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التوثيق الالكتروني والميكروفيلم

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BOUYE

A
Ph. D. Thesis

A Double Vision
A Study Of
Disraeli's Trilogy

Submitted by
Sherine Fouad Mazloun

Under the Supervision
Of
Prof. Radwa M. Ashour

2002

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Abstract

The thesis offers a study of the double vision of Disraeli, which results from his dual position in the Victorian society both as part of the dominant order and as a marginalized other. This doubleness is rooted in his Jewish origin and his Anglo-centeredness. The thesis studies Disraeli's trilogy: *Coningsby or The New Generation*, *Sybil or The Two Nations* and *Tancred or The New Crusade* as representations of colonial discourse using the insights of modern literary theory especially postcolonial criticism. Though, considered an "Other" by the Victorians, Disraeli places himself literary on the side of the dominant and identifies himself as an English imperialist figure. The thesis, in four chapters together with an introduction and a conclusion, offers an analysis of Disraeli's double vision and its juxtaposed representation in the novels highlighting the multiple levels of signification involved in this representation.

Introduction

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Benjamin Disraeli was born on 21st December 1804. He was the eldest son and second of five children born to Issac D'Israeli and his wife Maria Basevi. The family was Jewish but the children were baptized in 1817. Benjamin did not attend Eton nor did he go to Cambridge or Oxford. In fact, he did not receive any university education. However, he read a lot of books from his father's library and attended three schools. As a young man, he traveled throughout Europe and the Middle East. The impact of this trip, which appealed to his love of adventure, continued to manifest itself throughout his career. He was supposed to take up a career in law but he decided to join politics. In 1825, he started a daily newspaper *The Representative* with John Murray, which lasted only a few months. During this period, he suffered from financial difficulties and was always in debt. His financial problems continued until he married Mary Anne Wyndham Lewis - a wealthy widow - in 1839. Rumors were that he married her for her money. However, his biographies stressed that they were very devoted to each other and that he was utterly devastated when she died.

Disraeli entered the House of Commons in 1837 as a Tory. His Maiden Speech - the first speech delivered by a new member - was a total disaster, which he ended by saying, "I sit down now but the time will come when you will hear me" (Maurois 68).

In his early parliamentary debates, he pointed out that neither the church nor the aristocracy was helping the people. In 1840, Parliament witnessed a number of debates on Chartism. Disraeli did not agree to the Chartists' demands but objected to the harsh punishment directed against the Chartist leaders. From 1841 to 1846 Disraeli associated himself with the Young England group. After the

disintegration of the Young England group, Disraeli had an opportunity to overthrow Peel on behalf of the Corn Laws and to set himself up as a Tory leader. Together with Lord George Bentinck, he became the leader of the protectionist group - a sub group in the Tory party. In 1852, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Derby ministry. Gladstone criticized his presentation of his first budget. Hence, an era of opposition between the two started. Disraeli served as a Chancellor of the Exchequer in two other subsequent Derby ministries in 1858 and 1866. In 1867, Disraeli put forward the second Reform Bill and established the Tory party as the supporter of the working classes. In 1868, he formed his first ministry, which lasted for about a year and a half. In 1874, he formed his second ministry, which lasted until he resigned in 1880 and became leader of the opposition. During this period, in 1878, he was raised to the House of Lords as Earl of Beaconsfield.

Disraeli's second ministry passed a number of important legislations and reacted to a number of international events. The most important of these events were the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876, which gave prominence to the Eastern question - the decaying Ottoman Empire and the fate of its possessions. There was also the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, which ended in the Treaty of Adrian Pole in 1878 and was followed by the Congress of Berlin where Disraeli and his Foreign Minister Salisbury won "peace with honor" (Maurois 322). The Congress of Berlin was Disraeli's greatest triumph in foreign policy for he was able to counter Russo-phobia and to regulate among other European powers the growing scramble for Africa. His second triumph in foreign policy was the purchase of the