Walter Savage Landor
A critical reconsideration of the man
and his works with special reference to his
Imaginary Conversations

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Abstract

The first two chapters are devoted to investigating the psychological characteristics of Landor's personality. This preliminary study of the man, which is essential for a reconsideration of his works, points to a recurring pattern of rebellion against persecution and self-imposed exile from the region of its influence.

The recurrence of this pattern throughout Landor's life, brought alternately into prominence - as the third chapter attempts to show - the two soul-sides of the man: "One to face the world with," and "one to show" the beloved.

Landor's fight against the contemporary world is then studied in the three subsequent chapters. His struggle against the political, religious and literary worlds, and his alienation from them are dealt with in detail. It was in terms of his sense of persecution that Landor came to view political and religious institutions, and to speak of contemporary writers, critics and reading public.

When we deal, in chapter seven, with Landor's withdrawal, we find out that his essential character embodies traits which imply a romantic attitude to life. This romantic aspect of his personality comes into full view as we study his Promethean rebellion, his withdrawal in time and place, his
subjectivity, and his attitude to love, death, and nature.

This view of Landor's character becomes the more convincing when we study, in chapter eight, the impact of his withdrawal into Italy upon his mind and work. For he will emerge, from this study, as a major participant in the Italianate fashion which was prevalent during the Romantic period, and which characterises the works of the Romantics proper.

After dealing with Landor's Content in the previous chapters, we proceed to a consideration of his Form. When Landor adopted the dialogue form, he made it - as chapter nine attempts to show - his own. A knowledge of his peculiarities of temperament, the nature of his thinking, his poetic genius, his subjectivity, and his craving for dramatic expression will help us to understand the reasons for his choice of the dialogue form. A short survey of the dialogues written by his predecessors and contemporaries will show how Landor developed this form, and how the Imaginary Conversations are characteristically Landorian.

This study of Landor's dialogues suggests a new classification for the Imaginary Conversations. None of the existing classifications is convincing enough: they overlook the important fact that Landor's dialogues are the product of the recurring pattern of rebellion and withdrawal. The
knowledge of this pattern enables us to see in Landor's Conversations two groups that correspond with the two sides of his nature: the discursive and the dramatic.

The predominance of this pattern in Landor's life shows also that each of his individual dialogues, though digressive in nature, has unity. It is because they have ignored this pattern that some critics have been led to the conclusion that most of Landor's dialogues lack both a central theme and a unity.

Finally, if we approach Landor's criticism with this study in mind, we shall be able to understand what Landor said and — what Mr. Super sees as lacking in previous studies — "why he said it."
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INTRODUCTION

As in the case of many other writers, the full significance of Landor's achievement as a writer can only emerge when studied against the background of his character and life. I therefore begin this thesis with a study of the man who needs, I think, reconsideration. Despite the three voluminous biographies we have of Landor, and the numerous accounts given of his character by various of his contemporaries, the pictures we have of him are mostly blurred, misconceived, or one-sided.

To begin a study of Landor with such pictures in one's mind is apt to lead to wrong conclusions. George Woodberry's chapter on Landor shows how a misconception concerning the man leads to a grave misunderstanding of the writer. "The difference between Landor the man and Landor the author," believes Woodberry, "is so great as to make the two almost antithetical." This belief reveals - as the present thesis attempts to show - an utter ignorance of Landor the man, which leads to the wrong view - namely, that in Landor's "imaginative work, by which he must be judged," he "denied and forswore his personality, and obliterated himself so far as was possible."¹

¹ Makers of Literature (N.Y., 1900), p.68.
On this wrong conception of Landor, which Woodberry shares with many others, he builds arguments and reaches conclusions which are far from the truth. Landor "not only eliminated self from his style," he says, "but he also eliminated self, so far as one can, from his subject." No wonder then if Woodberry sees no unity in Landor's work, and if he misses the truth with which Landor is preoccupied, and if he underestimates Landor's principles: "He did not bind his work together by the laws of his own mind; he did not root it in the truth, as he saw truth;" says Woodberry, "he did not interpenetrate and permeate it with his own beliefs, as the great masters have always done."^1

A better knowledge of Landor the man will show us that the only unity in his work is precisely the unity made by the laws of his own mind, that the truth in which his work is rooted is that truth he saw, and that he interpenetrated and permeated his writings with his own beliefs to such an extent that these writings cannot be fully appreciated without a knowledge of these beliefs. Similarly, no unity can be seen in Landor's work unless the laws of his mind - which determined the kind of truth he saw - can be fully recognised.

^1 Ibid., pp. 68-9.
Before we begin to study the man and the laws of his mind we make a short review of the accounts given of him to show that they contradict each other in such a way as to make a reconsideration of the man an essential primary step. While some of these accounts speak of Landor in the same terms as do the Tuscan police records, namely as a quarrelsome, troublesome, cruel, grandiose, and eccentric person, the others show him as the noblest and most tender of men.

The former accounts, one has to mention, are given by those who did not know him intimately. In Italy he mixed with very few of his countrymen. The others had towards him the attitude implied in the phrase of Claire Clairmont who called him "the odd English at present in Pisa". It is this attitude which was adopted by those who wrote on him without taking the trouble to understand him. Edward Dowden, for example, declares that Landor "was emphatically an uncivilized man."
But those who knew the man intimately say otherwise: "The high breeding and urbanity of his manners, which are very striking, I had not been taught to expect;" writes Lady Blessington, "for those who spoke of him to me, although sincere admirers of his, had not named them."¹ When Southey met Landor he wrote: "I have often said before we met, that I would walk forty miles to see him, and having seen him, I would gladly walk fourscore to see him again."² Southey's lasting friendship, and admiration for Landor support his view. Elizabeth Linton who knew him well enough to understand his character wrote that "a nobler, finer, more loyal, more moving, more lofty nature never took on itself human form than his." She also found him "tender to the loving" and "loyal to the true," and as an enemy, he was "uncompromising."³

If intimacy makes these friends overlook Landor's faults, we may listen to more objective accounts given by less intimate friends. These were aware of two aspects of

¹ Idler in Italy (1839), II, 310.
² The Life and Correspondence of the late Robert Southey, ed. C.C. Southey (1850), III, 138.
³ Linton, E.L., My Literary Life (1899), pp.51,2.
Landor's character. Lord Houghton, in his *Monographs*, tells us how Landor was influenced by Dr. Parr who took from Dr. Johnson the tradition of "masking a kindly temperament under a rude and sometimes malicious exterior."¹ Landor "had the reputation of being a violent man," wrote Seymour Kirkup, "and no doubt was so. But I never saw anything but the greatest gentleness and courtesy in him."² To Leigh Hunt, Landor was "like a stormy mountain pine that does produce lilies." Hunt then adds, "After indulging the partialities of his friendships and enmities, and trampling on Kings and ministers, he shall cool himself, like a Spartan worshipping a moon-beam, in the patient meekness of Lady Jane Gray."³

Of this duality⁴ of Landor's character, his biographers tell us nothing. In fact they fail to give the reader a living picture of Landor. The more voluminous the biography is, the vaguer the picture. In 1869, the first, and formal

¹ Milnes, R.M. (Lord Houghton), *Monographs, Personal and Social* (1873), p.73.
³ Hunt, L., *Lord Byron and some of his contemporaries* (1828), p.496.
⁴ Dickens, I think, was aware of this duality, yet he concentrated his attention - while drawing the character of Boythorn in *Bleak House* - on the violent side of Landor's character, "the stormy mountain pine".
biography by John Forster appeared, in two volumes. Seven years later Forster produced his one-volume edition. In 1881 Sidney Colvin published a biographical and critical essay. This was followed by Malcolm Elwin's *Savage Landor* (1941). Then appeared R.H. Super's *Walter Savage Landor: a biography* in 1954. The last one, Malcolm Elwin's *Landor: a replevin*, followed four years later.

Discontent with previous biographies is the raison d'être of each of the biographies published after Forster's first one. Expressing his disapproval of Forster's "bulky and rather oppressive to read" biography, Super writes:

> Long arid stretches are devoted to mere summaries of Landor's writings; much of the rest was composed by pasting clippings from Landor's letters to sheets of paper and sending them to the printer. Forster also was not much concerned with exactness: he pronounced pontifically upon matters of which he knew nothing, and altered and garbled letters with inexplicable wilfulness. It is a curious sidelight on him that although he knew Landor well, his book contains very little personal reminiscence.¹

Super then shows how Forster's desire to satisfy Landor's friends and surviving relations hindered him from dealing with Landor's separation from his wife and with the Yescombe-Landor libel suit. Forster thus lacked the complete sympathy of complete detachment necessary to a biographer.

Super expresses his disapproval of Forster's biography, again, in an article entitled "Forster as Landor's literary executor". In this article he writes that "the pompousness of Forster's claims to the literary executorship of Landor's works, together with the unsatisfactory manner in which he performed the task, have made more than one scholar wish he could disprove those claims."\(^1\) Landor's friends were not pleased with this biography. Elizabeth Linton who began her review of it with the words, "The Life of Walter Savage Landor has yet to be written",\(^2\) found in Forster's work "a cold and carping and unsympathetic biography."\(^3\)

Of Elwin's *Savage Landor*, Super says that being a "wartime book" it "suffered accordingly: [Elwin] was not able to seek out the vast amount of unpublished Landor manuscript which had found its way to the United States; he could not go to Italy; he could not even make use of the unpublished materials in the libraries of the United Kingdom."\(^4\)

When Super's biography appeared, a reviewer wrote, "What this book misses is the man himself." This, I think,

\[\text{---\footnotesize\underline{1\hspace{1cm}Modern Language Notes, LII (November 1937), p.504.}}\]
\[\text{---\footnotesize\underline{2\hspace{1cm}Elwin, M., Victorian Wallflowers (1934), p.199.}}\]
\[\text{---\footnotesize\underline{3\hspace{1cm}Linton, E., My Literary Life, p.157.}}\]
\[\text{---\footnotesize\underline{4\hspace{1cm}Super, "Walter Savage Landor," op.cit., p.242.}}\]
is what most readers feel. Super has crammed his book with a great number of events and minute details, yet most of these events, as the reviewer, George Becker, says, "are more than usually irrelevant to the life of the spirit." Though Professor Bonamy Dobrée finds this book "a great advance" upon Forster's which "is very incomplete" and Elwin's Savage Landor which "lacks a good deal of the information" included in Super's volume, he adds, "The pity is that this volume is not likely to lead anybody to read Landor." Super, one believes, hardly tells us anything about that important aspect of Landor's nature which lies beyond the data he collected and classified. "With Mr. Super's volume to dispose of the minutiae," rightly says George Becker, "what we now need is a thorough analysis of the growth of this poet's mind."

In his revised version, Landor: a replevin, Elwin seeks to supply what Super's biography lacks: "This book is described as 'a replevin'," he writes, "because it is an attempt to recover Landor's character from misrepresentation and his work from neglect." Super, believes Elwin, "so far surpasses

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Forster in deprecating the eccentricities of Landor's character and conduct that his readers must wonder why he persevered so long in studying a subject with whom he felt so little sympathy." Yet, it is Super's method, rather than his lack of sympathy, which makes his biography what it is. In a scientific but cold way, he goes on adding detail upon detail, in a strict chronological order dividing into lifeless portions what should be given as a whole. A chronological biography, as Leon Edel rightly says, "runs the risk of flattening out a life and giving it the effect of a calendar or a date-book."¹

Elwin's biography is indeed more interesting to the reader. But the facts that it is not documented, and that Elwin "occasionally accepts a slight hint as conclusive evidence about certain crucial points in Landor's life,"² make one sometimes quote it with caution. Like the rest of biographies it does not tell us about Landor's peculiar psychology, a knowledge of which - the writer of this thesis believes - is essential for an understanding of Landor's life and thought.

CHAPTER ONE

The Development of Landor's Character

Landor was born at Warwick on January 30, 1775. His father, Dr. Walter Landor, who practised as a physician at Warwick, had married as his second wife Elizabeth Savage the heiress of estates at Ipsley Court and Tachbrook. These estates as well as the father's at Rugeley, were entailed upon the eldest son, Walter Savage Landor, who had three brothers and three sisters.

As it was difficult for Landor to remember further back than his sixth year, he could not tell his biographer, John Forster, much about his earliest years. But a small girl, named Mary Butt, who visited his family, in 1782, with her mother, described later on how she saw Walter - "a big boy with rough hair" - stretched on the carpet, before the fire. When his mother admonished him "to get up, he answered, 'I won't,' or 'I shan't.' She reproved him, and he bade her hold her tongue."

In the mind of Mary Butt (who became Mrs. Sherwood\(^1\)), the image of the boy Walter "became the prototype" of all that is disobedient. One can derive some reason for Walter's

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\(^1\) The author of The Fairchild Family.
disobedience, from Mary's description of the Landors: Walter's sister "took me up-stairs, and, whilst showing me her dolls, she said: 'I am glad you came to-day, for you have saved me from a good scolding, for my mother is out of humour.'" At dinner, the husband "kept constantly saying" to this "exceedingly civil and hospitable" lady who was in "a perpetual fume ... 'Come, Betty, keep your temper. Do, Betty, keep your temper.'"^1

It seems that Walter lacked affection at that early stage. In the eight years following his birth, his mother gave birth to six children. When he was four and a half, he was sent to school, from which he returned home on holidays only. Commenting on the fact that Walter was the sole heir of his parents' estates, and that "from childhood [he] knew himself to be destined for an ample fortune," Elwin says, "A mother's natural affection was bound to be enlisted in the interests of the sufferers from this unjust distribution."^2

Speaking of the love Landor's mother had for her children, Sidney Colvin says that it "was solicitous and prudent rather than passionate or very tender."^3 Elwin also believes that

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^1 The Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood, ed. F.J. Harvey Darton (1910), pp.40-1.

^2 Landor: a replevin, p.31.

she "regarded duty as the only correct guide for human conduct; any deviation from duty's narrow path, caused by whatever natural emotion or temperamental idiosyncrasy, was a weakness and a fault."¹

As for Landor's father, he seems to have been preoccupied with the management of the family estate. In his reminiscences of past days, Landor hardly mentions him. But it is evident, from the events and comments, which will be referred to, that Landor feared him. Later in his life he wrote: "Tho' my father had really shown me as much unkindness as was in his power, I was resolved if possible not to give him any further cause of complaint."²

As a boy, Walter often went to Ripple Court where his friend Fleetwood Parkhurst lived. "With old Mr. Parkhurst," Robert Landor tells us, Walter was a great "favourite, and he had always been very happy at Ripple."³ He never forgot the kindness and sympathy of his friend's father, which attracted him to Ripple Court. "Your father was as fond of me as if I had been his son;" he wrote in May 1839 to Mrs. Rosenhagen, Fleetwood's sister, "and never did I shed

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¹ Landor: a replevin, p.31.
² Fragmentary Remains, literary and scientific, of Sir Humphrey Davy, ed. John Davy (1858), p.49.
³ Landor: a replevin, p.44.
so many tears for the loss of any man." With the letter he sent her a poem in which he says:

The Lord of these domains was one
Who loved me like an only son.¹

In another letter to his sister, written in 1830, from Florence, he speaks of "these domains" and adds: "I believe I should shed tears if I saw the place again. No person in my early days was so partial to me as [the father] was."²

Of this significant attachment Elwin rightly says: "The mutual respect and affection existing between Landor and a man of his father's generation indicates that the antagonism between father and son arose from parental shortcomings more culpable than the boy's waywardness."³

At Rugby Landor revolted against the head-master's authority in such a way that he was dismissed from school. It was unfortunate for Landor to have a head-master like Dr. James who was "neither respected nor beloved by his pupils" writes Charles James Apperley (Nimrod), Landor's school-fellow. Flogging, he adds, was "unmercifully pursued" at Rugby. "It was generally believed," adds Nimrod,

¹ See "Where Malvern's verdant ridges gleam ..." See Forster, Landor, I, 27.
² Ibid., p.27n.
³ Landor: a replevin, p.44.
"that James — and he alone was the executioner — delighted in it."\(^1\)

Though the head-master was proud of Landor, because of his talent, Landor "would not have him at any price.

Having "an instinctive horror of cruelty of all kinds,"\(^2\) the lad behaved in a way which shows a protest against some of his school's traditions. In a letter to Forster about an Eton boy's cruelty to his fag, Landor wrote many years later:

When I wrote about the cruelty of the Eton boy I had not forgotten a lighter case at Rugby. With what pleasure and even pride do I recall to memory that I was the first of that school who paid the lad he fagged. Poor little B.H. had three or four bottles to fill at the pump in a hard frost, and was crying bitterly, when I took pity on him and made him my fag, at threepence a week I think. This exempted him from obedience to others, and I seldom exercised my vested rights. Perhaps the head master James thought it an innovation to pay. He certainly hated me for my squibs, and had also threatened to expel me for never calling Will Hill Mister; I having told him I never would call Hill or any other Mister unless I might call the rest so.\(^3\)

One reason behind Walter's dislike of James, is that the latter preferred the Latin verses of Samuel Butler\(^4\) (who was in the same class) to those of Walter. This must have

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1. My Life and Times (1927), p.150.
2. Milnes, Monographs, p.73.
3. Forster, Landor, I, 197.
offended the proud boy whose excellence in Latin made the other pupils beg him "to win them a half-holiday with his Latin verses." Landor saw in this treatment injustice which incited him to rebel against the head-master: "At last he wrote to my father that I was rebellious and incited others to rebellion; and unless he took me away he should be obliged ... to expel me."¹

As he was too young for Oxford, he was placed under a private tutor, William Langley, rector of Penny Bentley, Derbyshire. Landor's attitude to this tutor shows that he responded to kindness and sympathy. He was always grateful to Langley, to whom he pays homage in one of his Conversations, by writing that the "kindness of him and his wife to me was parental."²

Landor was similarly grateful to two other tutors who were also good-natured: John Sleath, and Benwell: "Never was a youth blest with three such indulgent and affectionate private tutors as I was; before by the elegant and generous Doctor John Sleath at Rugby; and after by the saintly

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¹ Samuel Butler (1774-1839), bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. He was admitted to Rugby 31 March 1783. (Dictionary of National Biography). Grandfather of the author of Erewhon.  
² Forster, loc.cit.  
³ "Walton, Cotton, and Oldways," Complete Works, IV, 163n.
This devotion and respect show that his disobedience to James was a protest against what he considered a tyrannical authority. It was natural that the principles of the French Revolution should appeal to such a youth. The sympathy he had for the revolutionists and the admiration with which he spoke of their principles, naturally, widened the gap between him and his father. His brother Robert tells us how Walter shocked his mother, brothers, and sisters one day by wishing that "the French would invade England and assist us in hanging George the Third between two such thieves as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York." Furiously his mother left the room after boxing his ears. "'I'd advise you, mother,' shouted Walter after her, 'not to try that sort of thing again!'"

With such revolutionary ideas, Walter entered Oxford in 1792. There he was called the "mad Jacobin", and was avoided by others, even by those who shared his views. "He was a contemporary of mine at Oxford, of Trinity," wrote Southey, "and notorious as a mad Jacobin; his Jacobinism would have made me seek his acquaintance, but for his

1 Ibid. See also The letters of a conservative, Complete Works, XII, 210.

2 Forster, op. cit., pp. 73-4n.
his madness."¹ Landor's revolutionary sentiments made him delight in defying others. When he decided to wear his hair without powder, his tutor warned him: "Take care, they will stone you for a republican." However, he did what he wanted, and expressed openly his unorthodox views in such a way which gained for him the enmity of some colleagues.

These must have irritated him, for one day he was induced to fire his gun at the closed shutters of one of them. As a result, he was rusticated from Oxford. When his father heard of this, a serious quarrel ensued. Referring to this quarrel in one of his letters to Walter Birch, Landor wrote:

My father and I are more different than any other two men. I have endeavoured to make the greatest sacrifices to his happiness; but if I cannot make him happy, I certainly will not make him miserable. Because I sent to Oxford to give up my rooms, he imagined that I had no intention of returning. On this he used the most violent expressions, and the event is that I have left him for ever.²

At that time Landor was attracted to the circle of Dr. Parr who was notorious for his republican views. Parr showed Landor the sympathy he must have needed then. "He treated me with all the kindness I could have wished in a

¹ Fragmentary Remains, op.cit., p.48.
² Forster, Landor, I, p.57.
father, and invited me to live in his house."¹ On the other hand Parr admired Landor's Latin compositions, and encouraged him: "My first exercises in [argument and eloquence] were under his eye and guidance, corrected by his admonition, and animated by his applause ... His house, his library, his heart, were always open to me."²

We can imagine the influence of Dr. Parr and his circle on the young rebel when we read what Percy Colson writes of Parr. He was a violent Whig. With him, "not to be a Whig was to be a criminal."³ At the time of the French Revolution, he was "so much disliked and feared on account of his indiscreet sympathies, that it was considered highly imprudent, even unpatriotic, to meet him in society, and the authorities watched him closely, ready and anxious to act if he went too far."⁴

Landor's family must have been displeased at Landor's friendship with Parr. The following letter to Landor—written by a favourite cousin, Sophia Venour—which touches tactfully upon this subject, shows us how Landor was then

¹ Ibid., p.416n.
² Super, Landor, p.12.
⁴ Ibid., p.127.
looked upon by his relatives:

I think you are much in the right to make the most learned your friends and companions; but permit me to say, that though I think a proper spirit commendable and even necessary at times, yet, in my opinion, it is better to submit sometimes to those under whose authority we are, even when we think they are in fault, than to run the risk of being esteemed arrogant and self-sufficient.¹

But Landor could never submit to those under whose authority he was, especially if he knew that they were "in fault".

As the poems written at that time show, his mind was already set against injustice and persecution. In "Apology for satire" he complains against oppression.² In "Birth of Poesy" he appeals to his countrymen to shake off tyranny:

"Britons! at last will come the fated hour / With ample vengeance for abuse of pow'r" (III. 262-3). If we study the contents of his first volume: The Poems of Walter Savage Landor (1795) we come across many passages that show this sense of injustice. In Moral Epistle published in the same year, we see a like preoccupation with persecution. Speaking, in the preface, of the crimes of the

¹ Landor: a replevin, p.44.
² See the following lines:

(F.) Hush! why complain? of treason have a care; You heard of Holcroft and of Tooke - beware -
(F.) I heard the whole; nor deem it a disgrace -
(F.) Tho' danger surely - (F.) - to lament their case. (ll.55-8)
politicians who abuse their power, he says, "Why should we hesitate to unmask the crimes? Is it because they are frightful? and are we, then, such children? Ought we not rather to shew the World that they are so ...?" He then declares his intention to go on writing Moral Epistles as long as such men live, and adds "Though I am very sensible how long and how laborious a work it would be, yet, having begun it here, I shall continue it at my leisure." This preface shows that Landor's sense of persecution made him formulate, so early in his literary career, a kind of purpose which determined the choice of the subject-matter of one aspect of his work.

Knowing this state of mind of Landor, Dr. Parr encouraged him to enter the political world. "Glad shall I be when you sit with us again," he wrote to Landor in 1801, "and chat on ... the talents of Buonaparte ... and the perilous condition of this oppressed and insulted Kingdom." Landor, who had exiled himself to South Wales, accepted the invitation immediately, and came to London to fight against oppression. Parr's invitation, it seems, came at the right moment, for

2 Ibid.  
3 Forster, Landor, I, 161.
Landor was then, as we shall see later on, suffering from the attacks of critics on his poem *Gebir*.

Landor's experience in the political world did but deepen his sense of persecution. When we deal with his attitude towards this world, we shall see that he was too much of an idealist to be a successful party man, too much of an individualist to submit to what the Whig leaders wanted him to do, and too uncompromising in his fight against the Government to be of great use to his party. As a result he turned his back upon practical politics, but remained faithful to his high political ideals.

These ideals - which arose from a deep hatred of tyrants - made him forsake his comfortable life at Bath, and the fortune which he had inherited after his father's death, and rush, in 1808, to Spain to fight against Napoleon's tyranny. "I hope to join the Spanish army immediately on my landing," he wrote to Southey, "and I wish only to fight as a private soldier." This action surprised his friends and relatives. Southey was among the very few who admired Landor's action, "A noble fellow! This is something like the days of old." Southey also understood the inner urge

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that took Landor to Spain: "I should most rejoice to hear that King Joseph had fallen into his hands; - he would infallibly hang him on the nearest tree, first, as a Buonaparte by blood; secondly as a Frenchman by adoption; thirdly as a king by trade." ¹

As soon as he reached Spain, Landor, who had taken enough money with him, formed and equipped a band of volunteers. "A man like Landor cannot long remain without command." ² wrote Southey to his brother. This again shows insight into Landor's character. The latter's letter to the Governor of Corunna shows the enthusiasm with which Landor set out to fight oppression:

If there are any volunteers in this town, or in the Kingdom, who may wish to accompany me, though their number should amount to 1000, I shall with much pleasure pay the expenses of their journey, travel with them on foot, and fight along with them, glorying to serve under the command of any brave Spaniard who has taken up arms in defence of religion and liberty." ³

After offering some money to the town of Venturada which was destroyed "on account of its loyalty to its King by most cruel and ferocious enemies," ⁴ Landor led the volunteers

² Ibid.
³ Forster, op.cit., p.225n.
⁴ Ibid.
to Villa Franca where he waited to join the battle. Yet he returned to England without having the opportunity of fighting, after the Convention of Cintra which disappointed him, and many others of his countrymen.

Besides showing the sincerity of Landor's compassion for the persecuted, this adventure sheds light on his character. A slight incident that took place in Corunna, and deeply affected him, helps us to understand something about his temperament. The first thing he did as soon as he reached Villa Franca was to write a letter of protest to Charles Richard Vaughan. In this letter he complained bitterly against Charles Stuart, the British envoy who, while introducing him to the Governor of Corunna, told the latter - as Landor believed - "Il est fou, il n'a pas l'argent." ¹

Landor was in such fury that he said nothing at the moment, but by the time he reached Villa Franca he was no longer able to contain his fury, and so sent this letter much to Stuart's surprise. The words Landor applied to himself were not "directed against him"² he wrote to Vaughan. But when we read Landor's own account³ of the insult -

¹ Ibid., p.230.
² Ibid., p.232.
³ See Appendix A.
which we shall refer again when dealing with the state of his mind - we see how he reacted to this "fancied insult". Landor went to Spain to fight against persecution; but returned with a strong consciousness of it, which made him turn his back upon society and fully occupy himself with his Llanthony estate which he had bought before he went to Spain. Landor's choice of this secluded part in South Wales as a permanent abode, the projects he began to execute there, and the series of events that led him to exile himself from England are of great significance to the student of Landor.

The secluded place with its natural beauty, and its ruins of Llanthony Abbey, appealed to him so much that he decided to sell the Savage estate at Tachbrook to purchase this new one. Moreover, an act of parliament was necessary to confirm the breach of entail. When all was done, he set to build his new world - an ideal one. One of his projects was to "establish a press" at Llanthony, that would set him free from the power of publishers, and enable him to set "the public mind more erect."^2

Landor wanted Llanthony to be a unique place: "I am

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1 See Forster, op.cit., p.306.

2 At that time Landor's Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox was rejected by the publisher who insisted upon omitting certain parts.
about to do ... what no man hath ever done in England," he wrote to Southey in January 1809, "to plant a wood of cedar of Lebanon. These trees will look magnificent on the mountains of Llanthony unmixed with others; and perhaps there is not a spot on the earth where eight or ten thousand are to be seen together."

Besides, he imported sheep from Segovia, introduced improvements in agriculture, and looked for good tenants to settle in his ideal world. Southey recommended Charles Betham, who became one of the tenants on Landor's estate.

But, despite Landor's good intentions, he could not manage his estate. He quarrelled with his tenants who made his life unbearable. He complained to his friends against his Welsh peasants; and believed that they hated him: "These rascals," he wrote to Birch in 1813, "have as great a hatred of a Saxon as their runaway forefathers had." In fact he came to believe that everybody was intent upon cheating him: "In architects I have passed from a great scoundrel to a greater, a thing I thought impossible" he complained to Southey. After spending much money, and after a year's work, the farm-house "is not half-finished ... I

1 Forster, op.cit., p.307.
2 Elwin, Landor: a replevin, p.137.
think seriously of filling it with chips and straw and setting fire to it."

Long disputes between him and his troublesome tenants followed. In the meantime he found out that he had spent most of his fortune on Llanthony, and come to the conclusion that the Welsh peasants would not let him live in peace in his own estate. "The earth," he told Southey, "contains no race of human beings so totally vile and worthless as the Welsh." 

Landor's behaviour shows his failure to live in peace with his tenants. He used to wander by night watching and guarding his plantation. One night a peasant broke into his enclosures. Landor's account of the incident is worth quoting for it shows his inability to live peacefully in the world which he meant to be an ideal one:

He broke down the fence of my wood, & was in no foot-path. He stood before me with his arms folded & told me I had better not touch him. I instantly took him by the arm and swung him thro the hedge. I know not whether this is an assault - but if I catch him in my woods again, there shall be no doubt about the matter ... I have watched him every night since, and court an attack that I may have a memorable example.

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1 Ibid., p.140.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p.154.
Among those who also turned against him was Betham, the tenant recommended by Southey. After a series of quarrels with this farmer and his brother Frederick, Landor issued the following bill which he himself distributed in the streets of Monmouth:

**FELONY! Fifty Guineas Reward -**
Whereas Frederick Betham, late an inferior mate in a merchant ship in the East India Company's service, did threaten, in the presence of several persons, at several times, that he would root up some fir trees in the plantation of W.S. Landor Esq; and was seen, in the evening of Saturday the 15th May, followed by a person with a spade or shovel; and the said trees were found about twenty minutes afterwards rooted up. Whoever will give such evidence against this F. Betham as may lead to his conviction, shall receive 50 Guineas as reward from me.

W.S. Landor

It was not only with his tenants that the idealist landlord failed to come to terms. The same failure marks his relationships with the authorities. He was a member of the grand jury at Monmouth Assizes. Yet he behaved in a way which brought upon him the enmity of the other members. When the judge, on one occasion, made the "formal charge that the jurors lay before him whatever they might have heard of crime committed in the county". Landor - who interpreted these words literally - accused an attorney

1 *Ibid.*, p.157,
named Price of felony. But the judge and the jury ignored Landor's charge. In a severe letter to the judge Landor then wrote:

Among the things that I should have fancied could never be, is a judge refusing to investigate a felony, when a grand juror, whom he had commanded to lay such matters before him, states the fact, and a magistrate brings the evidence. I acknowledge my error and must atone for my presumption. But I really thought your lordship was in earnest, seeing you, as I did, in the robes of justice, and hearing you speak in the name and with the authority of the laws.

As a result, Landor gained the enmity of the judge and the attorneys, especially Price who encouraged Landor's tenants to resist him. Many refused to pay their rents for long periods and caused their landlord endless troubles.

Being the owner of Llanthony, Landor had the right to be a magistrate of the peace in his county. He might have thought that this post would give him some power over his adversaries. But the Lord Lieutenant refused his application and ignored a second one - an action that led to an expected, inevitable reaction: a letter of scorn written in a grandiose tone. The letter enclosed "some testimonies" of Landor's fitness for the office" which he sought to undertake, "in

1 Super, Landor, p.111.
2 Forster, Landor, I, p.338.
furtherance of the public good." Referring to these testimonies he wrote, "When the lord-lieutenant sees them coming from persons of experience and virtue, it is much to be hoped that he will approach one step towards wisdom by taking some advantage of theirs."\(^1\)

This letter was followed by another to the Chancellor, in which Landor complained against the injustice of the Lord-Lieutenant. When the Chancellor ignored this letter, Landor sent him a disdainful one in which he declared that he would never in future accept "anything whatever that can be given by ministers or by chancellors, not even the dignity of a country justice, the only honour or office I ever have solicited."

This letter to the Chancellor shows that Landor's attitude to Llanthony was not that of a land-lord to his property, but the attitude of a governor - as the following quotation shows:

> Here I have only occupied my hours with what lie beneath the notice of statesmen and governors: in pursuing, with fresh alacrity, the improvement of public roads, of which already I have completed at my own expense more than a distance of seven miles over mountains and precipices, and have made them better and much wider than the turnpike roads throughout the country; in relieving

\(^1\) Ibid., p.341.
the wants and removing the ignorance of the poor; and in repressing, by personal influence rather than judicial severity, the excesses to which misery and idleness give rise.\(^1\)

Hence Landor's great disappointment, and his decision to leave England, when his ideal world collapsed. Referring to the case between Betham and himself he wrote to Southey on May 27, 1813, "The ends of justice are defeated ... The laws of England are made entirely for the protection of guilt." With this belief he left his country in self-imposed exile. The last passage in his letter to Southey shows how disillusioned he was: "I go to-morrow to St. Malo. In what part of France I shall end my days, I know not, but there I shall end them; and God grant that I may end them speedily, and so as to leave as little sorrow as possible to my friends."\(^2\)

\(^1\) Ibid., pp.345-6.

\(^2\) Ibid., p.408.
CHAPTER TWO

The Psychological Characteristics of Landor's Personality

The Llanthony episode is of great significance, in that it is symptomatic of Landor's inability to come to terms with society. Every contact with others was characterized by this inability which made strife inevitable, and finally led to self-imposed exile. The recurrence of this pattern throughout Landor's life, and the states of mind corresponding with it seem to have determined the choice of his subject-matter. It is therefore essential before we consider Landor's work, to understand the writer's mind.

I am inclined to think that there is a relationship between Landor's sense of persecution - to which attention has been drawn in the foregoing pages - and the recurrence of that pattern. For it is in the light of this sense of persecution that Landor's behaviour, which at certain times seems unaccountable, may be intelligible. It is this sense of persecution that magnified to him the injustice of his opponents, and made him believe that he was their victim while others, including his sister, complained of his "tyrannical spirit".

It was unlucky for a man with this cast of mind to have
become the owner of Llanthony. It was the very place that favoured the growth of such a complex. Its inhabitants were troublesome people, whose lawlessness "earned for the vale [in which Llanthony was situated] the name of Ewyas, or Gwyas, meaning in Welsh 'a place of battle.'"¹ The local peasantry were described by a monk who had lived there as "savage, without religion, thieves, and vagabonds, who viewed the establishment of a religious community with suspicion, and delighted more in feuds among themselves than in the practice of the arts of peace."²

It was with keen awareness of persecution, in both the political and the literary worlds, that Landor came to Llanthony, seeking Liberty and Peace in this isolated spot. But, as Mr. Elwin truly says, when Landor bought this estate, he "entered upon an inheritance of strife."³ His sense of persecution magnified the evil that his mind detected; and he had that particular mind which demanded from others nothing short of nobility. Referring to this quality in him, Lord Houghton wrote:

If Antipathy had been the presiding genius of his life, the reason assuredly was, that

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p.137.
he demanded from all men his own nobility of mind, in addition to all the qualities of temper and wisdom which he never forgave himself for not possessing. ¹

As a result, Landor came to believe that his Welsh peasants were the "most barbarous" in the world. His letter to the Bishop of St. David's shows how he looked upon those with whom he had come to live:

I have conversed with the lower ranks of more than one nation in Europe, and last of all with those who have generally been considered the most superstitious and most barbarous. But if drunkenness, idleness, mischief, and revenge are the principal characteristics of the savage state, what nation, I will not say in Europe, but in the world, is so singularly tattooed with them as the Welsh?²

This view of his tenants, dictated his attitude towards them. It was an attitude of suspicion and scorn which, naturally, stimulated the maliciousness of his peasants; for hostility breeds hostility; and once the neurotic vicious circle starts, it never stops. The letter his sister Maria Arden sent to their brother Robert illustrates this point:

I think Walter a subject of great pity - for he does not seem at all inclined to conciliate the peasantry about Lantony but on the contrary - therefore he must expect to be plagued - I think a Person with

¹ Milnes, Monographs, p.145.
² Ruster, Landor, I, p.315.
temper, & a determination to be on good terms with the poor around him, particularly his Tenants may soon convince them he wishes to live in peace with them — but an overbearing tyrannical spirit will never conciliate. ¹

Landor might have lived in peace, if he had convinced his peasants of his good intentions. But the way he behaved made this impossible; for when he went to his estate in the summer of 1812, it was "as a general taking command of a war."² Accordingly, they plagued his life.

The hostility he met with, exaggerated by his way of thinking, made him believe that he was the persecuted victim of the public officials also, and mutual enmity followed. The attorneys called him "an oppressor". They "posed as champions of the oppressed" and incited his tenants to torment him. These came to believe that he was a tyrant, and thought that he "caused [the] untimely end" of a tenant called Tombes who had refused to pay his rent and was accordingly evicted.³ Another tenant, Betham, sent a letter to the county journal trying to prove the oppressiveness of Landor. It was not upon his peasants only that he looked with scorn and suspicion; he had the same attitude towards the county authorities. He looked upon them as

¹ Super, Landor, p.84.
² Ibid., p.109.
³ Elwin, M., op.cit., p.154.
ignorant and dishonest persons; and revolted against their "irrational prejudice" and their authority which — as he wrote to one of them — was "more often conferred on rank than on information, and on subservience than on integrity." This is why they left him alone to contend against his tenants, and why he came to believe that the laws of his country did not protect him.  

As time went by, Landor's suspiciousness increased and made him behave in a deplorable way. Of this state of mind of Landor's Mrs. Browning wrote, "Of self-restraint he has not a grain, and of suspiciousness many grains. Wilson [the maid] will run certain risks, and I for one would rather not meet them. What do you say to dashing down a plate on the floor when you don't like what's on it? And the contadini at whose house he is lodging now have been already accused of opening desks. Still, upon that occasion (though there was talk of the probability of Landor's throat being 'cut in his sleep'), as on other occasions, Robert [Browning] succeeded in soothing him." 

1 This is what he wrote in his letter to the Lord-Lieutenant of the country, the sixth Duke of Beaufort (see Elwin, op.cit., pp.148-9.)

2 In his letter to Southey from Tours, 8th May 1815, he wrote: "A man in France cannot be ruined by pursuing his rights. In England he unquestionably may."

This state of mind which made Landor accuse others, even his hosts, of opening his desk, and of trying to kill or poison him, made him fancy that "a stock of tea purchased for his use was poisoned" and threw it out of the window. Robert Browning who saw him throwing food away, must have had him in mind while writing the following lines in *The Ring and the Book*:

As if I put before him wholesome food Instead of broken victual, - he finds change I' the viands, never cares to reason why, But falls to blaming me, would fling the plate From window, scandalize the neighbourhood, Even while he smacks his lips, - man's way, my child!

("Pompilia", 539-544)

Wishing to understand this state of mind of Landor's — as well as his other states — I have availed myself of what psychologists have written regarding the sense of persecution — though psychology proper is beyond the limits of my knowledge, and the scope of this thesis. It would appear that there is a similarity between Landor's states of mind, at certain times, and what psychology diagnoses as a paranoid condition. However, I do not presume to say that Landor was paranoid, for it is difficult for a student of literature to give a valid view on this point. All that one can say is

1 Super, *Landor*, p.472.
that Landor's unaccountable behaviour had something to do with his sense of persecution.

Dealing with persons who have persecutory delusions, Professor Norman Cameron says:

A very large group of sensitive, rather rigid and difficult persons, with strong tendencies to self-reference, is looked upon in many quarters as either potentially paranoid or already partially paranoid or paranoid; such persons, showing paranoid-like or paranoid characteristics, are said to be in a paranoid condition or state. Officially (Cheney, 1934) they are defined as having delusions, usually persecutory in nature, and tendencies in the direction of misinterpretation and illogical thinking, sometimes too with hallucinations, but in any case with little or no tendency to deteriorate.

Professor Cameron goes on to say:

It is also evident that a very large number of difficult persons, odd eccentrics, faddists, pseudo-reformers, inventors, cantankerous and litigious men and women, usually never seen by psychiatrists, falls legitimately into the group of paranoid conditions or paranoid personalities.

According to what Professor Cameron says, Landor falls into this group of paranoid personalities. He was a sensitive, rigid and a difficult person, with strong tendencies to self-reference. As we shall see later, he was also a would-be reformer, a faddist who had peculiar notions as to the right way of doing things, and a litigious person

whose life was a series of quarrels.

From the symptomatology of paranoia given by Meyer also, we find that Landor had the personality characteristics that favour the development of paranoia. One of the predominant features of this development is—according to Meyer—"an inability to adapt the personal trend of thought and its elaboration to the facts and to make concessions or accept corrections, while at the same time there are marked over-concern and sensitiveness as to what others may be thinking." It was this inability in Landor that caused his misfortunes. It was behind his dismissal from Rugby, and his rustication from Oxford; it caused his self-exile from his father's house, from his Llanthony estate, and from his wife and children.

Landor's behaviour at Llanthony tells us much about his character. The fact that his successors could easily manage the peasants shows that he was mainly responsible for his failure at Llanthony. He used to wage war against his tenants for petty reasons, such as the grubbing up of roots, or the use of a sawpit. Betham's letter to the county journal shows this sad fact: "I had consented to the trees being

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1 Ibid., p.907.
grubbed up," wrote Betham, "that I might plough the land; and when Mr. Landor cut them down, and refused to grub up the roots, I refused my permission to their being removed. He attempted it by force, arming men and women to invade my fields." Betham then wrote of the reason of another quarrel: "The Sawpit, I certainly prevented Mr. Landor from using; but on the avowed principle, which I still profess, that while I wish to accommodate my neighbours, I will not suffer encroachments to be made upon my property, in open and insulting defiance to my will. The Sawpit in question is mine; and Mr. Landor only attempted to make use of it as an exercise of right, which I deny belongs to him."¹

Side by side with this failure to come to terms with others, or adapt his trend of thought to facts, went Landor's sensitiveness as to the thoughts of others. He used to interpret what others said or did in a way that astonished them. He ended his friendship with William Rough because of "some unintentional offence" said Robert Landor; "Either Rough had smiled at a false argument, or interrupted my brother in some other way, before several guests, whereupon Walter left his house and renounced his acquaintance."²

² Forster, op.cit., pp.147-8.
On another occasion Landor "rush[ed] from the table" of a friend, "provoked by some slight contradiction that appeared disrespectful, when in truth there was no disrespect but only a slight difference threatening controversy." Landor could not bear being contradicted before others. "Some slight interruption," said his brother, "even a smile, was provocation enough, if there were many witnesses present at the controversy, to decide it."¹

"Early," writes Meyer of another feature of the development of Paranoia, "there are feelings of uneasiness about the future and about what is going on, and a tendency to brood and ruminate with increasing inclination toward isolation from others."² We have to bear in mind that this feature, taken alone, does not prove that Landor was a paranoid personality. It is by relating it to other features that we see some significance in it.

It was natural for Landor - who was unable to adapt his thoughts to facts, who failed to make friends with others because he thought that they ridiculed him, or had hostile feelings towards him - to worry about what was going on. It is not impossible that this inability made him read, in

¹ Ibid., p.113.
passing events, meanings that were not favourable to him. Hence his moods of despondency and despair which his friends noticed. William Rough referred to such moods in a letter he sent to Landor (who was then in his twenties):

Come, come, rouse yourself and write. If you must die, it is at least your duty to leave something behind you; and though Gebir will do much, yet I am persuaded it is in your power to do still more. Literature, like other things, as often obtains the reward of praise by quantity as quality; and we are all of us so little important to others, that unless we put them in mind of us daily, we shall scarcely avoid being forgotten.¹

The same despair was noticed by Robert Adair who refers to it in a letter to Landor in which he tells him that "of all men, [he has] the least reason to despair as a public writer."² Besides this, his relations with the outer world were coloured by an uneasiness which made him brood and ruminate. He was hardly satisfied with the work done for him by others. He believed that they cheated him. The quarrels with his servants, with a carpenter in Florence, and with many others prove this fact. When his architects took a longer time in the building of his house, he, as we have mentioned above, thought seriously of "filling it with chips and straw and setting fire to it."³

¹ Forster, op. cit., p.149.
² Ibid., p.167.
Again, when one of his manuscripts was rejected by a publisher, or when his publisher was late in sending him a reply, he reacted in a violent way. When Longman refused to publish *Count Julian* Landor looked with such despair upon his future as a writer, that he burnt a tragedy which he was then writing, and looked upon his literary career as over. The letter he sent to Southey on 25 June 1811, shows this state of mind:

> On receiving the last letter of Mr. Longman to this purport, I committed to the flames my tragedy of Ferranti and Giulio, with which I intended to surprise you, and am resolved that never verse of mine hereafter shall be committed to anything else. My literary career has been a very curious one. You cannot imagine how I feel relieved at laying down its burden and abandoning this tissue of humiliations.  

This letter shows how Landor ruminated upon an experience which is familiar to all writers; it also shows the humiliations he fancied in a common situation.

Landor's inclination towards isolation from others, began in his early years. After his quarrel with his father he lived in isolation in South Wales. He usually banished himself from the society of others whenever he felt their ingratitude or injustice - which he often did. In this

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1. Elwin, op.cit., p.140
isolation he dwelt upon the others' ill-treatment of him, and attributed special meanings to their actions. Speaking of such a state of mind, Meyer writes:

With ill-balanced aims and dissatisfactions there come suspicions and dominant notions about the intentions and goals of others. Then to the actually indifferent actions of others, special meanings in some personal relation to the patient are increasingly attributed, along with a decrease in genuine attempts at verification of any conclusions thus arrived at, and often with flat refusal to reconsider or discuss the conclusions. The misinterpretations grow with the brooding and fantasy, and become systematized while falsification of past incidents retrospectively considered, further distorts the train of events.

This strongly suggests the line of thought which ended in Landor's strife against others, and caused, in Mrs. Lynn Linton's words, "the second great blunder of his life", namely the libel case that made him escape from Bath in his old age, and seek refuge in Italy. He found himself involved in a quarrel between two ladies who were his friends. "Believing here," writes Forster, "as at every quarrel in which he had ever been engaged, that he saw on one side a friend incarnate, and on the other an angel of light, he permitted that astounding credulity to work his irascibility

2 Layard, G.S., Mrs. Lynn Linton (1901), p.110.
into madness; and there was then as much good to be got by reasoning with him as by arguing with a storm at Cape Horn ... He rejected every warning, and rushed into print, and found himself enmeshed in an action for libel."¹

This state of mind helps us to understand Landor's relationship with his wife. His following letter to Southey shows how his mind worked after a quarrel in which she contradicted him, and "declared her fault in marrying a man who was older than herself":

My brain seems to be heaving on an ocean of fire when I attempt to recollect what I would say ... I remained broad awake, as I firmly believe, and yet I had a succession of dreams, rapid, incoherent, and involuntary. I rose at four. I walked to the other part of the island, and embarked alone, on board of an oyster-boat, for France. It was this very day month. I am resolved to see her no more ... It is enough. I have neither wife nor family, nor house nor home, nor pursuit nor occupation.

Though a month elapsed after the quarrel, he was still brooding on what had happened, thinking of death, in his loneliness "in a tower ... where I intend to be buried, if I die here."²

Landor's misinterpretation grew with the brooding and became systematized. His relations with his biographer

John Forster, show how he used to jump to conclusions, regardless of facts. Though Forster was of great help to him in publishing his work,¹ and highly praised him in most of his articles,² Landor suspended correspondence with him for years, because he had advised Landor not to publish a "Defence" he had prepared concerning the libel suit. Landor soon became dissatisfied with Forster, and complained to friends that he ignored his contributions to the Examiner. He also expressed his displeasure with the Hellenics which Forster had prepared for print, and said: "I gave strict orders that the last sheets should not be sent to Mr. Forster, but to Mr. Pitman, who wrote some good notes on Euripides. I feared both inattention and blunders - and here are the proofs." When he discovered that Forster had omitted some lines referring to the libel suit from one of his poems, (and though another publisher had, before, explained the need for omission) he said: "This is an audacity and insolence quite unpardonable."

In fact Landor went so far in his misinterpretation of Forster's intentions that when Browning expressed to him

¹ When Landor dedicated his Complete Works in 1846 jointly to Hare and Forster, he stated that, without Forster's "patience and assiduity in superintending the press, while I was resident in Italy, the Imaginary Conversations never would have been printed in my life-time."

² See Forster's article in the Examiner for November 30, 1834.
Porster's disappointment at receiving no reply to his birthday letter, Landor said: "Do not believe that Forster wrote to me on my birthday. When he says his prayers, I hope he will lay a peculiar emphasis on the words 'and the truth is not in us.' Never did so much foam and froth boil over from any furnace. You need not tell him that I never receive[d] his letter. He knows it. No letter address to me miscarries 3

Had Landor the ability to "reason away" these unintentional slights, he would have spared himself much pain. Instead he interpreted them in his own way. Twenty-five years after his second separation from his wife, he came to Browning, one day, with the following couplet:

Out of his Paradise an Angel drove Adam, a Devil now drives me from mine. 2

His poem entitled "Ingratitude" is another example of his brooding:

All, all, I gave; and what is the return? Not even a bell-rope at my sick-bed side. O thou of largest, wisest, tenderest heart, Truly thou sayest that a serpent's tooth Wounds not so deeply as a thankless child.

Another feature that characterizes paranoid personalities is, according to Meyer, their "lack of adaptability" which leads to "antisocial and violent reactions against others." 3

1 Super, Landor, p.477.
2 Ibid., p.472.
The records of the Tuscan police department, preserved in the "Archivio di Stato" in Florence, show many examples of Landor's violent reactions against others. One of the reports gives an account of a quarrel between him and a woman servant who had, previously, worked in his house. When he met her at a friend's house, he struck her with his cane. When questioned by the police he confessed that he struck her, saying that she "had spoken slanderously against him and his household." On another occasion he kicked a window-cleaner whom he had engaged, because he asked for more money than others demanded. When summoned by the police he protested against "such extraordinary insolent injustice." He then sent a letter to the President of the "Buon Governo", in which he wrote:

Signor Landor does not make this remonstrance because of the money ... but he makes it in order to prevent other foreigners from being subjected to the decisions of unjust functionaries, and in order that the laws of Peter Leopold should not be violated in the reign of his worthy successor.

In order to banish him from the Tuscan State, the police set out to prove that he "was in a constant danger of committing some act of violence in the grip of rage, which

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1 Buon Governo Comune, Negozi, Filza 1143 (Anno 1823), No.2422. See Super, R.H., "None was Worth My Strife," in The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, XLVII (1953), pp.121-2.
sometimes made him so furious as to be unable to restrain himself."

Landor's antisocial reactions against the British community and British Legation in Tuscany are another proof of the predominance of this feature as one of his characteristics. In a letter to a certain "Signor Marchese", Landor begs him to "procure me a ticket for Mrs. Landor at the next ball given by Prince Borghese ... since after what has happened, I cannot ask or accept a ticket from the English Legation, until it is entirely changed." The reason why Landor was hostile towards the Legation, is that the secretary of the British Minister, Lord Burghersh, whistled while Mrs. Landor was passing. It is illuminating to see how Landor reacted against this insolent action. First he wrote to the Minister asking him to punish his secretary. When the latter was not punished Landor wrote to the Minister that "he had neglected his duty and forgotten his promise, which was to see an injury done me redressed."

Landor became so obsessed by the insolence of Dawkins that he thought of killing him. "To show his courage, whenever [he] meets my wife in the streets he walks up and sings or whistles." he complained to Walter Birch on May 21, 1823,

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1 Ibid., p.123.

2 Found by the writer of this thesis, in the "National Library" at Florence.
"This has affected her health, and I am afraid may oblige me to put him to death before we can reach England." Landor then came to the conclusion that his countrymen in Italy persecuted him: "In fact the only Englishman in Italy who does any credit to his country, is the only one who receives from its ministers and their dependents and visitors, every mark of insolence and injustice." He then wrote to Whitehall complaining of the Legation. "I have collected anecdotes of those who have been employed by our government on the continent, and will publish them at some future time. Such follies and infamies disgrace no other nation."^1

Another important feature which usually accompanied Landor's complaints against persecution is a certain grandiosity, which is unmistakable in his behaviour as a man, and in his utterances as a writer. Referring to such boastful utterances Charles Williams wrote:

Such notes are not frequent in the critical confessions of English writers; as a rule from Chaucer to Chesterton they have been content to write and live among their fellows, and only the greatness of genius set even Shakespeare alone. Milton in the seventeenth and Patmore in the nineteenth centuries made comments on their solitude, if not claims to it; but there was all but a boast in Landor's which was not in theirs.2

^1 Super, Landor, p.156.

Landor seemed to have found consolation in such an attitude whenever he experienced ill-treatment from others, as most of the passages quoted above show. When he felt that the Bishop of St. David's had shown him disrespect by not answering his letter, in which he asked for the Bishop's permission to make some alterations in the Abbey, he wrote to him saying that "God alone is great enough for me to ask anything twice." He also believed that others persecuted him because they were envious of his powers and gifts, and because they realized their inferiority to him. The following lines which he sent to Southey in 1812, show his reaction when he was not made Justice of the Peace.

But Envy's steps too soon pursue
The man who hazards schemes so new;
Who, better fit for Rome and Greece,
Thinks to be - Justice of the peace! 1

His disdain for the public had something to do with this grandiose attitude. He who said that at Parr's he talked only to Parr, used to look down with disgust upon his tormentors, and upon those crowds that used to point at him and his dog, in the streets of Florence, in a rather disrespectful way. Landor's assertion that "to stand at the end of a crowded street made him burn with indignation at

1 "Lines to Southey".
being a man" proves what we say. He also asserted that "he could only enjoy a theatrical representation if he were himself the audience."¹

From among a great number of letters in which he replies with this grandiosity to the insults of others, I quote the following which he sent to Lord Normanby:

My Lord, Now I am recovering from an illness of several months' duration, aggravated no little by your Lordship's rude reception of me at the Cascine, in presence of my family and numerous Florentines. I must remind you, in the gentlest terms, of the occurrence. It was the only personal indignity I ever received ... Do not imagine I am unobservant of distinctions. You, by the favor of a Minister, are Marquis of Normanby; I by the grace of God am Walter Savage Landor.²

I end this study of Landor's mind by quoting what Professor Cameron says regarding the relationship between grandiose and persecutory delusions:

Freud looked upon delusional grandiosity as secondary to persecutory and as intended to provide an acceptable explanation of persecution to the patient ... Bleuler (1926) and Diethelm (1936), on the other hand, consider grandiose delusions to be direct compensatory developments related to wish-fulfillment.³

¹ Milnes, Monographs, p.120.
² Super, Landor, p.466.
CHAPTER THREE

Towards Alienation

The more one goes into Landor's work, the more convinced one will become of the significance of the brief study made above of his mind. The sense of persecution, to which we have referred, clearly affects his writings and seems to be a strong motive behind them. It set, as it were, the pattern of strife and self-exile, which recurred throughout his life resulting in two aspects of his writings: one which embodies the strife against persecution, and another which shows the artist's self-imposed exile from the society in which he felt persecuted.

These two aspects differ so much, sometimes, that the reader who is not familiar with Landor's works may find it hard to believe that these two aspects are the product of the same mind. For while the first aspect shows him as a fierce rebel against every kind of authority, and a fearless preacher of tyrannicide\(^1\), the other aspect reveals him — to use his words on Cowper — as the "tenderest of tender hearts"\(^2\) who can produce such writings as "Death of

\(^1\) See his poem "Tyrannicide".
\(^2\) Poetical Works, II, 414.
Artemidora", "Dream of Petrarca" or "Faesulan Idyl" in which he says:

I never pluck the rose; the violet's head
Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
And not reproach me; the ever-sacred cup
Of the pure lily hath between my hands
Felt safe, unsoil'd, nor lost one grain of gold.

(25-9)

In his poem "Advice to a poet", Landor reveals what might be considered his attitude towards the contemporary world - the attitude which produced these two aspects,

If you are angry at the world's disdain,
What the world gives you, give the world again. ¹

This reciprocal disdain - from Landor's point of view at least - made him a wanderer between two worlds: one which he despised, and one which was a refuge in which he forgot his strife and his pains. In one of his dialogues he writes:

We are glad and righteously proud to possess two worlds, the one at present under our feet, producing beef and mutton; the other, on which have past before us, Gods, demigods, heroes, the Fates, the Furies, and all the numerous progeny of never-dying, never-aging, eternally parturient, Imagination. Great is the privilege of crossing at will the rivers of bitterness, of tears, of fire, and to wander and converse among the Shades.²

Each of the two worlds reflects one side of Landor's nature. In the sordid world of "beef and mutton", where he

¹ Ibid., p.458.
saw all kinds of persecution, he was an angry fighter. But when he was far removed from such a base world, he revealed the different side of his nature. Thus we can look upon Landor as having - to use Browning's metaphor -

... two soul-sides, one to face the world with, One to show a woman when he loves her!

Speaking of Landor's attitude towards society I said that he saw all kinds of persecution in it. The following passage by Thomas Hardy explains what I mean by the word "saw": "As, in looking at a carpet," wrote Hardy, "by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another; so in life the seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe, and describe that alone." Landor's temperament moved him to observe, describe, and magnify the least acts of persecution. It seems also that his idiosyncrasy made him see persecution where there was hardly any. What interests one as a student of literature is the impact of such a state of mind on Landor's work.

The following letter which he wrote to Wordsworth on September 8, 1822, shows that the content and the form of Landor's writings were greatly affected by this state of mind:

1 "One word more".
Since I wrote last to you, an occurrence has taken place, which has altered the tendency of my Dialogues, increased their number, and planted rue where there were roses. Delicacy towards you will not permit me to inscribe them with your name. Resentment has lighted up a fire which has cracked the column on which my glory was to have been erected. I have received first insult, & afterwards injustice and contempt from people in power.

The occurrence which "altered the tendency" of Landor's dialogues and made him castigate those in power (and consequently abstain from dedicating his first volume to Wordsworth lest he should be embarrassed) is that "one Dawkins, secretary to Ld. Burghersh, and minister in his absence, not contented with treating me most unbecomingly, had the impudence, when he met my wife soon after, to come in front of her, place his arms on his hips, and begin to sing.¹

Landor's quarrel with this secretary made him believe as mentioned above that he was persecuted by the British Minister himself who incited Dawkins to humiliate him, "I entertain no doubt that he [i.e. Dawkins] was ordered by Lord Burghersh to treat me with incivility whenever he could, because I had reminded his Lordship of neglect of duty and of breach of promise."² When the minister did not

² Ibid., p.78.
punish this secretary Landor set to defend himself, believing that no one else would do him justice. In his complaint to the Foreign Secretary he informed him "that I had collected facts relative to the diplomatic agents since the peace - that I would publish them, and that I would do it so as to prove my independence & integrity."

In his letter to Wordsworth Landor defines the urge behind one aspect of his works:

If men like me, who never sought anything, are to be insulted in preference to all others, by the most worthless of the creation, if all redress is declined, all attention, all civility dispensed with, can it be wondered that we expose the defects in such a state of society? My life, which is devoted, shall have no interval unoccupied, in attempting to destroy that worst of misrule, in which the vilest scoundrels may with impunity insult the most innocent, I will venture to add the most respectable, of their fellow citizens.

The following letter to Wordsworth, written on April 24, 1825, shows the consistency of Landor's purpose. After telling Wordsworth that he ordered the "whole Edition of the Conversations to be sent to [him], having added greatly to the two first" he adds,

I shall however leave to my country a well-stored armoury against oppression and fraud, plainly shewing where they are, and giving intelligible hints in what manner

1 Ibid., pp.77-8.
they may be best attacked. And this I have done, because I fear nothing and hope nothing from any man upon earth. My book is an eternal bar between the people in power and my family, who, if they ever imagine it worth their while to be great, must be so by great efforts. Whatever they may think about [it] this is well done in me.¹

One of the Conversations which show how deeply Landor was affected by his quarrel with Dawkins, is "Peter Leopold and President du Paty". Leopold is made to attack diplomats in general, "The persons we employ," he says, "have more interest in deceiving us than others have ... I send none abroad; so that I am rather less liable to deception than my brethren are."² Of British Diplomats, Leopold is also made to say that "among the residents in Florence ... I remember none of even ordinary talents, or, according to what I could judge or learn from report, of the slightest political or literary reputation." He then adds, "Not long ago a young person was sent hither in that capacity, who had more dogs than books, and more mistresses than ideas. He rode hard, drank hard, and fiddled hard, and admitted to his society, as such people usually do, the vilest and most abandoned of both sexes."³ Then follows a long homily on the follies of

¹ Ibid., p.82.
³ Ibid., p.149n.
this diplomat, who is no other than Dawkins himself.

In the second edition which appeared in 1826, Landor seems to have collected material relative to Dawkins for he adds more than sixty lines in which he tells a story of Dawkin's misbehaviour. The same story is retold in "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor" which is among the dialogues of the third volume published in 1828. Though Dawkins was by that time British Minister to Greece, Landor attacked him again in this Conversation in which the Florentine is made to say:

The court of England has not been quite so observant of merit in its appointment of diplomatists to the smaller courts, as, no doubt, it has to the higher. We Tuscans have been more amused by some of them than edified or flattered. One Sieur Dorkins, a secretary of legation, no sooner found himself in possession of his hundred pounds a year ...

After a long account of Dawkins' adventures is given, the English Visitor says:

I believe the story to be true in all its parts and circumstances: for I have heard it frequently, even in England: and indeed wherever a tale of consummate impudence is related, the Sieur Dorkins comes forward as regularly as the sentinel in a German clock at the hour.

1 Ibid., p.150n.
2 Ibid., p.189.
3 Ibid., p.190.
Landor thus sought to defend himself, in his writings, for, as we have seen, he was very sensitive as to what others thought of him, hence his earnest desire to prove his integrity in his own writings. Referring in "High and Low Life in Italy" to an actual incident he writes:

Prince Corsini and the President of the Buon Governo ... gave an order for Mr Landor to leave Tuscany within an hour, though he had violated no law, and no order of the Government, and showed no displeasure at the person who had violated the laws more than once in this very particular and who had disobeyed the order (serious or not) of the President del Buon Governo.¹

This account is completely different from what one reads in the Tuscan police-records. These give long accounts of Landor's fits of rage against the Tuscan authorities. But Landor, it seems, was only conscious of being persecuted: "Cases of tyranny," he adds, "there may have been more atrocious, but of naked, unblushing, aggressive injustice never was one beyond it. The French Minister himself, the Count de Garay, told Don Neri Corsini, that if Mr. Landor was sent out of Tuscany, he would accompany him." Landor then writes of his own banishment from Tuscany: "The order to leave Florence within the hour was given, that Mr. Landor might

¹ Complete Works, XI, 87.
not apply to the Grand-Duke, as he had done two years before. His letter is in the hands of many ...° This letter published in "High and Low Life in Italy" is the letter which Landor actually sent to the Grand-Duke, and which is referred to in the records of the Tuscan police.2

His repeated severe attacks on British laws are a significant example. When he lost control of his Llanthony estate, as a result of his inability to come to terms with his tenants, he believed that the English laws were the reason for this loss: "The laws of England are made entirely for the protection of guilt" he wrote to Southey, "A creditor could imprison me for twenty pounds, while a man who owes me two thousand ... can ... drive me for ever from my native country and riot with impunity on the ruins of my estate."3

When he comes to write his dialogue "Peter Leopold and President du Paty" eleven years later, we find him clearly affected by his early personal experience, when he speaks of these laws. The President is made to say that English laws are "often dilatory, often uncertain, often contradictory, often cruel, often ruinous ... Whenever they find a man down

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1 Ibid.
2 Buon Governo Comune, Negozi, Filza 110 (Anno 1829), Nr.858.
3 Forster, op.cit., p.408.
they keep him so, and the more pertinaciously the more earnestly he appeals to them ... There is no country in which they move with such velocity where life is at stake, or, where property is to be defended, so slowly."¹

These passages show how Landor's choice and treatment of subject-matter are influenced by his sense of persecution. We shall deal with this point again when we discuss Form and Content in his works.

Landor's views, and the manner in which he expressed these views, gained for him the antipathy rather than the sympathy of his contemporaries. It was not in the tone of a writer who belonged to them that he addressed them; it was in the angry tone of a persecuted prophet. His letter published in the Examiner of November 18, 1848 illustrates this view. Referring to his own "opinions" which gave "offence" to "many good and sensible men," he wrote: "Permit me to ask whether they have given proofs to the world of more research, more intellect, more information, more independence. I come forward not to offend, but to conduct; not to quarrel, but to teach; and I would rather make one man wiser than ten friendly to me."²

¹ Complete Works, III, 117.
When we come to think of it, we find that Landor was alone. He had no allegiance to a certain party or group. Though by birth he belonged to the landed gentry, his boastful references to his ancestors, and his conception of aristocracy convey the idea that he wished to belong to the aristocrats. This might seem inconsistent in one who was notorious for his hatred of the aristocrats, and for his avowed republicanism.

He was not that despiser of aristocracy which his writings would give us to understand him to be. His attack on Pitt for debasing true nobility by raising commoners to the peerage, and his praise of Fox, for raising only men of distinguished families, are significant. Pitt "ennobled the vilest rascals of every province, of every county, almost of every town and hamlet." He sent to the house of Lords in Ireland "fellows in whose family there never was a gentleman, a scholar, or decent member of society." Landor then adds, "What democrat, however rancorous and malicious, could more effectually debase nobility?" Fox, on the other hand, "raised men of ancient or distinguished family to the peerage; a thing which is never invidious even to those who possess not the advantage."¹

¹ Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox, ed. S. Wheeler (1812, 1907), pp.90-1.
As one reads other passages one is inclined to think that Landor regrets the fact that his "ancient" and "distinguished" family did not possess this "advantage" which, as the following argument implies, he thought it deserved. Comparing the nobility of England with that of other countries he writes, "All those gentlemen of England who have inherited from their ancestors for three or four centuries large estates would be classed among the nobility in the other Kingdoms of Europe."¹ This applies to Landor himself. Apart from the large estates which - as he wrote to Wordsworth - "had remained in [the family] little short of seven hundred years," this family "had given to the house of commons the greatest & best of its speakers, the man to whom England is indebted for the truest and plainest declaration of its freedom, Sir Arnold Savage."²

We can therefore understand why Landor blames the other ancient families for not constituting a nobility.

When Mr. Pitt was innovating, in his regular government as he called it, more than Marius presumed to do when he had trampled on the necks of the Romans, the few country-gentlemen remaining might have formed themselves into a separate class, and constituted a nobility more respectable and more powerful than his. Lords of two or three manors, heirs of three

¹ Ibid., p.160.
or four thousand a year for three or four generations, might have established to themselves that rank in the country which their families once possessed.

Commenting on Trotter's saying that "Fox spoke to an assembly of too aristocratic, as well as commercial, a cast," Landor writes, "The qualities are opposite. Both could not preponderate." Landor has his own conception of aristocracy. Such a conception would indeed include him among the nobility, and exclude from it many titled aristocrats. "In fact," he adds, "there was very little of what suits our notions of aristocracy. Brothers and sons of noblemen were in the House of Commons, but these had no aristocratical views or opinions. They sat and rose only for places and for pensions: their very seats were commercial." He then adds, "It is only an extremely small part of the English nobility itself that can be called the aristocracy."^2

Landor expresses the same views in other parts of his works: "The greater part of the English nobility," he makes Alfieri say, "has neither power nor title. Even those who are noble by right of possession, the hereditary lords of manors with large estates attached to them, claim no titles

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1 Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox, pp.160-1.
2 Ibid., p.45.
at home or abroad." In his letter to Emerson, published in 1856, Landor writes:

I approve the expansion of our peerage; but never let its members, adscititious or older, think themselves the only nobility; else peradventure some of them may be reminded that there are among us men whose ancestors stood in high places, and who did good service to the country, when theirs were cooped up within borough-walls, or called on duty from the field as serfs and villains."

As for Landor's bitter ridicule of and disdain for titled aristocrats, they seem to be the outcome of the same attitude which had urged him as a boy to ignore the Rugby custom of prefixing the title of "mister" to the names of pupils whose fathers were peers, and to reply to the headmaster's threats by saying: "I never would call Hill or any other mister unless I might call the rest so." It was not equality that Landor meant. He who asserted that "to stand at the end of a crowded street made him burn with indignation at being a man," never found equality appealing.

To what class then did Landor belong? In fact what Penn

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2. "Letter from W.S. Landor to Emerson," Ibid., XII, 196.
4. Milnes, M., Monographs, p.120.
tells Peterborough does apply to Landor himself: "Thy opinions are aristocratical: yet never did I behold a man who despised the body and members of the aristocracy more haughtily and scornfully than thou dost." In his dedication of Moral Epistle to Earl Stanhope he is careful to record this disdain for titles: "I only prefix what you are reading, by way of direction to my letter, and for the sake of declaring myself not the admirer of your titles but of your virtues." We have referred above to his letter of reproach to Lord Normanby, at the end of which he wrote: "Do not imagine I am unobservant of distinctions. You, by the favor of a Minister, are Marquis of Normanby; I by the grace of God am Walter Savage Landor.

The one who despised both: the aristocrats and the commoners, who belonged to neither, came to believe that he was superior to all titles. His writings as well as his private letters express this belief, "I have nothing to do with people, nor people with me. A phrenologist once told me that he observed the mark of veneration on my head. I told him in return that I could give him a proof of it ... I declare to you upon oath," he wrote to Lady Blessington, "that I firmly believe myself superior to any duke, prince,

2 Landor's Poetical Works, III, 444.
3 See above, p.51.
King, emperor, or pope existing, as the best of these fellows is superior to the most sluggish and mangy turn-spit in his dominions; and I swear to you that I never will be, if I can help it, where any such folks are." He then adds: "Why should I tell my countrymen these things? Why should I make the worst tempered nation in the world more sullen and morose than ever."¹ This same haughty attitude is also expressed in his Conversations. In "William Penn and Lord Peterborough" Lander makes the latter say: "Is it anything for such as thou art, or (I would say it with humility) for such as I am, to be greater in soul and intellect than a King or chancellor or archbishop?"²

This haughtiness, with which he reacted against the "world's disdain", was at the basis of Landor's alienation from the contemporary world. His equals for whom he cared were the immortals who dwelt at the heights. As for the small men who lived at the bottom, he despised them; and finding no place in their best class, he thought of a better class-distinction which put him as high as he desired: "I see but two classes of men:" he says through Peterborough, "those whose names are immortal, and those whose names are

¹ Morrison, A., The Blessington Papers (Printed for private circulation) 1895, pp.111.
² Complete Works, VI, 208.
perishable. Of the immortal there is but one body: all in it are so high as to seem on an equality, inasmuch as immortality admits of no degree: of the perishable there are several sets and classes; Kings and chamberlains, trumpeters and heralds, take up half their time in cutting them out and sticking them on blank paper."¹

Landor's attitude towards his age is the attitude of one who felt above others, "To him whose survey is from any great elevation," he writes, "all men below are of an equal size. Aristocrats and democrats, Kings and scullions, present one form, one stature, one colour, and one gait."² It was from this elevation that Landor surveyed the political, religious and literary institutions of the age. His views as we shall see in the following pages partake of this elevation or alienation.

¹ Ibid., p.200.
² Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

Landor's Political Writings

We begin the study of those writings of Landor's which embody his strife against, and his alienation from, the contemporary world, by dealing with his political views. About one-third of Landor's prose, and one-fourth of his verse are devoted to politics. A study of this portion shows that as a political writer, Landor saw the world as made up of oppressors and oppressed, and that his message was the need to rid the world of the former, and give the latter their freedom and their rights.

The age, we know, was partly responsible for this attitude. It was an age of revolutions. But equally responsible, I believe, was Landor's sense of persecution. It made him utter unconventional views and formulate certain conceptions which recur throughout his works giving them an unmistakable Landorian tone.

One of these conceptions which determine the choice of historical episodes and figures for his Conversations is his belief that rulers humiliate their betters. To illustrate this belief he makes a figure like Cromwell converse with another, like Walter Noble, on Charles I's oppression,
declaring that "because we remonstrated against" it, he "prosecut[ed] us as rebels." ¹ "Oppose in all elections the man," Pitt is made to tell Canning, "whatever may be his party or principles, who is superior to yourself in attainments, particularly in ratiocination and eloquence." He then adds: "Bring forward, when places are found for all the men of rank who present themselves, those who believe they resemble you ... those ... who have never been more than ducked and cudgelled."²

The picture Landor gives of the contemporary political world shows that he conceived of it as a corrupted one in which a person of superior powers is shunned by all - not only by rulers, "As we see in masquerades the real judge and the real soldier stopped and mocked by the fictitious, so do we see in the carnival of to-day the real man of dignity hustled, shoved aside, and derided, by those who are invested with the semblance by the milliners of the court." Marvel then adds, "Until our people alter these notions; until they estimate the wise and virtuous above the silly and profligate, the man of genius above the man of title ... they are fitter for the slave-market than for any other station."³

² "Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning," Ibid., V, 119.
³ "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker," Ibid., IV, 223.
Landor has his own conception of the successful politician. In order to understand this conception, we have to refer to his experience in the political world, for it is in terms of this bitter experience that he speaks of politicians. When he entered the political world, he was ambitious for a political career. Yet, he soon became disappointed, and left practical politics with the belief that he was humiliated because of his superiority.

He was only nineteen when he took part in the political battles of his borough. The address he prepared then, and intended to deliver at an assembly of the Burgesses of Warwick shows his early interest in politics, and his independent thoughts. As he was not allowed to give his speech, he published it in a pamphlet entitled To the Burgesses of Warwick (1797). At the end of this pamphlet — or address — which strongly opposed the "Assessed Taxes Bill", he writes:

Now it remains with you to determine, not whether he who lays in ruins one half of Warwick, regards the prosperity of the remainder, not whether he who compromises your independence would strictly abstain from the plunder of your property, but whether I, who shall be abominated for this struggle by all my acquaintance here, can have interests separable from your's.¹

"It seems quite clear on the basis of this pamphlet and other evidence," writes Super, "that Landor as a young man was more than slightly ambitious for a political career."¹

Two years later, we find him in London, in the company of the leading Whig figures, who took him to the Parliament and obtained for him regular access to the reporters' gallery. The young man who had indignantly declined to follow a profession, became a regular contributor to the Whig Press. Dr. Parr had often assured him that his abilities would make him well suited to the Parliament. Parr used to ask the young man to write articles on "the matter contained in this letter [Parr's]," and to "lay out upon it that vigorous eloquence with which you often charm my ears."² It was not only Parr who had that view of Landor's future. Adair "cultivated him for six or seven years;" says Mr. Elwin, "they corresponded from 1800 till 1806. For Landor was a young man of talent who might have been useful as a member of Parliament in opposition; an heir to fortune, he would have money and the consequent influence necessary to secure himself a seat. So Adair frequently met him at Debrett's in Piccadilly and they went together to the House of Commons ... In Adair's

¹ Ibid., p.xii. See introduction by R.H. Super.
² Forster, Landor, I, 158.
company he once heard Sheridan, Pitt, Fox, and Burke speak at one sitting."

But Landor's independence of mind, his over-confidence in his abilities, and the fact that he was more faithful to his own principles than to the party, made of him, in Adair's words, "an intractable satellite". He used to be greatly offended if the editors of the Whig press edited or omitted his articles; and they often did so because some of the young enthusiast's articles were libellous. If Landor had any hope for a political career the coming of the Whigs into power made him lose this hope, for he was not approached; the correspondence between him and Adair seems to have stopped. From that time Landor had nothing to do with the Whigs; and he seems to have lost interest in practical politics.

It is to such personal experiences that Landor refers when he - or his characters - illustrates the view that rulers humiliate their betters. In "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor", for example, he tries to prove to his visitors that he is equal to - if not better than - Pitt, Fox, and

1 Elwin, M., Landor, pp.75-6.
2 See above, p.
3 See Adair's letter to Landor, Forster:Landor, 1,167.
Canning; that his "education, and that which education works upon or produces, was not below theirs:" he then says, "Yet certain I am that, if I had applied to be made a tide-waiter on the Thames, the minister would have refused me."

Then in the tone of one grievously hurt he says:

In the county, where my chief estate lies, a waste and unprofitable one, but the third I believe in extent of any there, it was represented to me that the people were the most lawless in Great Britain; and the two most enlightened among the magistrates wished and exhorted me to become one. It would have been a great hinderance to my studies; yet a sense of public good, and a desire to promote it by any sacrifice, induced me to propose the thing to the duke of Beaufort, the lord-lieutenant ... The noble duke declined my proposal.

At the beginning of his speech he says: "Peace, freedom, independence for nations, these shall buy me: and, if nothing but the humiliation of their betters can win the hearts of rulers, I would almost kiss their hands to obtain them."¹

As we read Landor's views on "persons of authority" we realize how much he is influenced by his experience with such persons - even when his characters are made to speak of their own experiences. The "brief observations on important matters" of which Anaxagoras is made to speak,

are no other than Landor's own observations which he sent Lord Liverpool in his "Calvus" letters. Hence the Landorian tone of Anaxagoras:

Before I left my country, I offered some brief observations on important matters, then in discussion, to persons in authority. Do I much over-estimate my solidity of intellect, my range of comprehension, or my clearness of discernment, in believing that all these qualities in me, however imperfect, are somewhat more than equivalent to theirs? ... They rewarded me by suffering me to depart in peace, unanswered and unnoticed."

Landor's fixed conception that rulers oppress their betters gave him other related views which dominate his political writings. The first is the view that these rulers lack the essential virtues that make successful rulers. His conversation "Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning" illustrates his general view of politicians. In this satirical dialogue, Landor makes Pitt admit his own follies and weaknesses (as the author sees them). Pitt is, for example, made to say that he "never believed in any future state;" and that he "made a very damnable one of the present." 2 His advice to Canning who is supposed to succeed him, shows Landor's scorn for politicians in general: "You will ... have plenty of folks

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1 Pericles and Aspasia, Complete Works, X, 198.
2 Complete Works, V, 112.
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. I usually had Dundas at my elbow, who never lied but upon his honour, or supported the lie but upon his God." \(^1\)

What politicians had made of politics aroused his anger. They, he believed, exhibited no sincerity whatever with their countrymen, nor did they serve their country as true patriots should. In the conversation quoted above, Pitt represents the corruption which Landor saw in politics: "If at any time you are induced by policy, or impelled by nature, to commit an action more ungenerous or more dishonest than usual;" says Pitt to Canning, "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 as you can be beneficial to your King and country." \(^2\)

It must have been Landor's political idealism that made him attack politicians in this severe way. Yet he gives us another reason - a reason which is so much attached to his sense of persecution: it was because the secretary whom:

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\(^1\) Ibid., p.114.

\(^2\) Ibid., p.122.
he had alleged to be uncivil to his wife was not punished, that Landor developed this attitude towards politicians. This is what we understand from his following letter to Southey. When Taylor refused to publish the Imaginary Conversations because of such attacks on the Tory government, Landor wrote to Southey explaining why he attacked it:

Why have these rascals suffered me to be insulted by their agents? ... Out of four thousand English here I was selected for slight and contempt! the only man in all the four thousand who ever acted with disinterestedness for the public good, or who will be remembered a year after his death ... It could not have happened in Russia or in Turkey. In those countries men who are superior to others in virtue and intelligence are promoted and rewarded. I wanted neither... I would only have avoided disrespect, disdain, and insult. So long as such wretches are in power and employment, I am the avowed and unmitigable enemy of those who countenance them, and of the government that allows it.

Thus Landor's sense of persecution, and his conception of his own superiority separated him from both the Tories and the Whigs, "I belong to no party, no faction, no club, no coterie," he wrote in Letters addressed to Lord Liverpool, "I possess no seat in Parliament, by brevet or by purchase." His belief that he was humiliated and unwanted, completed

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his alienation to which he bitterly refers in the following poem, "Parties":

Tories don't like me, Whigs detest;
Then in what quarter can I rest?
Among the Liberals? most of all
The liberals are illiberal.

He sees no difference between the one party and the other:
"The two factions in England retain their ancient appellations, having interchanged principles." In one of his dialogues, we read a debate between a Whig, and a Tory, in which the latter says, "Whenever [the Whigs] have among them an honest sentiment, they borrow it; and when they have done what they want with it, they throw it aside." This debate shows Landor's disappointment with the Whigs: "None ever growled so long and felt so little anger ... none ever wagged its tail so winningly and earned so little confidence." To this the Whig is made to say: "It is idle to speculate on the irremediable, or to censure the measures of the extinct."

This disillusionment with practical politicians made Landor believe that politics were "the trade of a lackey." In a letter to Lady Blessington he expresses his grief that his 'good' friend Richard Monckton Milnes - whose talents

he greatly admired - participated in party politics: "I am
grieved," he wrote, "that my good Milnes, so pure-hearted,
so affectionate, should mix with the busy adventurers of
either faction. His genius is so far above them, and his
fortune so independent." Having this view, he makes
Peterborough say that when he discovers "men of high birth
condescending to perform the petty tricks of party, for the
sake of obtaining a favour at court," he wishes that "some
wrangling barrister, some impudent buffoon," could be made
a prime minister "that their backs might serve for his
footstool."2

Galileo is made to explain why virtuous men (like Milnes)
should not mix with "the busy adventurers" of the political
world:

Even good men, if indeed good men will
ever mix with evil ones for any purpose,
take up the trade of politics, at first
intending to deal honestly; the calm
bower of the conscience is soon converted
into the booth of inebriating popularity;
the shouts of the multitude then grow
unexciting, then indifferent, then
troublesome; lastly, the riotous support-
ers of the condescendent falling half-
asleep, he looks agape in their faces,
springs upon his legs again, flings the
door behind him, and escapes in the livery
of Power.3

1 Madden, R.R., The Literary Life and Correspondence of the
   Countess of Blessington (1855), II, p.383.
3 "Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican," Ibid., III, 55-6.
This brings us to Landor's ideal of government. He had definite views on this subject, which are the outcome of his attitude towards the political world. Though he was notorious for his republicanism, his deep hatred of democracy which, as Thomas Jefferson said, "is the only pure republic" necessarily removed him from the republicans of his day. He despised French and American democracy. In his Letter from W.S. Landor to R.W. Emerson (1856), he writes, "Democracy, such as yours in America, is my abhorrence."¹ We have seen above how Landor was an aristocrat by nature, how the concept of nobility greatly appealed to him. He had no faith in the masses; and though he believed that "whatever nation has really its representatives is free, whatever has not is not" an important principle of his was, as he told the Neapolitans, "that few representatives are enough."²

This last principle leads on to an important notion of Landor's which is the natural outcome of the views discussed above. Like Milton,³ he believed that the few representatives should be those who possess the highest wisdom, and the highest genius. The oligarchical republic, was therefore

¹ Ibid., XII, 196.
the only "quarter" where Landor could rest. It is the one quarter where he would be rewarded, promoted, and venerated.

Landor's affection for the Roman antiquity is probably one of the factors that made him choose this quarter. In the conversation between Peter Leopold and President du Paty, Landor expresses, through the latter, his admiration for the Roman institutions, which he prefers to the English:

The Roman institutions were incomparably better, when the most respectable and the most elevated characters of the republic walked up and down the forum, ready to receive the complaints and to redress the grievances of their fellow-citizens. Such was the practice not only in the time of the republic, but before it under the kings, and after it under the emperors.

This passage, I believe, illustrates very well Landor's attitude towards people. It is not the attitude of a republican towards his fellow-citizens, but rather that of a Prometheus towards the helpless human beings whose sufferings he tries to allay. He was devoted to the cause of freedom and sought to release men from all chains. "To remove and consume the gallows on which such men are liable to suffer, is among the principal aims and intents of these writings" he wrote in one of his conversations.  

1 **Complete Works**, III, 117-8.

2 See "Barrow and Newton," **Complete Works**, IV, 118n.
Edward Dowden described the love Landor had for the people in the following terms, "Landor loved the people, but for the most part he loved them as he did the peaceful tribes of flowers, as one inevitably above them, who yet found something infinitely attaching and pathetic in the simplicity of their wiser joys, and in the sacredness of their human sorrows."^1

Yet Landor's aristocracy, as we have seen above, was not that of title; it was an intellectual aristocracy. He divides men into two classes, those who are entitled to rule, by virtue of their wisdom and genius; and those who are to be ruled. Naturally, he believed that the ideal republic would be ruled by an oligarchy of these aristocrats. A great part of his writings discusses the superiority of the one class, and the inferiority of the other, and stresses the fact that the former is the most fit to rule. The reader comes across many passages that express Landor's longing for those past ages in which the wisest were preferred: "Bacon lived in an age when the wisest men were chosen, from every rank and condition, for the administration of affairs," he says through Barrow, "Wonderful is it ..."

that we can not point out a prime minister of any nation, at that period, deficient in sagacity or energy."

In this respect, Landor resembles a contemporary of his, Thomas Jefferson. The American President also believed that such aristocrats are the fittest for administering affairs. But while Landor uses the term intellectual, Jefferson uses "natural": "There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talent." Jefferson also says, "There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents."2

Then Jefferson stresses the superiority of these "natural aristocrats": "The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society." Then he comes to the following conclusion: "May we not even say," he adds, "that that form of government is best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government?"3

Yet Landor's aristocracy admits the very few - those who

1 "Barrow and Newton," Complete Works, IV, 133.
3 Ibid., pp.126-7.
are really great, and possess the gifts that make their names immortal: "I see but two classes of men: those whose names are immortal, and those whose names are perishable"¹ he says through Peterborough. In another conversation, "Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican", Milton is made to repeat the same notion: "I know but two genera of men, the annual and the perennial. Those who die down, and leave behind them no indication of the places whereon they grow, are cognate with the gross matter about them; those on the contrary who, ages after their departure, are able to sustain the lowliest, and to exalt the highest, those are surely the spirits of God, both when upon earth and when with Him."²

In Landor's conception, such aristocrats are often persecuted by the powerful and hated by the low: "O Andrew!" says Milton to Andrew Marvel, "albeit our learning raiseth up against us many enemies among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and confer on us a largeness of beatitude."³ When Bishop Parker wonders at the "bitterness" with which Marvel speaks of people's notion of greatness, the latter

¹ Complete Works, VI, 200.
² Ibid., III, 57-8.
³ Ibid., IV, 175.
says: "Bitterness it may be from the bruised laurel of Milton ... Milton was among the few."¹

It is this obsession with the idea that the best people (the intellectual aristocrats), are humiliated by the powerful rulers and hated by the low, that makes one reconsider Landor's republicanism. Here is an avowed aristocrat, who cannot tolerate democratic notions, who would preserve "the due ranks and orders of society, and even to a much greater degree than the most of the violent tories are doing."²

Why did he become a republican then?

Before we attempt to answer this question, we have to consider some other points which shed light upon Landor's political thought. Though he called himself a radical, he was unwilling to effect any change. His comment on Carlyle's remark that "Landor's principle is mere rebellion" shows this attitude, "Quite the contrary is apparent and prominent in many of my writings" replied Landor, "I always was a Conservative ... I have said plainly, more than once, and in many quarters, that I would not alter or greatly modify the English Constitution."³ What Landor wanted to

¹ Ibid., p.222.
² Elwin, Landor: a replevin, p.325.
³ Letter from W.S. Landor to R.W. Emerson, Complete Works, XII, 195.
to do was to correct. In the *Letters of a Conservative,* he writes, "Certainly I have no interest in throwing things into confusion, as all are accused of doing who would correct what they can clearly prove to be abuses." If he had in mind any slight changes, they were rather inevitable developments than essential changes, as he says in Letter XXX:

We have lately been told, by sensible and by liberal men, that we must abstain from all organick changes. For my part, I would abstain from all changes whatever, were it possible. But smaller, made in time, obviate the necessity of greater. We must not be led away by words. What! are there no organick changes from childhood to manhood? or is it the voice only that is firmer?

In fact Landor was too much attached to whatever was old to welcome a vital change. He preferred the old to the new, even "the titled man of ancient" to the "titled man of recent families. The following passage from "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker" illustrates that strong affection of Landor's: "I look to a person of very old family as I do to anything else that is very old, and I thank him for bringing to me a page of romance which probably he himself never knew or heard about." Apart from this, there are passages in

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1 Ibid., XII, 210.
2 Ibid., 230.
3 "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker," Ibid., IV, 220.
4 Ibid., 221.
Landor's political writings, that reveal conservative sentiments. We have quoted above one of these passages in which he condemns Pitt's innovations, and blames his own ancestors, the country gentlemen, for not forming a separate class and constituting a nobility "more respectable and more powerful than Pitt's." Then Landor asks, in the tone of one who has missed the one and only chance of getting his heart's desire: "When republicanism was making such alarming strides as he represented ... why did not the country gentlemen of England erect a barrier of property on a broad basis, against the flood-tide which he foretold would ruin their estates, and re-establish old usages in opposition to new opinions?"¹

If we consider such sayings in the light of Landor's aristocratic feelings, his hatred of democracy, his belief in the necessity of rank in society and in class-distinctions we shall probably attribute Landor's republicanism to other bases than, or besides, a strong belief in republican principles as such. While most of his contemporaries, such as Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge abandoned their republican sympathies, Landor went on displaying them in an exaggerated way - or rather in a rebellious way.

¹ Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox, p.161.
When Carlyle, as we have already seen, said that Landor's principle was mere rebellion, Landor defended himself by saying that he was always a conservative. One believes that there is some truth in both Carlyle's remark and Landor's protest. For it seems that Landor's republicanism is the rebellion of an idealistic conservative who believed that those in power, who also represent the existing established order, humiliated him and denied him his rights. Though he banished himself to the opposite camp, he was still, at heart, the aristocrat who had strong conservative tendencies.

As both Carlyle's remark and Landor's protest express some part of the truth, I think the appellation "conservative rebel" would be as applicable to Landor as "aristocratic radical" - as he called himself.¹

Landor's views on the ideal government would make him take part in the ruling of others. He believed that he had the wisdom that would entitle him for such a position. The letters of advice which he used to send to those in power illustrate this point. The urge behind such publications as Letters Addressed to Lord Liverpool (1814), and Letters of a Conservative (1836), as well as many other letters

¹ Elwin, Landor: a replevin, p.325.
published in the Examiner, was his belief that "it is the duty of the wise to set the unwise right." 1

If we consider such writings as these, 2 we believe with George Becker that Landor "looked upon himself as a political prophet." 3 "You are a little too melancholy in regard to the times," he wrote to his sisters (May 20, 1831) on the political conflict at the time of the parliamentary reform of 1831, "Whatever is happening and about to happen was foreseen by me in the period of Pitt's war against France." 4

But the prophet's political views made him unpopular. When William Gifford, the editor of the Quarterly, read his dedication of Commentary On Memoirs of Mr. Fox to President James Madison, he wrote to Murray:

1 See Landor's letter to Lady Blessington (July 16th, 1833) in The Blessington Papers, p.100.

2 Landor's following publications were also written with the same view: to advise the politicians of other countries. In 1809, he published Three letters, written in Spain, to Dr. Francisco Riquelme, and "Hints to a Junta" in which he suggests a federal union between Spain and Portugal. In 1821 he published Poche Osservazioni sullo Stato Attuale di Que' Popoli, Che Vagliano Governarsi per Mezzo delle Rappresentanze, in which he shows the Neapolitan revolutionaries how to form a representative government.

3 "Landor's Political Purpose," S.P. (1838), XXXV, 447.

4 Forster, Landor, II, 240.
Nothing but a rooted hatred of his country could have made [Landor] dedicate his Jacobinical book to the most contemptible wretch that ever crept into authority, and whose only recommendation to him is his implacable enmity to his country ... I would not, on any account, have you publish such a scoundrel address. 1

Another reason for the unpopularity of Landor was the exaggerated tone with which he urged his republican views. Referring to this tone John Forster said that Landor's "exaggerated peculiarities of temperament which unexplained would make inexplicable Landor's whole career ... gave his opinions a tone of offence that not all the eloquent ability he maintained them with could allay." 2

The offence must have been greater when he resumed his bitter denunciation of monarchy in the reign of Queen Victoria who, by her personal integrity and her liberal and constitutional policy, rehabilitated monarchy in England. When he wrote, in October, 1852, that the perjuries of Louis Napoleon "far from excluding him, place him among the legitimate sovrans of the highest order, of whom not a single one, excepting the Emperor of Russia, is guiltless of this crime against his people, God's vicar taking the precedency" 3 Lord Dudley Stuart "objected that the only real

1 Smiles, S., A Publisher and His Friends (1891), I, 199-200.
2 Forster, Landor, I, 75.
exception was not the Czar, 'but our own venerated and beloved Queen Victoria.'\(^1\)

Landor's unpopularity as a political writer increased, and reached its utmost, when he began to preach his political creed - tyrannicide - which is in itself the climax of his political writings. "A bitter schoolmaster is now abroad," wrote Forster in the Preface to the Italics (1848), "and domineering over the indignant manhood of nations, who teaches, not intending it, that above the highest virtues, above the most glorious actions, is tyrannicide."\(^2\) But Landor did intend what he taught.

His previous writings show how this passion against tyrants had always preoccupied him. The moral of "Chrysaor" (1802), for example, is that men's duty in time of tyranny is to remove tyrants. In Letters addressed to Lord Liverpool (1814), he declares that there would be no peace until Napoleon is stripped of his life, and cites examples from history showing how usurpers less tyrannical than Napoleon, such as Caesar Borgia, were killed.

The last of Calvus letters ends with the prophet's following warning:

Sovereigns of the earth, if you prolong

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the existence of this miscreant, this accursed of God and man, declare at once that you have drawn the sword only to divide dominion with him; that you have brought nations to fight one against another, only that you might at last be admitted to peace and amity with him: and the blood of extinguished and of unborn generations be upon your heads! the scorn of your contemporaries, the reproaches of your posterity, and the vengeance of your Almighty Judge.¹

After these letters, Landor left for Italy, where he followed with great excitement the news of revolutions. When he returned to England, his "assiduity in the cause of liberty," says Elwin, "made his Bath lodgings a place of pilgrimage for revolutionary exiles."² In 1843, he was in contact with some Greek revolutionaries, on whose behalf he wrote a series of letters on the threatened revolution against King Otto of Greece. Referring to the first of these letters he wrote to Mrs. Paynter: "I hear also that it will be (perhaps is) translated into the Turkish. Yesterday I sent another to the Examiner containing a series of charges which the noblest subjects of King Otho bring against him. I rejoice in being chosen their interpreter and advocate."³

Landor must have rejoiced more, when Kossuth - whom he

¹ Letters addressed to Lord Liverpool, by Calvus, p.84.
² Landor: a replevin, p.396.
³ Letters, Private and Public, p.119.
considered one of the great champions of freedom - came to England and referred to Landor's name, in a letter to the citizens of Bath, as one "distinguished and long familiar to me." The visit of this fighter against tyranny stirred Landor to write the poem "On Kossuth's Voyage to America", which was "read at a public meeting held at Birmingham on November 12, [1851] to wish him God-speed."¹ Seventeen days later Tyrannicide appeared, causing a great stir. In this poem Landor proclaimed that

Most dear of all the Virtues to her Sire
Is Justice; and most dear
To Justice is Tyrannicide; the fire
That guides her flashes near.

The poem repeats some of Landor's notions such as the one expressed thirty-seven years before in Letters Addressed to Lord Liverpool: "He who places himself beyond the laws, is outlawed by his own subscription."² In "Tyrannicide" he declares: "No law for him who stands above the law."

In his defence of tyrannicide published with the poem, Landor writes that "the sentiments repeated in this Poem have been exprest, and acted on, by wiser and better men than I am." In conclusion he writes: "It is the duty of all, in

¹ Poetical Works, II, p.298.
² P.67.
every country, to seize and slay, in such manner as raises least commotion, and endangers fewest lives, properties, and comforts, the usurper of that country, or whosoever aids in the subversion of its institutions."\(^1\)

This poem served as an excuse for the Tory press to wage war against Landor. In fact he stood alone in this war. Even his friends blamed him. "He greatly scandalised even those who knew him best" wrote the London Quarterly Review.\(^2\) His friend, Sir William Napier, looked upon the doctrine as a mistake. "[Landor]," he wrote to a friend, "is unpopular for his tyrannicide letter; yes, and deservedly so; it would be a bad sign of public feeling if he were not so, for tyrannicide means assassination, and that gives a licence to every violent passion,... but this mistake does not make Landor obnoxious to me, or you, or anybody that knows him."\(^3\)

It is worth mentioning here that Landor was not the only one who advocated tyrannicide at that time. In his Revolutionary Epick (1834) Disraeli wrote:

\[
\text{And blessed be the hand that dares to wave} \\
\text{The regicidal steel that shall redeem} \\
\text{A nation's sorrow with a tyrant's blood.}
\]

\(^1\) Tyrannicide, by W.S. Landor, published for the benefit of the Hungarians in America, (Bath, 1851).

\(^2\) "Life and opinions of Walter Savage Landor," XXIV (April. 1865), 195.

\(^3\) See Bruce, H.A., Life of General Sir W. Napier (1864), II, 409.
But Disraeli had to omit these lines after denying in the House of Commons that he had written them. This was during a debate in which he attacked Stansfield for his friendship with Mazzini who believed in tyrannicide. When John Bright asked Disraeli "whether he had not himself praised tyrannicide, and repeated the above-quoted lines, Disraeli said that they were not his own. Immediately after that, a new edition was issued without these lines.¹

But none of Landor's contemporaries, perhaps, justified the doctrine as strongly and as fearlessly as he did. The prophet who felt that he was persecuted, who believed that laws were made for tyrants to serve their ends, declared that Justice was above the laws, as his letter published in the *Examiner* of July 28, 1849, states:

> Justice is immutable and divine; but laws are human and mutable; they are violated every day, changed and superseded perpetually, and sometimes ejected from the judgment-seat by military power. In such a case, what remains for nations?

Landor found the answer to this question - as for all other questions - in past practices. Tyrannicide was the one salvation for the persecuted:

> History tells us. There springs up a virtue from the very bosom of Crime.

venerably austere, Tyrannicide. The heart of Antiquity bounded before this Virtue. Religion followed Religion; new idols were worshipt; they rotted down one after another; Tyrannicide has appeared in every age, in every country, the refuge and avenger of the opprest.1

And because tyrannicide was the one salvation, Landor persisted in his views against all criticism. He even went so far as proposing "to pension the widow of the man" - wrote indignantly the London Quarterly Review - "who should assassinate Napoleon, and might suffer death in consequence."2 This Landor did advocate. When J. Meriton White published "an appeal for subscriptions toward the arming of the Italians" Landor replied in an open letter3 which he reprinted in his Letter to Emerson:

I have only one hundred pounds of ready money, and am never likely to have at my disposal as much in future. Of this I transmit five to you, toward the acquisition of the ten thousand muskets to be given, in accordance with your manifesto, 'to the first Italian province which shall rise.' The remaining ninety-five I reserve for the family of the first patriot who asserts by action the dignity of tyrannicide.4

3 See Super, Landor, p.432.
4 Complete Works, XII, 203.
In his letter to Emerson, he repeated these words and referred to the opposition he found in his country: "Abject men have cried against me for my commendation of this ancient virtue, the highest of which a man is capable, and now the most important and urgent." But his knowledge that his words appealed to other countries consoled him: "My words are circulated in America and on our continent, and well received and widely echoed. I regret that here in England are some professing to be the friends of liberty and justice, who stand forward as shields and buckles to the enemies of both."2

In Landor's political writings, fierce opposition to tyranny, and the strong advocacy of tyrannicide form the other theme which often recurs, and runs parallel to the theme we have dealt with above - namely that rulers humiliate their betters. If we consider this last theme as the setting forth of a problem - persecution, the other theme, tyrannicide, could be considered the solution which Landor presents.

Though he knew that this doctrine would arouse feeling against him, he persisted in his advocacy, because he was highly convinced of what he preached, "Outcries will be

1 It is worth pointing out that tyrannicide is not a virtue, as Landor's sense of persecution led him to believe; it is an action.

2 Letter to Emerson, p.203.
raised," he wrote to Forster, "even by some of the honest, against my praise of tyrannicide. Nevertheless, if some superior Power said to me 'I will consume with fire all your writings, and abolish the traces of them, unless you cancell this,' my reply would be 'Burn away then'."¹

Thus Landor's political views brought him to a stage when public understanding and sympathy were denied him. This antipathy against Landor's political views, I think, had something to do with the conception his contemporaries had of him as a man. This is shown in a letter written by Samuel Carter Hall, in which he compares Landor to Southey. It is evident that Hall's unfavourable view of Landor's character affects his judgement of the writer and his opinions:

Southey was a Tory, Landor a Republican - or worse; the one was provident as well as just, the other reckless and utterly inconsiderate; the one was a devoted and affectionate husband, the other held matrimonial ties to be very slight; the one was patient, generous, "thinking no evil," abjuring the notion that revenge was virtue, the other petulant, irritable, passionate, ever ready to give or take offence; - in a word, the one was a Christian, the other, if not a mocker, was a despiser, of all creeds.²

¹ Super, Landor, p.433.
This antipathy, one thinks, had something to do with Landor's anti-clerical views, as well as his attitude towards the contemporary literary world - as we shall see in the following pages.

Landor's writings on the Church Establishment show another aspect of his strife against authority. As he revolts against practical politicians, so did he revolt against clergymen. Both groups are often associated together in his writings as forming the two sides of an insidious power. Discussing Landor's religious principles, Whitley Stephen says that they are "little more than the assertion that he will not be fettered in mind or body by temporal or spiritual authority. The priest is to him what he was to Deists and materialists of the eighteenth century - a cunning impositor who uses superstition as an instrument creeping into the confidence of women and cowards, and in brave men."

Landor's revolt against the Church pertakes of his revolt against all institutions. "Institutions," writes us through Penn, "can not make men perfect. Fraud, cruelty, violence, may be disconstranced and diminished," if not "whose authority began upon them, rests upon them.
Landor's writings on the Church Establishment show another aspect of his strife against authority. As he revolted against practical politicians, so did he revolt against clergymen. Both groups are often associated together in his writings as forming the two sides of an oppressive power. Discussing Landor's religious principles, Leslie Stephen says that they are "little more than the assertion that he will not be fettered in mind or body by any priest on earth. The priest is to him what he was to the deists and materialists of the eighteenth century - a juggling impostor who uses superstition as an instrument for creeping into the confidence of women and cowards, and burning brave men."\(^1\)

Landor's revolt against the Church partakes of his general revolt against all institutions. "Institutions," he tells us through Penn, "can not make men perfect. Fraud, injury, violence, may be discountenanced and diminished," if those "whose authority began upon them, rests upon them,

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\(^1\) Hours in a Library (Third Series), pp.265-6.
and must go upon them"¹ are removed. "Mark my words:"
Alfieri is also made to say, "a century of misfortunes will confirm them. Wherever there are priests subordinate solely to a priest leader, there are snares and chains for all beyond the circle."²

Landor could not see in any religious institution anything more than despotism. Referring to the Church of Rome he says — through William Penn:

Can anything be so insulting to equity and common sense, as that a gang of priests and friars should be the absolute and self-elected potentates, of enough territory and population to constitute a mighty commonwealth? ... Let those who doubt, or rather who profess to doubt, which is best, arbitrary power or republican freedom, lift up their eyes ... to the contemplation, on the one side, of equal laws, of magistrates elected by the people ... on the other, of insolent domination, of rulers imposed by force and maintained by terror ... of religious perjuries in the creating of saints to people them; and the triple pestilence of priests, monks, and marshes, of which the last only ever intermits its ravages.³

This hostility of Landor's is not confined to Roman Catholic priests; it is indeed a general hostility: "Prelaty is one and the same in all countries;" he declares, "and there

¹ "Penn and Peterborough," Complete Works, VI, 267.
² "Alfieri and Metastasio," Ibid., III, 84.
³ "Penn and Peterborough," Ibid., VI, 227.
is just enough of difference in doctrine to keep up excitement and animosity in their partisans.\(^1\) Such views are repeated by Landor's characters: "Happiness would overflow my heart," Peterborough says, "to see reduced to the condition of my lackeys the proudest of our priesthood and our peerage."\(^2\)

In order to justify his attacks on priests, Landor concentrates on, or exaggerates, their failings. He shows them as quarrelsome, and "blinded" by "pride": "Quarrels in the house of Him who proclaimed upon earth peace and good-will toward men, were, and are still, most violent and outrageous among those who have occupied the highest offices under Him. Neither argument nor conscience could coerce their malignant passions."\(^3\)

Landor also exposes what he calls the lust of the higher clergy for power and wealth. In *Letters of a Conservative* (1836), and *Popery: British and Foreign* (1851), he shows how this lust weakened the Church Establishment. In the first book he shows how the "inordinate wealth" of this Establishment made priests hate each other. "In every part of Europe," he writes in the second book, "the

\(^1\) *Popery: British and Foreign* (1851), Complete Works, XII, 85.

\(^2\) "Penn and Peterborough," Ibid., VI, 198.

\(^3\) *Popery*, Ibid., XII, 98.
richest clergymen are usually the least influential over their congregations."

Landor's impatience with priests makes him sympathise with a Quaker's point of view: "I am grieved," he makes Penn say, "to find it insisted on that the Word of God requires more explanation than the Statutes at Large; that men are appointed and paid to expound it; that we must give them money for words, and finally must take their words at their own price." Though we may know the very thing they do better than they, "there is no appeal; we must take it after their chewing, and keep it in our mouths and swallow it just as we received it out of theirs." 2

The political prophet who took upon himself the task of correcting and guiding politicians, believed it part of his message to do the same with priests. He begins his Letters of a Conservative addressed to Lord Melbourne by saying: "I never should have written to your Lordship this letter or any other, were I not confident that it is your fixed determination to abolish all the remaining grievances of the United Kingdom." After making it clear that his intention is "to trace and to expose the faults and fallacies of every

1 Ibid., p.63.
2 "Penn and Peterborough," Ibid., VI, 201.
administration," he informs the Prime Minister that the letters relate "to the abuses of the Church Establishment, such as, unless they are totally done away with, will involve our country for the third time in all the miseries of popular discord, and in all the immoralities of arbitrary spoliation."¹

Landor was conscious, and proud, of the fact that other great men like Milton had had the same views of prelaty. "In the reign of James and his son," Landor writes in Popery, "many serious and religious, and many of deep research, both jurists and divines, wrote in condemnation of Prelaty: Milton stamped the warrant."² Landor approves of what Milton said of bishops, and warmly defends him. Through Marvel he says that Milton "saw the prelates ... standing as ready there as anywhere to wave the censer before the king, and under its smoke to hide the people from him." Landor's admiration for Milton makes him add: "He warned them as an angel would have done, nay, as our Saviour has done, that the wealthy and the proud, the flatterer at the palace and the flatterer at the altar, in short the man for the world, is not the man for heaven."³

¹ Complete Works, XII, 209-10.
² Ibid., p.98.
³ "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker," Ibid., IV, 216.
Milton's writings on "The mischief that prelaty does in the state," naturally appealed to Landor. Of the prelates' support of tyranny Milton writes, "If it should happen that a tyrant ... should come to grasp the Scepter, here were his spearmen and his lances, here were his firelocks ready, he should need no other pretorian band nor pensionary than these, if they could once with their perfidious preachments awe the people."\(^1\)

Thus, encouraged by men like Milton, Landor set out to expose the abuses of the Church, which weakened her, and endangered her position. This, he believed, was the outcome of her lust for power which made her forget her original function: "The Church has nothing more to do, within a state, than to apply her seal to moral contracts and engagements. Wherever she does more, she does mischief, and is liable to be thrust out with violence."\(^2\)

In his general desire to find fault with the higher clergy, and condemn their authority, he makes them responsible for the weakness of the Church of England, and for its being the "only national Church in Europe that is in a minority." The reason for this weakness is that "the spiritual wants

\(^1\) The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelaty (1641), p.61.

\(^2\) Letters of a Conservative, Complete Works, XII, 229.
of the people were insufficiently supplied by the pastors engaged to tend them. Hence the flocks break through the old inclosures, and expose their fronts to the bravest dogs that bark against them. It is impossible to whistle or shout or cudgel them back again."

Landor then blames the bishops for the spread of Roman Catholicism in Ireland, for dissent in Wales, and for the separation of the Church of Scotland from the Church of England. In Wales, he thinks, the bishops do not do their job properly: "Our common-room barons, when they get among the mountains, do not mix with the natives at all, and very little with the national clergy." They "give their benediction in the cathedral and their vote in the House of Lords, and have no worldly care or anxiety until a richer father in God makes way. Then they descend from their perches, look innocent and meek as unfledged doves, waiting with retorted neck and reverted eye for another pea to be pushed into the beak."  

Landor also believes that some of the bishops were inadequate to their offices: "I know not why bishopricks should be given, as they often are, for merely classical

1 Ibid., p.215.
2 See Ibid., p.226.
3 Ibid., pp.217-18.
attainments;" he writes, "since, from the moment a scholar becomes a bishop, his study of the classicks and his earnestness in correcting them is over." Then he adds: "My lord bishop enters, mounts his throne, and, instead of strophe and antistrophe, hears the responses sung to the Ten Commandments. Thenceforward

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?"¹

Landor's attacks on the Church have something to do with his own religious views. What he admires in Christianity is its practical ethical system, rather than its supernatural element. Hence his belief that the original function of the Church is an educational one. To prove that this ethical side is the predominant one he says that "there are only four of the commandments of the Old Testament which relate to the works of God: the other six are confined to moral and social duties." Therefore,"why does not the parson teach as often as the schoolmaster?"²

Accordingly Landor is indifferent about those points of theology and ritual which have caused quarrels between the different sects. "Our pastors come to buffets with each other about a few drops of water;" writes Landor in Popery,

¹ Ibid., p.218.
² The Letters of a Conservative, Complete Works, XII, 237.
"some insisting that an infant on whom they never have been
sprinkled has no right or pretence to enter the kingdom of
heaven, altho' the omission of so momentous a duty be no
fault of his: others would more kindly give the infant a
free ticket, but insist that grown men should be soused over
head and ears."^1

He also satirizes priests for quarreling over placing
flowers on the altar,^2 and over burial of children. "In­
fallibility comes forward with great advantage while our
bishops are scuffling in the market-place," he writes mockingly,
"and, where dead infants are lying before their feet, are
debating which of the poor innocents are to be buried as
children, and which as dogs. She sprinkles with salt water
those she favors, and straightway they mount into heaven."^3

The indifference Landor shows towards these points of
ritual and theology is due to his belief that they are
innovations and accordingly relate, not the religion of
Christ, but the the religion of Christendom. "The religion
of Christ," he writes, stressing the distinction between
the two, "is peace and good will; the religion of Christendom

^1 Ibid., XII, 75.
^2 Ibid.
^3 Ibid., p.80.
is war and ill will."\(^1\) The following passage shows his impatience with the latter and its innovations: "Let old superstitions crumble into dust;" he writes in *Popery,* "let Faith, Hope, and Charity, be simple in their attire; let few and solemn words be spoken before Him 'to whom all hearts are open, all desires known'."\(^2\)

Landor attacks the religion of Christendom so severely that the reader who is not familiar with his works, and with this distinction between the religion of Christ, and that of Christendom, is liable to think that Landor attacks Christianity itself.

In his article on Landor, Leslie Stephen says that "at bottom he prefers paganism to Christianity".\(^3\) But Landor's attitude to "the religion of Christ" makes it difficult to agree with Stephen. If Landor prefers the pagans to the Christians, it is because he believes that the former possess Christian virtues which Christians do not: "Compare the writings, compare the conduct, of those who occupy the highest seats in the Christian synagogue, both at home and abroad, with the writings and conduct of Epictetus and Seneca and

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1 "Penn and Peterborough," *Complete Works,* VI, 226.
2 *Complete Works,* XII, 98.
3 Stephen, Leslie, op.cit., p.266.
Plutarch and Marcus Antoninus" writes Landor in Popery, "On which side lies Christianity? It lies invariably on the side of those who knew not Christ."

It is not paganism that inspires Landor to attack Christendom, but the belief that Christians have neglected the teachings of Christ; "Animosities at the present day are carried on principally by the very parties whose bounden duty and salaried office it is to allay and to remove them" he says. These parties, he points out, are "unchristian". With them "Christianity, very contrary to the intention of its blessed Founder, has almost from the beginning been the smelting-house of discords and animosities."

The following words put in the mouth of the Emperor of China represent, one thinks, Landor's attitude to both Christianity and Christendom, "I am afraid, Tsing-Ti, thou hast set thy face against the priests, for no better reason than because thou couldst not find thy favourite Christianity among them." Tsing-Ti's reply represents, also, Landor's point of view: "I do indeed, with all humility, still adhere to that humane and pure religion; and I may peradventure be

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1 Complete Works, XII, 74.
2 Ibid., p.95.
3 Ibid., p.98.
disappointed and displeased at finding its place made desolate, its image thrown down, and what was erected for its support rendered the instrument of its destruction.\(^1\)

Another reason for Landor's bitter attacks on the Church Institution is his belief that it encourages fanaticism, and deprives men of their religious freedom. The arguments Landor puts in the mouths of his non-Christian figures are a plea for this religious freedom. Filippo's anecdote of the Moslem sailor shows that Landor clearly sympathises with this sailor who beat "canonico Paccone" for trying to convert him. Landor makes the Moslem sailor defend himself by saying: "Why would he convert me? I never converted him."\(^2\) What Landor puts in the mouth of the Emperor of China, also shows the writer's dislike of religious intolerance, "Let every man choose his idol as freely as he chooses his wife; let him be constant if he can; if he can not, let him at least be civil."\(^3\)

This leads us to Landor's hatred of Roman Catholicism. He considers it despotism itself: "No religion hath ever done so much mischief in the world," he writes in Popery, "as that which falsely, among innumerable other falsehoods,

\(^1\) "Emperor of China and Tsing-Ti," Complete Works, IX, pp.32-3
\(^2\) "Fra Filippo Lippi and Pope Eugenius," Ibid., II, 293.
\(^3\) "Emperor of China and Tsing-Ti," Ibid., IX, 14.
calls itself the catholic." He then points out the persecution of the Church of Rome, "There was a time when the Arians outnumbered the papists; and it was only by the exercise of imperial power, by the sword in the balance, that the scale flew up and scattered its contents."¹

Landor abhorred Roman Catholicism because he believed that it sought political as well as religious domination: "As the arrow of Paris was directed from behind the brightest and most glorious of the heathen Gods, and occasioned the downfall of his native city," he says through William Penn, "so hath ever that of Policy in later times from behind the fairer image of Christianity."² After showing the detrimental effect this had on religion, he adds, "This we owe to Popery; to her turbulence, her insolence, her fraudulence; to her rapacity, her persecutions, her lusts; to her contempt of good faith, of equitable governement, of authority both divine and human." It is not to the Roman Catholic Church only that Landor refers here, but to the Church of England also - as the following sentence shows: "Now every establishment of a political church is Popery: every church having a head, which head is not Christ."³

¹ Complete Works, XII, 89.
² "Penn and Peterborough," Ibid., VI, 226.
³ Ibid.
Such are the thoughts that preoccupy Landor in *Popery*; British and Foreign also: "At the present day," he writes, "the question turns less about the doctrinal points of Popery, than about the influence which its ministers again are exercising on the social condition of Europe."¹ He is obviously very indignant about the increasing influence of Roman Catholicism in Britain: "Forty years ago," he writes in *Letters of a Conservative*, "there were but thirty popish chapels in England. Last year there were five hundred and ten; twenty or thirty more are rising from their foundations."²

It was natural for one like Landor, who was all his life an advocate of freedom for all countries, to react fiercely against the Pope whom he suspected of having certain intentions that might affect the freedom of his own country; "Has the Pope of Rome a better right to exercise authority in the British dominions, than the head of the Anglican church has to exercise it in the Roman?" he indignantly asks in *Popery*, and then adds, "The Queen of England most graciously permits to every Papist the exercise of his religion, not only in private but in public, inasmuch as it interferes not with civic order; while the Pope," he

¹ Complete Works, XII, 89.
² Ibid., p.216.
adds, "not only prohibits it even in its last offices at the grave, but forbids in private houses the followers of Jesus Christ to introduce that Gospel which he commanded his apostles to preach openly in all lands."¹

He therefore came to look with suspicion at the Roman Catholic priests: "No Popish priest dares hesitate to execute the Pope's commands" he writes, "If ever a pope casts his slipper over England, I trust we shall return it him with a full attendance of his own servants in their richest liveries." Then with typical sarcasm he adds; "Christ says, 'Ye can not serve two masters.' The Pope says, 'ye can'; he says more; he says, 'whomsoever you serve, unless you serve me in preference, and obey my orders in despite of his: I, who have the power of doing it, will send you to the devil.'"² Such allegiance of Roman Catholic priests to the Pope increased Landor's hostility to priests in general: "Ministers," he writes, "have brought upon the Queen and country the greater part, if not the whole, of the Pope's insolence."³

Landor's reaction against the Pope made him try hard to

¹ Ibid., p.77.
² Ibid., pp.73-4.
³ Ibid., p.79.
refute the two sides of his authority; the religious as well as the secular. Speaking of the tyrannical power of the papacy he says that it exercised its persecution "when the more civilised and intelligent," in Germany, Holland, France, and Italy "preferred the plain doctrine and pure authority of the Gospel to the glosses and assumptions of the papacy." Landor attacks also the secular side of the Pope's authority. After showing how the Pope forbids the Protestants to introduce the Gospel, he says,

And this gentleman forsooth is delegated by the Prince of Apostles! Nay, he goes beyond, far beyond, this assumption. He not only is Christ's messager, but Christ's viceregent. Not only does he come forward under a false name, but he forges title-deeds to a vast estate; which estate never belonged to the pretended owner. St. Peter's patrimony is the name inscribed on the endorsement.2

Landor was not alone in his attack on Roman Catholicism. The great number of works on Church reform, which appeared in this period, express, more or less, similar views. The book that seems to have had a certain effect on Landor is Remarks on the Progress of Popery (1836) by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth. Landor quotes him in his Letters of a Conservative - which appeared in the same year - when he

1 Ibid., p.89.
2 Ibid., p.77.
deals with the increasing number of Roman Catholic Chapels in Britain.¹ Bickersteth's attack on the Pope and his authority is as harsh as Landor's: "What a mystery of iniquity is that," writes Bickersteth, "which on the one hand will stretch the words 'This is my body' to such a degree of literalness as to make it, by a priest's merely repeating it, work perpetual miracles, making Christ's glorified body everywhere; and stretch the words 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,' &c. &c. to make the Pope the successor of Peter, and the Church of Rome the centre of unity ..."²

Yet Landor differs from the majority of his contemporaries in that he does not speak on behalf of any of the conflicting parties. Though he attacks the Church of Rome, he has very little sympathy with the Church of England. His prejudice against Institutions made him severe, and rather unfair in his attacks on the Church. He looks upon priests as censors who restrict man's freedom. When Tsing-Ti tells the Emperor how priests condemn people to "everlasting fire," he says, "Amazing! have they that? who invented it? Everlasting fire! It surely might be applied to better purposes. And have those rogues authority to throw people into it?"³

¹ See Letters of a Conservative, Ibid., XII, 216.
² Remarks on the Progress of Popery (1836), p. 20.
Landor's version of Christianity, says Leslie Stephen, "is superficially that of many popular preachers: Be tolerant, kindly, and happy, and don't worry your head about dogmas, or become a slave to priests."\(^1\)

But one also sees in Landor's version of Christianity the influence of his sense of persecution. Despite his admiration for the principles of Christianity, he denounces Christendom believing that it favours persecution, and condemns the Church as an institution of tyranny. Hence his explicit rebellion against it which made Forster declare that the pages of Popery: British and Foreign are "disfigured" by views which have "more of personal spleen than of any higher feeling in them."\(^2\)

Besides this explicit rebellion, the reader of Landor's imaginative works comes across other utterances, put in the mouths of his characters, which show a kind of rebellion - an implicit one - against what is represented as divine tyranny. With this implicit rebellion we shall deal when we discuss the romantic elements in Landor's works.\(^3\)

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1. [Hours in a Library (third series), p.266.](#)
2. [Super, Landor, p.403.](#)
3. [See below, p.134.](#)
CHAPTER SIX

Landor's attitude towards the Contemporary Literary world

"Though I wrote better Latin verses than any undergraduate or graduate in the University," wrote Landor, "I could never be persuaded, by my tutor or friends, to contend for any prize whatever." I doubt if Landor was aware of the confession implied in his own words. He meant to declare the opposite of what his words really mean. He wanted to show how superior he was to his fellows, and how this superiority made him look down upon the competitors, and refuse to compete with students who were inferior to him. It seems that he was too scared of criticism to be really sure of himself, and too scared of failure to be confident of success.

With his Gebir, he sent the following significant letter to Dr. Parr:

I take a liberty, which I hesitated much and often ere I ventured on, to put into your hands and at your discretion a poem which I finished last summer.
   However proud and presumptuous I may have

1 Forster, Landor, I, p.42. "I never would contend at school," Landor also wrote to Southey, "with anyone for any thing. I formed the same resolution when I went to college, and I have kept it." See Ibid., pp.20-1.
shewn myself, I rather think that, during
the time that I fancy you reading and
examining my verses, I shall undergo much
the same sensation as the unfortunate
Polydorus, while his tomb, new turfed and
spruce and flourishing, was plucked for a
sacrifice to Eneas.¹

With this diffidence underlying his apparent over­
certainty in his powers, he approached the world of letters.
Hence his great sensitivity to criticism, which made him
accuse all the critics of the age — except Southey — of being
jealous, malignant and ignorant. Hence also the boastfulness
and the grandiosity which characterise his writings. The
title of his first volume of poetry illustrates what we say.
"There is something slightly ludicrous," writes Super, "when
a lad of barely twenty calls his work The Poems of Walter
Savage Landor."² The lad's grandiosity is also manifest in
the preface. Referring to his treatment of the theme of
Eloise and Abelard, he draws the reader's attention to his
own originality: "Relinquishing, altogether, the paths
pursued by predecessors in this department —" he writes,
"[the author] contents himself not with what has been
already said, but simply with what might have been."³

His preface to Gebir (1795) shows, again, this

¹ The Works of Samuel Parr, ed., J. Johnstone (1828),
VIII, p.47.
³ Poetical Works, III, 390.
grandiosity. It shows, besides, a deep concern with the reception of his poem, and a feeling that he would be attacked by critics: "I am aware how much I myself stand in need of favor. I demand some little from Justice; I entreat much more from Candor. If there are, now in England, ten men of taste and genius who will applaud my Poem, I declare myself fully content: I will call for a division; I shall count a majority."¹

As he had anticipated, his work was attacked by critics. Compared to Southey's favourable criticism of Gebir in the Critical Review, the Monthly Review was most severe on Landor. Southey's review shows a genuine admiration for the poem, and its language which abounds "with such beauties as it is rarely our good fortune to discover."² He enumerated, in ten pages, Gebir's beauties of which readers, he believed, "must already be sensible." "Every circumstance," Southey remarked, "is displayed with a force and accuracy which painting cannot exceed." At the end of his review he wrote: "We have read his poem repeatedly with more than common attention, and with more than common delight."³

¹ Ibid., I, 473-4.
² The Critical Review, XXVII (September 1799), p.29.
³ Ibid., pp.38-9.
The Monthly Review was hostile. It called Landor an "unpractised" author, and accused him of "borrowing too many phrases and epithets from our incomparable Milton."1 Besides, it declared that Gebir was nothing more than the translation of an Arabic tale. These accusations irritated Landor so much that he resolved to punish the reviewer. For this purpose he planned "Post-script to Gebir" which reveals how much he was hurt by the attacks on his work.

He begins this "post-script" by exposing the "rash and indefensible" criticism of the Monthly, and the malice and ignorance of the reviewer. After defending himself against the latter's accusations, and after asserting his own superiority, Landor invites the reviewer "or any other friend that he will introduce" to a strange trial of skill, in the following terms:

I will subject myself to any penalty, either of writing or of ceasing to write, if the author, who criticizes with the flightiness of a poet, will assume that character at once, and, taking in series my twenty worst verses, write better an equal number, in the period of twenty years. I shall be rejoiced if he will open to me any poem of my contemporaries, of my English contemporaries I mean, and point out three pages more spirited, I will venture to add more classical than the three least happy and least accurate in Gebir.2

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2 Poetical Works, I, 481-2.
To justify this strange attitude he then declares that he would not have asserted his claims in this manner if his rights had not been refused him.

Landor must have been greatly disappointed by the failure of Gebir to attract the attention of readers. But he was too proud to show this disappointment then. "I confess to you," he wrote to Southey, ten years later, "if even foolish men had read Gebir, I should have continued to write poetry; there is something of summer in the hum of insects. I like either to win or to extort an acknowledgment of my superiority from all who owe it." Yet in the "post-script" he hides this disappointment and declares that it is not popularity but perfection that he seeks: "Rambling by the side of the sea, or resting on the top of a mountain, and interlining with verses the letters of my friends, I sometimes thought how a Grecian would have written, but never what methods he would take to compass popularity."2

This apparent disdain of popularity makes Landor go as far as to declare his shame that his previous volume had found some popularity. "Before I was twenty years of age I

1 Forster, Landor, I, 261.
2 Poetical Works, I, 482.
had imprudently sent into the world a volume, of which I was soon ashamed. It every-where met with as much commendation as was proper, and generally more."

"Post-script to Gebir" shows very clearly Landor's reaction to the attacks of the Monthly. He speaks of critics in general as malicious persons who take great delight in assailing "by the intolerable stings, of obloquy, scorn, and contempt" the author who "has grasped even the isolated works of sublime imagination," who has sunk "thro' the dearth of conception, or lost in the deserts of enquiry" in his "personal attempts at original composition." These critics who "barked at Gebir" pursue with their "aggravating hisses" every writer of true genius. The more misery they cause such a writer, the more pleased they are. "For, when any one has done an injury, the power, that enabled him to do it comes back upon the mind, and fills it with such a complacency, as smooths away all the contrition that the action of this injury would have left. And little power is requisite to work much mischief." The following image shows how disgusted Landor was with reviewers: "Flies and reviewers fill their bellies while they irritate; both of them are easily

1 Ibid. The reference here is to The Poems of Walter Savage Landor (1795).
2 Ibid., p.483.
crushed, but neither of them easily caught."¹

The Literary world seemed to Landor as corrupted as the political one. "The authors who can come into a share of a monthly publication," he writes, "are happy as playwrights who manage a theatre, or as debtors who purchase a seat in our excellent house of Commons."² In both worlds, he believes, humiliation and persecution are the lot of those possessed of virtue and of genius. Critics — as he sees them — are the tyrants of the literary world:

They hunt over domains more extensive than their own, trample down fences which they cannot clear, strip off the buds and tear away the branches, of all the most promising young trees that happen to grow in their road, plow up the lawns, muddy the waters, and when they return benighted home again, carouse on reciprocal flattery.

Men of genius, on the contrary, may be compared to those druidical monuments, stately and solitary, reared amidst barrenness, exposed to all weather, unimpaired, unaltered, which a child perhaps may move, but which not a giant can take down.³

The Latin essay "De cultu atque usu Latini sermonis" written twenty years later shows Landor's attitude when he was forty-five — just before writing the "Imaginary Conversations", his chief contribution to English Literature. He wrote this essay in 1820, and printed it in his Idyllia Heroica Decem published at Pisa in the same year.

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid., pp.483-4.
³ Ibid., p.484.
The essay shows that the span of twenty years had hardly changed Landor's attitude expressed in "Post-script". He still believes that England is nearly the only country where the poet is humiliated. Other countries honour their poets, while in England, "no man will tolerate any poetic glory except his own."\(^1\) This echoes what he had previously said in "Post-script": "In France and Germany," he wrote, "men of talents are received with cordiality by their brethren - In England, if their brethren look upon them, it is with a grudging eye; as upon those no otherwise connected with them to share their fortune. There it is thought that genius and wit enhance the national glory - in England, the acquisition of sugar and slaves."\(^2\)

The book to which this essay is added is written exclusively in Latin. If this shows anything, it is Landor's scorn for the popular taste. It also shows his conception of himself as a superior writer, who writes for the élite, and who gives utterance to superior thoughts, whose greatness will be acknowledged by future generations. It is the thought of future generations and future fame that urged Landor to write this book in Latin. He thought it the one proper language which should be used "by all civilized nations

\(^1\) Colvin, Sidney, *Landor*, p.91.

\(^2\) *Poetical Works*, I, 487.
for the expression of their most dignified and durable thoughts." To him Latin was by no means a dead language: "Why should those be called the dead languages which alone will never die? Why should any one choose to engrave on glass when it is open to him to engrave on beryl-stone? ... English, even English, may decay ... but Latin has survived and will continue to survive all the vicissitudes of time."¹

The attitude towards critics which the Latin essay conveys is the same scornful attitude expressed in "Postscript". The interval of years between the two works deepened Landor's hostility to critics. He was attacked and ridiculed by reviewers. In his Examination of the strictures of the critical reviewers on the translation of Juvenal (1803), William Gifford wrote against those who "were lavishing ... whole pages of [praise] on a jumble of incomprehensible trash called Gebir, the most vile and despicable effusion of a mad and muddy brain that ever disgraced, I will not say the press, but the "darkened walls" of Bedlam."²

Gifford was clearly prejudiced against Landor. Southey's letter written six years later throws light on Gifford's criticism, "When Gifford published his Juvenal," wrote Southey

¹ Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.
² P. 7.
to Landor in 1809, "one of the most base attacks that ever disgraced a literary journal was made upon it in the Critical Review ... Gifford wrote an angry reply, in which he brought forward all the offences of the Review for many years back; one of those offences was its praise of Gebir.¹ I laughed when I heard this, guessing pretty well at the nature of Gifford's feelings; for I had been the reviewer of whose partiality he complained."² This criticism by Gifford determined Landor's attitude to him. In one of Landor's poems, published 1853, he says

Matthias, Gifford, men like those,
Find in great poets but great foes.³

The fact that Southey's review was published anonymously made some of those who had no sympathy for Landor spread the "ill-natured gossip" that "only the author of such a poem as Gebir could have written its favourable[criticism] in the Critical Review."⁴ Anna Seward heard this gossip from Robert Fellowes, and, in turn, spread it for she was offended by Landor who had refused to meet her, declaring that he

¹ It was not known, then, that the reviewer who highly praised Gebir in the Critical Review was Southey.
² The Life and Correspondence of R. Southey, ed. C.C. Southey (1850), III, 228-9.
⁴ Landor: a replevin, p.78.
preferred a pretty woman to a literary one. When he heard this rumour he expressed his deep contempt for Fellowes and Anna Seward. He must have been exasperated to see his contemporaries not only denying him his rights, but grudging him the little praise he had received.

About the same time he was exposed to the harsh attack of the Anti-Jacobin. Reviewing Gebirus (his Latin version of Gebir) published in 1803, this periodical ignored all the literary merits of the book, and denounced Landor's "atrocious principles" and condemned him for sending George the Third to "the infernal regions." It then accused the author of wishing to render the "blessings" of education and property "insecure," and attributed this wish to "that folly and blindness with which it pleases the Almighty to chastise the last excess of human wickedness."¹

Landor complained to Dr. Parr that the Anti-Jacobin assailed him "with much virulence." Though he showed indifference to its attacks, asking Dr. Parr to "let them pass," he was deeply hurt as his grandiose reactions show. He found consolation in the belief that he was like a garden while his enemies were like a cloud: "the cloud is transitory, the garden blooms." It also satisfied him to follow

¹ The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, XVII (February 1804), pp.179, 182.
the example of Gulliver, "who, when the Lilliputians climbed and crept over him, forbore that contention which a more equal or a more formidable enemy would have aroused." \(^1\)

Landor's Latin essay shows also his inclination to dissociate himself from the literary figures of his country. He expresses his desire "to avoid being confounded by those among whom he is sojourning with the promiscuous crowd of travelling Englishmen." \(^2\) Landor's wish to be a unique figure who stands apart from, or above, his age, has something to do, I think, with his belief that his age ill-treated him. This wish, to which we shall return, determined a considerable part of his writings.

Landor's attitude towards the literary world in general and critics in particular remains the same, even after producing his most successful works: *Pericles and Aspasia* and his two series of "Imaginary Conversations". If we study *A Satire on Satirists* and admonition to detractors, written in 1836, twenty years after the "Post-script", and sixteen years after "De cultu", we find that Landor still looked upon himself as one ill-treated because of his genius. "It is only our intimate friends who like us best when we write well," while the others, he believed, become so jealous

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that they refuse to admit our excellence. He then adds:

The greater part of readers are complacent at imagining their superiority as they discover our aberrations. Every ball we send rolling before us is a stumble and strain to those who are impatient of standing to catch us out at the wicket. Such as cannot find employment in mischievous actions, look for consolation in mischievous thoughts, and solicit, and seldom fail in obtaining, a fit audience, and not few, to applaud them.¹

The chief detractors whom Landor attacks here, besides critics in general, are Blackwood's Magazine and William Wordsworth. It is illuminating to know how and why the Satire came to be written. While Landor was writing Pericles and Aspasia, Blackwood's Magazine was publishing a series of scenes entitled "Alcibiades the Young Man".² When Pericles and Aspasia appeared in March 1836 the author of the series accused Landor of borrowing his material from Blackwood's. This author exasperated Landor by introducing his September scene with a letter in which he makes fun of Landor for announcing that he reads no periodical works: "If your assertion be more than an allowable figure of speech, described by Aristotle in the twenty-first section of his poetics," writes the author, "we admire how some opinions,

¹ See Preface to A Satire on Satirists, Poetical Works, III, 379.
by no means bearing the stamp current, on classical subjects, should adorn your most recent publication, as well as sundry antecedent critiques, contained in periodical journals, and certainly not written by the author of Pericles and Aspasia."¹

In this letter addressed to Landor the writer seems to have been conscious of what we have called Landor's "sense of persecution": "Of one thing let us both be sure -" adds the writer, "impartial justice. You modestly observe, in your Letter to an Author, 'a great party in England, and every Scotchman and half-Scotchman in the world, is my sworn enemy.' Poor man! Since the days of Jean Jacques Rousseau, was there ever such persecution, such conspiracy, and such grammar? But you are mistaken. Scotchmen, and the great party in England, may answer for themselves: for the half-Scotchmen we respond."²

It is easy to imagine Landor's fury on being thus addressed and accused. When Mrs. Dashwood, who showed him the magazine asked him if he proposed to answer, he replied in his typical way which shows how much he scorned those "detractors":

Do you think it possible I should abase myself

¹ Blackwood's Magazine, XI (September 1836), p. 309.
² Ibid., p. 310.
to notice any witticisms in Blackwood's Magazine? I never forgive anyone who tells me what another has said or done against me. I never read criticisms upon me unless to acknowledge an obligation, when I hear of it ... I desire never to see or hear criticisms on my writings, favourable or unfavourable. It is so much time wasted, either to gratify a childish vanity or excite a childish resentment, though I think I am too tough-skinned for either.¹

Landor did not "abase" himself by answering Blackwood's. But as part of his message was to expose every kind of oppression, he set out to expose the injustice he experienced in the Literary world. "The worthies of Edinburgh have been attacking me .... Within next week," he wrote on November 26, 1836, to Milnes, "you will have a copy, not of my answer [to Blackwood's], for I answer no man, but of a satire on these people and others somewhat better."² From the letter he wrote to Lady Blessington we know that the "others somewhat better" include Wordsworth: "My Satire," he wrote, "cost me five evenings, besides the morning (before breakfast) in which I wrote as much as you have about Wordsworth."³ Landor's new attitude towards Wordsworth whom he had previously admired, was a surprise to the friends of both.

¹ This is part of Mrs. Dashwood's letter to Blackwood's in which she sought to defend Landor. Blackwood's published it in November issue with an abuse of "the immense Walter Savage". See Ibid., pp.718-9.


We shall deal with this change in Landor's attitude to Wordsworth when we study his criticism of his contemporaries. This criticism, as will be seen, was much affected by Landor's sense of persecution. The following lines which are the outcome of this sense, sum up, I think, his attitude towards the literary world:

If I extoll'd the virtuous and the wise,
The brave and beautiful, and well discern'd
Their features as they fixt their eyes on mine;
If I have won a kindness never wooed;
Could I foresee that . . . fallen among thieves,
Despoil'd, halt, wounded . . . tramping traffickers
Should throw their dirt upon me, not without
Some small sharp pebbles carefully inclosed?
However, from one crime they are exempt;
They do not strike a brother, striking me.¹

¹ "Appendix to the Hellenics" (1859).
CHAPTER SEVEN

Romantic Elements in Landor's Works

A notion which Landor is never tired of repeating, in one way or another, is that he is different from his contemporaries. This notion which sums up his attitude towards the literary world springs, I think, from the sense of being persecuted by these contemporaries who were - he believed - his inferiors. By emphasising this difference he meant to show his own uniqueness or, in other words, his own superiority. Hence such utterances, which directly convey this notion, as the following one: "I claim no place in the world of letters; I am alone, and will be alone, as long as I live and after."¹

The reader of Landor's works will come across many such sayings. The most typical are those he himself expresses in the dialogues in which he figures as an interlocutor. In the Conversation between himself and Archdeacon Hare, for example, he is preoccupied with this uniqueness. When the

¹ "Consider how studiously I have kept clear of society," he wrote to Forster, "how little I have ever mixt with authors, how totally I have avoided their petty squabbles, and even their less illaudable concerns ... What I am will be known, in good time, by the volume of my Greeks and Romans: a century later by my Hellenics." See Super, Landor, p.411.
Archdeacon remarks that "authors are like cattle going to a fair; those of the same field can never move on without butting one another." Landor says: "It has been my fortune and felicity, from my earliest days, to have avoided all competitions." Then follows the often-quoted passage: "I shall dine late; but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select."¹

In another passage, in the same dialogue, he writes: "I stand out a rude rock in the middle of a river, with no exotic or parasitical plant on it, and few others. Eddies and dimples and froth and bubbles pass rapidly by, without shaking me. Here indeed is little room for pic-nic and polka."² In "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor", he says:

Why should authors act like children? snatching at the coach and horses across the table, and breaking them and trampling them under foot; rejoicing at the wry faces and loud cries they occasion; and ready to hug and kiss, only at the moment when they are called away! For myself I neither ask nor deprecate; no compacts, no conventions, no confraternities, for me. Let them consider me as a cloud if they will; could they break and dissipate this cloud, which they can not, it would form again upon some other day. The breath of the universe, directed at once against me, could detach from me but some loose atoms, and such only as ought to fall of themselves.³

¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Complete Works, VI, 37.
² Ibid., p.41.
³ Ibid., III, 223.
But the main field in which Landor tries to prove his difference and superiority, in a somewhat indirect way, is that in which he speaks of his classicism. Landor has his own conception of romanticism and classicism. He writes of these two terms and of the difference between them. But all the passages in which he deals with this uniqueness point to one end: that classicism is superior to romanticism; and that he himself is a classical writer.

Landor, as we shall see later, was aware of the romantic characteristics of the new school of poetry. He condemned these characteristics as being unclassical. In his poem "To the author of Pestus" which is subtitled "On the Classick and Romantick", he declares that no poetry can be worthy of the name, unless it has the classical virtues of Form:

The classical like the heroick age
Is past; but Poetry may reassume
That glorious name with Tartar and with Turk,
With Goth or Arab, Sheik or Paladin,
And not with Roman and with Greek alone.
The name is graven on the workmanship.

(37 - 42)

The difference between classical and romantic poetry as Landor clearly stresses it, is one of Form.

It is indeed surprising to see Landor praising Philip

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1 In Pericles and Aspasia, he gives an account of this school, and its characteristics. It is to his own contemporaries that he, I think, refers, when he speaks through Cleone of "the young poets at Miletus", as we shall see later. See below, p.347.
James Bailey for a work which can hardly be called classical. *Festus* is an obscure poem. Its blank verse breaks the rules; its images are not clear. It certainly lacks most of the classical virtues on which Landor insists. After praising Bailey's work, he speaks, in a similar tone, of his own classicism, and urges young poets to follow him:

He then assumes the role of one who preaches—in a romantic age—the classical virtues.

We shall discuss fully this intentional difference in Landor's *Form and Criticism* when we deal with these two points in detail. We return now, the poem subtitled "On the classick and romantick," to see where Landor places himself by virtue of this difference. The metaphors he often uses to illustrate this difference turn round heights, and planes; tops and bottoms of mountains. It is at the top that he places himself side by side with the great ancient writers:

I write as others wrote  
On Sunium's height.¹

After referring to his contemporaries in "On the heights",

¹ "Wearers of rings and chains!" *Poetical Works*, II, 465.
as cattle in the common field, that yield "weak creatures" he says:

My mansion stands beyond it, high
Above where rushes grow;
Its hedge of laurel dares defy
The heavy-hoofed below.1

To this high "mansion" Landor invites his young contemporaries who, he thinks, prove to be classical in their poetry. In his poem "To Aubrey De Vere" he says:

Welcome! who last hast climbed the cloven hill,
Forsaken by its Muses and their God!
As De Vere "hath trackt a Grace's naked foot," and seen her "close-bound tresses and the robe succinct," and because she "hath placed her palm" in his hand, Landor singles him out of the crowd to ascend with him "the steeps of Greece",

None stop our road,
And few will follow: we shall breathe apart
That pure fresh air, and drink the untroubled spring.2

To Landor, the top of the mountain is also a symbol for the refuge which the persecuted genius seeks:

Ye who are belted and alert to go
Where bays, won only in hard battle, grow,

Along the coast prevail malignant heats,
Halt on high ground behind the shade of Keats.3

1 Ibid., p.478.
2 Ibid., p.397 (ll.1-2, 26-8).
3 "To recruits," Ibid., p.425.
In "The heroines of England" he grieves for the death of Felicia Hemans and other female writers and says:

... instead of them we see
Flat noses, cheek by jowl, not over-nice,
Nuzzle weak wash in one long shallow trough.

and then adds:

Let me away from them! fresh air for me!
I must to higher ground.¹

Landor again reverts to the same metaphor in his essay on Catullus: "They who have listened, patiently and supinely, to the catarrhal songsters of goose-grazed commons," he writes, "will be loth and ill-fitted to mount up with Catullus to the highest steeps in the forests of Ida, and will shudder at the music of the Corybantes in the temple of the Great Mother of the Gods."²

Thus Landor separates himself from his Romantic contemporaries, believing that he differs from them by reason of his classical virtues which they lack. But one tends to think that this adherence to a certain form, this conscious adherence, does not necessarily exclude Landor from among his contemporaries or make him different from them. For classicism is not merely a matter of Form.

But there is no doubt that in matter of Form, Landor is

¹ Ibid., pp.400-1 (11.44-8).
the most classical among the Romantics. Yet it is an acquired, conscious classicism. Referring to Landor's "highly mannered prose", its "artificiality" and "air of translation," Professor Bush rightly says that "when Landor ceases to be regal he frequently becomes deplorable." It is this conscious classicism which made Leslie Stephen call Landor "a glorified and sublime edition of the model sixth-form lad."^3

Landor's classical virtues, as Ernest de Selincourt has pointed out,^4 are not due to Landor's "natural character," but to his "taste" which classical studies have modified. For Landor's natural character embodies, I think, those traits that imply a romantic attitude to life. Yeats's wondering at Landor's duality is significant here. "When I think of any great poetical writer of the past," he writes, "I comprehend, if I know the lineaments of his life, that the work is the man's flight from his entire horoscope, his blind struggle in the network of stars." He then adds: "While

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2 Ibid.
3 Hours in a Library, op.cit., p.273.
Savage Landor topped us all in calm nobility when the pen was in his hand, as in the daily violence of his passion when he had laid it down."

Yeats then shows the discrepancy between what Landor said and what he actually did: "He had in his Imaginary Conversations reminded us, as it were, that the Venus de Milo is a stone, and yet he wrote when the copies did not come from the printer as soon as he expected: 'I have ... had the resolution to tear in pieces all my sketches and projects and to forswear all future undertakings. I have tried to sleep away my time and pass two-thirds of the twenty-four hours in bed. I may speak of myself as a dead man.'^1

Believing with Mr. Ridley that the difference between Classicism and Romanticism is a difference of attitudes to life, and so "primarily" a difference of spirit and "secondarily and by consequence one of form,"^2 I tend to think that the romantic aspect of Landor's work is strong enough to place him among his Romantic contemporaries. I do not deny that there is a classical aspect, and that it is at times more clear than the romantic. But I think that this classical aspect is alien to Landor's natural character, and that it is acquired by a strenuous effort and a hard

^1 Yeats, W.B., Per Amica Silentia Lunae (1918), pp.16-17.
apprenticeship in the school of the classical writers. In this thesis we shall be mainly concerned with the romantic aspect as the classical has been the subject of numerous studies.

In the study made above of Landor's sense of persecution we have dealt with certain characteristics which are related to this sense. The most prominent among these is rebellion. It underlies his attitude towards the political, religious and literary worlds, and produces a certain Promethean note which pervades his work.

It is this element of rebellion which De Quincey emphasises in his study of Landor's "Count Julian": "Mr. Landor, who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas, when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers," writes De Quincey, "is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian." De Quincey then declares that although men of genius, like Shelley, had attempted directly or indirectly "to realize the great idea of Prometheus ... no embodiment of the Promethean situation, none of the Promethean character, fixes the attentive eye upon itself with the same secret feeling of fidelity to the vast archetype, as Mr. Landor's Count Julian."
De Quincey then gives the following description of Landor's romantic Prometheus:

There is in this modern aërolith the same jewelly lustre, which cannot be mistaken; the same 'non imitabile fulgur,' and the same character of 'fracture', or cleavage, as mineralogists speak, for its beaming iridescent grandeur, redoubling under the crush of misery. The colour and the coruscation are the same when splintered by violence; the tones of the rocky harp are the same when swept by sorrow. There is the same spirit of heavenly persecution against his enemy, persecution that would have hung upon his rear, and 'burn'd after him to the bottomless pit', though it had yawned for both; there is the same gulf fixed between the possibilities of their reconciliation, the same immortality of resistance, the same éternity of abysmal sorrow.

De Quincey ends this study by saying: "Did Mr. Landor consciously cherish this Aeschylean ideal in composing Count Julian? I know not: there it is." Referring to this "lofty tragedy" by Landor, Swinburne also writes: "No comparable work is to be found in English poetry between the date of Samson Agonistes and the date of Prometheus Unbound."

The rebellion of Prometheus touched a sensitive chord in the Romantics. He came to be their "symbol of heroic individualism, of revolt against divine or human tyranny".

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3 Bush, D., Mythology and The Romantic Tradition, p.78.
Like Landor, both Byron and Shelley intensely admired this Aeschylean ideal. Byron who wrote a poem entitled *Prometheus*, and whose works contain many allusions to this rebel, "was passionately fond as a boy"\(^1\) of Aeschylus' drama. *Manfred, Cain, and Heaven and Earth* also show how much this theme of rebellion appealed to him. It also appealed to Shelley who made of Prometheus the archetype of this romantic revolt.

When we come to Landor we find that he expresses the same admiration for Prometheus, "Every wish, hope, sigh, sensation," he says through Aspasia, "was successively with the champion of the human race.... How often ... have we throbbed with his injuries! how often hath his vulture torn our breasts!" Prometheus, Landor admiringly says, "had resisted in silence and disdain the cruellest tortures that Almightyness could inflict."\(^2\)

In the study made above of Landor's psychological characteristics we have seen how rebellion, which characterises his behaviour throughout his life, is the outcome of his sense of persecution. The majority of his characters are rebels against one form of persecution or another. Besides Count Julian we have many other rebels, chosen from

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\(^1\) See *Works*, ed. E.H. Coleridge (1901), IV, 48n.

different times and different countries: Savonarola, Phocion, Garibaldi, Joan of Arc, Washington, Mazzini, Photo Zavellas, and others. Apart from the Imaginary Conversations that embody the rebellion of these, there are the poems and the dramatic scenes which deal with themes of rebellion. "The Phocaeans" deals with Phocaea's defiance of Persia. "Crysaor" - which Bush calls a poem "of romantic revolt" - shows a Titan defying Jupiter. The same theme of revolt is dealt with in such dramatic scenes as "Andrea of Hungary", "Giovanna of Naples", "Fra Rupert", and "Siege of Ancona", which show rebels working to overthrow rulers and tyrants.

"The romantic temper," says Mr. Ridley, "questions and rebels." Most of Landor's writings reflect his questioning and his rebellion. Referring to Landor's Promethean rebellion, which is, I think, the inexhaustible source of his writings, Swinburne says that Landor's "bitter and burning pity for all wrongs endured in all the world found only their natural and inevitable outlet in his life-long defence or advocacy of tyrannicide as the last resource of baffled justice, the last discharge of heroic duty."
Landor's defence of tyrannicide shows the questioning of a rebel's mind, as the following passage—already quoted—shows:

Justice is immutable and divine, but laws are human and mutable; they are violated everyday, changed and superseded perpetually, and sometimes ejected from the judgment-seat by military power. In such a case, what remains for nations? History tells us. There springs up a virtue from the very bosom of Crime, venerably austere, Tyrannicide. The heart of Antiquity bounded before this Virtue. Religion followed Religion; new idols were worshipt; they rotted down one after another; Tyrannicide has appeared in every age, in every country, the refuge and avenger of the opprest.1

This takes us to another aspect of Landor's rebellion. Beside revolting against human oppression many of Landor's characters revolt against the oppression of "Powers Above". These powers are referred to as "Destinies", "gods", "Heaven", and as "God" Himself. It is true that this revolt is a dramatic necessity. Yet, considering Landor's subjectivity—with which we shall deal later on—and his great sympathy for those of his characters who serve as his personae or his masks,2 one tends to believe that their rebellion partakes of his. We have dealt above with his revolt against the

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2 See below p. 198. See also pp. 201, 272-3.
Church and his denunciation of Christendom. Though his attitude to Christianity is, in general, one of respect, he hardly discusses it. Such reticence seems to imply more doubt than faith, "I am resolved not to doubt:" he says through Boccaccio, "the more difficulties I find, the fewer questions I raise."¹

Landor knows that people's faith means much to them. Hence, I think, his reticence. In one of his poems he says,

About the Gods above I would not say
A word to vex you ...²

In "Ines de Castro", Pedro attacks the Church in such a severe way that Ines cries:

Now cease, cease, Pedro! Cling I must to somewhat ...
Leave me one guide, one rest! Let me love God!³

Yet others of Landor's characters believe that this "somewhat", to which Ines clings, is an illusion. When Giulio, in "Ippolito di Este" learns of the fearful doom of his brother Ferrante, he asks him to pray, but Ferrante says:

God hears not, nor is heard ... And thinking of the suffering of the girl he loves, he adds:

¹ The Pentameron, Complete Works, IX, 216.
³ Ibid., I, 232 (11.244-5).
Talk no more of Heaven,
Of Providence, of Justice... look on her!
Why should she suffer? what hath she from Heaven
Of comfort, or protection?

Then the conversation goes on as follows:

Giulio. Talk not so!
Fity comes down when Hope hath flown away.
Ferrante. Illusion!

In the dialogue between Marcus Aurelius and Lucian, the emperor reproaches the latter for scoffing openly "at all religions". When Lucian ridicules people's notion of God Marcus Aurelius replies:

Lucian! I think as thou dost, but abstain
From words that irritate where all should soothe.
I seldom laugh, and never in men's faces.

One cannot say which of the two represents Landor. However, the attitudes of both are very close to each other: while Lucian's is open rebellion, Marcus Aurelius's is reticent.

Relating the sad fate of Anius who ended his own suffering by committing suicide, Landor writes:

Wrong, upon earth imperious, may o'erpower
And crush the mortal; Virtue may stand back

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2 Ibid., (11.103-5).
Nor help him; even the clemency of Heaven
May fail ...................
... but on those who die
Thro' wretchedness, and undeservedly,
Compassionate and faithful verse attends
And drives oblivion from the wasted tomb. 1

In the revised version of 1859 - written twelve years later -
the above passage reads as follows:

The world as ever let Injustice rule,
Let men and Gods look on and little heed,
Let violence overturn the bust, and spill
The treasured ashes, yet above the tomb
Sits holy Grief, and watchful Muse warns off
Oblivion. 2

When we compare these two passages we find that the tendency
is towards a more austere view of the gods. One misses in
such passages the "noble acquiescence" which Mr. Ridley
considers "a mark of the classic spirit." 3 Instead, we find
reproaches hurled against the gods for abandoning such
obedient persons as Anius:

O Why, ye Gods! 4 why, in such lands as these,

Should burst forth anguish from a father's breast?
Why from the guiltless Anius? Who brought gifts
More gladly to your altars? Who more pure? 5

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1 In "Catullus and Salia" Poetical Works, 1, 159 (11.431-38).
2 Poetical Works, 1, 520 (11.263-8).
4 In the revised version of 1859, "Gods" is changed to
"Powers above". See Poetical Works, 1, 520 (1.268).
On the other hand some of Landor's characters express
the same disbelief in the efficacy of prayers, which is
defended in "Middleton and Magliabechi". Crysaor, for
example, believes that "men wrong"

By their prostrations, prayers, and sacrifice,
Either the Gods, their rulers, or themselves¹

We also read in "Corythos" that the Gods "smile at incense,
nor give ear to prayer."² Again, Thetis is made to say that

The soft voice of compassion is unheard
Above.³

In "Crysaor" written in 1800 Landor reproaches the Destinies
for being completely indifferent to the suffering of mortals:

Intent upon their loom, unoccupied
With aught beyond it's moody murmuring sound,
Will neither see thee weep nor hear thee sigh.⁴

But in a poem written thirty years later, he represents
Fortune not as indifferent but as malignant:

Wert thou but blind, 0 Fortune, then perhaps
Thou mightest always have avoided me ...

But blind thou art not; the refreshing cup
For which my hot heart thirsted, thou hast ever
(When it was full and at the lip) struck down.⁵

¹ (11.35-6).
² (Second Part, 1.8). See Poetical Works, I, 506.
³ "Pellus and Thetis" (11.56-7).
⁴ (11.74-6).
⁵ Poetical Works, III, 235-6.
But this rebellion against the persecution of "Powers above" is not as much stressed as his rebellion against human persecution. This latter is open, and fierce. It determines — as we have seen — his attitudes towards the Church, and the political and literary worlds. Such attitudes support Carlyle's remark that Landor's principle "is mere rebellion".1

Withdrawal

Landor's sense of persecution, as mentioned above, set a pattern2 of strife against society and self-exile from it. This pattern recurred throughout his life resulting in two aspects of his writing. While the one embodies his strife, the other his withdrawal. Landor's withdrawal was in both place and time. Though he exiled himself to Italy, he found the present too uncongenial to live in, and escaped to the past. Italy, with its past associations, encouraged such imaginary flights. In "Fiesolan Musings" Landor speaks of himself as a "recluse" who muses, by "aerial Fiesole", on the oppression that drove him from his country:

Ah! how much better here at ease
And quite alone to catch the breeze,

1 See above, p.85.
2 See above, pp.31-51.
Than roughly wear life's waning day 
On rotten forms with Castlereagh, 
Mid public men for private ends, 
A friend to foes, a foe to friends!

But neither Italy, nor any other country, was a real refuge for the one who complained of persecution wherever he went. He therefore says, in the attitude of a stoic:

Nor London, Paris, Florence, Rome ...
In his own heart's the wise man's home ...

And he goes on to describe this one refuge:

Stored with each keener, kinder, sense, 
Too firm, too lofty, for offense, 
Unlittered by the tools of state, 
And greater than the great world's great.

And his one wish, in his retreat at Fiesole is that of one persecuted:

Grant, Heaven! and 'tis enough for me, 
(While many squally sails flit past, 
And many break the ambitious mast) 
From all that they pursue, exempt, 
The stormless bay of deep contempt!

To one who sought such isolation in the "stormless bay", the present meant little. The glory he was looking for belonged to the past; hence the great appeal this past had for him. It was the rich past of Florence that attracted him to that city, as his poem "On the road to Florence" shows:

O could I find thee as thou once wert known, 
Warlike, erect, and liberal, and free!

1 Poetical Works, III, 170 (ll. 29-34, 81-2, 83-6, 88-92).
Ancient Rome, and Ancient Greece, seemed to contain the sort of life that satisfied him. This, I think, is one reason why Landor is called a classical writer. The term seems to me to be only right if it means a love for classical themes, and a tendency to adopt the Form of classical works. But Landor is hardly different from his contemporaries in this admiration for, and escape to, the past. His interest in the history of Athens, for example, is not that of a classical scholar, but the interest of an idealist who dreamt of an age on which his imagination bestowed all that the present lacked. It is not the interest of a historian, but of a poet who sought release from the chains of the present.

Landor's works show that he was interested in whatever was antique and remote. Gebir shows the interest in the Orient. The great appeal of the Arabian Nights to Landor is significant. In a letter written to Lady Blessington on January 13, 1835, he says, "The Arabian Nights have lost none of their charms for me. All the learned and wiseacres in England cried out against this wonderful work, upon its first appearance; Gray among the rest. Yet I doubt whether any man, except Shakespeare, has afforded so much delight, if we open our hearts to receive it."¹ In his Commentary on Memoirs of Madden, Lady Blessington, II, 367.

¹ Madden, Lady Blessington, II, 367.
Mr. Fox, 1812, he writes of the great "celebrity" of The Arabian Nights, and expresses his surprise that they "are mentioned with contempt" in the correspondence of Swift and Pope. He then adds that The Arabian Nights and Rousseau's Héloise "are perhaps read with more universal delight than any [other works] ancient or modern." Landor's admiration for Héloise, which is extremely romantic, is also significant.

But if ancient Rome and Greece fascinated Landor so much, it is because he was taught their languages and culture at school. So one could say that his escape has something to do with this early education which made a deep impression on him. Of the effect of such an education he makes Trelawny say that "on every ingenuous and well-educated mind antiquity lays a spell, of which they [sic] never afterward are dispossessed."

Hellenism was a bell that rang in the early part of the nineteenth century, as a result of the considerable advance in classical scholarship and the new lights the discoveries in Pompeii and Greece shed upon antiquity. While these discoveries invited historians to scientific studies of a past age, they lured poets to realms of beauty, heroism and glory.

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1 See Commentary, p.143.
These poets gave us their picture of the Hellenic age - which is different from that which might be given by scholars. Landor would not let any historical accuracy lessen the beauty of his pictures. Speaking of certain details - concerning the Trojan wars - which are only true according to Homer but not to Thucydides, Aspasia is made to say, "Away with calculation. We make a bad bargain when we change poetry for truth in the affairs of ancient times, and by no means a good one in any." This saying, one thinks, sums up Landor's approach to history.

As the following passage shows, this approach is a poet's:

On an accumulation of obscure deeds arises a wild spirit of poetry; and images and names burst forth and spread themselves, which carry with them something like enchantment, far beyond the infancy of nations. What was vague imagination settles at last and is received for history. It is difficult to effect and idle to attempt the separation: it is like breaking off a beautiful crystallisation from the vault of some intricate and twilight cavern, out of mere curiosity to see where the accretion terminates and the rock begins.²

Landor's recreation of the Hellenic age makes of it a golden one. His Pericles and Aspasia shows how fascinated

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1 Pericles and Aspasia, Complete Works, X, 149.
2 Ibid., p.150.
he was by his image of this past which he delighted to portray. Many of the letters exchanged between the characters of this book are nothing but idyllic pictures of this world. They are not merely beautiful; they are rich with associations. In the very first letter Aspasia describes the olive-trees in Athens in terms of classical mythology that gave Greece her charm: "When the sea-breezes blow," the olive tree "looks beautiful;" writes Aspasia, "it looks, in its pliable and undulating branches, irresolute as Ariadne when she was urged to fly, and pale as Orithyia when she was borne away."¹

In another letter Aspasia expresses her delight in being at Athens "at the first of the Dionysiacs" in the following words:

How fortunate! to have arrived at Athens at dawn on the twelfth of Elaphebolion. On this day begin the festivals of Bacchus, and the theatre is thrown open at sunrise. What a theatre! what an elevation! what a prospect of city and port, of land and water, of porticoes and temples, of men and heroes, of demi-gods and gods!²

"The flute and the timbrel and the harp alone," Anaxagoras is made to write, describing this idyllic world, "were heard along our streets; and the pavement was bestrewn with cistus and lavender and myrtle, which grow profusely on the rocks

¹ Ibid., p.1.
² Ibid., p.3.
behind us." It is indeed a world of beauty, love, heroism, and poetry: "Do you remember little Artemidora," writes Cleone, "the mild and bashful girl, whom you compared to a white blossom on the river, surrounded by innumerable slender reeds, and seen only at intervals as they waved about her, making way to the breeze, and quivering and bending?"

These quotations show that Landor's interest in the Hellenic age is that of an escapist who would build his own world on the model of that glorious one.

In his exile in Italy, Landor was satisfied only when he managed to live in the isolated villa, on the hills that surround Florence. For it secured to him the withdrawal which was essential for his happiness. He tells us of his own withdrawal, in the letters that Anaxagoras is made to send Pericles and Aspasia from his exile: "You, Pericles, and myself, have a world of our own," he writes to Aspasia, "into which no Athenian can enter without our permission." He then tells her of the things that make exile perfect: "Study, philosophise, write poetry. These things I know are difficult when there is a noise in the brain; but begin, and the noise ceases. The mind, slow in its ascent at first,

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1 Pericles and Aspasia, X, 211.
2 Ibid., p.59.
accelerates every moment, and is soon above the hearing of frogs and the sight of brambles.\(^1\)

Thus, far from people, and possessed of few friends and of imagination, Anaxagoras lives - happily:

> Believe me, I am happy: I am not deprived of my friends. Imagination is little less strong in our later years than in our earlier. True, it alights on fewer objects, but it rests longer on them, and sees them better. Pericles first, and then you, and then Meton, occupy my thoughts. I am with you still; I study with you, just as before, although nobody talks aloud in the schoolroom.\(^2\)

The schoolroom, or the study, was indeed one of the places to which Landor withdrew. At the time when troubles were threatening Llanthony, Landor surprised his brother Robert by retiring to his study where he tried to forget these troubles by writing of the love and death of Ulysses.\(^3\) This is symptomatic; most of Landor's writings are either an escape from problems or a release from his own pains; for "the noise in the brain ... ceases" he says - through Anaxagoras - as one writes.

> "Solitude - retirement, rather," writes Landor to Rose

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1. Ibid., p.192.
2. Ibid., p.171.
Paynter, "has the same charms for me as ever."\(^1\) Besides the study, nature was the place to which he retired and which protected him from man.

Of men enough, and oft too much is seen; Of Nature never.\(^2\)

Of the retreat of Anaxagoras in nature, and of his happiness there, we also read: "My tenement is small," he is made to write, "but my vineyard is as spacious as any about." Of his solitude, he then adds:

Sitting at my door, I am amused at the whistle of curlews, and at their contentions and evolutions, for a better possession than a rabble's ear. Sometimes I go down, and enjoy a slumber on the soft deep sands; an unexpected whisper and gentle flap on the face from the passing breeze awakens me, or a startling plash from the cumbersome wave as it approaches nearer.\(^3\)

"Nature I loved" says Landor in his famous quatrain:\(^4\) and his love of nature, I think, is mainly the love of one who is obsessed by human persecution. While for Wordsworth and Coleridge Nature brings positive impulses, for Landor it is a retreat from human persecution:

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Let poet rest his throbbing breast
In the lone woodland's safe retreat.¹

* * *

Landor who was perpetually searching for a refuge from the harshness of life, found it in love. It provided him with a heightened world to which he might withdraw both as man and as a writer. Speaking of

The Loves who many years held all my mind,
he says:

Among my books a feather here and there
tells what the inmates of my study were.²

And because love is a refuge Landor does not seek to destroy it by any analytic or realistic study. Believing – or preferring to believe – in love's omnipotence, he approaches it with an adolescent credulity, "There is no God but he [love], the framer, the preserver of the world, the pure Intelligence!"³

Aspasia is made to say; and most of Landor's characters agree with her.

In Landor's writings on love, the "beloved" is an ideal woman who "dispels" the "gloom of life", understands, appeases and consoles the persecuted genius. Hence his great need

¹ "To a Kid," Poetical Works, III, 194.
² Ibid., III, 132.
for her - a need which most of Landor's writings on love express. Conversing with the "beloved" the persecuted genius forgets his pains. "Vittoria Colonna and Michel-Angelo" illustrates this point. Vittoria grieves that "some poetaster or criticaster has been irreverent toward" Michel-Angelo. She consoles him by telling him that "every predominant genius" must have many enemies, then adds, "Leave those of your light assailants to whiten in their native deserts; and march on."^1

"I come to you at all times, my indulgent friend, to calm my anxieties whenever they oppress me" replies Michel-Angelo. In this reply we see Landor's conception of the beloved:

You never fail; you never falter. Sometimes a compassionate look, sometimes a cheerful one, alights on the earthly thought, and dries up all its noxiousness. Music, and a voice that is more and better, are its last resorts. The gentleness of your nature has led you to them when we both had paused. There are songs that attract and melt the heart more sweetly than the Siren's. Ah! there is love too, even here below, more precious than immortality; but it is not the love of a Circe or a Calypso.2

We perceive in this conception of the beloved, a certain idealization which brings to mind the medieval attitude to

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^1 Complete Works, III, 27.

^2 Ibid.
love and woman. In his chapter on "Romantic Love" Irving Babbit points out the separation between the ideal and the actual which characterises medieval love: "In its attitude towards woman as in other respects," he writes, "the Middle Ages tended to be extreme. Woman is either depressed below the human level as the favorite instrument of the devil in man's temptation ... or else exalted above this level as the mother of God."¹

We find the same thing in Landor. He elevated the women he loved above the level of ordinary human beings: he addressed Rose Aylmer in consecrated terms,² looked upon Nancy Jones as divine,³ and considered the birthday of Rose Paynter "a saint's day on his calendar, to be celebrated with a letter or a poem every year until the very last of his life."⁴ On the other hand, he was severe in his attacks on those who fell short of his imagined ideal. Hence his scorn for his wife who was to him an "intolerable woman", "a vile mother", and a "devil" - as the lines quoted above show.⁵ Mrs. Yescombe was another unfortunate woman. When Landor believed

¹ _Rousseau and Romanticism_ (N.Y., 1919), p.221.
² See his lyric "Rose Aylmer".
³ _Gebir_ (VI 36-40), and "Crysaor", (138-9).
⁴ _Super, Landor_, p.289.
⁵ See p.46.
that she intended to take for herself the money he had
given to her protégée, he attacked her in a way which
aroused strong feeling against him,¹ though he was most
courteous towards women. "The only singularity I can discern
[in Landor]," wrote Lady Blessington, "is a more than
ordinary politeness towards women."² Kirkup saw the same
thing in Landor: "He was chivalresque of the old school."³

We find this contrast in attitudes in his "Dream of
Cino da Pistoia" (1853). In this allegorical poem the
dreamer is Landor himself, as he confessed to Theodosia Garrow.⁴
He saw four women in this dream. First came "the heavenly
twain":

    each fair,
    And each spake fondest words, and blamed me not,
    But blest me, for the tears they shed with me
    Upon that only world where tears are shed,
    That world which they (why without me?) had left.

Then appeared one who is apparently his wife:

    Another now came forth, with eye askance:
    That she was of the earth too well I knew,
    And that she hated those for loving me
    (Had she not told me) I had soon divined.

And of the fourth he says:

¹ See Super's "Extraordinary Action for libel - Yescombe v.
Landor", P.M.L.A. (September, 1941), LVI, 736.
² Idler in Italy, II, 507.
³ Forster, Landor, II, 205.
⁴ Super, Landor, p.314.
Of earth was yet another; but more like
The heavenly twain in gentleness and love:
She from afar brought pity; and her eyes
Fill'd with the tears she fear'd must swell from
mine.¹

The contrast between the wife and the three beloveds is
quite clear. While she is a hateful, earthly, and jealous
woman, the others are compassionate, tender and gentle; and
while the wife blames, they bless. It is difficult to know
exactly the identity of the first two women. The fourth is,
I think, Rose Paynter. If we consider Landor's attitude to
these beloved, especially to Rose Aylmer and Rose Paynter,
we find that it has at its core the typical romantic love of
the unattainable. It is significant to know that Landor
began to sing of his love for Rose Aylmer only after he had
received the news of her death. His acquaintance with Rose
Aylmer was too short to develop into love: "I am quite
certain," he wrote in February, 1853 to Rose's sister, "I
never wrote any [verses] of an amatory turn, nor ever offered
a word of love to your lovely sister."² Shortly after their
meeting Rose Aylmer left for India. When he heard, later on,
of her death, he wrote his well known lyric.³

¹ Poetical Works, III, 40-1.
² "Letters and other Unpublished Writings of W.S.L.", ed.
Wheeler, p.69.
³ "Ah what avails the sceptred race," Poetical Works, III, 77.
About fifty years later, Mrs. Paynter, her half-sister, gave him a lock of Rose's hair. Though he, most probably, had forgotten, by that time, the actual Rose, he treasured the lock of hair and addressed it in tones of ardent love:

Beautiful spoils! borne off from vanquisht death!
Upon my heart's high altar shall ye lie,
Moved but by only one adorer's breath,
Retaining youth, rewarding constancy.¹

One might say that the Rose whom Landor loved was the idealized one, the creation of his own genius.

The second, Rose Paynter, was also unattainable. She possessed all that appealed to Landor: youth, beauty, and above all, her being the niece of Rose Aylmer. Landor was fifty-nine when he saw Rose Paynter who was then only sixteen. Her beauty was such that Kirkup thought of painting her portrait as Juliet. Landor was soon attracted by her, and this attraction seems to have surprised her uncle, as the poem entitled "An uncle's surmise" implies. The girl's uncle is made to say:

"Landor, now hang me but I think
You are in love with Rose. Don't blink
The question!"

Whereupon Landor says:

My good Admiral,
Would you that I alone of all
Who see and hear her should not prove
(As suits their age and station) love?²

¹ Ibid., p.84.
² Poetical Works, III, 95.
One would think the whole matter to be nothing more than a joke, or the usual admiration of an old man for a young girl. But the great number of poems and intimate letters addressed to her reveal a certain seriousness of tone. They show an unmistakeable attraction, and frequently refer to the gap between them - the gap of years which preoccupies Landor:

But who can leap the gulf between Dark fifty-nine and bright sixteen?¹

In the poem written on her wedding day he also says:

Youth is the sole equivalent of youth²

She seems to have noticed that he was sad on that day, for in his following letter to her he writes: "Is it possible that I appeared to you sad and sorrowful on your wedding day?" After expressing his conviction that she has "chosen the man most certain to make [her] happy for life," he declares his intention to give up amusements: "It is time," he adds, "I should begin to feel the effects of age, and I think I do. Let me fold my arms across my breast, and go quietly down the current until where the current ends."³ In "Appeal to sleep", Landor thinks of her as the unattainable:

¹ Ibid.
² "To a Bride, Feb.17, 1846," Ibid., p.83 (1.35).
Mine? ah! mine she must not be.  

At the same time he expresses his hope of meeting her in the other world.

You will be sweet when I am dead:
Where skies are brightest we shall meet,
And there will you be yet more sweet,
Leaving your winged company
To waste an idle thought on me.  

It is sometimes illuminating to compare a writer's published work with his private letters. In the year 1845, for example, Landor wrote his dialogue "Dante and Beatrice" in which Dante is made to say, "You have made me see clearly that you never can be mine in this world; but at the same time, O Beatrice, you have made me see quite as clearly that you may and must be mine in another." God, he adds, "will permit me to behold you, lovely as when I left you."  

In Landor's works, we find that most of his personae idealise in the same way the unattainable women they love. "Childish man! pursuing the impossible!" Beatrice is made to say to Dante. To this significant saying Dante answers: "We cannot touch the hem of God's garment; yet we fall at his feet and weep", whereupon Beatrice says: "But weep not, 

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1 Poetical Works, III, 84.
2 "[To Rose]", Ibid., p.85.
3 "Dante and Beatrice," Complete Works, II, 226.
gentle Dante! fall not before the weakest of his creatures, willing to comfort, unable to relieve you."

Boccaccio is also made to venerate Fiametta: "I feared to lose anything attendant on her presence;" he tells Petrarca, "I feared to approach her forehead with my lips: I feared to touch the lily on its long wavy leaf in her hair, which filled my whole heart with fragrance. Venerating, adoring, I bowed my head at last to kiss her snow-white robe, and trembled at my presumption. And yet the effulgence of her countenance vivified while it chastened me."

Heightening love thus to an improbable pitch, and elevating the "beloved" to a divine status, Landor ignores the classical law of measure and makes too much of things. His is by no means the Greek attitude. It is rather the medieval one. And in this, Landor, I believe, is himself; he is following the natural bent of his character. He who addressed the women he loved in consecrated terms, made of Aspasia a goddess: "Such is your beauty, such your genius," he addresses her through Cleone, "it may alter the nature of things. Endowed with the power of Circe, you will exert it oppositely, and restore to the most selfish and most

1 Ibid., p. 223.
2 The Pentameron, Complete Works, IX, 269.
voracious of animals the uprightness and dignity of man.\(^1\)
Pericles himself is made to say that he finds it hard "to
believe that she, to whom the earth, with whatever is
beautiful and graceful in it, bows prostrate, will listen to
[him] as her lover."\(^2\) The ancient Greeks, one thinks, would
have reproached Landor for this idealization of Aspasia.
Whatever her wisdom and her beauty were, to them she was a
normal human being, with a past of which no woman would be
proud. To idealize her in such a manner would be unforgiv-
able.

Besides these ideal relationships, Landor delineates
others that are purely physical, and that have nothing noble
about them. As he himself could, as a man, draw a distinction
between the ideal and the real, between his heightened love
for Ianthe and the earthy relationships with others,\(^3\) so do
his characters. His Boccaccio and Petrarch relate stories
of such earthy love; and the tone with which Boccaccio
speaks of Piametta is completely different from that with
which he relates his stories which reduce the relations
between men and women to a sheer physical level. The same

\(^1\) Pericles and Aspasia, Ibid., X, 12.
\(^2\) Ibid., pp.12-3.
\(^3\) See Elwin, M. Landor: a replevin, p.102.
could be said of Petrarch. We see him,¹ in Boccaccio's kitchen, patting the cheek of the maid Assunta, who is made the object of the purely physical love of Fra Biagio. This latter is seen warning Assunta against Petrarch by saying, "He makes rhymes and love like the devil. Don't listen to him, or you are undone."²

At the same time Petrarch's love for Laura is spoken of in a completely different tone: "The incense which burnt in the breast of Petrarca before his Laura, might have purified, one would have thought, even the court of Avignon; and never was love so ardent breathed into ear so chaste."³

In giving such a picture of Petrarch, Landor seems to have understood his true character, as the following passage by Babbit implies:

The man of the Middle Ages, however extravagant in his imaginings, was often no doubt terrestrial enough in his practice. The troubadour who addressed his high-flown fancies to some fair châtelaine (usually a married woman) often had relations in real life not unlike those of Rousseau with Thérèse Levasseur. Some such contrast indeed between the "ideal" and the "real" existed in the life of one of Rousseau's favorite poets, Petrarch."⁴

¹ The Pentameron, p. 204.
² Ibid., p. 225.
³ "Francesco Petrarca," Complete Works, XII, 29.
Landor was a passionate man, more of a feeler than a thinker. He approached life through his feelings, and was always under the sway of his passions. Love, besides being a refuge, was a natural channel for such intense passions. It provided the superlative moment which he valued and, in the absence of the "beloved", recreated through recollection.

This brings us to another aspect of Landor's love — a typically romantic one: impassioned recollection. As the romanticist is apt to dream of what he cannot attain in reality, so in the absence of the "beloved" he lives on recollecting past moments with her. As these recollected moments are purified of the cares that usually accompany the real moment, the romantic comes to prefer the recollected moment to the real one. "Objects," says Rousseau, "make less impression upon me than my memory of them."¹ Landor says the same thing, "The recollection of a thing is frequently more pleasing than the actuality; what is harsh is dropped in the space between."² In one of his letters to Rose Paynter, written in 1856, Landor says, "It is pleasant to turn round in the midst of one's weariness and to look on

¹ Quoted in Babbit, op. cit., p. 234.
the verdant declivity behind." In another letter to her (1840) he writes, "I think I am destined to spend [at Bath] all the remainder of my days, living on recollections."^1

In the *Pentameron* Landor makes Petrarch and Boccaccio indulge in such recollections. After reciting his poem, "Departure from Fiametta", Boccaccio is made to say to Petrarch - trying to justify such an indulgence: "Do not look so grave upon me for remembering so well another state of existence. He who forgets his love may still more easily forget his friendships. I am weak, I confess it, in yielding my thoughts to what returns no more; but you alone know my weakness."^3

Among Landor's other characters who find happiness in reliving their past moments of happiness are Tiberius, Tasso and Rosalba. "These too were happy days:" says Tiberius of his past married life with Vipsania, "days of happiness like these I could recall and look back upon with unaching brow."^4 Tasso relives the past so intensely that he forgets that Lionora is dead; and goes on to address her as though

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2. Ibid., p. 57.
she were present. But Tasso is mad. However, people are apt to doubt the sanity of the romanticist who indulges in his impassioned recollection in such an intense way as to become unconscious of reality.

When Rosalba, in "Ippolito di Este", realizes that she is prevented from seeing her lover, she says:

\[
\text{... well my memory can supply}
\text{His beauteous image. I can live on love}
\text{Saturate, like bees with honey, long drear days.}
\text{He must see me, or cannot rest: I can.}
\]

This search for the emotional intoxication in past moments explains not only the poems in which Landor recreates these moments, but also the conception of such Imaginary Conversations as "Dante and Beatrice," "Tiberius and Vipsania," and "Aesop and Rhodopè". Here Landor presents exquisite moments after searching for them not in his own past, but in the past of his personae. This also explains Landor's love and idealization of the beloved of such personae. His Beatrice, Laura, Rhodopè, and Aspasia, are therefore nothing but images of the ideal beloved, as Rose Aylmer, Rose Paynter and Ianthe are.

To Landor, the identity of the beloved did not matter.

1 See "Tasso and Cornelia," Ibid., III, 44.
2 Poetical Works, I, (First part, 99-102).
3 Cf. the two poems entitled "Abertowy", Ibid., III, pp.94 and 98.
The fact that he "indited verses to one lady which he afterwards thought fit, with or without emendation, to offer to another" \textsuperscript{1} puts him very near to another Romantic, Musset, who said:

\begin{quote}
Aimer c'est le grand point. Qu'importe la maîtresse? Qu'importe le flacon pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse? \textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

Love, to Landor's characters, becomes, therefore, a necessity: "0 Pericles!" Aspasia is made to write, "how wrong are all who do not for ever follow Love, under one form or other! There is no God but he, the framer, the preserver of the world, the pure Intelligence! All wisdom that is not enlightened and guided by him is perturbed and perverted." \textsuperscript{3}

Cleone tells us what kind of love it is that preoccupies Landor. It is not the ordinary, every-day love, but the one that takes human beings to the beyond where they experience joys unknown to others: "0 Aspasia," Cleone is made to say, "how glorious is it in one to feel more sensibly than all others the beauty that lies far beyond what they ever can discern! From their earthly station they behold the Sun's bright disk: he enters the palace of God. Externally there is fire only: pure inextinguishable aether fills the whole

\textsuperscript{1} Poetical Works, III, 105.
\textsuperscript{2} Quoted in Babbit, op.cit., p.233n.
\textsuperscript{3} Pericles and Aspasia, X, 202.
space within, and increases the beauty it displays.¹

In the later part of Landor's life, he came to look upon death, also, as a refuge—a attitude which his most frequently-quoted passages hardly reveal. In order to understand this attitude, we have to consider the development of a conspicuous streak of melancholy which is marked throughout his works. For it seems to me that Landor's longing for death which he frequently expresses in the last forty years of his life is not merely the result of old age.

Like most of the Romantics, Landor delights in sorrow. With Keats he agrees that

... in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine.

and with Shelley that

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

For he himself believes that,

The tears that on two faces meet
My Muse forbids to dry,
She keeps them ever fresh and sweet
When hours and years run by.²

and that,

The thorns that pierce most deep are prest
Only the closer to the breast:
To dwell on them is now relief,
And tears alone are balm to grief.³

¹ Ibid., p.59.
² Poetical Works, III, 370.
³ Ibid., p.333.
In his youth he was too proud to show his grief whose reason he did not know, as he says in one of his early poems:

Yet, ere the sources of my grief I know,
Behind they veil, O Solitude! I sigh!
Art may conceal it, but the tear will flow —
Or gladness sparkle — from th'impassion'd eye.

He was notorious for his revolt against authority, and his scorn for critics, but none knew or was allowed to know the softer aspect of his nature, for

Oft with a pensive heart, and slow my pace,
I shed, unseen, involuntary tears. ¹

And when urged to express such pensiveness, he searched — as he learnt to do later — for a mask. Hence his "Abelard to Eloise" which enabled him to indulge in the sorrows of youth without shame, and to speak of "Death's dewy hand", of "griefs' collected storm", and of echoes "vocal with unhappy loves". ² His later writings show a development of this tendency to indulge in the sorrowful. A letter which he wrote later on to Rose Paynter throws light on this development, "Take my word for it," he wrote in June 1840, "if we fondle and pamper our griefs, they grow up to an unwieldy size and become unmanageable. Melancholy, which at first was only the ornament of a verse, becomes at last a

¹ In "Stanzas Written by the Water Side," Ibid., p. 430 (ll. 25-8, 19-20).
² Ibid. See "Abelard to Eloise" (ll. 187, 171, 206).
habit and a necessity. Much of our subsequent life depends on the turn we ourselves give to the expression of our early feelings." One doubts if Rose was in need of such advice. The rest of the letter shows that it was rather Landor who needed to be reminded of it: "But why am I saying all this to you?" he adds, "to you whose philosophy is so much sounder and surer than mine? It is because we all require to be told as often of what we know as of what we do not know."¹

Most of Landor's letters to Rose reflect a certain melancholy which he tries in vain to hide: "I am never tired of solitude where there is sunshine," he writes in one of these letters, "but sometimes this gloom is rather more than external with me."² "The happy days of my existence are all past"³ he tells her in another letter, and in a third he speaks of his "utterable grief."⁴

Landor was an idealist and a dreamer. The realities of life left him, as they left most of the Romantics, disappointed. We have seen, when dealing with his political views, that he looked upon himself as equal, if not superior, to Pitt, Fox, Canning and other famous politicians. Such a conception,

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¹ Letters of W.S. Landor, p.58.
² Ibid., p.63.
³ Ibid., p.120.
⁴ Ibid., p.123.
as well as the belief that he was humiliated by these politicians, embittered him. On the other hand, his failure to make of Llanthony an ideal world led him to leave England with a disillusionment which he never overcame. It is the disillusionment of an unpractical idealist.

This unpracticality, which is seen in other episodes in his life, shows that Landor was more of a dreamer than a man of action. It may also explain his domestic tragedy. When his quarrels with his wife became frequent he simply left his house and never went back. But he was too much attached to his children to enjoy life far from them. He went on begging his brother and his friends to make his daughter live with him. But Landor did nothing beyond this craving to see his children. The strong desire to live with them remained, like all his other wishes, unfulfilled to his last days.¹

This inability to act left Landor pining "for what is not." "The romantic movement," says Babbit, "is filled with the groans of those who have evaded action and at the same time become highly sensitive and highly self-conscious."² For the greater the hopes, the severer the disillusionment.

¹ See his letters to Rose Paynter, in which he expresses his deep grief, anxiety and dejection. Letters of W.S. Landor, pp. 58-60, 96, 123-4, 134-5.
² Babbit, I., Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 316.
This explains Landor's experience not only in politics, but in literature. He began his career with hopes of literary glory, but remained obscure in his early years and unpopular in the later ones. This embittered him however indifferent he appeared to be. "This disappointment," he wrote when Longmans refused to publish his first series of Conversations, "has brought back my old bilious complaint, together with the sad reflection on that fatality which has followed me through life, of doing everything in vain."¹

We have seen, while dealing with Landor's alienation that he looked upon himself as a persecuted genius, and accordingly separated himself from society. This belief in one's own genius and uniqueness which shatters one's communion with society, denotes, according to Irving Babbit, a romantic attitude. For it shows one eager "to get his own uniqueness uttered."² Landor delighted in being different from others, and he often expressed, not without pride, that he differed from others in eating, writing, thinking, and other activities, as the dialogues in which he figures as an interlocutor show. In his letters we find many references to his own uniqueness: "I have nothing to do with people, nor people with me" he wrote to Lady Blessington in the letter

¹ Super, Landor, p.540.
² Babbit, op.cit., p.41.
quoted above - in which he told her of the phrenologist who "once told me that he observed the mark of veneration on my head." ¹

"The genius for the Greek, let us remind ourselves," says Babbit, "was not the man who was in this sense unique, but the man who perceived the universal; and as the universal can be perceived only with the aid of the imagination, it follows that genius may be defined as imaginative perception of the universal." Babbit then adds that the "universal thus conceived not only gives a centre and purpose to the activity of the imagination, but sets bounds to the free expansion of temperament and impulse, to what came to be known in the eighteenth century as nature." ²

Landor's loneliness was another thing which he showed the "beloved" only, or expressed behind a mask. It is this sense of loneliness that, I think, made him identify himself with the statue of Memnon:

Exposed and lonely Genius stands,
Like Memnon in the Egyptian sands,
At whom barbarian javelins fly. ³

Landor's loneliness is an important fact in his life.

¹ Morrison, A., The Blessington Papers, p.111.
² Babbit, op.cit., p.41.
³ In "From heaven descend two gifts alone ..." Poetical Works, III, 115.
His thirst for the ideal intellectual companion and the "beloved" in whose conversations he sought consolation, can explain his choice of the dialogue form, as explained below.¹ For us who deal with the romantic aspect of his work, this loneliness makes him not so different from his Romantic contemporaries. It is not the loneliness of one who does not belong to the age owing to major differences in thought and attitude, but the loneliness of disillusion which is "the main symptom of romantic melancholy" as Babbit says. "When one gets beneath the surface of the nineteenth century," he adds, "one finds that it was above all a period of violent disillusion, and it is especially after violent disillusion that a man feels himself solitary and forlorn."²

It would be misleading, of course, to think that all melancholy is a sign of romanticism. Both the classical and the romantic writer experience this feeling of melancholy. Yet there is a distinction between the attitude of each towards it. "Disclose not to strangers our burden of care; this at least shall I advise thee" says Pindar, "Therefore it is fitting to show openly to all the folk the fair and pleasant things allotted us; but if any baneful misfortune

¹ See p. 263.
² Babbit, op.cit., p.335.
sent of heaven befalleth man, it is seemly to shroud this in darkness." ¹

Landor does indeed do this but only when he assumes the role of consoler, as he does in the poem entitled "To a Lady":

Why, why repine, my pensive friend,
At pleasures slipt away?
Some the stern Fates will never lend,
And all refuse to stay.
I see the rainbow in the sky,
The dew upon the grass,
I see them, and I ask not why
They glimmer or they pass.
With folded arms I linger not
To call them back; 'twere vain;
In this, or in some other spot,
I know they'll shine again.²

But we cannot say that this attitude is typical of Landor. One aspect of his work shows that he discloses to strangers the most personal of his cares. In his public writings he tells us of his misfortunes, as a man and as a writer. He does so not to instruct the reader, but to relieve himself of the pains which preoccupy him:

To dwell on them is now relief
And tears alone are balm to grief.

It is in fact astonishing to note the great number of poems

² Poetical Works, III, 27.
in which Landor, who is generally known as a fighter, speaks of tears.\(^1\) Besides these, there are others that express deep melancholy, and grief for the passing away of pleasure. In one of these poems he says:

Pleasure! why thus desert the heart
In its spring-tide!\(^2\)

and asks pleasure why it "takes" so much away. In the following poem he is also preoccupied with the transience of joy:

Why do our joys depart
For cares to seize the heart?
I know not. Nature says,
Obey; and man obeys.
I see, and know not why
Thorns live and roses die.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Here are some such poems:

"Our youth was happy ..." Poetical Works, III, 44.
"The tears that on two faces meet" Ibid., p.370.
"The tears that rise" Ibid., p.363.
"Blest are the bad alone while here" Ibid., p.295.
"Mine fall, and yet a tear of hers" Ibid., p.123.
"There are some tears we would not wish to dry" Ibid., p.124.
"A time will come when absence, grief, and years" Ibid., p.126.
"We will not argue" Ibid., p.128.
"Here, ever since you went abroad" Ibid., p.130.
"Tears, and tears only, are these eyes that late" Ibid,II,132.
"Tears! are they tears indeed?" Ibid., p.138.
"A voice I heard and hear it yet." Ibid., p.139.
"Tears, many parti-color'd years" Ibid., p.33.
"Tears driven back upon the fountain head" Ibid., p.236.

\(^2\) Poetical Works, III, 114.

\(^3\) Ibid., p.45.
Landor, we have seen, was an emotional being who sought to live in the superlative moment, as his love poems show. Life without the company of the beloved was too insipid for the lonely man to bear.

Who would desire to spend the following day
Among the extinguished lamps, the faded wreaths,
The dust and desolation left behind?

Therefore his poems become a kind of prayer to the beloved to remain with him:

Remain, ah not in youth alone,
Thou youth, where you are, long will stay,
But when my summer days are gone,
And my autumnal haste away.
"Can I be always by your side?"
No; but the hours you can, you must,
Nor rise at Death's approaching stride,
Nor go when dust is gone to dust.

This need deepens in his later years:

No charm can stay, no medicine can assuage,
The sad incurable disease of age;
Only the hand in youth more warmly prest
Makes soft the couch and calms the final rest.

But Landor's love of the unattainable only increases his pains and deepens his disillusionment. On the other hand his consciousness of the transience of things makes him sadly realize that,

Not even love must last,

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1 Ibid., p.341.
2 Ibid., p.129.
3 Ibid., p.134.
4 In "Fate! I have askt few things of thee." Ibid., p.12.
and that it is a temporary refuge. Yet the thought of another permanent refuge becomes his main consolation:

Bidden by Hope the sorrowful and fond
Look o'er the present hour for hours beyond.
Some press, some saunter on, until at last
They reach that chasm which none who breathe hath past.
Before them Death starts up, and opens wide
His wings, and wafts them to the farther side.\(^1\)

Hence his impatience with life:

I wait its close, I count its gloom,\(^2\)
and his melancholy yearning for death which makes him - thirty-nine years before his death - say:

O Parent Earth! in thy retreats
My heart with holier fervour beats,
And fearlessly, thou knowest well
Contemplates the sepulchral cell.\(^3\)

But it is not the contemplation of a fearless philosopher; it is that of one who is weary of life, as the following lines, written about thirty years before his death, show:

The day returns, my natal day,
Borne on the storm and pale with snow,
And seems to ask me why I stay,
Stricken by Time and bowed by Woe.\(^4\)

In both his prose and verse he comes to express a certain denial of life and a welcome of death. Marcus Tullius, who

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\(^1\) Ibid., p.45.
\(^2\) In "mild is the parting year." Ibid., p.117.
\(^3\) "Lines written in the Church yard of Llanbedr, on a vacant tomb, 31st May, 1832", Ibid., III, 11.
\(^4\) Written on his sixtieth birthday. Ibid., p.20.
is represented as thinking of his death on his birthday, is made to say: "If life is a present which any one foreknowing its contents would have willingly declined, does it not follow that any one would as willingly give it up, having tried what they are?"¹

Landor is usually quoted as expressing a classical attitude towards death, an attitude of noble acquiescence which is manifest in such passages as that of Marcellus who dies praising the Gods for their beneficence to him in both life and death: "Gods of my country! beneficent throughout life to me, in death surpassingly beneficent, I render you, for the last time, thanks."² Another passage which is often quoted to illustrate Landor's classical attitude towards death is the following poem:

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.³

There is then a kind of duality in Landor's attitude towards death. The attitude which is more typical of the man who believed that his life was a failure, that his "most virtuous hopes and sentiments [had] uniformly led to misery" ⁴

³ Poetical Works, III, 249.
⁴ In a letter to Southey, November 1803, quoted in Forster, Landor, I, 238.
and that "all unhappiness is real",¹ is, I think, the one which shows death as a refuge, and which brings to mind Keats's lines:

... for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath.²

A reason that makes one more inclined to accept this attitude as more typical of Landor is that unlike at least those of the classical writers who were either agnostic about death, or who regarded it as the end, he does not look upon it as final. His frequent writings on "the other shore", and on the happiness he is apt to find there, show his belief in a better life after death. To him death is a gentle "calm sleep" from which "friends awake us in their happier homes".

His imagination flies to this other shore and endows it with all that he misses in life. In one of his poems he describes an imaginary visit to the other world. It is a place where one's wishes are realized the moment they occur. Landor's desire to have Southey as his guide in this other world is realized as soon as it is felt. While conversing together, Southey refers to the death of his first-born son,

¹ In a letter to Rose Paynter, June 1840, Letters of W.S. Landor, p.55.
² In "Ode to a nightingale" (ll.51-4).
and soon the son appears:

The words were not yet spoken when the air
Blew balmier; and around the parent's neck
An angel threw his arms; it was that son.
"Father! I felt you wisht me," said the boy,
"Behold me here!"

Thus Landor imagines the other world: it is a place where
one is never disappointed. There, his genius as a great
writer will be acknowledged - as Southey's son is significantly
made to say:

............. Gentle the sire's embrace,
Gentle his tone. "See here your father's friend!"
He gazed into my face, then meekly said
"He whom my father loves hath his reward
On earth; a richer one awaits him here."

Some of Landor's characters utter similar sentiments.
Like him, they are interested in the other world. His choice
of these characters, or personae, is probably determined by
his interest in this theme. He chooses those who are liable
to have similar views. Marcus Tullius looks forward to
meeting the great figures of the past:

O Quinctus! I wish I could impart to you my
firm persuasion, that after death we shall enter
into their society; and what matter if the
place of our reunion be not the capitol or
the forum, be not Elysian meadows or Atlantic
islands? Locality has nothing to do with
mind once free. Carry this thought perpetu-
ally with you; and Death, whether you believe
it terminates our whole existence or otherwise,

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1 [In Memoriam, Southey], Poetical Works, III, 36-7.
will lose, I will not say its terrors, for the brave and wise have none, but its anxieties and inquietudes.¹

The belief in a future state of bliss is a great consolation to Landor. So it is to these characters: "We shall enjoy a future state accordingly as we have employed our intellect and our affections" says Marcus Tullius, "Perfect bliss can be expected by few: but fewer will be so miserable as they have been here."² In a passage added to the second edition, Landor carries this point on death further. He makes Marcus say that death, like sleep, restores "our power":

Just as sleep is the renovator of corporeal vigour, so ... I would believe death to be of the mind's; that the body, to which it is attached rather from habitude than from reason, is little else than a disease to our immortal spirit; and that, like the remora, of which mariners tell marvels, it counteracts, as it were, both oar and sail, in the most strenuous advances we can make toward felicity.³

Others of Landor's characters express similar beliefs. Vittoria Colonna converses on death with Michel-Angelo. While she speaks of "another state of existence," he talks of

¹ "Marcus Tullius and Quinctus Cicero," Complete Works, II, 125.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p.134.
the "everlasting mansions".\textsuperscript{1} In the Conversation between Aesop and Rhodopè Landor makes Rhodope's father say: "We shall meet again, my Rhodopè! in shady groves and verdant meadows, and we shall sit by the side of those who loved us."\textsuperscript{2} And while Leonora on her death-bed says: "O! Could [Tasso] leave his prison as surely and as speedily as I shall mine; it would not be more thankfully. O! that bars of iron were as fragile as bars of clay!"\textsuperscript{3}, Lady Lisle - in her condemned cell - cries: "Open, O gates of Death!"\textsuperscript{4}

Nothing made Landor more vocal than the theme of a young beautiful woman snatched away by death, as his lyrics "Rose Aylmer," "Rose Aylmer's Hair," and "The Death of Artemidora," and other poems show. It was only when he heard of Rose Aylmer's death - as mentioned above - that he began to sing of his love for her. One tends to think that it is this appeal of beauty and death combined together rather than any real love for her that made him vocal. This shows a certain romantic attitude in Landor; for as Mario Praz points out,

\begin{footnotes}
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the Romantics looked upon Beauty and Death "as sisters".1 Besides Landor's lyrics - mentioned above - which show this sisterhood, the theme of beauty and death is reverted to in the Imaginary Conversation "Leonora di Este and Father Panigarola", and in such dramatic scenes as "Beatrice Cenci", and "Shades of Agamemnon and Iphigeneia". This theme is also dealt with in the poems "Gunlaug and Helga", and "A mother's Tale" which show heroines, young and beautiful, yield to grief and death. They are delineated in such a way as to make them conform with the picture of the romantic heroine who is an incarnation of melancholy. Beatrice Cenci, for example, is made to speak of nightingales in the following terms:

If their sweet sorrow overshadows mine
I ought to love them for it, and I do.
I have not always thought them melancholy;
'Tis but of late; and gayer things are worse.2

Another theme which is closely related to the theme of Beauty and Death, and which equally appealed to the Romantics, is that of the persecuted heroine. We shall deal with this theme when we discuss the impact of Landor's withdrawal to Italy on his work.

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1 The Romantic Agony, p.31.
2 "Beatrice Cenci: five scenes," Poetical Works, II, 10 (ll.20-3).
The subjective element in Landor's work.

Talking of solitude to Lady Blessington Byron said that "it has but one disadvantage ..., but that is a serious one, - it is apt to give one too high an opinion of oneself." On reading Byron's observation in his copy of Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington (1834), Landor wrote at the bottom of the page a comment that shows his disagreement: "I do not think so. In solitude we have other and higher matters to think about. In society we divine how we shall appear, what is likely to please or displease, and surrender a sound judgement to an unsound one."\(^1\)

Despite Landor's objection, Byron's observation illustrates a truth about Landor's own work. For what preoccupied him in his withdrawal from society was his own self. His personal experiences as a man and as a writer formed the foreground as well as the background of his work. He was self-conscious, not only in society as his remark shows, but also in the world to which he withdrew.

An important fact about Landor's escape, is that he could not escape from his ego. His personal worries and

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\(^{1}\) The British Museum Library (Shelf-mark: C134.c.3.), p.335.
problems followed him and prevented him from enjoying a full escape. So we find him preoccupied with these personal troubles whether he is, in spirit, in the Athens of Pericles, or the Florence of Dante. We have seen how he sought to escape such troubles at Llanthony by composing in 'Latin' his poem "The last of Ulysses". But in fact Landor's escape was not complete. He was obsessed, in this escape, by his persecutors who - he believed - caused his ruin: Gabell, Gabb, and Betham. These are made responsible, in the poem, for the death of Ulysses. Their names become Gabalus, Gabbus and Baethamus, in this poem which was first composed in Latin:

Who shall record the rabble? who pronounce
The barbarous names? who care to know, if told?

Gabbus, who bade escape the thief he caught,
To share with him the spoil he bore away.
Boethamus, bold in plunder, bold in wife,
He, and his sea-spawn brothers; and, of gait
Countenance and demeanour brotherlike,
A dismal sister, hired at funerals
To howl in verse the praises of the dead.

Here Landor not only mentions the names of his antagonists at Llanthony, but he also tells us of what they were accused—which is irrelevant to the theme of the poem—and gives an

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1 Super, Landor, p.126.
2 Poetical Works, I, 146 (Part III, 247-8, 256-62).
actual description of these persons.

He thus departs from classical decorum when he introduces a satirical element in a classical epic idyl. This departure characterises a considerable part of Landor's work. There is a purely personal element in a great number of his dialogues, poems, prefaces and public letters. It is not of oppression, revolt and exile in general that Landor speaks, but of his own suffering as a persecuted genius, of his own rebellion against tyrants, and of his own withdrawal, that he is primarily preoccupied.

Characters of the

Most of the Conversations are masks which are often too thin to hide his identity. As we listen to what these characters say, we are sometimes under the impression that we are reading Landor's autobiography, or an "apologia pro vita sua" written by these characters. "Hephaestion" of whom Aspasia tells Cleone, is no other than Landor himself: "I hear he has suffered on many occasions," she writes, "and particularly in regard to his fortune, very great injustice with equally great unconcern." She is then made to defend his withdrawal, "He is never seen in the Agora, nor in the theatre, nor in the temples, nor in any assemblage of the people, nor in any society of the learned; nor has he taken the trouble to enter into a confederacy or strike a bargain, as warier men do, with any praiser; no, not even for the loan
of a pair of palms in the Keramicos." In a foot-note to this
letter, the editor, T. Earle Welby, rightly says: "Obviously
Landor here sketches himself, in the attitude he supposed
he permanently maintained."^1

Hephaestion’s - or Landor’s - poem which Aspasia sends
Cleone is typical of Landor’s attitude towards his con­
temporaries, which we have discussed above. This poem is merely
another "Post-script to Gebir," or "De Cultu," or a Satire
on Satirists". In the "Iambics" which Aspasia introduces
by saying that Hephaestion "is going to Italy, and has written
this poem on the eve of his departure," Landor writes:

Speak not too ill of me, Athenian friends:
Nor ye, Athenian sages, speak too ill!
From others of all tribes am I secure.
I leave your confines: none whom you caress,
Finding me hungry and athirst, shall dip
Into Cephisus the grey bowl to quench
My thirst, or break the horny bread, and scoop
Stiffly around the scanty vase, whereby
To gather the hard honey at the sides,
And give it me for having heard me sing.
Sages and friends! a better cause remains
For wishing no black sail upon my mast.
’Tis, friends and sages! lest, when other men
Say words a little gentler, ye repent,
Yet be forbidden by stern pride to share
The golden cup of kindness, pushing back
Your seats, and gasping for a draught of scorn.
Alas! shall this too, never lack’d before.
Be, when you most would crave it, out of reach!
Thus, on the plank, now Neptune is invoked,
I warn you of your peril: I must live,
And ye, O friends! howe'er unwilling, may. 2

^1 Pericles and Aspasia, X, 115.
^2 Ibid., p.115.
Of his own genius and future fame— which so much occupied Landor— Cleone is made to say: "How do you know, pray, that Hephaestion may not live? and quite as long as he fancies he shall; a century, or two, or three." Landor then makes her praise his own "Iambics":

Even in the Iambics there is a compression and energy of thought, which the best poets sometimes want; and there is in them as much poetry as was necessary on the occasion. The poet has given us, at one stroke, the true impression of a feature in his character; which few have done, and few can do, excepting those features only which are nearly alike in the whole fraternity.¹

The reference here is to Landor's uniqueness and to his consciousness of being persecuted for his superiority by his inferiors.

Continuing her defence of Landor, Cleone adds: "You do not know Hephaestion, and you speak ill of him on the report of others, who perhaps know him as little as you do." Landor refers, here, to those contemporaries who undervalued him without knowing him well: "You would shudder if I ventured to show you the position you have taken."² In this sentence one can hear Landor's reproach to his contemporaries for denying him recognition.

In selecting his characters, and composing their con-

¹ Ibid., p.117.
² Ibid., p.118.
Landor is not objective. Most of his characters are his representatives. They think and talk as he does. Boccaccio, Petrarch, Pericles, Aspasia, Anaxagoras, Homer, Marcus Tullius, and many others are made to repeat his notion that the great are always persecuted: "There is, and ever will be, in all countries and under all governments, an ostracism for their greatest men."¹ says Landor's Boccaccio. Marcus Tullius is made to give a long speech on persecution beginning with: "In literature great men suffer more from their little friends than from their potent enemies. It is not by our adversaries that our early shoots of glory are nipped and broken off, or our later pestilentially blighted; it is by those who lie at our feet, and look up to us with a solicitous and fixed regard until our shadow grows thicker and makes them colder."²

Most of these characters partake of Landor's haughtiness: "Could I begin my existence again, and what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen," Marcus Tullius is made to say, "I would choose few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities." After expressing this typical Landorian notion, he adds: "This rubbish, for such it generally is, collecting at the base of an elevated mind,

lessens its height and impairs its character. What requires to be sustained, if it is greater, falls; if it is smaller, is lost to view by the intervention of its supporters.\(^1\)

Being so subjective Landor's writings point to his personal life. His choice and treatment of a theme seem to have been determined by the personal experience through which he was living at the time. "The death of Clytemnestra" illustrates this point. In the months following his departure to England he was the prey of his own anxieties, fears and suspicions. The thought of his wife's "misconduct" obsessed him, and he wanted to have his children with him. "When I think of my family it almost drives me mad," he writes to his brother Henry from Clifton on 12th June, 1836, "for whatever I have at any time projected or ordered has been systematically overthrown." Referring to his wife, and to his decision not to live in future "under the same roof"\(^2\) with her, he expresses his sorrow for his daughter Julia. Three days later he sends his brother another letter about the way his wife behaved, and how she persecuted him: "Nothing was ever so much my desire as to conceal the misconduct of my wife, for the sake of my children." He then adds, "I

1 Ibid., p.144.
suspect at last she will keep my children from me, and the winter will whiten my bones among the Alpes." He ends his letter by begging his brother to persuade his "dearest Julia" to join him in England.

The next month Landor was in Heidelberg waiting for his wish to be fulfilled. It is significant to know that the subject which so much preoccupied him as a man, at that time, was the very theme that preoccupied him as a writer. He was then revising "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker", in which Marvel defends Milton's Treatise on Divorce by saying, "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," and adds: "We know not how grievously a man may have suffered, long before the calumnies of the world befell him as he reluctantly left his house-door."^2

The other theme on which Landor was then engaged is the "Death of Clytemnestra", which he sent to Forster, to be incorporated in Pericles and Aspasia.

The character of Electra, in this scene, is conceived with great sympathy. The reason, I think, is that while drawing

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1 Ibid., p.292.
2 Complete Works, IV, 242,46.
her Landor was preoccupied with his own daughter, who—in a sense, at least to Landor—would be another Electra. For at the time he was writing this scene, as we mentioned, he believed that his wife was unfaithful to him, and wanted his daughter to live with him. Hence the identification—in his mind—between his daughter and Electra. If we compare his Electra to the Electra drawn by the three Greek Tragedians, we find that his is the softest possible portrayal of Electra which would gain our sympathies.

When we read what Landor puts in the mouth of his Electra we can see the personal element—when she for example is made to remind Orestes of his father's love for him:

Think upon our father—
Give the sword scope—think what a man was he,

Of thee, Orestes! tossing thee above
His joyous head and calling thee his crown.

Nothing saddened Landor more than the ingratitude of his son Arnold whom he loved so much. Arnold sided with his mother against him. We cannot help remembering this when we read the following lines:

Ah! boys remember not what melts our hearts
And marks them evermore!¹

The following lines from "The madness of Orestes" seem

¹ Pericles and Aspasia, Complete Works, X, 235.
to be a reminder to Arnold. In these lines Landor makes Electra say to her brother:

Speak no more of love, 
Ill-omen'd and opprobrious in this house. -
A mother should have had, a father had it, 
O may a brother let it dwell with him, 
Unchangeable, unquestioned, solitary, 
Strengthened and hallowed in the depths of grief! 
Gaze not so angrily - I dare not see thee, 
I dare not look where comfort should be found. 

Landor's following letter written to his son, Arnold, about the same time, is a similar reminder:

Alas, Arnold, too much has been forgotten. Do you hate a father because he cannot bear the dishonour of his family? ... I do not appeal to your justice; I appeal to your memory ... Is it not strange that the only person that treats me with indignity, is the person who made oath in the presence of God, to treat me very differently? ... I have loved all of you most fondly, and without distinction. Some of you may be taught that you have no right to treat me as a father. I have every day of my life wished to see my family and have now made one last effort to save it ... Two painful and violent disorders the erysipelas and cholera, came rapidly over me. Either of them, at my age, would be enough to prepare me for the inevitable hour. God grant it may come soon ... I do not desire you to return me any part of the love I have incessantly borne away toward you, nor to observe the courtesies of society in my favour ... Arnold, permit me to call myself, perhaps for the last time, your affectionate father W.S. Landor. 

Thus were Landor's feelings at the time he wrote of the

1 Ibid., p.238.
Death of Clytemnestra. Deep hatred for an unfaithful wife, pity for a daughter whom he deeply loved, and bitterness at the ingratitude of a son. That he chose to write of the death of Clytemnestra while waiting for his daughter is significant. It is also significant to know that the only obstacle against the realization of his heart's desire, which was seeing his children, and Julia especially, was his wife. She would not allow them to live with or even visit him: "My wife will not give up the children," he wrote to his brother in June, 1836, "she swore she never would." These facts help, I think, to explain why Landor disagrees with the Greek tragedians, and why he portrays Electra as a loving daughter who is as tender as any father would wish his daughter to be.

A brief review of the delineation of Electra by the Greek tragedians will illustrate this point. In the Libation bearers, the murder of Clytemnestra is committed without a sign of grief or repentance. In Sophocles, Electra becomes less cruel, "We should note the masterly, yet unobtrusive way in which her feelings toward Clytemnestra are portrayed" writes Gilbert Norwood, "Hating her steadily as the slayer of Agamemnon, she cannot quite forget (as does Euripides' heroine) that Clytemnestra is her...

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1 Ibid., p.292.
mother." Yet there is no sense of guilt. At the end of the play, the chorus proclaims the passing of night and the birth of dawn.

As for the Electra of Euripides, though she feels great shame after the murder of her mother, she is a heartless creature. Referring to the plot she invents to summon her mother, Professor Norwood says, "It shows, as nothing else could show, the fiendishness of a woman who can use just this pretext to the very woman who gave her birth. She relies upon the sanctity of motherhood to aid her in trampling upon it." It is this heartlessness that characterises her shame, I think, and makes it different from that of Landor's Electra: "With burning hatred did I pursue her," says Euripides's, "the mother who bore me." She grieves, but her grief is for herself, "Alas! And whither I? In what dance will there be a place for me, who will have me in marriage, what husband will take me as a bride in his bed?"

1 Norwood, G., Greek Tragedy (1953), p.143.
2 "Announce that I have given birth to a male child.... Then, when she has come, of course it is her death." vv 652-60. See Ibid., 256.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid., (11.1198-1200).
As for Landor's Electra, the following passage shows her suffering after the crime is committed:

Electra. O that Zeus
Had let thy arm fall sooner at they side
Without those drops! list! they are audible,
For they are many - from the sword's point falling,
And down from the mid blade:
Too rash Orestes!
Couldst thou not have spared our wretched mother?
Orestes. The Gods could not.
Electra. She was not theirs, Orestes.
Orestes. And didst not thou -
Electra. 'Twas I, 'twas I, who did it
Of our unhappiest house the most unhappy!
Under this roof, by ever God accurst,
There is no grief, there is no guilt, but mine.

The letter which Aspasia is made to write to Cleone tells us more of Landor's own conception of the character of Electra:

Electra was of a character to be softened rather than exasperated by grief. An affectionate daughter is affectionate even to an unworthy mother; and female resentment ... throws itself down inert at the entrance of the tomb. Hate with me ... the vengeance that rises above piety, above sorrow; the vengeance that gloats upon its prostrate victim. Compunction and pity should outlive it; and the child's tears should blind her to the parent's guilt. I have restored to my Electra such a heart as Nature had given her; torn by suffering, but large and alive with tenderness.

Besides this delineation of Electra, Landor's subjectivity - which many of the passages quoted above and below illustrate -

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1 Pericles and Aspasia, Complete Works, X, p.236.
2 Ibid., p.234.
is also seen in his delineation of nature. He projects - as romanticists do - his own inner feelings such as sadness, loneliness, and his sense of persecution upon nature and natural objects. He sees them also as sad, and as lonely and as persecuted as he is. After Ianthe's departure he feels alone, and his loneliness colours the world around him. The place where they once met becomes a "lonely disenchanted ground."\(^1\) In a mood of dejection, his inner gloom is reflected upon the sky, and the "cheerless room":

Here will I sit, 'till heaven shall cease to lour,
Gaze on the mingled waste of sky and sea.\(^2\)

He also feels, while weeping Ianthe's death, that nature shares his sadness:

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\text{I DARE not trust my pen it trembles so;}
\text{It seems to feel a portion of my woe,}
\text{And makes me credulous that trees and stones}
\text{At mournful fates have uttered mournful tones.}\(^3\)
\]

In his sadness, he sees flowers also sad, and to him the drops of dew on their leaves are tears, as those tears in his eyes.

\[
\text{The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;}
\text{So have I too.}\(^4\)
\]

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1 "To Ianthe [in Vienna]", Poetical Works, III, 119n.
2 In "While the winds whistle ...", Ibid., p.109.
3 "On the death of Ianthe", Ibid., p.140.
4 "The leaves are falling; so am I ...", Ibid., p.135.
There are, besides, three lines in his poem "Faesulan idyl" in which he describes nature at Fiesole. These lines illustrate the typical romantic feeling for nature, which is subjective in its essence:

And where go forth at morn, at eve, at night,
Soft airs, that want the lute to play with them,
And softer sighs, that know not what they want ...

In the last line we find the "je ne sais quoi" attitude which denotes, I think, a certain romanticism.

Landor's sense of persecution affects, to a certain extent, his delineation of nature. He often speaks of trees, with which he seems to have identified himself, as suffering from man's persecution. In his poem "To a tree" he first compares his youth and old age to the youth and old age of the acacia, then says:

Acacia! low thou liest, and the axe
Hath scattered wide thy weak and wither'd limbs.¹

In a poem entitled "A tree speaks", he makes the tree complain of man's persecution, and of the suffering it experiences at his hands:

Again they come, and then pluck off
What poets call our hair, and scoff;

They come once more: then, then you find
The root cut round and undermined:

Chains are clencht round it: that fine head,
On which still finer words were said,
Serves only to assist the blow
And lend them aid to lay it low.

In another poem he tells us how his trees at Villa Gherardesca were equally persecuted by his family. They who were ungrateful to him were also ungrateful to his trees. The strangers whom Landor's "parting song" brought to the villa witnessed this savage treatment:

Vanisht each venerable head,
Nor bough nor leaf could tell them where
To look for you, alive or dead.

Other objects in nature reflect for him his own dilemma. He sees in the sea-shell another "outcast", to which he addresses the following "solace":

Come with me,
Thou little outcast of the sea!
Our destiny, poor shell, is one;
We both may shine, but shine alone:
Both are deprived of all we had
In earlier days to make us glad.

In the martin Landor sees another wronged creature, who - like himself - is robbed of his children:

Say, little bird! whose tender breast
Would quiver at another's wrong,
Say who could spoil thy fretted nest,
Who take away thy callow Young?

1 Poetical Works, Ibid., p.191.
3 "A sea-shell speaks", Ibid., p.81.
As autumn has a strong appeal to the Romantics, so it has to Landor. This appeal has something to do with their delight in sorrow. There is something in the sunset of the day, of the year, and of life that makes the romantic vocal. Landor sang of all these sunsets, especially at his approaching death,

The bird upon its lonely bough
Sings sweetest at the close of day.

In "Death of the day" he writes:

My pictures blacken in their frames
As night comes on,
And youthful maids and wrinkled dames
Are now all one.¹

In one of his letters to Forster, he writes: "This evening, I took my usual walk a little earlier, and sitting afterwards without candles for about an hour as I always do ... I watched the twilight darken on my walls and my pictures vanish from before me."²

In autumn, he experiences the same kind of delight. Addressing November he tells it of the joy he feels with the "sadness borne upon thy wings":

The gloom that overcast my brow,
The whole year's gloom, depart, but now;
And all of joy I hear or see,
November! I ascribe to thee!³

¹ Ibid., p.56.
² Ibid.
³ In "November! thou art come again", Ibid., p.180.
Of this significance of autumn to the Romantics, Irving Babbit says that it is "perhaps even more than spring time the favourite season of the Rousseauist." The following passage from *Pericles and Aspasia* shows that autumn is also Landor's favourite season: "Serene and beautiful are our autumnal days in Thessaly" he makes Aspasia say, "We have many woods about us, and many woodland sounds among them. In this season of the year I am more inclined to poetry than in any other; and I want it now more than ever to flow among my thoughts, and to bear up the heavier." Such sentiments, one thinks, are not at all typically Greek.

1 Rousseau and Romanticism, p.248.
2 Complete Works, X, 227.
CHAPTER EIGHT

The Impact of Landor's Withdrawal to Italy on his Work

More than a fifth of Landor's work deals with Italian subject-matter. Besides twenty-nine dialogues, we have The Pentameron and "High and Low Life in Italy" each of which is in itself of book-length. We have also a considerable amount of verse, a long critical essay on Petrarch, and many letters published in the Examiner. All these deal with Italian Landscape, history, politics, literature and art.

This aspect of Landor's writings reflects a wide-spread Italianate fashion which prevailed during the Romantic Period, and which left a strong mark on the literature of that time. Interest in Italy and its culture has a long tradition behind it in English literature from Chaucer onwards; but it reached its climax during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Travel to the Continent had been more or less impossible during the Napoleonic Wars. When these were over, English travellers preferred Italy to France partly because of the antipathy against the French - a natural result of the wars - and partly because of the sympathy for the Italians which was enhanced by common enmity to Napoleon and by the interest in Italy, which Italian exiles in England and travel
books aroused. "The Romantic generation," writes C.P. Brand, "appropriated Italy as the most romantic of countries - her poets, her history, her landscape, her art, all fitted into the Romantic pattern." Indeed, Italy became something of a promised land. Even those who could not afford to visit Italy dreamt of it as did Letitia Landon (L.E.L.) who spoke of Italy in the following terms:

Italie, thou art
The promised land that haunts my dreaming heart
Perchance it is as well thou art unknown:
I could not bear to lose what I have thrown
Of magic round thee, - but to find in thee
What hitherto I still have found in all -

Perhaps it is the spirit of the age which produced this yearning for Italy, and for what Italy stood for, as we notice in the following lines:

Thou art not stamped with that reality
Which makes our being's sadness, and its thrall!
But now, whenever I am mix'd too much
With worldly natures till I feel as such ...
Wearied of this, upon what eager wings
My spirit turns to thee, and bird-like flings
Its best, its breath, its spring, and song o'er thee,
My lute's enchanted world, fair Italie.
To me thou art a vision half divine,
Of myriad flowers lit up with summer shine ...

Most of the Romantic poets yielded to this lure, and went to Italy. Landor was there in 1815. Byron followed in

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1 Italy and the English Romantics (Cambridge, 1957), p.228.
1816; and Shelley, in 1818. Landor's writings on Italy prove that he was a main participant in this Italianate fashion, which is a characteristic of the Romantic period. This participation also proves that he was closer to his contemporaries than he thought.

The reason Landor gave for his departure to Italy was that he was persecuted at home. But this reason seems to be hardly convincing. For he complained of persecution in Italy as much as he complained of it in England. The Tuscan police records are full of Landor's outbursts against what he considered ill-treatment by the Italian authorities. A more convincing reason for this departure is revealed in his work. Italy meant to Landor what it meant to the other Romantics. The urge for departure had been in his mind since he was a young man of twenty.

In a letter he sent Walter Birch in April, 1795, he tells him that he is "constantly" studying Italian which "is extremely easy both to read and speak, and I understand it as well as French, which I have been in the habit of reading four or five years. In about another month. I think of going into Italy." Yet he could not go to Italy at that time.

The immediate decision to quit England as the Llanthony

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troubles accumulated shows that his old wish to live in Italy was still in his mind. Though his wife was against the idea, and though the troubles of Llanthony were not yet settled, he soon carried out his plan. After some wanderings between Genoa, Pisa, Pistoia, where he stayed for short periods, he made his way to Florence. The lines he wrote on the road to Florence reveal a strong reason behind Landor's departure to Italy: the lure of that country which is full of legendary and classical associations:

I leave with unaverted eye the towers
Of Pisa, pining o'er her desert stream.
Pleasure (they say) yet lingers in thy bowers,
Florence, thou patriot's sigh, thou poet's dream!\(^1\)

Like his Romantic fellows, Landor sang of the beauty of the Italian landscape. He composed a considerable part of his writings out of doors, inspired by the same nature which inspired his contemporaries. Shelley records in the preface to _Prometheus Unbound_ the effect of Italy upon him by saying: "The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were in the inspiration of this drama."\(^2\) Landor was equally inspired: "Beautiful scenes, on which Heaven smiles

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\(^1\) "On the road to Florence".

eternally," he wrote of Florence, "how often has my heart ached for you! He who hath lived in this country, can enjoy no distant one. He breathes here another air; he lives more life; a brighter sun invigorates his studies, and serener stars influence his repose." ¹

There are numerous prose and verse passages in which he expresses his pure delight in the beautiful scenery of Italy. We have quoted above the lines from his poem "Faesulan Idyl" which shows this delight. In the dialogue "Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Petrarca", the natural beauty of Italy is also dwelt upon. "In this country," Chaucer is made to say, "more than dreams swarm upon every spray and leaf; and every murmur of wood or water comes from and brings with it inspiration." ²

In "The Faesulan Villa", Landor gives us a picture of Fiesole by moonlight - a sight which so much impressed his contemporaries. Threaded in a pattern of shades and lights, of clouds that "whiten far away", of last "quivering" rays and of dim meadows, the place is vaguely but suggestively drawn:

Unseen beneath us, on the right,
The abbey with unfinished front

² Ibid., 244.
Of checker'd marble, black and white,
And on the left the Doccia's font.
Eastward, two ruin'd castles rise
Beyond Maiano's massy mill,
Winter and Time their enemies,
Without their warder, stately still.

(17 - 24)

In this picture Landor conveys besides, the emotional element which made Italy so appealing to the Romantics:

We can not tell, so far away,
Whether the city's tongue be mute,
We only hear some lover play
(If sighs be play) the sighing flute."¹

* * *

Many of the Romantics were interested in Italy's political affairs, and had great sympathy for her aspirations to independence and unity. Landor's interest in the political aspect of Italy was as deep as - if not deeper than - that of his contemporaries. Coleridge's letters show that the Italian question appealed much to him:

I have been strenuous in awakening the govern­ment to the true character and vices of the Court of Naples, for the last 4 months ..."²

Wordsworth had the same interest. In 1802 he composed a sonnet "On the extinction of the Venetian Republic". The following passage from his letters shows his hope for a unified Italy:

¹ Poetical Works, III, p.177 (11.17-24, 33-6.)
Now, I think there is nothing more unfortunate than the condition of Germany and Italy in these respects (as dismembered states); could the barriers be dissolved which have divided the one nation into Neapolitans, Tuscans, Venetians etc ... and could they once be taught to feel their strength, the French would be driven back into their own land immediately. I wish to see Spain, Italy, France, Germany formed into independent nations.¹

Byron took an actual part in the preparations for a revolution in Italy. His house was used as a store for the ammunition of the rebels: "I suppose that they consider me as a dépôt, to be sacrificed, in case of accidents" he wrote, "It is not great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object - the very poetry of politics. Only think - a free Italy!!! Why, there has been nothing like it since the days of Augustus."² In his Childe Harold³ and in "Ode to Venice"⁴ he expresses this love for a free Italy.

Of Shelley's enthusiasm Mary Shelley writes: "The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense ... He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport.

¹ Letters, Middle Years (1937), I, 438.
² Letters and Journals, V, 205.
³ See Canto Iv (St. XVII).
⁴ See also his Prophecy of Dante. Canto II, 11.142-5.
His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause.\(^1\) Landor's enthusiasm was equal to, if not greater than, that of his contemporaries, "I wish I had some thousand pounds to spare, as I had when the Spaniards rose against Bonaparte," he wrote when he heard of the uprising in Naples, in 1821, "that what I offered to them I might offer to the Neapolitans."\(^2\) Having no money, he offered the Neapolitans what he supposed to be of great help to them. He wrote for publication and free distribution among them a pamphlet entitled: *A Few Remarks on the Present State of These Peoples Who Wish to Govern Themselves by Means of Representation*.\(^3\) This pamphlet includes his advice to the revolutionaries about the formation of a representative government.

Most of the views expressed are repeated in the later dialogues, such as "*General Lacy and Cura Merino*"\(^4\) (1824), in which he puts forward the same view of a representative government. Landor also denounces the Holy Alliance - which he attacks in the pamphlet - in the conversation between

\(^1\) See Mary Shelley's Note on Hellas, *Complete Works* (1952), p.481.
\(^3\) Translated from the Italian *Poche Osservazioni sullo Stato Attuale di Que' Popoli, Che Vogliono Governarsi per Mezzo delle Rappresentanze* by Felice Elkin. See her *Walter Savage Landor's Studies of Italian Life and Literature*, p.205.
\(^4\) See *Complete Works*, VII, 48.
himself and the Florentine and the English visitor, and in
"Mauracordato and Colcotroni".

Landor remained, till his death, deeply interested in
Italy's struggles for independence and Unity as "Alfieri and
Metastasio", "Garibaldi and Mazzini", "Machiavelli and Michel-
and
Angelo Buonarroti"; "Macchiavelli and Guicciardini" show.
In the first dialogue he makes Alfieri say, "Italy, the most
civilized, the most humane, the most inventive and enthusiastic
is not destined by Providence to be much longer subservient
to Gaul or German."  
Landor's poetry also reflects this
concern. In "Regeneration", written in 1824, he urges the
Italians to shake tyranny off:

Rise up again, rise in thy dignity,
Dejected man, and scare this brood away.

The uprisings of the Italians moved him deeply, and
filled him with hopes some of which were realized before his
death. In his poem "To Mazzini" he writes

And could not you, Mazzini! wait awhile?
The grass is wither'd, but shall spring a-gain;
The Gods, who frown on Italy, will smile
As in old times, and men once more be men.

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1 Complete Works, III, 94.
2 Poetical Works, III, 288 (ll.109-10).
3 Ibid., II, 320.
On the outbreak of the revolutions in 1848 he wrote his *Italics* (1848) which include seven poems among which is "Ode to Sicily" in which he attacks the Bourbons, and urges Sicily to rise against tyrants:

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Strike, Sicily, uproot
The cursed upas.  Never trust
That race again:  down with it;  dust to dust. ¹
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The same concern dictated his public letters which he sent to the *Examiner*. When France sent military aid to the Pope against the Italian revolutionaries he expressed his indignation in a letter published in the *Examiner* of May 19, 1849, in which he says, "Behold the promises of a nation which declared its readiness to aid unreservedly in the deliverance of the oppressed! ... What then is Europe to expect from France? what, but another link and rivet to the monarchal chain, another chin-band to the sacerdotal tiara."²

In spite of Landor's dislike of Popes in general, he dedicated the *Hellenics* to Pius IX because of his then liberal attitude. He also praised him in "King Carlo-Alberto and Princess Belgioioso" by making the latter say: "The Pope, reposing on the bosom of God, inspires the purest devotion, the sublimest virtues" and add, "I have heard cold philosophers say, with the hand upon the breast, This man is truly God's"

¹ Ibid., p.283 (11.55-7).
² *Letters of W.S. Landor*, p.297.
vicegerent. Pio Nono is with Italy. One shake of the handbell on his table would arouse fifty millions of our co-religionists." But when the Pope sought to maintain his temporal power supported by France, Landor turned against him, and inserted a foot-note to the above passage in which he wrote: "God had inspired him with all but wisdom, truth, and courage."

Landor, as we have seen above, was against any interference of the Church in political matters as his dialogue "Pope Pio Nono and Cardinal Antonelli" shows.

In another letter entitled "The Pope, Temporal and Spiritual" published in the Examiner of July 7, 1849, he writes: "The most intelligent, not only in the Roman States, but in every State throughout the whole of Europe, entertain and always have entertained the opinion, that the secular power of the Pope should be disunited from the ecclesiastical."

We will deal now with another aspect of that Italianate fashion: interest in Italian history. Like the other Romantics, Landor looked upon it as a store of exciting episodes which appealed to him, and which he chose as themes for his works. "It is hardly a coincidence," writes C.P.

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1 Complete Works, III, 283.
2 Letters of Landor, p. 305.
Brand, "that between 1815 and 1840 Shelley wrote The Cenci, Byron Marino Faliero and The Two Foscari, Landor his trilogy of plays on Joanna of Naples, Bulwer Lytton Rienzi, Browning Sordello, Mary Shelley Valperga, Miss Mitford Foscari and Rienzi, and Felicia Hemans her Vesapers of Palermo, to mention only a few of the works inspired by episodes in the history of Italy."  

Landor's choice of the Giovanna episode for his trilogy "Andrea of Hungary," "Giovanna of Naples," and "Fra Rupert," is significant. It is a story of a persecuted woman, which takes place against a background of conspiracies, murder, violent passions, and cruelty - themes which appealed to the Romantics. On the other hand Landor's delineation of Fra Rupert who dominates the trilogy, makes of him another criminal monk, as that of Matthew Gregory Lewis. Landor's monk is, as Eino Railo suggests, another version of Lewis's. Referring to Landor's trilogy Eino Railo writes:

Previous to the period dealt with in the plays, Rupert has passed through an erotic experience: he has been the pious adviser and mentor of the beautiful Agatha, whose mother he frequently visits to pray and to hear long confessions, precisely like Ambrosio with the mother of Antonia. When he becomes the teacher of Agatha he soon thrusts religious works aside, to hum in the ear of his pupil "Florentian tales and songs of Sicily" and to accustom her to

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1 Italy and the English Romantics, p.187.
speak "the only soft language of love" which brings a blush to the maiden's cheek—again like Ambrosio in his attempts to seduce Antonia. 1

Another historical episode which appealed to Landor as strongly as it appealed to Shelley is that of Beatrice Cenci. It includes two elements which interested the Romantics. The first is that of a beautiful innocent girl who is persecuted to the point of death. The second is the element of incest. One tends to think that this theme, which has recurred in literature from the earliest times, had a certain attraction for the Romantics who craved for the strange, the unnatural, the shocking and the horrible. In his chapter "Incest and Romantic eroticism," Eino Railo traces the incest motive from the Iliad (Phoenix's cohabiting with his father's mistress) onwards. Railo then gives a brief survey of this incest theme in the works of Elizabethan and Stuart dramatists. He shows how Shakespeare approached it in Pericles, The Winter's Tale, and Hamlet, and how Beaumont and Fletcher dealt with it in A King and No King, Women Pleased, and The Fair Maid of the Inn. John Ford, also, dealt with this theme in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore.

Railo then speaks of the "peculiar and characteristic affection" the Romantics had for this theme. He shows how

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1 The Haunted Castle (1927), pp.181-2.
it preoccupied the following writers: Walpole in *The Mysterious Mother*, Mrs. Radcliffe in *The Romance of the Forest*, and Lewis in *The Monk*. When he comes to Byron who dealt with incest in *The Bride of Abydos*, he writes: "Defiant, always on the look-out for new poses, this romanticist who waged open war on conditions, institutions, customs and established conceptions ... affected to regard ... the usual disgust against unlawful love as a superstition, of which liberty-loving souls could, if they so desired, divest themselves." Byron, he adds, "never deals with incest as a misfortune."\(^1\)

This, I think, applies also to Shelley as Rosalind and Helen shows. Shelley ends this story of the brother and sister who "surrendered themselves to each other body and soul"\(^2\) by saying:

> And know, that if love die not in the dead
> As in the living, none of moral kind
> Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

The story of Beatrice Cenci fascinated also Shelley. In 1819 he wrote his tragedy on her. The following passage in which he expresses his admiration for her portrait (at the Colonna Palace, Rome), is a significant one: "There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 273-4.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 278.
lightened by the patience of gentleness." Describing the moulding of her "exquisitely delicate" face, Shelley says:

the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish ... her eyes ... are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic.\(^1\)

The only other Romantic who was similarly moved by the fate of Beatrice, and fascinated by her portrait, and who also wrote a tragedy on her, is Landor. Of her portrait he writes in 1850:

When I was at Rome, I visited frequently Lady Mary Deerhurst, afterwards Lady Coventry; and yet more frequently I forgot the object of my visit to palazzo Barberini, and turned impulsively to the room containing the portrait of Beatrice. Nothing else could fix my attention: my heart rose violently with more than one emotion. Shelley has shown great delicacy in overshadowing the incest ... Alas, alas, poor Cenci! she never told her grief. Of this I am certain. In her heart was the same heroism as that of Prometheus: no torture could extort the dreadful secret: she would have died without disclosing it.\(^2\)

Both Landor and Shelley elevate the character of Beatrice, and in so doing they are true to the legend rather than to the historical fact. According to the Italian scholar Corrado Ricci\(^1\) the supposed incest is doubtful.\(^2\) On the other hand Beatrice had a love affair with Olimpio to which neither Shelley nor Landor refers. Although Shelley's picture of her is noble enough, Landor believes that "the violent language [Shelley] gives to Beatrice somewhat lowers her" whose drama is a "sad and sacred" one.\(^3\)

It is difficult to know the source Landor used in writing his scenes. But were these facts, published by Ricci in 1925, known to him, still we may suppose that he would have selected only the incidents which contribute to his romantic approach. The same thing might be said of his trilogy. He was familiar with various points of view given by historians on Giovanna of Naples. Yet he chose, and depended on the source that presents Giovanna as he wished her to be: the innocent, gentle, and beautiful queen who was persecuted in spite of her innocence.

Landor ignored what historians\(^4\) like Pietro Villani and Muratorì say of Giovanna because they accuse her of plotting

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2 See "The Charge of Incest," in Ibid., pp.139-169.
the murder of Andrea. He took as his source Mrs. Jameson, because she, in her book *Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns* defends Giovanna, by showing her as one who suffered by the "follies, or the crimes of her nearest connexions," and who was "injured by her own virtues."¹ Of this source Landor wrote to Forster on the 12th October 1838, "I am a great admirer of Mrs. Jameson's writings. So I sent on Saturday night for her Female Sovereigns. On Sunday after tea I began a drama on Giovanna di Napoli." In this letter, it is worthy to mention, he tells Forster that Giovanna and Vittoria Colonna are his "favourites among the women of Italy."²

Another episode which Landor dealt with is that of Ferrante and Giulio. His choice and treatment of this episode shows that Landor's conception of the Italian national character is that of his age. The following passage by Ann Manning, written in 1831, shows how Italians were then looked upon:

>The energy and violence which marked their national character was often directed to evil purpose by such dark and vindictive passions as, in these more temperate times, we find it difficult to account for or excuse. It is hard

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for us to credit the strength of the stormy passions in southern climes... The emotions of hatred and jealousy which in our cooler climate occasionally ruffle our bosoms, and are mastered by steady principle and placid temperament, there burn with an intensity which makes their unhappy victims the objects of our pity no less than reproach.¹

In presenting this episode of Ferrante and Giulio, Landor concentrates on the features that agree with the above conception. He shows how Cardinal Ippolito deprives his half-brother Ferrante of his eye-sight because Rosalba loves the latter, and praises his eyes. Landor also shows that it is this rivalry in love that makes the Cardinal torment his half-brother, and not the latter's conspiracy against Duke Alfonso, as historians believe. Burckhardt tells us of the "plot of two bastards against their brothers, the ruling Duke Alfonso I and the Cardinal Ippolito (1506), which was discovered in time, and punished with imprisonment for life."²

Landor is not a historian. Hence the freedom with which he deals with historical facts. In a letter to Forster, written in 1838, he says, "I am a horrible confounder of historical facts. I have usually one history that I have read, another that I have invented."³ The preface to

¹ In *Stories from the History of Italy* (1831), p.59. See Brand, op.cit., pp.189-90.
"Beatrice Cenci" is significant; it throws light on Landor's approach to history, and shows that it is primarily the approach of a poet. In this preface he writes:

Poetry is not History. In features they may resemble; in particulars, in combinations, in sequences, they must differ. History should "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Poetry, like all the fine arts, is eclectic. Where she does not wholly invent, she at one time amplifies and elevates; at another, with equal power, she simplifies, she softens, she suppresses.

Landor's interest in such violent episodes explains the appeal of certain parts of Italian literature to him. The only two episodes which he admires in the Inferno are those of Ugolino and Francesca. These two episodes equally appealed to the Romantics. The sad story of Count Ugolino who was imprisoned and starved to death with his children is mentioned by Byron in The Prophecy of Dante:

But those, the human savages, explore
All paths of torture, and insatiate yet,
With Ugolino hunger prowl for more.

Shelley contributed with Medwin in the rendering of a poem on Ugolino whose story also inspired Shelley to write The Tower of Famine, and influenced his treatment of another subject in the Prisoner of Chillon. Edward Wilmot wrote a

2 Canto XXXIII.
3 II, 88-90.
long poem entitled *Ugolino or the Tower of Famine*. Landor was similarly impressed by this episode, which is mentioned with admiration in *The Pentameron*.\(^1\) He also begins his poem to his daughter with a reference to this tragic story:

> By that dejected city, Arno runs,
> Where Ugolino claspt his famisht sons.

These lines show that Ugolino's story had a significant appeal to Landor who was, in a sense, a bereaved father.

The other episode in the *Inferno* which impressed Landor is that of Francesca. It is mentioned with deep admiration in more than one place in *The Pentameron*. "Admirable is indeed the description of Ugolino," writes Landor, but "in Francesca, with the faculty of Divine spirit," Dante "converts all his strength into tenderness."\(^2\) In his critical essay "Francesco Petrarca", Landor also says that "Francesca and Beatrice open all the heart and fill it up with tenderness and pity."\(^3\) The episode also appealed to Byron. He translated it in the metre of the original, and referred to it in the *Corsair*. Keats also composed his sonnet "A Dream, after reading Dante's episode of 'Paolo and Francesca'" because he was impressed by the episode:

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1. "In the whole of the *Inferno* I find only the descriptions of Francesca and of Ugolino at all admirable." *Complete Works*, IX, 186.
The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more - it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca - I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell - The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life - I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure to whose lips mine were joined at (for as) it seem'd for an age ... I tried a Sonnet upon it.¹

The episode appealed to Leigh Hunt also. He wrote the "Story of Rimini" which inspired Keats to write his sonnet "On 'The Story of Rimini'".

Landor's interest in Italian literature began long before he went to Italy. His early knowledge of Italian enabled him to read Italian works in the original. In 1806 he was familiar enough with Petrarch to prefix the Simonidea with a part of one of Petrarch's sonnets in Italian. In 1807 he published a translation of one of Alfieri's poems in The Oxford Review. In the introductory note he wrote, "We were willing to give a specimen of the sonnets of Alfieri, as they are much praised. Though we have attempted a translation, we are sensible that we have not reached the spirit and elegance of the original."²

Landor's interest in Italian literature increased during

¹ The Letters of John Keats, ed. M.B. Forman (1952), p.325.,
² Poetical Works, 1, 487.
his stay in Italy. In *The Pentameron*, the critical essay on Petrarch, as well as some of the dialogues, he gives his views on certain aspects of this literature. If we consider such views we find that Landor is more interested in individual writers than in literary periods. His interest in the life of the individual writer is sometimes greater than his interest in the work itself. For example, we learn much about Tasso's life, love and madness, but hardly anything about his work. This, again, brings Landor very close to some of his contemporaries. For they reveal the same interest in Tasso's life. The reason is that it contains two elements that appealed to the Romantics: intense love, and madness. Hence this unusual interest in Tasso's life. Madness was one of the subjects that fascinated the Romantics. This is due, I think, to the discovery of the individual consciousness and unconsciousness. The Romantics, who turned their eyes within, found in the unconscious a strange and uncanny labyrinth, the source of all conflict, distraction and madness. There was nothing horrible or ridiculous in Tasso's madness. There was only sorrow, deep sorrow that soon gained their sympathy as did that of Werther, and made many of them vocal. This sympathy was felt not only by poets like Byron, Shelley and Landor. It was also felt by critics.
Hazlitt represents this attitude in his review of Sismondi's *De La Litterature du Midi de l'Europe*. To him "the life of Tasso is one of the most interesting in the world."¹ He quotes the conclusion of Tasso's tragedy *Il Torrismondo* to express how impressed he is by the sorrow it embodies. In this conclusion Tasso writes:

> Like the swift Alpine torrent, like the sudden lightning in the calm night, like the passing wind, the melting vapour, or the winged arrow, so vanishes our fame; and all our glory is but a fading flower. What then can we hope, or what expect more? After triumphs and palms, all that remains for the soul, is strife and lamentation, and regret; neither lover nor friendship can avail us aught, but only tears and grief!²

Both Byron and Shelley were as interested in Tasso's madness as Landor. Byron who called Tasso the "Bard divine," wrote his "Lament of Tasso" in which he shows the miserable poet speaking of his love and madness. Shelley wrote "Scene from Tasso", and "Song for Tasso" which deal with his madness. As for Landor, he wrote a dialogue between Tasso and Cornelia, his sister; and another between Leonora and Father Panigarola. Besides, he spoke of Tasso, in his poem "To Alfieri", in the following terms:

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, XXV (June 1815), p.57.
² Ibid., p.58.
thou alone
Hast toucht the inmost fibres of the breast,
Since Tasso's tears made damper the damp floor
Whereon one only light came thro' the bars;
Love brought it, and stood mute, with broken wing.
The vision of Leonora could not raise
His heavy heart, and staid long nights in vain.

Landor's sympathy for Tasso is, indeed, deep. "The
miseries of Tasso," he writes, "arose not only from the
imagination and the heart. In the metropolis of the Christian
world, with many admirers and many patrons, bishops, cardinals,
princes, he was left destitute, and almost famished." Tasso's
madness, Landor believes, was the result of the persecution
he suffered. The Duke of Ferrara, says Landor:

suggested to him the necessity of feigning
madness. The lady's honour required it from
a brother; and a true lover, to convince the
world, would embrace the project with alacrity.
But there was no reason why the seclusion should
be in a dungeon, or why exercise and air should
be interdicted. This cruelty, and perhaps his
uncertainty of Leonora's compassion, may well be
imagined to have produced at last the malady he
had feigned.¹

Landor approaches this story of Tasso's love for Leonora,
in his typical romantic manner to which we have already
referred. He likes to believe that Leonora returned Tasso's
love though historically this is not certain, and is even
doubted. "But did Leonora love Tasso as a man would be

¹ "Tasso and Cornelia," Complete Works, III, 44n.
loved?" writes Landor, "If we wish to do her honour, let us hope it: for what greater glory can there be, than to have estimated at the full value so exalted a genius, so affectionate and so generous a heart!" Landor therefore ends his Conversation "Leonora di Este and Father Panigarola" with a passage that suggests her love for Tasso:

Leonora... Pray, father, for my deliverance: pray also for poor Torquato's: do not separate us in your prayers. ... But tell him, tell Torquato - go again; entreat, persuade, command him, to forget me. Panigarola. Alas! even the command, even the command from you and from above, might not avail perhaps. You smile, Madonna! Leonora. I die happy.  

Landor reveals Tasso's madness in a way which seems to me more convincing than that attempted by Byron or Shelley. While these depict Tasso as philosophising or meditating upon life in a rather cool and monotonous way, Landor illustrates the heights and depths of a distracted mind. While Byron's Tasso says:

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay ...

and while Shelley's says:

And if I think, my thoughts come fast,
I mix the present with the past ...

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., pp.51-2.
3 In "Lament of Tasso" (viii 189-90).
4 "Song for Tasso", II (12-14).
Landor's Tasso acts as one whose mind is really troubled, who mixes the present with the past without being conscious of the fact. He wanders between his sad present and his happy past. At times he speaks tenderly, imagining that Leonora is present, and at times he is crushed under the pressure of distressing thoughts. When his sister asks him to stop thinking he cries: "The mind has within it temples and porticoes and palaces and towers: the mind has under it, ready for the course, steeds brighter than the sun and stronger than the storm ..."¹ He also tells her: "Argue with me, and you drive me into darkness."²

Landor's interest in madness, which is behind his interest in Tasso's life, made him deal also with the madness of Orestes and the imminent madness of Tiberius. Referring to the Conversation "Tiberius and Vipsania" Swinburne says that in the "utmost command of passion and pathos" revealed in this dialogue, Landor "shows a quality more proper to romantic than classical imagination—the subtle and sublime and terrible power to enter the dark vestibule of distraction, to throw the whole force of his fancy, the whole fire of his spirit into the 'shadowing passion' (as Shakespeare calls it) of

¹ "Tasso and Cornelia", vol. III, p. 42.
² Ibid., p. 40.
gradually imminent insanity."¹

The other Italian literary figures whom Landor presents are Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. There is also Alfieri, the only modern Italian writer Landor admires. His studies of these figures show an interest in their lives. Dante's work, it seems, did not impress him much. But Dante's love, hatred of tyranny, and exile, touched a sensitive chord in him. In "Dante and Beatrice" and "Dante and Gemma Donati", we feel Landor's sympathy with the lover, the exile, and the patriot. The following lines, put in the mouth of Savonarola, show Landor's admiration for Dante:

The Sun of Righteousness will shine again. The Prophets will show their countenances thro' the clouds, and make their voices heard. Dante Alighieri lies in his tomb at Ravenna, but his spirit will return to our city and reanimate a half-dead people. Italy is not always to be sown with lies and irrigated with blood.²

In his poem "Italy in January 1853", Landor addresses Dante in the following terms:

Come, Dante! virtuous, sage, and bold,
Come, look into that miry fold.³

Besides being the subject of conversation in The Pentameron Dante is mentioned in different parts of Landor's writings.

¹ Miscellanies (1886), pp.208-9.
In a letter to Forster Landor writes in the autumn of 1840, "I have written now the last drama of the trilogy ... You will like what one of my characters says on reading Dante's story of Francesco da Rimini:

Piteous, most piteous, for most guilty passion.
Two lovers are condemned to one unrest
For ages. I now first knew poetry,
I had known song and sonnet long before:
I sail'd no more amid the barren isles
Each one small self; the mighty continent
Rose and expanded; I was on its shores.¹

Landor is also much impressed by the personalities of Petrarch and Boccaccio. In one of his letters to Forster (1838), he tells him that Boccaccio and Petrarch are his favourites among the men of Italy.² Petrarch's love for Laura is dwelt upon in a sympathetic way in The Pentameron, and in the critical essay "Francesco Petrarca". After giving the translation of the second part of Petrarch's "Triumph of Death" Landor writes, "He who, the twentieth time, can read unmoved this canzone, never has experienced a love which could not be requited, and never has deserved a happy one."³ Like Dante, Petrarch was an unfortunate lover, a hater of tyranny and an exile. These are qualities which

¹ Forster, Landor, II, 360.
² Ibid., p. 347.
³ "Francesco Petrarca," Complete Works, XII, 60.
are calculated to win the sympathy of any romanticist, and Landor stresses them in his study of Petrarch.

Petrarch and Boccaccio take up the great part of Landor's writings on Italian subject-matter. They figure in the conversations "Boccaccio and Petrarca", and "Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Petrarca." They are also presented in long pleasant interviews in The Pentameron. Boccaccio, one notices, is Landor's favourite among the three Italian figures. Dante vituperates, Petrarch moralises, but Boccaccio is the man after Landor's heart - the author of the Decameron. Landor's frequent references to this work, and his efforts to imitate its episodes show his admiration for it. In his episode of Fra Biagio's love for Assunta, Landor is clearly influenced by the Decameron, which commemorates the surroundings of Landor's villa.¹

Like Dante and Petrarch, Boccaccio was a patriot who suffered exile, and an unhappy lover. In "Savonarola and the Prior of S. Malo" Landor pays tribute to the three of them by making Savonarola say: "Dante Alighieri, Petrarch,

¹ Referring to the word "Africo" in the phrase "My chirping Africo," Landor writes the following footnote: "Affrico, a little stream celebrated by Boccaccio in his 'Ninfale'; to this place also his Bella Brigata retired, to relate the last stories in the 'Decameron.' The author's villa (formerly Count Gherardesca's, the representative of the unhappy Count Ugolino) stands directly above what was anciently the lake described there." Poetical Works, III, 10. See also Footnote p.198.
Boccaccio, were not only nightingales that sang in the dark— which all three did—but they were prophetic, and intelligible to the attentive ear."¹

The other Italian poet who receives from Landor such attention is Alfieri. Referring to the enthusiasm with which Landor speaks of Alfieri, Forster says that he has "often heard [Landor] say that his thoughts were in more frequent agreement [with Alfieri] than with those of any other writer." Forster also states that Landor "had a wonderful liking for Alfieri, in whose intolerant liberalism, aristocratic republicanism, and fierce independence, he had all the enjoyment of his own."² Such qualities Landor stresses in the study he gives of Alfieri in "Alfieri and Metastasio" and "Alfieri and Solomon the Florentine Jew."

* * *

Landor's withdrawal to Italy made of him a great lover of Italian art. It was stimulating to live in Florence. There Landor developed a deep interest in painting, and became an ardent collector of old pictures. Though his friends used to laugh at him for his enthusiasm for the "primitives", he persisted in showing his admiration for them

¹ Complete Works, II, 306.
by collecting their pictures. This admiration shows Landor to be in advance of his time. For, as Milnes said, Landor "anticipated the public taste in the admiration of the early Italian schools, thus amid some pretenders to high birth and dignity, his walls presented a genuine company of such masters as Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, Gozzoli, Filippo Lippi and Fra Angelico."¹

Most of Landor's visitors expressed their surprise at the great number of ancient pictures among which he lived. Emerson referred to "the cloud of pictures"² in his villa. Carlyle found Landor's "apartments all hung round with queer old Italian pictures; the very doors had pictures on them."³ Landor's one "self-indulgence," Kirkup said, was "buying a number of very ancient pictures which were not esteemed at that time."⁴

Landor's love of painting made him express in his works certain views on this art and on the artists he admired, as the following passage shows: "I delight in Titian, I love Correggio, I wonder at the vastness of Michel Angelo; I

³ Ibid., p.398.
⁴ Forster, Landor, II, p.205.
admire, love, wonder, and then fall down before, Raffael.¹

Landor's admiration for these masters is mainly due, I think, to the idealized tone of their paintings: of Raphael he writes, "Only one genius ever existed who could unite what is most divine on earth with what is most adorable in heaven. He gives sanctity to her youth, and tenderness to the old man that gazes on her. He purifies love in the virgin's heart; he absorbs it in the mother's."² Michelangelo, at whose vastness and sublimity Landor wonders, figures in two dialogues. In the first he is made to discuss politics with Machiavelli. In the second he figures with Vittoria Colonna.

Landor's admiration for Titian is expressed in "Tiziano Vecelli and Luigi Cornaro" in which Titian is made to discuss paintings and painters with Cornaro who says, "In both pictures³ you have proved yourself the best adapter of external nature to human and superhuman action. The majestic trees, at the stroke of your pencil, rise up worthy to shade the

³ Cornaro is referring here to the Saint Peter Martyn, and to the painting which depicts "the prostration of Austria, in the memorable field of Cadore."
angels in their walks on earth."¹ Cornaro also says, "The time will come, perhaps within a few centuries, when the chief glory of a Venetian noble will be the possession of an ancestor by the hand of Tiziano."²

Landor, who elevates his characters and shows them in their grandeur, admires Titian for his idealization of aristocratical republican institutions: Cornaro is made to say:

And deserves he little, deserves he less, who raiseth his fellow-men, lower by nature, to almost the same elevation? Can the Venetian Senate ever be extinct while it beholds the effigies of those brave, intelligent, and virtuous men, whom you have placed in their ancestral palaces? There they are seated, or they stand, according to your disposal and ordinance, the only sovran, the only instructed, the only true nobility in Europe. When I have been contemplating the gravity and grandeur of their countenances, and meet afterward a German or Frenchman, I acknowledge the genus, but doubt the species: I perceive that I have left the master, and recognise the groom or lackey.³

In another place Landor refers to this characteristic of Titian's which appeals to him, "Titian ennobled men ... Give me the glowing afternoons of Titian; his majestic men, his gorgeous women, and ... his Bacchantes."⁴ This praise recalls Hazlitt's: "After I had once copied some of Titian's

¹ Complete Works, III, 47.
² Ibid., p.48.
³ Ibid., pp.48-9.
portraits in the Louvre," he wrote, "my ambition took a higher flight. Nothing would serve my turn but heads like Titian - Titian expression, Titian complexions, Titian dresses. Correggio is praised for the same reason. "Angels play with his pencil; and he catches them by the wing and will not let them go. What a canopy hath he raised to himself in the Dome at Parma! The highest of the departed and of the immortal are guardians of his sepulchre: he deserved it." Correggio is a rich colourist, and his colouring is referred to as "so transparent, so pure, so well considered and arranged." Landor sums up, in the following prose and verse passages, his admiration for the grand style of these painters who idealise and elevate their figures. In the first passage he writes: "Titian ennobled men; Correggio raised children into angels; Raffael performed the more arduous work of restoring to woman her pristine purity." The following lines show the same admiration:

First bring me Raffael, who alone hath seen
In all her purity Heaven's virgin queen,

1 Hazlitt's Works, XVII, p.139.
2 "Tiziano Vecelli and Luigi Cornaro", III, p.48.
4 Ibid., p.269.
Alone hath felt true beauty; bring me then
Titian, ennobler of the noblest men ... \(^1\)

Among the painters he also admired, and who were equally
admired by his contemporaries, are Claude and Salvator Rosa.
Of the first he says in the above-quoted poem:

I am content, yet fain would look abroad
On one warm sunset of Ausonian Claude.\(^2\)

Before Landor's death he distributed his paintings among his
friends. He gave the pictures he valued most to those who
were his closest friends. To Browning and Kate Field he
gave a picture by Salvator Rosa each. "The wild, bandit-
infested landscapes of Salvator Rosa," writes Brand, "exerted
a strong appeal to a public accustomed to the romantic scenery
of the terror-novels. Salvator Rosa was admired as a
'Romantic'"\(^3\)

Landor's views on Italian art, which he offers in his
two Conversations "The Cardinal-Legate Albani and Picture-
Dealers," and "Tiziano Vecelli and Luigi Cornaro," and in
"High and Low life in Italy", show that his interest is
confined to painting. Of sculpture and architecture he
expressed very few remarks. Though he anticipated the

\(^1\) Poetical Works, III, 242.
\(^2\) Ibid.,
\(^3\) Italy and the English Romantics, p.147.
public taste by his admiration of the primitives, he admired the Renaissance painters as much as his contemporaries did.

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Aven Arneil in Delcourt's article which has the title "Classicism and Romanticism in the Poetry of

3by savage Landor," annexes an additional remark on Landor's

3by Delcourt states that Landor's classicism is

3by that manner 'romanticism in practice.
CHAPTER NINE

Landor's Use of the Dialogue Form

Having studied Landor's subject matter, and reached the conclusion that it is mainly the outcome of a romantic attitude to life, we now deal with Landor's peculiar concern for, and with, form which enabled him to achieve his classical style. A review of the studies made on Landor will show us that his classical manner has attracted the attention of readers so much that the romantic element underlying his matter has been overlooked, ignored, or very lightly touched upon. Even Ernest De Selincourt's article which has as its title "Classicism and Romanticism in the Poetry of Walter Savage Landor," avoids explicit remarks on Landor's romanticism, in such a way as to make Mr. Super say that the article "is scarcely concerned with the problem implied in his title (unless perhaps to deny that it has meaning)." But when de Selincourt states that Landor's classicism is alien to his natural character, and that it was acquired by study, he implies that Landor's romanticism is primary.

1 In Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1930/1931, 1932.
Both Leslie Stephen¹ and Douglas Bush, besides de Selincourt, look upon Landor's classicism as something fabricated, and achieved through effort and skill. While Stephen believes that this conscious classicism results often in artificiality, Bush believes that it makes the "regal" Landor "deplorable".² On the other hand Yeats's belief that Landor wears a mask³ when he holds his pen, suggests the duality of "classic" and "romantic" in Landor.

Saintsbury, unlike these writers, is explicit in his references to this duality. "'Classic' and 'romantic' tendencies and characteristics," he believes, are "combined" in Landor in an "unparalleled" and "strange" fashion, which distinguishes him from other writers who have both tendencies. Landor "stands almost, but not quite, equally alone in his strange compound (for it is a real chemical compound, not a mere mechanical mixture) of classic and romantic" writes Saintsbury, "The names of Spenser, Milton, Gray, Matthew Arnold ... and Swinburne, may rise to some lips by way of objection; but, in all cases, when they are examined, the elements will be found more separate than in Landor."

³ Per Amica Silentia Lunae (1918), pp.16-7.
Saintsbury then rightly adds that Landor "would himself probably have disliked - have, indeed, disclaimed, in his most Boythornian vein - any sympathy with romanticism."\(^1\)

We have shown above how Landor sought to dissociate himself from the romantics. "He boasted his indifference to Spenser himself;" continues Saintsbury, "of his own contemporaries, he preferred Southey, who, in some ways, though not in all, was the least romantic of them. But it is what a man does, not what he says, that, in the higher courts of criticism, 'may be used against him'.\(^2\)

Referring then to Landor's classicism Saintsbury writes:

"The important point for us at the moment is that, wold he hold he, this assumption of a classical garb, this selection of classical subjects, even this attempt to create and to diffuse a classical atmosphere, were all subtly conditioned by an underlying romantic influence which was of the age as well as of the man and which he could not resist."\(^3\)

Yet, despite this strong romantic element, Landor was able to achieve a classical style. His work thus shows, even if he does not believe it, that the difference between

\(^1\) "The Landors, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey," The Cambridge History of English Literature, XII, 207-8.

\(^2\) Ibid., p.208.

\(^3\) Ibid.
classicism and romanticism is not merely a matter of form. His classical form shows that a writer with strong romantic tendencies can control, by means of discipline and a consciously developed taste, the indefinite romantic experience, and convey it in a definite form.

Behind Landor's deep concern for the manner of his writing there are certain important factors which are worthy of consideration. Apart from his belief that his distinction as a writer depends on acquiring the classical virtues, and that the term "classicism" is "graven on the workmanship", he was certain his content would not reach future generations unless it was preserved in an enduring form. Landor's only consolation, as we have seen, was his belief in a future fame. Unless the thought is invested becomingly and nobly, he believed, it would be forgotten. Hence his deep concern for the manner of his writing.

This does not mean that Landor cared more for form than for content. It was his belief in the worthiness of the latter that made him seek to perfect the former. Introducing a series of his dialogues he wrote, "The sentiments most often inculcated are those which in themselves are best: which, even in times disastrous as our own, produced an Epaminondas, a Pelopidas, and a Phocion; and in these, when genius lies flat and fruitless as the sea-sand, a Washington,
a Kosciusko, and a Bolivar.\textsuperscript{1} This shows that matter is as important to Landor as manner. "Style I consider as nothing," he wrote, "if what it covers be unsound."\textsuperscript{2}

Landor's conception of a great writer as a reformer of language is another factor behind the great attention he paid to the manner of his writings. He was always aware of his responsibility as a writer. "Every great author," he wrote, "is a great reformer, and the reform is either in thought or language." It was in language that Landor's reform was made. Believing that "a great deal of what is good" had been dropped, he sought to recover it: "The words I propose," he declared, "are brought to their former and legitimate station."\textsuperscript{3} His system of spelling was also a part of his reform. To this system and to those who attacked it, Archdeacon Hare is made to refer as "the assailants of this our Reformation."\textsuperscript{4}

In propagating a system of spelling Landor was not innovating, he was doing his duty as other great writers, such as Milton,\textsuperscript{5} had done before him. Pericles, "the most

\textsuperscript{1} See Introduction to Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen (1824), I, vi-vii.

\textsuperscript{2} "Marcus Tullius and Quinctus Cicero", Complete Works, II, 140.

\textsuperscript{3} "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor", Complete Works, VI, p.19.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p.26.

\textsuperscript{5} "Johnson and Horne (Tooke)", V, p.7.
eloquent man on record," did also make reforms in the spelling of his language; he "introduced the double \_\_ instead of the double s: and it was enamelled on that golden language to adorn the eloquence of Aspasia, and to shine among the graces of Alcibiades." Xenophon, Plato, Aeschines, and Demosthenes did the same. They "were promoters of the New Attic, altering and softening many words in the spelling." "With such men before me," adds Landor, "I think it to be deeply regretted that coxcombs and blockheads should be our only teachers, where we have much to learn, much to obliterate, and much to mend."¹

Landor's hatred of innovations in language, and his conception that such innovations prevailed in fashionable circles - which he did not frequent - made him believe that he was the right man for such a reform in language. Since he lived in isolation, his language remained pure. Yet this was not the only reason he had:

I have been either a fortunate or a prudent man to have escaped for so many years together to be "pitched into" among "giant trees," "monster meetings," "glorious fruit," "splendid cigars, dogs, horses, and bricks," "palmy days," "rich oddities"; to owe nobody a farthing for any other fashionable habits of rude device and demi-saison texture; and above all, to have

¹ Ibid.
never come in at the "eleventh hour," which has been sounding all day long the whole year. They do me a little injustice who say that such a good fortune is attributable to my residence in Italy. The fact is, I am too cautious and too aged to catch disorders, and I walk fearlessly through these epidemics.¹

Moreover, Landor's style reveals an aesthetic sense of language. This sense made him delight in the act of writing which yielded him that pleasure an artist finds in the handling and shaping of his material. Hence his interest in the sense, sound, association, and generally in the peculiar character of every word. Referring to some archaic words such as "forlet" and "wanhope", which his contemporaries neglected, he writes, "Has no poet the courage to step forth and rescue these maidens of speech, unprotected beneath the very castle-walls of Chaucer?"² We shall deal with his delight in the sound and harmony of words and phrases, when we discuss his criticism.

Such are the main factors which occupied Landor's mind, and resulted in the Landorian style. It is in prose rather than verse that Landor's concern for style is mostly felt. Prose, he said, was his "study and business," while verse was his "amusement."³ This saying illustrates an important

¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor", Vol.VI, p.16.
² Ibid., pp.21-2.
³ Ibid., p.37.
truth about Landor's work. Prose indeed became his business, but only when he adopted the dialogue form, and only when he realised that he could not be a major poet.

Landor's genius is a poet's; and though his epic and dramatic poetry has greatly impressed the best minds, it has a defect which makes it fall short of the standard of great poetry. Gebir is one example. Its admirers complained of its obscurity though they extolled the poem as a whole. "Its intelligible passages are flashes of lightning at midnight" confessed Southey. "It wants common sense:" declared William Taylor, "When you have read it through, you know nothing of the story, or of the locality, or the characters introduced. There are exquisitely fine passages; but they succeed each other by such flea-skips of association, that I am unable to track the path of the author's mind, and verily suspect him of insanity."¹

This obscurity which is the result of a certain incoherency or a lack of causal relationship between one episode and another, is not manifest in Gebir only, but in other long poems such as Cysraor (1800) and The Phocaeans written also in the early years, and published 1802. Obscurity is

either intended, or is caused by a complex system of thought, or is merely the result of a writer's inability to express himself clearly. Landor's obscurity, it seems, is of the latter type. This inability is seen in such poems as "Crysaor" in which he tries to create a new myth. Here the reader finds it hard to follow Landor's line of thought. Whereas in "The last of Ulysses" he is much less obscure because he is reproducing a story which is familiar both to himself and to the reader. Landor, who was eager to build his fame, seems to have been aware of this. "Southey ... calls [Gebir] in some parts obscure" Archdeacon Hare is made to say; and Landor replies, "It must be, if Southey found it so. I never thought of asking him where lies the obscurity: I would have attempted to correct whatever he disapproved."¹

This awareness might have been one of the reasons behind Landor's experimentation in different forms. Beside epic poetry Landor tried the closet drama, the idyl, the satire, the lyric and the epigram. But it seems that the epic and dramatic forms of poetry on which he sought to build his fame were beyond his abilities. "The fact simply is," Saintsbury writes, "that the modern and romantic touch in Landor made him unequal either to formal epic or to formal drama. He

wanted the loose movement, the more 'accidented' situations, the full, and sometimes almost irrelevant, talk, the subsidiary interest of description and other things of the kind, to enable him to be something more than 'pale and noble'.

After nearly a quarter of a century Landor suddenly decided to write, almost exclusively, prose dialogues. If we consider Landor's abilities and limitations we shall find out that this happy choice, which came after long experimenting, was inevitable.

In 1809 Landor wrote to Southey, "I confess to you, if even foolish men had read Gebir I should have continued to write poetry. There is something of summer in the hum of insects." "The popularis aura, though we are ashamed or unable to analyse it," he repeated the following year, "is requisite for the health and growth of genius. Had Gebir been a worse poem, but with more admirers, and I had once filled my sails, I should have made many, and perhaps some prosperous, voyages." He then adds: "There is almost as much vanity in disdaining the opinion of the world as in pursuing it. In the one case we are conscious of possessing dignity; in the other we basely serpentize (sic) to obtain it.

2 Forster, Landor, I, 177-8.
This is indeed a difference, and one worth knowing in the outset.\textsuperscript{1}

Landor's realization that he would not be able to occupy as a poet the place he aspired to among the writers of his country was the first reason that made him look for this place in the field of prose, as his letter to Browning written in 1845 shows:

\begin{quote}
If ever you receive my collected works, pray do not say a single word about the poetry. I might have been a poet if I had given up my mind to it. In prose I found more room. We had no prose-writer interesting in his subject and grateful in his style. We had none who could stand with Pascal, De Sévigné, Bossuet and Le Sage — nor do I think the Romans had, or even the Greeks — I detest the subjects of Bossuet, but what eloquence! I threw out both writers to their full length, and made room for myself beyond their sphere."\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

But Landor's genius, one repeats, is primarily a poet's. Lack of admirers would not have so easily dissuaded one of his talents, especially if he despised popularity, from making "many, and ... prosperous, voyages" had he been sure of success. If the above-quoted letter does not give valid reasons for Landor's turning to prose, the following quotation does: "Amplitude of dimensions," he declared, "is requisite to constitute the greatness of a poet besides his symmetry

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p.178n.
\textsuperscript{2} Minchin, H.C., \textit{Walter Savage Landor} (1934), pp.19-20.
of form and his richness of decoration" he wrote, "We may write little things well and accumulate one upon another; but never will any justly be called a great poet unless he has treated a great subject worthily." In his essay "The Poems of Catullus" he repeats the same view: "A poet of the same order must have formed, or taken to himself and modified, some great subject."\(^1\)

The incoherency referred to, seems to be behind Landor's inability to treat "a great subject worthily". Whether he was conscious of this, the dialogue form which he came to adopt is the form in which this structural defect is least noticeable. Lack of coherency is natural in a conversation. Of the digressive nature of the dialogue Landor was fully aware: "When we adhere to one point, whatever the form," he writes, "it should rather be called a disquisition than a conversation." Beginning a conversation with Southey on Milton he says: "I shall ... say everything that comes into my head on the subject. Beside which, if any collateral thoughts should spring up, I may throw them in also; as you perceive I have frequently done in my Imaginary Conversations, and as we always do in real ones."\(^3\)

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1. The Pentameron, Complete Works, IX, p.201.
This awareness may have been one of the reasons why Landor chose the dialogue form. There are other reasons which, I think, are connected with his own temperament and conception of himself as a writer. "The best writers of every age," Barrow is made to say, "have [written in dialogue]: the best parts of Homer and Milton are speeches and replies, the best parts of every great historian are the same: the wisest men of Athens and of Rome converse together in this manner, as they are shown to us by Xenophon, by Plato, and by Cicero." In "Marcus Tullius and Quinctus Cicero", we are also told that Menander, Sophocles, and Euripides "wrote in dialogue, as did Homer in the better parts of his two poems." This method "had been employed by Plato on all occasions, and by Xenophon in much of his Recollections." Landor then adds that "the conversations of Socrates would have lost their form and force, delivered in any other manner." Such a form must have appealed to one like Landor who came to despise popularity. His choice of the dialogue form might be considered a reaction against the public's indifference to his works. "Let us love those who love us," he wrote, "and be contented to teach those who will hear us. Neither

1 "Barrow and Newton," Ibid., IV, 152-3.
2 Ibid., II, 138.
the voice nor the affections can extend beyond a contracted circle.\textsuperscript{1} The fact that none of his contemporaries used it exclusively and extensively also satisfied one who prided himself on his own originality and sought distinction in difference from others.

Landor began to write his \textit{Imaginary Conversations} in Italy where social meetings were called "conversazioni". It was with contempt that he looked down upon such meetings and upon the conversations that featured in them. In "Florentine, English visitor, and Walter Landor", he speaks with disdain of the "Italian habit of \texttt{conversazioni}, as those assemblies are called where people do anything rather than converse." This habit," he adds, addressing the Florentine visitor, "produces the same effect on the minds of your countrymen as brandy does on the bodies of your greyhounds: it stupefies them, takes away their strength, and makes them little all their lives."\textsuperscript{2} Knowing how he avoided society, especially the Italian, we can see in his \textit{Imaginary Conversations}, ideal "conversazioni" inspired by the actual one.

Having a temperament that made him unable to come to terms with others, Landor felt happy only in an imaginary

\textsuperscript{1} "Dante and Gemma Donati", Ibid., II, p. 232.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., III, 215.
society to which he summoned the heroes of the past. Yet knowing his temperament one believes that he would not have felt as happy had they actually been with him. The following passage shows the only society that pleased him:

We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together: we raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another: we give no offence to the most illustrious by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence: each interlocutor stands before us, speaks or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. 1

This passage shows, among other things, the dominating personality of the author. For one with such a strong egotism, the dialogue would be a favourite form: "For the same form of writing most often used to conceal one's personality," writes Forster, "is also that which may be employed with the greatest success to indulge in peculiarities intensely personal without the ordinary conditions or restraints." In the following passage Forster goes on to explain why this form suits Landor's mind:

When a man writes a dialogue he has it all to himself, the pro and the con, the argument and the reply. Within the shortest given space of time he may indulge in every possible variety of mood ... In no other style of composition is a writer so free from orderly restraints upon opinion, or so absolved from self-control.

1 "Milton and Andrew Marvel", Ibid., IV, 175-6.
Better far than any other it adapts itself to
eagerness and impatience. Dispensing with
preliminaries, the jump in medias res may at once
be taken safely.\(^1\)

Another reason behind Landor's choice of the dialogue
form is that it satisfied his craving for dramatic expression.
We notice this craving as early as 1811. A letter which he
sent Southey, at that time, shows his desire to offer Count
Julian, which he had just finished, for presentation on the
stage, "Kemble may be tried" he wrote, "It really does appear
to me, on recollection, that Count Julian is a character
suited to him." He was afraid lest his play should lose much
of its dignity and elevated sentiments by being played by
inferior actors: "I am not remarkably pure or chaste; but to
hear generous and pathetic sentiments and to behold glorious
and grand actions amidst the vulgar hard-hearted language
of prostitutes and lobby-loungers, not only takes away all
my pleasure by the evident contrast, but seizes me with the
most painful and insuperable disgust." Therefore, "if Kemble
will not act it, I would not submit it to inferior actors."\(^2\)

Referring to Landor's tendency to dramatic expression
Forster writes, "That the natural bent of his genius went
strongly in the direction of the drama, as he seems himself

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\(^2\) Ibid., p.298.
at all times to have felt with greater or less vividness, there is no doubt.¹ Landor's letter to Southey in which he refers to the latter's play shows the truth of Forster's view: "Certainly this last section of Pelayo² writes Landor, "is the most masterly of all. I could not foresee or imagine how the characters would unfold themselves. I could have done but little with Florinda and with Egilona, taking your outline; yet I could have done a good deal more with them than any other man except yourself."

Referring to his own dramatic gift, Landor then adds, "For I delight in the minute variations and almost imperceptible shades of the female character, and confess that my reveries, from my most early youth, were almost entirely on what this one or that one would have said or done in this or that situation. Their countenances, their movements, their forms, the colours of their dresses, were before my eyes."³ Knowing this tendency in Landor, Southey anticipates the dramatic nature of his friend's dialogues: "I shall rejoice to see your Dialogues," writes Southey in May 1822, "Mine

¹ Ibid., p.268.
² Afterwards Roderick.
³ Forster, op.cit., p.267.
are consecutive, and will have nothing of that dramatic variety of which you will make the most."¹

The dialogue is often the voice of a mind in revolt. For a discontented mind is always posing questions and looking for answers. Landor, as we have seen, was in perpetual revolt. He was most discontented with political and religious institutions, as the following passage illustrates:

As the needle turns away from the rising sun, from the meridian, from the occidental, from regions of fragrancy and gold and gems, and moves with unerring impulse to the frosts and deserts of the north, so Milton and some few others, in politics, philosophy, and religion, walk through the busy multitude, wave aside the importunate trader, and, after a momentary oscillation from external agency, are found in the twilight and in the storm, pointing with certain index to the polestar of immutable truth."²

Landor also believed that the dialogue form protects the writer who expresses individual and unconventional views from the hostility of society. This belief has something to do, I think, with his sense of persecution: "Such a form of composition," he makes Barrow tell Newton, "will protect you... from the hostility all novelty (unless it is vicious) excites."³ This explains why most of Landor's characters are masks

¹ Ibid., p.509.
³ "Barrow and Newton," Ibid., IV, 153.
behind which Landor's own voice is heard — as we shall see later.

These factors explain why the dialogue form became Landor's favourite medium of expression; why, as soon as Southey mentioned it to him, he immediately set to work, and, in a comparatively short time produced his voluminous Imaginary Conversations. In August 1820 Southey wrote to Landor that he was writing "a series of Dialogues, upon a plan which was suggested by Boethius."¹ When Landor soon adopted the same form, he was not imitating Southey. He was only reminded, I think, of a form which he had used many years before, and which he discarded when what he wrote was not accepted for publication. In 1797, he gave Robert Adair a dialogue between Lord Grenville and Burke for publication in the Morning Chronicle, but it was rejected. Another dialogue which Landor wrote at that period was between Henry the Fourth and Sir Arnold Savage.² One can therefore say that Southey's letter reminded Landor of a certain gift which he possessed.

Having considered the factors that had most probably led Landor to adopt the dialogue form we now discuss the characteristics of the Imaginary Conversations. In so doing

¹ Super, Landor, 153.
² See Forster, Landor, I, 511.
we may come to understand the nature of Landor's contribution, and the development of the dialogue form in his hands. The most important characteristic of Landor's Conversations is the dominance in them of Landor's personality. Reviewing the first volumes of Imaginary Conversations, the Monthly Review criticised Landor's frequent and grandiose references to himself: "If the author's representation of himself be just," wrote the reviewer, "we cannot consider him as a very polite, or a very amiable, or a very modest personage." Equally significant is the passage with which the reviewer ended his article: "We hope that, in a future edition," he "will retrench the passages in which he is himself brought forwards in a manner that must appear ridiculous in all eyes but his own." The personal element does in fact dominate Landor's dialogues to such an extent that their method and their classification can better be understood with reference to this factor. "The only continuous element" in Landor's dialogues, says Mr. Super, "is the author himself." Super therefore believes that "their only valid sequence is in reference to his own life." Another student of Landor,

1 VOL. CV, p.126.
2 Ibid., p.127.
H.M. Flasdieck, believes that Landor's Conversations are a species of informal essay which is dominated throughout by the personality of the author.¹

Considered in this light, the two existing classifications of Landor's dialogues are not illuminating enough. In Forster's edition, they are classified under the headings of "Greek!", "Roman", "Dialogues of Sovereigns and Statesmen", "Dialogues of Literary men", "Dialogues of Famous Women", and "Miscellaneous Dialogues". In Welby's edition, they are classified according to the nationality of the speakers.

If we approach Landor's Imaginary Conversations guided by the studies made above of Landor's intense subjectivity which makes many of his dialogues a record of his personal experience, and of his sense of persecution, we shall be able to divide the dialogues into two groups. In the first of these he exposes what he considers injustice, persecution and corruption in society, in the manner of an angry teacher, as we see in "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor," "Barrow and Newton," and "Emperor of China and Tsing-Ti". The other group shows Landor as a dramatist who is mainly concerned with the passions that he dramatizes, or the significant situations that help us to understand the inner feelings of the characters with

¹ Ibid., p.247.
whom he sympathizes.¹

Landor's recurring double experience - we have seen above - is that of rebellion against persecution, and self-imposed exile to a world of his own. His Conversations, generally speaking, reflect this double experience. The letter which he sent Wordsworth, while engaged on the first series of Conversations is indeed illuminating; for it explains the nature of the first group of dialogues. In this letter he tells Wordsworth of the "occurrence" which affected the "tendency of [his] Dialogues." This occurrence, we have explained above, was the quarrel between him and Dawkins, which made him believe that he was persecuted by the diplomats of his country. We have quoted above the letter in which he complains to Wordsworth of this persecution, "If men like me ..." he wrote, "are to be insulted ... by the most worthless of the creation ... can it be wondered that we expose the defects in such a state of society?" He then adds "My life, which is devoted, shall have no interval unoccupied, in attempting to destroy that worst of misrule."²

Hence the purpose behind one aspect of Landor's work - to expose the persecution of those in authority. As Dawkins

¹ This grouping agrees with Sydney Colvin's view that Landor's dialogues can be divided into dramatic and non-dramatic. See his Landor, p.128.

² See above, p.56.
and his follies become the theme of discussion in two of his dialogues, so do the other persons against whom he contended in his life. They are similarly attacked in the dialogues which constitute that aspect of his work, and which he considers "a well-stored armoury against oppression and fraud." When we study this group of dialogues we find that their purpose determines their form. For in them, Landor makes his characters talk on the follies and misdeeds of such persons as Dawkins. Hence the discursive nature of these dialogues.

Most of the characters of such dialogues are mere mouthpieces through which Landor holds discourse on the themes that interest him. What these characters are made to say hardly differs from Landor's views which we have discussed above while dealing with his attitude towards the political and literary world, and the Church Institution. This is mainly the reason why his typical views concerning kings, republics, priests, and critics recur in many dialogues, and are uttered in the standard Landorian manner. "As to the political conversations, the views developed in the most prominent manner are decidedly republican," wrote the Monthly Review.

1 See above, p. 56.
2 VOL. CV, p.120.
The following quotation from the same periodical illustrates the view, above mentioned, that most of Landor's characters are masks:

Several of these political dialogues are constructed with masterly address and artifice; and they have an undersong of sense, which is intended to be vocal only to the initiated, while the plain reader may be satisfied with antient names, and believe that he is listening only to antient personages and hearing of past events. If some mischievous inquirer, however, when perusing what Demosthenes says about Anœdestatus, (vol. 1. p.245.) is reminded of any particulars in the history of a living Premier, must he thank his own fancy for the coincidence? If, also, when mention is made (vol. ii. p.105.) of many particulars in the life of Chlorus, the imagination of any one be carried back to the course of a deceased minister, again must the reader thank himself?¹

Another characteristic of these discursive dialogues is that, besides expressing Landor's own views, they reflect his own way of thinking. They hardly present opposite tenets. The author's point of view, is the only one presented, when a subject like republicanism is discussed. In the great number of dialogues which deal with this theme, we are told in a passionate way that republicanism is absolutely good while monarchy is absolutely bad. The following passage put into Diogenes's mouth is typical of this one-sidedness. Referring to the "Kingly power" he writes:

¹ Ibid., pp.122-3.
All nations, all cities, all communities, should enter into one great hunt ..., and should follow it up unrelentingly to its perdition. The diadem should designate the victim: all who wear it, all who offer it, all who bow to it, should perish. The smallest, the poorest, the least accessible village, whose cottages are indistinguishable from the rocks around, should offer a reward for the heads of these monsters, as for the wolf's, the kite's, and the viper's.  

If Landor presents views which are different from his own, he does so in a prejudiced way. He makes them look unconvincing by putting them into the mouths of characters whom he dislikes. Referring to this lack of objectivity, Leslie Stephen writes: "Some conversations might as well be headed, in legal phraseology, Landor v. Landor, or at most Landor v. Landor and another - the other being some wretched man of straw or Guy Faux effigy dragged in to be belaboured with weighty aphorisms and talk obtrusive nonsense." One example of this is Plato who is shown in "Diogenes and Plato" as a conceited sophist.

This one-sidedness of Landor's discursive dialogues, is a characteristic of the man's thinking. We have referred above to his impatience of contradiction which is a symptom of this one-sidedness. Referring to Landor's intellectual

1 "Diogenes and Plato," Complete Works, I, 100.
2 Hours in a Library, 3rd ser. p. 258.
faculty, Carlyle thinks it "weak in proportion to his violence of temper;" and adds, "The judgment he gives about anything is more apt to be wrong than right; - as the inward whirlwind shows him this side or the other of the object; and sides of an object are all that he sees ... two hours of such speech as his leave me giddy and undone."¹

Landor's dialogue "Washington and Franklin" illustrates, to a certain extent, what Carlyle says. At the time of writing this dialogue which deals with the Irish problem, Landor exchanged with Southey certain views on this very problem. From these letters we know that they held opposite points of view.² If we compare the letters with the dialogue, we find that it includes Landor's point of view only. Another writer of dialogues would have inserted such opposite views given by a friend. But Landor simply ignored them, though they came from the only friend he deeply respected.

It is indeed hard to know the real reason, or decide whether it is egoism, subjectivity, over-confidence, lack of confidence, or as Carlyle says, weakness of intellectual faculty. It may be the result of Landor's isolation. For mixing with very few friends - and these were careful not to

¹ The Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson (1883), ed. Norton, I, 278-9.
² See Forster, Landor, II, p.95. Landor's letter is quoted on p.96; Southey's p.97.
contradict him – he was deprived of the advantage of communicating with others who held different views. For it is mainly through continual interchange of opposite views that a person can modify his own. Perhaps psychology may give us a convincing answer. Describing how a person with a strong sense of persecution thinks, Professor Cameron says that such a person "can see things from only a very limited perspective and his conclusions are therefore irresistible, final and without genuine choice of alternatives."¹

Another characteristic of Landor's discursive dialogues is their digressive nature. They "abound," says Leslie Stephen, "in wanton digressions."² This also has something to do with Carlyle's remark on Landor's intellectual faculty. He was not a deep thinker, and his utterances were often the outcome of a strong passion. Hence the lack of a logical development of thought in many of these dialogues. Instead we get a conglomerate. We have seen above how the structure of Landor's long poems suffers from the lack of causal relationship between one episode and the other. The same

¹ See "The Development of Paranoic Thinking," The Psychological Review Vol. 50, No. 1 (1943) pp.227. In the same article, Professor Cameron writes: "Paranoic attitudes and actions make their appearance in such an environment [one of isolation]. They grow out of a breakdown in the machinery of social cooperation. The mutual sharing of plans, acts and consequences, that goes to make up genuine communication gets replaced gradually, in certain persons, by solitary behavior in which there is an irresistible selection of the evidence on the basis of their special sensitiveness."(P.221).

² Stephen, L., op.cit., p.258.
defect determines, to a certain extent, the structure of these dialogues. Again, it is difficult for us to decide the nature of the reason of such a defect. It may have something to do with Landor's sense of persecution.1

Because of the digressive nature of Landor's dialogues, some critics have condemned them as lacking in unity. They might have been led to this conclusion by Landor's following confession: "I shall ... say everything that comes into my head on the subject. Beside which, if any collateral thoughts should spring up, I may throw them in also; as you perceive I have frequently done in my Imaginary Conversations, and as we always do in real ones."2 After quoting this, Elizabeth Merrill writes, "Such digressions might be justified, did they

1 In Professor Cameron's study entitled Reasoning, Regression and Communication in Schizophrenics we read: "One of the most outstanding characteristics of schizophrenic thinking is its disjointed and apparently incoherent structure." (p.2). We also read: "The most outstanding characteristic is a striking paucity of genuinely causal links which, if present, would function in binding the whole together into an integrated concept. The elements of such a loose cluster, although quite evidently felt by the subject to be related, are not explicitly bound together." (pp.14-15). "The result is a conglomerate instead of an integrate." (p.16). See Psychological Monographs, ed. J.F. Dashiell (1938), vol.L, No.1.


return on themselves and make for a more complex unity, but in many cases this cannot be said of them, and it is largely because of the frequent changes of subject, and the rambling character of some of Landor's longer dialogues, that they are often decidedly ineffective.¹

But if we study these long dialogues we shall find that they possess, despite their digressive nature, a certain unity. Most of the digressions stem, I think, from one source - which is Landor's personal experience. This experience, as we have seen above, resulted in a recurring pattern of thought which we discussed in the following terms: exposure of persecution, revolt against it, and self-imposed exile from the region of its influence. This pattern of thought, I think, underlies Landor's discursive dialogues and forms, either explicitly or implicitly, the central theme. If we approach such dialogues with this knowledge, we shall find out that most of the digressions are variations on the central theme which reveals itself in a long series of partial statements.

In the following pages we analyse three of Landor's long dialogues which abound in digressions to show how they are governed by this pattern of thought, and how the digressions stem from, and conduce to, this pattern which establishes the

unity of the dialogue. The first Conversation to be analyzed is "Barrow and Newton". It opens with Newton's consciousness of the tendency of some examiners to underestimate the power of the examinee: "I come, sir, before you with fear and trembling, at the thought of my examination tomorrow" he says to Barrow. The latter then indignantly attacks the viciousness and injustice of these examiners who "break their beaks against the gravel, in trying to cure the indigestions and heartburnings your plenteousness has given them." Barrow then adds:

All will not be [contented]: many would be more so if you could prove nothing.\(^1\)

This conception colours his attitude towards men:

Men, like dogs and cats, fawn upon you while you leave them on the ground; if you lift them up they bite and scratch;\(^3\)

The nature of man leads Barrow and Newton to talk on philosophy and the tendency of the people to extol ignorant philosophers, and persecute the learned such as Bacon. After this Landor reverts to the theme which consoled him whenever he thought of persecution:

Thus it is with writers who are to have a currency

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\(^1\) Complete Works, IV, 110.

\(^2\) Ibid., p.111.

\(^3\) Ibid.
through ages. In the beginning they are confounded
with most others; soon they fall into some
secondary class; next, into one rather less obscure
and humble; by degrees they are liberated from
the dross and lumber that hamper them; and, being
once above the heads of contemporaries, rise
slowly and waveringly, then regularly and erectly,
then rapidly and majestically, till the vision
strains and aches as it pursues them in their
ethereal elevation.¹

Milton is then chosen as an example, and the conversation on
him leads the speakers to the following conclusion:

There are eyes that cannot see print when near them;
there are men that can not see merit.²

From Milton's religious views, they ramble on to Newton's
future, to his discoveries, to inventions in general, and
then to the prejudice of historians, whereupon Newton expresses
his relief that his studies:

not only abstract me from the daily business of,
society, but exempt me from the hatred and per­
secution to which every other kind of study is
exposed. In poetry a good pastoral would raise
against one as vehement enemies as a good satire.
A great poet in our country, like the great giant
in Sicily, can never move without shaking the
whole island.³

After a digression on historians they come back to one
of those utterances of Landor which - we know - is the result
of his belief that he was neglected by his age:

¹ Ibid., p.112.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p.114.
I should entertain a mean opinion of myself, if all men or the most-part praised and admired me: it would prove me to be somewhat like them. Sad and sorrowful is it to stand near enough to people for them to see us wholly; for them to come up to us and walk round us leisurely and idly, and pat us when they are tired and going off.¹

Disappointment with public opinion leads the speakers to talk bitterly of popularity, and of the inferior writers who build their fortunes on it:

Men of genius have sometimes been forced away from the service of society into the service of princes; but they have soon been driven out, or have retired.²

We then remember Landor's early experience in politics, when we read his attacks on the ambitious who seek to "raise their name and authority in the state" by seizing a young talented man and pushing him forward "into parliament". If "he succeeds to power, they and their family divide the patronage."

Consciousness of injustice does not only affect Barrow's talk, but determines the following pieces of advice to Newton:

The best thing is to stand above the world; the next is, to stand apart from it on any side.³

Barrow's other advice is:

Let me admonish you to confide your secrets to few: I mean the secrets of science ... We can

¹ Ibid., p.115.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p.117.
not but recollect how lately Galileo was persecuted and imprisoned for his discoveries.

When Newton argues that Galileo "lived under a popish government" Barrow answers:

My friend! my friend! All the most eminently scientific, all the most eminently brave and daring in the exercise of their intellects, live, and have ever lived, under a popish government. There are popes in all creeds, in all countries, in all ages.¹

"Men seldom have loved their teachers"² is the theme that follows in the speakers' minds. When we then read Barrow's saying, "Let me hear what you have to say on Bacon's Essays,"³ we think that it is an unexpected digression. But in fact it is not. For the passage Newton quotes from Bacon leads back to the theme of persecution. Bacon is referred to as one persecuted by his inferiors, and by even those who did not know him. The following remark on Bacon has a reference to Landor's own life:

Surely no folly is greater than hatred of those we never saw, and from whom we can have received no injury.⁴

For Landor himself, as we have seen, was disliked by many who

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid., p.118.
³ Ibid., p.119.
⁴ Ibid., p.121.
hardly knew him. He was also conscious of this.

The discussion of Bacon's third essay leads on to the theme of religious persecution. His essay "On Envy" makes Barrow and Newton meditate on people's tendency to hate their equals when these "are raised." After a digression on Bacon's phraseology, they come back to the theme of religious intolerance, whereupon Barrow says:

I see no reason why we should not be courteous and kind toward men of all persuasions, provided we are certain that, neither by their own inclination nor by the instigation of another, they would burn us alive to save our souls, or invade our conscience for the pleasure of carrying it with them at their girdles.¹

Bacon's essay "On Empire" is then discussed; and it is hatred of all kinds of oppression that determines the nature of their discussion:

It is the duty of every state, to provide and watch that not only no other in its vicinity, but that no other with which it has dealings, immediate or remoter, do lose an inch of territory or a farthing of wealth by aggression.²

After a brief review of Bacon's other essays the conversation reaches the subject of fame which leads on to the following passage:

Seeing that reputation is casual, that the wise may long want it, that the unwise may soon acquire it, that a servant may further it, that a spiteful

¹ Ibid., p.132.
² Ibid., p.134.
man may obstruct it, that a passionate man may maim it, and that whole gangs are ready to waylay it as it mounts the hill, I would not wish greatly to carry it about me, but rather to place it in some safe spot, where few could find it, and not many will look after it. But those who discover it, will try in their hands its weight and quality, and take especial care lest they injure it, saying, "It is his, and his only; leave it to him and wish him increase in it."

Again we come across some digressions on Bacon's Latin style and the structure of his sentences, after which the Conversation leads back to the theme of religious persecution.

After conversing on the heavenly bodies and the effect of environment on man, the speakers come back to the theme of fame, whereupon we read (with Landor's craving for recognition in our mind):

No very great man every reached the standard of his greatness in the crowd of his contemporaries. This hath always been reserved for the secondary. There must either be something of the vulgar, something in which the commonalty can recognise their own features, or there must be a laxity, a jealousy, an excitement stimulating a false appetite.

Again we read:

The minds of few can take in the whole of a great author, and fewer can draw him close enough to another for just commensuration.

1 Ibid., p.145.
2 Ibid., p.147.
3 Ibid., p.151.
4 Ibid.
Most of the discussions that follow refer to the author's own bitter experience in the literary world and his belief that his contemporaries underestimated him. Hence the significance of Barrow's following advice to Newton who is to "become an author ere long":

If others for a time are preferred to you, let your heart lie sacredly still! and you will hear from it the true and plain oracle, that not for ever will the magistracy of letters allow the rancid transparencies of coarse colourmen to stand before your propylæa.

After advising Newton to cultivate "the society and friendship of the higher" authors that "on proper occasions" he "may defend them against the malevolent, which is a duty," Barrow says:

Think, how gratifying, how consolatory, how all-sufficient, are the regards and attentions of such wise and worthy men as you, to those whom inferior but more powerful ones, some in scarlet, some in purple, some (it may be) in ermine, vilify or neglect.

This and the following passage show how preoccupied Landor was with the theme of underestimation:

Many are there to whom we are now indifferent, or nearly, whom, if we had approached them as we ought to have done, we should have cherished, loved, and honoured.

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1 Ibid., p.153.
2 Ibid., p.154.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
In a long monologue Barrow then expresses his contempt for the illiterate who:

raise higher than the steeples, and dress up in the gaudiest trim, a maypole of their own, and dance round it while any rag flutters⁵;

and his disdain for the "treachery", "insolence" and "fraud", that pervade public life (from which the author exiled himself):

I want before I die to see one or two ready to believe, and to act on the belief, that there is as much dignity in retiring soon as late ...²

In the remaining part of the Conversation, Barrow is made to give his views on Friendship and Marriage. He first warns Newton against befriending his inferiors:

Never take into your confidence, or admit often into your company, any man who does not know, on some important subject, more than you do. Be his rank, be his virtues, what they may, he will be a hindrance to your pursuits, and an obstruction to your greatness.³

The other advice concerning marriage also speaks of Landor's bitter experience. Answering Newton's question: "Ought a studious man to think of matrimony?" Barrow is made to say:

Painters, poets, mathematicians, never ought: other studious men, after reflecting for twenty years upon it, may ... Begin to reflect on it after the twenty: and continue to reflect on it all the remainder; I mean at intervals, and quite leisurely. It will save to you many prayers,

¹ Ibid., p.155.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p.156.
and may suggest to you one thanksgiving.\(^1\)

With this passage ends "Barrow and Newton" which has as its central theme Landor's own experience of life. If we study the passages quoted above we find that they stem from Landor's sense of persecution which is at the root of his experience.

After this study, I quote the note appended to the dialogue, for its deep significance. In this note Landor points out the main theme which preoccupied him and which set the pattern of thought governing this dialogue: "To remove and consume the gallows on which such men [the persecuted] are liable to suffer," writes Landor, "is among the principal aims and intents of these writings."\(^2\)

The other two dialogues to be analyzed are "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker," and "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor".\(^3\) These, as well as many other discursive dialogues, will reveal, when analysed, that they derive their unity from the recurring pattern of thought which is the outcome of Landor's sense of injustice. The critics who miss such a pattern are liable to be as severe in their judgement on Landor's Imaginary

\(^1\) Ibid., p.157.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.118n.
\(^3\) For convenience's sake, I defer the analysis of these two dialogues to Appendix B.
Conversations, as E.W. Evans who writes: "Landor should himself have known whither he was leading us, and that the meandering paths of thought should have at last opened out upon some central prospect, whence we might look down and discover the way we had come."¹

We come now to the second group of dialogues - the dramatic. It is to the lighter ones of this group that Leslie Stephen most probably refers when he writes that "the best and most attractive dialogues are those in which [Landor] can give free play to [his] Epicurean sentiment; forget his political mouthing, and inoculate us for the moment with the spirit of youthful enjoyment."² But in fact this group reflects much more than Landor's Epicureanism. Here Landor reveals the tender side of his character.

An analysis of such dialogues shows that they contain the three elements that give them their dramatic quality: setting, situation and character. Many of these dialogues derive a part of their vividness from the setting which is skilfully drawn. In such dialogues as "Achilles and Helena", "Marcellus and Hannibal", "Tasso and Cornelia", "The Cardinal Legate Albani and Picture-dealers", and in the Pentameron

¹ Walter Savage Landor (N.Y., 1892), p.132.
² Hours in a Library, p.275.
(which is a series of dialogues), Landor proves to be a writer with a great command of visual imagery. He is at his best when he draws the Italian background - which he loved - in such works as the Pentameron. The reader does not feel here that he is merely reading a dialogue between two writers. He is made to live with Boccaccio and Petrarch, to see what is happening inside the villa and outside it, and to enjoy all the sights that inspire the two friends.

Sometimes the setting is suggestive. Tasso is made to speak of his intense passion for Leonora, against a warm background of sunshine, "grapes", "pomegranate", scented "lemon-blossom" and songs. And when Cornelia calms Tasso's agitated soul, he says: "Tomorrow, my Cornelia, we will walk together, as we used to do, into the cool and quiet caves on the shore; and we will catch the little breezes as they come in and go out again on the backs of the jocund waves."¹ Landor's power of conceiving statuesque reliefs enables him to enrich the dialogues by such significant images as the following one which occurs at the beginning: "The little girl was crushed, they say, by a wheel of the car laden with grapes, as she held out a handful of vine-leaves to one of the oxen."²

¹ "Tasso and Cornelia", Complete Works, III, 43.
² Ibid., p.38.
The method Landor follows in delineating his scenes also accounts for the appeal of this group of dialogues. As his characters speak, the setting reveals itself. He only uses stage directions in few dialogues such as, "Admiral Blake and Humphrey Blake" where we read such directions as "officers come aboard", "to himself", and "alone".\(^1\) In the other dialogues these directions are implied in the characters' talk - a method which recalls Lucian's rather than Plato's. For the latter's scenic settings are, as A.R. Bellinger says in his study of Lucian's dialogues, more narrated than being "an integral part of the dialogue." "Place," adds Bellinger, "is sometimes as significant to Plato as to a tragedian, but, in general, his interest in the dramatic aspect of dialogue was not great enough to make him spend the care on it which Lucian did."\(^2\)

One example of this method is Landor's dialogue "Achilles and Helena". Trying to comfort the trembling Hellen, Achilles says: "Take my hand: be confident: be comforted ... the scene around us, calm and silent as the sky itself, tranquillises thee ... Turnest thou to survey it? ... Pleasant is this level eminence, surrounded by broom and myrtle, and

\(^1\) Ibid., IV, p.174.

crisp-leaved beech and broad dark pine above ..."¹

Similarly, the situation is gradually brought out by the speakers' conversation. The opening speech of Hannibal is a good example:

Could a Numidian horseman ride no faster? Marcellus! ho! Marcellus! He moves not - he is dead. Did he not stir his fingers? Stand wide, soldiers - wide, forty paces - give him air - bring water - halt! Gather those broad leaves, and all the rest, growing under the brushwood - unbrace his armour. - Loose the helmet first - his breast rises. I fancied his eyes were fixed on me - they have rolled back again. Who presumed to touch my shoulder? This horse? It was surely the horse of Marcellus! Let no man mount him.²

With this power of delineating the setting and presenting the situation Landor's characters come vividly to life. Most of his speakers show, not only his delight in characterization (which we have mentioned when we discussed his craving for dramatic expression),³ but also his interest in the psychological make-up. The setting, the situation, and the words combine to reveal the inner conflict of a character like Tiberius. We also notice how Landor preserves the important element of suspense. We are not told everything at once. The concluding passage of "Tiberius and Vipsania" shows how

¹ Complete Works, I, 2.
² "Marcellus and Hannibal," Ibid., II, 51.
³ See above, p.265.
effective this combination is. It also shows how the climax is kept till the end.

Vipsania: Calm, O my life! calm this horrible transport.

Tiberius: Spake I so loud? Did I indeed then send my voice after a lost sound, to bring it back; and thou fanciedest it an echo? Wilt not thou laugh with me, as thou wert wont to do, at such an error? What was I saying to thee, my tender love, when I commanded — I know not whom — to stand back, on pain of death? Why starkest thou on me in such agony? Have I hurt thy fingers, child? I loose them; now let me look! Thou turnest thine eyes away from me. Oh! oh! I hear my crime! Immortal Gods! I cursed them audibly, and before the sun, my mother!  

Landor's power of realizing characters is, I think, influenced by his subjectivity. Most of his characters are chosen because they have a certain kinship with Landor himself, or because they represent what he venerates, or what he would have liked to be. "It has been said of the Imaginary Conversations," writes Forster, "that it is never possible to read them without feeling that whatever may be their truth to the circumstances and times in which their supposed speakers lived, they are still more true to Landor himself; that we always feel it is he who is speaking; and that he has merely chosen characters whom he considered suitable to develop particular phases of his own mind."  

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2 Forster, Landor, I, 502-3.
When delineating such characters Landor tends to stress those features in them which are his own. Cicero, for example, reflects two of these: "I have given Cicero his variety, and his rambling from topic to topic, ever pardonable in a conversation between two;" he wrote to Southey on May 31, 1823, "but the few touches of paternal tenderness I now give were wanting, and I should have passed many sleepless nights at the faultiness of my work if I had omitted them."¹

As a result, Landor's characters, reflect, sometimes, his idiosyncrasies rather than their own. This is one of the things which the Monthly Review criticised: "Mr Landor even assigns to his characters sentiments quite the reverse of those which they are known to have entertained." The reviewer cited the character of Cicero as an example: "The following sentence, for instance, we should but little expect from the mouth of Cicero: 'Could I begin my existence again, and what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen, I would choose few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities.'²

The reviewer's following remark is indeed significant. It shows Landor's tendency to make his figures reflect his

¹ Ibid., II, 113.
² Vol. CV, 127.
own sense of persecution:

The impropriety is rather aggravated than softened by a note which Mr. Landor subjoins to the paragraph, in which he observes, 'these are the ideas of a man deceived and betrayed by almost every one he trusted; but, if Cicero had considered as I have often done, that there never was an elevated soul, or warm heart since the creation of the world, which has not been ungenerously or unjustly dealt with, and that ingratitude has usually been in a fair proportion to desert, his vanity, if not his philosophy, would have buoyed up and supported him.'

If we review Landor's favourite characters, we find that they are either military and political heroes, persecuted men of genius, unhappy lovers, rebels, exiles, or Epicuruses seeking happiness in their elevated worlds, and in the company of beloved Ternissas and Leontions. There is something of each in Landor. Hence the sympathy with which he created such figures to commune with in his solitude:

Among the chief pleasures of my life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and the unfortunate, as most interested me by their courage, their wisdom, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversation best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices; and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy.

1 Ibid.
2 The Pentameron, p. 273.
This passage throws light on Landor's method of creating his characters. His subjectivity which underlies—as we have seen—the choice and treatment of "The Death of Clytemnestra", underlies also his choice and treatment of historical figures. He chose the figures who represent various aspects of his own character. In dramatising them, he seems to have been dramatising aspects of himself. Hence the emotional involvement and the tears which he shed while relating their stories, and speaking of their miseries. In the following lines he tells how he was emotionally involved while composing "The shades of Agamemnon and Iphigeneia":

From eve to morn, from morn to parting night,  
Father and daughter stood before my sight.  
I felt the looks they gave, the words they said,  
And reconducted each serener shade.  
Ever shall these to me be well-spent days,  
Sweet fell the tears upon them, sweet the praise.  
Far from the footstool of the tragick throne,  
I am tragedian in this scene alone.  

This involvement seems to be the power that makes some of his characters well-conceived, impressive and unforgettable. We have quoted above De Quincey's comment on Count Julian. Landor "is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation ... and the monumental misery of Count Julian." This is probably because Landor did not merely

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1 A Satire on Satirists, Poetical Works, III, 385 (ll.195-202).
understand Julian's defiance of persecution, but experienced it himself. Hence De Quincey's belief that "no embodiment of the Promethean situation, none of the Promethean character, fixes the attentive eye upon itself with the same secret feeling of fidelity to the vast archetype, as Mr. Landor's Count Julian."\(^1\) Referring to the time in which he was engaged on this tragedy Landor wrote: "In the daytime I laboured and at night unburdened my mind, shedding many tears."\(^2\)

But if this emotional involvement helped Landor to present powerful characters, it hindered him, at the same time, from creating characters that are fully independent of himself. He could not be objective in his conception of the characters of those he disliked - as the following confession shows: "I have admitted a few little men, such as emperors and ministers of modern cut, to shew better the just proportions of the great; as a painter would place a beggar under a triumphal arch or a camel against a pyramid."\(^3\)

When Landor adopted the dialogue form, and made it his "business" he developed it. Besides bearing the mark of his own personality, and besides being enriched by the lyric element as will be shown below, Landor's dialogues are distinguished

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1 See above, p. 146.
2 Super, Landor, p. 96.
3 See Dedication "to Major-General Stopford," Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen (1824), I, vi.
from those of his predecessors by the dramatic element which contributes to the greatness of the Imaginary Conversations. A quick survey of the dialogues written by Landor's predecessors and contemporaries will show how far Landor developed this form.

Most of the dialogues written in the three preceding centuries are mainly polemical, or expository. In the sixteenth century Lucian's dialogues were translated from Greek into Latin by Erasmus and More. The Colloquia of Erasmus which was a popular work in England in that century show the influence of Lucian. Referring to the influences that helped the mediaeval debate to develop into "a polemical dialogue" Elizabeth Merrill says that "the impulses of humanism, which led back to Plato and Cicero and Lucian", the impulse that came from Erasmus, "combined with the mediaeval tradition already existing, then, to produce the pamphlet-dialogues of the sixteenth century, and to these the conflicting tendencies and beliefs of that stirring age gave the vitality of human interest."¹

The polemical dialogue was used in religious and political controversies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

¹ The Dialogue in English Literature, p.42.
The following titles suggest the nature of such dialogues:

The expository dialogue, on the other hand, is used by the writer to expound his own views. "As compared with the philosophical dialogue, the dialogue of didactic tendencies lacks all true clash of opinions" writes Elizabeth Merrill, "It is not merely that one figure usually dominates it ...
It is that the ultimate aim and object of the expository dialogue is not to elicit truth through argument, but rather to set forth facts or principles or theories already existent in the mind of the writer, or, in the words of Bishop Hurd, to 'insinuate truth'.”

The following are examples of the expository dialogues written in that early period: Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545),

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1 Ibid., pp.46, 50, 52.
2 Ibid., p.59.

In the 18th century the dialogue form was used by philosophers such as Shaftesbury, Berkeley and Hume who followed Plato's model. Referring to the state of this form at that time, Shaftesbury says that it "lies so low, and is us'd only now and then, in our Party-Pamphlets, or new-fashion'd Theological Essays. For of late, it seems, the Manner has been introduc'd into Church-Controversy, with an attempt of Raillery and Humour, as a more successful Method of dealing with Heresy and Infidelity."¹ Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*, a Philosophical Rhapsody, in dialogue form, appeared in 1709. In the same form Berkeley expounded his philosophy, as we see in his *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), and *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (1713).

Although Berkeley is more interested in ideas than in characters, nevertheless he uses the dialogue as a literary form. Besides being a stylist, he paints the setting in which his characters are placed. Compared to Berkeley's lively dialogues, Hume's are dry, polemic and formal, as his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1751) show.

Besides these, there were other writers who helped to

¹ *Characteristicks* (1711), III, 290-1.
develop the dialogue form. Bishop Hurd introduced historical characters in his *Moral and Political Dialogues* published in 1759. Henry More and Waller discourse on commerce; Robert Digby, Arbuthnot, and Addison on the Age of Queen Elizabeth. In 1763 he published two *Dialogues On the Use of Foreign Travel*, Matthew Prior wrote "Dialogues of the Dead",¹ which were published in 1907. Prior was influenced by Lucian, and by Fenelon and Fontenelle.

Another 18th century writer who was influenced by the same writers is Lord Lyttelton. In the preface to his *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760) he writes: "The Plan I have followed takes in a much greater Compass: it brings before us the History of all Times and all Nations, presents to the Choice of the Writer all Characters of remarkable Persons, which may best be opposed to or compared with each other; and is, perhaps, one of the most agreeable Methods, than can be employed, of conveying to the Mind any Critical, Moral, or Political Observations; because the Dramatic Spirit, which may be thrown into them, gives them more Life, than they could have in Dissertations, however well written."²

Yet compared with Landor's, Lyttelton's tend to be

¹ See *Dialogues of the Dead and other Works in prose and verse* ed. A.R. Waller, (Cambridge, 1907), pp.207-69.

² P.iv.
expository. Neither the characters, nor the situations, are vividly presented. Besides, his dialogues which Walpole called "Dead Dialogues," are as traditional and rather dull, as those of his contemporaries. Though there is some similarity in tone between Lyttelton's and Landor's dialogues that expound critical views, it is unlikely that Landor was influenced by Lyttelton, as the latter held religious and political views which would not make one like Landor sympathise with, and imitate him. Lyttelton, for example, was careful to appear to his readers as a good Christian. Hence the following warning (in the preface): "Elysium, Minos, Mercury, Charon, and Styx, are ... necessary Allegories in this way of Writing. If they should offend any pious or critical Ears, I shall defend myself by the solemn Declaration, which is always annexed, by the Italian Writers, to Works, where they are obliged to use such Expressions." The declaration as translated in a foot-note reads as follows: "If I have named Fate, Fortune, Destiny, Elysium, Styx, &c, they are only the Sports of a poetical Pen, not the Sentiments of a Catholic Mind."¹

After Lyttelton the dialogue continued to be a lifeless form, used by minor writers for expounding religious, social, or moral views. An interesting offshoot of the tradition set

¹ Ibid., p.vi.
by Lucian is Ambrose Serle's *New dialogue of the Dead or a Supposed Debate between the Crucified Thief and the Apostle Paul* (1791). This may be called a Christian Dialogue of the Dead.

When we come to the nineteenth century we observe that the traditional tone was still apparent in such dialogues as Shelley's *A Refutation of Deism: in a Dialogue*. Shelley's object here is to expound his own views on deism, atheism and Christianity. The same serious tone also marks Hazlitt's "Self-love and Benevolence",¹ and Drummond's *Dialogues on Prophecy* (1827) which show no attempt at characterization. Southey's *Sir Thomas More, or Colloquies on the Progress of Society* which appeared in 1829 has as its characters Southey himself and the ghost of More. There are descriptive passages that introduce the appearance of More's ghost, but little attention is paid to characterization. Accordingly the colloquies sound like essays.

The dialogues which are of great interest to us are those which made their appearance in Blackwood's *Magazine* in March 1822, under the title of *Noctes Ambrosianae*. This series which continued until 1835 is a record of the conversations of a group of friends including the author himself, John Wilson.

¹ See also, Hazlitt, W., *Conversations of James Northcote Esq. R.N.* (1949).
The "Noctes" convey to the reader the liveliness, vigour, and humour of an actual meeting of a group of gifted friends whose conversations are often interrupted by songs, and jokes. But despite the vivid characterization, the "Noctes" lack a unity and a central theme. They are, in fact, a transcript of actual conversations with all their digressions, and ramblings from one topic to another.

It was indeed left to Landor to make of this form - as we have seen - a dramatic one, thus reviving the tradition set by Lucian in his Dialogues of the Dead. For though it was Plato who originated this form, it was left to Lucian to make it a purely dramatic one. "Dialogue," as one of the critics says, "had been regarded as the property of philosophy, devised for eager learners, not for audiences intent only on amusement. Lucian was a professional entertainer, and, seeing the possibilities inherent in dialogue, he treated it with a lightness and satiric brilliance which resulted in the creation of what was practically a new form of art."¹ Landor must have been influenced by Lucian's dialogues. His admiration for them and their author is manifest in his Conversation "Lucian and Timotheus" in which he praises Lucian through the other speaker. "I am delighted ... to observe how popular are

¹ Bellinger, "Lucian's Dramatic Technique," op.cit., p.3.
become your Dialogues of the Dead" says Timotheus. "Nothing can be so gratifying and satisfactory to a rightly disposed mind, as the subversion of imposture by the force of ridicule. It hath scattered the crowd of heathen Gods as if a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst of them."\(^1\) And of Lucian's wit, Timotheus is also made to say: "I can bring to mind, O Lucian, no writer possessing so great a variety of wit as you."\(^2\)

There is no doubt that a writer with Lucian's detached views on religion and philosophy appealed to Landor whose own position was similar. This is why most of the opinions Landor put into Lucian's mouth against philosophy, religion and priests, are in character with Lucian though they are Landor's. Like Lucian, Landor aims to expose the abuses of his age. Perhaps the dialogues in which the social and moral satire is clear, such as "Pope Leo XII and his Valet Gigi", "Louis XVIII and Talleyrand", "The Cardinal-Legate Albani and Picture-dealers", and "Fra Filippo Lippi and Pope Eugenius the fourth", show, with their vivid characterization, their narrative and descriptive elements, the inspiration of Lucian. One may add here that the nature of Lucian's style might have made him appeal to Landor. This style, according to a

\(^1\) Complete Works, II, 1.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.21.
ninth-century bishop, "is so harmonious that when read aloud it does not sound like words, but like indefinable music that trickles into the listener's ears." Of Lucian's Attic Greek, J.A.K. Thomson also says that it is of "extraordinary" "ease and brilliance" qualities which Landor admired in any writer.

When we study Landor's dialogues, we find that they have some characteristics that can be discussed in terms of Landor's own personality. Though Landor's characters are historical, the utterances he puts into their mouths are not. Disdaining to repeat what we already know, he puts his characters in new situations, and gives them original utterances - a method to be expected from one whose earliest publication shows his pride in his own originality. In the preface to this work he proudly writes that in his poem "Epistle from Abelard to Eloise," he "relinquish[ed], altogether, the paths pursued by predecessors in this department" and contented "himself not with what has been already said, but with what might have been." It is this principle that determines the situations of his dialogues. They are original situations devised in such a way as would make the historical characters utter not what had

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already been recorded by historians, but what might have been.

Love of originality is, I think, the main reason behind such deviation from historical facts, as the following confession implies: "I have expunged many thoughts for their close resemblance to what others had written whose works I never saw until after."\textsuperscript{1} He also abstained from quoting others: "I seldom do it in conversation, seldomer in composition; for it mars the beauty of style."\textsuperscript{2}

Another characteristic of the Imaginary Conversations is their style, which is clearly Landorian. All the characters, despite their variety, speak their author's elevated English. If we read for example the following passage:

There is a pettishness and forwardness about some literary men, in which, at the mention of certain names, they indulge without moderation or shame ... Do not wonder then if I take my walk at a distance from the sibilant throat and short-flighted wing; at a distance from the miry hide and blindly directed horn.\textsuperscript{3}

we look suspiciously at the name of "Michel-Angelo" to whom it is attributed, for this is Landor's unmistakeable tone. And when we read the following passage which is put into Epicurus's mouth:

\textsuperscript{1} See Introduction to Landor's Imaginary Conversations, selected and edited by Cavenagh (1914), p.xviii.

\textsuperscript{2} "Lucian and Timotheus," Complete Works, II, 25.

\textsuperscript{3} "Vittoria Colonna and Michel-Angelo," Ibid., III, 30.
I would not contend even with men able to contend with me ... Whom should we contend with? the less? it were inglorious: the greater? it were vain.¹

we immediately remember Landor's famous "Dying speech of an old Philosopher" which begins with:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife ...

"Machiavelli" is also made to speak in Landor's English as the following passage shows:

Republican as I have lived, and shall die, I would rather any other state of social life, than naked and rude democracy; because I have always found it more jealous of merit, more suspicious of wisdom, more proud of riding on great minds, more pleased at raising up little ones above them, more fond of loud talking, more impatient of calm reasoning, more unsteady, more ungrateful, and more ferocious; above all, because it leads to despotism through fraudulence, intemperance, and corruption.²

One reason why most of Landor's characters speak in one style which is Landor's own, is, I think, his subjectivity. He cannot forget himself and his problems, and live in theirs. It is rather the opposite thing which happens here. Partaking of his own thoughts and feelings, they naturally partake of his own language. Landor's deep concern for the manner of his writing is also another reason why he makes his characters use this pure and harmonious English. For as Leslie Stephen truly says, "Landor's style seldom condescends to adapt itself to the mouth of the speaker ... from Demosthenes to Porson

every interlocutor has palpably the true Landorian trick of speech." ¹

If there is any variety of style, it is the variety that corresponds with the two sides of Landor's character. While the rebel expresses himself in a "prolonged series of explosions" - to use Leslie Stephen's words - or "monotonous thunder-growls", ² the tender lover converses with a "supernatural delicacy." ³ If we compare the following passages we shall notice the difference. The first one is taken from "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor," in which the latter says:

Far am I from the inclination of lighting up a fire to invite around it the idle, the malevolent, the seditious: I would however subscribe my name, to ensure the maintenance of those persons who shall have lost their country for having punished with death its oppressor, or for having attempted it and failed. Let it first be demonstrated that he hath annulled the constitutional laws, or retracted his admission or violated his promise of them, or that he holds men not born his subjects, nor reduced to that condition by legitimate war, in servitude and thraldom, or hath assisted or countenanced another in such offences. No scorn, no contumely, no cruelty, no single, no multiplied, injustice, no destruction, is enough, excepting the destruction of that upon which all society is constituted, under which all security rests, and all hope lies at anchor, faith. ⁴

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¹ Hours in a Library, p.257.

² Ibid., p.255.


⁴ Complete Works, III, 211.
Beside this passage that illustrates the angry Landor, I place the famous "Laodomeia" passage\(^1\) and the following one in which "Michel-Angelo" is made to address "Vittoria Colonna" by saying:

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\begin{align*}
\text{I come to you at all times, my indulgent friend, to calm my anxieties whenssoever they oppress me. You never fail; you never falter. Sometimes a compassionate look, sometimes a cheerful one, alights on the earthly thought, and dries up all its noxiousness. Music, and a voice that is more and better, are its last resorts. The gentleness of your nature had led you to them when we both had paused. There are songs that attract and melt the heart more sweetly than the Siren's. Ah! there is love too, even here below, more precious than immortality; but it is not the love of a Circe or a Calypso.}^2 \\
\end{align*}
\]

These two passages point us to another element which is more apparent in the dialogues that reflect the tender side of Landor's nature - the lyric element which, together with others, give the *Imaginary Conversations* their peculiar character. When Landor adopted the dialogue form, choosing prose as his medium, the only form of poetry which he could not discard, till his last days, was the lyric. His productions in this genre which continued without cessation from the very first volume of poetry to the last, are among those of his writings which have most impressed his readers.

\(^1\) See Appendix C.

\(^2\) "Vittoria Colonna and Michel-Angelo," *Complete Works*, III, 27.
On the other hand he called this composition of lyric poems his amusement. For it was to this kind of poetry that he referred, I think, when he said that prose was his "study and business" while poetry was his "amusement".

If we consider Landor's temperament, we find that this kind of poetry is the one that most suits his genius. His emotional nature, his subjectivity, and his strong tendency to give immediate expression to his thoughts and feelings, and to colour with his own mood the theme he is treating, support this view. A great number of his poems have as their motive feelings of indignation and rebellion. The rest deal with love, friendship, heroism, liberty, beauty, life, death, and nature - themes which are susceptible of lyrical treatment. As one reads Landor's lyrics, the Boythorn image fades away, and is replaced by a different one - a Landor unknown to the majority, a suffering, sensitive, compassionate and tender person. This is what we feel when we read his poems to his children, his beloved, and his friends. "I was moved to tears the other day, on reading in the Examiner your lines to A[rnold]. If he read them, how can he resist flying to you?" wrote Lady Blessington referring to Landor's poem to his son Arnold in which he says:

\[ I am not cross, I am not cold, \\
My heart .. it never can grow old .. \]
The tears fast falling from my cheek
Are signs for words I will not speak.  

Similarly effective as well as revealing are his poems to his other children. Again, the lyrics addressed to his sister Elizabeth show the depth of his feelings. To his friends he addressed many poems, as his poetical works show. We have quoted above others of his lyrics on love, nature, and death. The general reader is familiar with only very few such as "Rose Aylmer" or "Dying speech of an old Philosopher." Besides these, there are indeed many others that should appeal to most readers, and gain for Landor immortal fame. Among these are "The Maid's Lament", "Youth and Hope", "Plays", "On the dead" as well as many others.

1 Poetical Works, III, 151.
2 "To my son Walter", Ibid., 153.
"To my child Carlino", Ibid., 149.
"To my daughter", Ibid., 151-2.
"To a son and daughter", Ibid., 148.
"The Dead Martin", Ibid., 148-9.
3 "On the approach of a sister's death", "My sister Elizabeth", Ibid., pp.156,57.
4 The following are examples:
"Well I remember how you smiled ..." Ibid., p.140.
"Tell me not things past all belief ..." Ibid., p.131.
"Sweet was the song that Youth sang once ..." Ibid., p.30.
"Here, ever since you went abroad ..." Ibid., p.130.
"Along this coast I led the vacant hours ..." Ibid., p.128.
"Love ran with me, then walk'd, then sate ..." Ibid., p.336.
"Twenty years hence my eyes may grow ..." Ibid., p.129.
Lyricism, one tends to believe on reading such poems, is the natural expression of the man behind the mask, the essential Landor. This is the conclusion which Augustus Mason also reaches in his study entitled *Walter Savage Landor, Poète lyrique*. What is significant about this study is that though it is limited to Landor's lyric poetry, it gives the reader a comprehensive view of the man and the writer. Mason traces the lyric element throughout Landor's career. Referring to a group of poems in Landor's first volume, Mason shows the early independence of Landor's mind. In these poems, which are not imitative, he reveals "une inspiration romantique entièrement étrangère à Pope et à son école."¹ Such poems,² he adds,

montrent l'indépendance de Landor vis-à-vis des règles de la poésie lyrique et qui témoignent de son romantisme. Si Gray donna à l'ode Pindarique une forme plus régulière et toute personnelle, tendant par là se sépare de Cowley à l'idéal plus classique; si par la musique des voyelles et les 'souffles embaumés' de la nature qui flottent dans son 'Élégie', il a montré la route à suivre à Wordsworth et à Coleridge, à Byron et à Shelley, c'est certainement Landor qui marche à l'avant-garde de cette troupe romantique.³

³ Mason, op.cit., p.77.
These poems show, beside Landor's romanticism, his early preoccupation with the themes of liberty and rebellion against tyranny, which became the major themes in his prose. Citing a stanza¹ in which Landor addresses Washington as a hero of liberty, Mason adds:

La variété et la vigueur que nous trouvons dans ces strophes, dénotent ainsi que l'appel à la liberté une originalité de pensée et d'expression que nous ne pouvons estimer à sa juste valeur, si nous ne nous rappelons, qu'à l'époque où Landor professait de tels sentiments, on ne dénonçait pas certaine espèce de tyrans si communément que de nos jours. Un tel enthousiasme pour la liberté, exprimé avec tant de force prouve la sincérité du républicanisme de Landor. Est-il nécessaire de rappeler au lecteur que la républicanisme et la véhémence étaient signes caractéristiques de la poésie qui était alors en bourgeon, la poésie romantique.²

At the end of his study, Mason says that Landor's lyrical poetry reflects the tender side of his nature: "Celle que nous voyons dans la poésie de Landor," writes Mason, "est naturellement celle qu'il montrait à tous ceux qui lui étaient chers, tout ce qui faisait vibrer son coeur: femmes, enfants, parents, amis, nature, liberté, beauté."³ But it is not

¹ "But, hail thou hero! born to prove
   The Country's glory and thy Country's love,
   To break her regal iron rod -
   Of justice certain, fearless of success,
   Her rights to vindicate, her wrongs redress,
   Her sceptre to transfer from tyrants to her God.
   (27 - 31)

² Mason, op.cit., p.78.

³ Ibid., pp.224-5.
only the lyric poetry that shows this side of Landor's character. A whole group of the Imaginary Conversations, as we have shown, also does.

This group - the dramatic - is much influenced by Landor's lyricism. Many passages in such dialogues strike the ear in the same way as do the lyrics. When Aesop talks of life, love, and death, he creates the same atmosphere that "The Death of Artemidora" creates. Again many of the letters in Pericles and Aspasia I - which can be considered epistolary dialogues - give the same impression. There is not much difference between the tone of the letters that speak of Artemidora, and the poem. The passage which Landor puts in the mouth of Michel-Angelo - quoted above 2 - also has much in common with the lyrics Landor addressed to Rose Paynter. 3

Most of Landor's dialogues possess some of the characteristic elements of lyric poetry. A predominant feature that distinguishes these dialogues is - as pointed out above - the personal element. It pervades Landor's work, as we have seen when discussing his subjectivity, reducing many of his

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1 See letters LXXVI and LXXXV.
2 See above, p. 309.
3 See above, p. 171.
characters to mere masks. Another element is that of spontaneity which, like the lyric element, affects both the form and the content of the Imaginary Conversations.

We have seen, while discussing the structure of Landor's dialogues, that they are digressive in nature. We have also referred to Landor's belief that a planned dialogue is rather "a disquisition than a conversation". This belief made him "say everything" that came into his head" while composing the Imaginary Conversations; it encouraged him to give free and immediate expression to his thoughts and feelings.

This spontaneity, on the other hand, points to another important element in Landor's dialogues - the emotional element - which is seen in the man as well as the writer. What Landor puts into the mouth of his favourite figure, Epicurus - in the following quotation - represents, I think, his own attitude:

-Menander: Do not lose your philosophy in your emotion, my Epicurus.
-Epicurus: I would lose it any day on such a bargain. There is no danger of any man carrying his best affections to excess, provided they be not adulterated with worse.¹

It is in prose rather than verse that Landor tends to carry his "affections to excess". There is "feeling" in his verse, but, as Saintsbury says, "it is too often birth-

¹ "Menander and Epicurus," Complete Works, I, 256.
strangled in the expression, partly by an attempt at classical
restraint, which ... is not really natural to the writer, and
partly by the singular verbosity also glanced at, which, in
a way, is the 'escapement' and compensation for this restraint.\(^1\)
Hence the prose passages which are "excessively florid", as
Leslie Stephen calls them.\(^2\) In those passages - says
Saintsbury - Landor:

summoned to his aid every device of rhythm, colour,
word-value, sound-concert and other helps that
rhetoric and prosody itself, used in the most
general way, could give him. There was no longer,
as in his verse, any effort to 'boil away,' to
'cart off loads' of matter likely to be attractive
to the general: there was, on the other hand,
evident effort to 'let everything go in,' to 'load
every rift with ore.'\(^3\)

Landor tends to use such a poetic style when he is under
the sway of his emotions. We see this when he is presenting,

\(^1\) "The Landors, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey," The Cambridge History
of English Literature (1953), XII, 213.

\(^2\) The following passage from "Andrew Marvel and Bishop
Parker," is cited by Stephen as an example of the florid
style. (See Hours in a Library, pp.241-2)

"Little men in lofty places, who throw long shadowes
because our sun is setting: the men so little and the
places so lofty, that, casting my pebble, I only show
where they stand. They would be less contented with
themselves if they had obtained their preferment honestly.
Luck and dexterity always give more pleasure than in-
tellect and knowledge; because they fill up what they
fall on to the brim at once, and people run to them with
acclamations at the splash." Complete Works, IV, 224.

\(^3\) Saintsbury, op.cit., p.216.
or dramatising the emotions — mostly tragic — of those figures with whom he used to identify himself. As Ernest de Selincourt says, "he delighted to delineate those rare and delicate souls, of whom it might be said that

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\text{injuries} \\
\text{Made them more gracious, and their nature then} \\
\text{Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,} \\
\text{As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,} \\
\text{When foot hath crushed them.}^1
\]

In such cases, Landor does not only use a prose that resembles verse, but also expresses himself in verse in the middle of a prose composition. Pericles and Aspasia alone, includes more than sixty verse pieces of different lengths.\(^2\) It is to this that he refers when he says, "When Passion and Imagination meet, the low banks of prose are overflowed, and mole-hill after mole-hill disappears."\(^3\)

Though Landor tends, in verse, to "strangle" this emotional element, it underlies most of his lyrics, though the sculptural style in which it is expressed attracts the whole of the readers' admiration and attention. This emotion has, at times, all the indefinite nature of the romantic experience, yet Landor's genius enables him to include the indefinite in a

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1 Introduction to Imaginary Conversations — a Selection (World's Classics), p.XXV.

2 See Poetical Works, III, 312-40.

3 In a letter to Forster, explaining why he used verse instead of prose in the composition of "Beatrice Cenci", a "story that always moved him." See Super, Landor, p.399.
definite concrete form. The following statuesque relief—

'Cupid saw Pan stretcht at full length asleep.
He snatcht the goatskin from the half-covered limbs,
And, now in this place now in that twitcht up
A stiff curv'd hair,¹

is not—alone—typical of Landor's productions. Equally
typical is the following poem which expresses deep emotion:

The reeds were green the other day,
Among the reeds we loved to play,
We loved to play while they were green.
The reeds are hard and yellow now,
No more their tufted heads they bow
To beckon us behind the scene.

"What is it like?" my mother said,
And laid her hand upon my head;
"Mother! I cannot tell indeed.
I've thought of all hard things I know,
I've thought of all the yellow too;
It only can be like the reed."²

The emotions suggested by the green and the hard reeds are
indefinite, yet Landor is able to convey these essentially
vague human emotions in a concrete form.

But this emotional element is expressed without restraint
in Landor's dialogues, especially the dramatic. They abound
in passages which show an overflow of emotion, and sound like
rhapsodies. In his chapter on "The revival of rhythmical
elaboration," Saintsbury presents a detailed study of such
passages showing how Landor's prose possesses the metrical

¹ "Cupid and Pan" (ll.1-4).
² "[Aspasia's Song]," Poetical Works, III, 322.
qualities of verse, which make of him, De Quincey and Wilson "the First Three in the instauration of musical prose."¹

The passages to which Saintsbury refers are the "Dream of Euthymedes" which he calls a "remarkable example of quiet symphony and polyphony", ² the "Laod_ameia passage", the "Dream of Boccaccio " as well as other passages quoted from various dialogues. In another study he writes: "Landor's prose and Landor's verse are so strangely allied that there is practically nothing save the presence or absence of metre which distinguishes them, though, reversing the usual practice with his usual self-will, the prose diction and the prose imagery are sometimes more 'flowery and starry' than those of the verse."³

What is significant about these lyrical passages, is that they mostly occur towards the middle or at the end of the composition, hardly ever at the beginning. For Landor seems to be led into them, lulled by the beat of his rhythm which accompanies the expanding emotion. In this he resembles the Eastern singer who needs the emotional effect of music to

² Ibid., p.330.
warm up - what is called, in connection with Spanish singing, the "duende". The following two passages illustrate this point. The first is from "Aesop and Rhodopè":

I will sing to thee one song more, my wakeful Rhodopè! my chirping bird! over whom is no mother's wing! That it may lull thee asleep, I will celebrate no longer, as in the days of wine and plenteousness, the glory of Mars, guiding in their invisibly rapid onset the dappled steeds of Rhaesus. What hast thou to do, my little one, with arrows tired of clustering in the quiver? How much quieter is thy pallet than the tents which whitened the plain of Simôis! What knowest thou about the river Eurotas? What knowest thou about its ancient palace, once trodden by assembled Gods, and then polluted by the Phrygian? What knowest thou of perfidious men or of sanguinary deeds? ¹

The second passage is from the Pentameron:

My dream expanded and moved forward. I trod again the dust of Posilipo, soft as the feathers in the wings of Sleep. I emerged on Baia; I crossed her innumerable arches; I loitered in the breezy sunshine of her mole; I trusted the faithful seclusion of her caverns, the keepers of so many secrets; and I reposed on the buoyancy of her tepid sea. ²

Besides these two passages I place the often-quoted "Laodameia" ³ passage, for it also shows the predominance of the lyric element.

This study of Landor's dialogues has led us to the conclusion that he owes nothing to his predecessors in this genre. The lyric and the dramatic elements which mark the

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² Complete Works, IX, 268.
³ See Appendix C.
development of this literary form in his hands, are the product of his own genius. Furthermore the pattern of thought which underlies his Imaginary Conversations is determined by the romantic aspect of his character and his sense of persecution.
CHAPTER TEN

Landor's Criticism

"There is still the greatest need for a study of Landor as critic which ... will concern itself not merely with what he said, but with why he said it"¹ writes Mr. R.H. Super in a recent survey of the studies that have been made on Landor. "The trap into which most writers on Landor as critic have heretofore fallen," he adds, "is that of merely culling Landor's critical remarks wherever they can find them, and then trying to put them into some sort of order."²

The writer of the present thesis believes that the foregoing study made in it of Landor's sense of persecution with its impact on his mind, of the duality of the classicist and romanticist in him, and of his conscious desire to suppress the latter and declare the former, will help us to understand the nature of Landor's criticism, and - what Mr. Super demands - "why he said it".

In our account of Landor's attitude towards the contemporary literary world we have seen that he firmly believed

² Ibid., p.257.
that he was unpopular because he was superior to other writers and beyond the reach of the reading public. We have also seen that his belief in his own superiority was a compensation for his being—as he also believed—grievously underestimated: "If my rights had not been refused me," he declared, "I should not have asserted my claims." The study made above of different items written at different times showed us that he asserted his superiority by claiming to be a classicist in a romantic age. We have referred to the strong conscious effort which he made to write as the ancients did.

Landor's early experience in the literary world is partly the underlying reason for the grandiose attitude which is manifest everywhere in his writings, as for example in the poem to his brother Robert, in which he says:

Rare, since the sons of Leda, rare a twain
Born of one mother which hath reacht the goal
Of Immortality: the stem is rare
Which ripens close together two rich fruits.

Landor, we know, is not alone in this boastfulness. But what distinguishes him from others is that his boasting is always accompanied by complaints against persecution. Hence the following warning to his brother:

1 "Post-script to Gebir," Poetical Works, I, 482.
2 See above, pp. 123-33.
Aside thy Fawn expect some envious stab,
Some latent arrow from obscure defile;
Aside thy Arethusa never hope
Untroubled rest: men will look up and see
What hurts their eyes in the strong beams above,
And shining points will bring fierce lightnings down
Upon thy head, and mine by birth so near.

Landor entered the literary world with an apparent over-confidence in his powers. Instead of receiving general recognition as he expected after Southey's highly favourable review of Gebir, he was severely attacked. His work was condemned not because of literary defects, but because of the political views of its author. This made him write the "Post-script" in which he accuses critics of injustice and malignancy. This early attitude toward critics persisted throughout his life.

It must have been hard for one like Landor, who had great expectations as a writer, to remain unknown to the majority of readers for about a quarter of a century. It must have been harder still to be reminded of his obscurity, especially by a contemporary like Byron - the very man whose quick fame Landor both envied and despised. It was as "one Mr. Landor who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses" that Byron referred to him.

2 In a note appended to the Preface to Vision of Judgment.
Landor's best writings, even those of which he was proudest, brought him scant praise. His scornful attitude to critics, and his unorthodox views on politics and religion made him the butt of many attacks. These as well as his sense of persecution brought about the alienation to which we have referred above. It seems that his contemporaries were aware of this sense of persecution, and of its impact on Landor's character. Reviewing his *Pericles and Aspasia*, *Blackwood's Magazine* wrote with sarcasm: "Poor man! since the days of Jean Jacques Rousseau, was there ever such persecution, such conspiracy ...?"

Landor's contemporaries were also aware of his attitude towards the literary world. In 1843 the same periodical published an "Imaginary Conversation, between Mr. Walter Savage Landor and the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine" which reflects this awareness. The writer of this dialogue was Edward Quillinan, Wordsworth's son-in-law. Describing his long dialogue in a letter to Henry Crabb Robinson, Quillinan wrote that it consisted of "extracts (pithily selected I think) from L.'s several volumes of Im*V* Cons., North drawing out his opinions in banter & opposition; & L. denouncing all

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1 XL (September 1836), 309.
the principal poets, orators, historians & dramatic writers of antiquity, the principal poets & prose-writers of Italy, & France, & England, the leading statesmen of modern times, all Kings, all peers all baronets & the nations of Italy, France & England; in his peculiar manner & in his very words as published in his various works."¹

Quillinan quotes only the utterances that show Landor's scorn for writers in order to show him, in this parody, as one who believes that all others are inferior to him. Yet Quillinan understood the source of Landor's bitterness — his failure to be a famous writer. In the letter to the editor, published with the dialogue, he writes, "Many of your readers, ignorant or forgetful, may have asked, 'Who is Mr. Landor? We have never heard of any remarkable person of that name, or bearing a similar one, except the two brothers Lander, the explorers of the Niger.'"²

Quillinan then speaks of Gebir as a poem "composed originally in Egyptian hieroglyphics." This poem, as we know, was attacked for its obscurity. Quillinan dwells on this defect, in his satire, saying that Gebir has "so puzzled the few philologists who have examined it, that they have

² Blackwood's Magazine, LIII (April 1843), 518.
declared none but a sphinx, and that an Egyptian one, could unriddle it." Landor, the age knew, was very proud of his originality in the Imaginary Conversations. Quillinan therefore mortifies him by denying the originality of the conception:

The thing, we know, is neither new nor rare,  
But wonder how the devil it got there.  

Landor borrowed his manner — thus thinks Quillinan — from the "Noctes Ambrosianae", and stole his image: "Diamonds sparkle the most brilliantly on heads stricken by the palsy" from Wordsworth's:

Diamonds dart their brightest lustre  
From the palsy-shaken head.

But, in the light of the study made above of Landor's dialogues, Quillinan is rather unfair in his first accusation.

Needless to say, Landor was deeply affected by such attacks, though he professed indifference. His reply to Mrs. Dashwood, who told him of the attack on him in Blackwood's Magazine, is significant: "I desire never to see or hear criticisms on my writings, favourable or unfavourable. It

1 Ibid.
2 Landor had also been accused by the writer of the series "Alcibiades the Young Man" which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine, of borrowing opinions for his Pericles and Aspasia from this series. See Ibid., (September 1836), XL, 309.
3 Blackwood's Magazine, LIII, 532-3.
is so much time wasted, either to gratify a childish vanity or excite a childish resentment, though I think I am too tough-skinned for either."¹ Had he been really tough-skinned, he would have been spared much bitterness. As mentioned above, he seems to have lacked the confidence which would have made him indifferent to criticism. His mind dwelt long and morbidly on whatever was said against him, and led him ultimately to write such replies as "Post-script to Gebir" and a long review on the review of his Pentameron.²

The idea that he might learn from criticism never occurred to Landor. First because he looked upon his contemporary critics as ignorant, jealous and malignant people who became reviewers only because they failed as writers. The second reason is implied in his saying that "great personages are never to be set right. This is the only criterion I know of greatness."³ Hence his scornful reference to reviews in "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor": "I never look for them nor see them. The whole world might write against me, and leave me ignorant of it to the day of my death. A friend who announces to me such things,

¹ Blackwood's Magazine, XL (November 1836), 719.
² Forster, Landor, II, 369.
³ Landor: a replevin, p.326.
has performed the last act of his friendship.  

It is from this attitude that all the references to critics and criticism, in his works, derive: "With what perfect ease and fluency do some of the dullest men in existence toss over and discuss the most elaborate of all works!" Lucian is made to say, "How many myriads of such creatures would be insufficient to furnish intellect enough for any single paragraph in them! Yet 'we think this,' 'we advise that,' are expressions now become so customary, that it would be difficult to turn them into ridicule. We must pull the creatures out while they are in the very act, and show who and what they are." This is indeed what most of Landor's figures earnestly do.

Johnson is made to say that critics "will pass over" a writer's most original thoughts "as if they had been long and intimately known to them." Of their ignorance Boccaccio also reminds us when he says that they "would gaze with wonder at anything similar, in our days, to Pindar and Sophocles, and would cast it aside, as quite impracticable."  

1 Complete Works, IX, 121.  
2 "Lucian and Timotheus," Ibid., II, 29.  
3 "Samuel Johnson and John Horne (Tooke)," Ibid., V, 67.  
4 The Pentameron, Ibid., IX, 162.
He then refers to their injustice: each "has some favourite object for the embraces of his hatred, and a figure of straw will never serve the purpose. He must throw his stone at what stands out; he must twitch the skirt of him who is ascending. Do you imagine that the worst writers of any age were treated with as much asperity as you [Petrarch] and I?"¹

Such utterances provide us with the conceptions that furnish the background of Landor the critic. They show a general dissatisfaction with the condition of criticism, and a deep scorn for critics. "No criticism is less beneficial to an author or his reader than one tagged with favour and tricked with courtesy" Petrarch says, "The gratification of our humours is not the intent and scope of criticism, and those who indulge in it on such occasions are neither wise nor honest."²

Landor's dissatisfaction with the existing criticism and the practice of contemporary critics arises from his belief in the importance of the critic's role. A worthy critic — in his view — "must surely be above what he measures, else how can he measure with exactness? He must be greater,

¹ Ibid., pp.187-8.
² Ibid., p.187.
ex officio, than the person he brings before him; else how can he stigmatize with censure, or even dismiss with praise?"\(^1\) Besides, criticism is "an occupation worthy of the best intellect, and not at all unworthy of the best heart."\(^2\) In a poem addressed to Elizabeth Linton he tells her that the critic who tells the world of her worth and to whom the world listens, is "one great above his fellows" — a "crown'er":

He who can crown stands very near the crown'd.\(^3\)

Believing that none of his contemporaries had his own powers, he chose to fill this worthy position which, he gives us to believe, had been vacant for a long time: "No critic hath yet appeared," he makes Southey say, "who hath been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point ... because the eyes of no one have been upon a level with it."\(^4\)

"We critics who write for the learned," and "our younger brothers, the critics who write for the public"\(^5\) are significant utterances which reflect Landor's conception of

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\(^1\) "Post-script to Gebir," Poetical Works, I, 483.

\(^2\) "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Complete Works, VI, 25.

\(^3\) "To Eliza Lynn," Poetical Works, II, p.467 (1.77).


\(^5\) Ibid., p.139.
himself as a critic. One of his duties, as a critic, was to educate his "younger brothers". Hence the didactic passages which fill his works. When we review such passages we find that they are, generally speaking, a plea against injustice in criticism. For they teach just evaluation of a literary work.

Landor was only twenty-five when he gave his first lesson to critics. His "Post-script to Gebir" is full of valuable pieces of advice. In order to criticise well and justly, he tells them, a critic should be well-educated. He should also base his criticism on the text itself which he should study thoroughly before giving his verdict, and should not be influenced by personal prejudice. Believing that the critic who accused him of borrowing from Paradise Lost had read neither that work nor Gebir, he adds correcting him: "The language of Paradise Lost ought not to be the language of Gebir. There should be the softened air of remote antiquity, not the severe air of unapproachable sanctity."¹

He then warns critics against the use of such hackneyed clichés as, "This volume possesses considerable merit", for they are "the stoutest ally of ignorance and indifference, and ... the most insurmountable enemy of acuteness and precision."²

¹ Poetical Works, I, p.481.
² Ibid., p.484.
It would improve the public taste, he adds, if they select few passages, and point out their "defects and excellencies". Remembering how a critic accused him of plagiarism, he says: "But particularly should evidence and instances be adduced where accusations of plagiarism are preferred." He then defends himself against this accusation by showing the "ignorant" critic that "plagiarism, imitation, and allusion, three shades, that soften from blackness into beauty, are, by the glaring eye of the malevolent, blended into one."¹

Twenty-three years later, Landor gives another important lesson in which he develops the points made in the first one, and shows critics the only right method of criticism. "Nowhere, in ancient or modern place," writes Saintsbury of this lesson which is overlooked by most histories of criticism, "is the education of the critic outlined with greater firmness and accuracy."² The importance of this lesson lies, I think, in the fact that it anticipates modern criticism. For as early as 1823 Landor told critics that analysis and comparison are the essential tools of the just critic. Though comparison and analysis were known long before him, he was almost the first who expounded in a lucid and detailed manner this method of criticism:

¹ Ibid., pp.484-5.
I would seriously recommend to the employer of our critics, young and old, that he oblige them to pursue a course of study such as this: 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. For instance, purple might express grandeur and majesty of thought; scarlet, vigour of expression; pink, liveliness; green, elegant and equable composition: these however and others, as might best attract their notice and serve their memory. The same process may be used where authors have not written on the same subject, when those who are wanting, or have touched it but incidentally ... It matters not if one be found superior to the other in this thing, and inferior in that; the exercise is taken; the qualities of two authors are explored and understood, and their distances laid down, as geographers speak, from accurate survey. The plus and minus of good and bad and ordinary, will have something of a scale to rest upon; and after a time the degrees of the higher parts in intellectual dynamics may be more nearly attained, though never quite exactly.1

Thus Landor realized, long ago, the importance of the text in criticism and blamed the critics who neither compare nor analyze. In his essay on "Imperfect critics", T.S. Eliot

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objects to the criticism of Charles Whibley because he "exercises neither of the tools of the critic: comparison and analysis." Landor's figures repeat this important notion in one way or another. Expressing his admiration for Southey's criticism he tells Cuthbert Southey that his father "alone seems to have been aware that criticism, to be complete, must be both analytical and synthetic." Landor then adds, "Every work should be measured by some standard. It is only by such exposition and comparison of two, more or less similar in the prominent points, that correctness of arbitrament can be attained."

"A perfect piece of criticism," repeats Landor through Alfieri, "must exhibit where a work is good or bad; why it is good or bad; in what degrees it is good or bad; must also demonstrate in what manner and to what extent the same ideas or reflections have come to others, and, if they be clothed in poetry, why, by an apparently slight variation, what in one author is mediocrity, in another is excellence." Archdeacon Hare is also made to say: "How much better would it be if our reviewers and magazine-men would analyze ... to

2 "To the Reverend Charles Cuthbert Southey ...", Complete Works, XII, 158.
3 "Alfieri and Salomon the Florentine Jew," Ibid., III, 110.
the extent of their abilities, and would weigh evidence before they pass sentence."

How much better would it have been, one repeats, had Landor strictly practised this method of criticism he taught his contemporaries. For though he analyses with close reference to the text, his general views of the work criticized are often affected by his personal feelings towards the author. Even his analytical criticism is tinged by this lack of objectivity, as we shall see in his comments on some of Wordsworth's poems.

But before we discuss Landor's critical comments on his contemporaries, it would be of great help to us if we consider first his attitude towards Romanticism and Classicism. It is indeed Landor himself who forces us to deal with these terms - at the mention of which some frown - first because he uses them, and secondly because he seems to judge his contemporaries according to his own conception of these two words.

Landor uses the term "romantic" in the same derogatory sense in which it was used before and during the Romantic period. There is great similarity between his conception of the term and the conception conveyed in John Foster's essay

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1 "Archdeacon Hare and Landor," Ibid., VI, 26.

2 The name is misprinted as Forster in Professor Wellek's article "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," Comparative Literature (winter 1949), 13.
"On the Application of the Epithet Romantic" published in 1805. According to Foster, this term was among the "vague condemnatory words" which constituted the "language of censure." It "has become a convenient exploding word, of more special deriding significance than the other words of its order, such as wild, extravagant, visionary." Foster then adds that this epithet is "a standard expression of contemptuous dispatch," and "is always understood to deny sound reason to whatever it is fixed upon."

The following question and answer which Foster then poses, convey an early nineteenth century conception of the word "romantic":

Pray now what do you mean by romantic? ... Perhaps you mean that the ideas which I am expressing, associate in your mind with the fantastic images of romance, and that you cannot help thinking of enchanted castles, encounters with giants, solemn exorcisms, fortunate surprises, knight and wizards, dragons and griffins."

In his poem "To the author of Festus", subtitled "On the Classick and Romantick", Landor gives us a similar conception of the term "romantic". To him, romanticism is chaos, extra-

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1 Essays in a series of letters, I, 231.
2 Ibid., p.240.
3 Ibid., p.241.
vagance, and formlessness against which he warns young writers:

I wear no cestus; my right-hand is free
To point the road few seem inclined to take.
Admonish thou, with me, the starting youth,
Ready to seize all nature at one grasp,
To mingle earth, sea, sky, woods, cataracts,
And make all nations think and speak alike.

Some see but sunshine, others see but gloom,
Others confound them strangely, furiously;
Most have an eye for colour, few for form.

Believing that classicism is a matter of form, Landor adds:

Imperfect is the glory to create
Unless on our creation we can look
And see that all is good; we then may rest.  

Like a typical classicist he insists on order: "There is nothing so godlike as a love of order," he writes in one of his dialogues, "with a power of bringing great things into it. This power ... belongs to the Deity and the Poet."  

When Landor examines the works of his contemporaries - the Romantics - he finds that they suffer from profusion: "Amplification and diffuseness are the principal faults of those who are now standing the most prominent."  

He therefore warns young writers against profusion - the romantic defect of which Southey's poetry suffers:

1 (I. 15-23, 23-26).  
3 "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Ibid., VI, 25.
Classick in every feature was my friend
The genial Southey: none who ruled around
Held in such order such a wide domain...
But often too indulgent, too profuse.¹

Dilution, he tells Archdeacon Hare, "does not always make a thing clearer; it may even cause turbidity." On the other hand it is the sign of weakness: "Diffuseness is often the weakness of vanity. The vain poet is of opinion that nothing of his can be too much: he sends to you basketful after basketful of juiceless fruit covered with scentless flowers."²

Hence the following advice to young poets to avoid profusion not only in words but also in thoughts and feelings:

In every poem train the leading shoot;
Break off the suckers. Thought erases thought,
As numerous sheep erase each other's print
When spongy moss they press or sterile sand.

This lesson in structure is of great importance to Landor, therefore he repeats it:

Blades thickly sown want nutriment and droop,
Altho' the seed be sound, and rich the soil.
Thus healthy-born ideas, bedded close,
By dreaming fondness, perish overlaid.³

Landor's preaching, as we notice, stems from his belief that the structure of the works of his contemporaries is defective,

¹ "To the author of Festus" (11.88-91).
² "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," loc. cit.
³ "To the author of Festus" (11.27-34).
that "most have an eye for colour; few for form". This preaching, on the other hand, shows him unable to accept the conception of schools:

We talk of schools ... unscholarly: if schools Part the romantick from the classical.\(^1\)

A poet who is defective in craftsmanship, argues Landor, is no poet at all. To say that he belongs to another school is to place him on a level with a real poet, though in a different category, or school: good poetry, he believes, possesses the classical structural virtues. It is therefore rightly called classical poetry:

The classical like the heroick age
Is past; but Poetry may reassume
That glorious name with Tartar and with Turk,
With Goth or Arab, Sheik or Paladin,
And not with Roman and with Greek alone.

Thus it is not only the poetry of a certain past age that is to be called classical, for

The name is graven on the workmanship.\(^2\)

Most of Landor's views on his own poetry aim at drawing the reader's attention to the classical workmanship of his verse; in other words, to his difference from and superiority to his contemporaries: "Little in these pages," he writes in

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1 I give here the correct reading to the two lines, as they appear in The Last Fruit of an Old Tree (1853). In Wheeler's edition they read as follows:

We talk of schools .. unscholarly; of schools.
Part the romantick from the classical.

2 Ibid., (11.37-42).
the preface to the *Hellenics*, "will gratify the generality of readers. Poetry, in our day, is oftener prismatic than diaphanous: this is not so: they who look into it may see through. If there be anywhere a few small air-bubbles, it yet leaves to the clear vision a wide expanse of varied scenery."  

In his poem "With an album" he expresses his scorn for the "crowd" of contemporary poets, and his strong desire to "disengage" his verses from their "motely page". When he turns his back upon them and makes his way to the top of the mountain where the ancients abide, he sees very few in the romantic valley who deserve to accompany him. Among these is Aubrey de Vere:

Welcome! who last hast climbed the cloven hill,
Forsaken by its Muses and their God!
Show us the way; we miss it young and old.

And in his invitation to this young poet, he is careful to stress his own uniqueness in this romantic age:

Come, reascend with me the steeps of Greece
With firmer foot than mine. None stop our road,
And few will follow: we shall breathe apart
That pure fresh air, and drink the untroubled spring.
Lead thou the way; I knew it once ...

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Thus Landor shows that he belongs to the classicists, and not to the romanticists who are half-choked in the romantic swamp:

The ancients see us under them, and grieve
That we are parted by a rank morass,
Wishing its flowers more delicate and fewer.¹

This conception of romanticism as being inferior to classicism is often repeated side by side with Landor's assertion of his own classicism. While he denounces his contemporaries' indulgence in prolixity and exaggeration, he prides himself on his Attic abstinence. Referring to his writings, in one of his poems, he says:

If some should tire
With too much froth or too much fire,
There is an ear that may incline
Even to words so dull as mine."²

This Attic abstinence - he tells us - is a rare virtue in his age:

We hear no more an attic song,
Teuton cuts out the Athenian's tongue,
And witches, ghosts, and goblins fill
Each crevice of the Aonian hill.³

A study of Landor's critical views shows that most of them are a conscious challenge to romantic precepts. The

¹ "To the Author of Festus" (ll. 92-4).
² "With an Album," Poetical Works, II, 462.
³ Ibid., p. 448.
romantic loading of every rift with ore made him preach the Delphic precept "not too much of anything": "If there is a word too much in sense or sentiment," he writes, "it is no poem; just as, if there is a syllable in a verse too much, it is no metre." The same ideal determines his views on prose: "Elegance in prose-composition is mainly this: a just admission of topics and of words; neither too many nor too few of either."  

His teachings to young writers derive from this Delphic precept. He who wants to be a poet should "conquer his volubility," and learn to "compress in three verses what he had easily thrown off in twelve." He should "train the leading shoot," and "break off the suckers." "Myrtis and Corinna, like Anacreon and Sappho who preceded them," Aspasia is made to say, "were temperate in the luxuries of poetry. They had enough to do with one feeling; they were occupied enough with one reflection."  

As for Landor's deep concern with form, it sometimes seems to be a reaction against his contemporaries' concern

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1 Pericles and Aspasia, Complete Works, X, 104.  
2 "Chesterfield and Chatham," Ibid., IV, 270.  
4 "To the author of Festus", (11.27, 28).  
with content. Nearly all his pieces of advice turn round design. "No admirable poetry of the first order can exist," he tells us, "without a pure simplicity of design." Regularity is the criterion of excellence; and "the best poets are the most impressive, because their steps are regular; for without regularity there is neither strength nor state." He admires Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer because they are masters of regularity.

Thus Landor sees in romanticism all the vices that John Foster and his contemporaries saw. Yet Landor saw in it much more than the age did. For his views on the essence of romanticism show that he recognised it before many others of his contemporaries. Before we deal with those views which indicate the depth of Landor's insight and the power of his judgement, we refer to what Professor René Wellek says in this connection. In an article entitled "The concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary history", he writes, "None of the English poets, we must stress, recognized himself as a romanticist or recognized the relevance of the debate to his own time and country." Reviewing the critical writings of the nineteenth

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1 "Southey and Forson," Ibid., V, 205.
2 The Pentameron, Ibid., IX, 247.
3 Comparative Literature, op.cit., p.14.
century till the year 1882, to show that the word "romantic" was hardly used or applied to the writings of the age, he concludes that "as late a book as Mrs. Oliphant's *Literary History of England between the End of the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries* (1882) shows no trace of the terms and their derivatives."¹

Landor's conception of the classical-romantic distinction makes one accept Professor Wellek's statements with some caution. For Landor recognized the relevance of the debate to his own time and country. Though he did not early use the term "romantic" when dealing with his contemporaries, he clearly understood the new spirit that pervaded the poetry of the age. It was in 1849 that he used the word romantic when referring to this spirit in his poem "To the author of Festus" subtitled "On the classick and romantick" - a poem which Professor Wellek appears to have overlooked.

It was as early as 1819 that Landor came to express his awareness of the new spirit in poetry, and in Byron's particularly: "Between genuine poetry and that of Biron," he wrote to Birch, "there is the same difference as between roses and attar of roses. He smells of the spirit and [not] of the flower."² Five years later Landor developed this metaphor -

¹ Ibid., p.15.
in one of his dialogues - making it less vague: "Our national
taste," he tells Abbé Delille, with reference, also, to Byron,
and to his popularity, "begins to require excitement. Our
poems must contain strong things: we call for essences, not
for flowers." Many will differ in interpreting this
metaphor. Some might say that it means a preference for the
artificial to the natural: while the attar, or the essence,
stands for the former, the rose or the flower stands for the
latter. But this is not what Landor means. The phrase
"strong things" shows, I think, that he means intensity.
Those who prefer the attar to the rose, are those who search
for the intense passions and feelings, who are not satisfied
with what is moderate, ordinary, or restrained; and who yearn
for the indefinable. The metaphor, in this sense, reveals
a deep insight into romanticism, or at least into the romantic-
ism of Byron who believed that poetry is the spontaneous
overflow of powerful feelings.

In 1836 appeared Pericles and Aspasia in which Landor


2 When Landor saw Byron for the first - and only - time, he
was buying attar of roses. It is significant to know that
Landor was buying the same article: "Odd enough - he had
just bought the very article I came to buy - attar of Roses.
He was more economical than I - he gave his one pound, I
gave my five" wrote Landor. See Super's "Landor and the
'Satanic School',' Studies in Philology, XLII (October 1945)
p.794.
speaks of the new school of poetry. He seems unwilling to accept the notion of schools: "We now begin to talk about schools of poetry" he writes through Aspasia, "Is not that absurd? There is only one school, the universe; one only school-mistress; Nature. Those who are reported to be of such or such a school, are of none; they have played the truant."

However, he goes on to give an account of the poets who belong to the new school of poetry, and tries to find an appropriate name for it. Referring to his contemporaries, I think, as "the young poets at Miletus,"¹ he first speaks of the difference between them: "Some are more careful, some more negligent, some bring many dishes, some fewer, some little seasoned, some highly." He then adds: "Ground however there is for the fanciful appellation. The young poets at Miletus are beginning to throw off their allegiance to the established and acknowledged laws of Athens, and are weary of following in the train of the graver who have been crowned. The various schools, as they call them, have assumed distinct titles; but the largest and most flourishing of all would

¹ Landor is most probably referring to the "Milesian Tales": "A collection of short Greek stories of love and adventure, of a generally licentious character, by Aristides of Miletus of the 2nd century B.C., now lost." (The Oxford Companion to English literature.)
be discontented, I am afraid, with the properest I could inscribe it with, the queer."\textsuperscript{1}

Landor, as we shall see later on, was not antipathetic to all the prominent Romantic figures. Yet he liked to declare his objection to their writings which - in his view - lack the classical virtues: "We really have at present in our city more good poets than we ever had;" Aspasia adds, "and the queer might be among the best if they pleased. But whenever an obvious and natural thought presents itself, they either reject it for coming without imagination, or they phrygianize it with such biting and hot curling-irons, that it rolls itself up impenetrably.\textsuperscript{2}

Referring to the romantic trust in imagination, and interest in metaphysics, Landor adds: "They declare to us that pure and simple imagination is the absolute perfection of poetry; and if ever they admit a sentence or reflection, it must be one which requires a whole day to unravel and wind it smoothly on the distaff.\textsuperscript{3}

When a reviewer wrote in 1838 that Landor's intellect "flags and falls whenever the idea of the infinite [is]
Landor indignantly replied that his intellect "neither flags nor falls but turns its back upon it [the infinite], well knowing the folly of pursuing what cannot be reached, and grasping at what cannot be comprehended." Landor, we have seen, prided himself on being different from others. Hence his condemnation of their interest in metaphysics: "Mr. Landor," he adds, "was never such a mischievous idler as to set folks about searches in dark places for vain and useless objects, telling them that the wind, which he knows must blow their candle out, will direct them."

Landor's attack on this interest of his contemporaries arises less from an objection to metaphysics than from the belief that they are not capable of dealing intelligently with such subjects "which require so much preparatory study, such a variety of instruction, such deliberation, delicacy, and refinement." Hence the ridicule with which he refers to the metaphysical writings of his contemporaries: "What a blessing are metaphysics to our generation!" he makes Southey say, "A poet or other who can make nothing clear, can stir up enough sediment to render the bottom of a basin as invisible

1 The British and Foreign Review. VII (1838), 503.
2 Landor's reply is quoted in Forster, Landor, II, p.376.
3 Ibid.
as the deepest gulf in the Atlantic. The shallowest pond, if turbid, has depth enough for a goose to hide its head in."¹

This refusal to deal, as others did, with metaphysics, is partly due to his scorn for their intellectual powers and for what they say, and to his conscious desire to differ from them: "Others say they wonder that judicious men differ from them. No doubt they differ; and there is but one reason for it, which is, because they are so. Again, there are the gentle and conciliatory, who say merely that they can not quite think with you. Have they thought at all? Granting both premises, have they thought, or can they think rightly?"²

Landor knew of the impact of German literature and thought on the age. Hence his prejudice against "whatever the Germans and the germanised"³ say. This prejudice makes him declare, in his published works, an attitude which contradicts the attitude he expresses in his intimate private letters. We notice this inconsistency in his views on Goethe, for example. In spite of his admiration for him, he shows, in an open letter to Emerson, a certain scorn for the writings of the great German who "spent the better part of his time in contriving a puzzle, and in spinning out a yarn for a labyrinth."

² Ibid.
³ Forster, Landor, II, p.381.
Of Goethe's novels, which had a wide appeal, he writes: "Neither in my youthful days nor in any other have I thrown upon the world such trash as 'Werther' and 'Wilhelm Meister', nor flavoured my poetry with the corrugated spicery of metaphysics." Referring to a criticism in the Whitehaven Journal, in which he is "compared and preferred" to Goethe, he adds: "I am not too much elated." If the Revelations need one guide only to "draw the mystic veil aside," he says in one of his poems, Goethe's Epigrams need two. In short — Landor makes it clear in his open letter — Goethe is too inferior to be compared to him, "nor could he have written in a lifetime any twenty, in a hundred or thereabout, of my Imaginary Conversations."

But in his letter to his friend John Forster written also in the later years Landor gives a completely different view on Goethe: "What a profound observation is this of Goethe's, quoted by Blanco! 'Time is infinitely long, and each day a vessel into which a great deal may be poured if we really desire to fill it' (p.320). Certainly the man who said this

1 "Walter Savage Landor to Emerson," Complete Works, XII, 200.
3 "Walter Savage Landor to Emerson," (1856), op. cit., p.200.
4 This letter which is published in Forster, Landor, II, 521, is undated.
was the wisest man of his time, as he was the most poetical. Drops hang from every work of Goethe's that I have seen of the very purest brightness, such as will never dry up nor fall. I can judge of them by translations only; but I admire much of his poetry and all his prose." This view, I think, is more representative of Landor's attitude towards Goethe.

As for the apparent objection to Goethe, it is, I think, a part of a general objection to the interests of the age, which, in his desire to appear as a classicist, Landor expresses. We find the same thing when we deal with his views concerning feelings. Recognizing the romantic weakness of indulgence in one's emotions, Landor reacts by preaching restraint. In his significant poem "Remonstrance and Reply" he shows that he is different from some of the Romantics in this respect:

So then! I feel not deeply: if I did,
I should have seized the pen, and pierced therewith
The passive world! And thus thou reasonest?
Well hast thou known the lover's, not so well
The poet's heart. While that heart bleeds, the hand
Presseth it close. Grief must run on, and pass
Into the memory's more quiet plain,
Before it can compose itself in song.

Here he condemns Byronic romantic spontaneity, and expresses a truly classical view,

1 The quotation is from the Life and Letters of Blanco White, which Landor was reading then. See Ibid.

He who is agonised, and burns to show
His agony to those who sit around,
Seizes the pen in vain; thought, fancy, power,
Rush back into his bosom: all the strength
Of genius cannot draw them into light
From under mastering Grief; but memory,
The muse's mother, nurses, rears them up,
Informs, and keeps them with her all her days.

We notice the similarity between this view and Wordsworth's belief that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity."¹

In one of his dialogues Landor makes fun of those who improvise by telling his Florentine interlocutor: "Your improvisatori let drop their verses as a string of mules their morning oats, for miles together."² In this comment on the Italian improvisatori, Landor may be glancing at his Romantic contemporaries. "Poetry, like wine," he says, "requires a gentle and regular and long fermentation." He then adds: "What is it if it can buoy up no wisdom, no reflection? if we can throw into it none of our experience? If no repository is to be found in it for the gems we have collected, at the price sometimes of our fortunes, of our health, and of our peace?"³

If we compare such passages with his own poetic

¹ "Preface to Lyrical Ballads."
³ Ibid.
rhapsodies in which he clearly succumbs to his emotions, we find out that in his attempts to be a classicist he is more consistent as a critic than as a creative writer. Yet, even as a critic, he is not always consistent. For he is much more concerned with emotions than a classicist is apt to be. In his approach to any work he gives priority to intensity of emotion. Its presence is, sometimes, enough for Landor to make him extol the work. Expressing his admiration for Boccaccio he tells him, through Petrarch: "You were placed among the Affections, to move and master them, and gifted with the rod that sweetens the fount of tears." He then adds the significant sentence: "My nature leads me also to the pathetic."\(^1\) If we bear in mind the romantic aspect of Landor we can look upon this saying as applying to Landor himself.

His nature led him to choose from Italian history the same passionate episodes as those chosen by the Romantics. He treated these episodes - as we have seen - in the same spirit as his contemporaries. This is not unexpected from one who spent his life feeding on the emotions of his heart, and who was so impassioned while writing, that he used to "moisten with ... tears"\(^2\) the figures that he brought before

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1 The _Pentameron_, Ibid., IX, 163.

2 See above, p.294.
us. The following lines addressed to Alfieri show why Landor admired such writers — and men — as Tasso and Alfieri:

thou alone
Hast toucht the inmost fibres of the breast,
Since Tasso's tears made damper the damp floor
Whereon one only light came thro' the bars ...\(^1\)

In his critical passages we come across such utterances as the following: "Neither in the spirited and energetic Catullus, nor in the masculine and scornful and stern Lucretius, no, nor in Homer, is there anything so impassioned, and therefore so sublime, as the last hour of Dido in the Aeneid." He also says, "Never was there such a whirl-wind of passions as Virgil raised on those African shores, amid those rising citadels and departing sails."\(^2\)

It is also revealing to know that Landor remained all his life an admirer of Rousseau. On May 21, 1808 Southey wrote a letter to Landor in which the former refers to the "single heart" of Landor, and recommends "Christian Stoicism" as "wholesome for all minds." Landor is then advised to lay Rousseau aside, and read Epictetus: "Were I your Confessor I should enjoin you to throw aside Rousseau & make Epictetus your manual."\(^3\) But Landor never did. Till his last years.

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\(^1\) "To Alfieri," Poetical Works, II, 436.
\(^3\) Super, Landor, p.81.
he remained an admirer of Rousseau. It seems that Landor was attracted to the French writer because of his harmonious style, as we shall see later on, and because Rousseau attaches great importance to passion. It is the presence of this element which makes Landor prefer Rousseau's eloquence to Plato's: "There is no eloquence which does not agitate the soul" believes Landor. While Plato "never does" Rousseau "effects it sometimes in despite of the reason, and by uniting the Graces with the Passions." Landor then adds, revealing his attitude towards Rousseau, "We often say we hate Rousseau; but how often does the lover say (or wish to say) he hates the beloved!"^2

Landor's confidence in feelings is no less than the confidence of his contemporaries. The heart, he quotes Pascal, has its own reasons, of which the reason knows nothing.3 "The heart," he also believes, "is the creator of the poetical world."4 As a critic, he often approaches the literary work through his heart whose voice he confidently accepts. In his essay on Petrarch he expresses his deep admiration for his

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1 Browning mentions that Landor read Rousseau in his later years. See Ibid., p.472.
3 "Le coeur a ses raisons que le raison ne connaît pas."
"Triumph of Death". Yet he does not analyze it to show the reason for this admiration. He only says, "He who, the twentieth time, can read unmoved this canzone, never has experienced a love which could not be requited, and never has deserved a happy one." ¹

He prefers Felicia Hemans to Wordsworth - a thing which makes Mr. Super "ready to weep". ² Yet this preference can be explained in terms of Landor's cult of feeling: Wordsworth does not quench his thirst for the passionate as Felicia Hemans - who is more sentimental than passionate - does: "No tear ever fell, no smile ever glanced, on his pages" writes Landor, "With him you are beyond the danger of any turbulent emotion, as terror, or valour, or magnanimity, or generosity.-- Nothing is there about him like ... those exquisite works which, in Hemans, rise up like golden spires among broader but lower structures, Ivan and Casabianca." ³

Speaking of "the higher poetry" Landor insists that "there should be as much of passion as is possible" in it. He also writes that the "range of poetry and invention ... can not but be very limited and sterile" without "diversity of

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¹ "Francesco Petrarca," Ibid., XII, 60.
² Super, Landor, p. 337.
character," "much peculiarity of sentiment ... and finally and chiefly, much intertexture and intensity of passion." In a letter to Southey he also declares that "passion can alone give the higher beauties of versification." The "best" poetry, Landor again writes, "moveth the heart most."

Besides this confidence in feelings, and the quest for the passionate, which bring Landor very near to the Romantics, his trust in imagination shows that he was concerned with the same problems as preoccupied most of them. In his conversation with Southey, published 1846, he distinguishes between two kinds of imagination: a weak one which "can invent only shadowy appearances," and a powerful one which can make "an inert and insignificant atom grow up into greatness," giving "it form, life, mobility, and intellect."

In his conversation with Archdeacon Hare published seven years later, Landor returns to this subject to distinguish, not between a weak and a powerful imagination but between Fancy and Imagination: "The face is not the same, but the resemblance is sisterly; and, even by the oldest friends and

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1 The Pentameron, Ibid., IX, 274.
2 Forster, Landor, I, 259.
3 Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare, Complete Works, X, 341.
4 "Southey and Landor," Ibid., V, 308.
intimates of the family, one is often taken for the other, so nearly are they alike." Landor then develops the distinction referred to in the previous dialogue:

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 and animate such Beings as are worthy of her plastic hand; certainly not by invisible wires to put marionettes in motion, nor to pin butterflies on blotting-paper. ¹

There is some similarity between Landor's belief that Fancy is "excursive" and immature and Wordsworth's view that it is mad. ² "The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on," writes Wordsworth, "is capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined." ³ Both Landor and Wordsworth believe in the creative power of Imagination. This is implied in Landor's reference to "her plastic hand" and in Wordsworth's belief that Imagination deals with the plastic, and that it "shapes and creates". ⁴

Continuing his definition Landor adds, "Vigorous thought,

¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Ibid., VI, 35.
² The Excursion (Book IV, l.769.).
⁴ Ibid., p.212.
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, belong to Imagination." The rest of his definition becomes more significant if we discuss it in terms of his poem subtitled "On the Classick and Romantick". "Fancy," he adds, in the dialogue, "is thought to dwell among the Faeries and their congeners; and they frequently lead the weak and ductile poet far astray. He is fond of playing at little-go among them; and, when he grows bolder, he acts among the Witches and other such creatures; but his hankering after the Faeries still continues. Their tiny rings, in which the intelligent see only the growth of fungusses, are no arena for action and passion."¹

In the poem referred to, Landor declares that he is a classicist, and that he is different from his contemporaries in that he does not follow "faeries":

The Faeries never tempted me away
From higher fountains and severer shades;
Their rings allured me not from deeper tracks
Left by Olympick wheels on ampler plains.²

Faeries and Fancy are connected in Landor's mind with romanticism. His poem "To Wordsworth" makes it clear that in

¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," loc.cit.
² (Ll.7-10).
the "marsh" (by which he means the romantic world),

... youthful Fancy pouts alone,
And lets not Wisdom touch her zone.¹

Imagination, on the other hand, denotes classicism. While the weak poet is led astray by the faeries to their tiny rings where Fancy dwells, the intelligent who know the truth about such rings, seek "ample plains". They despise these smaller circles which "are no arena for action and passion. It was not in these circles that Homer and Aeschylus and Dante strove."²

It is to be noticed here that Landor's interest in the literary problems of the age is combined with the urge to contradict his contemporaries: "Do I then undervalue imagination?" he tells Southey, "No indeed: but I find imagination where others never look for it: in character multiform yet consistent."³ Coleridge's definition is not satisfactory for him. With the saying, "let us take a leisurely look at Fancy and Imagination," Landor goes on to review the distinction attempted by the authors of the Lyrical Ballads: "Wordsworth was induced to divide his minor Poems

¹ Poetical Works, II, p. 382 (11.35-6).
² "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," loc. cit.
under the separate heads of these two, probably at the suggestion of Coleridge." After reporting Wordsworth's regret at following the advice of Coleridge who persuaded him to adopt the inadequate name of "Lyrical Ballads", Landor adds: "It would have puzzled Coleridge to have drawn a strait boundary-line between the domains of Fancy and those of Imagination, on a careful survey of these pieces; or perhaps to have given a satisfactory definition of their qualities." When the Archdeacon asks, "Do you believe you yourself can?" Landor gives the definition quoted above.

Landor's was not a philosophical mind; he could not speak of a primary and a secondary Imagination which are part of Coleridge's complex system of thought. It is therefore a natural thing if he disapproves of Coleridge's definition. Again it would be futile to look for an equivalent to Wordsworth's transcendental implications in Landor's simple definition. Yet, however limited his definition may be, it is nearer to his own period than to the neo-classical one. For in the latter, the distinction was not between Fancy and Imagination, but between Fancy and Judgement. This last distinction - says Spingarn - was "a commonplace of criticism in the period of classicism." As an example we quote a

1 "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," p.35.

2 See Introduction to Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1907), I, XXVIII-XXIX.
passage from a letter written by John Dennis to Wycherley (1696):

[By a Man of Wit, I mean] a Man like you, Sir ... in whom Fancy and Judgment are like a well-match'd Pair; the first like an extraordinary Wife, that appears always Beautiful, and always Charming, yet is at all times Decent, and at all times Chast; the Second like a Prudent and well-bred Husband, whose very Sway shews his Complaisance, and whose very Indulgence shews his Authority.¹

Some of Landor's critical views bear the mark of his own personality; and so can best be explained in terms of his character. His view that criticism should detect faults rather than beauties, for example, is the outcome of his own attitude towards others, and his own state of mind. Looking upon himself as a reformer of language, he believes that it is his duty to do more than merely express his admiration for beauties: "There is no power of judgment," he declares, "to be shown in the expression of admiration." Hence his detection of faults, as we see in "Barrow and Newton." Of this occupation he is proud: "Cicero disdained not, in the latter days of his life, when he was highest in reputation and dignity, to

¹ The Critical Works of John Dennis, ed. E.N. Hooker, II (Baltimore, 1943), 383.
perform a similar office in regard to Epicurus.¹

This ability to detect the faults of great writers is the privilege of superior critics. In his reply to the reviewer who disagreed with his belief that Plato is "an inexact reasoner" whose diction is "luxuriant and rank", Landor says, "Such men as my critic should reverence Plato, and do no more: but there are others, Bacon for instance, and Newton, who are permitted to weigh him; and these may praise him where praise is due, which itself is no light privilege, and where censure is due may reprehend him." He also says:

No injury is done to the greatest writer, or the best man, by showing his defects and inaccuracies. I have shown very many in Bacon himself, even in the small volume of his Essays, and I have detected a vast number more, equally indefensible, in his other, larger works. In the Barrow and Newton I passed over several objections, mindful in what character I was standing.²

Defending his procedure Landor comes to repeat certain views uttered by neo-classical critics such as John Dennis. Comparing the views of both, we find some similarity. "Faults may be avoided," says Landor, "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

¹ "Barrow and Newton," Complete Works, IV, 151, 2. See also "Johnson and Horne (Tooke)," V, 33; and "Southey and Landor," V, 281.

² Quoted in Forster, Landor, II, 374-5.
them forward, instead of inculcating an indiscriminate admiration."

In Dennis's dialogue between Beaumont and Freeman, the latter replies to the former's remark that "the very faults of a Great Man ought to be respected upon the account of his Excellencies", by saying: "The very contrary of which is true: Upon that account they ought to be rather expos'd. His Faults are the more dangerous on the account of his Excellencies. For young Writers, before they have Judgement to distinguish, are sometimes so far mistaken, as to copy the very Faults of famous Poets for Beauties."²

It can hardly be said that in this detection of faults Landor is influenced by such critics as Dennis, for the typical Landorian urge to be different from others is one of the main reasons behind his procedure. We see this clearly in his criticism of Paradise Lost. In his conversation with Southey, he insists on omitting Milton's beauties, and concentrating on his faults. Though he knows that Johnson offended readers by pointing out Milton's blemishes, he decides to collect others which Johnson had overlooked. Southey's protest, and Landor's answer which follow are significant:

1 "Southey and Landor", p281.

Southey: If we add any to the number, and the literary world hears of it, we shall raise an outcry from hundreds who never could see either his excellences or his defects, and from several who never have perused the noblest of his writings.

Landor: It may be boyish and mischievous, but I acknowledge I have sometimes felt a pleasure in irritating, by the cast of a pebble, those who stretch forward to the full extent of the chain their open and frothy mouths against me.¹

In another place Landor says, through Porson, "There are folks who, when they read my criticism, say, 'I do not think so.' It is because they do not think so, that I write."²

This detection of faults is, on the other hand, Landor's means of degrading his opponents. The following passage is quoted from his review of the review of his Pentameron:

Hear what this heavy boy says:

"Mr. Landor's entire sympathies are with the ancient rather than with the modern world."

If they are entirely with the one, they have nothing at all to do with the other: the 'rather,' then, is an impropriety, an absurdity. The fly buzzes about Mr. Landor's pine-apple just as alertly as if it could penetrate its bosses, and taste its flavour.³

Hence Landor's detection of the faults of Wordsworth and Byron, as we shall see when we deal with his criticism of the major Romantic poets.

¹ See "Reviewing a reviewer" - his reply to The British and Foreign Quarterly, in Forster, Landor, II, p.373.


³ Southey and Porson," Ibid., V, 15.
The great part of Landor's criticism is verbal, as we see in the following Conversations: "Barrow and Newton," "Southey and Porson," "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," and "Samuel Johnson and John Horne (Tooke)". In these dialogues, as in the critical essays on Catullus and Theocritus, Landor is clearly concerned with the minute details of language. Yet the approach throughout is his own. The approach is that of Walter Savage Landor who is great enough to come near the great writers such as Bacon and Milton, to explain to us the blemishes, in their works, so that we may not imitate them. It is that of one who believes that he is superior to his contemporaries, and so has the right to correct their inaccuracies. This he did with Wordsworth who - to Landor's pride - corrected some of his lines at Landor's suggestion. It is also the approach of one who believes that every great writer is a reformer of language.

It is, perhaps, because he is conscious of all this, that he refuses to be called a verbal critic. When Southey objects to this kind of criticism saying, "We must not rest too often, too long, or too pressingly, on verbal criticism". Landor replies, through Porson: "Do you, so accurate a grammarian, say this? To pass over such vulgarisms; which indeed the

1 See "Southey and Porson", p.195.
worst writers seldom fall into; if the words are silly, idle, or inapplicable, what becomes of the sentence?" He then adds: "Those alone are to be classed as verbal critics who can catch and comprehend no more than a word here and there, and who lay more stress upon it, if faulty, than upon all the beauties in the best authors."

Then, claiming to be above the verbal critics whom Pope attacked as "word-catcher[s]" who live "on syllables",¹ he adds: "But unless we, who sit perched and watchful on a higher branch than the word-catchers, and who live on somewhat more substantial than syllables, do catch the word, that which is dependent on the word must escape us also."²

Landor's critical approach is also individual because the other elements which he cares for, in a literary work, have something to do with his lyric genius which - as explained above - determines the choice and treatment of his subject matter. He cares for intensity of emotion, and, as we have seen, considers the work "limited" if it lacks "much intertexture and intensity of passion." The other element, which he demands as a critic, is one which characterises his style - harmony. For the sake of harmony he is ready to

¹ See Ibid., 188n.
² Ibid., p.188.
sacrifice economy: "Wherever there is a word beyond what is requisite to express the meaning, that word must be peculiarly beautiful in itself or strikingly harmonious."¹ Landor, as mentioned above, has an aesthetic approach to style. The musical sound of the word satisfies him. He is enchanted by the "sweet" "series of sounds" in "Livorno", and is repelled by the sounds that constitute "Leghorn".²

Such an approach makes Landor discuss style in terms of music. Speaking of the harmonious word which delights - though it adds nothing to the meaning - and which is accordingly acceptable, Archdeacon Hare tells Landor: "I know the delight you feel, not only in Milton's immortal verse, but (although less) in Wordsworth's." In reply Landor says: "A Mozart to a Handel! But who is not charmed by the melody of Mozart?"³

In his criticism of a poem Landor would, therefore, omit the line or lines that weaken harmony - as his criticism of Paradise Lost shows: "Would it not have been better to omit the fourth and fifth verses, as incumbrances, and deadeners of the harmony? and for the same reason, the fourteenth,

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¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Complete Works, VI, 33.
² "Francesco Petrarca," Ibid., XII, 26.
³ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," p.33.
fifteenth, and sixteenth?" Again, explaining his reasons for omitting the five lines that follow "Dovelike satst brooding on the vast abyss" Landor says, "The ear, however accustomed to the rhythm of these sentences, is relieved of a burden by rejecting them: and they are not wanted for anything they convey." 

In prose also, Landor equally cares for the harmonious element. "Good prose," he declares, "is only an extension of metres, an amplification of harmonies, of which even the best and most varied poetry admits but few." Innovation of words, he believes, corrupts the language, but innovation in harmony renews it, "Every note in music has been sounded frequently; yet a composition of Purcell may be brilliant by its novelty. There are extremely few roots in a language; yet the language may be varied, and novel too, age after age." 

One of the reasons for Landor's admiration for Rousseau

1 "Southey and Landor," pp. 238-9. The following are the lines quoted in the dialogue:

That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

2 Ibid., p. 239.

3 "Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker," Complete Works, IV, 211.

4 Cf. "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Ibid., VI, 15.

is the presence of the harmonious element in the latter's works. Though there is harmony in the writings of other French writers, Rousseau is preferred to them, because "in the construction of their sentences they have obtained from study, what sensibility has denied them." Rousseau is endowed with a superior gift that makes him "an exception". He "is the only musical composer that ever had a tolerable ear for prose."

Landor then reveals the angle from which he approaches style:

Music is both sunshine and irrigation to the mind ... Sometimes I have absorbed music so totally, that nothing was left of it in its own form: my ear detained none of the notes, none of the melody: they went into the heart immediately, mingled with the spirit, and lost themselves among the operations of the fancy, whose finest and most recondite springs they put simultaneously and vigorously in motion.¹

When one says that Landor's is a lyric genius, one refers, among other things, to the elevation of thought, feeling and expression which, in his works, reflects the mode of life he sought to live, and which transports the reader to a refined world - a poetic one which does not admit the absurdities of real life. This genius gives Landor one of his principles as a critic: a work that does not elevate the reader is no

¹ "Alfieri and Salomon the Florentine Jew," Ibid., III, 105-6.
great work.

To express elevated thoughts in an elevated style becomes, therefore, his ideal. Dignity, purity, simplicity and harmony are the characteristics of this style. The language of literature must, therefore, be different from every-day language; it should contribute to this elevation. Hence the significance of the following passage: "While the Italians are the same in the church and in the market-place, while the preacher and policinello are speaking in the same key and employing almost the same language, while a man's God and his rotten tooth are treated in the same manner," Barrow is made to say, "we find at home convenience and proportion. Yet the French have taken more pains than we have done to give their language an edge and polish; and, although we have minds in England more massy and more elevated than theirs, they may claim a nearer affinity to the greater of the ancients."¹

It is therefore natural for Landor to defend the use of "poetical" diction in prose compositions. When Southey disapproves of it, Landor replies that worthy writers like Chatham, Burke and Grattan "did not [avoid it]; nor indeed the graver and greater Pericles; of whom the most memorable sentence on record is pure poetry." He then adds: "On the

¹ "Barrow and Newton," Ibid., IV, 127-8.
fall of the young Athenians in the field of battle, he said, 'The year hath lost its spring.' More poetical than Pericles, is Livy because he has "passion": "But how little are these men," adds Landor, "even Pericles himself, if you compare them as men of genius with Livy! In Livy, as in Milton, there are bursts of passion which can not by the nature of things be other than poetical, nor (being so) come forth in other language."¹

The following passage sums up the qualities which Landor demands in his judgment of a literary work. "It does not appear to me that anything more is necessary in the first instance, than to interrogate our hearts in what manner they have been affected." Then - he makes Porson add - we must be well contented "if the ear is satisfied; if at one moment a tumult is aroused in the breast, and tranquillised at another ... if we rise up from the perusal of the work with a strong excitement to thought, to imagination, to sensibility; above all, if we sat down with some propensities toward evil and walk away with much stronger toward good."²

* * *

² "Southey and Porson," Ibid., V, 152.
Landor's Criticism of his Contemporaries

Before concluding this study of Landor's criticism, we discuss his approach, as a critic, to Southey, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and then Byron. Guided by the studies made above of Landor's mind, his attitude towards his age, and his conception of classicism and romanticism, we can understand the nature of his criticism of each of these contemporaries.

In one of his letters to Dr. Parr, we come across a passage which is, I think, significant of his criticism in general: "Thank God," he wrote, "I have a mind more alive to kindness than to contumely. The statue of Memnon is insensible to the sands that blow against it, but answers in a tender tone to the first touches of the sun."¹ The same image recurs in a poem in which Landor speaks of the persecuted genius:

Exposed and lonely Genius stands,
Like Memnon in the Egyptian sands,
At whom barbarian javelins fly.²

Landor was not "insensible" to his persecutors, unless he means by this word a state of utter scorn and indifference. But to those who praised him, he truly answered "in a tender tone". This image, sums up, most eloquently, one aspect of Landor's criticism.

² In "From heaven descend two gifts alone ...," Poetical Works, III, 115.
His craving for recognition made him most grateful to those who offered him what he badly needed, and this gratitude had a considerable effect on his criticism of their work. He firmly believed that his contemporaries benefited from his writings, and was deeply hurt when he was neither thanked nor praised by them. The following two passages show his disappointment. To Archdeacon Hare he says:

"My quarry lies upon a high common a good way from the public road, and everybody takes out of it what he pleases "with privy paw, and nothing said" beyond "a curse on the old fellow! how hard his granite is, one can never make it fit." This is all I get of quitrent or acknowledgement."

In his reply to a reviewer, he also says:

"My writings have long been at every author's discretion and disposal, as much as the letters of the alphabet, and few have taken any more trouble to utter a word of acknowledgment about it. They all are heartily welcome; and never did any man say with greater sincerity in the full force of the expression. Much good may it do them!"

To his friend Southey Landor also wrote: "I like either to win or to extort an acknowledgment of my superiority from all who owe it."

The principal contemporary who accorded Landor recognition was Southey. In return he received Landor's superlative

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1 "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," VI, p.40.
2 Forster, Landor, II, 387.
3 Ibid., I, 261.
praise. Every word Landor uttered on Southey the man, the writer, and the critic, is coloured by Landor's gratitude. In fact he accords Southey the highest praise he could offer when he calls him a classicist.

"Classick in every feature was my friend
The genial Southey." 1

"No poet since Homer," he wrote to Walter Birch in 1819 "was ever so rich in language as Southey." 2 His "inscriptions," Porson is made to say, are "much nearer the style of antiquity than any others in our language." 3

As a critic, Southey is "the first and almost the only one of our critics who moves between his intellect and his conscience, close to each." 4 He "will always be considered the soundest and the fairest of our English critics; and, indeed, to the present time, [he has] been the only one of very delicate perception in poetry." 5 To Cuthbert Southey Landor repeats the same view, "Conscience with Southey stood on the other side of Enthusiasm. What he saw, he said; what he found, he laid open." 6 To Emerson who asked "Who is

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1 "To the author of Festus, on the classick and romantick," (11.88-9).
2 "Some unpublished letters ..." op.cit., p.366.
5 "Southey and Porson," loc.cit.
Southey" Landor indignantly replies that he "is the poet who has written the most imaginative poem of any in our own times, English or Continental; such is The Curse of Kehama. Southey is the proseman who has written the purest prose; Southey is the critic the most cordial and the least invidious."¹

One sees a certain relationship between this superlative praise of Southey and the latter's highly favourable review of Gebir, which came at a time when other critics humiliated Landor and ridiculed his work. In his conversation with Archdeacon Hare, Landor judges others according to their reception of Gebir.² Southey's recognition of Landor had the same effect which "the first touches of the sun" have upon the statue of Memnon. It brought forth from Landor "tender" words of praise. These make up his criticism of the works of his friend. One may coin, as a convenient term for this, the word "memnonism". It is the attitude that arises from and is coloured by gratitude, and so exaggerates beauties and overlooks faults. It speaks more of an author's amiable personality than of his works - as the following passage on Southey shows:

If his elegant prose and harmonious verse are

¹ "Walter Savage Landor to Emerson", op. cit., p.194.
insufficient to excite [enthusiasm], turn to his virtues, to his manliness in defence of truth, to the ardour and constancy of his friendships, to his disinterestedness, to his generosity, to his rejection of title and office, and consequently of wealth and influence. He has laboured to raise up merit in whatever path of literature he found it; and poetry in particular has never had so intelligent, so impartial, and so merciful a judge.¹

In spite of the many passages dedicated to Southey, we hardly find one in which Landor analyses Southey's works.

Another contemporary who is similarly praised by Landor is Shelley. Again, Landor's praise of Shelley is not based on a critical analysis of his works. When we study Landor's writings, in search of critical views on Shelley, we find that Landor's interest in this poet begins only in the second quarter of the century. Before, Shelley is only referred to in the letters exchanged between Landor and his friends. Being one of Byron's circle, Shelley was despised by Southey and Wordsworth, and also by Landor: "It is reported here," wrote Wordsworth to Landor, from Como, in 1824, "that Byron, Shelley, Moore, and Leigh Hunt ... are to lay their heads together in some town of Italy for the purpose of conducting a journal to be directed against everything in religion, in morals, and probably in government and literature, which

our forerunners have been accustomed to reverence.\(^1\) Landor himself had refused to meet Shelley in Italy. The rumours spread about him and Byron were — Landor admits — the reason for this refusal.

In 1826, we notice a great change in Landor's attitude towards Shelley: "Landor is anxious to know if there is a portrait of Shelley;" wrote Charles Brown on May 29, to Leigh Hunt, "he begs you will urge Mrs. Hunt, in case there should not be one, to make one, either in clay, or in paper, as a profile; will you answer this? — he is with me at this moment, just walked into town, pressing me to press you."\(^2\)

The reason for this change is that Landor became acquainted at that time with Shelley's friends who gave him a true picture of Shelley. Yet this sudden enthusiasm of Landor's which made him extol Shelley must have had something to do with the fact — which Landor came to learn — that Shelley admired Gebir. When Hogg met Landor in 1825\(^3\) he told him of this admiration. In his Life of Shelley, Hogg writes:

> I often found Shelley reading Gebir. There was something in that poem which caught his fancy. He would read it aloud, or to himself sometimes,


\(2\) British Museum Add. MS. 38, 109, fol. 30.

with a tiresome pertinacity. One morning, I went to his rooms to tell him something of importance, but he would attend to nothing but Gebir. With a young impatience, I snatched the book out of the obstinate fellow's hand, and threw it through the open window into the quadrangle. It fell upon the grass-plot, and was brought back presently by the servant.

Hogg then mentions that he "related this incident" after Shelley's death, "to the highly gifted author," who "heard it with his hearty, cordial, genial laugh." It was to Hogg's passage that Landor referred when he wrote to Forster in 1858, "I have been looking...into the life of Shelley. I could not help smiling at Shelley's praise of me, and at his Hogg's tossing up Gebir into the fire [sic]. Poor Shelley got into a scrape about me with Byron. Yet, ardent as he was in my favour, I refused his proffered visit."2

The turning point, then, in Landor's attitude to Shelley is the meeting with his friends, and his hearing of Shelley's passion for Gebir, among other stories. The result of this meeting, is recorded in "Florentine, English Visitor, and Landor" which appeared some years later: "Let me return to Shelley," says Landor to his visitors, and then goes on to give the following account of the poet who - he discovered - recognised his genius:

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1 The Life of Shelley, ed. H. Wolfe (1833), I, 127.
2 Forster, Landor, II, 537.
Innocent and careless as a boy, he possessed all the delicate feelings of a gentleman, all the discrimination of a scholar, and united, in just degrees, the ardour of the poet with the patience and forbearance of the philosopher. His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that enemy had done some grievous injustice to another: and he divided his income of only one thousand pounds, with the fallen and the afflicted. This is the man against whom such clamours have been raised by the religious à la mode, and by those who live and lap under their tables: this is the man whom, from one false story about his former wife, I had refused to visit at Pisa. I blush in anguish at my prejudice and injustice, and ought hardly to feel it as a blessing or a consolation, that I regret him less than I should have done if I had known him personally.¹

Landor then ends this long account of the man by a brief remark on the writer. He says that Shelley "is incomparably the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose-writers."²

Beside this account we come across a few scattered remarks which imply that Landor admires most the lyric element in Shelley. "I would rather have written his 'Music, when soft voices die'," he says, "than all that Beaumont and Fletcher ever wrote, together with all of their contemporaries, excepting Shakespeare."³ In his poem "To the Nightingale",

¹ This passage is found only in the edition of 1828. See Complete Works, IX, 127-8.
² Ibid., p. 126.
Landor refers also to this lyric element:

Melodious Shelley caught thy softest song,
And they who heard his music heard not thine.\

Such utterances make one think that Shelley and Landor might have become close friends, had they met. "I regret that those two intellectual persons," writes Hogg, "were not acquainted with each other." Both were idealists, who dreamt of a free world. Both were fighters against tyranny which they denounced in Promethean terms. They had other things in common, as the poem "To Shelley" implies. Landor begins it with the lines:

Shelley! whose song so sweet was sweetest here,
We knew each other little...

He then addresses the "regions of happiness", in Italy, which both of them liked, in tones which are not unlike Shelley's:

Your solitudes, and not your cities, stay'd
My steps among you; for with you alone
Converst I, and with those ye bore of old.
He who beholds the skies of Italy
Sees ancient Rome reflected, sees beyond;
Into more glorious Hellas, nurse of Gods
And godlike men ...  

Landor's memnonism is not as apparent in his criticism of Shelley as it is in his criticism of such contemporaries

1 Poetical Works, II, 418 (11.13-14).
2 The Life of Shelley, loc.cit.
3 Poetical Works, II, 417.
as G.P.R. James and Richard Monckton Milnes. Landor "never forgot a compliment," wrote the London Quarterly Review, "and he generally returned it with compound interest. It was generally possible to find the origin of his panegyrics in the flattery of those whom he eulogized. He was seriously angry when some one in his presence spoke slightingly of the works of G.P.R. James; and he extolled that novelist to an extent that would have been suitable only for Scott." The reviewer then mentions that James had praised Landor "at all events" and that Landor "repaid him a thousand per cent."¹

James was a sincere admirer of Landor, to whom he dedicated Attila in 1837. Referring to this admiration Crabb Robinson writes that James praised Landor's tragedies "even beyond Landor's own opinion." Landor, one has to mention, believed that one of his tragedies was "better than anything that has appeared since Shakespeare."² James's offering of the manuscript of Blanche of Navarre to Landor, to revise, pleased the latter greatly, for it meant a recognition of his powers. "This is indeed the highest compliment I ever have received," he wrote to James, "I know not how I may have

¹ XXIV, (April 1865), 199.
acquitted myself - this I know - never did I feel more desirous of doing anything well than the little I had to do here. It consisted chiefly, almost solely, in lighting up a few chips to draw the planks of your vessel closer, here and there."\(^1\)

To his friend Kate Field, Landor wrote that he found thoughts "as profound as any in Charron, or Montaigne, or Bacon, - I had almost added, or Shakespeare himself," in the "noble romances of my friend James."\(^2\) To Lady Blessington Landor also wrote, "I have received more honour than Augustus, or Mecenas, or Louis Quatorze, or any other man, living or dead, for to no one were ever inscribed two such works of imagination as the *Curse of Kehama* and *Attila*."\(^3\) In his letter to Emerson he also says: "Some honors have ... been conferred on me in the literary world. Southey dedicated to me his *Kehama*; James his *Attila*."\(^4\)

Landor's high praise of the poetry of Richard Monckton Milnes can also be ascribed to "memnonism" - as the following passage by Mr. Super shows:

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2. Kate Field, "Last days of Walter Savage Landor," The Atlantic Monthly, XVII (June 1866), 701. Kate Field also writes, "I cannot but think that a strong personal friendship had much to do with Landor's enthusiasm for this novelist." (p.698).
Milnes entertained Landor at breakfast on May 18 and gave him a new volume of his poems that contained one on young Walter Landor and (equally flattering) a quotation from Landor himself. The gift was the partial cause of Landor's amazing the company at Robinson's breakfast two days later with the statement that Blake was "the greatest of poets, that Milnes is the greatest poet now living in England ..."

If we approach Landor's criticism of Wordsworth with this "memnonism" in mind, we shall be able to account for the change that makes Landor's later views on Wordsworth contradict his early ones.

The series of letters which Landor wrote to his friend Walter Birch, during the first quarter of the century, shows a growing admiration for Wordsworth the man and the poet: "Do not let us be so unjust to our own age as to compare any other with it in genuine poetry," reads the letter dated November 27th, 1818, "If the whole of the Excursion is equal to this portion of it, I do not hesitate to assert that all the productions of the Augustan age put together fall greatly short of it."^1

In a following letter received April 22, 1819, Landor expresses his admiration for "the style of Wordsworth's

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1 Super, Landor, p.294.
3 Ibid., p.365.
pamphlet." After referring to it as "the strongest piece of composition that exists amongst the moderns" 1 he declares that its style is "very much superior to Milton's!" and adds, "How abundant is that harmony which can only arise from fulness and energy of thought! ... Those who want to influence the people should employ the popular language." 2 Reverently, he places Wordsworth on a level with the ancients. "I admire Pindar as much as you do," he tells Birch, "but Wordsworth more than you do yet. If ever you should read him thirteen or fourteen times, as I have done, you will find him richer in poetry (I do not say a greater poet) than any of the ancients." 3

This enthusiasm makes Landor modify his well-known passion for the ancients. "The day will come when the moderns will be spoken of as ancients. On the other hand a great deal of what we call classics, is not worth reading: "What a quantity of rubbish, both Greek and Latin, is preserved in what we call the classics." Landor then adds, "It is impossible to talk of the ancients without something of prejudice. They wounded themselves about our hearts in youth, when impressions

1 Ibid., p.366. Landor is most probably referring to Wordsworth's pamphlet On the Convention of Cintra (1809).
3 Ibid., p.368.
are strongest, and when admiration is traditionary. We do not see the faults which their contemporaries saw in them."

"Happy you! who have yet to read the *Excursion,*" again writes Landor in another letter, "There is nothing so difficult in literature as that which appears to be the easiest and most natural thing in the world - to see with our own eyes." Repeating his view concerning the ancients, he adds: "We admire the ancients by tradition," then goes on to illustrate what he says: "Suppose for a moment that anyone had, on the first publication of Gray's poems, called him a better poet than Statius in the presence of Johnson. This man, who habitually filled the scorners chair, would have laughed him to scorn." One has to mention that Landor believes Johnson to be ignorant of poetry and a "corrupter of our language".

In this early period, Wordsworth is also praised as a critic: "Just criticism had not dawned. Wordsworth has begun this science, inasmuch as relates to poetry." In another letter Landor writes: "I admire so much the criticism of Wordsworth that I intend to give an Italian translation of it." Landor has often seen "small and separate observations,

1 Ibid., p.369.
2 Dated June 15th, 1820. Ibid., p.369.
just and clever, on particular pieces of poetry; on poetry little tolerable has been said before.\(^1\)

To those who know Landor's mind, and, who are aware of his "mennonism", the following sentence, which occurs in one of these letters - which abound in surprising praises of Wordsworth - is highly significant: "Southey tells me that Wordsworth is about to make me a present of a new poem. Such a present from W. is like a kingdom given by Alexander or Cyrus."\(^2\)

When we turn from these letters to the works published in this early period, we find that they reflect the same admiration. In the first dialogue between Southey and Porson, the merits of Wordsworth are fully appreciated. Here, again, he is placed on a level with the ancients. When Porson says: "Pity, with such abilities, he does not imitate the ancients somewhat more," Southey replies, "Whom did they imitate? If his genius is equal to theirs he has no need of a guide. He also will be an ancient; and the very counterparts of those who now decry him, will extol him a thousand years hence in malignity to the moderns."\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Ibid., pp.369-70.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.368.
\(^{3}\) "Southey and Porson," Complete Works, V, 155.
Even Porson, who is supposed, in this dialogue, to represent a view which is opposite to Southey's, speaks in praise of Wordsworth: "Adverse, as I have declared myself to the style and manner of Wordsworth, I never thought that all his reviewers put together could compose anything equal to the worst paragraph in his volumes."\(^1\) Porson also agrees with Southey that none "ever existed who spent a more inoffensive life, or adorned it with nobler studies" than Wordsworth. Those "who attack him with virulence," Porson adds, "are men of as little morality as reflection."\(^2\) Such a general praise is typical of Landor's views on Wordsworth during the first third of the nineteenth century.

In 1836, Landor shocked his, and Wordsworth's, friends by publishing his *Satire on satirists and admonition to detractors*, in which Wordsworth is vehemently attacked for being a jealous detractor. Crabb Robinson sent Landor a letter of protest in which he wrote: "I remarked nothing but cordiality between you And now I receive from you a very bitter attack upon not his writings but his personal character."\(^3\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p.142.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.139.
\(^3\) Correspondence of Crabb Robinson, with the Wordsworth Circle, I, 326.
Landor's apparent reason for the attack is a remark Wordsworth is said to have made on Southey's poetry. According to Byron, Wordsworth had said that he "would not give five shillings for all that Southey has every written." It is this remark, supposed to have been made three years earlier, which infuriated Landor to such an extent that he wrote this Satire in which he tells Wordsworth:

Tho' Southey's poetry to thee should seem
Not worth five shillings (such thy phrase) the ream,
Courage! good wary Wordsworth! and disburse.  

Landor indignantly adds that Southey's poetry deserves "Not our five shillings, but our heart and soul."  

Wordsworth is also castigated because of his jealousy of his contemporaries' genius which he refuses to acknowledge. This jealousy prevented him from sharing the general admiration for Talfourd's Ion at the representation of which he was present with Landor

Amid the mighty storm that swell'd around,
Wordsworth was calm, and bravely stood his ground.  

Yet, when we read other remarks made on Wordsworth, we

1 Letters and Journals of Lord Byron ed. Prothero (1900), IV, 483.
2 (Ll.284-6).
3 (L.299).
4 (Ll.234-5).
find out that Landor accuses him of refusing to acknowledge his genius. We have referred to the delight with which he expected Wordsworth's "present" which is "like a Kingdom given by Alexander or Cyrus."¹ This present Landor never received. In his conversation with Archdeacon Hare, he says - after accusing Wordsworth of stealing from Gebir the image of the "sea-shell" which he "clapt into his pouch": "He is indebted to me for more than the value of twenty Shells: he is indebted to me for praise, if not more profuse, yet surely more discriminating, than of those critics who were collected at wakes and hired by Party."²

When Landor realised that Wordsworth would not pay back his debt, "memnonism" gave way to a kind of Promethean revolt against the demi-god who would not offer his fellow-writers acknowledgment - the divine spark which is essential to their growth. Landor was not alone in having this attitude towards Wordsworth. Both Crabb Robinson his friend, and Edward Quillinan, Wordsworth's son-in-law, expressed views similar to Landor's: "W: is admonished as a detractor because he does

¹ See above, p.388.
² Speaking of the "secret of all this anger" of Landor, Robinson says that "it is because Wordsworth did not acknowledge his obligations to him for his lines on the shell." Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers (1938), II, 507.
³ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Complete Works, VI, 29.
not appreciate other poets as they deserve" wrote Robinson to Landor, "I could admit the fact without acknowledging the justice of it's being imputed to him as a crime."\(^1\)

In a letter to Crabb Robinson, Quillinan complains of "the absurdity and want of generosity in our friend, my father-in-law in his depreciation" of the genius of others. "It was too much W's habit to be censorious of rival celebrities of his own day, & too little his practice to give cordial praise to any of his literary contemporaries & even to those of earlier date." Quillinan then admits that "this is a great defect in" Wordsworth, and believes that it "abates his greatness". Wordsworth did not like Quillinan to admire the "poetical genius" of others.\(^2\)

Landor must have been aware of this attitude of Wordsworth's - as the following lines imply:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Why every author on thy hearth-stone burn?}
\text{Why every neighbour twitcht and shov'd in turn?}
\text{Rather than thus eternally cry hang'em,}
\text{I'd almost praise the workmanship of Wrangham.}\(^3\)
\end{align*}
\]

If we review the works written after 1836, we notice a radical change in Landor's views concerning Wordsworth the man, and, accordingly, the poet. Landor cannot judge a

\(^1\) Correspondence of Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle, I, 326.

\(^2\) Ibid., II, 779.

\(^3\) A satire on satirists, (ll.307-10).
writer's work objectively. This is made clear in the second
dialogue between Southey and Porson, published in 1842.
When the latter expresses his surprise that "the nearest
neighbours in the most romantic scenery, where everything seems
peace, repose, and harmony, are captious and carping one at
another," adding, "Let poets be crop-full of jealousy; let
them only sing well; that is enough for me" Southey replies:
"I think you are wrong in your supposition, that the poet and
the man are usually dissimilar."

This last saying represents an important truth about
Landor's criticism: "Wherever the poet is," he firmly
believed, "there also must the man obtrude obliquely his
ill-favoured visage." Porson is made to agree on this with
Southey, when he admits the existence of a race of poets
"which nature has condemned to a Siamese twinship." He then
adds: "In no two poets that ever lived do we find the fact so
remarkably exemplified as in Byron and Wordsworth."

When Landor declares that fame has made a vain man of
Wordsworth, we are ready to accept Mr. Super's notion that it
is "jealousy ... of Wordsworth's reputation" that is at the
basis of Landor's hostile attitude: "It is a difficult thing

2 Super, Landor, p.276.
to set a weak man right," he writes on Wordsworth, "but it is infinitely more difficult, when a man is intoxicated by applauses, to persuade him that he is going astray."

The defects of Wordsworth the poet are, Landor then concludes, the man's: "What we cannot improve or alter [in the poet], lies in the constitution of the man: the determination to hold you in one spot until you have heard him through; the reluctance that anything should be lost; the unconsciousness that the paring is less nutritious and less savoury than the core; in short, the prolix, the prosaic; a sickly sameness of colour; a sad deficiency of vital heat."  

Once Landor dislikes the man he begins to see faults in the writer. In the second dialogue between Southey and Porson — which reflects the change in Landor's critical views on Wordsworth — we are told that the latter suffers from the romantic defect: profusion. His instrument has "no trumpet stop." A "good deal of his breath is wiffed on the outside of the pipe, and goes for nothing." If we compare such sayings with the following lines from the poem "On the classick

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2 Ibid., p.175.
3 Ibid., p.176.
4 Ibid., p.176n.
and Romantick," we understand that Landor who, in the early period, places Wordsworth among the classical writers, denies him, now, this place:

Abstemious were the Greeks; they never strove
To look so fierce: their muses were sedate,
Never obstreperous: you heard no breath
Outside the flute; each sound ran clear within. 1

Similarly significant are such sayings as "hoarse whistles
Wordsworth's watery flute," 2 and "Wordsworth's long-drawn wheese" which issues from a breast that "pant[s] for ease." 3

Moreover, the poetry of Wordsworth is not "soul-stirring". While good poetry agitates the soul, Wordsworth's - Landor believes - results in an opposite effect; he sings us asleep "with his lullabies." 4 Landor also ridicules Wordsworth's notion of simplicity. While he was on friendly terms with Wordsworth, he highly praised his "style" and admired its simplicity. Now he derides this simplicity and equates it with "silliness": 5 "Few are suspicious that they may be led astray and get benighted by following simplicity too far" he writes in his essay on "The Idyls of Theocritus" published

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1 (I.I.95-8).
2 "To Andrew Crosse," Poetical Works, III, 23.
3 "Byron and Wordsworth," Ibid., II, 452.
5 Ibid., p.197.
in 1842, "If there are pleasant fruits growing on the ground, must we therefore cast aside, as unwholesome, those which have required the pruning-knife to correct and the ladder to reach them?"\(^\text{1}\) How different from Wordsworth's, is Burns's simplicity. It is "never stale and unprofitable." Hence Porson's regret that Wordsworth "did not place himself under the tuition of Burns," when "resolving on simplicity."\(^\text{2}\)

The Lyrical Ballads are, accordingly, condemned. When Southey is made to ask Porson "if there is anything in [them] which [he] could materially improve" Porson replies: "Tell me first if you can turn a straw into a walking-stick. When you have done this, I will try what I can do. But I never can do that for Mr. Wordsworth which I have sometimes done for his betters."\(^\text{3}\) Again, when Southey says that "many are deeply interested by the simple tales [the Lyrical Ballads] convey in such plain easy language" Porson says, "His language is often harsh and dissonant, and his gait is like one whose waistband has been cut behind." He then adds, "Homely and poor thoughts may be set off by facility and gracefulness of language; here they often want both."\(^\text{4}\)

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1 "The Idyls of Theocritus," Complete Works, XII, 22-3.
2 "Southey and Porson," Ibid., V, p.179.
3 Ibid., pp.196-7.
4 Ibid.
We have seen above how verbal criticism is Landor's means of humiliating a writer. Hence the verbal criticism in which the second dialogue between Southey and Porson abounds. For instance, Landor chooses for his severe criticism the line "How do you live and what is it you do?" In comment he writes: "Show me anything like this in the worst poet that ever lived, and I will acknowledge that I am the worst critic." Of two other lines he says: "In what other author do you find such heavy trash?" Even Southey is made to admit that a poem like "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" contains many examples of "awkward" simplicity.

Landor, in such criticism, clearly aims at ridiculing Wordsworth, as the following quotation shows:

Taught us how rightfully - a nation -
Did what? Took up arms? No such thing.
Remonstrated? No, nor that. What then? Why "shone"! I am inclined to take the shine out of him for it. But how did the nation "rightfully shine"? In splendour!

Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour!
Now the secret is out; make the most of it. Another thing they taught us,
What strength was.

1 Ibid., p.185.
2 Ibid. I on the earth will go plodding on
By myself cheerfully, till the day is done.
3 Ibid., p.187.
They did indeed, with a vengeance. Furthermore, they taught us what we never could have expected from such masters.

What strength was - that could not bend
But in magnanimous meekness.

Brave Oliver! brave and honest Ireton! We know pretty well where your magnanimity lay; we never could so cleverly find out your meekness. Did you leave it peradventure on the window-seat at Whitehall?¹

In this spirit Landor goes on to review other poems of Wordsworth, "I am weary of decomposing these lines of sawdust:" he says through Porson, "they verily would disgrace any poetry-professor."²

The dialogue then ends with Porson's denying Wordsworth a place among the immortals. He lacks their classical virtues, their objectivity, and greatness. The "one pronoun" in his grammar, "is the pronoun I": "He can devise no grand character, and indeed no variety of smaller: his own image is reflected from floor to roof in every crystallisation of the chilly cavern. He shakes us with no thunder of anger; he leads us into no labyrinth of love."³

As Southey, in this dialogue, has to defend his friend, Landor puts in his mouth the following praise, which proves

¹ Ibid., p.180.
² Ibid., p.184.
³ Ibid., p.209.
that Landor tries, even in his animus, to be fair:

The beauties of Wordsworth are not to be looked for among the majestic ruins and under the glowing skies of Greece: we must find them out, like primroses, amid dry thickets, rank grass, and withered leaves; but there they are; and there are tufts and clusters of them. There may be a chilliness in the air about them, there may be a faintness, a sickliness, a poverty in the scent; but I am sorry and indignant to see them trampled on.\(^1\)

Landor's criticism of Byron is determined by the same factors that govern his criticism of Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth, Byron is "condemned" by nature - Landor believes - "to a Siamese twinship". It is to this notion that Landor reverts again and again to prove that Byron cannot be a great poet, and that his fame is a temporary one. He "is incapable of continued and strenuous exertion" writes Landor to Birch in 1819, "A mind of his structure is radically weak. It may present in its changes and movements some bright phases, but it can do no more."\(^2\)

In his Latin essay "De cultu atque usu Latini sermonis", 1820, Landor also writes with reference to Byron that "the loftiest poets in every era of poets have been upright men; in ours we have seen and now do see that; nor is any other

\(^1\) Ibid., p.212.

\(^2\) "Some unpublished letters ...", op.cit., p.366.
error further removed from truth than that great geniuses are necessarily corrupted by great vices."¹ Landor reveals the reason for his indignation when he adds that "most men prefer the second-best to the best; and when there appears a writer of talent and fertility, whose life and style are alike full of showy faults, he is sure of notoriety and acclamation."²

In a letter written to Walter Birch, in the same year, Landor writes, "My opinion is this, that a man of a heart so rotten, and a mind so incompact, was never formed for more than temporary greatness."³ Again Landor attacks Byron the man and the poet in "Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle" published four years later: "Whenever he wrote a bad poem, 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" writes Landor, "Say what you will, once whispered a friend of mine, there are things in him strong as poison, and original as sin."⁴

¹ Super, "Landor and the 'Satanic School'," Studies in Philology, XLII (October 1945), p.797.
² Colvin, Landor, p.92.
³ "Some unpublished letters..." op.cit., p.368.
⁴ Complete Works, IV, 262.
Though it was Byron's remarks on Landor which drew forth the latter's attack, Landor himself was the person responsible for this quarrel. He began the attack on Byron's character in the Latin essay. When Southey quoted this in the preface to his Vision of Judgment, to support his attack on the "Satanic School", Byron retorted by making fun of both Southey and Landor. He referred to the latter as "'one Mr. Landor,' who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses" and pained Landor more, by repeating Gifford's criticism of Gebir as "trash of the worst and most insane description." In his famous couplet, Byron made fun of Landor by saying:

And that deep-mouthed Boeotian, 'Savage Landor',
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.3

Landor was, naturally, infuriated: "You will find some ridicule on [Byron's] poetry," he wrote to Southey, "and a severe sarcasm on his principles, in two different parts of my dialogues."4

We have quoted Landor's sarcasm in the first dialogue, "Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle". In the second

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1 See Preface to Vision of Judgment, Poetical Works, 1901, IV, 484, note 3.

2 See note appended to The Island, Ibid., V, 613.

3 Don Juan (canto XI, stanza lix).

dialogue, "Abbe Delille and Walter Landor." he condemns the public taste that made of Byron a famous poet, saying that the national taste is excited by the essence not the flower, hence the great appeal Byron's poetry has; for it contains this intensity, or the "strong things" that satisfy readers. He then adds: "We run across from the old grove and soft meadow, into the ruined abbey, the Albanian fortress, and the Sultan's garden."

We have already noticed the significance of Landor's metaphor of the rose and the attar, in relation to Byron's poetry. Similarly the "ruined abbey," the "Albanian fortress," and the "Sultan's garden" show Landor's awareness of the romantic spirit - as he saw it - in Byron's poetry.

The rest of the passage reflects this awareness of Landor's: "We cut down our oaks and plant cypresses:" he adds, "we kick the first shepherd we meet, and shake hands with the first cut-throat: we are resolved to excite tears, but we conjure them forth at the point of the dagger: and, if they come slower than we wish, we bully and blaspheme."¹

Landor also recognised the egotistical element in Byron, and condemned it. His poem on Byron opens with the word "changeful". Sarcastically Landor says:

True as the magnet is to iron
Byron hath ever been to Biron

He then speaks of the one image - among Byron's "color'd prints" - which is "set before the rest":

In shirt with falling collar drest,
And keeping up a rolling fire at
Patriot, conspirator, and pirate.

Byron's restlessness, and indulgence in his emotions are also satirized in the following lines:

There is a restless mortal who
Feeds on himself, and eats for two.
Heartburn all day and night he feels ...

There are, besides, other references to Byron's romanticism of which Landor makes fun, as, for example, the phrases: "Byron's peppery dishes" and "Byron piping-hot", and as saying:

Bright-color'd prints he preferr'd to the graver cartoons of a Raphael,
Sailor and Turk (with a sack), to Eginate and Parthenon marbles.

Beside this general criticism Landor reverts to verbal

1 Poetical Works, II, p.415. Landor probably writes the name of Byron in this manner to associate him with the Birons, who were notorious for their conspiracies: Duc de Biron (1562-1602) who was involved "in intrigue with Spain," and who worked "with the malcontents led by the comte d'Auvergne," and duc de Biron (1747-93) who "had military ambitions," and "accepted every political change." (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

2 Ibid., p.440.

3 In "Sent with poems", Ibid., p.390.

4 In "To recruits", Ibid., p.425.

5 In "English Hexameters", Ibid., p.405 (11.35-6).
criticism with the aim of exposing Byron's grammatical inaccuracies. Referring to the "criminality" of those who "violate" the language, Archdeacon Hare is made to call Byron a "defaulter". Some of Byron's lines are then discussed, and the faults in them are pointed out: "On Napoleon he says 'Like he of Babylon,' 'The annal of Gibbon,' 'I have eat,' &c."\(^1\)

In "Southey and Porson" also, Byron's faults are again dealt with. Porson is made to object to such lines as: "Let he who made thee", saying: "Some of us at Cambridge continue to say, 'Let him go.' Is this grammatical form grown obsolete?"

Commenting on: "And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste" Landor writes: "I profess my abhorrence at gilding even a few square leagues of waste."\(^2\) Porson is also made to disapprove of such phrases as "rustic plough" and "desolate cloud", and also of Byron's omitting of the possessive s in the line "O'er Venice' lovely walls?"\(^3\)

Most of Landor's prejudice against Byron evaporated with the latter's death. Byron's death indeed gained for him Landor's sympathy. The foot-note appended to "Bishop Burnet and Humphrey Hardcastle" shows an unreduced basis for

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1 "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," VI, 26.
3 Ibid., p.171.
criticism: "If, before the dialogue was printed," writes Landor, "[Byron] had performed those services to Greece which will render his name illustrious to eternity," and "the performance of which I envy him from my soul ... never would I, from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him."^1

Hence Landor's acknowledgment of some of Byron's powers as a poet, and of his greatness and lasting fame. "He will always have more ... admirers than any other in your confraternity" Porson is made to tell Southey, "He possesses the soul of poetry, which is energy." Despite his vices, he has "much that is admirable."^2

* * *

Addressing Wordsworth in A satire on satirists, Landor says:

Another date hath Praise's golden Key,
With that alone men reach Eternity.
He who hath lent it, tho' awhile he wait,
Yet Genius shall restore it at the gate.^3

Landor's experience in the world of letters developed in him a deep sympathy for young writers of talent. Condemning

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^1 Vol. IV, p.264n.
^3 Poetical Works, III, 388 (ll.336-9).
Wordsworth's unsympathetic attitude towards them, Landor formulated a kind of moral principle, of which he tells us in his poem "To Robert Browning":

There is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the prais'd far off him, far above.\(^1\)

This made him, sometimes, too generous in his eulogies; and he himself was conscious of this, as the following letter to Lady Blessington shows, "Wordsworth, no doubt, has a thousand good reasons why there is not a poet upon earth," he wrote, "but as there are many who have given me pleasure, I love them for it; some of them, perhaps, a little more than they deserve."\(^2\) But Landor's interest in their works was, indeed, genuine. The manuscript notes on the pages of the copies\(^3\) of volumes of poetry presented to him show this interest.

Landor's praise then, as a reviewer wrote in 1865, "was not always given in exchange. He often gave it as a free gift to men to whom the gift was very valuable." The reviewer then adds, "There is nothing more generous in the annals of

\(^1\) Ibid., II, 387.
\(^3\) See Landor's collection of the copies presented to him - the British Museum Library.
of modern criticism than his review in the Morning Advertiser of a volume of poems by a then unknown mechanic." In his review Landor writes:

I purpose to review the works of no ordinary poet — Gerald Massey. It appears that his station in life is obscure, and his fortunes far from prosperous. Such also was the condition of Keats, to whom he bears in many features of his genius a marvellous resemblance. Keats has found patrons now he is in his grave. May Massey find them on this side of it!

After expressing his preference for the moderns over the ancients and showing his admiration for Massey's ode, "Ah, 'tis like a tale of olden!", Landor adds, "Here is such poetry as the generous Laureate [Robert Southey] will read with approbation, as Jeffrey would have tossed aside with derision, and as Gifford would have torn to pieces with despair. Can anything more or better be said for it?"¹

This attitude of Landor towards such poets as Massey has something to do with his deep sympathy for the persecuted — a sympathy which made him look upon himself as their patron:

But O! to fulminate with forked line
Another's fame or fortune, ne'er be mine!
Against the wretch who dares it, high or low,
Against him only, I direct my blow.²

² A Satire on Satirists, (11.153-6).
In the conversation between Landor and Archdeacon Hare, the latter says: "Vaticide is no crime in the statute-book; but a crime, and a heavy crime, it is:" He then adds, revealing what might be considered one of his principles as a critic, "and the rescue of a poet from a murderous enemy, although there is no oaken crown decreed for it, is among the higher virtues."¹

This principle of the critic is the same principle of Landor the warrior who fought beside the persecuted Spaniards against the tyranny of Napoleon. We remember this episode of his life when we hear him telling the Archdeacon of his duty as a critic: "Many will pass by;" he says, "many will take the other side; many will cherish the less deserving; but some one, considerate and compassionate, will raise up the neglected: and, where a strong hand does it, several less strong will presently be ready to help. Alas! not always." He then adds, "There is nothing in the ruins of Rome which throws so chilling a shadow over the heart as the monument of Keats."²

Keats is probably the only contemporary for whom Landor had consistent and pure admiration that owes nothing to his

¹ "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor," Complete Works, VI, 34.
² Ibid.
"memonism". First, because he was deeply impressed by Keats the poet; and secondly, because he saw in Keats a symbol of the persecuted genius. Were Landor more concerned with beauties than with faults, he might have given us an analytical study of Keats's poetry. Unfortunately he only expressed his admiration for it in general statements which, however, show an insight into Keats's achievement. Landor must have been impressed by the craftsmanship of this poet whom he called "the most Grecian of all":

Poesy breath'd over him, breath'd constantly, tenderly, freshly.†

In his conversation with the Florentine, and the English visitor, published 1828, Landor declares that "since the time of Chaucer there have been only two poets who at all resemble him." These two are Burns and Keats who "are widely dissimilar from each other." Chaucer has accurately and truthfully "described the manners of common life with the fore-ground and back-ground." Burns also "delights in broader strokes of external nature." Yet, "the animated and pathetic Keats in his 'Endymion' is richer in imagery than either: and there are passages in which no poet has arrived at the same

† "English Hexameters," Poetical Works, II, 406n.
excellence on the same ground." Landor then adds, "Time alone was wanting to complete a poet, who already far surpassed all his contemporaries in this country in the poet's most noble attributes." Speaking of energy, which he considers an essential characteristic of poetry, Landor shows how it is the "highest merit" of Byron and Scott. He then adds that Shelley possesses it, also Keats "whose heart and soul is sheer poetry, overflowing from its fermentation." Though he finds in Keats "wild thoughts," and extravagant expressions, "in none of our poets, with the sole exception of Shakespeare," he adds, "do we find so many phrases so happy in their boldness?"

A study of Landor's poem addressed to Keats, which begins with the lines:

Fair and free of soul poesy, O Keats!  
O how my temples throb, my heart-blood beats,  
At every image, every word of thine!

shows the other reason for Landor's veneration for Keats. The notion that he was persecuted to the point of death by some merciless critics made Landor regard him as a martyr whose "bosom" was "pierced" by the "Envy" of a "viperous brood" that "stung an Orpheus" and

2 "To the Reverend Charles Cuthbert Southey on his father's character and public services" (1850), Ibid., XII, 154.
3 Complete Works, IX, 121.
Still writhes and hisses, and peers out for more
Whose buoyant blood they leave concreted gore.¹

Both Shelley and Byron accepted this notion of Keats's death.
"The savage criticism on his Endymion, which appeared in the
Quarterly Review," writes Shelley, "produced the most violent
effect on his susceptible mind." The reviewer thus "wantonly
defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of
God."² Byron also accepted the story, but with some reserve.

In Don Juan he writes,

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great.

'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.³

As for Landor, he was deeply moved by the story. It
touched a sensitive chord in his nature, and appealed to his
sense of persecution. Speaking of the ill-treatment which
Lamb, Keats, Hazlit (sic) and Coleridge received from "the
worthy men employed by Mr. Blackwood," and which drove them
"into the grave" Landor adds, "A more deliberate, a more
torturing murder never was committed, than the murder of Keats;
a young man adorned, it is said by those who knew him intimately,

¹ Poetical Works, II, 378.
² See Preface to Adonais, Works of Shelley, ed. T. Hutchinson,
³ Stanza LX.
with everything graceful, generous, and manly." Charles Armitage Brown, Landor's neighbour at Fiesole, and Richard Monckton Milnes must have impressed Landor by what they told him of Keats: "I have seen those thoughtful and melancholy at the mention of him," he adds, "whom I never have seen so on any other occasion; and it was many years after his decease."¹

As the following passage implies, Landor also believed that it was Croker's article that brought about Keats's death: "The chief perpetrator of his murder," he goes on to say, "knew beforehand he could not be hanged for it, and was occupying a station whence he might be called by his faction to hang others far less guilty." It is to John Wilson Croker that Landor is referring here. Croker was Speaker of the House of Commons, and was chosen by Perceval to be his under-secretary.² Hence Landor's following remark on Keats's persecutor: "While he was rising to the highest rank in the profession and in state, his victim sank under him, in long agonies, to an untimely grave." In conclusion Landor writes: "When men strike at genius, they strike at the face of God in

¹ A Satire on Satirists, Poetical Works, III, 383n.
the only way wherein he ever manifests it to them."¹

This last saying is significant of Landor's attitude towards Keats. It underlies his deep sympathy and boundless admiration for this poet, whom he "dream[s]" of meeting at our home

With Spenser's quiet, Chaucer's livelier ghost, Cognate to thine ... not higher, and less fair.

Though Landor admires the other Romantic figures, his admiration partakes of his "memnonism". But to one who values classical craftsmanship, and delights in rich imagery, as Landor does, Keats has a stronger appeal.

The poet Landor places beside Keats is Shelley. In 1853 Landor inserted the following line into the poem "To the author of Festus":

Shelley and Keats, those southern stars, shone higher.²

These two poets - he also says - "are gone;"

Where only such pure Spirits meet And sing before them words as sweet.³

"If anything could engage me to visit Rome again," says Landor in one of his dialogues, "to endure the sight of her scarred and awful ruins, ... if I could let charnel-houses and opera-

¹ A Satire on Satirists, loc. cit.
² Poetical Works, II, 403n.
³ In "Shelley and Keats, on earth unknown ..." Ibid., p.441.
houses, consuls and popes, tribunes and cardinals, senatorial orators and preaching friars, clash in my mind; it would be that I might afterward spend an hour in solitude, where the pyramid of Cestius stands against the wall, and points to the humbler tombs of Keats and Shelley."

Landor does not speak of the other Romantic figures in this affectionate tone. Yet he admires most of them. Though Coleridge had offended him by his attitude towards Gebir, he acknowledged his genius as a poet and a critic. "I think more highly of his Ancient Mariner than Southey did." In Christabel, "he had done enough to prove that he could write good poetry." Coleridge, Landor also believes, possessed "the most extraordinary powers of mind," yet "his unsteddiness gave him the appearance of weakness." However, "few critics were more acute, more sensitive, more comprehensive," than Coleridge who also excelled "no less in prose than in poetry." On hearing of his death Landor wrote: "My heart aches at the

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2 In the Conversation between Landor and Archdeacon Hare, Landor says that Coleridge praised Gebir "enthusiastically, until he once found Southey reciting a part of it in company: after which, I am told, he never mentioned it, or slightly." Complete Works, VI, 31.

3 Beside this praise, there is mention of Coleridge's weaknesses, his lack of the power to perform great works, his indulgence in "a soft malignity", and his inability "to hold together, in poetry or prose, as much as might be contained in half a dozen pages." "To the Rev. Charles C. Southey," XII, 157.
thought that almost the greatest genius in the world, and one so friendly to me, is gone from it."¹

Next to Keats and Shelley, in Landor's estimation there come Wordsworth and Byron. Despite the animus which lessened Landor's superlative admiration for the former, Landor's later views show that he could overcome this animus, and return to express praise which, if not as superlative as that he early voiced, is at least genuine and sincere. In 1850, he declares that he has "no hesitation" in calling Wordsworth "the superior both of Virgil and of Theocritus in description. And description, let it be remembered, is not his only nor highest excellence."² In a significant letter to Forster, written in 1845, Landor tells him of a lady who "has been lecturing me on my hostility to Wordsworth." He then adds: "No writer ... has praised Wordsworth more copiously or more warmly than I have done." The letter contains some lines on Wordsworth and Byron. After referring to the fever Byron caught from the "marsh", and of the scorn that made Wordsworth's voice harsh, he says,

But each hath better parts: to One belong
    Staffs for the old and guide-posts for the young:

¹ Forster, Landor, II, 255.
² "To the Reverend C.C. Southey," XII, p.155.
The Other's store-room downcast eyes approve,
Hanging with bright feathers dropt from moulting love.

Despite Landor's disapproval of Byron's morals, the reader will come across remarks scattered in different parts of Landor's works, which show that Byron's poetry appealed to him. He acknowledges - as mentioned above - his greatness as a poet, and calls him "the keenest and most imaginative of satirists." It is also evident that he prefers Byron's heat to Wordsworth's "ice". The former's spicery, he believes, is "stimulating."^2

If we bear in mind Landor's fondness for intensity of passion, we shall not find such views surprising. If he prefers Byron to Wordsworth, it is because the former impresses him by his vigour which he considers "the first and the second and the third requisite of eloquence, whether in prose or poetry." Landor also finds in Byron qualities which he misses in Wordsworth. While the latter's poetry is "equidistant from humour and from passion," Byron's - like Cowper's and Southey's - "with much and deep tenderness, [is] richly humorous." The following passage also explains why Landor, despite his objection to Byron's character, finds him often powerful and impressive,

1 Forster, Landor, II, p.424.
An indomitable fire of poetry, the more vivid for
the gloom about it, bursts through the crusts and
crevices of an unsound and hollow mind. He never
chatters with chilliness, nor falls overstrained
into languor; nor do metaphysics ever, muddy his
impetuous and precipitate stream. It spreads its
ravishes in some places, but it is limpid and
sparkling everywhere.¹

* * *

In this chapter we have seen that Landor's criticism—
like his creative writings—can only be explained in terms of
his own character. He is involved in attitudes which are too
personal for him to be an objective critic. These attitudes
determine his views of the work of the author he deals with.
Besides, his approach to a literary work is idiosyncratic;
the presence of the qualities which appeal to him, such as the
lyrical, is enough for him to extol the work. Hence his
inability to see it as a whole. His verbal criticism shows
how preoccupied he can be with fragments and details.

Landor's sense of persecution, and his belief in his own
superiority, are important factors in his criticism. His
strong desire to be unique made him consciously react against
the spirit of his age, by preaching classical precepts in a
romantic period. Though he thus acquired classical virtues

which have impressed the best minds, and though he spoke as a
typical classicist, the romantic elements in the man, which
the writer could not wholly suppress, gave him away.

Speaking of Landor's character, his biographer, John
Forster, said that "unexplained," Landor's "peculiarities of
temperament ... would make inexplicable Landor's whole career." Unexplained, one would also add, these peculiarities of the
man's temperament would make inexplicable whole aspects of the
writer's work.

In short, a knowledge of Landor's mind, and consequently
of his attitude towards his age, and of his conception of
classicism and romanticism, provides an indispensable guide
to an understanding not only of "what he said," but also of
"why he said it."

1 See above, p.90.
APPENDIX A

Landor's letter to Charles Robert Vaughan

Referring to Stuart's words: "il est fou, il n'a pas l'argent" which Landor applied to himself, he wrote:

They were spoken in that half-formed and that half-stifled voice which deep malignity is apt to utter, but has not the power to modulate or mange. He would not dare to use such language openly; and on his return to England, whenever he gives me the opportunity, I will teach him that if any one speaks of me, his tone must be lower, or his remarks must be more true. You, who remember me in my earliest years, remember that I was distinguished — was it either as a liar or a fool? Inform him if ever I broke my word, or ever endured an insult. I made no reply at the time to his calumnies and his insolence. I thanked him for his offers of service. Though I consider him as merely a petty envoy to a province, yet I consider also what is due both to the Spanish and the English nation. No action is recorded more heroic than that of Louis XIV towards the Duc de Lausun. When the King received a gross and grievous insult from his subject, he rose, threw his cane out of the window, and made this calm reply: 'I should be sorry to have caned a duke and peer of France.' VAUGHAN, I should be sorry to have done what I may not be sorry to do. I have been able to restrain my impetuosity, but I will not conceal my disdain. I entertain the highest and most inviolable respect for whatever is in office under the King and constitution of my country. The forbearance I have shown, and even the letter I am writing, will controvert the charge of imbecility, as surely as the same charge would be proved by whatever is intemperate or coarse. The ten thousand reals (why am I forced to mention them?) which I paid into the hands of the governor at Corunna, and a daily allowance of full pay to every soldier I am
leading to the armies, together with some occasional gratuities to keep up their spirits on the march, are presumptive proof that the calculations of Mr. S. are groundless, frivolous, and false.¹

¹ Forster, Landor, I, 231.
In order to avoid repetition and for the sake of conciseness, I shall only quote the significant passages which constitute the main theme, and which recur in the dialogue establishing its unity. The speakers here begin by conversing on the suffering of Milton who "bears his blindness and asthma with truly Christian courage." Then they talk on the ingratitude of Milton's friends. From this they proceed to other themes, as the following passages, which form the backbone of the dialogue, show:

"Were I to trust my observation rather than my feelings, I should believe that friendship is only a state of transition to enmity. The wise, the excellent in honour and integrity, whom it was once our ambition to converse with, soon appear in our sight no higher than the ordinary class of our acquaintance; then become fit objects to set our own slender wits against, to contend with, to interrogate, to subject to the arbitration,

1 Complete Works, IV, 206.
not of their equals, but of ours; and lastly, what indeed is less injustice and less indignity, to neglect, abandon, and disown."\(^1\)

- b -

"If we are to build our summer-houses against ruined temples, let us at least abstain from ruining them for the purpose."\(^2\)

- c -

"We are hated for rising."\(^3\)

- d -

"Now, although we may find solid men cast on the earth and hollow men exalted, yet never will I believe in the long duration of the hollow, or in the long abasement of the solid."\(^4\)

- e -

"We are displeased by him who would be similar to us, or who would be near, unless he consent to walk behind."\(^5\)

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1 Ibid., p.207.
2 P. 208.
3 P. 209.
4 P. 210.
5 P. 212.
"In literature, often a man's solitude, and oftener his magnitude, disinclines us from helping him if we find him down."

Then, from page 216 to page 216, the conversation is mainly concerned with religious intolerance. This is followed by an indignant attack on the church and on the peerage, after which occurs the following passage which is significant of Landor's attitude:

"Parker. I am afraid, Mr. Marvel, there is some slight bitterness in your observation.

Marvel. Bitterness it may be from the bruised laurel of Milton."²

"Until [our people] estimate the wise and virtuous above the silly and profligate, the man of genius above the man of title ... they are fitter for the slave-market than for any other station."³

¹ P.213.
² P.222.
³ P.223.
"Still less accordant is it with my principles, and less reducible to my comprehension, that they who devised the ruin of cities and societies should be exhibited as deserving much higher distinction than they who have corrected the hearts and enlarged the intellects, and have performed it not only without the hope of reward, but almost with the certainty of persecution."\(^1\)

"Great is the exultation of a worthless man, when he receives, for the chips and raspings of his Bridewell logwood, a richer reward than the best and wisest, for extensive tracts of well-cleared truths ... when his emptiness is heard above the voice that hath shaken Fanaticism in her central shrine, that hath bowed down tyrants to the scaffold, that hath raised up nations from the dust."\(^2\)

Milton, who sprang "away with such resolution from the sublimest highths of genius, to liberate and illuminate with patient

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\(^1\) P.224.  
\(^2\) P.224.
labour the manacled human race ... what is his recompense? The same recompense as all men like him have received, and will receive for ages. Persecution follows Righteousness: the Scorpion is next in succession to Libra."¹

"[Milton] has lived long enough to perceive that all sects are animated by a spirit of hostility and exclusion, a spirit the very opposite to the Gospel."²

"The great abhor the greater, who can humble but can not raise them."³

"Your conscientious men are oftener conscientious in withholding than in bestowing."⁴

"Marvel ... But what would your lordship argue from the impru-

¹ p.225.
² p.227.
³ p.228.
⁴ p.229.
dence and irreverence of the dwarfs? The most prominent rocks and headlands are most exposed to the violence of the sea; but those which can repel the waves are in little danger from the corrosion of the limpets."

"Among the plants of the field we look out for the salubrious, and we cultivate and cull them; to the wholesomer of our fellow-creatures we exhibit no such partiality: we think we do enough when we only pass them without treading on them: if we leave them to blossom and run to seed, it is forbearance?"

"Why should we permit the good to be excluded, whether by force of shame, from any place which ought to be a post of honour? Why do we suffer a block to stand in their way, which by its nature hath neither eyes to discern them, nor those about it who would permit the use of the discovery if it had?"

"We bethought us of the ingratitude, of the injuries, of the
indignities, we had sustained: we bethought us of our wealth transferred from the nation to raise up enemies against it: we bethought us of patient piety and of tranquil courage, in chains, in dungeons, tortured, maimed, mangled, for the assertion of truth and of freedom, of religion and of law.¹

"Our judges are merciful to those who profess the King's reputed and the duke's acknowledged tenets: but let a man stand up for the Independents, and out pops Mr. Attorney General, throws him on his back, claps a tongue-scraper into his mouth, and exercises it resolutely and unsparingly."²

"Two ancient religions, the Grecian and Egyptian, met in perfectly good temper at Alexandria, lived and flourished there together for many centuries, united in honouring whatever was worthy of honour in each communion, and never heard of persecution for matters of opinion, until Christianity came and taught it. Thenceforward, for fifteen hundred years, blood has been perpetually spouting from underneath her footsteps; and the wretch, clinging exhausted to the Cross, is left

¹ P.238.
² P.238.
naked by the impostor, who pretends to have stript him only to heal his wounds."¹

"Men who have been unsparing of their wisdom, like ladies who have been unfrugal of their favours, are abandoned by those who owe most to them, and hated or slighted by the rest."²

"We know not how grievously a man may have suffered, long before the calumnies of the world befell him as he reluctantly left his house-door."³

"[Prelaty] stripped up her sleeve, scourged us heartily, and spat upon us - to remove the smart, no doubt!"⁴

"[Prelaty] 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

¹ P.241.
² P.242.
³ P.246.
⁴ P.247.
the dust of the market-road, and who conversed with him rather in the cottage than the toll-booth."\(^1\)

Towards the end of the dialogue we read: "What a deplorable thing is it that Folly should so constantly have power over Wisdom, and Wisdom so intermittently over Folly!"\(^2\)

* * *

Analysis of "Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor"

In about thirty pages the two friends converse on spelling, on society, on language, on criticism and on other various subjects. Apparently there is no connection between one subject and another; and the dialogue seems, accordingly, without unity. Yet if the reader bears in mind, while reading this dialogue, Landor's personal experience and his strong feeling that society was against him, he will find that such a feeling is the source of all the sentiments he expresses while dealing with these various subjects. Whether the theme is Gebir, or criticism, Landor discusses them all from the viewpoint of one persecuted. Hence the grandiose reactions which

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1 P.247.  
2 P.251.
pervade his dialogue.

Perhaps the following passage, which could be considered as a key-passage to the whole dialogue, illustrates this feeling of Landor's, "After this conversation," he says to Archdeacon Hare, "if it ever should reach the public ear, I may be taken up for a brawl in the street, more serious than an attack on the new grammar-school."¹

From the same feeling arise the following passages that recur at various intervals reminding us of the real central theme that preoccupied Landor's mind:

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"Clowns and boys and other idlers, if they see a head above a garden-wall, are apt to throw a pebble at it, which mischief they abstain from doing when the head is on their level and near."²

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¹ [Complete Works, VI, 27.]
² Ibid., p.28.
unwholesome food.\textsuperscript{1}

"Flies\textsuperscript{2} are only the more troublesome and importunate for being driven off, and they will keep up with your horse, however hard you ride, without any speed or potency of their own."\textsuperscript{3}

"People who ... use false scales and measures, ought to be pointed out and put down."\textsuperscript{4}

"No one ever falls among a crowd of literary men without repenting of it sooner or later."\textsuperscript{5}

"Never have I descended to repel an attack, and never will; but I must defend the understanding and consistency of a wiser and better man in Southey. Never have I feared that a

\textsuperscript{1} P.29.
\textsuperscript{2} The reference here and in the next passage is to critics.
\textsuperscript{3} P.31.
\textsuperscript{4} P.31.
\textsuperscript{5} P.31.
little and loose petard would burst or un hinge the gates of my fortress, or that a light culverine at a vast distance below would dismantle or reach the battlements.\textsuperscript{1}

"It is amusing to observe the off-hand facility and intrepid assurance with which small writers attack the greater, as small birds do, pursuing them the more vociferously the higher the flight. Milton stoop t and struck down two or three of these obstreperous chatterers, of which the feathers he scat ter ed are all that remains; and these are curiosities.\textsuperscript{2}

"It is moroseness to scowl at the levity of impudence; it is affability, not without wisdom, to be amused by it."\textsuperscript{3}

"It is cruel and inhuman to withhold the sustenance which is necessary to the growth, if not the existence, of genius; sympathy, encouragement, commendation."\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} P.32.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Pp.32-3.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} P.33.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} P.34.
\end{itemize}
"When they to whom we have been unknown, or indifferent, begin to speak a little well of us, we are sure to find some honest old friend ready to trim the balance."\textsuperscript{1}

"We sometimes stumble upon sly invidiousness and smouldering malignity, quite unexpectedly, and in places which we should have believed were above the influence of such malaria."\textsuperscript{2}

"The practice of barring out the master is still continued in the world's great schoolroom. Our sturdy boys do not fear a flogging; they fear only a book or a lecture."\textsuperscript{3}

"Authors are like cattle going to a fair; those of the same field can never move on without butting one another."\textsuperscript{4}

"It has been my fortune and felicity, from my earliest days,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} P.36.
\item \textsuperscript{2} P.37.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
to have avoided all competitions."\(^1\)

"I shall dine late; but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select."\(^2\)

"Envy of pre-eminence is universal and everlasting."\(^3\)

"Do not wonder ... if one of the rabble runs after you from the hustings, and, committing no worse mischief, snatches at the colours in your hatband."\(^4\)

"Others have snatched more. My quarry lies upon a high common a good way from the public road, and everybody takes out of it what he pleases 'with privy paw, and nothing said' beyond 'a curse on the old fellow! how hard his granite is, one can never make it fit.'"\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Ibid.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) P.39.
\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^5\) P.40.
"I stand out a rude rock in the middle of a river, with no exotic or parasitical plant on it, and few others. Eddies and dimples and froth and bubbles pass rapidly by, without shaking me."¹

"Sorry I have often been to see a fellow Christian ... one attendant on the sick, one compassionate with the sufferer, one who never is excited to anger but by another's wrongs, enjoying a secret pleasure in saying unpleasant things at no call of duty; inflicting wounds which may be long before they heal; and not only to those who are unfriendly or unknown, but likewise to the nearest and the friendliest."²

With the saying "Unwholesome exhalations creep over the low marches of Pevensey, but they ascend not to Beachyhead nor to Hurstmonceaux"³ ends this Conversation between Archdeacon Hare and Landor, which took place at Hurstmonceaux where the Archdeacon lived.

¹ Ibid., p. 41
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p. 42.
APPENDIX C

"Laodameia died; Helen died; Leda, the beloved of Jupiter, went before. It is better to repose in the earth betimes than to sit up late; better, than to cling pertinaciously to what we feel crumbling under us, and to protract an inevitable fall. We may enjoy the present while we are insensible of infirmity and decay: but the present, like a note in music, is nothing but as it appertains to what is past and what is to come. There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last."\(^1\)

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