

THE CENSORSHIP OF LANDOR'S *IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS*¹

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LANDOR'S quest for a publisher for the *Imaginary Conversations* began in the spring of 1822, when he entrusted the manuscript to Captain Vyner² for delivery to Longman. Assuming that by 22 April 1822 Longman had received it, Landor urged Southey on 3 June to have the manuscript sent to Mawman because he had received no reply from Longman thus far.³ By 16 September, however, he admitted to Southey that not only had he failed to allow for the delay in the arrival of the manuscript (which arrived on 19 August), but that he had merely requested Longman to inform him when it arrived. He now entrusted the manuscript to Julius Hare for delivery to Mawman.⁴

Although Landor had never met young Hare and their correspondence was probably recent,⁵ he could not have chosen a more

¹ I wish to express my gratitude to the following for permission to quote original material used in this article: Mr. Ronald Hall, Librarian of the John Rylands Library (Julius Hare's letters to John Taylor, Rylands English MS. 1238; cited as Ryl. English MS. 1238); Mr. John Gordan and the trustees of The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (John Taylor's letters to Julius Hare and one letter from Hare to Taylor; cited as Berg Coll., NYPL); Mr. James M. Osborn of the Marie-Louise and James M. Osborn Collection, Yale University Library (Robert Southey's letters to John Taylor; cited as Osborn Coll., YUL); and Yale University Library (Landor's holograph revisions of the 1824 edition of the *Imaginary Conversations*; cited as Y). For financial assistance in the preparation of this article, I am indebted to my former employer, Roosevelt University, and particularly to Mr. Kendall B. Taft, chairman of the Department of English, and Mr. Otto Wirth, dean of the College of the Arts and Sciences.

² John Forster, *Walter Savage Landor, a Biography* (London, 1869), ii. 11. Although Forster indicates that Vyner was in the Life Guards, the *List of the Officers of the Army and of the Corps of Royal Marines . . .* (London, 1824) does not list a Captain Vyner in this unit. However, a Captain Charles James Vyner, of the 56th Regiment of Foot Guards is listed as being placed on half pay on 29 August 1822 (p. 569).

³ Forster, ii. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.* 14-15, 18.

⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

diplomatic and tireless agent. For the next ten years, Hare saw through the press two editions of volumes one and two and one edition of volumes three, four, and five. He even published two of the conversations written for the projected volume six in the *Philological Museum*, which he and Connop Thirlwall edited in 1831-2.¹ The arduous task of editing such a large volume of work was complicated by Landor's habit of forwarding from Italy last-minute insertions and revisions written on small slips of paper in his cramped and barely legible hand. G. F. McFarland has very properly termed the task one of "sheer labour".²

Hare undertook the job with energy, submitting the manuscript unsuccessfully to Mawman, Martin, Valpy, and Ridgway. Weary of soliciting publisher after publisher, he finally applied to John Taylor. Hare respected Taylor as the publisher of Keats and Lamb and he knew him as the proprietor of the *London Magazine*, to which he had contributed during his Temple days.³ His letter to Taylor introducing the *Imaginary Conversations* demonstrates that his inability to find a publisher had diminished neither his genuine enthusiasm for the work nor his sense of salesmanship :

Trinity College Cambridge
Monday March 3^d—[1823]

Sir.

I have been entrusted by my friend M^r Landor, the author of *Gebir*, and of that magnificent dramatic poem, *Count Julian*, with a manuscript volume, which he is desirous of having published as soon as possible and it would give me great pleasure to transfer the MS into the hands of one to whom our literature [sic] has been so indebted, as to the publisher of *Endymion*, of Keate's [sic] last volume, of Carey's *Dante*, of the *Opium Eater*, and above all of dear inimitable *Elia*. M^r Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* between Statesmen and Literary men are fully worthy to take their station in this noble company. Indeed I know very few works in any language at all comparable with them in vigour and raciness either of thought or expression. The most distinguished personages of ancient and modern times are introduced as speakers, Sophocles, Pericles, Demosthenes, Richard I, Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, Bonaparte, Kosciusko, Southey, Porson, &c. and their conversation is on all sorts of topics. The majority is political, several are literary; some, as for instance, one between Bacon and Hooker is admirably characteristic, and the conversation between Lady Jane Grey and Roger Ascham is one of the purest and loveliest gems I ever

¹ R. H. Super, *Walter Savage Landor : A Biography* (New York, 1954), p. 201.

² G. F. McFarland, "The Early Literary Career of Julius Hare", *BULLETIN*, xlv (1963-4), 61.

³ Forster, ii. 19.

met with. The terms I am instructed to propose are that the profit, or loss are to be divided equally at the expiration of a twelvemonth from the time of publication. The whole work would form a volume somewhat larger than *Elia*, consisting perhaps of near 400 pages. If you are desirous of examining the Manuscript, I will send it up to London for that purpose, and I should be greatly obliged to you for as early an answer as will be convenient

Your obedient humble Servant
Julius C. Hare¹

Although Taylor replied enthusiastically the next day, he also emphasized his right as a publisher to exercise some discretion. After alluding to De Quincey's praise of Landor's extraordinary powers of mind, he commented: "The Title is a good one—of that Publishers are considered legitimate Judges—if I go beyond that, & endeavour to judge for myself of this work also, you must not think it unreasonable, for unless I exercised some Discretion I could feel no Right to appropriate to myself the Compliment you pay to the Publisher of *Elia*, &c."²

Hare's reply of the same date not only reflects his relief at finding a publisher, but also sets forth some of the circumstances that two years later would terminate the relations between Landor and Taylor. Sure that a reading of the *Conversations* would lead Taylor to a just estimate of Landor's extraordinary powers, he nevertheless warned that Taylor would probably disagree with Landor's political ideas, which formed such a large part of the *Conversations* and which were sometimes strongly expressed. "His disposition is volcanic, and every effort to keep in his powers and moderate their action only serves to increase their violence."³

Hare's confidence in the power of Landor's manuscript was justified, for on 1 April Taylor—after a reminder from Hare⁴—conditionally agreed to publish the *Conversations*: "... if certain Passages or the *Conversations* in which they occur were

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/1. Deleted words or phrases in the correspondence have been indicated thus: [edition]; the number of deleted and illegible words has been indicated thus: [2 x]. The correspondents' inconsistencies in capitalization and punctuation have been retained.

² Berg Coll., NYPL.

³ Ryl. English MS. 1238/2.

⁴ On 15 April, Hare commented that Landor's disposition "is somewhat impatient, so that I am frequently receiving inquiries . . ." (Ryl. English MS. 1238/3).

omitted ;—without that were done I should fear the Sale of the Work would be materially affected ;— ~~then~~, & I should feel Regret myself, as one of the Multitude, that a Production so capable of interesting & of instructing should be debarred the full Measure of its Success for want of a little Curtailment.—”¹ This position Taylor maintained throughout the controversy to come. Hare’s answer of 17 April clearly defined his position as the author’s agent—one he maintained as steadfastly as Taylor did his. Because he had stated to Landor his strong feeling that the *Conversations* would be considerably improved by omitting a few passages, he had been authorized to make alterations he considered indispensable. However, he must use this authority only with the utmost delicacy. “ Still any passages that seem likely to give too much offense, I shall take upon myself to erase or alter ; but it must be done sparingly and with [1x] caution. Nor can I mention their affecting the sale of the work as a reason for omission. Landor has often told me that he is utterly indifferent upon that point. . . .”² He also notified Taylor that since he had received eight more dialogues, plus additions to the original manuscript, he now guessed the whole would make an octavo volume of about 500 pages.³

Unpersuaded, Taylor declined publication on 19 April : “ I am averse to become instrumental to the appearance of such of these *Conversations*, or such Parts of them, as I cannot honestly approve, & it is too well founded, I fear, to be removed by those slight alterations which you are allowed to make. I have no Right however to require more— . . .”⁴ Although Hare’s reply is lost, he evidently persisted in attempting to persuade Taylor to remain as publisher because on 26 April the latter outlined his objections in a letter which demonstrates just how far he felt justified in exercising his scruples :

1st in order, but not in Degree,—is the Dialogue between Burke and L^d Grenville.⁵ It gives the popular Account of the Cause of Burke’s Change of Party, but I think not the true one. A Person who knew him well, & who had every Reason

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁵ Written around 1797, this was one of Landor’s earliest conversations. See Forster, i. 511.

to resent his Defection—I mean the late Sir Philip Francis¹;—thought this Change in Burke arose from want of Courage & not from want of Principle.—I should say, Let his Reputation have the Benefit of the Doubt: The Dialogue brands him with the most barefaced Dishonesty.

2. I wonder that M^r Landor should put the Rod for Gifford's Pruriency into the Hands of Porson, the Author of *Eloisa en Dishabille*²;—it so completely defeats the Author's purpose to select for this Office a Man still more obnoxious to the Charge than the Person he scourges. But this is principally a matter of taste & out of my Province as a Publisher. I may be allowed to say that the way in which Gifford is spoken is too much in his own style, & that the Contempt is over-acted. I should like to see him punished, but with Justice & Dignity, so that even his own Party would not be able to find in it Excuse for taking his Part:—

3rd. "Too late the Goddess hid &c.," is an excellent Picture, but done with a Freedom almost beyond the Era of Elizabeth.³—

4th. The Charges against Lord W^m Bentinck offer a more serious Ground of Objection. The Stories told of him & the Threat that "he shall answer for it, he shall suffer for it, he shall live for it,"⁴ are affairs of great Moment in which I wish not to be a Party—They may be deemed libellous, & as the Law at present stands I have no Desire to incur the Penalties of such a Verdict.—They may be unfounded or overstated, without being punishable as a Libel, & what Reparation could I then make the injured Party, or what to myself for having published them? But they may be true & not exaggerated:—that is an excellent Reason why M^r Landor shd hurt the offender thro' the World & at last perhaps out of it,—but my Motive will not be thought so pure. I hope to have Courage at all Times to do my Duty, disregarding Consequences; but it is not my Duty to intermeddle here. The more proper Course in my opinion would be bring these

¹ Taylor wrote three works between 1813 and 1817 to prove that Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818) was the author of the letters of Junius (*DNB*).

² "Southey and Porson", 1824, I, 42. See also my dissertation, "Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*: A Critical Edition of the First Eight Conversations in Volume One" (Northwestern University, 1966), p. 308, 11. 219-24. Taylor alludes to a poem entitled "Eloisa en Dishabille", a parody of Pope's "Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard", first printed in 1780. Although it is uncertain whether Porson wrote it, he was notoriously fond of reciting it. See M. L. Clarke, *Richard Porson* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 73. For a discussion of the validity of Taylor's criticism and the basis of Landor's dislike of Gifford, see Prasher, pp. 612, 624-5.

³ "Queen Elizabeth and Cecil", 1824, I, 88. See also Prasher, p. 413, l. 58. Unfortunately, Taylor, Hare, and Southey do not seem to have recognized that Landor's poem was his version of the discovery of the naked Diana at her bath earlier described by Ovid in *The Metamorphoses* (iii. 174-98) and by Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* (iii. vi. 17-19). The parallel passages are quoted in Prasher, pp. 758-9 and the relationship of Landor's poem to Spenser's is discussed on pp. 153, 155, 157.

⁴ Lord William C. Bentinck (1774-1839) led a successful expedition against Genoa in 1814 and remained in Rome at the close of the war. Landor's attack appears at the close of "Marchese Pallavicini and Walter Landor", 1824, I, 125.

Accusations against Lord W^m Bentinck, & those against Lord Burghersh,¹ Dawkins,² Trevor,³ [lx] & other public Functionaries [?] before Parliament. The Charges will then become a fit Subject for History—they will live on a thousand Records, & so far as they justly attach Blame it will stick to the Delinquents, no matter what the Decision of Parliament may be.

Lastly, I dislike the attack on Prayer & on the Bible which is made in the Dialogue between Middleton & Magliabechi.⁴ I know what M^r Landor means, & I should find little Difficulty myself in agreeing with him in his Views; but I cannot consent to loosen Mankind from one Set of Obligations before they are fitted for the Reception of another equally or more operative on their Con-

¹ John Fane (1784-1859), eleventh Earl of Westmorland and Lord Burghersh, was the British minister to Florence during Landor's residence (*DNB*). The charge against Burghersh was undoubtedly included in "Peter Leopold and the President Du Paty", but it has not survived.

² Edward J. Dawkins (1792-1865), secretary to Lord Burghersh and later minister to Greece, was accused by Landor of insulting his wife (*DNB*). See Landor's letter to Wordsworth, 8 September 1822 in R. H. Super, "Landor's Letters to Wordsworth and Coleridge", *Modern Philology*, lv (November 1957), 77. See also Landor's letter to Rev. Walter Birch, 3 May 1823, in Ryl. English MS. 1237/39, and Edward R. Tatham, "Some Unpublished Letters of W. S. Landor", *Fortnightly Review*, xciii (February 1910), 371. The attack on Dawkins probably appeared in "Leopold", 1824, I, 207-208 and was deleted by Southey (see *inf.* p.442, n. 3). Dawkins was specifically attacked under the name "Dorcus" in 1826, I, 288-92. Hare's reply to Taylor (see below) implies that Landor originally included the story of Dawkins's insult to Mrs. Landor. Landor later revised it and added the following deleted note at the bottom of p. 291: "~~One Dor Dawkins~~", The person of whom these particularly are literally true, altho antedated in the Dialogue, was afterwards sent as British Agent with the Greek government!" The restored passage (without the note) was transferred to "Landor, English Visitor and Florentine Visitor". The deleted note appears in the copy of the 1826 edition containing Landor's holograph revisions in the Wrenn Collection of the University of Texas Library. This set (hereafter cited as T) is Landor's earliest revision of this edition. For a discussion of the relationship of this set to those in the Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, F. 5067, see Prasher, pp. 5-8. That containing the pressmark "F. 9.R.25" is cited here as VA¹ and that containing the pressmark "F. 9.R.22" is cited as VA². These revisions of the 1826 edition are later than T.

³ While this may be John Hampden-Trevor (1749-1824), third Viscount Hampden, who served as minister to the Sardinian Court at Turin from 1783-98, Taylor's reference to him in his letter of 2 May as one of Burghersh's "underlings" makes this identification questionable (*DNB*). The attack on Trevor probably occurred in the Leopold dialogue, but it has not survived.

⁴ "Middleton and Magliabechi", 1824, I, 352-4. Cf. 1826, I, 489-93. Landor may have based Middleton's denial of the efficacy of prayer on the story that one of his posthumous papers contained such a denial. Bolingbroke was supposed to have preserved a copy after advising Middleton's executors to destroy it (*DNB*).

sciences—Religion will become more pure in Practice, as Men became more intellectual ; but because a Man is wise & able to do without the School-master that is no Reason why Boys, by whom I mean the less wise & the uneducated, should be left as much without a G[od] [a]s without Discretion.—”¹

Taylor concluded by agreeing with Hare’s suggestion of appealing to Wordsworth and Southey : “. . . Let them see the Proofs & if they approve of what I condemn, I will consent to forego the Right of private Judgment, & be bound by their Decision.”²

However, Hare, tired of searching for a publisher, was not so easily put off. His firm but diplomatic reply of 27 April reveals how far he was willing to compromise to mollify both publisher and author. After commenting that Taylor’s objections were moderate, reasonable, and, on the whole, just, he gave his own views. First of all, he found the attack upon Burke the most offensive in the whole manuscript. Although he had told Landor that he was indulging “in a vulgar calumny, contrary to facts, and that it w^d materially injure the character of the entire work in the opinion of all moderate men”,³ Landor had not alluded to the topic in his answer and, therefore, Hare was not authorized to omit it. Nevertheless, he was afraid that it could not be altered to obviate the bad tendency of the whole :

. . . and therefore if you will not consent to print it as it stands, and the difficulty cannot be otherwise removed, the whole shall go.

2. Your remark about the inconsistency of making Porson censure prurient language is perfectly just ; but then he does it in such an admirable way. He professes not to be squeamish ; but he will not open a drain to look for a pin, & miss it. It seems to be as if that might stand ; for it is only a critical objection ; & I fear that in the other dialogues equally, though there are often many admirable characteristic touches, historical consistency has in very many instances been violated ; and very often the speaker is only a duplicate of the author. About Gifford I do not remember anything objectionable. For all I recollect is that he says he never knew his name & does not know how he translated Juvenal.

3. There are certainly a few—~~passages~~—expressions here & there which will offend the delicacy of the modern ear, or which will give the alarm to its conscious impurity. But though of course one does not give a razor to a madman, it is difficult to determine how far one is bound to abstain from saying what is innocent in itself, lest an impure tinderous age should catch fire at the sparks which ~~yo~~ one is amusing oneself by striking. Perhaps Landor once or twice transgresses ; for in this as in many other points his feelings are much more those of a Roman

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL. Since the letter is mutilated, I have supplied missing letters in brackets.

² Ibid.

³ Ryl. English MS. 1238/8.

than of a modern European ; and if you continue to retain your repugnancy to the lines you have quoted, I will try to omit them. But I fear it will hurt the picture, and Elizabeth, who loved Martial, ought to have a little of her favourite seasoning.

4. It has already struck me several times, that the attack upon L^d B. ought not to be printed, especially when the attacker is not in the country to support his charges. They may be deemed libellous ; they ought not be brought forward without the strongest evidences ; and from the character L^d W.B. bears, I should think there must be some misrepresentation about them. The chief part therefore of what is said about him I will agree to expunge. The other attacks on L^d Burghersh Dawkins Trevor &c are of a different nature I think. They furnish no matter for serious accusation, but plenty of very proper food for ridicule, which Landor has poured forth upon them all [?] the fountains of his mind ; the authority in most cases is unexceptionable, he being himself a party ; and an animal, that ~~lived~~ like Dawskin Dawskin [sic] c^d insult M^{rs} Landor in the manner there described,¹ deserves no mercy. I have heard from other quarters that the whole of his behaviour is of a piece & that he richly merits to be made a mark for the finger of scorn ; besides which the conduct of our ministers at almost all the courts in Europe is so impertinent & insolent, that it is a good thing to have one of them duly exposed.

5. I agree with you entirely in your objections to Middleton's attack upon prayer ; but I do not remember any attack on the Bible. The objections to Prayer . . . seem to me to arise altogether out of a false philosophy, . . . Landor however thinks differently ; nor would I prevent him from declaring it provided there be nothing injurious in the manner. If you think there is, I will try to see whether that dialogue can be altered ; if not, it shall be omitted entirely ; nor shall I grieve at being forced to erase it, inspite of the good stories it contains.²

Hare urged Taylor to begin printing as soon as possible if he felt they could alter the manuscript to overcome his objections.³

Although Taylor agreed on 29 April to publish "with all possible speed"⁴ a volume formed of those Conversations to which he had nothing to object, he retracted this offer in a second letter written on the same day. Because he was uncertain about whether Hare could allow so large an omission or might be precluded from consenting to it and because his own objections were too strong to be removed in the instances quoted, he therefore suggested that if these omissions could not be made, Hare apply to other publishers—" (Longman's for instance)."⁵

Hare's reply, postmarked 1 May 1823, is a remarkable combination of tact and desperation. He not only repeated his

¹ See p. 432, n. 2. *sup.*

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/8.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL. Edmund Blunden does not indicate that these are two separate letters written on the same day. See *Keat's Publisher : A Memoir of John Taylor* (London, 1936), p. 159.

⁵ Berg Coll., NYPL.

respect for Taylor's principles, but also assured him that whether they finally agreed upon the main point or not, he would "remember with pleasure the truly gentlemanlike manner in which the negotiation has been carried on".¹ After emphasizing the difficulties he had had in finding a publisher, he confessed: "And I still hope that my application may not have been in vain, though your letter which accompanied the MS somewhat shakes me."²

To overcome Taylor's objections, he took it upon himself to omit the note containing the charges against Lord William Bentinck, the whole of the conversations between Burke and Grenville, and between Middleton and Magliabechi—if these could not be modified to suit Taylor. However, Hare preferred to refer these to Wordsworth or Southey. While he did not understand Taylor's objections to other passages, he was willing to listen to arguments against them. All Landor said about Gifford was that he translated Juvenal: "It seem to me to be as slight as any thing well can be."³ Nor could he see anything very bad in the line attributed to Spenser, but this alone should not stand in the way of an agreement. Although he was not sure whether Taylor would consider these alterations sufficient, he could not proceed further: "... even in these I am half afraid that he [Landor] will think I am taking unwarrantable liberties. But however that risk shall be run."⁴ Determinedly confident that Taylor would publish the *Conversations*, Hare promised to return six more dialogues as soon as he heard from Taylor and also informed him that an additional eight dialogues had just been received from Landor.⁵

This time his confidence was unjustified, for on 2 May Taylor still refused to publish the work, recommending Simpkin and Marshall in terms that must have galled Hare: "They are respectable Men, & they published O Meara's Work which is a Proof of their not being too fastidious."⁶ Taylor's elaboration of

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/9.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Berg Coll., NYPL. In 1822 Barry Edward O'Meara (1786-1836) published *Napoleon in Exile*, which denounced the treatment of Napoleon by the allies (DNB).

his original objections emphasized once more how many of these were based on personal taste. In the "Southey and Porson" conversation, he objected both to the tone and to the choice of Porson to attack Gifford. The conversation between Elizabeth and Cecil he disliked "as being a Caricature of the Style of the Conversation in that Age, & as giving Authority to the popular Error of attributing to Burleigh any Ill-will to Spenser".¹ To the severe remarks on Lord Burghersh and his underlings he retained his old aversion: "If [1x] I had M^r Landor's Cause for Resentment, I would not call these Men Names, for my own Sake; nor should I be content with this Mode of avenging an Insult.—"²

In a letter postmarked 5 May 1823, Hare politely declined Simpkin and Marshall because he would be sorry if forced to give Landor "that scamp [O'Meara] for a companion instead of dear Elia".³ Instead, he had asked Southey to decide whether the manuscript should be sent to another publisher or whether the dialogues to which Taylor objected should be sent to Southey to alter as he saw fit. However, Hare wished assurance that Taylor consented to be bound by Southey's decision. Wordsworth could not be appealed to since he was now in the Netherlands. In a postscript, Hare stated his firm belief that Taylor's objections to the "Southey and Porson" conversation were critical, whereas Hare felt justified in altering the manuscript only when these were moral. As for the "Queen Elizabeth and Cecil" conversation, he declined comment.⁴

In response to Hare's plea, Southey wrote Landor on 8 May 1823 that he would arbitrate, reminding Landor that Taylor was a man "very superior to most of his trade".⁵ Landor was persuaded, and a jubilant Hare wrote Taylor on 11 May that he had received two letters in the last week which would end all the latter's doubts about publishing the *Imaginary Conversations*: "One was from Landor himself desiring me to omit every thing

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² Ibid.

³ Ryl. English MS. 1238/10.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, F. MS. 481; *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. John Wood Warter (London, 1856), iii. 388-9.

about Lord Burghersh ; the other an answer from Southey expressing himself glad that I had thought of requesting you to become his friend's publisher, and that he felt the same repugnance with myself to resorting to any other publisher, ' whose name in the title page would be a pollution,' and promising ' that he will give a faithful opinion upon the passages to which M^r Taylor objects '." ¹ Consequently, Hare was sending Southey the dialogue about Burke, the verses attributed to Spenser, and Taylor's objections stated in his own words. Still optimistic that Taylor would publish the *Conversations*, Hare included several dialogues for the printer and promised to get the Middleton dialogue to Southey as soon as possible.²

This time he was not to be disappointed. Now enthusiastic about the project, Taylor not only replied on 13 May that he had sent the copy to Davison with the injunction that he use " great Dispatch " but he also reassured Hare of his pleasure at the arrangements : " I am glad M^r Southey has undertaken the office of Moderator—Unless I am much mistaken we all agree in desiring as much good to be done, with as little Mischief, as possible,—& the Result will I doubt not be satisfactory to all parties—It gives me much [1x] Pleasure to hear that M^r Landor wishes the Part concerning Lord Burghersh may be omitted."³

In an undated letter to Taylor (ca. May 1823), Hare forwarded Southey's decisions on the Burke and Porson dialogues. Taylor's objection to the Burke, Southey found very much to his honour since it would make many readers judge as unjustly of Landor as he did of Burke. " I am heartily glad it is in our power to withhold it, and have very little doubt that Landor himself, were he to see it in irrevocable type, w^d wish it had never been written."⁴ The line attributed to Spenser did not strike him as reprehensible : " It proceeds from a picturesque imagination, not a prurient one, & belongs entirely to the subject."⁵ Hare also raised the question of Landor's spelling reforms. Although they might alter the spelling of " Boxeley and Grenvile ", they must conform to Landor's whims of " Sovran, and Foren ".⁶

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/32.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/58.

² Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

³ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁶ Ibid.

On 29 May Landor himself addressed a letter to "Messrs. Taylor & Co Printers London", in which he defended his conversations :

May 29

Gentlemen,

I have this day received a letter from Mr. Southey in which he tells me that you will undertake to print my Conversations, subject to such omissions as he shall think proper. I am quite satisfied with this arrangement, and shall be equally so with whatever other you may deem proper.

In the Dialogues of the ancients I hope you will not object to their known sentiments. I c^d not make a Demosthenes talk like a Canning. I do not mean in barbarisms but in politics. The last words of my Preface¹ obviate many difficulties.

Do me the favor to preserve for me my copy, as I have no other intire [sic] one, and you will perceive that even this is much interpolated by sentences transmitted to my kind friend Mr. Hare after the rest was written.

I am
Gentlemen
very respectfully Yr obed^t Serv^t
W S Landor

Florence²

On 31 May, Landor had also written Southey authorizing him to omit whatever he thought ought to be omitted. His own plan for obviating any objections was to include a statement authorizing the editor to mark with his reprobation whatever might be injurious to national establishments or irritating to the public feeling.³

Despite the author's sarcasm, the publisher retained both his respect for the work as a whole and his objections to particular passages. In a letter written before 5 June 1825 (see below), Taylor confessed his extreme interest in and satisfaction with the work now that these "little Blots" had been removed: "We have not had so much Wisdom put into a Book since the Days of Lord Bacon—I have ordered 750 Copies and am willing to make it 1000 if you wish it.—"⁴ However, in a postscript, he asked

¹ The last words of Landor's preface to volume one are "... and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age". See 1824, I, xiv; Prasher, pp. 206, 11. 76-77.

² Yale University Library. With minor alterations, the letter appears in Stephen Wheeler, "Landor and his Publishers", TLS, xxi (19 January 1922), 45.

³ Forster, ii. 21.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

whether Southey would approve the whole of the paragraph at the "bottom of p. 51, & the top of 52" and the word "*Piss* at p. 50".¹ Hare's undated reply defended these as both strong and characteristic if somewhat coarse: "We must not prune and pare too much away."² Nevertheless, Forster indicated that because of this one word, Taylor cut the number of copies from 1000 to 750.³

In the extant fragment of his 5th of June letter to Southey, Hare appeared to outline Taylor's objections to the Middleton dialogue and passed on Taylor's praise of the book's wisdom.⁴ Southey lost no time in sending to Taylor his defense of this dialogue and his tribute to Landor's genius:

Keswick. 7 June 1823

Sir

According to Mr Julius Hares desire I forward to you the Dialogue which I this day received from him—I do not believe that Landor himself would argue seriously against prayer. He has only made Middleton speak in character & chosen the topic for the sake of introducing what he has heard in Italy.—I have drawn a pencil thro two passages which might give offense. The result will provoke a smile at Italian superstition.—but it will shake the reasonable faith of no man.

I am very glad these Dialogues have found a publisher who appreciates their worth. It is not to the credit of this generation that Landor who will hereafter be regarded as one of its brightest ornaments should be as little known & honoured among his Contemporaries.

I remain Sir
Yrs obediently
Robert Southey⁵

In his letter of 2 July to Southey, Landor himself defended the dialogue as fair because he gave the known sentiments of both

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL. "Oliver Cromwell and Walter Noble." Taylor may allude to the note on Louis XIV's miraculous birth, 1826, I, 104. The word to which it refers appears in 1824, I, 61, although the note was included neither here nor in Y. See note C to this conversation in Prasher, p. 378. There are no other major omissions or additions to this section of the dialogue. The word "piss" appears in 1824, I, 60; Y; and 1826, I, 102. In T and VA¹ it became "quench these firebrands in their own puddle"; in VA² this version was deleted and the passage revised to read as 1846: "spit outright (or worse) upon these crackling bouncing firebrands." See Prasher, p. 367, ll. 100-1.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/46.

³ Forster, ii. 19-20.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/59.

⁵ Osborn Coll., YUL.

parties. While he would be delighted if Southey agreed with Hare to let it pass, he would nevertheless be contented if his friend did not. "In regard to prayer, if ever I prayed at all, I would not transgress or exceed the order of Jesus Christ. In my opinion all Christianity (as priests call their inventions), is to be rejected excepting His own commands."¹ Landor's defence of the dialogue to Taylor, received on 8 July, survives only in a copy made by the latter. After assuring Taylor that whatever Hare and Southey thought proper would meet with his entire approbation, Landor stated that he did not think Middleton's arguments dangerous. Although he believed pure religion the greatest of blessings, he would not venture to use any prayer other than that defended by Middleton. "He says *when* you pray, pray thus, . . ."²

Taylor next objected to Landor's attack on Lord Chatham in a note to "General Kleber and French Officers". In his draft of his 24th of June letter, Taylor requested the omission of the part which "so strongly reflects upon the Character & Conduct of Lord Chatham".³ Obviously relieved to be rid of the burden of dealing with Taylor's scruples, Hare requested that this current objection and all subsequent ones be forwarded to Southey.⁴ In a second letter to Taylor, apparently postmarked 30 June 1823, Hare explained that, on reconsideration, he did not feel justified in erasing more than the two last lines of the paragraph attacking Chatham. Although he agreed to accept Southey's decision, he once more redefined his position as Landor's agent :

But my own principle always is, as I would claim a right to speak out my opinion freely and without any restraint, so long as nothing morally wrong is contained in

¹ Forster, ii. 22.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/77. Landor also used a variation of the phrase "when you pray, pray thus" in his letter to Southey above. The passage in "Middleton" containing this phrase was om. in 1824, Y. It was restored in 1826, I, 492. The phrase itself may be Landor's version of Luke 11 : 2—"And he said unto them, When ye pray, say Our Father which art in heaven, . . ."

³ MS. draft in Ryl. English MS. 1238/75. See "General Kleber and Some French Officers", 1824, I, 141 n. The comment on William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), Lord Chatham, did not appear in 1824, Y. The note itself was om. in 1826. Pitt was the English politician Landor attacked most.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/15.

it, in a like manner to throw no impediment in the way of a similar freedom of speech in others, however at variance their opinion may be to my own. Many of Landor's, as I have already said, I all but abhor. The dialogue between James & Casaubon for instance I cannot read without disgust at its gross misrepresentations¹: but still I would not prevent its publication: but where there is so much good in the volume wish to facilitate it; and trust that the evil the book might produce and the errors it might generate will be purged away. The good must endure and must be great; and we must content ourselves in this world in things good mixed up with evil.²

Ignoring the object lesson, Taylor merely replied on 1 July that he was sending the passage to Southey,³ which he did on 4 July. His plea that Landor's charge of Chatham's being "*dead drunk*" either be omitted or made in a less offensive manner⁴ was successful, for on 6 July Southey unhesitatingly authorized the deletion: "It is better wholly to expunge the words, than to convey any thing of the like import in a less offensive manner, the charge itself being grossly exaggerated, if not altogether groundless. What precedes it—represents I believe the matter of fact."⁵

Since the publication of the *Imaginary Conversations* was delayed by the continuing censorship controversy, Taylor and Hare published "Southey and Porson" separately in the July 1823 issue of *London Magazine* to give the public a foretaste of what was to come and to please Wordsworth.⁶ They also tried to cope with the torrent of revisions and insertions arriving from Italy.⁷ Indeed, Hare's dedication to Landor is demonstrated as much by his diligence as by the volume of work he edited. In an undated apology (ca. July 1823) to Taylor for failing to return proof sheets on the "Peter Leopold and President Du Paty" dialogue, he explained: "I was so engaged last evening that I could not return the sheet as usual by the same night's mail. . . . At all events, that [note] in page 206 and that in page 213 after

¹ For a discussion of Landor's use of sources and his historical inaccuracies in this conversation, see Prasher, pp. 40-41, 145-56.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/16.

³ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁴ MS. draft in Ryl. English MS. 1238/69.

⁵ Osborn Coll., YUL.

⁶ Forster, ii, 23. Although Forster indicates Landor willingly consented, Hare's undated letter to Taylor indicates otherwise.

⁷ See particularly J.H. to J.T., n.d. (Ryl. English MS. 1238/33) and J.T. to J.H., 8 July 1823 (Berg Coll., NYPL).

billet-doux may be inserted and I should think a good deal of the long one also.”¹

In another undated letter, probably written the same month, Hare informed Taylor that in this dialogue he had omitted a passage and inserted a note in sheet O and in the next sheet he had omitted one or two passages which seemed the most objectionable.² On 8 August, Southey deleted in this same dialogue the note on Burghersh and passages on pages 206, 207, and 208³ :

Landor is not more hasty in throwing off such passages than he is ready to withdraw them upon the suggestion of any one whom he esteems—I have struck out also the names of the Italian Judges⁴ : Their insertion is not of consequence here, & his safety is consulted [?] by the omission.

I do not observe anything in the four [?] sheets which requires to be cancelled. There are some opinions from which I dissent ; a little which I do not understand,—& a great deal which I heartily approve and admire.⁵

A portion of one of Hare’s letters, apparently postmarked 6 September 1823, indicates that Taylor was again threatening to withdraw as publisher : “ At present I agree entirely with Southey ; I would much rather see it printed ; but I would rather leave it out than send the manuscript to any other publisher than yourself.”⁶ The dialogue at issue was undoubtedly the “ Middleton and Magliabechi”, to which Taylor had renewed his vehement objections and which he informed Hare on 10 September he had forwarded to Southey. Aside from this, the proofs he sent Hare contained nothing which could be disapproved—“ even by one so scrupulous as I may appear to be, tho’ on Politics I am more than usually anxious for M^r L’s Discretion—”.⁷

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/39. Hare probably alludes to the following notes in “ Peter Leopold and the President Du Paty ”, 1824, I : p. 206—on the small Italian state governed by a woman ; p. 212—on the distich on the eucharist. The long note must be that on Landor’s court case with his maidservant, pp. 215-17.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/39. In 1824, I, sheet O corresponds to pp. 193-208 and sheet P to pp. 209-24, both in the Leopold.

³ These pages appear in the Leopold. 1824, I, 206-8 contain the attack on incompetent government officials. As indicated in p. 432, n. 2 *sup.* the passage deleted by Southey probably attacked Dawkins.

⁴ The deleted names appeared in Landor’s note on his court case, 1824, I, 215-17. The note itself was deleted in Y and did not reappear in subsequent revisions.

⁵ Osborn Coll., YUL.

⁶ Ryl. English MS. 1238/13.

⁷ Berg Coll., NYPL.

Whereas in April, Hare would not have grieved at erasing the dialogue, he now strongly urged its retention. Not only did he feel Taylor's objections unjust, but he also felt the conversation itself contained "so much wit of the very first quality"¹ that he could not bring himself to expunge it. Further, Landor had more than once stated his earnest wish that it be retained and his firm conviction that it could do no harm. Although Landor's own faith seemed to reject all prayer, what he ridiculed here was "what no one need feel sorry or shame at having laughed at, and reasonable prayer is untouched and remains exactly upon the same grounds, at the end, as at the beginning of the dialogue, and nothing is urged against Magliabechi's arguments in defense of it".² He pointed out that both Southey and his brother Augustus approved its publication.³

As work on volume two began, Taylor objected to Landor's comments on the term "subject" in "Washington and Franklin". Although Hare had earlier found nothing requiring deletion here, despite a great deal of which he disapproved,⁴ he now agreed to erase this passage to which he himself had frequently felt offence. Consequently he transferred the long note at "p. 31.32 & 33 excepting the first two lines" to the end of the conversation.⁵

On 20 October, Southey authorized omissions from "General Lascy and the Curate Merino" because he once more feared for Landor's safety :

Mr Landor himself will feel not only that the merit of this Dialogue but that the weight of the remarks which it contains, would be very much diminished by suffering the statement of his own grievances to stand.⁶ I have struck out also two lines in the Inscription upon Ferdinand,⁷ the first unwillingly but it goes because the second charges him with a crime of which most certainly he is

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/38.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/29.

⁵ Ibid. 1238/44. The passage was om. in 1824, II, 30; Y. It appeared in 1826, II, 32-33. The transferred note must be that on the Catholic Church, 1824, II, 46-48.

⁶ Om. in "General Lascy and Curate Merino", 1824, II, 81; Y. It was at least partially restored in 1826, II, 111-18.

⁷ Landor strongly disliked Ferdinand VII (1784-1833) of Spain. Southey may allude to a Latin verse on the "slaughterer", 1824, I, 91. The verse was del. in Y and om. in 1826 and in subsequent revisions.

innocent ; & such a charge even tho conveyed in Latin might expose the book to prosecution—if the Spanish Ambassador should notice it, as it would be his duty to do.¹

The next conversations in which Southey authorized omissions were “ Pericles and Sophocles ”, “ Louis XIV and Father LaChaise ”, and “ Cavaliere Puntomichino and Mr. Denis Eusebius Talcrangh ”:

The three sheets H.I.K.² require a great deal of pruning. It is a safe principle to say that every thing should be cut out in which the author, writing under the influence of personal feelings has expressed himself in a manner which may very possibly be injurious to others & hurtful in its consequences to himself. Upon this principle I would strike out ~~the passage~~ part of the speech of Sophocles pp. 109-10.³ from “ Chlorus grew rich—to—the less for Sophocles.” Personal as what precedes it is, it may I think stand—, because its application will not be understood, even by the fathers themselves.

I would strike ~~also~~ out also the first paragraph in the speech of Pericles p 111.⁴ The second sentence of that paragraph is true, but the first is not, & would be deservedly deemed mischievous.

I hardly know what to say respecting the seventh Conversation,⁵ which is altogether such as Voltaire would have written.—& yet the difference between Voltaire and Landor is as great in every thing as between French & Englishmen. Had the character of the Dialogue been imaginary, the satire would not be exaggerated ; I know enough of Catholic casuistry to say this : but it is so as applies to Louis 14 & appears even more so than it is. [1x] I should rather not lose the whole, & yet know not how to preserve it. Might it pass with the following corrections ?—

^p121 *Dele*—on much slighter we read in the Old Testament.⁶

122 line 7—for God Almighty, read *their Deity*,—or omit the sentence.⁷

¹ Osborn Coll., YUL.

² Sheets H, I, K consist of the following in 1824, II : H—pp. 97-112 (“ Pericles ”); I—pp. 113-28 (“ Louis XIV ”); K—pp. 129-44 (“ Louis XIV ” and “ Puntomichino ”).

³ Om. in “ Pericles ”, 1824, II, 107 ; Y. Restored in 1826, II, 150-1, the passage alludes to Landor’s appeal to Robert Stewart (1769-1822), second Marquis of Londonderry and later Lord Castlereagh (Chlorus in this dialogue), to reprimand Dawkins (Dorkas here) for his insolence. See also p. 432, n. 2 *sup*. In T, Landor inserted and then del. “ Dawkins ” for “ Dorkas ”. Castlereagh was another favorite enemy of Landor’s.

⁴ Om. in “ Pericles ”, 1824, II, 109 ; Y. In 1826, II, 151, the comment on the insanity of all royal families was restored.

⁵ “ Louis XIV and Father LaChaise.”

⁶ “ Louis XIV ”, 1824, II, 119. The deletion was not made.

⁷ “ Louis XIV ”, 1824, II, 120. The substitution was not made nor was the sentence omitted.

125. for a clyster read an *enema*—& omit the note, for the Latin hymn contains nothing in its meaning to justify the ridicule.¹

If you think these alterations insufficient,—as I fear they are, to remove [1x] serious objections against the whole Conversation,—let the whole be omitted : as the safest, & I believe the best course. What is really just in it, the author may introduce in an unobjectionable form.

p 140—insert asterisks on lines—————in place of the words Edinburgh, Valpy, & Classical.²

142 We must begin to expunge from one of these worthies—where to end I know not, whether at a ~~an~~ “The same patriot?”³ p. 144—or if what may follow in the ensuing sheet will require farther pruning.⁴

Continuing to eliminate passages from this last section of the Puntomichino which he feared would jeopardize Landor's safety, Southey deleted the stories of the Prince Borghese's callous treatment of a woman imprisoned for debt and stories of Italian “patriots” imperious treatment of an Englishman of intellect and of the cottager family of thirteen :

Keswick. 30 Oct. 1823

Dear Sir

In dealing with a work like this of Landors, it is as safe a rule to expunge the passage when in doubt, as it is to win the trick at whist in a similar predicament. I know not who the persons are that are aimed at in the 8th Conversation : but be they who they may, it cannot be proper to publish such things of them, & may be dangerous. Landor is so incapable of fear, that in his estimate of the character of such men, he never recollects how easily they may employ some one to revenge them with a stiletto.

The Dialogue may be made harmless by curtailing it, thus.

p. 142. After “subject of notoriety.

proceed thus—

Lady Morgan has spoken of our patriots, the Russels of our city.

There may formerly &c. p. 145⁵

p. 146 Omit from “allowing to—to—depressed”⁶

¹ “Louis XIV”, 1824, II, 123. Although “clyster” was altered to “enema” in 1824 and Y, it was restored in 1826, II, 167. The note was om. and evidently never restored.

² “Puntomichino”, 1824, II, 138. Southey's suggested underscoring was used in 1824, Y. In 1826, “Edinburgh” became “Quarterly Review” (but “prime review” in T). Asterisks were used in 1826 for “Valpy” and “Classical Review”. In T, Landor restored both (II, 290).

³ Om. in “Puntomichino”, 1824, II, 140 ; Y. Restored in 1826, II, 292-4. This anecdote describes the insolence of a secretary toward an intellectual Englishman and his family.

⁴ Osborn Coll., YUL.

⁵ Om. 1824, II, 140 ; Y. Restored in 1826, II, 291-5.

⁶ Om. 1824, II, 140 ; Y. Restored in 1826, II, 296. Here Landor commented on the low merits of the “Russel of the Bologna-road”.

148—said our host, omit from thence to—“ under the least vindictive &c.¹
p. 150. Omit from “ I wish—to—Lawful Princes²

You may well wonder at the manner in which Landor resents real or imaginary wrongs. But it is a constitutional malady which he has inherited, nor did I ever see any other case in which a mans errors were so certainly thus to be accounted for. The attachments however are as strong & as permanent as his resentment. And deeply as his insanity of temper is to be regretted, I do not believe that there exists a man of more generous feelings, of a brighter genius or of a nobler heart.

Believe me dear Sir

Yours faithfully

Robert Southey³

In a letter to Taylor postmarked 5 December 1823, Hare strongly protested against Southey's decision to omit the cottage story as a matter of taste. The personal attack upon an individual was swallowed up in the poetical and “ our indignation against the offender is forgotten in our sympathy with a simple unexaggerated tale of human suffering ; However, M^r Southey apparently sees something very dreadful in it, and therefore it must go.”⁴ However, he asked Taylor to preserve any proof sheets of it. Landor agreed with Hare and, after the publication of the first edition, gently admonished Southey for the deletion : “ You carried your tenderness too far . . . in suppressing my story of the thirteen lest I should be assassinated. Had I my choice of a death, it should be this, unless I could render some essential service to mankind by any other.”⁵

Still busy with the job of censorship as late as 22 December 1823, Southey forwarded to Taylor deletions to be made in “ Prince Maurocordato and General Colcotroni ” and in “ Alfieri and Salomon the Florentine Jew ” :

Were I to consult my own judgment only I should certainly omit two speeches in pp. 228-9,⁶ which might be struck out without leaving a chasm. If however the two lines which are offensive to good manners be got rid off [sic] the next may pass.

¹ Om. 1824, II, 142 ; Y. Probably a comment on the lack of liberty under monarchy, the passage was also omitted in 1826, II, 298 and in subsequent revisions.

² Om. 1824, II, 142 ; Y. This omission was also retained in 1826, II, 298, and in subsequent revisions. I am unable to locate the phrase “ Lawful Princes ”.

³ Osborn Coll., YUL.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/14.

⁵ Forster, ii. 145.

⁶ “ Maurocardato ”, 1824, II, 228-9 ; 1826, II, 377-8. The deletions were not made. The two speeches undoubtedly are the criticisms of the patriotic society of Englishmen and of Sir Thomas Maitland (1759?-1824), Lord High Com-

P 231 I would omit¹ [1x] from at present to the bottom of the page. & in p. 241² from He has reason—to—every thing that is.—What cannot be made unexceptionable we must be content with making less offensive. The opinions may be right or wrong. The personalities (even if the facts are true) are unbecoming & unworthy.³

Although Landor was so sure that the *Imaginary Conversations* had been published that he wrote Wordsworth on 24 November 1823 to mark whatever he found “badly reasoned or inelegantly reasoned”,⁴ the volumes were still not published in February 1824. While awaiting publication, Taylor took the precaution of getting counsel’s opinion on the safety of publishing passages which might be libellous. On 25 February, he wrote Hare that while Brougham had refused to pronounce upon the case in the present state of the libel law, Scarlett had counselled that he ran no risk in publishing the work although it was impossible to affirm that any composition not a hymn or a prayer might not be deemed a libel—an opinion Taylor found “more libellous than any thing in the Work”.⁵ His own solicitors advised that it would be dangerous to publish the charge of cruelty against Lord William Bentinck and Sir Thomas Maitland⁶ “or whoever it was” in the Pallavicini dialogue and the charge of bribery against Lord Castlereagh, coupled with the taunt of being his own executioner.⁷ To Taylor, the worst

missioner of the Ionian Islands. The two lines tell how the English society sent 300 Bibles, along with a remonstrance against urinating out of doors, and a form of prayer to be offered in churches. In T, Landor marked these speeches “omit in Selections”. The “Selections” may be those intended for female reading. See p. 463, n. 1 *inf*.

¹ Om. in “Maurocordato”, 1824, II, 231; Y. The passage, restored in 1826, II, 380-2, defends “wild theories” and attacks monarchy.

² “Alfieri”, 1824, II, 241. Although I do not find the phrases to which Southey alludes, the note at the bottom of the page on the respectability of English nobility does not reflect Landor’s true opinion since he frequently charged Pitt with creating a vile peerage and ridiculed the city nobility as inferior to the landed aristocracy. See Prasher, pp. 525-6. ³ Osborn Coll., YUL.

⁴ Super, “Landor’s Letters to Wordsworth and Coleridge”, *ut sup.* 79.

⁵ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁶ As p. 431, n. 4 and p. 446, n. 6 *sup.* indicate, Landor attacked Bentinck not Maitland in this dialogue.

⁷ Castlereagh served as Foreign Secretary from 1812-22. The charge of bribery appears in “Aristotle and Callesthenes”, II, 1824, 334-6. That on the suicide (p. 336) was evidently omitted at the last minute because the phrase “exposure

morally was that on the suicide: "What say you? Shall we reprint that *Leaf*, & so make some Change of the preceding Page to remove its Sting a little, as well as of the Passage in Question? The other might then pass, I think."¹

In his undated reply, Hare praised Scarlett's opinion as "perfectly right and very good", but argued against omitting the passages in question. That on Bentinck merely said he stood at the window; it did not assert that he saw or was in any way concerned with the outrage. That on Lord Londonderry's suicide he too disliked but did not consider libellous:

It wd hardly be worth while to reprint it for the sake of saying, "at last discharged the office of executioner upon himself. (Callesth) Tell me, Aristoteles." There would be no very great objection to this, nor any save that it takes all the point of the passage away.² Then perhaps you might also leave out "Little more persuasion was wanted" in the preceding page and begin a new paragraph "Our negotiator after this became &c."³ But I see very little good in or reason for this.—⁴

With this letter Hare dispatched the last proof. As Southey explained to Landor on 29 February 1823, the final delays had been caused by his failure to return a last-minute insertion for the Cicero. Southey also assured Landor that when he perceived a deleted passage, he would "perceive at the same time for what reason it was omitted. The reason for every omission was such that, I am persuaded, you would, without hesitation, have assented to it, had you been on the spot."⁵ This last sentiment was obviously not shared by Hare since many of the deletions were restored in the second edition.

The volumes finally appeared in March 1824. Anxious for good reviews to increase the sale, Taylor urged Hare to write

alone is ignominy, at last" is followed by asterisks. The passage was restored in 1826, II, 517: "exposure alone is ignominy, at last severed his weason with an ivory-handled knife". 1826 also includes the suggestion that the knife be preserved and revered (pp. 517-18).

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² As indicated above, Taylor did not follow Hare's suggestion.

³ Om. in 1824, II, 335; Y. Retained in 1826, II, 516, and subsequent revisions.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/57.

⁵ Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, F. MS. 481. See also *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, v. (London, 1850), 115. The date is wrong in this edition.

something for the *London Magazine*.¹ Hare's just and ironic review, which Taylor attempted to censor,² appeared in the May 1824 issue of the *London* and successfully diminished expected criticism.³ By 12 July 1824 Taylor reported to Hare that the trade was beginning to call for more copies, "but it does not spread like wildfire".⁴

Taylor also raised the question of what to do with the accumulating additions sent by Landor. There was now a great packet for the third volume in the hands of Captain Sartorius⁵ at Paris. Since Landor seemed to desire the speedy appearance of a new conversation on the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Taylor offered to print it separately in the forthcoming issue of the *London*.⁶ Hare's undated reply (ca. July 1823) indicated that he had asked Landor for instructions about a new edition or a third volume. Appreciative of Taylor's considerate offer to publish this dialogue separately, he nevertheless declined: ". . . Landor has such strange and strong whims, I am afraid to venture it, lest he should say he would rather have his right hand cut off. I wonder he never has told me he would rather be castrated in body than in mind. Wordsworth mentioned to me that L. was very angry at the publication of the Southey & Porson in the Magazine a twelve-month ago."⁷

In July, Hare forwarded to Landor news of both the reviews and the sale of the *Conversations*. He also asked whether to keep back the new dialogues should a second edition be called for in the spring of 1825, or whether to print a third volume to come out at Christmas. Further, he explained why he declined Taylor's

¹ 7 April 1825 (Berg Coll., NYPL). Taylor feared Henry Taylor had not reviewed the *Conversations* favourably. Ironically, Southey had recommended Henry to John Taylor in his letters of 22 September and 20 October 1823 (Osborn Coll., YUL).

² Hare defended his review in his letter to Taylor, n.d. [ca. April 1824] (Ryl. English MS. 1238/18).

³ *London Magazine*, ix (May 1824), 523-541. A long excerpt from the review is quoted by McFarland, op. cit. 65-66.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁵ The only Captain Sartorius I find is Sir George Rose Sartorius (1790-1885), who became a captain in the Royal Navy in 1814. No information about his career is given between 1815 and 1831. See William R. O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary* (London, 1849), pp. 1028-9; *DNB*.

⁶ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁷ Ryl. English MS. 1238/11.

offer to publish the dialogue on the grand duke. As for the omissions in the first edition, he would try to persuade Taylor to insert the Middleton in its original form in the second edition. Although he and Southey wished to omit only two lines, Taylor was so fixed that the only way to save the dialogue was to modify it. Hare hoped that Taylor would not be quite so scrupulous next time.¹ Unfortunately, this last issue provided tinder for Landor's explosion at Taylor the following April.

Although Hare seems never to have received explicit authorization from Landor to proceed with the second edition and the third volume, Landor certainly gave the impression that he desired these. In a letter to Wordsworth which arrived on 4 November 1824, he complained that he had not yet received his own copies of the *Conversations* so that he was unable to make the additions and improvements he would have liked: "... but many I have made in readiness for another Edition in my Lifetime or after. I have long completed a third vol: and send the last supplement, notes, &c. by this present conveyance."² On 4 November, he sent material for the third volume to Southey.³ However, he protested to Southey on 11 November that he had heard nothing about the progress of the third volume—"not having heard from Julius Hare for several months, and publishers being personages of too high importance to communicate with such humble men as I am".⁴

That he had heard nothing from either Hare or Taylor is not surprising since this represents the gap in their correspondence also. Nevertheless, by November, the second edition of volumes one and two was in proof form. Hare's hopes that Taylor would consent to restoring portions of the Middleton dialogue proved futile. Rather, his objections were now so strong that he threatened to abandon the whole second edition. On 26 November, Hare wearily tried once again to overcome Taylor's scruples and warned of Landor's temper:

I am very sorry to see you in your last letter intimating that you cannot undertake the second edition. The matter is really such a mere trifle, make the most of it, to

¹ Forster, ii. 144-5.

² Super, "Landor's Letters to Wordsworth and Coleridge", ut sup. 80.

³ Forster, ii. 145.

⁴ *Ibid.*

split about, when everything else is amicably settled. I have so often and so lengthly [sic] given my reasons why I conceive the couple of lines cannot possibly do any harm to a single individual on the face of God's earth that it is useless to repeat them. I have made Landor in one edition say what he is furious about, and therefore cannot ask him to do so again. But do you really think the half dozen words of such importance, as for their sake only to break with a man ~~of~~ as Landor?¹

Taylor, in no mood to consider his scruples a mere trifle, argued on 29 November that he had a responsibility as a publisher to refuse to publish Landor's attack on prayer :

Landor *means* to dissuade Men from Prayer to the Deity—and he writes fully up to what he intends, so that it is probable his Object will be attained. (I cannot state it otherwise consistently with the Opinion I entertain of his Sincerity & his Power.)—Now, I believe this to be wrong, & if it is so, it cannot be a Trifle which I am asked to grant in publishing it. You think me overscrupulous I know, but I am bound, by what I conceive to be right, to act in the way I do. . . . I can bear however to be thought a Fool in these Matters, if I have my own approbation, & without I have that, no other Person's good opinion of me would yield me any Satisfaction.

I refused Lord Byron's Vision of Judgment long before it was offered to John Hunt—Yet I did not think *that* a Production so likely to prove pernicious as the Article in Question ; . . .²

However, Taylor apologized for Hare's trouble in reconciling to the course he advised either Landor or "your unreasonable, obstinate, foolish, or whatever you plan to call him, Correspondent".³

Nor was Hare in a mood to accept Taylor's rationalizations. His undated reply, enclosing the omitted passage and a note added by Landor, was his most forceful attempt to make Taylor see once and for all that the passage on prayer was completely harmless. Since the argument Landor used against prayer was the old one that God is immutable, Hare could not see that any effect would be produced by saying so for the "million and first" time :

You must really have an astonishing notion of Landor's power, if you think he can dissuade men from prayer by these few words. With all my admiration for him, I think him no reasoner, . . . Whatever he might write on the subject I am sure would be utterly unavailing ; but the words omitted would not even shake a pin, and again and again I say, I cannot think it any thing but the merest trifle.⁴

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/12.

² Berg Coll., NYPL.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ryl. English MS. 1238/6. In 1826, the following, which appear neither in 1824 nor in Y, were added or restored : the passage on the irrationality of belief

Despite his dissent from Taylor's opinion, he expressed his sincere respect for the publisher's scruples. After pointing out the difficulties of searching for a new publisher, he urged Taylor to fulfil his intention of asking Thirlwall's advice on the dialogue: "If he differs from me, I give up.¹ Also in this letter, Hare indicated a deletion from the "Romilly and Perceval" dialogue in the third volume: "I think Romilly can never have gone a circuit. At all events it is a mistake to make him speak of it so familiarly."²

Won over by the revision if not by the argument, Taylor exclaimed on 8 December that Hare had "removed entirely the Ground on which my obstinate Dislike had pasted itself, and I believe nothing now remains but that we put the new Edition to Press with all convenient Speed—Two more Letters have arrived from Landor, but they relate to the New Edition and need not cause any Delay in the Sheets at press".³

Although Hare had assured Landor that the third volume would come out by the end of January 1825, he had received neither all the Richelieu conversation nor all the insertions for the others. In self defence, he suggested to Landor in January that they stop printing until he ascertained how long the dialogues he had would extend and when others, "if necessary", might be added.⁴ As agent and publisher sorted out the accumulating additions, the author was becoming increasingly impatient at Taylor's failure to answer his letters. On 16 March 1825, Taylor finally alluded to Landor's annoyance over his failure to forward Mina's note, one of the misunderstandings which aroused Landor's wrath a month later. Taylor's excuse was hardly convincing:

But he alludes I suppose to the Note I rec^d from Mina which I would have gladly copied to show him that it is not the one he [1x] imagines but I cannot find it, & in prayer (II, 491) and the long one "Our Savior does not command us to pray. . . . The representative system is good only on this side of adoration" (II, 492-7). The note to which Hare refers is probably that on Middleton's disbelief in prayer. It does not appear in Y but was added in 1826, II, 493.

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/6.

² Ibid. While I am unable to locate the deletion, it probably occurred in III, 65-67, where Romilly and Perceval discuss criminal statutes. Contrary to Hare's statement, Romilly (1757-1818) did ride the Midland circuit (*DNB*).

³ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁴ Forster, ii. 149-50.

in the daily Expectation of seeing it turn up among the Papers which I am almost constantly hunting over for various Purposes, I have postponed writing to him—I will certainly lose no more Time, but will tell him the Contents put in a Letter tomorrow—Four of his Letters arrived this day—¹

Hare's undated answer warned Taylor to clarify matters to Landor as soon as possible :

Landor's mortification was that no notice had been taken of the two or three letters which he wrote on money matters. If you had written to explain the state of things to him, I doubt not he w^d have been perfectly satisfied. As it is, if you have not written on the subject to him already, I wish very much you would, and would explain the whole state of the case. Otherwise we very probably shall have some more angry letters shortly.²

He also alerted Taylor to prepare for still more additions for the first volume, among them an "extravagant panegyric on Hazlitt".³

On 25 March 1825, Taylor outlined the original financial agreement and explained to Hare why no money had been sent to Landor. Although he did not recollect that Landor ordered a certain sum to be paid to his bankers, he did remember that Landor abandoned his original intention of drawing on them for £40 or £50 in favour of having a share of the first-edition profits paid to his banker. However, this was only now becoming realized and it was uncertain whether any profits would be realized since they were again placed at venture by the reprint. He promised, however, to send some money to Landor's bankers for his account although he might have to apply for it again to cover Landor's share of the loss or the expense of the second edition. He also indicated that he still had not sent Mina's book and letter to Landor : " I wrote before I rec^d your last Letter to M^r Landor telling him of the arrival of Mina's Book & a Letter for him—and also giving him a Copy of that which came to me.—How shall I send the Book ? Will it work better to forward the Note by post under Cover ? "⁴

As work on the second edition crept forward, Hare sent to Taylor, in a letter postmarked 6 April [1825], Landor's eulogium

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL. Landor dedicated volume two to General Francesco Espoz y Mina (1781-1836), the Spanish guerrilla general who fought first against Napoleon and then against Ferdinand VII. See the article on him in *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, Europeo-Americana*, ed. Hijos de J. Espasa, xxii (Barcelona, 1924), 359-62.

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/48.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

on Hazlitt to be placed near the beginning of the Southey conversation, though he wished "it had never been written".¹ In a subsequent undated letter, he informed Taylor that he had erased a note in page 52 "which Landor has desired to be omitted and which might possibly have got him into a scrape". To fill this space he inserted the Hazlitt note on page 60.²

Taking Hare's earlier advice, Taylor had written Landor a casual letter expressing his regret for the omissions he had caused to be made in one of two of the dialogues and informing Landor that he had not sent the bankers the half profit from the first edition because these might be absorbed by the costs of the second.³ Unfortunately, this letter, undoubtedly written around 25 March, appears to have been Landor's first word that a second edition was in progress.

Urged on by Hazlitt, who arrived in Florence fresh from a quarrel with Taylor, Landor replied with blasts of fury that shattered Taylor. That of 1 April forbade Taylor to continue publishing a second edition, charged (on the authority of Hazlitt) that booksellers who take half the profit never take half the risk, and accused Taylor of withholding the balance of the first edition.⁴ The same day, Landor wrote Hare to repeat the charges and to enclose a copy of his letter to Taylor.⁵

Without allowing time for replies to these letters, Landor fired off another to Taylor on 4 April, which survives in an annotated draft of the copy Taylor made :

Copy of Mr Walter Savage Landors Letter received April 19 1825 addressed to Mr Taylor Waterloo Place London

Sir

It was not my Intention to have any further Intercourse with a person of your Conduct ; but I find on reading the note you transcribe that you have had the Assurance & Effrontery to creep into the Notice of Gen Mina under my Skirts & even to send him my Conversations not as coming from me according to Directions but as coming from *you* !! which whatever Risibility it has excited in others

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² Ibid. Since no notes were included in "Southey" in either 1824 or Y, the deleted note must have been an insertion Landor regretted. The note on Hazlitt appears in 1826, II, 59-61.

³ Forster, ii. 150.

⁴ Although the version of the letter cited by Blunden (p. 162) contains only the first point, it is clear from Taylor's letter of 19 April to Hare that he is replying to all three.

⁵ Forster, ii. 151.

affects me very differently. That same Insensibility to Decorum & Decency has induced you to withhold the Book and Note the General sent me, altho I gave you the Address long ago by which any parcel could reach me.

I shall not trust myself with the Expression of my Sentiments on either of these occasions—but I order you instantly to deliver to M^r Hare all the papers you may have of mine & to publish nothing more of them at your peril.

M^r Hare will remember the Day when you were first ordered to desist, on your second Neglect of Compliance with my Conditions. The first I need not remind you was your Violation of Trust & promise, in omitting what you had agreed to publish as assented to by M^r Southey & M^r Hare arbitrators proposed by yourself.

Your printing 1000 Copies of the 3rd Vol. & (as *you* state) only 750 of the two former will be the Subject of Discussion in another place.

Who will buy the 250 remaining after the publishers of the others have made up their Sets ; & of what Benefit will 250 be to this second Edt. which requires 1000 ? These are Questions asked *me* in Florence and they will be asked *you* in a Court of Justice.

Whatever further you may have to say for yourself must come thru my attorney M^r Landor of Rugeley—

W.S. Landor

Florence April 4 1825¹

At the bottom of the copy, Taylor noted that the letter had been received on 15 April and was sent to Hare on 19 April.²

Pouring out his anger at Taylor in his 11th of April letter to Southey, Landor made it clear that although he probably sanctioned a third volume, he did not sanction a second edition of the first two. He had resolved to require a different contract for the second edition and to stipulate that either Taylor print all admitted by Hare and Southey or nothing. Further, he had given Hare neither instructions nor authority to agree. He also made it clear that ten days had not diminished the intensity of his fury :

His first villainy in making me disappoint the person with whom I had agreed for the pictures, instigated me to throw my fourth volume, in its imperfect state, into the fire, and has cost me nine-tenths of my fame as a writer. His next villainy will entail perhaps a chancery suit on my children—for at its commencement I blow my brains out. . . . This cures me for ever, if I live, of writing what could be published ; . . .”³

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/65.

² *Ibid.*

³ Forster, ii. 153. On 28 May 1825 Southey sided with Landor : “ What vexes me is that you should destroy a single line, or forbear writing one because a book seller [1x] shews himself to be no better than what the spirit of trade makes him. That spirit is a vile one.— ” (Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, F. MS. 481).

With this self-destructive outburst, Landor's ire subsided. His victim, however, struggled to regain his composure as he justified himself to Hare in his letter of 19 April. He denied Landor's assertion (on Hazlitt's authority) that those booksellers who take half the profit never take half the risk. Except in the case of Landor's proposal to share the loss, they had always taken all the risk when profits were to be divided. He also denied the accusation of withholding the balance of the first edition, quoting an extract from his letter to Landor: "'We shall have no objection to pay the Half profits of the first Edition to your Banker, if it be that to which you allude. You can return us your Share of the Expenses of the 2nd Edition if it sh^d not succeed'—His Threat of a Prosecution is ridiculous, futile & unnecessary"¹

Equally absurd was Landor's notion that he had any sinister end or selfish view in printing the work or that he would have begun it without his concurrence: "As for his formal Discharge from proceeding with it, he mistakes my Character as much in thinking this necessary as in imputing to me a Want of Integrity. You can witness that I have not been over solicitious to be the Publisher either of the 1st or 2nd Editions—, & that so far from Profit being an Allurement I have repeatedly offered to give up the Work on Principle at various stages of its Progress, without making any Charge. . . ."² Although Landor may not have interdicted him from publishing the third volume because he feared Taylor would insist on some compensation, Taylor assured Hare that Landor need not fear being taken advantage of. "Many a Tradesman is less mercenary than some of those who arrogate to themselves ~~the~~ exclusively the Title of Gentlemen. I renounce him and all his Works with the greatest Willingness— . . ."³

While Taylor found the whole letter contemptible, on a reperusal his anger was changed into wonder that a man of any sense should have written it :

Perhaps the Presence of Hazlitt may help to explain the Mystery. I refused to advance him 50 £ before he went to the Continent, on his Proposal to write some Articles for the London Magazine respecting the Pictures in the Vatican & elsewhere ; & that inoffensive & much injured Man has possibly taken this Opportunity of being revenged. It is Evident from the whole Letter that Landor desired to find an Excuse for breaking with me.⁴

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

As he wrote this letter, Taylor received two more letters which he enclosed—a second letter from Landor and one from Walter Landor of Rugeley. “I hope this completes the Series.”¹

Hare’s reply, dated 20 April [1825], does him credit. He unhesitatingly offered Taylor both his sympathy and his support :

I am extremely grieved that you should have been exposed to such unmerited and unwarrantable insults as are contained in Landor’s letters to you, for which in great measure I must needs think myself personally answerable, as from the beginning I have almost forced you, though for many reasons much against your will, to engage in the publication of his Dialogues. . . . And as Landor has written in such language on the subject, allowe [sic] me to assure you that from beginning to end I have felt convinced that your conduct has been that of a thoroughly upright, liberal, and conscientious man. As one cannot tell what steps Landor in the violence of his passion may have recourse to, it may be as well that you should have this assurance from the only person acquainted with all the details of the matter, which, if it were necessary, I would readily confirm upon oath.²

The only subject on which Hare could find fault was that Taylor did not reply promptly last Christmas to Landor’s letters drawing on the profits of the first edition. However, this was no justification for Landor’s language— “. . . that scoundrel Hazlitt may have a finger in the pie [and] may have been irritating him against you, as he evidently has been against other people.”³ Hare was at a loss as to what to do about the second edition and third volume : “I cannot ask you to continue it, even if Landor should be brought to perceive his error : . . .”⁴

Hare’s 21st of April letter to Landor punctured his charges against Taylor one by one. Noting that the first two volumes sold despite what Hazlitt did to retard the sale, Hare reminded Landor that not only had he sent over both additions and corrections for the second edition as well as for a third volume, but

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL. In his letter of 18 April 1825, Walter Landor of Rugeley informed Taylor that Landor had instructed him to initiate legal proceedings if Taylor failed to pay the funds due him. “There certainly upon his statement does not appear to be any good reason for withholding this money.” Although the body of the letter is written in an unknown hand, it is signed by Walter Landor (Ryl. English MS. 1238/63).

² Ryl. English MS. 1238/24.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. Hessey also sided with Taylor. In an undated letter to Taylor, he wrote : “Landor’s Letter is a brutal thing and he is an unfeeling ungentlemanly brute to have written it . . . but I don’t feel disposed to give up what is printed and the money too—” (Ryl. English MS. 1238/72).

he implied neither hesitation about a new edition nor desire for a new contract. He also explained that Taylor had tried to withdraw from the second edition because of his dislike of the Middleton dialogue. Further, it was Southey, not Taylor, who wished the story in the Puntomichino deleted.¹ Thus he reduced the charge to Taylor's failure to reply to Landor's letters and to forward accounts, a failure for which he was far more to blame than was Taylor. As for Taylor's creeping into Mina's notice under Landor's skirts, he merely sent Mina a copy of the *Conversations* accompanied by an explanatory note. Mina deferred thanking Landor until he could send a copy of his own projected work.²

Hare wrote Taylor again, probably on 21 April, to assure him that he had written Landor and to clarify the issue of whether or not 1000 copies had been printed of the second edition and 1500 of the third volume. "I should like much also to hear of your having paid his half profit to his bankers: he says he is sure he never shall get a farthing from you, . . . Landor seems to have been much worried by having bought a few pictures, which he expected to pay for from the produce of his book, and it annoys him not to have fulfilled his engagement at the appointed time. This together with his irritability magnifying trifles into monsters has made him quite ill".³

Taylor replied to both Hare's letters in two separate letters dated 22 April. In the first, he tried to avoid accepting full responsibility for seeing that Landor was paid:

You were probably right in thinking that I sh^d have attended sooner to Landor's wish to have the Balance of his acc^t paid to his Banker. His first Intention & Notice was that he sh^d draw on us for a certain amount—Information I conveyed to Hessey, & all would have done well had that Bill been presented; but when it did not come & [1x] I understood he had made some alteration which enabled him to do without drawing I became as forgetful on the Subject as unfortunately I am in general on [1x] Methods of Account, for it has been my Habit ever since I entered into Business to leave all such Things to my Partner. . . . On this Occasion I thought little of the Necessity of paying Landors share earlier than was customary & Hessey never knew of it in Consequence of the Correspondence being wholly with me.⁴

However, Taylor assured Hare that not only had the balance of £89 17s. 8d. been paid to Landor's bankers, Herries and Com-

¹ Forster, ii. 155-6.

² Ibid. 156-7.

³ Ryl. English MS. 1238/55.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

pany, but also that Mr. Landor of Rugeley had been informed of the payment. Further, the accompanying statement was unusually minute because they feared both Landor's suspicious temper and a possible suit. As for the question of the number of copies printed, Taylor thought that "in the blindness of his Fury" Landor misinterpreted some information of his or Hare's. "The first Edition consisted of 750 Copies (I suppose the under-scoring of *you* ' (as *you* say) ' was intended to convey his Doubt of the Fact—a Meanness sadly unworthy of Landor.)—Of the 2nd Edit 1000 are printing : & of the 3rd Vol 1500 are provided, to allow 500 of those who have bought the 1st Edit to complete these Set [sic].—This arrangement appeared to be the most judicious that we could adopt, and you I think approved of it, as indeed your present Question shews."¹

The possible foundation for Landor's charge that he withheld Mina's book and note was the enclosed address to which Landor wished some books forwarded. Taylor closed his letter with a personal note of appreciation for Hare's "firm and friendly Support": "I ought not to have been afraid knowing your Disposition & Character, but somehow I never expect any high Degree of Virtue from my Fellow Creatures: this is the Consequence perhaps of my never having put it to the Test before—I always dreaded making the Experiment: hereafter I shall take a higher Standard."²

With these matters out of the way, a much calmer Taylor wrote a second letter on 22 April, in which he shifted some of the blame for Landor's explosion onto Hazlitt:

Your kind and generous letter has so completely restored me to my former Self that I no longer feel any Regret at what has happened on my own Account; & when your second communication, this Morning told me that Landor was really ill, I became sorry for him, and could from my Heart pity him for that Infirmary of Temper which he is subject to. With such an honest Iago as Hazlitt at his

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL. On 20 April, Taylor explained this arrangement to Walter Landor of Rugeley (Draft in Ryl. English MS. 1238/66). He assured the lawyer on 22 April that the balance due had been paid to Landor's bankers. To defend himself from Landor's charges, he quoted an extract from Hare's letter of 20 April (Draft in Ryl. English MS. 1238/67). On 26 April, Landor of Rugeley wrote that he hoped Landor had been acting under some strange mistake: "I believe a more honorable man does not exist, but he sometimes acts too hastily upon first impressions" (Ryl. English MS. 1238/68). ² Berg Coll., NYPL.

Elbow I don't wonder at the Consequences—when they quarrel as they are sure to do, and Hazlitt treats him as he has done others, the Re-action will be terrible, for Hazlitt will betray him unless he is deterred by a Consciousness of Landor's vast Superiority of Genius, and when the cherished Reptile stings him he will almost go mad.¹

Sorry that Landor had praised Hazlitt so highly, Taylor believed him vastly inferior to Landor: "What there is good in him may be said to be of the Devil. How different from the Genius of Landor—" ² Because he dared not risk his feelings and reputation, Taylor declined all future interest in Landor's works. However, he hoped that his acquaintance with Hare would not be terminated: "You have done me on a trying Occasion the most important service I ever rec^d and I cannot therefore regard you but as a Friend whose Esteem I trust never to forfeit.—" ³

These letters Hare forwarded to Landor on 24 April so that he could see how much pain he gave to "a most simple-hearted and amiable man", ⁴ and how futile had been the grounds of his indignation. Reminding Landor of the passage on the need for a good opinion of one's fellows in the conversation on the death of the grand duke, Hare commented: "The principle is truly a beautiful one, and I rejoice much in having been the means of leading Taylor towards it. O that you yourself would more regularly act according to it, and believe, when you see something that appears not quite right, that it may as often be a mistake as a misdeed!" ⁵

Even before receiving this letter, Landor had recovered enough to write a calm letter to Wordsworth on 24 April [1825] specifying segments of the *Conversations* which were not his:

The reason why I publish even one more volume is, because I find it requisite to declare that (p 279) the paragraph "You know" down to "gainers" is not mine—nor the conclusion of the following page "It has been well remarked" down to "decorous." Any man might say I did not write the whole book—besides the language and tone of thought are different from mine altogether. I was resolved then to collect as many pieces as were brought the nearest to a conclusion, & to finish and print them with a postscript.⁶

¹ Berg Coll., NYPL.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Forster, ii. 159.

⁵ Ibid. 160.

⁶ Super, "Landor's Letters to Wordsworth and Coleridge", ut sup. 81. In Y, Landor marked these passages as "not mine". See I, 279-80, 281.

On 25 April Hare also chided Taylor for his distrust of his fellowman : “ You must however have rated human virtue very low if, where no sacrifice was needed, no exertion was to be made, where the stretching out a hand was sufficient to assist a fellow creature in distress, you did not expect that even a hand would be stretched forth.”¹ Although he assured Taylor that he had explained to Landor all that Taylor had clarified and had sent him the statement of his account, Hare nevertheless advised Taylor to refer to him any correspondence from Walter Landor of Rugeley : “. . . at all events I can satisfy him, till we get some further account from the Savage.”²

An almost cheerful Taylor closed, on 29 April, the extant correspondence with his friend on this series of the *Imaginary Conversations* with a perceptive self analysis, a sincere tribute to Hare, and just praise for Landor :

It is the Dread of experiencing any Disappointment where I could have allowed myself to hope much that has contributed to keep my Expectations so very low, and which has actually caused this Service of yours to be the first, I might almost say & certainly the greatest I ever received from any Friend. . . .

Now that I have nothing to do with the book or the Author, I shall be able to enjoy the Reading of it more than ever. I am particularly pleased with that anecdote of the late Lord Manvers³ . . . I knew him well, & fancy I hear him speak the Words which are attributed to him—The dramatic Faculty by which this Impression is conveyed is sometimes very perfect in Landor.⁴

According to the expense statement enclosed by Taylor, at the time of the break, only eight sheets of the second edition of volume one had been printed at a cost of £31 6s. and only fifteen sheets of volume three, at a cost of £112 5s., the latter included an estimated charge of £5 for advertising. The total expense was £143 11s.⁵

Although the formal relations between Landor and Taylor ended, each regained and retained his respect for the other.⁶ However, because the stereotype of Landor raining a cloudburst of fury down upon his innocent victim has been overemphasized,

¹ Ryl. English MS. 1238/25.

² Ibid.

³ Berg Coll., NYPL. The anecdote on Charles-Herbert Pierrepont (1778-1816), Viscount Newark and Earl Manvers, appears in “ Duke de Richelieu, Sir Fire Coats, and Lady Glengrin ”, III, 201-8. See Burke's *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary* . . . (London, 1840), pp. 684-5.

⁴ Berg Coll., NYPL.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Forster, ii. 160.

he has received far too much blame for the rupture. Rather, the correspondence between Hare, Taylor, and Southey makes clear that Landor had been extremely patient with Taylor for almost two years. Not only had he seen extensive deletions made in his work, but he had also not received a sum due him equal to a quarter of his annual income.¹ For a man of his temper, the wonder is not that he finally exploded but that he retained his self control as long as he did.

Taylor emerges from the controversy as an extremely complex man—one whose basic distrust of mankind led him to place no confidence in their ability either to decide moral issues for themselves or to stand by a friend in need. This distrust and his trust in the soundness of his own taste and opinions were as much the cause of his censorship as was his fear of being prosecuted for publishing libel. While the tone of Landor's attack was unwarranted, the attack itself should not have been unexpected since both Hare and Southey warned Taylor from the beginning of the danger of rousing Landor's temper. Nor should some of the charges have been unexpected. Taylor went far beyond both the bounds of moral censorship in his objections to the *Conversations* and the bounds of good business relations in his failure to clarify the financial arrangements, to answer Landor's accumulating correspondence, and to pay the half profits to Landor's account. Further, the financial arrangement behind which Taylor hid allowed him to withhold the sum at a time when the firm of Taylor and Hessey was badly in need of funds. By June, the partnership was dissolved.²

Southey, too, emerges as a complex man whose distrust of his friend's judgement was almost as much of a threat to the *Conversations* as were Taylor's scruples. While he refused to sanction the deletion of passages specifically defended by Landor, he nevertheless felt justified in deleting those he considered dangerous or improper. Although the extent to which he authorized deletions not requested by Taylor cannot be known until Taylor's letters to him are found, both his and Hare's letters to Taylor indicate that he deleted sizeable portions of "General

¹ Super, *Walter Savage Landor*, pp. 183-4.

² H. E. Rollins, ed., *The Keats Circle* (Cambridge, 1948), I, cxlii.

Lascy and the Curate Merino ” and “ Cavaliere Puntomichino and Mr. Eusebius Talcranagh ” over Hare’s objections. Further, it is evident that at one point he was willing to omit the whole of “ Louis XIV and Father LaChaise ”.

It is Hare whose stature is greatly increased by his role in the controversy as evidenced by the fact that he received the sincere trust and approbation of both antagonists.¹ The diligence of his labour on the work of an author he never met, the firmness of his dedication to freedom of expression, and the dignity of his negotiations with two difficult personalities—all mark him as a noble man and a rare friend.

¹ Forster, ii. 160. On 28 November [1828], Hare informed Taylor that he was on the “ look out ” for a publisher for the fourth and fifth volumes because he thought Ainsworth behaved so impertinently he gave him leave to withdraw as publisher. After describing the terms he was offering, he wistfully asked Taylor’s help : “ I am afraid after the way in which he behaved to you, I must not venture to ask you : or that is the only plan which could give me full satisfaction. But perhaps on your recommendation M^r Duncan might undertake it : . . . ” In this letter, Hare also informed Taylor that Augustus Hare had obtained Landor’s leave to publish a selection of “ all the dialogues fit for female reading, omitting every thing in any way objectionable ” (Ryl. English MS. 1238). See also p. 446, n. 6 *sup.*