of The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor (1927-1936), T. Earle Welby has classified thirty-five as "English" in the nature of speakers and substance. And frequently, English speakers and themes relating to England appear in the Italian and in the Roman and Greek dialogues. It was also in Italy that Landor definitely abandoned Latin for English as the medium of his shorter poems. It has been suggested that as an esthetic aristocrat, Landor may have wished to employ a language "unprofaned by landlords, butchers, slanderers, or political orators. Living in a foreign country, Landor found English to be such a language. In Great Britain it was the common pavement for everyone to

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[2]John Forster, Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (Boston, 1869), p. 394.

tread; at Florence it was the reserved space behind the altar rail."[3] In Landor's later years, Thomas Carlyle said of him: "When Landor was young, he went to Italy, believing that England was too base a place for a man of honour to dwell in; but he soon came to discover that Italy was intrinsically baser."[4] A century later, Havelock Ellis spoke of Landor as one who was "proud of being an Englishman--very proud of being an 'English gentleman.'"[5]

Thus far in Landor scholarship, no specific study has dealt with Landor's English sentiments and interests. For the purpose of this dissertation, a critical study of Landor's English Imaginary Conversations,[6] in addition to a discussion of Landor's treatment of his sources, will endeavor to show Landor's attitude toward English literary men and statesmen and his views on English politics, religion, and literature. Even though R. H. Super has cogently defended his contention that Charles G. Crump's edition of

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[3]Frederick Erastus Pierce, Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation (New Haven, 1928), p. 236.

[4]D. A. Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, 1848-1853 (London, 1927), p. 125.

[5]Havelock Ellis, From Marlowe to Shaw (London, 1950), p. 160.

[6]This classification is that of T. Earle Welby in volumes IV, V, and VI of The Complete Works. Welby has grouped all the Imaginary Conversations according to nationalities.

Landor's prose is still the most satisfactory one, students will find that Welby's plan of grouping the Imaginary Conversations by nationalities is preferable to Crump's for the sort of close study of a limited subject that a dissertation affords.

To provide a workable limitation of a study on Landor has been no easy task for at least two reasons. In the first place, none of the complete editions of Landor's works are entirely satisfactory. In the several editions of his works, his poetry has fared well.[7] In the four volumes devoted to poetry in the most recent edition, by Welby and Wheeler (1927-1936), Wheeler has produced an accurate text that is adequately indexed and annotated. On the other hand, the twelve volumes of prose, edited by T. Earle Welby, are lacking in completeness and in a careful collation of the texts. Not only is this edition of Landor's prose the only important one since 1846 that lacks an index, but Welby's arrangement, according to R. H. Super, can be "bewildering, especially when he puts into an 'Appendix' in the middle of Volume IX some of the longer variant readings of Conversations printed in Volumes I, III, IV,

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[7]For an exacting and detailed account and evaluation of Landor scholarship, see R. H. Super, "Walter Savage Landor," The English Romantic Poets and Essayists: A Review of Research and Criticism (New York, 1957), p. 232.

and VI."[8] Secondly, the difficulty of analyzing the subject matter of Landor's prose is particularly evident in a brief comparison of the three major editions: John Forster's The Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor, 8 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874-1876); Charles G. Crump's Imaginary Conversations, 6 vols. (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1891); T. Earle Welby's The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor, Volumes I-XII (London: Chapman and Hall, 1927-1936). No two of these editors group the Imaginary Conversations in the same way.

The blame for this difficulty in the classification of the dialogues certainly should not fall upon Landor's editors. The author's use of the dialogue form and the variety of subjects have long been recognized as barriers to a tightly unified organization. In 1837 a contemporary reviewer, William Henry Smith, pointed out that:

> It is remarkable that the form of the dialogue has never been taken advantage of by Mr. Landor, in order to investigate any one subject thoroughly; either by giving to one speaker all the objections, and furnishing the other with all the replies and explanations, or by animating with equal intelligence and ardour the champions of two opposite opinions. His thoughts are, for the most part, detached, desultory, and manifesting more vigour than patience of reflection.[9]

Landor bibliography has grown slowly but steadily

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[8]Super, p. 233.

[9]William Henry Smith, "Works of Mr. W. S. Landor," Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 128-129.

in the twentieth century. Much in keeping with his own prophecy that he should "dine late," most of the extensive Landor critical research remains in unpublished theses and dissertations. But during the past decade, Landor has been the subject of two biographies: R. H. Super's Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (New York: New York University Press, 1954) and Malcolm Elwin's Landor: A Replevin (London: Macdonald, 1957). Both in anthologies and in scholarly studies, Landor's reputation stands primarily upon his prose. Super, in his discussion of Landor scholarship, comments upon the sparsity of scholarly attention to the Imaginary Conversations despite the general belief that they are the heart of Landor's literary production.[10] That Landor considered his own prose more significant than his poetry is evident in the famous passage from the dialogue between himself and Archdeacon Hare: "Poetry was always my amusement, prose my study and business.... I shall dine late; but the dining room will be well lighted, the guests few and select."[11] The present study attempts to fill a conspicuous vacancy among the critical treatments of Landor's Imaginary Conversations. Attention to Landor's

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[10]Super, p. 247.

[11]T. Earle Welby, ed., The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor, Prose, Volumes I-XII (London, 1927), VI, 37. In other references, this edition will be designated as Works.

Italian and Roman and Greek Conversations has appeared in two unpublished dissertations,[12] but no specialized study of the "English" Conversations has yet been done.

Landor's purpose in employing the dialogue form was obvious to his contemporaries. Julius Charles Hare, in his review of Landor's 1824 edition of Imaginary Conversations, stated: "Often, however, the author's main object has been to communicate his own sentiments upon sundry questions of literature, politics, and morals; and he has chosen rather to express them in dialogue than monotonously by talking right to an end."[13]

Because of the nature of the dialogue, one of the main problems in a study of the Imaginary Conversations is to determine Landor's proper character and position in this work. The author cannot automatically be held responsible for any particular opinions or arguments since the chief requirement of the dialogue form is that these opinions or arguments be characteristic of the speakers. Two questions arise then for consideration: How much is merely dramatic

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[12]Doris Peterson's Landor's Treatment of His Source Materials in the Imaginary Conversations Greek and Roman (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1942) and Felice Elkins' Walter Savage Landor's Studies of Italian Life and Literature (University of Pennsylvania, 1934).

[13]Julius Charles Hare, "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," London Magazine, IX (January-June, 1824), 540.

in these opinions? What proportion of Landor's own ideas has he attributed to his interlocutors? Three criteria will be employed in this research project to determine Landor's opinions. First, if some opinions are more frequently advanced, more cogently presented, and more plausibly supported than others throughout several dialogues, then these sentiments may justly be considered Landor's. Secondly, Landor has furnished a clue in his own writings. In his dedications and prefaces, in supplementary pages to some conversations, in notes to others, he has often spoken in his own person upon subjects connected with or arising from the dialogues. By comparing then what comes from the author with what he assigns to his speakers, we can be fairly certain that we have derived the writer's own opinions. Thirdly, Landor appears as a speaker in three of the English Imaginary Conversations. Robert Southey and Landor are the speakers in two Conversations, and Archdeacon Hare and Landor in another. In all probability then, by assigning to Landor sentiments that he has ascribed to himself, we shall be in no danger of attributing to him any opinion or proposition that he may have disclaimed.

Two examples will demonstrate how Landor used the characters in the Imaginary Conversations as his mouthpieces. In a letter to Southey, dated May, 1823, Landor refers to the horrible accounts of Ireland that he has

heard about in Italy and announces that he intends to insert in the Conversation between Franklin and Washington his ideas on the means of bettering Irish conditions.[14] Again in a letter to Forster in 1851, Landor states that while reading he has had "a reflection which I shall put into Hare's mouth in a Conversation I am writing."[15]

In the preface of the 1824 edition of the Imaginary Conversations, Landor proposes to the public the ultimate object of his project:

> Wherever ground is dug for any purpose, there spring up plants of various kinds, from that purpose altogether alien; most of them are thrown away, a few collected: thus I, occupying my mind in enquiries and speculations which may amuse my decline of life, and shew to others the features of the times in which we live and have been living, at one moment write for business, at another for relaxation, turn over many books, lay open many facts, and gather many fancies which I must relinquish on the road. Should health and peace of mind remain to me, and the enjoyment of a country, where, if there isnone to assist, at least there is none to molest me, I hope to leave behind me completed the great object of my studies, an orderly and solid work in history, and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age.[16]

Whether Landor is referring to his Imaginary Conversations as the "plants of various kinds" alien to his larger purpose, "an orderly and solid work in history," or whether he

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[14]Forster, p. 372.

[15]Ibid., p. 639.

[16]Walter Savage Landor, Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen (London, 1824), pp. xii-xiii.

intended these first Conversations to be the beginning of this great historical endeavor are problems that Landor's critics may never solve. Doris Peterson, in her unpublished dissertation, believes that the Imaginary Conversations at this time (1824) were "merely the incidental product of his more solid historical research."[17] If this interpretation be true, whatever efforts Landor may have expended on his proposed work of history were at any rate not wasted, for they are the basis of his Imaginary Conversations.

Concerning Landor's purpose in writing his Imaginary Conversations, it is significant to note that some two and a half years before he had stated his purpose of producing "an orderly and solid work in history," his interest in the dialogue form is mentioned in the Southey-Landor correspondence. In a letter to Landor dated August 14, 1820, Southey remarks, "One of my occupations at this time is a series of dialogues, upon a plan which was suggested by Boethius."[18] Over a year later, Landor returns to the subject in a letter to Southey from Florence. On March 9, 1822, Landor writes, "It is long ago since you first told me that you were writing some dialogues. I began to do the same thing after you, having formerly written two or three

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[17]Peterson, p. 411, n. 3.

[18]John Wood Warter, ed., Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey, 4 vols. (London, 1856), III, 207.

about the time when the first income tax was imposed.[19] I have now written fifteen new ones.... I hope your dialogues are printed, that they may give some credit and fashion to this manner of composition."[20]

This letter to Southey seems to show more than an "incidental" interest in the choice of form for and the writing of the Imaginary Conversations. It may be that such early dialogues as Henry the Fourth and Sir Arnold Savage and Lord Grenville and Burke, written twenty years before this letter, qualify to be numbered among the "plants of various kinds." But in consideration of the number of Conversations that Landor states he had written by March, 1822, and the repeated publications of Imaginary Conversations, it would seem presumptuous to say that Landor, even in 1824, thought of his dialogues as merely "incidental."[21]

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[19]The first income tax was imposed by William Pitt in 1799.

[20]Forster, p. 314.

[21]
1822	March	First Imaginary Conversations sent to Longmans.
1823	July	Southey and Porson in London Magazine.
1824	March	First two volumes published.
1825	April	Publication of third volume suspended because of Landor's quarrel with John Taylor.
1826	January	Second edition published by Colburn.
1828	May	Third volume published by Colburn.
1829	May	Fourth and fifth volumes published by Duncan at the Baths of Lucca.
1834	Autumn	Citation and Examination of William

Furthermore, from the time of Landor's first published work, Poems in 1795, to the 1824 "Preface," his phrase "plants of various kinds" could logically apply to several different types of writing he was doing. During these twenty-nine years, Landor had published Poems (1795), Gebir (1797), Poems from the Arabic and Persian (1800), Poetry by the Author of Gebir (1802), Simonidea (1806), Guy's Porridge Pot (1808), Letters to Riquelme (1809), Ode ad Gustavum Regem (1810), Count Julian (1812), Commentary on the Memoirs of Fox (1812), Letters of Calvus (1813), Idyllia (1815), Sponsalia Polyxenae (1819), Idyllia Heroica (1820), Poche Osservazioni (1821). These publications include lyrical, elegiac, and satirical poetry, odes, and epistolary, pamphlet, and dramatic types of writing.

In Southey's reply to Landor's letter of March 9, 1822, the first sentence mentions the dialogue form: "I shall rejoice to see your 'Dialogues.' Mine are consecutive,

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		Shakespeare published.
1836	March	Pericles and Aspasia published.
1837	December	The Pentameron and Pentalogia published.
1839	April	Andrea of Hungary and Giovanna of Naples published.
1843		Began preparation of collected works.
1846	June	The Works of Walter Savage Landor published in two volumes.
1848	May	Imaginary Conversations on the Affairs and Prospects of Italy published.
1853	April	Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans published.

and will have nothing of that dramatic variety of which you will make the most. My plan grew out of Boethius, though it has since been so modified, that the origin would not be suspected."[22] Then again before the publication of the first two volumes of the Imaginary Conversations, Landor wrote to Southey that "in two thousand years there have not been five volumes of prose equal in their contents to this."[23] Twenty years later in 1844, Landor again spoke of his Imaginary Conversations with pride, in a letter to Forster, his future biographer: "My Conversations, whatever their demerits, will exhibit more qualities and postures of the human mind than any other book published in my day."[24]

In this study, the critical treatment of the thirty-five English Imaginary Conversations will constitute four remaining chapters and a conclusion. Chapter Two includes those dialogues which, either wholly or in part, reveal Landor's ideas on political matters concerning kings, government and social reform, and English statesmen. Chapter Three analyzes the author's attitude toward religion and religious issues. Chapter Four presents Landor's literary

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[22]May 27, 1822, Warter, III, 311.

[23]Forster, p. 327.

[24]Ibid., p. 584.

criticism as revealed in these English Conversations and thus summarizes his views on philology, literature, and on certain literary figures. Chapter Five deals with those dialogues which are primarily dramatic and which contain little or no exposition as such on political, religious, or literary issues. The conclusion, Chapter Six, comments briefly upon Landor's personality as revealed in this portion of his prose.

The plan of this study is to discuss the background and sources of each dialogue at its first appearance in one of the following chapters unless otherwise specified in the footnotes. It is necessary to add that tabulation of sources is almost impossible in Landor's writings. At least two reasons have been suggested for this difficulty: Landor's wide reading and his usual dependence upon his memory.[25] Leigh Hunt, for instance, noted with surprise how few books Landor kept about him.[26] According to Forster, it seemed to be Landor's practice to read a book and then give it away.[27] Mrs. Lynn Linton gave a similar account of his last years when she recalled that he "had not more than a

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[25]George Joseph Becher, The Political Idealism of Walter Savage Landor (Unpublished dissertation, University of Washington, 1937), p. 188.

[26]Forster, p. 440.

[27]Ibid.

dozen books, a Milton, a Homer, a Horace, a Ben Jonson, and a Shakespeare's Sonnets."[28]

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[28]Mrs. Lynn Linton, "Reminiscences of Walter Savage Landor," Fraser's Magazine, II (1870), 113.

CHAPTER II

LANDOR'S VIEWS ON ENGLISH STATESMEN AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

When the first series of Walter Savage Landor's Imaginary Conversations appeared in 1824, Julius Charles Hare, the reviewer in the London Magazine, alluded to Landor's continued interest in political matters: "Is it to be wondered at, is it to be regretted after this, that the constitution, the laws, the institutions, the policy of England should be the perpetual theme of Mr. Landor's virulent?"[1] The fact that nearly all the prose works written before this first series of Conversations had been purely political in nature indicates that politics held a significant place in Landor's thought. Havelock Ellis, in his book, From Marlowe to Shaw, has described Landor as a republican of the school of Plutarch with a lively hatred of kings and has suggested that his aristocratic republicanism was irreconcilable with modern democracy, which, Landor thought, would inevitably lead to despotism.[2] Yet an ardent love of freedom is evident in his support of practical political measures that would remove Catholic

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[1]Julius Charles Hare, "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," London Magazine, IX (January-June, 1824), 531.

[2]Havelock Ellis, From Marlowe to Shaw (London, 1950), p. 171.

disabilities, that would mitigate penal laws, and that favored land legislation for the relief of Ireland and the Factory Acts.[3] Landor may aptly be called an English Paladin of liberty because his emphasis upon freedom is basic to his whole political commentary.

Thirteen of the English Imaginary Conversations may be classified as political because of the nature of the speakers and the content. Since Landor rarely developed one idea or theme fully in one or several dialogues, a chronological arrangement has been employed in handling these Conversations. The Middle English group includes Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley, John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, and King Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage. In the Renaissance group are Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, King James I and Isaac Casaubon, and Queen Elizabeth, Cecil, Duke of Anjou and De La Motte Fenelon. Relative to the Puritan and Restoration Period, Landor wrote Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble and Oliver Cromwell and Sir Oliver Cromwell. Drawing from the political resources of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Landor produced Windham and Sheridan, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, Romilly and Wilberforce, Romilly and Perceval, and Lord Chesterfield and Lord Chatham.

In this study, Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley

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[3]Ibid.

is given first place as it was in the 1824 edition of the Imaginary Conversations. But it was not until 1828 that this dialogue received specific mention in periodical reviews. Even then only a one-sentence statement appeared: "It is short, and written in parts, with force and spirit; but partakes more of the nature of a scene from a drama than a formal conversation, and is far from being satisfactory or complete."[4] Since this review, critical attention of Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley has been meager. John Forster, in his biography of Landor, makes brief mention of the dialogue and states that the moral of it is "contempt for the princes of Europe, and respect for Saladin."[5] This dialogue appeared in the Crump edition (1891) and in Welby's Complete Works (1927-36) with little additional comment to that of Forster's biographical edition in 1874-76.

The chronicles of the reign of Richard I (1189-99) are the main sources covering the last ten years of Richard's life: Ambrose, Gervase of Canterbury, Chronica de Mailros, Coggeshall, Devizes (1189-92), Diato, Histoire de Guillaume Marechal, Hoveden (1192-99), Itinerarium, Newburgh, Benedict

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[4]"Landor's Imaginary Conversations," New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 11.

[5]John Forster, Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (Boston, 1869), p. 333.

of Peterborough to 1192, and Rigord.[6] Of these chronicles, Crump cites Hoveden's Chronicles and Memorials as the probable source of Landor's dialogue.[7] Although we may not be able to find the specific source that Landor read for his knowledge of Richard I and other English kings, we do know that this information was available in published form in his day. The first really complete edition of the chronicles was published by Thomas Hearne in 1719 (Oxford, 3 vols.), fifty-four years before Landor's birth.[8]

The dialogue is motivated by the meeting of Richard I, who has just returned from the third crusade and his imprisonment in Germany, and the Abbot of Boxley, his old confessor. Landor is historically accurate in the framework of the dramatic situation. John T. Appleby, in his biography of King John, states that as soon as the Chief Justiciar in London had heard of the capture of Richard, he had sent the Abbots of Boxley and Robertsbridge to Germany to try to find him. They found their king in Bavaria where they reported to Richard on the state of his kingdom, and

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[6]Charles Gross, The Sources and Literature of English History (London, 1900), pp. 254-257.

[7]Charles G. Crump, ed., Imaginary Conversations. By Walter Savage Landor, 6 vols. (London, 1891), II, 131n.

[8]Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I, edited by Richard Howlett (London, 1884), I, lv.

he complained about John's conduct.[9]

Although this dialogue may be considered more religious than political, Landor has taken full advantage of the Kingdom of Richard to comment upon rulers. Landor has the king tell the Abbot of the superiority of English kings: "I have given away thrones, but never shall they be torn from me; rather than this, a king of England shall bend before an emperor of Germany, but only to rise up again in all his majesty and strength."[10] In Richard's reference to the English favor toward his brother John, we have Landor contrasting two kinds of rulers.

The capacity and courage of the kings preceding Richard and John are alluded to: "What nation hath ever witnessed such a succession of brave kings, two hundred years together, as have reigned uninterruptedly in England? Example formed them, danger nurtured them, peace and war in an equal degree were supporters of their throne."[11] If this succession is not to be broken, Richard must remain king. Landor remains true to history once again in depicting this rift between Richard and John. Just as Landor's

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[9]John T. Appleby, John: King of England (New York, 1959), p. 64.

[10]Works, IV, 8.

[11]Ibid., IV, 7.

Richard tells the Abbot of Boxley that John cannot succeed him either by virtue or force, so history records Richard as saying: "My brother John is not the man to conquer a country if there is a single person able to make the slightest resistance to his attempts."[12] Concerning John's succession to the throne, Landor's Richard asks: "What will remain to our country but the bitter recollection of her extinguished glory?"[13] This glory is so great to Richard that later in the dialogue he speaks specifically of the "superiority of England."[14]

Even Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, who had defeated the Christians and captured Jerusalem, had recognized the worthiness of Richard above that of the so-called Christian princes. Richard tells the Abbot that "the Christian princes judged me from their own worthlessness: Saladin judged of me from himself: to them he sent pearls and precious stones, to me figs and dates, and I am resolved from that moment to contend with him and love him."[15] As king, Richard did not requisition and accumulate wealth. Earlier in the Conversation he told his old confessor that the gold and silver taken from the caravan of Egypt had been distributed among

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[12]Appleby, p. 65.

[13]Works, IV, 8.

[14]Ibid., IV, 13.

[15]Ibid., IV, 10.

his soldiers, "for the only prizes worthy of me were Saladin and Jerusalem."[16] According to Landor's own note, title and rank are not responsible for the dignity of a sovereign, but "the valour, the power, the wealth, the civilisation /sic/, of those he governs."[17] Landor humorously exhibits his attitude toward the pretence and superficiality of rank: "In our days, an adventurer to whom a petty prince or his valet has given a pennyworth of ribbon, looks proudly and disdainfully on anyone who has nothing else in his button-hole than the button."[18]

Thus to Landor, true rank or dignity is more worthy than titular position. When Richard is recounting his conquest of Cyprus and the capture of the emperor and his daughter, Richard says: "We placed his daughter under the protection of Jane,[19] knowing her sweet temper and courtesy, and reminding her that a lady of rank rises one step higher by misfortune."[20] Furthermore, the traits that commanded Richard's esteem for Saladin, "his wisdom, his courage, his courtesy, his fidelity," are the very traits that Richard possessed as well as that "succession of brave kings," who

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[16] Ibid., IV, 9.

[17] Ibid., IV, 8.

[18] Ibid., IV, 8-9n.

[19] Queen of Sicily, according to Landor's own note.

[20] Works, IV, 13.

for two hundred years "reigned uninterruptedly in England."[21]

The second Imaginary Conversation to be considered for its political thought is John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent. First published in the 1829 edition of Imaginary Conversations, this dialogue later appeared in Landor's Works in 1846, in Forster's Works and Life in 1876 (classified among the "Dialogues of Famous Women"), then in the Crump edition in 1891, and finally in Welby and Wheeler's Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor (1927-1936). No mention of this dialogue occurs in the contemporary reviews of either the 1829 or the 1846 edition. In fact, the only critical attention given to this dialogue is Forster's very brief reference to it as one of several Conversations taken from English biography.[22] He then annotates his listing with a one-sentence comment upon the circumstances preceding the conversation of the two speakers.

The chief original sources for John of Gaunt's life are Sir John Froisart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Brittany, Flanders, and the Adjoining Countries (1325-1400), the Chronicon Angliae (1328-1388), and the Chronicle of Henry Knighton. During Landor's lifetime, seventeen years before the John of Gaunt and Joanna

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[21] Ibid., IV, 7. [22] Forster, p. 422.

of Kent was first published, a reprint of John Bouchier, Lord Berners' translation of Froissart's Chronicles from the original French into English (1523-1525) was published in London in 1812.[23]

In this dialogue Landor limits the situation to the historical scene where the people have risen in open revolt against John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster), suspected of plotting to seize the throne. In Landor's Conversation, it is only by the intercession of the popular idol, the widow of Gaunt's brother and the mother of the future Richard II, that he is saved. It is somewhat difficult to harmonize Landor's place and time for this meeting with historical facts. Landor has Joanna appearing in Gaunt's besieged house, which is being pelted with bricks and stones and arrows.[24] Yet history records Gaunt's taking refuge in Joanna's house after a mob attacked the Duke's house with the intent to kill him and burn his mansion over him.[25] Concerning the time of this dialogue, Forster speaks of Joanna of

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[23]Sir John Froissart, Chronicles of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Brittany, Flanders, and the Adjoining Countries, Translated by John Bourchier, Lord Berners (Reprinted from Pynson's editions of 1523 and 1525), 2 vols. (London, 1812), title page.

[24]Works, IV, 15.

[25]George Macaulay Trevelyan, England in the Age of Wycliffe (London, 1909), p. 46.

Kent as a widow, thus placing the event after the death of the Black Prince.[26] On the other hand, Welby footnotes the title of this Conversation in his edition with the following comment: "The incident with which Landor deals is to be dated shortly before, not after, the death of Edward III."[27] The latter assumption, as we shall see in later discussion of the dialogue, is neither implicit in the speeches nor consistent with historical facts. For example, Joanna cries out in one instance: "O my Edward! my own so lately! Thy memory--thy beloved image which never hath abandoned me--makes me bold."[28]

John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, in one respect, is Landor's comment upon John of Gaunt's alleged disloyalty to his family. A brief survey of the historical background of the dramatic situation is illuminating. Ten years before the Black Prince's death in 1376, Gaunt had aided his eldest brother in Aquitaine and again in 1370 was present with him at the sack of Limoges. Soon thereafter, Edward's health broke down, and he went home, leaving John as his lieutenant. For the next several years Gaunt remained aboard in command of the army until his brother's poor health required his return to England. Upon his return, he was

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[26]Forster, pp. 422-23. [27]Works, IV, 15n.

[28]Ibid., IV, 16.

forced into the foremost place in spite of his ill-success. As the head of the court party, he had to bear the brunt of criticism of his administration and of reflection on his loyalty. His politics were also opposed by the chief ecclesiastics.[29]

According to Trevelyan, after Gaunt's return and the death of Edward III, he endeavored to secure the succession to the crown. When the Good Parliament took steps to ensure the succession of Richard, the Black Prince's son, Gaunt appeared in the Chapter House among the assembled Commons and boldly asked them to provide the reversion of the crown to him in case of his nephew's early death.[30] Although this act shows Gaunt's ambition to be king, it appears to reveal his loyalty to Richard. It was following such actions as stifling Commons Minority, supporting confiscation of church property, urging Wycliffe to preach endowment, and aiding Wycliffe at St. Paul's that a mob attacked the Duke with the intent to kill him.[31]

The scene of Landor's Imaginary Conversation takes place in the midst of this attack. Joanna, who is given the

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[29]Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, "Lancaster, John of Gaunt, duke of," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XVI, 1910, 146-147.

[30]Trevelyan, p. 28.

[31]Ibid., p. 46.

opening speech, appears to be surprised that Gaunt's house is besieged by the citizens of London. Ironically, she explains: "I thought you were their idol."[32] Yet we learn later in the dialogue that she was aware of the perverse criticism with which the people had assailed him. In this scene, the chivalrous Duke takes her hand endeavoring to lead her a few paces back from the shower of bricks, stones, and arrows. Refusing his entreaty, she announces her desire to intercede for him and states positively that the people shall obey her. At first, Landor's Gaunt is skeptical of her mission, even fearing that she may order his death. The author's faithfulness to history is striking in this depiction of Gaunt's character. Trevelyan concludes that "nothing but fear of death could have driven the Duke to take shelter with the widow of the Black Prince."[33] Despite his doubts, Landor's Gaunt remains chivalrous, submissive, and amiable throughout the entire scene. He tries to comfort Joanna in her grief for Edward; in the rain of missiles he endeavors to hold her back from the open window. These speeches of his are characteristic: "Speak, and by the Lord! it shall be done," and "Madam, I obey."[34]

Joanna's motives for interceding for Gaunt are

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[32] Works, IV, 15.

[33] Trevelyan, p. 46.

[34] Works, IV, 16, 17.

implicit in her speeches. In remembering her late husband, she gains the boldness to say: "I will rescue from perdition the enemy of my son."[35] Then later in the dialogue in the conclusion of her plea to the people, she voices a defense of Gaunt's loyalty: "No, no: I never can believe those angry cries. Let none ever tell me again he is the enemy of my son, of his king, your darling child Richard."[36] After naming various sureties that Lancaster could bring to prove his honesty, the intercessor offers herself: "Raised by the hand of the Almighty from amidst you, but still one of you, if the mother of a family is a part of it, here I stand, surety for John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, for his loyalty and allegiance."[37] "The fair maid of Kent," as Landor refers to her in a footnote, reveals in her closing speech her chief reason for making this intercession--the welfare of her son:

> Swear not: every man in England hath sworn what you would swear. But if you abandon my Richard, my brave and beautiful child, may--Oh! I could never curse, nor wish an evil: but, if you desert him in the hour of need, you will think of those who have not deserted you, and your great heart will lie heavy upon you, Lancaster.[38]

But this maternal concern for Richard is not the only motive that Landor would have us derive from the dialogue. Joanna is depicted as a kind, generous, and forgiving individual, who recognizes in Gaunt qualities that are too

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[35] Works, IV, 16.

[36] Ibid., IV, 17.

[37] Ibid., IV, 18.

[38] Ibid.

virtuous to be destroyed by the falsely influenced mob. She alludes to Gaunt's victorious achievements as commander of the English army and praises him as "the defender of the helpless, the comforter of the desolate, the rallying signal of the desperately brave!"[39] In brief, Joanna's benevolence toward Gaunt and her success in appeasing the people are character traits that historians continue to maintain. To cite one example, Anthony Steel, in his biography of Richard II, states that the widow of the Black Prince "had the reputation of a peace maker in later life."[40]

Probably the most significant political view expressed by Landor in this Imaginary Conversation is voiced in one of Joanna's speeches. After she has finished her plea in defence of Lancaster, the reaction of the rioters is such that Gaunt thinks they are bursting into the chamber through the windows. But Joanna quickly explains:

> The windows and doors of this solid edifice rattled and shook at the people's acclamation. My word is given for you: this was theirs in return. Lancaster! what a voice have the people when they speak out! It shakes me with astonishment, almost with consternation, while it established the throne: what it must be when it is lifted up in vengeance![41]

While Landor recognizes here the power of the voice of the

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[39] Ibid., IV, 17.

[40] Anthony Steel, Richard II (Cambridge, 1941), p. 39.

[41] Works, IV, 18.

people and apparently favors the traditional English freedom to "speak out," at the same time he may be alluding to his own antipathy to democracy. For Gaunt replies: "Wind: vapor--."[42] In turn, Joanna finishes his comment: "Which none can wield nor hold. Need I say this to my cousin of Lancaster?"[43] To complete the metaphor, Gaunt states: "Rather say, madam, that there is always one star which can tranquilize and control them."[44] Elsewhere, Landor had stated in his writings that Napoleon, for example, had been chosen by the voice of his people. Landor also charged the wrong he may have done in Italy to be the fault of politicians like Lamartine and Changainier--"first-rate in chatter, second-rate in literature, third-rate in public confidence. I never had intimacy or connexion with democratic strangers; I detest and abominate democracy, the destroyer of republics."[45] To Emerson, Landor once wrote, "Democracy is lax and disjointed; and whatever is loose wears out the machine."[46]

The last dialogue in the Middle English group, King Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage, is important for its views on kingship, princes, the Parliament, and war. Although

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Harlan Ms., quoted by Super, p. 449.

[46] Works, XII, 196.

first published in 1824, it was not until the 1828 edition of Imaginary Conversations that this Conversation was given specific treatment in a periodical review. The reviewer, writing in the New Monthly Magazine, commented primarily upon the identity of Savage and the subject matter of the speeches rather than upon the style and form. The reviewer's treatment of this dialogue is quoted in full because it is the sum of the contemporary criticism of it and at the same time is a good summary of its situation and content:

> Savage is identified here as an ancestor of the author, 'who was twice Speaker of the Commons in that day, and who distinguished himself by that famous speech to the king, in which, in the name of the people, he refused the supplies 'till every cause of public grievance was removed.' The dialogue is very short, and is conducted on both sides with a cool and temperate dignity that is very characteristic. It is founded on a speech alluded to, and concludes with the following very kingly proposition, and the noble replication to it, either of which, uttered openly in our own more refined day, would throw a whole court into consternation.[47]

John Forster's typical one-sentence critique offers only the identification of Sir Arnold Savage as the first recorded Speaker of the House of Commons--information which Landor himself provides in his notes to this Conversation.[48]

As in Shakespeare's time, the standard source for biographical-political information about Henry IV in Landor's

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[47] New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 11-12.

[48] Forster, p. 334. See also Works, IV, 23n.

day was Holinshed's Chronicles. In 1808 an edition of the Chronicles was published in six volumes in accordance with the original text.[49] For details of Arnold Savage's activities in Parliament, Landor cited William Hakewill, author of The Manner of Holding Parliament in England, and Henry Elsing, clerk of the Parliaments in the first half of the seventeenth century.[50] In addition, we have evidence of Savage's political prominence in the public records of his day. Twenty entries, for instance, concerning Arnold Savage[51] appear in the Calendar of the Close Rolls of the Henry IV's reign.[52]

Landor's esteem of Arnold Savage is not only implicit in the Conversation itself but is specifically stated in a letter to his mother, dated April 5, 1818. Here Landor is speaking of the namesake of his eldest son, who was born March 5, 1818. Having been assured sometime previously that one of the earliest speakers of the House of Commons, Sir

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[49]"Holinshed, Raphael," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XI (1959), 643.

[50]Works, IV, 23n.

[51]Landor not only varied from the original spelling of Arnald (Arnold), but in his second edition of the Imaginary Conversations, he spelled Hakewill and Elsing as Hakewell and Elsynge.

[52]Calendar of the Close Rolls. Henry IV. 5 vols. A.D. 1399-1413 (London, 1929), I, 330; II, 125, 192, 285, 305, 367, 444, 462; III, 6, 120, 143, 265, 355, 380, 381; IV, 6, 121, 165 (3 entries).

Arnold Savage, was of his family, Landor "looked for him in a book, which I bought on purpose and procured with extreme difficulty, written by a person named Hakewill, on the manner of holding Parliaments."[53] Landor's admiration of Sir Arnold Savage lies in the Speaker's boldness to assert the financial independence of Commons by urging the king (Henry IV) "that no subsidy should be granted me until every cause of public grievance were removed."[54] Even though Landor recognized the uncertainty of any family link with Sir Arnold, he had so much respect for him that he says, "I should be likely to name a son after him, even if I had no connection with his family or name."[55] These details will give the reader of King Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage a clearer revelation of Landor's personality in this dialogue. Certainly, in view of Landor's regard for Savage, Henry is less likely to be the author's spokesman than the Speaker.

The true place or function of the kingship and the extent of its authority are fundamental matters discussed by Savage and Henry IV. And despite the controversial nature of the subject matter, Savage cannot be accused of disloyalty

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[53]Walter Savage Landor's letter to his mother, April 5, 1818, quoted by R. H. Super, p. 140.

[54]Works, IV, 20.

[55]R. H. Super, Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (New York, 1954), p. 141.

or undue respect to his king. Recognizing the sovereignty of the king, the Speaker tactfully reminds him of his responsible trust: "I am now in the house of the greatest man upon earth; I was then in the house of the greatest nations."[56] Uppermost in Henry's mind is conquest, particularly of all France. He talks repeatedly of his need for horses and armour to satisfy the cravings of his soldiers; for a store of meat, oats, barley, rye, and good "wheaten" corn; for hemp, shipping, masts, anchors; and various other commodities many of which must be obtained from other rulers. "Moreover," the king says, "I must have instruments of mine own device, weighty, and exceeding costly; such as machinery for beating down walls."[57] So obsessed is he with power and dominion that Savage has to point out his omission of the "best and necessary things in the world to batter down your enemy's walls with."[58] Upon the king's anxious query as to what these "things" may be, Sir Arnold replies: "Sir, you have found them, and must keep them: they are the hearts of your subjects."[59] To further impress upon the king his proper relationship to the people and his need of their support, Savage continues:

> The whole people is a good king's household: quiet and orderly when well treated, and ever in readiness

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[56] Works, IV, 20.

[57] Ibid., IV, 21.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

> to defend him against the malice of the disappointed, the perfidy of the ungrateful, and the usurpation of the familiar.[60]

Then Savage imperatively says to his king: "Act in such guise, most glorious Henry, that the king may say my people, and the people may say our king."[61]

Not only does Sir Arnold endeavor to turn Henry's attention to the welfare of the people, but he attempts to show him the futility of war. Henry reveals to his interlocutor that he raised up the House of Commons only as a buffer to his barons that he might be less hampered in his complete conquest of France. The Speaker acknowledges the necessity of certain wars, such as those responsible for the "title-deeds to our lands and tenements, the perpetuity of our power and dominion."[62] But this defense was necessitated by the conquests of the warlike Normans, whose leader, William the Conqueror, thought the opening of "new careers" would encourage idleness and trouble that too many possessions brought. Furthermore, to the king's advantage, "wars are requisite," Savage says, "to diminish the power of your Barons, by keeping them long and widely separated from the main body of retainers, and under the ken of a stern and steady prince, watching their movements, curbing their

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[60] Works, IV, 22. [61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., IV, 21.

discourses, and inuring them to regular and sharp discipline."[63] In his plea, the people's representative attempts to convince the king that ultimately the condition of a people which hath many conquests becomes worse than that of the conquered. According to Savage, the conquered "have no longer to endure the sufferings of weakness or the struggles of strength."[64] In fact, the conqueror many times will provide certain advantages to keep peace and contentment within the new possessions.

Without exception Landor's concern is for the people. Through Savage he scorns the evil of so much emphasis on war that the people are either deprived of better living conditions or are caused to suffer undeservedly. Looking back over the past few years of the French Revolution and its outcome, the author could truthfully say through his spokesman:

> But under a conquering prince the people are shadows, which lessen and lessen as he mounts in glory, until at last they become, if I may reasonably say it and unreprovedly, a thing of nothing, a shapeless form.[65]

And Landor's deep affection for the English people is evident in the closing words of the dialogue that proclaim Savage as the "great comprehensive symbol of the English people."[66] To Landor, the real Henry is one seen in his subordination,

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[63] Ibid., IV, 22. [64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., IV, 23. [66] Ibid.

or neglect, of all responsibilities to the throne. He permitted "any irregularity at home, and suffered any affront from his rival kings, rather than hazard the permanency of his power."[67]

Four Imaginary Conversations deal with political matters during the time of the English Renaissance: Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn; Queen Elizabeth and Cecil; Elizabeth, Cecil, Anjou, and Fenelon; and King James and Isaac Casaubon. Since the nature of the subject matter and treatment of the first three of these dialogues are primarily dramatic, the main critical exposition of them will be in Chapter V. King James and Isaac Casaubon is both political and religious and will thus be related to both topics. Briefly in Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth, Cecil, Anjou, and De La Motte Fenelon, Landor comments further on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. These two dialogues illustrate appropriately the author's epigrammatic definition of kingship: "Kingship is a profession which has produced both the most illustrious and the most contemptible of the human race."[68]

In depicting the last meeting of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Landor does not permit the king to fare favorably at all. In fact, Landor's Henry qualifies for a place among the "most contemptible of the human race." In the

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[67] Ibid., IV, 24n. [68] Ibid.

first place, Landor's note to this dialogue reveals his estimate of the king:

> His reign is one continued proof, flaring and wearisome as a Lapland summer day, that even the English form of government, under a sensual king with money at his disposal, may serve only to legitimatize injustice.... The government was whatever the king ordered; and he a ferocious and terrific thing, swinging on high between two windy superstitions, and caught and propelled alternately by Fanaticism and Lust.[69]

Secondly, Landor creates disfavor toward his Henry by attributing blasphemous words to him. Angrily does the king address Anne and condemn her reading of the Bible and history as "the two worst books in the world for young people, and the most certain to lead astray both prince and subject."[70]

In contrast to Henry VIII as a ruler, Queen Elizabeth in Landor's presentation is an example of the "most illustrious" fruit of kingship. Her depiction in Elizabeth, Cecil, Anjou, and Fenelon is that of a dedicated servant of the English people. Landor presents the Queen willingly submissive to the proposed marriage between her and the Duke of Anjou if such an arrangement will benefit her nation. But she is determined not to compromise the established religion of England. In speaking to Anjou, Lord Burleigh refers both to her devotion to her subjects and to her political discretion in agreeing to this marriage:

In order to pacify her people, who are dearer to

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[69]Works, IV, 25-26n. [70]Ibid., IV, 29.

> her than life, and in order that no delay whatever may be interposed to your forthcoming nuptials, her majesty would fain insure your Highness's compliance with the established religion of the realm.[71]

Because of the religious-political nature of Roman Catholicism, it is necessary to include the dialogue betweem King James I and Isaac Casaubon in both this chapter on Landor's political views and in Chapter III, which treats Landor's ideas on religious topics. In James's second speech in the Conversation, Landor introduces this twofold subject: "As I am a king and a Christian, I have a mind to act vigorously and with my whole courage."[72] But since this dialogue is chiefly concerned with basic Catholic doctrines, such as the infallibility of the Pope, transubstantiation, and the relationship between church and state, our discussion for the present will be limited to the political references.

When this Imaginary Conversation was given specific attention in the Monthly Review in 1824, it was only the political element that interested the reviewer. And it is probable that Landor's choice and treatment of subject matter is of such a universal concern that the emphasis of a review of this work in our own times would also be political. The reviewer thus stated:

> The question is discussed how far the Catholics should be incapacitated from holding office on account of their belief in the Pope's temporal jurisdiction. The writer's

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[71] Ibid., IV, 69. [72] Ibid., IV, 78.

> decision, both here and in several notes interspersed through the volumes, seems to be in favor of their exclusion.[73]

The impression should not be left that the timely and universal nature of the subject matter is the only reason for the popularity of this dialogue in the succeeding 1826, 1828, 1837, and 1846 editions during Landor's lifetime. In 1824, in the Edinburgh Review, Hazlitt cites the dialogue between Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble as an example of "dramatic appreciation of the intellect of the speakers, and of the literary tone of the age."[74]

Reviewed again in 1828, this dialogue is praised further for its literary merit with less attention to its ideas:

> It is full of acute remarks and strong reasoning, but is not one of those on which (we suspect) readers of any class will dwell with much pleasure, unless it be the violent anti-Catholics.[75]

Almost a decade later, in 1837, the stylistic aspect was again the point of emphasis in the Quarterly Review: "To Queen Elizabeth and James I has been given the dialect of their own times."[76]

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[73]"Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor, Esq.," Monthly Review, CXVI (1824), 120.

[74]Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 80.

[75]New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 12.

[76]William Henry Smith, "Works of Mr. W. S. Landor," Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 123.

Ample materials for the reign of James I were available to Landor. Nor was Landor alone in his historical interest in this English king. From 1811 to 1848, for example, Samuel Rawson Gardiner lists fifteen publications of history, life, memoirs, reign, letters, and miscellaneous papers of James I. Among these publications, printed for the first time thirteen years before Landor's dialogue, was the Secret History of the Court of James the First, Edinburgh, 1811.[77]

In presenting James and Casaubon upon his stage, Landor has remained faithful to history. Both his extensive reading of English history and his skill as a writer are evident in his literary treatment of these two personages. In the Edinburgh Review in 1824, Landor's contemporary William Hazlitt said of this dialogue that:

> the verisimilitude does not arise from a studied use of peculiar phrases, or an exaggeration of peculiar opinion, but the writer seems to be well versed in the production and characters of the individuals he brings upon the stage, and the adaptation takes place unconsciously and without any apparent effort.[78]

Approximately forty years later, John Forster praised this dialogue as a masterpiece of humour and character. Forster bases his evaluation upon Landor's humorous and successful reproduction of James's oddities of speech, his native

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[77]The Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London, 1917), X, 618.

[78]The Collected Works of William Hazlitt, edited by A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover (London, 1904), X, 243-244.

mother-wit, his pedantic folly, his shrewdness, his real learning, dogmatic absurdities, argumentative subtleties, and hatred of Jesuit and presbyter.[79]

That conversations occurred between King James I of England and Isaac Casaubon is not imaginary but historically true. After Casaubon came to England in 1610, James, who was quickly impressed by him, frequently requested his presence and conversed with him for hours, always on theology. The king even granted him an annual pension of three hundred pounds from his own purse, in addition to the prebendary at Canterbury. Since the religious views of the two interlocutors of this Conversation are both similar and different, Landor is afforded an opportunity to voice his objections to Catholicism on both religious and political grounds in an intellectual and logical framework. Although Isaac Casaubon could not submit to papacy, he had learned to respect the authority of the Fathers. It seems that he was thoroughly in accord with the Anglo-Catholics.[80] The agreement of the two men in their opposition to Roman Catholicism is utilized by Landor to set before his readers the fallacies of the religion. On the other hand, the dialogue is motivated by their disagreement on the proper tactics to use to

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[79]Forster, p. 338.

[80]The Dictionary of National Biography, III, 1168.

oppose the power of the pope.

The political views developed here are decidedly republican. Although Landor describes James as pompous, he does admire his "unbendingness" toward English law.[81] When Casaubon warns James that "pontiffs in all ages have mounted and ridden hard both restive rulers and well-broken ones," the king quickly affirms: "Afore God! my back shall never bend under them."[82] In the same speech in which James declares himself "truly and completely a Catholic," he also acknowledges his belief in freedom:

> I do not pretend to tell a man how he should sing, or how he should lie in bed, much less would I admonish him in what manner he should think on subjects which concern not me.[83]

Landor's note to this statement suggests that James was pharisaically claiming "exemption from the very failing to which he was most liable."[84]

So liberal is James that he would deny none the benefit of the law, even to establishing Catholics in positions to govern, judge, or administrate. According to Casaubon, such counsellors, who recognize a greater power in this realm than the king, would not only assist in regulating the instruction of the people but also murder James if he resisted the pope.[85] Perceiving the dangers involved in such a

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[81] Works, IV, 78. [82] Ibid., IV, 79. [83] Ibid., IV, 82.
[84] Ibid., IV, 82n. [85] Ibid., IV, 83.

proposal, James nevertheless feels a personal responsibility. So long as popery exists, freedom will be a "dishonest outcast and maimed beggar." Unfortunately then until man destroys this "nuisance," it is only in "king's palaces that freedom can be properly educated and worthily entertained."[86]

In the midst of the king's plea for an almost absolute political, social, and religious freedom, we are confronted with a jibe at democracy. Casaubon has continued to urge the exclusion from all power, all trust, and all offices whoever would assert a legitimate power other than the king or parliament. Casaubon documents his position by reminding James that the first attempt to murder the Prince of Orange was made by a Catholic. Inconsistent with previous answers given to Casaubon, James hastens to justify the death of this Prince at the hands of a lawful king who was simply combating the evils of democracy:

> He had disobedient subjects to deal with, instigated by the devil of democracy; and the Prince of Orange was a ringleader of republicans, rank and riotous in his love of power; which love I hold unlawful and ungodly in any under the throne.[87]

During the time that James had ruled Scotland, he had prevented the Presbyterian Church from dominating the state. As a believer in the divine right of kings, he had

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., IV, 84.

also asserted the authority of state over church and after his succession to the English throne supported the established church.[88] In this Imaginary Conversation, a significant objection to Catholicism was its political framework. According to a speech that Landor attributed to James, the popes attempted to impose upon people a religion that resembled Julius Caesar's more than Simon Peter's because of the bribery and debauchery employed by those who sought office.[89] James assures Casaubon that one plain and demonstrable teaching in the Scriptures is that the Christian leader must abstain completely from political concerns.[90] If the frequent repetition of this idea suggests to us Landor's own views, then the following epigrammatic statements spoken by James will leave little doubt about Landor's antipathy to the papacy and his views on church and state:

> The papacy is the guardian of governments as a bawd is the guardian of girls: for profit.[91]
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> Whatever is said in order to make a man believe an untruth, is a lie; yet a Jesuit has not hesitation to swear it upon the eucharist; and princes have no hesitation to let Jesuits be the instructors of youth![92]

Throughout the Christian world the popes have stipulated

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[88]Samuel Rawson Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War: 1603-1642 (London, 1901), I, 65-77.

[89]Works, IV, 90-91. [90]Ibid., IV, 92.

[91]Ibid., IV, 86. [92]Ibid.

> with the usurpers for almost every accession of authority and power.[93]
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> Popery is an amalgam of every religion and every institution by which mankind in all countries under heaven had been subjugated.[94]

From the Restoration Period in England, Landor drew upon resources to produce two dialogues that specifically treat political themes: Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble and Oliver Cromwell and Sir Oliver Cromwell.[95] When Landor came to write these two Imaginary Conversations, the availability of source material was no obstacle. In Wilbur Cortez Abbot's A Bibliography of Oliver Cromwell (Cambridge, 1929), 1,660 entries appear from 1597 to Landor's Imaginary Conversations in 1824. From 1820-1824, four major historical and biographical works concerning Oliver Cromwell were published that generally favored the Puritan Revolution, but condemned Cromwell as Protector.[96] And according to D. A. Wilson, it was Thomas Carlyle's Life and Letters of Oliver

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[93]Ibid., IV, 93. [94]Ibid., IV, 99.

[95]Admiral Blake and Humphrey Blake is set in this era also, but it is primarily dramatic. See Chapter V.

[96]Oliver Cromwell, Memoirs of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, and of his sons, Richard and Henry, 2 vols., 1820, 1821, 1822; Thomas Kitson Cromwell, Oliver Cromwell and his Times, 2nd edition, 1822; George Brodie, Constitutional History of the British Empire from the Accession of Charles I to the Restoration, 4 vols., 1822; W. D. Fellowes, Historical Sketches of Charles I, Cromwell, Charles II, and the Principal Personages of that Period, 1824. See Abbot, p. 208.

Cromwell, published in 1845, that first made "plain the greatness of Oliver Cromwell as one of the makers of the modern British empire."[97] But it should be noted that Landor's dialogue more than twenty years before Carlyle's great work had made a first step in rehabilitating a misrepresented character.

Landor's dramatic presentation of this famous historical personage was popular enough to prompt critical attention in five periodical reviews from 1824 to 1837. Hazlitt, in his review of the Imaginary Conversations for the Edinburgh Review, recognizes the dramatic appreciation of the intellect of the speakers and of the literary tone of the age. He also comments briefly upon Landor's characterization in his display of the blunt knavery of old Nol, Cromwell, and a mixture of honour and honesty in the old Roundhead. In passing, Hazlitt speaks of some touches that illustrate Landor's political views.[98] In the Quarterly Review, William Gifford commends the style of this Conversation. At the critical period when Noble endeavors to dissuade Cromwell from executing the king, the language and manner of Cromwell's resistance is not ill-imagined. This review is sympathetic toward Charles and recognizes a

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[97]D. A. Wilson, "Carlyle, Thomas," Encyclopaedia Britannica, IV, 1952, 883.

[98]Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 80.

feeble advocate for him in Walter Noble. The reviewer concedes that Landor is following the traditional view of Charles because after all that has been written of that period of English history, "the character of Charles has never been fully and fairly depicted."[99] In the Monthly Review, no political reference is made to this dialogue. Stylistically, the subject matter and situation are thought to be highly characteristic of the speakers.[100] An estimate of Landor's Conversation in 1828 is summarized in one word: "Excellent." Then follows the observation:

> Nothing can be better than the way in which the character of Cromwell is hit off--cold, cruel, sarcastic, and (as Noble is made to say very finely) witty over blood, as other men over wine.[101]

The fifth periodical review appears in the 1837 Quarterly Review. Here various topics of jurisprudence, specifically the paying of taxes, are discussed.[102]

In the criticism of Landor in the twentieth century, R. H. Super, in his biography of Landor, gives more space to this Conversation than to any other in the English group. But Super's discussion is primarily on stylistic failures. To show the peculiar dangers of the dialogue form, the

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[99]Quarterly Review, XXX (1824), 511.

[100]Monthly Review, CXVI (1824), 120.

[101]New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 12.

[102]Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 129.

biographer cites Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble, wherein Landor sometimes speaks equally through both persons and at times a vein of irony reveals itself beneath the surface as a speaker assumes a position that Landor held ridiculous. But even so, Super suggests that we can safely assert from the dialogue what Landor's opinions are because the general tendency of all his dialogues is clear enough.[103] The most recent biographer, Malcolm Elwin, offers no critical analysis of this Conversation, but he does refer to the publisher's (Taylor) objection to the Elizabethan frankness of Cromwell's language.[104]

Concerning the second speaker, John Forster tells us that Noble's first name was Michael (whom Landor misnamed Walter), that he was the friend of Oliver Cromwell and member for Lichfield in the Long Parliament, that some of his blood ran in Landor's own veins. In 1732 Landor's grandfather, Robert Landor of Rugeley, had married the sole daughter and heiress of Noble's grandson Walter, of Chorley Hall, Longdon, through whom Landor's father inherited a good estate.[105]

The theme of regicide is introduced in Noble's first

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[103]Super, p. 170.

[104]Malcolm Elwin, The Replevin (London, 1957), p. 204.

[105]Forster, p. 335.

speech: "I hope, General Cromwell, to persuade you that the death of Charles will be considered by all Europe as a most atrocious action."[106] Cromwell's personal agreement with Noble cannot relieve his responsibility to the Commonwealth. Noble is told:

> If Charles Stuart had threatened my death only, in the letter we ripped out of the saddle, I would have reproved him manfully and turned him adrift: but others are concerned, lives more precious than mine.[107]

Landor is faithful to history in this depiction of Cromwell. History records that Cromwell did not set out to overthrow the king; he was driven to this course by the necessities of the situation.[108] In defence of the proposed death of Charles given in Landor's dialogue is the doctrine of utility, which is further developed by a series of rhetorical questions concerning the sufferings of the guiltless for the guilty. Cromwell's appeal becomes even more convincing when Landor has him speak allegorically:

> If the extinction of a spark prevents worse things than the conflagration of twenty cities, if it prevents the expansion of principles endemically noxious through incalculable ages, such as slavish endurance and all unmanly propensities, I would never take by the collar him who resolutely setteth his foot thereon.[109]

This concept of equity and proportion is retained throughout

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[106] Works, IV, 102. [107] Ibid., IV, 103.

[108] Dictionary of National Biography, V, 175-76.

[109] Works, IV, 104.

the dialogue in Cromwell's retaliation to Noble. Cromwell would reserve the death penalty only for kings because:

> Sovereigns are paid higher than others for their office; they should therefore be punished more severely for abusing it, even if the consequences of this abuse were in nothing more grievous or extensive.[110]

Landor's ideas on kingship recur in these references to Charles. Almost verbatim does a statement about kingship reappear from the first and second edition of Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage. Noble is given to say: "We should be slow in the censure of princes, and slower in the chastisement. Kingship is a profession which has produced few among the most illustrious, many among the most despicable, of the human race."[111] Noble places the blame for Charles's mistakes on wrong education and thus requests clemency. Such reasoning loses its force under the Protector's practical view:

> Whatever his education was, thinkest thou he was not wise enough to know his wickedness, his usurpation and tyranny, when he resolved to rule without a parliament? to levy taxes, to force consciences, to imprison, to slay, at his own arbitrement and pleasure?[112]

Through Cromwell, we are told that Charles was really the only rebel in the kingdom because he had acted either against laws or without them. He had violated conditions on which

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[110] Ibid., IV, 108.

[111] Ibid., IV, 106. See also Ibid., IV, 24.

[112] Ibid., IV, 107.

Parliament had granted him money; he had seized forcibly what belonged to the public and then prosecuted as rebels those who remonstrated against this fraud and theft.[113] Climactically, Landor voices this hatred of tyranny through both his speakers:

> Cromwell: I have no bowels for hypocrisy and I abominate and detest kingship.
>
> Noble: I abominate and detest hangmanship; but in certain stages of society both are necessary. Let them go together; we want neither now.[114]

Cromwell's political position is depicted as an agency to mete out divine justice. This concept offers one explanation, at least, for Landor's note that Cromwell was not cruel. As God's agent, the Protector merely resigned himself to his duty. To Noble, Cromwell defended the justness of executing Charles: "Justice is perfect; an attribute of God: we must not trifle with it."[115] Then again Cromwell announces: "I must do my duty; I must accomplish what is commanded me; I must not be turned aside. I am loth to be cast into the furnace or the dust; but God's will be done!"[116]

In addition to discussing the theme of regicide and ideas on kingship in Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble, Landor somewhat digressively includes the paying of taxes; he

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[113] Ibid. [114] Ibid., IV, 108. [115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid. See also Cromwell's speech, IV, 109.

refers specifically to "chancery fees." Landor proposes that barristers and attorneys, like judges, should be paid out of the public purse. To pay a lawyer, in any court, is to pay again what has already been paid. Noble questions the right of the government to any taxes if the people's lives, properties, and station in society be not secured.[117]

Landor's employing Cromwell as a speaker in two Imaginary Conversations indicates his high esteem of him. We know from other sources that Cromwell continued to hold Landor's admiration. In 1852, Landor told Forster: "I am a great advocate for hero-worship; and when you have looked closely into Carlyle, you may discover him to be quite as much of a hero as Cromwell."[118] As late in life as his eighty-fourth year, Landor wrote: "I shall drink a glass of claret to the glorious memory of Cromwell, Ireton, and Ludlow."[119]

The dialogue between Oliver Cromwell and his uncle, Sir Oliver Cromwell, is more a dramatic scene of their meeting to reveal character than a dialogue which is primarily an exposition of political views. Here Landor retains

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[117] Ibid., IV, 106.

[118] D. A. Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith (London, 1927), p. 305.

[119] Walter Savage Landor to William Gaskell, January 12, 1858. Quoted by Super, p. 450.

the noble, religiously dedicated character of Oliver, even among his uncle's thrusts of vile personal assaults, such as "thou wast too dirty a dog by half," "polecat," and "perhaps there are worse maggots in stauncher mummeries."[120] Indifferent to Sir Oliver's abusive remarks and in due respect for his uncle's age, Oliver begs his forgiveness. Landor himself, according to his note to this dialogue, looked reverently upon old age:

> Sir Oliver, who died in 1655, aged ninety-three, might, by possibility, have seen all the men of great genius, excepting Chaucer and Roger Bacon, whom England has produced from its first discovery down to our times.[121]

Failing in his attempt to appease his uncle, Oliver, near the close of the dialogue, again humbles himself before his elder: "I always bow submissively before the judgment of mine elders; and the more reverentially when I know them to be endowed with greater wisdom, and guided by surer experience than myself."[122]

In Sir Oliver's second speech, Landor introduces the contrasting political views of the uncle and his nephew, and in turn the two opposing views in England of that era:

> So! because a rabble of fanatics at Huntingdon have equipped thee as their representative in Parliament, thou art free of all men's houses, forsooth! I would

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[120] Works, IV, 199-200. [121] Ibid., IV, 202n.

[122] Ibid., IV, 204.

> have thee to understand, sirrah, that thou art fitter for the house they have chaired thee unto than for mine.[123]

Understandable to some degree is Sir Oliver's contempt when one considers that the Cromwell family had long been ardent Royalists.[124] And despite the intercession of Oliver to preserve Sir Oliver's estate after the defeat of the Royalist Party,[125] his uncle continued to behold the usurpation and tyranny of his nephew with hatred and contempt.[126]

Two conclusions about Landor's views seem reasonably clear from the Cromwell dialogues. First, Landor gives the Royalist Party little justification in upholding Charles I. Walter Noble has been depicted as a feeble advocate for the deposed king, and Sir Oliver's boisterous invectives are always silenced by Oliver's calmly disposed tolerance. Secondly, the ideal ruler is the humble servant of the people. In Cromwell, Landor displays the virtues of kindness and generosity, even toward an unworthy following, penitence toward his uncle, and a sincere and spiritual dedication as Protector.

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[123] Ibid., IV, 199.

[124] Charles Firth, Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England (London and New York, 1901), p. 73.

[125] But Oliver's aid availed little. See Dictionary of National Biography, V, 156.

[126] Wilbur C. Abbot, The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell (Cambridge, 1945), III, 817.

Five dialogues dealing with political issues are dramatic scenes within the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1700-1850): Windham and Sheridan, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, Romilly and Wilberforce, Romilly and Perceval, and Lord Chesterfield and Lord Chatham. Since these statesmen lived near and during Landor's own lifetime, we may rightly expect the author to deal with contemporary problems and views of his political world. It will be readily seen also that the chief figures of Landor's time appear to him more often as villains than as heroes. But underneath the many virulent castigations of English statesmen is his strong devotion to England, to which he looks for championship of right and truth. Landor's humanitarianism calls forth to and England which will aid each downtrodden people and never defile her name with a suspicion of acting selfishly or tyrannically.

If some of Landor's Imaginary Conversations possess the quality of verisimilitude more than others, the dialogue between William Windham and Richard Brinsley Sheridan must be classified among them. Not only by the dates of their lives are the two speakers exactly contemporary (Windham, 1750-1810; Sheridan, 1751-1816), but their close association in public life testifies to their natural adaptability in a literary dialogue. For example, in the printing of Boswell's Life of Johnson in 1792, both Sheridan and Windham are

listed among the thirty-five members of the famous Literary Club of Samuel Johnson's day, where literary men, statesmen, painters, and others met frequently and conversed on various current topics.[127] Sheridan's biographer, Walter Sichel, also attests to a close friendship with Windham. Together with Windham, Sheridan projected a society for the encouragement of ancient games. Like Windham, he delighted in violent exercise of every description.[128] Politically, they were both Whigs, and occasionally they were members of the committee, such as the one appointed to impeach Warren Hastings.[129]

In addition, Landor has very aptly chosen the two statesmen to represent the two opposing flanks in the Whig Party after its split in 1793.[130] This party breach, which was prompted by the effect of the French Revolution on English politics, led Windham over to Pitt, along with Edmund Burke and all those whose principles were of the same cast. To Sheridan, their failing in loyalty to Fox was bad enough, but their willingness to accept places, to

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[127]James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson (Oxford, 1953), p. 339.

[128]Walter Sichel, Sheridan (Boston, 1909), I, 79.

[129]Lewis Gibbs, Sheridan: His Life and Times (New York, 1948), p. 137.

[130]Ibid., p. 174.

profit by desertion, and make their political fortunes seemed unforgivable.[131] Sheridan spent thirty-two years in Parliament and never sat in a Cabinet. Whatever satisfaction he received from his political life was not office or wealth.[132] Windham thus broke his political friendship with Sheridan in following and consequently in joining William Pitt's administration as secretary of war in 1794.[133]

It is not by chance that the union of Ireland is the subject of the dialogue in which Sheridan and Windham are the interlocutors. On the one hand, Windham had served as chief secretary to the lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1783.[134] On the other hand, Walter Sichel, in summing up Sheridan's character, says that in his Irish nature are to be found "most of the scattered qualities which he combined and heightened; the blend of gaiety and sadness, the unmethodical hopefulness, the theatrical instinct; the union, moreover, of pathos with satire, and of impromptu with polish."[135] We may well add here that in Landor's dialogue Windham's characterization of the Irish, "who are disposed to fighting, frolic, and pardon," is also descriptive of

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[131] Ibid., p. 176. [132] Ibid., p. 259.

[133] "Windham, William," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959, XXIII, 654.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Sichel, p. 103.

Sheridan. Hence, the background and experience of both speakers provide for a well-formed and perceptive discussion of Ireland.

At the time of the setting of this Conversation, the British government was pressed with the decision to bring Ireland under the union. Late in the eighteenth century, the British were faced by Napoleon in one direction and with the Irish rebellion of 1798 in the other.[136] Since the revolts in Ireland of both the Presbyterians and Catholics failed, William Pitt and his Irish agents felt that union was the best solution. The legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland would only ensure emancipation of the Catholics from the imperial assembly; the Protestant establishment could be saved, and free trade would compensate the commercial classes.[137] Pitt's reasoning seemed to set favorably with both religious groups. Many of the Protestant ascendancy were convinced that only the union of Ireland could hold them in power over the Catholic majority. And the Catholics saw the union as a great step nearer emancipation.[138]

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[136]William O'Connor Morris, Ireland: 1494-1868 (Cambridge, 1898), pp. 276-77.

[137]Edward Raymond Turner, Ireland and England in the Past and at Present (New York, 1920), p. 110.

[138]Morris, p. 276.

In Landor's dialogue, the theme of the union with Ireland is introduced by Windham. After he has commended Sheridan for his noble stand in denouncing insubordination and rebellion, Windham requests of him: "I heartily wish, and confidently hope, that you will display the same energy and decision in the great measure of the union now projected with Ireland."[139] Sheridan's first response reveals his skepticism about the wisdom of such a plan. He refers to the vast number of indigent and worthless people who have recently been made Irish peers. With such men, discontent with their present income will grow, and their demands on Britain will rise with their services. Sheridan foresees that the Irish have learned enough "arithmetic in the English school" to aspire to the fortunes they have seen rise so high and so suddenly on the base of politics in England. In brief, Sheridan warns that "the Irish peers may fairly demand something handsome for the surrender of their power and patronage."[140]

Windham's main plea in defence of the union is the principle of equality. By taking over church-land (Irish-Catholic), Parliament would bring about an equalization of funds for the purpose of supplying the indigent and the afflicted. Windham further reasons that the answer to the

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[139] Works, V, 102. [140] Ibid., V, 103.

question is finally a matter of mere expediency:

> If our government, after a war, reduces the pay of its soldiers, and abolishes altogether the pay of its sailors, it may consistently, justly, and legally, do the same in regard to the Church militant.[141]

In his rejoinder, Sheridan has no objection to the principle if it is applied specifically to Ireland. If it is a matter of equality or consistency, Landor refers us, through Sheridan's speech, to more than six centuries during which Ireland has been misruled by its conqueror. Sheridan reminds Windham that Britain has also derived the most powerful and efficient aid from this nation against all her enemies, and now she wished to derive more by legislative union. The conqueror--probably an allusion to George III, whom Landor detested--now cares little about the matters of God and conscience, but "very much about the interests of some riotous idlers and rich absentees."[142] It is evident that Landor is sympathetic with the views that he attributes to Sheridan. In his dialogue between Washington and Franklin, Franklin's proposed remedies for Ireland conform to those views expressed by Sheridan. For instance, Franklin would abolish middlemen to check absenteeism; he would confer titles on Irish gentlemen to encourage residence and remove the Protestant establishment to arrest Popery.[143]

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[141] Ibid., V, 106. [142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., VIII, 20-25

By no means does Landor compromise his stern opposition to the Catholic Church. Yet his love of freedom affords tolerance and equal consideration from the state respecting other religions. Through Sheridan the proposal is made to reduce the wealth of the English Church in Ireland. He then suggests the following solution:

> By selling all church-lands there, and by devoting to the religious and moral education of the people the whole proceeds, in just proportion to the Papal and Protestant communicants, you would conciliate all far-sighted, all humane, all equitable men throughout the island.[144]

Windham, of course, endeavors to convince Sheridan of the impracticability of his idealistic plan. To Windham, the practical view is to consider the amount of revenue that Ireland will contribute if she is properly governed. Sheridan, too, believes that Ireland can be brought to prosperity and contentment, but not by proscribing her religion and replacing it with another.[145]

William Pitt and George Canning do not fare so well under Landor's pen as do their two contemporaries, Windham and Sheridan. Landor's Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning was not published until 1829, two years after the latter's death had removed the possibility of prosecution for libel. Malcolm Elwin suggests that Landor may have written the Conversation several years earlier, at which time it was possibly

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[144] Ibid., V, 107. [145] Ibid., V, 108.

rejected by his publisher as politically too prejudiced.[146] Unlike most of his other dialogues in which Landor treats one speaker more sympathetically than the other, this one reveals Landor's intense dislike of both speakers.

George Canning is distinguished both as a statesman and author. High points in his political life include his appointment as foreign secretary in 1822 and as premier in 1827. In a literary connection, he is remembered as the founder of and a contributor to The Anti-Jacobin, a journal designed to combat the subversive principles of philosophy and politics current in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Canning's poems, published in 1823, are other fruits of his literary interests. In view of this twofold success, however short-lived it may have been, Super suggests a personal reason for Landor's hatred of Canning. For here is a contemporary author who has attained political success and one whose political principles Landor despised.[147] It is significant that Landor has this literary figure and statesman speak "poetically" and occasionally be reminded of this poetic talent, or lack of talent, by Pitt:

> Canning: We must prevent the possibility: We must go on weakening them. The viper that has bitten escapes: the viper that lies quiet in the road, is cut asunder.

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[146] Elwin, The Replevin, p. 206.

[147] Super, p. 47.

> Pitt: Why! Canning! I find in you both more reasoning and more poetry than I ever found before. Go on in this manner, and your glory as a poet will not rest on pilots and pebbles, nor on a ditchside nettle or two of neglected satire.[148]

William Pitt, the younger, was the chief English statesman during the first thirty years of Landor's life. Landor's life-long hatred of the Prime Minister is evident in a letter to his sisters dated May 20, 1831:

> Whatever is happening and about to happen was foreseen by me in the period of Pitt's war against France. He squandered the nation's wealth with more imprudence than the most wanton youth ever squandered his new inheritance.[149]

Landor's political prejudice against Pitt is shown in his complete lack of sympathy with Pitt's taking up arms against France in 1793. G. M. Trevelyan, in his British History in the Nineteenth Century, exculpates Pitt's actions against the French to some extent by showing that almost any other course was impossible because of the existing state of public opinion.[150]

Landor's interest in political affairs and his intense hatred of Pitt found expression in Landor's early publications. In 1795, Landor had submitted a volume of Poems

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[148] Works, V, 112.

[149] Forster, p. 457.

[150] G. M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1927), pp. 73ff.

for publication; but fearing future critical reference to these immature writings, he instructed his publishers to withdraw the volume from circulation. Issued a few weeks later by the same publishers was another little book which did not bear his name on the title page.[151] A Moral Epistle, Respectfully Dedicated to Earl Stanhope, a satirical poem, specifically attacked the Tory government by contrasting the current voices of public life with the incorruptible virtues of some statesmen of the past and primarily placed the responsibility for all evil on the venality, stupidity, and demogoguery of Pitt.[152]

In 1797, Pitt introduced into Parliament a new revenue bill which provided for an income tax as high as ten per cent of incomes above two hundred pounds. The Whigs throughout England rallied to oppose this bill and also debated the continuance of the war with France. To bolster the Whig cause, Landor himself prepared a speech to present at a public meeting; and when he was refused permission to speak, he published and distributed it in leaflet form. Entitled To

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[151]The authorship of this anonymous publication is attributed to Landor because of certain lines in the body of the poem:

> Parham! and Shippon! If each honor'd name
> Be not eternally preserv'd by Fame--
> Lie tranquil in your tombs; and say, "Ye Powers
> Of Darkness: It is Landor's fault not ours."(ll. 189-92.)

[152]Elwin, Savage Landor, pp. 38-39.

the Burgesses of Warwick, this address was a scurrilous attack on Pitt and his followers.[153] Of this occasion, Landor wrote in 1850:

> Only once in my life have I attended any publick meeting. It was fifty years ago, on Pitt's inquisitorial income tax. This wretch was the greatest mischief our country ever endured.[154]

Thus it is not surprising that by 1829 Landor's most skillful abuse directed at Pitt is the dialogue between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning. In a farewell interview, Landor ironically has the dying prime minister impart to Canning the benefit of his governmental experience. Much after the manner of Swift in advising servants of a lower rank, Pitt makes numerous cynical remarks about the maintenance of power at the expense of civil liberty and exclaims his hatred of great families because they overshadowed him.

In the tradition of the dramatic monologue and the soliloquy, each of Landor's speakers reveals more about himself than about the person with whom he is conversing. Particularly has Landor attributed to Pitt what the statesman may very likely have thought and discreetly kept to himself but would never have confessed even to so close an associate as Canning. To create a stronger sense of verisimilitude for

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[153] Super, p. 39.

[154] G. V. Irving, Notes and Queries, 4th Series, IV (September 4, 1869), 193.

their self-expression, Landor has resorted to facts of Pitt's life. For instance, in his opening speech, Pitt alludes to his bachelorhood by expressing his desire to appoint his successor because, as he says, "nature has withholden from me the faculty of propagating my species."[155] In addition, the numerous references to wine in Pitt's speeches suggest the generous consumption of port wine which his physician had prescribed for him early in life and which had become a life-long habit.[156]

Because of the nature of the situation and subject matter of this Conversation, a series of direct quotations will serve most effectively to demonstrate both the author's dramatic irony and his political views about the English government in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In this dialogue Landor places the total responsibility for all the evils in the English government on Pitt. When Canning mentions the rich families or the ancient aristocracy of the kingdom, Pitt interrupts: "There is hardly one however that I have not disgraced or degraded."[157] The Prime Minister is also given to say frankly:

I never believed in any future state; but I have made

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[155] Works, V, 155.

[156] "Pitt, William," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XVII, 1952, 973.

[157] Works, V, 110.

> a very damnable one of the present, both for myself and others. We never were in such danger from within or without.[158]

Then at the height of his irony, Landor has Pitt advise his lowly inferior Canning that three things are necessary for a successful Minister: "to speak like an honest man, to act like a dishonest one, and to be indifferent which you are called."[159]

Pitt's ethics, or lack of ethics, reveal the pitiable plight of English politics during his ministry. He counsels his supposed successor to "prevaricate" as often as he "can defend the prevarication, being close pressed: but, my dear Canning! never--I would say--come, come, let me speak it plainly: my dear fellow, never lie."[160] As an explanation of this apparent discrepancy, Pitt states further:

> I am presuming that you will become Prime Minister; you will then have plenty of folks ready to lie for you; and it would be as ungentlemanly to lie yourself as to powder your own hair or tie your own shoe-string.[161]

More details of the "ethics" of Pitt's political ideals are seen in his counsel concerning public addresses:

> It will be expected of you...to speak for a given space of time. The people must be made to believe that their representatives are <u>persuaded</u>: and a few plain words are never thought capable of effecting this.... Are you to understand the meaning of everything you talk about?

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[158] <u>Ibid</u>., V, 112.

[159] <u>Ibid</u>., V, 113.

[160] <u>Ibid</u>., V, 114.

[161] <u>Ibid</u>.

If you do, you will not be thought deep.[162]

Landor suggests that Pitt was aware of and approved of many corrupt practices in the English government. According to Pitt, even the most honest member of Parliament belongs to the party that pays him his fee. When Canning mentions "fairer representation," Pitt replies:

> Some have really the vanity to believe that they would be chosen, and might choose their colleagues.... The fact is this: the most honest and independent members of Parliament are elected by the rotten boroughs. They pay down their own money, and give their own votes.[163]

Through his interlocutor Pitt, Landor suggests that the people were unaware of such deception and would be "struck with horror" if shown "that the very best part of their representation is founded on nothing sounder than on rank corruption."[164]

Further personal counsel to Canning indicates Pitt's lack of any sound ethical code. By experience the Prime Minister had found that "inconsistency is taken for a proof of greatness in a politician."[165] Political pretense is also important, for any time that a politician may be induced by policy, or impelled by nature, "to commit an action more ungenerous or more dishonest than usual," he must utilize every available resource. Pitt recommends:

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[162] Ibid., V, 116-117. [163] Ibid., V, 121.

[164] Ibid. [165] Ibid., V, 122.

> Talk and look bravely: swear, threaten, bluster: be witty, be pious: sneer, scoff: look infirm, look gouty: appeal to immortal God that you desire to remain in office so long only as you can be beneficial to your king and country.[166]

A climactic bit of advice involves making merchandise of public office. "Never consent," Pitt says, "to any reduction in the national expenditure. Consider what is voted by Parliament for public services as your own property."[167]

In this dramatic situation Landor places the burden of the dialogue on Pitt. Canning is characterized primarily as one who is unduly deferential to Pitt's counsel. Landor permits Canning to speak his own mind frequently enough only to show him sympathetic to Pitt's views. For example, Canning's speeches, for the most part, might well be incorporated in any of Pitt's declarations. Like Pitt, Canning is concerned primarily with self: "It is better to think of ourselves than of others; to consider the present as everything, the past and future as nothing."[168] Whereas Pitt is attributed enough strength of character, whether good or evil, to attract a popular following, Canning is depicted void of any merit. Charles G. Crump, in his edition of the Imaginary Conversations, suggests that Landor's antipathy to Canning is less reasonable and more personal than that he has to Pitt.[169]

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166 Ibid., V, 122. 167 Ibid., V, 123.

168 Ibid., V, 115. 169 Crump, I, xiii.

Whatever may have caused this bitter dislike (possibly Canning's inferior birth), Landor's attitude remained unchanged, for he never recanted nor lessened his attacks upon Canning.

The most scurrilous attack upon Pitt and the most libellous reflection upon Canning are reserved for Pitt's bequeathal to Canning in the closing speech of the dialogue. After citing Bolingbroke as the only living author that he read with attention, Pitt glories in the opportunities afforded him to exploit the English government to his advantage. In no other nation would this evasion have been possible:

> In Turkey I should have been strangled; in Algiers I should have been impaled; in America I should have mounted the gallows in the market-place; in Sweden I should have been pistolled at a public dinner or courtball: in England I am extolled above my father.[170]

Finally, the reader is left in no doubt about Landor's attitude toward these two statesmen. In Pitt's last speech, which contrasts his own ministry with that of his father's, Landor assails the Prime Minister's failures: but for Canning, there is only personal contempt. Pitt says:

> He left the country flourishing: I leave it impoverished, exhausted, ruined. He left many able statesmen; I leave you.[171]

Seventeen years after the publication of Mr. Pitt

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[170] Works, V, 125. [171] Ibid.

and Mr. Canning, Landor's hatred of Pitt is still finding vent in his Conversation between Sir Samuel Romilly and William Wilberforce. Although the primary theme is the abolition of the slave-trade, Landor makes opportunities to catalogue the grievances that Pitt has heaped upon the English people. For example, even Pitt's interest in the abolition of the slave-trade must stem from an ulterior motive. Romilly opens the dialogue by saying:

> Indeed, sir, I cannot but suspect that the agitation of this question on the abolition of the slave-trade, is countenanced by Mr. Pitt chiefly to divert the attention of the people from crying grievances nearer home. Our paupers are increasing daily both in number and in wretchedness; our workhouses, our hospitals, and our jails, are crowded and overflowing; our manufactories are almost as stifling as slave-ships, and more immoral; apprentices, milliners, dressmakers, work throughout the greater part of the night, and, at last disabled by toil, take the sorrowful refuge of the street.[172]

To expound upon the subject of slavery, Landor chose two speakers who were especially interested in reform. On April 22, 1818, two motions were made for papers respecting the treatment of slaves in the West Indies--one by Wilberforce, the other by Romilly. Romilly's speech was devoted to an exposé of things, which by official admission had happened in Dominica and St. Nevis.[173] Although Romilly, a famous law reformer, was to some degree Puritan and in

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[172] Ibid., V, 126.

[173] Sir Reginal Coupland, Wilberforce, 2nd edition (London, 1945), p. 381.

general society somewhat cold and reserved, he did not lack sympathy. Throughout his life he was dedicated to reform issues. For instance, he succeeded in abolishing the penalty of death in cases of private stealing from the person. And in 1811, Romilly substituted transportation for death in instances of stealing from bleaching grounds. In addition to numerous other similar accomplishments, one to which Landor alludes in his dialogue is Romilly's desire to emancipate Negro slaves.[174] The second speaker, William Wilberforce, will long be remembered in English history for his humanitarian accomplishments. Like Romilly, he devoted himself to the cause of slavery and to other philanthropic projects.[175] It is interesting to note that he just lived to know that the second reading of the bill abolishing slavery was carried.[176]

On the whole, Landor presents the political views of Romilly and Wilberforce accurately. Only in the situation of the dialogue is Landor anachronistic. Romilly is presented as a member of the House of Commons during Pitt's ministry. In truth, Pitt died three months before Romilly entered the House. Otherwise, the dialogue may be an

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[174] Dictionary of National Biography, XVII, 188-191.

[175] Ibid., XXI, 208-216.

[176] He died in 1833, the year of this reading.

elaboration of the happenings described by Romilly himself in his diary of parliamentary life. The entry dated April 1, 1806 reads:

> Wilberforce came and sat by me to-day in the House of Commons, and renewed our acquaintance, which has been interrupted (but not by any fault of mine) for I think about nine or ten years. He said that he came with a petition to me; it was, that I would speak in support of the Bill he meant to bring in for the abolition of the slave-trade; as he was sure that my speaking, as I was quite new in the House would be of great use. I told him that I would do everything in my power to ensure the success of the measure, and that, if I found that my speaking on it could be of any use, I would certainly do so.[177]

Much in the same tone of this account, Landor has Romilly say to Wilberforce: "To detain you no longer, Mr. Wilberforce, I give you my promise I will attend at the debate, and vote with you."[178]

Landor's choice of theme for this Conversation serves a twofold purpose. He is able to stress the importance of the abolition of the slave trade and, at the same time, to denounce an attitude of complacency on the part of the English at home. To Wilberforce's astonishment, Romilly asserts that "slavery in the West Indies is less cruel and pernicious than the slavery in their own parishes."[179] His

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[177] The Life of Sir Samuel Romilly, edited by his sons (London, 1842), II, 6.

[178] Works, V, 137.

[179] Ibid., V, 130.

explanation is that the Negro children are incomparably more comfortable and happy than the children of paupers in England. To Wilberforce, Romilly recommends that philanthropy may well begin at home with a bill to diminish the hours of a child's labor in factories, "that none under his eighth year should be incarcerated in these pesthouses."[180] Landor's belief that protecting the people at home from slavery is a greater necessity than the problem of Negro slavery is voiced again through Romilly:

> I do care about the Blacks; I do care greatly and anxiously about them; but I would rather that slavery should exist for seven centuries longer in the West Indies, than for seven years longer in Lancashire and Yorkshire.[181]

Landor recognizes two distinct problems in the abolition of slave-trade and the abolition of slavery in the islands. In the first place, he blames Pitt for the curse upon England that she can neither make peace in the war against France nor abolish slavery. Romilly is given to say:

> We can decree, and we ought instantly, that the importation and sale of slaves do cease at this very hour throughout the world.... We can decree, and ought instantly, that children from seven to ten years of age be instructed one hour daily.[182]

In recommending an immediate decree, Landor is adhering to the original proposals of Romilly and Wilberforce. In 1789, Romilly wrote to M. Dumount:

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[180] Ibid. [181] Ibid., V, 131. [182] Ibid., V, 132.

> I was in the House of Commons last Tuesday, when Wilberforce opened the business of slave trade. He did it in an admirable speech, which seemed to make a great impression on the House. What he proposes is, that the trade should be totally and immediately abolished.[183]

Secondly, the slave-trade can be abolished more quickly than the abolition of slavery in the islands. The termination of servitude must be gradual because the "consequences of a sudden change might be fatal."[184] Aware of the grave responsibilities involved in emancipation, Landor compares the situation to "materials which, being warped, are not to be set right again by a stroke of the hammer, but by temperance and time."[185]

According to Landor's dialogue, the kind of abolition that England needs cannot be restricted to one evil such as slavery. He has Romilly speak of the abolition of injustice which includes slavery, war, child labor, and wretched conditions in jails, workhouses, and hospitals. In discussing the evils of war, Landor avails himself of another opportunity to denounce Pitt. Landor's interlocutors talk generally of war with specific reference to England's war with France. To them, "war is alike the parent and the child of evil."[186] Adjectives which Landor applies to Romilly's analysis of

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[183]Letter LI, Romilly to M. Dumont, Gray's Inn, May 15, 1789. Romilly, I, 263.

[184]Works, V, 133. [185]Ibid. [186]Ibid., V, 134.

England's war against France are "unnecessary," "most impolitic," and "most unjust."[187] Furthermore, Romilly states that England entered the war for the gratification of an old madman.[188] Of Pitt, Romilly is made to say to Wilberforce:

> It would surpass your ingenuity, or Mr. Pitt's, to discover any (evil) whatsoever which does not arise from war, or follow war, or romp and revel in the midst of war. It begins in pride and malice, it continues in cruelty and rapine, it terminates in poverty and oppression.[189]

In the dialogue between Samuel Romilly and Spencer Perceval, Landor again brings together two men who had long been friends. They became friends when both were young men and were both members of the Midland Circuit. Of this personal relationship in the Midland Circuit, Romilly describes Perceval with:

> indeed very little reading, of a conversation barren of instruction, and with strong and invincible prejudices on many subjects; yet, by his excellent temper, his engaging manners, and his sprightly conversation, he was the delight of all who knew him. I formed a strong and lasting friendship with him.[190]

In his autobiography, Romilly also includes Perceval among the names of several men for whom he entertained a very great regard.[191]

The occasion of this Conversation is Perceval's appointment to the post of Prime Minister in 1809. After

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[187] Ibid., V, 132. [188] Ibid., V, 133.

[189] Ibid., V, 134. [190] Romilly, I, 67. [191] Ibid., I, 66.

Romilly congratulates Perceval on his new office, the two statesmen discuss Pitt briefly and then are concerned with English law and reform. Romilly had long endeavored to ameliorate the barbarity of English criminal laws. For twenty-three years he had been working in this cause before he introduced in the House of Commons in 1808 the first Bill to abolish capital punishment for minor offences.[192] Now one year later, Romilly would certainly be desirous of presenting his views to the new Prime Minister. Like his friendship with Wilberforce, Romilly's friendship with Perceval was more personal than political. Their disagreement on political issues is corroborated by a statement from Romilly's autobiography:

> Perceval, after he had in a manner, which my private friendship for him could never induce me to consider in a favourable point of view, obtained the situation of Prime Minister, and quite to his tragical end, was desirous that our friendship should remain uninterrupted: I could not, however, continue in habits of private intimacy and intercourse with one whom in public I had every day to oppose.[193]

The fact that Pitt was dead at the time of this dialogue did not lessen Landor's searing denunciations. But Pitt fares little worse than his defender Perceval. Typical of Landor's skill in his use of irony, the opening lines of this dialogue give Perceval, a champion of debate in his

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[192]Crump, II, 309n. [193]Romilly, I, 67.

time, a weak second place in his defense of Pitt. Each praise that Perceval bestows upon his predecessor is little more than a general statement from which Romilly deduces an opposing argument. For instance, when Perceval speaks of his arduous task of succeeding such eloquent men as have preceded him, Romilly spares no punches at either Perceval or Pitt. He is first critical of Perceval's placing eloquence as the chief requisite of a minister. Secondly, he compares Pitt's fluency of speaking to the tide along the Lancashire sands, "always shallow, but always just high enough to drown us."[194] Then Perceval is again made to assume too much when he defends Pitt with the general comment, "Despise him as you may, he did great things."[195] Romilly's curt reply is driven home, "Indeed he did: he made the richest nation in the world the most wretched, and the poorest the most powerful."[196] Even more evasive is Perceval's last appraisal. Of Pitt's place among the "immortals," Romilly explains that "he was called <u>immortal</u> by those who benefited from him, the word <u>God</u> on such occasions being obsolete."[197]

Early in Landor's dialogue, both Perceval and Romilly acknowledge their differences on civil and criminal causes. Romilly urges agreement on certain points disconnected from

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[194] <u>Ibid</u>., V, 214. [195] <u>Ibid</u>.

[196] <u>Ibid</u>. [197] <u>Ibid</u>.

parties and offers his support to what he has thought to be Perceval's favorite plan "to soften the rigour of the penal statutes."[198] Whatever excuses Perceval can give for changing his mind about the necessity or advisability of reform, Romilly is determined to alter the criminal statutes by diminishing "the number of capital offences, which is greater in England...than the light and heavy put together in the tables of Solon or Numa." He continues "that Draco himself did not punish so many with blood as we do...."[199] In all likelihood, Landor's comparison was no exaggeration. When Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, four hundred and thirty-eight offences were still punishable by death in England.[200]

On the basis of a twenty-seven year friendship with Perceval, Romilly proposes a change of the English laws on bankruptcy. Romilly asserts that under the law then in force that even a virtuous man, about to fall into bankruptcy, may commit a fraud.[201] As proof, Landor has Romilly cite the case of a young husband and father who is caught between the obduracy and cruelty of the law on one side and conjugal tenderness and parental love on the other. The

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[198] Ibid., V, 215. [199] Ibid., V, 216.

[200] David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century: 1815-1914 (Baltimore, 1950), pp. 17-18, 64-65.

[201] Works, V, 217.

latter wins out, and the young man by "fallacy and concealment" unlawfully refuses his creditors any part of the remains of his bankrupt business.[202] So convincingly does Landor have Romilly present his case that Perceval has little choice but to honor the motion. Romilly's concluding proposition, in such cases as this young man's, is to "deduct the widow's third from the bankrupt's property, and place it in the hands of trustees for the benefit of herself and her children by that marriage.[203]

Only in part does the dialogue between Lord Chatham and Lord Chesterfield relate to political issues. Landor's denial of Plato's greatness concentrates primarily on the philosopher's character, his literary style, and language.[204] In addition to its treatment of Plato, this dialogue gives Landor occasion to exalt Locke and Bacon. In this preference of philosophers, Landor's pride in his country and its heritage is again evident.

Of the two speakers, who are readily identified from the Conversation itself, Chesterfield fits more appropriately into the context of the situation than Chatham. In the opening speech, attributed to Chesterfield, he alludes to his famous Letters to His Son. Chatham commends

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[202] Ibid., V, 219. [203] Ibid., V, 220.

[204] This dialogue will also be discussed in Chapter IV.

him highly for his accomplishments as viceroy of Ireland. Thus from his own success in writing letters that are full of elegant wisdom, of keen wit, of admirable portrait painting, and of exquisite observation and deduction, Lord Chesterfield is an appropriate personage to discuss matters of rhetoric. His short but brilliant administration of Ireland qualifies him for an intelligent discussion of political affairs. Lord Chatham, as Landor indicates in a note to the first edition in 1824, is the father of William Pitt the younger whom Landor so despised. As was previously noted in discussing the dialogue between Pitt and Canning, Landor sets the younger Pitt's corrupt administration in striking contrast to his father's flourishing one.[205] Chatham's background makes him a less suitable speaker than Chesterfield. It is unlikely that Chatham ever talked about the rhythm of Plato, the physics of Democritus, or the moral mysteries of Pythagoras. And yet Landor employs Chatham as the chief spokesman of ideas in this dialogue.

Even though this dialogue is primarily interesting because of style, the references to John Locke and Francis Bacon are a significant reflection of Landor's political views. Landor's Chatham panegyrically says of Locke that "equally deep and clear, he is both philosophically and

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[205]Works, V, 289n.

grammatically one among the most elegant of English writers."[206] The statesman admires Locke for his selection of plain and proper words, for his range of inquiry and potency of intellect. And on a similar basis, Bacon is preferred to Plato. Chatham is given to say:

> The little volume of Bacon's Essays, in my opinion, exhibits not only more strength of mind, not only more true philosophy, but more originality, more fancy, more imagination, than all these volumes of Plato.[207]

In this praise of Locke and Bacon, Landor identifies himself with the school of English empiricism which had developed steadily since Bacon's time. In his interest in the past, which he contrasts with the present, Landor looks to such philosophers as Demosthenes and Locke, who, as he states:

> may console me for the downfall of my hopes from that bright eminence to which none of them, in these times and in this country, would have attained; and for which my pursuits equally disqualify me. Here I have only occupied my hours with what lie beneath the notice of statesmen and governors.[208]

It was Landor's knowledge of the past that brought him comfort when he thought of the evil present and that motivated his desire to promote reform.

Moreover, Locke's Essay of Civil Government embodies

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[206] Ibid., IV, 269.

[207] Ibid., IV, 287.

[208] Quoted by Elwin, The Replevin, p. 150.

essentially the same political ideas as Landor. Locke defines political power as:

> a right of making laws, with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties for regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good.[209]

Landor's concept of freedom is also similar to that incorporated in Locke's Essay of Civil Government. Locke wrote:

> Freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it. A liberty to follow my own will in all things where that rule prescribes not, not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man, as freedom of nature is to be under no other restraint but the law of Nature.[210]

In addition, a significant likeness can be seen between Locke's and Landor's ideas on rebellion and kings. After discussing the best fence against rebellion and expounding upon those who are truly rebels, the eighteenth-century philosopher says:

> But whether the mischief hath oftener begun in the people's wantonness, and a desire to cast off the lawful authority of their rulers, or in the rulers' insolence and endeavours to get and exercise arbitrary power over their people, whether oppression or disobedience gave the first rise to the disorder, I leave it to impartial history to determine. This I am sure, whoever, either ruler or subject, by force goes about to invade the rights of either prince or people, and

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[209] John Locke, Of Civil Government (London, 1924, 1936), p. 118. See also Becker, pp. 191ff.

[210] Ibid., p. 127.

> lays the foundation for overturning the constitution and frame of any just government, he is guilty of the greatest crime I think a man is capable of, being to answer for all those mischiefs of blood, rapine, and desolation, which the breaking to pieces of governments bring on a country.[211]

Thus to Locke, as to Landor, the constitution of any just government demanded respect. Under this principle Pitt and, especially, Canning found no sympathy from Landor.

Throughout all these dialogues that treat political issues, the controlling theme is Landor's love of freedom. Growing out of his broad humanitarian sympathy for the whole of mankind is his hatred of tyranny, which, to Landor, includes kingship and popery. The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church is to Landor a political organization, and it is the papacy that typifies the most universal form of tyranny. Landor has Barrow comment: "There are popes in all creeds, in all countries, in all ages."[212] Evident also in Landor's writings is his intent to bring discredit upon rulers. "Willingly," he states, "should I sacrifice my fortune, my life, everything but my soul, to abolish kingship throughout the world. Men can never be honest or peaceable while they live under this most cursed idolatry."[213] To Landor, even regicide may be necessary, for the Conversation between Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble is in one respect a justification

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[211] Ibid., p. 234. [212] Works, IV, 117.

[213] Forster, p. 226.

of the execution of Charles I.

Landor's interest in reform did not lead him to propose changes in the structure of the government. His view of reform is that it is largely a matter of removing the pollution, in this case, the expulsion of selfish, crooked officeholders. In spite of his love and hopes for England, Landor never found his ideal in contemporary leaders. For his examples of political virtue, he turned to the past, not necessarily for ideal forms of government, but for ideal men and women.

CHAPTER III

LANDOR'S VIEWS ON RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Like his political views, Landor's religious beliefs and attitudes toward religious issues were governed by one underlying principle: freedom. As early as 1800 he had blamed the Whig leadership of Fox for not supporting religious toleration, abolition of the slave trade, and parliamentary reform. By 1831, these three changes were being reluctantly accepted by those who derided his opinions as impracticable.[1] Leslie Stephen, in discussing the Pentameron, concluded that Landor's religious principles are "little more than the assertion that he will not be fettered in mind or body by any priest on earth."[2] It will be evident in Landor's English Imaginary Conversations dealing with religious subjects that he insisted chiefly upon love to humanity and the widest toleration.

Landor's quarrel with Christianity was not with the simplicity of Christ's teachings, but with orthodox theology that encumbered spiritual freedom. In a letter to Lady Blessington, Landor voiced his objection to the restrictions

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[1]Malcolm Elwin, Landor: A Replevin (London, 1957), p. 248.

[2]Ibid., p. 315.

of the established church:

> All men are liable to error. I, particularly, who believe that there may be criticism without sarcasm, and Christianity without deans and chapters.[3]

As early as 1795 when Landor penned the line, "For battle, parsons preach, and poets rant," he added a lengthy footnote deriding the clergy for "calling upon us in the name of Religion to strengthen the hand of Government against the enemies of Church and State." And he further recited how "among all their execrations, and all their sighs, the fate of our slaughtered Countrymen seemed totally forgotten."[4] Church leaders fared no more favorably in Landor's notes to "The Birth of Poesy," published in the same year. Here it was observed that Dr. Samuel Croxal's exquisite translation of the Song of Solomon had rescued the Biblical classic from "those senseless bigots who imagined that the mistress of Solomon was the Church."[5] Malcolm Elwin has appropriately compared Landor's religious attitude to that of his contemporary Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who stated that "whenever religion excludes philosophy, or the spirit of free inquiry it leads to wilful blindness and superstition."[6] Thus to both men, true Christianity would mean the teachings of Christ and not of the church.

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[3]R. R. Madden, ed., The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington (London, 1855), II, 388.

[4]Works, XVI, 285 [5]Ibid., XVI, 316.

[6]Elwin, Replevin, p. 315.

So far as a body of personal beliefs is concerned, Landor held no great zeal for religious mysteries. The fact that he was either undecided or possibly indifferent to certain religious beliefs such as the efficacy of prayer and immortality might possibly have motivated his avid plea for religious liberty. The controversy between Landor and his publisher John Taylor over the dialogue between Conyers Middleton and Florentine Magliabechi implies that Landor did not believe in prayer. In that Conversation Middleton, who attempted to liberate Christian doctrine from the embellishments of ecclesiastical form, directed his arguments toward the efficacy of prayer. John Taylor objected that "he believed in prayer if Landor did not."[7] Concerning a belief in future life, Landor was just as non-committal as he was about prayer. In 1834, when Augustus Hare died in Rome, the author wrote to Lady Blessington: "Were I certain of seeing my departed friends in another life, I know not anything that would detain me in this. Pazienza! Those who hope must fear something."[8] Even as late as the year of Landor's death, his skepticism about the immortality of the soul had not resolved itself. When Algernon Swinburne called on Landor on March 29, 1864, Landor, then eighty-nine, told him that he

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[7]R. H. Super, Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (New York, 1954), p. 173.

[8]Quoted by Super, p. 173.

had no belief or opinion whatever about a future state, but that of one thing he was sure: "that whatever was to come was best--the right thing, or the thing that ought to come."[9] Of Landor's religious life, R. H. Super comments that many unsuccessful attempts were made to bring Landor to the "spiritual light before he should die."[10]

Despite Landor's personal antipathy to the restrictions of any body of religious tenets, the subject of religion receives major consideration in his writings. In the English Imaginary Conversations the most frequently treated religious theme is Roman Catholicism. Specifically concerned with this religious-political issue are King James I and Isaac Casaubon and Martin and Jack. Other dialogues which contain brief statements on Roman Catholicism are Windham and Sheridan, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, Romilly and Wilberforce, David Hume and John Home, Lady Lisle and John of Gaunt, and Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker.

To arrive at Landor's views on the Roman Church is not always easy because apart from the dialogues his actions and statements seem almost irreconcilable. On the one hand, he wrote to Southey in April, 1819: "When my spirits wax faint I say to myself, I have yet to see Rome and Southey."[11]

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[9]Super, p. 504. [10]Ibid., p. 611, n.48.

[11]Quoted by Elwin, Replevin, p. 182.

In Rome at this time were Pope Pius VII and his secretary, whom Landor esteemed for their defiance of Napoleon and their liberal stand after the Congress of Vienna.[12] On the other hand, some years later upon learning that Pope Pius IX was seriously ill and that he was likely to die because erysipelas had settled in his legs, Landor remarked: "He has been on his last legs for some time, but depend upon it they are legs that will last--the Devil is always good to his own, you know."[13]

The principal subject of the dialogue between King James I and Isaac Casaubon is popery. For the statement of his hostile treatment of the doctrines, beliefs, and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, Landor selected suitable speakers. King James had never believed in church control of the state. During the time he ruled Scotland, James had prevented the Presbyterian Church from dominating the state. Adhering to his belief in the divine right of kings, he had also maintained the authority of state over church and afterwards on the English throne supported the Anglican Church.[14]

Before Isaac Casaubon came to England at James's invitation, his refusal to be converted to Catholicism caused him to be denied a professor's chair in the College Royal,

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[12]Elwin, Replevin, p. 182 [13]Ibid., p. 401.

[14]"James I," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959, XII, 876-77.

but he was appointed to the king's library in 1604.[15] Of the two, Casaubon seems a little more sympathetic to Catholicism than James. Even though Casaubon could not submit to papacy, he had learned to respect the authority of the church fathers. He appeared to be thoroughly in accord with the Anglo-Catholics. Of the dramatic situation of this dialogue, Charles G. Crump, in his 1891 edition of the Imaginary Conversations, wrote:

> After the death of Henty IV, under whose patronage he had been made librarian of the Royal library in Paris, Casaubon found that the difficulties he had experienced from his Roman Catholic opponents were likely to be even greater than they had been during the king's life. He accordingly accepted James's invitation to come to England, where he was received with the distinction his learning demanded. Nearly every Sunday James and he had long conversations, chiefly on Theology, of which this may be supposed to be one.[16]

What Landor has his English personages say about the Roman Church is bitter and cutting satire at times. Through King James, Landor speaks of the inalterable spirit of the Roman hierarchy. This arrogant, intolerant, persecuting, and unforgiving attitude prevails wherever the church can exercise its authority. To James, a worse feature is that this poisonous spirit "has been sublimated, and its froth and fumes have been condensed by the Jesuits."[17]

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[15]Dictionary of National Biography, III, 1168.

[16]Charles G. Crump, ed., Imaginary Conversations. By Walter Savage Landor, 6 vols (London, 1891), II, 151n.

[17]Works, IV, 86.

In the expression of such an intense hatred of the Jesuits, it is evident that Landor himself is speaking. In his note added to the end of this dialogue, Landor acknowledges that the abolition of the Jesuits is the only good ever permitted by Catholic princes. During the time of the Inquisition, Landor declares that "more mischief has been done to mankind by their religion, than by all the other religions that have existed in the world."[18] Landor also has James assert that a Jesuit has no hesitation to swear a lie upon the eucharist in order to make a man believe an untruth.[19] According to this same note, Landor carries his objections to Catholicism to cultural grounds. He admits that the Roman Church may have been responsible for the revival of sculpture and painting, but then he avers that "it is more certainly the cause why they have made no progress, and why they have been employed on ignoble objects; on scourgers and hangmen, on beggarly enthusiasts and base impostors."[20]

In spite of Landor's strong objections to Roman Catholicism, he was broadly tolerant toward it in some respects. It is Casaubon who asserts for Landor the injustice of excluding Catholic subjects from the rights of citizenship.[21] After surveying the successes and failures of the

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[18] Ibid., IV, 98n. [19] Ibid., IV, 86.

[20] Ibid., IV, 98-99n. [21] Ibid., IV, 99.

papal priesthood to subjugate Spain, Italy, and France, Casaubon feels no fear for the English. In the first place, the very nature of the English will resist the Roman power. Casaubon states:

> The strong moral principle of the English, their serious temper, their habit of long reflection, their unreserved confidence one in another, their dauntless practice of delivering their opinions, their liberality in accepting and exchanging them, and, upon these, the attempering countenance of your Majesty, will deprive the papal poison of its circulation and activity.[22]

Secondly, this pacifist attitude requires patience, but Casaubon believes that ultimately:

> the scourge of reason and humanity, left upon the ground awhile, will break in the hand of the first who strikes hard therewith: it has already lost much of its weight and suppleness.[23]

The theme of liberalness is reiterated in Andrew Marvel's conversation with Bishop Parker.[24] Marvel, like James, speaks of the unchanging character of the Roman Church regardless of the state of civilization. He maintains that her evil is still as rampant as ever "since under her influence the polite Louis at the present day [Seventeenth Century] commits as much bloodshed and perfidy, and commands as many conflagrations and rapes to her honour and advancement, as the most barbarous kings and prelates in times

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[22]Ibid., IV, 100. [23]Ibid.

[24]This dialogue will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

past."[25] But because there may be good men under all forms of beliefs, Marvel concludes in this same speech: "Let us receive as brethren our countrymen of every creed, and reject as Christians those only who refuse to receive them."[26]

In addition to an overall reaction against Roman Catholicism, Landor particularly assails the office of the pope. A much-repeated attack is upon the identification of the pope with God. For instance, in alluding to Jacques Clement, the assassin of the French king, Henry III, Casaubon explains that Clement justified his crime because the king was preparing to aid Protestants in Germany, an act offensive to God. He adds that Clement remarked during his interrogation that "the pope is God, and God is pope."[27] This speech is an example of Landor's altering the facts of history to suit his dramatic needs. Casaubon is made to say that Clement was interrogated on his reasons for committing the crime. The facts are that Clement mortally wounded the king with a dagger which had been concealed beneath his cloak and that the assassin was killed on the spot by the king's attendants.[28]

Landor has James respond with a vehement denial, which is similar to Wordsworth's preference to be a pagan

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[25] Works, IV, 239. [26] Ibid. [27] Ibid., IV, 85.

[28] "Clement," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, V, 796.

in a "creed outworn":

> Christ forgive me! but I am fain to cry out, Happy the people whose Gods were leeks! Religion never taught them that perfidy and murder are virtues.[29]

To this evil, Landor adds another atrocious crime. Through his interlocutor James, the popish priesthood is characterized as the only sect since the creation of the world that has protected fratricides. Reference is made to Juan Diaz, who was murdered at the instigation of his brother Alfonso, because he adopted the doctrine of the apostles in preference to the commentaries of the popes.[30] In another dialogue, one of Landor's most scurrilous attacks upon popery is attributed to Andrew Marvel in the Conversation between him and Bishop Parker:

> As Popery caused the violence of the Reformers, so did Prelaty (the same thing under another name) the violence of the Presbyterians and Anabaptists. She treated them inhumanly: she reduced to poverty, she exiled, she maimed, she mutilated, she stabbed, she shot, she hanged, those who followed Christ in the narrow and quiet lane, rather than along the dust of the market-road, and who conversed with him rather in the cottage than the toll-booth.[31]

The method of electing a pope and the doctrine of apostolic succession are also given particular attention by Landor. First, incorporated in the English Imaginary Conversations is nothing less than scorn for the traditional

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[29] Works, IV, 85. [30] Ibid., IV, 97.

[31] Ibid., IV, 247.

belief that Peter was the first pope. Landor has James say: "A pope, like the Glaucus of antiquity, has taken his leap, and from a fisherman is become a God."[32] Later in the dialogue, Casaubon actually refers to the popes as pretended successors of Saint Peter.[33] Furthermore, to try to find a divinely authorized body to elect a pope and thus continue apostolic succession is equally hopeless. Although Casaubon suggests that successors of the twelve apostles were made by the provincial priests along with the votes of the people, James correctly cites 610 A. D. as the date marking the first regular or certain method of electing popes. The king further replies that Boniface the Third left his election to the popedom to the priests and people, "but usurped to himself the right of confirming it."[34]

The doctrine of papal infallibility finds no sympathy in the speeches of either James or Casaubon. The latter reminds the English king that according to this doctrine, "every potentate in Europe is base-born."[35] By Innocent III's prohibition of marriages within the seventh degree of affinity, Casaubon declares "there not only is no crowned head, but no nobleman in Europe, who is not a bastard or the descendant of one."[36] Casaubon then speaks of Pope John

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[32] Ibid., IV, 89. [33] Ibid., IV, 94.
[34] Ibid., IV, 88. [35] Ibid. [36] Ibid.

VIII, who in 879 condemned as Judases all those who asserted that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son (instead of the pope). James replies ironically: "Another short vacation for Infallibility."[37] But it is left for Casaubon to seal the arguments against this papal trait climactically:

> Infallibility was never claimed by the bishops of Rome, nor ever thought of, until they were sufficiently powerful for the assertion of any falsehood and any usurpation. Pope Honorius, in later times, gave his sanction to the Ecthesis of Sergius, which was accepted by a synod convoked under him: it was declared heretical by his successors. Where was the Infallibility?[38]

In all likelihood, Landor found the doctrine of papal infallibility and the identity of the pope as God to be among the more distasteful beliefs to him personally. Not only does the dialogue contain several virulent attacks on these concepts, but Landor attaches to the end of the work a satirical illustration which pinpoints his assault on the various doctrines and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. This "wicked little story," as Landor refers to it, serves as an epilogue, or moral tag, to this Conversation.[39]

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[37] Ibid., IV, 89. [38] Ibid., IV, 91.

[39] A young Japanese was brought over to Rouen on the day of Pentecost. He had expressed in the voyage a deep regret at the death of the chaplain, who might have instructed him in the mysteries, and who, the only time he conversed with him, recommended to him zealously the worship of the living God. He was constant in his desire to be edified, and immediately on his debarkation was conducted to the cathedral. He observed the

After the account of a pious Japanese biting an archbishop on the leg, James is given the final speech to moralize:

> 'See now,' cried James, 'the result of proclaiming that the pope is god upon earth. It led this poor heathen, who amid such splendour and prostrations might well mistake an archbishop for a pope, to the verge of an abyss, dark, precipitous, and profound, as any that superstition hath opened in his own deplorable country.[40]

Several religious doctrines pertinent to the Reformation appear in Landor's exposition on the Church of Rome. In his relationship to the Roman Church, James, in Landor's dialogue, classes himself with Luther, whom the Pope called sectary. But James is liberal toward Catholicism and calls himself a catholic (spelled with a small "c"). He says that he should not "be loth to go with them, if their priests

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elevation of the Host with imperturbable devotion, and an utter indifference to the flattering whispers of the fairest among the faithful; such as, 'O the sweet jonquil coloured skin! O the pretty piercing black eyes! O the charming long twisted tail! and how finely those flowers and birds and butterflies are painted upon his trousers! and look at that leopard in the centre! it seems alive.

When the service was over, and the archbishop was mounting his carriage-step, he ran after him, and, with eyes half-closed, bit him gently by the calf of the leg. Vociferations were raised by the attendants, the soldiers, and the congregation, ill accordant with sanctity, and wronging the moral character and pious disposition of the Japanese. These however the good prelate quieted, by waving his hand and smiling with affability. The neophyte was asked what induced him to bite the archbishop by the leg: he answered that he wished to pay the living god the same reverence and adoration as the living god had paid the dead one. (Works, IV, 100-101.)

[40] Ibid., IV, 101.

would allow me, to the communion table."[41] James cannot accept the doctrine of transubstantiation, which maintains the literal changing of the substance of bread and of wine into the substance of the Body and the Blood of Christ at the Lord's Table. In the first place, James reasons that the Bible does not say how the communion bread is Christ's body. Secondly, the name of transubstantiation was not in existence for several hundred years after Christ left the earth.[42] It is Casaubon whom Landor employs to document the king's statement that this doctrine was not established until the Lateran Council in 1215.[43]

Through his spokesman James, Landor expresses a typically Protestant and liberal interpretation of the Lord's Supper. James would have every Christian take the sacrament. In contrast to the practice of the Roman Church, he would have families, friends, and neighbors take it together and permit each person to apply to the elements of the Supper his own idea of its import and its essence. Landor is presenting the Pauline explanation: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (I Corinthians 11:28) In observing the Communion, Protestants generally stress the memorial of a past sacrifice on Calvary as the important element. In Catholic

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[41] Ibid., IV, 81. [42] Ibid. [43] Ibid., IV, 89.

bodies, there is insistence on a real sacrifice.[44] To Landor's King James, the memory which the eucharist brings to his mind makes him anxious to open his arms toward all, and to treat his enemies with the charity of the Gospel.[45]

Conversely to the Roman Catholic concept of church and state, Landor supports caesaropapism, the supremacy of state over church. In answer to William Wilberforce's argument that religion should be the main part of the state, Sir Samuel Romilly, one of Landor's favored statesmen, is given to declare "that the best government and the best religion should be kept apart in their ministries."[46] Especially appealing to Landor in this issue is the freedom for both church and state in their respective spheres. In Landor's treatment of the English-Irish problem of the late eighteenth century in the dialogue between Windham and Sheridan, he recommends complete independence of financial support of the state church. In discussing the state support of the Anglican Church in Ireland, where there are only a few communicants, Sheridan believes it expedient to remove them to places where there are many.[47] When William Windham points out that certain gentlemen in the House of

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[44]Vergilius Ferm, ed., An Encyclopedia of Religion (New York, 1945), p. 451.

[45]Works, IV, 82. [46]Ibid., V, 136.

[47]Ibid., V, 105.

Commons would not agree to this plan, Sheridan replies:

> If towns which contain several thousand inhabitants have no representative at all, there would be no worse hardship in fewer than one hundred having no established pastor. But his hardship might not befall them: for they might elect one; and they might themselves pay him proportionally to the service he renders; or they might remove into a more convenient and less contracted fellowship.[48]

The "less contracted fellowship" refers to the followers of Wesley, who do not "hanker after gowns and surplices" and who are independent of state support. In fact, it is by such unendowed ministers, Sheridan maintains, that "the most pious and serious of the English people are taught the doctrines of the English Church."[49]

Another fundamental difference between the Catholics and Protestants is the standard of religious authority. To Protestants, the Bible is authoritative, whereas the Roman Church stands authoritatively between individual members and the Bible. In King James I and Isaac Casaubon, James I, who is deservedly the eponym of the long favored Bible revision of the Protestants, does not like Wycliffe because "he would make men equal," but he praises Bishop Reginald Peacock because he resisted the authority of the pope and refuted several doctrines of the Roman Church. On the subject of authority, James says to Casaubon:

Our bishops (Anglican) acknowledge in spirituals the

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[48] Ibid. [49] Ibid.

> sole authority of that sacred book: whereas your papist, when you push him slinks off from it as he lists, now to one doctor, now to another, now to saint, now to father, now to confessor.[50]

This issue arises again in the dialogue between Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker. To answer Parker's censure of John Milton as a seceder and sectarian and his proposal for liberal interpretations of the Scriptures, Marvel adheres to the strict Puritan interpretation of the Bible. To Marvel, the Scriptures should be taken as they are or not at all. He reasons thus:

> If they are true we should receive them as they are; if they are false we should reject them totally. We can not pick and choose; we can not say to the Omniscient, 'We think you right here; we think you wrong there; however, we will meet you half-way and talk it over with you.'[51]

It is not to be supposed that Landor was a strict adherent to the Puritanism of Andrew Marvel's time. For instance, both speakers in the Barrow and Newton dialogue show little sympathy toward Calvinism, but believe in religious toleration. Newton speaks of Calvinism as "a sect wherein good-humoured and gracefully-minded men are scanty."[52] Barrow in turn says, "Never hate, never dislike men for difference of religion."[53] But such liberality is not to be taken as Barrow's defence of Calvinism, because his next

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[50] Ibid., IV, 92. [51] Ibid., IV, 216.

[52] Ibid., IV, 118. [53] Ibid., IV, 119.

utterance voices a cutting attack:

> Some receive baleful impressions in it more easily than others, as they do deseases. We do not hate a child for catching the small-pox, but pity its sores and blemishes. Let the Calvinist hate us: he represents his God as a hater, he represents him as capricious.[54]

To Landor, there is a vast difference between the Roman Church's ecclesiastical control of the people's beliefs, governing their morals, worship, and interpretation of the Scriptures, and the individual's regulation of his religious life by a personal reading of the Bible. In his brief exposition of the history of Catholic ursurpation, Casaubon satirically concludes that "the people are not permitted to read in their houses the precepts of our Saviour, but are ordered to believe the legend of Saint Handkerchief or Saint Eleven-thousand."[55] In much the same spirit, Landor has Marvel speak allegorically to Bishop Parker:

> The shepherd of the seven hills teaches his sheep in what tone to bleat before him, just as the Tyrolean teaches his bullfinch; first by depriving him of sight, and then by making him repeat a certain series of notes at stated intervals.[56]

The last Conversation which Landor devoted entirely to the subject of religion was Martin and Jack, published for the first time in 1853.[57] Like Swift's A Tale of a Tub, Landor's Lord Peter, Martin, and Jack are representatives

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., IV, 93.

[56] Ibid., IV, 238.

[57] Ibid., IV, 9-11.

of the Roman Church and of the Reformation. But in Landor's dialogue, only Martin and Jack are brought together. As a result, Lord Peter, who represents Catholicism, is assailed by both speakers. Jack, who is supposedly John Calvin, has nothing but scorn for the proud Lord. Martin (Luther), as one would expect, disapproves of the Catholic religion, but is more liberal toward it than Jack.

The situation of this brief dramatic satire occurs several years after the Reformation. Yet the first responsibility for this disturbance in religion, according to Landor's "Preface" to this dialogue, is Lord Peter, who is characterized as "the proudest, most intolerant, most exclusive of his order."[58] Martin is depicted by Landor as different from Peter in stature and features, but possessive of "a marvellous family--likeness in appetite and quickness of digestion."[59] Jack's Puritan simplicity and restricted views are illustrated by the smallness of his house in contrast to the other two religious leaders. Landor further comments in the "Preface": "If you only sent him a simple calf's head toward the close of January," Jack would be content because he "cared little for any other delicacy of the larder."[60] The religious positions of the three

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[58] Ibid., VI, 9. [59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

representatives are distinguished by their language. Peter speaks a language that Jack avows he does not know. Martin, again as the medium of the extreme positions, has caught a few words from Peter and is "somewhat fond of displaying his acquisition."[61]

Out of this background of religious dissent, Landor brings Martin and Jack into a brotherly expostulation. With Peter absent, Landor's interlocutors are freer to express their opinions about the Roman Church. Landor also leaves the impression that Martin and Jack are more congenial toward each other in Peter's absence than in his presence. Although Landor characterizes Jack as "taciturn," he gives him the burden of the dialogue in its attack upon Roman Catholicism. To describe Peter, Jack employs such epithets as "impostor," "bastard," "audacious bastard," "dissolute old bastard," and "proud bastard."[62] This religious illegitimacy is appropriately illustrated by Jack:

> I always knew he was neither our father's son nor our mother's son. Had he been, would he ever have attempted to strangle us in our cradles? Would he not rather have helped us in our sickness and infirmity? would he not rather have fed us with pure fresh milk and unfermented bread in it? would he not rather have taken us by the hand, and guided our tottering steps, patiently and cautiously? Instead of which, he blew out the rush-light; he set fire to our cribs, and burnt us cruelly.[63]

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., VI, 9-10.

[63] Ibid., VI, 9.

Assailing the political usurpation of the pope, Jack accuses him of stocking every kingdom and mounting every throne vicariously with spies and assassins.[64] Landor's views on the separation of church and state find expression here slso. Jack says: "If priests there must be, let them keep their proper station: let the king have his palace, not the priest."[65]

Martin not only has less to say than Jack, but he is also less abusive in referring to Peter. On the whole, Martin assents to the assaults on the Roman Church, but his indifference to his friend's contumelious scorn is indicated by his yawning. Given the last speech in the Conversation, he condemns popery and alludes to the aim of the Reformation to enlighten the communicants of the dominant Church:

> There is only one set of men in Europe who are avowedly adverse to the propagation of knowledge, aware that the propagation of knowledge is adverse to their dominion.[66]

But Martin, unlike Jack, perceives some good in sectarianism. It is desirable because each sect is a moral check on the other. Above all, Martin maintains that

> competition is as wholesome in religion as in commerce. We must bid high for heaven; we must surrender much, we must suffer much; we must make way for others in order that in our turn we may succeed.[67]

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[65] Ibid., VI, 10-11. [66] Ibid., VI, 11.

[67] Ibid.

If Landor is more sympathetic to one of these three representatives of religious sects, the choice would indeed be between Martin and Jack. Landor would certainly lend full support to Jack's denunciation of the political control, the intolerance, and the hypocrisy of the Catholic hierarchy. Similarly, he would favor Martin's objection to the opposition of the Roman Church to the propagation of knowledge and commendation of the free spirit of competition in religion. But to Landor, all three religious groups here represented lack in some aspect the true spirit of Christianity. In the last sentence of this dialogue, which is spoken by Martin, Landor exalts Christ above the hypocrisy, the pride, and the merchandising of nominal Christianity:

> There is but one guide: we know him by the gentleness of his voice, by the serenity of his countenance, by the wounded in spirit who are clinging to his knees, by the children whom he hath called to him and by the disciples in whose prosperity he hath shared.[68]

Landor's Marvel voices this same attitude in contrasting the true Christians, who keep the ordinances of Christ, with such "scoria" as Papists, Calvinists, and Lutherans. In the dialogue between Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker, Marvel states:

> A wise man will always be a Christian, because the perfection of wisdom is to know where lies tranquillity of mind, and how to attain it, which Christianity teaches;

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[68] Ibid.

> but men equally wise may differ and diverge on the sufficiency of testimony, and still farther on matters which no testimony can affirm, and no intellect comprehend.[69]

Landor's views on religious issues other than Roman Catholicism comprise either all or a large part of Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Lord Bacon and Richard Hooker, David Hume and John Home, and Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Inglis. Whereas the preceding discussion in this chapter has presented mainly the negative aspects of Landor's views on religion, the remaining section will present his positive judgments. Each of these four Imaginary Conversations will be treated separately for the convenience of handling the background material of David Hume and John Home and Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Inglis. In all five of these dialogues the emphasis is not centered upon a particular religious group so much as upon the ideal or real meaning of religion to the individual.

Through Andrew Marvel, who speaks in defense of John Milton in Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker.[70] Landor reveals his concept of true Christianity. One's worthiness of the name and privileges of a Christian is not determined by his being a Papist, a Calvinist, or a Lutheran, but by his

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[69]Ibid., IV, 215.

[70]This Imaginary Conversation will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV, which treats literary persons and themes.

faithfulness to keep the ordinances of Christ. The emphasis of moral character is shown in Marvel's assertions that the Christian who doubts "all that ever was doubted of his genealogy [Christ's] and hereditary, yet who never swerveth from his commandments" is a better Christian than the most zealous believer in the divinity of Christ and in the atonement but who is inflamed with "pride, arrogance, persecution, malice, lust of station, lust of money, lust of power."[71]

Exemplified in Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn are the "tranquillity of mind," which Christianity teaches, and the theme of religious tolerance. Ironically, in Landor's portrayal, England's Defender of the Faith not only lacks these virtues of Christian wisdom and tolerance but destroys anyone who possesses them both. Landor is completely unsympathetic towards Henry's condemnation of Anne Boleyn. In his note to this dialogue, he characterizes Henry as "a ferocious and terrific thing" that is "caught and propelled alternately by Fanaticism and Lust."[72] To Landor, Henry VIII is among the greatest of sinners. Landor knows of no instance of any public trial where accusations were so improbable and ill-supported as those that Henry made against Anne.[73] From a religious viewpoint, the king's actions are designated as

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[71] Works, IV, 215. [72] Ibid., IV, 25-26n.

[73] Ibid.

"cruelty, which if not the only sin, is certainly the greatest" and one that has been overlooked entirely by the zealots of religion.[74] Despite Anne's innocence and petition for forgiveness throughout the dialogue, Henry's inexorable spirit finds no room for either mercy or pathos. It is likely that such actions as Henry's in the history of religion in England account for Landor's own religious detachment. To him the brutality of Henry toward Anne seems to symbolize a destructive force in religion. In the concluding note to this dialogue, Landor declares that:

> Literature and Religion seem to have been contending two hundred years unintermittingly, which of them should be most efficient in banishing humanity and civility from the world, the very things which it was their business to propagate and preserve, and without wh ch they not only are useless but pernicious.[75]

Unlike Henry, Anne exemplifies the essence of true Christianity that Landor associated with wisdom. Her kindly reception of and submissive spirit toward Henry evidence the wisdom of one who has found "tranquillity of mind," and yet ironically she is condemned to die a heretic. Unmercifully reproached at every turn, Anne retaliates patiently and respectfully and pleads for her husband's forgiveness. Typical of Anne's sincerity is her reply to Henry's accusation of falsehood and adultery:

If I had committed any kind of falsehood, in regard

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., IV, 32.

> to you or not, I should never have rested until I had thrown myself at your feet and obtained your pardon: but if ever I had been guilty of that other crime, I know not whether I should have dared to implore it, even of God's mercy.[76]

Again when Henry denounces the Bible and history as the two worst types of reading for young people and asserts his right to examine what the English read and think, Anne exclaims:

> O my dear husband! it must be a naughty thing indeed that makes him angry beyond remission. Did you ever try how pleasant it is to forgive anyone? There is nothing else wherein we can resemble God perfectly and easily.[77]

Still the real test of the worth of Christianity to Anne comes in her last moment with Henry. With courage and "tranquillity of mind," she makes her last requests of him:

> Love your Elizabeth, my honoured lord, and God bless you! She will soon forget to call me: do not chide her: think how young she is.
> Could I, could I kiss her, but once again! it would comfort my heart--or break it.[78]

Landor sees in the character of Anne both a deep concern for the welfare of others and a liberal attitude toward different religious beliefs. To disprove the king's accusation that Anne had reserved extravagant amounts of money for vanities, Landor cites the historian Burnet that in the last few months of her life she had distributed between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds among the poor.[79]

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[76] Ibid., IV, 27.

[77] Ibid., IV, 29

[78] Ibid., IV, 32.

[79] Ibid., IV, 28n.

Concerning religious tolerance, Anne mentions several factors which may be responsible for different beliefs and opinions. One person may be influenced to believe one thing instead of another from weakness or ignorance, or the persuasive manner of a teacher, or the purity of his life, or possibly from the strong impression of a particular text. Whatever may decide one's opinions, Anne prayerfully concludes: "And the hand of the Almighty, let us hope, will fall gently on human fallibility."[80]

In Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley, Landor again concentrates upon the moral aspect of Christianity instead of the outward ordinances and church restrictions. His exposition upon religion is developed by contrasting the representatives of Christianity with Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt who opposed the Crusades. During the time of Richard's wanderings and his imprisonment, he had found the princes of Europe, who supposedly professed Christianity, to be

> creatures of less import than the sea-mews on their cliffs; men praying to be heard and fearing to be understood, ambitious of another's power in the midst of penitence, avaricious of another's wealth under vows of poverty, and jealous of another's glory in the service of their God.[81]

The chief question which Landor's Richard poses here is, "Is this Christianity? and is Saladin to be damned if he

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[80] Ibid., IV, 31.

[81] Ibid., IV, 12.

despises it?"[82]

In the dialogue between David Hume and John Home, the emphasis of morality in religion is presented more in the manner of exposition than by exemplification.[83] In this dramatic situation Landor has brought together David Hume, the well-known Scottish philosopher, historian and political economist, and John Home, author of the tragedy Douglas and a minister of the broad church party. In actual life a close friendship existed between the two men who belonged to the same family of Scottish descent.[84] David Hume had changed his name from Home to Hume to make the spelling conform to the pronunciation, and in his will he pleasantly refers to the difference of spelling as one of

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[82]Ibid. As we have already noted in Chapter II, Richard had perceived in Saladin a better moral character than in the so-called Christian princes. Esteeming Saladin for his wisdom, his courage, his courtesy, and his fidelity, Richard acknowledged that if he had remained to conquer him, he would have restored to him the whole of his dominion excepting Palestine. Similarly, Saladin had recognized the moral excellence of Richard above that of the other representatives of the Christian world. Richard explains that "the Christian princes judged of me from himself: to them he sent pearls and precious stones, to me figs and dates." In contrast to Saladin, Richard censures Philip, who speaks for pacific measures but practices aggression. Such is the state of France that Richard rhetorically asks, "Where upon the earth was there ever a people so ready to swear and to forswear, to fight and to fly."

[83]Imaginary Conversations, II, 1824; II, 1826; Works, I, 1846; Works, IV, 1876; Crump, IV, 1891; Welby, IV, 1927.

[84]Dictionary of National Biography, IX, 1130.

two points on which the two friends differed.[85] The bond of friendship was strong enough to lead Hume to dedicate the 1758 edition of his "Essays and Treatises" to Home.[86]

Landor's chief sources for the subject matter of this dialogue on religion and morality are David Hume's Dialogues on Natural Religion. First published in 1757, these dialogues introduce three interlocutors who represent the existence of God from an a priori view, from an a posteriori design, and from an empirical or sceptical position.[87] Charles G. Crump cites Hume's essay entitled "A Dialogue" as the source of the illustration in Landor's Conversation of a brother and sister innocently wedded.[88] In addition, the mention of an unfaithful wife employed by Hume to evaluate Home's religious beliefs may have been taken from a similar discussion in Boswell's Johnson.[89] Other biographical information concerning these speakers was available to Landor at least two years prior to the publication of this dialogue. The Works of John Home were collected and published by Henry

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[85] Notes and Queries, 4th Series, IV, 72; Crump, IV, 9n. The other point of difference mentioned in the will was the precedence in merit of port or claret wine.

[86] Crump, IV, 9n.

[87] "Hume, David," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, XI, 880.

[88] Crump, IV, 9n.

[89] Boswell, pp. 393-394.

Mackenzie in 1822 with an account of the "Life and Writings of John Home."[90]

The time of Landor's Conversation must have been in the summer of 1776. In April of that year, Home started from London to Edinburgh in the company of Adam Smith to see Hume, whose health was failing. Unexpectedly meeting Hume on the way to London, Home accompanied him to Bath. The situation of the dialogue is possibly based upon Hume's return to Edinburgh in July in the company of Home.[91] The main discrepancy in the situation, as noted by Crump, is Landor's supposition that Hume and Home had not met before, even though they had been acquainted for several years.[92]

Under Landor's pen, the Scottish reformed religion, represented by John Home, is weakly upheld. Typical of Hume's attitude toward his friend's religion is the following statement directed to Home: "Religion, as you practice it in Scotland, in some cases is opposite to reason and subversive of happiness."[93] Landor obviously favors Hume by granting him the better logic as well as the last word in the dialogue. Furthermore, this favoritism toward David Hume has

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[90]"Home, John," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, XI, 688.

[91]Dictionary of National Biography, IX, 1131.

[92]Crump, IV, 9n.

[93]Works, IV, 291.

been indicated by John Forster, who says of this Conversation: "Hume talks much as his essays suggest and makes many keen thrusts which the other parries feebly."[94] It is significant also that Landor held a lifelong admiration for Hume. As late in Landor's life as 1853, he found a portrait of the eighteenth-century philosopher that he was certain had been painted by Allan Ramsay, bought it, and shortly thereafter declared to Carlyle that he was giving it to him as a present. Upon receiving it, Carlyle exclaimed: "Only think of that old Landor sending me this."[95]

Fundamental to Hume's arguments in Landor's Conversation is the theme of free will. With Home's assertion that only religion can make people happy and keep them so, Hume readily agrees on the condition that they be allowed to manage it according to their own minds.[96] It is on the basis of free will that Hume denounces the church of Scotland for bringing into proximity the antithetical objects of veneration and abhorrence. Home's orthodox view of the devil as God's adversary loses force under Hume's reasoning. In Hume's opinion, Satan may attempt to seduce men into wickedness, but he at least leaves everyone his free will either to resist or yield. To Hume, the Scottish Church wrongs the evil

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[94]Forster, p. 356. [95]Super, p. 416.

[96]Works, IV, 290.

one greatly by its failure to recognize this characteristic, but the same church wrongs God more by attributing to Him such an unjust doctrine that "predestines the greater part of mankind to everlasting pains and torments, antecedently to corruption or temptation."[97] It is significant that the ability of Hume and Home to discuss their differences freely conforms both to the facts about the real Hume and to his beliefs set forth in this dialogue. That Hume favors freedom of the will and tolerance of differing beliefs is amply supported in the closing speech attributed to him by Landor:

> If men would permit their minds, like their children to associate freely together, if they would agree to meet one another with smiles and frankness, instead of suspicion and defiance, the common stock of intelligence and of happiness would be centupled. Probably those two men who hate each other most, and whose best husbandry is to sow burs and thistles in each other's path, would, if they had ever met and conversed familiarly, have been ardent and inseparable friends. The minister who may order my book to be burnt to-morrow by the hangman, if I, by any accident, had been seated yesterday by his side at dinner, might perhaps in another fortnight recommend me to his master, for a man of such gravity and understanding as to be worthy of being a privy councillor, and might conduct me to the treasury-bench.[98]

To Hume, morality and religion are almost the same. Landor has him affirm that "if morality is not religion, neither is religion morality."[99] Not only are all momentous actions of religious men referable to their religion, but all

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[97] Ibid., IV, 296. [98] Ibid., IV, 298-99.

[99] Ibid., IV, 292.

social duties as well.[100] In addition, actions, according to Hume's philosophy, are virtuous when they contribute to the happiness of ourselves and others.[101] Landor explicitly sets forth this utilitarian concept through Hume:

> To produce as much happiness as we can, and to prevent as much misery, is the proper aim and end of true morality and true religion.[102]

Thus Hume opposes Home's religion and any religion that causes "misery and consternation." To illustrate his views, Hume asks what Home would do if he had a brother living happily with a wife who was unfaithful to him without his suspicion. In answer to Home's uncompromising declaration to cast her out, Hume returns to his basic view of happiness in religion by concluding, "You would then destroy his happiness, and his children's."[103] A second supposition of Hume's concerns a "brother and sister, who, born in different countries, met at last, ignorant of their affinity, and married."[104] True to the character of each speaker, Home pleas for God's mercy to be extended to these blind, sinful creatures; Hume agreeably adds that "man be merciful to them also."[105] Home would snap asunder the chain that the devil had ensnared them in; Hume decries any pastor who would speak a word to bring them into irremediable guilt and

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[102] *Works*, IV, 294. [103] *Ibid.*, IV, 292.

[104] *Ibid.* [105] *Ibid.*

anguish. The arguments of Landor's Hume are put to their ultimate test at this point in the dialogue. In such circumstances, the felicity of love based upon ignorance and innocence excuses guilt.

Hume's empirical philosophy is applied to his doctrine of religion. To him, nations do not throng to celebrate God's power and beneficence because He is delighted with hymns and instruments of music or because He prefers a habitation erected by Inigo Jones or Christopher Wren to a humble cottage on the lowliest moor. But the real purpose of worship is "that the best feelings, the highest faculties, the greatest wealth, should be displayed and exercised in the patrimonial palace of every family united. For such are churches both to the rich and poor."[106] Consistently with this concept, Landor has his speaker Hume compare religion to a medal that has contracted rust from age. Although the rust may seem to be the medal's preserver for many centuries, it will eventually consume it. Just as the corrosion must be removed carefully and patiently, so religion needs to be re-interpreted for each new generation.[107]

Twenty-two years after the 1824 edition of the Imaginary Conversations, Landor returns to the subject of religion in the dialogue between The Duke of Wellington and

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[106] Ibid., IV, 297, [107] Ibid., IV, 295.

Sir Robert Inglis.[108] In a method similar to the treatment of religion in Richard I and the Abbot of Boxley, in which Christian princes are contrasted to Saladin, Landor has Wellington and Inglis talk of Christianity in relation to the religion of India. Landor's speakers meet to discuss the actions of Edward Law, Earl of Ellenborough, during his administration as Governor-General of India from 1841 to 1844. Invading Afghanistan during his term of office, Ellenborough had carried the gates of the Hindu temple of Somnath triumphantly back to India. To him this invasion appeared to be a vengeance which the Hindus had taken in return for the Mahommedan conquest of India eight centuries past.[109] After the Governor-General had boasted publicly of his conquests and of the recovery of the sandalwood gates and had conveyed them to Agra in a triumphal car, the gates were found to be an imitation.[110] Not only had the Somnath affair made Ellenborough ridiculous in the eyes of many Englishmen, but he had unfortunately insulted the Mahommedans in his conquest and had offended the religious feelings of the Hindus by his farcical recovery of the gates.[111]

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[108] Works, II, 1846; III, 1876; Crump, II, 1891; Welby, VI, 1927.

[109] Crump, II, 415n.

[110] Dictionary of National Biography, XI, 665.

[111] Crump, II, 415n.

To discuss Ellenborough's administration in India, Landor chose two speakers who had been political opponents for several years. Along with Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, had successfully vindicated Ellenborough in Parliament. Sir Robert Inglis, on the other hand, was in the mainstream of evangelicalism in England that strongly opposed Ellenborough's proclamations as religiously offensive.[112] Furthermore, when Wellington was appointed prime minister in 1828, the so-called Protestant party hoped that at the head of a more united cabinet, he would offer a steady resistance to Catholic emancipation. Until this time Wellington had always opposed this measure, but he and Sir Robert Peel both felt that the time had come for it to be adopted.[113] Then in the following year, Sir Robert Inglis defeated Sir Robert Peel by 755 votes to 609. In the same year, Inglis spoke and voted against the third reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, which Peel and Wellington supported. Later in 1832, when Wellington attempted to form a ministry in order to carry a moderate reform bill, Inglis strongly denounced any such compromise. In fact, Inglis was characteristically a consistent anti-reformer.[114] Thus throughout their political careers, the

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[112]Albert H. Imlah, Lord Ellenborough (Cambridge, 1939), p. 113.

[113]"Wellington, Arthur Wellesley," Encyclopaedia

(Continued on the next page)

Duke of Wellington and Peel worked together usually in opposition to Inglis.

It is evident that Landor's spokesman in this dialogue was Wellington. On the one hand, Sir Robert Inglis was an old-fashioned Tory and a strong churchman, whose name suggests to be "familiar as the pattern of the despairing Tory."[115] On the other hand, Wellington, as stated by Forster, was Landor's ideal of a great captain.[116]

In Landor's dramatic situation Inglis, by appointment, has met Wellington to discuss Ellenborough's use of "language such as no Mahommedan Governor would have suffered him to use."[117] In contrast to Inglis's concern over religious matters, Wellington is impartial and states that the Governor's actions on the side of religion neither please nor displease him. Typical of Landor's view of church and state, Wellington would not mix politics and religion. He thus tells Inglis that "this is a matter that lies among the bishops."[118]

Landor does not depict Wellington as anti-Christian,

Britannica, 1959, XXIII, 501.

[114]A. Aspinall, ed., Three Early Nineteenth Century Diaries (London, 1952), p. 252n.

[115]Crump, II, 415n.

[116]Forster, p. 601.

[117]Works, V, 1n. [118]Ibid., VI, 1.

but as a discerning statesman who considers the practical side of this religious matter. Even though Wellington denounces Inglis's objections to Ellenborough as "frivolous," Inglis asserts the responsibility of Englishmen as Christians not to alienate peoples of differing religions. Wellington in turn endeavors to show Inglis what is England's primary responsibility:

> We may worry those who are near us for believing this and disbelieving that; but, until there are none to worry at home, let the people of India fight and work for us, and live contentedly. You live contentedly. But you are too grave and of too high standing to be bottle-holder to conflicting religions. I am sure, Sir Robert Inglis, I would wish fair play and no favour.[119]

Landor has Wellington suggest the difficulty of first converting these people to Christianity and secondly of adapting the new religion to their way of life. He thus recommends to Inglis:

> Do not encourage men, ignorant men particularly, to throw off any restraint you find upon them: it is no easy matter to put another in the place, well-looking as it may be, and clever as you may think yourself in cutting it out and fitting it to the wearer.[120]

Later in the dialogue, the Duke again urges that until an evil intention is revealed he "would let people have their own way, both in Oxfordshire and Hindostan."[121] Above all, in the midst of Inglis's pleas to save the people in India from the "flames of hell," Wellington calls for patience.

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[119] Ibid., VI, 3. [120] Ibid., VI, 4.

[121] Ibid., VI, 6.

He discourages Sir Robert's haste by saying, "There are some things at which we may make a dash; others require wary circumspection and slow approaches."[122]

Landor's dialogue presents the Church of England in a favorable light, primarily because of its liberal views. In conceding the bishops' seeming approval of Ellenborough in Parliament, Wellington professes his membership in the English Church and his respect for its authority. Not only does he acknowledge the succession of bishops from the apostles, but he upholds them as "the fairest and most impartial men in the world; they let all religions thrive that do not come too near their own."[123] In reality, when the Duke was convinced that it was for the best interests of his nation, it was this very liberal and impartial attitude that led him to favor Catholic emancipation.

The conclusion of this Conversation accords with history's depiction of Wellington. Albert H. Imlah, in his biography of Lord Ellenborough, says that Wellington saw no harm in the Governor-General's proclamation, calling it a mere 'song of triumph.'[124] In the closing speech of this dialogue, Wellington, who sees no justification for Sir Robert's anxiety, humorously decries his early morning visitor for his impatience. He thus addresses him:

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[122] Ibid., VI, 4. [123] Ibid. [124] Imlah, pp. 212-13.

> I see, Sir Robert Inglis, you are in haste. I will lay before Peel, and the rest of them, all your suggestions. In the meantime be a little patient; Juggernauth is not coming down St. James's Street.[125]

A study of Landor's English Imaginary Conversations reveals the author's extensive reading in the history and doctrines of the Roman Church and of representative Protestant doctrines. At times his speakers discuss authoritatively the controversial issues of the Reformation, such as popery, transubstantiation, apostolic succession, and religious authority. Many of the speeches are little more than brief argumentative essays documented with dates and references to sources of church history.

It is not possible to affiliate Landor with any religious group or to compile a formal list of tenets to which he adhered. In some instances, his ideas on the doctrines of prayer and immortality indicate his skepticism of certain orthodox beliefs. He is opposed to any religious group, whether Catholic or Protestant, that restricts freedom of any individual group. For this reason, Landor rejects the Catholic doctrine of church and state and the Calvinistic belief in predestination. He also detests the hypocrisy and intolerance of so-called Christianity. In contrast to Christian princes, he esteems the Sultan of Egypt for his high moral principles; he favors the impartial

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[125] Works, VI, 8.

attitude of the Duke of Wellington toward the religion of India; he depicts sympathetically the spirit of true Christianity in the child-like sincerity of Anne Boleyn's faith. Particularly do Landor's speakers Anne Boleyn and David Hume exemplify his concept of Christianity, and religion in general, as a spiritual and moral discipline.

A conspicuous paucity of Biblical allusions is significant in this study of Landor's religious personality. Even though he was well acquainted with the religious creeds of Catholicism and Protestantism, he manifested little personal interest in them or in an exacting interpretation of the Bible. To Landor the importance of Christianity lay in the spirit and not in the letter of the law.

CHAPTER IV

LANDOR'S VIEWS AS A LITERARY CRITIC AND PHILOLOGIST

Although Landor's concern for political and social affairs both on the contemporary scene and in the past occupies a large portion of the English Imaginary Conversations, possibly his own greatest interest is his literary criticism. Landor scholarship has consistently referred in a general way to Landor as a literary critic, but no satisfactory study of his criticism has been done. In this chapter, the discussion of Landor's critical endeavors is by no means exhaustive, mainly because of the limitation of this dissertation to the English group of Conversations. First, a general picture of Landor as a critic will be presented by reviewing the scholarship which treats the author as a critic and philologist. Secondly, a more specific consideration of the principles and techniques of his criticism will be given in the discussion of individual dialogues.

After Landor's death in 1864, John Forster's critical biography of Landor, which appeared in 1869, gives brief attention to the Conversations dealing with literary figures and writings and to attitudes revealed in his personal correspondence, but he attempts no evaluation of Landor's

critical ability.[1] Similarly, Sidney Colvin's Landor (New York, 1881) and Edward Dowden's Studies in Literature: 1789-1877 (London, 1892) contain only general biographical-critical essays of Landor. The first endeavor to relate Landor to any critical tradition appears in Lewis E. Gates's Studies and Appreciation (New York, 1900), which places Landor in the school of literary criticism that flourished before Sainte Beuve and Taine and thus endeavors to show that Landor was not the product of his age.

The first really serious attempt to indicate Landor's critical standards is George Saintsbury's treatment in his History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe (New York, 1904). Saintsbury classifies Landor among those critics who incline toward "the divorce of Taste from Criticism to the admission of the monstrous regiment of mere arbitrary enjoyment and liking, not to say mere caprice."[2] The chief fault that Saintsbury perceives is Landor's lack of judicial quality. To Saintsbury, Landor's critical shortcomings are the inevitable result of certain well-known "peculiarities of temperament, moral rather than intellectual, and principles of life

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[1]A preparatory treatment of Landor as a critic had been done during his lifetime in the form of an imaginary conversation. In 1843, Edward Quillinan published in Blackwood's his "Imaginary Conversation between Mr. Walter Savage Landor and the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine," which humorously shows the danger of taking Landor's statements out of context.

[2]George Saintsbury, A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe (New York, 1904), III, 276.

rather than of literature."[3] Despite Landor's thorough classical background, his vast knowledge of modern literature, and his occasional delicate and exquisite taste, Saintsbury believes that Landor's lack of intellect and will to govern the emotions hindered him from being a consistently sound critic. It is Saintsbury who has cited the Imaginary Conversations as the source of Landor's best critical observations.[4]

Eight years later, Oliver Elton, in A Survey of English Literature: 1780-1830 (2 vols., New York, 1912), speaks of Landor's deficiencies as a critic:

> As a critic he would be unsafe in his dislikes, if any man could be imagined as accepting them. He cannot be reconciled to Milton's rollcalls of proper names, 'Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.' He sees nothing good in Boileau; nay he holds that of Shakespeare's sonnets 'not a single one is very admirable,' and compares them to 'raspberry jam, without cream, without crust, without bread, to break its viscidity.'[5]

But Elton does not permit these Boythornisms to blind him to Landor's merits as a critic. Particularly of the formal examination of Wordsworth in Southey and Porson and of Milton in Southey and Landor, he says:

> They are pieces of sharp, minute, textual comment, often censorious, always courageous, and again and again pertinent. Subtle Landor is not, but delicate he often is, and perhaps his best judgments are those conveyed by

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., III, 277.

[5] Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature: 1780-1830 (New York, 1912), II, 40.

poetic metaphor.[6]

The only evaluation of Landor's marginalia appears in two brief critical articles: Stephen Wheeler's "From Landor's Library" (Spectator Literary Supplement, 24 March 1923, pp. 475-76) and G. E. Wall's "Stray Words from Walter Savage Landor" (The Critic, XXXVIII, 238-240). Wheeler's essay, which deals with Landor's marginalia in Grote's History of Greece, shows that Landor is primarily interested in the diction and the spelling. Wall's publication of Landor's marginal notes on Aubrey de Vere's poem "Coleridge" reveals Landor's personal bias against the subject of the poem instead of a criticism of the text of the poem.

Although Stanley T. Williams' "Walter Savage Landor as a Critic of Literature" (PMLA, 1923) is by no means an exhaustive treatment of the topic, his article does set forth the main characteristics of Landor as a critic. In the first place, Williams concludes that Landor's judgments are arbitrary, that he possesses no set of critical principles, and that his criticism is at the mercy of high but eccentric ideals.[7] In the second place, Williams asserts that Landor's sweeping judgments are unsupported by critical analysis. Instead, he uses the critic's faute de mieux--

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Stanley T. Williams, "Walter Savage Landor as a Critic of Literature," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923), 910.

comparison and contrast; for instance, he compares Ovid to Virgil and Spenser to Chaucer. In the third place, Landor's hobbies of orthography and textual annotation, Williams suggests, are obviously a transference of the scholia of classical criticism to English literature. And lastly, Williams concludes that Landor's greatest power as a critic lies in his capacity for epigrammatic criticism.[8]

In his work, On Writing and Writers (edited by George Gordon, London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1926), Walter Raleigh attributes Landor's greatness to his literary criticism. He states that "some have complained of the minuteness of his criticism, but this is what makes Landor so good a teacher. In these minute criticisms he always excels."[9] Raleigh has also indicated the reason for Landor's lack of popular esteem as a critic by naming him as a part of "that very small company of English men of letters who are born Academicians, like Ben Jonson and Gray," whose works are stiff with scholarship and are not congenial to our soil.[10]

The most extensive and yet unsuccessful study of Landor's criticism has been Helen Bigham Browne's thesis, Walter Savage Landor as a Literary Critic (Unpublished dissertation, Cornell University, 1939). Primarily a

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[8]Ibid., pp. 912-13.

[9]Walter Raleigh, On Writing and Writers (London, 1926), p. 144.

[10]Ibid., p. 145.

compendium of Landor's critical utterances in his prose and poetry, this study is of no value in evaluating Landor as a critic. In the "Preface" Miss Browne states that a "study of these collected critical utterances will prove that Landor did not strive to improve the readers' taste, but did seek to show what he considered good literature."[11]

In Havelock Ellis's critical essay on Landor, included in his general survey of English literature--From Marlowe to Shaw, he briefly summarizes what other critics have already said about Landor's literary criticism. His conclusion is that Landor stood aloof from his contemporaries.[12]

The most recent attempt to relate Landor to a critical tradition appears in Stanley Edgar Hyman's The Armed Vision: a Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism. Hyman does not not classify Landor as a distinctively modern literary critic, but he sees him as a definite link in a critical practice that continues to the present. In his discussion of systematic aesthetic evaluation of works of art as the principal aim of criticism, Hyman reserves for Landor a place of distinction. In his brief survey of the

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[11]Helen Bigham Browne, Walter Savage Landor as a Literary Critic (Unpublished dissertation, Cornell University, 1939), "Preface." Super makes a similar evaluation. See Super, MLA, p. 232.

[12]Havelock Ellis, From Marlowe to Shaw (London, 1950), pp. 165-66.

development of evaluative criticism to the present century, Hyman summarizes briefly the major tradition of criticism to which he relates Landor:

> The Greek and Roman critics were chiefly interested in poetics and analysis of the social nature and effects of art; medieval critics devoted their principal attention to moral and allegorical interpretation; and Renaissance criticism, particularly in England, centered on the moral justification of imaginative literature. By Jacobean times in England, however, criticism began to assume the concentration on evaluation it was to display for three centuries, as it did throughout Europe after the Renaissance and in America.[13]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England when evaluative criticism flowered, Hyman asserts that Thomas Rymer, John Dennis, Samuel Johnson reached heights of dogmatic statement that even Yvor Winters of the twentieth century has never equalled. Hyman places Landor in this succession of critics, calling him the "great dogmatic evaluator of the nineteenth century." As a critic, Hyman sees Landor as a throwback to the violent oracular tradition of an earlier century who bases his evaluations in classicism and traditionalism.[14]

Landor's views on spelling, pronunciation, and diction have received attention in the twentieth century primarily by one philologist. T. R. Lounsbury has thought

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[13]Stanley Edgar Hyman, The Armed Vision: a Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism (New York, 1948), pp. 60-61.

[14]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

Landor worthy of mention respecting these phases of the English language. In his English Spelling and Spelling Reform (1909), Lounsbury discusses Landor's theories as a spelling reformer. Further, in his work, The Standard of Usage in English (1908), he cites examples of Landor's textual criticism to illustrate his discussion of the nineteenth century, which "abounded in men who had very decided opinions as to the debasement which was overtaking the speech, and were filled with anxiety about its future."[15] Lounsbury's The Standard of Pronunciation in English (1904) severely judges Landor to be ignorant of the "influences which have affected and still affect pronunciation in our tongue."[16]

What Landor's scholars say about Landor as a critic provides at least two general conclusions. First, it is evident that no one has made a satisfactory extensive study of Landor's criticism. In fact, the only scholarly discussion of any worth evaluating Landor's critical standards is Williams' article. Secondly, these critics generally agree that Landor stood aloof from his age and that he probably adhered more to the eighteenth century than to the nineteenth

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[15]T. R. Lounsbury, The Standard of Usage in English (New York and London, 1908), pp. 37-38.

[16]T. R. Lounsbury, The Standard of Pronunciation in English (New York and London, 1904), p. 141.

because of his method of textual criticism and interest in philology.

The major portion of this chapter will be devoted to classifying or relating Landor to critical standards in English literary history more clearly than has been done. The English Imaginary Conversations that contain Landor's criticism will be treated individually to demonstrate specifically what Landor's critics have mentioned generally and also to deduce suggestions of critical principles as yet unnoticed. Except for those dialogues dealing with philology, which will be treated last, the order of discussion will follow the plan in Welby's edition. In Barrow and Newton, Landor devotes his attention to Bacon's Essays. The dialogue entitled Walton, Cotton, and Oldways treats Donne's early poems. In the first dialogue between Milton and Andrew Marvel, Landor's exposition is limited primarily to dramatic theory of comedy.[17] The Conversation between Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker deals with a defence of John Milton's life and gives brief attention to his prose tracts. Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle criticizes Byron; Lord Chesterfield and Lord Chatham, Plato; Southey and Porson, Wordsworth; Southey and Landor, Milton. Within these

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[17]The second and third Conversations between Milton and Andrew Marvel offer little additional criticism beyond the first, but they will be treated briefly with the first dialogue.

dialogues, Landor makes brief comments upon Thomson, Young, Crabbe, Addison, Cowper, Johnson, Coleridge, Keats, Scott, Shelley, Southey, Shakespeare, and Chaucer. On matters of orthography and usage, the two Conversations, Samuel Johnson and John Horne Tooke and Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor, comprise this phase of Landor's interest in philology.

Landor reveals his esteem and appreciation of Francis Bacon by devoting a relatively long Conversation, Barrow and Newton, to a critical treatment of his essays. To enhance the verisimilitude of the situation, Landor chose speakers who as pupil and master were contemporary with each other and lived only a generation later than Bacon. Furthermore, it is interesting to note biographically that Bacon, Barrow, Newton, and Landor himself were all of Trinity College, Cambridge. For a discussion of Bacon's Essays, Landor's speakers may seem misplaced because of their dominant interest in mathematics and philosophy. But Francis Bacon, though no scientist himself, had been the popularizer of a new natural science.

In life, Landor's speakers had been intimate friends who conversed frequently. The first of the interlocutors, Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), born four years after Bacon's death, was an eminent mathematician, a classical scholar, and one of the great Anglican divines and preachers of the

Caroline period.[18] Landor would admire the reactionary spirit of Barrow, who was clearly out of sympathy with the dominant party at Cambridge. His want of sympathy with his surroundings and the dislike of his brother fellows parallel many circumstances of Landor's own life. Becoming Professor of Greek in 1654 at the age of twenty-four accounts for Barrow's acquaintance and lasting friendship with his pupil Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). John Henry Overton, in his biographical sketch of Newton, has noted of the two men that Barrow's reputation as a mathematician was considered by his contemporaries as second only to Newton, whose genius overshadowed Barrow's only a little.[19] Another evidence of the close ties of friendship is seen in Barrow's resigning the Lucasian professorship in 1669 in favor of his distinguished pupil Newton. Overton again suggests that Barrow had the "acuteness to perceive, and the generosity to acknowledge, the superior qualifications of his great successor."[20]

Criticism of this Conversation in contemporary reviews and later editions is sparse. The dialogue first appeared in 1829, but received no critical attention until 1837. But even then only two sentences show any critical appreciation. After William H. Smith, the reviewer for the

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[18]Dictionary of National Biography, I, 1219.

[19]Ibid., I, 1222. [20]Ibid., I, 1221.

Quarterly Review, has discussed Landor's treatment of the sages of modern times, he refers to Barrow:

> Amongst the moderns, Barrow and Sir Philip Sidney appear in these dialogues, to the greatest advantage. But something too much of the author's own spirit has been infused into the divine.[21]

The manner of treating Bacon's Essays in Barrow and Newton is unique in the English Imaginary Conversations. Landor employs a dialogue within a dialogue: Newton recounts a conversation with an elderly man of another college in which the two discussed Bacon. This framework was employed by Landor to comment both favorably and unfavorably upon the essayist. On the one hand, the elderly man declared some of Bacon's quotations to be dull and colorless bombast; others he called idle in allusion, false, and impious. On the other hand, on the basis of one sentence, this old gentleman esteemed Bacon's genius beyond all the Greek philosophers. Bacon had written, "Certainly, it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."[22] Barrow evaluates this single sentence to be worthy of Shakespeare.

In this dialogue Landor's critical approach is chiefly analytical. His discussion of Bacon's Essays takes

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[21]William H. Smith, "Works of Mr. W. S. Landor," Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 122.

[22]Works, IV, 121.

the form of brief commentaries upon each essay. The essays specifically treated include: Essay on Revenge, On Simulations and Dissimulation, Upon Goodness, On Envy, On Seditions, On Nobility, On Atheism, On Empire, On Counsel, On Cunning, On Innovations, On Friendship, On Expense, On Suspicion, Upon Ambition, On Custom and Education, On Youth and Age, Of Beauty, On Deformity, On Building, On Negotiating, On Followers and Friends, On Suitors, On Studies, On Faction, On Ceremonies and Respects, On Praise, On Vainglory, Of Honour and Reputation, On Judicature, On Vicissitudes of Things, and On Fame. In his notes on these essays, Landor quotes passages to illustrate the beauties of the language, to state the themes of the essays, and occasionally to show some deficiency in logic. Within this critical analysis, Bacon's diction and grammar are also given close and exacting attention. David Daiches, in his Critical Approaches to Literature, has explained that the analytical method develops when "philosophical defense tends to give way to practical discussion, to evaluation of particular works, to consideration of ways of writing well."[23]

The comparative method employed in evaluating Bacon's style is a quality that further characterizes Landor as a practical, or analytical, critic. According to Daiches,

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[23]David Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1956), p. 173.

the practical critic uses such devices as comparison, contrasts, and illustrations to make his evaluations. Landor compares Bacon's style with Cicero's. Both Barrow and Newton agree that Bacon's Essays contain more genius and philosophy than all of Cicero's works, but less of the scholastic and oratorical. By this process, Landor's conclusion is that Bacon is a superior stylist. Barrow is given to say:

> Your brief review of the Essays hath brought back to my recollection so much of shrewd judgment, so much of rich imagery, such a profusion of truths so plain, as (without his manner exhibiting them) to appear almost unimportant, that, in the various high qualities of the human mind, I must acknowledge not only Cicero, but every prose-writer among the Greeks, to stand far below him.[24]

Landor's method here, particularly the use of comparisons, relates him more to eighteenth-century practices in English literary criticism than to those of his own age. For instance, in the late eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson employed comparisons as a device for establishing degrees of excellence. Characteristic of Johnson (and later of Landor) was his comparison of authors, or different kinds of genius, rather than individual works. In his Life of Pope, for example, Johnson contrasts Pope and Dryden not merely to show how different the two styles are, but to point out

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[24]Works, IV, 151.

essential characteristics of each writer.[25] Although Johnson seems to rate Dryden's genius a little higher than Pope's, the reader is led to appreciate both. Similarly, Landor's comparisons and contrasts are not made at the expense of either one of the great literary figures.

For a brief treatment of John Donne's early poetry, Landor employs a biographer, an antiquarian, and an imaginary friend of Donne as his speakers in his Conversation entitled Walton, Cotton, and Oldways. Izaak Walton (1593-1683), twenty years younger than Donne (1573-1631), came into contact with Donne about 1618 when he established his residence near St. Dunstan. It was this acquaintance that provided Walton with the sources and inspiration to write his Life of John Donne, published in 1640.[26] The second speaker, Charles Cotton (1630-1687), an antiquarian and co-author with Walton of the famous Compleat Angler, was thirty-seven years younger than Walton and only one year old when Donne died. The identity of the third speaker, Willy Oldways, has not been related to any person in the seventeenth century by Landor's critics and biographers. Obviously, as C. G. Crump suggests, the character is imaginary.[27] Oldways

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[25]Samuel Johnson, Selected Prose and Poetry, Edited by Bertrand H. Bronson (New York, 1955), pp. 385-86.

[26]Dictionary of National Biography, XX, 730.

[27]Charles G. Crump, ed., Imaginary Conversations, By Walter Savage Landor, 6 vols. (London, 1891), IV, 159n.

is identified in the dialogue as a curate to Master Donne, an intimate friend who had resided at Ashbourne forty-five years.

In his biography of Landor, John Forster grouped this Conversation with those taken from English biography and praised the piece as a "very exquisite prose-poem." He further described it as a beautiful idyll "fresh as a page of Izaak's own writing; a natural landscape overrun with charming thoughts; and with a sweet soberness in its cheerfulness and sunshine, that Walton says of the effect upon himself of sights and sounds of nature, makes us readier to live and less unready to die."[28] Forster also notes that the style of Donne is imitated occasionally throughout the speeches of Oldways.[29] It should be added to these observations that Landor's informal style is seen in Walton's direct addresses to Charles Cotton as "Charley" and to William Oldways as "Willy." Other aspects that set the tone of the dialogue are the comments upon the flowers and trees, the discourses on fishing, and Cotton's task of catching flies and putting them into a box for Walton's fishbait.

Landor's criticism in this dialogue is limited to several unpublished early poems by Donne, supposedly in Oldways' possession. Through his speaker Oldways, Landor gives Donne's age when he wrote these poems and suggests the

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[28]Forster, p. 423. [29]Ibid.

occasion, or reason, for writing them by stating that he was "in his twenty-third year, and subject to fits of love."[30] When Walton requests to see the poems, Oldways is reluctant to show them because he does not know whether Donne would consent if he were living, "the lines running so totally on the amorous."[31] Of the love affair upon which these poems are based, Oldways identifies the "damsel" of Donne's affection as a Mistress Margaret Hayes, a name not mentioned in critical studies of Donne. Also according to this Conversation, Landor places this affair and the writing of these poems ten years before Donne's marriage to the daughter of the "worshipful Sir George More."[32]

In this dialogue, Landor is dealing with the time of Donne's life discussed by Edmund Gosse under the heading, "The Lyrical Poem." Gosse, Donne's standard biographer, says of this period that it is "shrouded in a mist, which is the more exasperating to the biographer in that just enough is revealed through it to show the value of what is hidden."[33] The reference to Donne's posthumously published poems and the poet's attitude toward his early endeavors are accurately depicted in Landor's Conversation. Gosse has

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[30] Works, IV, 164. [31] Ibid., IV, 164-65.

[32] Ibid., IV, 166.

[33] The Life and Letters of John Donne, Revised and collected by Edmund Gosse (London, 1899), I, 55.

written:

> He [Donne] also wrote a great body of very singular and moving poetry, some part of which, at least, has been preserved to us, although it was not printed during its author's lifetime. The extreme importance to the student of Donne of all these particulars has tempted his successive biographers, and even Walton, into positive statements which can, by the nature of the evidence, be not treated as more than conjectural.[34]

Furthermore, in Landor's dialogue Oldways' hesitation to show these poems to his guests because of their amorous nature reflects Donne's real attitude toward these verses. In his letters, for example, Donne apologizes for his amorous poems. According to Gosse, he would not print them; yet he had no objection to seeing them circulate in manuscript.[35]

Only eighteen lines of Donne's poems are cited and discussed analytically. But these few lines are not given the exacting textual examination that Landor later devotes to Wordsworth's and Milton's poetry. The main quality for which Landor praises these early poems is the quality of smoothness, which he says is lacking in the later poems. Through Walton's speeches, Landor indicates his preference for the amorous character of these poems in contrast to the later ones. Walton says:

> This is the poetry to reason upon from morning to night. ...These verses are testimonials of a fine fancy in Donne; and I like the man the better who admits

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., I, 60.

Love into his study late and early.[36]

This evaluation of Donne's early poetry on the basis of its smoothness and amorous quality represents an individualistic criterion as opposed to set rules. These somewhat general and abstract critical estimates of Donne are characteristic of the School of Taste, a critical movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[37]

The implication in this dialogue that Landor dislikes Donne's later poetry relates his criticism more closely to neoclassical critics than to the Romantic critics of the nineteenth century. His views are similar to both John Dryden and Samuel Johnson. Dryden has described Donne's poetry as lacking in charm and his versification as being faulty with rough cadences. Dryden also thought that the charm of Donne's love poetry was occasionally marred with "nice speculations of philosophy."[38] In his criticism of the metaphysical school, Samuel Johnson indirectly attacks Donne for "such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect that they were only found to be verses by counting the

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[36]Works, IV, 170.

[37]A. Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, Second edition (New York, 1953), p. 19.

[38]W. P. Ker, Essays of Dryden (Oxford, 1900), II, 19.

[39]Johnson, p. 469.

syllables."[39]

Among Landor's contemporaries, Coleridge rejected the poetry of the neoclassicists on the same ground (in one point, at least) that Johnson denounced the metaphysical school and praised Donne. To read Dryden and Pope, for example, Coleridge said that "you need only count syllables; but to read Donne you must measure time, and discover the time of each word by the sense of Passion."[40] Like Landor, Wordsworth senses a quality of roughness in Donne's verse; yet unlike Landor, he praises the seventeenth-century poet for this very trait. Wordsworth criticizes Donne's sonnet, "Death, Be Not Proud," as "weighty in thought, and vigorous in the expression, though to modern taste it may be repulsive, quaint, and labored."[41] The nineteenth-century critic whose views on Donne resemble Landor's is William Hazlitt, who dislikes Donne's practice, particularly in his satires, which tell "disagreeable truths in as disagreeable a way as possible, or to convey a pleasing and affecting thought by the harshest means, and with the most painful effort."[42]

If Landor felt at home in any one era of English

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[39]Johnson, p. 469.

[40]Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, 2 vols. (Shawcross, 1907), II, 120.

[41]The Letters of William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years (Oxford, 1939), II, 152.

[42]The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, Edited by P. P. Howe (London, 1931), VI, 51.

history more than another, that period was probably the English Renaissance. When Walter was five years old, he attended a school kept by Thomas Trehern, where an old woman who was one hundred and two years old was paid to come from Balsal Temple to teach. In later years Landor amused himself with recalling how the "span of this one life joined him to a generation that had seen not merely Milton, but Shakespeare, Spenser, and Raleigh."[43] And of these literary personages named, Milton receives by far the greatest attention in the English Imaginary Conversations.

The first of the three dialogues between Milton and Andrew Marvel appears in the 1824 edition of the Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. Only one contemporary reviewer devotes attention to this dialogue. In the review of this edition in Blackwood's John Wilson notes briefly that in the Conversation between Milton and Marvel Milton advises Marvel how to compose comedy and also points out that "the pure, high, and lofty spirit of the great bard is well entered into, and sustained."[44]

Landor's interlocutors were close friends for many years. David Masson, in The Life of John Milton and History of His Time, has noted that at the time of Henry Lawes'

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[43]Super, p. 3.

[44]Blackwood's Magazine, XV (1824), 465.

death in 1662 Milton's steadiest friends were Andrew Marvel, Cyriack Skinner, and young Lawrence.[45] A possible source available to Landor that emphasizes the close tie between Milton and Marvel is George Burnett's Specimens of English Prose-Writers from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Seventeenth Century, published in three volumes first in 1807 and in a second edition in 1813, seventeen years prior to the first publication of this dialogue. Burnett's brief twelve-page biographical essay of Andrew Marvel devotes at least five pages to his friendship with Milton and the high esteem he held for him.[46]

In a note to the third edition in 1846, Landor explains why he selected the subject of comedy for Milton to discuss. He reasons that Milton had given his opinions in full on government, religion, and many kinds of poetry, but what he supposedly thought on comedy was lacking.[47] The subject matter is also imaginary in the supposition that

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[45]David Masson, The Life of John Milton and History of His Time (New York, 1881, Reprinted in 1946), VI, 453.

[46]George Burnett, Specimens of English Prose-Writers (London, 1813), III, 345-356. Charles Lamb may have had a hand in this work. E. V. Lucas, in his Life of Charles Lamb, specifically mentions Lamb's assisting Burnett with the sketches of Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton, and Jeremy Taylor. See E. V. Lucas, The Life of Charles Lamb, 2 vols. (London, 1905), p. 209.

[47]Works, IV, 175n.

Marvel was writing comedy.[48] At least we know that Marvel held some interest for dramatic poetry. Such poems as "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body," "A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda," and "A Dialogue between Two Horses" indicate his own limited use of the dramatic framework. In Addition, Marvel's translations and his writings of Latin and Greek verse qualify him as a suitable companion to converse with Milton on Roman and Greek writers of comedy.

Landor's speakers discuss two subjects of major significance in literary criticism: the differences between comedy and tragedy and the extent to which the ancients should be venerated. To create a more effective dramatic situation by contrast, Landor has provided his speakers with the two main critical concepts of comedy. Landor's Milton favors "old" comedy in opposition to the degraded mode of Restoration drama; in contrast, Marvel's views show a preference for new comedy. Without distinguishing between tragedy and comedy, Milton advises Marvel to "copy the better part of what the Greeks and Romans called the old." To utilize the "better part," the dramatist must employ songs and music (chorus) and the "names and characters and manners of

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[48]Although the seventeenth-century writer may have tried his hand at comedy, his known works today are his letters, poetry, and essays. See Alexander B. Grosart, The Complete Works of Andrew Marvell, 4 vols. (London, 1872), "Table of Contents."

times past" for his model.[49] Marvel, on the other hand, opposes the chorus and prefers that the characters develop the action naturally. Landor is here following the historical distinction between the two kinds of comedy. Henry Ten Eyck Perry, in his Masters of Dramatic Comedy and Their Social Themes, considers the Chorus as one of the main differences between old and new comedy. He has concisely described the skeleton of the original formula (old) as having the

> sympathetic protagonist and his rival to engage in a formal debate, always to be won by the author's favorite; there had to be the Chorus to discuss this conflict and sometimes to share in it, but always on the right side.[50]

On the basis of Milton's and Marvel's discussion, Landor's own views of these critical practices tend to maintain the distinction between genres which was basic to the neo-classical creed. Early in the dialogue, in view of Milton's failure to distinguish between the two dramatic forms, Marvel states explicitly: "It appears to me, however, that there is as much difference between tragedy and comedy as between the heavens and the clouds; and that comedy draws its life from its mobility."[51] In agreement

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[49] Works, IV, 175.

[50] Henry Ten Eyck Perry, Masters of Dramatic Comedy and Their Social Themes (Cambridge, 1939), p. 43.

[51] Works, IV, 176.

with his friend, Milton later says: "As a tragedy must consist of opposite counsels and unforeseen events, if the author should exhibit his whole action in one hall or chamber, he would be laughed to scorn. Comedy is not formed to astonish: she neither expects nor wishes great changes."[52] It is significant also that both speakers think that Menander was mistaken in not recognizing that comedy and tragedy are different.

A more specific application of the doctrine of genres is made by Landor in reference to his Conversations. In the third Conversation between Milton and Marvel, Landor draws a fine line of distinction between the Conversation and the dialogue. Milton says:

> An imaginary line may be drawn between Conversation and Dialogue. In Conversation, as in the country, variety is pleasant and expected. We look from the ground before us into the remoter, and much of more than one quality lies between. In Conversation we ought not to be didactic, in Dialogue we may be.[53]

Yet Landor's liberality concerning genres is evident in his discussion of prose and poetry in the second Conversation between these literary figures. Here Milton favors keeping the two forms distinct, but Marvel cogently suggests that Milton had not done so.[54]

In the dialogues between Milton and Marvel, it is

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[52] Ibid., IV, 183-84. [53] Ibid., IV, 196.

[54] Ibid., IV, 182.

evident that Landor venerates the ancients, but he does not propose a slavish adherence to rules. Especially in respect to the unities are his views liberal. Speaking of the unities, Landor's Milton would not hamper the writer of comedy with rules and precedents, and he would advise him to "comply with no other laws or limits than such as are necessary to the action."[55] Milton considers incredible the many great changes affecting many whole families, sometimes into several countries in one day. In fact, the combination of plots, Milton states, is less "difficult to contrive than to credit." Furthermore, he prefers

> seeing a fault wittily rebuked and checked effectually, and thinks that surprising enough, considering the time employed in doing it, without the formation of attachments, the begetting or finding of children, bickerings, buffetings, deaths, marriages, distresses, wealth again, love again, whims and suspicions, shaking heads, and shaking hands.[56]

Milton can see no reason, in nature or in art, for demanding five acts in drama. He very liberally asserts:

> The number of acts should be optional, like the number of scenes, and the division of them should equally be subordinate to the convenience of the poet in the procession of his events. In respect to duration, nothing is requisite or reasonable but that it should not loiter nor digress, and that it should not exhaust the patience nor disappoint the expectations of the audience.[57]

Neither would Milton always demand strict adherence to the

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[55] Ibid., IV, 182. [56] Ibid., IV, 183.

[57] Ibid.

unity of place throughout a whole performance, "unless for the purpose of ridiculing some late French critics."[58]

Landor's tendency to favor the doctrine of literary types places him once more in a closer position to eighteenth-century critical practices than to those of his own day. A. Bosker, in his Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, ascribes the strict separation of literary types to the neoclassicists of the eighteenth century. He cites such critics as Addison, Kames, Hurd, and Pye, who held that the intermixture of comic and tragic elements in the drama was a serious transgression of the laws of propriety.[59] In the nineteenth century, an era characterized by the rise of an emotional concept in poetry, Coleridge expresses the most commonly held view in his age. Like Samuel Johnson, who varied from the strict neoclassicists, Coleridge defends tragicomedy in Shakespeare's plays. For example, Coleridge not only argues that the Fool and Lear both heighten the tragic and the comic effect, but he asserts that Shakespeare produced dramatic poems, not tragedies nor comedies.[60]

If, as Rene Wellek suggests in his History of Modern Criticism, the rejection of the unities of time and place in

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Bosker, p. 107.

[60] Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism, edited by T. M. Raysor, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1930), I, 203; Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism, edited by T. M. Raysor (Cambridge, 1936), p. 179.

drama is a distinguishing characteristic of the early nineteenth century, then Landor follows the tenor of his age in this respect. But even so, his ideas are still compatible with eighteenth-century critics like Samuel Johnson, who rejects the unities on a purely rational basis[61] and Henry Fielding, who expresses disbelief in the unities of time and place and also describes the division of drama into five acts as absurd.[62]

In the nineteenth century Landor's views of the unites and his distinction of comedy and tragedy place him in a middle position between Coleridge and Francis Jeffrey, the critical spokesman for the Edinburgh Review. With the former, Landor tends to disagree on tragicomedy and to agree on the matter of the unities. On the other hand, Landor would follow Jeffrey, who was a strict neoclassicist in the nineteenth century, in his views of tragicomedy but not on the doctrine of the unities. In his critical essay on Ford, Jeffrey criticizes Shakespearean plays, for instance, for the "confusion of their plots, the disorders of their chronology, their contempt of the unities, or their imperfect discrimination between the provinces of Tragedy and Comedy."[63]

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[61]Johnson, pp. 253-260.

[62]Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling (New York, 1950), p. 159.

[63]The Modern British Essays: Contributions to the Edinburgh Review by Lord Jeffrey (Philadelphia, 1850), p. 303.

To return to the Conversation on comedy, the reader can draw general conclusions about Landor's own theory of comedy. In the first place, he reveals his acquaintance with the development of comedy from Aristophanes and Menander through Plautus and Terence, who imitated Menander. But in discussing the ancients, Landor does not recommend a slavish imitation of the past. Secondly, he will not accept current, or Restoration, comedy because of its immorality. Through his spokesman Milton, Landor says:

> I could desire to see a piece modeled in every part on the Athenian scheme, with the names and characters and manners of times past. For surely you would not add to the immorality of the age, by representing anything of the present mode upon the theatre. Although we are more abundant in follies, which rather than vices are the groundwork of comedy, we experience less disgust in touching those of other times than of our own; and in a drama the most ancient would have the most novelty.[64]

Finally, although Landor seems to favor the past, he does not side strictly with "old" comedy, but suggests a modification that will better adapt it to the present.

The chief emphasis in the next Conversation, Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker, is the life of John Milton with brief attention devoted to his prose works. To treat Milton biographically, Landor perhaps could have selected no person who knew the epic poet more intimately than Andrew Marvel. And to enhance the typical Landorian method of contrast, Bishop Parker, an acquaintance of both Milton and Marvel,

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64 Works, IV, 175.

was the natural choice. David Masson gives an account of the first meeting of Parker and Marvel at Milton's house, where Parker visited constantly for a while.[65] Masson suggests that Parker, having completed his B. A. at Oxford, may have sought aid from Milton to reason out his difficulties between conformity and nonconformity. But these difficulties did not trouble him for long because he returned to Trinity College, Oxford, was graduated M. A., took holy orders in 1663, and became a "zealous anti-Puritan and strong asserter of the Church of England, in fact, the most rancorous ribald against the Nonconformists among the Anglican clergy."[66]

Landor's Conversation is based on an actual situation that grew out of a pamphlet war between Marvel and Parker. After Parker had apparently resolved his "difficulties," he published in 1670 A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity, "wherein the Authority of the Civil Magistrate in matters of External Religion is asserted, the mischiefs and inconveniences of Toleration are represented, and all pretences pleaded in behalf of Liberty of Conscience fully answered."[67] After Parker had followed this treatise by two other anti-nonconformist pamphlets in 1671 and 1672, Marvel

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[65]Masson, VI, 454. [66]Ibid., VI, 699-700.

[67]Dictionary of National Biography, XII, 1212.

undertook to answer him. And then in 1672-73, Marvel published the two parts of the Rehearsal Transposed, the title of which the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal had suggested; in Marvel's work the character of Mr. Bayes alluded to Parker.[68] Later Milton was brought into the controversy by a rumor which credited him with a share in the composition of Marvel's work. Because of the bitter attack by Parker and his allies, Marvel vindicated Milton from the charge. It is significant that Landor read, at least in part, Parker's Ecclesiastical Polity (1670) and Marvel's Rehearsal Transposed, because he quotes from both works in a note to his dialogue between Marvel and Parker.[69]

Upon this historical basis, Landor found a natural situation to defend Milton. In Landor's Conversation, there is little in Milton's life and works that escapes Parker's criticism. Parker condemns the epic poet politically as a republican who entered into the service of a usurper. In matters of religion, Landor's speaker views Milton as a nonconformist, who has seceded from every form of worship and has thus forfeited the "name and privileges of a Christian."[70] Concerning Milton's literary endeavors, the Bishop is indifferent toward the poetry; among his prose writings,

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Works, IV, 206n.

[70] Ibid., IV, 214

he admires the Defence of the English People for its subtilty; but he denounces the Treatise on Divorce as "monstrous sophistry! abominable doctrine!" and "palpable perversion!" So opposed to Milton's ideas is Parker that in his last speech, he implores:

> Let us piously hope, Mr. Marvel, that God in his good time may turn Mr. Milton from the error of his ways, and incline his heart to repentance, and that so he may finally be prepared for death.[71]

Although Marvel is placed on the defensive in this discourse upon Milton, he performs nobly and cogently in behalf of his devoted friend. Throughout the Conversation he speaks of Milton's genius and is not content with Parker's acknowledgement of Milton as merely "a learned man." He insists: "Call him henceforward the most glorious one that ever existed upon the earth."[72] In Landor's typical epigrammatic style, Marvel explains further the reason for the great poet's unpopularity: "The great abhor the greater, who can humble but can not raise them."[73]

In the critical treatment of Milton in this dialogue, Landor assumes the role of the practical critic in his use of comparison and contrast to make his evaluations. Marvel expresses his opinion of Milton by comparing and contrasting him with Homer, Shakespeare, and Bacon. Though it is

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[71] Ibid., IV, 251. [72] Ibid., IV, 225.

[73] Ibid., IV, 228.

unthinkable to Parker to associate Milton's name with Homer's, Marvel subtly gives the seventeenth-century poet priority without diminishing Homer's status in the least. He says: "It appears to me that Homer is to Milton what a harp is to an organ; though a harp under the hand of Apollo."[74] And again without discrediting Homer, Landor has his spokesman, Marvel, state: "The admirers of Homer never dreamt that a man more pathetic, more sublime, more thoughtful, more imaginative, would follow."[75] The speeches attributed to Marvel suggest Milton's superiority to Bacon and Shakespeare on the basis of moral emphasis. "Every great author," Marvel states, "is a great reformer; and the reform is either in thought or language. Milton is zealous and effective in both."[76] His superior work as a reformer is again alluded to in a rhetorical question: "If two, Bacon and Shakespeare, have equalled him in diversity and intensity of power, did either of these spring away with such resolution from the sublimest highths [sic] of genius, to liberate and illuminate with patient labour the manacled human race?"[77]

Since the subjects discussed in this dialogue consist of Milton's ideas of religion and government, the main

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[74] Ibid., IV, 225.
[75] Ibid., IV, 211.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., IV, 225.

comments on his individual works are related to his prose. The chief value of his remarks here is their more detailed discussion of the relationship of prose and poetry than that given in the second dialogue between Milton and Andrew Marvel. In general, Landor attributes to prose many qualities usually reserved for poetry. In the first place, prose is as capable as poetry of "displaying new phases and phenomenons in images and reflections."[78] Secondly, to say nothing of the original thoughts that prose conveys, good prose "may be infinitely varied in modulation."[79] In fact, Landor is bold enough to write that good prose "is only an extension of metres, an amplification of harmonies, of which even the gest and most varied poetry admits but few."[80] In view of these estimates of prose, Landor has his speaker Marvel praise Milton both for his prose and poetry as "incomparably the greatest master of harmony that ever lived."[81]

On matters of grammar, Landor is interested in consistency. Through the speeches attributed to Parker, Landor presents some of his most adverse criticism of Milton's style: "It signifies and manifests antiquity of family"; it is "a congestion of queer words and dry chopt sentences"; and Milton's style has led weak writers into grammatical faults, particularly spelling.[82] Marvel answers these

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[78]Ibid., IV, 210-211. [79]Ibid., IV, 211.

[80]Ibid. [81]Ibid. [82]Ibid.

charges by pointing to the merits of Milton's language, which, he says, is "never a patchwork of old and new: all is of a piece." In particular does Parker agree that Milton is the only writer whom it is safe to follow in spelling because he is consistent.[83]

Critical attention in this Conversation is subordinate to a discussion of the subject matter of Milton's Defence of the English People and Treatise on Divorce. The former is evaluated as a "masterly piece of rhetoric and ratiocination," admirable for its subtilty and Latinity.[84] The latter tract is treated from the standpoint of its subject matter rather than its style. Here Landor stands in defence of the liberal ideas and the utilitarian theme that

> happiness is better than unhappiness; that, when two persons can not agree, it is wiser and more christian-like that they should not disagree; that, when they cease to love each other, it is something if they be hindered by the gentlest of checks, from running to the extremity of hatred; and lastly, how it conduces to circumspection and forbearance to be aware that the bond of matrimony is not indissoluble, and that the bleeding heart may be saved from bursting.[85]

In addition to his defence of Milton, Landor has made three broad critical comments worthy of mention. First, by contrasting great writers with great rulers, he shows the superiority of writers because of the immortal quality of

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[83] Ibid., IV, 211-212. [84] Ibid., IV, 250.

[85] Ibid., IV, 242.

their literature. Marvel says:

> With great writers, whether in poetry or prose, what falls away is scarcely more or other than a vesture. The features of the man are imprinted on his works; and more lamps burn over them, and more religiously, than are lighted in temples or churches.[86]

Secondly, Landor's attitude toward Restoration plays appears again. In reply to Parker's attempt to maintain the moral propriety of plays because the great Reformers did not prohibit them on the Sabbath, Marvel reasons that what is wrong now was likewise wrong in the time of the reformers. Finally, Landor's emphasis upon the moral value of literature is revealed in the discussion of Milton's famous passage in Paradise Lost that describes Eve's beauty. In answer to Parker's denunciation that the description is too suggestive, Marvel replies that the "sight of beauty, in her purity and beatitude, turns us from all unrighteousness, and death to sin."[87] Landor's emphasis here is similar to Shelley's concept of the moral effect of poetry. In the preface to Prometheus Unbound, Shelley depicts "beautiful idealisms of moral excellence."[88]

The next two Conversations--Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle and Lord Chesterfield and Lord Chatham--reveal two controlling factors in Landor's evaluations. In

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[86]Ibid., IV, 222. [87]Ibid., IV, 251.

[88]The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, edited by Harry Buxton Forman, 4 vols. (London, 1882), II. 144.

the first place, it appears that Landor's personal dislike of a literary figure influences his critical estimates of the literary works. Secondly, Landor tends to follow the principle that the poet is inseparable from his poetry. In fact, the principle is discussed in the Southey and Porson dialogue, where Southey concludes: "I think you are wrong in your supposition that the poet and the man are usually dissimilar."[89]

The former Conversation, Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle, is concerned more with Byron's life than with Byron's writings. Landor has discreetly attacked his contemporary within a seventeenth-century framework in which an imaginary character represents Byron. Though Lord Byron is nowhere named in the dialogue, Landor admits no chance of the reader missing the allusion, for he adds a lengthy note on Byron at the end. His annotation in no wise retracts his denunciation of Byron's faults, but finds redemption for them in his services to Greece that cost his life. Landor states that if Byron "had performed those services, the performance of which I envy him from my soul, and as much as any other does the gifts of heaven he threw away so carelessly, never would I from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him."[90]

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[89] Works, IV, 167. [90] Ibid., IV, 264.

The chief historical sources available to Landor for this dialogue were Burnett's own writings, particularly the History of His Own Times. Not only does Landor refer to Burnett's History in the opening speech of the dialogue, but he adapts a style which his contemporaries recognized as a caricature of Burnett's style of writing.[91] Yet this source does not provide information or reference to a Humphrey Hardcastle.

To Landor's readers, this Conversation was among the most popular and favored of the English Imaginary Conversations. In at least six periodical reviews of the Con versations, from 1824 to 1837, Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle is either quoted or discussed in a relatively detailed fashion. In his review of this dialogue in Blackwood's Magazine, John Wilson quotes two dialogues, of which Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle is one, to illustrate the literary merits of the volume printed in 1824. Wilson particularly commends the characterization of the chief speaker, Burnett, that permits "great latitude in uninterrupted prosing to be properly indulged in without producing ennui, or violating the principles of this kind of composition."[92] William Hazlitt, in the Edinburgh Review, quotes

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[91]See the next paragraph which surveys the contemporary periodical criticism; see also Forster, p. 341.

[92]John Wilson, "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," Blackwood's Magazine, XV (1824), 466.

the two pages of the dialogue which supposedly allude to Byron and describes Landor's pleasingly caricatured style of Bishop Burnett as "garrulous, credulous, acute, vulgar, and yet graphic."[93]

Like Wilson and Hazlitt, Julius C. Hare, in his review of the Conversations in The London Magazine, discussed briefly the literary merits of Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle, but he went a step further to mention the satire involved:

> If you will look over the account given by Burnet of Mr. George Nelly, you will perceive that at least the main part of it is designed for the noble satirist, who of late, whenever he has caught scent of Landor, has run after him to bark at his heels; and I leave you to decide which of the combatants puts in the strongest and neatest blows. The first part is in allusion to the quarrel with Southey, in which so much inkshed took place a couple of years ago; and with your knowledge of literary scandal you will not fail to discern many other palpable hits.[94]

The reviewer in the Monthly Review (1824) also referred to the Southey-Byron episode. Four years later, in 1828, the reviewer in the New Monthly Magazine suggested that Landor should not feel uneasy about the picture he painted of Byron and implied that if he had not told his purpose at the conclusion of the dialogue, "the passages in question would

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[93]William Hazlitt, "Landor's Imaginary Conversations," Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 82.

[94]Julius Charles Hare, "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," The London Magazine, IX (Jan.-June, 1824), 528.

have been merely unintelligible to us."[95]

The least favorable review of this Conversation appeared in the Quarterly Review in 1837. William H. Smith took Landor to task for his quarrelsome nature, his fondness for seclusion and his indifference to the opinion of his countrymen. Smith believed that Landor was too violent, too intolerant in his abuses, ever to acknowledge the playfulness of his satires. If Landor's claim be true that his dialogues are destined for immortality and that he can mark out anyone he pleases for eternal applause, Smith bitterly declares:

> What black, hideous, and distorted portraits of some of the most illustrious of his contemporaries are fated to descend to future generations! 'Alas!' he exclaims in a penitential note to the dialogue between Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle, 'Alas! my writings are not upon slate; no finger--not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years and in the storm and tempest--can efface the written. Alas, then--for it is left us only to re-echo the lamentation--that calumny and ill-humour should be destined to endure so long, that invective so unjust, and so little animated by wit, should be imposed so irremediably upon all posterity.[96]

It may be concluded from these reviews that if Landor had not purposed an attack upon Byron, the Conversation would have received considerable attention and praise for its style. The garrulous, gossiping, and colloquial style of Landor's spokesman, Burnet, makes this dialogue delightful

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[95]"Landor's Imaginary Conversations," New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 13.

[96]Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 111-112.

reading and offers the reader a deserved relief from the longer Conversations of straight exposition. The Bishop, for instance, employs the diminutive "Hum" in referring to Sir Humphrey Hardcastle. His mild, but credulous, slang expressions, such as "But damn it, brother" and Oddsfish" provide a sense of reality and vivacity. In an incident related by the speaker Burnet, Landor attributes to a wench a befitting dialect when she says, "Look, parson, Will's forehead is like a rank mushroom in a rainy morning; and yet I warrant you, they show it forsooth as the cleanest and honestest part about him."[97] Further, Landor describes the actions of Nick, a valet, who before giving away a shilling first spat on it for luck.

Landor's attitude toward the relationship of the poet and his poetry is implicit in the allusion to Byron. To Landor, morality is indispensable to the poet. Burnet prefaces his discourse on Mr. George Nelly--supposedly Byron --by sermonizing upon the foolishness of immorality and the insanity of the poet who hazards a good reputation.[98] Thus he questions: "Who would have imagined that the youth who was carried to his long home the other day, I mean my Lord

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[97]Works, IV, 257.

[98]George Nelly is called Mr. George most of the time in the dialogue--obviously an allusion to Lord Byron's name, George Gordon.

Rochester's reputed child, Mr. George Nelly, was for several reasons a great poet?"[99] Later in the dialogue, Burnet says of Nelly (or Byron) that "he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, a heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce."[100]

This dialogue also reveals Landor's personal bias against Byron. Several passages in the discourse upon George Nelly are obviously Landor's comment upon the altercation between Byron and Landor's close friend, Robert Southey. To Landor, Byron's attack on Southey was as unjust as Mr. George's misrepresenting John Milton's character by calling him a "rogue and a liar" because of his Comus.[101] Burnet's statement that Mr. George "had invented new rhymes in profusion, by such words as trackschuyt, Wagenhen, Skiermonikoog, Bergen-opzoom, and whatever is appertaining to the market-places of fish, flesh, fowl, flowers, and legumes, not to omit the dockyards and barracks and ginshops, with various kinds of essences and drugs" may well allude to such rhymes in Byron's Don Juan as "Southey," "mouthy" and "Landor," "gander."

The dialogue between Lord Chesterfield and Lord Chatham is concerned mainly with Plato's style and his theory of poetry. The fact that Landor's judgment of Plato

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99Works, IV, 261. 100Ibid., IV, 262.

101Ibid., IV, 262-63.

runs counter to general opinion is not due to Landor's failure to read the philosopher's works. Sidney Colvin, in his biography of Landor, tells us that Landor went every morning for several weeks to the Magliabechian Library in Florence and read the whole works of Plato through. According to Colvin also, Landor's reading was intense enough to create in him a great distaste and a considerable contempt for Plato.[102]

Two periodical reviews of the first edition of Landor's dialogues contain specific mention of this Conversation. In the Edinburgh Review, William Hazlitt praised its "admirable estimate" of Plato and commented upon Lord Chatham's panegyric upon Locke as "the most elegant of English prose writers."[103] The reviewer in the Monthly Review acknowledged that the dialogue was noble in all respects, but felt that the subject matter was out of place, "that Lord Chatham never did talk about the rhythm of Plato, the physics of Democritus, or the moral mysteries of Pythagoras."[104] In addition to these reviews, John Forster considered the Conversation one of the best, but suggested that Landor treated a difficult and complex subject too

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[102]Sidney Colvin, Landor (New York, 1881), p. 123.

[103]Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 85.

[104]"Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," Monthly Review (1824), p. 127.

confidently. He commended the style for its clearness and some incidental sayings for their singular beauty.[105]

Once again Landor's approach is that of the practical critic in his use of the comparative method. Like his treatment of Milton, Wordsworth, Bacon, and Donne, Landor discusses the Greek philosopher comparatively, primarily in relation to Locke and Bacon. In Chatham's speeches, Landor attacks Plato's lack of wit in argument. He sees

> more applicable good-sense, more delicate wit, more urbanity, more gracefulness, in a single paper of the Spectator, than in six or eight among the minor of these dialogues; in all of which, not excepting the Phaedo, I was disappointed.[106]

Landor's aversion to Plato is obvious in his discussion of the deficiencies and fallacies in Plato's works. He censures Plato for bringing bombast into philosophical disquisitions and attributes to him the worst of all failures--failing in a witticism. And Chatham adds that Plato's mishap is the more calamitous because the failures are written. By comparison, Landor shows that it is Plato's singleness of wit that makes him inferior to Xenophon and Cicero. He has Chatham say:

> The wit of Plato's dialogues is altogether of a single kind, and of that which in a continuance is the least welcome. For irony is akin to cavil; and cavil, as the best wit is either good-natured or wears the appearance of good-nature, is nearly its antipode. Plato has neither the grace of Xenophon nor the gravity of Cicero,

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[105]Forster, p. 258. [106]Works, IV, 273.

who tempers it admirably with urbanity and facetiousness.[107]

Although Landor's Chatham admits that the best in Plato is his language, he places Bacon superior to him both in quantity and quality of poetical thoughts and images. In fact, Landor goes so far as to assert that there is "no eloquence which does not agitate the soul," and adds that Plato never does. On the one hand, Landor praises the dexterity and ease with which Plato supports and shifts an argument and exhibits it in all its phases. On the other hand, he condemns a long series of interrogations which weary the reader in one dialogue: Plato "continues them in twenty, with people of the same description, on the same subjects."[108]

The treatment of Plato's attitude toward poets and poetry again shows Landor's conformity to the School of Taste. Although the critics of taste accepted reason as an important guide for both the poet and the critic, the ultimate appeal of art was to sentiment or the heart.[109] Plato's taking offense in the Iliad because of the undignified grief of Achilles and Priam indicates to Landor the Greek philosopher's lack of sympathy and understanding of human nature. Landor sees no true concept of heroism and passion in Plato; he denounces him for failing to recognize the importance of

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[107] Ibid., IV, 277. [108] Ibid.

[109] Bosker, p. 20.

the heart in both poetry and philosophy:

> And we can not wonder that he strays wide from sound philosophy, who knows so little of the human heart, as to be ignorant that the poet is most a poet in the midst of its varieties and its excesses.[110]

Landor's discussion of truth in his attack on Plato's theory of imitation relates him to the empirical tradition of the eighteenth century and also to the School of Taste. Landor refuses to believe that poetry is a third-hand copy of the truth. Chatham reasons that truths are conveyed by poetry quite as certainly as "fallacies, and the most captious and quibbling fallacies, are conveyed by Plato: more certain nothing can be."[111] To Landor, these truths are identified with the poet's conception of things so long as nothing distorts them, and they remain the same whether it is at third hand or thirtieth. He also suggests the primary importance of direct experience of reality as opposed to Plato's emphasis upon the imaginative faculty of the mind. It is Landor's view that

> the image or archetype is God's: he impresses it on things: the poet represents the things as they are impressed on his mind by the hand of the Creator. Now, if this is done, the distance from truth is not remote. But there is a truth, accommodated to our nature, which poetry best conveys. There is a truth for the reason; there is a truth for the passions; there is a truth for every character of man.[112]

Landor's emphasis on reality, or "things," and his individualistic, relativistic attitude toward truth associate him

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[110] *Works*, IV, 282. [111] *Ibid*. [112] *Ibid*.

with such critics of taste as Rymer, Dryden, Dennis, and Gerard.[113] To cite the words of Dennis, "Taste in writing is nothing but a fine Discernment of Truth."[114] Or according to Gerard, "Good sense is an indispensable ingredient in true taste, which always implies a quick and accurate perception of things as they really are."[115]

It has been difficult for Landor's critics to comprehend how he could go so far afield in his estimate of Plato, but it is implicit in the Conversation that Landor could not separate the man from his works. When Lord Chesterfield comments at the conclusion of the dialogue that he has never known anyone so unbiased and so unprepossessed as Chatham is with Plato, Chatham expresses an underlying prejudice (possibly Landor's) against Plato: "I dislike, not to say detest, the character of Plato, as I collect it from his works, and the worst part of it I conceive to be his coldness and insincerity in friendship."[116]

Of the dialogues discussed thus far, the two between Southey and Porson offer the most extensive revelation of

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[113]Jean H. Hagstrum, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism (Minneapolis, 1952), p. 27.

[114]E. N. Hooker, ed., Critical Works of John Dennis (London, 1943), II, 392.

[115]Alexander Gerard, An Essay on Taste (London, 1759), II, 90.

[116]Works, IV, 288.

Landor's purposes as a critic. Here he systematically recommends a model for critics to follow in analyzing literary works. Within his own application of critical principles, his emphasis on the faults of great writers, his satirical manner in the tradition of Pope and Swift, his frequent use of comparison, his analysis of grammatical structure, his distaste for the sonnet, and his didactic purpose all relate him to eighteenth-century practices. His view of imitation, on the other hand, parallels Samuel Johnson's of the late eighteenth century but does not dissent radically from critics of the nineteenth century.

These two Conversations not only show Landor working primarily as a textual, analytical critic, but also reveal his admiration of William Wordsworth. Because of his respect for his contemporary, Landor was moved to write the first of these dialogues. In September, 1822, when he had twenty-three Conversations ready for the publisher, he feared that his proposed dedication would embarrass Wordsworth because Landor had expressed his rage against English diplomats in Florence with "asperity and contemptuousness of the people in power."[117] Instead of a dedication, he enlarged upon some remarks about Wordsworth's poetry that he had once scribbled on an old letter and thus developed the

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[117]Forster, p. 325.

Conversation between Southey and Porson. By this production Landor hoped that the judgments attributed to Southey would more than outweigh in Wordsworth's mind the pain he felt from attacks of his "unprincipled adversaries" in the contemporary reviews and publications.[118]

Both of the Conversations between Southey and Porson are entirely imaginary. Richard Porson (1759-1808) died fifteen years before this dialogue was written and six years before the publication of Laodamia, which is discussed by these speakers. But to criticize Wordsworth's poems textually, Landor selected a creditable and capable critic who had followed in the line of the chief classical scholars of the eighteenth century, such as John Taylor, Markland, Dawes, Toup, Tyrwhitt, Heath, and Musgrave.[119] To defend Wordsworth, Landor chose the most suitable living contemporary poet, Robert Southey. Jack Simmons, in his biography of Southey, has indicated Southey's loyal appreciation of

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[118]Super, p. 160.

[119]Porson was a Greek scholar whose genius was mainly devoted to textual criticism. According to Richard C. Jebb's biographical essay, Porson's emendation of texts had a finish, an exactness, and a convincing power that tended to raise the general estimate of this kind of work as a discipline for the mind. Yet, he lived before the study of manuscripts and of their relation to one another had become systematic. Jebb recognizes the lack of one element of scientific value in Porson's work, namely, "a constant regard to the relative weight of different witnesses for a text." (Dictionary of National Biography, XVI, 163.)

Wordsworth and notes that he was among the first to recognize Wordsworth's greatness as a poet. Simmons adds that "he stuck to his opinion through thick and thin until, in old age, he saw it become fashionable to agree with him."[120]

Because of a delay in publishing the Conversations, which finally appeared in 1824, Julius Hare gave John Taylor permission to print Southey and Porson in the London Magazine (July, 1823) in order to please Wordsworth. John Forster comments that it "excited considerable interest; and much curiosity was raised for the appearance of the book, which the magazine had promised would be immediate."[121] Although Wordsworth expressed regret that the Conversation had appeared in a magazine and that Landor had "condescended to minute criticism upon the Laodamia," he concurred with many of the objections cited and removed, for example, the line about the "witness" and "second birth" that disfigured the stanza describing the Elysian Fields.[122]

In his review of the 1824 edition of the Imaginary Conversations in the Quarterly Review, William Gifford specifically assails the dialogue between Southey and Porson. He states that the reader of this Conversation who expects a great exhibition of wit, of astute criticism, and deep

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[120]Jack Simmons, Southey (London, 1945), p. 188.

[121]Forster, p. 330. [122]Ibid.

erudition will be surprised to find that these eminent individuals meet only to agree upon the merits of Wordsworth's poetry. The conversers, Gifford adds, talk as if they were writing commentaries and were tired of it. Of the treatment of Wordsworth, Gifford says:

> Though it is doubtless with the best intentions that Mr. Wordsworth is figured in the same fruitful allegory, first as Adam, (or Eve, we do not clearly make out which), and secondly as an elephant, yet we know enough of that gentleman's modesty to assure ourselves that he would be satisfied with appearing in one of those characters.[123]

Like Gifford's, William Hazlitt's treatment of the Southey and Porson dialogue in his review in the Edinburgh Review was, on the whole, unfavorable. In particular, Hazlitt dissents from Landor's enthusiasm in comparing Wordsworth with Shakespeare. Whatever comparisons have been made between Wordsworth and Milton, Hazlitt will accept, but he says, "we did not expect to see a resemblance between him and Shakespeare."[124] To Hazlitt, Wordsworth and Shakespeare are the antipodes of each other, and no English writer of any genius has shown less variety of powers than Wordsworth with more effort and more significance of pretension. Of Landor's criticism of Laodamia, Hazlitt comments that "some ingenious verbal criticisms are made on one or two passages."[125]

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[123] Quarterly Review, XXX (1824), 510.

[124] Edinburgh Review, XL (March, 1824), 80.

[125] Ibid., p. 81.

In this dialogue Landor explicitly sets forth principles of analytical, textual criticism. Through his speaker Porson, Landor classifies critics into two groups--those "who write for the learned" and those "who write for the public"-- and then suggests specific steps a critic should follow:

> That under the superintendence of some respectable student from the university, they first read and examine the contents of the book; a thing greatly more useful in criticism than is generally thought; secondly, that they carefully write them down, number them, and range them under their several heads; thirdly, that they mark every beautiful, every faulty, every ambiguous, every uncommon expression. Which being completed, that they inquire what author, ancient or modern, has treated the same subject; that they compare them, first in smaller, afterward in larger portions, noting every defect in precision and its causes, every excellence and its nature; that they graduate these, fixing plus and minus, and designating them more accurately and discriminately by means of colours, stronger or paler.[126]

Landor's recommendation to critics conforms to the analytical approach in two aspects: first, by an examination of the work itself both as to its content and its text and, secondly, by comparison with other authors either ancient or modern.[127] That Landor is presenting his views in Porson's remarks is evident in Southey's agreement with the analytical method proposed by Porson.

Landor's views as a textual, analytical critic are

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[126] Works, V, 140.

[127] See Daiches, p. 173.

further supported by Southey, who reads poets for their poetry and attempts to "extract that nutriment of the intellect and of the heart which poetry should contain."[128] In this process, he is guided by precept, habit, taste, and constitution. Porson heartily agrees with this approach to literature, but supplements it with a more technical one. To make an accurate and just survey of literary works, he suggests that one imitate geometricians and astronomers and thus "measure out writings by small portions at a time, and compare the brighter parts of two authors page by page."[129]

To Landor, an important practice in criticism is recognizing the faults of the great poets. This method not only relates Landor to the tradition of textual criticism, but it also shows his similarity to Samuel Johnson, literary dictator of the late eighteenth century. Landor believes that every man can see what is very bad and what is very good in a poem, but the real critic is one who is able to "fix or to discern the exact degree of excellence above a certain point."[130] Through Porson, Landor questions "whether a poet is to be judged from the quantity of his bad poetry, or from the quality of his best."[131] In Southey's reply that the quality of the best should be the criterion,

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[128] Works, V, 144. [129] Ibid., V, 148.

[130] Ibid., V, 147 [131] Ibid., V, 149.

Landor compares poetry to sculpture and painting:

> He who arrives at a high degree of excellence in these arts, will have made more models, more sketches and designs, than he who has reached but a lower; and the conversation of them, whether by accident or by choice, can injure and affect in no manner his more perfect and elaborate works.[132]

Landor's principle concerning faults closely parallels Johnson's prefatory remarks to his criticism of John Milton's Samson Agonistes:

> But if there is any writer whose genius can embellish impropriety, and whose authority can make errour venerable, his works are the proper objects of critical inquisition. To expunge faults where there are no excellencies, it a task equally useless with that of the chemist, who employs the arts of separation and refinement upon one in which no precious metal is contained to reward his operation.[133]

In addition to the analytical principles, Landor employs a satirical approach to attack contemporary critics. Such critics, according to Landor, have never before been so plentiful because almost every young author makes his first attempt in some review. Although Landor ironically proposes as a useful volume a compilation of the incorrect expressions of the "booksellers' boys, the reviewers," his most bitter censure compares the young author-critic to a monkey "showing his teeth, hanging by his tail, pleased and pleasing by the volubility of his chatter, and doing his

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[132] Ibid.

[133] The Works of Samuel Johnson (Printed for William Pickering, London, 1825), III, 158.

best to get a penny for his exhibitor and a nut for his own pouch, by the facetiousness of the tricks he performs upon our heads and shoulders."[134] Landor advises these reviewers to "read us for the sake of improvement, and not for the sake of showing off a somewhat light familiarity, which can never appertain to them."[135] And much in the manner of Pope or Swift, he makes a final slash at the reviewers:

> Those who have failed as painters turn picture-cleaners, those who have failed as writers turn reviewers. Orator Henley taught in the last century, that the readiest-made shoes are boots cut down: there are those who abundantly teach us now, that the readiest-made critics are cut-down poets.[136]

In digressing from his treatment of Wordsworth to discuss other literary figures briefly, Landor employs perceptive epigrammatic evaluations within a comparative development. Bacon is compared to a London timber-yard where the materials are sawed, squared, and uniformly stacked; Shakespeare to an American forest where

> we have the natural form of the tree, all its growth, all its branches, all its leaves, all the mosses that grow about it, all the birds and insects that inhabit it; now deep shadows absorbing the whole wilderness; now bright bursting glades, with exuberant grass and flowers and fruitage; now untroubled skies; now terrific thunderstorms; everywhere multiformity, everywhere immensity.[137]

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[134] *Works*, V, 143. [135] *Ibid.*, V, 144. [136] *Ibid.*

[137] *Ibid.*, V, 150. Such elaborate comparisons suggest a slight similarity to metaphorical criticism, a new method of criticism which proved to be highly influential in the

Furthermore, in passing, Landor praises Percy, the Wartons, and Cowper because they set aside French models. Particularly does Landor esteem Cowper for diversification and classicism in his poetry.[138]

In the second Conversation between Southey and Porson, critical estimates of Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, and Chaucer are developed by the comparative method. Shakespeare is deemed more tolerant toward his rude and beggarly rivals than Milton, who "shrivelled up the lips of his revilers by the austerity of his scorn."[139] A statement attributed to Porson evaluates Spenser in one sweep: "There is scarcely a poet of the same eminence, whom I have found it so delightful to read in, or so tedious to read through."[140] But to Porson, Chaucer is the more captivating of the two poets:

> He slaps us on the shoulder, and makes us spring up while the dew is on the grass, and while the long shadows play about it in all quarters. We feel strong with the freshness round us, and we return with a keener appetite, having such a companion in our walk.[141]

And among English poets, Chaucer is thus given a place next to Shakespeare.

In his brief comparative treatment of English poets

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nineteenth century. See René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950, 2 vols. (New Haven, 1955), II, 4.

[138] Ibid., V, 152. [139] Ibid., V, 168.

[140] Ibid., V, 204-205. [141] Ibid.

from Dryden to Burns, Landor reveals his taste for the moral quality of Crabbe, the critical powers of Dryden, the poetical power of Cowper, and the simplicity of Burns. In contrast, the graveyard school finds no sympathy from Landor. He finds Young too often fantastical and frivolous. Never has Landor seen poetry so "ill put together" as Blair's Grave. Averse to Blair and Young's babbling, graveyards, and courteous ghosts, Landor praises Cowper, who "plays in the play-ground, and not in the churchyard. Nothing of his is out of place or out of season. He possesses a rich vein of ridicule, but he turns it to good account, opening on prig parsons, and graver and worse impostors."[142] It is significant that Landor prefers those poets who adhere, generally at least, to literary standards of the eighteenth century.

Among his contemporaries, Landor treats Byron and Scott comparatively. Through Porson, Landor predicts an enduring popularity for Byron and indicates his chief weakness as a poet:

> He possesses the soul of poetry, which is energy; but he wants that ideal beauty, which is the sublimer emanation, I will not say of the real, for this is the more real of the two, but of that which is ordinarily subject to the senses. With much that is admirable, he has nearly all that is vicious; a large grasp of small things, without selection and without cohesion.[143]

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[142] Ibid., V, 204. [143] Ibid., V, 168.

Landor further censures Byron's malice, his animosity, and his immoral character. By comparing Byron and Scott, Landor reveals his admiration of Scott. He sees more spirit in Byron than in Scott, but more vivacity and variety in Scott than in Byron. He likes the freshness in Scott's scenery, the vigor and distinctness in his characters, and the medieval influence of Froissart. Particularly is Marmion praised for its chivalry, its ballad measure, and its epic quality.[144]

Through his interlocutor Southey, Landor presents his defense of Wordsworth by a comparative development of his ideas. Southey asserts that the most evident things are often but little perceived:

> Swift ridiculed the music of Handel and the generalship of Marlborough, Pope the perspicacity and the scholarship of Bentley, Gray the abilities of Shaftesbury and the eloquence of Rousseau. Shakespeare hardly found those who would collect his tragedies; Milton was read from godliness; Virgil was antiquated and rustic; Cicero Asiatic. What a rabble has persecuted my friend![145]

Unlike his predecessors, Wordsworth is compared to an elephant born to be consumed by ants: He is the "prey of Jeffrey." And for the ultimate in allegories, Southey concludes this speech by recollecting "that God in creation left his noblest creature at the mercy of a serpent."[146]

In both dialogues, Porson, who examines Wordsworth's

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[144] Ibid., V, 178-79. [145] Ibid., V, 153.

[146] Ibid.

poetry analytically and severely, assails Wordsworth's verbosity. His explanation contains astute advice for any writer not to pursue his thoughts too far. He thus censures Wordsworth for accumulating thoughts rather than selecting them. Landor's Southey does not question the rightness of these principles, but he questions an unqualified application of them to Wordsworth. Speaking comparatively again, Southey replies:

> You admire simplicity in Euripides; you censure it in Wordsworth; believe me, sir, it arises in neither from penury of thought, which seldom has produced it, but from the strength of temperance, and at the suggestion of principle.[147]

He claims further that Wordsworth's very clearness puzzles and perplexes critics who imagine that straightness is distortion. In this praise of his friend, Southey leads Porson to assent that no other English poet has "exerted greater powers with less strain and less of ostentation."[148]

To Landor, imitation of the ancients is more than merely copying them, as he indicates in his praise of Wordsworth's proper adaptation of models in his Laodamia. In brief, the speaker Southey metaphorically suggests that the ancients are of great value to modern writers: "To neglect what is recoverable in the authors of antiquity, is like rowing away from a crew that is making its escape from

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[147] Ibid., V, 154. [148] Ibid., V, 164.

shipwreck."[149] In his view Landor joins ranks with those critics of both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who reacted against eighteenth-century writers who misinterpreted Aristotle's concept of imitation to mean the salvish copying, not of nature, but of other works of art.[150] In the eighteenth century, Addison and Johnson are among the critics who pointed out the dangers of too much imitation. Johnson's and Landor's views are particularly harmonious. On the one hand, Johnson condemns a mere copying of authors when he says, "No man ever yet became great by imitation."[151] On the other hand, he recognizes the greatness and importance of the ancients to modern writers: "What mankind has long possessed they have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favor.... What has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood."[152] In the nineteenth century Coleridge condemns the pedantic imitators who looked to Sophocles as the great model of tragedy and to Aristotle

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[149] Ibid.

[150] Elizabeth Nitchie, The Criticism of Literature (New York, 1928), p. 72.

[151] The Works of Samuel Johnson, IV, 87.

[152] Walter Raleigh, ed., Johnson on Shakespeare (London, 1908), pp. 9-10.

as the infallible dictator of rules.[153]

In view of Landor's satirical treatment of the relationship between poets and critics, it appears that all his critical principles are subordinate to a moral purpose. In Porson's speeches, Landor speaks of the attitude of poets toward critics. Not only do poets consider critics to be cheap, but they are "drilling a company out of their own body," who march with their legs too high and fire with their eyes shut.[154] Landor's textual criticism attributed to Porson is controlled by a moral emphasis, for the speaker is given to say: "In our praises and censures, we should see before us one sole object: instruction."[155]

Landor's defense of Wordsworth as a philosophical poet gives further attention to the moral emphasis in judging literary works. Porson cuttingly denounces Wordsworth as philosophical and refuses to consider him soul-stirring or capable of exciting any strong emotion. But he ironically admits a certain sentiment in the poet, for he says, "I have soon given way to him; and he has sung me asleep with his lullabies."[156] Although Landor will not state explicitly

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[153]Samuel T. Coleridge, "Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to His Genius," Literary Criticism: Pope to Croce, edited by Gay Wilson Allen and Harry Hayden Clark (New York, 1941), p. 235.

[154]Works, V, 172. [155]Ibid., V, 176.

[156]Ibid., V, 210.

that the first aim of poetry is utility, he does speak through Southey to the effect that "poetry which is strong enough to support, as his [Wordsworth's] does, a wide and high superstructure of morality, is truly beneficial and admirable."[157]

For the first time in the English Imaginary Conversations, Landor expresses his distaste for the sonnet, a favorite verse form in his own age. Both Porson and Southey praise Milton's sonnet on the massacre of the Protestants in Piedmont, but Porson will acknowledge no other comparably great sonnets. In comparison with Milton's sonnets, Porson epigrammatically calls Wordsworth's sonnets "mince-meat put into small patty-pans all of equal size with ribs at odd distances...without salt or succulence."[158] Landor justifies Milton's use of the sonnet in that "it restricted him from a profuse expression of what soon becomes tiresome, praise."[159]

Fundamental to Landor's textual approach is his criticism of the grammatical structure of the text. For example, upon the following lines from Wordsworth's Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems--

> No thorns can pierce those tender feet,
> Whose life was as the violet sweet!--

Landor has Southey say, "It should have been written her tender feet; because, as the word stands, it is the life of

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[157]Ibid. [158]Ibid., V, 182. [159]Ibid.

the tender feet that is sweet as the violet."[160] In another instance Porson attacks Wordsworth by alluding to his language:

> If there is a Wordsworth school, it certainly is not a grammar school. Is there any lower? It must be a school for very little boys, and a rod should be hung up in the centre /sic/.[161]

In the textual analysis of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," from Wordsworth's Poems of the Imagination, and "An Anecdote for Fathers, showing how the practice of Lying may be taught," from Poems referring to the Period of Childhood, Landor's praise is determined mainly by his personal taste for the harmony of the language. The interlocutor, Southey, defends these poems and the Lyrical Ballads for their ease and simplicity. When Porson disagrees and labels Wordsworth's language harsh and dissonant, Landor in his delicate style and balanced structure has Southey respond:

> Harmonious words render ordinary ideas acceptable; less ordinary, pleasant; novel and ingenious ones, delightful. As pictures and statues, and living beauty too, show better by music-light, so is poetry irradiated, vivified, glorified, and raised into immortal life, by harmony.[162]

Landor's defense of these poems on the basis of ease and simplicity attained by harmony parallels his praise of Donne's early poems for their smoothness.[163]

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[160] Ibid., V, 183. [161] Ibid., V, 184.

[162] Ibid., V, 197.

[163] See the Conversation between Walton, Cotton, and Oldways.

Landor continues his analytical method in his two Southey and Landor dialogues, which contain textual criticism of Milton's major and minor poems. His techniques that recur in these Conversations are mainly his use of the comparative method, his concern with faults more than beauties, and his exacting textual attention as to the diction, grammar, punctuation, and pronunciation. But principles which appear for the first time in any detail are harmony, the sublime, and condensation.

The general procedure in Landor's criticism of Milton's poetry closely follows Pope's recommendation to critics in his Essay on Criticism. Before the two critics begin to pursue the criticism of any individual poem in detail, they consider the work as a whole with emphasis upon the scope and tendency, or what is sometimes called the moral.[164] Similarly, Alexander Pope had suggested among particular laws for the critic that he consider the work as a total unit and seek the author's aim.[165] Following this plan in treating Paradise Lost, Landor discusses the problem of the hero in relation to action. The controversy of whether Satan or Adam is the hero is treated conventionally.

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[164] Works, V, 237.

[165] Alexander Pope, "Essay on Criticism," Selected Poems of Alexander Pope, edited by Louis I. Bredvold (New York, 1947), p. 9, ll. 233-236.

To Southey, in Landor's dialogue, Satan qualifies as the hero only if the greatest hero is the one who "gives the widest sway to the worst passions." He adds that Adam is the main character because it is he "who acts and suffers most, and on whom the consequences have most influence."[166] He concludes that "Eve is the more interesting, Satan the more energetic, and on whom the greater force of poetry is displayed. The Creator and his angels are quite secondary."[167]

Throughout both dialogues between Southey and Landor, Landor's textual criticism is chiefly concerned with faults more than with the beauties of the verse. When Landor was writing the first of these two dialogues, he wrote to Forster in January, 1845, that this Conversation lay idle from October to January and added: "I am afraid it will be long; perhaps there will be enough without it. I am grieved to find faults in Milton, and reluctant to mention them."[168] Of this reluctance Landor also wrote to Leigh Hunt:

> Latterly it has cost me above a month to remark on the faults of Milton, in an Imaginary Conversation with Southey, which our friend Forster desired. You know how highly I venerate the poet of our Republic. In vain do I attempt to read any verse after his.[169]

In the first dialogue, Landor permits Southey to suggest the purpose of their discussion: to "collect all the graver

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[166] Works, V, 237. [167] Ibid., 205-206.

[168] Quoted by Super, p. 355. [169] Ibid., p. 579.

faults we can lay our hands upon, without a too minute and troublesome research."[170] Landor adds that their intent will be to omit the beauties of his poetry, but "where the crowd claps the hands, it will be difficult for us always to refrain."[171]

Furthermore, in the first dialogue Landor praises Johnson, who "has himself done great good by exposing faults in great authors." He adds that Johnson's criticism on "Milton's highest work is the most valuable of all his writings."[172] In the second dialogue Landor states that "fau ts may be avoided, especially if they are pointed out to the inexperienced in such bright examples as Milton: and teachers in schools and colleges would do well to bring them forward, instead of inculcating an indiscriminate admiration."[173] Landor also makes known his purpose in this type of criticism. Referring to the charge that in his Conversation of Tooke and Johnson, he was attempting to either undermine, modernize, or antiquate the native tongue, Landor defends his method:

> Whereas I am trying to underprop, not to undermine: I am trying to stop the man-milliner at his ungainly work of trimming and flouncing: I am trying to show how graceful is our English, not in its stiff decrepitude, not in its riotous luxuriance, but in its hale mid-life.[174]

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[170] Works, V, 234. [171] Ibid. [172] Ibid., V, 279.

[173] Ibid., V, 281. [174] Ibid., V, 305.

Landor employs the comparative method to discuss Milton in relation to Shakespeare. Throughout the two dialogues, Southey's speeches continually suggest to the reader that Landor's great admiration of Milton is always second to Shakespeare. In a manner similar to his comparison of Bacon and Cicero in Barrow and Newton and that of Dryden and Cowper in Southey and Porson, Landor expresses due regard to both Milton and Shakespeare. Epigrammatically Landor says of them: "A rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton: the same portion of Milton, all poets born ever since."[175]

On matters of grammar, spelling, and pronunciation, Landor's main principles are consistency, clarity, and emphasis. For example, Landor would place commas in one line for emphasis and in another for clarity.[176] In response to Southey's criticism of Milton's accent on the second syllables of words then stressed on the first, Landor states his preference for Milton's pronunciation because by analogy it is more consistent than contemporary pronunciation. On a problem of punctuation in Book XI of Paradise Lost, both speakers would follow the more modern practice by omitting the comma in the equal elements joined by "and"--"moping melancholy, and moonstruck madness."[177]

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[175] Ibid., V, 280. [176] Ibid., V, 294.

[177] Ibid., V, 276.

Landor's criticism of Wordsworth and much of his treatment of Milton generally adhere to the eighteenth-century practice of criticizing faults rather than beauties, the latter standard being more characteristic in Landor's day.[178] Yet in the Southey and Landor dialogues, where the reader is constantly reminded that Milton's faults are the main concern, Landor indicates his purpose of praising the the beauties of Milton's poetry in addition to criticizing the faults.[179] Landor praises the beauty of Milton's poetry on the basis of harmony and the sublime.

Landor employs the former term according to the classical theory of beauty of harmony, or as the harmonious adaptation of parts to the whole.[180] According to Aristotle, beauty depends upon order or symmetry, and without unity and completeness there is no beauty.[181] Throughout the first dialogue between Southey and Landor, the beauties and defects of Paradise Lost are determined mainly on the basis of harmony. Terms which Landor uses in describing the harmonious parts of Milton's epic are "consummate," "conciseness," "propriety," and "completeness."[182] In Paradise Lost alone, Landor thinks that two thousand four hundred and one

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[178]Wellek, II, 217. [179]Works, V, 234.

[180]Wellek, II, 161.

[181]Lane Cooper, Aristotle On the Art of Poetry (New York, 1913), p. 29.

[182]Works, V, 243, 261, 262.

lines are superfluous primarily because they mar the harmony of the poem. He would omit some lines because their absence would not deter the harmony of the sentence[183] and others because they add nothing to the harmony.[184] Landor recommends the omission of some lines because they are "verbose," "dull," "repetitious"; others he would delete for their "recurrence of sound" and for their "much verbiage."[185]

On this same principle Landor judges Dante, Ovid, and Lucretius. To Landor, one of the fundamental defects in Dante is the lack of harmony. He says of the Divine Comedy that the "characters are without any bond of union, any field of action, any definite aim."[186] Furthermore, on the basis of harmony, Landor compares Lucretius and Ovid: "The excellence of Lucretius is, that his ornaments are never out of place, and are always to be found wherever there is a place for them. Ovid knows not what to do with his, and is as fond of accumulation as the frequenter of auction-rooms."[187]

A second critical standard which Landor employs less consistently than harmony to judge the beauties of Milton's poetry is the sublime. Landor uses this term in the critical

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[183] Ibid., V, 242-43. [184] Ibid., V, 288.

[185] Ibid., V, 261, 267, 252. [186] Ibid., V, 280.

[187] Ibid., V, 331. This quotation possibly explains Landor's suggestion to omit sixty lines in Paradise Lost because they are Ovidian. (See V, 246)

sense that Longinus, in his Essay On the Sublime, employed it as an "elevation of style, or that which lifts literary style above the ordinary and commonplace to the highest excellence."[188] For the most part, that which Landor praises in Milton's poetry as sublime follows what Longinus cited as the technical sources: elevated arrangement of words, choice of noble diction, and figurative language.[189]

Discussing the sublime in a general way both in reference to Shakespeare and to Milton, Landor speaks primarily of the elevation of the language and versification.[190] In his brief criticism of Milton's English sonnets, he writes of the "mild and serene sublimity" in one of several "noble" verses.[191] He praises the diction of Milton's Latin poem, Obitum Praeulis Elienses, as sublime.[192] He notes that the sublimity of Milton's description of Sin and Death at their interview with Satan is attained by the use of figurative language. But here, according to Landor, is also Milton's innate, or natural, capacity to create the sublime. In addition to Landor's comment about this description that the "terrific then is sublime," his interlocutor Southey speaks of a "wonderful vigour of imagination and of thought, with

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[188] Walter Jackson Bate, Criticism: the Major Texts (New York, 1952), p. 59.

[189] Ibid., p. 62.

[190] Works, V, 279.

[191] Ibid., V, 317.

[192] Ibid., V, 329.

such sonorous verse as Milton alone was capable of composing."[193] Landor also refers to this innate capacity in evaluating a part of Paradise Regained as "sublimely pathetic."[194] Then in speaking of Shakespeare's Othello and Julius Caesar, Landor seems to be thinking of this innate quality in the "grand design which displays the interior workings of the world within us, and where we see the imperishable and unalterable passions depicted a fresco on a lofty dome."[195]

The use of both harmony and the sublime does not set Landor apart from his age so much as other critical standards noted previously in this chapter. Although Landor formulates no concept comparable to Coleridge's organic unity, basic to both writers is the ancient theory of beauty as harmony, or unity.[196] Landor's views also are not in opposition to another contemporary, William Hazlitt, who holds that an essential quality of poetry is an "unusual vividness in external objects or in our immediate impressions, exciting a movement of imagination in the mind, and leading by natural association or sympathy to harmony of sound and the modulation of verse in expressing it."[197]

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[193] Ibid., V, 245. [194] Ibid., V, 292.

[195] Ibid., V, 286-87.

[196] Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, II, 232.

[197] Howe, IX, 44-45.

Concerning the use of the sublime in the critical sense, Bate asserts that its emphasis on beautiful passages anticipates Arnold's famous "touchstone" theory.[198]

In the second Conversation between Southey and Landor, the author returns to a discussion of the sonnet. Although he has expressed a distaste for the sonnet in the Southey and Porson dialogue, Landor praises Milton for ennobling the genre in English. It has been noted generally that Landor ranks Milton second to Shakespeare, but in their sonnet-writing, Landor unquestionably prefers Milton. Not only is Landor unlike many of his contemporaries of the Romantic movement in his attitude toward the sonnet, but he also differs from traditional critical taste for Shakespeare's sonnets. In his typical frankness, Landor says of them:

> Among all Shakespeare's not a single one is very admirable, and few sink very low. They are hot and pothery: there is much condensation, little delicacy; like raspberry jam without cream, without crust, without bread, to break its viscidity. But I would rather sit down to one of them again, than to a string of such musty sausages as are exposed in our streets at the present dull season. Let us be reverent; but only where reverence is due, even in Milton and in Shakespeare.[199]

According to his biographer Forster, Landor's favorite subject was that of orthography and language.[200] The two English Imaginary Conversations dealing with this interest

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[198]Bate, p. 60.

[199]Works, V, 318.

[200]Forster, p. 503.

are Samuel Johnson and Horne Tooke and Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor. In the former, Landor has brought together the great lexicographer Johnson and John Horne Tooke, politician and philologist. Their lives are not exactly contemporary, but they do overlap for a period of forty-eight years.[201] Both speakers discuss their common interests, Johnson's Dictionary and the state of the English language. In the field of linguistics, Tooke's studies in etymology appeared for the first time in his Diversions of Purley, thirty-one years after Johnson's Dictionary.

The dialogue between Johnson and Tooke received attention in three periodical reviews. In the Quarterly Review (1824), William Gifford berated Landor's ignorance of the true sentiments of Tooke. Alluding to their political differences, Gifford suggested the little possibility of Tooke's ever uttering a panegyric upon Johnson's Dictionary. He remarked that

> in all literary history, (not less disgusting than political,) we know of nothing more pitiful than Tooke's comment, whether for the envy which leads him to make light of a work which he was peculiarly capable of estimating, or for the miserable hypocrisy with which he endeavors to dissemble his spite by declaring that he could never read the preface without tears.[202]

Gifford also believed that Landor had Tooke accuse Johnson

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[201] Johnson (1709-1784), Tooke (1736-1812).

[202] Quarterly Review, XXX (1824), 517.

unjustly of being defective in a scheme of etymology that Johnson never proposed. Although Gifford admitted that the Dictionary could be improved, he asserted that "it was not a part of Johnson's design to give the roots or English words; he did not pretend to trace them to their aboriginal country, but only to the country when they last transmigrated."[203]

In the Monthly Review (1824), the reviewer marked off this Conversation as among the least agreeable and least interesting and saw very little intelligible purpose in it "except as a sort of justification of the author in his deviations from the usual mode of speaking in a variety of instances, most of them very unimportant."[204] In the Quarterly Review in 1837, William H. Smith evaluated Landor's critical abilities as good when he confined himself to general remarks. He cited Samuel Johnson and John Horne Tooke to exemplify Landor's deficiencies when he could find nothing to criticize in a writer "but some trivial inaccuracies of language, and could then dismiss him from notice with contempt."[205] Thus Smith thought this dialogue showed that a man of great ability could be so biased by prejudice and ill-humour as to become a sorry critic.

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[203] Ibid., p. 519.

[204] Monthly Review, CXII (1824), 125-126.

[205] Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 134.

Although the contemporary reviewers knew that Dr. Johnson and John Horne Tooke thoroughly despised each other, they failed to recognize Landor's genius in bringing together in a dramatic situation two men who never met. In her biography of John Horne Tooke, Minnie Clare Yarbrough remarks that a meeting between Johnson and Tooke would have been almost a dramatic as the famous encounter of Johnson and Wilkes.[206] Despite the fact that Johnson had denounced Tooke for his criticism of the English government in the American crisis and had even expressed the wish that he might be placed in the pillory for it, Boswell's Johnson contains a statement that supports the wisdom of Landor's choice of speakers. Johnson had said: "Were I to make a new edition of my Dictionary, I would adopt several of Mr. Horne's etymologies: I hope they did not put the dog in the pillory for his libel; he has too much literature for that."[207]

It is significant to note that Landor recognized and presented Johnson and Tooke in a relationship and in an evaluation of their contribution to philology that is still upheld. But it should not be understood that Landor alone perceived the significance of Tooke's contributions or that he was unaware of the esteem with which Tooke was held by

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[206]Minnie Clare Yarbrough, John Horne Tooke (New York, 1926), pp. 103-104.

[207]Boswell, p. 996.

his own age. This admiration is evident in the contemporary estimate of Mr. Tooke's Diversions of Purley in the Annual Review for 1805:

> Few good books have been written on the theory of the language: this is one of them. Philosophic linguists have mostly pursued the Aristotelic, the antient, method of reasoning, a priori; they have rarely recurred to the Baconian, the modern, method of reasoning, a posteriori. They have examined ideas instead of phaenomena, suppositions instead of facts. The only method of ascertaining in what manner speech originates, is to inquire historically into the changes which single words undergo; and from the mass of instances, within the examination of our experience, to infer the general law of their formation. This has been the process of Mr. Horne Tooke. ...To him the English language owes the pristine introduction of just principles, and a most extensive, learned, and detailed application of them to the etymology of its terms. He has laid the groundwork of a good Dictionary.[208]

In the twentieth century, Otto Jespersen, an authority in philology, cites Tooke in discussing substantive verbs.[209]

Miss Yarbrough also asserts that Tooke's studies in Anglo-Saxon and other Germanic languages make his etymology far more reliable than that of his contemporaries. In comparison to Johnson, she finds Tooke's derivations more trustworthy because Johnson "was more concerned with the purity of the language than with a scientific knowledge of its history."[210] Tooke's influence was such that James Mill

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[208]Quoted by Richard Taylor, editor, Diversions of Purley by John Horne Tooke (London, 1829), I, vi-vii.

[209]Otto Jespersen, Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin (London, 1922), p. 49.

[210]Yarbrough, p. 112.

constantly accepted his philological doctrines in order to confirm his own. Among other followers were Hazlitt, who in 1810 published a grammar in which the discoveries of Horne Tooke were for the first time incorporated, and Charles Richardson, who in 1837 accepted Horne's doctrines in his dictionary.[211]

In view of John Forster's comparatively full summary and critical evaluation of this dialogue and T. R. Lounsbury's critical attention, little more needs to be said about the substance of the Conversation. In his biography of Landor, Forster has treated Landor's inconsistencies and merits in spelling, etymology, and pronunciation. Though the majority of Forster's comments pertain to Landor's faults, Landor's contributions are not overlooked. The biographer states:

> For students of language the dialogues of Tooke and Johnson will always be a rich collection of such peculiarities and defects as a rare mastery of English, and prolonged and unwearying investigation of its irregularities and intricacies, could alone have brought together.[212]

Two other critics have made perceptive comments on Landor's unusual views of etymology and spelling. Of his opinion on spelling, C. G. Crump has stated that

it is enough to say that he believed that the seat of

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[211] Dictionary of National Biography, XIX, 974.

[212] Forster, p. 353.

> authority in language and in spelling were the same. To spell as the classic authors spelt was his ideal. But in practice the student who guided himself by that light would find too often that they spelt as the fancy took them. Landor himself was not unaware of this, but nevertheless he still saw in the usage of Ben Jonson or Milton a guide to orthography. ...One cannot help regretting that instead of the comedy, that might have been, there is only a mass of words and scraps of verse.[213]

In Lounsbury's supplementary treatment, he has suggested three conclusions that this dialogue reveals about Landor's interest in philology. First, in citing several blunders in spelling, diction, and pronunciation, he has shown Landor's ignorance of philology. Secondly, he has pointed out that Landor's opinions about the debasement of the English language differed from those of his contemporaries; and thirdly, he indicates Landor's adherence to eighteenth-century tradition.[214]

In the second Conversation that Landor reserved for his discourse on philology, he includes himself and his close friend Julius Hare, or Archdeacon Hare as he is called in the dialogue. Hare had reviewed the Imaginary Conversations, had supervised their publication, and had traveled to Italy with Landor. But the common interest upon which Landor has based the subject of this Conversation is spelling. Hare was, in

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[213]Crump, III, 346-347n.

[214]T. R. Lounsbury, The Standard of Usage in English (New York and London, 1908), pp. 38-47.

his way, a spelling reformer and drew upon himself much censure for his orthographical peculiarities. Most of Hare's alterations, according to Lounsbury, were petty, and the only one of any importance that he proposed was spelling the participial ending ed and t when it had the sound of t, such as reacht, vanquisht, prickt, suppresst, rusht, and publisht. But Hare defended his petty changes by the usage of Spenser and Milton and their contemporaries.[215]

T. R. Lounsbury, in his English Spelling and Spelling Reform, respects Hare above Landor. He suggests that Hare knew almost as little of the real principles governing orthography and talked of them nearly as much as did his friend and fellow-reformer, Landor. But however perverse were Hare's notions in other matters, Lounsbury asserts that he was, unlike Landor, eminently sound concerning the class of words ending in or or our. Indeed, Hare was more consistent than Landor because he reintroduced the u into some words of this class where it had at one time often appeared but had become generally discarded. Lounsbury further states that Hare "trotted out, as was in those days almost inevitable, the old bugaboo of derivation, as unconscious of its erroneousness, scholar as he was, as we are now the most unscholarly who persist in obtruding it upon a

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215T. R. Lounsbury, English Spelling and Spelling Reform (New York and London, 1909), p. 224.

generation which knows better."[216] Herein Lounsbury was opposed to Landor. In his dialogue between Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor, Landor would eject the u in these endings for the sake of consistency.[217]

This Conversation, which is among the very last dialogues that Landor wrote, contains more than straight exposition on spelling and pronunciation. Crump, in his edition of the Imaginary Conversations, suggests that the latter part of this dialogue is "in part an answer to De Quincey's rather spiteful 'Notes on Walter Savage Landor' and in part an answer to a reviewer who had quoted from that book."[218] In the opening speeches, we are given evidence to agree with Forster's statement that a study of orthography and language was a hobby with Landor. In his own speech Landor explains that he found it inexpedient to follow strictly the line he had laid down for spelling. He admits the fallacy of his own remedy for the state of English spelling in that whatever pains he took; he says:

> There was in every sheet almost, some deviation on the side of the compositor. Inconsistency was forced on me against all my struggles and reclamations. At last nothing is left for me but to enter my protest, and to take the smooth path instead of the broken up highway.[219]

Thus Landor was able to foresee that his was a lost cause in his proposals to reform the English language. He

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[216] Ibid., p. 226. [217] Works, VI, 13.

[218] Crump, IV, 401n. [219] Works, VI, 12.

was also able to judge that to secure a place for his prose in literature, he could not consistently follow these principles. It should be noted that in this choice Landor has by the example of his own writing done infinitely more to enrich the language than in the many linguistic suggestions, even though some of them are subtle and ingenious.

Personages and topics of earlier Conversations are also mentioned in this dialogue. Landor has Hare praise Johnson for his contribution to literature but not for his efforts in linguistics. Furthermore, he feels that time has not disagreed with his estimate of Wordsworth's poetry as treated in his Southey and Porson Conversation. He repeats admiration for Wordsworth, but places him second to Southey: "Wordsworth has not written three poems so excellent as Thalaba, the Curse of Kehama, and Roderic; nor indeed any poem exhibiting so great a variety of powers."[220]

In justifying his own method of analytical criticism, Landor praises Southey further. In answer to Hare's question about his detecting and exposing the faults of good authors, Landor replies:

> To discover a truth and to separate it from a falsehood, is surely an occupation worthy of the best intellect, and not at all unworthy of the best heart. Consider how few of our countrymen have done it, or attempted it, on works of criticism: how few of them have analyzed and compared.[221]

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[220] Ibid., VI, 29-30. [221] Ibid., VI, 25.

In this censure of his contemporary critics, only Southey is the first and foremost of critics who "moves between his intellect and his conscience, close to each."[222]

In this dialogue Landor prefers modern writers to the ancients. He is not speaking reproachfully of the ancients, but is alluding to his opposition to a slavish imitation of them. Landor's praise of modern writers is seen in his comment that "we walk no longer in the cast-off clothes of the ancients, often ill-sewn at first, and now ill-fitting." If we think of the proverbial saying of dwarfs standing upon the shoulders of giants, we can better understand Landor's explanation that the field of poetry in modern times is "both wider and better cultivated than it has ever been."[223]

This dialogue also provides Landor's attempt to define and to distinguish two philosophical concepts, Fancy and Imagination, that were of utmost interest to his Romantic contemporaries, particularly Wordsworth and Coleridge. Although Landor offers no theory comparable to that of these poets, he does speak of a "sisterly" resemblance of the two qualities:

> Fancy is Imagination in her youth and adolescence. Fancy is always excursive; Imagination, not seldom, is sedate. It is the business of Imagination, in her maturity, to create animate such Beings as are worthy of

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[222] Ibid., VI, 26. [223] Ibid., VI, 34.

her plastic hand.[224]

A superficial likeness between Landor's explanation and Wordsworth's concept of the two terms is seen in Wordsworth's statement in his Preface of 1815 that the Imagination "shapes and creates" by innumerable processes, but the resemblance ends when Wordsworth adds that "in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,--alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers."[225] He also suggests a similarity between Fancy and Imagination in their powers to "aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine." And even though Fancy, "as she is active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty," Imagination differs from it in demanding "the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite." In contrast, where the materials of Fancy "admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent."[226] He concludes that where the effects of Fancy are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, and transitory, the Imagination incites and supports the

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[224] Ibid., VI, 35.

[225] William Wordsworth, Prefaces and Essays on Poetry, 1800-1815, edited by George Sampson (Cambridge, 1920), p. 212.

[226] Ibid., pp. 214-15.

eternal.[227]

Not only does Landor offer no theory comparable to Wordsworth's transcendental implications; he also has no poetic creed like Wordsworth's nor philosophical concept of organic unity like Coleridge's. To Coleridge, the functions of the Fancy and the Imagination are more independently related than they are to Wordsworth. According to his Biographia Literaria, Coleridge conceives of the Imagination as either primary or secondary. The primary is "the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." The secondary is an echo of the primary, differing only in degree; "it dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify."[228] Fancy, on the other hand, is not the creative faculty; it is "indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space.... But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."[229]

On the basis of this brief survey relating to

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[227]Ibid., p. 215.

[228]Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, edited by George Sampson (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 177-78.

[229]Ibid., p. 178.

various views of Fancy and Imagination, it is evident that Landor's concept falls far short of his contemporaries' philosophical treatment of the two qualities. Landor has nothing to say of the permanence of one and the transience of the other. To him, Imagination characterizes a maturer, more perceptive faculty than Fancy. To Imagination belong "vigorous thought, elevated sentiment, just expression, development of character, power to bring man out from the secret haunts of his soul, and to place him in strong outline against the sky."[230] He associates the Imagination with vigor and gravity; he places Fancy among the fairies who frequently lead the dull poet far astray. To illustrate the distinction between the two terms, Landor refers to the greatest of the Elizabethan playwrights. Shakespeare, according to Landor, exerted full powers of the Imagination in his tragedies, of which Landor cites Macbeth and Othello; and in the circles of the "Faery World," Shakespeare "trifled with Ariel and Titania" and "played with Caliban."[231]

The attempt to distinguish between Fancy and Imagination is more characteristic of the nineteenth century than of the eighteenth. Bosker notes that "there is hardly any reference in the eighteenth century writers on the subject which foreshadows Coleridge's distinction between 'the

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[230] Works, VI, 35. [231] Ibid.

imagination or shaping and modifying power' and the fancy or the 'aggregating and associative power.'"[232] But even though the two names are often used synonymously for the same faculty in the eighteenth century, critics like Sir Joshua Reynolds and James Beattie attempt to keep a clear distinction between them. The latter critic, like Landor, uses the word imagination for the more solemn and fancy for the more trivial manifestations of the mind.[233]

To conclude this chapter briefly, Landor's English Imaginary Conversations that convey his literary criticism and views on linguistics reveal his wide reading in the literature both of the ancients and of England. Although Landor has been described as a "classic writing in a romantic age" because of his admiration of Greek and Roman subjects,[234] his appreciation of his English heritage is evident in his preference for the moderns over the ancients. Of English literature, he presents in the first place a general survey of literary figures from Chaucer to his contemporaries Wordsworth and Southey and, secondly, an exacting textual criticism of the works of Milton, Bacon, and his

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[232]Bosker, p. 55.

[233]John Bullitt and W. Jackson Bate, "Distinctions between Fancy and Imagination in Eighteenth Century English Criticism," MLN, LX (1945), 12.

[234]Ernest Bernbaum, Guide Through the Romantic Movement (New York, 1931), p. 260.

friend, Wordsworth. Finally, these ten English Imaginary Conversations confirm the general estimate of Landor scholarship that he stood aloof from his own age. His use of the comparative method, his exacting textual criticism, his attitude toward the genres, and his greater emphasis upon faults than upon beauties all relate Landor as a practical, analytical critic to the standards of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, he follows the tempo of his age in employing the criterion of harmony, in his occasional emphasis upon beauties, and in his liberal views concerning the imitation of the ancients and the doctrine of the unities.

CHAPTER V

LANDOR'S USE OF HISTORY IN THE ESSENTIALLY DRAMATIC ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS

During the years preceding and following Landor's first edition of the Imaginary Conversations in 1824, his literary endeavors show both his strong historical sympathy and his interest in drama. By more than ten years, the two tragedies, Count Julian (1811) and Ferranti and Guilo (1811), and a comedy, The Charitable Dowager (1814), precede the first edition of the Conversations. Returning to this medium in the last period of his work, Landor produced his Neapolitan trilogy: Giovanna of Naples, Andrea of Hungary, Fra Rupert (1838); in 1844 he completed a fourth play, The Siege of Ancona. Furthermore, before Landor's edition of his Conversations in 1824, Southey, who was engaged in writing dialogues himself, was well aware of his friend's interest in drama and looked forward to seeing Landor's dialogues. In comparison with his own, he said, "Mine are consecutive, and will have nothing of that dramatic variety of which you will make the most."[1]

It is significant that the strong dramatic element in Landor's dialogues is inseparable from his treatment of

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[1]Quoted by John Forster, Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (Boston, 1869), p. 313.

history. Landor conceives of history as a moving drama, and his chief concern is with the role of individuals, especially the heroes or great men, who may be statesmen, literary figures, and even rulers like Cromwell. In the dialogue between Diogenes and Plato, Landor says that the "images of great men should be stationed throughout the works of the great historians."[2] Although Landor is not always consistent with his ideal, he prefers that the action of history speak for itself and objects to the historian's intruding with too much commentary. His vicarious appreciation of history also accounts for the strong dramatic element in his treatment of it. In his dialogue entitled Landor, English Visitor, and Florentine, Landor remarks:

> Even those with whom I have not lived and whom indeed I have never seen, affect me by sympathy as though I had known them intimately, and I hold with them in my walks many imaginary conversations.[3]

The discussion in this chapter is limited to those dialogues which are more purely dramatic than others because of their lack either of historical documentation or of exposition on religious, political, and literary matters. Oliver Elton, in his Survey of English Literature: 1780-1830, praises Landor's "dramatic" Conversations as the best ones because in them principles and ideas give way to

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[2]Works, I, 101.

[3]Ibid., VI, 45.

artistic presentation of character.[4] In the first place, it will be the purpose here to show how Landor makes use of history to provide the setting, the dramatic situation, and the speakers for these dramatic Conversations. Secondly, Landor's character revelation, implicit in the speeches, will also be discussed in relation to the actual personages in the historical sources. Finally, in those dialogues where it is pertinent, attention will be given to "stage directions" and to Landor's use of humor. The dialogues treated here as essentially dramatic include: Leofric and Godiva; Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey; Princess Mary and Princess Elizabeth; Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney; Queen Elizabeth and Cecil; Queen Elizabeth, Cecil, Duke of Anjou, and De La Motte Fenelon; Lord Bacon and Richard Hooker; Admiral Blake and Humphrey Blake; The Lady Lisle and Elizabeth Gaunt; Steele and Addison, and Eldon and Encombe.[5]

The first of these dramatic Conversations, Leofric and Godiva, draws upon the sources of Old and Middle English chronicles. But whether Landor actually depended upon specific readings for his background cannot be determined from

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[4]Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature: 1780-1830, 2 vols. (New York, 1912), II, 32-33.

[5]The dialogue between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn dramatically portrays Anne Boleyn with Henry before her execution; but because of the documentation of religious views, its main treatment appears in Chapter III, pp. 110-113.

this dialogue. In the first place, the dramatic situation is limited to the eve of a legendary event; and secondly, we know that Landor had been familiar with the Godiva story since his childhood. Until 1826, three years before the first publication of this Conversation, fairs were held in Coventry celebrating Godiva. Landor's long acquaintance and his interest in these festivals are indicated in his note attached to this dialogue:

> The story of Godiva, at one of whose festivals or fairs I was present in my boyhood, has always much interested me; and I wrote a poem on it, sitting, I remember, by the square pool at Rugby.[6]

Not only are the characters of Leofric and Godiva based on actual personages in English history, but the setting of Landor's dramatic scene in Coventry is also faithful to history. Leofric lived in the eleventh century and was the Earl of Mercia and the Lord of Coventry. According to Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, Leofric, one of the most powerful nobles in England, took a leading part in public affairs.[7] For example, when King Canute died in 1035, Leofric supported the claim of Harold against Hardicanute. Then in 1951 he played the part of a mediator in the quarrel between Edward the Confessor and

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[6]Works, IV, 6.

[7]Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland (London, 1807), I, 750.

Earl Godwine and thus diverted a civil war. He also assisted his wife in her religious activities.[8] In the chronicles of English history, Lady Godiva, originally spelled Godgifu, is depicted as a liberal benefactress to the church. It is recorded that she married Leofric in 1040 and with her husband, three years later, founded the Benedictine Monastery, which marked the beginning of the city and county of Coventry, the setting of Landor's dialogue. William of Malmesbury records that in the founding of Coventry, Godiva left a string of jewels on which she had told her prayers that it might be hung on the statue of the Blessed Virgin.[9]

But Godiva is better remembered than Leofric for her horseback ride, naked, through the streets of Coventry--though it has no factual basis--than for her religious deeds. The oldest version of this legend is given in Flores Historiarium by Roger of Wendover of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[10] The legend was kept alive in Coventry for a good many years. Instituted May 31, 1678, a Godiva procession was celebrated as part of Coventry fair until

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[8]Edward A. Freeman, The History of the Norman Conquest of England: Its Causes and Its Results (Oxford, 1873), II, 31.

[9]Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi, De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, Edited from the autograph manuscript by N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London, 1870), p. 311.

[10]Freeman, II, 31n.

1826.[11] In fact, E. K. Chambers, in his study The Medieval Stage, states that when Godiva was placed in the Coventry procession in the seventeenth century, it became the most important feature.[12]

The dramatic episode in Landor's dialogue is centered in the legendary vow of Leofric and his wife concerning Coventry. According to Holinshed's account, it was at Godiva's earnest suit that Leofric

> made the city of Coventry free of all manner of toll, except horsses: and to have that toll laid downe also, his foresaid wife rode naked through the midst of the town without other coverture, save only her hair.[13]

Landor's Conversation has all the "trimmings" of this account of the legend. In the speeches of Leofric and Godiva, references are made to Leofric's impious tax, to Godiva's long hair that Leofric admires, to Godiva's ride the next day at noon, and to Leofric's refusal to exempt horses from the toll when he speaks of the "fat nags" belonging to the bishops.

Showing Godiva's means of extracting a vow from her husband is the primary imaginary element in Landor's scene. Despite the fact that Leofric appears in history as honorable

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[11]The Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register, Transcribed and edited by Mary Dormer Harris (London, 1907-1913), p. 856.

[12]E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), II, 163.

[13]Holinshed, I, 750-751.

and devoutly religious, Landor depicts him as he is in the legend: indifferent toward a burdensome tax upon the citizens of Coventry. Stern in his conviction of the rightness of the tax, Leofric was not to be easily persuaded to change his decrees. Thus in Landor's treatment, when the speakers are one mile from the protection of the city walls, Godiva discreetly dismounts her horse and refuses to rise until Leofric remits the "most impious tax, this tax on hard labour, on hard life."[14] Conveniently in the presence of a bishop, Godiva pleads for the city's pardon. Leofric, a person of dignity, is embarrassed that the bishop has witnessed the scene, but even then rashly answers Godiva's request:

> Will I pardon? Yea, Godiva, by the holy rood, will I pardon the city, when thou ridest naked at noontide through the streets.[15]

Landor's Lady Godiva is abashed at Leofric's response, but holds him to his word and makes him repeat his stipulation to secure the vow in the presence of the bishop. By so doing, she succeeds in her appeal to his religious faith and to his love for her.

Characterization of both speakers is revealed dramatically in the action and speeches rather than in documentation in Landor's footnotes. Though Godiva is evidently

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[14]Works, IV, 4. [15]Ibid.

the favored speaker in the Conversation, Leofric is depicted in his own speeches and in Godiva's comments as a stern leader, who carries himself with dignity, is devoted to his wife, and is pious, but at the same time is humanly stubborn. Made to swear to his rash vow, he obstinately replies, "Beside, thou hast made me redden and turn my face away from thee, and all the knaves have seen it: this adds to the city's crime."[16] His respect for the church and its clergy is evident in his apology to the bishop for his young bride and his willingness to swear "by the holy rood." But as a man of gentility and love, Leofric thinks primarily of his wife. In response to Godiva's remark that he had been rash and obdurate, Leofric tenderly seeks appeasement:

> But thou, my sweetest, art given to blushing; there is no conquering it in thee. I wish thou hadst not alighted so hastily and roughly: it hath shaken down a sheaf of thy hair: take heed thou sit not upon it, lest it anguish thee.[17]

Landor's characterization of Godiva contrasts with that of Leofric. Her timidity and even shyness, revealed in her uncontrolled blushing, are strikingly opposite to her husband's aggressive and stern qualities of leadership. Her religious zeal gives no room for understanding Leofric's having

> imprisoned more than one malefactor for leaving his dead ox in the public way; and other hinds have fled before

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[16] Ibid., IV, 5. [17] Ibid.

> you out of the traces, in which they and their sons and their daughters, and haply their old fathers and mothers, were dragging the abandoned wain homeward.[18]

Her religious zeal is also demonstrated in her several entreaties, including: "O God!" "Some good kind Power," "My Redeemer," and "God help them! good kind souls!" To further enhance the religious tone of Godiva's speeches, Landor employs language that at times paraphrases Biblical passages. For example, Godiva pleads with Leofric that the "sun is ready to set: let it never set, O Leofric, on your anger. These are not my words; they are better than mine; should they lose their virtue from my unworthiness in uttering them!"[19] Here is a reference to the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (4:26). But the most striking characteristic of Lady Godiva is her power to wield her wish and yet hold her place as the submissive wife. Landor does not depict her as the dominating wife in her reaction against her husband's will, but shows that her actions are motivated mainly by her desire to place religious duty first.

Landor's portrayal of Leofric and Lady Godiva, whose name in Middle English poetry appears as "good Eve,"[20] is comparable to John Milton's account of Adam's attitude

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[18] Ibid., IV, 1. [19] Ibid., IV, 2.

[20] The Coventry Leet Book, p. 567.

toward Eve in Paradise in Book VI of Paradise Lost. On learning of Eve's disobedience, Adam affectionately replies:

> O fairest of creation, last and best
> Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
> Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
> Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
> .....for with thee
> Certain my resolution is to die;
> How can I live without thee, how forgo
> Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
> To live again in these wild woods forlorn?[21]

Leofric, in his tender sentiments addressed to Lady Godiva, conveys much the same tone and attitude as Adam:

> O my beauteous Eve! there is a Paradise about thee! the world is refreshed as thou movest and breathest on it. I can not see or think of evil where thou art. I could throw my arms even here about thee. No signs for me! no shaking of sunbeams! no reproof or frown or wonderment--I will say it--now then for worse--I could close with my kisses thy half-open lips, ay, and those lovely and loving eyes, before the people.[22]

At the appearance of Landor's Imaginary Conversations, the reviewers in contemporary periodicals centered their attention chiefly upon the dialogues that revealed Landor's views, or prejudices, on politics, religion, and on literary figures. As a result, Leofric and Godiva received no contemporary critical comment in periodicals. But the dialogue between Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey was given considerable space in Hazlitt's review in the Edinburgh Review and

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[21]Harris Francis Fletcher, The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton (Boston, 1941), p. 323, lines 895ff.

[22]Works, IV, 5.

brief mention in the Monthly Review. Evidently this dialogue was a great favorite of Hazlitt's, for he praises it enthusiastically. Particularly does Hazlitt commend the style which is imitative of the sixteenth century and in which "a good deal of character, and sometimes of humour, is thrown into the tone of the different speakers."[23] In the Monthly Review it was not the style of the dialogue but primarily its moral cast that caught the reviewer's eye. He did comment on the style that there were "passages of beauty and pathos not surpassed by many compositions in our language."[24]

It is reasonable to question why Landor, in choosing an intense moment in Lady Jane's life for a dramatic portrayal, did not select the eve of her execution, a setting similar to the scene of the dialogue between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. The account of Lady Jane Grey's last days, or day, provides the test of real character that Landor ardently admired in his heroes and heroines. The ambitious design of her marriage, the fateful and unfortunate circumstances that led her to the throne and ultimately to death, and especially her refusal of a parting interview are all elements that

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[23]William Hazlitt, "Landor's Imaginary Conversations," Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 73.

[24]"Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," Monthly Review, CXXI (1824), 115.

might well have appealed to Landor. An interview on any of these occasions with Roger Ascham would have been purely imaginary, because Lady Jane's last communication with the master was a letter he had written to her from Germany in 1551, three years before her death.[25] In Landor's Conversation, the meeting of the speakers to discuss Jane's forthcoming marriage in May, 1553, is also imaginary; but at least one explanation has been given for Landor's selection of setting. Both Ascham and Lady Jane are remembered for their great learning and readings in Latin and Greek. Thus Landor has brought them together at one of the great moments in Jane's life, when, as Forster suggests, she was "called suddenly away from the companionship of her books to that other in which her life was wrecked."[26]

Despite the imaginary element of the situation, the dialogue relies on sufficient historical fact to achieve verisimilitude. Roger Ascham, Jane's senior by twenty-two years, had encouraged her in her studies and had counseled her frequently in his correspondence with her. According to Ascham's own account in his Schoolmaster, he first met her at her father's house at Bradgate, Leicestershire, where he found her reading Plato's Phaedo while all the household

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[25]"Epistle CXIV," The Whole Works of Roger Ascham, Edited by Rev. Dr. Giles (London, 1864), II, pt. 2, 239-241.

[26]Forster, p. 349.

was out hunting.[27] In Landor's dialogue, Ascham reveals himself in the true character of the humanist of the sixteenth century. His moral and religious composure are revealed in the fatherly counsel of the opening speech: "Thou art going, my dear young lady, into a most awful state; thou art passing into matrimony and great wealth. God hath willed it: submit in thankfulness."[28] His character is revealed in Jane's dialogue when she addresses him as "my virtuous Ascham" and "my kind religious teacher." In the humanist tradition, Ascham advises her to continue her studies in the classics. He speaks particularly of Cicero, Epictetus, Plutarch, and Polybius: "Read them on thy marriage bed, on thy child-bed, on thy death-bed. Thou spotless undrooping lily, they have fenced thee right well."[29] Finally, emphasizing Christian doctrine, Ascham instructs Jane to obey her husband and "teach him to live unto God and unto thee; and he will discover that women, like the plants in woods, derive their softness and tenderness from the shade."[30]

In addition to a revelation of Ascham's character through his speeches, Landor attributes to him certain fearful premonitions of the outcome of the young girl's marriage that allude to historical fact. So shaken is Ascham in the

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[27]The Whole Works of Roger Ascham, III, 118.

[28]Works, IV, 33. [29]Ibid., IV, 34. [30]Ibid., IV, 35.

beginning of the Conversation that he breaks off his serious discourse on love with "Alas! Alas!" His lack of self-possession is so evident that Jane questions, "What aileth my virtuous Ascham? What is amiss?" Ascham also alludes to the evil motive prompting the marriage of the two youths: Jane, who was sixteen, and Guildford Dudley, seventeen. In Jane's submission to her husband, Ascham suggests that she "complacently and indirectly lead him from ambition."[31] He further encourages her to enjoy life with her husband, but warns her to "watch him well," and "if ever he meditate on power, go toss up thy baby to his brow, and bring back his thoughts into his heart by the music of thy discourse."[32] In reality, Jane became the victim of an ambition which was not her own. The marriage between Jane and Guildford Dudley had been arranged by Dudley's father, the duke of Northumberland, as part of a desperate project for transferring the succession of the English throne from the Tudor family to his own upon the decease of Edward VI.[33]

In his dramatic revelation of character, it is significant that Landor has incorporated in Ascham's recommendations to Jane certain traits of an ideal wife that Ascham himself came to enjoy in his own marriage in 1554. After

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[31] Ibid. [32] Ibid.

[33] David Harrison, Tudor England (London, 1953), I, 138.

his marriage Ascham wrote to his friend Sturm and also to Queen Elizabeth in high praise of his wife.[34] To Lord Chancellor Gardiner, he writes:

> God, I thancke him, hath given me such an one as the lesse she seeth I doe for herr the more loveing in all causes she is to me; hitherto she hath founde rather a loveing than a luckye husband unto her.[35]

In Landor's Conversation, Ascham recommends that Jane be a loving companion to her husband:

> Rather do thou walk with him, ride with him, play with him, be his fairy, his page, his everything that love and poetry have invented...sport with his fancies; turn them about like the ringlets round his cheek.[36]

Like his dramatic revelation of Roger Ascham's character, Landor's depiction of Jane is faithful to history. He introduces her trembling and fearful of the future as he asks her counselor: "Why do I tremble?"[37] Born in 1537, she was to be married by prearrangement in May 1553. History records that Jane had violently resisted the forced match, motivated by evil political intentions, and had yielded only to her father's command. Yet a legendary account holds that Jane's meeting with her husband before marriage may have produced

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[34]The Whole Works of Roger Ascham, I, pt. 2, 443-448; II, 152-161.

[35]Quoted by Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography, I, 627.

[36]Works, IV, 35.

[37]Ibid., IV, 33.

something like a nutual affection.[38]

Despite Jane's anxiety and her confession to Ascham that she is "weak by nature and very timorous," she reveals a strong sense of moral and religious duty that sustains her. Regardless of her youth, she discerns many of the difficulties of a successful marriage and reveals her knowledge of the evils of the court. She acknowledges the goodness of God and is willing to follow whatever Ascham commands her. Landor has thus depicted his speaker's facing the peculiar circumstances of her marriage with a moral courage that was later so well exemplified at her death. It is recorded that when Lady Jane heard that she and her husband were to die, after her brief reign as Queen, she refused a farewell meeting with her husband, fearing that it would increase their pain and thus "prepared to meet her fate with Christian fortitude."[39]

Though limited to the occasion of Lady Jane Grey's marriage, Landor's Conversation dramatically presents Jane as the precocious, book-loving child that history records. Landor has Ascham cite verses supposedly written by Jane three years previous to this meeting. Meekly she calls them childish and wishes that Ascham "had been too generous to

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[38]Dictionary of National Biography, VI, 105.

[39]"Grey, Lady Jane," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910, XII, 591.

keep them in memory as witness against me." But Ascham reassures her that "they are not much amiss for so young a girl."[40] Her wide reading is indicated by her desire to limit her reading after marriage to the four great authors--Cicero, Epictetus, Plutarch, and Polybius--whose writings she must retain, she says, for "my fireside and for my pillow, truth, eloquence, courage, constancy."[41]

Twenty years after the first publication of Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey, in 1846 Landor produced another Conversation that follows the former in its setting and characters. The dialogue between Princess Mary and Princess Elizabeth, which refers to Lady Jane as Queen, brings the two speakers together at one of the most intense moments in the lives of both Mary and Elizabeth. The historical picture of the dialogue between Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey provides the essential background for the interview of Princess Mary and Princess Elizabeth. At the time of the latter Conversation, Lady Jane Grey, the great-granddaughter of Henry VII by his second daughter, had succeeded to the throne instead of either Mary or Elizabeth, daughters of Henry VIII and granddaughters of Henry VII. Such a manipulation of royal descent had come about, as has been indicated in the discussion of Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey, through

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[40]Works, IV, 33. [41]Ibid., IV, 34.

the ambitious endeavors of the duke of Northumberland.[42]

In this dramatic episode, Landor's speakers are characterized by their contrasting views and personalities. Princess Elizabeth is by far the stronger character of the two speakers. Her initiative, strong will, and striking personality are manifested in every utterance that Landor attributes to her. Two illustrations from the dialogue will exemplify Landor's depiction of Elizabeth. Early in the Conversation, she tells Princess Mary that if given the opportunity, "I would try the mettle of my subjects: I would mount my horse, and lead them."[43] Once again, when Mary complains of being merely a "weak woman," Elizabeth responds, "I do not see why women should be weak unless they like."[44] In contrast to his treatment of Elizabeth, Landor attributes speeches to Mary that are characteristically pious, prayerful, and devoutly Catholic in tone. When Elizabeth ridicules the actions of the King and Parliament, Mary beseeches her not to "think so ill of men." Elizabeth's contrasting attitude of skepticism is reflected in her retort to Mary's plea:

> For my part, I can't abide 'em. All that can be said, is, some are not so bad as others. You smile, and deem the speech a silly and superfluous one. We may live, sister Mary, to see and acknowledge that it is not quite so sure and flat a verity as it now appears to us.

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[42]Harrison, I, 138. [43]Works, IV, 37. [44]Ibid.

> I never come near a primrose but I suspect an adder under it; and the s nier the day the more misgivings.[45]

The mention of Lady Jane Grey lends further detail to show the contrast of characters. Though Jane's succession to the throne ousted both Mary and Elizabeth, Mary defends her as the queen of the realm, invested with her royal state by the majority in Parliament. Nevertheless, Elizabeth calls her "wench" and "vile woman." And in talking of her, Elizabeth finds an outlet for her impetuous and impatient nature. Of both the Dudleys and Jane she exclaims:

> And, pray, who are these Dudleys? The first of them was made a man of by our grandfather. And what was the man after all? Nothing better than a huge smelting-pot, with a commodious screw at the colder end of the ladle. I have no patience with the bold harlotry.[46]

Emotionally the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth becomes extremely strained in their comments upon their deceased father, Henry VIII. Mary thinks of their "father now in bliss" and as a "rock of defense against the torrent of irreligion."[47] She calls him God's vicegerent and even approves of his execution of Elizabeth's mother by saying that it probably was "for the good of her soul, poor lady! Better suffer here than hereafter."[48] And with reference to the doctrine of purgatory in Mary's religion, she begs of

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[45] Ibid., IV, 37.
[46] Ibid., IV, 39-40.
[47] Ibid., IV, 36-37.
[48] Ibid., IV, 41.

her sister: "Pray for him, Elizabeth! pray for him."[49] On the contrary, Elizabeth speaks indifferently of her father's eternal welfare. She replies to Mary: "Well, in bliss or out, there, here, or anywhere, would he royal soul! have minded parliament?"[50] Upon Mary's suggestion to "conceal all such infirmities," Elizabeth recalls his few visits when he always pinched her ear bitterly and called her "by such a name moreover as is heard but about the kennel; and even there it is never given to the young."[51]

Landor's most effective humor is expressed in Princess Elizabeth's remarks about Henry VIII. When Mary says that "we ought to kiss the rod, and be thankful," Elizabeth frankly and humanly replies:

> Kiss the rod, forsooth. I have been constrained erewhile even unto that; and no such a child neither. But I would rather have kissed it fresh and fair, with all its buds and knots upon it, than after it had bestowed on me, in such a roundabout way, such a deal of its embroidery and lace-work. I thank my father for all that. I hope his soul lies easier than my skin did.[52]

Mary tries to excuse Henry's mistakes by attributing them to "an irritation in the foot, whereof he died," and acknowledges that he "was somewhat sore in his visitations; but they tended heaven-ward." Yet to Elizabeth, these "visitations" were both "sore" and "heaven-ward," "yea, when he

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., IV, 37.

[51] Ibid., IV, 42.

[52] Ibid., IV, 41.

cursed and cuffed and kicked us."[53] Climactically, Landor's most bitter satire comes in the closing line of the dialogue as Elizabeth exits and speaks not of Henry but Mary as "The Popish puss!"[54]

The dramatic revelation of character in Landor's Conversation between Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney is not so successfully handled as in the two preceding dialogues. Although Landor has brought together two intimate friends of the English Renaissance, their meeting does not relate to a great moment of decision or to an incident heightened by an intensely emotional experience. The fact that this Conversation is longer than the former ones indicates Landor's ability to handle better the shorter dramatic episode. Another reason that accounts for the weakness in sustaining the dramatic interest in the last Conversation is that Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney, victims of a method frequently employed in Landor's dialogues, become merely spokesmen for Landor rather than for themselves. In this respect also, Landor provides the reader with two lengthy notes for historical documentation.

Appearing in the first edition of the Imaginary Conversations in 1824, Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney attracted the attention of two contemporary periodical reviewers. John Wilson, in his review in Blackwood's,

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53Ibid., IV, 42. 54Ibid., IV, 43.

classified this dialogue as one of those that showed Landor's chief strength and one of four that he especially admired. Mainly because of the scene of the dialogue in the woods and wilds of Penshurst rather than its revelation of character, Wilson considered it one of the author's most perfect Conversations.[55] In the Quarterly Review, the reviewer cited Sir Philip Sidney and Isaac Barrow as examples of "two sages of modern times that appear to the greatest advantage."[56] He also noted the moral reflection that was well compressed in many of the sentences, such as "We must distinguish between felicity and prosperity...happiness is perpetual."[57] Four years later in 1828, the evaluation in the New Monthly Magazine is the best general criticism to date:

> It is full to the overflowing, of beauty--of that highest and rarest class of beauty which results from the willing union of poetry with philosophy. The friends sit together beneath a spreading oak in the Park at Penshurst, and talk in strains of calm, pure, and unaffected wisdom, worthy of themselves and of the place. Their talk is desultory,--as such talk, uttered in the presence of such scenes, must and should be. But it touches on no subject idly; and leaves none that it touches till it has brightened and beautified it with thoughts and images, no less new than just. The concluding paragraph might be offered as a sort of motto to all the finer portions of Mr. Landor's labours.[58]

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[55] Blackwood's Magazine, XV (1824), 465-66.

[56] Quarterly Review, LVIII (1824), 121.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "Landor's Imaginary Conversations," New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 11.

In this dialogue Landor does not always permit his characters to speak for themselves. His personal comment on one of his speakers explains that "Lord Brooke is less known than the personage with whom he converses, and upon whose friendship he had the virtue and good-sense to found his chief distinction."[59] Landor offers further biographical information that Brooke was Queen Elizabeth's servant, King James's counsellor, and Sir Philip Sidney's friend. In addition, Landor must have been acquainted with Lord Brooke's (Fulke Greville) literary efforts because he states: "His style is stiff, but his sentiments are sound and manly."[60]

In real life, Landor's speakers became friends in their early years. In fact, both Greville and Sidney were born in the same year, and both entered Shrewsbury School on the same day, October 17, 1564. Continuing in their close association, they both came to court in 1577 and traveled to Heidelberg together in the same year. Both were also rapidly taken into the queen's favor. Of this friendship, by far the most important literary contribution on Greville's part is his Life of Sir Philip Sidney, published posthumously in 1652.[61]

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[59] Works, IV, 59n. [60] Ibid.

[61] Hugh De Selincourt, "The Successors of Spenser," The Cambridge History of English Literature, edited by A. W. Ward & A. R. Waller (New York, 1910), IV, 183.

Within their opening speeches, Brooke and Sidney reveal the setting, which is comparable to Sidney's Arcadia. Brooke's first speech indicates the pastoral scene in the woods and the wilds of Penshurst, the name of Sidney's birthplace. Throughout the dialogue the reader is not permitted to forget this impressive atmosphere of contentment. So exhilarating to Brooke are his surroundings that he exclaims:

> What a pleasant spot, Sidney, have you chosen here for meditation! a solitude in the audience--chamber of God. Few days in our year are like this: there is a fresh pleasure in every fresh posture of the limbs, in every turn the eye takes.[62]

Although the beginning of Sidney's Arcadia and Landor's Conversation show little similarity in phraseology, essentially the same tone and sense of peace and contentment are perceptible in both. Sidney's romance begins:

> Arcadia amonge all the Provinces of Grece was ever had in singuler reputation, partly for the sweetnes of ye Aire and other naturall benefittes: But, principally, for the moderate & well tempered myndes of the people, who, (fynding howe true a Contentation ys gotten by following the Course of Nature, And howe the shyning Title of glory somuche affected by other Nacions, dothe in deede helpe litle to the happines of lyfe,) were the onely people, wch as by theire Justice and providence, gave neyther Cause nor hope to theyre Neighboures to annoy them, so were they not stirred with false prayse, to truble others quyett.[63]

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[62]Works, IV, 44-45.

[63]Sir Philip Sidney, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia: Being the Original Version, edited by Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1926), p. 1.

In his technique of describing the setting, Landor has incorporated a minimum of "stage directions" for his speakers' actions in their speeches. That Brooke is just arriving at Penshurst at the beginning of the dialogue is indicated by his expression, "I come again," and by Sidney's response, "Welcome, welcome!" After their brief expressions of joy in seeing each other again, the next physical action in the scene is suggested in Sidney's courteous invitation to his friend: "And now, Greville, seat yourself under this oak; since, if you had hungered or thirsted from your journey, you would have renewed the alacrity of your old servants in the hall."[64] From this time in the dialogue, the speakers do not move from their positions and the drama depends entirely upon character revelation in the dialogue. Even at the end of the dialogue, when Brooke refuses Sidney's request to dismiss, Sidney answers: "While the weather is so temperate and genial, and while I can be out-of-doors, I care not how late I tarry...."[65]

Early in the Conversation Landor's characters reveal their close ties of friendship and thus reflect a theme significant in the English Renaissance. The high estate, even the immortal quality of true friendship, exemplified in Brooke and Sidney, finds expression in a speech attributed

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[64]Works, IV, 44. [65]Ibid., IV, 59.

to Brooke:

> I know not whether our names will be immortal; I am sure our friendship will. For names sound only upon the surface of the earth, while friendships are the purer, and the more ardent, the nearer they come to the presence of God, the sun not only of righteousness but of love. Ours never has been chipt or dimmed even here, and never shall be.[66]

In Sidney's turn, Landor completes the metaphor begun in Brooke's discourse and shows the attitude of friendship to be mutual:

> Friendship is a vase which, when it is flawed by heat or violence or accident, may as well be broken at once; it can never be trusted after. The more graceful and ornamental it was, the more clearly do we discern the hopelessness of restoring it to its former state.[67]

Landor seems to be following Sidney's use of the friendship theme in the Arcadia. The principal situation of Sidney's work centers in the friendship of Musidorus and Pyrocles who enjoy companionship in Arcadia. Lauren J. Mills, in his scholarly work on this theme--One Soul in Bodies Twain, says of the Arcadia:

> The background and general plan, therefore, of the Arcadia are formed by this pair of friends. The story consists of their adventures in friendship and in love, and is finished when they pass all the tests of friendship and win their loves.[68]

Implicit in the dialogue of Landor's speakers is a

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[66]Ibid., IV, 44. [67]Ibid.

[68]Laurens J. Mills, One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama (Bloomington, Indiana, 1937), p. 219.

moral reflection comparable to the expression of Sidney's attitude in his Apology for Poetry. Although Sidney is here endeavoring to answer the charge of the Puritans that literature gives only pleasure and is therefore useless, he defends poetry on moral grounds. To Sidney, the poet gives delight and pleasure through his poetry, but it is also asserted that the poet "giveth praise, the reward of virtue to virtuous acts; who giveth moral precepts and natural problems; who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of immortal God."[69] In Landor's Conversation, Lord Brooke expresses doubt that virtue is happiness. He reasons that "the virtuous man meets with more opposites and opponents than any other, meets with more whose interests and views thwart his, and whose animosities are excited against him, not only by the phantom of interest, but by envy."[70] Brooke then concludes that "virtue alone cannot rebuff them; nor can the virtuous man, if only virtuous, live under them, I will not say contentedly and happily, I will say, at all."[71] The moral emphasis, characteristic of Sidney (and of Landor), is reflected in Sidney's comment upon the importance of studies, specifically philosophy and

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[69]Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry," English Critical Essays: Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries, edited by Edmund D. Jones (London, 1924), p. 32.

[70]Works, IV, 50. [71]Ibid.

poetry:

> That life has not been spent idly which has been mainly spent in conciliating the generous affections, by such studies and pursuits as best furnish the mind for their reception. How many, who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers, which in the beginning of their course have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterward partake the nature of that vast body whereinto they run, its dreariness, its bitterness, its foam, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion![72]

Where the dialogue between Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney treats the contentment and virtues of a literary life, Landor's Conversation between Queen Elizabeth and Cecil deals with the subject of patronage. With reference to the former, R. H. Super suggests that Landor is both speakers and that the discourse reveals the author's attitudes relative to literary life in his own day.[73] Of the latter dialogue, the discussion of patronage and Edmund Spenser evidently alludes to the need of increasing the poet laureate's salary in the nineteenth century. In a note to this dialogue, Landor states: "Calculating the prices of provisions and the increase of taxes, the poet-laureate in the time of Elizabeth had about four times as much as at present (1816)."[74]

Three contemporary reviewers of Landor's Imaginary Conversations devote brief space to Queen Elizabeth and

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[72] Ibid., IV, 55. [73] Super, p. 169.

[74] Works, IV, 60n.

Cecil. These reviewers, concerned with either the reference to the laureateship or to the use of dialect, offer no comment upon the dramatic quality of the Conversation. William Hazlitt, in the Edinburgh Review, couples this Conversation with Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey in that it is distinguished by the same vein of felicitous imitation. Although Hazlett speaks of the subject--Spenser's pension--as trite, he does suggest the importance of Landor's allusion to his friend Southey and to the laureate's salary. Hazlitt wholeheartedly endorses the attack against a long-held view about the function of poets. He states:

> We certainly think they [poets] have something better to do than to varnish over state-puppets, and hold them up to the gaze of posterity. Yet this menial use of their talents seems to have been the highest which even persons like Elizabeth formerly contemplated in their patronage of them.[75]

In the review in the New Monthly Magazine in 1828, a one-sentence critique of this dialogue indicates that the reviewer read with perception and with enjoyment, but he makes no attempt to evaluate the style or dramatic quality:

> It is on the subject of Spenser, and his complaint on the delay in the payment of the pension as Poet laureate; and nothing can be more spirited and royal than the strain in which the Queen chides her counsellor for his narrow-thoughted parsimony in that matter.[76]

William H. Smith, in the Quarterly Review in 1837, refers to

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[75] Edinburgh Review, XL (1824), 78.

[76] New Monthly Magazine, XXIII (1828), 12.

Queen Elizabeth and Cecil to show an inconsistency of Landor's in using dialect for some of his speakers and not for others. Smith questions whether Landor's experiment in using dialect for Queen Elizabeth's speeches were really wise. He concludes:

> There was no more necessity that Elizabeth should speak in an antiquated style of English, than that Aristotle should converse in Greek, or Cicero in Latin; and the imitation in one instance induces us to look for it in others, where it was equally within the power of the author. Even if we suppose that the author has translated the language of his Romans and Grecians, this will only make it still more difficult to explain why Sir Philip Sidney should speak a dialect so much more modern than Queen Elizabeth.[77]

Brief biographical-historical information will indicate the close political relationship of the speakers and the suitability of the topic discussed. William Cecil, created Lord Burghley in 1571, became the Lord High Treasurer and principal minister to Queen Elizabeth in 1572.[78] Martin A. S. Hume, in The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft, has stated concisely Elizabeth's dependence upon and confidence in Burghley's council:

> But withal, her vanity, her fickleness, the folly and greed of her favorites, or the machinations of her enemies, would inevitably have dragged her to ruin again and again, but for the fact that she always had near her, in moments of weakness or danger, a fixed point to which she could turn, a councillor whose gaze was never

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[77]William Henry Smith, "Works of Mr. W. S. Landor," Quarterly Review, LVIII (1837), 123.

[78]Martin A. S. Hume, The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft (London, 1898), pp. vii-viii.

> diverted from the ultimate goal, a man whom flattery did not move, whom bribery did not buy--wise, steady William Cecil, who to her honour and his, remained her prime adviser from the moment of her accession to the day of his death.[79]

But from the foregoing statement, it should not be assumed that Elizabeth was always deferential to Burghley. It is true, for example, that she and her minister worked hand-in-hand in such important administrative affairs as the Guinea trade and in the formulation of English policy toward it.[80] It is also significant that in matters of French diplomacy, Elizabeth's attitude differed from Burghley's, but as Hume states, "when passion or persuasion led her into a dangerous course, as they frequently did, she knew that Cecil, sagacious, and steady as a rock, would advise her honestly."[81] Yet, when she thought that it was necessary that England should become mistress of the seas for the prosperity of English trade, she opposed the more cautious policy of Cecil by favoring the war party, by conferring knighthood on Sir Francis Drake, and then by sending him forth to circumnavigate the globe.[82]

As they differed in attitude toward Drake, Elizabeth

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[79] Ibid.

[80] The Cambridge History of the British Empire, edited by J. Holland Rose and others (Cambridge, 1929), I, 45.

[81] Hume, p. xi.

[82] H. S. V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook (New York, 1947), pp. 3-4.

and Cecil held opposite views about Edmund Spenser. Many of Spenser's early writings treated the Queen favorably, and especially did his Faerie Queene, designed to glorify her, encourage her to think highly of him. On the other hand, it was generally known in this era that Cecil was no friend of the poets and thus disapproved of the Queen's patronage.[83] The Lord Treasurer's hostility was in no wise lessened by Spenser's attachment to the war party that Elizabeth had enthusiastically supported. That the antagonism between Cecil and Spenser was mutual is evident in Spenser's early poems. In his Mother Hubberd's Tale, for instance, the satire upon the Lord Treasurer can scarcely be missed. Spenser alludes to the charge brought against Cecil that he used the influence of his office to advance the members of his family, particularly his son, Robert Cecil. Furthermore, in line with Landor's dialogue, Spenser, in this same tale, obviously assails Burghley for his lack of consideration for scholars in his verse, "For men of learning little he esteemed."[84] Again, in Ruines of Time Spenser alludes to the principal minister's enmity against both soldiers and scholars.[85]

In Landor's Conversation, the characterization of Cecil is revealed both directly and indirectly. In the first

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[83] Ibid., p. 82. [84] See Jones, p. 103.
[85] Ibid.

place, his queen addresses him as "churlish" and describes his actions toward Spenser as "uncourteous." Implicit also in the dialogue is a recognition on the part of Elizabeth that Cecil dislikes poetry, for it appears that she spitefully commands him to read ten verses supposedly written by Spenser. Although Elizabeth carries the burden of the Conversation, Cecil does find vent for his attitude toward Spenser's poetry. He states very candidly to the queen: "So small a matter as a page of poesy shall never stir my choler nor twitch my purse-string."[86]

Landor's revelation of Elizabeth's character is more fully developed than Cecil's. Her readiness to reprimand Cecil in her defense of Spenser reveals a frankness and quickness to speak her mind. In her references to Spenser's poetry, Landor depicts Elizabeth as capable of making sound judgments on Spenser's poetry. She points out his use of homely and rustic language rather than that which is learned and majestical. In contrast, she recognizes that his poesy at times is not over-rich and that it concludes awkwardly. Landor presents an Elizabeth who sees in poetry "the finer things of life." By analogy, she is given to say:

> The parent gives us few days and sorrowful; the poet many and glorious: the one (supposing him discreet and kindly) best reproves our faults; the other best remunerates our virtues.[87]

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[86]Works, IV, 62. [87]Ibid., IV, 63.

Even in view of the political turmoil and struggles for domination, particularly among England, Spain, and France, the Queen acknowledges the importance of the poet:

> A page of poesy is a little matter: be it so: but of a truth I do tell thee, Cecil, it shall master full many a bold heart that the Spaniard cannot trouble; it shall win to it full many a proud and flighty one that even chivalry and manly comeliness cannot touch.[88]

Yet possibly the most cutting words to Cecil reveal the Queen's unreserved praise and confidence in the poet:

> But Edmund, if perchance I should call upon him for his counsel, would give me as wholesome and prudent as any of you. We should indemnify such men for the injustice we do unto them in not calling them about us, and for the mortification they must suffer at seeing their inferiors set before them. Edmund is grave and gentle: he complains of Fortune, not of Elizabeth, of courts, not of Cecil. I am resolved, so help me God, he shall have no further cause for his repining.[89]

In the brief dramatic episode between Elizabeth and Cecil, Landor does indicate some physical movement on the part of the speakers. Unlike the dialogue between Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney in which Brooke enters at the beginning, in this Conversation Landor plunges his reader in medias res. Elizabeth is heard first, "I advise thee again, churlish Cecil."[90] Physical action throughout the dialogue consists of Elizabeth repeatedly commanding Cecil: "Read them"; "Read the poesy"; "Psha! give me the paper." In conclusion, Elizabeth bids Cecil to "Go" and personally deliver certain items to reward Spenser deservingly for his

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[88]Ibid. [89]Ibid. [90]Ibid., IV, 60.

literary endeavors.

Though the dialogue is primarily serious in tone, Landor provides one bit of humor through his interlocutor Elizabeth. To be included among the several valuables such as silver and gold and a Bible that she commands Cecil to take to Spenser, she says, is "this pair of crimson silk hose, which thou knowest I have worn only thirteen months, taking heed that the heel-piece be put into good and sufficient restoration, at my sole charges, by the Italian women nigh the pollard elm at Charing-cross."[91]

Within the same era as the preceding Conversation, Landor retains the two speakers and employs humor more fully in his Elizabeth, Cecil, Anjou, and De La Motte Fenelon.[92] Drawing upon the circumstances of the attempts to contract a marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou for political expediency, Landor has thus produced one of the most delightful and humorous pieces in his English Imaginary Conversations.

The dramatic interest in this dialogue depends primarily upon Landor's wit. So significant is his humor to the dramatic success that one might consider it a one-act farce--at least in the tradition of closet drama. A device

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[91]Ibid., IV, 64.

[92]This dialogue also appears in the discussion of Landor's political views in Chapter II.

employed effectively by Landor to achieve his desired effect is the use of "asides." For instance, when Elizabeth tells Anjou, who is only nineteen, that she is bordering on thirty, La Motte speaks aside: "Thirty-nine, that is. (Pretty bordering)."[93] On this note the dialogue begins and continues throughout. Again when Anjou refuses to believe that Elizabeth's personal charms will perish, wane, and decline in twenty or thirty years, La Motte says (aside): "They have all been gone the best part of the time."[94] A moment later Anjou notices that Elizabeth has been comparing his stature with Lord Burleigh's and expresses his displeasure with his own height. Lest she offend him, Elizabeth replies, "Men never are contented. You are between five and six feet high." Then aside, she adds, "Eleven inches from six though."[95]

Another element that contributes to the humor and movement of the dialogue is Elizabeth's particular care not to offend Anjou. As already noted, she attempted to hide her true feelings about his height. When Anjou apologizes for the "unfortunate holes and seams left all over my face by the small-pox," Elizabeth exclaims: "Dimples! Dimples! hiding-places of Love." Anjou suggests that in another year his "beard will overgrow the marks," or he will find a

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[93]Works, IV, 65. [94]Ibid., IV, 67. [95]Ibid.

surgeon who can render his "face as smooth as_____." Then aside, Elizabeth completes the comparison: "The outside of an oyster-shell."[96]

Irony of situation brings the Conversation to its climax. Throughout their meeting, Elizabeth has carefully avoided offense; her speech has been sentimental and "sugary." But near the end of Landor's dialogue, Elizabeth, realizing that the match is hopeless, makes one last plea:

> O Anjou! Anjou! O my beloved Francis! do you, must you, can you, leave us? My sobs choke me. Is war, is even glory, preferable to love? Alas! alas! you can not answer me: you know not what love is. O imperfection of speech! In the presence of Anjou to separate war and glory! But when will you return?[97]

When she sees that Anjou is not moved to respond favorably, she whips forth at him: "Flatterer! deceiver! I am shipwrecked and lost already."[98] After her exit, Anjou with reat relief states: "She is gone--God be praised! why did you not tell me, Fenelon! what a hyaena the creature is? Her smile cured me at once of love-qualms."[99] In her absence his pretense is over, and though La Motte at least acknowledges that "she has points about her," Anjou elaborates upon Elizabeth's physical features:

> Were her nose but awry, she might see to read through it. Then (mercy upon us!) those long narrow ferret's teeth, intersecting a face of such proportions, that it

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[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid., IV, 69.

[98]Ibid., IV, 69-70.

[99]Ibid.

> is like a pared cucumber set on end. And then those foxy eyelashes and eyebrows! And those wild-fire eyes, equal in volubility to her tongue and her affections, and leering like a panther's when it yawns. Grammercy! the fellow who pretends he can fill up the trenches and pitfalls in my face, may try his hand at hers. I never will. Sacre! the skinny old goshawk, all talon and plumage.100

Through his speaker Anjou, Landor alludes to the rumors of a Dudley-Elizabeth affair and to Amy Robsart, Dudley's wife. Anjou continues: "I do not wonder that Dudley requires a couple of wives to take the taste of this wormwood out of his mouth."101

Although the speakers of the dialogue between Lord Bacon and Richard Hooker may bring to mind either literary, philosophical, or religious implications, Landor's Conversation is primarily dramatic. No lengthy exposition of ideas relating to these areas of knowledge controls the discourse. Bacon, the fallen chancellor, seeks consolation in the "worthiness and wisdom" of Richard Hooker. Landor once again develops a dramatic scene around an intensely emotional experience in the life of one of his speakers.

Appearing first in 1824, this Conversation is only moderately acclaimed by Landor's reviewers, for it is mentioned in but two contemporary periodicals. In the Monthly Review it is spoken of as "extremely well sustained" without

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100 Ibid., IV, 70-71.

101 Ibid., IV, 71.

further comment.[102] In The London Magazine, Julius Charles Hare's evaluation is also favorable. He notes that the two personages are usually considered dissimilar when Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity is associated with Bacon's literary and philosophical writings. Yet, the reviewer concludes:

> We find here all the gravity and subtility, and simplicity and humility of the original, and that everlasting celestial flame, which burns but consumes not, as it were emblematic of the eternal peace unto which it leads. Many of the touches also in the Bacon speeches are admirable though I somewhat doubt whether the passage about the malmsey be not too ill-bred, and whether the end be not too much like going off in an explosion.[103]

This Conversation has been cited as one of Landor's "most daring defiances of chronology."[104] Although Hooker and Bacon were contemporaries, Hooker died twenty-one years before Bacon was tried and convicted of bribery. Yet in the framework of the "imaginary" dialogue and of the dialogues of the dead, Landor's license for occasional anachronisms such as this one is valid. That Bacon and Hooker were acquainted and did converse is fairly certain. In fact, it is thought that Hooker saw in manuscript Bacon's "An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church," written in 1589.[105]

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[102] Monthly Review, CXII (1824), 120.

[103] Julius Charles Hare, "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen. By Walter Savage Landor," The London Magazine, IX (Jan.-June, 1824), 540.

[104] Works, IV, 72n.

[105] The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, I, 687.

In his dramatic revelation of Bacon's character, Landor faithfully depicts the seventeenth-century figure. He has brought Bacon at the time of his downfall to seek consolation from Hooker; but ironically it is Bacon who gives back to the esteemed clergyman more counsel than he receives. Thomas Fowler, in his essay on Bacon, has said in this respect:

> In Bacon's intercourse with men there was none of that intellectual give-and-take which is the foundation of the highest friendship. What he gave was advice, the best that he had at his disposal.[106]

Landor's Hooker, in a manner characteristic of his office, attempts to console Bacon by telling him that God is chastening him. He further suggests that his misfortune began with his receipt of the ward and custody of the great seal of the English realm. Possibly alluding to Bacon's essay Of Great Place, Hooker is given to say: "Such an effect to power and rank and office produce even on prudent and religious men."[107] In his warning against the vices of authority in his essay Of Great Place, Bacon suggests that the way to avoid corruption is not only to "bind thine own hands or thy servant's hands from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one, but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth

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[106] Dictionary of National Biography, I, 802.

[107] Works, IV, 72.

the other."[108] Landor depicts Hooker as shrewdly leading Bacon to admit: "You have circumvented and entrapped me, Master Hooker. Faith! I am mortified: you the schoolman, I the schoolboy!"[109] Then reverently and humbly, Landor has Hooker reply:

> Say not so, my Lord. Your years indeed are fewer than mine, by seven or thereabout, but your knowledge is far higher, your experience richer. Our wits are not always in blossom upon us.[110]

Implicit in Bacon's and Hooker's speeches are "stage directions" for a very limited action of the speakers during their discourse. At one point Bacon interrupts the serious expostulations with: "Methinks it beginneth to rain, Master Richard. What if we comfort our bodies with a small cup of wine, against the ill-temper of the air."[111] Then unexpectedly Hooker reacts in such a way that Bacon questions, "Wherefore, in God's name, are you affrightened?" In his answer, it is indicated that Hooker has been idly and imprudently looking into Bacon's "rich buffet" and has discovered "no fewer than six silver pints."[112] Then within Bacon's speech, the reader is told that a servant enters bringing wine. For humor and for a suggestion of Bacon's stinginess,

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[108] The Essays of Francis Bacon, Edited by Mary Augusta Scott (New York, 1908), p. 49.

[109] Works, IV, 73. [110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., IV, 74. [112] Ibid.

Bacon addresses his servant:

> Dolt! villain! is not this the beverage I reserve for myself?

Then to his friend Hooker he says:

> The blockhead must imagine that Malmsey runs in a stream under the ocean, like the Alpheus. Bear with me, good Master Hooker, but verily have little of this wine, and I keep it as a medicine for my many and growing infirmities.[113]

It is also evident from this incident that the speakers are meeting at Bacon's residence.

One of Landor's shortest, but most successful dramatic Conversations appeared in 1853. His Admiral Blake and Humphrey Blake is a return to the seventeenth century, a favorite period in English history for Landor. The dialogue is not burdened with Landor's personal views expressed in long discursive speeches of either character. Yet Landor has attached a note at the end of the dialogue that serves as his personal epilogue and historical documentation of Admiral Blake's character.

The situation of this dialogue is based on an apocryphal story concerning Admiral Robert Blake and one of his brothers. John Knox Laughton, in his biographical sketch of Robert Blake, records that:

> A story has been told and repeated that Blake's brother Benjamin, commanded a ship at Santa Cruz, was there guilty of cowardice, was tried by court martial at Blake's order, was sentenced to death, with a

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[113] Ibid., IV, 74-75.

> recommendation to mercy, to which the general yielded, and sent the culprit home with an order 'he shall never be employed more.' The story is utterly false. Benjamin Blake went out to the West Indies with Penn, and was appointed by him vice-admiral of the fleet left there, under Goodsonn as commander-in-chief. Between these two a quarrel arose, apparently as to the right of command. The details are not known, but the result was that Goodsonn sent his second in command home.[114]

Landor's dialogue develops a dramatic episode upon this account of Admiral Blake's condemnation of his brother. But he varies this version and substitutes the Admiral's brother called Humphrey in Benjamin's place.

If Landor had retained Benjamin's name for his dialogue, the circumstances would be nearer historical fact. According to entries in Calendar of State Papers from 1649 to 1657, Humphrey Blake's several duties as a Commissioner for Prize Goods are listed.[115] Yet in the entry dated January 29, 1653, it is recorded: "7. Capt. Benjamin Blake to be discharged from present command in the fleet, and not employed in the service."[116] Then in an entry dated February 15, 1653, the record states: "22. Order to answer on the petition of Capt. Ben. Blake, that there is no charge of crime against him."[117]

Admiral Blake's opening speech in Landor's dialogue

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[114]Dictionary of National Biography, II, 640.

[115]Calendar of State Papers: Domestic 1649-1657, Edited by Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1875), passim.

[116]Ibid., p. 132. [117]Ibid., p. 167

serves as the exposition in this dramatic episode. Here the reader is told that the scene takes place on the sea as "evening is closing on the waters." Even though the English have been victorious in a battle, Robert cannot be jubilant because he feels that God "hath sorely chastened" him and his brother Humphrey. To Humphrey, he states:

> There are those who accuse you, and they are brave and honest men--there are those, O Humphrey! Humphrey!--was the sound ever heard in our father's house?--who accuse you, brother! brother!--how can I ever find utterance for the word?--yea, of cowardice.[118]

This brief scene reaches the climax when officers come aboard and offer to speak in Humphrey's behalf, but the Admiral refuses and orders: "Take him away."[119]

Although Admiral Blake is the most striking character of the two speakers and evidently Landor's favorite of them, the portrayal of Humphrey Blake captures the reader's sympathy. The Admiral describes his brother as a person who has always had many friends because of his "honied temper." He suggests that his brother's geniality may be responsible for his present weakness. He thus characterizes Humphrey:

> Easiness of disposition conciliates bad and good alike: it draws affections to it, and relaxes enmities: but that same easiness renders us, too often, negligent of our graver duties.[120]

Although Humphrey may be a weak character in some respects, he is honest with himself and detests sham or hypocrisy.

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[118] Works, IV, 172. [119] Ibid., IV, 174.

[120] Ibid., IV, 173.

Concerning his negligence, he remorsefully acknowledges his misconduct and feels quite unable to offer adequate defense for it: "Oh! could the hour return, the battle rage again. How many things are worse than death! how few things better!"[121]

Robert Blake's resolute conduct is manifested in his every speech. No place can be found for justification of his brother's act. Even though the Admiral tells Humphrey that he will hear the worthy men who are ready to speak in favor of the accused one, he says that their petitions are futile and sends them away. His unselfish patriotism is coupled with an avid devotion to God whom he piously invokes in prayer: "Merciful Father! after all the blood that hath been shed this day, must I devote a brother's?"[122] At the same time, he recognizes that intercession is vain because "honorable men shall judge you. A man to be honorable must be strictly just, at the least. Will brave men spare you? It lies with them. Whatever be their sentence, my duty is (God give me strength!) to execute it."[123] Landor's depiction of Robert Blake compels the reader to believe that his object above everything else was to uphold the honor and interests of England. And in the trying ordeal over his brother's delinquency, the closing soliloquy attributed to

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[121] Ibid. [122] Ibid. [123] Ibid., IV, 174.

Robert indicates that his religious faith gave him fortitude and discretion:

> Just God! am I the guilty man, that I should drink to the very dregs such a cup of bitterness?
> Forgive, forgive, O Lord! the sinful cry of thy servant! Thy will be done! thou hast shown thy power this day, O Lord! now show, and make me worthy of, thy mercy![124]

For the source of his Conversation between The Lady Lisle and Elizabeth Gaunt, Landor cites Burnet's History of His Own Times. Landor comments that:

> Burnet relates from William Penn, who was present, that Elizabeth Gaunt placed the faggots round her body with her own hands. Lady Lisle was not burned alive, though sentenced to it; but hanged and beheaded.[125]

C. G. Crump, in his edition of the Imaginary Conversations, has supplemented the author's statement concerning the background and dramatic situation:

> The foundation of this Conversation is a passage in Burnet, vol. i., 649, where he describes the persecution and execution of these two women. They never could have met, as described, and it was probably the occurrence of their names on the same page which brought them together in this Conversation.[126]

The Lady Lisle in Landor's Conversation was Alice Lisle (1614-1685), the second wife of John Lisle (1610-1664). Her husband had advocated violent measures on the removal of King Charles I and held the distinction of not only

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., IV, 253n.

[126] Charles G. Crump, ed., Imaginary Conversations. By Walter Savage Landor, 6 vols. (London, 1891), V, 91n.

concurring in December, 1653, in nominating Cromwell, but also administered the oath to him.[127] Alice Lisle was often spoken of as Lady Lisle because her husband had been a member of Cromwell's House of Lords. After her husband died in 1664, she lived quietly at Moyles Court, but it is recorded that she was sympathetic with the dissenting ministers in their trials during Charles II's reign.[128]

The circumstances that led to her execution occurred in July, 1685. On July 20, she received a message from John Hickes, a dissenting minister, who asked her to shelter him. In reality, Hickes was fleeing from justice because he had taken part in Monmouth's behalf at the battle of Sedgemoor on July 6. Yet Lady Lisle claimed that she merely knew him as a prominent dissenting minister and presumed that a warrant was out against him for illegal preaching or a similar offense in his ministerial capacity. Readily receiving him and a friend, she provided shelter only one night because a spying villager disclosed the matter to Colonel Penruddock, who arrived the following day, July 26 and arrested Lady Lisle and her guests. No proof was ever adduced either that Mrs. Lisle had any basis to suspect John Hickes of disloyalty or further that she had shown any sympathy with Monmouth's

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[127] Dictionary of National Biography, XI, 1221.

[128] Ibid., XI, 1218.

insurrection. Although the jury was reluctant to convict her, she was ultimately found guilty and was sentenced to be burnt alive. With an extension granted to delay the execution from August 31 to grant her another reprieve of four days and to behead rather than burn her. Only the latter was granted.[129] One month later Hickes was also tried and executed for treason.[130]

Elizabeth Gaunt, who was executed during the same year as Lady Lisle, was the wife of William Gaunt, a yeoman of the parish of St. Mary's Whitechapel.[131] According to Bishop Burnet, she was an anabaptist who spent her life doing good, 'visiting gaols, and looking after the poor of every persuasion.'[132] During the reign of Charles II, in spite of Elizabeth Gaunt's poverty, she gave a man named Burton money to escape to Amsterdam after he was outlawed for his part in the Rye House plot. Later Mrs. Gaunt hid him in her house after the defeat of Monmouth at Sedgemoor. Unlike the situation between Lady Lisle and John Hickes, Burton was base enough to acquire a pardon by informing against his benefactress. Indicted for high treason, she was convicted and burned at Tyburn on October 23, 1685.[133]

The religious and moral emphasis in Landor's

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[129] Ibid., XI, 1218-19. [130] Ibid., IX, 806.

[131] Ibid., VII, 951. [132] Ibid. [133] Ibid., VII, 951-52.

presentation of his speakers is biographically accurate. Following a design of several of the shorter dialogues, Landor brings the two women together at an intensely emotional time in both their lives. As Landor indicates in the Conversation, Lady Lisle and Elizabeth are imprisoned for the same offence, and both are executed. Thus in a moment when one would expect to see them in anguish of their approaching death, Landor depicts Elizabeth Gaunt of a "countenance serene and cheerful." Both women, faithful to their religious convictions, find strength and tranquility of soul in their petition to God. Elizabeth Gaunt expresses an optimistic view of death in speaking of the man that she protected:

> I saved his life, an unprofitable and (I fear) a joyless one: he, by God's grace, has thrown open to me, and at an earlier hour than ever I ventured to expect it, the avenue to eternal bliss.[134]

Lady Lisle, in a spirit of forgiveness for her enemies, concludes this dramatic scene:

> O my good angel! that bestrewest with fresh flowers a path already smooth and pleasant to me, may those timorous men who have betrayed, and those misguided ones who have prosecuted us, be conscious on their death-beds that we have entered it! and they too will at last find rest.[135]

The brief dramatic scene of Steele and Addison first appeared in Book of Beauty in 1835 and then in Ablett's Literary Hours in 1837 before Landor included it in his

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[134] Works, IV, 256. [135] Ibid.

collected works in 1846. Cited by C. G. Crump in his 1891 edition of the Conversations, the most trustworthy account of the subject of this dialogue is told by Benjamin Victor to Garrick in a letter written in 1762. According to this letter:

> Steele borrowed £1000 from Addison....on the house at Hampton Wick, giving bond and judgment for the repayment of the money at the end of twelve months. Upon the forfeiture of the bond, Addison's attorney proceeded to execution, the house and furniture being sold, and the surplus sent to Steele with a 'genteel letter' stating the friendly reason for this extraordinary proceeding, viz.: to awaken him, if possible, from a lethargy that must end in his inevitable ruin.[136]

Crump adds that the affair appears not to have severed the friendship of Steele and Addison.

In Landor's treatment of this affair between Steele and Addison, the speakers are depicted as friends, but realistically Steele's first response to Addison's visit reflects a note of cynicism. But after Addison has explained that what he did was for Steele's own good, Steele, at least outwardly, is satisfied. He says, "I know that I retain my friendship for you by what you have made me suffer."[137] Interesting in view of a changing attitude among literary historians toward the character of Addison is the closing speech in the dialogue uttered by Steele after Addison says farewell. The defaulting debtor concludes:

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[136]Crump, IV, 353n. [137]Works, IV, 267.

> Ah! could not that cold heart, often and long as I reposed on it, bring me to my senses! I have indeed been drunken; but it is hard to awaken in such heaviness as this of mine is. I shared his poverty with him; I never aimed to share his prosperity.[138]

Landor attaches a note at the end of this dialogue in which he states that "doubts are now entertained whether the character of Addison is fairly represented by Pope and Johnson."[139] Peter Smithers, a recent biographer of Addison, treats the Steele and Addison relationship similarly to Landor. Smithers suggests that "Steele found it hard to comprehend that in the height of power and patronage, he should put the principle of friendship quite low down amongst the priorities of public duty."[140]

The last dialogue to be discussed for its dramatic character is Eldon and Encombe, a portrayal of two persons who were living when this Conversation was first printed in the Examiner in 1836. Upon its appearance, a Mrs. Dashwood rebuked Landor for writing it because "poor Lord Eldon is no longer a public man, and eighty years old."[141] However, Landor's reply was bluntly, "the devil is older."[142] In addition to Mrs. Dashwood, both John Forster and Malcolm Elwin acknowledge this dialogue as a satire on Eldon's sycophancy

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[138] Ibid. [139] Ibid.

[140] Peter Smithers, The Life of Joseph Addison (Oxford, 1954), p. 98.

[141] Quoted by Elwin, pp. 294-95. [142] Ibid.

and notorious parsimony.

Biographical accounts of John Scott, Lord Eldon (1751-1838), do not present a very pleasing picture of the man. Sydney Smith has described Eldon as "the most heartless, bigoted, and mischievous of human beings, who passed a long life in perpetuating all sorts of abuses, and in making money of them."[143] Eldon had been the judge in the affairs of Shelley. Walter Edwin Peck, in his Shelley: His Life and Work, states:

> The Lord Chancellor, in a formal order dated Thursday, 27 March 1817, directed that Shelley be restrained from taking the custody of the children and instructed William Alexander, Esq., one of the Masters of the Court, to 'enquire what will be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the...Plaintiffs.[144]

In this same year, when Southey had tried to secure an injunction against the publishers of the unauthorized editions of his Wat Tyler, Lord Eldon, who might have been expected to support his fellow-Tory, held that "a person cannot recover in damages for a work which is in its nature calculated to do an injury to the public." So the sale of this republican drama, written in Southey's youth (1794), went on unchecked.[145] James M. Rigg, in his sketch of Eldon, states that Eldon's maxim was that a lawyer should live like a hermit and work

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[143]Quoted by Elwin, p. 149n.

[144]Walter Edwin Peck, Shelley: His Life and Work, 2 vols. (Boston and New York, 1927), I, 514.

[145]Jack Simmons, Southey (London, 1945), p. 158.

like a horse. His radical strictness is also evident in his support of Lord Auckland's bill prohibiting the marriage of a divorced adulteress with her lover. More pertinent to Landor's Conversation are Eldon's efforts in the House of Lords to defeat such proposals as the abolition of slave trade and "the emancipation of the debtor."[146]

Lord Encombe, whom Eldon calls "my son, my son" in Landor's Conversation, is Eldon's grandson John. Malcolm Elwin, in his Landor: A Replevin, speaks of Encombe as Eldon's son; yet John Forster eighty-eight years before had referred to Eldon and his grandson. A letter from Eldon to his grandson, dated October 4, 1821, clarifies the matter:

> To My dear John,
>
> If your excellent and most dear father had been in life when I was created Earl of Eldon and Viscount Encombe, he during my life, would unquestionably have used, not as of right, but by the courtesy of the realm, his father's second title, instead of the name of Mr. Scott.[147]

Eldon continues by telling his grandson that the College of Heralds "certified to me their unanimous opinion, that you, according to the courtesy of the realm, may use the name, and be commonly called by the name Encombe."[148]

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[146]Dictionary of National Biography, XVII, 987.

[147]Horace Twiss, The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon (London, 1844), II, 440.

[148]Ibid., II, 441.

In view of Eldon's generous attitude toward his grandson expressed in this letter, Landor's dialogue is satirical. When Encombe confesses that he has lost two thousand pounds by gambling on the evening before, Eldon shows no sympathy, refuses to pay the debt, even if duelling is contemplated. He then advises his grandson to utilize his time wisely, a curious contrast to James M. Rigg's account of Eldon's habitual dilatoriness displayed in his late years of public service in chancery.[149] Overall, Landor's speaker, Eldon, warns his grandson against dissipation and urges him to acquire knowledge and to practice virtue. Ironically, in both Eldon's and Encombe's speeches, Landor portrays Eldon as a stingy, miserly old man whose money is his idol. To enhance this trait by depicting Eldon as uncharitable, Landor provides a beggar whom Eldon sends away empty-handed with the "consoling" words, "I pity you, my good friend, from the bottom of my heart."[150]

In this group of dialogues, Landor has presented dramatic scenes depicting historical and literary figures from the eleventh century in England to his own time. No continuity among these dialogues is implied in this episodic account of the past and the present. With a minimum of stage

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[149] Dictionary of National Biography, XVII, 987.

[150] Works, V, 227.

directions in each dialogue, Landor provides independently the occasion for his characters to meet and converse. Beyond the dramatic situation, the action ceases, and the creation of drama or revelation of character is dependent upon the attitudes, ideas, and reflections of the speakers. For the most part, Landor has permitted his speakers to be themselves. An exception is Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney, in which Landor is considered to be both speakers. But even here the pastoral setting and the moral reflections of the speakers hold the reader's attention more closely to the sixteenth century than to the nineteenth. In the instances where Landor defies chronology, his speakers are actual personages, and his artistic handling of the settings and his characterization of his speakers create verisimilitude.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Since the conclusion of each chapter in this study contains evaluative statements respecting Landor's personality and his views on English politics, religion, and literature, a lengthy discussion in this last chapter would be repetitious. In respect to all these topics, the foregoing chapters have treated the thirty-five English Imaginary Conversations individually with respect to Landor's treatment of his sources, the dramatic situations, and the revelation of Landor's thought.

Although Landor's wide reading equipped him to utilize history and literature of other nations to supply the speakers and subject matter in many of his Imaginary Conversations, his group of English dialogues reveals a dominant interest in English life and literature. To Landor, his sources from the English past seemed to be an ideal vehicle for the expression of his political, religious, literary, and moral sentiments. In the personages and events of the past, he found ideals and principles that would benefit the present. Even when he chose contemporary figures for his spokesmen, he carefully selected literary men or political statesmen who, for the most part, are still remembered by students of history and literature.

Those dialogues that treat political and religious issues reveal certain basic principles in Landor's thought. His love of freedom and his broad humanitarian sympathy account for his hatred of tyranny either politically in his opposition to kingship and slavery or religiously in his intense dislike of popery. As evidenced in his approval of regicide respecting the execution of Charles I, Landor evidently was not so much opposed to the structure of the English government as to the selfish, corrupt officeholders. Likewise, Landor did not speak disparagingly of the system of Christianity. Rather he detested the evils of hypocrisy and intolerance of the so-called Christian religion of both the past and the present. Landor was opposed to any religious group, whether Protestant or Catholic, that restricted freedom of any individual or group. He thus rejected the Catholic doctrine of church and state and the Calvinist tenet of predestination.

The English Imaginary Conversations show Landor in relation to both the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. On the basis of his political views, Landor may be classified as a romanticist. His interest in reform, his opposition to slavery, his belief in the freedom of the individual, and his use of the past all link Landor to the romantic tradition. But on matters of literary criticism, his role as a practical, analytical critic relates him more closely

to the critical standards of the eighteenth century than to those of his own age. Despite this preference, Landor's contemporaries would heartily approve of his praise of Milton and Shakespeare in addition to his use of harmony as a critical principle, his occasional emphasis upon beauties, and his liberal views concerning the imitation of the ancients and the doctrine of the unities.

To students of literature, Landor's dialogues of exposition will be worthwhile for their literary criticism and views on political and social history. On the other hand, the essentially dramatic Conversations have a more universal appeal as literary art, because in them principles and ideas give way to artistic presentation of character. In these dramatic scenes of historical and literary figures of the English past, Landor skillfully creates drama or revelation of character in the attitudes and personal reflections of his speakers without burdening the dialogues with his own historical documentation and exposition of ideas.

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