

## ABSTRACT

UNDERWOOD, JONATHAN ALLEN. From *empire to Empire: Benjamin Disraeli and the Formalization of the British Imperial Social Structure*. (Under the direction of Dr. David Gilmartin.)

Throughout the last century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's influence and reputation as an imperialist has been praised, demonized, and denied. Though always a target of considerable political criticism, Disraeli's advancement and, some might even say, invention of British imperial nationalism was celebrated by contemporary politicians, academics, and the general population who considered him "inextricably entwined" with the notion of empire. However, twentieth century historiography largely downplayed and discounted Disraeli's influence on late nineteenth century imperial British expansion by focusing not on imperialism as an ideology, but as a phenomenon of economics and power; aligning its genesis with the Industrial Revolution, and the socio-economic theories of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Atkinson Hobson. But, since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, which reevaluated the cultural and social relationships between the East and the West, Disraeli's impact on Britain's colonial century has yet again come to the forefront of imperial British historiography. Disraeli's rhetoric and political acumen regarding Britain's eastern empire directly (through the proclamation of Victoria's title Empress of India in 1876) and indirectly (through his assertion of Conservative Principles at the Crystal Palace in 1872) established a significant hierarchical social structure and consciousness that still pervades British culture today.

**From *empire* to *Empire*:  
Benjamin Disraeli and the Formalization of the British Imperial Social Structure**

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

For Coco—the greatest historian I have ever known.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Jonathan Allen Underwood, a native of Sanford, North Carolina, is the eldest son of Steven and Melanie Underwood. He has one younger brother, David. Underwood obtained his high school diploma in 1999 from Lee County High School. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in history and classical studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2003. If all goes well Underwood will obtain his Master of Arts degree in European History (with a minor in Public History) from North Carolina State University in December 2006. Currently, Underwood is the director of the Stanly County Historic Preservation Commission and Museum in Albemarle, North Carolina. He also has three cats; Jackson, Spot, and Finnegan.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis has been a long time coming, but it *is* here. As I sit typing, a flood of memories gush to mind—from my early days of wild enthusiasm; convinced that my original idea would totally reshape post-imperial philosophy, to wondering whether anything I wrote was worth any more than kindling, then back to the euphoric state of knowing that my work *will* shape the course of historiographic thought. Wow. Amidst all that, life happened—hard.

Let me begin by explaining that thus far, my first year of graduate school was the worst year of my life. It all started as my family stood in line in the Albany Airport to fly home from my brother's Make-a-Wish trip. As I checked my cell phone messages, we received word that Granddaddy had died. Within a couple of weeks, I began graduate school and a new job in the Archives at State. On my first day in the Archives I learned that the gentleman who recommended me for hire, Bernie McTeague, had died the previous afternoon in his office. A couple of months later, falling faster and faster behind schedule on a paper concerning the diplomatic history of the Abyssinian Crisis, my dear "grandmother" Gertie died of cancer. I took an incomplete in diplomatic history—not to be completed for nearly two years. That January, I sat with my grandmother, Coco, as she slipped away—she was my best friend. A month later, dear Ms. McGee, another "grandmother," passed. A month after that, the oncology doctors at UNC informed my family that my brother's leukemia had returned and that he would probably have to have a bone marrow

transplant in the summer. Of course, I had already signed up to spend the summer as an intern in upstate New York. Then there was the lying, cheating ex-girlfriend...

I haven't told this story for sympathy, but rather to illustrate that I only kept my sanity thanks to a few providentially placed individuals.

Despite all that was whirling around me as graduate school started, I could not have asked for a better group of friends than the ones I met as school began. Even though I repeatedly retreated into my own little world of self-doubt, Coleman, Matthew, and Laura were always there to see me through. I will never forget our long nights of philosophical discussion at Mitch's—discussions that, for time enough, allowed me to daydream about other things—like how Southern culture saved civilization, or how the Scottish Enlightenment shaped Southern culture so it could save civilization, or how Eastern European diplomacy during the Cold War saved the lessons of the Scottish Enlightenment, and thus Southern culture, and civilization from nuclear annihilation. Of course, everything can be traced back to Roman imperialism. Well, it made sense at Mitch's.

Then, there were the “Archive people.” I never expected to have as much fun in a dank, dusty basement as I did in the SCRC of D.H. Hill Library. And truly, where else in the world can you find a librarian action figure and an obtusely shaped cloth bat filled with candy in the same place. Thank you Elizabeth, Valerie, Keith, Jason, Erin, Stephanie, Mary, Pat, Lois, Mick, Dawne, Jamie, Todd, Kevin, Linda, Amy, Steve, especially Robert (and Karrie), and yes, even Reed for being there.

When I first visited NC State in the summer of 2003, the only professor on my schedule I could find was Dr. DeGrand. I peered into his office and he quickly

welcomed me in. We spoke for probably less than a half hour, but within five minutes I was convinced I would be leaving for Oxford or Harvard after I finished my masters at State. His faith in me and his commitment to my education assured me that I had indeed chosen the right school. I found just as much enthusiasm in Professors Kim, Mitchell, Zonderman, Carlton, Kalinga, Mobley, and of course, Norene.

Though all my professors have been by my side, I must say that Dr. Gilmartin has weathered every storm with me. He has been my mentor, my therapist, and my friend. There is no telling how many times I entered his office ready to give up, only to chat for twenty minutes and leave knowing I was about to conquer the world. Thank you.

Pat, Andy, Sarah, Matthew, Ashley U., Pam, Gary, Ashley B. (et al), and Smokey—we've been there and back, haven't we? From paintball wars to barn raisings, from English class to Roaring Gap. You are the greatest family ever, and I love you all.

And Jennifer, thank you for showing up when I needed you most. You are indeed *my Ms. Right*.

Of course, there are Mom, Dad, and Alex. I will never be able to express to you how much I love you and how much you have inspired my life. Thank you for teaching me that all things are possible.

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# CHAPTER 1

## TOUCHING THE IMAGINATION OF NATIONS

### **The Legacy of Benjamin Disraeli**

Throughout the last century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's influence and reputation as an imperialist has been praised, demonized, and denied. Though always a target of considerable political criticism, Disraeli's advancement and, some might even say, invention of British imperial nationalism was celebrated by contemporary politicians, academics, and the general population who considered him "inextricably entwined" with the notion of empire.<sup>1</sup> However, twentieth century historiography largely downplayed and discounted Disraeli's influence on late nineteenth century imperial British expansion by focusing not on imperialism as an ideology, but as a phenomenon of economics and power; aligning its genesis with the Industrial Revolution, and the socio-economic theories of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Atkinson Hobson.

A string of economic historians such as Carl Bodelsen, Richard Koebner, and Helmut Schmidt have critiqued Disraeli's imperialism as opportunistic and largely rhetorical, capable of satisfying little more than popular jingoistic sentiment. The impact of modern economic history, coupled with the negative etymological metamorphosis of the word "empire" during the twentieth century, has further marginalized Disraeli's role as Britain's imperial architect. Indeed, by the 1960s, a decade of decolonization, Disraeli's most celebrated biographer of the time, Robert

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<sup>1</sup> C.C. Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996) 4-5.

Blake, paid little more than a fleeting glance to his imperialism, doubtlessly taking into account the subject's unpopularity. Yet few individuals remain as iconically associated with Britain's nineteenth century imperial development as Disraeli, a fact that must be credited to the persistence of his "rhetorical" imperial social constructs, epitomized by the manifestation of a formalized British imperial order in India and in Britain during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.

Since the publication of Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978, which reevaluated the cultural and social relationships between the East and the West, Disraeli's impact on Britain's colonial century has yet again come to the forefront of imperial British historiography. Modern post-colonial studies, such as Orientalism, push "past the conventional conception of imperial power as a material phenomenon"...to illustrate the power of "cultural representations" that shaped the ideology and self-awareness of colonizer and colonized; mindsets and psychology that survived the political collapse of Britain's Empire following World War II.<sup>2</sup> Said's work maintains that through centuries of political and social interaction, European civilization has defined itself by its contrast to the East. The relationship between East and West, then, is an amalgamation of discourses that have led to the creation of "realities," political and social, accepted by Occident and Orient alike, based on perceptions of power and domination. Similarly, Disraeli's rhetoric and political acumen regarding Britain's eastern empire directly and indirectly established a significant hierarchical social structure and consciousness that still pervades British culture today.

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<sup>2</sup> Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24 (September 1996): 347.

Building upon Said's work by exploring the development of social acceptance and integration of Eastern values in British society, David Cannadine states British hegemony over the East was based in the conception of the universality of hierarchy. For Britain, the existence of hierarchy in Asia during the expansion of mid-nineteenth century imperialism blended nicely with the existence of hierarchy on the British Isles, ultimately leading to a "natural" extension of British domination over much of Asia. Though at times termed to be a politically anachronistic paradigm, Britain's extension of authority, endorsed by Disraeli, promoted a rural, stratified, and medieval notion of English society, which was in turn legitimized, formalized, and sanctified through the successful expansion, culturally and politically, of Britain's empire. Cannadine states that the image of the empire as a "layered, rural, traditional, and organic society...was more than an image, being in fact a social construct that gained coherence and credibility from a whole range of imperial institutions and practices," and has proved to be "more important and persuasive than has generally been recognized."<sup>3</sup> Disraeli led the creation of that social image, an image that remains potently symbolic of the Empire.

Interestingly, questions of rhetoric and reality, similar to those posed by Said and Cannadine, were already present during the middle and late nineteenth century concerning the relationships between Britain and her dominions. Noted imperial historian and Disraelian contemporary, Sir John Seeley, wrote "bombastic imperialists," like Disraeli, "were lost in [the] wonder and ecstasy [of the empire's] dimensions, and [in] the energy and heroism which presumably have gone [into] the

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<sup>3</sup> David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xix-xx.

making of it.”<sup>4</sup> The “bombastic school,” as defined by Seeley in his 1883 publication The Expansion of England, “advocate[d] the maintenance of [the empire] as a point of honor or sentiment.”<sup>5</sup> Some believed this rhetoric was merely a cover for the empire’s unpleasant economic realities. Those ascribed to the “pessimistic school” perceived the empire as “useless and burdensome, a kind of excrescence upon England...”<sup>6</sup> Seeley’s view was hardly so negative. But the empire that mattered to him was the white empire of “Greater Britain.” Seeley argued Britons across the globe could, and should, join into an “ethnological unity” defined by “race, religion, and interest.”<sup>7</sup> Seeley’s interpretation of “ethnological unity” must be acknowledged, however, as white, Protestant, and culturally English.

Such views were gaining credence when Seeley published his best selling history of imperialism in 1883. The idea of a “Greater Britain,” a phrase coined by Sir Charles Dilke, a mid-century economic theorist, in the 1860s to describe Britain’s far-flung race of English Protestant colonizers, particularly in Canada and Australasia, had been at the center of political and philosophical discussions for the better part of the century. Initial opponents of such ideological colonialism included philosophical economists like Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham who argued for the severance of political ties between Britain and her colonies on economic grounds. But, despite the rebellion and loss of the American colonies<sup>8</sup>, neither Smith’s

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<sup>4</sup> J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, ed. John Gross (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 231.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16.

<sup>8</sup> The loss of the thirteen American colonies was also attributed (by anti-imperialists then, and now by Americans nationwide) to the denied liberties and rights of the British colonists via restrictive economic policies.

assertion that Britain derived “nothing but loss” from her colonies, nor Bentham’s widely popular pamphlet entitled *Emancipate Your Colonies*, could persuade a growing sect of colonial reformers, like Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Sir William Molesworth, and Lord Durham from proposing regulated, systematic colonization and responsible colonial government. The ideology of “radicals” like Wakefield, Molesworth, and Durham envisioned the importance of colonies as outlets for Britain’s surplus population. Coupled with a refinement of colonial administration through the grant of civil liberty and self-administration, British colonies could, the Reformers argued, serve to relieve growing social pressures at home (brought about by a growing population) and in the colonies (brought about by reactionary measures following the loss of the American colonies).<sup>9</sup>

The ideology of both the separatists and reformers was nationalistic. The “Little Englanders,” as the separatists came to be known, continued to argue that colonies would handicap the nation’s domestic economic initiatives for industrialization and overreach any strategic advantage Britain had militarily in Europe and the world. However, where separatists advocated free trade for the British Isles, and labeled colonies as useless and burdensome to the nation’s home economy, reformers perceived lands such as Canada and Australia to be extensions of the British nation, capable of absorbing a surplus population and ripe for economically beneficial development. Those “white” colonies were to be afforded the same political and economic protection and rights found within the political institutions of the Isles themselves, a revision of tactics used in America and a theme

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<sup>9</sup> Carl A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (London: Scandinavian University Books, 1960), 16-17.

Seeley carried forth in his Cambridge lectures by extolling the sustenance of Greater Britain as significant to the maturation and expansion of the English Constitution.<sup>10</sup>

By the middle of the century the reformers' cries included the basic nationalistic tenets popular throughout Europe, the political unification of nations via race and language. Seeley popularized the sentiment best by concluding

...Greater Britain is not in the ordinary sense an Empire at all. Looking at the colonial part of it alone, we see a natural growth, a mere normal extension of the English race into other lands...It creates not properly an Empire, but only a very large state.<sup>11</sup>

Colonial separatists found it increasingly difficult to promote their brand of economic philosophy and insular nationalism over a familial relationship. Sir Charles Dilke, for example, fell victim to the complexities surrounding a growing national identity and the maintenance of economic responsibility. Despite the colonization Dilke perceived as economically detrimental, he was forced to admit the successful extent of Britain's colonizing endeavors. "The English race," Dilke wrote, "[has been offered] the moral dictatorship of the globe, by ruling mankind through Saxon institutions and the English tongue."<sup>12</sup> Dilke's statement was a reference to Britain's white settlement colonies and his attitude, shared by many, developed into a notion of cultural superiority. Coupled with a growing sense of paternal responsibility to "lesser races," Britain's success in constructing Greater Britain evolved into a social mission bound to structure the world on a hierarchically Anglo-Saxon model.

The infrastructure of empire, encompassed by the ideology of Greater Britain, was acknowledged by reformers and separatists alike; but the idea remained muddy

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<sup>10</sup> Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 233.

<sup>12</sup> Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 69.

and only a half-hearted affair throughout much of the nineteenth century. While interested in the economic advantages of trade monopolies and tariffs, liberal and conservative politicians, who slowly banded themselves into anti-imperial and pro-imperial sects respectively, rarely conceived of a formal imperial construct aligned with Dilke or Seeley's idea of Greater Britain, let alone the formalized expansion of British interests into lands populated by complex, non-Anglo peoples. And yet, Britain already ruled one large, racially different possession—India.

The British government deliberately avoided direct rule in India, prior to 1858, by administering India through the East India Company. Indeed, many considered India, with its caste system and “primeval” Eastern habits, to be an anachronism as a British “colony.” Seeley excluded Britain's dominion over the native peoples of India and the Middle East from his idealic empire, founded in nationalism and racial unification.<sup>13</sup> In his lectures he stated that India's place in the Empire was only made possible by the discord sown among its peoples for the benefit of British rule: “...if by any process the population [of India] should be welded into a single nationality...then I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion, I say we ought to cease at once to hope for it.”<sup>14</sup> India did not fit into the “Greater Britain” of Empire. Yet, other views were already developing.

Seeley's statement and interpretation was merely one side of the coin. David Cannadine states that two distinct ideologies of governance emerged during the nineteenth century; one, in line with Seeley's, saw little alternative to the subjugation of native peoples under British rule, as “native regimes and hierarchies” were equally

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<sup>13</sup> Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 19-20.

<sup>14</sup> Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 184.

“backward...and corrupt.”<sup>15</sup> In short, those cultures were un-English. In contrast, the other ideal, aligned with the “chief ambition of many settlers” and “policy makers,” was to recognize native governance as “traditional and organic...[a part of the] time hallowed social relations...that the Industrial Revolution was threatening (or destroying) in Britain,” therefore demanding its existence to be “cherished, preserved, and nurtured...”<sup>16</sup>

In time, and despite Seeley’s caveat regarding ethnic and religious conquests, particularly in India, British politics and growing popular opinion gradually accepted the colonized “white” nations as well as subjugated societies as a part of the metropolis, despite distance, locale, creed, or economic influences because of the growing awareness (or invention of similarity) between native hierarchy and British hierarchy. The association between metropolis and periphery was made clearer, over time and particularly in India, by the alignment of English conceptions of hierarchy and authority based on “assumptions” of native social gradation.<sup>17</sup> Disraeli noted the imperial mood in his Crystal Palace speech, delivered in June of 1872: “I find a rising opinion in the country sympathising with our tenets<sup>18</sup>, and [the people are] prepared, I believe, if the opportunity offers, to uphold them until they prevail.”<sup>19</sup> By capitalizing upon the varying degrees of social interpretation and acceptance theorized throughout the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, Disraeli was able to tie those ideologies into a national mission (and political platform), serving to

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<sup>15</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> The maintenance of the monarchy, the peerage, the Church, and the Empire.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Selected speeches of the late Right Honourable the Earl of Beaconsfield*, ed. T.E. Kebbel (London: Longmans Press, 1882), 534.



unite Britons across the globe and establish an emerging British culture. Trade and economic mechanisms were bolstered by playing upon popular conceptions of English history, values, and the fascination of Western civilization with the exotica of the East, particularly for the British, in India. Likewise, he legitimized Britain's "outsider's" regime into an "insider's" reign by vesting Queen Victoria with the imperial crown of India, cementing his multifaceted vision of empire with the legitimacy of the British Crown.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Refinement of a New Imperialism**

Considering the expansion of British dominion economically and politically over much of North America, Australasia, and India, domestic politics at Westminster were bound to eventually encompass a growing imperial mantle. Disraeli and imperialism's association with the Conservative Tory party was initiated by an 1846 rebellion against then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel. Peel's administration of colonial economics advocating free trade favorably affected the growth of industrial technology and output, but often at the expense of the working classes, accentuating the gross inequalities and social unrest of the Industrial Revolution. In response to the perceived degradation of traditional hierarchically paternal responsibility, a younger generation of Tories, of which Disraeli was a member, romantically assimilated themselves into a sect called "Young England." The group supported the ideology of a renaissance in "medieval feudalism," acknowledging the "reciprocal

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<sup>20</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165.

obligations between rich and poor.”<sup>21</sup> The eventual success of Young England’s romantic rhetoric splintered the Tory party and, thanks largely to Disraeli, drove Peel from office. Though weakened by a migration of many party members to the Liberal side of the aisle, the Tory party was able throughout the 1850s and 1860s to sustain and finesse its platform of conservative principles, still courting the notion of a feudal renaissance that would reconcile progressing industrialization with pre-industrial agrarian values.

Disraeli’s eventual assumption of the party’s control in the 1860s initiated a new age of Conservative ideology, linked to popular notions of medieval romanticism. “We associate the Monarchy,” Disraeli noted, “with the ideas which it represents—the majesty of law, the administration of justice, the fountain of mercy and of honour.”<sup>22</sup> Disraeli began shaping the Tory agenda in such a way that its popularity was ensured by supporting populist trends, foreign and domestic, political and economic. Accordingly, in the face of rising domestic frustration over suffrage and a crippling depression, Disraeli believed “...a show of aggression, if free from risk, would be popular, and that if it were to symbolize a renewal of past imperial splendour it would serve as a focus for the energies of the whole nation and provide a foundation for national unity more compelling than any other that could be devised at the time.”<sup>23</sup> An imperial association, Disraeli believed, would serve the purpose of furthering his domestic policies and revitalize the Conservative Party.

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<sup>21</sup> T.A. Jenkins, *Disraeli and Victorian Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1996), 21.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Selected speeches*, 525.

<sup>23</sup> Freda Harcourt, “Disraeli’s Imperialism, 1866-1868: A Question of Timing,” *The Historical Journal* 23, (March 1980): 88.

In 1867 the Abyssinian Emperor Theodore's imprisonment of British diplomats signaled the opportune moment for an imperialistic reprisal. The Earl of Derby's recently elected administration, with Disraeli at its helm in the Commons, was able to orchestrate a daring rescue mission onto the African horn. The successful show of arms and rescue of British subjects proved to be a widely popular move. Though the expedition ended without any lasting physical gain, its emotional significance reinforced the nation's nationalist spirit, especially among the poor and working classes.<sup>24</sup> It was by no chance of fate that at the same time of the Abyssinian expedition, Disraeli was pushing through Parliament a Tory sponsored Reform Bill, more than doubling a grateful electorate. For William Gladstone and his anti-imperialist liberal minority, the passage of the bill and successful expedition into Africa were a tremendous embarrassment, especially since the Liberal Reform Bill had failed to pass just a few months before.

In addition to the African victory and Reform Bill coup, Disraeli and the Conservatives were then able to exploit the Liberal government's poor handling of the Maori uprising in New Zealand between 1869 and 1870. Gladstone's colonial secretary, Lord Granville, brashly informed the British citizens of New Zealand, who were facing a revolt of the local Maori tribe, to deal with the problem themselves. Conservatives in the Commons and the press alleged that Gladstone's administration was separatist and attempting to relinquish Britain's dominion over the islands. During the scandal Disraeli's interest in the ideology of the imperialists advocating intervention and imperial preservation peaked, further strengthening a connection between the older Conservative ideology of monarchical preservation and empire, a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 101.

course bound to invoke nationalistic emotions from the people.<sup>25</sup> Shortly thereafter, by capitalizing on Gladstone's misadventure, Disraeli promoted a policy of imperial maintenance, outlining the association of the Crown with Britain's dominions, particularly India.

Disraeli's association with the "New Imperialism" is often linked to his pronouncement of Conservative principles in a speech delivered at the Crystal Palace in June of 1872. The Crystal Palace speech outlined what Disraeli heralded as the three basic principles of the Conservative party: the maintenance of Britain's historic traditions and institutions, the maintenance of the "Empire of England," and the elevation of the condition of the people.<sup>26</sup> Disraeli's pronouncement achieved two significant goals by first, reconfiguring a political platform for the Conservative party, and secondly, aligning Conservatism with the maintenance and expansion of Britain's growing empire. The Crystal Palace speech was a successful rhetorical move, key to the revival of Conservatism's association with stability and now, empire.

Within domestic British politics Disraeli's policies of expansion, however "bombastic," had now "eclipsed" the Little England ideology of William Gladstone and the Liberals, as even theorists like Seeley were now aware.<sup>27</sup> As a respected academic, Seeley's endorsement of imperial consolidation, coupled with the Conservative party's political success and popularity, further legitimized Disraeli's political agenda. By the time Seeley published The Expansion of England the ideology of the reformers had morphed from a philosophical dialogue into an

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<sup>25</sup> Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 120.

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Selected speeches*, 528, 531, 534.

<sup>27</sup> Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of the New Imperialism*, 5.

imperialistic agenda, proposing the exploration (and eventual exploitation) of new found lands, particularly in Africa, canvassed under the veil of civilizing missions and renewed religiosity. The new imperialism promoted an integration of “old empire” economics with cultural expansion and moral responsibility towards “lesser” races. The “radical” ideology of Wakefield, Molesworth, and Durham that focused on Britain’s ills, such as the economic depression of the 1860s, the parallel problems of rapid industrialization and poor urban conditions, and poor diplomatic relations with much of the world, was now linked to a focus on solutions involving a great movement of people, material, and wealth across the globe as a foundation for Disraeli’s new imperialism. Imperial expansion and propagation then, whether used as a political mechanism or genuine mode of domestic reform, was now linked to improving the social conditions of all Britons, if through nothing more than turning their attention away from the troubles at home.

For nearly forty years, Seeley’s interpretation of Britain’s colonial heritage and advancement, including Disraeli’s political imperialism, remained the keystone of British imperial history. Indeed the growth of the Empire, particularly following the proclamation of Victoria’s imperial domain over India, steadily reinforced a new image of British power; not merely internationally, but domestically. Britain’s imperial persona, further defined by traditional and medieval notions of hierarchy instituted by Disraeli through the creation of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and the Order of the Indian Empire, remained potently representative of Britain’s own self-image.<sup>28</sup> Imperialism, through its invented association with the organic origins of the nation, became closely interconnected with an image of the history of Britain.

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<sup>28</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 23-24.

But, the association and sociological effects could not have existed without Britain's colonial and imperial incursion into India, beginning with the arrival of the East India Company in 1600 and culminating with the Royal Titles Act in 1877. Though India had been viewed by many (including Seeley) as an anachronism within the larger structure of British imperialism, it came to assume a central place in Disraeli's imperial vision.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA**

#### **The East India Company**

Disraeli used historical precedence to integrate India into a new imperial order. The manipulation of the political and constitutional genealogy of Britain's Indian adventure, undertaken by the British establishment, economic theorists, and historians, allowed Disraeli to capitalize upon what he claimed was an evolutionary path towards Britain's imperial destiny. That path culminated with a renewed sense of responsibility towards the administration of India following the mutiny of 1857, and was compatible with an already established imperial order of white settlement colonies. In time, Disraeli was able to use that link, beyond its initial purpose of political administration, to support his imperial program of consolidation by demonstrating the historic and social ties that had bound Britain and India since the seventeenth century.

That history began in 1600 when Queen Elizabeth I granted a royal charter to the East India Company for the purpose of organizing and authorizing trade to the East Indies. The charter stated that the Company had the exclusive privilege to transact political and economic business with any native prince, thereby instituting in the Company a vague diplomatic mission to establish a political and economic relationship on behalf of the Crown of England. The Company was "democratically" administered by annually elected governors and directors, though the elections had

more to do with an individual's social prominence than of any merited administrative ability. Elizabeth's successor, James I, revised the Company's charter and granted those "elected" officials limited legislative powers to establish "lawes" inside the hierarchy of English merchants, manufacturers, and shippers.

By 1672, the Company was allowed to administer "unrestricted power of command, government, and justice" within all of Madras, a trading hub in the Circars, purchased by the Company in 1611.<sup>29</sup> In 1685 James II incorporated Madras, as well as the Company's trading hubs of Bombay and eventually Calcutta, as English towns that included a mayor, aldermen, burgesses, town clerks, and town recorders.<sup>30</sup> Though James II reigned for only three years the ramifications of his incorporation of these Indian cities would drastically shape the next three hundred years of British imperial history by further legitimizing the political link between the British monarch, the British government, and India.

That assumption of municipal and judicial authority granted by James II established an informal imperial mandate by vesting the Company with increased trading rights and political administrative authority on behalf of the British monarch. However, the mixture of commercialism and political ascendancy in the hands of a private firm frequently resorted in bribery, judicial misconduct, and the pillage of the local population. Alexander Hamilton, a Scottish sea captain, noted such abuses in his book A New Account of the East Indies in 1727:

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur Berriedale Keith, *A Constitutional History of India: 1600-1935* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1926), 23.

<sup>30</sup> W.A.J. Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History [British Period]* (London: Curzon Press, 1926), 36.



They are, or were a Corporation<sup>31</sup>, and had a Mayor and Aldermen to be chosen by the free burghers of the Town; but that scurvy way is grown obsolete, and the Governor and his Council or party fix the choice...In smaller matters, where the [court] case, on both sides, is but weakly supported by money, then the Court acts judiciously, according to their conscience and knowledge, but often against Law and Reason...<sup>32</sup>

The corruption described by Hamilton was to be a hallmark of the Company until its dying day. However, those vices were relative to the era, and only significantly remarkable because of the unique relationship between the Company and the British government, and in their later use (by Whig historians) to justify the dissolution of the Company and legitimize the British government's ultimate assumption of formal authority following the revolts of 1857.<sup>33</sup>

Still, the Company's charter was successively amended in 1687, 1726, and 1753 in an attempt to organize the venture into a semi-honest commercial vocation, at least for the sake of its outward appearance. In response to the amendments, justices of the peace were appointed and procedures like those used in English courts were instituted for trials and lawsuits, as well as for the election of mayors, aldermen, and judges.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, several internal investigations and even Parliamentary interventions did little to stem the tide of commercial and judicial malpractice because the abuse monetarily benefited British political interests. Because of the Company's independence from formal governmental control, its ability to make profits in a foreign land was largely unchecked by typical British regulations and mores. The Company's shareholders and directors, who were typically men of

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<sup>31</sup> Hamilton is speaking of Madras.

<sup>32</sup> Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History*, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History*, 40-41.

wealth, were also members of Parliament, and therefore disinclined to regulate their own income, particularly since India, unlike America or Australia, was a non-white country.

Though the economic conventions of the Company remained largely unbridled, issues of appropriate administration and governance assumed new significance when the Company began acquiring a large territorial empire, the most notable acquisition being the principality of Bengal, obtained following the defeat of the French-allied Nawab at Plassey in 1757. The victory at Plassey transferred a remarkable amount of authority, economic and political, to the Company's employees, particularly Robert Clive, the mastermind of the Nawab's defeat. Clive's ascendancy to the right of diwani, or tax collection, illustrated a unique political usurpation of the Mughal Empire's power even while the Company theoretically accepted Mughal sovereign authority.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Clive's administrative control now covered an area larger than England and in order to govern he had to do so under the fiction that "the Company had acquired no sovereign rights, and that their administration was within, and not imposed over and above, the Mughal constitution."<sup>36</sup> Clive's control over Bengal did not illustrate a deliberate plan of imperial domination. Neither the Company's charter nor its London based administrators had ever conceived of landed expansion and foreign governance. But, Clive and other Company employees continued to engage in practices of blatant exploitation, plundering the wealth of the local population and ruling over them with

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<sup>35</sup> Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1993), 90.

<sup>36</sup> Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History*, 46.

the support of the Company's growing armies.<sup>37</sup> By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the East India Company's "rule" throughout much of India was theoretically based on English Common Law, though in practice the Company's exercise of authority, invented by Clive, remained erratic, often abused, and void of any moral obligation.<sup>38</sup>

### Reform

Famed political theorist Edmund Burke noted in 1782 that the "Interest of our Empire is scarcely to be reconciled to the Interest of our Constitution."<sup>39</sup> Much to the "genuine bewilderment" of his contemporaries, Burke continuously sought the judicial, pecuniary, and humanitarian reform of the East India Company and warned that "the wrongs done to humanity in the eastern world, shall be avenged on those who have inflicted them..."<sup>40</sup> Burke's caveat regarded the Company's abuse, under Clive's administration, of commercial "alliances" held among several native princes who were ousted by the Company's native army, either for their protests against the Company or simply for their territory and wealth. Burke's call for reform was also subliminally aimed at the British establishment, whose political mechanisms he believed were corrupted by an uninspired aristocracy and an amoral merchant class, many of whom made their "unscrupulous" fortunes in India. Burke believed that by exposing the financial corruption of the Company, its ambivalence towards the

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<sup>37</sup> Lawson, *The East India Company*, 91.

<sup>38</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 116.

<sup>39</sup> Edmund Burke, *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters*, ed. David Bromwich (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

welfare of the Indian people, and its devious relationship with Parliament he could illustrate the need for reform within the British political establishment. The locus for Burke's accusations, however, was leveled most directly at two men: Robert Clive and Warren Hastings.

In 1772, at the behest of Burke, Parliament began to question the ability of the Company, particularly under Clive's watch, to govern so much territory. The Company's annexation of Bengal in 1757 had radically transformed the nature of the Company from a commercial venture into a governing agency the ramifications of which raised serious questions of political ethics, social responsibility, and economic feasibility. Despite the integration of English law with the rhetoric of private commercialism, the East India Company continued, in Burke's view, to abuse its financial privileges inside India, by "[subverting] the laws, rights, and liberties [of the people of India]..."<sup>41</sup>, as well at the British nation, a particularly problematic situation considering the Company's assumption of political governance.<sup>42</sup>

Parliament convened a Revenue Committee in 1772, chaired by Warren Hastings, to investigate fifty years of debts incurred by the Company, and principally those incurred under Clive. Hastings' success in streamlining policy and cleaning up the administrative and judicial corruption made him popular in Parliament. Hastings followed Clive as governor-general in 1774 and continued to overhaul the judicial system in India by removing corrupted officials and instituting stiff penalties for the abuse of office. Likewise, he reformed the administration of the Company by

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<sup>41</sup> Burke's idealism largely ignored the practicality of Clive and Hastings' adherence to the use of indigenous custom within the judicial and legal system. Indeed, applying English law was expensive, inconvenient, and potentially explosive—a charge leveled against the Liberal establishment by Disraeli in 1858.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund Burke, *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters*, 383, 400.

scrapping archaic positions and regulating ties between local chiefs. But, Hastings grew weary of the inefficient formality required to maintain the amicable (and profitable) ties between native princes, the Mughal Emperor, and British diplomacy. His high-handed treatment of native Indians drew criticism from some members of Parliament, like Burke, who labeled Hastings an “Oriental Despot.”<sup>43</sup> Despite his reorganization of the Company, Hastings’ cultural prejudice, coupled with an inalienable duty to the East India Company above all else eroded his reputation as a capable governor-general and Company reformer.

In 1782 Parliament began censuring Hastings, under the direction of Burke, for “misdeeds” of administration. Though reprieved by the Company’s Court of Proprietors the same year, by 1788 Burke managed to launch an impeachment trial against Hastings, implicating him in the Commons and Lords as a thief, a warlord, and a rapist:

...we have brought before you the first Man of India in rank, authority, and station. We have brought before you the Chief of the tribe, the Head of the whole body of Eastern offenders; a Captain-general of iniquity, under whom all the fraud, all the speculation, all the tyranny, in India, are embodied, disciplined, arrayed, and paid.<sup>44</sup>

Though Burke’s accusations had focused initially on Clive, the destruction of Clive’s reputation drove him to commit suicide in 1774, thus leaving Hastings to face of the brunt of Burke’s vendetta. The trial of Warren Hastings lasted for six years and remained a media sensation for the rest of the century, not only for the accusations leveled against a popular hero, but for the theoretic political implications the trial made clearer during an age of political awareness and enlightenment. Though

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 378.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 388.

Hastings was eventually acquitted, the trial forced the misdeeds carried forth in India by the Company to the forefront of British politics, questioning the practical feasibility of imperial governance, a lesson bitterly learned by the loss of the American colonies.

In tandem with the impeachment proceedings against Hastings, a bill, sponsored by Prime Minister William Pitt and George III, proposed a Government appointed bureau of oversight to regulate the Company's municipal management and armed forces. The India Act of 1784 furthered the measures of the Regulating Act of 1773, with which Hastings had "cleansed" the Company's central administrative authority and finances, through the creation of a Board of Control. The new board consisted of six members, two from the Cabinet and four Privy Councilors, who would direct all the Company's civil, military, and income related activities.<sup>45</sup> The act reorganized the territories of the Company and appointed presidents in them, with a governor-general atop the new hierarchy and geographically located in Calcutta. Despite the fact that the British government ruled India through the structure of the East India Company, the India Act "checked any attempt to introduce English law wholesale in India," instead guaranteeing Hindus and Muslims protection under their own laws and customs.<sup>46</sup>

The British government's policy of non-interference with indigenous religion and cultural norms was based more upon the Company's profitability than on any respect for personal freedom or native custom. Despite Burke's struggle for reform, government and Company officials knew that the despotism of native rule was far

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<sup>45</sup> Keith, *A Constitutional History of India*, 95-96.

<sup>46</sup> Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History*, 80.

less restrictive and more profitable for the Company than if Western modes of limited democracy and Christianity took root among the people of India. In 1808 the President of the Board of Control, Robert Dundas, went so far as to state:

“We [the company] are very far from being averse to the introduction of Christianity into India...but nothing could be more unwise than any imprudent or injudicious attempt to induce it by means which should irritate and alarm their religious prejudices...”<sup>47</sup>

The statement, of course, was a complete manipulation of ideology, intended to convince an increasingly zealous and missionary-bound British public that the Indians should be left to their own customs.<sup>48</sup> In order to control the flow of missionaries into India, the Company, with the consent of Parliament, began turning away religious missionaries entering India, as well as expressly forbidding its own chaplains from preaching to the native population.<sup>49</sup> However, when Parliament revoked the Company’s trading rights in India altogether in 1813,<sup>50</sup> its monopoly over missionary activity was also revoked. Men like William Wilberforce and Zachary Macaulay, both devout abolitionist Christians, promoted a full-scale crusade into the Orient to convert heathen and heretic alike. In addition to the somewhat sublime invasion of Christian “hospitality,” the British government now directly provided all civil and judicial administration within the territories annexed by the Company. The rigidity of a more direct British rule, coupled with a new push for religious conversions only

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<sup>47</sup> Ferguson, *Empire*, 137.

<sup>48</sup> The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a surge of Protestant zeal in Britain, much of which was directed at the conversion of the indigenous populations of the colonies.

<sup>49</sup> Ferguson, *Empire*, 137.

<sup>50</sup> Though the Company’s trading rights in India were revoked in 1813, the Company still held a monopoly over the tea trade in China.

further eroded the balance of power and compliance between the Indians and the British.

### **From Scylla to Charybdis and Beyond**

By the mid-nineteenth century, India fit only uneasily into emerging visions of empire. Unlike previous English and British colonial endeavors, such as in America, the presence of Europeans failed to eradicate or marginalize the native population, complicating emerging British theories of colonial and constitutional practice. Furthermore, white settlement in India was limited, thus holding no clear position within the imperial theories proposed by Dilke and Wakefield, which totally ignored the presence of non-whites within Britain's imperial domain, save their ability to serve as exotic oddities. Though "nobly" endowed with the virtues of the English Constitution, as Burke had fought for and nineteenth century historians would celebrate, the Company's governance failed to implement those laws and mores because of the perceived cultural disparity between Britons and Indians. The culminating maladministration of Indian affairs and mistreatment of the native population boiled over into open rebellion in India in 1857. Niall Ferguson states:

The project to modernize and Christianize India had gone disastrously wrong; so wrong that it had ended up by barbarizing the British. Those who actually had to run India had been proven right: interfering with native customs had meant nothing but trouble. Yet the Evangelicals refused to accept this. In their eyes, the Mutiny had happened because the Christianization had not progressed fast enough.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ferguson, *Empire*, 152-153.



The initial catalyst of the revolt surrounded an inebriated Company soldier's physical attack on his superior, claiming the British had forced the Indian population into submissive soldiery as well as forcing them to accept Christianity.<sup>52</sup> The soldier was tried and executed, and his detachment disbanded amid fears of potential retribution upon the Company's Anglo officers. But, the mechanism of rebellion had been brewing for the past century, and was compounded during the decade prior to the rebellion by famine, the cultural indifference shown by evangelical Christian missionaries and Company administrators, and the systematic annexation of Indian territories. The Company's policy of annexation was a British legal manipulation, largely instituted by Governor-General Dalhousie,<sup>53</sup> which based the succession of Hindu realms on primogeniture, instead of the accepted native practice of adoption. The "doctrine of lapse" excluded many princes from their thrones and succeeded in further alienating India's indigenous ruling class.

In response to territorial annexations and the perceived notion of a forced religious conversion, the Indians, mainly Company soldiers and aggravated nobles, rallied around the only semblance of unity they could find, the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar; a pathetically figurative leader, but a rather accomplished poet. Though initially overwhelming, within a year and a half the Indian Mutiny was put down. The atrocities allegedly carried out by Indians upon European women and children were wholly reprisal by zealous British troops. The last Mughal emperor was dethroned and farcically tried, "desacrilizing" the myth of Mughal supremacy

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<sup>52</sup> Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 235.

<sup>53</sup> Dalhousie was India's youngest Governor-General and administered British India between 1848 until 1856.

and further sanctifying the authority of British rule.<sup>54</sup> Amid the changes sweeping India, the Mutiny once and for all sealed the fate of the East India Company, and its Indian empire was dissolved.<sup>55</sup>

Though the political relationship between Britain and India shifted significantly after the mutiny, Britain struggled to identify India's role as a Crown Colony within the construct of popular British imperial thought. Like other non-Anglo possessions, India remained outside the popular ideology of Greater Britain, as championed by Dilke and Seeley. Between the trial of Warren Hastings in 1785, the protracted dissolution of the East India Company, and the mutiny of 1857, British India played a limited role within the construct of British imperial social identity. Parliament's muted assumption of control over India was largely based in what was perceived by legal theorists and philosophers as an irreconcilable difference between the concepts of liberty and empire, a point that played a significant part in Britain's avoidance of direct control in India since the mid-eighteenth century. Indeed, the problem of liberty and empire had been at the core of Burke's argument presented before Parliament concerning the Company's abuse of power. Though Burke's understanding of such basic rights remained remarkably black and white, despite race, creed, or nationality, few theorists at the end of the eighteenth century and certainly during the nineteenth could even approach the differences between Occidental and Oriental culture without treating the latter as culturally inferior.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Cohn, "Representing Authority in British India," 178.

<sup>55</sup> Though the East India Company was excluded from India, it continued to trade in the East, particularly in China, until finally being abolished in 1874.

<sup>56</sup> Edmund Burke, *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters*, 18-19.

Before the demise of the Company, but during its charter revisions in 1833, 1853, and dissolution in 1858, John Stuart Mill, a Company employee and political theorist, argued that the best course for administrating India remained within the constructs of the East India Company. Like Burke, Mill's ideology of imperial governance relied on the reform and introduction of English Constitutional precedent into India. That reform, Mill argued, was better implemented via indirect rule because the Company was better insulated from party strife and the contradiction of one free society ruling over another.<sup>57</sup> The Company's authority and structure of hierarchy under the Mughal Emperor may have been anachronistic but, according to Mill, it was necessary to sustain the anachronism in order to initiate a "silent revolution" of reform in India.

Despite the celebrated idealism of Burke and the potential constitutional conundrum pleaded by Mill, Parliament did in 1858 abolish the Company and assumed control over India. Despite the British government's history of involvement and connection with the Company's administration, the Company conveniently acted as a political scapegoat, much to Mill's chagrin, bearing most of the blame for provoking the revolt. Indeed, British public opinion, fanned by inflammatory articles written in the media, held the Company responsible for the mutiny and demanded its termination.<sup>58</sup> In November of 1858, four months after an official treaty of peace, Queen Victoria announced the extension of her realm over the former domains of the East India Company in India. The Queen's carefully worded proclamation covered

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<sup>57</sup> Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 162.

<sup>58</sup> James, *Raj*, 293.

the two most important points of contention by which the *Company* had alienated the Indians into revolt: usurpation of hereditary lands and religious freedom:

We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our right to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others...

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law...<sup>59</sup>

Victoria's proclamation mollified many who opposed Britain's rule in India by outwardly disavowing the mechanisms of the Company's rule. But, though Parliament evaded blame for the mutiny, its liberal members came under fire from the Tory party for having failed to clarify the nature of British control over India. The Indian revolt, Benjamin Disraeli claimed, was in direct correlation with the failure of Whig-Liberal ideologies aimed at reforming, westernizing, and converting the Indians against their will.<sup>60</sup> Though used as a political maneuver to weaken the Whig and emerging Liberal parties' hold over the Commons, Disraeli's assessment of the reformers' movements, beginning with Burke in 1788, was justified; reforming efforts in India had in fact lacked coherence and were based on contradictory assumptions. The animosities between the Indians and the British had grown from emerging notions of racial and cultural superiority; ideas and prejudices taken out of context from Burke's rhetoric comparing the political establishments in Britain and in

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<sup>59</sup> Archbold, *Outlines of Indian Constitutional*, 118.

<sup>60</sup> James, *Raj*, 291.

India during the trial of Warren Hastings. Each revision of the Company's charter, then, divested the Company of its ability to uphold its policies of non-intervention while simultaneously failing to appropriately account for the vacuum of political authority.

But, in the years following the revolt, which was crushed with military precision, British authority firmly established itself through the consolidation of political idealism and assumed stereotypes. Edward Said would label the readjustment of British authority as a part of Orientalism, a realignment of consciousness that redefined the differences of culture into a foundation of power, linking rule with an emphasis on cultural difference. But, the assumption of direct control of India by the British Crown also required the delineation of principles of authority linking Britain and India. David Cannadine states that that idealism was revised from an eighteenth century enlightened notion of universal democratic privilege, intended to overturn the stereotyped "corrupt, despotic, ruling regimes" of India into a "an alternative stereotype" that viewed the existing hierarchy of India as noble, akin to the organic hierarchical origins of the British ruling classes and thus worthy of preservation.<sup>61</sup>

In time Disraeli would codify the similarity between India's native caste and aristocratic systems and Britain's nobility, melding them into an imperial social order, relevant to both nations and capable of compromising the differences of culture by extolling the virtues of hierarchy as organic, foundational to their societies. The idyllic notion of Greater Britain did not completely fade away, but rather became incorporated within Disraeli's romantic ideal of "hierarchical flower[y] and Gothic

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<sup>61</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 41.

efflorescence;”<sup>62</sup> a vision capable of incorporating not only white settlement colonies, but India as well. Though economic in origin, the British advance in India was shaped by the establishment and metamorphosis of British rule, via the interaction between Oriental and Occidental culture, and development of a romantic ideal based upon that rule and interaction.

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<sup>62</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 45.

## CHAPTER 3

### FROM *empire* TO *Empire*

#### The Politics of Empire

In the years preceding the Indian Mutiny, eighteenth century ideologies continued to shape British party politics, particularly the ideas of liberty and free trade. Though Burke's philosophy on the nature of liberty failed to take root within the political governance of the East India Company, his arguments did, in time, significantly alter the British establishment; most notably via the Reform Act of 1832, broadening the electorate. Similarly, and within the progression of the industrial revolution, economic policies became of paramount political importance. Indeed, the ideological struggle between free trade and protectionism splintered the Tory Party and drove a prime minister from office. Interestingly, as India remained central to Burke's justification for the advent of liberty, so too would India play a central role within Disraeli's reconstruction of the Tory Party, emerging as the jewel of the imperial crown.

Since Sir Robert Peel's expulsion in 1846 the Tory Party had splintered and its authority had been marginalized. The event was largely due to Disraeli's dissatisfaction with Peel's atypical Tory stance on the application of agricultural duties and Free Trade, as well as the Prime Minister's failure to place Disraeli in any post within the government.<sup>63</sup> In time, Peel's supporters, including William Gladstone, migrated into the ranks of the emerging Liberal Party. For nearly a decade the Tory Party, assuming the appellation "Conservative," slowly redesigned its

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<sup>63</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *Disraeli: A Biography* (New York: Truman Talley Books/Dutton, 1993), 226.

platform around the neo-feudal principles of Young England; supporting an attachment to the monarchy, aristocracy, and Church via the sacred and romantically sentimental concept of “noblesse oblige.”<sup>64</sup> The political manifestation of Young England evolved in tandem with a cross-class cultural nostalgia for the ancient history of Britain. The maturation of the Romantic era did much to popularize the fledging party.

Still, in the decade leading up to the Indian Mutiny the Conservative Party often failed to assert its romantic tenets, clinging at times to Peel’s liberal agenda and nearly paralleling the platform of the Liberal Party. However, in early 1858 the Tory Party reclaimed the premiership amidst the Liberal Party’s political wrangling over the fate of India’s administration following the Mutiny. With the support of Lord Derby, Disraeli organized, authored, and successfully obtained Parliamentary acceptance for the Government of India Act of 1858. Though abolishing Company rule, the Act reaffirmed the basic hierarchy of the Company’s civil service and further integrated the execution of political power with native Indian rulers all the while affirming, for the first time in history, the sovereignty of the British crown over India. Obliging, Victoria stated in her proclamation of 1858, that the Indian nobles were the “quintessential natural leaders” of South Asian society, and likewise would govern their semi-autonomous states under British paramountcy, accepting members of the Indian Civil Service (formerly of the Company) as aides and advisors, and contribute soldiers to the Indian Army.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>65</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 45.



The India Act, with its overtures of forgiveness and leniency to the rebels, created a new (or at least streamlined) imperial administration in India, and successfully abated (or at least mollified) much of the animosity the Indian ruling classes felt towards British rule.<sup>66</sup> The Act also closely tied empire and India to Tory politics, despite a similar Act proposed by Lord Palmerston shortly before his resignation in early 1858,<sup>67</sup> thanks largely to Disraeli's ability to finally assert his party's tenets by creating a royal prerogative in India. Politically, the Act was a success. Bureaucratically, the administration of India was successfully codified and sanctioned by Parliament. Most importantly, the monarchy was now central to the administration of India. Despite its assertion of parliamentary supremacy, in name the Act was *royal*. By vassalizing the princes of India under the Crown of Britain, the passage of the India Act initiated the first step towards a new, romantic, and feudal perception of the British monarchy.

Despite the history, usage, and accuracy of the term "British Empire," Britain remained an abstract empire following the Indian Mutiny. It is doubtful whether any politicians, theorists, or philosophers at the time of Britain's first assertion of power on the subcontinent considered the discrepancy between the reality of British imperialism and the titular dignity of the sovereign, despite Disraeli's mention of it during the debates of 1858. Still, if not prior to the dissolution of the East India Company, then certainly afterward, the direct authority with which Parliament, at Disraeli's guidance, granted the Queen sovereignty over the princes of India constructed an Empire in the more explicit sense of the word. Indeed, at the opening

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<sup>66</sup> Dennis Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 90.

<sup>67</sup> Jenkins, *Disraeli and Victorian Conservatism*, 53-54.

of Parliament on 3 December 1857 and following the collapse of the East India Company, Victoria stated in her address from the throne that “I confidently commit to your Wisdom the great Interests of My Empire...”<sup>68</sup>

Prior to the dissolution of the East India Company the British monarch’s status in India was uncertain, but the issue was of little relevance as long as the Company ruled under the fiction of Mughal authority. It seemed a natural progression, according to Disraeli, that when Britain secured the throne of the Mughal Emperor, its imperial authority should pass to the monarch of the British Isles. The establishment of such a hierarchy was not unknown, and popular medieval precedents were used to illustrate the developing link<sup>69</sup>—Edward I had vassallized the Scottish king, John Balliol, as well as investing his own son, the future Edward II, as Prince of Wales in 1301. After the Battle of Agincourt Henry V essentially held France, ruled by Charles VI, as a feudatory to be merged with England and passed to his heirs. But, Victoria’s case as an imperial sovereign was different in two significant instances. First, Victoria’s rule, despite medieval precedent, was tenuous because of the circumstances of distance and differing cultures. Secondly, equating the Oriental term “mogul” in English with “emperor” proved problematic because Britain had never had an emperor in the strict sense of the word, though Britain had shared its monarch with other nations.<sup>70</sup> In 1858 Victoria was made queen of India, but the meaning of this designation remained a matter of dispute.

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<sup>68</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 148 (1858), col. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” 167.

<sup>70</sup> The most recent instance being the Kingdom of Hannover.

## Setting the Jewel in the Crown

But in the years after 1858, pressures began to mount for this to change. In November of 1875 Victoria noted in her journal that Disraeli had successfully purchased Suez Canal stock shares from the Khedive of Egypt "...for four million [pounds], which gives us complete security for India, and altogether places us in a very safe position."<sup>71</sup> The procurement of the route to India was a paramount issue for Disraeli's Conservative government since India was becoming psychologically and economically an increasingly integral part of the empire. Though successful in foreign policy and domestic enfranchisement, Britain saw a decline in manufacturing and an overall depression severely crippled the economic integrity of the nation in the 1860s.<sup>72</sup> Disraeli hoped that by securing the route to India, British intentions on the continent would become clearer via the expedience of trade and the possibility of readily available troops from Britain to protect the economic interests of its developing commercial networks. In conjunction, Disraeli also believed that associating Queen Victoria more formally with the government of India through an imperial label would further cement the socio-political bond between dependency and mother country, at least for the British.<sup>73</sup>

The push towards formalized empire remained rooted in Disraeli's bid to further strengthen the Tory party by associating it with a new vision of nationalism, blending emerging popular notions of English "tradition" with global military, political, and economic might. Likewise, the success of the Abyssinian campaign in

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<sup>71</sup> Queen Victoria, *Queen Victoria: In Her Letters and Journals*, ed. Christopher Hibbert (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000), 241.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Cain, *Empire and Imperialism: The Debate of the 1870s* (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>73</sup> Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of a New Imperialism*, 54.

1867 and the passage of the Tory sponsored Reform Bill the same year signaled a reaffirmation of popular support for conservative politics. By 1872 Disraeli was able to tie his successes (including the Government of India Act, the Abyssinian campaign, and the Reform Bill) together and present them as a platform for Conservative ideology at the Crystal Palace. The eloquently delivered Crystal Palace speech of 1872 bound the “elevation of the people” with the sustenance of England’s imperial prerogatives, and the maintenance of the monarchy.

...will [you] be content to be a comfortable England, modelled and moulded upon continental principles and meeting in due course an inevitable fate, or whether you will be a great country—an imperial country—a country where your sons, when they rise to paramount positions, obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world...<sup>74</sup>

Though the speech received only a moderate amount of press, its doctrinal significance in the development of Disraeli’s thinking was considerable. Many of his concerns in the speech would later be implemented and codified in Disraeli’s imperial advance and served as a backdrop to the purchase of the Suez Canal shares in 1875 and proclamation of a new imperial title for the Queen in 1877.

The growing popularity of the idea of empire allowed Disraeli to further define the role of Britain’s possessions beyond the seas. In a rebuke of Gladstone’s mismanagement of the Maori uprising in 1868 that attacked his willingness to let go of the imperial prerogatives in the white settlement colonies, Disraeli stated that

...self-government, when...conceded, ought, in my opinion, to have been conceded as a part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation [and] accompanied by an Imperial tariff, by securities to the people of England for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belong to

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<sup>74</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Selected*, 534.

the Sovereign as their trustee, and by a Military Code, which should have precisely defined the means and the responsibilities by which the colonies should have been defended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the colonies themselves. It ought further to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the metropolis, which would have brought the colonies into constant and continuous relations with the Home Government.<sup>75</sup>

While the establishment of a “representative council” would have inaugurated a significant attachment to British ideals, the extension of royal titles created a tangible human link between Great Britain and its non-white colonies, represented in the person of the sovereign—an ideology largely derived from Young England and sustained by the Conservative Party. Disraeli believed that the British sovereign could and should act as an idyllic unifier among nations within the empire, transcending the political atmosphere to represent the will of the people, even among people of non-Anglo stock. That link had been absent in India up to 1858, and until 1877 was only recognized as a vague association.

On 26 February 1876 Victoria noted in her diary that Disraeli visited her to discuss the implementation of an imperial title. Doubtlessly the attainment of the Suez Canal revived the idea of a new imperial label, a revival for which Victoria is most often credited. However, this was an idea that fit remarkably well with Disraeli’s neo-feudal perception of hierarchy as well as his fascination with the East. On two occasions prior to 1876 Disraeli referred to the achievement of the Queen’s imperial prerogative in India. The first emerges from Disraeli’s 1847 novel *Tancred*. An Indian Emir suggests to Tancred, the novel’s main “crusading” English character,

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<sup>75</sup> Julius Vogel, “Greater or Lesser Britain,” in *Empire and Imperialism: The Debate of the 1870s*, ed. Peter Cain (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1999) 78.

that if the Queen would move her seat of government to Delhi, "... she will find an immense empire ready made...and [the Indian princes] will acknowledge the Empress of India as our suzerain."<sup>76</sup> Further, in 1858 amid the debate surrounding the adoption of the India Act, Disraeli raised the point in a letter to Victoria that an imperial title would be appropriate considering the nature of the Queen's assumption of power in India:

[the passage of the India Bill]...is only the antechamber of an imperial palace; [and] Y[ou]r Majesty would do well to deign to consider the steps, [which] are now necessary to influence the opinions, [and] affect the imagination, of the Indian populations. The name of Y[ou]r Majesty ought to be impressed upon their native life.<sup>77</sup>

Even Victoria's journal entries belie the assertion that she concocted the scheme entirely by herself. On 26 February 1876 Victoria noted "...the Titles Bill [is] causing trouble and annoyance [to Disraeli], he could not tell why. I spoke of the feeling about the Colonies and gave him full power to add anything to the title."<sup>78</sup> The fact that Victoria "gave...full power" to Disraeli to manage the application of the titles seems odd, considering the dictatorial persona many historians and contemporaries give her. Stanly Weintraub, author of *Disraeli: A Biography*, firmly asserts that the measure was Victoria's, quoting the Earl of Derby as stating that the whole affair was "folly on our part" and merely satisfied the Queen and "encouraged her obstinacy."<sup>79</sup> However, though Victoria doubtlessly viewed the pursuit of her imperial label intently, she rather complacently stated on 14 March that "I cannot

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<sup>76</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred or The New Crusade* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), 263.

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters: 1857-1859*, vol. 7, ed. M.G. Wiebe, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 215.

<sup>78</sup> Queen Victoria, *Queen Victoria: In Her Letters and Journals*, 242.

<sup>79</sup> Weintraub, *Disraeli*, 571.

understand how the quite incorrect rumor can have got about<sup>80</sup>, that I did not care for it [the Royal Titles Bill]; it really is too bad. But all sensible people know that this Bill will make no difference here [in Great Britain], and that I am all for it, as it is so important for India.”<sup>81</sup> There is little doubt that Disraeli’s ideas shaped the Queen’s thinking on this.

Victoria’s entries seem to be more cavalier than dictatorial, as do most of the entries and notations she scribbled about her dealings with Disraeli. No doubt the relationship between the Queen and her Prime Minister was a very special one—one in which Disraeli, “by his expansionist policies and his bold gestures, had made Victoria conscious of her position as the Sovereign of [a] jumble of people and territories.”<sup>82</sup> But, whatever the Queen’s interest in the issue, for Disraeli it was critical that it fit into a larger policy. Disraeli directed that the mention of the Titles Bill in the Queen’s opening speech to Parliament be set near the mention of the Prince of Wales’ recent journey to India so that “What may have been looked upon as an ebullition of individual vanity may bear some semblance of deep and organized policy.”<sup>83</sup> There is no doubt that for Disraeli it was.

Indeed, the Prince’s visit to the subcontinent had been a media sensation, with news articles documenting the use of the recently acquired Suez Canal, as well

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<sup>80</sup> It was rumored Victoria’s own titles were in danger of being outpaced by her eldest daughter Victoria, the Crown Princess of the newly formed German Empire. Similarly, imperial Russian encroachments on India’s northern border may have forced the British government to consider declaring a formal imperial mandate in order to clearly illustrate to Russia its deliberate intentions of holding India.

<sup>81</sup> Queen Victoria, *Queen Victoria: In Her Letters and Journals*, 242.

<sup>82</sup> Theo Aronson, *Victoria and Disraeli: The Making of a Romantic Partnership* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1977), 193.

<sup>83</sup> Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of a New Imperialism*, 54.

as illustrating the popularity of the Prince in India. In a thankful note to Disraeli, Prince Albert wrote:

I am fully alive to the importance of my trip to India and hope that neither of you [n]or anyone else in my land will have cause to regret that the honour of my country has been placed in my hands whilst in India.<sup>84</sup>

Doubtlessly, in return for persuading Victoria to allow the trip, Disraeli had imbued the Prince with the significance of his mission. Indeed, the visit became, somewhat unexpectedly, one of Disraeli's "proudest foreign affairs coups."<sup>85</sup>

Still, Disraeli's anxiety in proclaiming the Queen Empress remained, for at that time the word "imperialism" was still associated with the despotic tendencies of Rome during the reign of the emperors, as well as carrying a "pejorative" correlation with Napoleon III's coup of 1852 and Maximilian's invasion of Mexico in 1863.<sup>86</sup> "Imperialism" had been a dirty word during the middle of the nineteenth century; however, its daily use in popular press pertaining to the informal British empire rapidly transformed its use into a less abrasive, if not a positive, connotation. Indeed, it was noted in the London papers that during the Prince of Wales visit to India in 1875, that there were several banners of welcome, one of which read "Welcome to our Future Emperor."<sup>87</sup> Still, newspapers like *Punch* and the *Times* lampooned "empires" and "imperialism" as a passing fad of continental despots. The *Times* blasted rumors of the queen's assumption of an imperial title by writing

If "Emperor" has no shade of meaning in excess of that of "King," why should we adopt it? ...why should we

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<sup>84</sup> Weintraub, *Disraeli*, 540.

<sup>85</sup> Weintraub, *Disraeli*, 540.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Cain, *Empire and Imperialism: The Debate of the 1870s* (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1999), 11.

<sup>87</sup> Aronson, *Victoria and Disraeli*, 145.



degrade the simple dignity of the English Crown by this tawdry emblem of fictitious splendor? The addition is perfectly un-English... We reject the title “Emperor” because it implies a supremacy unchecked save by the grace of the person who bears the dignity.”<sup>88</sup>

Though public opinion had perhaps begun to shift since Disraeli’s Crystal Palace speech, considerable skeptics to the notion of a new imperial title remained.

### **The Royal Titles Act**

On 8 February 1876, with deliberate, though tactful appeal, Victoria addressed Parliament with a speech that illustrated the prosperity and allegiance of India, and duly noted the lack of her appropriate titular association:

I am deeply thankful for the uninterrupted health which my dear Son, the Prince of Wales, has enjoyed during his journey through India. The hearty affection with which he has been received by my Indian subjects of all classes and races assures me that they are happy under my rule, and loyal to my throne. At the time that the direct Government of my Indian Empire was transferred to the Crown, no formal addition was made to the style and titles of the Sovereign. I have deemed the present a fitting opportunity for supplying this omission, and a Bill upon the subject will be presented to you.<sup>89</sup>

Victoria opened Parliament on 8 February<sup>90</sup> and Disraeli presented the official Bill into the Commons on 17 February. His argument for the augmentation of the Queen’s style and titles in India began with an explanation of the Government of India Act’s failure in 1858 to supply an acceptable title at that time. The reason, according to Disraeli, was that “...there were circumstances at the time to make us

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<sup>88</sup> *The Times* (London), 11 March 1876.

<sup>89</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 227 (1876), col. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Disraeli was able to persuade Victoria to open Parliament in person, something which she had not done since the death of her husband, Prince Albert, in 1861.

think that it might [have been] premature.”<sup>91</sup> He failed to elaborate on the circumstances surrounding the omission of the titles, but the poor strategic footing of the British military and economy in India must have figured into the equation, as well as Britain’s colonial hesitations in declaring a formalized empire, an act which could have antagonized the Indians at a critical junction in the reconquest of India.

Disraeli’s light commentary on the initial rejection of the title in 1858 was superseded by his argument that India was mature enough by 1876 to bear the decoration of an imperial mandate.

India...is peopled by various and varying races, differing in origin, in language, in religion, in manners, and in laws – some of them gifted and highly civilized... And this vast community is governed, under the authority of the Queen, by many Sovereign Princes, some of whom occupy Thrones which were filled by their ancestors when England was a Roman Province. ...They look forward to some Act of this kind with intense interest, and by various modes they have conveyed to us their desire that such a policy should be pursued<sup>92</sup>

Disraeli stated that the origin of the imperial idea emanated from the Indians<sup>93</sup> and he used examples of popular perceptions of tradition and hierarchy to argue that India’s culture was remarkably similar to Great Britain’s, in so far as age and methodical hierarchy were concerned. He also added to his argument that the assumption of Victoria’s title would please “not merely the Princes, but [also] the people of India.”

An editorial in the *Times* defended Disraeli’s proposition, though not without critique, by stating that the intent of the Royal Titles Act:

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<sup>91</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 227 (1876), col. 408.

<sup>92</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 227 (1876), col. 410.

<sup>93</sup> Disraeli was probably referring to banners along the route of the Prince of Wales’ journey through India that welcomed “...our future Emperor.” Still, much of his argument associating the creation of an imperial title with the will of the people was based on his perception of the cultural similarities in indigenous hierarchy between Britain and India.

...must be to strengthen the Queen's Government in India by appealing to the sentiments of awe, or veneration, or loyalty, or affection, or the belief that the assumption of an Imperial title signifies a resolution to maintain a permanent dominion against which it would be vain to struggle.<sup>94</sup>

Disraeli knew the only way to argue for the title "empress," other than stating that the Queen desired it, was to present India in a light that appealed to a popular and pragmatic awareness of "empire," that harked back to the neo-feudal ideals he had accepted in his youth. India was a land of many nations in which many separate sovereigns reigned; to amalgamate these nations into a singular entity under a supreme monarchical authority dictated that the system would have to be imperial in origin, which it already was.<sup>95</sup> Loyalty to the queen and to Britain's native hierarchy transcended the difference of nomenclature, but the sticking point was the reluctance of Parliament to officially change the name of the system from "royal" to "imperial."

Doubtless, Disraeli anticipated some grumbling about the Royal Titles Bill, especially from the Liberals in Parliament, however he was unprepared for the firestorm of debate that challenged the announcement of formalizing the empire. Indeed, many members of Parliament viewed the Bill with skepticism because they interpreted the meaning of "imperial" to be derogatory to the foundations of the British Constitution. Those arguments were akin to Burke's rejection of the nature of British rule in India in the eighteenth century—that the execution of constitutional law and justice in Britain was incompatible with the execution of authoritarian administration of India. Robert Lowe, a Liberal member of Parliament whose notions of the titular change were echoed by many in the Commons, was the first to take issue

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<sup>94</sup> *The Times* (London), 10 March 1876.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Koebner and Helmut Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 118.

with the definition of “empress” by suggesting that an imperial appellation associated with the Crown of Great Britain was too reminiscent of despotic Roman imperialism. Lowe declared that the imperial appellation already in use to describe the Crown of Great Britain was accurate in denoting the King of Great Britain as supreme sovereign over all British territories and dependencies;<sup>96</sup> ergo any elevation of a British monarch from king or queen to emperor or empress was redundant and, needless to say, un-English.<sup>97</sup>

Besides Lowe’s labeling of the title as “un-English” other members of the Commons and the public considered the prospect of the imperial title a usurpation of a royal one. Hierarchical philosophy places emperors above kings, and if that argument stood to reason then it was considered possible for the Imperial throne of India to outrank the Royal throne of Great Britain. The rhetorical question placed before the Commons and the general public was that the empire would soon be administered from Delhi instead of London—a comment most likely mocking *Tancred*. But, another editorial in the *Times* offered to clear up the public’s misapprehension by stating “...it is becoming congruous to place the title of Empress after that of Queen, and attach “Empress” to a dependency, while “Queen” [would

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<sup>96</sup> Lowe’s argument centered around three previous Royal Title Acts:

Henry VIII’s in 1542:

“...that the said title and name of King of Ireland, together with our said whole realm [England and France], should be united and annexed to our imperial crown of our realm of England.”

Elizabeth I in 1559:

“OF the most high and mighty Princess, our dread sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the true, ancient, and Catholic faith, most worthy Empress from the Orkney Isles to the Mountains of the Pyrenees.”

And George III’s in 1801:

“...that the Royal Stile and Titles appertaining to the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdom... [shall state] GEORGE the THIRD, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith.”

<sup>97</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 227 (1876), col. 411-412.

be] reserved to the ruling state.”<sup>98</sup> Such commentary from the *Times* illustrates that the public’s notion of “empire” and “emperor” was certainly far from being pejorative, despite Lowe’s condemnation that it was.

A significant Burkian point of contention developing against the Royal Titles Bill was that such a change to the title of the monarch would threaten the foundation of English liberty by eroding away the balance of power between the monarch and Parliament—a balance some insisted had existed for a thousand years. Imperial authority was popularly perceived, as noted in the *Times*, as “unchecked save by the grace of the person who [bore] the dignity.” Politicians, like Gladstone, warned against the assumption of a title that subjugated foreign princes, because of the inevitable creep of despotism that naturally formed around bastions of centralized authority. Interestingly, Gladstone himself would have been mortified had the public known that during his tenure as Prime Minister in 1869, he had himself amended the Queen’s title in a letter of congratulations to the Emir of Afghanistan to state “Empress of India.”<sup>99</sup> This suggests how useful politicians of all stripes had found the use of such titles in dealing with the East.

The negative association of the term “empress” was echoed in both houses of Parliament. In a speech made just before the final vote to consider the Bill, the Earl of Shaftsbury, whose feelings on the matter were shared by most of the Peers, played down the practical differences between popular perceptions of the term “king” and “queen” and “emperor” and “empress”—the practicality Disraeli had trumpeted as key to protecting Britain’s growing imperial interests. Shaftsbury ultimately stated

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<sup>98</sup> *The Times* (London), 10 March 1876.

<sup>99</sup> Weintraub, *Disraeli*, 553.

that any alteration to the traditional style of titles of the *royal* throne of England would be detrimental to the “royal dignity and esteem” of the monarchy.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the Duke of Somerset announced that the creation of an imperial title was a moot point, as everyone knew Queen Victoria was the “first Queen in the world.”<sup>101</sup>

Most arguments favoring the association of the monarch with the imperial label were made by pragmatists, like Disraeli, who understood the implication as a justifiable progression of Britain’s imperial mission. Indeed, Victoria lashed out in a letter addressed to Theodore Martin that “there was no difference whatever [between her royal and imperial titles] except officially adding after Queen of Great Britain, “Empress of India,” the name which is best understood in the East, but which Great Britain (which [*is*] an Empire) never has acknowledged to be higher than Queen or King.”<sup>102</sup> On 10 March Disraeli rose to defend the Bill again and reaffirmed to the House of Commons that the title of empress in no way superseded that of queen, or of the balance of power vested between the Houses of Parliament and the monarch. He further added

“Then why should you adopt it? ...The amplification of titles is founded upon a great respect for local influences, for the memory of distinguished deeds, and the passages of interest in the history of countries. It is only by the amplification of titles that you can often touch and satisfy the imagination of nations; and that is an element which Governments must not despise.”<sup>103</sup>

Through late winter and early spring of 1876, opposition to the Bill faded as public support for the measure increased. The bill passed 27 April 1876. Disraeli’s quarter

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<sup>100</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 228 (1876), col. 1039.

<sup>101</sup> Weintraub, *Disraeli*, 552.

<sup>102</sup> Queen Victoria, *Queen Victoria: In Her Letters and Journals*, 242.

<sup>103</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, (Commons), 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., vol. 227 (1876), col. 1724.

century old political platform, most recently manifested and codified through his speech at the Crystal Palace, doubtlessly played a significant role in positively redefining British imperialism. In the end, the placement of “empress” after “queen” placated those few technical linguists who feared an Indian Empress would rule over the Kingdom of England. Amidst much fanfare, Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India on 1 January 1877.

### **DEI GRATIA INDIÆ IMPERATRIX**

The Royal Titles Act formalized the British Empire and created a strong psychological link between Great Britain and her colonies, particularly India. As David Cannadine suggests, that link was forged by Disraeli on the basis of a common cultural tradition: hierarchy. Indeed, the immediate aftermath of Victoria’s imperial ascension was visually formalized in 1877 through an imperial durbar, planned and executed by Lord Lytton.<sup>104</sup> Harking back to Mughal practice, the durbar was a “pseudo-medieval-Oriental display” of submission and allegiance, a “ceremonial meeting between rulers and ruled which articulated the traditional social order and legitimized the position of the Queen-Empress at the head of [the Empire].”<sup>105</sup>

The scale of Britain’s imperial proclamation was staggering. More than 84,000 people attended the Durbar at Delhi in 1876, of which only 1,169 were European. The princes, together with their retinues and retainers, were estimated to number more than 25,600.<sup>106</sup> The main imperial camp, consisting of the Viceroy

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<sup>104</sup> Viceroy Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, later an Earl, was the son of Baron George Earl Bulwer-Lytton, one of Disraeli’s comrades in Young England.

<sup>105</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 46.

<sup>106</sup> Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” 196.

Lord Lytton's "palace," stretched a mile and half and was encircled by, in precedential order, the camps of the princes in attendance—outstretched from the viceroy's camp by nearly five miles. When holding court, the viceroy sat upon a high dais, encircled by a grandstand of maharajas, princes, sultans, and viziers, accepting for hours on end their deferential homage and subjugation in the name and honor of the Queen-Empress. The grandeur of the event was not lost on the Indians. Sir Dinkar Rao, an Indian bureaucrat, noted:

If any man would understand why it is that the English are, and must necessarily remain the master of India he need only go up to Flagstaff Tower and look down upon this marvelous camp. Let him notice the method, the order, the cleanliness, the discipline, the perfection of the whole organization and he will recognize at once the epitome of every title to command and govern which one race can possess over others.<sup>107</sup>

Indeed, Lytton would state that the assemblage was intended, in the most unambiguous terms, to be an "acknowledgement [of authority] in the most formal manner of subjugation to the Empress on the part of the Great Chiefs."<sup>108</sup>

Though criticized for its extravagance and presumed to be purely imaginative,<sup>109</sup> the durbar was the catalyst by which the British Empire was measured by subsequent generations. It was repeated in 1903 and 1911, for the King-Emperors Edward VII and George V respectively, on far grander scales, further illustrating the cultural stamina, in Britain and India, employed to sustain "tradition."

The rejuvenation and invention of a neo-feudal tradition in Britain is Disraeli's most significant and long-lasting legacy. As a member of Young England,

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<sup>107</sup> Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 198.

<sup>108</sup> L.A. Knight, "The Royal Titles Act and India," *The Historical Journal* 3 (1968): 496.

<sup>109</sup> Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 207.



Disraeli's views on the disappearance of traditional English values, such as hierarchy, religion, and most importantly English prestige, were years ahead of their time. Through the promotion of his "Conservative Principles" and the passage of the Royal Titles Act, Disraeli was able to reassert the romantic existence and applicability of the British monarchy, and to a lesser extent, the nobility. But, the significance of Disraeli's ideology was not that he sustained an anachronistic ruling order, but rather that he inspired an appreciation for an ancient institution, which, however politically impractical, was pragmatic and tremendously successful in solidifying the British public's civic awareness. That patriotic awareness and appreciation further crystallized following Disraeli's death in 1881, and emerged a key element in imperial British culture through the rest of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

## Chapter 4

### THE EMPIRES OF TOMORROW ARE THE EMPIRES OF THE MIND --Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill

#### The Decline and Fall of Disraeli's Legacy

Between his return to the premiership in 1874 and the early 1920s, Disraeli's legacy remained remarkably unscathed, despite continual critical analyses by Liberal politicians and some academics, such as John Atkinson Hobson. By the turn of the century many Liberals accepted empire as a natural phenomenon, and Disraeli's political agenda encompassing the formalized political construct known as the British Empire embodied the British people's mainstream conception of society; that of hierarchy, tradition, and world dominance. During this time the Disraelian legacy was codified by two men, William F. Money Penny and George E. Buckle. Money Penny and Buckle's exhaustive six-volume biography, entitled The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield, continued to associate Disraeli's personal life, his politics, and even religious beliefs with the organic institutions of the English nation. The biography furthered Disraeli's legendary imperial image by stating he had the distinct ability to "[know] what Parliament and English society had not sufficient imagination to realize...that a new and durable link had been forged between the crowned democracy of the West and the immemorial Empire of the Middle East."<sup>110</sup> That statement heralded the passage of the Royal Titles Act as a watershed in British and world history, further legitimizing Britain's colonial expansion and the linking of the Crown to a new vision of nation and empire.

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<sup>110</sup> W. F. Money Penny and George E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. 5 (New York, MacMillan Company, 1920) 487.

While comprehensively informative and remarkably substantiated by primary source material, Money Penny and Buckle's glowing account of Disraeli's life must be understood as a product of its time. The work was completed in two parts, the first part by Money Penny, who passed away in the midst of volume four, and then by Buckle, who after years of revision finally published the biography in 1920. The publication date stands very near to the closure of the First World War, and at a time when the strength and even survival of the Empire was being questioned. Buckle, himself a peer, was keenly aware of the troubles overtaking the British government's administration of the colonies and the nation. Following a war of sidelined heroes and destroyed notions of romantically chivalrous battles, Buckle understood the need to reinvigorate the nation by reintroducing, or in some sense creating, a national hero that championed the working classes and upheld the popular conception of the successful and stable Victorian Empire. As a young man, Buckle had felt the influence of Disraeli's oratory, his political dogma, and Britain's successful imperial expansion. He regarded Disraeli's work as an imperialist as "special work," laid "down in a programme" of imperial maintenance and "heightened imperial character."<sup>111</sup> Money Penny and Buckle's interpretation was based on their experiences maturing through high-Victorian imperialism.

But, while popular, their work was not without critics for their interpretation was rooted in an earlier time. In 1924, the emerging skepticism of Disraeli's legacy took clearer form in Carl Bodelsen's analysis of nineteenth century imperialism. Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism was one of the first critical interpretations of Britain's colonial saga, and almost instantly became a revisionist's staple in the study

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<sup>111</sup> Money Penny and Buckle. *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, 406.

of British imperial history. His thesis, surveying more than a century of British imperial philosophy and overseas expansion, questioned the validity of imperialism's benefits by illustrating the movement's history of economic and political success and failure. Bodelsen did much to dispel the popular myth that British imperialism was an established norm and destiny, dating back to the political dynamics originating with Britain's Tudor monarchs.

Rather, Bodelsen traced the history of modern British imperialism from the late eighteenth century—and he saw the economic and political trends of the nineteenth century as having been working against it. Bodelsen stressed the world trade patterns established by European entrepreneurs and evolving economic theories, philosophies, and practices made popular by men such as Adam Smith, Josiah Tucker, and Jeremy Bentham. The combination of colonial economic trends (such as the loss of the American colonies and expanding colonization efforts in Australia and Canada), continental discord (necessitating Britain's invasion of Europe and the offensive against France's imperial expansion), and domestic British politics (which were attempting to reconcile industrial development with political, economic, and social reform) produced a hostile environment for territorial and overseas economic expansion. Bodelsen stated that it was only through the reactionary efforts of colonial reformers like Thomas Carlyle that the remnants of Britain's first empire were spared.

Bodelsen's primary emphasis was thus on colonial reformers, who implemented the notion of a British Federation, which was popularized at mid-century by Dilke and praised by Seeley as the only means of successful empire-building. However, the failure of the federation movement, Bodelsen stated,

precipitated a further reaction against free-trade and pacifism, two agendas associated with the separatist tendencies of the Liberal party.<sup>112</sup> The Conservative party, then, was able to capitalize on the Liberals' failure to court popular opinion. But for Bodelsen, Disraeli's ideas were nothing but a throwback to an earlier era. What little space Bodelsen devotes to Disraeli's impact on British expansion revolves around Disraeli's attempt to mesh jingoism with imperialism in order to manipulate the public's perception of colonial and domestic affairs. For Bodelsen this was merely a political maneuver meant to popularize the Conservative party and strengthen Disraeli's "spirited foreign policy."<sup>113</sup>

Bodelsen's work remained focused instead on what he perceived as a largely academic, philosophical, and economic imperialism, which he saw as a trend in decline in the mid-nineteenth century. As such, Bodelsen's analysis of Britain's imperial expansion is more concerned with the economic and philosophical developments of the nineteenth century. Bodelsen maintained that imperialism, "with the exception of a few and short periods when some spectacular event [occurred],...was debated in an atmosphere of indifference and ignorance."<sup>114</sup> Bodelsen's marginalization of Disraeli's role was based primarily on his interpretation of imperialism as an economic force, which Disraeli's political career and personal romantic beliefs allegedly did little to shape.

Though paralleled by Marxist treatises denouncing imperialism and its capitalist rhetoric, Bodelsen's work differed from these works in harking back to very old and very English arguments questioning the nature and need of imperialism and

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<sup>112</sup> Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 8.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

all its capitalist trappings. Disraeli's imperialism, devoid of any economic significance (as Bodelsen would have it), was little more than a political device, apotheosized by the Crystal Palace speech.

While Money Penny and Buckle's description of Disraeli thus remained the popular interpretation of Disraeli's life and of British imperialism as a whole, Bodelsen's critique slowly became the historiographic rubric framing most subsequent academic evaluations of British imperial history. Despite Bodelsen's wide popularity among academics, his criticism of a political, cultural, and social institution that literally ruled the world for the better part of a century was largely ignored by the general population who remained "proud and happy to keep their social distinctions...[and]...remain part of traditional, Greater Britain."<sup>115</sup> The notion of Empire as defined by Disraeli and lauded by Seeley remained a potent force within British society well into the twentieth century, and the degree to which imperialism imprinted itself as a positive construct would not and could not fade easily from the people's minds. But, this occurred against the backdrop of an increasing disjunction between academic and popular appreciations of Disraeli.

Indeed, in 1929 Warner Brothers Studios capitalized on Disraeli's popular legacy by producing a motion picture of the same name. *Disraeli*, directed by Alfred E. Green and starring George Arliss,<sup>116</sup> is a historic (and often humorous) film focused on the prime minister's successful attainment of the Suez Canal in 1875. The film was an adaptation of a play performed throughout the 1920s and popularized by Arliss' dramatically convincing depiction of Disraeli. Though focused on the

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<sup>115</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 40.

<sup>116</sup> Arliss won an Oscar at the 1930 Academy Awards for his portrayal of Disraeli.

circumstances surrounding the purchase of the Suez Canal, the film was also a critique of Disraelian stereotypes and legends, ranging from the condemnation of the prime minister as a “dreamer” and “dangerous visionary,” to illustrating his conservative principles through the recitation of the Crystal Palace speech.

Disraeli’s initial antagonists, including Viscount Deeford, the Duke and Duchess of Glastonbury, and the Governor of the Bank of England, all attack the prime minister as a cad. Deeford’s opening monologue represents their collective distaste for Disraeli:

I consider it an affront to every English gentleman that the destinies of our nation should be in the hands of a person like Disraeli. A man who poses as a great patriot, but who in reality is an unprincipled politician, seeking to only gratify his mad thirst for power.<sup>117</sup>

Deeford’s view is short lived, as are those of his peers. In the process of securing the Suez Canal for Britain, exposing two Russians spies, and inaugurating the creation of Queen Victoria’s imperial title Disraeli is able to persuade his detractors that his interests are in the interests of Britain’s security, despite being afflicted with what the Governor of the Bank of England calls the “Eastern imagination.” There is, interestingly, an entire dialogue between Lady Beaconsfield and her husband following the purchase of the Canal referring to the formalization of the Empire:

**Disraeli:** For now, that other dream of mine will be realized.

**Lady Beaconsfield:** What dream?

**Disraeli:** To make my sovereign Empress of India!

**Lady Beaconsfield:** Empress of India?

**Disraeli:** Ah, sounds well, Mary, doesn’t it? Mary, you shall be my messenger when the time’s ripe. You,

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<sup>117</sup> *Disraeli*, directed by Alfred E. Green, 87 min., Warner Bros., 1929, videocassette.

Lady Beaconsfield, shall carry the news to our beloved Queen. And you shall be proud when I stand up to announce the new title to Her Majesty's faithful Commons.

**Lady Beaconsfield:** Yes Dizzy, when will that be?

**Disraeli:** Oh, sometime is to elapse. This must be formally ratified, public opinion must be created.

**Lady Beaconsfield:** Make haste, Dizzy, make haste.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, the Duke of Glastonbury remarks at the inauguration of the Queen's imperial title:

What a day this is for Dizzy...They say the Queen is delighted with her new title, "Empress of India." And, how Dizzy swayed the House when he announced the new title. Even Gladstone was [for it]! Disraeli is a great man.<sup>119</sup>

Following the Duke's dialogue, the camera swings around to face a set of tremendous gilt doors. Amidst a joyous rendition of *Rule, Britannia*, the crowd proceeds forward behind Disraeli and Lady Beaconsfield into what can only be described as an Olympian chamber, where the hazy figure of a woman sits on a throne.

*Disraeli*, like Money Penny and Buckle's biography, was produced just after the First World War, and was a propaganda tool intended to reaffirm the importance and strength of the British Empire, particularly in its struggle to retard the influence of Communism in India. But, the film also illustrates the significance placed on Disraeli's legacy through popular media, despite the stereotypes of dreaminess, Jewishness, or his "mad thirst for power." Any number of historical events could have been used to illustrate Britain's imperial greatness, strength, and constitution—from Nelson's victory at Trafalgar to the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. The fact that Disraeli was chosen as the subject of the film, and that Britain's

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.



greatness emanated from the purchase of the Suez Canal and the creation of the imperial title firmly underscores that Disraeli's legacy retained popular potency in spite of the critiques of historians like Bodelsen.

Little was written by academics about Disraeli until Richard Koebner and Helmut Schmidt published Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960 in 1964—reemphasizing, now in an era of decolonization, the arguments made before World War II by Bodelsen. Koebner and Schmidt's analysis of Disraeli's imperialism, like Bodelsen, aligned Disraeli's imperial policies with political opportunism and party intrigue. But, Koebner and Schmidt went further than Bodelsen, downplaying his influence even on the rhetoric of Empire and on the imperial imagination. "Disraeli's imperial language alone—from which he desisted when political reasons required it—or his personal romantic preference for the glamour of the Indian possessions, would hardly have sufficed to bring about a change in Empire thinking."<sup>120</sup> Much of the Koebner and Schmidt thesis revolves around debunking the "myth" surrounding Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech, which had been upheld throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century as the fulcrum of Britain's rhetorical imperial development: "It is quite mistaken to believe that the Crystal Palace speech inaugurated an ideological link between Empire championship and Conservatism."<sup>121</sup> By negating the importance of the speech, one which, for instance, Money Penny and Buckle herald as the defining moment of Disraeli's imperialism and Conservatism's association with empire,<sup>122</sup> Koebner and Schmidt systematically deny Disraeli his significance in the creation of the Empire. Disraeli's

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<sup>120</sup> Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, 133.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>122</sup> Money Penny and Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, 194-195.

announcement of Conservative principles is rhetorical, state Koebner and Schmidt, and merely an association of “strong emotion rather than with clear pictures” of defined ideology.

In the post-war, post-imperial decade of the 1960s, Koebner and Schmidt’s thesis finally dealt a substantial blow to the memory and legacy of Disraeli the imperialist. With the British Empire vanishing, “imperialism” once again became a slogan for oppression and anachronistic government.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, mid-century scholarship often chose to downplay or skip such ideological points in many texts, including Disraeli’s next major biographer, Robert Blake. In 1967, almost one hundred years after Disraeli’s invasion of Abyssinia, which might arguably have set off Victorian imperialism, Blake published *Disraeli*. Like Money Penny and Buckle’s biography, Blake’s evaluation of Disraeli is remarkably whole and thorough, encompassing all aspects of his life. However, in regards to Disraeli’s imperialist ideology, there is scant mention of imperial politics other than to support Bodelsen, Koebner, and Schmidt by stating that Disraeli’s Crystal Palace speech and enactment of the Royal Titles Acts was nothing more than a ploy to discredit the Liberals.<sup>124</sup> In a volume of more than eight hundred pages, neither the word “empire,” nor any of its derivatives appear. Discussion of the Crystal Palace speech is confined to about a page, and matters concerning the empire during Disraeli’s tenure take up barely two of thirty-two chapters. Blake ends his work by stating, “Disraeli is not likely to be forgotten. No one would deny him a place in history. Yet there is still no agreement

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<sup>123</sup> Ferguson, *Empire*, xiii.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967), 523-524.

as to where that place should be.”<sup>125</sup> Blake’s analysis of Disraeli’s historical placement is, again, typical of the author’s time and environment. To praise Disraeli for his political and imperial maneuvers would have been historiographic suicide, but, unlike the damning critique Disraeli’s memory suffers under Bodelsen and Koebner and Schmidt, Blake promotes him to a plane of purgatory, neither sainted nor bedeviled, but awaiting judgment by an even more distant posterity. It is by largely dissociating Disraeli from imperialism altogether that Blake raises him to this position.

Since Blake’s biography, there have been few substantial historiographic biographies published on Disraeli, other than Stanley Weintraub’s 1993 Disraeli, deviates little from Blake. In fact, Disraeli’s role as an imperialist has been largely forgotten, either condemned for his lack of political correctness, or scorned as a charlatan, as suggested in Blake’s epilogue.

However, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, interest in Disraeli has risen as historians have ventured to reevaluate the concept of British imperialism in light of the general trend of historical studies through cultural history. Bodelsen, Koebner and Schmidt, and Blake all worked under the same prevailing conditions that the trend of history had given them, and were concerned primarily with imperialism as a political and economic system. This downplayed the “rhetoric” of empire that had so captivated Money Penny and Buckle. Interestingly, in his preface Bodelsen remarks on the popular notion of imperialism:

Both the originality and the significance of the Imperialists of the ‘eighties seem to me to be overrated. What they did was not so much to invent new ideas or to convert

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 757.

unbelievers, as to give literary expression to, and to popularize a movement already well under way, and to attract the attention of those who had previously been indifferent.<sup>126</sup>

Similarly, Koebner and Schmidt stated that Disraeli's imperialism merely invoked "strong emotion rather than...clear pictures" of ideological principle. Bodelsen, Koebner, and Schmidt are exactly right, but all ignore the "literary expression" and popularization that significantly formed the basis for British self-identity at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The emotion of the people must be taken into account, a fact recognized by Seeley, as a contemporary academic, in his own late nineteenth century evaluation of imperialism. Blake paid tribute to these concerns in his biography by leaving his final interpretation of Disraeli's reputation open-ended, but it has only been within the growing popularity of cultural history that this has taken on new meaning.

### **The Empire Strikes Back**

Recently, Disraeli's legacy has seen a reevaluation among historians who have considered the impact of his oratory and publications on the general population. This reexamination of imperial history owes its rebirth to Edward Said, who, in the 1970s challenged economic and political theories of historiography by deconstructing Western "structures of knowledge."<sup>127</sup> Said proclaimed that rhetoric (defined by structures of thinking and knowledge) are as important as the underlying currents of economic and political factors. The context of power is impossible to discern without first understanding structures of knowledge. Though by no means without critics,

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<sup>126</sup> Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 9.

<sup>127</sup> Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," 347.

Said's argument initially only concerned a revision of attitudes in the West's interpretation of the East, and vice versa. But, Orientalism laid the groundwork for a reevaluation of imperialism as a significant historical epoch, influenced by much more than economic theory. The advent of cultural history has since become a staple, and an almost overbearing one, within modern historiographic studies.

Within such historiography, Disraeli's importance inside Britain's imperial movement has taken a new meaning. Disraeli was able, through his delivery of the Crystal Palace speech, to unite imperialist ideology with Conservative principles. That agenda, developed between 1867 and 1872, largely facilitated Disraeli's political aims, domestic and foreign, by securing the Suez Canal, and eventually proclaiming a formalized imperial structure via the Royal Titles Act, which proclaimed Victoria Empress of India. The formalization of the British Empire in 1877 constituted a significant shift in the perception Britons felt towards what had been solely an economic and political opportunity, colonization. A formalized imperial structure, Empire, united national pride with economic, political, and moral awareness. David Cannadine states that the British "hierarchical enterprise [established by Disraeli] was never merely the 'one-sided creation of British imagination,' [and]...as a result, most Britons saw their empire as an extension of their own social world rather than in contradiction to it."<sup>128</sup> The sincerity with which the British people endorsed and celebrated their imperial construct, and the social constructs that still pervade British society speaks volumes of the importance that Disraeli and the Empire played in shaping British culture between the middle of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth. Disraeli's promotion of that imperial construct, whether through

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<sup>128</sup> Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 134.

political gaming or legitimate interest is of little consequence when one considers that the formalization of the British Empire reinvigorated the public's interest in aligning domestic power structures with foreign ones, redefining the British psyche and spreading a vision of Britishness around the world.

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