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# A PERSON OF LETTERS IN PARLIAMENT: EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON'S CAREER AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND A MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT 1831-1866

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1998

MAJOR: ENGLISH

Approved by:

John R. Reed 3-12-98

Advisor Date

Michael Scrivener

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Donald Haase

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1998

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To

My Parents

J. Gibson Caldwell, Jr.
(1914-1996)

and

Marie Adele Caldwell

μνησθητι ˋοτι δι' ˊαυτων ˊεγεννηθης
και τι ˊανταποδωσεις ˊαυτοις καθως ˊαυτοι σοι;
--ΣΟΦΙΑ ΣΙΡΑΧ 7:28

My Wife

Jo Hea-Gyong

γυνη ˊαγαθη μερις ˊαγαθη,
ˊεν μεριδι φοβουμενων κυριον δοθησεται.
--ΣΟΦΙΑ ΣΙΡΑΧ 26:3

My Director

Dr. John R. Reed

ˊανηρ σοφος τον ˋεαυτου λαον παιδευσει,
και ˋοι καρποι της συνεσεως ˊαυτου πιστοι.
--ΣΟΦΙΑ ΣΙΡΑΧ 37:23

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# Preface

The reader may find it helpful to know the following:

1. All material found in Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates* has been cited to it. When material found in Hansard is also found in other sources, these sources have been cited in addition to Hansard where appropriate. Material found in Bulwer's collected *Speeches* has been cited both to that work and to Hansard without exception. Hansard, accordingly, is the fundamental reference throughout.

2. Bulwer's Second Speech on the Taxes on Knowledge, found on pages 207 to 223 has been given the rendering from both *Speeches* and Hansard, so that the reader may notice the differences, which are representative and, in almost every case, inconsequential. Elsewhere, the rendering is from *Speeches* when Bulwer is speaking and what he says is contained there; otherwise, of course, whether Bulwer or another Member is speaking, the rendering is from Hansard.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### Introduction

The subject of this essay is the nineteenth-century writer and politician, Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873). Recognized perhaps as the author of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, which was made into a television series some years back, and as the mocked author of the novel starter, "It was a dark and stormy night," few today are aware that Bulwer was in his time a writer of prodigious amounts of widely acclaimed work and fewer still that he was at least as prominent as a politician as he was as a writer, his successes in each of these undertakings rendering benefits for the other.

*The First Chapter*: This first Chapter will offer some general comments on Bulwer. It will then discuss Bulwer's life and some of the influences upon it, including those brought by his family, friends and acquaintances, his education and the like. Since the present essay will on the whole be concerned with Bulwer's activities as a Member of Parliament, rather than his activities as an author, a brief conceptual discussion - chiefly rhetorical, argumentational and historical - will be offered so that when, from time to time, the relevant concepts

are employed in this essay's examination of Bulwer's political work their meanings will be clear. Finally, Bulwer's discussion of contemporary Britain, *England and the English*, will be considered. These four domains, then, Bulwer generally, his life, a few general concepts for purposes of analysis and *England and the English*, will serve as means of orientation for discussions in the Chapters which follow of Bulwer's quest for Reform, his opposition to the Taxes on Knowledge, his defense of Protection, his contributions during the war in the Crimea and his labors as a Cabinet Minister in the second Derby-Disraeli Government.

*Bulwer's Name*: It is not possible, however, even to begin a discussion of Bulwer without some reference to his name. He finished life with the name Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, first Baron Lytton. During different times in his life, he used the names Edward Bulwer, Edward Lytton Bulwer, Edward Bulwer Lytton and Edward Lytton; when elevated to the peerage in 1866, he became Lord Lytton of Knebworth. Throughout this essay, he will be referred to simply as Bulwer, although it must be said that his contemporaries and many commentators since have preferred Bulwer-Lytton or Lord Lytton, the former more generally and the latter from his elevation in 1866 until perhaps the First World War, after which his popularity waned precipitously and his peerage receded in memory. He is today given entry in most lexical and encyclopedic works under "Lytton," indexed and referred to in works concerned with history usually as "Bulwer-Lytton" and in works concerned with

literature increasingly as "Bulwer." There are exceptions to these rules, however, particularly when, for instance, a work of history treats of a very limited span of time, say the Thirties, when Bulwer called himself Lytton Bulwer; if the historian's apparent knowledge of Bulwer is congruently limited, then the historian is likely to refer to and index him as Lytton Bulwer. On the other hand, so recent and knowledgeable a commentator as John Russell Stephens in *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theater 1800-1900*, published in 1992, both indexes and refers to him throughout as "Lytton," as if Bulwer were no more than a middle name. Bulwer's first mention in those segments of the book in which he is discussed is frequently of "Bulwer Lytton," but normally Stephens returns quickly to "Lytton." Interestingly, his reference to "Bulwer's Act," the popular title of the Dramatic Copyright Act of 1833, requires that he mention "Edward Bulwer Lytton," but a few lines later it is "Lytton" again (90), this despite the fact that, at the time of the Act, Bulwer referred to himself as "Lytton Bulwer," never "Lytton" alone, and with some frequency as "Bulwer" alone, as did his contemporaries.

***Bulwer's Reception***: Now all of this might be wholly incidental were it not so indicative of the personae of Bulwer himself: because, on the one hand, he was so variously occupied during an immensely busy life and, on the other, has achieved so little in the way of an enduring, general reputation, he has been profoundly compartmentalized in his reception, with commentators fully aware of the aspect of his career with which

they are engaged, but little aware of any of the others. Sometimes, for example, only the most fleeting reference is made to Bulwer's political and oratorical skills, even by those studying the historical circumstances in which these were significantly employed, be these circumstances to do with his work in Reform, Protection, the Conservative Party, taxation, military, foreign and Colonial affairs or with any of his numerous specific endeavors. He is acknowledged to be a Parliamentarian of talent or competence often simply because a commentator's contemporary sources refer to him as such. Only a sprinkling of commentators - most very recently and, it must be said, most of them historians - indicate in any degree of their deserved complexity the roles he played in a great range of events. Similarly, Bulwer's talent as a literary person has been obscured by pejorative commonplaces emanating in the main from an often affected repugnance at his style; while his is a style not currently in vogue, it is in the present writer's view one well worth a serious reconsideration, as too is his literary effort generally. Mockery of the very great may be attributable to insecurity on the part of the mocker; mockery of those something less than very great, only to meanness.

Such was not, with respect to Bulwer, however, the disposition of the considerable majority of those living in the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century and the first decade or so of the twentieth, who consumed his work with enthusiasm and collected his books with zeal. Indeed, so much of him was printed throughout the English-speaking world that it remains a

relatively easy matter to obtain sets of his complete works even today. And, at least as a literary figure, Bulwer continues a flitting presence on the periphery of the canonical gaze. His contributions as a political person, on the other hand, in the House and out of doors, fully apparent to his contemporaries, have been buried in silence. It is the purpose of this essay to bring these contributions once more to consideration.

Part of the difficulty in doing so lies in the fact that Bulwer has never received adequate biographical attention. As a result, errors with respect to his life pervade even the most authoritative and recent reference works. Both the latest edition of *Chambers Dictionary of Biography* (1990) and the first edition of the new *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (1995) are in substantial error on significant points. But these works are part of an abiding tradition. The *Dictionary of National Biography*, the touchstone of all lexical biography in English, has allowed error. Conversely, the only important and factual biography of Bulwer to date remains a two-volume effort published eighty years ago by the subject's grandson, Victor Alexander George Robert, the second Earl of Lytton (1876-1947). The second Earl's father and Bulwer's son, the diplomat and poet, Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, the first Earl of Lytton (1831-1891), known also under the *nom de plume*, "Owen Meredith," began a biography of his father shortly after his death, but was unable to much more than gather various autobiographical, biographical and literary materials together in a two-volume anthology. There is a popular biography by the

English Radical journalist, Thomas Hay Sweet Escott (1844-1924), published some forty years after Bulwer's death, and the initial volume, published in 1931, of a projected but never completed multivolume biography by the English publisher and writer Michael Sadleir (1888-1957), whose "story" of "melancholy grandeur" (v) ended with the first volume in the biographer's self-confessed boredom at the telling. There is but little else.

## General Comments

Edward Bulwer-Lytton had, on the whole, a reasoned life and an apt and deliberate career as a person of letters, politician and celebrity in the late Georgian and early and middle Victorian periods. He did all the right things and nothing, at least by the standards of the day, that was particularly wicked: he worked indefatigably, led a very nearly public private life, performed each and every social function required of him, had influential and animating friends, was the product of a successful family and himself raised a son of whom any parent could be proud. The darker side of the Victorian century was not absent in him: his marriage, ill-advised on any account, was stormy in union, vicious in separation and nationally and, from time to time, internationally visible throughout. It drove one child, the son, to distraction and contributed to the other child's, a daughter's, early death. This awful and still notorious marriage notwithstanding, however, Bulwer was a man of abiding

integrity, rational compassion, eccentric personality and social wit. He was also redoubtably pragmatic in a manner widely admired in the nineteenth century, but one not customarily expected of those who were in any degree immersed in creative preoccupations. Those who were acquainted with him - political opponents and colleagues, friends, those with whom he did business or interacted in the context of government - knew well enough his practical turn of mind. John Blackwood (1818-1879), the important publisher, writing to George Eliot in May of 1858 of his meetings with several "literary men," commented on his impression of Bulwer a few months after the second Derby Government had been formed. A resignation and consequent shuffling had taken place in the new Cabinet, and Bulwer had again been approached:

> Bulwer is in great form and I do not think he cares much whether he is to be a Cabinet Minister or not. I hope he will, as I think he has the best head in the House of Commons. I never met any one whose views were so clear and statesmanlike. Very few have any idea what a shrewd practical man he is and how ready to consult the opinions and wishes of others. (II, 458.)

Blackwood's remarks nicely epitomize what most of Bulwer's contemporaries - friend or, *mutatis mutandis*, enemy - thought of him, but also point to the feature in Bulwer, much criticized by some in his day and since, but essential in a competent politician and recognized as such, at least implicitly, by Blackwood, of a deftness at and openness in listening to others and shaping his political responses to the extent he could in terms of what others expressed as their needs and desires.

***Bulwer's Work***: Bulwer was often published and widely

republished throughout the last century and well into ours. It is hard to imagine that anyone in the English-speaking world had not read him long before his death in 1873 and nearly as hard to imagine that there were many who had not heard of him within thirty or forty years of his birth in 1803. Today we would call Bulwer a phenomenon, but unlike the phenomena we produce today, he was vastly intelligent, although to an extent, it must be admitted, in a noncreative way, enormously well read, fully at home in German, Greek, Latin and French, and an author of reputable histories, satisfactory biographies, skillful novels, respectable verse, irreproachable if uninspired drama and brilliant speeches; indeed, had he stuck to this last genre, he might have been in his day the rival of Cicero or Demosthenes. There were those in his day, and they were not a few, who thought him such in any case.

This may seem high praise, but it is not intended to be so, for Bulwer never took the time to make of himself more than a luminous orator in an age prepared by both formal and informal education to receive something a good deal greater. And much the same can be said of his novels: an age which was already receiving - not just in English, but in German, Italian, French and Russian - some of the best novels ever written, an age which - whether entirely cognizant or not of its own capacity to generate and receive great fiction - was, clearly, ready to receive much better from Bulwer, got from him novels only of decorous competence and agreeable facility. It is not true, however, that Bulwer did no more than write to taste; nor did he

measure what he'd done by its popularity alone. He thought, for example - and was probably right in thinking - that *La Vallière* was his best play (Shattuck 55), despite its having never found favor with audiences. Nor was he ever caught up in himself; despite the envy and even contempt he received from others - hardly from Thackeray alone - he was, according to one Dickens' biographer, "magnanimously quick to recognize the merits of others" (Johnson [I] 210), and this against the tendency of the day. But unlike Dickens, whose famous apology to Mrs. Seymour Hill and subsequent rewriting of *David Copperfield* matched in later humility the unseemliness of the precedent deed, Bulwer hid his identity after an unwarranted attack in *The New Timon* upon a Tennyson who had just come into his own and then rationalized the attack with untrue claims about the younger poet's supposed wealth, all the while trying desperately to cloak the impropriety and gratuitousness of his language behind authorial anonymity, a ploy he had, ironically, condemned with solid and consequential persuasiveness in *England and the English* thirteen years before.

***Bulwer's Personality***: Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton or Sir E.G.E.L. Bulwer-Lytton, as his name was rendered by the last Hansard before his elevation to Baron Lytton of Knebworth in 1866, was a personality a great deal more complex than even this long name, artifactually representative in its repetitions, might be given to convey. Despite its only slightly exaggerated display at a time of growing hyphenation and initials wielding, it was a name often mocked; Thackeray

delighted to burlesque it. Less parodied but equally visible were Bulwer's mannerisms and dress. He brought black into style for men, where it's been ever since, with a casual remark put by a character in *Pelham*, and there was no question that even into age he was foppish, insofar as one can be foppish in black. But nearly every Prime Minister save Gladstone had been in one degree or another foppish, at least in youth; but in Bulwer foppishness was noticed, not the least because he unfailingly made a thing of it. He was all of an act, of course, yet this is to be distinguished from putting on airs. William White, who saw him often during Bulwer's last years in the Commons, said that, before speaking, Bulwer walked about "rather stooping ... his hands thrust into his trouser pockets, and his eyes cast downwards - looking all the world as if he fancied that he had lost something, and was searching on the ground and feeling for it in his pockets at the same time" (9-10). This was the outer appearance of a man about to say something, and, always one to ready an audience, Bulwer sought by the appearance to convey the intention.

***Intellectual Orientation***: And Bulwer changed his views, another ground for derision; not that he was inconsistent, rather he was unafraid to follow where his thoughts and observations led him. He was a singularly observant man and soaked up what he heard and saw with a mind that knew the sponge, but not the bucket. Much of what he took up in observation found its way into the enormous numbers of pages he wrote. That he was remarkably antitheoretical and often treated abstractions as

if they were aberrations or diseases may have been more a quirk of personality than a conscious intellectual orientation; whatever drove him to the denial and despisement of theory, his life-long devotion to its ridicule manifested itself in each and every one of his endeavors. Yet he was not a man consecrated to facts for their own sakes; he was deeply interested in the principles which underlay and girded the alliance of facts with one another. In this sense, he was a scientist, and *England and the English* not only demonstrates his early and comprehensive command of the complexities of society in all its aspects, but offers us one of the first great works of what in the present century might be considered social anthropology. In this publication, as elsewhere, he was systematic rather than theoretical, comprehending rather than constructing, expository rather than explanatory, as we might say today, exegetic rather than hermeneutic. We can see this too in his contemporary and friend John Stuart Mill and in one of the great teachers of them both, Jeremy Bentham. Philosophically, it was a bearing unbroken until the Idealisms of the end of the century - Bradley, Bosanquet, T. H. Green, McTaggart and the like - only to be reasserted by Russell, Moore, their friends and students. Bulwer was an empiricist of the ancient British tradition. This is not to say Bulwer was a philosopher, even minutely. It is to say, however, that he, as much as any greatly productive person of British nineteenth-century ambiance, was moved by the propulsion of the practicable, which impelled the age.

***Bulwer's Sensibilities, Beliefs and Competence***: Nor was

Bulwer free of the insecurities of that age. He did not question the Empire. Few did until the Commonwealth movement began to develop in the Universities, especially at Oxford, toward the end of the century. But Bulwer was convinced that Imperial power must be earned power, and he demonstrated his conviction in his defense of the native populations under British control and his willingness to criticize British governance in the Colonies when it went bad. His compassion for the lower classes in Britain itself and for the Irish was a constant in his politics. These acknowledged his value to them, and the Scots as well, who specifically honored his contributions to the spirit of their national heritage. His work in Parliament, not less than his novels, showed him an intractable social critic. He believed in education and the franchise as means of social improvement; there was no sense in him that anyone or any group was naturally more able or intelligent than any other. While inclined to a more patronizing presentation of it, his view of women did not greatly differ from that of Mill.

Despite his affectations, he had the common touch and was as likely to be invited to speak at a workingmen's association meeting as at a Scottish university. He despised - as can only those who deeply comprehend the word - any kind of violence, and while he supported violence where he thought he must, say in the Crimea, he spoke against it surprisingly often during his thirty years in the Commons, whether it be done against the Irish, the Chinese, the peoples of the Subcontinent or working men and women at home in England.

Toiling all his life without respite, often to collapse, his written and spoken words betray a turbulent mind and a spirit unavailable to leisure. Ironically, Disraeli, of the two the far less sensitive, but a man without fail able to find his ease, chided Bulwer once for taking a cure for what amounted to a nervous collapse. But this commotion within Bulwer nearly always found its way out, so that when he referred to the "money spiders" of the capitalist Interest or pointed - ever so discreetly - at the habitual rape of Irish women and girls by English proprietors and soldiers, the edge on his language matched well the anger motivating his words.

All in all, Bulwer's relationship to his listeners and readers was a kind of partnership, an alliance governed by what Bulwer would accept as moral impulse. He was an Anglican and acknowledged the Church of England, but was not a demonstrably religious man; he vigorously supported the end to Disabilities, be they attached to Catholics, Dissenters or Jews, so that his morality was not founded on particular interpretations of Scripture or doctrine or a special understanding of faith. He was worried that the vast enterprises of the age - the factories, the growing Imperial bureaucracies, the crowded cities, the social and political movements - would engulf and overpower the capacity of the single person to find place and to preserve herself or himself and that this would in turn provoke responses even more devastating to the values he cherished than the circumstances which provoked them. In one of his last novels, *The Parisians*, whose major theme is the Commune, with

whose motives Bulwer was not wholly out of sympathy, he sums up his reflections amid the terrible carnage:

> When crimes that outrage humanity have their motive or their excuse in principles that demand the demolition of all upon which the civilization of Europe has its basis - worship, property, and marriage - in order to reconstruct a new civilization adapted to a new humanity, it is scarcely possible for the serenest contemporary to keep his mind in that state of abstract reasoning with which Philosophy deduces from some past evil some existent good. (Book 12, "L'envoi".)

A few words later, Bulwer reaffirms his confidence in the guidance of the divine intention in human affairs, so that it is not a question of the horrifyingly expected character of the deeds done in Paris during that time; what is essential here in understanding Bulwer is his denial of the capacity of abstraction to attain comprehension of the event. Rather, "social virtues to be realized ages afterwards by happier generations" are the consequence of and discoverable in "instincts and aspirations," not "abstract reasoning."

But above all, Bulwer was a careful man. He memorized constantly and remembered well. He knew his speeches by heart, although, when interrupted, he was superbly capable of retort and repartee. In writing, he often used more words than were necessary, and this may have been the consequence of the care he took. But he did not always do so and rarely in speaking, whether the speech was prepared or extemporaneous. He respected facts, seldom exaggerated, even a little, and had a keen eye for statistics, and not just when they fit his purposes. Time and again he was praised by other Members not just for his eloquence, but for his command of subject. Both

were admired in Parliament, and the latter especially.

## Bulwer's Family, Early Life and Education

*Family*: Bulwer's father, a general, had been appointed one of the four commanders responsible for the defense of Britain upon an attempt by Napoleon to invade. This and the awful gout which killed him occupied all of his final days. William Earle Bulwer (1757-1807) was descended from Turold Bulver, who fought at Hastings with William the Conqueror and had been given land in Norfolk (Lytton, I, 3). Born with land, the General attempted to add to it, but the acquisitions cost him more than they gave, and he fell into considerable debt. This might not have finally been a problem, but the avenues he seems to have contemplated out of his obligations vanished with his death just after Edward turned four. Edward Bulwer was brought to London by his mother, born Elizabeth Barbara Warburton Lytton (1773-1843), the daughter of a family in Hertfordshire which had its own great wealth. The marriage had been, in Bulwer's later term, "ill-assorted," not the least due to his father's jealousy of his wife's mother (4). The general's death, however, permitted the daughter and mother thenceforward to be happy in one another's company as and when they might wish. Bulwer had two older brothers, and the death of their father terminated the common domicile of the three sons. William (1799-1877), the oldest, received the Bulwer property in Norfolk and was sent off to school; educated, he took up permanent residence on his estates and in no way entered the

public life of England. Henry (1801-1872), the middle son, was given in care to grandmother Lytton, whose patrimonial fortune he was to inherit; he entered into Government service, sat in Parliament, worked skillfully and relentlessly for Palmerston, wrote much of, but did not finish, the great man's official biography, published works of travel and political analysis and contributed much to Britain's activities in Europe and elsewhere with daily and unceasing energy until he died in Naples, Lord Dalling and Bulwer, exhausted but still working, a year before his younger brother, who would die too in the midst of ceaseless labor.

*Mother, Schooling and First Writing*: After his father died, Bulwer remained with his mother, herself heir to the Lytton estates at Knebworth in Hertfordshire. Edward was his mother's favorite, not the least because his father had taken a thorough dislike to him, but also because, unlike his brothers, he was fully hers during the tender years of his childhood. At nine, however, he was sent off to Fulham, where a Dr. Ruddock and a Mrs. Bowen kept a school. The school did not suit the young boy particularly well; his mother came for a visit after two weeks to find him physically and mentally in such a state that she removed him from the school immediately. Bulwer was next sent to the school of Dr. Curtis in Sunbury, where his older brother Henry went. He was not there close to his brother, nor did he make any friends. After two years in the place, he was sent, again for medical reasons, to a school in Brighton, where, again, he learned little, but finally regained his health. He

ended, at eleven years of age, at Dr. Hooker's in Rottingdean, and there he met his element. He liked the other boys, save the master's stepson, learned much and made sufficient impression on Dr. Hooker, whose school had a national reputation (44), to draw the following comment in a recommendation that Edward be sent on to Eton: "Your son has exhausted all I can profess to teach him. His energy is extraordinary. He has a vital power which demands a large field. He has it in him to become a very remarkable man" (45).

However, it was not to Eton that Edward went, but to a tutor with a few students who were to be prepared for the best universities. The Rev. Charles Wallington was an Oxford graduate under whom Bulwer studied Latin and Greek literature and heard Parliamentary debates read aloud by a master with two sons in the Army and a passion for politics. Bulwer read enormously at Mr. Wallington's, especially history, and wrote much. While at Mr. Wallington's he received a very encouraging response from Dr. Samuel Parr (1747-1825), the renowned Latinist and whig controversialist, to whom he had sent many letters and samples of his verse. Parr, with William Jones (1746-1794), the distinguished orientalist, had been friends of Bulwer's grandfather Richard Warburton Lytton (1751-1810), himself a greatly accomplished, if unproductive, scholar, linguist and collector of books. Encouraged to write, Bulwer wrote. His first publication, subsidized in part by his mother, came when he was seventeen: *Ismael: An Oriental Tale, with Other Poems. Delmour; or, A Tale of a Sylphid, and Other Poems*

came three years later, in 1823, and it was followed by *Sculpture* in 1825, which won Bulwer the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement of July, 1825. After 1825, Bulwer published at least one book a year, nearly every year, the rest of his life, in some years two, three or even four, if one counts novels, plays, anthologies of essays, book-length poems and collections all together. To this are to be added his prolific contributions to periodicals, his voluminous correspondence and, of course, his many speeches, all carefully prepared and memorized for delivery.

***Cambridge and the Cambridge Union***: Though there was debate, Bulwer ended going to Cambridge, despite the ties of his beloved Mr. Wallington to Oxford. First, however, he was sent to a Cambridge tutor for mathematics. Bulwer's splendid comparison of his new tutor, Mr. Thomson, with his old tutor, Mr. Wallington, says as much of Oxford and Cambridge in the first years of the last century as it does of either of the men:

> Wallington was a Tory, Thomson a Whig; Wallington was High Church, Thomson somewhat of a latitudinarian; Wallington was dignified and silent, Thomson easy and loquacious; Wallington loved a quotation, Thomson loved a joke. Both of them were excellent men in different ways. Thomson would have called Wallington a prig, Wallington would have called Thomson vulgar. (67.)

While Bulwer's literary endeavors are not the subject of the present essay, it may be said that many of the persons in Bulwer's early life would be evoked for the making of characters in his novels. This would be true as well, of course, of persons he knew later, but it is nearly always the earlier persons who

have been the more poignantly drawn.

Bulwer went first to Trinity, where William and Henry had gone, but William had already graduated and Henry had first left school, then returned, then gone to Downing College. Bulwer for a number of reasons intensely disliked Trinity and after Henry's leaving moved to Trinity Hall, one of the oldest colleges at Cambridge. He associated much with Henry, but too with many of his contemporaries at the university who would later, like Bulwer and his brother Henry, become notable: Alexander Cockburn (1802-1880), the great jurist; Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839), the satirical and political poet and Parliamentarian; Robert Hildyard (1800-1857), the renowned lawyer; Charles Pelham Villiers (1802-1898), the reformer and indefatigable anti-Corn Law activist; Charles Buller (1806-1848), the Benthamite friend of Thackeray and Chief Secretary to Lord Durham in Canada during the French-Canadian insurrection of 1838; John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872), the Broad Church founder of Christian socialism; William Eyton Tooke (1808-1834), a tragic figure, dying young, and an early and important member of John Stuart Mill's short-lived Utilitarian Society; and Benjamin Hall Kennedy (1804-1889), the Latinist and model for Dr. Skinner in Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* were among Bulwer's friends (details in part from Cradock [Chapter 1, *passim*], in part from encyclopedic and lexical sources).

These all and others of similar future credentials were members of the Cambridge Union Debating Society, familiarly

known as the Cambridge Union, which Bulwer joined in 1823 at the invitation of Alexander Cockburn, who was, like Bulwer, also at Trinity Hall. Most became officers in the Union, "a serious-minded body, [for which] political or historical motions were in favour" (Cradock 5); Bulwer was himself Secretary for Easter term 1824 and Treasurer for Michaelmas the same year (170). Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) and Charles Austin (1799-1874) immediately before Bulwer's involvement with the Union and Richard Chenevix Trench (1807-1886), John Kemble (1807-1857), John Sterling (1806-1844), Richard Monckton Milnes (1809-1885) and Arthur Hallam (1811-1833) just after (16, 169-170) were among the officers whose contributions in subsequent years have brought them significant historical recognition and were numbered among Bulwer's acquaintances. Macaulay - who had been secretary for Easter 1820 and treasurer for Lent 1823 and, like Bulwer, never became president, although movement through the offices to that of the presidency was the norm - returned frequently after graduation and had a material impact on Bulwer:

> I remember well walking with him, Praed, [William Henry] Ord and some others of the set, along the College Gardens, listening with wonder to that full and opulent converse, startled by knowledge so various, memory so prodigious. That walk left me in a fever of emulation. I shut myself up for many days in intense study, striving to grasp at an equal knowledge: the trophies of Miltiades would not suffer me to sleep. (Lytton, I, 79-80.)

Bulwer's final speech in the Union, the 19th of April, 1825, was a delivery on the Game Laws; described here in, it must be conceded, Bulwer's own words, it was "long remembered and cited as among the most effective which had been heard in my time at

that famous debating club" (80). Cradock quotes him (from Lytton, I, 77) on his first speech, early in 1823 - it "was short, but it was manly and simple, spoken in earnest, and at once successful" - but quickly moves to Bulwer's affair with Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828 [Byron's infatuée and the wife of Viscount Melbourne (1779-1848), whig premier 1834, 1835-1841]) and to his personality, a thing of sometimes sardonic, sometimes approving fascination alike to his contemporaries and to his commentators: "[he] had already many of the mannerisms of genius" says Cradcock (12). Bulwer's first speech before the Union was given in the defense of Praed, who had, in a free-spending way, committed funds, unavailable to him as secretary, to a purchase - which had not been authorized by a vote of the membership - of periodicals for the Union library . Hildyard, always one to make a legal point, had as treasurer that term led the accusation, but it came to nothing, for Union sentiment, as well as some precedent, was with Praed (Hudson 89-90). In addition to gaining the experience he did from his final task, in 1825, of defending before some two hundred officers and members of the Union a thesis - that respecting the Game Laws - originated by vote and contested within a formal context (Cradock 5), Bulwer was given the opportunity at Cambridge to embrace the Philosophical Radicalism which had been taken up everywhere at the university, and no less among the membership of the Union, first under the leadership of Charles Austin, who ascended the steps of officership in the Easter, Michaelmas and Lent terms of 1821

and 1822, and then of Charles Buller, who was treasurer during Michaelmas, 1826, and president during Lent, 1827 (169-170). The Benthamite inclination, says Cradock, was "very much a Cambridge product" (22); Austin and Buller, both of whom later became very important Philosophical Radicals, lent their names to the two Cambridge phases of the Benthamite ascendancy due in the main to their presidencies and the influence which flowed from them; other members, including Bulwer, whose tenure as a Union officer and period of study at Cambridge came squarely between the two cusps of the Benthamite presence, were strongly under its sway and would contribute significantly to the successes of the Philosophical Radicals once they'd got into Parliament and the civil service. Bulwer thus received at Cambridge two crucial assets: first, the skills developed in the Cambridge Union of a person involved with matters of public policy, who must criticize and be criticized both in the course of presentation and in consequence of it; second, a philosophical position which he might take with him into the great world and by means of which he might discipline his judgment and delimit his perspective. To these was added, of course, the absolutely indispensable network he assembled of relatives, friends and acquaintances - along with *their* relatives, friends and acquaintances - which no politically active person can be without.

***Bulwer's Private Life***: Bulwer's private life was full, interesting and often as taxing as his public life. He traveled much, often for his always tenuous health, but never beyond

Europe. He smoked constantly, a circumstance which, without doubt, contributed much to his recurrent poor health, but he worked just as constantly, writing daily from rising until twelve or one and after dinner until midnight at least, often until one or two in the morning (Lytton, II, 18-19). His marriage to Rosina Doyle Wheeler (1804-1882) was a disaster whose very public repercussions lasted all of his life. The perpetual arguments of the married years, 1826 to 1835, were transformed into great, intermittent battles during the long decades of separation. The last thing of which Emily, their daughter, dying of typhus in 1848, was aware was her mother's bribing her way into the house where her daughter lay stricken in order to gather evidence that Bulwer had been giving the dying young woman inadequate care. Lord Lytton, the grandson, implies his aunt may actually have died of the encounter, for she had been making good progress until this final, typically rancorous encounter with her mother (II, 102). But neither does he spare Bulwer, insisting that the responsibility for Emily's lonely, tragic, short life lay upon them both: each blamed the other for every manner of thing, real or imagined, "and the recital of these reproaches ... gave [Emily] a morbid terror of both her parents" (101). Emily's death, added to much else, embittered their other child, Emily's younger and devoted brother Robert, against both parents, though in the end far more against his mother than his father. The marriage had turned Bulwer's own mother against him, depriving him of an affection upon which he had until that time been dependent, but it too

deprived him of income of which he was an often unwilling, if always needful, recipient and forced him back upon his own resources, among which writing for a living became the principal. After the separation, mother and son reconciled, though at the time of the separation it appeared the elder Mrs. Bulwer had with difficulty achieved a willingness to step in in order to save the marriage (I, 243-44).

It is no exaggeration to say that Rosina Bulwer took to a pursuit of her husband which reached out to touch him even when both were in the grave. In 1889 was published a collection of letters between them that, editorially fitted together with skill, indicated a Bulwer who, when he was not indifferent, took his pleasure in tormenting his wife, this only after having seduced her by the most affectionate hypocrisy in earlier days (Devey, *passim*). There is no doubt that the difficulties lay with them both, and while we may certainly identify, if we wish, with the nineteenth-century public's tendency to assign a stoic patience to Edward Bulwer, broken only when Rosina Bulwer - always careful to employ the wife's equivalent of any honor or status Bulwer might have accrued - made an appearance at some campaign speech or another to lambast him verbally from the back row, the blame for which the public assigned to them both, we can just as easily notice the rather sublime competence which Rosina Bulwer imparted to her chosen task. The great resource of Victorian gender oppression, the hysterical woman, was naturally brought to bear against her, but Rosina Bulwer's resourcefulness, stamina and eye for detail in the stalking of

her husband were not the characteristics of hysteria, and she acquired no little respect and a certain following as the issue became a kind of fixed emotional appurtenance amid the shifting Victorian scene. Indeed, when news of the one injudicious attempt at commitment got to the press, such a thing was made of it that the very public Rosina Bulwer was soon free again (Lytton, II, 274-75), and the ill-advised Edward Bulwer, driven to distraction by an uproar added to ill-health, very nearly had his public career ruined and did have, far sooner than might otherwise have been the case, to give up the Cabinet slot he'd been given (301), one in which he had done exceedingly well and which was his, be Derby and Disraeli in office or in shadow (298-99).

Bulwer had many friends and knew nearly everyone of importance in Victorian society. Among the friends who have not yet been mentioned were Charles Dickens (1812-1870), to whom he was close; Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), for whom he served for a time as a kind of elder brother; Lady Marguerite Blessington (1789-1849), who was his special confidante, and Count Alfred Guillaume Gabriel D'Orsay (1801-1852), who was her special confidant; Albany Fonblanque (1793-1872), the ground-breaking journalist and editor; William Godwin (1756-1836), the famous writer; John Forster (1812-1876), the historian, editor and biographer; William Charles Macready (1793-1873), the great actor and producer-director; Richard Lalor Sheil (1791-1851), the Irish M.P. and playwright; Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) and Washinton Irving

(1783-1859); John Galt (1779-1839), the Scottish writer; Countess Cowper (1787-1869), Melbourne's sister and Palmerston's wife; Samuel Butler (1835-1902), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and many others. His circle of acquaintances, extending far beyond that of his friends, was very large, for Bulwer was thoroughly at home in society and liked people; he was a genuinely popular person in a world where manufactured popularity, like manufactured goods, was undergoing nascent, though powerful moments in its development. He was active in charity work, especially for actors and writers, for whom age or disability or undeserved lack of recognition had become insuperable barriers to subsistence or even existence. Beneath the patinas of first foppery, then pretense, and finally idiosyncrasy was found by most who knew him a person whose devotion to duty, loyalty to friends, humanity to enemies and sensitivity to the oppressed or victimized - of which the 19th century was no less replete than our own - were aspects of his character he believed better left under the bushel than shown before all, barring some great, transcending necessity to be served in their manifestation. In his dealings and in his thinking, he was a humanist, though he would be the last to call himself that, the designation being perhaps somewhat self-congratulatory. But he had his failings and his failures. The gratuitous insult to Tennyson offered in *The New Timon* gave him much, if admittedly well-deserved, pain and nearly lost him his friendship with Forster. This incident was the result of one of his two greatest faults, hypersensitivity to critics, which he

inappropriately directed at Tennyson, during a time when the poet was just gaining recognition (71-76). His other great fault was insensitivity to his family, the consequences of which no member in it entirely escaped; on the other hand, it was often friends who held him dear who rescued him from himself, as when Chauncey Townshend (1798-1868), the poet, and Forster intervened between Robert and his father to smooth over a circumstance that the sixteen-year old boy - separated from his mother, deprived by death of his sister, sent away to a school in Germany by his father - experienced all out of proportion to its actual gravity (II, 378-79). But even here, Bulwer came immediately around once the matter was made clear to him.

***Bulwer's Political Life***: As a politician he had a distinguished, although not a pre-eminent, career. He was first sent up from St. Ives in Cornwall for the last pre-Reform Parliament and lost his seat as much by his own vote as any Member's. Next he went - rather was sent by the boroughmongers - to Lincoln City, where he represented a whig, but Protectionist, constituency. He remained its Member for nine years, but lost his seat to a tory on not being quite Protectionist enough. This was an irony, for his defenses of Protection, both in Parliament and in pamphlets, remain some of the most comprehensive and cogent to come of the age. But Protection was a lost cause, and when Bulwer returned to Parliament eleven years later in 1852, a shire Member for Hertford, his home county, he did so as a Conservative with more on his mind than the agriculturalists. In 1858, he became

Secretary of State for the Colonies and in 1866 was raised to the peerage, leaving the Commons forever. His political career is better followed in the context of his work in Parliament, but it is clear from what has been outlined here that he was no author merely exercising a hobby; he was fully serious about his political employment and good at it, so much so that Disraeli, one of the great political persons of Bulwer's or any age, expressed the profoundest incredulity at a decision on Bulwer's part to resign his Cabinet position, given that the causes of that decision were personal. While Disraeli's letter, which, as a matter of fact, persuaded Bulwer to stay on for several more months, says something of Disraeli and of the politics of the moment, it says a good deal more about Bulwer, as seen through the eyes of a friend who was also both a consummate politician and, too, in reasoned and great need of his friend's political competence:

Downing Street,
*Dec.* 29, 1858.

> MY DEAR BULWER - I am entirely knocked up by your letter, received on my hurried return from Knowsley.
>
> I have no opinion of Dr. Reed, or of any Doctors. In the course of my life I have received fifty letters from physicians like that which you enclosed to me, and which I return. Had I attended to them, I should not be here, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in robust health.
>
> Men of our temperament, at our time of life, ought not to require Doctors. I am quite alarmed that you have been so long under Dr. Reed, who, in some degree, explains your state.
>
> It is quite impossible that a man more than fifty, who has accomplished such great work as you have done, and endured such unparalleled and supernatural labour, can experience any real deficiency of nervous energy. It is not organic or natural, and must be the result of some quacking.
>
> I hope you will consider your position, and not sacrifice a political career at a public emergency, and

> when you have gained, on all hands, credit for the masterly administration of your Department. It will cause you regret hereafter.
>
> I say nothing of the effect on the position of the Government by the retirement of any of its members at this moment. The true motive will never be credited.
>
> Whatever your illness may be, your secession will be a paralytic stroke to the Ministry. The retirement of the most insignificant would be serious now.
>
> It has been one of the objects of my public life to find a colleague in an old friend, with whom, in our youth, I had pursued a congenial course, and I cannot express the pain it costs me to contemplate the possibility of a separation.
>
> My direction is *Torquay*. We had meant to have gone there this morning but I have stayed a day on account of this business.
>
> At all events, I trust the affair may be kept quite close at the present, so that we may look about ourselves, and breathe, and think. - Yours ever,
>
> D. (298-99.)

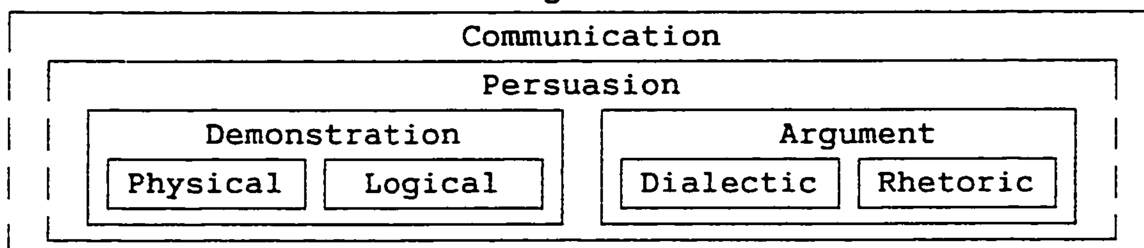
Bulwer received a letter, not so personal, but just as insistent, covering just the same ground except for remarks on the nature of illness in a politician, from Derby. Bulwer remained Colonial Secretary until June, 1859, when the Government fell, but then left even the shadow Cabinet.

## Formal Concepts

*Persuasion Generally*: Because much of this essay concerns Bulwer's formal speaking, it may be helpful to have to hand some formal tools of analysis, most of a lineage which goes back to Aristotle, as aids in discussing his labors in Parliament. These tools of analysis, while of longstanding provenance, are not without a degree of controversy in the present day with respect to their conceptual base, the parameters of their application, indeed, their very existence. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this essay, they perform their functions well

enough, as long as it is borne in mind that they remain tools of analysis and no more. The following chart makes several concepts available:

**Figure 1**




The broken lines in Figure 1 indicate modes of communication and persuasion which lie beyond the chart, among which artistic expression and the language of posture and gesture are examples. Naturally, all modes are available to all others, so that the delimiting charted in Figure 1 is meant to be analytically useful, not generically descriptive. Persuasion consists of both demonstration and argument. Demonstration is self-evidently persuasive and comprises displays which are either physical in nature or logical, the latter of which include, for example, those of mathematics. Argument occurs in two forms: in dialectic, all sides are active in submitting arguments; in rhetoric, only one side is active, while other sides listen or read, that is, when all listeners or readers are not already on the same side, as might be the case, for instance, in sermonic rhetoric. Another way of viewing the distinction between dialectic and rhetoric has participants in the former in one-to-one correspondence with each other and in the latter in one-to-many; the actual number of individuals in either configuration, of course, is not important, for it is the

relative attitude of the individuals which makes for the distinction, not their physical disposition as such. What distinguishes demonstration from argument is the circumstance that, in the course of demonstration, the writer or speaker will expect no dispute (providing the display has gone as intended), while quite the reverse is true for genuine instances of dialectic and rhetoric, in which dispute is not only intrinsic to their processes, but essential to their progress. And it is important to notice here that competent rhetoric involves the presentation of arguments no less than dialectic, although these may be rendered in their entirety and without overt interruption by the speaker or writer. Only in the vulgar sense is rhetoric the shouting of slogans or the importuning of certitudes.

*Modes of Persuasion*: Persuasion can be further characterized by the modes of ethos, pathos and logos, which are analyzable in terms of the audience, the speaker or writer and the content of particular instances of communication (Table 1). With respect to rhetoric, however, the circumstances are somewhat otherwise, for the audience has certain expectations of the speaker or writer: that he or she exhibit, first, the kind of credibility indicated by credentials, second, a commensurate level of competence, that is to say, the capacity to do what the credentials promise and, finally, good character, however that may be defined by the society of which the audience is a part. The speaker or writer, on the other hand, will wish to stimulate his or her audience's feelings,

assent and, when possible, awe. What remains when ethos and pathos have been analyzed out, if there is anything remaining, will be logos, the rationalized content of the delivery or writing. Naturally, an adept speaker or writer, as a proficient

**Table 1**

| Modes of Persuasion |
| --- |
| ethos |
| competence |
| credibility |
| character |
| pathos |
| emotional: feeling |
| intellectual: assent |
| spiritual: awe |
| logos |

audience, will attend to all of these aspects - of which good persuasion admits no separate identities - in more or less equal measure. Nevertheless, it is possible to be "persuaded" in a vulgar sense as the consequence of an emphasis upon or exclusion of one or two of the three modes.

An attempt at persuasion, delivered or written, will have a purpose or some multiplicity of purposes quite apart from the more general conditions under which any act of persuasion must take place. In such a case, it becomes important to determine more precisely the nature of the endeavored persuasion; in this

respect, dialectic is the more prolific in the variety of its authentic instances simply because its one-on-one procedure is nearly universal in its applicability. In short, anything is available to argument when people or groups confront each other individually as equals. Similarly, but conversely, demonstration's competence, in both its aspects, is dependent upon the acquisition of specific skills by the speaker or writer, since, as George Campbell, referring specifically to the teaching of mathematics, pointed out in the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* two centuries ago, only eloquence is necessary in its exposition (2n). As a result of these features, demonstration and the dialectical aspect of argument do not present significant difficulties in the analysis of their purposes, which, despite the incidental complexity which may attend any of their manifestations, are necessarily clear, practically to the writer or speaker and ideally to the audience; indeed, clarity is normally intrinsic to the purpose and a vigorously sought-after feature of both. Quite the contrary is the circumstance of rhetoric, as here defined; this is not to say that obfuscation is to be taken as the complement of clarity in any incidence of rhetoric, rather that rhetoric's natural functions in formal manifestation do not readily lend themselves to effortless disambiguation and comfortable accessibility. Nor is this to say conversely that rhetoric is unavailable to lucid and perspicuous presentation; indeed, Aristotle held clearness to be fundamental to the function of speech ([1404b] K 221), that is, to the ability of the speaker,

if not always the writer. But the nature of rhetoric, whether discovered in the speaker or writer, is such that its subject matter will in most instances be twisted or perverted when clarity is sought after as an intrinsic component of its design, rather than as the happy companion of its progress.

*Kinds of Rhetoric*: Still, rhetoric is available to significant analysis whose intent is to clarify in so far as clarity is obtainable. Again following Aristotle, but with explication in some small degree original to this essay, Table 2 provides an analytical framework within which instances of rhetoric may be formally contextualized. Table 2 is largely self-explanatory and need be discussed only insofar as obviously neologistic terminology has been introduced. The Greek derivatives "dicanic," "epideictic" and "symbouleutic" are taken directly from Aristotle; "epideictic" has already been in English use for many years, although it has yet to find its way into most collegiate dictionaries. The Latinate terms "ritic" and "consilic" are suggested as fellows to "forensic," although the difficulties found in the employment of "forensic" for "dicanic," given its origin in events, however legal, of the forum, persist, albeit to by far a lesser degree than with "ritic" and "consilic;" nevertheless, these Latinate terms have their value in the schematic balance. The three Greek-derived terms will be employed in the present essay in order to indicate that the full range of Table 2 is to be considered when they are used. With respect to Table 2 generally, it is, as with Figure 1, probably not wise to take what is found in it too

**Table 2**

| Kinds of Rhetoric | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | The Lexicon | | |
| **dicanic** | **epideictic** | **symbouleutic** | |
| (δικανικός) | (ʽεπιδεικτικος) | (συμβουλευτικός) | |
| forensic | ritic | consilic | |
| (*forensis*) | (*ritus*) | (*consilium*) | |
| [magistratical | [ceremonial | [parliamentary | [Arena] |
| judicial | demonstrative | deliberative | [Type] |
| legal] | occasional] | political] | [Purpose] |
| | The Circumstance | | |
| person | community | state | [Purview] |
| past | present | future | [Time] |
| law | custom | politics | [Context] |
| courts | forum | legislature | [Place] |
| | The Rhetor/Writer | | |
| fact | value | policy | [Claim] |
| accuses/ defends | praises/ blames | exhorts/ dissuades | [Procedure] |
| proof | display | action | [Object] |
| | The Audience | | |
| right/ wrong | proper/ improper | expedient/ inexpedient | [Judgment] |
| acquits/ convicts | acknowledges/ disavows | supports/ opposes | [Execution] |
| | The Subject | | |
| exoneration/ penalty | honor/ shame | advantage/ harm | [Effect] |

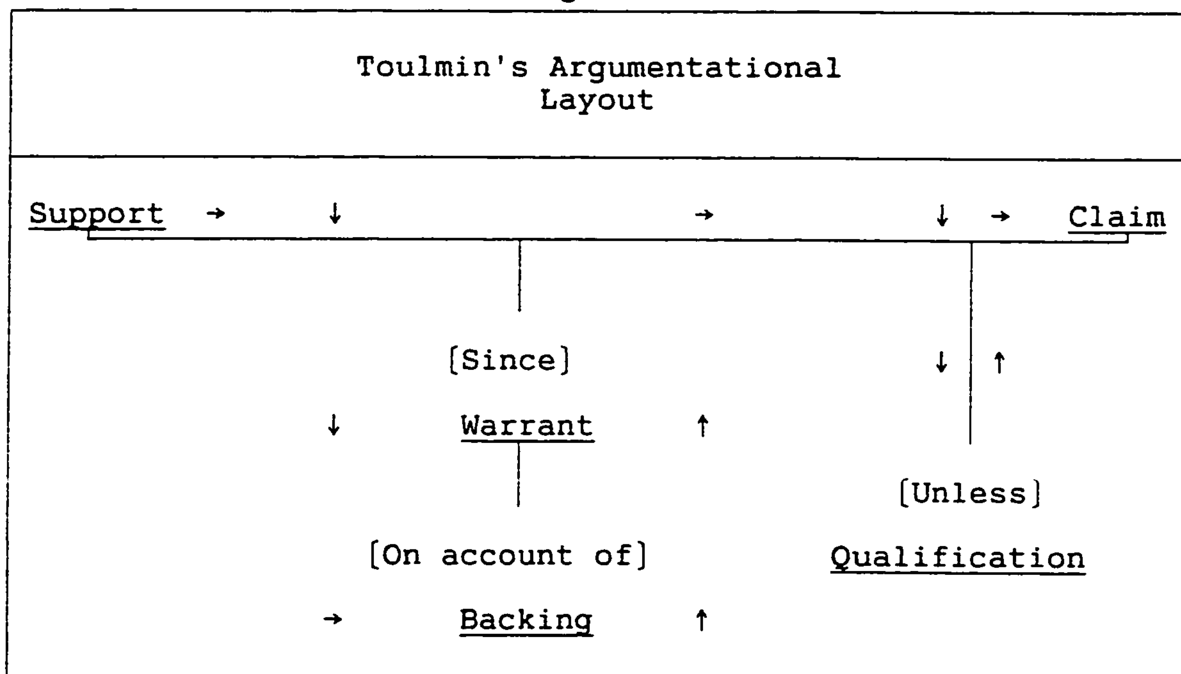
seriously, at least in any prescriptive sense; while it is intended to be descriptive, it is so merely in order to facilitate discussion in the present essay.

Toulminian Argumentation

*The Toulminian Layout*: The Toulminian layout - "layout" is Toulmin's term - presented in Figure 2 (derived from Toulmin, Chapter 3), on the other hand, possesses both descriptive power and prescriptive applications. The Toulminian description of argumentation takes as its model the logical procedures which are followed in the law; its practitioners remain actively aware of the stricter - Toulmin calls them "idealized" - rules of formal reasoning, but follow the dictates of a "working logic" (Toulmin, Chapter 4), which is no less rigorous in application, but remains open to probable, as well as to incontrovertible, reasoning. Argument from probable premises is a cornerstone of Aristotle's notion of rhetoric, the embodiment of which is the enthymeme, often called the rhetorical syllogism, whose layout mimics the logical syllogism found in dialectic, but whose development is rather from probable than certain premises. A modern interpolation has it a syllogism with an implicit or unexpressed premise (e.g., Rottenberg 215; v. Aristotle [F] 475-76 for the standard refutation and Aristotle [K] 315 for more or less a compromise position); this would better be called a truncated syllogism, for the briefest moment's thought will produce the recognition that unexpressed or implicit premises may as easily occur in

dialectical as in rhetorical reasoning. There is, as well, the consideration, pointed out by Colwyn Williamson in the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, that "it is difficult to be sure that a hidden premiss is 'really there,' and any silly argument may be turned into a valid one by arbitrary additions" (238 [single quotes in text]). For reasons more technical than substantive, the notion of the enthymeme is not entirely satisfactory for all instances of argument in rhetoric, and, of course, Aristotle never claimed it so.

**Figure 2**




But argumentation, by definition, requires formal embodiment of some sort, and Toulmin has struck the balance with his layout, one which preserves the progressive dynamic of argumentation, but allows for not only probable premises, as with the enthymeme, but a degree of flexibility in the reciprocal characterization of those elements of argument which permit conviction and those which permit only

presumption.

***The Warrant***: What Toulmin introduced into argumentation, then, was a formalization of the "degree of force" (100-101 and *passim*) any particular argument may carry, conceptualized in his notion of warrant. While the claim may be reconstituted to fit the particular environmental demands of any incarnation of an argument and the support (Toulmin calls it "data") may be, without respite, added to or subtracted from in the search for agreement, what normally moves an argument is not its claim, for this is the business of the person bringing forth the argument - to be heard or ignored as others may wish - nor its support, which others may well acknowledge even as they dispute the claim, but the link which binds these two aspects together and effects cogency for the claim by virtue of the support. This Toulmin calls the argument's warrant:

> Our task is no longer to strengthen the ground on which our argument is constructed, but is rather to show that, taking these data as a starting point, the step to the original claim or conclusion is an appropriate and legitimate one. At this point, therefore, what are needed are general, hypothetical statements, which can act as bridges, and authorise the sort of step to which our particular argument commits us. (98.)

Warrants provide "rules, principles, inference-licences or what you will, instead of additional items of information" (98). Typically, seven kinds of warrant are isolated: authority, generalization, sign, cause and effect, comparison, analogy and values (v., e.g., Rottenberg 144-159 and Arthur Hastings in Mills 128-146).

## The Synchronic and the Diachronic

It is useful to define categorically what is meant in this essay by the terms "diachronic" and "synchronic" and their various inflections. Table 3 renders a categorical definition.

**Table 3**

Synchronic/Diachronic Range

| Synchronic | | Diachronic |
|---|---|---|
| math   nat sci | soc sci | hmnstc stds   poetry |
| repeatable | [Aspect] | unrepeatable |
| abstract | [Mode] | concrete |
| experimental | [Means] | historical |
| simultaneous | [Instance] | sequential |
| reversible | [Moment] | irreversible |
| determinate | [Character] | indeterminate |
| universal | [Range] | unique |

The Table is divided into three aspects. First, the range itself is construed with respect to the characteristics which delimit its extreme manifestations in application. These characteristics are signified (in brackets) by their general purviews. Finally, the range is given an exemplary application in an allocation of academic arenas along its span. The term "synchronic" will be used to refer to things or circumstances of the world or the mind which maintain identity through time (and thus are, in a sense, timeless), while the term "diachronic"

will be used to refer to things or circumstances of the world or the mind which undergo alteration so that their identities evolve, change or come into being and pass away (and are thereby timebound).

*England and the English*

When he published *England and the English* in 1833, Bulwer was thirty years old and had published, among other literary works, notably poetry, *Falkland, Pelham, The Disowned, Devereux, Paul Clifford, Eugene Aram* and *Godolphin*, all novels of significance, whose themes for the most part concerned a variety of social issues put forward within a range of venues from high society in *Pelham* to low society in *Paul Clifford*; he had, as well, published *Asmodeus at Large*, a collection of essays on an assortment of subjects and sat in Parliament already for two years, winning constituencies in both the Unreformed and the Reformed House of Commons. *England and the English*, a work of social, political and economic analysis and criticism, was a natural outgrowth of the activities and writing in which Bulwer had been engaged since leaving Cambridge in 1825. In many ways, *England and the English* may be considered a work of early social science, particularly if one takes social science as interpretive rather than predictive, that is as diachronic in its intentions rather than synchronic (v. Table 3). As is the case with nearly all writing, including social science , whether its writers so acknowledge or not, Bulwer's analysis is set to purposes which compel it to a degree

of polemic from time to time. The possibility of writing in the absence of imperatives, moral, ideological, theological, social, political or the like, is yet to be demonstrated. What Bulwer seeks is to avoid abstraction and theorizing either for its own sake or as a means of concealing what we might refer to today as agendas. *England and the English*, then, is divided into five books and has three important appendices.

***The First Book.*** The first book, "View of the English Character," lays out Bulwer's general perspective of English society, with frequent comparisons with other societies, mostly that of the French, and is dedicated, appropriately enough, to the French statesman Talleyrand (1754-1838). The book is heavily anecdotal and is mostly topical in its examples, but rises to generalization, often strikingly so, as the details demand. Bulwer is intent to demonstrate the uniqueness of the English in a world of pandemic inclinations with respect to human nature. "The passions are universally the same," he says, "the expression of them as universally varying" (I, 7). As the English are unique, so are the remainder of peoples, so that at no time does Bulwer want to claim exclusive or generic superiority for any group. The English are superior in some things, not in others. Bulwer's working this out in illustrations brings some surprises. The English military is criticized by those who, "in the plenitude of their ignorance," wish flogging to be done away with, for there is no flogging in the French army. But, "if there is not flogging in the French army, there is the penalty of death. *For all the offences for*

*which we flog a soldier, the French shoot him*" (95, italics in original). In a comparison of the British with the Prussian army, the logic is nearly as crisp, but social rather than cultural in its objects. The Prussians have no difficulty in getting soldiers both willing and honorable: In Prussia, "a soldier considers it not the greatest blessing, but the heaviest misfortune to be discharged: *he was trained to think so before he went into the army.* [The Prussians] make the feeling of honour first, and *then* they appeal to it" (99, italics in original). He adds the interesting footnote that "even in the *civil* schools of Prussia there is a law, 'That no punishment shall be inflicted which wounds the sentiment of honour'" (99-100n, italics in original).

Bulwer is fond of inventing characters whose names represent their personalities or their political biases. In the second chapter of the first book, there is Lord Lachrymal, a "plebeian" risen into the aristocracy; risen, he forgets his origin and provides one more reason the people had better trust their sovereign than their nobles. The name and the eponymous behavior intersect politically: "if you were to menace the peers' right of voting by proxy, he would burst into tears" (19). In chapter five, Bulwer offers such instantiations as William Muscle, of the Old School of Radical (110-113), and the contiguous pair: My Lord Mute, the Dandy Harmless (115-118), and Sir Paul Snarl, the Dandy Venomous (118-121).

In an apologia meant to justify his revealing the "foibles" of the English, Bulwer begs to presume upon his

countrymen's generosity and wisdom, comparing these virtues in the English to the same in an emperor of the Chinese, "who have long been in the habit of enjoying very sensible monarchs" (41). When told by his court historian that a threatened dismissal for writing the truth about the emperor would result in further truths from the historian, these concerning the dismissal, the emperor assured the historian that he might write all he pleased with no fear, so that posterity would find little to blame in the historian's subject (41). Formally, the anecdote exemplifies one of Bulwer's favorite rhetorical devices: the tale to a point. But its content indicates as well a residue in Bulwer of the eighteenth-century penchant among educated Europeans for idealizing - at least for didactic purposes - the peoples of the East.

*The Second Book*: The second book is devoted to "Society and Manners." For Bulwer, this topic covers a great deal of ground indeed; in the first of the book's five chapters, Bulwer discusses the deleterious custom of matchmaking among the fashionable, "the universal marketing of our unmarried women; - a marketing peculiar to ourselves in Europe, and only rivalled by the slave-merchants of the East" (137); in the last of the chapters, he discusses the "sexual licentiousness" found in the manufacturing towns, debunking "a mischievous error" in the belief that the lower rates of illegitimacy in towns, when compared with those on the land, are due to less promiscuity, when they are actually due to "the inferior health of the women, and the desperate remedy of destroying the burden prematurely

in the womb" (203-04).

These sociological expositions of Bulwer's are materially ahead of their time with respect to sexuality, the implications for gender, the absence of at least explicit moralizing and the like. They are conspicuous because they hit upon issues which we might wish to contextualize as feminist, that is, of necessarily "recent" provenance and not available to the consciousness of a nineteenth-century English male writer, but they do not in a more general sense vary substantially in the forward-thinkingness of their insight from Bulwer's response to other, less arresting issues. What is more significantly interesting in Bulwer's remarks on these social problems is what he sees as their repercussions and their solutions. Matchmaking encourages "perpetual scheming, and perpetual hypocrisy," which may be overcome either by lovematching or, surprisingly, childhood betrothal, which would, "instead of bringing [children] to public sale, [effect] a private compact of exchange" (138). Later, Bulwer says that licentiousness encourages "passions [which] are jaded and exhausted" (204), but such a state can be overcome by "Operatives," that is, workingmen, who, "[d]eeply acquainted with the ills of their race, their main public thought is to alleviate and relieve them" (205-06). Bulwer intriguingly adds that these men "have not the jealousy common to men who have risen a little above their kind" (206). What is striking in the great range of concerns which Bulwer addresses is that it persuades the reader not only of the pervasiveness through every aspect of society of

the ills he points to, but of the possibility of locating the solutions where he has found the ills.

On the whole, Bulwer is disposed to see solutions in the group, but the group as representing and representative of the individual. Clubs provide not only social amenities, he points out, but a means for the individual to work through the group; presciently, Bulwer claims such institutions, once adopted, will be "peculiarly favourable to the poor" (153). On the other hand, not all groupings are necessarily beneficial; "political unions" tend to divide the "Operatives" into small clusters of squabbling parties, which weaken the overall political power of the workers (188-190). Often Bulwer's concerns seem as apropos today as, perhaps more so than, they did in his day: "The respect we pay to wealth absorbs the respect we should pay to genius," he laments (163). The social context given by the following is unique to Bulwer's time, its moral, of course, somewhat more universal:

> Everyone knows the anecdote of a certain professor of chemistry, who, eulogizing Boyle, thus concluded his panegyrics: "He was a great man, a very great man; he was *father* of chemistry, and - *brother* to the Earl of Cork!"
>
> You laugh at the simplicity of the professor; after all it was no bathos in practice; - depend upon it, the majority of the world thought quite as much of the brother of Lord Cork as they did of the father of chemistry. The Professor was only the unconscious echo of the vulgar voice of Esteem. (165, italics in original)

Perhaps the great theme of the second book is not so much the subjugations, inequities and exactions of society, regardless of a member's rank, station or status, but of the origins of these, within the specific contexts of English

society itself. No better illustration of this theme can be discovered than that found in the final chapter's concluding remarks upon the question of the Poor Laws: "Something is, indeed, wrong in that system in which we see 'Age going to the workhouse, and Youth to the gallows.' But with us the evil hath arisen, not from the malice of Oppression, but the mistake of Charity" (246). And here we can see as well - and early - the kind of perspective which would bring Bulwer eventually into the tory disposition.

***The Third Book***: The third book has for its unwieldy title, "Survey of the State of Education, Aristocratic and Popular, and of the General Influence of Morality and Religion in England." It is first of all not unlikely that education and religion, particularly with respect to the latter's practice, come to be treated together in this work of humane analysis, for they have similar, if not identical purposes, and, indeed, unite in the making of "a great truth: The Christian clergy throughout the world have been the great advancers and apostles of education" (304). The book is dedicated to Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), a hugely effective evangelical preacher, but too an important theologian, educator, religious and social reformer, economist and mathematician, who would in the Forties, lead nearly five hundred clergy of the Church of Scotland into the Free Church and found the new denomination's College (*DNB*, 3, 1358-1363). It was Chalmers' emphasis on the individual person's conscience and the individual person's responsibility in matters of religion, education and social

reform that doubtless led Bulwer to make him the dedicatee of the book. This Bulwer makes even more clear in an epigraph he attaches to the book's title page, taken from Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), the eloquent 17th-century bishop, writer and educator:

> Men generally need knowledge to overpower their passions and master their prejudice; and therefore to see your brother in ignorance is to see him unfurnished to all good works: and every master is to cause his family to be instructed; every governor is to instruct his charge, every man his brother, by all possible and just provision. For if the people die for want of knowledge, they who are set over them shall also die for want of charity. (249)

The book is, in its formal aspect, relatively straightforward, with chapters devoted to education among the upper, middle and lower classes, the last of which he refers to as "popular education."

These three chapters are followed by a chapter on religious conditions in England, one on the Sabbath, whose observation was under political scrutiny at the time, and a chapter on the current state of morality in England; the final chapter, treating what we might call the sociology of ethics, asks what role the moralist plays in society. To the book is appended a discussion of popular education - the third chapter and the appendix have identical titles - in which the implications which have arisen earlier in Bulwer's more general considerations of the question are treated in terms of specific observations and remedies. The general temper of Book Three can be gathered from Bulwer's characterization of the age as one "of trite materialism and the discordant jealousies of rival sects" (251). Again having recourse to a national comparison, Bulwer

points admiringly to Prussia as a state in which the central authority administers both "Public Worship" and "Public Instruction" to the greater good (252). One would expect, then, that Bulwer is about to advocate some sort of centralized educational system, but he does not; rather, he analyzes the situations of the various levels of educational institution, concluding that the education of the upper classes is insufficiently practical, of the middle classes, adequately practical and strongly religious, and of the lower classes, practical, if unevenly so, but entirely deficient in religious training. Bulwer again holds up Prussia as the exemplar, inveighing - and this is characteristic of him - against abstraction in the implementation of curricula, a superior paradigm of which he finds in the Prussian schools: "Observe, here is no theory - no programme of untried experiments: - this is the actual education, actually given, and actually received" (313).

This antipathy for abstraction is carried over into Bulwer's discussion of religion and morality in an insistence that "[t]o the great work of God, we must apply the same order of criticism we apply to the [artistic] masterpieces of men" (320). This is so for two interlinked reasons: first, religion must fight the passions on their own ground, that is with passions (321-22); second, because these - rather than rationality - are the true foundation of religion it must at all points be associated "with the poetry of life" (322). Indeed, the whole point of an Established Church is to bring "a certain

standard of sober sense" (339), "a pressure upon the ebullitions of sectarian extravagance" (341) and a "more wise and harmonious mixture of all classes, from the higher to the lower" (342) in a religious practice which "drink[s its] youth and vigour from the inspiring Fountains of the Heart" (321). From this, it follows the abstractions of reason issue in little of consequence for those of religious aspiration.

This is not quite the circumstance for moral practice, on the other hand, which, in lacking a "moral science," is subjected, by the Press and in the legislature, to a "thousand ... most shallow and jejune observations upon every point of morality that occurs" (364). Interestingly, what concerns Bulwer here is not the problem of the abstract line, rather a "chasm [which] has taken place between private and public virtue" (364), which in turn is the result of "a blind and narrow folly, [in] suppos[ing] in England that the abstract and the practical knowledge are at variance" (365), when the trouble lies in the "deficiency ... in abstract experience" (366) of those concerned with the legislation of morality. What Bulwer means here - and it is found in his practical examples of failure in public administration - is that the promulgation of morality must proceed from a clear general sense of it discoverable in "the mind of the people upon whom it [is] to operate" (366). Given this, Bulwer offers a "picture of a moralist":

> Rejecting the petty and isolated points, the saws and maxims, which a vulgar comprehension would deem to be morals where they are only truisms, his great aim for England shall be to exalt and purify the current channels

> of her opinion. To effect this for others, he shall watch narrowly over himself, discarding, as far as the contaminations of custom and the drawbacks of human feebleness will allow, the selfish and grosser motives that he sees operating around him; weaning himself, as a politician, from the ambition of the adventurer, and the low desire of wealth and power; seeking, as a writer, in despite, now of the popular, now of the lordly clamour, to inculcate a venerating enthusiasm for the true and ethereal springs of greatness and of Virtue; and breathing thus through the physical action and outward form of Freedom, the noble aspirations that belong in state as in men to the diviner excitation of the soul! (378-79.)

It could not be more obvious that Bulwer has himself in mind nor clearer that his project is no mean one.

***The Fourth Book***: The fourth Book of *England and the English* is dedicated to the elder Disraeli, whom Bulwer had met through his friendship Benjamin Disraeli. Isaac Disraeli (1776-1848) had published anthologies of literature and essays which were in the day held in very high regard, and Bulwer takes him as a kind of arbiter in matters of art and taste. The first chapter is given over to an attack upon the Press, whose incompetence and absence of credibility follow in part from its own power and in part from the anonymity many of its practitioners are allowed to maintain; to these shortcomings is added the restraint of the Taxes on Knowledge. Bulwer now moves on to literature, which he finds up to standards in its imaginative branches, but "singularly barren" (II, 53) in its other aspects; history, moral philosophy, political writing suffer a want of great work, but, ironically, not of great writers, among whom he numbers Robert Southey (1774-1843), William Cobbett (1763-1835) and Sidney Smith (1771-1845). He spends many pages on Byron, finding his tragedies of a higher

order than his other poetry, and then offers an extended comparison of Wordsworth and Shelley, the former of whose work he finds "peculiarly German," the latter's "impetuous," although "intellectual and unworldly." It is Wordsworth's "singular householdness of feeling" (97) which gains him this description, while Shelley, "more daring and dramatic ... with a greater mastery of language [than Wordsworth] and the true Lucretian soul," is "for ever aspiring *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*" (101 [the quote, *extra processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi*, a famous one, though, as indicated, slightly truncated by Bulwer for a syntactical fit, is from the first book of *De rerum natura* (lns. 72-73): "he [Epicurus] moved far out beyond the burning walls of the world" (i.e., beyond the outmost celestial sphere, thought to comprise the empyrean)]). While one may wonder a bit at the rather thoroughgoing conflation of German, Wordsworth and householdness, despite its unmistakable insight, the notion of Shellean flight into the fires beyond the world presents little metaphorical difficuty. In any case, there were certainly these respective senses of each poet abroad in England at the time in which Bulwer was writing, and Bulwer's attachment to such complementary interpretations represents pretty well how Bulwer thought the poets of the preceding generation ought to be classified.

Bulwer devotes two chapters of the book to the means by which art is supported in society. He observes in the third chapter that the fewer the people acquainted with a subject the more likely the subject is to be given its merited depth: "Cheap

publications of themselves are sufficient for the *diffusion* of knowledge, but not for its *advancement*," he says, but, as with the schoolmaster, the activity of dispensation crowds out the activity of acquisition (116). The problem is one of patronage, which he treats in the seventh chapter and separates into two kinds. Individual patronage is generally harmful, since it is difficult for the patron to remain apart from the production; conversely, since the state can both remain apart and sense more fully the larger public context, its patronage can be beneficial. What is true of art is true too of science in this regard. But the important point of these two chapters is not the production of art or science itself, but that both must, in Bulwer's view, conform to the needs of the public as interpreted by its most cognizant and enlightened elements. Bulwer acknowledges that the state has no power of itself to produce great artists or scientists, but that is not its purpose; rather than "stimulating the lofty," its purpose lies in "refining the vulgar" (179).

These comments indicate much about Bulwer's approach to both education and the uneducated, aspects of society which concerned him greatly during the whole of his career. Further, they explain his remarks on style (Chapter IV), in which he takes the English tendency to be eclectic and thus more accessible, his remarks on the drama (Chapter V), which he wants more available than the Patent Theaters allow for, and his remarks on moral philosophy (Chapter VI), whose chief advancer he takes to be Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), though noting that he

and others of the "Material School" - Samuel Bailey (1791-1870), James Mill (1773-1836), William Hazlitt (1778-1830) - are deficient in their understanding of the underlying principles which support moral activity.

The age, however, is one for the economists, Bulwer says, and not one for those engaged in "speculative research." For this the support of professorships, as found in Germany and Scotland, is necessary (171-72). He works out the implications in two chapters entitled "The State of Science" and "The State of the Arts." Since the public recompenses only such science as meets its needs in use, its development cannot be left to the public will. This is true of art as well, but here Bulwer carries his argument to an extreme which one might today wish to question:

> Even (with a few distinguished exceptions [which Bulwer does not name]) our finest historical paintings, such as those of Martin, are on a small scale of size, adapted more for the private house than the public hall. And it is mostly on achievements which appeal not to great passions, or to pure intellect - but to the household and domestic interests - that our higher artists have lavished their genius. We see Turner in landscape, and Landseer in animals, Stanfield in scenes, and Wilkie, whose sentiment is purer, loftier, and deeper than all, (save Martin's) addressing himself, in the more popular of his paintings, to the fireside and familiar associations. The rarer and more latent, the more intellectual and immaterial sources of interest, are not those to which English genius applies itself. (230)

With all the will in the world, it is difficult to muster for Bulwer's point - although it has a certain psychological merit, it cannot be denied - imagination enough to see a Turner, not to say a Martin, hanging in some unassuming, domestic way, over an average, middle-class mantlepiece in Bulwer's or anyone else's

England, physical size of the artwork notwithstanding.

***The Fifth Book***: Bulwer's final book is "inscribed to the English people" and is entitled, "A View of Our Political State." It is accompanied by two appendices, one by Bulwer on James Mill (1773-1836) and one by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) on Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), this second of which is critical above all of the philosopher's relatively simple understanding of motivation in human affairs (342) and was published anonymously in this work of Bulwer's so that Mill might escape the animosity Bentham's more impassioned admirers among the Philosophical Radicals would surely feel at any attempt by James Mill's son to criticize his father's sainted friend and leader, now dead mere months. Bulwer, never a pessimist, all the same quotes Shakespeare epigraphically: "Since the affairs of men rest still uncertain,/Let's reason with the worst that may befall" (243 [*Julius Caesar* 5.1.95-96, controversially corrected for grammar]). He follows quickly with the well-trodden lines from Horace's *Epistles* (1.6.67-68): "Si quid novisti rectius istis/Candidus imperti - si non, his utere mecum," which, loosely rendered, caution the reader to, in the absence of anything demonstrably better, stick with the tried and true. Given the Horatian qualifier and Bulwer's elemental optimism, the lines from Shakespeare, then, cannot be taken as a comment on human nature, to the status of which Bulwer would subsequently give much consideration; in so far as he is talking about domestic policy in the first place, however, what he regards as problematic are the organs of state and society:

"the people are calm and reasoning, and have a profound sense of the universal interest" (309). And his optimism is founded upon his faith in these attributes. "But you," he says, addressing the people, "have a false likeness, my dear friends; a vile, hypocritical, noisy, swaggering fellow, that is usually taken for you, and whom the journalists invariably swear by, - a creature that is called 'THE PUBLIC'" (309-310).

This is as good an introduction as any to Bulwer's political philosophy: for the forty years following the publication of *England and the English*, until his death in 1873, Bulwer repeatedly affirmed a deep and reliant faith in people generally; his speeches are full of it, his novels endorse and commend it; his daily life testified to it. For Bulwer, human beings were alike in only one characteristic: their inherent goodness. All their differences enabled them to unite on the ground of this one common feature. Wickedness he saw in individuals, especially those in power, although he was too sophisticated to treat it as diabolical; goodness he saw in the mass of persons. Further, he saw the wicked as able and inclined to act together, while good persons were often forced to act alone. This is what, at least in his early days, led him so often and so roundly to condemn the aristocracy. In Bulwer's view, it was the individual, rooted in the people, who must accept the challenges contemporary society offered, since the people might find themselves, unwittingly receptive in concert, believing or acting against their own best interests and in the interests of their enemies. In an argument he often

offered in defense of the monarchy against the aristocracy, an argument not entirely new to English history, he cautions the people against self-deception:

> Do not fancy, as some contend, that the aristocracy would fall if the king fell. Not a whit of it. You may sweep away the House of Lords if you like; you may destroy titles; you may make a bonfire of orb and ermine, and after all your pains, the aristocracy would be exactly as strong as ever. For its power is not in a tapestried chamber, or in a crimson woolsack, or in ribbons and stars, in coronets and titles; its power, my friends, is in yourselves; its power is in the aristocratic spirit and sympathy which pervade you all. In your own hearts while you shout for popular measures, you have a reverential notion of the excellence of aristocratic agents; you think rich people alone "respectable;" you have a great idea of station; you consider a man is the better for being above his fellows, not in virtue and intellect, but in the good things of life. (260)

Clearly, Bulwer's faith in the people was not a naïve or idealizing one.

But it is not just with respect to the aristocracy that the people are susceptible; in the battle for Reform, for example, who in power could be depended upon? Journalists, the supposed advocates of the people, are in alliance with ministers, however unlikely each group would wish this to appear (270); not the great whigs and certainly none of the tories is constrained by popular mandate (272); all the people have in support of them are a "few violent theorists, all quarrelling with each other, full of crotchets and paper-money chimeras" (273; cf. 289).

Bulwer ends the book with an "apology" in which he justifies his support of King and Church in terms that presage the tory, especially the Tory-Democratic, reasoning that will mark his middle and later years. Too, they indicate an independent streak in Bulwer which, rare in any day, is rarer

still in any politician. Finally, they manifest, as well as any, Bulwer's command both of language and of the process of conceptualization in whose working out and implementation language is merely a servant:

> If I have, in certain broad and determined opinions, separated myself from many of your false and many of your real friends; if I have not followed the more popular leaders of the day against our ecclesiastical establishment, or against a monarchical constitution of government, it is not because I believe that any minor interests should be consulted before your own; it is not because I see a sanctity in hereditary delusions, or in the solemn austerities of power; it is not because I deny that in some conditions of society a republic may be the wisest government, or because I maintain that where certain standards of moral opinion be created, an endowed establishment is necessary to the public virtue; but it is, because I consider both Institutions subordinate to your welfare; it is because I put aside the false mists and authorities of the past, and regard diligently the aspect of the present; it is because on the one hand I feel persuaded, viewing the tendencies which belong to our time, and the moral bias of the general feeling, which while often seeming to oppose an aristocracy, inclines equally (in its opposition) to aristocratic fallacies whether of wealth or of station, that your republic would *not* be a true and sound democracy, but the perpetuater of the worst influences which have operated on your character and your laws; - and because on the other hand, I dread, that the effects of abolishing an endowed Church would be less visible in the reform of superstitions, than in the gloomy advances of fanaticism. (314-15)

This isn't quite the Conservatism of Burke, which sought to see an organic necessity in the politics and society within which persons acted, but, if it is not, this is due to the influence of Bentham upon Bulwer, urging him to distrust attributions of an implicit or tacit foundation underlying the express or reasoned decision-making of persons.

On the other hand, if Bulwer accommodated in *England and the English* no particular sense of a past that mandated patterns of thought and behavior which would insure some kind of steady,

if intangible, wholeness to the common individual's political or social experience, neither did he adopt general, overriding, categorical principles, the like of which Bentham - despite his insistence on the formal prerogatives of a reason functioning independently in practice and his rejection of metaphysics altogether - had repeated recourse to, the central example of which was, of course, that of utility. Time and again, as he has been in the quote above, Bulwer is constrained by his insight into persons to allow that alternatives to what he wants may be *exactly* what are needed under divergent circumstances. So far was Bulwer from developing or embracing universals, so alien to him were the notions that placed concepts or theories before persons and actions, that his single most repeated public caution was against speculation of any kind. It is true, of course, that, in governance, one must work from principles, but only in the sense that one's scheme and purpose must be laid out unambiguously, and this meant clarity in one's *general* intentions - one's philosophy, in the popular sense - as well as in the procedures and objectives of the *day-to-day* business of politics. Nothing irritated Bulwer more than when a colleague in the House took up with what we might today refer to as a "hidden agenda;" it was one of the great joys of his political life when he was able to expose something of the kind - an activity for which he had, and was, in his day, acknowledged by friend and foe alike to have, great talent. And it was his faith in the people and their potential, if not always their present capacity, to govern themselves

which led him to despise those who would govern in secret or govern as if the governed could not govern themselves. All of this is patent in everything he did, from his choice of subjects for comment in *England and the English* to his interest in real persons in the real world with respect to his literary work - *both* as subject matter *and* as audience - and in his support of causes in Parliament, notably in this context those which would advance *first* the education and access to knowledge of persons and *then* their participation in government. Bulwer's work in Parliament, discussed in the following Chapters, will show this and will show as well much else Bulwer as a political person, a person of letters and a person significantly involved in the popular and high cultures of his era.

# Chapter Two

# Reform

## Introduction

Altogether, Bulwer wrote six speeches on Reform and gave four of them; the first was delivered in 1831, in the midst of the debate which resulted in the Great Reform Bill of 1832. The last five were written and three of them delivered thirty years later in the course of the lingering controversy between the Liberals and the Conservatives about which of their parties should be the one to deliver to the Nation a quantity of Reform that had become even more inevitable than the nearly endless debate upon it. Now, to say that the debate was long is not to say that it was tedious, and to say that it both emanated from and engendered party strife is not to say that it was always hollow of provenience or necessarily tendentious in character. Indeed, the very inevitability of Reform, combined with the fact that it was, in its second instance - propelled by the vision of Disraeli - ultimately a work of the tories, indicates something more of a resolution through consensus than a conclusion after confrontation. And in showing this, Bulwer's speeches are, as well as for other reasons, particularly felicitous in arriving at some understanding of the time, for he

opposed many aspects of Reform in the Fifties and Sixties, even as he had been one of its most complete and vociferous proponents in the Thirties. What ultimately permitted Bulwer to support his Party's initiatives, culminating in the tory Reform Bill of 1867, and thus the ongoing impulse of Reform itself was the balance the Conservatives, in proposing their own legislation, sought to achieve with respect to all Interests in the Nation. In Bulwer's speeches, then, can be marked not only the altering dispositions of an individual, but, to a degree, the transformation, as well, of a significant portion of the Nation.

Added to these speeches is the celebrated pamphlet, *The Present Crisis. A Letter to a Late Cabinet Minister*, which was produced in 1834 against the Duke of Wellington's leaden response to the consequences of the first Reform Bill's passage, a disposition in the Duke before which the entire Nation sat transfixed, be it from horror or from glee or, simply, from want of a more savage entertainment. Some of the pamphlet's reputation too can be laid upon Bulwer's prestige as a writer, which was by 1834 considerable and continuing rapidly to grow; he had already published ten novels, among them *Pelham, Eugene Aram* and *The Last Days of Pompeii*, several collections of poems, some of significant length, *Asmodeus at Large, England and the English* and a collection of essays.

While it is certainly true that *The Present Crisis* both met a ready audience and worked an immediate theme, it was neither the public temper nor the pamphlet's exigent subject that, even

together, carried the short work into twenty-one editions in six weeks. Nor did Bulwer's reputation, however great, more than add spur to the impetus that moved "[c]opious extracts from it ... [into] all the provincial papers" (Lytton, I, 473). Simply , it was written to be read, and read it was. Much of it had been said before, but not very often as well as Bulwer said it. No fewer than ten respondents published answers to the pamphlet, and whigs used it without respite during the late autumn General Election of 1834 in preparation for which it had in part been composed (473). Bulwer's grandson goes so far as to compare it to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, not certainly in terms of the latter's "incomparably higher merit," he acknowledges, but in terms of the "rapidity and extent of its circulation, as well as the influence it exercised at the moment[, which] were unique" (473). Bulwer, at least on the level of production, had been able to do in a month what it took Burke a year (473-74). Bulwer, however, was himself characteristically more reserved in the matter: "It was all luck, for it had no particular merit" (474). Merit or no, the pamphlet was a major tool in the hands of the Reformers and is certainly to be recognized for "the promptitude and completeness with which it met the requirements of the situation" (474) - in any case, certainly for the promptitude: Bulwer was able to turn out the pamphlet of something over 15,000 words in two days, no mean feat, given both the competence of its language and the compellingness of its argument.

Bulwer's First Speech on Reform, 1831

Bulwer's first speech in defense of Reform, his maiden in Parliament and one of only three as a Member for St. Ives, Cornwall, was given on the 5th of July, 1831, in response to a Motion by Sir John B. Walsh (1798-1881), Conservative Member for Sudbury, who was seeking to table the Bill on its Second Reading by asking for another Reading six months following (Hansard 3rd, 4, 659). Bulwer, rising on the second day of a three-day debate on Walsh's Motion, was the 17th speaker of 48 rising in the debate, not counting squabbles, but including those who gave more than one full speech, and he followed Sir Edward Cholmeley Dering (1807-1896), who had spoken vehemently against the Bill and for Walsh's Motion (753). Bulwer's speech was given during the debate on the so-called Second Bill. The First Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell on the 1st of March (Hansard 3rd, 2, 1061), had survived 12 day's debate - seven on Leave to Bring, one on First Reading, two on Second Reading and two on the Motion for Going into Committee (2-3, *passim*) - but died in the "[e]xtraordinary and tumultuous" dissolution of Parliament (Hansard 3rd, 3, Table of Contents, 22 April) brought about by a Division (1688) in favor of General Isaac Gascoyne's famous Motion against the Ministry, which called for an Amendment to the Bill which would insure no overall reduction in the Representation of England and Wales (1527). The whigs, led by Lord Grey, and, thereby, Grey's Ministry were returned in May, however, and Lord John brought the Second Bill forward on the 24th of June, ten days into the new Session (Hansard 3rd, 4,

322); this Bill was in turn thrown out of the Lords on the 7th of October, after 49 nights' debate in the Commons and six in the Lords (Hansard 3rd, 4-8, *passim*). The Third Bill was brought on the 12th of December, passed on the 4th of June, 1832, and accepted by the King three days later (Hansard 3rd, 9-13, *passim*). The present Motion, Walsh's, was defeated on the third day of debate, with 367 for the Reading and 231 against (Hansard 3rd, 4, 906), and the Bill brought up to Committee six days later (1106); only 27 Members missed the vote on Walsh's Motion, two of whom having died in Session and one just before (919 [and Hansard 3rd, 1-4, *passim*]).

Bulwer addresses himself almost entirely to the question of the degree to which the Bill will affect the status and privileges of the aristocracy, of which, it should be noted, he was not yet a member, despite his family's wealth and prestige in lineage. His procedure is to cut a clear and unremarkable distinction between the aristocracy and the other classes, while implying that this commonplace of British life stood in historic danger expressly as the result of and for no other reason than aristocratic intransigence with respect to Reform (*Speeches*, I, 4 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 759]). This is a theme he would develop further and bring to an expanded range of contexts both in *England and the English* (I, 24-27) and in *The Present Crisis* (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 4), where it would be given, in the former, primarily a social and, in the latter, primarily a political dimension. In the present speech, however, Bulwer is content simply to state the case and call attention to the

immediate repercussions of noble pertinacity. And, indeed, aristocratic willfulness is made to appear the entire difficulty, so that Bulwer begins his speech insisting, in "[s]o far as the people are concerned, ... the Bill is already carried" (*Speeches*, I, 1 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 756]). The elections, which had followed the accession of William IV the previous year and had - despite some attempt on the part of the recently enthroned monarch to retain Wellington and his Cabinet - brought Grey's whig Administration into power, but particularly the elections of the immediately preceding May, which had magnified that whig power, directly "rendered it idle and superfluous to insist on those more popular measures which, though founded at first on just reasoning, might now assume the appearance of unnecessary declamation" (1 [756]). The delicacy of Bulwer's prose upon this point did not - nor was it meant to - disguise the grim, if implicit, threat it bore: the Bill is passed by the people; our arguing about it now is merely an epideictic nicety, which suggests no other options than aristocratic assent in its passing or aristocratic extinction in resisting it. More bluntly, during the previous day's debate, C. James Fynes-Clinton, (1792-1833), Radical Member for Aldborough, had intimated some resemblance between the fate of Charles I and at least one of the varieties of future available to the current King and then asked the assembled Commons to consider the "doctrine of the sovereignty of the people" and "the consequences of a collision between the two Houses of Parliament. In the event of such a collision," he

said, "it required little sagacity to foresee which of the two would go to the wall" (Hansard 3rd, 4, 666). As Bulwer put it the next evening, the time for "just reasoning" had gone; opposition was not merely vain, it was fatal (*Speeches*, I, 1 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 756]).

That either real or feared menace from violence hung as a proximate constant before those who contested the intentions manifest in public opinion was never out of the consciousness of the aristocracy during the entire period between Waterloo and the passing of the Great Reform Bill. The Lord Chancellor Eldon had had rooms of his house in Bedford Square - very nearly the house itself - sacked and his life threatened in 1815 by irritated crowds before he'd managed to escape over his back fence onto the grounds of the British Museum (Thompson 63). But this had been a two-way street almost all of the roughly twenty years which followed: when William, ten weeks before, on the 22nd of April, came to the Lords in order to dissolve Parliament, Wellington's oft-wounded lieutenant, Sir Henry Hardinge (1785-1856), Conservative Member for Newport, crossed the House to tell his friend John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869), Liberal Member for Westminster, that the ceremonial guns would be next time loaded and would take off the heads of the Ministers (Broughton, IV, 106-07). A Member need hardly threaten violence in order to evoke its possibility; not Bulwer nor Fynes-Clinton nor any other Member, in issuing such statements, wished to suggest he might himself engage in turbulent activity, but the prospect of force hung ready, if not to hand,

then certainly in the air, during all the debate over the Bill. Nevertheless, Bulwer continued, some among "the more enlightened and independent of the anti-Reformers" may harbor reservations with respect to the Bill's affecting rather the "due and wholesome power of the aristocracy" than its "illegitimate influence" (*Speeches*, I, 1 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 756]). And it will be just such objections Bulwer proposes to engage in the present speech.

In the course of the speech, his design, Bulwer says, is to refrain from those more or less natural aspects of Party conflict which frequently accompany dispute, even upon principles; he hopes that such restraint on his part will not "lose the attention" of his friends, given the "harsh vituperations that have been so lavishly bestowed on our opponents" (2 [757]). But in this, Bulwer's was not the persuading voice. The following day, Sir Robert Peel, nearly the last speaker on the Motion and too a political person consistently, if not invariably, generous to his listeners, regardless of their opinions, felt he must in rising say that

> [w]hile I have been listening to this debate, and have heard the cheers echoed and re-echoed from each side of the House, on the introduction of some topic involving personal allusions, or party criminations, I have more than once lamented, that we allowed ourselves to be diverted by matters of such trifling concern, from the mighty subject of our deliberations, and that we forgot, even for a moment, amidst the excitement of party conflict, that we are occupied in the establishment of a new system of Representation, involving in its issue the highest and most permanent interests of the country. (Hansard 3rd, 4, 872.)

Conversely, Bulwer hoped that those who sat on the benches

opposite did not take either his failures in accuracy or his intensity of emotion as anything but the consequences of "a want of practice in public speaking in general, and ... a want of knowledge of this House in particular" (*Speeches*, I, 2 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 757]). This is rather a self-unsparing preface for a Parliamentary speaker, even for one issuing his pioneer delivery. Indeed, it might seem a mild form of neophitic contrivance, even in a first speech, which in point of fact contained no "vituperations," had it not been the case that all of Bulwer's speeches, if not every time containing statements of the like, nevertheless adhered to practices such as this statement endorsed. The further feature, that Bulwer condemns his own side of the House for these "vituperations," is exceptional, but indicates his life-long distaste for bellicose attitudes and personal sniping. While the language of respect and high manners dappled nearly every Member's every remark, degrees of sincerity and of habit marked any given Member, and in the measure of these Bulwer comes off better than most and far better than some. When on the attack, he rarely went for his opponents' blood and even more rarely left his opponents no way out. This predisposition for openhandedness is clearly indicated already in this first speech. Aside from the fact that it included the conventional Radical threat, it was preeminently an attempt at conciliation, a term and concept Bulwer would employ almost routinely throughout his careers as a Parliamentarian, a Minister and a person of letters.

With respect to the aristocracy itself, Bulwer declares

quite roundly midway through the speech that such divisions as have appeared between classes will be remedied obviously to the benefit of the aristocracy, which solely of the classes of England would positively gain from a restabilizing of a society in the convulsions of fundamental transformation: "it is the aristocracy alone who can lose by a violent collision with public opinion" (4 [759]). The argument here, symbouleutic in nature and available to a comprehensive Toulminian analysis, has for its *claim* that the aristocracy must lose its power, because (*support*) public opinion is against it, unless (*qualification*) it submits to the public's wishes; this is *warranted* (by *cause and effect*) since the public has the power to cause such an effect on account of (*backing*) its increasing capacity to dominate political circumstances in the Nation. Nevertheless, such change will, of its very nature, force alteration upon the aristocracy, and - this being the "strongest, and [of late] the most ostensible, ground on which the anti-Reformers rest" - it becomes important to determine "the probable manner in which the proposed Bill will affect the power of the aristocracy" (2 [757]). This is to say that Bulwer wants to ascertain the degree to which the *qualification* specified in the Toulminian disposition just rendered must be met in order to undermine the argument and, just as importantly, the *harm* (v. Table 2) which would be forthcoming were the aristocracy to disregard it. He does this, interestingly and reasonably enough, by way of the *backing*, introducing a point both of recent social significance and of critical political

consequence:

> [W]hen we speak of the power of any political body distinct from the people, we must remember that that power is at this day solely the creature of public opinion; and that it is only in proportion as it loses or gains in public opinion that that power can really be said to be lessened or increased. (2 [757].)

Of course, the sentiments of people generally have always played a role in the distribution of power within the polity; further, under every form of government and in every manner of society, this sentiment is available to organization of some sort or other and, in polities whose governmental organs are representational, organization of a rather pervasive potential. But this is only something of what Bulwer means; the paramount terms here are "distinct from the people," "creature" and "only in proportion as." What Bulwer is saying, again, delicately, is that the aristocracy - a "political body distinct from the people" - is not merely *of* the people, but *owing to* the people; the aristocracy is the people's "creature," that is, *created* by the people, if not as the result of conscious effort, certainly as the outcome of an historic concession. Bulwer thus introduces a diachronic context, which serves as the environment not just of his argument, but of the situation which has made the argument inevitable. This creativity of the people manifests itself in public opinion such that the power of the Public's creation exists "only in proportion as" that Public's opinion permits it. And Bulwer is neither inclined to argue the point further nor hesitant to submit its implications:

> Admitting this fact, which is so indisputable as to have

> passed into a truism, and glancing over the aspect of affairs, will any man say that the power of the aristocracy is now so safe, so secure in public opinion, that it ought at once, to resist the idea of change? (2 [757].)

This said, he urges the aristocracy, employing manifestly the warrant of sign, to a more reasoned recognition of the character of its plight:

> [C]an any man note the commonest signs of the times, attend any political meeting, read any political writing, have the most shallow acquaintance with the organs of political opinion, and not confess, that so deep is the demarcation between the aristocracy and the people, that it has become sufficient alone to obtain popular suffrage, to declaim, however ignorantly, against aristocratic privilege. (2 [757].)

But Bulwer's point is more complex than merely a warning to the aristocracy of the tenuity of its associations to the Nation and of the philosophical instruments of their maintenance. He seeks to defend these, in the first place, by means of their proper description and, then, by offering advice on their fitting realignment. But, above all, he wants emphatically to suggest, that which associates the British aristocracy to the British people is very little open to the charges most frequently rendered against it: neither is, Bulwer urges against the Reforming side, the English aristocracy so reprobate as it might have been, nor are, he insists against the anti-Reforming side, the consequences of the proposed remedies so awful as they have been anticipated to be. This is because the type to which the British aristocracy is most frequently likened is that which had been found among the French. Such a comparison is a repeated libel, Bulwer argues, due entirely to Britons' irritation with their own aristocracy and not to any

sensible analogy between the cases (3 [758]). "The people of this country have not, as the people of France had, a long and black sum of offences against their superiors, to be scored off on the great reckoning day of revenge" (3 [758]). The aristocracy in England can surely be charged with "haughty neglect" and "too obstinate a stand upon harsh laws and ungracious prerogatives." But, in a far more ferocious systrophe, Bulwer insists the British aristocracy has been free of the "grasping oppression," "unblushing venality," "degrading sycophancy to royal vices" and "ruthless indifference to national distress" that dependence on the Court produced in the French aristocracy; the English aristocracy has been spared from the "double necessity of meanness and extortion" by its "great wealth" (3 [758]), precisely the argument of *England and the English* (II, 262-63), but put to slightly different use. On the other hand, neither is popular irritation with the aristocracy in Britain the result of the development of "liberal opinion" as such; one would have to return to the days of Jack Cade to find a time when "the doctrine of equalization of rank or property has obtained so extensively, that the people have formed a hatred to their superiors, merely from their superiority, or that they have cherished an animosity to power solely from a love of experiment" (*Speeches*, I, 3 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 758]). It is the aristocratic control over Parliament by means of pocket boroughs, as are Lostwithiel and Old Sarum, that has brought on the hatred of the people, such that all evils of State, indeed,

the inflictions even of Providence are laid extravagantly to the aristocracy's account. In this is to be found "the cause of that great and growing division between classes which is so deeply to be feared" (4 [759]). It is not in the existence of power - a natural, if construct, feature of society - but in its application, which may be wise or stupid, effective or barren, humane or cruel, that Bulwer finds the ground of strife.

The sequence in argument is here unambiguously calculated to appeal to the aristocracy, who are the speech's rhetorical, though far less its real, audience: on the one hand, the aristocracy is currently disliked with intensity, but in excess of its deserts and contrary to its historic acceptance; on the other hand, the origin of its troubling reception is not to be discovered in behavior intrinsic to its existence, but in actions incidental to its power. In short, the aristocracy retains its value even as it jeopardizes its own continuity, and this is true apart from any disposition on the part of the people:

> [E]ven if the people, whilst suffering under the disease, had not clamoured for the remedy, if the irritation felt under the present system had excited no agitation for any definite question of reform, - every true advocate, not of the people's interests only, but also of the interests of the aristocracy, ought nevertheless, to endeavour to carry into effect, as soon as possible, the great main principle of this Reform. (4 [759].)

Bulwer now proceeds to an argument of an altogether different kind, meant not so much in appeal to the aristocracy, as in defense of the Bill: Some have said that undermining the aristocracy's command of pocket boroughs over which its members have the power of nomination will produce a House of Lords eager

to reject any work of a Commons thus immune to its traditional control. "But," exclaims Bulwer, "was there ever anything so glaringly inconsistent as the application of this argument?" In the first place, of what good is it to insure now the hatred of the people for the House of Lords in order to forestall their hatred at some hypothetical time in the future? But Bulwer declares he will accept his opponents' claim, regardless of its inconsistency, in order to assert a more comprehensive claim:

> [G]ranting that there are times and occasions in which it is well that the influence of the House of Lords should be felt in this House, and that it does serve to prevent any collision between the Assemblies - is it not evident that the influence would still remain, only exercised through a constitutional, not an invidious channel? Do hon. Gentlemen imagine that, after the passing of the Reform Bill, the aristocracy will suddenly be left alone in the world, without a single tenant possessed of a vote, or a single friend to whom that vote can be given? (4-5 [759-760].)

Bulwer has not been swept up into the hasty general sense, widespread at the time, that a passing of the Bill will change all things for all time; he quite practically and, given events, quite foresightedly points out that "these miserable victims of radical atrocity will still have sons and brothers, and cousins, and friends in the House, ... will still exercise a great and paramount influence in the towns near which they reside" and, indeed, will increase this influence in the counties which are to gain Members by the Bill (5 [760]).

Bulwer now returns to his initial point, the essential viability of the aristocracy as discovered in the conditions of this Bill. It is the elemental theme of this speech that, if the

Lords resist, they warrant their own demise:

> If hon. Members insist that the moment this House mirrors in some degree the opinions of the majority of the people, the House of Lords must succumb and perish, they do not prophesy its future, they utter its present condemnation. If this were true, the House of Lords is gone already; while we debate on its defence, the seal is put upon its abolition. (5 [760].)

This thesis, Bulwer points out, is founded on a larger consideration, that, as in science, in which the greatest discoveries no more than expedite the progress of discovery itself,

> [s]o in the career of nations ... you may advance, but you cannot contradict the genius of a people. The most democratic law cannot do more than hasten a democracy, which, before that law could be received, must have already become inevitable. (5 [760].)

This general principle, warranted on Toulmin's terms by comparison, not by analogy, it should be noted - that political development, in likening scientific development, proceeds by the inevitabilities its historical context presents - leads in turn to specific consequences with respect to the situation of the Lords: "At a time when authority can no longer support itself by the solemn plausibilities and the ceremonial hypocrisies of old, it is well that a government should be placed upon a solid and sure foundation" (5 [760]). And, now, this "system of government ... is menaced both by the moral intelligence and the physical force of a country," nor can it any longer depend upon

> the opinions of that class which, in this country, fills up the vast space between the highest and the lowest, and whose Members [in Parliament] are opposed to every more turbulent revulsion by all the habits of commerce and all the interests of wealth. (5-6 [760-761].)

The country as a whole opposes the present system, and the middle class, always hesitant before the possibility of turbulence, appears willing to risk it in behalf of change. Nevertheless, Bulwer remains in agreement with the Opposition, "that it is the practical stability, and not the theoretical improvement of the commonwealth, that ought to be our first object" (6 [761]). It is within the context of this common concern that Bulwer finds himself motivated to speak: his listeners, no less than he, owe the Nation, in the first place, stability. The difference between them lies in what each believes the best manner might be in which to make this stability certain. He "would become a willing and a cheerful convert to the rest of their sentiments on this great measure," providing those opposite could show him "amidst the tumults of neighbouring nations and the crash of surrounding thrones" a better means of safety for "the institutions of power" than that given by a "united and intelligent people" (6 [761]).

*The Present Crisis*

The greater part of *The Present Crisis* was not nearly so benign in its approach to his opponents as had been Bulwer's first Parliamentary speech three years, six months earlier. Published as a pamphlet entitled *A Letter to a Late Cabinet Minister on the Present Crisis* by Saunders & Otley on the 21st of November, 1834, it was addressed, without explicit reference, to Lord Mulgrave (1797-1863 [1st Marquis Normanby and 2nd Earl Mulgrave]), a rather incidental, but well-liked character, who

had been Melbourne's Privy Seal and would fill various Cabinet and ambassadorial posts in years to come, but who stood firmly for Reform, was an acquaintance of Bulwer's in consequence of Bulwer's work on *The New Monthly Magazine* (Lytton, I, 367) and was, it seems, willing to provide Bulwer with information on or confirmation concerning circumstances regarding Cabinet business (486), some of which Bulwer was able to use in writing the pamphlet. His Lordship, Bulwer insists, was "one of that portion of the late Ministry which has been considered most liberal ... one interested alike in the preservation of order and the establishment of a popular government" (10). This is, as always with Bulwer, a central condition, that constitutional change take place within the context of the prevailing order. Some may want to achieve popular government at a cost to order; Mulgrave wishes them to proceed together, and, insists Bulwer, "so do I" (10). The term "crisis" was fairly frequent in Radical titles during those years, harkening back, perhaps, to Tom Paine's famous series of thirteen pamphlets published during the period of the American Revolution; for example, the Owenite National Equitable Labour Exchange issued a newspaper with this word as its title between 1832 and 1834 (Maccoby III, 105 and 440), and in 1835 one of Roebuck's *Pamphlets for the People* attacking the peerage was called "The Crisis" (136).

*The Present Crisis* begins with a comparison of Wellington with "Marlborough in his glory and Marlborough in his dotage." The two are equal in war, Bulwer claims, but in peace Wellington is "incontestably inferior" to Marlborough, whose "cunning"

and "boldness" he possesses, but whose "eloquence" and "skill" he does not. The Duke of Wellington has been often victorious, but never "over the English People," a battle the Duke had unsuccessfully "adventured" before and is now undertaking anew. But "[o]n far worse ground the great Captain hazards it again; for his first battle was to prevent giving power to the people; the power obtained, his second is to resist it." Bulwer's attack here is not upon Wellington the soldier, but upon Wellington the politician, specifically, Wellington the *old* politician. Wellington was only sixty-five in 1834 and was to live another eighteen years, but was certainly of an age to be old to Bulwer, then barely thirty. There was little question that the Duke had equaled Marlborough in his glory, but "is he about to surpass his dotage?" Bulwer asks (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 9). While the implications are not altogether fair to either man, the representation doubtless carried for Bulwer's readers, since Marlborough and Wellington were both brilliant generals, in nearly every fight, less brilliant politicians, at nearly every turn, and both were active far beyond the time allotted them by the political realities of the day. In any case, the comparison gave Bulwer opportunity for a pungent observation: "It is the usual fate of fortunate warriors, that their old age is the sepulchre of their renown" (9). The comparison weakens in reference, even as it expands in reach, when Bulwer styles Marlborough a trickster, but one who "sought only to trick a court," while Wellington had "a grander ambition, and would ... trick a people" (10). Bulwer's rhetoric

devolves somewhat rapidly here, although, again, the analogy would certainly be one eagerly received by Radicals and forward whigs:

> "Like chimneys," said the wise man, "which are useful in winter and useless in summer, soldiers are great in war, and valueless in peace." The chimney smokes again! - there is a shout from the philosophers who disagree with the wise man, "See how useful it is!" - but it smokes because it has kept the soot of the last century, and has just set the house in a blaze! - the smoke of the chimney, in this instance, is only the first sign of the conflagration of the edifice (10).

The insult here, the like of which was far more frequent in Bulwer's day than our own, was both a tweaking of the enemy - a powerful, if wounded, enemy - and a rallying cry sent out to the elections then in progress. It was also fairly typical of Radical speech. To a degree, the predicament facing Bulwer, and those on behalf of whom he wrote, was not one in consequence of a threat by Wellington or by Peel, who was on the way to shouldering his first, if brief, premiership, but the grim possibility that tory propaganda would succeed in its object of convincing even Reform-devoted electors that Reform under a Conservative administration would be in no more danger than Reform under a Liberal administration. The tories were wise enough to see that they had little chance of election in the event that they publicly and explicitly indicated an intention to abandon or dismantle Reform; Peel particularly "took the chance of explaining his policy to the country and of showing that the conservatives accepted the reform act of 1832 as a definite and irrevocable settlement" (Woodward 97). And it was this, Peel's assertiveness on the matter, which worried and

riled Radicals, whigs and Bulwer alike. Given the finish, they might all have saved their anxieties, for while there was a political weariness in the country at the time and the tories gained a hundred seats, although not quite the majority, and Peel was able to form a Ministry and refused to consider resignation until six solid defeats in the House, it was one of the shortest Ministries ever, a few weeks shy of four months, and the inevitable return of Melbourne occurred in April of 1835. But this new, solid, six-year Melbourne Administration was hardly foregone as Bulwer took up pen to convince a wavering electorate that a little slippage now would effect a great tumble later. His means was to be the alleged hypocrisy of the tories.

First comes the question of the composition of the Cabinet. The tory papers insist "a high Conservative cabinet" is not the necessary consequence - with Peel away on the Continent in late November and early December - of Wellington's busy endeavors to form a Government. Bulwer quotes *The Standard*: "It is possible his Grace may think that some of the Whig leaders who are abroad or absent from London, are likely to form useful components of a new administration" (11). Bulwer's response is sarcastic incredulity:

> So then, after all the Tory abuse of the Whigs - after all the assertions of their unpopularity, it is nevertheless convenient to insinuate that some of these most abominable men may yet chequer and relieve the too expectant and idolatrous adoration with which the people would be imbued for a Cabinet purely Conservative! (11.)

But the Duke does not have the options with men that he has with measures, Bulwer says, for he may "filch away the Whig policy,"

but no whigs can themselves be stolen without consent. "And the fact is notorious, that there is not a single man of liberal politics - a single man, who either belonged to the late government [that is, Melbourne's first], or has supported popular measures, who will take office under the Duke of Wellington, charm he never so wisely" (11). Even Lord Stanley [later the Earl of Derby and future Conservative Prime Minister], who had left the whigs in 1831, from his independent position as leader of the middle-of-the-roading Stanleyites, Bulwer has been informed, "scorns the very notion of a coalition with the Conservatives" (11). It is clear here, then, that two operations are under way in Bulwer's pamphlet. First of all, Bulwer has the confidence of those whom he implies he represents; this pamphlet is thus the work of a party, such as parties were in those days, that is, inchoate with respect to discipline. Given this bestowed confidence, Bulwer takes upon himself the task not merely of propagandist, but of policymaker, at least in so far as the articulation of positions and perspectives instantly adhered to and employed throughout the party, as well as approved by former Ministers, may be construed as policymaking. This is significant for Bulwer's pamphlet since, in this part of the century, policy was made by a confluence of individually articulated positions - even when the party was in power, but particularly when it was not - within the organs of dissemination, that is, within the Press, the pamphlet or the broadside. There was a price attached to the first two, and the third, the obvious choice of the lower

classes, lacked mobility, so that Bulwer's sales' record on *The Present Crisis* indicated not just the popularity of its ideas, but its usefulness as a device of party cohesion. The second operation which is under way is that of Bulwer's own development as a political writer and speaker. As a consequence of this, moments in the pamphlet that are infelicitously constructed in the extreme lie between passages of considerable eloquence of language and aptness in illustration. The following example of the first, painful to read in the first sentence, doubles the affliction in its transition to the second:

> And we know, therefore, even before Sir Robert Peel arrives, and whether Sir Robert Peel take office or whether he do not, - we know that His Grace's colleagues, or his Grace's nominees, can only be dittos of himself - it is the Farce of Anti-Reform once more, by Mr. Sarum and his family [Old Sarum, a borough of legendary rottenness, was disfranchized by the Reform Bill of 1832] - it is the old company again and with the old motto "Vivant Rex et Regina!" Now-a-days, even in farces, the loyalty of the play-bill does not suffice to carry the public. (11-12.)

This heaping of unexceptional metaphor, culminating in a confusion of the actors with the farce in which they play, may of course be a sign merely of the haste with which Bulwer had undertaken to write; nevertheless, this passage is supervened by a delightful and wholly apropos comparison to an episode in the *Aeneid*:

> Your Lordship [that is, Mulgrave] remembers in Virgil how Æneas meets suddenly with the souls of those who were to return to the earth they had before visited, after drinking deep enough of oblivion; so now how eager - how noisy - how anxious wait the Conservative shadows, for the happy hour that is to unite them to the substance of place.
>
> -Strepit omnis murmure campus!
> [And all the plain buzzes with
> their humming noise.]

> how they must fret and chafe for the appointed time! - but in the meanwhile have they drauk [sic] of the Lethe? If *they* have, unhappily the world to which they return has not had a similar advantage; they are escaped from their purgatory before the appointed time - for the date which Virgil, and we, gave them, in order completely to cleanse their past misdeeds, was - a thousand years! In the meanwhile there they stand! mistaken, unequivocal! - Happy rogues - behold them, in the elysium of their hopes, perched upon little red boxes, tied together by little red strings -
>
> ". . . . . . Iterumque in tarda reverti
> Corpora; quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido!"
> [And enter again into inactive bodies; what direful love of the light possesses the miserable beings!]
>
> (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 12
> [translations supplied by Bulwer])

What will these tory shades, newly incorporated under a "united Cabinet," set out to do? According to Bulwer, they will return to the practice of the "Liverpool ascendancy - unite to take office at every risk - to seize all they can get - to give nothing that they can refuse!" (12 [the reference is to Lord Liverpool's 15-year tory Ministry from 1812 to 1827]).

But the problem of a tory resurgence in the offices of Government is of less concern to Bulwer than the connivance of the King with the tory leaders, especially Wellington, at delaying acceptance of Melbourne's resignation until such time as they were convinced a Conservative Government could be formed. There is a sense here in which Bulwer is able vaguely to comprehend the constitutional implications of the King's behavior. By the time William IV had come to the throne, connivance was all that was left the British monarch. This isn't to say grisly alternatives were not heard at Court; the Duke of Cumberland, younger brother to the King, suggested a *coup* from the Throne in the event of a failure to secure a tory

Administration (Woodward 96), and sanguinary resolutions to problems of state and society, as has already been pointed out, had regularly been suggested or accused by or of nearly every side since 1815. But it is also probable that, if Bulwer had a disproportionate wariness of the dangers, as, it must be admitted, did many then, the implications for established Constitutional process were perhaps less obvious to him and others. He allows, but without the slightest doubt that the possibility he addresses has *not* been the case, that neither King nor Duke had been aware of the other's thoughts or knowledge with respect to a Melbourne resignation and the opportunity for a tory Cabinet made rather in Court than in the polity. Even then, the two might without explicit communication be united in "the coming experiment which is to back the House of Lords against the Representatives of the People," an experiment which will institute the final "struggle between the Court and the People" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 14). That Bulwer was aware that the conditions for such an occurrence simply did not exist, that it was by far too late for a Royal intervention in the normal activities of state, seems clear in his appeal to the example of France. "The Duke of Wellington is guiltless of the lore of history," Bulwer submits antiphrastically, but this is not so of those who act with him. He ought to have pointed out to him "that fearful passage, half tragedy, half burlesque, ... when Mirabeau rose up in the midst of an assembly suddenly dissolved, and the nation beheld the *tiers état* on one side, and - the Master of the Ceremonies on the

other!" (14.) The question comes to this:

> The English people have the power now, in their elections - an election is at hand - there is no army to awe, no despot to subdue, no enemy to embarrass them - will they, of their own accord, give back that power to the very men from whom they have wrenched it? (15.)

"The notion is" Bulwer concludes "preposterous" (14-15). Bulwer is prepared, nonetheless, to consider that the tories may resort to the Army, an option, he allows, "more grave and statesmanlike" than the plotting done by "hack officials" (15), but he is convinced that the firmness of the People will prevail against such an action.

Bulwer moves now to treat of the House of Lords which, with Ireland, is one of the two great "causes of trouble;" Ireland cannot be governed without Reform, he says; the House of Lords cannot govern with it. In so dire a situation are the Lords and so compromised in many of its Members is the Commons, that, to convey the circumstance, Bulwer must employ

> an anecdote of Sheridan, that walking home one night, not altogether so sober as he should be, he was suddenly accosted by a gentleman in the gutter, considerably more drunk than himself. "For the love of God, help me up!" cried the stranger. "My dear sir," hiccuped Sheridan, "that is out of the question. I cannot help you up; but (let us compromise the matter) I will lie down by you!" The House of Lords is in the gutter - the House of Commons on its legs - the matter is to be compromised - the House of Commons is not to help up the House of Lords, but to lie down by its side! Fate takes from us the leader of the Liberals in one House; - to supply the place, his Majesty gives us the leader of the Tories in the other. (16-17.)

Bulwer alludes here to the circumstance which allowed William to dismiss Melbourne and install a minority Cabinet. Lord Althorp, who had been Leader of the House of Commons in his role as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had passed to the Lords

upon the death of his father, the elder Lord Spencer. Melbourne had told the King when he'd formed the Cabinet the previous July that Althorp, the Member in Commons most responsible for the Reform Bill and thus no favorite of the Sovereign, was indispensable as Leader to any Ministry he might lead. William used this as a pretext to finesse the resignation of Melbourne. Even more than he hated Lord Althorp, William hated Lord John Russell, who was to succeed the new Lord Spencer as Leader, so that the King was determined he would refuse any Cabinet with Lord John as Chancellor. Even Peel, who returned from the Continent on December 9th, found himself dissatisfied with the King's treatment of Melbourne, but consented to form a Ministry, although on the basis of a sense of duty to the King that he had not demonstrated in similar circumstances two years earlier (Stewart, 1978, 112). But Peel this time reckoned that "taking office in an extremely fluid political situation would stimulate the growth of his party" (112). And indeed it did, for while even Conservative historians admit the constitutionality of William's "calculated putsch" (Coleman 60), it is also their shared view that "experience of office under Peel and the gains made in the election of January 1855 pulled the Tories back together and helped to re-establish them as a powerful, concerted opposition and as a potential government" (60). And it was precisely this that Bulwer most feared, not the Ministry, for its days were numbered even if the Conservatives gained seats in the January election - they won, as has been mentioned, a hundred seats (Woodward 96) - and not the King, for the King

was powerless without the King's own Ministry, but the resurgence of tory power, and this, above all, as the result of electoral indifference and Liberal hubris. Of the first, Bulwer can say nothing definitively yet, for the election is two months away, although it is clear that he dreads, and dreads reasonably, that the movement in the electorate in the direction of the tories will proceed; of the second, he can and does say a great deal, on the whole in the course of a great debunking of William's decision to dismiss Melbourne on the pretense of Althorp's passing to the Lords. The entire point of the pamphlet is this third possibility. Bulwer couches the matter of Althorp's passing to the Lords in a satire of William's conversation with Melbourne upon dismissing him. It is a masterwork of political lampoon, possessing considerable internal consistency and contentual development. The irony, Bulwer points out, however, is that Althorp's presence in the Government was considered necessary by Melbourne because Grey's Government had fallen and Melbourne's taken its place precisely and only as the result of Althorp's having resigned over the Coercion Bill, so that Melbourne's demand upon the King that Althorp be present in the Ministry was Melbourne's attempt to override the effects of the Coercion Bill. In other words, Melbourne's condition upon the King in July had to do with Melbourne's carrying on the Government, but since July the repercussions of the Coercion Bill had been met and overcome. In November, Althorp's leaving the Government was - in consequence of his father's, Lord Spencer's, death - his own

entrance into the House of Lords. Of course, the King is indisputably exercising his prerogative, something Bulwer explicitly acknowledges (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 20-21), but, laments Bulwer caustically, what "a misfortune" it is "that other ministers have not also fathers of seventy-six! Old Sir Robert [father of Peel], good Lord Mornington [father of Wellington] - would that *they* were alive!" The pretense for Melbourne's dismissal, Bulwer concludes, is "utterly burlesque" (21).

Bulwer's great concern in *The Present Crisis* is that the Liberals will undo themselves: the electorate will backslide to the tories, and the Liberals will become convinced that, regardless of the Government, Reform and its ancillary aspects will continue. He acknowledges that Wellington has changed on the question of the Catholic disabilities, but insists that this is not ground upon which to assume that he will be moved likewise with respect to other major questions: those involving Church reform, the Corporations, triennial Parliaments and the Pension List. Those who anticipate such changes in Wellington "would give their suffrage to [him] upon the very plea, that he will desert his opinions; and declare that they will support him as a minister, if they can but be permitted to loathe him as an apostate" (21). Now this is an important argument in the pamphlet, for Bulwer says that even if the Duke were to conform to every Liberal measure he should be refused support, and so too any Conservative in like circumstance, because

> [t]here could be but one interpretation to their change - one argument in their defense, and that is, - that they

> would not yield to reforms when nothing was to be got by it; but that they would enforce reforms when they were paid for it - that they would not part with the birthright without the pottage, nor play the Judas without the fee. (22.)

It is certain that liberty has never been "served by the sacrifice of honesty" (22), and it is honesty that is first to be expected in those governing England. Honesty requires adherence to principles, and the principles of Peel, Wellington and the tories are against Reform.

> This is, then, their dilemma: either they will prosecute reform, or they will withhold it - either they will adhere to their former votes, or they will reverse them: in the one case, then, people of England, you will have uncompromising anti-reformers at your head - in the other, you will have ambitious and grasping traitors. Let them extricate themselves from this dilemma if they can. (23.)

This is an argument to which Bulwer frequently returns: principle must be the guiding political force; expedience with respect to it in the quest for office, in and of itself, makes one unfit for office. This is a very good argument, very high-minded, very moral, but it opens one who employs it to certain paradoxes to which Bulwer had himself cause from time to time to attend.

To this point, *The Present Crisis* has been devoted to an analysis of the situation as it presents itself in the characters of Wellington and the King. Of course, the intent is much more than this, since both men were not only actors in their own right, but representatives of Interests. More than any of the other Interests, those uniquely tory were of a nature in their understanding of the polity which might be termed purely ideological, that is, in the same sense that other Interests

might be regardful of commerce or the elevation of the lower classes as practical matters. This is not to say that practical gains and losses were never a consideration, but the issues upon which mindful tories most tended to focus were those which could be presented as matters of a tradition sensibly and reflectively arrived at. That it often wasn't so arrived at, of course, provided their opponents with much ammunition. Still, the tory Interests appeared to many and, naturally enough, above all to the great majority of tories themselves as a defense of, first of all, grand thinking. The tragedy was that the activities promoted by this Interest were often in the hands of stupid or grasping men who, whatever their thinking, seemed, at least, to be absolutely without ideals. As a result, Liberal warriors, as was Bulwer then, were forever ready, not to say eager, to point to Orange Ireland, Ecclesiastical Sinecures, the Pension List, the Corporations and the like, all more or less dominated by tories, whenever scandal, rapacity or obtuseness was needed in illustration. And this segment of Bulwer's pamphlet is consecrated to such an effort, the kind of which served to subvert the contributions of Conservative intellectual heroes like Burke, Scott, Croker and Southey or tory activists like Lord John Manners, Beresford Hope and Richard Oastler, none of whom or anyone else like them, one may be assured, made an appearance in the diatribic aspects of the pamphlet. Brougham, on the other hand, does appear, for he had been making speeches in these crisis weeks which, maintained Bulwer, "might have offended the royal taste, but scarcely the

royal politics - Heaven knows they were sufficiently conservative and sufficiently loyal" (25 [and Stewart 1985 315]). The papers and the word in the clubs had suggested that the King might have acted *against* Brougham, rather than *for* any Interest of his own; Brougham, forever anxious to be loved everywhere, "hotly repudiated the charge" (Stewart 1985 318); Bulwer, on the other hand, treated it merely with scorn (25). But in the larger scheme of things attended to by the pamphlet, it would not have done to have had the matter revolving about an individual in any case - even such an individual as Brougham - for this would have undercut the very central argument Bulwer wished his readers to take away from their reading: that this was a tory *plot*, a tory *conspiracy*. As did the question of whether the King and the Duke were in league - despite appearances, they *were* - so came the question of Brougham as a Royal motive - despite appearances, he *wasn't*. And the fact that William hated him (the King, true to the legacy of his four Georgian predecessors, hated nearly everybody) was no basis to lay the cause upon Brougham, for, in hating Brougham, wherein could lie a *plot*? Nearly everybody hated Brougham. The one thing Bulwer is careful to do, however, is to imply that he harbors not the slightest hesitation about the Monarchy. He assures his reader that he is for it and points out that it is "an institution that I take the liberty humbly to say I have elsewhere [that is, in *England and the English*, II, 250-264] vindicated" (27). Further, he articulates the philosophical grounds upon which he defends it: "because Order is of more

value than the Institutions which are but formed to guard it; and in the artificial and complicated affairs of this country, a struggle against monarchy would cost the tranquillity of a generation" (28). Perhaps, but William, until King a whig, had been open to reason and, when not to reason, to inevitabilities, and was then months from his seventieth birthday and likely willing to listen to age as well. The chances of a struggle against monarchy were remote, but it served Bulwer's rhetorical purpose and conformed to his sentiments as well, in defending the Monarchy, not to appear too revolutionary. On the other hand, Bulwer points out, the Government under Grey had allowed Charles Manners Sutton, a tory, to remain Speaker, had passed the Irish Coercion Bill, had maintained the Sinecures and had shielded the Pension List (28). "Nor was this all," Bulwer presses, "much that it did was badly done: there was a want of practical knowledge in the principle and the details of many of its measures - it often blundered and it often bungled" (29). An attack upon it, Bulwer implies, is a reasoned attack; and, he implies further, persons of his own persuasion are happy to have seen it go. On the other hand, Melbourne's Cabinet had not even been tested, a Cabinet greatly different from Grey's, for the Liberals were a majority of Melbourne's Cabinet, the cause of its dissolution. Indeed, during Brougham's recent speech in Edinburgh, three members of the Melbourne Cabinet - Hobhouse, Ellice and Abercromby - had sat in repudiating silence as Brougham sought to explain himself, Lord Chancellor under both Grey and Melbourne, to fifteen hundred dinner guests (Stewart

1985 316 ["he made a woeful speech. 'My fellow citizens of Edinburgh,' he began, 'these hands are clean' (and those close to him [i.e., the other Ministers] observed that they were distinctly not)."]; the crowd, however, grown to 2,600 after dinner, cheered him thunderously [v. Broughton V 11-12 on this]). Bulwer wants it clear here that Brougham represents the Grey Cabinet, on which Liberal sentiment was in the minority, while Brougham's Cabinet-level listeners in Edinburgh represent the Melbourne Cabinet, on which Liberal sentiment was in the majority.

This is a turning point in the pamphlet; until now, Bulwer has proceeded more or less within the context of late events, so that the contrast of Brougham with the three recently turned-out Cabinet members is a contrast of the past with the future, providing, of course, the electorate does its job in the coming election. As for Brougham, a waning figure, Bulwer appears to think,

> it is no slight blame to one so long in public life - so eminent and so active - to say that his friends consider him a riddle: if he be misconstrued, whose fault is it but his own? When the Delphic oracle could be interpreted two ways, what wonder that the world grew at last to consider it a cheat. (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 30.)

While it is easy enough to contextualize these comments of Bulwer's as evincing no more than a perspective on propriety, it is important to notice that character, defined in the Modes of Persuasion with competence and credibility, plays both a technical and a substantive role in the kind of rhetoric Bulwer practiced (see Table 1). This has been made wholly obvious here in Bulwer's comments: presenting oneself as a riddle,

misconstructing one's thinking and intentions, these moves, taken as a matter of purely rhetorical concern, subvert the fundamental objective of rhetoric, which, despite - indeed, because of - the inevitable presence of *intrinsic* ambiguities and uncertainties in whatever content is at issue, has as its purpose the getting at and exposition of what is right, proper or expedient (see Table 2). Doubt about the rhetor's or writer's character allows doubt about the rhetor's or writer's competence and credibility, and such doubt is sown when the rhetor or writer introduces *extrinsic* aspects which *induce* ambiguity or uncertainty. In the courts, this may lead a jury, for example, to suspect corruption in the sovereign when an officer of the crown or of the state is discovered in improper behavior (see Table 2) and to nullify what the law would technically demand on the ground that a corruption of character *implies* a corruption of competence or credibility. Precisely because rhetoric has as its task legal, occasional or political disambiguation and as its goal legal, occasional or political certainty, however unattainable these may in any given case be, the *willful* introduction of what is wrong, improper or inexpedient into a case through the *form*, rather than through the *content*, that is, through the rhetoric, where these subvert, rather than through the issue, where these may naturally be expected, is the greatest crime a rhetor or writer can commit. It is, by way of comparison, equivalent to plagiarism in the academy or treason in the state; none of these three acts may appear to possess the same sanction against them

that do, say, murder, rape or robbery, but they are great crimes in their own right because they sabotage the entire purpose of their respective contexts - the citizen's knowledge, the citizen's thinking and the citizen's security - as much as murder, rape and robbery sabotage the entire purpose of society, that is, the independence and well-being of persons. For this reason, Bulwer's reference to the Delphic Oracle is centrally *apropos*: while great store may have been put on the Oracle's being correct, even greater store was placed on its being sincere; as the Greeks came to understand that truth and falsehood were not absolutes and that, further, fact and its absences could be rhetorically contextualized, many took a second look at the Oracle and discovered that ambiguity in pronouncement and uncertainty in reception were part and parcel of a strategy on the Oracle's side which would undermine the fundamental objective of any, and not less oracular, rhetoric, that is, again, the getting at and expositon of what is right, proper or expedient. Bulwer is, in effect, accusing Brougham of rhetorical criminality.

Bulwer turns now to Viscount Melbourne with the narrative device of describing him as would an historian, placing the description of nearly a page in quotation marks, as if it had been excerpted from another work. As has become the norm in this pamphlet of Bulwer's, compliments given are not always intended, though the converse are meant surely enough: "'Not to commit himself,' was at one time supposed to be his particular distinction. ...He seldom preceded his time, and never stopped

short of it" says Bulwer's "historian" of Melbourne (31). This "historian" compares Melbourne tongue in cheek to Lord Durham; while the latter "would have led the people to good government," had the Cabinet not been dismissed, Melbourne would certainly "have marched with them [toward it] side by side" (31). The important thing here for Bulwer is that it be clear to his readers that the success of a Liberal Government does not lie necessarily in the hands of that Government's first minister, particularly if the premier is Melbourne; there is a conscious epideictic effort here on Bulwer's part to diminish Melbourne's symbouleutic importance, even as he acknowledges his political necessity. The significance of Melbourne and, indeed, of Grey before him resides in whom these two could bring to office, Durham being, for example, Grey's son-in-law; and these in turn have been or, when they have not, should have been brought to office not because they are Grey's men or Melbourne's, but because they are the People's (32). Further, this will not change, for, Bulwer asserts, "I do not believe that a single member will lose his seat" (33), that is, in the January elections quickly coming. Victories will be the result of a subsumption by principle of personal interests and individual disagreements, to the extent, Bulwer declares, of a willingness "that others should be the agents for carrying these principles into effect" (33). Indeed, even whigs less centrally responsible for advanced policies will win, Bulwer implies, telling the story of "Haroun Alraschid, the caliph of immortal memory" who went out with an advisor one night in disguise and

asked charity of his people. When two of these appeared the next morning before the caliph and his advisor asking for office, "the sultan gave the preference to one of them. 'Sire' whispered Giaffer, 'don't you recollect that that man only gave us a piece of silver when we asked for a piece of gold?' 'And don't you recollect,' answered Haroun, 'that the other man, when we asked for a piece of silver, called for a cudgel?'" This brief story - a parable, actually - allows Bulwer entertainingly to prepare his readers for the grounds he will offer for whig diffidence with respect to Reform. One reason some whigs had offered only silver was William, into whom the country had not yet gained insight sufficient to understand the degree to which he had resolved - not in the grasp of "secret and invisible advisers," but of his own mind - to serve as an impediment to Reform. Other reasons were somewhat more transparently the House of Lords and somewhat less transparently "intrigues and cabals" surrounding the King. At no time, then, was a tory Administration "so impossible as the public believed" (34). But Bulwer is not entirely forgiving here with respect to whig reticence: "so beset with difficulties, their wisest course would have been to remember the end and origin of all government - have [been to have] thrown themselves on the people and abided the consequences" (35). This is what Bulwer believes Mulgrave and other Cabinet members intended, and to this he attributes their dismissal (35). Whigs "dallying" in their commitment to Reform will be treated as tories; those making amends and promising better will be

returned (35). A Cabinet thus formed will receive popular consent, "not by perpetually reminding [the public] of one [met, though old] obligation, but by constantly feeding it with new ones"(36).

Bulwer returns now to the situation of Government: while the Duke plays a versatile dictator, "grave Sir Robert" returns to the call. The juxtaposing of Wellington and Peel is neatly done; the reader easily catches the breathlessness of the situation, perhaps, too, its virtual confusion. Wellington is holding every office until Peel can return. "India is in one pocket, our colonies in the other - see him now at the Home Office, and now at the Horse Guards; Law, State, and Army, each at his command - Jack of all trades, and master of none - but that of war; - we ask for a cabinet, and see but a soldier" (36). In point of fact, Wellington's attempts in late November and early December to both run the Government and form a Cabinet were near frenetic; it was a truly amazing moment in the history of British cabinet forming, a history replete with unique phenomena, but few to equal Wellington's ride round the Ministries. In contrast is Peel's progress from Italy:

> How well we can picture his prudent face! - with what solemn swiftness will he obey the call! how demurely various must be his meditations! - how ruffled his stately motions at the night-and-day celerity of his homeward progress! Can this be the slow Sir Robert? No! I beg pardon; *he* is not to discompose himself. I see, by the papers, that it is only the Courier that is to go at "minute speed" - the Neophyte of Reform is to travel "by easy stages" - we must wait patiently his movements - God knows we shall want patience by and by; his stages will be easy enough in the road the Times wishes him to travel! (36-37.)

Once home, he will be, Bulwer assures his readers, "the new

political Hamlet" (37). He mocks Peel in a rerendering of the play to correspond to Peel's deciding whether or not he shall commit to the premiership. The pivot upon which the decision turns stands between tyranny and treachery: Bulwer again announces the dilemma that, if Peel please King and tories, he must repress the people, if he serve the people, he must go turncoat (39). Bulwer, who has begun this derogation of Peel with Shakespeare, ends with the Bible. If Peel is indecisive normally and, when decisive, slow, he is ever innocent of indiscretion and strives to be, above all, decent. "He is in the situation of a prude of a certain age, who precisely because she may be a saint, the world has a double delight in damning as a sinner. Sweet, tempted Innocence, beware the one false step! turn from the old Duke! list not the old Lord Eldon! allow not his Grace of Cumberland (irresistible seducer!) to come too near! O Susanna, Susanna, what lechers these Elders are!" But an explanation, aside from the literary aspect of Bulwer's writing, needs to be given here, and it is a very simple one, indeed. Norman Gash points out that, while "[i]t was the fashion among the radicals to decry Peel as a timid, unimaginative reformer," his colleagues did not see him this way; Ellenborough, admittedly an extreme Conservative, nevertheless manifested significant hesitance with respect to him, thinking Peel himself a Radical. But Gash explains the Radical misperception on two grounds. "The typical radical sneer at Peel as 'a very tiny statesman' [Gash is quoting William Carpenter's *People's Book* (1831)] was founded partly on

ignorance of what went on behind the scenes in Wellington's government" and partly on Peel's tendency to ignore "organic changes in the constitution" as a Reforming option and to direct his attention at the development of administrative efficiency (Gash 1961 670-671). It is interesting that administrative development would eventually become Bulwer's choice as well, and as his politics grew increasingly toward Peel's, so his generosity grew increasingly toward Peel. It was only in the matter of Protection, that is to say, with respect to his Repeal of the Corn Laws, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, that Bulwer maintained any degree of hostility toward him.

Bulwer now "deviate[s] from the usual forms of correspondence" and asks Mulgrave to allow him to address "for a few moments ... our mutual friends - the Electors of England" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 40). This last segment of the pamphlet is interesting for Bulwer's attempt here to remind his readers of the principles, as he construes them, upon which English life and the English people are founded and to call attention to specifics of circumstance and history which have supported these principles. There is much lauding of the middle class and of its favored activities: commerce, moral rectitude, practical affairs. A great deal of it may seem overdrawn, but it does nonetheless indicate a purpose Bulwer assumes of his countrymen which transcends the ambitions of those with whom, explicitly and implicitly, he compares them: "But we are still the great English people, the slightest change in whose constitutional policy vibrates from corner to corner of the

civilized world" (40). Greatness has arrived not with possession, agriculture or conquest, but in business and domestic politics. "The influence of England has been that of a moral power, not derived from regal or oligarchic, or aristocratic ascendancy, but from the enterprise and character of her people" (40-41). What have Wellington and his colleagues done with this heritage? They have supported tyranny in Holland, France, Austria, Russia and Portugal:

> Not the worst excesses that belong to despotism, from the bonds of the negro to the blood of a people, have been beneath the praises of your present government - not the most moderate resistance that belongs to liberty has escaped their stigma. This is no exaggeration; chapter and verse, their very speeches are before us, and out of their own mouths do we condemn them. (41-42.)

He reminds his readers of Ireland and the religious persecution there of Catholics by the Orangemen: "I have just returned from that country. I have seen matters with my own eyes," he says. The circumstances of Negroes in the Colonies too has deteriorated under the tories; the "grand" experiment of emancipation is weighed on by their sending out to the Colonies to oversee its progress the very persons who had in the first place predicted its infeasibility: "the prophet is rarely displeased with the misfortunes he foretells" (43). The tories cannot turn from all this and pretend to be Reformers, and if they claim to be, they are either insincere in their claim or insincere in their principles. But they have courage and are thereby dangerous; it would be foolhardy to assume that public opinion - as some assert it will - will restrain them. See how "impotent" is public opinion in France. Bulwer has fallen here

to one of his favorite modes in argument: analogy from history and contemporary events. He moves on to the end of his argument by reminding his readers that, in final resort, they may be promised reductions in taxes in return for support of the tories, but what tories remove with one hand, they can return with the other: "To drop a shilling in the street was the old trick of those who wanted to pick your pockets!" His conclusion is that the decision of this election will be "one of those ominous conjunctions in 'the Old Almanack' by which we calculate the chronology of the human progress" (48). Whether his readers see this or not, it will be so.

## Transition

Between *The Present Crisis* and his next effort with respect to Reform, nearly thirty years later, Bulwer moved his position from that of a reasonably moderate Radical, to that of a reasonably moderate Conservative. There is, however, an underlying consistency to be found between the poles of this progression discoverable in two aspects of his thinking: in his philosophical outlook and in his political understanding. Now, Bulwer was not the only prominent Briton of his time to move from a Liberal to a Conservative, from a whig or Radical to a tory position. In order, then, to give some context to Bulwer's transformation, at least from the literary-historical perspective - one about which Bulwer, as a politician, did not greatly articulate himself, but one which was certainly a felt aspect for him as a literary person - it might be helpful in

establishing a kind of general ground to consider what Michael H. Friedman has to say about Wordsworth's conversion in *The Making of a Tory Humanist*: "[T]o Wordsworth the social relations that were replacing Tory paternalism threatened to break what appeared to be an organic society into an aggregate of monads relating to one another only through competition" (223). While the term "monad" is not particularly one of Bulwer's nor, for that matter, one of Wordsworth's, it nonetheless carries just the tone to which Bulwer could respond: "an aggregate" of singular, autonomous, atomized entities, variant only in their relative capacities to survive in dreary, unending and ubiquitous "competition," is clearly a projection of things to come which would move him to dread and loathing. The social organism, atomized by the ascendance of the most avaricious elements in each of its divisions, as class warred upon class and Interest upon Interest, would, under the new forms, grow increasingly unable either to preserve itself or to protect its members. The implications, according to Friedman, were clear to Wordsworth: "The good old values seem to have been replaced by the egoistic attributes of rapine and avarice. The new social order and the new political economy seem to have reduced England's full humanity. England's freedom [was], therefore, in jeopardy" (238). But Bulwer, while he had Wordsworth's concerns, did not have Wordsworth's pessimism; if the past was going down under a swell of innovation, so the future was never so bleak as the older tory might conceive it. If, then, the extremes Bulwer feared were

always possible, their amelioration was never impossible. But the contrast with Wordsworth is useful with respect to still another circumstance, one that has less to do with the characters of the men than the divide of time which separated them, and it is this, that Bulwer seems, motivated by whatever else, certainly motivated by a genuine desire for what he called "equipose," that state achieved between persons which produces fairness and generosity regardless of any individual's economic status or social station. Again as the present essay maintains, Bulwer never conceived of differences between persons as either ordained or immutable, a Benthamite orientation on his part which he held from youth through age, and saw movement in wealth, knowledge and circumstance as ultimately an individual matter. Not so Wordsworth, if Friedman is to be believed: Wordworth's turning away from revolutionary politics and toward the rural population was a

> complex and contradictory gesture with distinct humanitarian significance, on the one hand, but a gesture that also signified a ratification of the established social structure on the other. The development of Wordsworth's Tory humanism was...a protracted resolution of the contradiction, as the Tory significance of his high valuation of the rural poor (in order to ratify existing society) came more and more to the fore. Indeed...the entire structure of social relations, as described in Wordsworth's poetry and prose, constituted a mythic structure whose function was to disguise social inequity and show in its stead, a false social symmetry. (297.)

Bulwer, in an age of realism, sought to respond to existing conditions in a way that never precluded their eradication, given they deserved it. A feature of his thinking he shared with many in positions of social authority, regardless of politics, was a disquietude at the possibility that the lower classes

would obtain determinative power before their level of education provided them with the wisdom to use it well or their economic stake in the society gave them sufficient incentive to exercise it with orderliness. That power should be increasingly achieved by the lower classes was never in and of itself a problem for Bulwer.

From a philosophical point of view, it is clear that these themes were already very much present in Bulwer's rhetoric, written or spoken, and in his artistic endeavors as well, from the very beginning. Bulwer was not one for philosophical speculation, neither was he one for idealizing or romanticizing - and this not just because he was, given the temper of his times, of a realist inclination. To the contrary, there are romantic aspects to his aesthetic work that do not show up in his public undertakings. Rather, the tendency must be attributed to his practicalness, his pragmatism, a feature one normally accepts in a politician, but may feel uncomfortable with in a person pursuing the humane occupations. And, of course, it is with his public life that we are here concerned. All the same, philosophical calculations on their own rarely achieved eminence in Bulwer's thinking and were, conversely, at least as regards politics, more often than not the object of his scorn, his most frequent choice of term in reference being "speculation," with its flavors of tentativeness and insubstantiality intact. But his hesitance with regard to speculation was no bar to appropriate abstraction or generalization, though, nearly without exception, abstractions

and generalizations found in Bulwer are accompanied by examples, illustrations, definitions, analogies, narratives and the like, a mark of the practicality of his rhetoric. But practice must be justified by principle, a requirement of which Bulwer was thoroughly aware. Perhaps his most comprehensive statement of grounds for his going over to the tories is found in *The Genius of Conservatism*, a work of five short chapters which his son found among his papers after his death and which he suggested his father had most probably written sometime in 1858:

> In every political society there are certain organic principles more or less peculiar to itself. If these principles be sapped, the society begins to decay; though the decay may be long unnoticed by the ordinary observer. If they be destroyed, the society itself will perish; it may be reconstructed in a new form, but its original identity is gone. The Roman Republic was not the same society as the Roman Empire.
>
> The true Conservative policy is the conservation of these organic principles. It is not in itself either democratic or monarchical. It is one or the other, according as democracy or monarchy be the vital principle of the State in which it operates and exists. Conservatism would therefore be democratic in America, monarchical in England; but monarchical according to the form in which monarchy in this country has become tempered and admixed. It therefore differs essentially from the old spirit of Toryism, which inclined in the abstract towards the predominance of the kingly element, and abhorred popular government in itself, no matter in what country it was established by law, and interwoven with sentiment and custom. All that Conservatism regards is duration for the body politic. It is not averse to change - change may be healthful; but it is averse to that kind of change which tends to disorganization. Whatever there be most precious to the vitality of any particular State, becomes its jealous care. As but one thing is more precious to a State than liberty, so where liberty is established Conservatism is its stubborn guardian, and never yields the possession save for that which is more essential to conserve. But liberty is diffused throughout a people by many varieties of constitution - the monarchical, the aristocratic, the democratic, or through nice and delicate combinations of each. Conservatism tends to the conservation of liber-

> ty in that form, and through those media, in which it has become most identified with the customs and character of the people governed. And if it seems at times opposed to the extension of freedom, it is not on the ground of extension, but from the fear that freedom may be risked or lost altogether by an incautious transfer of the trust. (*Speeches*, I, lxxxvi-lxxxvii.)

Two circumstances are fundamental to Bulwer's argument here, and these are that Conservatism attends to organic relationships within the State, such relationships producing liberty, and that the form of government is not material to the fact of organic relations nor the establishment of liberty. He claims these things because of a certain perspective on history that he maintains. It is a perspective that has been greatly discredited in the eyes of perhaps the majority of those considering it since Bulwer's time, but it is a perspective that understands Brutus as the "last hope of Roman liberty" and Richelieu as protecting life, property, the arts and commerce (lxxxvii), while in Rome the "popular party ... was headed by demagogues who, it is true, commanded armies" and in France the "Vergniauds and Marats, Dantons and Robespierres" created a "chaos of social elements [with]in which ... to struggle against each other" (lxxxvii). And if it is true, as Bulwer admits, that "[i]n the empire of Augustus democracy erected its own splendid tomb." Nevertheless

> despotism is often the effort of nature to cure herself from a worse disease. Conservatism will thus, in certain crises of history, be found in union with the masses, when both, equally interested against anarchy, exchange political freedom for social order. (lxxxviii.)

An example of "this compelled and melancholy league" is found in the rise of Louis Napoleon in France (lxxxviii). Here again, it

would be instructive to compare Bulwer to Wordsworth, both for their intrinsic differences as tories and for their different perspectives vis-à-vis the eras in which they lived.

> A ... reason for Wordsworth's being drawn to the apparently stable traditional affective community was his desire to avoid being made to feel impotent. He could be made to feel helpless by being a member of an historical movement whose immense forces were beyond his control. Such loss of control would leave him an historical object rather than an historical subject. (Friedman 143.)

Again, the older type of tory is visible in Wordsworth, though not perhaps dominant; the tory promise is to him more directly, not to him through his society. The dividing event was, of course, Peel's career: before Peel, toryism was often a matter of self-interest - all too frequently, pure and simple. This was true of whiggery as well, certainly, which was distinguishable from toryism only in what, not in whom, it promised. But toryism gave Wordsworth "control" over the "immense forces" he was exclusively interested in; *why* he was interested in them was another matter having only partly to do with his conversion to the tory persuasion. Bulwer, on the other hand, had not the uneasiness of historical place nor the concern for personal legitimacy from which Wordsworth apparently in some degree suffered. In this sense, Bulwer was far more cognizant of and troubled by the condition of the state as it affected society than was Wordsworth, who appears to have devoted little consideration to such matters, in large measure out of "political innocence"; indeed, he "accept[ed] political forms and arguments as historical absolutes, with no notion of the social and class interests that l[ay] behind them" (100-

101). As Bulwer's political rhetoric, written and spoken, repeatedly indicates, not only was Bulwer fully and intricately aware of and responsive to the vast political and social range, but was chosen by his party - whichever it happened to be - to express this complex grasp in its behalf. While one does not want to generalize on the basis of a comparison of two individuals, Bulwer's willingness to compromise and his acceptance of the imperfect as a means to an end mark him as the product of a far more pragmatic tory philosophy than is found in Wordsworth, certainly, and perhaps Scott or Southey as well. Clearly there is continuity from Burke through Wordsworth to Bulwer and others of his generation, including Mill. Raymond Williams explicitly recognizes this continuity (34), as did Cobban thirty years before him. One fundamental justification of the move to tory understandings by early nineteenth-century Radicals and Liberals found its origin in the view that, society's being organic in nature, it would be successful in its activity as a whole only in so far as it and its parts maintained contiguity and coherence over time. The thoughtful tory would accept and, given its ameliorative effects, welcome change, while the simple-minded tory would not. Burke, Wordsworth and Bulwer all clearly shared in this view and sought to enhance society's cohesiveness where they could. In this light, we can accept Bulwer's judgment of late-Republican Rome and, though less so, early seventeenth-century France in this respect, in part perhaps because of their historical distance; his assessment of Napoleon III strikes us as a trifle bizarre

because he was, and acted like he was, a more modern type of dictator. But it is most important not to yield to the temptation to project Bulwer's analysis too widely, upon, say, the likes of Stalin or Hitler, and for two reasons: First, as Bulwer had not the historical perspicuity to reveal Napoleon III, a contemporary, in any fullness, so he had not the prophetic perspicacity to anticipate such dictatorships as the present century has fashioned. More objectively, Napoleon III was no Richelieu, even less was Stalin or Hitler some modern Caesar. Indeed, it is important to understand Bulwer's choice here not in terms of liberty or freedom, but in terms of social order. Given Bulwer's conviction that social order *must* precede freedom or liberty in civil society, his example even of Napoleon III stands before us a good deal less far-fetched and that of Richelieu or of Augustus even less so. This is the case because imposed social order had brought economic stability, which had brought an increase and distribution of wealth, which had, in turn, encouraged expanding segments of society that were ready and eager for a share in political power. Historically, in England as well, the despot has often been the prelude to greater liberty; this is certainly true of some of the monarchs, say, Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII, particularly if we see them as in the succession of a single policy, and of Cromwell too. Of course, the underlying motive in all of these cases was the economic well-being and enhancement of the nation. Bulwer's thinking, then, is essentially practical, and its practicality is born of the

double aspect of his philosophical outlook and his political understanding. Philosophically, he saw society as organic and spontaneously directing itself toward political liberty, regardless of forms; politically, he saw society as a construct of order without which no liberty could long last. But both philosophically and politically, he noticed that the record of history was not one of easy concord, generous portioning and happy balance; these things must be accomplished through a social order that, while naturally welcomed, was not naturally achieved, so that liberty, a natural state - Bulwer's description - might flourish.

## Bulwer's Second Reform Speech

Between 1859 and 1867, Bulwer gave three speeches on the question of Reform and prepared two more, which would have been delivered in 1866 and 1867. Only the first and last were written in defense of Reform; the first was delivered when Derby was the Conservative Prime Minister and Disraeli had submitted a Reform Bill, and the last would have been delivered to the House of Lords, to which Bulwer had been elevated on the 13th of July, 1866, had not Derby, then in his third premiership, gotten the Upper House, with the disinclined agreement of most of the Liberal Lords, to pass the Bill without a division (*Speeches*, II, 339 ). The three intermediate speeches were each written when Liberal Administrations were in power, and, naturally enough, these speeches of Bulwer's opposed the specific Bills whose contents he addressed.

Bulwer's second speech on Reform was delivered on the 22nd of March, 1859, in response to an Amendment moved by Lord John Russell to a Bill to Amend the Representation of the People in England and Wales. At this time, Bulwer was Secretary of State for the Colonies and had been since May of 1858. There were at the time five Secretaries of State: Home, Foreign, War, Colonies and India; as a matter of Constitutional precedent these leaders of powerful Government departments were of equal status, and each could perform the functions of any of the others (Wilding and Laundy 676). Disraeli, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer and - with Derby, the premier, sitting in the Lords - the ranking Minister of Government in the lower House, had moved for the Bill's Second Reading the night before, after which followed seven nights' debate.

The Bill was an attempt on the part of the Conservatives, who had been in power a year the preceding February, to implement the inescapable Reform of the franchise on terms as closely approximating those they wished as they could. Derby's second Administration was nearing its end, which would come in three months, at which time Palmerston would be able to form a second Cabinet of his own, the longer of his two. With respect to Reform, the Conservatives saw this period under Derby as an opportunity to control events which, historically, had been under the sway of the Liberals. Disraeli in particular wished to be responsible for the passing of a franchise Bill so that his notions of Tory Democracy might find a degree of political embodiment in the Nation. While Bulwer was to a considerable

measure sympathetic to his old confidant's ideological aspirations as such and while, at the same time, Disraeli was not averse to employing his ideology at the behest of political enterprise, it was clear to both that the stakes in Reform were greater than what would accrue either to political ideology or to personal ambition. If the Conservatives were able to realize a revision of the franchise, this would make them friends of whomever benefited from the enlarged suffrage, and, indeed, this is precisely what occurred upon the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867.

It did not, however, occur spontaneously, for those segments of the working classes which had received the franchise aided significantly in the Conservatives' defeat in 1868. Perhaps it was that they sensed and did not like opportunism, but when Disraeli, "[n]othing daunted by the reversal of 1868, ... turned his attention to the organization of Conservative Working-men's clubs[, t]he election of 1874, six years later, justified his conviction that 'the Conservative working-man was not a myth but a reality.' As the years progressed he and the party continued more and more to acquire the confidence and esteem of the masses" (Wilkinson 54-55). To reinforce his tory proselytizing of the working classes, Disraeli coupled to it numerous Conservative social reforms after he had attained the premiership in 1874. Nevertheless, the exclusive monopoly of political allegiance among the lower classes by the whigs, the Liberals, the Left, be these nominated what they may, ceased with the Reform Bill of

1867. And Disraeli was not without an important ally in this struggle, for the Queen, who despised Palmerston, disliked Gladstone, got along with Russell only from time to time, but was genuinely concerned for not merely the "Stability of the Throne," but altogether as much "the Maintenance and Improvement of our Institutions, and the general Welfare and Happiness of My People," specifically directed the "Attention" of the assembled Houses in her Speech from the Throne at the beginning of the Session of 1859 "to the State of the Laws which regulate the Representation of the People in Parliamant," adding that she could not doubt but that Parliament would "give to this great Subject a Degree of calm and impartial Consideration proportioned to the Magnitude of the Interests involved in the Result of your Discussions" (Hansard 3rd, 152, 6). An implicit command of the kind from a Victoria otherwise in the Speech exuding gratitude for the deliverance of India from the Sepoys and the world from Russia, manifesting concern for problems involving France, the coast of China and the "highly civilized Country" of Japan, registering irritation over the continued existence of slavery or slavery-like institutions, establishing a concern for the treatment of British Subjects by both sides in the Mexican civil war, confirming an interest in Naval improvements and declaring encouragement for adjustment in the laws on bankruptcy and property (2-6), so pointed a stimulus, that is, with respect to Reform, could not but achieve, given its timing, a psychological dimension within which Disraeli and the tories in control of Government would

naturally benefit in their efforts to turn the one great inevitability of nineteenth-century domestic policy-making to their own political advantage. While the warm relations which obtained between Victoria and Disraeli were not to develop in their fullness until the latter's six-year premiership in the Seventies, the Queen, Conservative in most things, was adamant on the necessity of a widening franchise to a supportive and competent electorate; aside, then, from other more personal attributes Disraeli brought to his relationship with his sometimes difficult monarch, the two were a fair philosophical match.

While the Queen had, within the limits of her prerogative, such as it was at any given time during her reign, stood firmly against Ministers whose Liberalism or independence of her Constitutional rights was too much for her, she had three times before in Speeches from the Throne called upon Parliament to enlarge the franchise, a circumstance Disraeli was only too happy to point to in his speech for Leave on the current Bill on the 28th of February, reading verbatim the Queen's three previous admonitions of 1852, 1854 and 1857 in terms of which she was "counselled [by the Prime Minister] ... to address Parliament from the Throne" (968-970). By the time Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, came, in March of 1866, to bring Leave for the second Liberal Reform Bill of the Sixties, the reference to the Queen's Speeches from the Throne had become a ritual and the presentation of the point formulaic:

> For, Sir, let me remind you that those paragraphs which we have just heard read [from the Queen's Speech at the

> Opening of Session] are not the only paragraphs in which, under the most solemn form known to the Constitution, the subject of the representation of the people has been brought under the notice of Parliament. By no less than five Administrations, and in no less than five Queen's Speeches before that of the present year, the House of Commons has been acquainted by the Sovereign, under the advice of her constitutionally appointed Ministers, that the time, in their judgment, had arrived when the representation of the people ought to undergo revision. (Hansard 3rd, 182, 10.)

In any case, in 1859, the great opponents of the Reform Bill of that year were the Liberals, among whose leaders was Lord John Russell. His Amendment, part obstructionist, part a sincere attempt to increase the ballot further than the Conservative Bill intended, read in part "that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy this House or the country, which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure" (Hansard 3rd, 152, 1618).

Bulwer's was one of the initial speeches of the debate and tended to dwell on broad issues, but, true to habit, he was unable to make a point without surfacing its details or engaging in narratives, real or hypothetical, which quickly brought each abstract or general point into the full density of experience. "The question," he begins,

> is, Will you take into consideration - I say into consideration, for this is all that is now asked - a moderate measure of reform, which is offered by a powerful Conservative party with a large concession on their part; or will you rather wait for that other measure which the hon. gentleman [James Wilson, Liberal Member for Devonport, founder of the *Economist* and, from the 27th of June, Vice President of the Board of Trade, who had directly preceded Bulwer in speaking] says should be immediately proposed, which should be a satisfactory solution to every problem, but which, unhappily, is not before you, of which there is not a glimpse either in the amendment or even in

> the speech of the noble Lord the Member for London [Lord John], and for which you must calculate the odds that its provisions will be such as to satisfy those gentlemen who profess what they call Radical principles, and to satisfy also those other gentlemen who have spent the last six-and-twenty years [that is, since the implementation of the Great Reform Bill in 1832] in decoying Radical votes and in abjuring Radical opinions? (*Speeches*, II, 105-06 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 542-43].)

If this is to be done, not only must the Government change, but, even granting the Opposition "is in Downing Street tomorrow," its own quarrels must be resolved. Yet this is not the intent of the Amendment, at least on the part of him who moved it, "the same unrivalled destroyer of Governments [Lord John]" whose Amendment may "leave the English suffrage much as the [Irish Appropriation Clause] left the Irish Church [that is, in effect, disestablished]" (106 [543]). The indecision of the opposition, however, has left the House to listen to absurdities. Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen (1829-1893), the Liberal Member for Sandwich, who would hold lower office in the Sixties and Seventies under Palmerston, Russell and Gladstone, says he is willing to wait indefinitely for a Bill which would conform in every element to his convictions. John Bright (1811-1888), the Liberal Member for Birmingham, is willing to wait five years; Bulwer suggests sarcastically that he "propose as an amendment to this bill that a good bill should be read a second time this day five years" (107 [543-44]). [One means opponents had in attempting to end the progress of a Bill was to try to get a vote, usually by Amendment, that the Bill be put through one of its stages, often its Second Reading, at some time in the future, say, three months or six months or the like;

passing such an Amendment would normally end the life of a Bill. Bulwer's phrasing, which was standard, that the Bill "should 'be read a second time this day' five years," wittily turned House procedure into a medium for twitting Bright.] But Bulwer is not about harassing the Opposition in the matters either of their agreement with him or their disagreements among themselves; indeed,

> speaking frankly, I have no superstitious dread of any of those questions which are raised by the most ardent reformers opposite. Some of those questions I espoused myself many years ago; one or two of them I still individually favour; and if on others I have since modified or wholly altered the opinions I then held, I have done so with no uncharitable prejudice against those who believe now what I myself once believed, or may even believe a little more than my political creed ever permitted me to do. (107 [544].)

At first sight, this appears a somewhat contradictory statement, particularly when Bulwer follows it with another compliment to the "advanced reformers" among the Liberals across the aisle:

> [in] arguing the case with them I argue it not with the mob-leaders of fifty years ago, ... [but] with gentlemen of refined education, ... some of whom have proved the independence of their character by the loss of their seats, rather than yield to what they held to be the mistaken judgment of their constituents. (107 [544].)

Political creeds are supposed to determine beliefs and, even more, actions; Bulwer admits greater belief in the value of an expansive franchise than his political creed permits, while he praises others for going down to electoral loss rather than to represent "mistaken judgment." This may seem little more than an indication on Bulwer's part that he is sympathetic to facets of Reform, that his heart is more with Reform than his

"political creed," but it is something other than this. The point he is making here is about what he refers to as "questions," that is, items or aspects within the general understanding; in effect, he is denying that his own or anyone else's political creed *must* delimit a response to individual questions and praises those Liberals who, again on individual questions, have accepted electoral defeat rather than to submit unquestioningly to unfelt elements of a general creed. He makes clear what he means when he asks and then answers the following question:

> when a Government undertakes a Reform Bill, it is impossible to discard the question - what party does that Government represent? Conservatives are as free as other men to undertake financial or administrative reforms; and there may be points, both in the management of business and even of policy, in which there is more sympathy between Conservatives and advanced Liberals than there is between advanced Liberals and Whigs. But when it comes to the great organic changes, your own good sense and your instinct of party honour must tell you that a Conservative Government could not give the same kind of reform as a Government which represents your views and is supported by your constituents. (107-108 [544].)

While the question is fairly straightforward, the argument is somewhat complex here, whence the apparent contradiction. In particulars, an individual may agree with another individual of an entirely different political creed; Bulwer insists that this has been and to some extent remains the case for himself in matters of Reform. On the other hand, agree as he may and as "entitled to respect" (107 [544]) as individual, even advanced individual, Liberals may be, all the same, parties and governments are more than individuals, and it is not possible to expect that, with respect to "great organic changes,"

*parties* of greatly differing political creeds will be able to come to unanimity.

Bulwer now surfaces the precise motive stimulating this segment of his argument: "An hon. gentleman who spoke last night said, with great anger, that this bill was a compromise." Again, this is Knatchbull-Hugessen, who said that the Bill "fell short of those great principles which ought to guide" the House but that this did not surprise him, for Derby once had said that the British Constitution was established in a succession of compromises, and "his followers had proved themselves faithful adherents to the noble Lord's doctrine, for they had compromised, one by one, all those great principles which formerly held them together as a party." And this, "like every other measure which Her Majesty's [present] Government had brought forward, was a measure of compromise" (Hansard 3rd, 153. 471). "Of course, it is," Bulwer responds, ignoring the vituperation and focusing just upon the notion of compromise. "We could only deal with this question as men offering a compromise, in which we tender concessions on our side and ask concessions upon yours" (*Speeches*, II, 108 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 544]). But there is a benefit to this that many of the Liberal Members apparently do not notice: "What you lose in amount of reform you gain in the expedition and ease with which some reform at least may be effected" (108 [544]). But this alone is not what is gained: "A violent party battle upon Parliamentary Reform, to be fought throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom, is in itself a great calamity" (108 [544-45]). He

recalls for his listeners what it had been like the last time: "Lifelong friendships ... dissolved, families ... divided ... society embittered for years; trade and credit ... seriously injured," with £2,000,000 forfeited in London commerce alone to "the agitation of the great Reform Bill" (108 [545]). At this point, Bulwer concludes his argument dramatically with the options that he would claim lie before the Liberals:

> All those evils, according to your views, may be counter-balanced by some large triumph for popular Government such as you would propose. All those evils are counterbalanced by the amendment of the noble Lord. All those evils are prevented, and some advantage even to your views is obtained, if, by passing the second reading of this bill, you will meet the spirit in which a Conservative party offers to you the grounds for a compromise. (108 [545].)

It is clearly an hyperbole on Bulwer's part to indicate an expectation of the difficulties of the Thirties during a far more tranquil time; indeed, the "gentlemen of refined education" who sat opposite the Treasury Bench from which Bulwer spoke had as not even the last thing on their minds the progression to such a great calamity. But the rhetoric certainly stirred the tories and, perhaps, many of the whigs as well; as has been mentioned elsewhere in this essay, the fear of revolution in the Thirties outpaced indications of it, however compelling those indications may from time to time have seemed. But the fear lay a ready historical artifact in the consciousness of many, if not most, of his listeners, upon which Bulwer might facilely transcribe his text. And, too, his choice of "fifty" rather than "twenty-five years" as a temporal designator served the purpose of reawakening these fears while

sparing any of his listeners, of whom there were not a few, who might have had some reason to remain forgetful of precisely their roles in the generation of such fears in the Thirties. The great preponderance of the Commons, however, could be offended at Peterloo or despise the Six Acts without hypocrisy. This is a neat maneuver on Bulwer's part, carefully constructed to evoke pathos in the maximum number of his listeners, but to endanger no one's ethos, especially - himself an active Radical in those later days surrounding the Great Reform Bill, but only in his midteens when English killed English on St. Peter's Field - his own. This rhetorical stratagem, of stimulating the fear without simulating the cause, of advancing the history without implying any individual's participation in it, including his own, would quickly crumble to melodrama were he to linger, so that his next move is both genuinely unexpected and fully apposite.

There are two determinations which must be made when Reform is considered, both insisted on by the Member for Stroud, Edward Horsman (c.1805-1876), a Liberal who, nevertheless, voted for Disraeli's Bill and against Lord John's seven years later, and in respect to which Bulwer is in complete accord: public opinion must be measured (v. Hansard 3rd, 153, 460-61) and "the amount of acknowledged evil - what [there exists] for a government (and I must here add a Conservative Government) to admit and to remedy" - must be ascertained (v. Hansard 3rd, 153, 462-63) (*Speeches*, II, 108 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 545]). The state of the public mind had been "extremely apathetic" (108-09

[545]) when the present Bill was first undertaken the previous year; indeed, public opinion had been at best "listless" (110 [546]). And the evil, if it were present, "could not be one very popularly felt, for the hon. gentleman the Member for Birmingham [John Bright], with all his masculine eloquence, failed to get up an agitation commensurate to his talents and proportioned to his zeal" (110 [547]). Bulwer's explication of his answer to the first determination is fundamentally interesting in understanding Bulwer's conservatism: as in the previous year, so now, the possibility of war in Europe is great; this is not the time

> suddenly to transfer political power from the middle class, with which, on the whole, it now rests, and by which, on the whole, it has been liberally and usefully exercised, to the wider area of a class, however honest and respectable, still not yet educated up to the mark which England should require in a constituency that is to enable her to confront foreign Powers, not with the force of numbers, but with the majesty of disciplined intellect. (109 [545].)

Bulwer then quotes Fox for his Liberal heirs to the same effect as he has just claimed with respect to intellect and numbers. But "many eminent persons opposite" have shown insincerity in this, for when word of a Conservative Reform measure circulated out of doors,

> articles appeared in Whig journals that might have been written by Mr. Croker. Speeches were addressed to their constituents by Whig members that might have been uttered by Lord Liverpool. I appeal to our own social experience. Were not gentlemen on this side besieged with confidential whispers by gentlemen on the other side, "I hope your Reform Bill will be a very moderate measure; in fact, it cannot be too moderate for public opinion." And now, Sir, because this measure is brought forward by a Government they oppose, those same eminent persons, not contented with censuring its details, declare that it falls far short of their expectations; when if it had gone

> but a few feet further, if it had but touched the corner of that bench which the noble Lord the Member for London now adorns as a reluctant visitor, they would have said that it left Church and State behind it. Sir, that is very naturally the voice of party. (109-110 [546].)

In short, the Liberals in camera want a moderate Bill or none at all, but in public statement, particularly in the House, make great ado about opposing it. Bulwer's rhetorical play here is particularly sparkling: Lord John, already a member of six Governments and Prime Minister of one, with more of both to come, was indeed a "reluctant visitor" upon the Opposition benches; with his being one of the Liberal Opposition's most Liberal Members, the closer the content of the Bill came to what he might have wanted the louder would have been the protests against it - purely from party motives, Bulwer claims. Not content with this poke at Lord John, Bulwer adds as an afterthought that "if you want to know what is to be said against triennial Parliaments [a favorite Reforming cause] and vote by ballot, I refer you to the speeches of the noble Lords the Members for Tiverton and London [Viscount Palmerston and Lord John, respectively]" (110 [546]).

The second determination, that of how much acknowledged evil the Bill will surmount, occupies much of the rest of the speech. The Conservatives have discovered two flaws in the current franchise: there are large constituencies which are not represented; there are large classes which cannot vote. Bulwer now explains his Government's findings and proposed solutions; he moves through several of these, all to the following formula: "We found that the really large towns

unrepresented were extremely few. To all those with populations approaching 20,000, we have given members; if we have omitted some that should be represented, prove the case, and it is a fair question of committee; but reject the bill on account of that amendment, and you leave the towns we enfranchise still unrepresented" (111 [547]). Each repetition of the formula contains a specific problem found by the Liberal Opposition in the Reform Bill put forward by the Conservatives in 1859. The Conservatives have lowered the minimum rent for a vote to 8*s* a week so as to include "intelligent and independent persons who live in lodgings, and have no house at all" (111 [547]). Personal property as well as money invested in savings accounts has been admitted to tally along with rental, and £10 occupiers in the counties have been given the vote when they live in unrepresented towns and villages. This latter was done "with large concession on our side. Why? I am not ashamed to say, because our subject, if possible, was conciliation" (111 [548]). Each of these points is given the rhetorical context, "... prove the case - it is a fair question of Committee; but reject the bill on account of that amendment, and you reject ...," with the Liberal objection before "prove" and the specific and unfortunate consequence of such rejection following "you reject." It will be recalled from Chapter One that it was this refrain of Bulwer's, "prove the case," whose employment Bagehot found so useful within the context of his own arguments on this issue in the *National Review* a few weeks later. To a desire for conciliation which he has mentioned,

Bulwer adds tact, a good example of which is the manner in which he handles James Wilson, the political economist and, ironically, the founder of the the *Economist*, for which Bagehot wrote, and who had, it will be recalled, spoken just before Bulwer. This is, too, an example of Bulwer's ability not only to respond extemporaneously with competence, but to do so on terms one would expect to have been set by his opponent:

> The Member for Devonport, who preceded me, is an authority in facts and figures - he is a master of detail; yet even he seeks to prejudice you against the second reading of the bill by an inaccuracy he would not, I am sure, have incurred, had we been in Committee on the clause; for he said that our mode of dealing with the borough freeholds would create a fluctuating constituency between town and country for the next sixty years (v. Hansard 3rd, 153, 534). But only allow the bill to go into Committee, and I think we shall be able to show that there will be no such floating constituency, as a voter must select between the two at the first registration. (112 [548].)

Lord John has made a similar error; Bulwer's manner of response is interesting:

> Again, the noble Lord says, "By withdrawing the borough freeholders from the counties, we withdraw the commercial element those freeholders represent" (v. Hansard 3rd, 153, 392 [despite quotes, not precisely rendered]). But he forgot to state that we give to the counties more than double the votes by occupiers of the votes withdrawn by the freeholders; and if these occupiers should be for the most part the inhabitants of towns, they are more likely to be in trade than even the freeholder; and thus the commercial element is not withdrawn, but probably it is doubled - more than doubled, if you add those who will obtain either the lodger franchise or that derived from personal property. (112 [548-549].)

Both points Bulwer makes on the Bill and the counterarguments he offers those in the Opposition are items available to a larger theme he wants always before his audience: the proper balance between the component and the aggregate. "[Y]ou cannot judge the whole bill by a single clause. You must compare one part

with another. And to analyze the cause you object to would require a debate to itself" (112-113 [549]). In addition to warning speakers in the Opposition against the fallacy of converse accident, that is, hasty generalization, he urges them, even if the objections be granted, to pursue the available course with respect to a Bill: "those objections apply to details you can consider in Committee" (113 [549]). This is as well a point that both the Conservative Col. Charles Napier Sturt (1832-1886), who represented Dorchester, (Hansard 3rd 153, 427-28) and the Liberal Horsman had made with great emphasis the previous evening. The argument of both suggested that Lord John was, contrary to the "general rule and practice" of the House (457), submitting the Amendment as a "party manœuvre" (457) to halt the Bill on its Second Reading, during which the Bill was to be considered in principle, rather than dealing with the question of specificity of franchise extension in Committee, where "if the details are faulty" they are corrected (457). Bulwer reviews their objections for them, implicitly repeating his own counterarguments in as he goes along:

> and unless you say it is nothing to enfranchise the large towns now unrepresented - nothing to improve the registration - nothing to enfranchise new classes - nothing to admit the £10 occupier to vote in counties, - you ought not to reject the second reading of the bill on account of a clause you have a later and a fuller opportunity to discuss. (*Speeches*, II, 113 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 549].)

This conflation of trope, inferential device and summation is a technique at which Bulwer is a master. He is particularly inclined to employ variations on this kind of complexity as a

means of moving from one aspect of his discussion to another. He is also fully capable of moving with breathtaking abruptness at precisely the same kinds of junctures.

Bulwer now proceeds to a discussion of the philosophical and historical contexts within which he conceives the Bill. The great difference in terms of which the two sides approach suffrage is that the Liberals "would suddenly lower the borough franchise, and we would extend the general franchise of the nation" (113 [549]). This is indicated in the Conservatives' Bill's attention to detail - lodgers, savings, education - and the Liberals' insistence upon "house qualification." At this point Bulwer submits an interesting hypothetical example:

> [A] retired servant, or a broken tradesman, hires a house and lets lodgings; in those lodgings may live an artist, a banker's clerk, a man of letters, a superior artisan. The one retired servant or the broken tradesman alone has a vote; the four educated men who lodge with him have none. Will you tell me that their four votes would not be of more value to the constituency in the right choice of a member than the votes of four £5 householders if you added them to the constituency instead? (113 [549-550].)

Now, on the face of it, the argument here exemplified may seem advanced simply at the behest of the kind of tory values that appear weighted always toward intelligence with birth or, in this case, capital - economic or mental - as the sign of it, and it would not be entirely wrong to assert this. But Bulwer has as well something subtler in mind. He boldly declares that a lowering of the franchise in the boroughs - where the Liberals are most intent in their suffrage ambitions - would be of no disadvantage and might be of indirect advantage to the Conservatives. "... I take it for granted that the disposition

of all the larger towns will be to return candidates of the opposite party" (114 [550]). Whether these be "returned by a £10 or a £5 constituency could, therefore, in no way affect the balance of party in this House" (114 [550]). This seems clear enough. But the implications have yet to be surfaced: "it might be an advantage to us that gentlemen opposite should be chosen by a £5 constituency rather than a £10" (114 [550]). Why? Not numbers alone, but "the dignity, the independence, the education and, on the whole, the moderate good sense of its representatives" sustain a party. Conversely, "the worst enemy an upright reformer can have is not a Conservative gentleman; it is a demagogic adventurer. ...This would be your loss; indirectly it would be our gain" (114 [550]). Bulwer follows this with a telling and quite thoroughly insightful argument: the "demagogic adventurer" would be the Conservatives' advantage because the Liberals "would no longer be the same formidable candidates for power. Violent politicians may make a troublesome and unscrupulous Opposition, but they could never unite to form the Queen's Government" (114 [550]). It is to be noted that he does not say that they could not *form* the Queen's Government, but that they could not *unite* to form the Queen's Government; this is not an idly made distinction, and what follows demonstrates both this and Bulwer's considerable sagacity with respect to human nature, a trait fundamental both to the good rhetor and the good rhetorician, if Aristotle is to be believed. "If we wanted to destroy the moral power of your party, we would give you the lowest suffrage you like to ask....

Lower the franchise in towns, and the lower you go the more you place numbers under the control of ignorance and passion. That would be your loss," Bulwer repeats a third time (114 [550]). Conversely, he points out with all the savage practicality of a seasoned politician, were the vote lowered from £10 to £5 in the shires in tandem with the towns, "you would bring our own village labourers into the franchise, and thus place numbers under the influence of property. That," he declares, "would be our gain" (114 [550]. But this is not his point, which he arrives at benignly and in perfect sincerity:

> far from wishing to destroy your party, I consider it essential to freedom that the Liberal party in this House should be always strong; and if I ask you to pause before you lower too much the borough franchise, it is because I am convinced you cannot be always strong if you create a constituency that does not secure to Liberal members the same high standard of integrity and culture

which they now hold (114 [550-51]). Now, however sincere such remarks may be and genuine the Parliamentary and Constitutional sentiments which lie behind them, any politician would take pleasure in such power as Bulwer implies the Conservatives have over the Liberals, but as shall be demonstrated with the Members' response, this latter was not an interpretation his listeners put upon it. Nor should the authenticity of the remarks be underestimated.

As this essay frequently demonstrates, Bulwer inclined always to reach a rhetorical hand out to political opponents, whoever these might be and whatever might be the issue which divided him from them. For this, he was highly valued by his contemporaries. Not so valued has he been by many historians

since and particularly those of the last fifty or so years: as we shall see with respect to his work against the Taxes on Knowledge, historians of this effort have often greeted his generosity toward opponents as duplicity or, at best, incompetence, just as Douglas Hurd, former historian and former Foreign Secretary, greeted his speech on the *Arrow* as tawdry rhetoric and worse than tawdry politics, although, one must hasten to add, Hurd can be forgiven, for his book on the incident offers little evidence that he had actually read the speech. But the speeches were heard - they were valued and Bulwer was respected for them. Palmerston, absolutely no friend of Bulwer's - political or personal - remarked to the Queen of the present speech that it was among the finest he'd heard in the House of Commons (Lytton, II, 302). What captivated Bulwer's listeners - for, if often reasoned to a fault, his delivery was not of itself unfailingly stirring - were the power of his argument and the forthrightness of his intention, that is, in Aristotelian terms, his logos and his ethos. In consequence, what made this a great speech, but may not readily appear so to others than his contemporaries, was that Bulwer said in very good language what those who heard him thought, but wished to avoid saying themselves. Bulwer had already said as much in the speech himself. And only this can account for the discrepancy between the reception given the speech by the Members and the reception given it by William White, Doorkeeper to the House, who, in *The Inner Life of the House of Commons* characterizes Bulwer's delivery as "mere sound, conveying no meaning" (I,

89). He admits reluctantly to the possibility that this is due to his being at too great a distance from the speaker. On the other hand, he says this of the Members' reception:

> Members down below, we apprehend, must have heard Sir Edward better, for they cheered vociferously. Indeed, at the close of this remarkable harangue, the cheering was beyond everything that we ever heard in the House or indeed elsewhere. It was literally a "tempest of applause," and seemed to us to come from all parts of the House. It burst forth as the orator sat down, like a hurricane, was renewed and re-renewed, and then, when it seemed to have died out, was started again, and once more the whole House appeared to join in chorus. And all this was rendered more effective by the members rising just then to go to dinner, and cheering as they rose. (I, 89)

Earlier in this account, which was contained originally in a series of short articles in *The Illustrated Times of London*, White had issued a rather unflattering description of Bulwer's behavior preceding this and others of his speeches; such descriptions indicate White's disposition with respect to Bulwer and suggest a not altogether objective and impersonal reportage. He goes on after the comments just quoted to speculate upon Bulwer's state of mind upon returning home from speaking:

> A proud man was Sir Edward that night as members came up to congratulate him on his success, and probably he went home and dreamed, either waking or sleeping, that he had secured a great parliamentary name, and that future historians will say of him that, in addition to being a most successful novelist, he was one of the greatest orators of his time. (89-90.)

White was himself fewer than five years in the service of the House at the time the speech here under consideration was delivered and can be forgiven for failing to notice that Bulwer's reputation as a speaker preceded his own employment by more than twenty years. Nor is it difficult to understand why

such sniping might be directed at Bulwer - or any living, famous person - by contemporaries; reasons range from the personal through the political to the social and intellectual. But what is wholly and remarkably difficult, actually, fully impossible to understand is that it is the sniping, the great bulk of it casual and unreflective, as is White's, which has largely been retained in the historical reception of the man; even today, scholars of the language, who should know better, continue to institutionalize a mockery of Bulwer's style, one which offers the practiced reader much that is pleasurable and much that is profound. It is the present writer's belief that the cause of this critical inadequacy on the part of those who scorn or ignore Bulwer-Lytton is not just want of knowledge of him nor even that cultural gulf of taste many have claimed a barrier, though both these certainly play their roles, but a more consequential deficiency: the inability, generated by ideological predisposition or linguistic intolerance or cultural bias, to contextualize him historically, that is, an insistence to receive what he wrote, said or did synchronically, as if he had said it yesterday and down the street or, more likely, in the next office. In fairness, however, it must be added that Bulwer does not possess those obvious characteristics of one who consciously is speaking not to his time, but to all time, yet neither did Cicero, whose speeches, as the speeches of most great public speakers, are so diachronically embedded in their milieu that they defy reception - except as pretty language - in the absence of

considerable and sophisticated contextualization. And the present writer would submit as well that this feature of Bulwer's, his profound diachronicity, is precisely what made him so immensely well-received by his contemporaries and so difficult for a posterity at our present reach to grasp.

The speech now under discussion is a very great speech and a good example of the problem; it is a great speech not because of its eloquence, and it is more often than not greatly eloquent, nor because of its command of detail, and of detail the speech is a master, but because it conveyed with splendid expressiveness and in intensely pertinent specification what was in the hearts and minds of the Members on both sides of the aisle who heard it. Again and again, Bulwer directed himself and his argument to individual Members, nearly always by name or constituency or both, responding to their arguments adroitly, whether they had just spoken or spoken on the previous night. Its appeal was balanced, its tolerance was unfeigned, its anxiety for the state and future of the Nation transparent; the fears for the polity it expressed were the real fears of the Members who listened, the cautions it urged were sober, and the historical context it offered for reflection and as a ground of argument was sound, available and immediate. These are the elements of a great speech. So when Bulwer offers that the Liberal party "must pause before ... lower[ing] too much the borough franchise" (114 [550]), he does so because he is convinced that there would be no strength in "a constituency that does not secure to Liberal members the same high standard

of integrity and culture" (114 [551]) that they now possess. Bulwer is not flattering his listeners; he believes what he says, and so do they. It was not an unreasoned speculation that Liberal Members opposite might lose their seats to "demagogic adventurers" (114 [550]) who had little "standard of integrity and culture" (114 [551]), while Conservative Members retained theirs and even more easily retained the Government. This was well understood by the Members, regardless of Party, who met the speech with extraordinary, if not unprecedented, enthusiasm. Hansard's parliamentary reporters registered the great difficulty they experienced in making out the "first observations" of the following speaker, which were "lost," but nevertheless recorded that George Henry Charles Byng (1830-1898, from 1874 Visct. Enfield, 1886 3rd Earl Stafford), a Liberal then sitting for Middlesex, "was understood to express his admiration of the eloquent speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Colonies, and the diffidence he felt in rising after him..." (Hansard 3rd, 153, 559).

It is important to notice about the speech that, while it is in defense of a Bill, its mode of argument is by means of an attack upon a hostile Amendment a Member - Lord John Russell - wishes attached to the Bill. This forces upon the rhetor a technical horizon which he may not go beyond without endangering his audience's sense of appropriateness. Part of the speech's competence lies in its handling of this fundamental aspect. Still, Bulwer continues, it was not just Liberals who were in danger; both Liberals and Conservatives

would be targets of a Bill such as Lord John Russell wished this to be. In their most general terms, Bills Lord John had introduced in 1852 and 1854 would have brought the rental in the boroughs from £10 to £6 and evened out the occupier franchise in the counties to a consistent £10 (Webb 321). His Amendment to the tories' 1859 Bill, more or less following the spirit of these figures from his own Bills, implied a concentration of the overall franchise in the cities which would impact strongly on the Representational power of the smaller boroughs, be their constituencies Liberal or Conservative. With respect to the suffrage, then, which was meant - through the rates liable upon any given rental - to be rendered by ownership of property or the capacity to rent it and nothing else, the smaller boroughs, where owners or renters were fewer and rents, but not rates, on average higher, would be compelled to make way for the larger boroughs in such a general lowering of the franchise. This does not mean that the rents were absolutely higher in the smaller boroughs, for they were not, but that the absolute number of rentals at the lower end of the £6-£10 range was greater per capita of eligible voters in the larger boroughs than in the smaller. Regardless of party, Bulwer urges, "do not let gentlemen who represent the smaller boroughs credulously believe that you can by any political logic lower the franchise in boroughs without destroying the smaller boroughs; the two principles must go together" (*Speeches*, II, 114-115 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 551]). Further, because the absolute number of constituencies would remain the same, smaller boroughs must be

eliminated to make way for numbers added to the larger boroughs. Finally, those which would not be swept away on numbers alone will find their constituencies in danger from the relatively lower contribution to the rates from artisans in the smaller boroughs as compared to those paying rates in the larger boroughs, that is, artisans, taken as a separate class, and these are the marginal voters Lord John wants moved into the franchise. Because these pay an average higher rental in the larger boroughs than in the lower, they would, thereby, achieve greater Representation from the larger boroughs than from the lower. All these factors configured, Bulwer concludes, then "[t]o lower the borough franchise is to annihilate the smaller boroughs" (115 [551]). The inevitable established, Bulwer asks if there are "any members for such boroughs so guileless and lamb-like as to be caught by the noble Lord's ensnaring amendment and seductive tongue?" There is the Member for Sandwich, Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, about whom Bulwer quotes Pope, slightly altered:

> Pleased to the last he crops his flowery food
> And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
> [From *An Essay on Man* 1, III, 83-84]

Where will the constituents of the smaller boroughs go? "Do not think that we did not carefully examine that subject. We might have given what is called a more comprehensive, and might have been, a more popular measure. We might have swept away 80, 90, 100, 120, boroughs" (114 [551]), but on the basis of established understanding, extending back even to Lord John's last Reform Bill, these should go to the counties, but, further, this would

serve the tories who are strong in the counties and pit town against county as well:

> We did not do this. We would not, in the present state of Europe, provoke that town and county quarrel which renders always so difficult, and at this time so dangerous, the question of any large redistribution of seats. Having resolved that our measure should be moderate, we resolved that, as between party and party, it should be fair. (115 [551].)

As a consequence, although the counties in justice should have the seats, they will not get them. He has insisted throughout the speech, implicitly and explicitly, that the ultimate goal of this tory Bill is fairness.

Bulwer now asks his listeners to consider further what will occur if the moderate Conservative measure fails and, as the result of a Bill such as some of the Liberals want, "this country [is] governed by a large preponderance of great urban populations with a very low franchise" (116 [552]). This is a question of far greater consequence than "the party battle which the noble Lord's amendment presents to the ardour of some, and forces on the distaste of many who support it" (116 [552]). What is the object of such a Bill? "Popular freedom? Be it so," Bulwer says and then sets to characterizing the grounds upon which such freedom is maintained:

> Popular freedom is not secured by the machinery that returns representatives; its security is in the power the representative assembly will exercise over that highest class of minds which first guide and then consolidate the public opinion of a civilized state. That power must be intellectual, or it has no duration. That power all reforms must tend to increase, or they are worse than worthless. Fatal mistake, if in augmenting the constituency we lower the character of the assembly that represents it! From one end of Europe to the other, freedom is strengthened or enfeebled not by the numbers which bear her into our councils, but in proportion as,

> once installed amongst us, we preserve or endanger her attributes to confidence and respect. Well, then, the power and dignity of the House of Commons. That is the object, and all reforms are but as a means to maintain it. (116 [552].)

This is a fundamental perspective on the how government should operate. Bulwer points out that the House of Commons "is not merely a popular assembly, it is a deliberative assembly. It arrogates inquiry, and decides upon all the most complicated questions of policy both at home and abroad" (116 [552]). He calls attention to British Colonies which possess popular assemblies; these are "little more than vestr[ies] on a great scale" (116 [552]). In the United States, great matters of state - war, foreign affairs, public appointments - are in the hands of the Senate, not the popular assembly, the House of Representatives. Bulwer now makes an important comparison:

> [T]he American House of Representatives is what you would make this House of Commons, - so popular in its constituent elements - so brought down to the level of the masses - that even the masses have small respect for its wisdom; and it is to the Senate that the grand republic looks for deliberate judgment upon the graver matters which involve its honour and affect its national interest. It is not so as yet in England. The brain and the heart of England are still in the House of Commons. The wisest of our people have still a paramount interest in our debates; the greatest potentates of Europe have still a reverence for your decisions. But once Americanise the House of Commons and you would lose more in the intellectual attributes that create your real power than you could obtain by all the popular vigor you could get through manhood suffrage and electoral districts. (117 [553].)

This is not simply a plea to retain power in the hands of those who have it; the distinction Bulwer makes between the Congress and the Senate is a real one, was intended by the Founders of the United States and exists today. "One reason for the moderation and dignity which pervade our councils is to be found in this -

that we have not as yet, on the whole, lowered our suffrage beyond the fair standard of education which ought to be required from an English voter" (117 [553]). Bulwer acknowledges that his warnings will not prevail absolutely against the tide of manhood suffrage, but he cautions against haste. What he fears is that, "when only very popular constituencies exist, members become rather delegates than representatives" (118 [554]). This is what is occurring in America, Canada and Australia. The ultimate consequence of this change is the ascendancy of the two worst influences possible in public life: money and demagoguery, the one inducing the corruption of public virtue, the other devolving into tyranny. This has been seen in France. This was an argument left largely unanswered, although Byng weakly asserted that he believed there was "a great difference between Americanizing our institutions and giving the working classes a fair share, and no more than a fair share, in their just rights" (Hansard 3rd, 153, 563).

It is true that Bulwer argues as much for property as for education. But without fail, his notion is that, rather than as a bar to the political advancement of the lower classes, it should be their means. Possessed of property and education, any man in England would be possessed as well of the competence to vote. Bulwer responds vigorously to the rhetorical question he places on the lips of some of his listeners, whether he is "afraid of the working man" (*Speeches*, II,119 [Hansard 3rd, 153. 555]). There is, of course, something of paternalism in his response clearly, but as a "country gentleman" (119 [555])

he would certainly, as he claims, come in continual contact with all classes in the village, and, naturally, he adds the usual paternal observations about "homely virtues" (119 [555]). But he points as well to "the thirst for knowledge" and Utopian dreams to be found in "the skilled mechanic of our manufacturing towns" (119 [555]). But to admire persons of the lower classes is one thing; to "entrust all the destinies of England" (119 [555]) to them - as manhood suffrage, he feels, will do - is quite another. Still, the argument is nothing so simple as this; Bulwer insists that he "would entrust the destinies of England to no single class whatever" (119 [555]), yet numbers alone will make it a certitude that England would be ruled by a single class if a Bill is passed such as is suggested by Lord John's Amendment. Still more: it is clear that, under the sentiment that actually now prevails in the House, such a Bill, as certain Liberals argue for merely in order to forestall the present Conservative Reform Bill, is unlikely and those responsible for the tactic

> inflame the working men with the belief that they shall come into the franchise not by threes and fours, but by hundreds and thousands; and then, in the same breath, they declare that they have no idea of admitting the numbers whose expectations they so cruelly excite. (120 [555-56.)

Bulwer points particularly to Lord John in this and in the Amendment which, passed, would permit that "mysterious franchise which the noble Lord would give, but declines to divulge" (120 [556]). Bulwer makes an ominous prediction:

> [After] talk of our releasing the elements of democracy - and upon this subject I have heard some of the most deplorable rubbish that ever was talked by educated men -

> ... whenever the noble Lord and the Member for Halifax [Sir Charles Wood, heir to the Halifax title and member of many Liberal Governments] bring forward their measure, and the workmen as a class find that they do not pour in their countless multitudes through the door those gentlemen will keep ajar with a chain across it, there will be among them one cry of angry disappointment. (120 [556].)

Bulwer is himself against neither a lowering of the borough franchise nor the full admission of the working class to suffrage. Indeed, he goes further than that "statesman so eminent," Lord John, who would agitate the working class, but refuse to "make it clear" what he would do (121 [556]); Bulwer would go as far as John Stuart Mill and "not object to the widest possible suffrage, if you can effect a contrivance by which intelligence shall still prevail over numbers" (121 [556-57]). That not possible, he insists, "then ... at least, the first step towards anything that approaches to universal suffrage should be something that approaches to universal education" (121 [557]).

Bulwer moves now to an extended metaphor, which he takes from William Conyngham Plunket, the recently deceased Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and employs through the final moments of his speech. This was not an unusual technique in the style of nineteenth-century British Parliamentary delivery, though often the metaphors were strained or doubled, clichéd or needlessly protracted and, thus, better left unuttered. Bulwer's here verges upon the last, but is effective all the same. What is remarkable is not the metaphor itself, but its final extension a bit later in the speech:

> "Time is represented with the hour-glass as well as the scythe." True; with the scythe he mows down - by the aid of

> the hour-glass he metes the duration of that which he intends to destroy: let me add to Lord Plunket's grand image - by the aid of the hour-glass Time also must reckon the moment for that which he designs to construct. You borrow from Time the scythe; have you consulted his hour-glass? You would mow down this Government and this Reform Bill. Granted. Look at the hour-glass! What Government and what Reform Bill will you reconstruct? (121 [557].)

Bulwer has no intention of defending the Government against such faults as the Opposition finds in the Bill, but calls attention to the fact that it has received support from many Members of the Opposition at its earlier stages. He grants that the Bill does not meet the expectations of many, but, repeating a notion he had first propounded nearly twenty-five years earlier in *The Present Crisis*, Bulwer asks of those who object whether, "as men of honour, if Lord Derby's Government had passed a bill according to your models, though you would have accepted the bill, would you not have despised its authors? Should we not have been traitors to those we represent?" (122 [557]). Bulwer moves rapidly now from one point to the next, the first a broadside at the Opposition's fragmented leadership:

> If a Reform Bill, such as you desire, must be carried, it is for you to propose it; it is not for us. But, before you raise the scythe to mow us down, look again at the hour-glass! What is to be the next Government? Can it last if the Member for Birmingham [the Radical John Bright] and the noble Viscount [Palmerston], if the Member for Sheffield [J. A. Roebuck, another Radical] and the Member for London [Lord John], do not sit on the same Treasury bench? Can it last if they do? In either case the sands in the hour-glass will be violently shaken. (122 [557-58].)

"So much for this Government. One moment more to this bill," says Bulwer, carrying his argument forward by means of a rapid transition, the abruptness of which serves rather to heighten the effect of his tone than to diminish the clarity of his

argument.

"It is said not to be final. No Reform Bill can be. The fault you allege is its merit" (122 [558]). This is so "if it meets some of the requirements of the day present, and does not give to-day what you may regret to-morrow that you cannot restore" (122 [558]). At this point, Bulwer produces a truly remarkable metaphor, one extended from Lord Plunket's:

> Democracy is like the grave - it perpetually cries "Give, give;" and, like the grave, it never returns what it has once taken. But you live under a constitutional monarchy, which has all the vigour of health, all the energy of movement. Do not surrender to democracy that which is not yet ripe for the grave. (122 [558].)

Bulwer ends the speech with a lofty defense of what he sees as the real object of the present Bill. He wants to eschew "technical definitions," as Macaulay did in his support for the Great Reform Bill, and to avoid "abstract dogma" and "party interests" (123 [558]); the Bill is "emphatically a bill for the middle class. ... The cause is that of the middle class, down to the verge at which the influence of that class would melt away amidst the necessities of manual labour and the turbulence of concentred numbers" (123 [558-59]). The middle class may indeed have determined to give way to the lower classes, and, if so, this must be learned by Members in the House who are its "representatives and trustees" (123 [559]). But if this is what is wanted, it must as well be clear that such an undertaking by Members will constitute "a pledge [to the working classes] which you can never redeem to their satisfaction until you have placed capital and knowledge at the command of impatient poverty and uninstructed numbers" (123 [559]). Bulwer's great

and expressed dread is of an inundation of inexperience and ignorance, motivated by abject power mongering, carried into the House by a stream of elected officials, representing the untutored ambitions of an inadequately prepared electorate. This fear was not alleviated when the Opposition became the Government and its own Reform Bill was put forward, a political circumstance owed to the carrying of the Amendment against which this speech was given, a circumstance which effectuated the fall of Derby's Government.

## The Third and Fourth Speeches on Reform

With the departure of Derby's second Government in the last days of May, 1859, Bulwer left the only office he had held; he left it deeply ill and several months after he had wished. Returned, later in the year, to a degree of health and to Parliaments with first Palmerston and then, six years later for a few months, Russell as premiers, Bulwer's approach to Reform was no different in Opposition than it had been in defending from the Treasury bench the Bill brought by the Derby Administration. As a result, the two speeches he gave against Reform Bills which Lord John Russell in 1860 and William Gladstone in 1866 were now able to introduce as Ministers varied little in concept and argument from the one he'd given in behalf of the Government to which he'd belonged. These later speeches too brought praise, even from those he opposed in them. Of the speech delivered in 1860, Charles Villiers said, "The Ministers bring forward a Bill and admire the arguments against it"

(Lytton, II, 318). Lord John had just minutes before approached him on the same occasion, a concert at Buckingham Palace, and thanked Bulwer for what he had said about him in the speech (317). The speech of 1860 is a very long speech; Lord Lytton, Bulwer's grandson, observes that it took two hours to deliver (317). Because this speech of the 20th of April, 1860, and that of the 13th of April, six years later, do not depart greatly from the fundamentals Bulwer had already expressed in the speech of 1859, it will be sufficient to comment on only those specifics of the two speeches which add to an understanding of Bulwer's view of Reform.

While the speech of 1866 is the shorter of the two by a third, both speeches are more detailed in their use of support and more replete with Bulwer's response to the views, activities and evidence of others than had been his previous speeches and writing on Reform. But the underlying philosophy of government which informs Bulwer's reception of these Liberal Bills is unaltered, if more refined and concise in its articulation. The following is from the speech of 1866:

> The consequences of the measure before us go far beyond ... considerations [of party gain or loss]. They affect, for good or for evil, the permanent character of this House, whether it be regarded as the fair representation of various classes and various interests, or as a faithful likeness of the mind and state of the whole nation, or as a deliberative assembly requiring an amount of prudence and of cultivated intelligence beyond that of any other popular chamber in the world; because no other popular chamber, either in Europe or America, exerts the same control over the executive, arrogates the same authority in maintaining peace and provoking war, or, by the temper of its debates and the grandeur of its renown, commands the same influence over the ideas and destinies of mankind. (*Speeches*, II, 172 [Hansard 3rd, 182, 1237].)

This is perhaps the most succinct, yet most comprehensive general statement Bulwer issued in defining his view of the representational body which was to be reformed. The Lower House served three purposes and three only: it must represent fairly each class and each Interest; it must represent faithfully the self-understanding of the Nation; it must perform the tasks of deliberation in terms of its character as an assembly with global and historic responsibilities. He follows this with a definition of Reform in contrast to revolution: "A reform is the correction of abuses, a revolution is a transfer of power" (172 [1238]). In the speech of 1866, Bulwer's object is to show that the Bill's sponsor, Gladstone, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, had not adequately established what the Bill would do to bring about Reform and misjudges the degree to which it would originate revolution. It is significant symbolically, if perhaps incidental in any substantive way, that this speech on Reform in 1866 was the last Bulwer gave in the Commons, just as the speech he gave on Reform in 1831 was the first; three months to the day after this speech, on the 13th of July, 1866, he was raised to the peerage, entitled Baron Lytton of Knebworth. While he prepared several speeches for delivery in the Lords, including one on Reform, he never spoke formally there.

What *is* of substance, however, is the continuity of thought between the two speeches, that of 1831 and that of 1866, with respect to the mode and means Bulwer accepted as legitimate in the alteration of government. It is to be recalled that he

had said at the close of that first speech "that it is the practical stability, and not theoretical improvement of the commonwealth, that ought to be our first object" (*Speeches*, I, 6 [Hansard 3rd, 4, 761]). This statement embodies the underlying philosophy which pervaded Bulwer's approach to political change. It is seen in his general, cautionary remarks of 1866: "A bill for the redistribution of seats is a correction of abuses; a bill for a large alteration of the franchise is, and must be, more or less, a transfer of power" (*Speeches*, II, 172 [Hansard 3rd, 182, 1238]). As he had just pointed out, the first is reform, the second revolution. And it is seen in the specific criticisms he brings to the Bill in question:

> But if you want to make a safe experiment of a working-class suffrage, and an experiment fair to themselves and true to the dignity of honest and thoughtful labour, are you sure that it can be made by the abstract principle of your Bill? that is, by a uniform abasement of the franchise applied equally to all boroughs, whatever their population and whatever their character? (175 [1241].)

The essential feature of the "experiment of a working-class suffrage" must be that it takes place in safety; security is *the* basic function of government, even when the government is itself undergoing profound change. One of the greatest dangers that can confront a government, particularly one in the process of change, is that it be made to conform to abstractions; these normally untried and speculative devices bring any government into a very wide range of hazard, something risked by the present Government's Bill. Continuing, Bulwer brings against "the abstract principle" of the Government's Bill - that is, the "uniform abasement of the franchise applied equally to all

boroughs, whatever their population and whatever their character" - an argument which is both specific and comprehensive and supported at once by an eminent contemporary authority and by constitutional precedent. Particularly interesting is the manner in which he moves from the condemnation of the Bill's dependence on abstraction in the conveyance of principle to an exposition of the unfolding potential for corruption were the Bill to become law. Both in its logic of development and in its clarity of presentation, the following sentence is as precise in language as it is compelling in detail:

> Perhaps for such an experiment the wiser plan would be to revive that variety of suffrage which is agreeable to the ancient custom of the constitution, and which was strongly recommended by the high authority of Sir James Mackintosh [the Scottish legal thinker famous for lectures given at Lincoln's Inn at the turn of the century, a man initially a revolutionary, eventually a whig], in any further extension of populous constituencies; and having decided how many boroughs should be devoted to majorities of the working class, then select those constituencies in which the prevalence of skilled labour tends to create a superior class of artisans, and in which their numbers alone would be some safeguard against the bribes of a candidate; and giving there such a suffrage as would amply secure your object, decline to apply the same low rate of franchise to those other and numerous middle-sized boroughs in which the skilled artisans are too few to become a fair representation of the intelligence and integrity of their class, and the electoral population not sufficiently large to frustrate the bribery by which the ambition of the rich man tempts the necessities of the poor. (175-176 [1241].)

There are, of course, principles here, but they are not by any measure abstract. A fairly obvious one is that, franchise be given as it may, *it* must not be allowed to become an occasion and inducement to corruption. Another is that Constitutional integrity is of practical advantage in the promotion of a

widening suffrage. Still another is that a recognition of disparities of class does not imply electoral exclusion, but, conversely, neither does the enfranchising of a class imply the necessity of enfranchising each and every individual within it. These and others are principles found in the details Bulwer brings to the question, and they, in their own way, have a specificity which is no concretizing of some abstraction, but what specifics are truly supposed to be, the building blocks of a generalization - if one is to be had. And, in so far as these are not themselves of a degree of specification that allows no further analysis, they too may be each the general products of specifics they in turn comprise.

In this Bulwer is following the Aristotelian - as opposed to the Platonic - understanding of rhetoric, which Aristotle defines as "the faculty of observing in any give case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle [R] 24; v. Aristotle [K] 36 for a linguistically more exact rendering along with commentary). This is an understanding of rhetoric from which, in practice, Bulwer rarely strays, but there is something more here than simply the habit of a good practitioner. Bulwer is implying that the abstracting done by his unwitting opponents is not only enfeebling their argument, but also advising an inexpedient course to the House; if they do not look to the available means of persuasion and to the given case, that is, if they continue in their abstractions, they will, if they carry the vote, have done so on rhetorically problematical grounds, but, and in direct consequence, will have as well brought grave

harm to the Nation (v. Table 2).

There is another side as well to Bulwer's reticence with respect to abstraction beyond what he conceives to be its potential for promoting instability in government and insecurity in society, and it has to do with his obdurate scorn for those who credit the possibility of perfection, what we might today call closure. We have already seen this in the speech of 1859, wherein he chastens those who would censure a Reform Bill for its tentativeness. He said there that the allegation of incompleteness was in reality an acknowledgment of merit (*Speeches*, II, 122 [Hansard 3rd, 153, 558]). *Final* Reform Bills will disillusion the impatient, bring injury to the renitent or both: if proved overly final, the Bill will unjustly harm those who must relinquish a share of their power; if proved less than final, the Bill will leave needlessly bitter those who had expected it in larger portion. In the speech of 1860 Bulwer insists that he does not

> consider [the] failure [of a Reform Bill "to give general satisfaction"] a serious reproach to this or any Government. A Reform Bill, so easy to the theorist, is very difficult to the practical statesman. The hand of the true artist may well tremble when he applies the hammer and the chisel to the palladium of his country's laws. (*Speeches*, II, 148-149 [Hansard 3rd, 158, 166].)

On the other hand, Bulwer indicates the realistic nature of his views with a denial of the diametric possibility: "change for the mere sake of change."

> I know, indeed, that there are some persons who believe that progress consists in always stopping on the road to alter the springs of the carriage in which we travel. I know that there are some who think that man was made for nothing better than to pass his whole existence in the ecstatic contemplation of interminable Reform Bills. But

> let us flatter ourselves that such amiable enthusiasts are to be found chiefly out of doors, and not among us, to whom education and knowledge of the world may fairly be supposed to have given the ordinary attributes of common-sense. (148 [165].)

In essence, what he means to say here is that Reform is a response to circumstances that, in their own development, have outgrown or begun to have abused in them what had previously been useful and without corruption.

The common sense to which he refers was for Bulwer something potentially shared by all persons but which, though present in all ranks, found its greatest residence in the middle classes and paralleled his notion of class itself. In the speech of 1860, he links these two concepts, common sense and class, explicitly. He does so in the context of three things: the Great Reform Bill, the Liberal urging for an across-the-board expansion of the franchise (the Liberals' "abstract principle") and a tacit description of society which suggests the ultimate convergence of all classes in the middle class. He submits for consideration the question of how the present "measure [would] improve the constituent body."

> When that question was asked in the debates on the great Reform Bill, the answer of the reformers was crushing. You then got rid of the boroughmonger, who sold his borough - of the potwalloper, who sold his vote; and your substitutes were trade, commerce, manufactures - that combination of various interests which is found in the middle ranks of society, which cannot be called a class, because it comprises all classes, from the educated gentleman to the skilled artisan, and which, therefore, does represent a high average of the common sense of the common interest. You then did not merely extend the franchise. (135 [153].)

This linking of the middle class with a degree of incorruptibility or, rather, this linking of the activities of

the middle class - trade, commerce, manufacture - with the diminution of corruption is a continuing and increasingly insistent aspect of Bulwer's speeches, but, of course, the point is more in the contrast. Bulwer wants the corruptibility of the lower classes to be a contrapuntal theme running through what he has to say; in the speech of 1866, he gives expression to what he conceives to be the origin of this corruptibility and in the context of the idealizing beliefs some possess about the effects of suffrage:

> [I]t is said, with great plausibility, that the vote itself is a moral benefit to every man, whatever his education or condition of life; it raises his sense of dignity and self-respect. Does experience tell you so? Was the vote a moral benefit to the freeman and potwalloper? Do you suppose that the freemen were corrupt merely because they were called freemen? No; they were corrupt because they belonged to a condition of life in which, no doubt, there are many upright and earnest politicians [i.e., voters] but in which there are many others who, of the two rival candidates, prefer Smith and a £5-note to Brown and the Rights of Man. You disfranchised the freemen of Yarmouth. Did you extinguish corruption at Yarmouth? No; you find this very year that the same class of men are not less corrupt as petty householders than they were as freemen. (*Speeches*, II, 174-175 [Hansard 3rd, 182, 1240].)

We might consider this the Argument from Virtue: persons should not be given the vote simply because they are virtuous or because the vote is claimed able to make them so. Similar to this argument is the Argument from Poverty. In the speech of 1860, Bulwer points out that the absolute insistence on an across-the-board reduction of the franchise rental is in effect a scheme based on income. "[L]et us try and establish some better test than that of a certain amount of poverty," he urges the House. "Do not lower your franchise upon the express

principle of admitting the poor solely and wholly because they are poor" (*Speeches*, II, 131 [Hansard 3rd, 158, 149]). Finally, there is the Argument from Desire. Sir Charles Wood (1800-1885), Liberal Member for and future Viscount Halifax, had assured the House that the desire for the franchise was "the best test of fitness for it" (131 [149]). Bulwer suggests that Wood is "too good a logician not to see that his position is untenable. Desire is no proof of fitness" (131 [149]). The counterargument he brings would have fallen comfortably from the tongue of a Fifth-Century Athenian orator: Everyone desires to be rich, strong, healthy and wise; these desires are of themselves no indication of fitness for their fulfillment.

But it is not merely the troubles an uneducated and emotion-dominated lower class would bring with it into the franchise that concerns Bulwer; it is its size. What worries Bulwer, he points out in the speech of 1866, is the "preponderating influence" of sheer numbers upon "the constituent body and the legislation of this complicated empire" (*Speeches*, II, 181 [Hansard 3rd, 182, 1247]). He would object equally to the "preponderating influence of scholars and men of science, of great merchants, or of a territorial aristocracy" (182 [1247]). But, of course, Bulwer evades, in this aspect of his argument, the not too subtle feature that, in the absence of long historical development, "preponderating influence" can mean *only* numbers; it is clear that Bulwer has no great need to resist the "preponderating influence," to use his

examples, of scholars or of a territorial aristocracy, the latter given the Great Reform Bill and their numbers, the former given their numbers alone. But this point of Bulwer's is not entirely disingenuous, a fact we can see in the manner in which he qualifies his assertion. "Each of such sections, however indisputably honest and intelligent," he insists, "would fail to represent that common sense of the common interest which is best expressed by the word 'commonwealth,' and which can only be fairly represented where the middle class is, on the whole, largely preponderant" (181-182 [1247]). Gladstone has pointed out insistently that the working class does not present an undivided view of politics, the implication being that, given this, its influence cannot be undivided either. Bulwer admits this, but returns that in *its* interest it will be undivided, as would be the clergy on Church Rates and the farmers on the Malt Duty. And the interests of the working class, however virtuous, explicitly challenge the commercial activity of England. The problem, then, would not be the challenge in and of itself; rather, it would be the power of the working class constitutionally to enforce its interest solely as the consequence of its numbers. "All working men do not agree in politics," Bulwer admits, "but as soon as they return the majority of Members, rely upon it you will feel their influence in those questions between labour and capital, between manufacturer and mechanic, between supply and demand, upon which the very existence of this commercial England depends" (182 [1248]).

To this rather obvious, if perhaps unnecessarily nervous argument, Bulwer adds another which is as unexpected as it is interesting. Bulwer gives it a further twist with direct reference to American Constitutional procedure that is provocative, if not altogether persuasive:

> Even in foreign affairs as well as domestic, the very virtues of the working men, in their detestation of what they consider tyranny and injustice, would be a perpetual source of danger, did they return a majority of Members. The Member for Birmingham [the Radical John Bright] says, this Bill is wanted to save the country from the risk of war, provoked by the depravity of Tories. It might be answer enough to say, that all the wars in which we have been engaged since 1815 had their origin under Liberal Administrations. (182-83 [1248].)

The Member for Brighton, the Liberal Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), has said that the working class would have waged war on Russia in aid of Poland. Bulwer acknowledges that such a desire is "quite consistent with their generous tendency to side with the weak against the strong" (183 [1248]).

> But a war more disproportioned to our powers, less sanctioned by our interests, and more vainly exhaustive of blood and treasure, the imagination of man cannot conceive. Why do such dangers never occur in America and France - countries in which universal suffrage is adopted? Because both in America and France the popular Chamber has not the same voice in foreign affairs, in creating Cabinets and determining the choice between peace and war. And the example of both those countries makes the fact clear, that in proportion as you lower the scale of franchise to the preponderance of the working class, the safety of the State compels you to limit the powers and authority of the Representative Chamber. Nay - if law did not, public opinion would. The more you lower the standard of the constituency below the average education of the country, the more you will transfer the intellectual power of this House to some upper Chamber, whether it be an English House of Lords or an American Senate. (183 [1248-1249].)

Significantly, Bulwer understands working class sensitivity to oppression abroad as a virtue and calls it precisely that; his

view of international affairs, however, is informed by a high degree of realism, although, as we shall see in his Crimean War speeches, the two considerations - that of the practical necessities of the national interest and that of the ethical and moral concerns which might be brought to bear upon them - are consistently in balance with one another. On the other hand, unlike politicians, an excellent example of whom might be Palmerston, who tended to employ the moral at the behest of the practical, Bulwer was inclined to maintain some measure of categorical distinction between the perspectives, if for no other reason than to allow himself the option of appealing to adamant proponents of either perspective in the course of debate or in policymaking. He was fully aware of, first, the dangers attendant upon a too eager talent for enemy-making, second, the limits of Britain's national resources and, finally, its people's somewhat restricted capacity in the first place to institute and then to sustain resolve during time of war. He believed wars to be the products more of interests than of values, he believed further that, while values might verge on universal approbation within the nation, answers to issues never could, and, at last, he believed that of all the heads that might be gathered in crises, those belonging to the working classes were like as not to be the least cool when the moment of decision arrived.

# Chapter Three

## The State of the Drama
## and the Taxes on Knowledge

### Introduction

From the beginning of his adult life, Bulwer possessed a lively and strong interest in the free expression of thought and art. In this, he shared a general disposition with the majority of his contemporaries throughout the English-speaking world, who, having pioneered the notion in modern times, had come to take it for granted, and he shared this disposition too, although to a lesser degree, with his contemporaries in many parts of Europe, who had come to take it at least as an ideal. In consequence, the battles Bulwer fought on behalf of artistic and intellectual expression had about them often an ambiance of final engagement in a war nearly won. This is not to say, however, that Bulwer's role must be measured thereby as of negligible significance or of superfluous contribution. Indeed, his ability to marshal arguments and observations which systematically laid open the follies, anachronisms and self-serving designs implicit in his opponents' positions showed itself perhaps best in the speeches he delivered in behalf of free expression. Nevertheless and ironically, despite wide-

spread agreement among those in the Commons who heard him and like-thinking British out of doors, years remained after Bulwer's and his colleagues' initial speeches before all the advocated changes came fully to pass.

Partly this was due to the intransigence of the losing forces. Partly it was due to the fact that, if the efforts of Bulwer and the others had the appearance of *coups de grâce*, they did so largely because the social and political, but not always the legal, contexts had been so informally modified as to make much of the desired *de jure* outcome already the *de facto* circumstance. Despite this, however, men and women who violated the law could not invariably do so with impunity and might willy-nilly suffer, often awfully, from either its gratuitous but full enforcement or its use by those whose motives were personal or self-interested. As Bentham had long since maintained, it was not so much in the substantive law itself, however much it might be in need of revision, but in its application, that is, in procedure or, to use the correlative term, in the adjective law, that the ultimate ground of justice and injustice was to be discovered in the British system: "So far as evidence is concerned...the existing system of procedure has been framed, not in pursuit of the ends of justice, but in pursuit of private sinister ends - in direct hostility to the public ends" (VII, 598). But even when application appeared finally to be just - particularly when it was done in disregard of either the substantive or the adjective law or both - the law in each of these facets remained always available to those who

wished to employ it to unjust ends, so that, despite their Benthamite identification of procedure's central role, Bulwer and his colleagues saw that it was against the criminal aspect that they must ultimately direct their efforts, especially given the advantage opponents of the laws respecting the Press or drama might more frequently obtain through procedural questions of jurisdiction or evidence or the like.

Of the two areas upon which Bulwer focused his efforts, that of the prerogatives of the Patent houses and the rights of playwrights on the one hand and that of the Taxes on Knowledge on the other, it was in the matter of the former, particularly in the rise of what were referred to as the "minor theaters," that informal progress, if that is the term, had most completely been made. Bulwer gave but one speech on the Patent houses; however, it was the watershed. As already mentioned, in the matter of the Taxes on Knowledge, as too in that of the drama, informal modes of subverting the law existed: the Unstamped newspapers and other, cleverer enterprises took advantage of flaws in the law respecting periodicity, content, place of publication and the like, but instances of success, in numbers, rose and declined as the sequence of several factors, not all of them legal in nature. Bulwer, altogether, gave four speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge, and these speeches and the law and politics which contextualized them were interwoven in very complex ways with larger questions not only of freedom of the Press, but of economics in publication, the appropriate role of the Government in the production of knowledge and the degree to

which the various Interests should or must be considered in implementing what few in public life did not yet see as an inevitable process, one which would forever alter the relationship between the Press, the Public and the Government. Three of the speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge were given between 1832 and 1835 when Bulwer sat as a Liberal for Lincoln City, during the height of the debate over the Unstamped newspapers; the fourth, given twenty years later, when Bulwer sat as a tory Member for Hertfordshire, was the final moment in Bulwer's long resistance against the Duties, particularly that of the Stamp on newspapers. Bulwer was required to prepare, but was not called upon to deliver, two further speeches one advocating a repeal of the Duties on paper (1860) and one on the literary copyright (1839). Other speeches relevant to taxation include one delivered on the Income Tax (1853) and one on the Excise (1854) and another on the Malt Duties (1865), as well as one, undelivered, on the abolition of the Church Rates (1861). Some of these speeches have been referred to elsewhere in this essay, particularly in the chapter which follows dealing with Protection.

## Bulwer and the Patent Houses

Bulwer's speech on *The Laws Affecting Dramatic Literature* was delivered on the 31st of May, 1832, and, seconded by Daniel O'Connell (Hansard 3rd, 13, 248), he moved in it for a Select Committee which would inquire into the legal conditions under which drama was written, produced and performed. In

consequence, the speech comprised three concerns: the scope of the Copyright as it applied to plays, the justifiability of the Dramatic Censorship, and the soundness of the Patent-house system. The cause for an extension to dramatic works of the existing Copyright laws and the cause against the exclusivity of the two privileged houses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were to be successful, while the Censor was to remain. Bulwer's arguments against the Censor, however, are the more interesting of the three.

Censorship was exercised by an official known as the Examiner of Stage Plays, whose purview was in the sanction of that of his superior, the Lord Chamberlain, who, in turn, exercised general control over the theatrical circumstances of the realm on behalf of the Monarch. The legal right of the Censorship resided in the Throne, and, as the Lord Chamberlain licensed theaters, that is, as continuing institutions, so his subordinate licensed specific dramas upon the event of their actual production. The function of the Examiner of Stage Plays was explicit and direct; the Examiner's authority concerned itself with religion and politics. Although questions having to do with the third leg of the traditional censorial stool, morals, were - given the ubiquitous competence of the Examiner - fully within this official's faculty as well, common public probity was generally thought sufficient to satisfy the Examiner. And, indeed, by Bulwer's day, if this were considered the case with the conventional theater-going groups, even more was it regarded so of the newly invited lower classes: "There

was, in fact, a considerable degree of unanimity among witnesses testifying to the 1832 and 1866 Select Committees and among other sources that a working-class audience was much less tolerant of any suggestion of sexual impropriety than a West End audience" (Booth 146). Bulwer sought to extend this sense of the natural censorial disposition of the Public to the question of politics and, one might suppose, implicitly to that of religion as well, opposing it to the artificial censorial arrogations of the Examiner. It was all the more important that this be done because, as Bulwer pointed out, moral reference with significant frequency became the means for political censorship:

> Whole passages in Davenant and in Massinger were expunged by the Master of the Revels. [This official's office, whose function under the Lord Chamberlain was similar to that of the Examiner's, had become defunct by the beginning of the eighteenth century.] And now mark how really useless, so far as morality was concerned, were the pains he took upon the subject. We know what those passages were; they contained only some vague political allusion, and did not contain a line of the indecencies and immorality that might be found [elsewhere] in those plays. (*Speeches*, I, 13 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 244].)

Despite Bulwer's comments here, the Examiner was of course historically never reticent in employing political and religious censorship both outright and even arbitrarily; as examples, *King Lear* was banned during the illness of George III, and George Colman the Younger "showed an extraordinary antipathy to such words as 'heaven' or 'angel'" (EB 11 XXVI 738). Still, Bulwer's point is well taken if it is seen as an attempt at an isolation of the moral aspect in order to typify the process, which had to be effected with a degree of

deviousness in matters of politics and religion, for, while general agreement might readily be obtained with respect to a moral question, such might not always consummate debate in politics or, both despite and because of the growth of tolerance throughout the eighteenth century, in religion. It is granted that the Censor will see morality as do the Censor's contemporaries and will, thus, cancel his own function. But this can be the case only when the Censor wishes to comply with his contemporaries' sensibility, particularly in matters of morality, but implicitly in matters of politics and religion as well. Still, affairs were, at least as Bulwer saw them, relatively straightforward. "The only true censor of the age," he proclaims, "is the spirit of the age," amplifying his declaration in a finely-put disjunction: "When indecencies are allowed by the customs of real life, they will be allowed in the representation of it, and no censor will forbid them. When the age does not allow them, they will not be performed, and no censor need expunge them" (*Speeches* I 13 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 244]). The improbable irony of the Examiner's position makes itself clear in the fact that license might be denied or lines struck in a new play, but by "strict law" no old play was allowed altered by so much as a line. "The most indelicate plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Wycherly or Farquhar, may be acted unmutilated ...." But they are *not* acted "because the good taste and refinement of the age will not allow them; because, instead of attracting, they would disgust an audience" (13 [245]). The argument here is at least as old as the

*Areopagitica*, in which Milton insists that, upon open and unrelieved contest, what is true will finally prevail against what is not. Whatever the ability of the Censor, "[t]he public taste, backed by the vigilant admonition of the public Press, may, perhaps, be more safely trusted for the preservation of theatrical decorum" (13 [245]).

But there is more to Bulwer's thinking in this matter of the distinction between the genuine censorial competence of the Public or the Age and the artificial licensing permitted the legal Censor. Reflecting, in 1833, a year after this speech, on testimony given the Select Committee the speech had brought about, he acknowledges in *England and the English* that it has been "universally allowed that a censor is not required to keep immorality from the stage, but to prevent political allusions" (II, 141). In this respect, the Censor may indeed perform a more natural, if no less dubious, function; the continual political agitation of the day tends to diminish the desire in the Public for politics in the theater: "At present the English, instead of finding politics on the stage, find their stage in politics" (141). This apposite chiasmus expresses the converse of the theatrical dynamic, which allocates the degree of immorality permitted on the stage: if licentiousness is permitted in real life, it will be permitted on the stage, but as political activity decreases in real life, so it is increased on the stage. It is clear that Bulwer wants this inverse interconnectedness understood in terms of the suppression of political expression, which then finds its outlet on the stage, to which

the notion of the dramatic potential of politics is appended as an additional feature. Bulwer calls attention to what he construes to be the reason:

> The Athenians, always in a sea of politics, were nevertheless always willing to crowd the theatre ... *the theater with them was political*; tragedy embodied the sentiment and comedy represented the characters of the times. Thus theatrical performance was to the Athenian a newspaper as well as a play. (141 [italics in original].)

He insists that politics be incorporated into drama because "[i]n these times the public mind is absorbed in politics ... and ... the stage should represent the times" (142).

There is a sense in which electioneering can be taken as part of the theatrical aspect to which Bulwer refers, for in Bulwer's day, despite the Reform Bill, and during the previous hundred years, the elections, with their corruption and their entertainments, had provided the people - regardless whether any certain individual had the vote - considerable after-harvest diversion. But Bulwer here wants to make another, less obvious point, one to which he makes reference throughout his career and upon which he will be in agreement with substantial numbers of his contemporaries. The point has to do with the linkage between what persons, particularly persons of the working classes, should be allowed to do and the manner in which they should prepare themselves or be prepared by others to do it: the question is one of education; it has already arisen in the previous Chapter with respect to the widening of the suffrage, and it shall be returned to from a more critical perspective when the Taxes on Knowledge are discussed later in this Chapter. At this point, it is sufficient to call attention

to what might be referred to as the psychological dimension of the question, again nicely epitomized chiastically in Bulwer's rendering:

> I grant that in too great a breadth of political allusions there is a certain mischief: politics addressed to the people should not come before the tribunal of their imagination, but that of their reason; in the one you only excite by convincing - in the other you begin at the wrong end, and convince by exciting. (141-42.)

It is not a question of what people should, as we might put it today, be exposed to, but how and where; that is, in true Benthamite fashion, Bulwer raises not so much a question of content as of procedure. That it *is* a question of appropriateness can be seen clearly enough in juxtaposing what has just been quoted with what Bulwer says a few pages later in *England and the English* with respect to the competence, that is, rather than the scope, of drama. He is addressing the notion that kings are good subjects for drama because, in being "guilty of gigantic crime," they "awe and terrify us on the Stage" (146n). He says, "Whatever renders the passions weak and regulated is serviceable to morals, and unfitted for the Stage. A good man who never sins against reason is an excellent character, but a tame hero" (147). Certainly, Bulwer is following Aristotle in this, but, because he has education in mind, along with considerations of dramatic effect, he is implicitly making a point about how we are trained to be good persons, more or less in the same vein as Schiller had suggested, though far more explicitly, in his essay *Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet* (1785), with which Bulwer was of course familiar as a biographer, translator

and life-long devotee of the poet. When, on the other hand, Bulwer has morals strictly speaking in view, as he does in that segment of his argument on this question in *The Laws Affecting Dramatic Literature*, to which we now return, he can think of nothing better than to quote Scott on the matter: "'I do not pretend,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'to enter into the question of the effect of the drama upon morals; if this shall be found prejudicial, then two theatres are too many ...'" (*Speeches*, I, 14 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 245]). Scott's further point, that excellence in the writing of drama can come only in diversity and numbers, both of playwrights and audiences, is duly noted, but as preparation to Bulwer's final assertions on the matter. He repeats that, respecting both the quality of the play and, by implication, its adherence to accepted norms in every sphere, the best judgment is the audience's judgment, but he asserts further that the definition of "legitimate drama" is itself one of "difficulty," which he intends here to "put [...] out of the question" (14 [245]).

The argument when applied to politics - Bulwer does not touch upon religion in the speech - is, then, somewhat different from the one regarding morality. There is no question that politics as such has as much a right to the stage as any topic; however, it will occur only when it is absent in life. When the playgoer's political life becomes interesting, the playgoer will no longer desire politics on the stage, although this is not to say that the playgoer should not desire politics on the stage, for, as with the Athenian, it can be made a part of the

playgoer's politics. In a sense this is true for morality as well, for what makes the king of old a fit subject is his "excess," and what denies the current king the attention of the stage is not so much "the virtues that subdue, but the ceremonies which restrain, him" (*England and the English*, II, 147). The question of political censorship, then, is not a great question because of the political *excitement* of the age. On the other hand, the question of moral censorship is not a great one because of the moral *tranquillity* of the Age. But there is another item for consideration tacit here, at least in so far as the question is one of procedure: Reform may be the cause which had driven politics from the stage, but as it brings an increasing range to the vote, so too will it bring increasing ceremony, which may have its pull on politics, even as it has had it on morality. This notion of "ceremony," that is as emblematic for the decline of real evil, whether in morality, politics or religion, gives rather compelling historical context to the the question of the Patent system itself:

> In the licentious period in which the first patents were granted - viz., the time of Charles II., in all the unbridled reaction and intoxicated ferment of the Restoration - it seemed that the minor theaters were the scene of very disorderly and improper exhibitions; and it became necessary to suppress them - not so much for the sake of preserving decency as of protecting the drama. But does that reason exist at present? (*Speeches* I 8 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 240].)

In answer to this question, Bulwer responds in the negative, for the soundness of the Patent-house system is predicated, from Bulwer's perspective, upon a certain analysis of society conjoined with a broad code for contextualizing that

analysis.

Fundamentally, Bulwer is a pessimist in art, even as those are pessimists in religion who believe in the effects of Original Sin, for Bulwer understands that, if the Public is to want something more than "show," it is required that "taste" be revived. This, however, is no quick task: "The public being once spoiled by show, it is not easy to bring them back to a patient love of chaste composition. The public, also, being once rendered indifferent to the drama, it is not easy to restore taste" (*England and the English*, II, 139). The analysis of society on Bulwer's part is not much different from that of those who seek to justify the Patents. *Generally*, one must patent theaters to control licentiousness, or what not, on the stage; *specifically*, Covent Garden and Drury Lane must be Patent holders because they, beyond others, are able to preserve the national theater. The analysis is that the Public will, in matters moral, religious and political no more than in matters of taste, get used to whatever form it's presented, but once fallen, once the touch of the apple is upon the tongue, so to speak, the Public becomes "spoiled by show," is in sin, aesthetic or otherwise, and is no longer easy to save. Nevertheless, it *is* salvation which is at issue here, for "[i]t is easier to create a taste than to revive one" (139), just as it is easier to redeem the fallen than to restore Eden. Nonetheless, this has, Bulwer argues, already been accomplished in terms of decency; "the original reason ... for suppressing the minor theatres has, amidst the growing good

taste and civilization of the age, entirely ceased to exist," that reason being the "unbridled reaction and intoxicated ferment" which accompanied the reign of Charles II and provoked the Patents in the first place (*Speeches*, I, 8 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 240]). Altogether less chaste, however, are the Patent houses themselves; indeed, "it happens, curiously enough, that no sooner were the two great theatres in possession of this patent, than the national drama began to deteriorate, and a love for scenic effect to supersede it" (8 [240]). These theaters, while purporting to be dedicated to "the preservation of the dignity of the national drama," allow "mountebank actors," "absurd performances," "jugglers and harlequins," "wild beasts," "fire-eaters and sword-swallowers," "dioramas and ... cosmoramas" to populate the stage; "we cannot but feel," Bulwer asserts, "that the dignity of the drama has not been preserved, and the object of these patents has not been fulfilled" (9 [241]). Because the ground for the suppression of the minor theaters is defunct, while the objective in selecting the two Patent houses has never been met, Bulwer insists that "we are enabled to take a broader view of the question, and to recognise the monstrous injustice that the law inflicts upon the public" (9-10 [241]). It is of more than passing interest here to note that, while Bulwer is *accused* often enough of scenic indulgence, his understanding of its point and use is not that of many of his critics. On the other hand, he has been at least equally often accused of intellectual verbosity. It is ironic then that, in so far as the *content* of the dramatic enterprise is

concerned, that is, as opposed to its *context*, Bulwer sought to show that tragedy was constructed of the "simple" and the "magnificent." By the simple, he meant "the woes - the passions - the various and multiform characters - that are to be found in the different grades of an educated and highly civilized people;" by the magnificent, he meant "all the attractions of scenery, embracing the vastest superstitions and most glowing dreams of an unbounded imagination." These are the materials of tragedy, Bulwer claims (*England and the English*, II, 151-52, 154.). He invokes Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Goethe and Schiller in evidence (155), and one cannot deny an acquaintance with them each on these grounds of Bulwer's would sustain his point.

The final matter Bulwer takes up in the speech is that of the dramatic Copyright. He states the case by evoking a sense in his listeners of the plight experienced by the dramatist:

> The instant an author publishes a play, any manager may seize it - mangle it - act it - without the consent of the author - and without giving him one sixpence of remuneration. If the play is damned, the author incurs all the disgrace; if the play succeeds, he shares not a farthing of the reward. (*Speeches* I 15 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 246].)

Even if the play is not meant by the author to be acted, as was the case with some of Byron's work, the play, and the author by virtue of it, can be "dragged" onto an unintended stage "to be disgraced against his will" (15 [246]). Bulwer points out that

> [t]he commonest invention in a calico - a new pattern in the most trumpery article of dress - a new bit to our bridles - a new wheel to our carriages - may make the fortune of the inventor; but the intellectual invention of

> the finest drama in the world may not relieve by a groat the poverty of the inventor. (15 [247].)

He compares British practice unfavorably with that of the French and the Belgians in whose habit of protecting authors as well as their widows and children "justice is done on the one hand and emulation excited on the other" (16 [247]). Given the sickly state and calamitous environment into which Bulwer's description places the authors of England, it would seem their widows and children would be the more natural objects of the eventual Bill. Yet the argument is all the same that artists have a right to their produce as property and their property as secure, even to the point of inheritability, as do the manufacturer, the inventor and the tradesperson. That the situation was genuinely grim is indicated by the testimony of Douglas Jerrold, the playwright and publisher, to the Select Committee of 1832 in his claim that a certain Mr. Kenneth stood on a corner of Bow Street and would, having stolen them, "supply any gentleman with any manuscript on the lowest of terms" (quoted in Rowell 164). Less grim were the hearings themselves, for "all the leading performers were examined, and gave their evidence with much dramatic point and vivacity" (Fitzgerald 431n).

The speech was accorded a somewhat perfunctory but, all the same, an interesting response in the Commons; Daniel O'Connell, who normally had a great deal to say, said nothing at his seconding of the Motion. It was clear that there was to be a Select Committee. Still, Sir Charles Wetherell (1770-1846), Member for Boroughbridge, who was to lose his seat to the

Reformed Parliament, remarked that the "House had Reform enough upon its hands without also reforming the prerogatives of the Crown and all the theatres" (Hansard 3rd, 13, 248). He could himself see no abuse, though it "might be supposed that the liberty of the people was invaded - that the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, so much was made of dramatic liberty being infringed and violated" (248). He knows, he admits, of the lions and leopards, the camels and camelopards being paraded across the existing stages, but multiplying the theaters would do little more than bring such spectacles to every part of the metropolis (248). Contradicting himself, he says that the audiences at Drury Lane and Covent Garden are fit judges of the drama, but asks whether the same could be expected from audiences attending the "host of minor theatres, the establishment of which appeared to be the object of the hon. Member [Bulwer]" (250). In a practice fairly frequent in the Parliamentary speeches of the day, he refers to "a dramatic writer - a man of acknowledged taste," whom he does not name, thereby leaving his information uncomfirmable, but who, he assured his listeners, was certain multiplying the theaters would "tend to the multiplication of bad plays and worse actors" (250). George Lamb (1784-1834), Member for Dungarvan, thought the Committee ought to originate in the Lords, "where the officers to whom the Crown delegated its powers over dramatic performances had seats" (251). Indeed, "the more the controlling power was placed in the hands of the authorized officers of the Crown, the more flourishing would be the drama,"

he asserted, but without support (251). Nevertheless, he concludes, since the King's prerogative was violated nightly anyway, no harm could come from a Committee and might indeed get "the establishment of the censorship of the Chambelain over the performance at these minor theatres," some of whose "exhibitions were exceedingly improper," one of which, by way of example, he pointed out significantly, had portrayed a murder on stage even before the accused had been brought to trial (252). After a nice lecture on the relative duties of judges and legislators, William Brougham (1795-1886), Member for Southwark, who, despite that he had most of the rest of the century to live, was sitting in his only Parliament, produced one of the more memorable observations of the debate, calling Covent Garden and Drury Land "large wildernesses" in which no one could see or hear "unless he were fortunate enough to secure a seat near the stage" (253). A pity this was to be his only Parliament, for in addition to his eloquence of phrase and reverence for the Constitution, he was able implicitly to contextualize the strength of public opinion in specifying the law whose violation the Public not only condoned but supported: "As the law now stood, any minor theatre, within twenty miles of the metropolis, performing any pieces except burlettas, violated the law, and every actor was liable to a penalty of 50ℓ. for each performance" (254). The sum of £50 was hardly to be laughed at or shrugged off. Two of the speakers directed their wrath at Sir Charles; all speakers, friend and foe alike, however, treated Bulwer with utmost kindness, frequently

referring to his talents and accomplishments. John Campbell (1779-1861), Member for Stafford City, pointed out that the "hon. and learned member for Boroughbridge [that is, Sir Charles Wetherell] himself probably recreated himself from the labours of the Reform Bill, by going to the Olympic, and admiring the performances of Madame Vestris [Lucia Elizabeth Mathews (1797-1856), the famous - perhaps notorious - actress and theater manager]" (255). Richard Lalor Sheil (1791-1851), Member for Louth, leveled an attack on Sir Charles that is fairly representative of the kind of extended sarcasm that Members were very often subjected to by their opponents in the course of Parliamentary debate:

> It was delightful to see the hon. member for Boroughbridge, after his great political achievements, engaging in a discussion so purely literary as this. He was, in truth, a sort of ambulatory encyclopædia - there was nothing he did not touch, and he touched nothing which he did not adorn. But [Sheil] owned, that to [Wetherell's] opinion on dramatic questions [Sheil] was not inclined to attach any very great importance, when he found the hon. and learned Member mistaking Steele's comedy of *The Conscious Lovers* for Addison's *Cato* [something Wetherell had not in fact done]; and how could he have made such a mistake with regard to *Cato*? Was he not himself the great stoic of Toryism? Was not Boroughbridge a modern Utica? Did not the hon. the learned, and exceedingly dramatic Gentleman, realize, in the opinion of his party, the famous lines [from Addison's *Cato*, Prologue, lns. 21-22 (slightly misquoted)] -
>
> "A good man struggling with the storms of fate,
> And greatly falling with a falling state"?
>
> The hon. Gentleman had not only been a critic on the drama, but a great performer in those scenes which were now enacted in the political theatre; and [Sheil] was bound to acknowledge, that whatever might have been the defects of his character, the hon. and learned Gentleman had, at all events, adhered to the Horatian rule of unity, and observed the celebrated injunction of the poet -
>
> "---------------servetur ad imum,
> Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constat."
>
> [from the *Ars Poetica*, lns. 126-27, that, when an unfamiliar character is introduced to a play, it be self-

consistent throughout]. (258.)

Sheil's sarcasm was, however, hardly misdirected, Wetherell personally having been the explicit occasion of the disastrous Bristol Riots of the preceding autumn and so shrill an Ultra that many of even the most conservative tories found him an embarrassment (*DNB*, 1296-98). George Richard Robinson (1781-1850), Member for Worchester City, repeated Lamb's point that the rights of the Patents were ended in practice in any case, and added the practical insight that "[m]any a man accompanied his family to the theater, who would, if debarred from such an amusement, spend his time and his money in a public-house, or even a worse manner" (Hansard 3rd, 13, 256). Joseph Hume (1777-1855), the great Scottish Radical, then Member for Middlesex, was delighted at the free-trade implications in the effort to end the "theatrical monopoly" (255-56). Bulwer added one more correction - this with respect to the theatrical environment in Shakespeare's time - to the many that had been given Wetherell in the course of the debate, and Sir Edward Sugden (1781-1875), Member for St. Mawes, terminated the exchange in objecting to "delegating to a Committee of the House the power which was already vested in the Crown" and to refuse concurrence "in the appointment of a Committee to investigate a subject which the Government ought to take into their own hands" (258-59). Be all this as it may, Bulwer's speech was a notable success for him, despite the failure of the Select Committee, which was appointed in response to it, to deal adequately with the question of the Censor. His desire was nevertheless well

met

> that the age, the nation, and the Legislature ... be freed from the disgrace of these laws on the one hand, and this want of law on the the other, which are so glaringly unjust in themselves, and so pernicious to one of the loftiest branches of intellectual labour. (*Speeches* I 15 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 247].)

## The Taxes on Knowledge

The Taxes on Knowledge were three: the Duty on Paper, the Advertising Duty and the Stamp on Newspapers. The Duty on Advertising was the first rescinded, in 1853; the Stamp was repealed in 1855 and the Duty on Paper, finally, in 1861. All three of these taxes had been originated in the years between 1710 and 1712, during the reign of Queen Anne, whence the Stamp Act's nicknames, "The 10th of Queen Ann" (from its title in the code, which is indexed to the monarch's year in reign) or simply "The Ann Tax." The appellation, "Taxes on Knowledge," was widely attributed to Bulwer in his own day, but, writing sixty years later, George Jacob Holyoake, who, tongue in cheek, gives Bulwer "patent rights" to the phrase, assigns it to Leigh Hunt (I, 293). Be the phrase's originator who he may, Bulwer made it the battle cry for a generation in the combat against Government constraints upon publication

The Ann Tax was wrought during a more general imposition of taxes upon "manufactures," including candles, leather, soap, cards, dice, almanacs and licenses to sell wine and beer (Dowell, II, 74-76). Many of these excises had some precedent, but all were added, as a matter of legislative convenience, to current taxes on beer or, more precisely, upon its public

brewing (75); the existing excise on malt, which has been dealt with elsewhere in this study of Bulwer's Parliamentary career, was in the period joined by an excise on hops, both intended as indirect taxes on beer and thus on private brewing, which could not be taxed by the excise on beer brewed and sold publicly (76). There were other indirect taxes imposed as well, for example upon starch and upon gilt and silver wire (77); these taxes found their oblique sustenance in the increased use of linen, which was made firm and wrinkle-free by the starch and decorated by the precious metals. Both the reworked and the new taxes had each its own express rationale, mostly mercantile, and many had reductions, exemptions or discounts in accordance with the prevailing views of the Government as to what most benefited the country or, sometimes less explicitly, what benefited the country's more profitable special constituencies. The rubric of the discount would eventually be attached to the Taxes on Knowledge as well, but, however much they were embedded within the development of the taxes just rendered in outline, the Taxes on Knowledge were nevertheless unique in the sense that the supposedly determinative ground of these excises was to be discovered in a concern for the reputation of Her Majesty's policy, by whatever means and through whomever it might be promulgated and enacted, and this pretext persisted when the tax on the Newspaper Stamp was added to, under the middle Georges, especially the Third, for reasons essentially financial. Still, the legitimacy of the censorship was of historic lineage, and little justification beyond a statement

on the part of political or religious officeholders of intent to censor was deemed necessary in order to obtain its general acceptance. So it is that Collet, whose understanding of censorship was of another age, delights in pointing out that the Taxes on Knowledge were a means only "nominally to check 'false and scandalous libels' against the Government and 'the most horrid blasphemies against God and religion,' but really to pay for the War of the Spanish Succession," a surreptitious design Collet is - ironically, perhaps, to us - at some pains to prove.

While none of this history, though growing ever more remote, was obscure to those who wished to overthrow the Taxes on Knowledge, the tide had turned against the censorship, and it was, as a result, the financial need of the Nation, pure and simple, which had become in Bulwer's day the explicit rationale and, in the minds of some at least, the substantive ground of the Taxes on Knowledge. While the origins of the Taxes on Knowledge may seem comical, their enforcement might have appeared even more so had not 740 persons, men, women and children, suffered jail or even imprisonment within the context of an arbitrary implementation, which ranged from nonexistent to draconian (Hollis vii). Even more appalling, the decision whether or not to enforce was frequently overtly political, with, for example, Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine*, the organ of The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge - among whose founding members were numbered Henry Lord Brougham, Lord John Russell and Thomas Spring Rice, each a Minister early in his career and

often thereafter - escaping all discipline despite its Unstamped distribution. And yet, when the Government or its representatives at the Treasury or the judges at the Court of Exchequer or the bureaucrats at the Stamp Office wished to make a case or to prosecute, their authority was vast and their potential to punish annihilatory. In his introduction to Collet's *History*, Holyoake (1817-1906), a Radical campaigner for much of the century, described this potential of law: "He who published a paper containing news without a stamp, was...liable to have all his presses broken up, all his stock confiscated, himself, and all persons in his house, imprisoned, as had been done again and again to others within the writer's knowledge" (Collet,I,xi). This is not to say that the law could not be circumvented with selective impunity, even turned to a profit: "It became the practice for some publishers [among them William Cobbett] to pay the stamp duty on the country editions of their periodicals, which might otherwise cost 8*d*. or more to send. At the same time, they would circulate the London editions unstamped and run the risk of prosecution" (Wiener 6). All the same, the Taxes on Knowledge were a rigorous tyranny upon the working classes in the four-penny Stamp, which few of its members could afford, especially when added to the already difficult underlying penny or twopence cost of most newspapers; a financial drain upon segments of the middle class in the Advertising Duty, which greatly limited commerce; and upon all in the Paper Duty, which was passed on, with a few exceptions, in the price of every publication Stamped or

Unstamped.

The actual burdens of the Taxes on Knowledge, as a matter of cost, however, were not directly reflected in the political understandings of what a cheap press would produce in the Nation. These understandings are conveniently divided into three, although these do not represent every individual view then held; nevertheless, as epitomized by Patricia Hollis, they are the views of the tories, the middle-class radicals and the working-class radicals:

> The press, [the tories] argued, already enjoyed as much liberty as was safe and useful; to remove the stamp duties would flood the country with seditious papers pandering "to the basest passions of the mob" [*Brighton Gazette*, 11 Oct. 1832]. The country would be reduced to anarchy. But if such papers were suppressed, the working people would remain peaceable, contented, and deferential. The middle-class radicals hoped that cheap newspapers would imbue the working classes with truer notions of orderliness, sobriety, and political economy. The working-class radicals expected that cheap working-class newspapers would teach the working man the dignity of his class and the right he had both to the vote and to the products of his own labour. The tories upheld the sanctity of property; the middle-class radicals sought to instill a respect for property as being in the general interest; the working-class radicals argued that such property had been acquired by force or fraud. The tories pointed out that working men would obey the laws from habitual deference; the middle-class radicals hoped that newspapers would teach working men what the laws were and why they should be obeyed; the working-class radicals proclaimed that the laws were bad and must be overturned. The tories wished to maintain the stamp duties because they represented a property to the newspaper proprietors; the middle-class radicals wanted the repeal of the duties to break the monopoly of the existing proprietors and to purify the stamped press by widening its readership; the working-class radicals were interested only in establishing a press of their own.
>
> The radicals believed, where the tories did not, that a free press would ensure social peace, but the middle-class radicals thought that this was because reading inhibited rioting, the working-class radicals because a free press would so transform government that a bloody revolution would no longer be necessary. The tories feared and the radicals hoped that a free press would undermine

> the aristocratic grip on government. The middle-class men were sure that a cheap press was essential if middle-class ideas were to gain currency among working men. The working-class radicals knew that a cheap press was essential if the working class was to be organized and unified. The tories wished to suppress new doctrines and intellectual notions within the working classes; the middle-class radicals hoped to eradicate "dangerous" doctrines by opening the market to their own; the working-class radicals wanted to disseminate such doctrines as central to an authentic working-class self-image. (10-12.)

It is well to bear these several differences in mind as we discuss Bulwer's speeches on the subjects of the Press and the Taxes on Knowledge because his arguments, if nearly invariably middle-class Radical, as will be clear, were nevertheless couched equally invariably in terms that had as their objects no less the assuaging of the fears of the Conservatives as they did a categorical rejection of the perspective of the Radicals of the working class. This is important for many reasons, but two should be made clear here. In the first place, this balance Bulwer maintained between middle-class-radical reasoning and a mollifying of the tories - a balance scorned and rejected in the end alike by the middle-class Radicals such as Francis Place (1771-1854) and by all the working class Radicals (whom Place and others like him naively hoped to lead) - goes far to explain the apparent tentativeness of, if not Bulwer's speeches themselves, certainly the politics he pursued in the context of their delivery. If in his speeches he held to the ideal, in practice he fell back upon the attainable, to an end, naturally enough, that he satisfied no one and was the despair of many. But this paradigmatic overview of Hollis's helps to explain the forces among which Bulwer was acting and to explain, as well,

how his speeches, at least those in the Thirties, could so compellingly engage the ideal, while his actions so unaccountably embraced the merely available. This circumstance becomes a good deal less confounding when we keep in mind that, as Bulwer was always bright enough pretty fully to understand the political dynamics within which he was operating, he was clever enough to recognize how to steer a pragmatic course toward an abstract end. Just as naturally, then, he would be perceived by some as treacherous and by more as hypocritical. This is frequently the fate of competent, no less than of inept or wicked, politicians. But, secondly, these speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge and Bulwer's concomitant actions with respect to the issue also indicate, although as yet somewhat inchoately, his eventual conversion to Conservative politics. Particularly, his interest in property and stability as proper concerns both in society and in the political Nation indicates a tendency in him that will grow both in his articulated perspective and in the policies he pursued.

Bulwer and the Taxes on Knowledge

Bulwer's attack upon the Taxes on Knowledge was two-pronged: he advised their *reduction*, at those times that he did so, as constituting no threat to and potentially an enhancement of the general revenue; he demanded their full *repeal*, which was his ultimate object, on the basis of their mischief to the intellect of the British people, especially members of the working classes, and of their resemblance, at least in effect,

to measures or practices against persons which were to be found in nations less advanced in matters of public policy and individual rights than England. As a rule, these two protestations were worked off of one another, so that Bulwer's argument was nearly unfailingly, as we shall see, that the maintenance of principle meant simultaneously an accretion of the levy. Nevertheless, Bulwer's favor at no time lay with any of the revenue gleaned exclusively from the Taxes on Knowledge, which he was quite ready to condemn, when the occasion presented itself, as the income of benighted policies. In this he reasonably believed that he was in consonance with the disposition of the Nation as a whole. In the course of a debate on the seizure of some "types, presses and printing materials" under the pretext of a licensing law defunct nearly from the time of the younger Pitt, ["passed in an unfortunate time, by an unfortunate Minister, who had no regard for the liberties of his country... - passed for the suppression of discussion, and for the establishment of despotism" - so John Arthur Roebuck (1801-1879), tireless Radical writer and then Member for Bath, who had brought the Petition under debate (Hansard 3rd, 30, 203-204)], a debate in which Bulwer did not speak formally, Bulwer nevertheless rose to insist that "any plan which would leave a duty of [even] a penny upon newspapers would be taken only as a present compromise, and that nothing short of the complete and entire abolition of the duty would satisfy the country" (213).

There were times, of course, when the revenue of Great

Britain became important to Bulwer for what it sustained at the given moment and apart from its sources - the Crimean War was such a time - yet even at these times, principle must be the prevailing consideration as decisions were reached. Probably the most straightforward example of such a circumstance came late in his campaign against these Taxes, during the speech of the 26th of March, 1855, when he directed himself at the specific grounds of an Amendment, offered by William Deedes (1796-1862), the tory Member for East Kent, by which Deedes was seeking to delay the Second Reading of a Bill of Repeal of the Newspapers Stamp Duties. The Bill of Repeal had been introduced by Sir George Cornewall Lewis (1806-1863), a Liberal who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer after the resignation in February, 1855, of the Peelites from Palmerston's first Cabinet and who, as editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, which supported the Newspaper Stamp, came to his post resolved to continue the Taxes. Shortly after taking office, however, he had been induced by proponents of Repeal to "convert" to their cause (Collet, II, 18 and *passim* Chapters 14 and 15). Despite Chancellor of the Exchequer Cornewall Lewis's assurances as to the competence of the Government to judge in the matter (Hansard 3rd, 137, 1156-1157), the insistent contention of Deedes, who ended in refusing to retract his Amendment, was that Repeal would mean a loss of £250,000 in revenue (1115, 1117), which was sorely needed in support of the War. Now, this was a war which had Bulwer's keenest assent, yet his vigorous defense of Repeal, despite the great requirement for revenue, was

characteristic:

> But against what do ye wage war? It is not against Russia as Russia. In commercial interchange Russia is our natural ally. It is against Russia when she appears as the symbol of barbaric usurpation and brute force. Why, then, out of the millions you devote to secure the distant boundaries of civilisation, grudge a paltry fraction [that is, the £200,000, as Bulwer and others on both sides of the debate had the sum] towards the service of those two great agents of civilisation at home - freedom of opinion and popular knowledge? (*Speeches*, I, 241 [Hansard 3rd, 137, 1125])

The war was being waged, Bulwer urged, on grounds identical to those propounded against the Taxes on Knowledge. That the individual's means of understanding what lay beyond the narrow boundaries of touch and sight should be employed as a mere instrumentality in the acquisition of the state's revenue was in and of itself for Bulwer a practice of highly questionable legitimacy. Yet his support for Repeal in 1855 existed in opposition to powerful forces in his own newly chosen Conservative Party: "...it is with great pain that on this question I am conscientiously compelled to differ from him [Deedes], and, I fear, from some other gentlemen on this side of the House with whose opinions on most subjects I cordially concur" (232 [1117]). And no less importantly, his support of Repeal was too in opposition to forces out of doors which were of considerable significance to the tory Interests; he found himself constrained to praise, even flatter, *The Times*, the supreme conservative voice, whose opposition to Repeal was ultimately mercenary, however lofty its expressed sentiments in the matter: "[I]f I desired," said Bulwer, "some memorial of existing British civilisation, I would prefer - not our docks,

not our railways, not our public buildings, not even the palace in which we now hold our sittings - I would prefer a file of *The Times* newspaper" (235 [1119-1120]). Nevertheless, there remained a principle at stake here, arrived at by eliminating alternatives, which transcended Party and Interest:

> The principle is this - that you ought not in a free country to lay a tax on the expression of political opinion - a tax on the diffusion of that information on public affairs which the spirit of our constitution makes the interest and concern of every subject in the State. Still more, you should not, by means of that tax, create such an artificial necessity for capital that you secure the monopoly of thought upon the subjects that most interest the public at large to a handful of wealthy and irresponsible oligarchs. That is the principle at stake; that is the question before you. (236 [1120-1121])

It is central to an understanding of Bulwer as a politician, even as much as it is to an understanding of him as a writer, to note that his decisions and actions, and the products of them, had the appearance of expediency far more often than not because the principles which underlay them either appeared obscure or seemed merely topical. And these circumstances are heightened by his style in writing and speaking, one whose popularity in his day is rivaled only by its unpopularity in our own: as he assembled language in surges when writing, so in speaking he constructed with the sweep of the helix and the long, full arc of the arrow; in writing, his words plunged and dove over one another until brought at length to the distant, but intended end; in speaking, his arguments more often than not circled about each other in multiple eddies until pulled down into a common vortex to his deliberate point. In delivery, he may today seem redundant, circumlocutionary, fragmented, uneven -

but this was all quite conscious in disposition and, only occasionally, unmemorized in delivery. The trick was, of course, that he made it seem spontaneous and unaffected by intent: his work - writing and speeches - turns upon conceits and innocence, posturing and gentility, verbosity and the excitement of precipitate variation. Its complexity is quite beyond our general means today, but it was not so to his readers and listeners, who, especially in the latter case, when they were sufficiently educated to follow freely, enjoyed it for its complexity or, at its low points, even for its prolixity.

But eloquence is not always the steadiest handmaiden of policy, so that it is small wonder commentators in his day and since, who opposed the Taxes on Knowledge or chronicled in greatest sympathy their opposition, have wished for a less fluent, but evener, hand at the rhetorical helm in the fight against them - with Roebuck or George Grote (1794-1871), the eminent historian, who sat for the City, sometimes, and Joseph Hume (1777-1855), the surgeon and great Radical, who sat for Middlesex during most of the Thirties, frequently, mentioned as the preferred alternatives. Wiener has "Hume's implicit leadership of the parliamentary movement remain[ing] unchallenged" despite the "brilliant orator" Bulwer's "present[ing] three *well-publicized* motions for repeal" (57 [italics mine]). Be that as it may, while Bulwer's focus upon principle within the context of the general concern for revenue was more clearly formed in this final speech, due largely to the tension between funding and prosecution which dominated the

mind of Parliament during the Crimean War, it is no less present, if more implicit, in all of his speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge. But it is well to keep this final, summary speech of the Fifties in mind as we discuss the more consequential speeches of the Thirties, for the various strands which pulled upon Bulwer in this issue are not always clear in the earlier speeches and certainly not so for his critics, contemporary and since. And equally importantly, because it is a speech intended to culminate an effort of decades - though not, certainly, in any sense Bulwer's unique effort - its flourish and period carry a significance of their own. This final speech against the Taxes on Knowledge will serve, then, as a touchstone in considering the three speeches which were given twenty years before it.

### The First Speech on the Taxes on Knowledge

Bulwer's first speech on the Taxes on Knowledge, offered on the evening of Thursday, the 14th of June, 1832, followed by only two weeks his initial delivery on the laws affecting the drama and was greeted even more enthusiastically by his listeners and by the various Interests out of doors which supported the effort against the Taxes. Some commentators have come near to claiming this the greatest speech of his career, although these are on the whole historians of the Press such as Andrews or fighters in the cause such as Collet, and many wane in the ardor of their reception of his endeavor in proportion to the degree in which Bulwer's efforts appear to them to have

failed to have obtained success. Still, on the whole, it is a very good speech, despite its tendency - as did all his speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge - to roam off into numerical or statistical evidence - such evidence impressing many in an audience relatively new to the power that statistical - we would say "quantified" - evidence possesses. The speech introduced a Motion for a Select Committee (Hansard 3rd, 13, 634) to consider a reduction in the postage on newspapers, which, upon current Chancellor of the Exchequer Lord Althorp's (1782-1845) quickly asserted agreement with the *notion* of reduction, was withdrawn at the conclusion of the debate. The Motion also included the Propositions that "all taxes which impede the diffusion of knowledge are injurious to the best interests of the people" and that it was "expedient" (v. Table 2) to Repeal the Stamp Duty and to Repeal or Reduce the Advertising Duty. Bulwer had originally given Notice that he would call for a Committee of the Whole House, with Althorp particularly happy that Bulwer had decided against such a procedure (636), given what must have been Althorp's anxiety about its potential to compel the weight of his philosophical hand to be borne against that of his financial hand. His claim, which did not go undisputed, be it questioned explicitly or implicitly, was that the Treasury might lose £500,000 per annum in the absence of the Newspaper Tax alone (647). Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish patriot, seconded Bulwer's Motion for a Select Committee and spoke to it later in the debate as well (634, 637).

The argument is presented in terms of three independent

aspects: Bulwer discusses the effects of the present circumstance and specifies his proposals; he compares the situation of the Press elsewhere, especially in the United States, with that prevailing in Great Britain; finally, he appeals to the higher sensitivities of his listeners, but without abandoning the practicalities his continuing stream of examples manifests. This amalgamating of aspects, one with the other, is to no obvious rhetorical end, except as it enables him to surface the implications of each of the points in conjunction with those of the other two, so that failures in each aspect insinuate failures in the other two.

The effects of the present state of affairs, Bulwer indicates, are of two kinds: one legal, one political (v. Table 2). As a matter of realistic *legal* insight, it is obvious "that, while the cheap dangerous publication is not checked, we have at least suppressed the cheap reply" (*Speeches* I 18 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 620]). This is a familiar argument: while those who would bring reasoned, lawful behavior to the public arena in general will not violate this unreasonable law in particular, those who espouse "wild and impracticable theories" and encourage "riot, and incendiarism, and crime," as Bulwer sees "them written in the fires of Kent, and stamped in the brutal turbulence of Bristol" (18 [620]), will hesitate in not the slightest degree to break this or any other law. The Bristol Riots had occurred at the end of the previous October, and "Captain Swing" and his Incendiaries, active at least through 1833, the year following Bulwer's speech, had their nexus in Kent. In brief, the law-

abiding will not break the law even when the very act of breaking it would protect them from those who do. On the other hand, as a matter of sober *politics*, those who can neither read nor write have far outnumbered the literate among those arrested for Incendiarism; Bulwer offers numbers from Berkshire, Abingdon, Aylesbury and Lewes to illustrate his point, with the literate among the Incendiaries ranging between one in fifty to about one in two as he runs through his examples (18-19 [621]). Whatever may be thought of the sociological compellingness of this argument, it was not one which Bulwer was alone in offering; in addition to this speech of Bulwer's, Hollis cites sources both in Parliament and out of doors, including articles in the *Westminster* and *Edinburgh Reviews*, the latter by Brougham, a speech to the Commons by Roebuck and testimony by Thomas Hogg (1792-1862) to the 1851 Select Committee on Newspapers as evidence supporting the same argument: "The social cost of ignorance [that is, as caused by the inaccessibility of newspapers and the like for whatever reason: illiteracy, cost, censorship] could be calculated quite precisely from the size of prisons, the level of poor rates, the frequency of death sentences, the number of public houses, and the length of strikes" (12 and note). This kind of calculus, Benthamite in its parentage, had an argumentational compellingness only slightly less than Scriptural exegesis for a large portion of those forward thinkers of the middle classes, including Bulwer, who sought to better society by altering existing institutions; for the poor, particularly those among them who were, from time

to time, taking to urban rioting and, in the countryside, to the burning of ricks and, occasionally, something more than ricks, such arguments seemed, when they understood them at all, artificial and remote. Indeed, the "emotional counterreaction" among writers in the working class papers to this kind of opining was severe, condemning the middle class evangelicalism it represented as "pedantry and presumption" (Wiener 36 and note). Working class thinkers, among them perhaps preeminently Henry Hetherington, saw intellectual development as following from, not preceding economic development (Wiener 145; cf. Fox Bourne II 66); of the working-class Radicals, only Richard Carlile (1790-1843) seemed disposed, though in a fuzzy, arcane kind of way, to understand intellect as somehow prior in matters to mere flesh and blood (Wiener 134). But for men like Roebuck, who as much as any articulated the views of the middle-class Radicals, education would produce persons who were reflexively hard-working, nonviolent and without any sense of having been wronged (Wiener 34). Bulwer was often unambiguous in his endorsement of this view, crediting education with nearly miraculous powers.

That this understanding - that is, that illiteracy spawns all manner of antisocial behavior and literacy stimulates the converse - was one taken as accurate with nearly the fervor of an intuitive, thereby obvious, insight, can be seen in a rather peculiar, although not altogether bizarre, comparison by which Bulwer hoped to illustrate for his listeners the notion that poverty had little to do with crime:

> My habits have necessarily led me to see much of the condition of those men who follow literature as a profession, and I can say that this city contains innumerable instances, among well-informed and well-educated men, of poverty as grievous, as utter, and certainly as bitterly felt, as any to be found among the labouring population of Kent or Norfolk. Yet how few among these men are driven into crime! How rarely you find such men retaliating on society the suffering they endure! (*Speeches* I 19 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 621].)

Superficially, this assertion of Bulwer's might appear given the lie by *Eugene Aram*, which he had just completed five months previously (Lytton I 385), whose protagonist's crime is linked with his impecuniousness, linked so, at least, by a good portion of the received critical wisdom (v., e.g., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th ed., 328); a subtler reading, of course, engenders a sense in the reader that the point is one rather of the perversion of genius by willfulness than the subversion of learning by adversity and exists thus in no way incompatibly with the notion that poverty in and of itself does not lead to crime. The example of *Paul Clifford*, which had appeared in 1830, is perhaps more cogent in this respect, although it is clear from the novel that, while poverty is the occasion of crime, its origin lies in the nature of society itself; the protagonist thus transcends - if one can use such a term in describing Paul's progress and final escape - his individual circumstances to become a victim of society as a whole, implicitly representing thereby any origin of any criminal, given the implosive cruelty assumed of the society which he escapes to transform. Indeed, Paul Clifford is justified in transgression not only by the nature of his works, but in the rewards to his faith - his faith in those who depend

upon him (the members of his gang), even as much as in those he depends upon (Lucy). In the transition, however, as A. C. Christensen points out, it is neither society itself nor society's poverty that does him in: "[T]he practical, fleshly considerations that overthrow ideal loyalties become still more mundanely physical. The noble bandit is betrayed by his cook ..." (69). From an aesthetic point of view, it can be said that Bulwer is not capable of writing tragedy, at least in its unsentimental Classical sense, but, while this is indubitably the case, nevertheless, this incapacity of Bulwer's is as much the product of his standpoint, as of his talent: his characters are far more emblematic than they are representative. That is, there is a certain abstractness about them, despite the wealth of detail within which they are nested, which forbids both personal and social identification; they are not of much use to us as we struggle with ourselves or contend with others. They do, however, even today, get us to *think*. In the Commons no less than in his art, Bulwer undertook to communicate a sense of the complexities of things from the perspective of the individual or, perhaps, one might say from the perspective of human nature as it manifests itself in the individual, but there was nothing in what he said of the *social* context *apart* from its economic origins, that is, of the individual constructed and constrained by the circumstances of membership: poverty resulting from decision was to be in no way deemed a different state than that rendered by birth, that is, as resulting from "station," as the term was then used. Bulwer's view of society enabled him to see

escape or its opposite, submission or surrender, as functions of the complementary circumstances of opportunity and decision. Bulwer's society, then, was one of classes in which individuals were located, not one of conditions in which individuals were made, and in this understanding he was not greatly different from most of his contemporaries. When the sons of the middle and upper classes chose - normally against both their elders' wishes and their elders' means - to endure poverty for reasons of vocation, the attributes of their chosen state seemed to Bulwer in no way distinguishable from those of the poor, who were differentiated *only* by an incapacity to choose. The argument is no more than slightly vitiated when these well-educated and well-informed, but impoverished men have their origin in families which are poor or artisan or ruined or something of the kind, for, in the presence of education and information, remove this incapacity and all else would be removed as well. Further, the lesson of the Prodical Son was never far from hand, the more so given the awesome brush with poverty Bulwer's mother had forced him to undergo consequent upon her disapproval of his marriage. Of course, this signals for us no mawkish attraction to or conscience-stimulated affection for the poor themselves; Bulwer had made amply clear in *England and the English* what he believed to account for poverty in the land: "Idleness and vice, then, are the chief parents of crime and distress; viz., indisposition to work, not the want of work. This is a great truth never to be lost sight of ..." (I 213).

In conjunction with this notion of how poverty, ignorance and crime interacted, Bulwer, again along with the vast majority of his contemporaries, was in a certain degree naïve with respect to the typically proposed solution, and this incognizance is recognizable even more so in the notion that education was a matter of accessibility. As Hollis puts it, citing E.P.Thompson's reference to the "rationalist illusion," many believed that "[t]he only bar to the diffusion of knowledge was technical, [that is,] low literacy rates, bad communications, expensive newspapers; and the attaining of knowledge was a mechanical process, in which each item of knowledge worked its effect on the mind as each of Morrison's pills worked on the body" (296). Bulwer finds it impossible to conceal his enthusiasm for this miracle of mind: If newspapers were made inexpensive, their availablity would

> be prodigiously increased. Thus, information would circulate far more extensively; thus, matters connected with trade, science, and law, would become more familiar; thus, there would be a thousand opportunities for removing those prejudices among the poor which now so often perplex the wisdom and benevolence of legislators. (*Speeches* I 25 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 627].)

It is impossible to avoid notice of the seamless flow of his argument; we begin with "cheap" newspapers, and we finish with an educated, amiable poor. Here and elsewhere, there is constant reference to the improvement of the "trades," but this imperative more often than not plays a secondary role to political considerations. To the contrary, Bulwer's anxieties shimmer with translucent bulk just beneath the sparkling surface of his discourse: were newspapers made cheap,

> a great number of the more temperate and disinterested friends of the people would lend themselves to real instruction, and, by degrees, there would grow up that community of intelligence between the Government and the people which it is the more necessary to effect at a time when we are about to make the people more powerful. (25 [627].)

The Ministers, Bulwer points out, have been told by those who have resisted the Reform Bill that "they have created a monster they cannot control." Bulwer disagrees: the Bill has, at least in potential, precisely the opposite significance. "Instead of making a ferocious enemy of a gigantic and irresistible power, they have softened it by kindness. Let them, at the same time, enlighten it by knowledge!" (25-26 [627]).

That the question of Reform should enter the argument, particularly in the Thirties, is not to be discovered with surprise, for the Taxes on Knowledge may be analyzed by either the rubric of metonymy or that of synecdoche with respect to nearly every aspect of this "Decade of Reform." In the first sense, they stood in for concerns over education, Free Trade, even Postal Reform. In the second sense, they were, on the one hand, at least as they stood against knowledge itself, "a necessary appendix to Reform" (26 [628]); their destruction, on the other hand, was prerequisite to any means by which Reform might be either communicated or persuaded, no less in terms of the impact of readers upon Parliament as of the Reform-minded element of the Press upon its readers. And then there was the problem of the Stamped Press: If Reform is to be successfully implemented, Bulwer asks, but "we do not break the present monopoly of the five or six newspapers, which now concentrate

the power of the press[,] ... will not a ministry too entirely depend on some one or two of [these] for support? What the close boroughs have been, may not the existing journals become?" (26 [628]). A free and unimpeded Press is not only necessary to, but the necessary consequence of, a Reformed electorate. While he compliments the Press for the relative restraint he feels it has shown, given its power, nevertheless, Bulwer wishes to insist that "[e]very shade of opinion should find its organ. Power should exist, but that power should be a representation, not an oligarchy. Why," he asks, although arguing somewhat *petitio principii*, "exchange an oligarchy of boroughs for an oligarchy of journals?" (26 [628]).

Because of the many fibers that made up the warp and woof of Reform, the various relationships assumed by Bulwer and his listeners, whether or not they agreed to their value or even their admissiblity, depended often upon assumptions that grew either out of the relationships themselves or out of the conception he and they might have of the nature of things; one feature of this circumstance has already been mentioned above with regard to what we might call a sociological grasp of things. An unmistakable instance of these assumptions at work can be found in the argument Bulwer makes on drunkenness, which is very nearly a mirror image of that on the Taxes on Knowledge: gin, which might be taxed to the genuine good not merely of the state, but too of the drinker, is not taxed at all: "at Manchester there are a thousand gin-shops, and ... at Manchester, there is not one daily paper!" It is not "amount,"

but "method" which exercises Bulwer: "that we should choke the sources of intelligence, and throw open the means of intoxication" (*Speeches* I 28 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 629-630). The point is made somewhat more efficiently in *England and the English*:

> I trace [a] ... want of moral knowledge in our fiscal impositions. Some taxes are laid on which must necessarily engender vice; some taken off as if necessarily to increase it. We have taxed the diffusion of knowledge just a hundred per cent.; the consequence is, the prevention of legal knowledge, and the diffusion of smuggled instruction by the most pernicious teachers. We have taken off the duty upon gin, and from that day commenced a most terrible epoch of natural demoralization. (I, 368.)

This is essentially the argument of the middle-class Reformer, especially the Philosophical Radical: the question is one of method, not fact, of consequence, not intention, and the argument dovetails very neatly with those of origins and accessibility. With respect to gin, it goes something like this: gin causes ignorance; ignorance causes poverty; a tax on gin will decrease poverty. With respect to the Taxes on Knowledge it goes thus: the Taxes on Knowledge cause ignorance; ignorance causes poverty; an end to the Taxes on Knowledge will decrease poverty. For "poverty" may be read "crime" (especially "against property"), "immorality," "riots," "irreligion" and the like, for, if Bulwer was too sophisticated to assert identity between the items on this list, as many of his contemporaries were not, he clearly saw them as logically interchangeable, for proof of which we need only consider his example of the self-impoverished writer: "It may be said that, as ignorance and poverty usually go together, it is in these

cases the poverty that sinned, while the ignorance is only the accident that accompanies the poverty. But this notion I can contradict from my own experience" (*Speeches* I, 19 [Hansard 3rd, 13, 621]). And if one wants to call attention to rick-burning and urban riots, Bulwer assures us "how rarely" we will find "such men retaliating on society the sufferings they endure!" (19 [621]).

It escapes Bulwer, of course, that the self-imposition of poverty implies an abnegation of retaliatory rioting and a relationship necessarily at some distance to the average rick. With respect to gin and the Taxes on Knowledge - specifically, at this point, the Advertising Duty - Bulwer's advice is Reformist to the core and conceived in the cauldron of Benthamite practicality: "Squeeze, then, new profits from the excise duties, augment the assessed taxes, odious and unwise as those taxes are. *Any* tax is better than the one which corrupts virtue, and the other which stifles commerce" (28 [630]). The precedence of gin, like the precedence of the Taxes on Knowledge, did have a corollary in experience which allowed it its assigned order in the nature of things. G. Kitson Clark points out in his lectures on *The Making of Victorian England*, using the Irish as an example, that

> [i]n many cases ... the terms on which life was offered is a complete explanation of any drunkenness there was[,] ... and without doubt the proper remedies for ... drunkenness ... would have been to provide better houses, better wages, better education and more chances of rational enjoyment. That is however not the way in which men normally thought in the nineteenth century; and indeed any wide experience of drunkards, and it must be remembered that men in the middle of the nineteenth century saw much more of them than any normal person does now, would excuse

> a man for thinking sobriety must come first, if the results of any other reform were not to be thrown away. (127-28.)

Later, Bulwer was to come to question this Benthamite overreliance upon the synthetic proposition achieved a priori, with its corollary dependence upon a sense of troubles as having their origin mostly in procedure. But in the present speech the tendency is so strong that it not only defines the content, but even, to a degree, determines it. Only a Benthamite could seriously argue for a sameness between the artist in his garret and the pauper in his hovel. Further, only a Benthamite could argue this sameness on the basis that both involved poverty.

None who spoke in the debate which followed Bulwer's speech directed themselves, affirmatively or negatively, at Bulwer's analogizing; those who opposed him ignored the analogy, those who supported him spoke to the larger point. Edward Strutt (1801-1880), a Reformer sitting for Derby, claimed that the rich even as much as the poor were harmed by the Taxes on Knowledge, for he thought it could be proved that "as education is more widely diffused, the moral condition of the people is improved" (Hansard 3rd, 13, 643). Those in Parliament, that is, the rich and powerful, had "(h)itherto ... legislated too much for" themselves; they were "now called upon to legislate for ignorance" (643).

> It is chiefly upon the diffusion of sound political knowledge that you render safe the granting of political power. If you give the people the latter, without the means of obtaining the former, you do not confer a benefit upon them. (643.)

Strutt repeats Bulwer's observation that the most groundless

accusations and worst deceptions go unanswered in the Unstamped Press, for honest persons of similar background but opposite opinion will not break the law to respond to these. The present system "leads to the habitual violation of the law, and prevents the diffusion of useful knowledge and sound instruction among the lower classes, who above all others, stand in need of it" (643). Indeed, the Attorney General, fearing jury nullifications and resorts to assumptions of sovereign corruption, Strutt implies, will not "undertake a crusade against the publishers of these cheap newspapers; for the prosecutions might fail, and the sympathies of the people might be excited, under the impression that it was a species of persecution" (643-644).

Henry "Orator" Hunt (1773-1835), who sat less than three years, for Preston from 1831 to 1832, something of a Moses given not much more than a glimpse of the Holy Land of Reform, corrected Strutt: "The hon. Member said, legislate for ignorance; I say, however, legislate for poverty" (646). The impediment to knowledge, the expense of knowledge, is understood only when it is understood that "it is with the greatest difficulty that the labouring classes can get three farthings an hour for their work, and certainly not more than 5*s.* per week" (646). Hunt took exception to the defamation of the publishers of the Unstamped by those styling them "men of abandoned character" - the precise language of others in the debate: "Now, I have the pleasure of knowing some of these gentlemen, and I will venture to say, that they are as virtuous

and upright men as the writers for the great newspapers" (645).

> The fact is, that this House has been legislating for property alone for a great number of years, and the poorer classes have not been thought of. The truth is, that the working classes of this country are so depressed, and have been so shamefully used, that they are glad to read any publication written against the resent system of making laws in this country. The more violent these publications are, with the more avidity are they read. If the hon. Member [this to Bulwer] knew as well as I do what the situation of the labouring classes really is, I am sure he would not be surprised at their hatred of the laws. (646.)

This was not idle rhetoric on the parts of Strutt, Hunt and others who spoke that evening, whatever its intrinsic inadequacies.

Sir Charles Wetherell (1770-1846), who had sat for altogether seven constituencies since he had been returned for Rye in 1812, was a bitter enemy of Reform, whigs and Wellington; his reputation was so dark that his presence alone had provoked the three-day Bristol Riots in the autumn of 1831, but his resentment so great at having been passed over for office in 1817 that he, though always an extreme tory, defended James Watson (1766-1838) against the tory Government's informers in what would have been the first of the Spa Fields Riot trials so brilliantly that Watson was freed by the jury and the Government was forced to drop charges against the remaining accused, whom Wetherell was readying himself to represent *(DNB*, 21, 1296). Wetherell found himself "concur[ring] entirely in the opinion of the noble Lord, that the appointment of a Committee can lead to no useful result; but that we shall merely have, at the end of a few weeks, a large printed report" (Hansard 3rd, 13, 638). He

found "three distinct propositions in the hon. Gentleman's Motion": First, knowledge should be diffused, he agreed, but the newspapers were not places to get it, they containing no "philosophical or moral dissertations on any subject" (639). Second, reduction of the tax would enable newspaper startups, but the existing newspapers had their "copyright" as "a very expensive and valuable right of property," which would be destroyed were newspapers able to be more cheaply printed and sold (639). Finally, while a postage Duty might relieve the Treasury of its loss from the Stamp Duty, "for the purpose of benefitting the metropolis [that is, London], the hon. Gentleman would do an injury to all the other parts of the country" (639). These are not brilliant arguments, but they do quite well represent what was on the minds of those who did not want the Taxes on Knowledge done away with. One did not have to be an Ultra tory to say these things, but few beyond the Ultras would say them with such precision and forthrightness.

Bulwer's allies, almost to a person, advised him in the debate not to proceed with his Motion. Sir Matthew White Ridley (1778-1836), who represented Newcastle-upon-Tyne from 1812 to 1836, as had his father for the thirty-eight years before that, was against the Duty, but more against a Select Committee "because I think it is taking the responsibility which ought to rest with the Executive Government, and throwing it on a Committee of this House" (641). Henry Warburton (c.1784-1858), sitting then for Bridport, a strong Radical, hoped Bulwer would not press the Motion to a division since, given Althorp's

comments, he would get his Select Committee during the next Session (642). George Richard Robinson (c.1781-1850), a Conservative who voted for Reform and opposed the Taxes on Knowledge, wanted Bulwer "to withdraw his Motion, and bring it forward on a more opportune occasion" (644). While these Members and many others would surely have voted with Bulwer, given their advice, not to say the strong opposition which existed in its own right in the House, the Motion had very little chance of passing and, wisely, Bulwer withdrew it, "concurring (and how can I avoid it?) with the unanimous feelings of all my hon. friends, whom I know to be as cordially as myself attached to the principle of my Motion" (647).

## The Second Speech on the Taxes on Knowledge

Bulwer's second speech delivered before Parliament on the Taxes on Knowledge was given on the 22nd of May, 1834, in bringing forward a Resolution that the Stamp Duty on newspapers be repealed "at the earliest possible period" (Hansard 3rd, 23, 1206). The Motion was rejected by a vote of 90 to 58 (1222-1223). This is the only speech of the four on the Taxes on Knowledge at the termination of which the matter was brought to a vote and, "no tax press[ing] more directly upon the people" (1222), as Bulwer said in demanding it, to a division. Bulwer's first speech of June, 1832, on the Taxes on Knowledge had been followed by a withdrawal by Bulwer of the Motion, one for a Select Committee, not for Repeal or for a Reduction, after the "agree[ment] in...principle" (13, 647) of Lord Althorp, the

Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the "propriety of establishing a cheap postage" (634), that is for a Reduction of the cost of the Stamp, then set at fourpence, but subject to a twenty percent discount. The third speech, of August, 1835, was delivered in bringing a Motion for a Resolution of the Whole House into Committee for consideration of a Reduction of the Stamp to a single penny. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Thomas Spring Rice, pressed hard by Bulwer on the Tax's full abolition, qualifiedly acceded - "Aye," he said "supposing the revenue can bear it" (30, 862) - and Bulwer for a second time found it expedient to withdraw, to the consternation, if not the comprehension, of many then and since. The fourth and final speech, of March, 1855, was a defense by Bulwer during the Second Reading of a Bill drawn from Resolutions submitted by George Cornewall Lewis, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Palmerston's first Cabinet, which were to culminate in Repeal upon the Bill's passing. It will be recalled from above that the tory Member for East Kent, William Deedes, attempted to change the Amendment for a Second Reading to read that the Bill be read a month following, on the 30th of April, a polite way of opposing the Bill and an attempt to have the Bill removed from future deliberation. Given that the length of postponement Deedes wished amended was not great - three or six months for dismissal were conventional - and that he spoke in defense of his Amendment, that is, moved a Reasoned Amendment, together indicate that termination of the Bill was likely not his intention. Be that as it may, Bulwer's defense was successful,

with Deedes's Amendment rejected upon division by a vote of 215 to 161.

With respect, however, to the Question brought in May of 1834, Bulwer's critics have argued, epitomized by Wiener, that "the effectiveness of his appeal to reformers was vitiated ... by his announced willingness to agree to a year's postponement of any substantive change in the law" (61). And herein, clearly, is the undeclared origin of their criticism, that is, Bulwer's failure to live up to his supposed Radical self-description; however, this manner of criticism, particularly when it comes from Collet, who wrote many decades after the event, or Wiener, who wrote thirty years past a century afterward, predicates itself upon the false base of a later sense of Party, in this case, one with which the critics themselves had both considerable sympathy and not a little affiliation. The fundamental state of affairs is very differently contextualizable indeed, for the vote *failed*, a circumstance which must eventually overcome the rationalizing theoretics of the criticism. Bulwer's forcing the question in the face of certain defeat occasioned a loss, if not intended, then certainly expected. As was the case with respect to his literary reputation, his literary "ambitions," in Wiener's characterization (discussed below), so with his choice as the presenting speaker: he was given the task not on the basis of how he felt himself, but how well he could bring to the House the arguments of those who had encouraged him to speak. With respect to the one factor, Bulwer was chosen to speak as a

consequence of his existing reputation, which was significant and growing of its own accord; thus, Bulwer's literary reputation was not so much advanced by the speeches, as the speeches by his literary reputation. So, too, with respect to the other factor: Bulwer was chosen not because of the depth of his Radicalism, but because of the competence of his oratory. Surely, if the recent, but hardly to be scorned credentials of and the masterly delivery by a person of Bulwer's standing could not move the Bill, then just as surely the Bill must be genuinely unpopular. Hollis is closer to the state of affairs here when she says that, upon the defeat of Bulwer's Motion, "[the] next move ... lay with the radicals, who had to create a public opinion that the Ministers could not ignore, for they [the radicals] would not otherwise improve their voting strength" (73). Bulwer could not "vitiate" in himself what he did not in any case possess, nor "advance appreciably" what could not under the circumstances be advanced at all. As is normally the case with historians who bring an ideological predisposition to their analysis, it is difficult for them to distinguish between the rightness of their interpretive values and the rightness of the thoughts and actions of the historical players whom they assess. One, for instance, can as easily persuade oneself that Bulwer's speech was a fine success, given the formidable task of having obtained the large number of votes on the question that he had, and that the Radicals registered ingratitude, given the excessive degree of devotion afforded them by Bulwer, as evidenced in the power of his delivery despite the

tentativeness of his evolving convictions. Indeed, Collet ultimately concedes that, at least before the speech of August 1835, "Bulwer had done reasonably well" (I 50).

Bulwer begins the speech with a terse explanation why he had not introduced the present Motion when it had been promised, during the previous Session, but refuses an apology for the deferral, for "truth never loses [H: lost] by delay" (*Speeches*, I, 44 [Hansard 3rd, 23, 1194]). Be what his assessment of truth's power may, the postponement of his Motion was not precisely the result of the antecedent he denominates: "[t]he great pressure of business in the last Session, and a variety of those incidents which so often and so unexpectedly start [H: started] up in the way of any independent Member bringing forward a motion in this [H: that] House" (44 [1193]). In fact, the Radicals had spent the preponderant share of 1833 - partly, it must be admitted, in consequence of the many waves and ripples set about in the political Nation by Reform - somewhat unfocused, at least with respect to Parliamentary activity, and had cautioned Bulwer to wait as they worked both out of doors and and upon the Ministers. Bulwer did not like this, but followed the Radicals' counsel, receiving from the ever imperious Francis Place, some months *after* the event, the untidy rebuke that he ought to have been making his own decisions for himself (Hollis 72). In any case, "the question is [H: was] not now what it was when I [H: he] first introduced it to this [H: that] House," Bulwer continues ominously; "a new question, coldly agitated without, supported only by the inquiring and

speculative few, and screened from the eyes of the people by a variety of other objects, more clamourous and more exciting" (44-45 [1194]) has replaced it. The question, which has been given context by Reform - that is, in the sense that the newly elected Reform Parliament is meant by its supporters to deal with every aspect of Reform, including the Taxes on Knowledge - arises "from the quiet and deep heart of the people themselves [in the form] of a prayer I am now supporting [H: that he now supported] for the free circulation of opinion - for the enlarged and the untaxed diffusion of knowledge" (45 [1194]). The "prayer" to which Bulwer refers was certainly present, with the Taxes on Knowledge lodged within the general desire for all manner of Reform, but much of the effort - campaign promises, petitions and the like - expended by the Radicals was rather in sustaining than controlling the excitement among a population that often as not noticed its unmet needs and egregious maltreatment far more quickly than it did attempts to respond to either - whence, perhaps, the usefulness of Bulwer's metaphor upon the depth and quietness of that population's heart. Wisely, Bulwer moves to more technical and misconstrued aspects of the issue which had prompted his Resolution: "That it is expedient to repeal the Stamp Duty on Newspapers at the earliest possible period" (Hansard 3rd, 23, 1206). The first of these is the conviction held by many Members that the opposition of numerous, if not all, of the great periodicals of the day to Repeal of the Newspaper Duty represents a compelling argument against it. Indeed, Bulwer

> was surprised to hear no less a person than the right hon. Baronet, the member for Tamworth [i.e.,Sir Robert Peel] observe in excuse for the noble Lord [the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Viscount Althorp] in repealing the stamp duty upon newspapers, that he believed the newspapers were not loudly complaining of the burthen they endured - that they seemed tolerably contented with the imposition and would probably be acquiescent in its continuance (45-46 [1195].)

Having registered his surprise, Bulwer enters into one of the more cogent of the arguments against the Stamp:

> The [H: the] right hon. Baronet was cheered in that remark, and, therefore, there must be hon. Members in that House who supposed, what I can [H: he could] scarcely believe the right hon. Baronet unaffectedly supposed, that the stamp duty is [H: was] a tax of which only the existing newspapers have [H: had]a right to complain. Why, did any one ever hear of any monopolists complaining of a monopoly? When the House opened the trade of India, was it the East-India Company that insisted upon a repeal of their charter? This tax is [H: was] a charter to the existing newspapers - it is [H: was] not they who suffer from it - it is [H: was] the public - it is [H: was]the Government - it is [H: was] order - it is [H: was] society that suffers [H: suffered]! (46 [1195].)

Having brought this significant argument, having implied the disingenuousness, not to say hypocrisy, of Peel, having intimated a chastisement of the Members cheering Peel, having couched the argument, finally, in compellingly affective terms, not the least of which was the analogy drawn between the East India Company and the Stamped Press, Bulwer next, with a move in argument at which he was fully skilled, turns the emotive moment on its head in initiating a brief but profuse rendering of the fiscal and financial contexts within which the Stamped and, by implication, the Unstamped Press must operate. The numbers he presents are obliged to possess each a life of its own, for Bulwer is most careful to see that his figures are made correspondent to circumstances in which concrete persons are

advantaged or disadvantaged, sanctioned or deterred.

The figures Bulwer offers are authentically dramatic and will repay consideration with a sense of how really costly it was at that time in Britain for a free People to employ a free Press in order to exercise their freedom of speech. A combination of the Stamp and Paper Duties with the outlay for printing and distribution came to 5½*d.* for each 7*d.* newspaper copy; this left only 1½*d.* per copy for all other expenses, including compensating all staff but vendors and printers and paying for all physical plant and paper, all office space and materials. Bulwer estimates that the minimum capital investment for a morning paper would require £30,000, but might certainly run as high as £40,000. These were considerable fortunes, equivalent in the lesser figure today to very nearly a million dollars. "This [H: this]extravagant demand frightens [H: frightened] away new competitors" (46 [1195]), Bulwer observes, but more: it puts newspapers beyond the reach of all but a few, which had become monopolies. It is a commonplace of the excise that whenever an item is taxed over fifteen percent smuggling will be the inevitable consequence; with newspapers taxed far above 100 percent, the consequence is an "enormous circulation of all manner of contraband publications" (46 [1196]). At this point, Bulwer offers the foundation of his fears; his concern for those adversely affected by the Taxes on Knowledge is prompted only in a degree by altruistic sentiments. Fear spurs his anxiety as well:

> The writers in these [contraband] papers can [H: could] scarcely be well affected to the law, for they break [H:

> broke] the law; they can [H: could] scarcely be reasonable advisers, for they see [H: saw] before them the penalty and the prison, and write [H: wrote] under the angry sense of injustice; they can [H: could] scarcely be safe teachers, for they are [H: were] excited by their own passions, and it is [H: was] to the passions of the half-educated and distressed population that they appeal [H: appealed]. (46-47 [1196].)

Bulwer points to examples from the more inflammatory of Unstamped; one paper calls for taking his estates from the Duke of Bedford, another for the assassination of the Duke of Wellington. As Bulwer says this, there is laughter heard in the House. "Gentlemen may [H: might] laugh at these notions," he returns, "... but it is [H: was] not to us [H: them] that they are [H: were] addressed; they are [H: were] addressed, week after week, to men who have [H: had] not received any education, and whom poverty naturally attaches [H: attached] to the prospect of any violent change" (47 [1196]). He does not, however, wish to make his case upon the back of the poor, and the turn of argument by which he avoids it is a nice one: "These notions might be easily controverted; they might be scattered to the wind, for the English operative [i.e., factory worker] would listen to reason , or he would not ask you to repeal this tax" (47 [1196]). Bulwer's point here is worth pausing for: given the surfeit of Unstamped, only a reasonable person - this is Bulwer's terminology - would ask for Repeal, and, indeed, the reasonable poor of England are doing just so. *But* - none listen, specifically none in the House, and "the legal newspapers (addressing a higher class of readers) do [did] not condescend to notice them" (47 [1196]). Bulwer now frames his examination in its most accusatory configuration:

> You either forbid to the poor by this tax, in a great measure, all political knowledge, or else you give to them, unanswered and unpurified, doctrines the most dangerous. You [H: dangerous - you] put the medicine under lock and key, and you leave the poison on the shelf. You do not create one monopoly only, you create two monopolies - one monopoly of dear newspapers, and another monopoly of smuggled newspapers. You [H: newspapers - you] create two publics; to the one public of educated men, in the upper and middle ranks, whom no newspaper can, on moral points, very dangerously mislead, you give the safe and rational papers; to the other public, the public of men far more easily influenced - poor, ignorant, distressed - men from whom all the convulsions and disorders of society arise (for the crimes of the poor are the punishment of the rich) [H: rich,)] - to the other public, whom you ought to be most careful to soothe, to guide, and to enlighten, you give the heated invectives of demagogues and fanatics. (47[1196-1197].)

With this, Bulwer proclaims, "I [H: He] might stop here and say that I have [H: he had] made out my case. What more need be said to prove [H: said, to prove,] that this is [H: was] a tax that ought to be repealed?" (47 [1197]). It is important to notice that Bulwer is convinced that a Government gets from the Governed what it deserves, that the rich are punished by the crimes of the poor. The circumstances under which a Government may most hastily bring about its own reprehensible detachment from the less fortunate of its people is to give them over to the ambitions of demagogues and fanatics, when it ought rather to be soothing, guiding and enlightening them.

> Of what greater crime can [H: could] a Government be guilty than that of allowing the minds of the poor to be poisoned? - than that of pandering to their demoralisation? - and, if demoralisation leads [H: led] to guilt, and guilt to punishment, of encouraging the wanton sacrifice of human life itself? (48 [1197].)

By "demoralization," Bulwer means deterioration of moral thought and behavior, not of morale, and his prose in analysis of how this takes place, as it has been right along in the

present argument, is limpid in style and lucid in reasoning. Chief among the instruments of demoralization is the denial to the poor of cheap knowledge, making certain a flood of

> trash that now exists [H: existed], that is [H: was] now circulated in defiance of laws, of fines, and of jails [H: gaols]. During the present Administration, from 300 to 400 persons have [H: had] been imprisoned for merely selling unstamped publications in the streets - have [H: had] been punished with the utmost rigour - sent to herd with felons and the basest outcasts of society. (48 [1197].)

The effect has been the elevation of fanatical and demagogic writers to persons of importance among the poor and the assignment of martyrdom to them and to their vendors. Implicit in all of this, of course, is the notion that the poor are so at least in part from ignorance; nearly explicit, the notion that the poor are no less rational and human than the dominant elements of society and ought so to be treated. Further, there underlying it all is the understanding that, "[i]f there is [H: was] one true axiom in the world, it is [H: was] this - that opinion only can put down opinion" (48 [1197]). This remarkably unqualified view of Bulwer's represents something of a lapse in Bulwer's rhetoric and in this way: until this point he has indicated that the ethos of the rhetors and writers and the pathos in the listeners' and readers' reception were at least as significant as the content of the rhetoric, but in this latter remark he has implied a privileging of logos over the other two aspects of the Modes of Persuasion (v. Table 1). Indeed, his entire argument rests on the origin, not the content, of what he is now calling opinion. But he quickly removes himself from the rhetorically most unprofitable path.

In the debate, Lord Winchilsea had urged greater prosecution of the Unstamped, but Melbourne, then Home Secretary and two months from his first premiership, refused, pointing out that "prosecution might only give them a double publicity" (48 [1197]). Bulwer concurs but asks

> in what a condition, then, are [H: were] the Government placed? They leave [H: left] a law on their Statute-book to which they dare [H: dared] not apply - a law which, when dormant, gives [H: gave] a monopoly to the disaffected; and when exerted, only feeds [H: fed] still more the disaffection. If we do [H: they did] not use it, we are [H: they were] injured; if we do [H: they did] use it, we are [H: they were] injured doubly. We are [H: They were] like a man who keeps [H: kept] a bull-dog so fierce that it is [H: was] good for nothing; it worries [H: worried] both friend and foe; when chained, the robber escapes [H: escaped]; when let loose, it turns [H: turned] upon its master. (48 [1197-1198].)

This is a powerful analogy, not only in its connotations with respect to the behavior of the Unstamped as perceived by those whom they would attack, but even more in its rendering of the actual nature of the fears of which those threatened were possessed: even as these demagogues and fanatics, as Bulwer casts them, are beheld with terror by those in power, even as much are they beyond the capacity of these powerful to understand. For, as is the bulldog, the demagogues and fanatics simply *are*, and who can explain the movement of their reasoning or the motives of their effort? Bulwer wittingly plays upon this reception in the powerful of the more aggressive and defiant of the Unstamped; he can do so all the more effectively because he has himself what he assumes to be an explanation of them, an explanation that repeatedly returns to its most fundamental ground: either, negatively, ignorance or,

positively, the thirst, universal in people, for knowledge is the mechanism by which the impoverished can be comprehended. And in answer to the fears and blindness of the powerful he advises that they open up "the prison-house of the mind" (57 [1206]) that the Stamp has constructed for the spiritual and intellectual incarceration of the poor.

Against this metaphor of the bulldog, Bulwer felicitously juxtaposes an attribution of cowardice among proponents of the Stamp and not cowardice alone, but a small-minded cowardice at that:

> And a worthy task it is [H: is] for the Minister of England to be waging this petty war with bill-stickers and hawkers! To let the paper itself go free, to pounce upon the man who sells it - to level thunders of the law upon some ragged itinerant, some peddler of the Press, and then skulk behind the Stamp-office Commissioners, and say, "They did the deed - it is not we who prosecute - it is our agents at the Stamp-office." Miserable subterfuge! - pitiful excuse! (48-49 [1198].)

And indeed, of the several hundred persons in jail for violation of the Stamp, the vast majority were vendors, a fact well known to Bulwer and the Members hearing him. Added to this was the hypocrisy attendant upon the circumstance that officials at the Stamp Office and throughout the Government, as well as some Members in the House who inclined toward prolongation of the Stamp, were members of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge - Bulwer refers to it sarcastically as the "society for the diffusion of cheap knowledge" (49 [1198]) - whose *Penny Magazine* was notorious for both its price, which was never contested by the Government, and its line, which, unsurprisingly, reflected without deviation the Government's,

at least so long as the Society's members were in the Government helping create the Government's line. "... [I]t is [H: was] with a penny magazine in one hand that they attempt to strike down the penny newspapers with the other ... carrying into the State the jealousies of trade," (49 [1198]) says Bulwer. But the success of the *Penny Magazine* at least indicates the "disposition" of the poor to obtain knowledge, Bulwer adds, wringing maximum rhetorical advantage from his reference. To this he adds a comparison with France, in which cheap press is the rule, while education, person for person, is a good deal less than in England: many more "eminent men" in France than in England devote themselves to writing for that part of the Press which informs the poor (50 [1199]). But England has such volunteers as well; Thomas Arnold at Rugby and Richard Whately at Oxford have each recently offered to write for a Press which was no longer Stamped (49 [1198]). Further, in Paris, with a much smaller reading public, "[b]esides its political papers ... ten journals devoted to advertisements, judicial notices, and commercial announcements; twenty journals devoted to jurisprudence, eight to education, twenty-one to science, and twenty-two to medicine" are published (50 [1199]). Bulwer wants his listeners to know these numbers; each holds educational promise for England and commercial forewarnings from France. But there is more to the French account than educational inspiration and mercantile threat; there is the French attitude, which the English would do well to emulate:

> In the worst times of modern France, with a Bourbon on the throne, with a Villèle in the administration, when it was

> proposed by a despotic Government to a servile Chamber to tax the press in France as it is [H: was] now taxed in England, in order to prevent the circulation of knowledge, and to put down by the tax-gatherer the enlightenment they dared not assail by the soldier, the whole Chamber subservient as it was, rose against the proposal! They would not war upon knowledge! Are [H: were] Englishmen less free or less enlightened, that they can [H: should] support, with patience, that which in the French Chamber was [H: had been] rejected with indignation and scorn? (51 [1200].)

This juxtapositioning of France and England serves two purposes rhetorically: in the first place, it provides technically viable examples for Bulwer's argument; in the second place, it shames Bulwer's listeners, for France is a defeated foe, with no claim upon English superiority, certainly in public affairs, and, in some English views, culturally as well.

Bulwer now continues with his analysis of the English conditions. He proposes an end to the Stamp with cheap postage required

> not upon newspapers only, but upon all tracts, periodicals, and works of every description under a certain weight ... [with the postage] equal, whatever may be the distance, so that the remote parts of the country may [H: should] possess the same advantage in obtaining knowledge as those immediately in the vicinity of the metropolis. (52 [1201].)

Clearly stung and, two years later, still smarting from Lord Althorp's accusation that he had "a little exaggerated the facts and probabilities, as they regarded the revenue" (Hansard 3rd, 13, 635), Bulwer recalls "the calculations that I [H: he] had the honour to submit to the House in the Session before last," that is, in his speech of the 14th of June, 1832, and points out that, despite the printing and dissemination of thousands of copies of the debate, its review by "practical

men," that is. persons with the experience to judge, and its coverage in the Press, these calculations had not yet been refuted (*Speeches*, I, 52 [Hansard 3rd, 23, 1201]). This is an overt appeal both to ethos and logos (v. Table 1). He then offers continued argument based on further calculations, some of the more interesting being the fact that, with an untaxed Press in the United States, there is one weekly paper to every fourth person. Such a circumstance allows the inference, *mutatis mutandis*, of 150 million weekly papers printed in Great Britain a year were the Stamp rescinded. Bulwer then calculates the figures for British newspapers sent by mail, two-thirds of every run, with respect to their being charged for postage rather than for the Stamp and shows an increase in income for the Exchequer. It has been claimed that such postage would be a burden on the out-lying districts to the benefit of London, but, Bulwer points out, postage is not a tax, but the cost of transport, the same as for luggage or parcels, but this "common-place fallacy" (53 [1202) isn't the point, for if it's considered "a hardship to pay a penny for a newspaper in the shape of postage, how much greater is the hardship to pay 4*d.* in the shape of duty?" (53 [1203]). On the other hand, employment of postage for revenue rather than for the Stamp would bring at least three new sources of income for the Exchequer: increase in postage revenue will come not only from newspapers, but from tracts, circulars, advertising and the like; the increase in circulation will bring in increased revenue from the Advertising Duty; the increased use of paper will substantially

add to income from the Paper Duty. Bulwer backs all this up with considerable statistical evidence, but returns in the end to his fundamental political argument:

> I am [H: He was] no alarmist; I do [H: he did] not behold a storm in every cloud, or a revolution in every change. A great nation is [H: was] not easily made, and a great people are [H: were] not easily undone. But oppressed as we are [H: they were] with financial difficulties - old and new principles at war - the elements of our [H: their] legislative constitution almost at open discord with each other, - it is [H: was] above all things necessary that whatever changes may [H: might] be forced by the multitude upon their rulers, shall emanate from their enlightenment and not from their passion or their blindness. (57 [H: 1206].)

The great threat is not democracy, but a democracy "from [which] the opportunities of knowledge have [H: had] been carefully excluded" (57).

## The Third Speech on the Taxes on Knowledge

Of the speeches Bulwer gave against the Taxes on Knowledge, by far the most controversial, at least historically, was the third, which was spoken before a lightly attended House - indeed, the tory benches were nearly empty (Hansard 3rd, 30, 859) - on the 21st of August, 1835, to the end of obtaining a Committee of the Whole House to debate the possibility of a Reduction to a penny (843) of the payment required in securing a newspaper Stamp. That Bulwer asked in the speech for a Committee Advice on Reduction, rather than on Repeal, indicated that he had already moved from the uncompromising position of many of the regular Radicals, although others of these were with him in this. Grote, Edward Baines (1774-1848), a Leeds Liberal and proprietor of the *Leeds*

*Mercury*, and Thomas Wakley (1795-1862), a Liberal and surgeon-founder of *The Lancet* sitting for Finsbury, indicated varying degrees of satisfaction were there a reduction to a penny (851, 856, 860 respectively); Bulwer indicated himself appeased with a reduction to twopence. The Stamp would ultimately end this phase of the debate at a penny; the Bill, all but written by Thomas Spring Rice (1790-1866), who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer in April, received the Royal Assent a year and a month after Bulwer's speech, on the 15th of September 1836. An indication, too, of Bulwer's willingness to compromise on the cost of the Stamp was his absence at one of the decade's great meetings against the Taxes on Knowledge held at the Crown and Anchor Inn on the 18th of July, 1835; 2,000 attended, Brougham chaired and Hume, Roebuck and O'Connell spoke (Hollis 80), but some Radical Members who had attended left more willing to compromise than they had been on entering. Francis Place (1771-1854) noted this with irritation and noted as well Bulwer's absence (Wiener 61), as have commentators since. Despite his role as a Parliamentary spokesperson in this central Radical campaign, Bulwer, for good or ill, was, as usual, steered by his own lights and appeared little spurred by the criticism of Place, whose leadership of the agitation against the Taxes on Knowledge had hardly been in any case deciding even out of doors, not to say inside the House, which he would never enter as a Member, despite decades of Parliament-focused agitation, or, still less, among the Ministers, to few of whom he ever had ease of access. All the same, Bulwer's commitment in the matter has

been judged variously, depending on the commentator's own interests. Place was very much concerned that he himself be accepted by the working-class Radicals (57), but he was right in the logic Hollis attributes to him, that the Radicals "who wanted cheap newspapers as a means to some other end, rather than as an end in itself, would be satisfied with a penny stamp and would not press for a total repeal of the stamp duties" (62). As we shall see, this precisely characterized Bulwer in that his regard was rather for the education, than the power, of the working classes.

Beyond this, however, there was the question of how to proceed whatever the case. The Unstamped themselves, mostly emanations, if not always sons, of the working classes, of which men like Cobbett early in the century, Hetherington in the Thirties and Ernest Jones at midcentury are examples, were involved in a great conflict both with and in society and saw the Press as little more than another means denied them in the battle. Those of the middle class, Radical or no, who wanted a governmentally untrammeled Press had ambitions less complicated in their articulation, but more knotty when it came to implementation. Hollis points out that their options, broadly, were three: activity in Parliament, persuasion of the Ministers, a campaign directed at an awakening of public opinion to the issue, with success in this latter option redounding favorably upon whatever successes might be gained among the Members at large or among those upon the Treasury Bench (62-63). It is important to consider this three-part

approach when discussing Bulwer's role in the campaign, for his own contribution was limited, intentionally or not, to the first option, while the three options remained dynamically integrated in process, despite there being no clear oversight of the whole on the part of any one individual. Bulwer played a leadership role in Parliament, even as Hume and Henry Warburton (?1784-1858), a Radical Member representing Bridport, did in approaching the Cabinet and Place tried to do out of doors. Whether from irritation or jealousy, Place was something less than generous in acknowledging Bulwer's portion, and it is his version of events which has come down to us. Wiener explicitly claims that Bulwer's involvement in the drive against the Taxes was a calculated attempt to further his reputation as a writer - he "received nationwide publicity [which] enabled him to promote his literary ambitions" (60) - and implies that the lessened stature he pleases to attribute to the speeches was in proportion to their want of legislative effect. That some of Bulwer's contemporaries so accused him, as Wiener points out (62), does not make it any more so than if Wiener had induced such a characterization without their help; the truth of the matter is Bulwer was supported by his fellow opponents of the Taxes on Knowledge in his leadership role in Parliament in part because he was already what Wiener claims he wanted to become, that is, famous as a literary person. Indeed, Bulwer was less than two years from a knighthood - among the first lists of the newly crowned Victoria - which he received certainly as much for his literary as his political contributions; his enemies

claimed, naturally enough, that "he had purchased his baronetcy by compromising the Newspaper Stamp Bill of 1836 [sic]" (Holyoake 1893, I, 293), and Melbourne, the great, early influence on the Queen and the premier responsible for Bulwer's inclusion on the lists, could not have been ungrateful that Bulwer had been reasonable, as he had as well been time and again with his vote, but Bulwer's literary contribution was in the day entirely cause enough, and the motives of Bulwer's contemporary critics - Place chief among them - were themselves hardly free of political insidiousness, given his critics' impatience toward, really hatred against, a Liberal Government with which, despite the promise these men took to be implicit in Reform successes, extreme Radicals had less and less leverage as month passed to month and year to year. Conversely, it is without doubt true that Bulwer's work in Parliament against the Taxes was not, as Wiener also points out, likely to have furthered Place's ardently longed-for alliance between the working-class agitators and the middle-class Radicals, with Place, naturally, leader of the coalition. Nor is it any surprise that Brougham, "then trying to ingratiate himself with reformers," as Wiener rightly enough mentions (62), offered a description of Bulwer's accepting Spring Rice's intention to reduce the price of the Stamp at the point that Bulwer *might* have asked for a Division on his Motion as "one of the most mortifying, and ... most inexplicable things which have happened in Parliament during the late session" (quoted in Wiener 62) - no surprise, that is, given Brougham's talent for being on every side of

every issue and his life-long program of ingratiation, this, albeit, always in an upwardly direction. What is, on the other hand, surprising is Wiener's failure to note that the Motion was for a Resolution of the House into Committee, not for Reduction or Repeal as such - indeed, a Motion for Repeal is what Wiener seems to imply it to have been in text (61), and this despite a footnote acknowledging a claim to the contrary by Bulwer in *The Spectator* (61n), a claim which matched precisely both the situation in the House the evening of the 21st of August, 1835, the evening Bulwer gave this third speech on the Taxes, and the content of the third speech itself. But granting an understanding that the Motion was not for a vote on the Taxes themselves, there was, even so, no certainty whatever that a Committee of the Whole House would have comprised a majority of Members as might be uncomplicatedly favorable to Repeal, despite the scanty attendance of the Conservative benches, when even many of the Radicals were entirely willing to accept the reduction which was in due course effected. Wiener falls prey to a natural disposition to attribute to the whole what can be reasonably imputed only of a part: "Recriminations" Wiener reports,

> continued even after reduction of the stamp to 1*d.* in 1836, and as late as 1851, [the writer and ultra-agitator William E.] Hickson, a participant in the movement [against the Taxes on Knowledge], asserted confidently that the tax would have been totally repealed in 1835 "if we could have over-ruled the opinions of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton ...." (62.)

Given the Parliamentary conditions under which Bulwer was then working, such an assertion, were it at all true in the first

place, could only have been made about the activities of a time span a good deal longer than one required to assemble a Division, and, of course, a Division of the House while in Committee can result only in a decision on a question of Report, not in a decision on a Motion as such, this latter of which must be taken by the House with the Speaker in the Chair. And finally, it goes without saying that Motions cannot be brought at whim, even less may they be brought when attendance appears favorable to their passage, but must go through a complicated procedure of scheduling and notification - indeed, to prevent the manipulation of attendance or sentiment - so that neither Bulwer nor anyone else would have been able to initiate a wholly spontaneous or a profoundly altered Motion. Even Amendments have historically been rejected by the Speaker or a Chairman if offered without notification.

The speech of the 21st of August, 1835, was a lambent one, among Bulwer's shortest, full of passionate phrasemaking; commentators then and since have been in pretty complete agreement on the quality of Bulwer's rhetoric in these speeches against the Taxes on Knowledge, though the universal praise of the initial speech of 1832 waned, as might be guessed from the above, as each of the speeches was successively evaluated in the concurrent discussions of those who would have preferred more accomplished as the result, at least, of the second and third speeches. While generally characterizing Bulwer in terms most frequently employed by his contemporaries to describe him ("a brilliant orator" [57]), Wiener is as quick to point to what he

refers to as the "set" nature of Bulwer's speeches; what he can mean by this is obscure, but one must of course allow that he does not in all likelihood presume to the status of a literary or rhetorical critic.

Bulwer begins his delivery by complimenting the new Ministry, assuring it of a continuation of that support - now that they are in office - which he had given them "humbly, zealously, but disinterestedly" when they were in opposition [during the short first premiership of Peel] (*Speeches*, I, 59 [Hansard 3rd, 30, 835]). This is somewhat a curious affirmation, accepting that, at the time Bulwer spoke, the Ministry had been in power nearly five months and before that, at least in the persons of most of its members, out of power an even shorter span. However, Bulwer compliments as well the speeches of some of the members of the Government with respect to the issue at hand and appears rather to be seeking solidarity in the battle than making smooth his own way. Out of doors, on the other hand, the situation, according to Bulwer, is at no hazard, for Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge is "one of the most popular demands among [the] constituents [of any manufacturing town]," (59 [836]), greatly surpassing in petitions those for Municipal Reform, doubling those for an Abolition of the Tithes and, indeed, exceeding the number of petitions against any tax. Bulwer recalls that the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, Thomas Spring Rice, has said in his speech on the issue that "he would not consent to purchase popularity upon false and unreal grounds," that is, in inadvisedly reducing or eliminating the

Stamp. But Bulwer asks, and in doing so affirms, the grounds which have gained favor for the present Government:

> [w]hat has made the real, lasting, and merited popularity of the present Government? Has it not arisen from their consistent advocacy of liberty of opinion? In Catholic Emancipation - the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts - in Parliamentary and Municipal Reform Bills? This has been the main principle of their policy, and it has had its reward. Is it, therefore, on unreal grounds that I ask my right hon. friend to repeal this tax? (59 [836])

Bulwer returns at this point to the repeated assertions of every speech on these Taxes that "the legal market is altogether confined to great capitalists and exclusive monopolists, while a large and cheap market is opened to smugglers" (59-60 [836]), but adds that the very Ministers who maintain the Tax have obtained *their* power by means of access to these very costly legal publications: "The whole expression of public opinion, in a periodical shape, is at present confined to the narrowest oligarchy that ever disgraced a free country" (59 [836]), he had already declared. But the situation, hardly acceptable as it is, is deteriorating. Always interested in providing his audience with both synchronic and diachronic means for comparison and contrast, Bulwer points out that all of England has but five or six legal morning newspapers, while as many are found publishing in single districts of the United States and points out further that, in 1792, there were 13 papers published in the morning and 20 in the evening in London alone, this despite the numerical differences both in absolute population and in literate persons. Such makes nonsense of talk affirming "the liberty of the Press in England" and the familiar "holiday [holyday] speeches" proclaiming it (60 [837]). These are

strong attacks by Bulwer on the pretensions and standing of those who favor the Taxes on Knowledge and set the stage for the remainder of his argument, in which he seeks methodically and specifically to undermine the particulars of their defenders' standpoint.

These arguments are interesting for two reasons, one rhetorical, the other historical, which, while discoverable in the other speeches of this group, are most conveniently discussed here, since in this speech they are formally more transparent than in many of the others. With respect to the rhetorical aspect, Bulwer makes a continuing effort in his delivery to avoid imbalance between the three kinds of rhetoric, forensic, epideictic and symbouleutic, that is, in making claims or assertions of fact, value and policy, respectively. He will praise or blame a Minister for his work in the Political Nation, and he will prescribe ways and means by which to attain such goals as he suggests, but usually he will contextualize these epideictic and symbouleutic moments forensically. His approaches are normally two: narrative and statistical, both in the broadest senses of the terms. This bifurcation of support is easily seen in the present speech. With respect to the historical aspect, these arguments are interesting because - and Bulwer certainly shared this feature with other speakers of the day, Gladstone of course coming to mind - they are time and again clear attempts at marshaling what we would call social science to the support of fact, value or policy. While this is not original to Bulwer, it is certainly

new to the age, at least within the realm of political rhetoric. There is a determined effort in nearly every of Bulwer's speeches to persuade at least in part on the basis of an understanding of society which has been synthesized in terms of some prior analysis performed by what we would call experts. It is the difference between testimonial and empirical evidence. Bulwer employs both readily enough, but where he can provide an expert example or a quantitative perspective he will invariably do so, often in addition to supplying the more traditional narrative or illustration, what Aristotle called the rhetorical induction.

Bulwer's next statement encompasses both these features, the rhetorical and the historical as mentioned. But it begins with a classic rhetorical induction:

> It has been urged that if the newspaper press is rendered cheap, it will become bad and worthless, and that if the market is widened, the commodity will be deteriorated. Why, if this argument were used as to any other article of trade, a man would be set down as an idiot. If a dozen persons only were allowed to sell spectacles, and a proposition was made to allow every person to sell them, would not the statesman who told you that in that case spectacles would be good for nothing, deserve to be laughed at? The analogy holds good with everything - the greater the competition the greater the chance of excellence, and the wider the market the better the commodity. But this truth obtains more with respect to literature than anything else. (60 [837])

This is a classic example of what is described in Aristotle as a hypothetical, comparative rhetorical induction. Aristotle contrasts the syllogism in dialectic with the enthymeme in rhetoric and the induction in dialectic with the example in rhetoric; this last he refers to as a "rhetorical induction." The rhetorical induction is of two kinds, factual and

hypothetical, with the hypothetical divided into comparison and fable. (The other divisions and subdivisions are similarly ramified; these, in turn, are themselves sometimes divided into kinds.) Aristotle, as he does with near everything he says, offers abundant illustration for each of these rhetorical classifications. The one bearing on the present instance in Bulwer's speech is from Socrates, who said that public officials should no more be chosen from the general population by lot than should athletes, nor chosen by lot from a narrower group than the pilot from among the sailors of a ship. The illustration is to be found in the *Rhetoric*, Bk. 2, Ch. 20 (v. A[C,F,K,R] as appropriate). Bulwer amplifies the rhetorical induction in asking whether writing be better in the degree to which the writer is rich, in the degree to which he owns stock, in the degree to which he is able to afford a tax of 200%, whether the "eloquence of Addison and the wit of Steele could ... make head against a penny tax. How many 'Spectators' in politics of equal talents may you not have extinguished by a tax of four times the amount?" Bulwer asks (61 [837]).

But these questions merely prime Bulwer's listener for support of both the testimonial and the empirical kinds. Having submitted the reference to the extinction of *The Spectator* upon the installment of the penny tax, he asks what the difference might be between political periodical writing and writing of any other kind: "Are they not subject to the same laws - created by the same intellect - influenced by the same competition, and improved by the same causes?" Undertaking an hypophora

objectio, his answer to this question is at once jolting and compelling; it is startling because it comes from a person who not only is of a fine literary sensibility, but one who seeks to produce literature as well, indeed, is in the eyes of many of his listeners one who already has; forceful because, in the judicious presentation he gives it, Bulwer perhaps undertakes rather to elevate political writing than to disrate literature:

> There is only this difference between them, that political, and particularly periodical political writing, is much more generally useful and important than any other description. If I was a poor man, and had not read the 'Rambler,' or the 'Spectator,' or Shakespeare, or Milton, I do not well see how I should stand a greater chance of being imprisoned, or transported, or hanged. But were I a poor man, and did not read the newspapers - if I did not know what new laws were passed surrounding me with punishments - if I did not know what was legal and what was illegal - I should be liable to suffer through ignorance, and thus this tax of fourpence which keeps numbers of persons from obtaining the more useful knowledge, subjects them to crime and exposes them to the gallows. I can compare the system to nothing but the monstrous tyranny of shutting men up in a dark room, and declaring that they shall be severely punished if they stumble against the numerous obstacles by which they are surrounded. (61 [838])

What, of course, makes this testimonial evidence - that is, evidence brought from the experience of the speaker or writer - is only indirectly Bulwer's position as a maker of the other kind of literature. An example - a rhetorical induction - might be helpful here. If someone were a medical doctor and claimed involvement in religious practice to be more sustaining of general health than preventive medicine, then one might reasonably assume this doctor to be speaking with respect to his or her own practice of religion as much as anyone's, but with the

additional feature - unessential to testimonial evidence - of a professional authority beyond personal experience upon which to base the statement. Bulwer, apart from his professional status as a producer of literature and apart from his having had only one slight brush with poverty - the medical doctor above mentioned may be presumed to be in robust health, as Bulwer is of robust income - has offered, if only implicitly, the testimony that, having read literature, he is himself dependent upon other writing besides it for information essential to his well-being in society - and this writing is to be found, among other places, in the political periodicals.

Bulwer quickly follows this argument with one of an empirical nature. First, he praises the existing legal Press, against which, in contrast to some other Members, he harbors no ill will: "Where a great power exists," he says, "it is sometimes abused, but the wonder appears to me to be that its powers have been so seldom abused" (61 [838]). Still, as "the first person to bring forward a substantive motion for the repeal of the existing monopoly," he has fully demonstrated that he is "above the meanness of flattering or fawning upon the formidable engine of praise or censure" (61-62 [838]). Further, he wishes to point to "the talent, respectability, character, and accomplished education of the great mass of the gentlemen connected with the periodical press," but not as a "compliment," rather "as an argument in favour of" his Motion. Will these write worse for having the larger audience which would follow from Reduction or Repeal? Will they "'pander to

[the] base passions ... [of] the multitude'" as many have suggested? No, assures Bulwer, and the evidence is to be found in the Press itself:

> Look at the papers which please the great mass of the people, and you will find articles on science, trade, education, the steam-engine, and matters which would appear tedious to us. They do not desire their bad passions to be aroused - they seek to have their minds enlightened. They live by labour and seek to know how that labour may be best directed. I am afraid it is we - the idle rich- "the lords of luxury and ease," who require a false and meretricious excitement - who alone support the disgraces of the press - who encourage the slander and scandal, the venom and frivolity, which were first wrought into sundry libels, not by a radical journal, not by a heartless demagogue print, but by a paper professing a hatred of democratic principle and dignifying by its support the Tory cause. It pretends to furnish the gossip of the Court, and the tittle-tattle of the aristocracy. If you look at the large newspapers which circulate among the great mass of the people, you will find in them the most varied information, the most argumentative writing, and a great freedom from private calumny, vulgar slander, and personal abuse. (62 [838-39])

While there is certainly a tendency here in Bulwer to idealize the lower classes and their reading preferences, clearly the kinds of material he refers to appeared regularly in the Unstamped Press. Partly it did so because explanations of the steam engine and articles devoted to a specific argument could not be construed by the censors as news and would thereby escape the fullest measure of the Duties, but partly too such things appeared in the Unstamped Press or in such periodicals which were Stamped but directed at the lower classes because of a genuine interest in the editors of these kinds of publications in educating their readerships. That they did so, as well, additionally supported the middle-class Radical faith in the educability of the lower classes and indirectly added

justification to that faith's corollary that knowledge enhanced, if it did not always produce, law-abidingness. But what is more to be noted in these comments by Bulwer is his outright condemnation of the decadent practices of the legal Press, especially such segments of it as appealed to the upper classes, "the idle rich," as he puts it. As in *England and the English*, the obvious touchstone in this respect, Bulwer consistently refuses to allow such natural sympathy as he may have for a particular social context to effect an uncritical support in his rendering of it. This clear-headed specificity of Bulwer's is the mark of his rhetorical formidableness and the great tool of any reformer.

Bulwer partitions the second half of this speech into political and economic arguments. With respect to the political considerations, he argues

> [s]ome hon. Members on the other side of the House, tell us that the doctrines of the present Government are revolutionary and dangerous; whereas, from what I have heard this very night, if I were asked what doctrines were most likely to weaken the just influence of the Crown, separate the different classes, incense the people, and produce and hasten the course of revolution - I should say that it was the doctrine of the Conservatives. (63 [839])

Bulwer makes this claim on purely pragmatic grounds: the French Court's condemnation of Voltaire, Geneva's burning of Rousseau's *Social Contract* and the English Government's prosecution of Tom Paine - all these comparable to the pursuit of the Unstamped by the present Government - ended in the triumph of the oppressed, with Paine, for example, selling 30,000 copies of the prosecuted work the week after his trial

when he had sold no more than ten before the Government stepped in. So successful are the Unstamped that Bulwer is willing to guarantee that, with the arena as crowded as it is already, there will be not a single new publication following a Repeal of the Stamp (63 [839-840]). With this, he moves to economic considerations, pointing out that the only way to reduce or eliminate smuggling of any item is to remove the tax upon it. The implicit argument here is of course that of the new middle-class Radical political economists: that natural prices, even for smugglers, will meet supply and that taxes become artificial barriers with respect to any moment in the equations among demand, price and supply. Carrying his point to a head, Bulwer asks whether "the right hon. Gentleman [Thomas Spring Rice, Chancellor of the Exchequer, thinks] for a moment that he can succeed [in any imposition] so long as the tax is 200 per cent upon the article smuggled?" (64 [840]). Bulwer now argues, with specific figures, that a Reduction of the Stamp to a penny would increase sales to an extent that, by the penny in combination with income from the Paper and Advertisement Duties, the rate would equal the present income upon the fourpenny tax. "We shall materially extend the advantages of knowledge, without in the least diminishing the amount of revenue," Bulwer claims (64 [840]). Further, near everyone is with him in this; indeed, "[t]here are few now on the Treasury Bench who have not, on some former occasion, expressed themselves favourable" either to Reduction or Repeal (66 [842]).

Joseph Hume seconded Bulwer's Motion, pointing out that his views with respect to the Taxes on Knowledge were "so well known to the House and the country generally, that it is scarely necessary" for him to state them again (Hansard 3rd, 30, 843). He appeals to the Ministers, asking "even if they differ a little from us upon this question, let them, as we have done, sacrifice a little of their opinions, to reward those who have stood by them in the struggle" (843) over Reform. The people want to know who those are "who have imposed these taxes that have kept us in darkness" (843). Taxes are being reduced in Ireland by the present Ministry, why not in England? The people most affected by the taxes are those very people who have carried the present Government into office (844). The laws were "imposed by their opponents and the enemies of the people. It cannot surely afford these Gentlemen [now in Government] any satisfaction to know that 511 persons have been imprisoned by them" (844). Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at this point in Hume's speech, shouts out, "Not by the Government." Hume responds that he does "not care, Sir, whether the law is put in force by the Government or by common informers." From the time the Ministers took office [he means here probably under Lord Grey in November, 1830 (cf. 625); his dates and numbers are not consistent] until March of 1834 [though he likely means 1835 (cf. 625)], "no less than 511 persons have suffered imprisonment for a breach" of the laws governing the Taxes on Knowledge (844). And the Motion does not go to the length that Hume would wish: the eradication of the

Taxes altogether and "the Press entirely free" (844). "But ...I am willing, if any compromise could be made, to take any part of the good which I can get" (844). If he had, in previous debate, "expressed myself too warmly, in speaking of my hon. Friends [on the Treasury Bench] below me, it was merely because I was most anxious to drive them forward" toward what was good both for them and for millions in the country (844-45). Never a Member known to stick fastidiously to the superficial niceties of Parliamentary exchange, it is not clear to which instance of warmth he is referring, though it is as likely as not he is referring to his most recent, occurring late on the evening of Monday, the 17th of August, when, having brought a Motion for Repeal, which he withdrew a few minutes later, deferring to Bulwer's Motion, which was to come the following Friday, he accused the Government, among other things, of having enforced the Act more severely even than the tories who had passed it under Castlereagh and of having given occasion for vindication to those who would call the present Government "oppressors and robbers" of the poor, language for which he was rebuked even by his fellow Liberal Benjamin Hawes (1797-1862), who sat for Lambeth (625).

Clearly, Hume, both in his willingness to compromise, even within the context of the hundreds who had been imprisoned, and in his apology at having "expressed [himself] too warmly" did not appear driven in seconding Bulwer by a rigorous sense that things must go precisely the way the Motion implied, and, indeed, there is nothing in the succeeding debate which

indicates the unsettling rebuke against Bulwer with which Hume ends it. Spring Rice, of course, defended the Tax only in so far as it remained financially necessary to the Treasury: he wished to "complain" neither of the debate, conducted in a "calm and temperate mode," nor of the Motion itself or its having presently been introduced; for he was gratified that he might direct himself to a subject upon which he had "been much misrepresented" (845).

Charles Buller (1806-1848), a Radical sitting for Liskeard, compliments Spring Rice: "I am sure if the right hon. Gentleman should obtain any unpopularity, it will not be for the manner in which he has treated this question, though I am sorry he does not go further" (849). Granting he has stated himself unpopularly hitherto, in the present instance, he acknowledges "the justness of the principle" and "has thrown aside all the odious arguments by which these taxes have been supported" in the past (849). Nothing here or elsewhere in what Buller says precludes a reasoned confidence that Spring Rice has for his intention at least the reduction of the Stamp. Buller now turns his attention to two kinds of figures: those concerning the Treasury's needs and those concerning the capacity of the Press to contribute to their being met. First, the Stamp is said to bring from £400,000 to £500,000 for the Treasury, which is running a £200,000 surplus; Repeal would deprive the Revenue of £350,000, while a twopence Duty would mean a loss of only £100,000, which "could easily be made up by a duty on salmon, for example, or any other luxury" (850). Significant here is, of

course, the solicitude Buller expresses for the charge of the Minister to avoid deficiency in the Revenue when he can, but too is significant the implicit readiness of Buller to articulate a range within which he is himself willing to conceive the decision of the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the Tax. Second, the Taxes do not increase circulation as evidenced "in the circulation of *The Penny Magazine* [to which, it will be recalled from above, Spring Rice was himself a party] and other cheap publications" (850). The weekly papers cost sevenpence, but, under the Tax, the dailies cost sevenpence as well; the weeklies have a stated circulation of twenty million a year, while the dailies record only fifteen million, although "the actual readers of the weekly papers are eight times a many as those of the daily papers" (850). A Reduction in the Duty would bring many of those weekly readers to the dailies, with a corresponding increase in the Revenue. Again, the argument is as much in the interests of the Revenue as in the interest for those kept from newspapers by the Stamp. Buller adds that the Revenue is even more greatly afflicted financially by the Unstamped Press, but so too is the public morality. On the one hand, the Reduction or Repeal of the Stamp would permit a law of libel, of which the Unstamped Press, Buller implies, is full; on the other hand, those expected to follow the laws of the country will be given access to knowledge of them when they can afford a responsible Press (850-51). Buller's final appeal is to the Reformed House, but to Spring Rice as well, himself a Reformer: "I congratulate the House ... that the Ministers and the men who

achieved the glorious Reform Act, only wait the fair opportunity to give a fresh impetus to the diffusion of political knowledge and salutary information" (851). Whether the present "fail opportunity" will bring a Duty of twopence or one penny, whether it will occur in a Division on this very night do no seem foremost in the mind of this Member.

Grote also compliments Spring Rice, though perhaps so inflatedly as to carry the tang of sarcasm, but as well claims to repeat the Minister in the comment that a Reduction of the Tax to one penny would incur no loss for the Treasury. Grote is convinced the Paper Duty alone - he does not contemplate salmon - would make up any deficit through increased circulation. Grote points out, if any listener that night failed to notice, that the "liberal tone [Spring Rice] has taken ... [will] tend [only] to increase the objections to [the] tax" (851-52). He points out, finally, that to his mind, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not offered sufficient grounds, even financial, to retain the Tax and expresses "regret [at] the resolution to which he has come" (852). Again, Grote seems to imply that he is resigned that, for the evening in any case, the Tax will remain.

Two Members spoke very briefly: James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855), a Liberal sitting for Sheffield, simply repeated the general financial terms and endorsed a Reduction; perhaps both his remarks and his brevity may have had as their cause the circumstance that his very famous and long-standing claim against the East India Company was to receive some attention in

the next and final debate of the evening (for details of which see Hansard: "Mr. Buckingham's Claim" and the like, *passim* during the Twenties and Thirties and DNB, 3, 202). Robert Wallace (1773-1855), an energetic Reform whig sitting for Greenock, thought the discussion would "give universal satisfaction to the country," though he gave no hint of what he considered to have transpired, suggesting quite out of the blue that newspapers ought to be circulated through a better-managed Post Office, "which would make any defalcation good, but also leave a large sinking fund to meet future expenses" (856). No Member, least of all the hon. Mr. Wallace, calculated that the reduction of defalcations might contribute mightily to the restoration of revenue lost to a reduced Stamp and, likely too, obviate the need for "a large sinking fund," at least for meeting the "future expenses" of defalcations. As irrelevant as his comments seem *prima facie* to have been in the present context, however, this Cato against the Post Office managed by such "repeated applications" to Parliament to get a Royal Commission the next year which led not only to thoroughgoing postal reform, but to the penny postage as well (DNB, 20, 562), a feature which was more than incidentally germane to the point of the debate here under discussion. These contributions of Buckingham and Wallace are good examples of the way in which symbouleutic debate contextualizes itself, that is, by implication and circumstance as much as by topic, a possibility far less available to the dicanic and epideictic rhetorics, where the given, as opposed to the possible, is the point.

Henry Warburton rose to give a speech of some emotional force and mercifully free of a single quantifying remark. "It is notorious," he said, "that without a system of persecution and inquisition, which will no longer be borne, you cannot continue the tax" (853). Conversely, he was "persuaded if a proper duty was placed on newspapers, much less power than the Government has at present would enforce their payment" (854). Most interestingly, he declared himself willing to go along with "whatever the hon. Mover may think right to do.... If he divides, I shall divide with him, and if he thinks proper to defer the question I shall acquiesce in the propriety of the adoption of that course" (854).

The Fourth Speech on the Taxes on Knowledge

Bulwer gave his final speech on the Taxes on Knowledge the evening of the 26th of March, 1855. Some of the procedure and maneuver by which the speech came to be given has been discussed above, and it will suffice to say now that the speech's delivery took place in the course of a debate over an Amendment to a Bill developed on the basis of Resolutions brought by George Cornewall Lewis, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, designed to end the Stamp. Deedes's Amendment, a Reasoned one, was not seriously directed at retaining the Stamp as the Stamp, rather as a means of maintaining existing revenue, but was all the same voted down 215 to 161 (Hansard 3rd, 137, 1164). There is no ground for thinking that Bulwer was, in turn, seriously attacking the Deedes Amendment as one designed to prolong the

Stamp as the Stamp, but was, rather, adding his voice to the many raised during this final effort against the Taxes on Knowledge. And this is what makes this speech particularly interesting, for it is as much summation as argument, as much nostalgic, if that is the word, as it is combative. This is not so much a passionate speech, as a wise one, and one which often moves from its declared subject to remarks or asides upon matters that are contextualized on a more comprehensive level by concerns Bulwer possessed with respect to a number of issues, among them Protection, the Copyright, the nature of the Press in the variety of its manifestations, the Corn Laws, Russia, the War, Conservatism and the like. This is not to say, of course, that the speech is needlessly discursive; Bulwer had a well-earned reputation for the tightness and celerity of his argumentation, and this speech is no exception. Probably it is best to say that the speech is generally characterized by the ambiance of a battle won in a war going badly.

And yet there are real and weighty considerations here that require Bulwer's attention. Deedes's regard is for the fiscal integrity of the Nation as it prosecutes the War. It has been projected - and Deedes has referred to the figure (1115) - that the Exchequer stands to lose £250,000 with Repeal of the Stamp Duties on newspapers, and Deedes, assuming "a fresh tax" will be needed to replace the loss to the Treasury, insists that, "if the country could be polled" on the question, the Stamp would be preferred (1117). Bulwer's response, typical of him in the way of philosophy carried into controversy, is that

the War is waged in defense of that very thing to which the Stamp constitutes an impediment: "Why, then, out of the millions you devote to secure the distant boundaries of civilization, grudge a paltry fraction towards the service of those two great agents of civilisation at home - freedom of opinion and popular knowledge?" (*Speeches*, I, 241 [Hansard 3rd, 137, 1125]). But even as he asks this of Deedes, Bulwer takes pains to declare that war is waged not against Russia "a natural ally" in commerce, not against "Russia as Russia," but "against Russia when she appears as the symbol of barbaric usurpation and brute force" (241 [1125]). It is the mark of his proficiency as a rhetor that, having made these two points - one placing Russia as a natural ally, one placing Russia as an instrumentality of repression - and made them swiftly, a quick sentence each, Bulwer moves the vocabulary of repression back upon the defenders of the Stamp: Russia represses in all things, true, but the Stamp is the greatest of any of the individual repressions. It is worth pausing to look briefly at the logic of progression here, with the implicit aspects surfaced: Britain wages war with Russia, even though Russia is Britain's natural ally in trade, because Russia is by *habit* repressive in all things. You are our colleagues in this House and in the Government, and we deal with each other daily and naturally; how much worse is it when we allow you *knowingly* to repress the one thing most "odious" to do so? "I ask my hon. friend, is there any usurpation more barbarous than that which usurps the utterance of thought upon public affairs?" (241 [1125]).

Bulwer proceeds directly from this question to mock the Attorney General, who is parodied as being caught in a moment of honesty while addressing a hypothetical jury during a case brought against an Unstamped publisher: "This publication is harmless," Bulwer has him say, "nay, its contents are most valuable; but the proprietor was not rich enough to pay a duty imposed on the liberty of printing, and I call upon you, in the name of the law, to stifle the knowledge you admire, and to ruin the man who has a claim to your gratitude" (241 [1125-1126]).

Bulwer begins the speech by complimenting Deedes, who has allowed that the debate upon his Amendment not be restricted to, as Bulwer puts it, "a question of pounds, shillings, and pence" (232-33 [1117]). He refers to this approach as "cramped and narrow ground" (232 [1117]) and to the principle from which he will himself argue as "one of the most important, and, in point of time, one of the most pressing, which a House of Commons can entertain" (233 [1117]). To Deedes's objection that the question had not been as yet long enough before the House that a decision might reasonably be made upon it, whence his Amendment for prolongation, Bulwer points to the fact that the question has been before the House during twenty years and that he was the first Member to raise it. This is rather a neat play on the language, but is hardly without substance, for, despite the relative affordability of the penny that was exacted by the Stamp, there had continued to be significant sentiment against it both in the House and in, at least, the industrial

constituencies. In order to form some grasp of the historical dimension in his listeners, Bulwer affirms that, while he was "a very young man" when he first brought the matter before the House, he has had no reason to alter his opinions with respect to it; these have indeed become strengthened over the intervening period because even the dangers that appeared to lie behind an elimination of the Taxes on Knowledge had profoundly decreased. Indeed, his arguments of that former day have proven true:

> [W]ithin the last twenty years there has been a great increase of intelligence among the people, and any danger to be apprehended from the sudden diffusion of cheap newspapers is, therefore, considerably less now than it was then. But why is the danger less? Why has intelligence increased? Because within the last twenty years all kinds of cheap publications have abounded, and the public have had the wisdom to choose the best and reject the worst. The very arguments now used by my hon. friend against cheap newspapers were once used much more boldly against the principle of cheap publications altogether. We were then told that the common mass of the people would prefer worthless and inflammatory works, and that to adapt the market to their pockets would be to corrupt their understandings. Now what has been the fact? Why, that in proportion as good books have been made cheap, bad books have retreated from circulation. (233 [1118])

This is a powerful argument from the point of view of a Member who must vote on the Stamp, for it is clear that among their justifications public tranquillity is the only one ultimately able to validate the Taxes on Knowledge, granting these Taxes' *effects*, for the *revenue* is no longer much affected, considering their sum in receipt, £200,000 per annum - "paltry," Bulwer calls it - and had been questionably so right along, while the issue has not been *censorship* as such at least since the eighteenth century. "Ask anywhere," Bulwer insists,

"what books most please the artisan or mechanic, and you will find it is either elementary works of science, or if books of amusement, the very books of amusement that scholars and critics themselves prefer" (233 [1118]). While prudence might once have persuaded persons to be wary of the effect on the temper of the working classes of a cheap Press, now, only the proprietors of existing publications are so persuaded - and little more than echoed in the House by defenders of the Stamp. There are certainly details in the Bill which are in need of debate, but not in terms of "the broad principle" (234 [1119]) upon which the Bill is based, a principle which indicates that there is no danger in and much to be gained from Repeal of the Duty. Bulwer at this point goes on to specify some of the details he is content to allow worked through and altered in the Bill, but he is clear on the matter of the broad principle, a kind a notion which recurs regularly in his arguments. He denotes the principle: "in a free country" there can be no tax on "the expression of political opinion [or] on the diffusion of ... information on public affairs" (236). In corollary to this is the prohibition against such a tax's being allowed to become "an artificial necessity for capital ... secure[d by a] monopoly of thought" (236 [1120-1121]; this important quotation is given above in its entirety). Bulwer now offers the consequences of the Stamp as a matter of political reality and economic fact:

> Turn it as you will, you cannot get rid of the fact that as long as this newspaper stamp duty exists, no man, whatever his knowledge, his honesty, his talent, the soundness of his conservative opinions, can set up a daily journal on

> the affairs of the country without an enormous capital - not even a weekly one without a capital of some thousand pounds; and, therefore, the stamp duty does confine the liberty of expressing opinion as much as if the State actually sold for a large sum of money the right to monopolize the market of public information. Now one result of thus narrowing the representation of opinion is, that the large sections of opinion are either not represented at all, or represented very inadequately. And I doubt very much if there are ten thoughtful men on either side of the House who can say that, on many of the most important questions, there is now one daily newspaper with which they cordially agree. (236-37 [1121])

This is a most important point, that few Members could find themselves in heartfelt agreement with a single daily newspaper on many of the important issues of the day. Implicit of course is the notion that in a free society, not only is there a great diversity of opinion and even shades of the same opinion, there is, further, no established ground upon which any individual might place *all* of his or her opinions, so that such a person would find himself or herself always or even greatly in conformity with a specific newspaper. In effect, what Bulwer wants to claim is that without the widest possible range of attitude and sentiment available from a heterogeneous Press, then the great range of attitude and sentiment which exists among people, ever changing as to the society and the individual, will not be matched by a like diversity in the Press. This means, of course, that, in so powerful and influential an instrument of Public Opinion as the Press, few will have their views evinced, with the result that those few who do will attain to a power and influence greatly in excess of their numbers in the society or their views' intrinsic merits.

At this point, Bulwer enters into an analysis of the numerical relationship between Conservative opinion, Conservative representation and Conservative presence in the Press. The Conservatives - "the great Conservative party," (237 [1121]) he calls it - is by far the majority in the counties and an important minority in the towns, even in those "most hostile;" beyond numbers, a great many of "the highly cultivated classes - in the learned professions, in commerce, among the gentry - entertain Conservative opinions" (237 [1121]). With "two ways [only] of representing public opinion - one through Parliament, the other through the press," the Conservatives are "the largest single and integral body in the House of Commons" (237 [1121]). But are they represented in the Press?

> Why, no single subdivision of political opinion is represented so sparingly. Compute the number of Conservative journals, compute the number of copies they sell, at the price you are told to keep up, and you will be perfectly astounded at the disparity between the influence of the Conservative party in the country and their representation in the press. (237 [1121-1122])

This imbalance would be leveled significantly, of course, in the next decade with the official founding under Gladstone's influence of the Liberal Party, the first genuinely modern political party in Britain, and Disraeli's very successful efforts to counter .it with a disciplined and modern Conservative effort. Be that as it may, having made his moderately evocative case with respect to opinion, Bulwer offers the rather more suggestive and universally appealing point that

> if the stamp duty were removed - if every able man among you had the right to defend your cause in the form of a journal without this necessity of capital - can you doubt that all which talent or knowledge can bring to bear on behalf of your political creed would find its fair and natural channel? (237 [1122])

This declaration is not unqualifiedly made, for it is clear that the newspapers with the greatest available capital will certainly always be those which best render the news, but "the best opinions are not always found in the best newspapers," and readers will take one for the general news and another "on account of their sympathy with its political doctrines" (237 [1122]). This will mean, naturally enough, that opinions with which one disagrees will proliferate, but this too will produce beneficial phenomena of its own: one will expect "on the Liberal side of the question safe and sound thinkers would hold it an imperative duty to stand forward and counteract the danger of all socialist and revolutionary doctrines" (237 [1122]), while Conservatives will seek to penetrate the working class where "there is at this moment [not] a single Conservative journal" (238 [1122]). Further, Bulwer is persuaded that, once the Stamp is removed, "many an eminent public man, many an eminent man of letters, would start small cheap papers, not attempting to vie or interfere with the special province of 'The Times,' but conveying opinions stamped by the responsibility of his avowed name" (238 [1122]).

Another advantage to the introduction of cheap competition would be the challenge it would give the anonymity system, which has troubled Bulwer since *England and the English*: "If the political writer ordinarily affixed his name

to his lucubration, he would be brought under the wholesome influence of the same public opinion that he affects to influence or to reflect" (II, 17). The effects of this system he epitomizes in its secrecy and its unaccountability:

> [I]t is in vain to deny that we feel a certain uneasiness in the social intercourse with men to the exercise of whose talents secrecy is so imperative a law that the man who clasps us by the hand to-day may, in the discharge of his professional duty, sting us to the quick to-morrow, darkly and in secret. Mr. Fox once told the House an anecdote of a witness - on trial, I think, for murder - who gave his testimony against another man on the ground that a ghost had appeared to him and said so and so. "Well," said the judge, who was a person of considerable humour, "I have no objection to take the evidence of the ghost; let him be brought into court." These anonymous newspaper-writers are as ghosts. We do not object to take their evidence, but there are times when I should like them brought into court. (*Speeches*, I, 238-39 [Hansard 3rd, 137, 1123].)

Competition would force the anonymous writers out into the open. Competition would also work against the present monopoly circumstance in which the existing great newspapers are able to operate. Naturally, the great papers fight Repeal; as monopolies, why would they not? Still, Bulwer is "perfectly amazed" that

> these journals, most of which honoured us poor Protectionists with such hard times, [are] now arming themselves with all the antiquated arguments in favour of protective duties ... which during the last ten years of the discussion on the corn laws the stoutest friend of the farmer would not have ventured to use. (239 [1123].)

He reiterates many of the major points of previous speeches on the Taxes on Knowledge and ends with a kind of contrapuntal movement between the demise of Addison and Steele's *Spectator* following the introduction of the Stamp and the inaccessiblity of the working classes to the Conservatives, whose publications its members cannot afford to purchase. The reciprocal movement

between these two circumstances is not as arbitrary as might appear: the Stamp has killed a possibility of great literature at the same time as it prevents its availability to that segment of society for which it carries the greatest advantages. Bulwer ends by suggesting, perhaps without undue optimism, that, "as we widen the field of literature, we raise up new champions for ourselves, and best counteract the poison to which a worthless law now forbids the antidote" (245 [1129]).

# Chapter Four

# Protection

## Introduction

During the period of his representation of Hertfordshire, Bulwer gave several speeches and wrote frequently on matters which concerned taxation and its impact upon the economy. These speeches were delivered almost entirely within the context of Protection, and, when the point of any speech was not Protection and its converse, Free Trade, considerations of both were nevertheless invariably raised. Bulwer supported Protection and opposed Free Trade, at least in so far as the latter laid Britain's markets, domestic or Imperial, open to unhampered incursions of Protected trading partners. Free Traders more often than not rely for argument upon what they see as the self-evident verities that trade works best when left alone by all but the traders and that this self-evidence itself emanates from a kind of law of nature which insures that Free Trade's sincere practice alone will suffice as compelling proof of its rightness and efficacy. Ignoring the *principio petitii* scarcely obscured beneath the religious constancy of the Free Trader's argument, Bulwer, no less than the Free Traders. had surprisingly little difficulty with the abstract notion that

Free Trade was the ideal, or so he repeatedly professed, but - always one who thought first about human proclivity and the lessons of history - found blind faith in unilateral action, not to say in its potency as an example, psychologically naive and economically suicidal. The concrete nexus of Bulwer's endeavors in defense of Protection was commonly the Malt Duty, which impacted greatly upon the raisers of grain, specifically barley, in each of the constituencies from which he was returned and elsewhere in agricultural Britain as well; however, Bulwer's Protectionist views began to emerge with strength when he'd sat for Lincoln City, which, despite its size and its not insignificant contribution to the industrialization of the Nation, all the same remained a farmers' market town, controlled politically by the gentry, who were in turn massively supported by their tenured farmers, what yeomanry had the vote and, of course, the merchants in the town, who were dependent on them all. But in Lincoln, Bulwer had been an assigned whig; in Hertford County, he was now a tory and his own man. In addition to the speeches, there was a very important pamphlet, *Letters To John Bull, Esq.* (in *Pamphlets and Sketches* pp. 76-174), which Bulwer published in 1851, partly in response to a decision arrived at between himself and Disraeli that a full articulation of the Protectionist position needed presenting by a person whom the Public would afford its attention and partly as a reintroduction of himself into the public arena at the end of the politically idle, but hardly a somnolent, decade since his "retirement" from Parliament after

defeat in Lincoln City. With respect to the speeches themselves, his maiden speech for Hertfordshire, *In House of Commons, 10th December 1852,* was not intended upon a Bill, but was given as the consequence of a Motion that "Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" [that is, that a Committee of the Whole House be formed under the Chairman of Ways and Means so that a debate on Supply might take place, a circumstance which also emerged in the previous Chapter], whence its nonreferential title. A speech was delivered on *The Income Tax* the 25th of April, 1853; one was given on *The Excise Duties* the 15th of May, 1854; finally, one was delivered eleven years later, on the 7th of March, 1865, on *The Malt Duties.* In addition, Bulwer gave a speech to the Hertford Agricultural Society in October of 1862 which bore in part directly upon the questions of agricultural taxation and Protection.

Even in the period of his political life during which he devoted himself to the cause of Reform, Bulwer had been a Protectionist of particularly strong sentiment (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 106); as the debate on Free Trade developed during the Thirties and Forties, he came to abhor John Bright (1811-1888), Richard Cobden (1804-1865) and the Anti-Corn Law League, was happy that Charles Villiers's (1802-1898) annual Free Trade Resolutions in Parliament were just as annually voted down and was as resentful as any of them of what was universally perceived by Protectionists to be Peel's "betrayal" in the 1846 Repeal of the Corn Laws. It was this new politics of Peel's more than any other single aspect of the contemporary political

context that drew Bulwer to expand his literary friendship with Disraeli into a colleagueship in ideology. Tory Democracy, Disraeli's proffered alternative to the cold, bureaucratic, pragmatic approach of Peel, attracted a Bulwer whose inclination to a romanticizing of "the other classes," the worker, the person on the land, the outcast, had already been demonstrated both in his writing and in his politics. Reflecting on the implications of Revolution, he wrote to Forster in 1848, bombastically, but with a clear depth of concern, that

> [a] Republic is cheap, but if ever that hour arrives it shall not be, if I and a few like me live, a Republic of millers and cotton spinners, but either a Republic of gentlemen or a Republic of workmen - either is better than those wretched money spiders, who would sell England for 1s. 6d. (Lytton II 161.)

Bulwer, then, identified himself with the views of the landed Interest not so much out of any particular profit which might accrue to him as a landowner - that is, as master of Knebworth, the estate he had inherited from his mother at her death in December of 1843 - nor as the proponent of an entrenched ideological perspective - for his opinions remained in many respects Radical - but as one concerned that the rising power of the middle classes would shunt aside the values of the higher classes even as it trammeled the potential of the lower; there was, in his view, common cause to be made between Conservatives and workingmen, a view epitomized in Disraeli's Tory-Democratic message. And Bulwer's affection for strata-leaping solutions to social and political problems was not entirely in contradiction to his partiality for the Philosophical-Radical

conception of things, at least implicitly: while Bentham, for example, moved in focus from a supremacy residing in the legislator to one residing in the People, "[h]is whole strategy depended ... on the existence of a sovereign authority which was committed to the promotion of the greatest happiness, and which could therefore be safely entrusted with unlimited power" (Dinwiddy 107). For Bulwer, only educated gentlemen of whatever means or noble heritage could be counted upon to protect the working people from the "money spiders" of the middle classes. And while this may strike some readers today as perhaps even a little bizarre, there is not much generically to distinguish it from the Englishman's age-old notion of an alliance between the Crown and the common people against the forces of disorder, the menace of invasion and, from time to time, the ambitions of the great lords, a covenant which, among other things, gave birth to a compulsorily armed populace whose eventual right to weaponry came to be embodied in the Constitution of the United States of America (Malcolm 1-11, 115-121, 135-37 and passim).

The most general possible statement by Free Traders of the relative implications of Protection and Free Trade usually submits that, while Protection has its benefits, Free Trade must be presumed to have greater; what the Free Trader wishes above all is to instill a degree of doubt about Protection, even when its advantages are clear for all to see. The Classical utterance in this respect - from the perspectives of both content and form - comes from Adam Smith himself:

> That [a] monopoly of the home-market frequently gives great encouragement to that particular species of industry which enjoys it, and frequently turns towards that employment a greater share of both labour and stock of the society than would otherwise have gone to it, cannot be doubted. But whether it tends either to increase the general industry of the society, or to give it the most advantageous direction, is not, perhaps, altogether so evident. (420-21.)

Ricardo, always for Free Trade, and Malthus, only occasionally questioning it, had things to say in the matter, if not in every word cogent, at least compelling, and others, mostly following these Classical Economists - among them the politicians Huskisson, Cobden, Bright, Russell and, finally, Peel and the writers Thomas Tooke, McCulloch, Torrens, Nassau Senior and the Mills - added sometimes to the debate, sometimes to the theory. In practical terms, however, much of the discussion found its specificity in the Corn Laws. The general tendency of the landed Interest to manipulate by economic or political means the price of agricultural commodities had been under attack for some time before the turn of the nineteenth century; nevertheless, in 1804 the landowners, who controlled the lower House, passed a Corn Law which became the first unambiguous effort "by a parliament of landlords to legislate purely in their own interest as the owners of arable soil" (Woodward 58). The French War and bad harvests had permitted high prices the preceding decade, and the owners and their tenants intended to maintain them. And the second stage of the French War - that against Napoleon, which brought the Continental System of the years 1806 through 1813, by which the Emperor sought to destroy Britain in denying it trade with the rest of Europe - as well as

further bad harvests kept the price of grain far above the figure at which the tariff would kick in. With the defeat of the French and good harvests, however, the price of corn fell sharply, and a Committee in the Commons concluded in 1814 that "the average price for an equitable return [upon corn] was about 80*s*. a quarter" (58). There was a good deal of discussion out of doors on the Committee's appraisal and not a little agitation, and this insinuated itself back into the upper House, where some of the Lords registered their protest against the Committee's conclusions in their *Journal*, among them, significantly, the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester, a son and a nephew, respectively, of George the Third, and the Lords Grenville and Wellesley, the one the All-the-Talents Prime Minister, the other the elder brother of Wellington, in which they referred to the other House as "almost wholly uninformed" with respect to the "particulars" which underlay the Bill (McCord 1970 46, 48). Nevertheless, there was no trouble in getting it passed. In 1822, a sliding scale was introduced, supported by the agricultural Interests because in theory its overall effect was a supposed increase in the tariff, but delighting the Free Traders because it provided them with a mechanism by which they might eventually maneuver the tariff down and perhaps out. In 1828 the scale was lowered at both ends in an attempt to overcome manipulation in the market; Protectionists saw in this more Protection, while Free Traders indirectly achieved some decrease in prices via the discipline the new legislation imposed upon speculating middlemen. But, in reality, no one was

satisfied: Protectionists retrenched, concentrating on the Malt Duty, which they viscerally despised, and Free Traders organized the Anti-Corn Law League. In 1842, Peel - returned to office for his second premiership - squeezed through a Bill which again amended the sliding scale and was even more overtly in favor of Free Trade. With Sir James Graham and the Earl of Aberdeen in the Cabinet and Gladstone and Sidney Herbert soon to be - every one of them solid for Free Trade - all that was needed was pressure enough from the League and an occasion; this last was provided by the blight on potatoes, which, there being no other food in quantity in Ireland, even many English recognized the Irish could not live without. Since the famine made unimpeded grain the only solution, in February, 1846, Peel, dooming himself politically in the process, initiated legislation which effected the *de facto*, if not the *de jure*, destruction of the Corn Laws; this action on Peel's part insured Lord John Russell's premiership in July - ironically, for Lord John had himself often and with a characteristically consistent absence of success introduced Bills and Amendments against Corn.

Yet it was not so much Bills and Amendments, as it was the arguments they represented which were important in all of this, for it was within the terms of the, on the whole, not greatly significant legislative sequence just outlined here that the principles and methodologies in the debate between Free Trade and Protection began to find their most contemporary articulation, at least vis-à-vis one another, as independent

theoretical approaches to economic activity. It is, first of all, important to note how the rubric of 80*s*. a quarter is the tack upon which the debate is hung; its specificity is central to the nature of the exchange in which Bulwer and his contemporaries were engaged during the half century argument over Corn:

> The arguments of Malthus and Ricardo represent the most balanced statements of the case for and against protection. The evidence laid before the committee [of 1814] convinced Malthus that 80*s*. was a fair price; he thought it dangerous to depend upon foreign corn, since the supply might be cut off by legislation in foreign countries at times of scarcity. On the other hand, if foreign corn were admitted at a price below 80*s*. farmers would not be able to pay their way, labourers would have their wages lowered, and manufacturers would suffer from a fall in the purchasing-power of landlords and farmers. Ricardo wanted free trade in corn in order that Great Britain might use her wealth and population to the greatest advantage. There was no risk of a sudden closing of the supply, since no foreign country could resist the pressure of those who lived by meeting the British demand. (Woodward 58-59.)

There was no prominent British theoretician of Protection, at least none of the stature of the Free Traders Smith, Ricardo, Malthus or the Mills, in Bulwer's day, and this shows in Bulwer's penchant for employing such authors as he quotes or cites against themselves. But the greatest Protectionist theoretician of all, the German-American Friedrich List, had begun publishing at the time, with his great work, *The National System of Political Economy*, appearing in German in 1841; there was a growing, general awareness of his writing at the time, if not always an access to it. It is worth quoting him, as will be done in a moment, in two respects, for his statements and analyses do not have the *ad hoc* character

which, unfortunately, characterized much of the Protectionist argument, including Bulwer's. It is important to note as well that no writer, barring those at the very extremes, indicated a preference for absolutely Free Trade or absolute Protection, and neither Bulwer nor List was an exception in this. As can be seen in Woodward's description of the debate between Malthus, who was himself fundamentally a Free Trader, and Ricardo, Free Trade's cardinal theoretician, the question was very much one of degree. This becomes even more visible in List's comments, which have the virtue of historical perspective, where those of the Classical school might not always manifest this. There is a synchronistic streak among economists following Smith, which is hidden beneath their *use of*, rather than *response to*, history, and it is most noticeable in their penchant for rendering sweeping laws, not to say their yearning to couch these in mathematical terms. But for List, history told tales as much as yielded data, a circumstance of central moment for him. And this too is a feature of history central to economic issues for Bulwer as well, who - denied compelling theoretical abstraction, either through Classical co-option or, it must be said, more often than not his own refusal to construct it - was frequently of a mind to fall back on historical description, which, in lacking conceptual force, rarely attained analytical depth. But this is in no way to deny its ground of cogency, for this was funded by events and evidenced in fact; it historicity was born of experience, not constructed by theory. Bulwer's approach to this question was, as was his approach to most

questions, fundamentally personal and in conscious opposition to the impersonal postulation of his adversaries.

Still, as we shall see, a theoretical disposition all the same lay implicit beneath much of what Bulwer said even when he was not himself able or willing to make it clear. Further, because of what they discovered in this constant falling back on historical interpretation - *not* despite it - Protectionists, including Bulwer, received theoretical dispositions, including their own, with skepticism. Bulwer time and again scorned what he referred to as "speculation" and was strongly inclined to put the *experience* of history before any more general or abstract statements which might be made about it. While we do not find this stout a suspicion of theory in List, there is an unmistakable hesitance on his part to depend too thoroughly upon it and, in the following statement, probably his most defined contextualization of Protection, we find a sly dig at the Free Traders who do:

> [H]istory shows that restrictions are not so much the inventions of mere speculative minds, as the natural consequences of the diversity of interest, and of the strivings of nations after independence or overpowering ascendency, and thus of national emulation and wars, and therefore that they cannot be dispensed with until this conflict of national interests shall cease, in other words until all nations can be united under one and the same system of law. Thus the question as to whether, and how, the various nations can be brought into one united federation, and how the decisions of law can be invoked in the place of military force to determine the differences which arise between independent nations, has to be solved concurrently with the question how universal free trade can be established in the place of separate national commercial systems. (List 92.)

In his treatment of the British Corn Laws, List is no less historical and concrete; his argument is causal and specific:

On the basis of pure and present self-interest, the "English landed aristocracy," seeking to maintain high rents, that is, which they could charge tenants who were, in turn, receiving high prices for corn, "compelled the nations of the Continent to seek to promote their own welfare by another method than by the free exchange of agricultural produce for English manufactures, viz. by the method of establishing a manufacturing power of their own" (298). List then renders a masterly comparison: "The English restrictive laws thus operated quite in the same way as Napoleon's Continental system had done, only their operation was somewhat slower" (298). One would expect this to be a Free Trader's example and analogy, but it is not, for the point of List's national system is the Nation, not the Interest. The very historicity of the argument allows the *apparent* theoretical contradiction, but there *is* no contradiction, for with List there is a theory, but it is not of Protection, but of national development and its economic means. And this is the theory which is implicit in Bulwer's arguments, even when he is explicitly antitheoretical, that is, scornful of "speculative" approaches.

In Bulwer's case, the theoretical understanding can be inferred from two very different contexts. First of all, while one can take *England and the English* as early social anthropology or political sociology and thus, say, in its resemblance to de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, in a line with developments in social science later in the century, it can equally be taken as a quasi-philosophical analysis and defense

of the British Nation as the consequence of organic development, even as de Tocqueville's work can be taken as quasi-philosophical analysis and critique of democracy as innately unstable. And this is consistent with a recognition of *England and the English*'s intensely diachronic manner, both in its sense of *history* as simultaneously existential and normative and in its acknowledgement of the inherence of *change* in the life of the Nation. These, in turn, are consistent with an understanding of history as instructive - not in the Hegelian sense of a recognition of its generative functions, but in the Burkean sense of an acknowledgment of its fragile continuities.

The second context from which Bulwer's theoretical disposition can be inferred is his relationship to Disraeli, particularly with respect to Tory Democracy. Lord Lytton characterizes this aspect of their relationship as follows:

> Their protectionist opinions were by no means the only bond of sympathy between them. Both were men of strong imagination, which in each of them produced high notions of national honour and marked imperial instincts. To both the insular prejudices of the Cobdenite school were equally repugnant, and to both the prospect of uniting the country gentlemen and the artisans of the great industrial towns in a common attack upon the middle class manufactures, and the exclusive Whig aristocracy who now composed the Liberal party, was equally attractive. Both were imperialists and reformers at heart; and the Tory Democracy created by Disraeli was just such a policy as his friend could conscientiously support. (II 162-163.)

This in large measure enables an explanation of why so much of Bulwer's Protectionist rhetoric was offered *after* the unavoidable destruction of the Corn Laws became an accomplished fact: simply, he was not defending the Corn Laws *qua* Corn Laws.

What he was doing, as will be shown, was expressly refusing to defend or decry any specific incarnation of the law whatever, but, rather, urging a perspective which would account for the larger needs of the Nation, and this general refusal, in turn, contextualized the corollary endeavor on his part of urging a greater fairness in the Government's treatment of specific segments of the Nation, for instance, that segment affected by the *retained* duties on malt, duties which were supposed to have been relinquished in exchange for and abandonment of the Corn Laws.

And this leads to a consideration of the National question itself. Bulwer notes in *Letters To John Bull, Esq.* that John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864), discussing "agricultural improvement" over the preceding three-quarters of a century, calls it "extremely rapid" until the post-war years and after 1825 "rapid beyond all former precedent." Bulwer then further quotes McCulloch as saying that, in

> [e]stimating the increase of population in Great Britain since 1770 at eight millions, and taking the average annual expenditure of each individual on agricultural produce at £8, it will be seen that the immense sum of sixty-four millions a-year has been added to the value of the agricultural produce of Great Britain since 1770. (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 139n.)

Bulwer's addendum: "And it is the class that, in less than a century, enriched the nation by sixty-four millions a-year, which is to be represented as possessing an interest adverse to the community" (139n). It never ceased to amaze Bulwer that, given the contribution the Agriculturalists had made, they were to be simply sacrificed upon the altar of another *Interest*,

whose contribution, while no greater in absolute terms than that of the landed, at least when calculated as it had been by McCulloch and other honest statisticians - there were, as will be mentioned briefly later, those of another ilk - was far more evenly distributed within the "community." Still, if one were to calculate purely in terms of explicit monetary capital, where, after all, was this capital found to have been derived? It was to be derived from the working classes! But to them it is not returned. Bulwer acknowledges that manufacturing is coming greatly to exceed agriculture by such a measure, that "the old proportions of property are altered, that the manufacturing wealth increases in a ratio far beyond that of the agricultural; and yet," he continues

> this increasing wealth escapes comparatively free from the support of the very population that it forces to produce it! It takes the sinews of the human being, from childhood to decay, and then throws the human machine, when it breaks under its use, upon the alms of that very property to which that human machine has yielded no return, and towards the war against which it has been used as an instrument. Glance [Bulwer demands] at this instance from the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Lords (on the Burdens on Land). A farmer was examined, and speaks thus: - "The poor-rates on Mr. Heathcoat's factory, in this parish, have averaged £41 0*s.* 9*d.* a-year, for the last seven years; on the farm occupied by myself, £58 2*s.* So that I have paid £17 1*s.* 3*d.* a year more than Mr. Heathcoat. My rental [sic] is £300 a-year, and the profits you can imagine; Mr. Heathcoat's profits are reputed to be £40,000 a-year["] (121).

When Heathcoat is forced to lay off workers, Bulwer continues, *he* is not forced to care for them, but the *parish*: "The farmer maintains not only the paupers for whom the land has no labour, but those whom the factory flings back upon the land" (121).

In a sense, Bulwer's approach is what might be called

literary, that is to say, narrative, sequential, diachronic or the like, while that of the Free Traders, the Classical Economists, the Manchester persuasion and so on is, or rather is self-purported to be, scientific, that is to say, definitional, simultaneous, synchronic or the like. While this gives Bulwer's procedure an *ad hoc* character, it also gives it the benefit of clearly contextualizable historical moments, which can be integrated causally and are available to comparison, analogy, even metaphor. All the Free Traders had was certainty and "scientific" law. For Bulwer - and List - these were narrow and dubious means by which to make argument: better what *had* happened in evidence than what *would* happen! And while it is true that there was much put on either side of the controversy that appeared to have been said in a search for common ground - although rarely by those of the Manchester persuasion - like as not it was more a search for historical validity on the part of the Protectionists and a search for converts on the part of the Free Traders that prompted such reasonableness when it occurred. This is not to say that there was no attempt at inductive reasoning on the part of the Free Traders. But this kind of generalizing, found even in important statisticians such as McCulloch, is more often than not the rule:

> Holland and the United States have been almost the only countries that have enjoyed the same degree of internal freedom as Great Britain; and the former, notwithstanding the unfavourable physical circumstances under which she is placed, has long been, and still is, the richest country in Europe; while the later, whose condition is in other respects more favorable, is advancing with giant steps in the career of improvement (McCulloch, II, 36).

On the other hand, the Free Traders from time to time did not

find it beneath themselves to skew their own statistics, to "cook the books," as we might say today. The notorious example is that of the Select Committee on Import Duties (1840), a creature of the Radical Member Joseph Hume (1777-1855), the Report of which had been fabricated by some of the leading government statisticians of the day, all then gathered at the Board of Trade, which they had turned into a kind of general HQ for their war on Protection; these were James Deacon Hume, John MacGregor and George Richardson Porter, the last Ricardo's brother-in-law, and all have won honored entries in the *DNB* and the *EB* 9th and 11th eds., not one source of which mentions this reprehensible activity. These are, further, all men highly under the influence of Bentham, a circumstance which makes their behavior doubly ironic, for the Philosophical Radicals wished, in following the example of their patron saint, to appear always to value facts - the existing situation - to eschew the "metaphysical," to shun what was subtle, artful and feigned. As Crane Brinton put it in describing their founder, "[Bentham] was no man to content himself with the mere enunciation of a principle. No man loved more the infinite world of fact" (18). This might have been altogether to the good, for when principles must be involved, these men did not always do well. But even in their use of fact, there was a tendency about them toward abstraction, rather than employment, wherein the mere language of objectivity came to be substituted for real analysis of the actual, a process which requires the utilization of concepts as tools or instruments in

the performance of the analytic task. One catches a sense of this in the schoolroom scene which initiates Dickens' *Hard Times*. The great liberal or forward-thinking dilemma is forever how a theory that seems to work well enough in the mind can be made to work equally well in life. A conservative mentality such as Bulwer's - in part because it is satisfied with ideas which have already proved their real-world competence, however narrowly or anciently - may far more comfortably argue from examples, that is, from history, when the question arises whether something will work. That which *has* worked, though inadequately or with insufficient generality, is a powerful argument for its continued working, especially when "improvement" or negotiability are shown of it as a possibility.

Further, there is the centrally rhetorical question of the nature or mode of evidence itself. Clearly, Bulwer's opponents were constrained to offer what we and they would call *empirical* evidence, but this is not the only manner of evidence or - to use the language of argumentation - "support" available when one wishes to make a case for something which one maintains and wishes others to maintain as well; one has also available *testimonial* evidence. As Aristotle would have it, one may argue rather from probable than certain premises, employing an enthymeme, that is, a rhetorical syllogism; likewise, one may argue from examples, employing rhetorical induction. These rhetorical modes show matters in human, that is, in contrast to scientific, terms, and it is in this manner that Bulwer often

argues. That it is imperative that this distinction between Bulwer's rhetoric and that of the Free Traders against whom he wrote and spoke be made fully clear can be seen in the following: Bulwer's own grandson and, thus far, his only significant biographer says in his biography of Bulwer that he will deal solely with the first of the three letters in his discussion of *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, because, while the first letter contains a general discussion of Protection, the second and third are merely specific defenses of the agricultural Interest; Bulwer's argument is thereby "an easy one," for any specific industry will admit of many reasons for its own protection (II 65). While the fact is true, the turn Lord Lytton gives to it - following Adam Smith, wittingly or no, both in form and content - is not altogether insightful, for the fact is that one industry can be unequivocally defended only in the absence of defenses of the needs of other industries. Further, the needs of industries are not the same as the needs of people or, indeed, of nations. Bulwer does not ignore these considerations, as we shall see, and in his willingness to take on the question in rhetorically unflinching comprehensiveness - even where his argument fails, and it does from time to time fail - his rhetoric becomes him and evinces little of the single-minded self-interest of which the groups for which he stood have been conventionally accused. Lord Lytton charges him with committing the "fallacy" in the second and third letters of identifying "the interest of the food producer with that of the food consumer." This may be his reading. But it

appears to me, at least, that Bulwer wished to identify the needs of both with the needs of the Nation, in which he *as well* included the needs of the factory Interest.

The question for Bulwer was a question of equitableness, not one of the superlegitimacy of one Interest over another. Lord Lytton rightly says that "it is not sufficient for a full statement of the problem that the case of the producer alone should be established" (II 165). As it happens, a good deal more of the cases for the other Interests *is* established, *especially* that of the consumer, on whose behalf Bulwer time after time argues. But, be that as it may, the argument is not in the first place against the consumer, but against another kind of producer, whose context within the Nation has been made privileged vis-à-vis all other Interests, not to say all other producers, and whose advantage in the community is claimed to be identical with the advantage of the Nation in the world. And this Interest's case had been made so often that it must have been taken in with every breath during the decades of the Thirties and Forties. Bulwer considers its argument specious and seeks to show through the faulty empirical presentations of his opponents and the persuasive testimony of those he wishes to defend that remedies exist which will, if satisfying none, at least assuage the affliction of the genuinely aggrieved, while bringing the privileged into no danger of impairment that the Nation which receives their contribution could not reasonably bear.

*Letters to John Bull, Esq.*

Bulwer's *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, published in 1851 as a pamphlet, asserts as its central claim that a dispute has arisen between town and country within the context of the larger English circumstance, a "domestic dilemma," (76) which Bulwer exposes in the opening "metaphor" (77), really an apostrophe and apology to John Bull, the nation personified, if not deified:

> For this domestic dilemma of yours, so wounding to your pride and destructive to your peace, no doubt there are many causes; but I suspect that the one most serious is this - you have allowed your town servants to regulate all your country affairs, and they know just as much about them as - common sense might have told you! (76-77.)

The problem, then, for John Bull, "the head of a family" in this metaphor upon a metaphor, is "how to give content to the one side, without making the servants' hall too hot to contain the other" (77). The context, then, for Bulwer, and one, from his point of view, grave and important, is that of a family, living both in town and in the country, as did Bulwer's own family, whose servants, that is, the politicians, have gotten the family into difficulties as the result of the family's having allowed the "town servants" to prevail in matters purely from these servants' own perspective, thus bringing about a general crisis for the family as a whole. These

> have thus got the poor land, on which, sooner or later, you [John Bull, the personified head of the Nation-Family] are doomed to fall back for the expenses of housekeeping, into such a deuce of a mess, that I don't wonder they [the town servants, the present whig-*cum*-Peelite Ministry of Lord John Russell] are willing to shift to others [the tories under Derby] the task of hearing the complaint, and contriving the remedy; while those who might otherwise be disposed to succeed, have the wit to perceive that it will

> be no easy matter to undo what is done, to restore what is - undone. (77.)

Bulwer perseveres in these metaphors throughout the pamphlet, although his explicit apostrophes to John Bull dwindle as time goes on.

Bulwer heavily employs the work of John Ramsay McCulloch, a Scottish economist and statistician, whom he calls a "commercial historian" (84). McCulloch (1789-1864) was comptroller of the stationery office from 1838 to 1864 and was the author of several works in economics which "remain imposing monuments of his extensive and varied knowledge and his indefatigable industry" (*EB*, XVII, 209). He wrote regularly for the *Edinburgh Review* and "always remained a Whig pure and simple; though he was in intimate relations with James Mill and his circle, he never shared the Radical opinions of that group" (209). Intellectually, McCulloch was, without mistake, a great power in his day. Bulwer, in insisting upon using this economist's work, was, as was his inclination, very much taking the dragon by the teeth, for McCulloch, in addition to being splendidly adept at facts and figures - what were then generically called, as Bulwer calls them, "statistics" - was as well a writer quite able to rise to eloquence in the philosophical defense of any position he maintained. And about free trade he was adamant; in the *Statistical Account* (vol II, pp 36-37), he acknowledges that

> it is sometimes said, that restrictions on industry and commerce cannot be so injurious as has been represented, seeing the progress we have made notwithstanding they have always existed amongst us. The previous details show the weight to be attached to this allegation. The

> restrictions referred to have been confined to some branches of foreign trade: and, luckily, the freedom allowed to all sorts of industry at home would have insured our advance though the fetters laid on foreign trade had been a good deal more oppressive than they actually have been. But to imagine, as many have done, that these restrictions contributed to accelerate our progress, is the climax of absurdity. Their influence had, in every case, been distinctly and completely the reverse; but, though considerable, it has been insufficient to contervail the advantages resulting from the freedom we otherwise enjoyed. (Quoted in McCord, 59-60.)

McCulloch based his position on a number of circumstances, distinguishing, for example, between Germany, France and Spain, on the one hand, in which not only foreign commerce was restrained, but "the miserable system" of "peculiar privileges, ... separate codes of revenue laws ... [and] the most oppressive restrictions" prevailed even internally among the provinces, and, on the other hand, Great Britain, Holland and the United States, in which complete freedom of trade existed. While those living in the German, French and Spanish provinces, "being in a great measure isolated from [each other, experienced] comparatively little competition and, instead of invention and active exertion, ... nothing but routine and sluggish indifference," the inhabitants of Holland, England and the United States, despite less favorable circumstances "advanc[ed] with giant steps in the career of improvement" (59). But this false synecdoche of McCulloch's showed itself transparently enough in the circumstances under which the blockage of trade between units *within a nation* are erased when contrasted with the bringing down of barriers *between nations*. That which hinders Free Trade within a nation may readily be altered as the result of the control or the coercion of the

State, while between nations, Bulwer points out, "Free Trade, ... in the proper acceptance of the term, by all the laws of grammar and common sense, requires two parties to the compact - the native and the foreigner" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 99). But this political consideration is in actuality subsumed by the larger economic condition:

> A State can adopt no dogma for universal application, whether of Protection or Free Trade. In those branches in which it produces more or better supplies at less cost, it must naturally court Free Trade; in those branches where its produce is less or its cost greater than that of its neighbours, it must either consent to the certain injury, the possible ruin, of that department of industry, or it must place it under Protection. (98-99.)

Now, this circumstance in turn gives birth to its own political context:

> Free Trade, could it be universally reciprocal, would therefore benefit Manchester *versus* Germany, and injure Lincolnshire *versus* Poland. The English cotton manufacturer thoroughly understands this when he says, with Mr. Cobden, "Let us have Free Trade, and we will beat the world!" But the world does not want to be beaten! Prussia, France, and even America, prefer "stupid selfishness" and protected manufactures to enlightened principles and English competition. (99.)

The fact of the matter is, as Bulwer saw clearly and insisted eloquently, Free Trade is a matter of agreement between States - in which the entire Nation must consent, for some part of it will invariably be injured when the Tariff is abandoned - while Protection is a matter of national choice resulting from the decision to shield some sectors or industries, but at no inherent cost to any of the others. Bulwer points out two fundamental considerations:

> Reciprocity may be good; but I allow that it is not essential. Wherever it is for our interest to open our markets, it would be idle to wait till the foreigner,

> against his idea of his interests, opened his own. All that I would observe is, that such one-sided liberality may be judicious and politic, but it has no right to the appellation of Free Trade. (99.)

On the one hand, one *can* make money abroad by bringing down tariffs on commodities with which one can compete, but, on the other hand, one will make only friends and only abroad in bringing down tariffs on those items with which one *cannot* compete. Since this is the case, why, then, would one want to bring down tariffs on that with which one *cannot* compete? Kenneth Fielden points out, for instance, that

> [w]ithin Germany Free Trade pressure came from agriculture, still exporting, especially in the east, from merchants and overseas traders. Protectionism attracted the newer industries of the Prussian Rhineland, Silesia and the southern states, especially cotton, iron and steel, though not unanimously. (in Bartlett 88.)

This was a circumstance quite the converse in every specific from the one Bulwer wished to point to in Britain - and one demonstrating fundamentally that Free Trade and Protection were not the absolutes the Free Traders, especially those of the Cobdenite persuasion, liked to think of them as, for Germany, historically observed, was employing Protection, where it was useful, to catch up, while Britain was employing Free Trade, where it was useful, to stay ahead. Bulwer points out that, indeed, George Richardson Porter, an important Free Trade economist, acknowledges that cotton in Germany would fail, just as silk in the eighteenth-century in England would have failed, with no Protection (98).

The implication of this discussion of Free Traders, Bulwer is anxious that his reader note, is that "Free Trade at present

means [only] the free importation of foreign corn" (99); that is, in manufactures, British competition is sufficient to bar trade from abroad. For Bulwer, as for most Protectionists who followed the question with something more than an unconsidered reaction to immediate loss, it was certain that Free Trade in reality amounted to the "sacrifice," as Bulwer puts it (137), of one sector of the economy to the advantage of another, and this under the euphemistic "appellation" - to employ Bulwer's ironic term - of "Free" Trade. Some of the more honest, perhaps the more cynical, Free Traders, he wants to point out, have admitted as much and had from the beginning known that the question was one as much of politics as of economics, that is, of the distribution of gain and loss, not gain and loss themselves. Clapham points out that Henry Parnell, whose *On Financial Reform* (1830) brooked little compromise on Free Trade, allowed for example that

> "If protection must be given" to agricultural produce - he was thinking of a *political* necessity - let it be "a fixed duty of about £10 or £12 per cent.," which would yield a large revenue and so "would come in aid to the repealing of duties on raw materials and manufactures, and in this way make some amends for the injury it would still do to industry, in raising the price of food." (I 496, italics mine.)

And what was this "injury" that would be done industry? The increased price of corn would boost the wages the manufacturer must pay in order to insure that the industrial laborer be minimally nourished as he worked. Presumably, these wages' increment, spent on bread, might have been elsewhere better expended had they not been forced from the hand of the mill owner into the mouth of the mill worker. There was, then, another

principle at work here: for a gain, there is a loss - today, we call this the zero-sum principle. And the loss is all upon the land.

> At present, as I have stated, the full weight of distress rests on the occupier. Soon it must extend, not only to clerg[y]men and landowner - but to labourer and tradesman. Already in many districts the labourer begins to feel that the cheap loaf entails low wages, and brings him nearer and nearer to the workhouse. In other districts, where wages are not yet lowered to the ratio of prices, the farmer feels the humanity that is akin to his genial nature oozing away, as the wellbeing of the men he employs is adduced as an argument for beggaring the employer. Grand social evil! Hostile interest between masters and men - beware how it spreads too far. (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 166.)

It is not altogether clear to what present danger Bulwer is here referring, for by the Fifties landed labor had become generally quiescent. There had been resistance among the rural laborers from the mid-Nineties through the mid-Forties, particularly in the years 1794-96, 1816, 1822, 1830, 1834-35 and, finally, in 1843-44 (Hobsbawm and Rudé 16). But this, in the Thirties, for example, the "Swing" outbreak, had to do with machinery, not the tariff or taxes; nevertheless, Bulwer appears to indicate that tenants, yeomen and landlords might have in mind a response in disaffection similar to that of the English farm laborer, whose present restiveness he also clearly indicates. This could not have been a pleasant thought for factory owners, whose properties might burn as easily as ricks under the direction of more sophisticated, more organized, more determined incendiaries. After all, it had been in the workhouse that "Captain Swing" had found his recruits, but there alone; the new grievance might find recruits in the parish, the manor and the shop, as well as the workhouse. But this is a warning, not a

threat, and is in rejoinder to the double notion that the Agriculturalist must make the sacrifice - particularly alone - and, by inference, that the success of the factory owner is to be equated to the success of the Nation. Bulwer has already pointed out that "when you [the Free Traders] say, 'Sacrifice your interests to those of the community,' the men you address can be counted as millions in that community itself" (137). He does not dwell on this central point, but moves on - as he often does at the end of an argumentational speech or pamphlet - to a review of the reasoned self-interest his faction shares with its opponents and to a suggestion of compromise.

"Defence," he quotes Adam Smith as saying, "is of much more importance than opulence." That Smith says this in praise of the Navigation Acts (Smith 431) is ignored by Bulwer, although the point of each man is essentially the same: a Nation must limit its material gain in order to enhance its physical security; Smith sees the Navigation Acts as limiting trade in the absolute sense, but extending the relative competence of national security; Bulwer sees Free Trade as increasing absolute wealth in the Nation, but undermining "the moral and social circumstances by which alone that wealth can be permanently secured" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 168). There is more at risk, then, than

> leaving a deep and lasting remembrance of wrong and of insult upon the minds and hearts of a vast number of men - whom no redistribution of the franchise, however artfully arranged, can deprive of numerous representatives connected by the union of common suffering - and ... cause for the most anxious alarm in all who do not confine their thoughts to the Carthaginian's maxim of "Buy cheap, and sell dear." (169.)

Bulwer's reference to Carthage is not solely an epideictic move; it has clear symbouleutic implications: "[f]irst, indeed, under the cry of economy will go those expenses which maintain our navy and protect our shores" (169). Under Cobden and politicians like him, the Themistoclean "boast ... that he knew how to render a small state great" has been reversed, a circumstance that neither "prudent" men nor those "who have not lost the love and pride of country, without which no community can endure long ... can contemplate without alarm" (169). Under this "modern school of politicians" the House of Commons may well "reduce the empire of Great Britain to a fourth-rate state, leaving none of the defences which other fourth-rate states concur in maintaining" (169).

What is important about this pamphlet, *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, particularly in its final pages, are not so much the details of a Free Trading, as against a Protected, economy - although these are, of course, central to Bulwer's full argument - but the considered foundations upon which Bulwer has erected his argument, as well as two further features: the first is the degree to which he was in reality correct in his analysis of the contemporary economic contest, pure and simple; the second is how alert he was to trends and latent conditions in so far as they would manifest themselves in the social, political and economic contexts of the future. Certainly, there was no great response to all of this on the land after the mid-Forties, at least not until the founding of National Agricultural Labourers' (Trade) Union under Joseph Arch thirty

years later (Hobsbawm and Rudé 17 and 291), nor had the New Poor Law of 1834, despite its inequities, much of an impact on the directedness of resentment (17). So much for the likely troops in any overt show of revolt. Of the officers projected by Bulwer to captain them - the landed clergy, the rural tradespeople, the landowners, yeomen and tenants - one hears even less; peaking in land-use and employment relative to the population during the war against Napoleon, agriculture simply never regained its former inherent importance to the economy of Great Britain. "Conciliation ... in all times, and all lands, the master-art of the administrator, ... the policy of the Coming Man" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 81 and 105) was plainly never needed; those Bulwer claimed "pretty well united in the complaints of distress, and in the assertion of [their]cause" (81) dissipated, with an end to the generation upon whom the Repeal was laid or in finding other means of a living or, in most cases, by resigning themselves to the factors as they presented themselves and making do as best they could. In 1831, 275,000 families worked the land in Great Britain, in 1851, 286,000 (Clapham 450), an increase of 4%; in 1831, the population of Great Britain was 16,500,000, in 1851, 21,000,000 (Woodward 1), an increase of 22%. Yet these were twenty years of "low prices and discouraged farmers" with little development on the land (Clapham 465). Bulwer's constituency in this issue was rapidly, visibly shrinking, although it must be acknowledged, though it cannot be dealt with here, that other causes were at work beyond the termination of Protection. On the other hand, in purely human

terms, Bulwer was, of course, right; he points out Peel's comment of five years before, during the debates on the Corn Law, that he, Peel, had "always felt and maintained that the land is subject to peculiar burdens" (quoted in *Pamphlets and Sketches* 115) and that Peel had gone "on to argue that the question of Free Trade [was] one of policy - that of relief to peculiar burdens on those it may affect, one of justice" (115-16). But Peel then implied that once policy had been decided, justice might then be considered. "The antithesis was ominous," says Bulwer. "What Englishman, on reading it," Bulwer asks,

> will not say with Burke, "It was with the greatest difficulty that I was able to separate policy from justice. Justice itself is the great standing policy of civil society; and any eminent departure from it, under any circumstances, lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all" (116).

But policy has prevailed in the matter of Free Trade, not only over Protection, Bulwer wants to say, but over justice too. In the nearer term, as economists like to phrase things, Bulwer was wrong in fact and unpersuasive in implication on all counts, yet in the longer term he was right. For, ironically, in 1873, the year of his death, "the boom collapsed and for a quarter-century prices and profits tended to be low" (Fielden in Bartlett 93). The depression brought all trading nations but Britain back to some form of Protection, and Britain too after the First World War (93-99). Despite the efforts of some states and many economists, the Tariff is the rule today, and generally on grounds Bulwer and other thinking Protectionists set forth. Whether *this* is right or wrong cannot be addressed in the

present context.

The manner of Bulwer's argument is central to *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, as it is elsewhere in Bulwer's writing and speeches, and may have contributed to the bases of his insight as well. As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, Bulwer's approach is narrative, historical, exemplifying, diachronic, in short, specific and concrete, while the approach of his opponents is theoretical, experimental, assertoric, synchronic, in short, generalizing and abstract. Bulwer, implicitly and explicitly, rejects and attacks the latter approach. His most explicit attack is as follows:

> I do not think that [political economy] has proceeded from the collection, examination, and weighing of the largest number of experiences, and then, and not till then, deducing thence its general maxims. For obviously, were it so, we should not find such notable differences as I have shown in anticipations amongst its disciples, nor so startling a disparity between the fund of its experiences and the rigidity of its dogmas. It has rather, I think, proceeded in "that opposite way" which Bacon has condemned, and in which, according to him, no subtlety of definition, and no logical acuteness, can suffice to avail for the establishment of truth. It has rather commenced with the abstract principles, and then selected the experiences on which to support them. (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 100-101.)

Bagehot says of Palmerston that it

> was from the actual knowledge of men - from close specific contact - that [he] derived his data. We have heard grave men say with surprise, "He always has an anecdote to cap his argument[,"] ... real illustrations of the matter at hand. They were chosen instances of a man who thought in instances. Some think, as the philosophers say, by "definition," others by "type." Lord Palmerston, like the animated world, thought in example, and hardly realized abstract words. (216.)

This too is Bulwer's approach, and it is important to know this about him to understand him - and his, as too Palmerston's,

immense popularity. Briefly, Bulwer thought in instances, as Bagehot says of Palmerston, a feature of his writing which makes it somewhat difficult for us today, but a feature of his speeches and argumentation which makes them all the more accessible. Further, this property of communication of which he was consummately possessed made him a successful politician and most impressive in Parliamentary address. In terms purely of political economy, it may too have made available to him insights which allowed him to be - repeating the economists' phrase - in the longer term, right. Again, this is a feature of Bulwer's circumstance of which the present essay cannot judge.

## Return To Parliament

Bulwer was returned for Hertfordshire in the General Election of July 1852 and, as he had been elected a tory, he entered Parliament when it convened on the 4th of November to sit on the Government side, for Derby's short-lived first Administration was still in power. The Government had been formed in February, but had had great difficulty in maintaining itself and, after the General Election in the autumn, was returned somewhat stronger, but still in the minority. The question, then, was upon what issue the Government would fall, not whether it would fall, for its fall was inevitable, given its inability to obtain sure majorities on important votes. Disraeli, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer from the beginning of the Administration and had become increasingly

persuaded that the Derbyites too must give up Protection, offered the opportunity of challenge to the forces arrayed against the Government with a statement of fiscal intention which played, but on his own terms, into the hands of the opposition. With respect to Free Trade itself, while his language scarcely covers his distaste for it, in introducing his Budget, he explicitly enunciates his and his Government's philosophical posture, denoting as he does so the political environment within which he and it and its allies must act:

> Sir, we wished after the event of the last general election, understanding as we did from the result of that election that the principle of unrestricted competition was entirely and finally adopted as the principle of our commercial code - we wished to consider our financial system in relation to our commercial system - to see whether they could not be brought more in harmony together, and whether, in bringing them more in harmony together, we might not remove many well-founded causes of discontent among the people of this country, and lay the foundation of a system which in future should not only be more beneficial, but which should enlist in its favor the sympathies of all classes. (Hansard 3rd, 123, 838.)

While Disraeli's defense on the 3rd of December was, as usual, altogether skillful, his proposals, among others more innocuous, that the Malt Tax be reduced and a proportionate increase be made in the Tax on Inhabited Houses, were even less well received by the Government's opponents than his speech. One long-time Member, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe (1796-1861), a war-horse Radical then sitting for Finsbury, exasperated with Disraeli's tactics, called out in a speech on the second night of debate, "We do not want your Budget, nor do we want you" (1215). Still, these measures had some slight chance - the vote which ultimately brought the Government down demonstrating a

difference of only 19 with 591 Members voting (1693-1697) - but the question of the Malt Duty's reduction was seen as Protectionist fiddling in a House representing a Nation which, as Disraeli had implied, had largely gone against Protection in the General Election, and the Tax on Inhabited Houses, while in absolutely no manner popular, was seen in the context of the late battle over whether it or the Tax on Windows should prevail.

Traditionally taken as affecting the rich in greater magnitude than the other classes, since, it was argued, they would have the means, the wallspace and the inclination to possess the relatively greater number of windows in their dwellings, this latter Duty had come by mid-century to be viewed as "a restriction on air and light in the houses of the poorer classes," as lacking in adequate definition of what a "window" was and, finally, as unable to establish value, particularly when houses in the cities were compared with houses on the land (Dowell, II, 336-37). As a result, the Inhabited House Tax had been given the whole burden of both taxes and the Window Tax was abolished. Further, while rectification of inequities in this very lucrative instrument in the Thirties had lost £1,130,000 to the tax collection per annum (336), few thereby thought it too low in its present form. So the Government fell, and Gladstone, who had given, as usual, a speech of skill equal to Disraeli's, but following it, was the means by which it did. Gladstone was then made Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Aberdeen Coalition, which was formed in consequence, and

presented his first and still highly lauded Budget the following April.

It was during this debate, which took place between the 3rd and the 15th of December 1852, which witnessed the first engagement in the famous thirty-year confrontation between Disraeli and Gladstone and which came to be known in its day as the Battle of the Malt Tax, that Bulwer, on the 10th, gave his first speech for Hertfordshire. *In the House of Commons* was given during a Committee of the Whole House: the Speaker had left the Chair to be replaced by the Chairman of Ways and Means and the rules of debate, normally on Budget matters, become far less formal, allowing Members pretty much to choose their subjects as they liked and to speak oftener than once on the same subject. As a result, Bulwer breached no rule in terminating his speech with some comments on his change of Party, particularly since what he said bore directly upon the subject of the debate. Because these remarks point to the philosophical orientation he had developed in the Forties with respect to a variety of questions, it might be best to discuss them now, following immediately upon the discussion of *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, in which this newly manifested viewpoint of Bulwer's had lain adumbrated beneath the overt specificities of the pamphlet.

As always, polite to a fault, Bulwer was at considerable pains to insist upon a retained affection for those "in a party in which [he] still recognize[d] not only private friends, but many accomplished politician and statesmen - of consummate

talents and experience" (*Speeches*, I, 132 [Hansard 3rd, 123, 1230]). But, he says, it was not upon the single question of Corn alone that he had seen fit to "transfer [... his] very humble support to the party and policy represented by the present Government" from "a party to which [he had] formerly rendered some trifing service..." (132 [1230]). Further, he had done nothing overtly in any case until that Party's Administration - he hoped he might say so without offense - "died of its own exhaustion. Not until the noble Lord the late Premier [Lord John Russell], looking at the state of parties, could see no other person but Lord Derby to suggest to her Majesty as his successor..." (132-33 [1230]).

The nicety observed that Lord John had freely taken upon himself the reasoned task of selecting for and suggesting to the Queen his own successor may appear to contrast sharply from our own brute modes of succession, but in reality there was nothing nice about it. The Queen had forced the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, Russell's Foreign Secretary, for - among many, many other things about him she detested - having recognized Louis Napoleon with neither Parliamentary advice nor Royal consent. Lord John's somewhat precious Government was forthwith, under the influence of Palmerston's immense power in the House and nearly unsurpassed popularity out of doors, defeated on the issue of the Militia Bill, which will be discussed in the next Chapter. Lord John, always tossed about a small raft in the great undulations of every little storm, and the remnant whig Party he led prompted Bulwer, "regarding the position of

affairs at home, still more the position of affairs abroad, [to believe] that it might be for the welfare and perhaps for the safety of the country, to give to Lord Derby's Government a fair and a cordial trial" (133 [1230]). Reciprocally, he made his move, despite the "difficulties" presently confronting the Government, in order to advance conciliation toward the unjustly treated farmer and because of Lord Derby's "rational respect for public opinion" (133 [1230-1231]).

But the fact was, Bulwer had nowhere else to go. Even with Disraeli and many of the Derbyites wavering on Protection, even with the Corn Laws gone now six years, in effect if not in law, even with the vote out of doors increasingly with Free Trade, the only hope any Member had of retaining what little there was of the Tariffs was with the Derbyites. The Protectionists in both Houses were loud, long and relentless, but the circumstance was irreparable: the Navigation Laws had been abandoned in 1849 and the British coasts themselves opened to foreign trade in 1854; in the Forties there were nearly 1150 items available to the Tariff, by the Sixties only 48, and, of these, 36 were duties on luxury items (Kenneth Fielden, "The Rise and Fall of Free Trade" in Bartlett 82). This was as profound a shift in economic policy as any Great Power at any time had ever undertaken; even as the despair of the Protectionists, so too the object of their despair ought not to be underestimated. Particularly the farmer - landlord, tenant, laborer - suffered, each often turning on the other like members of a shipwrecked crew upon a narrow island, the stronger

consuming the flesh of the weaker in the essential quest for a possible extension of life. "Once the most complex in Europe, the British tariff could [by 1860] be printed 'on half a page of Whitaker's Almanack'" (82). The desperation of the landed Interest comes fully through in Bulwer's pleading:

> In that school where I learnt the meaning of constitutional liberty, it was never considered a disgrace to a Minister of England to regulate, not indeed his private doctrines, but his political conduct, according to the opinions of his time. Nor did I ever think I should hear a taunt on the expediency of bowing to public opinion from the very men who have threatened to change the constitution itself in order to bring us still more under the influence of popular control. (*Speeches*, I, 133 [Hansard 3rd, 123, 1231].)

Sadly, however, Bulwer was mistaken in the degree to which the general public opinion accepted his position on Free Trade.

Still, he was not without additional anxieties with respect to others of the whigs' policies, mostly an incoherent series of compromises on Lord John's part to bring whig, Radical, Irish and, where he could, Peelite under one roof; Disraeli undertook much the same tack on the Conservative side, but Derby, his captain, nearly always the more perspicacious when measured against Lord John, was able to do what he must when he must and thus avoid the loose ends in policy and personality likely to embarrass leaders in the throes of compulsive Party expansion. Had then Bulwer looked at Derby and Disraeli only in terms of Protection, he would never have committed himself so fully to the post-Peel tory Party Disraeli was constructing, but, as was his disposition, he did not hesitate to entrust a principle to those who rejected it on a basis of their accepting unrelated principles which he also held. This showed in Bulwer

the common blindness of any successful politician. His changing parties had this in it too, but it must be borne in mind that the Party system as later it was to develop under Disraeli and, especially, Gladstone, was at best nascent, even in the Fifties and Sixties, whence the labels "Irish," "Peelite," "Protectionist," "Free Trader," "Radical," "Derbyite" and the like. The politics in which Bulwer engaged was finally a politics of issues, not of Parties, with all the free-flowingness of affiliation and vote which this implies.

Of the further grounds for his change of Party which Bulwer gives as he ends his speech, many of them concerning administrative reform have their origin in the new Peelite program; those which concern legal and criminal reform, in the old Radical agenda; those which urge a constitutional emphasis, in the traditional tory or whig conceptions of government and, finally, those which make repeated references to Reform as such, particularly to "practical reform," to more recent whig and, in some degree, to whig-antipodal Tory-Democratic sentiments. What he is constrained most to look for, Bulwer sets it forth, is a Party and Ministry which "do not come into office as the exclusive advocates of a single class, or the inert supporters of a retrograde policy" (134 [1231]). One could suppose this to be a kind of synecdochical special pleading:

> the more they can mitigate the sufferings of every class, whether commercial or agricultural, the more worthy they will be of the support of that House of Commons to which every section of the community that contributes to the supplies has a right to come for the redress of grievances. (134 [1231].)

If one construes Bulwer to mean by class landlords or factory owners, then, of course, only the landlords in the Fifties could seriously present themselves qualified for redress. But what Bulwer means is, of course, all persons who make their living in commerce and all who make their living on the land and demands that "no large portion of the community shall be left excluded from that prosperity which is paraded before our eyes" (134 [1232]). It is the Government's job to "unite all classes and interests to co-operate with them in that calm but continuous progress [which will] maintain our hereditary place in the foremost rank of European civilisation" (134 [1232]).

As he votes, then, on the "intrinsic merits of the question immediately before" the House, he believes that the vote will as well maintain a Ministry "in its career of useful and liberal legislation" (134 [1232]), though he himself knows all too well, but does not say, that the Administration's days are numbered. He ends his delivery with a nearly explicit analysis of how he perceives an ideal Government should act and to what ends it exists: He shall

> give his vote ... believing ... that those same causes of dissension which before rendered a Ministry formed from the opposite benches so weak and ineffective, in spite of the honesty, the virtues, and the genius of the men who composed, and the Premier who presided over it, do still exist, and will still prevent that unity and firmness of purpose which can alone render effectual the desire to preserve - perhaps against attacks from its own supporters - that balance between safe reform and hazardous experiment on which I believe, in my conscience, depend the continuance of our prosperity and the stability of the Empire. (134 [1232].)

Gladstone, who could surely be something of a schoolmarm when he was of a mind to, began his speech following Bulwer's with

comments on the propriety of Bulwer's concluding remarks. "Mr. Speaker," he said,

> if it be any satisfaction to the hon. Baronet, my hon. friend who has just sat down, to widen the question now raised respecting the House resolving itself into Committee, in order that we may proceed to the consideration of the House Tax - to extend that question, in the first place, to a detailed discussion of all the more important items in the Budget, and then to pass from the discussion of the entire Budget to an eloquent and elaborate defense of the policy of the Government, and likewise to enter on a spirited vindication of his own character and conduct - so far as I am aware, impugned by no man - it is a satisfaction of which I, for one, would be most sorry to have deprived him. But, on the part of this House, on the part of the principles which regulate the conduct of public business, I cannot refrain from making an appeal to you and others, and from pointing out that if it is really intended that we should make progress towards a decision on the measures of the Government, it is most important that we should condescend, at whatever sacrifice of our own oratorical prepossessions, to approach the consideration of these measures in their natural order. (Hansard 3rd, 123, 1232-1233.)

Disraeli, on his feet the moment Gladstone sat down, declared to Gladstone that it was rather he than Bulwer who stood in the way of proper movement in the debate:

> One would have supposed from the observations of the right hon. Gentleman, that my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. Bulwer Lytton) had originated a discussion which was an obstacle to that progress which I presume all desire. I am grateful to any circumstance that gave my hon. Friend the opportunity of making one of the most masterly speeches I have ever heard. Certainly no Gentleman in this House could have risen more legitimately than my hon. Friend. (1238.)

While Disraeli's initial language may indicate a personal defense, even perhaps a petulantly personal defense, in rejoinder to Gladstone - a vicariously wounded Disraeli returning in kind on behalf of his hurt friend - no such trivial exchange was taking place among these three adept politicians. On these terms, Bulwer was entirely capable of taking care of

himself, as he had time and again demonstrated, in the House and out of doors. In this duel, neither person nor personality did play or ought to have played any role. It is abundantly clear that, indeed, Bulwer's rhetorical role was twofold: smoke Gladstone out on the question of general policy and provoke him, or at least someone across the aisle, into a personal attack which Disraeli might employ in turn as a means of contextualizing the Government's position vis-á-vis the Opposition's underlying - that is to say, general - intentions with respect to the Budget. Disraeli, however, was not altogether successful in this, for Gladstone - his head for figures intact - went on at length concerning elements in the Budget.

*In the House of Commons, 10th December 1852*

Bulwer's speech, *In the House of Commons, 10th December 1852*, had as its central object the defense of Disraeli's proposal for a reduction in the Malt Tax and a reciprocal increase in the Tax on Inhabited Houses. The reduction in the Duty on Malt was to have served as a "hinge," in Dowell's term (II, 338), for reductions in the Duties on Hops and Tea and as a means of transforming the character of taxation from indirect to direct. This latter was to have been accomplished through an enlargement of the Inhabited Houses Duty from an annually rated house value of £20 (III, 187) to that of £10 (II, 338) and a three-year renewal of the Income Tax. Additionally, the Income Tax was to be widened to include industrial incomes, although at

a reduced rate, as well as certain incomes derived in Ireland, and and its yield was to be increased by means of cutbacks in the degree and range of exemptions currently available to the taxpayer (338). It is important to note, however, that Disraeli's and, by extension, Bulwer's notion of a reciprocal turnabout of the direct and indirect taxes was fully in keeping with the orientations of them which Peel had inaugurated in the Forties and which Gladstone, nineteenth-century England's pre-eminent Budgeteer, would follow for most of the remainder of the century. The difficulties presented by Disraeli's proposals, which, if he could not dispel them altogether, Bulwer sought to ameliorate in the best fashion of which he was capable, were thus fundamentally either the result of technical emphases or the consequence of politics pure and simple. Disraeli's view, here, was that the domain of the direct taxation should be at least as general as that of the indirect (338), and, while this, of course, may be made to appear an insensitivity on his part to the asperities such an amplification of the direct tax would mean for the affected groups - primarily the lower classes, most thought - it must be remembered that £10 was not an insignificant sum at midcentury. This fact can be made particularly visible with respect to the specific tax here under consideration when one entertains that, since houses at the time were rarely sold and were even more rarely occupied by their owners, the assessment was made on the basis of the rent which the dwelling brought, its absolute value being profoundly difficult to calculate given variables such as age, location,

condition, appurtenances and so on. As an example, £40 a year in rent might pay for a house located in a relatively good neighborhood in London and sufficient for the needs of an upper-middle-class family - husband, wife, children, two or three live-in servants - possibly with facilities for horse and carriage, usually a very small backyard as a terminus for sanitary activities and, rarely, as a garden, and the like (McMurtry 47, 245-48). Further, the existing duty would have been 9*d.* per annum per pound on such a dwelling (Dowell, III, 187, 190), that is to say, 3.75% of the annual rent or £1 10*s.* Had the same rate been applied to a £10 dwelling, the duty would have been 7*s.* 6*d.* But none of the working classes lived in anything like £10 houses, most of which were, ironically, given Bulwer's intended constituencies, on the land.

Bulwer begins his argument by pointing out that Lord John and Gladstone had spoken vehemently against a distinction, which Disraeli had meant to bring, between income derived from profit and that derived from property, that is to say, earned income and inherited income. Bulwer declares that "you can no longer tax in the same proportion an income which a man, without any fault of his own, may lose in a moment, and income which is derived from capital which a man enjoys for his life, and which he may bequeath to his children" (*Speeches*, I, 123 [Hansard 3rd 123, 1221]). Disraeli's willingness to develop this distinction, with the intention of increasing the latter and decreasing the former, is fully commensurate with the well-being of "the industrial portion of our constituencies" (124

[1222]) to the disadvantage - Bulwer does not say this, though it is clearly implied - of the classes he and Disraeli most wished to represent, that is to say, the landed. This pointing out by Bulwer of the good will on the part of the Conservatives under Derby and Disraeli was a rhetorical propaedeutic meant to warm his listeners to the potential of the central issue, rightly brought to execution, similarly to benefit those constituencies which all who heard him that evening knew would soon come to be represented in power. Unfortunately, as he is aware, he is unable to do this with respect to the House Tax itself because it will be drawn from merely a larger segment of the middle classes as well as, of course, from those affected on the land. As a result, he seeks to deflect criticism of the increase in the Inhabited House Tax by showing that, first of all, the doubling of the Taxes on Inhabited Houses is sound and, indeed, advocated by political economists and that, second, the reduction of the Malt Tax by a moiety is an exercise in Free Trade. In the first instance, his argument is against those who seek, rather than a general duty upon rents, to

> impose the legacy duties upon realized property. Now I frankly own to the hon. gentleman [Liberal Member for Lambeth, William Williams (1800-1865) who had suggested it] that the feeling out of doors on this subject is so strong, and partly so reasonable, that if you are to continue these duties at all, sooner or later they must be applied to all descriptions of property. (128-29 [1226].)

And in this Bulwer is right, for with Gladstone's Succession Duty Act of the following year nearly all that was not covered under the existing Legacy Duty Act, which had been in existence since 1796, was brought under the new measure (Dowell, III, 135-

36). Yet, given this concession, in response Bulwer wants it allowed that the question is one of the better form of taxation, not of which tax has the better chance of adoption or continuance: "All political economists, and indeed all educated men, agree that taxes ought to fall, not upon capital, but upon expenditure" (*Speeches*, I, 129 [Hansard 3rd 123, 1226-1227]). Ricardo, Bulwer points out, set the legacy tax apart for "unqualified condemnation" (129 [1227]) arguing that an inheritance taxed at any substantive rate would induce the heir to behave as though the bequest after taxation were the actually received sum and do nothing to reduce expenses in order to make up the difference, while taxation upon a salary or something of the kind would induce the taxpayer to make up the difference by whatever manner was available, but most likely by a reduction in expenses. The latter taxes, if they do not enhance, minimally do not thus jeopardize the national wealth, while other direct taxes, certainly those upon real property and inheritable wealth, appear to. But these latter are both lucrative and easily collectible and, despite their ultimate unproductiveness and injustice, are likely to be retained for the worst reasons. Bulwer cites a statistic that has the average annual income of "all the landed proprietors of the kingdom" amounting to £150; rather than being "those great leviathans they have been represented," many landholders would fall far below this average figure and would incur the necessity of mortgage or even sale of property in order to meet the rate (129-130 [1227]).

Among the direct taxes, the House Tax would meet both the criteria of justice and the analyses of political economists. Further, this is a tax which, less intrinsically pernicious than either the Tax on Income or the Tax on Legacies, could be collected to the extent that it was neither unsafe nor impossible to do so. The argument that renewing and extending the House Tax would bode implications for the franchise is easily met by a notice that £10 householders form a very large and increasing proportion of the electorate: "it becomes a matter of great danger if a class which exercises so great an influence on all the taxation of this House, is itself altogether exempted from the taxation which it has the power of inflicting upon other classes" (130 [1228]). While complex, this synchronic argument of economics and political context is compelling, but Bulwer is not satisfied to argue the case on terms made altogether by his opponents and moves the argument at this point to historical considerations. His reference is oblique, but few of his listeners, holders of considerable property nearly to a man, with the workers' successes in 1848 and Napoleon III's coup of the previous December fresh to memory, could have missed his point; carrying through with his observation of the relative strength of the £10 constituency, he predicts that

> if the House should resolve to sanction and enforce such a principle as this exemption by a deliberate vote, they will affirm the principle by which the old republics were first corrupted and then destroyed; they will sanction a principle which justifies the people of France in preferring an absolute monarch to the workings of an unrestrained democracy; and that principle is the confiscation of property - confiscation for the benefit of

numbers. (130 [1228].)

One may expect that, upon this final phrase, his voice rose in pitch and volume and that he let its echo fade in the chamber, for his next words are masterly both in content and in rhetorical transition: "And now," he says, "one word for the farmer" (130 [1228]).

Bulwer intends at this point, having argued the facts and pointed to some awful, but possible, future history, to gain what he can of the sympathy of his audience as he moves to policy. The farmer is not asking for compensation; a reduction by half of the duty on malt would, in any case, be "a miserable dole, altogether unworthy of the House of Commons." Nevertheless, "the relief would be real, though I grant it would not be large; it would be a real and practicable relief to agriculture," and this he will establish should the House go into Committee on the subject, that is, if a vote that "Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" succeeds and the Chair of Ways and Means assumes presidency for a debate on the matters of the Budget then before the House. But, he continues

> it is not always the amount of relief given, but the mode and spirit in which it is offered, that allays dissatisfaction, and reconciles those who suffer from the crises which the changes in our national policy sometimes compel classes to undergo. (131 [1228].)

At this point, Bulwer brings an analogy with Ireland:

> one Government can often do very little more for that country than another; but it is the *animus* in which the offers of relief are made - the desire to do something - that makes all the difference between the Government which the Irish people are prepared to approve, and the Government which they are prepared to detest. (131 [1228-1229].)

This is true as well, of course, in England. The notion Bulwer wants to make evident here is that a common sympathy between the governing and the governed not only can exist, but must exist, for it is the job of politicians to establish and enhance such a feeling. Further, even if any segment of the governed should feel or believe wrongly, when it feels or believes something, it nevertheless remains the task of the politician to address that feeling or belief. "[S]upposing that the farmers are the only persons in the world who never know whether their pockets are full or empty, still you cannot deny that they believe they are distressed - they assert that they have been injured, and that impression tends to produce disaffection" (131 [1229]). Bulwer's notion of the politician is of a higher order, one is, I think, able to say, than more recent ones, although of economists perhaps his view and ours may not be so divergent: "You are not political economists only," he tells the assembled Members, "you are politicians - you are English statesmen" (131 [1229]). It will not do to treat the farmer as an enemy of those seated in the House. In and of itself, this is an argument meant to evoke some sense of commonality with the farmer on the part of representatives of the newer Interests. But, insists Bulwer,

> [a]ll men are governed by their feelings as well as their interests. Men are not leather bags or strong boxes - but living beings, with hearts in their bosoms and blood in their veins - who can appreciate kind intentions as well as resent the systematic disdain of their complaints. (131 [1229].)

In sum, the governed must not only see, but feel, the positive intentions of the governing; subjective perception is thus as

important as objective reality, and both move reciprocally: though the perception be wrong in the governed, the politician - an honorific term for Bulwer - must not only acknowledge it, but must acknowledge its legitimacy, if not its correctness; conversely, though the decision be an inflicting of burden by the politician, those whom it affects must, *mutatis mutandis*, feel both its authenticity and the probity of the intention which lies behind the decision to inflict the burden. Bulwer thus claims that a determination in policy must have the consent of those whom it affects as a matter of good governance whenever this is possible; when it is not possible, then minimally the solicitude of those making policy must be obvious, sincere and cognizant.

Bulwer now treats of a quality of the farmer which he also would point to in his speech on *The Excise Duties* seventeen months later (discussed at greater length in the next Chapter): the farmer's "ancient loyalty and the love of native soil" (131 [1229]), to which Bulwer attributes farmers' historic readiness to come in disproportionate numbers to the defense of the country. This he contrasts with the demeanor and intentions of those in the House to whom he is in this issue opposed. In the "removal of disaffection" (131 [1229]) cost, however high, is seldom a consideration, yet with respect to the farmer it can be done at little price. How can it be that his opponents "hesitate to accept the advantage?" (131 [1229]). Bulwer would "be the last person to impute to hon. gentlemen a single factious or unworthy motive;" but these have been "so severe on the

inconsistency" of the Conservatives with whom Bulwer now aligns himself that he must be allowed to ask "respectfully whether consistency of principle, independent of party, be precisely that virtue of which [his opponents on the Liberal benches] set [for the House] an example" (131-32 [1229]) for the Government has scarcely accepted the principle of Free Trade when "the very gravamen of the charges against that Government [becomes] the concession it has made" (132 [1229]). The reference here is of course to the matter of the Duty on Malt, which Bulwer wants reduced. "Surely," he proclaims, "never before were men who were in earnest about a principle, so angry when they heard that their principle was not to be opposed" (132 [1229]). Bulwer is precisely holding up to the Free Traders the fact that their refusal to deal with the Duty on Malt is in clear violation of the axioms of their faith:

> [N]ow that measures in [the] direction [of Free Trade] have been prepared [i.e., in the Government's proposed Budget], accompanied by a direct tax [i.e., on inhabited houses] so sound in its principle that there is not a single political economist whom you can cite against it, at once free trade is given up, political economy is thrown aside and restriction on industry becomes the cry of the the towns, in order to prevent free trade being carried out for the benefit of the country [by which Bulwer means those on the land]. (132 [1230].)

Bulwer wishes merely to call attention to the double-dealing in which the city Interests have involved themselves, for he knows that his words alone will not turn the issue. Nevertheless, he is unable to pass on a chance to locate, in language replete with sarcasm, a probable origin of this cunning:

> It is so impossible to ascribe all this to unworthy or paltry motives, that I ascribe it rather to that honourable ambition which induces you to substitute a Government

> composed of the men you prefer, for a Government whose measures you are compelled to be inconsistent in order to disapprove. (132 [1230].)

In short, the reduction - better, elimination - of the Tax on Malt would be a measure fully in accord with principles of Free Trade, but the Free Traders are loath to allow such, for, first, the inconvenience of its loss to the Treasury (which might naturally enough have to be recovered closer to their own pocketbooks), but, second and more importantly, for its capacity to reduce the competition raised by the British farmer against the import of cheap grain from abroad (127-28 [1225-1226]). Already, in the abandonment of the Corn Laws, hampered by *Free Trade* with respect to wheat, which the farmer produces less efficiently, the farmer must also be hampered by *Protection* in the imposition of the Tax on Malt, which is derived from barley, a grain in whose production the farmer is greatly efficient, but a Protection that protects not the British farmer, but the British farmer's foreign competitor, who, though less efficient, benefits even as much from the Malt Tax in England as he would from a barley subsidy at home. This double inequity redounds to the manufacturer, who is able to pay workers less, given that their expenses in feeding themselves and their families have been artificially reduced. But third and worst of all, a refusal on the question of Malt is a discomfiture visited upon the Conservatives at a cost to the Liberals of their quitting their own principles.

Bulwer's intention in this speech, since he could not hope to persuade effectively enough to bring the result he wished -

the passage of Disraeli's Budget - was nevertheless to hold up to view both the reasonableness of this Budget and the patent discrepancies between what the Opposition claimed in principle and how it actually behaved with respect to Derby's Administration. Bulwer delights in bringing to bear those very lights of the Opposition's intellectual standpoint, the political economists, in evidence for his own position and against his opponents'. McCulloch, with whom Bulwer was thoroughly conversant, both conceptually and in the wealth of the former's redoubtable arrays of statistics, is repeatedly referred to, implicitly and explicitly. Ricardo, who makes rarer appearances elsewhere in Bulwer's work, is here brought to center in a manner which could only have been experienced with a great deal of chagrin in those used to Ricardo's being one of their own. These discoveries in Bulwer's speech were of course telling enough on the mind, to which were added his analyses of the Duties themselves, both independently and in reciprocity. But his characterizations, first, of the farmer, if not entirely oppressed, at least *feeling* entirely oppressed, and, then, of the politicians as supposed statesmen, but actual hypocrites, at least some of them, cut to the emotional quick in the matter and, as intended, evoked sympathy, scorn or irritation, depending on the person it was who heard him.

*The Income Tax*

Bulwer's speech on *The Income Tax* was given during the evening of the 25th of April 1853 before a House no longer

controlled by his friends. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Aberdeen Coalition which had united the orthodox whigs with Peelite tories. While not everyone was at every moment inclined to support or agree with Gladstone's Budgets, it was and continues to be pretty universally acknowledged that before him only Pitt and Peel had been his rivals in their mastery of the technicalities, fiscal and political, of this complicated and unyielding Ministry. Again, Bulwer and those in the House for whom he spoke had little hope of altering either the Bill which carried Gladstone's Budget or the mind of the House which would pass it; indeed, Bulwer's Amendment, in advocation of which this speech was given, failed some nights later on Monday, the 2nd of May, by 71 in a vote dividing a House of 575 Members (Hansard 3rd, 126, 1004). Nevertheless, Bulwer felt that he must oppose, if not the tax itself, which had existed generally in its present form for nearly ten years, then its expanded purview and, especially, its proposed increase in longevity from three to seven years. The Tax itself was to be, on the pound, 7*d*. for the first two years, 6*d*. for the second two and 5*d*. for the last three years. The income level liable to the Tax was reduced to £100 per annum from £150, with the new population of taxpayers within that £50 range rated at 5*d*. on the pound (Dowell, II, 339 [cf. Hansard 3rd, 126, 453]). The House had gone into a Committee of the Whole House, that is, the House had reconstituted itself as the Committee of Ways and Means, in order to debate the aspects of the Budget which concerned the Income Tax. During this debate,

Bulwer moved for the inclusion in the wording of the Bill the following statement: "[T]he continuance of the Income Tax for seven years, and its extension to classes heretofore exempt from its operation, without any mitigation of the inequalities of the assessment, are alike unjust and impolitic" (*Speeches*, I, 135 [Hansard 3rd, 126, 454]).

The language of Bulwer's proposed Amendment, however, overrepresents the emotive temper of the speech and underrepresents the qualities of evidence and argument present in it. It is clear that Bulwer was concerned with matters of justice and, certainly, of politics, but the direction he took with the speech was, as it was usually, not one of pleading, but of disputation. And in this speech, more than in many, the incisiveness and cogency of his argumentation is quick, defined, well-formed and straightforward. It is difficult to arrive at the fundamental point of this address, some few lines before its end, without having become possessed of the feeling that one has been taught, that is to say rather than been moved, been made to come to a notion, rather than to a conviction. In this sense, the speech is not altogether satisfactory, for one expects Bulwer to touch a raw nerve or to tickle one submerged, to stimulate a moment of exaltation or compassion or contempt, even - perhaps, especially - when discussing intrinsically unaffective matters the like of fiscal policy. But he does not. What he does do in this speech is stick to his point, touching upon nearly every, in his view, maladroit fiscal decision connected with the Income Tax, indeed, with *any* income tax.

That the present Administration was a coalition afforded him opportunity to attack the Cabinet the more so as individuals, to contextualize the Budget as Gladstone's, to deny an All-The-Talents ambiance to a Peelite-*cum*-whig monstrosity, which many a tory feared was the coming thing. Palmerston's triumph of February 1855 was very much in the future. But what Bulwer wanted to bring to his listeners was a subtle play upon the very diffusiveness of the present Administration. And this fits quite well the principle articulated near the speech's end which he wants his hearers to obtain a clear notion of: "You must," he says, "lay down a broad principle in dealing with these questions" (143 [461]). He makes this point with respect to the qualitative distinction he wishes maintained between the kinds of income, that derived from secure wealth and that derived from trade, which has already been mentioned and to which we shall return. But it is a principle he intends to teach; as with administration and politics, so with justice: midway through the speech, he points out that a tax is never sufficiently proved to be just when its justice is proved merely in the abstract (141 [459]).

But the mechanics of the Bill's progress concern him as well. "The Chancellor of the Exchequer," Bulwer begins,

> has informed the House he regards the income tax as the keystone of his financial scheme; and the right hon. gentleman has requested the House not so much to give attention to the keystone as to bestow their admiration on the various superstructures it is intended to bear. (135-36 [454].)

This will not do, for while "there is much in the Budget worthy [of] the high reputation of the right hon. gentleman" and while

"the income tax may fairly be retained for a certain period, in order to enable the right hon. gentleman to develop his financial scheme," there is no reason its "defects" should accompany "all the good things in the right hon. gentleman's budget," particularly as "reform in the income tax ... is demanded by justice and the sense of the country" (136 [454]). The central instance of these defects to which Bulwer refers is the failure to "establish a clear distinction between precarious income and income derived from realised property" (136 [454]). This is the same issue Bulwer had brought in the speech of the previous December, but his focus and his articulated grasp of the issue have been greatly refined. All the same, in the course of his discussion, he seeks as well to indicate the relationship of this particular tax, specifically in its "defects," to other important taxes which he mentions or to which he alludes. His object in this is to show a tendency running through them all reflecting their makers' recourse to taxation as a means of implementing political objectives.

Now certainly he is not altogether transparent in his intention at every point, but at those in which his constituents - he represents the largely agricultural county of Hertford - are a reference in evidence, it is clear enough that, even as Gladstone and those with whom he is in league have their political or, one might reasonably say, ideological, agenda, so too does Bulwer. The patina of disinterestedness Bulwer's analysis sometimes projects, while in an informational sense sincere and factually founded, is still a rhetorical pretense

to the extent that his opponents are hardly without ground in support of their side of the argument. On the other hand, there is some very good work done in the speech in dispute against several of the genuinely significant difficulties presented by Gladstone's oft vaunted Budget, the "keystone" of which, as Bulwer has pointed out, is the Income Tax.

First is the nature of the view taken of it by those in the Political Nation whose task it is to see to fiscal security. It is precisely because he is in accord with "two fundamental premises" submitted by Gladstone, however, that Bulwer is forced to demur on other matters of substance with respect to the Income Tax. The Income Tax, first of all, *is* a "mighty financial resource, which should be kept available in all times for future need [H: of adequate need]" (136 [455]). The employment of it must therefore be sparing, genuinely temporary and free from aspects "which now make it so unpopular" (136 [455]). Thus, as Gladstone has allowed, "it ought not to be regarded as an habitual feature of our taxation" (136 [455]). This second of the two "premises," as Bulwer refers to them, is the more cardinal of them, for if the Income Tax comes to be regarded as an "habitual feature" of the Nation's fiscal security, then its effectiveness as a "mighty financial resource" will be undermined by its unpopularity.

But this is a point which Bulwer appears to find sufficiently obvious that he gives it no amplification, for he moves from it back to his initial point, the inequities existing in the present working of the tax: "But [it is] exactly because

I wish to have this tax available, with the ready assent of the people, in any future need, that I ask the House to remove from it those features which now make it so unpopular" (136 [455]). At this point in the speech, Bulwer offers advice that appears rhetorically to undermine to a degree what he has just finished saying; in effect, he waffles, at least on the face of it: "[O]r, if it be held unwise to correct the machinery of the tax, we should at least endeavour to console those who are ground down by this tax, by showing them we will not maintain it a single year longer than we can help" (136 [455]). But it must be seen that Bulwer is well aware that he has no chance of getting the "machinery" of the Income Tax revised nor, for that matter, even its longevity; what he asks for is a statement of intent on the part of the Chancellor of the the Exchequer, speaking in his official capacity, and thereby, all things being equal, for future Chancellors irrespective of Party, that the tax in its present form is to be implemented as a clearly temporary device, as an expedient, whose life in the Nation shall be only so long as the income derived from it both cannot be done without and cannot be elsewhere derived.

And, indeed, Bulwer is actually on steadier ground here than even this consideration would betoken, for he has an eye on a future time at which it will be possible to point back to such a statement on Gladstone's part to the clear advantage of the Conservatives. This moment will come in the speech on *The Excise Duties* discussed below. However, regardless how a decision might go at that future time, the Conservatives,

Bulwer or whoever, would have a wedge to drive between certainly Gladstone or, possibly, any other Liberal Chancellor or Administration and a prolonged, not to say permanent, extension of the Income Tax. An additional feature here of Bulwer's seeming to waffle is the impression such an appearance seems to give of an attempt in the direction of consensus. But it is no more than an appearance; Bulwer immediately adjusts the direction of his delivery for a undisguised attack upon Gladstone:

> The right hon. gentleman, however, determines to do exactly the reverse, for he retains all the inequalities of the impost, and postpones its suspension to the furthest possible period. Seven years may be a short period in the history of a people, but it is a long period in the lives of a generation. (136-37 [455].)

When seven years is at an end, he asks, what is there about the tax in its present form which will guarantee its abolition? The juxtaposition of a people and a generation within that people's history has both humanized the burden of the tax and given clear expression to the divergence between Bulwer's attitude and that of his opponent: Gladstone ought not ignore the effects of the Income Tax upon living persons as he seeks to employ it in furthering the life of the Nation.

Gladstone's tendencies toward rather a coldly administrative and mathematical understanding of his own activities is additionally marked in Bulwer's analysis of Gladstone's defense of the tax. Gladstone does not "wonder at the incredulity of the people on the subject of the repeal of the income tax, when he recollects the promises of his predecessors" (137 [433]). But his response to this

incredulity, Bulwer points out, is not to assert a certain end to the tax, but to show with a variety of calculations the tax's capacity for self-extinction, leaving, Bulwer quotes him to say, "the public to judge for themselves." In short,

> [t]he right hon. gentleman, accordingly, luminously sums up the amount of his financial expectations, if not to our satisfaction at least to his own, and shows that in 1860 there will be a balance arising from his scheme, which will enable parliament to dispense with the £6,000,000 contributed by the income tax to the revenue. (137 [455].)

But he gives no regard to the certainty that during this seven years "Members on both sides of the House will be doing their best to forestall his balance sheet" (137 [455]). His own Party had taken only four days before they'd "embarrassed his whole Budget" in repealing the Advertisement Duty; what makes him think those outside his Party will go seven years without meddling with his balances? Bulwer makes an astute observation at this point which cannot even today be gainsaid: "Every class has some particular interest against some particular tax, stronger than its share in the general interest against the income tax" (137 [455-56]). Those who want the repeal of the Paper Duties, the Stamp on Newspapers or the Malt Tax will "press forward their claims, deaf to any pathetic appeal not to derange the balance that is to pay off the income tax." The Income Tax will become a Goliath, against whom "not a pebble will be left in the brook" (138 [456]). Bulwer, in suggesting a certain naïveté to Gladstone's asserted assumptions, is doubly right, for Gladstone gave little evidence, in any case overtly, of anticipating the conclusive effect the Crimean War would have upon the issue of the Income Tax. Bulwer was to use this

against him in *The Excise Duties.*

Still, supposing Gladstone is right that the objective scheme will be allowed to move its course, will it work? The fundamental assumption, Bulwer points out, upon which lies the scheme is that of the commercial law of reproduction, that is, the rule that the revenue upon an item is met or exceeded in reducing its duty by the increased sales such a reduction produces. But no revenue can be obtained if the duty is altogether abolished, and it is precisely this that Gladstone proposes for several duties, for example that on soap. Further, even a reduction will not produce the same or increased revenue on luxury goods; the law of reproduction simply does not apply to items whose costs are so great that increased sales cannot be expected by a mere decrease in the duty.

On the other hand, where does the commercial law of reproduction come into effect in the matter of spirits, upon which an *increase* is proposed to be levied? Here, ironically, "the augmented receipts will ... go into the pocket of the illicit distiller, instead of enriching the Exchequer" (139 [457]). While Gladstone may rest his certainty upon the commercial law of reproduction - depending on it with respect to the items earmarked for abolition, reduction or increase in their duties in order to enhance receipts to a level of contribution at one-third of the surplus which is to replace the Income Tax in 1860 - of these items, projected to bring £2,000,000 to the Exchequer, one portion is not subject to the law at all and the other comprises duties to be abolished

altogether.

One would expect, of course, that Gladstone, at least, would have been aware of the implications Bulwer is drawing; one would suspect, just as surely, that, in this knowledge, Gladstone might not in his heart of hearts have sequestered the design of retaining the Income Tax regardless. This is, in any case, precisely what occurred. But Bulwer, who cannot have been unaware of this interpretation of the contradictions he has been exposing in Gladstone's Budget scheme, is not addressing Gladstone. His purpose is to educate more broadly. His next point shows this.

Gladstone had argued in a general way *vis-à-vis* the particulars Bulwer has brought, and the argument, as Bulwer receives it, is this:

> "I may be told that, though individual reductions should not replace their loss to the revenue individually, yet that their effect in stimulating the general energy, and in consequently promoting the general prosperity, will operate equivalently." (139 [457].)

Bulwer's response may be obvious retrospectively, but it is certainly nothing Gladstone seems to have anticipated in arguing his Budget:

> [T]here will be another operation going on at the same time; the greater the general prosperity, why, the greater the amount paid in the shape of income tax, and the greater, therefore, the unwillingness of any Chancellor to the Exchequer to part with so productive an impost when the time comes. (139 [457].)

There is, then, "a double risk for the country": when there is prosperity, the Income Tax will be too lucrative to part with; when adversity, too necessary to give up. Indeed, the very morning of Bulwer's speech a letter from Gladstone appeared in

one of the daily papers in response to "a question from a clerk at Birmingham," in which Gladstone explicitly states that the Income Tax will continue for seven years "unless Parliament, in consideration of other public benefits or necessities not yet foreseen, should prolong the tax" (139-40 [458]). These "benefits or necessities" are tantamount in Bulwer's eyes to his own prediction. But he has another prediction that he expects fulfilled: that the tax will be evaded.

Gladstone has admitted, "with his wonted frankness," fraud with respect to the Income Tax has been discovered even among those classes hitherto found "proverbial for their straightforward integrity" (140 [458]). But such is to be expected with this unequal and unjust tax, given human nature. Do not jurymen acquit persons subject to crimes too lightly made capital? Do not the game laws elicit sympathy for the poacher? Is not the entire peasant population of Ireland "bonded together ... against laws which they feel to be partial" (140 [458])? While the previous Administration wished to reduce the threshold to £100, but only after reform, the present Administration wants the same threshold, but the tax retained in its present unjust application. Bulwer's argument here is interesting: The present Government "proposes to extend [the tax] to that class whose humble circumstances must more tempt them to evade it, that same law, perfectly unmitigated, which has already corrupted the morality of men much better off" (140 [458-59]). Bulwer has heretofore discussed and will, with respect to Ireland, discuss briefly again other of Gladstone's

arguments. Further, Bulwer's arguments are, clearly, not lacking in sophistication. But, again, he wishes to return to his larger point, which pivots upon the distinction between what he has called "precarious income and income derived from realized property" (136 [454]). He does so with his sharpest dig at Gladstone's great capacities for rationalization and abstraction:

> I shall not follow the right hon. gentleman through all those ingenious arguments and references to special instances and examples by which he has vindicated the present adherence to the income tax; because, even if I grant that the right hon. gentleman has made out his case to the satisfaction of highly-educated logicians, still I fear that the stubborn prejudice of less scholastic persons will rebel against his reasoning, and that the tradesman, after puzzling his head with all the ingenious definitions and distinctions of the right hon. gentleman, will still blunder back to his old position, and will say, "That may be all very fine, but I can't for the life of me conceive that it is just that that income which a man enjoys for his life upon secured capital, and may give to his heirs, shall pay the same as mine, which I may lose by a casualty or by a stroke of paralysis to-morrow, leaving my children to the care of the parish." The right hon. gentleman must remember that it has been said by the highest authority - that it is never enough to prove that a tax is just in the abstract, but that it is much more important for the safety of the commonwealth to convince those who pay it that there is justice in its application. (141 [459-460].)

Gathered here, then, we have three of Bulwer's prevailing themes in this speech: Gladstone's overweening rationality; the distinction so many have failed to see in this matter of taxation, that between earned income and income derived from "secured capital;" and the consideration of justice with respect to those who must pay taxes, especially those newly incorporated by virtue of the expansion downward of the minimum rates.

But these themes are rendered within the context of two fundamental convictions on Bulwer's part, tied together although, *prima facie,* incompatible; they are that good government is done only when those responsible for it are operating under the guidance of a principle or set of principles and that justice is not possible when it is proved of a circumstance only in the abstract. But these become quite compatible when one understands that Bulwer is not speaking of abstract principles, but principles placed in a dominant position with respect only to the specifics with which they deal and no others. He himself, although speaking to a point, gives a good example of this notion of principle near the end of the speech. He is arguing that income derived from the land is more valuable than income derived from the trades. He acknowledges that *some* trades may in their incomes be of greater value than the land in its, but he acknowledges this - an argument others in the House have brought - by making a comparison:

> The same thing must exist, for instance, in the case of assurance on lives; but if actuaries are possessed of the same finely-discriminating genius as the right hon. gentleman [Gladstone], I believe that the scruples which will be engendered will prevent any assurances being effected at all. Fancy a grandfather and a grandson presenting themselves [in order to acquire life insurance] at the same office! According to the general tables, the grandfather's life may be worth five years' purchase, the grandson's twenty-five; but suppose the actuary to be of the ingenious and discriminating turn of mind of the right hon. gentleman [Gladstone], he may say - "Oh, but youth runs more dangers than age - the young man may hunt, and may fall from his horse, or he may shoot, and be killed in a *battue*; I really don't know that the young gentleman's life may not be worse than his grandfather's." And so it may be in some individual cases; still, if it were not pretty clearly established that grandchildren lived longer than grandfathers, assurance societies would have been ruined long ago. (142-43 [460-461].)

Bulwer moves on, having rendered this comparison, to show by means of it how Gladstone has reasoned to the relative values of trade and property with respect to taxation - and ignored the viability of a general principle, developing the tax rather on the basis of specifics. Bulwer recognizes that, with certain trades, incongruities exist and that it "was very hard to deal with them strictly [in writing the Budget]; but the same disparities exist in all phases of life, and these small petty matters of detail must be discarded, and broad distinctions only must be recognized" (142 [460]).

Indeed, this almost Benthamite approach to the problem - the calculus is applied so as to obtain the greater good for the greatest number, in Bentham's phrase - this dispensing with any concern for "petty matters of detail," opens the way for a principle which will allow the tax burden to be more fairly distributed. This, in turn, has allowed an analysis of the proposed Budget which brings to light the implicit judgment on the part of the Budget's writers that income derived from secured capital is somehow equivalent in value to income derived from sources dependent upon the health of the earner or some other accident of circumstance. Once Bulwer has been able to isolate this implicit judgment, it becomes clear that, instead of being based on a single "broad principle," Gladstone's arguments are "founded upon special instances and examples [which] are not of a nature to satisfy or console those who pay the burden" (143 [461-62]).

While it is clear that Bulwer has employed in this speech

on *The Income Tax* notions derived from the observations and thinking of contemporary economists and that his argument is dependent upon an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the political economy which was developing during the nineteenth century, his argumentation is nevertheless constructed on its own terms. This is in part made possible for Bulwer by the context within which he argued: Gladstone's Budget. Bulwer was very good at burrowing into another's general assumptions, be they in respect of content or of form, and turning them to his own advantage. Time and again, he moves in his delivery very close to eristic - that is, an arguing of the opponent's own case - only to indicate that case's weakness not from the outside, but from within. His reduction of those aspects of Gladstone's Budget available to this approach was exceedingly effective when surveyed from history's vantage; he was, however, engaged in a kind of argument which, at the time it is made, is necessarily tentative, for the argument was symbouleutic in its rhetorical kind (v. Table 2), a rhetorical kind in which often the *assurances* of an authority outweigh the *evidence* of an authority's adversaries.

Added to this tactical difficulty is the rather more comprehensive fact that all the examples in the world will not prevail with those predisposed to accept an abstraction and its derivatives. Nevertheless, not only is the elegance of an carefully constructed argument from observed realities, especially when diachronically contextualized, a most satisfying feature of it, but there is too a certain

rhetorically congenial open-endedness to be found in general principles developed from instances when contrasted with instantiations developed from abstract principles. In *The Excise Duties* Bulwer's argumentation becomes more dependent upon authority, in part because he tackles disparate individuals rather than a delimited, accessible text, and of course this is the more usual manner of argument in which Bulwer found it necessary to engage.

Gladstone did not reply directly to Bulwer's speech, a not unlikely circumstance, given his responsibilities generally in defending his Budget, not to say the other obligations which befell him as Chancellor of the Exchequer: four further Amendments were moved against the Budget between Bulwer's Amendment on Monday, the 25th of April, and Monday, the 9th of May, these in addition to other, unrelated Motions and Questions to which he must respond. It was a busy two weeks for Gladstone, on his feet eight times for the Income Tax alone and at least 22 times altogether (Hansard 3rd, 126, *passim* 619-1378).

John Evelyn Denison (1800-1872), who was then sitting for Malton, a highly regarded Member who would be elected Speaker four times between 1857 and 1868, but a staunch Liberal, followed Bulwer directly, referring to his sincere respect for him and praising him for his eloquence in Parliament. But Bulwer's "imaginary heros in a recent, most pleasing, amusing, and instructive work, if they spoke hardly with equal eloquence, spoke at all events more conclusively on the topics

which they took in hand," he said, for having attended closely Bulwer's speech, he was "totally at a loss to divine what were his real views and wishes with regard to the income tax" (463). This is rather a mystifying observation, given Bulwer's clarity, but it becomes obvious quickly enough that Denison is using Bulwer's range to imply Bulwer has actually made no point upon it; Denison wants to claim that Bulwer does not make it plain whether he desires an income tax or not and, if he will accept one, for how long and, if length be determined, what means might be employed to mark out and discontinue such inequities as may be discovered it it (463). In the end, he supposes the intention in Bulwer's bringing his Amendment to be a resolution of "the inequalities in its schedules" (463), whose structures - though not whose inequalities - he proceeds to discuss. He ends his speech with a brief paean to Gladstone - brief because its object is present, denying to Denison the possibility of "saying much that, in [Gladstone's] absence, he might have been inclined to say." Denison enunciates his belief that

> the country felt, as the House must have felt the other night [when Gladstone last spoke], that a great mind had been engaged upon its affairs. The country knew how to appreciate the incalculable value of such rare intelligence, and such truthful honesty. The right hon. Gentleman [Gladstone] would reap his reward in the success of this great scheme; for he did not doubt that the scheme would entirely succeed, to the great advantage of every portion of this entire empire, and to the lasting honour of the genius that had devised it, of the careful industry which had brought it to completion, and of the tongue which had announced it with such commanding and convincing eloquence. (465.)

Small wonder Denison found his way to the Speaker's Chair!

Eighteen Members followed Denison, most putting forth on specific difficulties or benefits accruing either broadly or to their constituents from Gladstone's Budget. Liberals or their allies from time to time took issue with details in Bulwer's speech. Joseph Hume (1777-1855), of the Manchester Persuasion, sitting for Montrose during the first 13 and, now, the last 13 of his 38 years in Parliament - doubly ironically, since Montrose was also the place of his birth - declared that he "took a very different view of the subject" from that of "the hon. Baronet" (473). Bulwer had "attached little importance to the proposed reduction of the taxes on horses, carriages, and servants," which would benefit "not the wealthy classes only, but the labouring classes also" (473); Hume made no effort to explain how such a benefit to the lower classes would take place, nor to suggest why Bulwer had not considered the reduction with favor. Less mystical was Hume's enthusiatic, although unsupported, endorsement, in contrast to Bulwer's, of the repeal of the soap tax (473); clearly someone so solicitous after the well-being of the lower orders would want his horses, carriages and servants clean. Again, however, the great Scottish Radical made utterly no attempt to deal with the central point of Bulwer's argument with respect to soap, that is, the commercial law of reproduction; rather, he entered into vast generalizations (in addition to those just alluded to with respect to mass cleanliness) which predicted the immense profits which would accumulate as Britain produced prodigious amounts of tax-free soap, not only for its own population, but

"all the colonies" (473) and doubtless the rest of the planet as well.

Colonel Charles Delaet Waldo Sibthorp (1783-1855), Member for Lincoln City and perennial butt of humor for his fellow Members and for many historians since, sometimes deservedly, often not, found himself in complete agreement with Bulwer's entire speech. Such agreement had not been the rule when he and Bulwer shared Lincoln City as tory and whig in the Thirties and Forties. In any case, Sibthorp blustered forth with his trademark John Bull bombast that the Income Tax was "a measure which was always adopted by all Chancellors of the Exchequer, in order to relieve themselves from difficulties, and to give them an opportunity of playing and dallying with the finances of the country" (474). On the whole, however, Members rose to a point, particularly the Irish Members, who felt that Ireland, still in turmoil from the Famine and in the midst of great emigrations could, less than any part of the two islands, bear a new, especially, an income tax. Few of these speakers revisited Bulwer in any substantive way; Henry Drummond (1786-1860), for example, a Conservative returned by West Surrey, who ended voting with Gladstone and the Government (1004), implied - arguing from examples - that Bulwer's questioning of the morality of the Income Tax made no sense when any rule or law could be conceived immoral when its existence is made to appear the reason for its violation (505-506). This is, of course, a very good argument indeed, providing one can make its accusatory aspect stick, a feature of it somewhat short of

target in this case; Bulwer and William Trant Fagan (1801-1859), who represented Cork City, the other Member accused by Drummond (505-506), had neither of them made such an argument, but had simply questioned the - to use a more neutral term - fairness of burdening with an income tax those who had not the economic means to sustain or the social awareness to comprehend or the political power to contend it (v., e.g., 458, 459 [for Bulwer (*Speeches*, I, 140, 141)] and 482 [for Fagan]). All told, the manner and course of the debate which followed Bulwer's speech were what one might normally expect when a Member had brought an Amendment to a Bill with the intention that the Amendment, if successful, would destroy the Bill rather than alter or enhance it.

*The Excise Duties*

Bulwer's speech on *The Excise Duties* was given in the context of the Crimean War, and the speech will be dealt with at greater length in the Chapter which follows whose topic that is. However, it will be of use to consider a few aspects of it which are relevant to the major themes of this Chapter. First of all, Bulwer employs throughout the speech material from the leading political economists of the day, particularly John Ramsey McCulloch, whom he quotes once at considerable length, cites frequently and a few times uses as a cudgel to batter the notions or batter at the ineptitude of his opponents, all of whom ought rather to have been quoting the liberal McCulloch themselves than to have been having McCulloch quoted against them. Bulwer

puts forward the farmer as an example of self-sacrificing patriotism, whose willingness to submit sons to die in battle is travestied in the unfairness of the imposts with which he is immoderately and unjustly burdened in comparison with other elements of the Nation. Bulwer argues cogently no less than affectively in the presentation of specifics, diachronic and synchronic, of taxes and taxation, and is as quick to render a figure or statistic as he is to draw a real-world set of parallels or offer examples contextualized to heighten the effectiveness of his point. Finally, he directs himself fully against specific individuals, ordinary Members or those seated on the Treasury Bench. Bulwer rarely spoke in generalities or abstractions, frequently deplored what he called "theory," and normally made explicit, intelligible, deliberate demands, whether or not he expected they be met. *The Excise Duties* contains a passage which illustrates the practical bent of Bulwer's rhetoric and one which is among the better moments in Bulwer's oratory. What makes the passage even more interesting is its retrospective allusion to an example given and a point made a year before in the speech on *The Income Tax*:

> And now, in that department of finance, on which the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Gladstone] has been so severe a critic upon his predecessors, from William Pitt to Lord Monteagle, and from Lord Monteagle to my right hon. friend the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), what have been all your fiscal operations? A series either of fallacious promises or costly blunders. Where was the statesman's prophetic eye when last year the right hon. gentleman based all his calculations upon the removal of the income-tax in seven years when he would not listen a moment to the possibility of war? What has become of the cheerful complaisance with which he replied to that inquisitive clerk who complained of his income-tax; and what was at least one-half of the

> right hon. gentleman's speech the other night composed of? Why, an eloquent vindication of what the world still believes to be mistakes. Now, Sir, I do not pretend to be a competent judge of the right hon. gentleman's financial schemes. But let me put an analogous case, more in my own way. If I were to publish a new book, and I prefixed to it a preface that would occupy three or four mortal columns of the 'Times' newspaper, tending to show that the three books I had last written were not the notable failures which, whether through ignorance or malignity, the public had been led to suspect, sure I am that I could not give a greater triumph to hostile critics, or take a course more likely to make the friendly infer that I had some misgivings on the subject myself. One thing is clear - success never needs an excuse. (*Speeches* I 198-99 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 372-373].)

While it is of course true that Bulwer did not himself in his speech on *The Income Tax* refer to the possibility of war (although Sibthorp surely did in his [v. Hansard 3rd, 126, 474-475]), there was clearly a sense at the time that, if not inevitable, war with Russia was more than merely likely. Bulwer's point is a telling one. His raising of the clerk's question a year after he had first mentioned it is a tactic that affords an appearance of continuity to Bulwer's on-going argument while it offers a homey reference point to those who understand - or refuse to understand - the deeply personal impress taxes have upon real people. Despite the mastery of many of the details of the Budget, the taxes and the economy which his speeches evince, Bulwer is not hesitant in proclaiming his own deficiencies and in falling back upon his experience as a writer for material with which to argue his case. Bulwer's political insight and exercise of it, rhetorically and in practice, were neither superficial nor awkward; his was a talent which alike won many elections out of doors and an attentive hearing in the House.

*To the Hertford Agricultural Society*

And his credentials out of doors, both in the recognition of them by his own constituents and by the general Public as well as in the use to which he put them, are manifest in the circumstance of a speech delivered at the Shire Hall at Hertford on the 9th of October 1862 before the Hertford Agricultural Society. As has been noted, Bulwer received many honors in his life, and these were mostly for his work as a writer, but in this instance he is honored in a toast to the Members for Hertfordshire given by the Marquess of Salisbury, father of the future Prime Minister, who presided, upon the completion of which the speech was given "to return thanks for the honour you have just conferred on me and my colleagues" (*Speeches*, II, 150).

Agricultural societies were associations of rural improvers, among whom were numbered not only farmers, but scientists, politicians, businessmen, an occasional duke and the like, all of whom were actively engaged to one degree or another in the development of methods to improve agriculture and husbandry. The Royal Agricultural Society, founded in 1838, had its own *Journal*, the sponsorship of Sir James Graham, Peel's important colleague (Clapham, I, 458) and, of course, the Royal seal. By midcentury, societies on the county and local levels had proliferated throughout the country; these sought to exploit the work of such scientists as Sir Humphrey Davy, Baron Justus von Liebig, Sir Henry Gilbert and Sir John Bennet Lawes (*EB* 9 I 395-96), the latter of whose experimental

station at Rothamsted, founded the following year, would become world-famous as a center for scientific agriculture. Bulwer begins the speech with a résumé of historically significant events which have occurred in the interval since the first time he had taken part in the civic activities of the county, "at an agricultural meeting similar to the present, held in this town and in this very room" (*Speeches,* II, 150). That the faces he sees still have not greatly changed he attributes to "the salubrious habits and the peaceful consciences which belong to agricultural pursuits" (150). He mentions changes in France, Italy, Austria, Russia, India, China and the United States, among them three French revolutions, Sebastopol, the suppression of the Indian revolt and now the civil war in America, but, too, constitutional experimentation in Austria, the rise of the united Italian state and the commercial opening of China. He follows this with a clever but comfortable contrast of the great world with the doings in Hertford County:

> So many startling events, tending to vast and permanent effects on the destinies of the human race, have scarcely ever before been crowded into a space of time so short as that which has elapsed since I first addressed you in this town. But, all the while, we have continued to hold our peaceful meetings in honour of that agriculture which, as it is the earliest art men learn when they form themselves into social communities, so it remains to the last the most solid foundation of the prosperity and wealth of nations. (151.)

Despite Bulwer's somewhat hyperbolical characterization of those years, which he also refers to as "one of the most important epochs in the history of the world" (151), this is not an especially idealizing or romanticizing comparison, given

the violence which lay behind most of the events which he enumerates, be their outcomes on the view of his audience favorable or unfavorable. It does all the same, however, convey a signification that on the land is peace and productivity and in the great world much less of the former and great cost to the latter.

But there is another element which is unshared between the land and other ranges of human activity, particularly manufacture, and that is speed: rural improvement, agricultural science, takes time, and this for two reasons. First, manufacturers possess the capital to risk on experiment and the inducement of profit to prompt the risk. On the land, only owners may proceed experimentally; tenant farmers, by far the larger in numbers, must wait until the experiment be proven, for these have not the capital to expend. Second, manufacturers attain extensive wealth the result of a single successful process, but, says Bulwer, "no farmer makes a great fortune by one lucky hit" (152). Bulwer continues the speech, distinguishing "fancy" from practical farming, the roles of the various classes and occupations upon the land, the intellectual contributions to agriculture of Lord Derby and Gladstone, guano and the Chinese use of nightsoil, which Bulwer calls "sewage," the comparative notions of David Hume and Bulwer on justice and manure respectively, and the characteristics of the lately departed Prince Consort, among several other matters.

There are two things important here: First, Bulwer displays great aptitude in his capacity to move artlessly from

one unrelated subject to another, and this is a speech in which his aptitude is supremely manifest; only the existence of agriculture appears a binding thread. Second, there is, nevertheless, an underlying thesis to this in no way obviously disputatious speech, a speech in which manufacturers, Gladstone and "our old friend the farmyard dunghill" are each praised with equivalent abundance. It is important to call attention to the thesis, which runs, surreptitiously, through all Bulwer says in the speech, and it is to be found most explicitly in the passage quoted above: there is an unspannable gulf between the life on the land and all else, so that events and circumstances do not and cannot affect that which is not on the land as they do the land. Appealing to Christian brotherhood, Bulwer denies any intent to arouse "angry recollections of the old feud between cotton and corn" (158). Yet nearly everything he says must stimulate in his listeners a crisp apprehension that they are of a variant kind and actuated by divergent needs.

While nowhere in his delivery does Bulwer mention taxes or, for that matter, even allude to issues either of taxation or Protection, the speech is worth discussing briefly here not only for its formal dexterousness, but for the light it sheds on Bulwer's perceptions of the farmers whom he represents and the agricultural milieu of his constituency. It is also important for what it shows of Bulwer's grasp of the particulars of farming, for he is frequently in the speech quite specific, technical, we might say, given the length of the delivery, in

talking as he does before a gathering of experts and practitioners.

*The Malt Duties*

Both Bulwer's perceptions and his implicit authority become important in *The Malt Duties,* which Bulwer delivered on the 7th of March 1865, for in the speech the farmer is little held up as an object for pity, while his burden in the Malt Tax is analyzed with considerable technical sophistication. The speech was delivered as a seconding Motion on a Resolution brought by Sir Fitzroy [sometimes Fitz-Roy or FitzRoy] Kelly, (1796-1866), Conservative Member for East Suffolk, "That upon any future remission of Indirect Taxation, this House should take into consideration the Duty on Malt, with a view to its early reduction and ultimate repeal" (Hansard 3rd, 177, 1223). The Motion lost 251 to 171 (1298). Kelly 's speech looks after the whole scope of considerations which must be brought against the tax and reminds Members that all the great participants in the fight against Corn admitted that, upon its defeat, the Malt tax should fall. There is much discussion of Tariffs and Budgets, all handled in a workpersonlike manner; Bulwer was to go over a good deal of this ground himself. Perhaps the most interesting part of Kelly's speech came when he dealt with the temperance socities, who opposed Repeal of Malt. Not only would Repeal not lead to excessive consumption, but it would place people in their families, where they could drink in moderation "a good and a wholesome" beer they'd brewed themselves, instead

of abandoning themselves to "a bad, an adulterated, and a deleterious drink ... [upon] going into public-houses and mixing with bad companions, and indulging in habits of intemperance, and at last of crime" (1240-1241) He has added this argument to one in which he called attention to the fact that, while, because it was taxed, the price of wine, the drink of the rich, was twice sixty years previously what it is today, it was nevertheless consumed by the rich "in excesses, which now we look back upon in wonder and shame" (1240). Price, even when elevated by taxes, is no deterrent to vice.

Many of the themes which had peppered Bulwer's speeches on taxation reappear in *The Malt Duties*, among them what he saw as the lopsided application of Free Trade principles, the differing points of view on the tax itself and the like. Bulwer calls attention to the fact that what brings £6,000,000 a year to the Exchequer will necessarily be taken as essential by those charged with acquiring revenue and onerous by those who must pay it; further, if these latter are in their own eyes singled out for the burden, they are likely to see their burden in the context of those who escape it. This, in turn, is coupled with the circumstance that the burden has been turned on its head, but remains all the same: while the farmer is forced to pay a tax on an item with respect to whose source he is competitive - the barley from which comes the malt - he is at the same time forced to compete with foreign farmers in the production of wheat in which, given Britain's climate, soil, and landforms, he is not competitive.

But these themes are not central to the speech, for Bulwer is intent upon arguing less for the farmer, than for the Nation as a whole. Thus, he moves quickly to the subject of the rotation of crops to point out that

> the presence of this tax at once obtrudes itself on the consideration of [the farmer's] choice [of crops], and will often induce [him] to select another crop more exhausting to the land, less appropriate to a judicious place in the regular course of his husbandry, and less lucrative than barley would be if barley were left free from the exciseman. (*Speeches* II 161 [Hansard 3rd 177, 1243].)

This is rather a more solid approach to the matter, for Bulwer is near to saying that the natural course of agriculture in the Nation lies in jeopardy so long as the Malt Tax prevents the farmer from making the more reasonable, experience-driven selection of crops. He next points out that barley rejected by farmers in barley-growing areas will be barley not even considered in areas where it might become cattlefeed instead of a brewer's ingredient.

> Thus, by the positive discouragement you give to a crop in which England naturally excels every other nation, you exclude it altogether from any soils to which it would be well adapted, and you stint the whole agricultural wealth of the country to a far greater amount than the revenue benefits by so mischievous a tax upon a raw material. (161 [1243].)

But the argument does not end here: "every class of consumer" is affected. The impoverishment of stock in the absence of good feed not only lessens the availability of meat, but of manure as well: "If you have no stock, you have no farmyard heap. If you have no farmyard heap, you have no guarantee for the permanent and continuous fertility of the soil" (162 [1243]). Now we know that Bulwer was a welcome participant in the activities of the

agricultural societies, so we would expect that he be conversant in state-of-the-art techniques of soil reclamation and maintenance, and this he is. "Artificial manures," he continues,

> are like doctor's drugs - they may do great good for a time, they act as restoratives or alternatives; but they can no more supersede the necessity of the natural manure of the farmyard heap than doctor's drugs can supersede the necessity for food. The farmyard heap is the food of the soil, and nothing can supply its place. (162 [1244].)

The analysis remains cogent and the metaphor compelling even today.

Bulwer now appeals to "those distinguished practical agriculturists, of whom there are so many in this House," in asking whether, since Repeal, farming had not moved its greatest dependence from the price of corn to the keeping of stock. "[T]his tax," Bulwer insists,

> which some consider only the grievance of the farmer, and others ridicule as a mere question of beer, operates against every constituent you have in towns or boroughs; because, by discouraging stock, it raises the price of meat, and by defrauding the soil of the manure which is its most lasting fertiliser, there is nothing that the soil can yield which does not render dearer, while it diminishes the taxable wealth of the whole community. (162 [1244].)

What Bulwer has done here, then, is link the success and object of the entire agricultural enterprise of Great Britain to the existence of a tax which nets a mere six million pounds a year.

Between this statement and the next is not the slightest transition, despite the considerable differences in subject matter. This is rhetorically quite effective because the more general theme, unspoken, is the failure of Parliament and Government to fairly comprehend the effects of the Malt Tax.

Bulwer points to a Report from the Board of Trade claiming, on the authority of Lawes, that unmalted barley produces fatter, milk-heavier stock than malted barley. Bulwer does not make the general point that this organization, populated by zealous, sometimes fanatical, Liberals, had long had the habit of issuing Reports which can be described only with the greatest charity as slanted, although he alludes to the fact with respect to nutrition.

Bulwer does point out, however, that the Report was issued the night before the debate was to begin on the question, allowing no opportunity to Members, "who in questions of practical detail naturally desire time to confer with practical authorities" (162 [1244]). But, praising Lawes, a fellow Hertfordshire man, whom he is happy to acknowledge, Bulwer goes on to point out that this is an initial finding, with initial findings being notoriously inexact, and to compare this finding with that of the transfusion of blood, the practice of which was found deadly - outlawed by the Parliament of Paris, the inventor banished - until the initial findings were refinded by considerable subsequent research. In matters of nutrition, Bulwer emphasizes, the Board of Trade has a dismal record; in example of this, he points to the initial finding by physiologists of the Continent, "on principles of selection exactly similar to those adopted by the Board of Trade," that more nutrition was contained in boiled donkey leg than in "the roast beef of Old England" (164 [1245]). While "second thoughts" have produced the opposite opinion, Bulwer declares,

"[s]ure I am, however, that if the raw material of donkey yielded to the revenue £6,000,000 a-year, a Board of Trade would never be at a loss to find a preliminary abstract report to justify its predilection for donkeys" (164 [1245]).

Bulwer then produces his own expert, one of "numberless" farmers who "have made these experiments," a Mr. Booth of Catterick, Yorkshire, "the largest stockbreeder in England, and perhaps in the world" (164 [1246]). Booth has found that, ironically, the best barley for cattle is that steeped just sufficiently to get it taxed. This is not much, but the tax does not comprehend quantity of steeping beyond the minimum which incurs the tax. And Gladstone, Bulwer notes, has had his doubts about the Board of Trade as well, for in the Bill of the previous year he attempted to incorporate exemptions which would promote the malting of barley for the exclusive experimental purpose of feeding cattle (165 [1246]). Of course, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's option is untenable, granting that farmers would hardly give time and resources to experiment with malting, at least, certainly, not in the degree they would do so to raise barley malted to no tax, be it for feed or for beer.

Bulwer now returns to the general argument, that the Malt Tax is detrimental to the Nation, reiterating a few of his earlier statements, that is, in the argument which moves, in one of its progressions, from malt to cattle to manure to soil to bread to food to the Nation, but adding the rather interesting turn that, "if the working class paid less for their beer than they do now, they would of course have more to spend upon

butchers' meat!" (166 [1247]). This comment is all the more deft, given the task to which Bulwer has fundamentally put himself, that of attenuating in virulence the "strange attempt to prejudice the true merits of this question by narrowing them to the mere effect of the tax upon malt liquors" (167 [1248]). Still, "its effect on malt liquor is not a thing to be ridiculed" (167 [1248]). Bulwer's condemnation of this effect is similar to his argument with respect to the aspects just discussed; however, there are two interesting points raised here that have not been raised previously, one an observation in which he would likely have gotten rather general accord, the other an assertion that reveals what might be referred to as Bulwer's Tory-Democratic sympathies.

Bulwer's observation follows from his calling attention to discrepancies in the figures before the House:

> Whether [the duty] only tax a quart of malt liquor at 12½ per cent as my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade [Milner Gibson] assures us - or, as my hon. and learned friend [Sir Fitzroy] contends, 50 per cent - that is a matter which I leave entirely to those more competent than myself to deal with. I may, indeed, think it strange that malt liquor is only taxed 12½ per cent, when the malt which we in the innocence of our hearts assume to be its principal ingredient is taxed 70 per cent; but I am old enough to know that there is no conjuring trick equal to that of figures in the hands of a clever Minister. (167 [1249].)

The second of these two points calls attention to a discrepancy between, rather than within, taxes:

> [I]t would be difficult to persuade the working man that you apply your legislation fairly to him when, in the name of free trade, you so largely reduce your duties on the beverage of the rich [wine] and then, in the name of the revenue, refuse all mitigation of a tax on the beverage of the poor [beer] - taking such special pains that the working man shall not have the best drink at the lowest

> price, that your last legislation of the subject exhausts the ingenuity of mechanicians in order to exclude the man from the advantage you are willing to give to a cow or a pig. (168 [1249].)

What concerns Bulwer here, then, is not so much the infelicities of a taxation by ideology - Milner Gibson (1807-1884), who was then sitting for Ashton-under-Lyne, was a leading Free Trade advocate and an important contributor to the rhetoric of the Anti-Corn-Law League - and the near inevitable skewing by a Minister of his figures under the ideological imperatives which contextualized the specifics of the process through which he was developing the tax, but the *result itself* as it obtained with respect to those who, in *paying* the tax, must puzzle out the rationale employed by those who have *written* it. It is for this reason that Bulwer persistently demands a showing of the grounds upon which the decisions in prolonging the Malt Duties were made.

It is important to work through his argument here, for he is in a proficient way employing his opponents' argument to his own end. "And now as to the amount of the tax. Is it really so great a difficulty if you will but grapple with it?" (170 [1251]). This question is followed by two statements of fact, the one concerning the existing fiscal environment, the other an action taken with respect to the Budget over the preceding three years. Between them, Bulwer articulates the constraint under which those responsible for the Budget claim they are working.

> The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us last year, on introducing his Budget, that since 1860-61 the real diminution in our taxation had been £6,668,000. That is,

> within three years, above £500,000 more than the proceeds of this malt-tax which, we are now told, is protected from even an approach by the sanctity of its colossal injustice! But you say that approach cannot be made with safety to the revenue. Yet so safely to the revenue did you sweep away more than six millions and a half of taxes on industry in three years, that last year you had two million and a half again to give away, and this year I believe you have much the same. (170 [1251].)

This is pretty strong stuff. How, Bulwer is asking, is it possible that the £6,000,000 derived from Malt is essential when, on the one hand, industry can be relieved of £6,500,000 during the previous three years, while, on the other, a surplus of £2,500,000 can occur in the last of those three years and a like surplus be predicted for the current year?

Bulwer's answer is the Income Tax: "All these great reliefs [to industry] were effected because you were in earnest to effect them while you could avail yourselves of the income-tax" (170 [1251]). This is significant, for it will be recalled that arguments justifying the Income Tax from the Peelite-whig benches and from the Treasury Bench once the Peelite-Whig Administration had been formed were arguments for direct taxation and against indirect taxation. Now, Malt, a most unjust indirect tax, according to Bulwer, is retained while others extracted from industry have been relieved. Yet relief from Malt was at the heart of the promises rendered when the Income Tax was renewed.

> Be only as earnest to complete, by this relief, the objects of that income-tax, and ways and means will be found in this case, as they have been found in others, in which a relief to the national industry has proved to be the readiest means to increase the national income. (170 [1251]).

Bulwer ends his speech by praising both Houses - "in which it is

more than thirty years since I first had the honour of a seat" - for their interest, the one in principle and the other in justice (170 [1251]). But because in accordance with neither principle nor justice can "you play fast and loose with those professions and pledges in free trade which make the repeal of the malt-tax the logical and inevitable consequence of the Corn-law, ... I entreat you not to reject the motion of my hon. and learned friend" (170 [1251]).

Bulwer has come now full circle: once the Corn Laws were gone, the entire rationale upon which indirect taxation was built fell with them. The fundamental injustice, he implies, but does not state, is that the Malt Duties have no rationale save their ability to garner money; in *this* lies their injury. One has Protection or one doesn't - that will be as it may. But if one "lay[s] down a broad principle in dealing with these questions" (*Speeches*, I, 143 [Hansard 3rd, 126, 461]) and sticks by it except in incontrovertibly exceptional cases, then the injustice will be lifted.

> [S]how [those who are inequitably taxed] that you are earnest to redress their grievance, and they, in turn, will have confidence in you as to the mode and manner of doing so, without too sudden a derangement of your financial operations; but do not dismiss them by the mockery of saying, 'Since we cannot at once give you complete justice, we will give you no justice at all. Instead of justice we give you a Report from the Board of Trade.' (*Speeches*, II, 169 [Hansard 3rd, 177, 1250].)

The speakers who followed Bulwer had not much to say about his speech. Charles Neate (1806-1879), a Liberal sitting for Oxford, at which he was educated and in which he was Professor of Political Economy, a Member with strong ideological and

personal links to the Board of Trade, moved an Amendment which seemed particularly cultivated to wound the Agriculturalists; the Amendment implied that exemptions from taxation possessed by the "owners and occupiers of land" were so extensive that, were Malt reduced or repealed, it should be replaced by another, equivalent tax directed specifically at agriculture (1252). He did not respond categorically either to Kelly or Bulwer, but was affronted that "the advocates of the landed interest ... [sought] to disturb the financial arrangements of the country" (1256). Likely sensing the vote would be a near rout, the speakers against the Resolution were inclined to dismissiveness. Harry Stephen Thompson (1809-1874), a Liberal, railway official and former West Riding, Yorkshire, High Sheriff sent down by Whitby, began his speech with the observation that, while he admitted "the Malt Tax was a bad tax, ... if every bad tax was to be repealed ... there would be very few taxes" (1266). The defenders of the Resolution, however, were the quicker with figures, one producing tables of them (1280); on the other hand, Milner Gibson, whose capacity to wield a figure stood second place to no one, filled his speech with them, but, in his usual way, all things to all persons, did not hesitate to enter a moral point in affirming the "greater consumption of more innocent articles" which he had discover in the turn from beer to tea "not only among the agricultural but the maritime population of this country engaged in the coasting trade" (1288). No prohibitionist he, but the move from "fermented drinks" to tea he saw as very much "in the right

direction" (1288). Probably the most telling argument, one brought by both Kelly and Bulwer, was that the rich had been relieved of the duty on wine, while the poor must still pay the duty on beer. Joseph Warner Henley (1793-1884), an Oxfordshire Conservative and President of the Board of Trade in the first two Derby Administrations, gave the final speech. Going hoarse toward the end of his delivery, he was given a glass of water by another Member and, having drunk, said, addressing the Speaker, "Thank God, Sir, there is no tax upon water." Returning to address the Members, he continued, "We feel that you have relieved all other persons who drink, but you refuse any relief to those who drink beer" (1297). While it is probably true that nearly everyone taxed feels thus about the tax, the question of fairness and equity in taxation is no easily answered one. While Bulwer and others against Malt issued powerful calls for justice, still, the vote was not theirs. Yet it cannot be claimed that their opponents were wittingly unjust. Great words of the kind, after all, do not lend themselves to unerring application.

# Chapter Five

## The Crimean War

### Introduction

In the two years between the 15th of May, 1854, and the 1st of May, 1856, Bulwer gave six major speeches in Parliament concerning one aspect or another of the Crimean War; these were important addresses not only because they significantly enhanced Bulwer's already considerable political and oratorical stature, but too because they greatly contributed to the attainment of those goals which both Bulwer and his political associates had set for themselves. Bulwer was, nevertheless, aware that he stood, as often as not, on the losing side of many of the great questions of the day, but he did not conceive of victory as the most important aspect of a political effort. In the introduction to *The Excise Duties* he says that "the issue ... may be against [him]," but that the charge to him and to them who were with him in the Excise struggle had been laid by those of his constituents who had elected him and who most would suffer on the duty's implementation (*Speeches*, I, 191 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 366). During his two-decade defense of Protection, to which *The Excise Duties* is as relevant as it is to the Crimean War, Bulwer

recognized the inevitability of Free Trade and commonly sought for the Interest he represented some sort of compromise or, barring this, dignity in defeat as it came at specific junctures in the fight; his approach in the present speech is reminiscent of that found in his great Protectionist tract, *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, in which he points to his opponents' acknowledgment that the destruction of Protection will bring great affliction to the agricultural Interest, but asks if they "will do nothing to render it less violent and abrupt" (*Pamphlets and Sketches* 136).

*The Excise Duties* is the first speech in the Crimean group, delivered on the second reading of the Bill, which required an increase in the Malt Tax in order to help pay for prosecution of the War, an increase by means of which Gladstone, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, anticipated gaining part of a needed £2,500,000 for the Treasury's war payments. Despite Bulwer's patriotic insistence that the War continue, his claim was that the tax would badly affect farmers, whose barley would find shrinking markets as the beer made from it became more dear and, thus, less consumed. In December of 1854, he spoke against *The Bill for the Enlistment of Foreigners*, decrying the ironic paucity of quarters for the great number of volunteers already available at home and foretelling - not altogether presciently as it turned out, given the excellent performance of some of Britain's non-British regiments in the Crimea - the embarrassment which would ensue for the British Government as the result of any difficulties, possibly defeats, such alien

levies might bring. The following January, he contributed greatly to the fall of the Aberdeen Coalition with a devastating attack on the *Condition of the Army before Sebastopol*; the cost of victory had brought before the public cogent grounds for questioning the Army's, not to say its leaders', preparedness to do battle and had brought about as well in the public an interest in military reform. In Lord Lytton's rendering, "the House of Commons, acting on [Bulwer's] advice, dismissed the Ministry" in order to "save the army" (II, 224). On June 4th, he responded to the recommendations of some of the Peelites, chiefly Gladstone, who wanted to call a halt to the War under circumstances Bulwer claimed would benefit the Russians and undermine the competence of British overseas policy. The speech, entitled simply *The Crimean War*, was received with extensive acclaim by those in France and England, among them Napoleon III and Palmerston (Lytton, II, 229), who were gravely disturbed by the terms of settlement suggested by the peace party. *The State of the Nation*, delivered on the 15th of June, does not bear directly on the War, but its call for proper political and administrative practice was implicitly as well a call for the rectification of deficiencies which had impacted on the effectiveness of the War effort. Bulwer's address on the 16th of July has as its received title *The Vienna Negotiations*; however, the point of the speech was an attack on the apparent duplicity of the Government, as represented in the terms secretly agreed to by Lord John Russell at Vienna on the one hand and on the other the Government's publicly stated resolve to

prosecute the War to an end wholly felicitous to British interests. The speech was to have been a resounding and definitive call by the Opposition for Lord John's resignation, but was in some measure attenuated in its impact by Lord John's offer of resignation moments before the speech was to be given, in response to which Bulwer managed an admirable extemporaneous adjustment of applicable sections of the speech. Bulwer's final delivery on the Crimean War, *The Capitulation of Kars*, was offered some ten months later, on May 1st 1856, and was one of those declamatory undertakings, absolutely essential in a democracy, during which the speaker analyzes a failure of the Government and proffers *post hoc* suggestions as to how the Government might have acted so as to have avoided the difficulties in the first place or, that impossible, to have brought the matter to some, often unspecified, but clearly more acceptable conclusion.

*The Excise Duties*

The backdrop of *The Excise Duties* was twofold: the War itself and Bulwer's concern to defend the agricultural Interest. Lord Lytton is in a degree apologetic with respect to his grandfather's enthusiastic embrace of the initially popular war, offering in explanation on the one hand an orator's timeless temptation to "grandiloquent prophecy" and on the other the "extraordinary prejudice which the people of that generation had been taught to feel against Russia" (Lytton, II, 216). In effect, Lord Lytton finds both the situation, as he

defines it, and Bulwer's response, as the latter operates in terms of it, matters for his readers' instruction. Lord Lytton is of course himself writing at a time - the turn of the century - in which the relatively recent fear of Germany had been coming rapidly to eclipse, both in the British Establishment and among the British people, a long-standing repugnance for Russian social contexts and an equally historic anxiety over Russian imperial aspirations. In so far as the War was both successful in its objectives and short of its prospects, however, Bulwer's embodiment of its assumptions and representation of its aims, though grandiloquent indeed, were nevertheless in the larger range perhaps nearer the mark than admitted by Lord Lytton.

It is also well to keep in mind another aspect to this matter of how and why an English war is to be fought that lies implicit in Bulwer's argument, implicit because, both as a literary professional and as an amateur historian, he was altogether too clever entirely to subscribe to the Tory Democratic characterizations of the altar, hearth and crown, which were then romanticizing the English farmer into a yeoman and, by extension, into a yeoman-soldier. It is not as the dupes of the urban faction that the Agriculturalists found "party warfare [carried on] against them, now against their political influence, now against their pecuniary interest" (*Speeches*, I, 197 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 371]). The question was one of fairness, under which "[f]armers, like all other Englishmen, will readily submit to taxes" (197 [371]). But this question of fairness in taxation superimposes itself upon a subtler, though ultimately

a more stinging, consideration, that "it is in the agricultural districts, it is in the rural population, that you [the Government] principally find the soldiers that man your armies; it is there that fathers will most mourn their children" (195 [369]).

It is easy enough, of course, to take Bulwer here as the statistician, figuring out for his audience the burdens of blood and treasure as they will fall relatively on various segments of the population. But the plaintiveness of his reference is paralleled with the equanimity of his constituents' resolve to perform the task which has been given them, *providing* it was *fair*. The question, at least in Bulwer's mind, whether English wars ought be fought by English farmers acquires little centrality in the issue; it is a given because it has always been a given: and therein lies Bulwer's implicit sense that, while the yeoman's status in society has been transmuted into that of farmer, there has been no alteration of the actual task, nor of its ground in the traditional demographic necessities. Further, while Bulwer does not say it, and in no manner does Lord Lytton notice it, Bulwer cannot help but be in some portion prompted in his enthusiasms by the very fact that it *is* his constituents' blood and treasure which must not be committed to either a needless or a barren war. In this argument, Bulwer is insisting on a certain humanity in the Government's recruitment of its military, an insistence which, as we have seen, permeates Bulwer's conception of a proper politics properly done.

Conversely, despite the horrors of this War, which were being brought by a new, telegraphic journalism to the next-day's papers throughout Britain, Bulwer's endorsement of the War was neither fatuous in origin nor venal in design. He expressed his concerns in the following way: "The encroachments of Russia are proverbially slow," but taking what time she needs, Russia will come to "menace the liberty and the civilization of races as yet unborn" (200 [374]). This was no idle conceit grafted onto the speech; the War, which had become both expected and welcomed by great segments of the public, possessed a character in the mind of the Nation of nearly transcendent importance with respect to human rights. Olive Anderson establishes that "of all the many conceptions of what the war was to be about, this notion that it was to be one of a constitutional system of government against the despotic principle was perhaps the most widely accepted by the general public" (4). Nevertheless, no tax should be promulgated, Bulwer urged, which would "exasperate those feelings which it was desired to extinguish, and, by damping the ardour with which the war should be prosecuted, [would call] in the excise man to be the ally of Russia" (*Speeches*, I, 196-197 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 371]). Bulwer accepted the War in the *national* interest, which was waged in the support of *domestic* interests whose success meant his own constituency's loss, for a central economic issue, indeed, that one the least abstract, which had led up to the War was the question of the foreign grain supply and its important reciprocity in achieving markets for manufactures

(Puryear 228 and *passim* 180-226).

Given this, the farmers were, as a natural consequence, involved in the War. While the farmers, as a whole, would be as amenable as any group in the Nation to a war in which "[c]lass barriers would be lowered and class antagonisms be overcome by the outpouring of unselfish patriotism released by common effort and common suffering" (Anderson 23), they were, nevertheless, faced as a class with a "Bill contain[ing] provisions affecting agricultural constituencies, which could not be discussed at a popular hustings without reawaking the division of classes, without raising the mischievous cry of 'Town and Country'" (*Speeches*, I, 197 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 371]). The Agriculturalists, having endured the fall of the Corn Laws, had been promised in return no elevation of, indeed, a reduction in, Malt (196 [370]); yet they now find the mercantile and manufacturing class - which as no other class "during the forty years' peace thus abruptly terminated has been so largely benefited by fiscal reductions" (194 [369]) - excused of supportive duties and taxes, even as the burdens upon the land are increased. While it was accepted on the land, as much as in the city, that "England's political and social problems would and should be shelved for the duration of [this] ... 'People's War'" (Anderson 23), it was also becoming apparent, if only obscurely, that in "[s]upplementing the revolution in industry, the new motivating influences were the principles of free trade and of reciprocally lowered tariffs on the one hand, and a more direct interest of the British government in building

an overseas economic empire on the other" (Puryear 227). This meant, on the eve of and as a cause of the Crimean War, Britain's increasing dependence on foreign trade with the "complementing imports of raw material and exports of manufactures, capital, and men" (228). Anderson points out that "[t]he increase in the malt duty - always a red rag to the agricultural Interest - did arouse bitter debate in the House, but as *The Times* put it, the whole discussion was 'an undertaker's job from beginning to end'" (206 [*The Times* quoted from 16 May 1854, the day following Bulwer's speech]). Anderson understands this futility as little more than emblematic and the result of conceptual intransigence on the part of the agricultural Interests, making it hardly worth saying that any but silly and dunning voices could be raised in the farmers' defense. But this is to misunderstand both the context and the consequences of the tax upon the farmer. Rhetorically, it is a *non sequitur* argument, because the degree in which a measure *can* be passed bears only in part on whether it *should* be passed. As has already been pointed out, Bulwer accepted that the Duties would carry; his argument was to their unfairness and its mitigation.

Bulwer is thus torn, in *The Excise Duties*, between the two poles of the specific repercussions of the duties and the general obligation which has brought them about. His rhetoric plainly addresses this ambivalence. On the one hand, he is constrained by his sense of the injustice wrought upon agriculture: "You" he says, addressing the Government,

> force on [the farmer] free trade, by which you concede he has been a sufferer; you refuse to retract your steps by a

> single import duty, and when he asks you free trade for himself to enable him to cultivate the crop which he prefers, you not only refuse his request, but add 50 per cent to the tax upon the only article in which he conceives free trade would be desirable for him.(*Speeches*, I, 197 [Hansard 3rd, 133, 371].)

The conclusion seems absolutely clear: "You [the Government] have a determined hostility against the cultivators of the land ..." (to which R.B.Osborne, then Liberal Member for Middlesex and a perpetual, if peregrinating, occupant of the whig benches [Craig 424 and *passim*], could not restrain himself in shouting "Hear, hear," stimulating Bulwer's observation that "The hon. gentleman has the courage to avow what his superiors disguise") (197 [371]).

Thus stated, succinctly, yet fully, the case for the farmers is crystalline and unequivocal, a feature, indeed, *explicitly* acknowledged by *individual* members of the party in power. On the other hand, Bulwer accepts the call to sacrifice; not only is this War a just one in and of itself, it is a war of historical consequence. This is not a war waged "but for some fleeting and selfish purpose of our own ... a war which is not for posterity is no fitting war for us." That the War has intrinsic and lasting merit is in no way in doubt; the sacrifices made by Bulwer's contemporaries may reasonably be shared, as will be the benefits, by their posterity. However flamboyant Bulwer's historical analogies may be or burdening his call on the following generation may seem, nevertheless, in his mind,

> [i]t is for all time that we wage the battle. It is that the liberties of our children may be secured from some future Attila, and civilisation guarded from the irrup-

> tions of Scythian hordes. On this ground, then, we might fairly demand the next generation to aid us in the conflict we endure for their sake. (200-201 [374].)

If this may be asked of posterity, surely it must too be asked of the farmer - but equitably and fairly. Bulwer's two perspectives then, the one *appearing* outmoded in its concerns, the other inflated in its anxieties, coalesce in a single understanding that, if partly overdrawn in its analogies, is all the same perspicacious, despite the intrinsic futilities of its situation and Cassandran aspects of predictions. Bulwer ends this speech as rigorously on the attack as he can be, yet with a rhetorically alert appeal to what he expects to be held in common by all members of his audience:

> but at least my plain common sense makes me sure of this, that if you desired to make the people as reluctant to proceed with the war as you were slow and blind to prepare for it, you could not take more effective means than ... such taxes - derived, at the very first commencement of military operations, from sources the most direct, palpable, odious in themselves, and unfair in their assessment as you propose by this Budget to create. (201 [374-375].)

It is important to notice about this speech, then, that Bulwer's primary concern is with the *treatment* of the farmers by the Government, not with the maintaining for them of any special privilege or status; his concern is thus essentially humanitarian, a feature which, as we have seen, permeates his politics and rhetoric, and is a continuing warrant in his argumentation. *The Excise Duties* manifests this concern as well as any speech and more expressly than most.

***The Enlistment of Foreigners***

The circumstances of the agricultural sector played a role as well in Bulwer's second Crimean War speech, *The Bill for the Enlistment of Foreigners*, for an argument made by the Bill's proponents was that the land was incapable of giving up sufficient numbers of its laborers to fill the needs of the Nation in the Crimea. The speech, delivered on the 19th of December, 1854, was given in defense of an Amendment brought by Bulwer himself at the Bill's Second Reading that it should be given its Second Reading six months hence; such an Amendment, as has been already mentioned, was a procedural means of terminating a Bill's existence.

The Bill had been initiated in the Lords and was given its First Reading without debate on the first day of the Third Session of the Sixteenth Parliament (18 Victoria 1854-1855) at a time when Great Britain and the Government under Aberdeen was deeply engaged in the War against Russia. The following Thursday, the 14th of December, the Lords gave the Bill its Second Reading, though not without opposition. The Duke of Newcastle, who was Secretary for War and the Colonies in the Aberdeen Coalition, pointed to the historic right of the Monarch to raise foreign troops and the instantiation of this right in three Acts of Parliament during the French War at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries (Hansard 3rd, 136, 258). The circumstance which justified this power was that, unlike some other countries which had means of training and call - he mentioned the Prussian *Landwehr* -

enabling them to field ready troops quickly, Britain had no such system (254); given at least half a year's training was required for recruits, the Sovereign had used this power in the main as a stop-gap measure between the commencement of hostilities and the time at which battle-ready British subjects became available. But Newcastle's argument met great resistance as the result of his assertion that the foreign troops would be brought to England for training.

This possibility was, of course, significant for Bulwer, but his speech propounded a number of arguments militating against the bringing of foreign levies into the contest under the British. The least effective of these arguments and the one which shall be dealt with here first is that recruitment on the land had neither been tried by the Army nor given an accurate estimation of its potential by the Government. "You are bound to show," Bulwer demanded of the Government, "that [the bringing of alien troops to the War] will be within a shorter time than you can raise, drill, and send out an equal number of native troops" (*Speeches*, I, 205 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 521]). He claims that a population of nearly thirty million ought be enough to supply the need for troops without disruption either to agriculture or industry (217 [533]). The diversion of resources from the construction of the railways and the development of industry to the prosecution of the the War has freed up a labor force now available for recruitment, nor is the land lacking in a "population so brave, so robust, so proverbially quick of comprehension as that of Great Britain

and Ireland" and with "plenty to spare" (217 [533]). Bulwer reiterates a theme which peppers the speech: "You have had ample leisure," he tells the Government (217 [533]). What he wishes to claim by this is that, while the manpower for recruitment is available, the will to achieve it is not, further, that, where there might have been will on the part of the Government, there has been a "want of activity and foresight" (204 [521]). The Government's defense is that, all arguments to the contrary, there is a shortage of labor and, above all, on the land.

The Government was not without reason itself for wishing to recruit in the British Isles; Lord Cowley, Britain's ambassador to Paris, "urged that recruiting in Britain ought to be pushed with vigour in order to disarm French suspicions" that enthusiasm for the War was not matched in London by that in Paris (Bayley 35). But members of the Government concerned with the issue, including Lord Clarendon, the foreign minister, Lord John Russell, president of the council, and Lord Aberdeen, the premier, faced the fact that emigration, high wages and scare labor (35) were combining to limit, even annul, any attempt at large-scale recruitment within the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, Bulwer is as least partially right in this, that Lord John's demand that 15,000 of the militia be brought into garrison duty in order to make the same number of regular troops thus engaged available for the Crimea had been "temporarily laid aside" by the Cabinet (35-36). The Cabinet's hesitance, however, was due to factors beyond the labor shortage, for the

landed colonels, a politically powerful and very active group, were, as one example, highly resistant to letting go of their men in the militias for whatever reason. Further, the agricultural sector from the beginning of the Crimean war through the "middle of Victoria's reign [experienced] a golden age" (Bryant 266); ironically, the initiation of this agricultural renaissance was in part due to the decline in grain supplies from the very arena out of which the contest had evolved: the Russians temporarily occupied the Danubian Principalities, rich grain-growing regions, the threat to whose availability had been one of the immediate causes of the War (Puryear 180ff) and, unsurprisingly, Russian grain shipments had all but ceased (Bayley 42).

To make matters worse, there had been a bad harvest in Britain in 1853 (41), which added in the present year to the claims on agricultural labor. The greater landed Interests were themselves rarely supportive of efforts to extract members from the laboring forces into the militia or, worse, the Army, particularly when wages were already higher than had been either the recent norm (42) or the reasonable expectation. Finally, there was little incentive within the militias themselves for individuals to move to the Regular Army, a change which entailed an increase from twenty-eight days' drill a year to permanent duty with very little more, and sometimes reduced, compensation (37). Representing, as he did, an agricultural constituency, Bulwer was aware of these factors, but, as in respect to most issues, he was possessed of what we might refer

to as a more global perspective: he advocated professionalization of the Army and, implicitly at least, understood the means to this lay as much with the militias as with the Regular Army.

In *England and the English* he had urged that the "aristocratic spirit" which suffused the Army's organization had done profound damage to the sense of initiative of the individual soldier and to the methods of recruiting and the mode of military training and education (I, 105). With respect to the land itself, it would clearly not have bothered Bulwer, a Protectionist, if Britain were in any degree forced back upon its own agricultural resources. In his speeches as Secretary for the Colonies, he defended emigration as beneficial both for the UK and Ireland and for the colonies of settlement and the United States; conversely, he had himself no objections whatever to higher wages on the land and, in any case, saw in improved practice the key to increased productivity on the land, a viewpoint to which he devoted a speech in 1862 to the Hertford Agricultural Society (*Speeches*, II, 150-159). These positions serve in part to underpin or warrant the evidence Bulwer brings in support of claims he makes in this speech. Warrants, as Toulmin indicates, need be neither specific nor explicit (100), but serve as "rules, principles, inference-licences or what you will, instead of additional items of information" (98); more than one warrant may, of course, bridge a claim to its support.

The charge that Bulwer leveled at the Government was that

it had been slow to take advantage of "the ardour of our people" when there was still the "time [required] to drill them, to convert raw recruits into disciplined soldiers," that

> during the eighteen months in which war - this great, this 'protracted war' - was foreseen by all England, except its chief Minister [i.e. Aberdeen], - that, during the nine months or so in which we have been actually engaged in hostilities, the Government should not already have raised and drilled a sufficient number of reserve to dispense at least with this first installment of 10,000 foreigners. (*Speeches*, I, 204 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 521].)

This charge was not altogether a fair one, although it is clear enough that the Government had neither the resources nor the stomach to bring to arms the numbers of which its ally France, by means of its conscription laws, was capable: 80,000 recruits a year, 140,000 troops in 1854 with the inclusion of those already trained, but still under conscription (Bayley 35). Lord Cowley had reported in 1852, for example, that, while the French Army's strength was 380,000, it could by all devices be raised to 500,000 men under arms within six weeks; by the end of the Crimean War, this capability had been elevated to 700,000 men at a notice of days (Partridge 76).

Nevertheless, there had been efforts made by the two previous Administrations. Lord John Russell's 1852 Militia Bill - calling for a local militia, raised by ballot, serving twenty-eight days the first year and fourteen each year subsequent for five years' full service - met with opposition everywhere. Lord John, then prime minister, wanted 150,000 men at a cost of £200,000 a year to serve in the county in peace and anywhere in the UK in war, but Joseph Hume (1777-1855) for the Radicals, Richard Cobden for the Manchester Interest (1804-

1865) and Palmerston for the next Government forced the Bill down and Russell out. Derby wanted a militia bill as much as his predecessor, but this time a weaker bill, which he got, despite Lord John's warnings (133), and which was barely able in its first year to get 28,000 officers and men recruited and trained (134), a number which stood in June of 1854 at a mere 30,000 (135). In the previous decade, attempts were made to increase recruitment in the Regular Army as well; the Third Earl Grey's Army Service Bill of 1847 reduced terms of service (hence, time to pension) from twenty to ten years in the infantry and twelve in the other branches (74). Other efforts were made to make service more attractive, but "the life of a soldier was so harsh that, in the majority of cases, only dire necessity would induce a young man to enlist," producing a Victorian army never able to recruit the wanted numbers (75). When the War came in 1854, both the militia and the Army were gravely understrength, to the point where, in a precipitate effort to find recruits, physical standards for enlistment were greatly reduced and bounties were increased, leading, naturally enough, to a like increase in multiple enlistments (75).

While the transparent sincerity of Bulwer's accusation would seem to save it from a suspicion of disingenuousness, there was clearly something of the naive about it, for Bulwer could not have been wholly unaware of the protracted and recent struggle between Russell and Palmerston and others over the nature and state of the militia, about which Bulwer had himself complained twenty years before. Nor could he have been entirely

unaware of the conditions in the militia, not to say the Army, which countervailed against the prodigious levies he projected and belied, too, the enthusiastic vision of service he claimed present in the population. While it was in the first "ardour" - to use Bulwer's term - of the War that the Government may have gotten "recruits faster than [it could] form them into regiments" (*Speeches*, I, 203 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 520]), even with the bounty raised from £6 to £7 and with the other measures taken, at the time Bulwer spoke the Government had come nowhere near the 40,000 new recruits it needed immediately (Bayley 53). Yet, Bulwer asserts, quite unbelievably, that between the Battle of the Alma, which had taken place on the 20th of September, and the time at which he was speaking, three months later nearly to the day, the Government had had the "the *leisure* to drill and send out" 20,000 British recruits fresh to the War (*Speeches*, I, 205 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 521] italics mine).

It is hard to accept that all this is mere hyperbole put to a conventional employment in bating the Treasury Bench; it is rather more likely that Bulwer believed it himself, if only because it was generally believed: *The Times*, for example, claimed on the 22nd of December, two days after Bulwer's speech, that 40,000 recruits had become available since the beginning of hostilities (Bayley 57). Despite Bulwer's insistence that he was using the Government's own figures, Sidney Herbert (1810-1861), who was Secretary at War (not to be confused with Secretary for War and the Colonies), had announced only the previous week that 54,000 men had already been sent or were

awaiting departure, including around 4,100 each in September and October and a little over 7,000 the month before (Iremonger 277). It must be borne in mind that these are figures Herbert is using to *defend* the Government and that, given this, they are hardly likely to have been understated. In effect, what Bulwer is doing is utilizing the optimistic projections of the spring and summer to indicate the potential of the fall. One can imagine the chagrin with which the speech was received by Herbert and by the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary for War and Colonies (not to be confused with Secretary at War), to whom the speech was principally addressed, but especially Sidney Herbert, who had exaggerated, if not precisely in fact, certainly in spirit, the number and quality of Regular Army enlistments in his address the previous year on the Army Estimates for 1853-1854 (Bayley 24). While it is true enough that Bulwer may have played loose and free with the arithmetic, nevertheless, it was an attack closely made and keenly felt.

Closer yet was Bulwer in his assessment of the potential for public acquiescence in the recruitment of foreign troops, particularly since it was the Government's design to bring them first to England for training before they were to be dispatched to the Crimea. In this respect, characterization of the debate over the Bill found in Partridge is somewhat understated: "This measure was strongly attacked in the House of Commons" (75). The reception of the Bill by Charles de L. W. Sibthorp (1783-1855), Conservative from the city of Lincoln, occurred to accompaniment of the the following phrases: it was "an

underhanded measure - a low, dirty, mean, paltry, cowardly measure - a measure unworthy of an English Government" (Hansard 3rd, 136, 617). Dispite the fact that Colonel Sibthorp, never a lengthy speaker, notwithstanding his oftener than not undeserved reputation as something of a windbag, spoke fewer than 250 words in the debate, he was able not only to deploy a regiment of adjectives against the Bill, but fairly to point to the lack of military experience in the Bill's major proponent, Lord John, and his "absence of feeling with the soldier" and to end condemning everyone in the Government but Palmerston: "With that exception, the Lord have mercy on such a set" (617). As Lord Claud Hamilton (1813-1884), a Disraeli Conservative representing Tyrone, put it, the Bill "was one repugnant to English feelings" (672). Bulwer's description of the Bill was hardly less venomous, if perhaps less strident: it was "an unwise and ... unnecessary blow upon the vital principle that now sustains your cause." His augmentation of the point covers in a few phrases the full and vital range of an English person's civil fears; if a thing, he said,

> could make this war unpopular, it would be the sight of foreign soldiers quartered and drilled in any part of these kingdoms, paid by the taxes extorted from this people, and occupying barracks of which the paucity is your excuse for not having embodied more of the militia of our native land. (*Speeches*, I, 204 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 520.)

In this Bulwer is quite thoroughly correct, at least in so far as he is attempting to gauge and render the depth of feeling which would make itself obvious in the Nation upon the passing of the Bill. "In the country at large, the violent movement of public

opinion against the bill was indicated by protest meetings, inflammatory orations, petitions to parliament, and a spate of critical letters to *The Times*" (Bayley 61-62).

Bulwer's assault upon the Government takes two avenues: "[I]n this Bill which you have had such leisure to prepare, we see all this blundering in the terms that involve a momentous constitutional principle, and all this careless indecision as to the amount of the force you require" (*Speeches*, I, 206 [Hansard 3rd, 522-523]). The question here of numbers is not simply a corollary to the available-recruits-and-militia issue, although the two topics are related; it has centrally to do with the Government's evident desire for openendedness in its levy of alien troops, a feature discoverable in the Government's obscurity and wavering regarding numbers. When the specific numbers of men required of the foreign enlistment become the sole point of consideration with respect to the Government's view, thunders Bulwer,

> so little calculation [has been] made - although the noble Lord [Newcastle] tells us that this is a main reason why we are summoned, and we might presume that your calculations would be somewhat carefully prepared - that it is an object of indifference whether it be 15,000 or 10,000, and the latter number is at once [i.e., under pressure of the present debate] exchanged for the former. (206 [522].)

In the end, 10,000 troops at any one time on British soil became the limit permitted by the Foreign Enlistment Act. This figure satisfied no one, least of all Bulwer, who refers to it as having been settled upon by the Government since it more nearly fit that of Xenophon's eminent warriors than those contemplated foreign recruits fresh from their *Landwehr* drills and hardly a

match for "the stout labourers you enlist in Kilkenny or Yorkshire" (*Speeches*, I, 211 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 527]).

But of all the elements in the issue, that which most exercised Bulwer's attention was the question of the Bill's constitutionality. The Government's representatives had argued for the Bill that there were precedents but that, had there not been precedents, there was no prohibition and that, had there been prohibition, there was, all the same, urgent need and that, precedent or no, prohibition or no, urgency of need or no, there was no harm, and there being no harm, it should be passed. Granting the urgency, if not the need, and conceding, at least implicitly, the absence of positive prohibition, Bulwer chose to focus his attack in the matter of constitutionality upon precedent. "I shall follow" the Government's representative, the Duke of Newcastle, says Bulwer, "through the precedents he advances, and I trust to prove that they served less to advance his argument than to divert the House from the question that is really at issue" (203 [519]). On the whole Bulwer is successful in this, and his arguments for constitutional inadmissibility of the Bill are both historically interesting and rhetorically competent. These are the high points of the speech, which, if unprevailing in a division of 241 Members to 202 (Hansard 3rd, 136, 618), articulated and defended a principle about as well as it can be done. He first points out that the Bill's openendedness has resulted in wording which might allow the foreign levies to *replace* the militiamen and Regulars called to the War. This the

Government has, he says, "indignantly denied" (*Speeches*, I, 206 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 522]). And well so, for the notion of quartering foreign troops in the UK for the purposes of training is reprehensible enough, but the idea that these should be used to police the British population is constitutionally unbearable. "In spite of such denial," Bulwer mordantly points out,

> the Minister charged with the conduct of the Bill [Sidney Herbert] finds the public persist in [their] alarm [on the point], for he says that "he hears with surprise from several quarters that such an impression unquestionably prevails out of doors"; and then he condescends to look into the Bill itself, and is bound to confess that, by the wording of it, it might be perverted to such a purpose (206 [522]).

Attacking on this point, one deeply repugnant in its implications and one which had been the means of achieving an admission and a denial from the Government even before he was to speak, Bulwer demonstrates the Government's weakness and increases the defensiveness of its posture, from which he may hope it will not recover.

Bulwer's argument here is historical and focuses largely, though not exclusively, on questions of constitutionality. The Government has claimed a Royal Prerogative, devolving implicitly to the Crown's representatives, of bringing foreign troops into the country. Bulwer reminds the Government that "William III sent a message to this House, requesting in somewhat humble terms, that his Dutch troops should be allowed to remain, and that the House of Commons refused the request" (207 [523]). A pivotal segment of the Government's argument is that German troops had been brought into the kingdom under

enlistment in 1804 and 1806. Bulwer avers that he is "almost ashamed to repeat what every one knows," that the Government's assertion, "is wholly inapplicable to the present case" (208 [524]) for the sovereign, George III, was, as Elector of Hanover, of these German soldiers as much the king as he was of any member of the British military (208 [524]); further, the cause against Napoleon was no less the cause of the German princes than it was of the English king, and those few other soldiers not subjects of the Hanoverian prince who were brought into Britain at the time were nevertheless Germans against Napoleon. Reminding opponents of a history with which they should be very well acquainted, as Bulwer does here, is a powerful rhetorical move, permanently damaging to the ignorant and forcing the knowledgeable to realign their arguments within its context. When at other times - for example under Marlborough - foreign troops had been employed, Bulwer continues, they were so only as the organized assemblies of England's closest allies, officered by persons equal in rank and competence to Britain's own officers, not "mere free lances under unknown and mercenary captains" (209 [525]). Unlike such Germans as might be hired for the current conflict, these former had countries of their own to return to upon the termination of hostilities. This circumstance adds a further consideration to that of constitutionality. It has been suggested that Poles be hired; were this to come to pass, Britain must be prepared to insure these Poles of a country to which to return, yet is unable to wrest from Russia the Crimea, much less Poland (212 [528]).

In the absence of such absolute assurances, "what will become of the large bands of armed malcontents you will leave on the surface of Europe, and who cannot quietly melt, like your own soldiers, into the ranks of peaceful citizens?" (213 [529]). The implication here, and it is one both reasonable and clever, is that troops with no country to return to upon deactivation will inevitably become marauding bands of criminals. But Bulwer's fundamental warrant is legitimacy. He quotes Lord Grey to the effect that the use of foreign troops under any conditions should be done with "constitutional jealousy" and with the knowledge that in all likelihood it was, still, not "the wisest course" (216 [531-532]). Within the context of all this, Bulwer calls on the House to heed the antipathy which greeted the German troops at the turn of the century and predicted that such would occur again and diminish, perhaps totally, popular support for the War. Others on both side of the aisle Members betokened the burden the recruitment of foreigners would place upon the Treasury; Locke King (1811-1885), a Liberal sitting for East Surrey, pointed to the hundreds of thousands of pounds disbanded foreign troops of the Napoleonic Wars had and continued to cost (£300,000 in 1816, £140,000 in 1822, £36,000 in the current year [Hansard 3rd, 136, 765]). But all the same the Bill passed on its Third Reading 173 to 135. The protracted and bitter fight over it, however, and its reception by the public contributed greatly to the fall of the Government early in the new year.

## *The Condition of the Army Before Sebastopol*

Bulwer delivered the *Condition of the Army Before Sebastopol* on Monday evening, the 29th of January, 1855. The debate on the issue of responsibility for the Army's circumstances in the Crimea had already taken one evening, that of the preceding Friday, the 26th of January, which had also seen Lord John Russell's resignation from the Aberdeen Cabinet, an event whose immediate occasion was, as well, the Motion upon which Bulwer was to speak. The Motion had been placed on Friday by John Arthur Roebuck (1801-1879), the Radical Member from Sheffield, and had as its end the forming of a Select Committee for the purpose of "inquir[ing] into the condition of our Army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those Departments of the Government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that Army" (Hansard 3rd, 136, 979). Some in the Government, including Aberdeen himself and possibly Lord John, however, had expected something of the kind happening (Iremonger 289; Conacher 1968 534), so when Roebuck had indicated his intention to put such a motion on the previous Tuesday, the first day after the Christmas recess, he set to stir a good deal more than his Motion. Lord John, quick to see advantage but not, perhaps, as quick to see advantage through, submitted his resignation not only to Aberdeen, but to the Queen, with informing letters scattered among those who he felt would add to his advantage in having so been informed (292). He was castigated in this by nearly all, even by the otherwise delighted *Times* (Conacher 538), and was further humbled when called by the Queen, as but

one in a lengthy sequence, to form a Cabinet, only to discover that even his closest associates would not follow him into a Government, some explicitly due to what they perceived as his opportunism (Ridley 584-85). So much for the whig.

The Radical Roebuck's interests in bringing the Government down were less personal; he, like many of the so-called "patriotic" Radicals, but unlike John Bright (1811-1888) and Richard Cobden (1797-1882) of the Peace Society (Anderson 98; Ridley 562), had supported the War because he believed the defeat of Russia, which, after 1848, Nicholas I had made the supreme reactionary redoubt against European liberalism, would further his political aspirations for the Continent and his political intentions at home and was, in consequence, enraged at the demonstrated ineptitude of the military bureaucrats and their aristocratic leaders both at home and in the field.

Bulwer's position fell somewhere between these two poles; on the one hand, he was interested in the furtherance of Derby's and his friend Disraeli's political position yet, as an independent Conservative, was equally interested in a competent Administration and a successful war effort against a reactionary Russia, although an effort, certainly, far less squandering of blood and treasure. In the end, Derby demurred when the Queen called upon him to form a Government, claiming the numbers were not there for him and earning the great, if unlingering, disgust of Disraeli and the disappointment of Bulwer (Lytton, II, 209,224). On the other hand, matters with

the Army were in any case on the mend and would by late spring be altogether resolved, at least in so far as such was possible to an army which had lost over half its troops sick, wounded or fallen (Ridley 581; during a Cabinet meeting at the beginning of the previous December a dispatch from Lord Raglan had been read which stated that "the army at Sebastopol was losing men at the rate of a regiment a day" [582]).

In all, twenty-eight Ministers and Members spoke on the Motion in the lower House, not counting those who had spoken in the adjacent matter of Lord John's resignation. In the two evenings of debate, eleven Members, five Liberals and twelve Conservatives, supported the Motion, while eleven Members, among them three Peelites, supported the Government (Conacher 1968 543). Great stress was laid upon the physical condition of the Army, but behind this great fact resided always the question of blame - and more than blame: cause. None denied the obvious; indeed, some who spoke had been there. Austin Henry Layard (1817-1894), a whig sitting for Aylesbury and "self-professed authority on Eastern affairs" (Conacher 1968 31), and Augustus Stafford-O'Brian-Stafford (1811-1857), a moderate tory who had for some weeks worked hand-and-apron with Florence Nightingale in the hospital at Scutari (Palmer 177), brought first-hand descriptions of the carnage and disease (Hansard 3rd, 136, 1026-1033 [for Layard], 1121-1135 [for Stafford]).

Bulwer, who declared that he himself had "two near relations in this war" (*Speeches*, II, 220 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 1169]), was in possession of a sheaf of letters, given him in

tears by a young, fallen officer's father, written over the weeks of the spring and summer of 1854, describing first the deprivations, then the sickness among the Army, officer and man alike, in terms both striking in their detail and touching in their artlessness. While testimonial evidence is never of itself absolutely cogent, it often makes for greater rhetorical effect than does the the kind of empirical evidence given in statistics and extrapolations upon them, and this was true even of the current circumstances, however dreadful the decontextualized numbers might be which were coming back from the front. In consequence, Bulwer's employment of this first-hand account by a fallen officer was doubly effective, for it put a human countenance upon the awful statistics and of course added another dimension to the descriptions of Layard and Stafford and the proliferative accounts in the press. These letters are "not intended for publication" Bulwer tells his listeners, but he can read them and, indeed, reveal their writer, a member of the Welsh Fusiliers, to any member of the Government who wishes to know, without "fear of injuring him in his profession," for he "is now no more." The young officer - "full of life, health, and ardour; athletic in his habits, no raw recruit, but accustomed to military hardship, the last man in the whole army to murmur without a cause" (*Speeches*, I, 223 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 1171]) - has fought off cholera at Varna, only to be sent to the Crimea, where he succumbs even before he has been disembarked, "calling out in his delirium to be set on shore, so that he might at least perish in the field" (226

[1173]).

Bulwer heightens the natural curiosity of his listeners about the pathetic experiences of this individual soldier in three ways: first, he calls attention to the letters' private nature by emphasizing the intimacy of their origin and their transmission to himself; second, he employs the letters as statement upon which he issues commentary, not so much reading from them, but offering them as fundamental, though accessible text, which his listeners must actively seek out in order fully to acquire; finally, he implies that he would not be so free with these letters were their author still available to the wrath of his incompetent superiors, thus implicitly conveying his listeners into the roles of jurors sitting in judgment of those who have brought about the young man's unnecessary death. But the great, physical fact of the Army's situation, nearly Bulwer's entire focus, as his use of the letters shows, was not without a context which, unnoticed by those, like Bulwer, who spoke to the Army's condition, came to be understood only long after victory had been achieved:

> No army comparable with [this] British [army] has in modern history ever landed upon a foreign shore more inadequately equipped for invasion. With nothing but what each man could carry, with few bât-horses, no ambulances, no knowledge of the countryside, its roads or its resources, it had for its objective a fortress reputed to be one of the most powerful in Europe. It was impertinence; but an impertinence so sublime as to deserve success. (Pemberton 26.)

Sentiments of the like, however, were not enunciated in the Commons those two days; the only focus was upon the physical fact, and the only assumption was the allocatability of

censure. Those aspects of war regarded as sublime by commentators at some historical distance are, often as not, an inconvenience in democratic rhetoric at the time. What most concerns a democratic assembly is the number and condition of the wounded and fallen; it cannot easily accept casualties. But Britain's was not yet a fully democratic legislature. And Bulwer's rhetoric indicates that he too is between the extremes, of aristocratic glory in and democratic repugnance for war: casualties are acceptable only in the degree that their cause is just and their numbers few, but they are all the same to be expected.

Still, the agony of the Crimea might have been a good deal less had victories come not so much sooner as differently. Conditions in the Army weren't at their worst in the Crimean period; in fact, in some respects, they had improved over the previous twenty-five years (Warner 15). On the 14th of November, 1854, a hurricane broke upon the region, visiting havoc on the camps, but sinking supply shipping as well, particularly the *Prince*, a 2,700-ton steamship containing 40,000 suits of winter clothing, an enormous supply of ammunition and great quantities of medical stores. Numerous other ships, unsafely harbored at Balaklava, Eupatoria and elsewhere, were also destroyed (Palmer 164-65). Nonetheless,

> [h]ad the allied army entered Sebastopol in October - as its commanders had assumed it would when the army began [its] "nine day march" south from Calamita Bay - gales and blizzards need have left little mark on the troops: the army would have sheltered in stone buildings while the ships rode out the storm at safe anchorages (166).

This is not irrelevant second-guessing; it was a mistake of monstrous proportions for the allies not to have taken Sebastopol by October; had they done so, several thousand soldiers who did not would have seen the following autumn. Bulwer, through his lost officer, presents a similar option with respect to Odessa, where the young man believes the Army *must* be sending his colleagues and him. His superiors have kept secret where they are going, he writes his father, "'but we believe it is to take Odessa, which is full of corn granaries, &c. I think this is the best thing we could do, and winter there both army and navy. It is too late in the year to attack Sebastopol'" (*Speeches*, I, 225 [Handard 3rd, 136, 1172-1173]). Bulwer's young officer is, of course, correct, and the siege of Sebastopol will last eleven months - three hundred and twenty-two days. For those assembled in the House of Commons in the last days of January, however, the final events in the matter of Sebastopol are still much in the future. Nor did it, in Bulwer's eyes, distract them from the horrible circumstances at Sebastopol to ask his listeners to consider Odessa; after all, the young officer had.

How "the whole fortunes of the campaign would have changed if Odessa had been your depot instead of the Russian," Bulwer exclaims. "[W]hy did you not later effectively blockade Odessa and the Sea of Azoff?" There were "thirty ships of the line, forty steamers on the Euxine," and there was not attempted "so much as [a] blockade [of] the great magazine of the enemy! Well, your troops went to Gallipoli," Bulwer concludes dismally (223

[1171]). First of all, it is significant of the debates that they are categorical in their response to the War and that - here Bulwer is representative - they are numerous in their specifics. The public, generally, and no less the Membership had access to considerable information, then frequently referred to as "intelligence," concerning the War; this was in part owed to the journalists with the Army in the Crimea, who were the first war correspondents ever to accompany troops on a campaign; in part due to improved means of communication (earlier in the month a telegraph had been completed between Balaclava and London [Conacher 1968 478]); and in part due to the mails, which were uncensored by the military authorities and contained - as had the letters read from by Bulwer - a wealth of detail in observation and opinion out of the personal experience and often the professional perspectives of those at the front. With respect to Odessa, it had been claimed that an assault upon the city would have endangered British subjects there, particularly those in the grain trade; Bulwer points out, however, that these could have received "the most liberal compensation" had the Government come to Parliament for it (*Speeches* I 223 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 1170]). Bulwer does not mention, on the other hand, the far heavier investment in the city of Britain's French allies, which had been increasing steadily since the turn of the century (Palmer 225; Seaton 122). Bulwer's focus is upon the physical cost and the Government's ineptitude - "feeble incapacity," in Bulwer's words - for the Government had forborne "the easiest and the wealthiest

conquest of all, in order afterwards, in the very worst time, at the very worst season, to attempt an achievement the most difficult in itself, and which that forbearance to Odessa rendered more difficult still" (*Speeches*, I, 223 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 1170]). Bulwer's emphasis upon Odessa might even today perplex military students of the War: Warner, for example, says - in passing, it must be emphasized - that "Odessa was considered to be an extremely beautiful city and of no importance militarily; this latter point was as well for it could easily have been shot to pieces" (146). Nor were the Russians overly concerned, as manifest in the advice of Field Marshal Ivan Feodorovich Paskevich, who told the Tsar in February of 1854 that neither Odessa nor the Crimea would be attacked by the French and British but that, if either were, it could be defended with 35,000 troops (Seaton 45). Only Palmerston ever seriously considered taking Odessa; however, revived interest in peace talks on the part of France and Austria, "which [Palmerston] ascribed to the influence of Russian agents," brought the plan to naught (Rich 158-59).

It is interesting, then, to notice how far-fetched Bulwer's suggestions with respect to Odessa appear to be; this cannot be laid to Bulwer himself, however, who, while he had spent not a day on active service, was nonetheless following the pattern found among the public, no less than among the Membership, to second-guess the Administration, especially its three military Ministers and the generals and admirals who worked for them. Stranger yet was the fact that there was little

forthcoming regarding the admissibility of such criticism from most of these officials, regardless how specific the criticism was, with ministers and military representatives throughout the War - Sidney Herbert being a particularly apposite example - taking great pains to respond specifically to each individual accusation and suggestion in turn. Only Charles Napier (1786-1860) - the admiral, who had sat for Marylebone six years in the Forties and would be returned for Southwark in November, but who had taken a fleet to the Baltic the year before while out of Parliament - had about him the backbone to resign in loathing, though he alone seems actually to have saved lives in refusing to pursue naval activity in the Baltic which would have turned out to have been very stupid. This absence of reticence on the part of the public through its spokesmen, in Parliament, in the press and elsewhere, to challenge the particulars of the War can be seen as an advance in parliamentary democracy, in which Bulwer was then taking an exceedingly active role, despite its often imperspicuous and sometimes intransigent manifestations. In purely military terms, despite Bulwer's source in the young officer - who was not, after all, to be expected to be any more expert, given his age and status, in matters of strategy than Bulwer - Bulwer's suggestions cannot be taken seriously, but even in this aspect of military explanation the critical effort laid against the Government had its uses, as when Herbert, in desperation,

> seemed to admit the intervention of the Almighty against them when he said: "But when we talk of commanding the seas, we are apt to be rebuked by Him at whose breath the stormy wind arises, and we are visited by the terrible

> calamity which befell our transports a short time ago." (Conacher 1968 541.)

Bulwer, the man of letters, makes short and unmetrical shrift of the politician's poetry by means of a most potent rhetorical reply:

> It has been said, "How are the Government to blame for winds and hurricanes, rains and mud?" But you are to blame for taking no pains to learn that your army would be exposed to a climate that is subject to winds and hurricanes, rains and mud. You are to blame for not resorting to the ordinary inventions of art to counteract the hostile operations of nature. When the clouds gather, a prudent man takes out his umbrella; when the wind sets in the east, he will see that his coat can button; and a man attacked by cold and disease for neglecting such everyday precautions, might as well exclaim, "How could I foresee that it would rain or that it would blow?" as you exclaim, "How could we foresee that there would be winds, rain, or mud?" - in a climate in which winds, rain, and mud are the ordinary phenomena of winter.(*Speeches*, I, 227 [Hansard 3rd, 136, 1174].)

Bulwer brings home the point of the physical fact perhaps most evocatively when he repeats the means by which the Government might have known the conditions into which thousands of the Army were to be sent, referring to "any traveller" or "any authority" - that is, the *Gazetteer of the World* and McCulloch's *Geographical Dictionary*, both of which he has himself already referred to in the speech - as means for the Government's determining the conditions (225 [1173]). And he brings it home too in a supplementary accusation that "out of all the twelve months in the year you had taken the worst to encamp at Varna [summer], and it was of course equally consistent to take the worst to besiege Sebastopol, that Gibraltar of the East [autumn]" (225 [1173]). He acerbically contrasts the incompetent exertions of the Government with the everyday

precautions any person might take against inclemency of weather and seasonal change. And, of course, he implicitly mocks Herbert's elegant phrasing in repeating a prosaic recapitulation of it time and again to Herbert's logical disadvantage.

In retrospect, however, Bulwer's handling of the great fact of the Crimean campaign - that is, the physical condition to which the Army had been brought - might strike us today as unsophisticated, in part because he asserts things which do not bear up under historical analysis - nor were they accepted by those in authority in the day - and in part because of the revulsion at their affliction he so obviously felt in recounting the suffering of the troops. But both of these features of the speech, themselves representative of what many said and felt at the time and, thereby rhetorically central to Bulwer's design, can be explained in terms of the utter novelty of a war brought home to the Nation. Despite our modernity, which is sometimes claimed to include heightened sensitivity to the wretchedness of others, we are inured, in a way in which Bulwer and his contemporaries were not, to military and political suffering, let alone death, both in terms of the quality of its pain and the quantity of its victims. People in Bulwer's day, in the absence of direct experience, had little means of understanding war and its effect upon persons and, indeed, frequently romanticized it beyond anything any of us might accept today. In noticing both the high-flown phrasing and the awful concern discoverable in Bulwer's language, it is

well to keep the following comment by Ridley in mind: "[T]he middle-class Londoner and the Radical Lancashire artisan who cheered on the war against Russian despotism intended to carry on business as usual while the war was fought by aristocratic officers and men whom they despised as the scum of the earth. But in the course of the war a great change took place in public opinion; they came to despise the aristocratic officers as incompetent bunglers, and to regard the common soldier as a hero" (573). The antecedent perception and its tranformed manifestation each had a place in Bulwer's long interest in the Army; in *England and the English* twenty years earlier, for example, in the course of a discussion on flogging, which he did not wish dispensed with without a thorough revamping of the martial code so as to compensate for its benefits, Bulwer refers to the English soldier, in contrast to the soldier of France or Prussia, as "culled from the sink of the peasantry" (I, 97), with, indeed, two-thirds of them being Irish, and "the dregs of an Irish populace" at that (I, 97n). Clearly, he has adopted the new mode of viewing the British soldier, but his articulation of it in the present instance strikes one nevertheless as strained at best, especially when it is found mixed with the usual partisan rhetoric which dappled all his Crimean War speeches, however often to an ironically splendid effect and in memorable statement. He cannot, for example, resist a stab at the Government concerning the Foreign Enlistment Act, making it less to his former point of British patriotism and more now to one of German politics (*Speeches*, I, 228 [Hansard 3rd, 136,

1176]), and he is in this of course thoroughly right, if all the same untopical; he contradicts a previous speaker's assertion that the Government's problems lie in its being a coalition, finding that the most "powerful, even popular Administrations" of the past were coalitions, but adding that "one indispensable element of a coalition ... is that its members should coalesce" (229 [1176]). It is altogether unclear how this latter observation is at all helpful, given that only Lord John's resignation had broken the actual consensus and that the Coalition's Ministers refused to be sundered from Aberdeen, many, especially the Peelites, having been persuaded to join Palmerston only after the most persistent arm twisting by Aberdeen and the Queen. Bulwer cannot resist jabs at the Liberals, particularly the whigs, whom he calls "demagogues in opposition and oligarchs in office," and declares that they constitute "a small hereditary combination of great families, a fictitious monopoly of liberal policy - a genuine monopoly of lethargic government" (230 [1177-1178]). He ends the speech with a reference to the Seven Years' War in which "there was a Duke of Newcastle, who presided over the conduct of [that] war [too], and was supported by a league of aristocratic combinations. That war," Bulwer continues,

> was, indeed, a series of blunders and disasters. In vain attempts were made to patch up that luckless Ministry - in vain some drops of healthful blood were infused into its feeble and decrepit constitution - the people, at last, became aroused, indignant, irresistible. They applied one remedy; that remedy is now before ourselves. They dismissed their Government, and saved their army. (231 [1178]).

We have here, of course, *tory* history in the making: however one

might despise the whigs, and Bulwer came to early and did much, nevertheless it is little more than mindful fabulation to narrate a people's initiative, "aroused, indignant, irresistible," into the ruthless suppression of the whig Ministers by George the Third and the Earl of Bute. Nevertheless, it is a politically irresistible analogy, at least on the level of gossip, which, after all, politics in large measure comprises, to call attention to the failures of a man's ancestor as precedent for chastizing the man. Still, it is clear Bulwer had a point to be made, and whether the Government's resignation had any material impact upon the Army's saving or no, Bulwer's speech had clearly such an impact on the Government's fall. Sebastopol, then, became an icon in the political battle, held aloft by a Bulwer who had in mind the terrible price in Sebastopol only secondarily - if, and this must too be said, sincerely - to the more surpassing object: that he help bring down a Government with which he had, for numerous reasons, long since lost patience. Needless to say, his patience had finally been exhausted by the bloodletting in the Crimea and the bungling everywhere.

But what can be troubling about many of these questionably topical imbrications is that, while they grow out of the central points of the speech clearly enough, they tend to redirect Bulwer's inflections from a humanitarian concern for the troops at the front to a political concern with the Ministers at home, giving his intentions an appearance less decent and more cunning. Without doubt, in a political body, politics is what

is to be done. Nevertheless, at times in this speech, though by no means throughout, Bulwer appears to take on the persona that is often attributed to him of being more interested in the effectiveness of his reception than in the fulfillment of his proclaimed purposes. It is clear from what specialists in nineteenth-century British colonial history have to say of him that Bulwer was a highly competent, if short-lived, Minister, and the great expanse of his speeches shows him to be nearly unwaveringly statesmanlike in his approach to friend, foe and event alike, but from time to time, and this is one, it is clear that Bulwer could be as petty and vicious as any officemonger when he thought the politics of the moment demanded it. On the other hand, it would of course be prissily inappropriate to demand that his rhetoric always evidence only the sublimest skills and the most idealistic intentions. We may be surprised, but we shouldn't be put off by the bite when we find it.

## *The Crimean War*

*The Crimean War* was delivered on the 4th of June, 1855, in the course of a debate upon the question of settlement. The speech comprises three aspects, each independent of the other, but which, when taken together, as Bulwer intends, entirely capture the concerns incumbent upon Parliament and the public during the late spring of the second year of the War. Isolated these concerns can be embodied in three questions: What is the object of the War? How has the War been conducted thus far? How is the War to be managed from this point on? Each of these

questions is available to amplification. Granting the object of the War can be determined, is it to be pursued on the basis of principle or of statecraft? Has the War's conduct to the present time, however this may be construed in terms of its satisfactory progress or ultimate success, been appropriate? In its management, what are the proper roles of the various actors, among them, the military, the Government in both its Ministers and its bureaucracy, the Parliament as a body or in its individual Membership, the public, the press and the multiplicity of actively, and not so actively, engaged foreign parties. Because Bulwer is often responding simultaneously to several of these considerations, it is well to keep in mind that the underlying speech is a masterwork of organization in large measure because that organization is submerged within highly successful language on the one hand and within the strenuous rigor of the argument on the other.

Bulwer's conception of the object of the War cannot be understood apart from his notions of how it has been and should in the future be fought. More than any other speech of the set, *The Crimean War* is sprinkled with allusions and exhortations both to Ministers and to previous speakers, but also to the variety of points of view. Indeed, he acknowledges, as he moves into a lengthy condemnation addressed to Gladstone, that both Members for Manchester, the Anti-Corn-Law Liberal John Bright (1811-1888) and the future Board of Trade President and Liberal Thomas Milner Gibson (1807-1884)

> have the merit of consistency in the cause they espouse. They were against this war from the first. But I cannot

> conceive how any member of that Government which led us into this war, and is responsible for all it has cost us, should now suddenly adopt the language of the Peace Societies, and hold it as a crime if we push to success the enterprise he and his colleagues commenced by a failure (*Speeches*, I, 248 [Hansard 3rd, 138, 1379]).

It is Bulwer's wish to convey an ambiance of argumentation, perhaps of dialectic, and so to camouflage the subtler designs of the address; he is responding to none of his hearers, but answering to all of them, taking, as it were, a defense of the Opposition's position in practice, at least as he conceives it and, as, it should be remembered, an independent Member, making of it the advocation for a certain vision of policymaking: Those in the House, he says, "can only judge by results; and, however unfair that may seem to Governments, it is the sole course left to us, unless [as would be in the present case] we are always dictating to our allies and hampering our generals" (259 [1390]). Now the origin of his concern is more than simply a desire to adhere to the practice of the separation of powers; Bulwer is insisting that the Government do its job and, in particular, keep to the original object to whose end hostilities had expressly been initiated: "the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, secured by all the guarantees which statesmen can devise, or victory enable us to demand" (259 [1390]). The achievement of this end requires both a mode and a context: "The more definite the object, the more firm you will be in asserting it. How the object is to be effected, how those securities are to be obtained, is not the affair of the House of Commons" (259 [1390]). It is not possible to convey more succinctly that understanding of the formal

relationship Bulwer indicates as prevailing between the Commons and the Queen's Ministers, nor more substantively to exemplify in the contemporary instance the manner in which the formal precepts concomitant upon it must apply. In this delivery, Bulwer is not advocating a specific military decision upon this fortress or that estuary, nor complaining that one already taken against this peninsula or that sealane has fallen short of the Ministers' reach or the Army's sustenance; rather, he is presenting the Government with his understanding of the limits within which its ambition must operate, no more falling back in fear from incomplete actions than expanding out of arrogance in ill-advised directions. In this demand for balance, Bulwer does not hesitate to upbraid Derby's son, Lord Stanley (1826-1893), a so-called Liberal Conservative and a future Minister and Commissioner under both Conservative and Liberal Governments, who sat for Kings Lynn from 1848 until succeeding to his father's title and seat in the Lords twenty years later. The passage is fluent, but appears deceptively unstudied in its movement between Bulwer's defense of attainable goals and the historical precedents available in a comprehension of them, and it is also, by the way, far-sighted with respect to Stanley's prospects:

> "Oh," said a noble friend of mine the other night, "it is a wretched policy to humble the foe that you cannot crush; and are you mad enough to suppose that Russia can be crushed?" Let my noble friend, in the illustrious career which I venture to prophesy lies before him, beware how he ever endeavours to contract the grand science of statesmen into scholastic aphorism. No, we cannot crush Russia as Russia, but we can crush her attempts to be more than Russia. We can, and we must, crush any means that enable her to storm or to steal across that tangible barrier which

> now divides Europe from a Power that supports the maxims of Machiavelli with the armaments of Brennus. You might as well have said to William of Orange, "You cannot crush Louis XIV.; how impolitic you are to humble him!" You might as well have said to the burghers of Switzerland, "You cannot crush Austria; don't vainly insult her by limiting her privilege to crush yourselves!" William of Orange did not crush France as a kingdom - Switzerland did not crush Austria as an empire; but William did crush the power of France to injure Holland - Switzerland did crush the power of Austria to enslave her people; and in that broad sense of the word, by the blessing of Heaven, we will crush the power of Russia to invade her neighbours and convulse the world. (260 [1390-1391].)

Now, it is clear that Bulwer means not to compare William of Orange or Switzerland to England, but to Turkey and, perhaps ironically, to Austria herself, with England's role the somewhat novel one of a Great Power's doing the goodly work weak nations had usually been left to do on their own. And the condition of Austria, caught between Russia and the Allies, tentative and historically resentful of the Ottomans, militarily the weakest of the Powers, is not far from his mind throughout the speech: "It is easy to threaten Austria with the dismemberment of her ill-cemented empire - easy to threaten her with reduction to a fourth-rate power" (257 [1387-1388]). But the problem of Austria, that is, the problem *for Great Britain* of Austria, is neither Austria's need of protection *vis-à-vis* Russia nor her natural desire to represent her own, if her mutable interests, in any exchange of state; rather, allowing Austria's interests were *fairly* represented, allowing she were given "a third coequal voice in all the conduct of the war" (257 [1388]), then just as naturally she would serve to "introduce into [these] councils [already in place between the Allies] a certain element of vacillation and discord" (257 [1388]). Here

Bulwer advises that the Government exercise patience, maintaining Austria "in her present attitude of friendly neutrality," assured that Austria's own reception of Russian ambitions will be inherently partial to the Allies, even as they remain in accordance with "the dictates of her own sense of self-interest" (257 [1388]).

In effect, the Government must use Austria's insecurities and timidity - indeed, to her own benefit - without permitting her into the Alliance. Bulwer's notion of management in statecraft, then, is funded by the concept of the balance of power as delicately conceived and refuses the kind of hugely gathered force which to some appears the sole alternative to settlements negotiated short of attainable goals. Conversely, with respect to Russia, Bulwer points out that she depends for her military strength upon huge armies taken from the land where they are needed in agriculture and transported great distances by primitive means at great cost, so that, at a point, from "exertions at once violent and sustained her sinews are [no longer] strong enough to support her bulk" (261 [1391]); further, she depends for her "pecuniary resources" upon easily blockaded *entrepôts*, through which must move the whole of her export of raw materials (261 [1391]); all that need be done is to insure she be brought to maximum utilization of her resources in war and to minimum utilization of them in commerce and "you have [thereby] at work for you, not only your fleets and armies, but the vital interests of Russia herself" (261 [1392]). Bulwer nears the end of his speech, appropriately enough, with

comments developed out of this context:

> She cannot resist you long, provided you are thoroughly in earnest. She may boast and dissimulate to the last, but rely on it that peace will come to you suddenly - will, in her proper name, knock loudly at the door which you do not close against peace herself, but against her felonious counterfeit, who would creep through the opening disguised in her garments, and with the sword concealed under her veil. (261 [1392].)

But there are other aspects of the speech which cannot be passed over in silence, for they amplify Bulwer's general approach to the issues which has just been discussed. From the Allied perspective, the War is being fought in order to obtain a Russian renunciation with respect to each of Four Points: (1) hegemony over the Danubian Principalities, (2) exclusive navigational control of the Danube in the Balkans, (3) military dominance of the Black Sea and (4) such treaties with Turkey as antedate the War (Conacher 1987 *passim*). If the Government, Parliament or the Nation wavers in its insistence on any of these, especially the Third, then Russia will be encouraged to continue the sacrifice at whatever cost; irresolution or indecision at this point by the Government or in the Commons will lead "Russia to deceive herself, to deceive her subjects" (*Speeches*, I, 255 [Hansard 3rd, 138, 1386]). Speeches given in Parliament now which indicate weakness, "a Russian General might read to his troops, a Russian Minister might translate to trembling merchant and beggared nobles, if he desired to animate them all to new exertions against [the Allies]" (255 [1386]).

Bulwer's arguments here are again to the point rather of consequence than immediate, but nominal success. Two

suggestions short of terms demanded of Russia upon a full Allied victory have been made in the course of the debate; Bulwer responds to each in turn: If, for instance, Russia were held simply short of predominance, that is, allowed to retain her fortresses and a naval competence just short of that of the policing British and French squadrons, which thereby will have been committed to the enormous expense and disadvantage of "perpetual surveillance" (252 [1384]), then "far from putting an end to the probabilities of war, it [will leave] the fleets of England and France perpetually threatening Russia" (253 [1384]). But this is not all: "[W]hile such a position could hardly fail sooner or later to create jealousy between England and France, [no] disease ... would more rot away the independence of Turkey than this sort of chronic protection established in her own waters" (253 [1384]). If, on the other hand, France and Britain should withdraw, leaving Russian strength at pre-War levels and Turkey the prerogative to recall the other Allies upon a perceived threat, then any fright of the Sultan would return events to the state of irresolution in which they had previously existed, but with all advantage lost to the Allies, for as the Russians would surely gain in strength, so would the Allies lose, "and ... while ... now not one Russian flag can show itself on those waters, you might then, before you could enter the Straits, find that flag waving in triumph over the walls of the Seraglio" (253 [1384]). The object of the War must then remain within a reasonable rendering of the Points, especially the Third, unless Britain is willing to give up even

the pretense of the promise with which she entered it.

Thus Bulwer's advice as to the conduct of the War, even his analysis of the degree of its success or lack of it to the present moment, resides only implicitly within the speech. This is consistent with his discussion of its management. But there are two points with which he initiates his remarks which, first said, seem trivially patriotic, but contextualized by the argument which follows present themselves in a somewhat different light, indicating as they do this tacit advice: Would those who debate England's honor not do so

> with indisputable justice if, after encouraging Turkey to a war with her most powerful enemy, we could accept any terms of peace which Turkey herself indignantly refuses to indorse? Honour, indeed, is a word on which many interpreters may differ, but at least all interpreters agree upon this, that the essential of honour is fidelity to engagements (247 [1379]).

England has engaged itself to the end that Turkey be permanently free from Russian aggression. Bulwer's notion of honor here is no abstract theorem developed to an emotional effect; it is the fundamental offspring of an active, practical political insight:

> ... I answer, because the continuance of the war is as yet essential to the vindication of the national honour, and because that national honour is the bulwark of the national interests. For there is this distinction between individuals and nations: with the first a jealous tenacity of honour may be mere sentiment, with the last it is a condition of power. If you lower the honour of a man in the eyes of his equals, he may still say, "My fortune is not attacked, my estate is unimpaired, the laws still protect my rights and my person, I can still command my dependents and bestow my beneficence upon those who require my aid;" but if you lower the honour of a nation in the eyes of other states, and especially a nation like England, which owes her position, not to her territories, but to her character - not to the amount of her armies, nor even to the pomp of her fleets, but to a general belief in her high spirit and

> indomitable will - her interests will be damaged in proportion to the disparagement of her name. You do not only deface her scutcheon, you strike down her shield. Her credit will be affected, her commerce will suffer at its source. Take the awe from her flag, and you take the wealth from her merchants; in future negotiations her claims will be disputed, and she can never again interfere with effect against violence and wrong in behalf of liberty and right. These are some of the consequences which might affect the interests of this country if other nations could say, even unjustly, that England had grown unmindful of her honor. (247 [1378-1379])

It is clear, then, here that Bulwer is possessed of something more than a simplistic understanding of the notion of honor; certainly, it comes in its synonymity closer to authority than to prestige, closer to integrity than to eminence. From it may be inferred the sense Bulwer has of affairs when he offers advice on how the War is to be managed, advice not quite modern, but forward thinking and maturely aware of peripheries. While the language is couched as pathotic evocation, a necessary rhetorical maneuver in any case, the content is driven by the imperatives of a reasoned proposal in policy. An emphasis on feelings in delivery is always dangerous and invites the charge of emotionalism or the like; but it must be understood that Bulwer's ability to influence policy, while significant, was by no means either authoritative or certain. Good politics is done and, therefore, good political advice is rendered in terms of a sensible concession to limitations, particularly, but not exclusively, one's own. *The Crimean War* is a speech which, finely aware of its own portion, is able to indicate limits without suggesting weakness and to urge policy without insisting upon specifics.

*The Vienna Negotiations*

*The Vienna Negotiations*, given a little fewer than six weeks after *The Crimean War*, is an important speech for a number of reasons: It represented through Bulwer the forces in the House of Commons which disapproved of the conduct of the War on the part of the Administration in general and Lord John Russell in particular. It was delivered under circumstances which were historically unusual in the House of Commons. It was itself a strong speech in which Lord John Russell's defects were detailed, although not as thoroughly as they might have been had Lord John not unexpectedly resigned moments before Bulwer was to give the address. The speech was as well an attempt to expose a Cabinet which Bulwer, Disraeli and others believed to be more aligned with Russell's position on the Austrian proposals than its individual members were willing to acknowledge. Finally, it was a fairly eloquent call for unity in a Government prosecuting a war.

The Vienna Conference of 1855 had been agreed to in a treaty, signed by Austria, Britain and France on the 2nd of December, 1854, which stipulated that the Allies should get Russia to accept the Four Points or Austria would join the belligerents (Prest 372). The Four Points had a significant history and, as we have seen, played a central role, particularly the Third Point, in Bulwer's speeches. The French and British had consented to the Vienna Conference in the first place to keep the Austrians happy, for Austrian participation at any level greater than absolute neutrality would keep

Russian troops tied up in Eastern Europe and away from the Crimea. As a result, then, of Austrian tentativeness and Allied distress over Russian naval and military potential on the Black Sea, for the duration of the Conference, the French and English ideal for the Third Point, at least in so far as Louis Napoleon and Palmerston were concerned, did not budge from *neutralization* of the Black Sea, while more moderate positions, held by Count Karl Ferdinand von Buol-Schauenstein, the Austrian foreign minister, Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys, the French foreign minister, Lord John, the British foreign minister, and others, ranged among various notions of *limitation* of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Finally, the Austrians suggested several *counterpoise* solutions, some of which embodied limitation proposals.

Because of the complexity of the issues and the multiplicity of parties - not just nations, but factions within nations, as well as individuals representing either of these or themselves alone - it was not always clear what specifics might be meant when any of these central terms, that is, *limitation, neutralization* or *counterpoise*, was used; nevertheless, each term stood for a conception which combined in the minds of the many actors and observers the possibilities of peace and military success or, conversely, failure. But this complexity of positions was made further intricate by a private understanding reached in December, 1854, between Britain and France, even as their public postures remained commensurate with that of the Austrians; this agreement, referred to by

Norman Rich as the "'stronger' interpretation" of the Third Point, called for

> the demolition of the great Russian naval base of Sebastopol and all other Russian fortresses on the coasts of the Black Sea, and a Russian guarantee never to rebuild them. The Russians were to be allowed to maintain only four warships on the Black Sea, the same number as Turkey. The Anglo-French interpretation thus required not only the elimination of Russian preponderance on the Black Sea, but Russia's relegation to a status of permanent inferiority (146).

While these were the secret intentions of Britain and France, they were eventually presented under the rubric of neutralization, which the Russians, of course, rejected out of hand, since it implied "a loss of Russian sovereignty in the Black Sea area and a severe national humiliation" (Rich 150). This was precisely as Palmerston, Clarendon and the War Party had hoped.

As has already been seen in *The Crimean War*, Bulwer had also espoused one of the stronger limitation positions and had given no evidence that he would be inclined to reject the option of neutralization; further, he had specifically repudiated other, weaker limitation options and, more importantly, any idea of counterpoise. As the War in time went against the Russians and the truculent Nicholas I died, his son, Alexander II, ignorant of the Anglo-French interpretation, grew more amenable with regard to the "weaker" renderings of the Third Point. Further, the Austrians, who had continually alienated their Russian neighbors throughout the affair, wished to avoid fulfilling their oft-repeated promise to join the Allies in the field and thereby offer Russia the final insult.

Lord John Russell had been sent to Vienna, in the role of plenipotentiary, for a number of reasons, but the one which was most important was that Lord Palmerston wished to insure the absence of his "great rival for the role of saviour of the nation, ... who [had] now [been]pushed right out into the cold" after having accidentally cleared Palmerston's way to the Prime Ministry (Ridley 586). Russell was still the leading whig and might, from his seat in Parliament, use Palmerston's ascendancy against him if the War continued to go badly. So, even though Palmerston had no interest in the peace process to which the Austrians, in accordance with the Treaty of the 2nd of December, 1854, had invited Russia and the Allies, Britain must all the same be represented, and Russell, "who was very conscious of his political isolation, was pleased to accept" (587). Indeed, had Russell been left in Parliament

> [t]here was no knowing what mine he might spring under the new ministry, nor what way the Palmerstonian rank and file in the house of commons would find of reminding him that he had not [as *The Times* of 23 Oct 1865 would eventually put it] "acted on those principles which are taken for granted as the foundation of the intercourse and combination of public men with each other." (Prest 372)

The Vienna Conference went pretty much as Lord Palmerston had anticipated, except that Buol, Drouyn and Russell worked out a statement of the "weaker" interpretation of the Third Point, which the Allied representatives agreed to present to their Governments. Those aspects bearing most upon the question of the Black Sea included first the notion that the Russians would themselves determine the limitation of their Fleet. Control of this process was to be exercised by the Allies in their meeting

any Russian increase with "a corresponding buildup (a graduated counterpoise);" were the buildup to go beyond pre-War Russian levels, such "would be regarded as a Russian act of aggression that would be met by an Allied declaration of war" (Rich 150). Any threat to the Porte under these terms would dissolve the provisions of the Straits Treaty of 1841, which otherwise would be allowed to stand (150).

Neither Louis Napoleon nor the British Cabinet ultimately accepted these conditions, and the War continued in lieu of the possibilities offered by the Conference. However, this was not before Drouyn de Lhuys and Russell had attempted to persuade their respective principals of the efficacy of the Austrian proposals. The reception Russell got could have been foretold in a comment of Palmerston to Clarendon that he "was very glad that John Russell is coming away. The truth is ... he is a man who seldom sees the consequence of his own acts" (Conacher 39). The War Party, despite hesitation by others - now absent the Peelites, who might have thrown their weight behind the proposals - prevailed. In France, Louis Napoleon initially hesitated, but quickly decided with his own war party. Drouyn de Lhuys immediately resigned. Lord John attempted to, but was talked out of it by Palmerston, who had further plans for the poor man. With the Cabinet now against the proposals, Russell, trying to play the good trooper, made the greatest mistake of his career and on the 24th of May delivered a vigorous exhortation in behalf of continuing the War. Count Buol felt understandably betrayed and eventually released through his

ambassadors throughout Europe documentation proving Lord John had supported the proposals. In due time, Russell "was ruined" (Prest 376), forced on the 29th of June to admit in the Commons to Buol's accusation and on the 6th of July to endure a question put by the Manchester Member and Peace Party leader, Thomas Milner Gibson (1807-1884), who asked how, if these were his real views, he could remain in the Government to say nothing of champion their contrary before the Commons. Ironically, while the machinations that had taken place in the Cabinet prompted all parties there to support Lord John, lesser members of the Government not privy to the decision-making process called for his resignation (Conacher 60-61).

On Tuesday, the 10th of July, Bulwer signified that he intended to move a censure upon Lord John. Disraeli wrote to Derby that, while the Motion had a great deal to gain, little could be lost, for "[i]n the present instance the feeling is strong and general against [the Government]" (Conacher 60). In response to the threat of Bulwer's Motion, Palmerston proposed to make public certain documents from the Allied-Austrian negotiations and asked for a postponement. Disraeli objected to the delaying tactic:

> We have something more authentic than any diplomatic documents to guide our judgments on the present occasion. We have the most authentic evidence in the world. We have, Sir, the speech of a Cabinet Minister (Russell), the principal actor on the scene; and it is on his own confession, on his own revelations, on his own evidence, that I am perfectly prepared to form my opinion, and to give my vote. (Hansard 3rd, 139, 811.)

"Really, Sir", Palmerston responded, "I think the right hon. gentleman has made 'much ado about nothing,'" and went on

to explain the circumstances of procedure as he accepted them (812-814). Bulwer, well known, of course, as a literary person, took the opportunity to remind Palmerston that "'Much Ado about Nothing' comes just after 'the Comedy of Errors'" (814). He accepted Palmerston's timeframe, but decided to bring his Motion forward as "substantive ..., rather than as an Amendment to the Motion for going into Committee of Supply (815). Still, it was too much, and Lord Palmerston, giving all the appearances of reluctance, admitted to "the storm which has swelled to a hurricane, and could not be withstood," (Conacher 61) and accepted Lord John's resignation.

Lord Lytton suggests that this speech, given its "peculiar" circumstances, caused Bulwer "no little embarrassment" afterwards (II, 229), but given the circumstances, peculiar or not, Bulwer had little choice but to deliver it. Conacher characterizes the speech as "one of the most scathing attacks ever delivered by one front bench politician against another," an attack which Bulwer had said he would make "under the altered circumstances ... as temperate as possible" (63). However, the fact of the matter is that Bulwer gave no such unqualified assurance; the "statement," he said, would be made

> as temperately as may be consistent with the requisite proof that it was not upon light grounds that we brought forward a charge against a man so eminent, and against a Government so justly entitled to the indulgence of compassion. (*Speeches*, II, 17 [Hansard 3rd, 139, 901].)

Unmentioned, however, went the fact that simple resignation does not of itself relieve a Queen's Minister of culpability.

What Bulwer is calling attention to is the reality that Lord John is no ordinary diplomat, dispatched to perform duties and do as he was told; "indeed," Conacher elsewhere acknowledges, no mere "ambassadorial representative ... he had a free hand in revising his own instructions" (30). "Here was a great and distinguished statesman," Bulwer points out, "who had held the office of Chief Minister to the Crown, who was sent to Vienna to negotiate terms of peace, or to report to us honestly the necessity for continued war" (*Speeches*, II, 17 [Hansard 3rd, 139, 901]). When Bulwer follows this characterization with the assertion that Lord John does not understand how the position he has taken "is viewed by his countrymen," what he means by "position" is the apparent duplicity, on the one hand, of Lord John's pretending to agreement with the Cabinet's express desire to continue the War while, on the other, his concealing his advise to the Cabinet - and an understanding with the Austrians - that the War might be ended on the basis of a situation amounting to counterpoise in the Black Sea.

Unknown to all but the highest Government Ministers seated in the House, as we have seen, was the fact that both Palmerston and Clarendon had engaged in secret discussions with the French concerning settlement, including the notion of neutralization of the Black Sea. It is likely that Bulwer would have been in accord with the Anglo-French understanding had he been aware of it, so that Russell's activities were, from Bulwer's point of view, doubly foolish; Bulwer had already spoken against counterpoise, the Austrian favorite, in his speech of June 4th

and, further, did not trust the idea of bringing the Austrians in as equal participants. For Bulwer, the Third Point meant limitation, the interpretation for which he believed he had successfully argued for on the 4th of June and which he had taken Lord John to be promoting in his speech of the 24th of May, both as his own view and as that of the Government. In Parliament, Lord John's apparent duplicity had enraged every faction from the Peace Party to extremist supporters of the War; out of doors, the Press "fell on him with a fury which was both unprecedented and unrestrained" (Walpole, II, 266). It was clear, then, as the Members assembled on the evening of the 16th of July, that Russell was to acquit himself fully or resign; in this, it is clear as well, from Bulwer's speech, that a resignation was less important than a possible defense, because many, no less Bulwer, wished to wring from the Government some sense not only of its activities, but of its intentions. Lord John was, given this, more a medium than an end in himself.

Having worked through his acknowledgment of Lord John's resignation and his extemporaneous restatement of rhetorical purpose, Bulwer entered into a review of Russell's resignation of the previous January in conjunction with his appointment to Vienna:

> Under what circumstances was he selected? He had just before broken up a Government by his own solitary desertion - a desertion so sudden, and accompanied by a denunciation of two of his colleagues so startling, that it was without parallel in the records of this House. But it was not without an excuse. What was the excuse? Why, that upon a question involving the fate of armies he could not, as an honest man, conceal his sentiment, and rather than do so he left his associates whom he could not defend. Well, that is a very noble excuse; and in saying so, I do not desire to

> imply a sarcasm. (*Speeches*, II, 17 [Hansard 3rd, 139, 901-902].)

At this point, Lord John interrupted the speech to point out that his resignation of January had been brought about by his inability to oppose John Roebuck's Motion for the appointment of a Select Committee on Sebastopol, not by an incapacity to defend his colleagues (17-18 [902]). Bulwer accepts the distinction, but calls attention to the fact that, if Lord John's "explanation at that period was rightly conceived, it informed us that he was compelled to retire, and to break up the Government of which he was so eminent a member, because of his distrust of the warlike capacities of his colleagues" that is, Aberdeen, Newcastle and Sidney Herbert (18 [902]).

What Bulwer is doing here is not so much condemning any particular action of Russell's, but indicating that resignation tendered on principle must be founded on it; the point had been accepted in January, regardless of the consequences, but recent events had led to speculation on Lord John's motives right along. Bulwer repeats the point, first in short question-and-answer form, then in sarcastic explication:

> He says he could not resist inquiry. Inquiry into what? National disasters; ascribed to what? To the want of competent vigour either in the chief Minister or the Minister of War. This was his excuse for not suppressing his sentiments. I say again, a noble excuse, but an excuse that required the uniformity of an inflexible political creed. Well, then, this statesman is sent to Vienna.... (18 [902].)

Bulwer wants to imply that the Government has willfully put

itself at risk in this.

It is clearly Bulwer's intention to get at the Government. In addressing himself to Lord John's speech of the 24th of May, he calls attention not only to "the noble Lord['s] ... marked disdain of the propositions which embodied that main principle of naval counterpoise which, we have since learned, the Austrian propositions contained" (18 [902]), but also a proposal made by Gladstone to leave the Straits Treaty of 1841 intact (18-19 [902-903]). "The noble Lord then proceeded triumphantly to argue in favour of the absolute necessity of limiting the power of Russia in the Black Sea" (19 [903]). Bulwer reviews both Lord John's speech of May 24th and, implicitly, his own speech of June 4th:

> He denounced the idea of guarding against that [Russian] force by any counterpoise in the ships which the Western Powers might station in those waters [the Black Sea]; he pointed out the costly and preposterous folly of our being there, to use his own words, "perpetually defending Turkey." (19 [903].)

Mockingly, Bulwer mimics the recruiting sergeant bringing men to service on the basis of the Austrian counterpoise proposals:

> "Fight, my boys, for your Queen and country. Think of Alma and Balaklava. Never mind a cannon-ball nor a wooden leg if you obtain this glorious result - that if Russia shall hereafter be at liberty to send eight ships of war to the Black Sea, Old England shall have the privilege of sending four." (22 [906])

Finally, Bulwer delineates what he believes to be the proper principle funding a continuance of the War: "What are the reasons," he asks, "which, in the noble Lord's mind, rendered a certain proposition for peace honourable and expedient in May, which are not equally good in favour of such a peace in July?"

(22 [906]).

Bulwer now recapitulates Lord John's reasoning: "'We have gained some victories,' he says; 'our army is in a better state'" (22 [906]). These are "good arguments" if Britain were "at war for dominion, none if we are at war for definite objects of justice. I deprecate this sliding-scale of homicide, which is to go up and down with every fluctuation in the market of blood" (22 [906]). With these two metaphors, both derived from economics - "sliding-scale of homocide" and "the market of blood" - Bulwer is able to reconstitute the point of the war within the contexts of antithetical alternatives: either Britain is at war for dominion, which for most British had economic implications in any case, and all of Russell's behavior is reasonable or Britain attains to higher goals in this specific conflict and Russell's behavior is faithless and, thereby, reprehensible.

Bulwer moves to an attack upon Russell himself. There are two motives: his adversary is "disingenuous," joining "with his colleagues to urge us to sacrifice the best blood of England in a war that he deemed no longer necessary, and to disdain the peace that he himself recommended" (20 [904]); he lacks logic, preferring peace last Friday because Russia was so powerful, but preferring war on the 24th of May because, again, Russia was so powerful (20 [904]). Vicious as the language is, it is little more than Lord John deserved; it is only on the grounds that resignation absolves all blame that a commentator can allow of embarrassment to Bulwer. It is, however, to be admitted that,

while Bulwer's attacks upon Russell are strong, his attacks upon Palmerston are by far the more substantive.

First of all, Palmerston the previous Thursday had said that the Government was ready to "stand or fall together" (23 [907; v. 814 for Palmerston's specific response to Bulwer on the circumstances under which Ministers answer Members]); nevertheless, aside from the statement of this "old Parliamentary principle that one Minister of the Cabinet does not stand alone," there is the fact that, given Russell's appointment to Vienna, "if any blame was subsequently to be attached to the noble Lord, ... the chief Minister of the Crown shared the responsibility" - especially given his insistence before the Commons the previous Friday that he could find "no cause to invite the resignation of his colleague" (23 [907; v. 812-814, where Palmerston's reticence to declare himself one way or the other is unmistakable, whence his retreat to procedure]). Indeed, "more than" simply representing "a majority," Bulwer reiterates, Palmerston "is First Minister of the Crown, and he alone is responsible for the unanimity of his Cabinet" (25 [909]). Further, Palmerston had pledged in February to "adhere to the foreign policy of Lord Aberdeen with regard to the war;" it is now clear that those who want the "Austrian peace" might find the promise given too lightly, while those who want the War pursued with vigor might find the promise not well kept (24 [907-908]). The Government, responsible to all, has undertaken to please none. Finally, "the noble Viscount who succeeded Lord Aberdeen in the

Government, on the express ground that all dissension upon the question of peace or war should cease, deems that dissension in the Cabinet of no consequence, so long as it is concealed" (25 [908-909]).

Bulwer spends the last third of the speech discussing the specifics of Cabinet decision-making over the last weeks as he understands them, challenging, in the course of this, individual members, among them Sir G.Cornewall Lewis (1806-1863) and Sir Charles Wood (1800-1885), who have replaced Gladstone and Sir James Graham (1792-1861) as Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Admiralty respectively, for their views (28 [912]). When foreign affairs are discussed, "[i]s Lord Claredon the spokesman of a united Cabinet?" Bulwer asks (28 [912]). "One thing, however, is clear; we cannot afford the ridicule of Europe consequent upon these constant Cabinet scandals - we cannot allow the great name of England to be thus frittered away" (28 [911]). This is Bulwer's central point. While he may have been as harsh on Lord John as Conacher would claim, nevertheless, his attack is delivered essentially upon the Government and its inability to maintain a tangible consensus in the context of a great war. In fact, Russell has resigned twice in fewer than six months from two different Administrations, each time because the Government of which he had been a member was unable to bring accord to its counsels. That this disunity was at least in part the consequence of Palmerston's conscious activity, Bulwer does not claim, if he seems to suspect. What Bulwer wishes to make clear, however, is

that Lord John's difficulties are ultimately symptoms of a larger issue: the ability of the present government to conduct the War. In *The Vienna Negotiations,* then, Bulwer performs several tasks at once: he utilizes the obvious to get at the obscure, assigns responsibility to the Government, but through individuals, whose decision-making, after all, *constitutes* the Government and, finally, organizes his attack sufficiently broadly that details will not obstruct him, but with sufficient command of detail that he need not fall to generalizing. And it is important that a person in a position such as Bulwer's be sensitive at each point to stases of these kinds, for in politics only the inconsequential is ever concluded, transparent, imputable or complete.

## Chapter Six

## Cabinet and Imperial Business

### Introduction

Bulwer spoke often in Parliament and on a diversity of subjects. Many speeches, however, do not possess the unity of purpose found in the speeches which have been selected for consideration as sets in the preceding four Chapters and in consequence do not display any special mandate in terms of their express subject matter. All of these speeches, however, were given within the context of circumstances whose significance was great in Bulwer's day and whose historical implications remain even to the present. While the greater portion of the present Chapter will be devoted to speeches which Bulwer gave at a time when he was a leading figure in the Conservative Party, two from his early days in the House of Commons, when Bulwer was a Liberal, are of great quality in and of themselves, but prefigure as well his general approach to Britain's duties with respect to matters concerning Imperial dominion, Colonial control and the state of affairs in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Given their dissimilar subject matter, these speeches will be introduced independently.

*The Suppression of Disturbances in Ireland*

The first of these speeches, delivered on the 27th of February, 1833, was given on *The Suppression of Disturbances in Ireland*. Bulwer addressed the Commons seconding an Amendment moved by Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt (1784-1861), a Liberal Member for Lambeth and uncle of Alfred Lord Tennyson, the poet. The Amendment submitted that the Bill's Second Reading should be given that day a fortnight, an attempt to terminate the progress of the Bill as it made its way through the procedures of its passing. English domination of Ireland is, of course, as well known an historical fact as there is, so there's no requirement here to reiterate either the frequent injustices or the occasional viciousness of that long, needless blemish on British history. Nor is it necessary to detail the resistance, sometimes sporadic, often violent, which met the incursion of English and Scots settlers and their government onto the island. But the immediate grounds of dissatisfaction demand brief mention, the greatest of which was the forced tithing by Catholics, far and beyond the majority of Irish, of the Established Church in Ireland. In effect, Catholics, particularly the Catholic peasantry, were forced to support the lucrative benefices of the Established Irish Church priests and bishops, themselves often of no account to anyone, even to communicants of their own "alien State Church" (Maccoby, III, 85), while the unendowed Catholic clergy were forced to make do with whatever they could. Peel was to deal with this ten years later, but it was a severe cause of unrest in Ireland in

1833.

The other great cause was that of the tenure. By the 19th century, few Irish peasants owned their land, and the rest must farm land for which rent was paid in work. Much land and few renters would have, Woodward suggests, made an "enviable" situation for the farmers (316), but the reality was the reverse. In consequence, as he puts it, all risk was taken by the tenant and all advantage by the owner, who, to make matters worse, worked through a middleman system which siphoned off revenue of its own. Nassau Senior called the ensuing exertion for land "like the struggle to buy bread in a besieged town, or to buy water in an African caravan" (quoted in Woodward 317). As in many other years, in 1833, unrest in Ireland, especially rural unrest, was abounding, and Reform's first Ministry was resolved to show its competence in responding to it with as much will as would have any recent tory Administration. Then, as now, when such resolve to law and order is found in a Conservative government, it is seen as natural to it and of little Constitutional consequence; when, on the contrary, such resolve to law and order is discovered in a Liberal government, it is seen as betrayal of the Constitution. Ireland and Coercion would eventually bring down Lord Grey, who was premier at the time of the speech, but at this point the question was merely the workability of the specific Bill before the House.

Bulwer begins his speech with the interesting promise that he will let others oppose the Coercion Bill because it is

"tyrannical" or "oppressive;" he will oppose it on the grounds that the Bill is "inefficacious," that it "will not obtain the objects for which [it] is demanded" (*Speeches*, I, 34 [Hansard 3rd, 15, 1231]). While Bulwer signals a speech of pure and reasoned argument, it quickly becomes clear he has no intention of surrendering eloquence entirely to logic. And in this speech, Bulwer is eloquent enough in his argument against the nominal constructs the law will create, but more eloquent still in his descriptions of the psychological implications of the law's actual employment:

> I am sure that no people on the face of the earth can be governed by the system his Majesty's Ministers propose. To-day concession - tomorrow coercion. This quick alteration of kicks and kindness - this coaxing with the hand, and spurring with the heel - this system, at once feeble and exasperating, of allowing the justice of complaint, and yet of stifling its voice - of holding out hopes and fears, terror and conciliation all in a breath, is a system that renders animals and men alike - not tame, but savage - is a system that would make the most credulous people distrustful, and the mildest people ferocious. (38 [1234-1235].)

This is not only good rhetoric and good psychology; it is, when abstracted from these, the essence of Bulwer's argument and very good law to boot. Two features, Bulwer wants to say, must be present in order for a law to be effective: the government must be able to apply it; the government must apply it consistently. Neither of these features is promised in the present Bill. These qualities of an effective law are by no means newly uttered with Bulwer; indeed, one can find reference to them in one form or another in any competent legal system or jurisprudential scheme. But while anciently and broadly recognized in principle, in practice they may come to be ignored

in the sometimes bitter transactions of civil society. Because exactly such circumstances had formed in the century or so just prior to the nineteenth, a fact he found utterly appalling, Jeremy Bentham made them fundamentals of his legal philosophy. The presence of fairness and justice, while important to Bentham, were thought by him to follow from, not precede, a proper application of the law. Further, law should be developed through clear and reasoned codification and maintain a Constitutional availability to the varied Interests of all who came under its rule.

Bentham was a significant influence on Bulwer's legal and political perspectives, although, as has already been pointed out, Bulwer was never a Benthamite or a Philosophical Radical as such. Further, Bentham has been understood by many who have read him to be possessed of a measure of chilliness in his affects, whatever the compellingness of his thinking or the passion of his motives. This concern for applicability, consistency, clarity and availability in law, along with a certain gelid absorption in procedure, even to the slighting of the human element, is very much to be found in the present speech of Bulwer's. In a way, it is unlike him, for Bulwer was of that rare breed of exceedingly sensitive persons who are even as sensitive to others as they are sensitive about themselves. But even a rarer breed was Bulwer, of the kind who can transcend the personally discomforting in order to promote or demand or act upon what the merely sensitive can only feel about. His reading of Bentham does him good stead in this speech, in which he

advises that "[i]t would be much wiser to be consistent in a harsh policy than weak and contradictory in a mild one" (39 [1235]). And in the harshness there should be no indecisiveness, no abating, no mercy, for "[a]n unpopular law mercifully administered is only an excitement to crime" (39-40 [1236]).

This is no hollow remark, meant to jolt his audience as he works through his substantive objections. Nor is it rhetorical flourish when he follows this with the observation that "[m]ercy and these laws are incompatible" (39 [1235]). Bulwer is interested in indicating the ineffectiveness not just of the proposed law and its modes of enforcement, but of the proposed method of enacting it. He does not deny that there are crimes in Ireland, but the powers the Bill contemplates do not engage these crimes. Further, even if they did, their implementation would be a worse event than any crimes they are set against: "a violation of law is a terrible evil - a suspension of law is a still greater one" (35 [1231]). It's of no use simply "to read a catalogue of crime" (35 [1231]). More than this, the law must fit the crimes. The Bill provides for Courts Martial, staffed by British officers, but these Courts Martial can only transport. Murder is nontransportable, yet murder is a principal crime for which the Bill has been moved its Second Reading by Viscount Althorp (1782-1845), Chancellor of the Exchequer and, thus, Ministerial Leader of Government in the House of Commons, Grey being in the Lords. The Viscount has a Bill which he justifies by reference to capital violations, but

which deals "only with subordinate offences - you attack the misdemeanour," Bulwer exclaims, "and you leave the crime" (35 [1231]).

But it is not only upon its response to crimes that the Bill is to be considered. Althorp has pointed to the present difficulty in getting witnesses; sons refuse to testify against the murderers of their fathers - "terrible proof," Bulwer presses, "of the disorder to which a legislation of long and unvaried coercion has brought that unfortunate country" (35 [1231]). The Bill would force testimony on threat of imprisonment, yet provide no protection for him who testifies. And the danger to him would be even greater than it is today, "[f]or the new tribunal will be more odious than the old; and in proportion to the odium of the tribunal, will be the vengeance against the witness" (35 [1232]). To heighten the absurdity, the Administration assures the House that such witnesses shall be safe because the military will "pacify the country" and make it secure for all witnesses. Bulwer points out the inadequacy of an argument which supports an intention to pacify a country for the safety of witnesses whose testimony is to provide the means in the first place of pacifying the country. That done, he attacks the Viscount directly:

> But pacify the country - pacify it by domiciliary visits, by Court Martials - by --. Oh rare pacification! The right hon. Gentleman has not been to Ireland in vain. He has learnt, at least, the science of practical bulls - he would pacify a country by maddening its people! (36 [1232].)

This is not to condemn the Courts Martial as illegal, "as my Lord Holland did - my Lord Holland, one of his Majesty's Ministers"

(36 [1232]) for they *are* illegal, nor is it to impeach the character or competence of the British officers who would man them. But how can military officers, whose judgment is habituated to the condemnation of offences of military insubordination to superiors, possibly be expected to adjudicate in civil cases "against [Irish] peasantry accused of the same offences of political audacity and insubordination to their superiors?" (36 [1232]). The best will in the world cannot alter the practice of a court, particularly when that court's practice is wholly legitimate in its proper context.

Bulwer sees in this an unmistakable question of applicability. The applicability of the Courts Martial is further brought into doubt when the activities of the officers during times in which they are not serving as judges is pointed out:

> The military are to assist the police in conflicts with the people, and then they are to judge the people; they are to be in the contest to-day, and on the Bench to-morrow; with all the passions of antagonists, they are expected to have all the moderation of judges. (36 [1233].)

Further, there is no chance that the military officers who man the tribunals will be unconfined by the biases of the Magistrates they are to replace. With whom other, along with the country gentry, would they mix socially and through whose eyes would they, "ignorant of the country" (37 [1233]), see? Bulwer, addressing the Administration, sums up his argument thus far:

> you are about to suspend the Constitution, to inflame all Ireland, to outrage all liberty, for the sake of appointing a tribunal which does not possess the requisite qualities fairly to adjudge the offence - which does not

> give the necessary protection to the witness - which does not meet the very crimes for which alone you ask us to appoint it. (37 [1233]).

Here again Bulwer insightfully conflates a clear understanding of the psychological implications of the proposed method with a sturdy sense of its legal import:

> If these laws only touched, only threatened the guilty, I should recoil from so terrific a precedent; but they menace the innocent also. If you suspend the Constitution, you suspend it for all alike - you make no exemptions from the dread ban of general excommunication. You subject the innocent and the guilty alike to spies and informers - to the arbitrary perils of suspicion - to those dark uncertainties of terror in which every man stands in fear of his neighbour. You give temptation to the accusation of private revenge; you give a field to all the mercenary, all the malignant, all the individual motives which are ever brought into operation by the suspension of law, and the insecurity of political freedom. (37 [1233].)

On the one hand, the Government acknowledges that "great grievances" remain; on the other, it removes the right of petition and, thus, "from those who endure [these grievances] the simple privilege of complaint" (37 [1234]). Bulwer's point here is that all persons will suffer under the Bill, not just the guilty, but that even the guilty will suffer insofar as their rights too are suspended.

In order to support his view, Bulwer appeals to history, specifically to the Irish experience under the Insurrection Act of two decades before. Peel, for example, "characteristically linking repressive and forward-looking measures," had used it as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1814 to attenuate any potential for increased agitation and violence "in that wild and unhappy country" when he introduced, under the Peace Preservation Act, a trained police organization to replace the

Army's Court Martial system (Webb 188). The proximate occasion for the unrest during Peel's incumbency was his dissolution of the Catholic Board, which had wanted unqualified Emancipation; the Government Peel then represented insisted on a preclusive say in the selection of Catholic bishops, something the Catholic Church and "popular opinion in overwhelmingly Catholic and not very enlightened Ireland" would not accept (188). By the time of Bulwer's speech, Emancipation was four years behind, and there had been no relenting on the question of ecclesiastical appointment, in which the Catholics had had their way. On the other hand, the Irish Church Bill of 1833, weak in the extreme, failed in an attempt on the part of Reforming whigs, Radicals and Irish Members to loosen the institutional clutches of the Irish Church on the tax base of Ireland, although it succeeded in disappointing the Liberals, provoking the Conservatives and confusing the Irish.

Bulwer, however, does not discuss the specific legal or political contexts, but alludes to, and very nearly makes explicit, the miseries of the Irish peasant under "the summary Insurrection Act, and the still more summary Court-Martial" (*Speeches*, I, 38 [Hansard 3rd, 15, 1234]). Not only was the peasant abused under the system, but the women in his family were taken at will by those appointed to defend the peace; the law did not protect "the trembling landlord" - its entire purpose - but permitted even greater crimes than any which might be perpetrated against "the security of property" (37-38

[1234]). And, demands Bulwer,

> by whom is it decreed that these horrors, of which no description can convey an adequate notion, are to be revived? By the most liberal and enlightened Ministry that, with respect to the affairs of England, this empire has ever known - by the very men who, in times of greater danger - times not of peace, but of war - not of robberies, but of rebellion - stood foremost, and boldest, and loudest, against the enactment of the very laws they now call upon us to pass. (38 [1234].)

It is certainly a conspicuous irony Bulwer has submitted in comparing this first Reformed House of Commons with those controlled by its tory predecessors. Unfortunately, Bulwer makes no attempt to explain it further, rather moves on to an entirely obvious acknowledgment that to govern Ireland "is no easy matter" (38 [1235]). He follows this with a statement of his ground for thinking so: "Wherever a highly civilised people is united under the same Constitution with one less prosperous and less enlightened, the task of Government is no sinecure" (38-39 [1235]). Since nearly everyone thought what Bulwer thought when Bulwer thought it, except, naturally enough, the Irish, it would be anachronistic in the extreme now to fault him for it. Be that as it may, this is not the first time Bulwer's sentiments with respect to civilization have come up in the present essay, and in this Chapter in particular they will continue to play a small but significant role. Here, with respect to the Irish, as almost always, Bulwer's conception of the "highly civilized" English people is rather contextualizing than central in its effect, for he immediately urges his listeners in the House that "[w]e must, as practical statesmen, in such a case look not only to abstract measures,

but to the complex and varied state of those parties on whom the measures must operate" (39 [1235]). This is Bulwer's great and constant cry, that abstraction is unavailing, even perilous, while, conversely, it is in the domain of the concrete that all viable solutions and all judicious answers are to be found. There are in Ireland two parties, he reminds his audience, the Protestant aristocracy and the Catholic population. The approach the present Bill takes will gain the independent good will of neither, to say nothing of bringing the two together within a common compliance: "By your measures of Church conciliation you offend the Orange aristocracy - by your measures of military coercion, you incense the body of the people - you pass a scythe under your power in both parties - you make an enemy of all Ireland" (39 [1235]). "Can anything," wonders Bulwer, "be less politic or less statesmanlike?" (39 [1235]). And can anything, he implies, be more simpleminded? Bulwer forever and again speaks of abstractions and abstract principles as if they were the products of minds unable, through a lack of education, of native competence or merely of subtlety, to grasp the very great, but very natural, range of complexity persons normally find themselves confronted with in this world.

Almost as if to demonstrate his own capacity to deal with the knotty reach of the world, in the midst of this rebuke of the Government, he proclaims that his opposition to the Bill, however inadequate in other respects, "ought, at least, to have this weight - it comes from one who does not oppose his Majesty's

Government generally" (40 [1236]). His Majesty's Ministers are not likely to have greeted Bulwer's assurances on this account with great joy, for it is clear that, if a Bill, which one has constructed on the basis of having been driven nearly to distraction by events seemly so perennial and so refractory as those of the Irish unrest, is to be opposed with the grandness that this has been by Bulwer, it would be altogether more palatable were the opposition to be found rather in an enemy than in a friend. Some Members, Bulwer adverts, oppose the Government because they distrust its intentions concerning English control in Ireland, others because they distrust its intentions concerning Irish freedom. He distrusts the Government on neither count; he stands upon the middle ground. He will always support the Government when he agrees with it; he will render identical support when, doubting, he can credit its intentions and understand its difficulties. But when conscience exhorts that the Government is "dangerously wrong" (40 [1236]), Bulwer can do no other than oppose. Yet, in the spirit of trust, he will ask only, despite how wrongly conceived he thinks the Bill, that, unmodified, it be held back for three weeks. It is a "trifling concession," he says. "In this haste there is no show of moderation. A bill that changes liberty into despotism is hurried through the Lords in one week, brought down to this House, and you refuse us the delay - the inquiry of a fortnight" (40 [1236]). The Ministers explain that, once passed, they will delay its implementation. But passed - delay or no - the Bill will "unmake the Constitution of Ireland" (40

[1237]).

Bulwer offers still another alternative; this option would insure the full possibility of the Bill, yet threaten less the rule of law in Ireland. Bulwer's suggestion is an interesting one, both neat and a compromise, unlikely to enrage anyone, although unlikely to satisfy anyone either. Its workability, prima facie unfeasible, increases in practicality in direct proportion to the degree of passion on either side of the issue. What he puts forward also indicates Bulwer's capacity to finesse both sides of a question, even one as potentially explosive as this. His proposal was to no avail, for the Amendment, moved by his friend, Tennyson D'Eyncourt, failed by 466 to 89 votes. Still, it was a good suggestion, well argued:

> Let [the Bill] rest, unmutilated, in this House; postpone it only from week to week, ready to be passed the instant it is required; passed too with less delay and less acrimony than at present; with much less excuse for prolonged and detailed opposition - much less reluctance in the English Members - much less procrastination - much fewer adjournments and debates - I will venture to say, even from the most indignant of the Irish Members themselves. The same purpose of terror will be answered; the Irish people will equally see this armed law hanging over their heads - they will see what penalty they must incur by crime. Thus perhaps you will obtain all the good that the passing of the law can secure, but without the same actual and formal violation of liberty - without provoking the same exasperation, or incurring the same responsibility. (41 [1237].)

Bulwer calls up the venerable argument that nothing would be lost in such a course and much might be gained. "No one can blame [the Government] for cowardice, for reluctance, in a little while suspending a law by which the Constitution itself is suspended" (41 [1237]).

Bulwer now repeats the four great objections he has brought against the Bill, unsubtlely and tersely, adding that a destruction of the "outward sign of the disease" will only increase "its inner violence" (41 [1237]). Referring to himself and other Members, mostly whigs and Radicals, he says, "We are the true quellers of agitation, who would give no cause to agitate. We are the true tamers and masters of the learned Member for Dublin [Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847)], who would take from his hands his only substantial power - the power of just complaint" (41-42 [1237-1238]). He does not fear open rebellion, Bulwer tells his hearers; none such could withstand the discipline of an English response. He does fear "a sullen, bitter, unforgiving recollection" on the part of the Irish and an English people,

> worn out with unavailing experiments - wearied with an expensive and thankless charge - and dissatisfied with a companionship which gives them nothing but the contagion of its own diseases, [who] will be the first to ask for that very dismemberment of the Empire which we are now attempting to prevent. (42 [1238].)

Aside from the gratuitous, if unconscious, arrogance of Bulwer's notice that England's task in Ireland was "thankless," the point is astute both in its predictions and in its contextualization of the circumstance as "a companionship which gives [the English] nothing but the contagion of its own diseases" (42 [1238]).

Bulwer chooses to end this speech in a manner in which he ends no other speech: he repeats a lengthy segment of another's speech, one by Henry Brougham, now a lord two years and three months and Lord Chancellor a day longer. Brougham (1778-1868),

always eager to hear his name on others' lips, would not have much objected, even when Bulwer with almost indecent flattery, not to say hyperbole, calls it "one of the most splendid orations that adorn our time" (42 [1242] and decries the circumstance that those around him "will ... not learn wisdom from the speeches of Lord Brougham" (43 [1243]). Indeed, all this might have been received with typically amplified satisfaction by Brougham, but for his having been, as usual, on both sides of the issue - for the Irish with his sympathies, against the Irish with his vote - and Bulwer's turning it back upon the great and recent lord himself. Despite the enveloping unctuousness, the finest moment in this extended reference to Lord Brougham comes at its introduction. Bulwer is quoting

> it not as an instance of inconsistency - this question is far too wide to be reduced to the petty criteria by which individuals are acquitted or defended. I quote it only as an instance of that large and Catholic wisdom which is applicable to all circumstances and all times. (42 [1238] capitalization Bulwer's and in both texts.)

The long quotation is from a speech Brougham has given at the Second Reading of the Reform Bill, during the course of which he in part explains and in part defends the growth of political associations. In any case, it is clearly supportive of the contentions Bulwer has set forth in his own delivery and ends with a line as worth repeating still as it was worth repeating then: "Nor can you expect to gather in any other crop than they did who went before you, if you persevere in their utterly abominable husbandry, of sowing injustice and reaping rebellion" (quoted 43 [1239; v. 8, 274 for original]). A concatenation of the quotation and its speaker is as fine a

prophylactic against the *ad hominem* fallacy as there is.

*The Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship*

The history of the Antislavery Movement in Great Britain is likely less well known in its details than the relationship between England and Ireland. But little by way of an explanation of its history and circumstance is needed in order to understand Bulwer's speech on *The Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship*. He gave the speech on the 22nd of May, 1838, before a very thin House; there were present only 189 members. The division on the Amendment, moved by Sir Eardley Wilmot, a Conservative Member from North Warwickshire who would eventually become Governor of Tasmania, was nearly evenly split, with 96 in favor and 93 against (Hansard 3rd, 43, 123). There were few speeches given, all on a single night, and Bulwer's was the last before the division.

The slave trade had been outlawed to British subjects and on British ships in 1807; in 1772, slavery itself had been forbidden in England, and, in 1833, it was made illegal in all British-governed territory, regardless of status, throughout the Empire. However, the owners, all congregated in the British possessions in the West Indies, the Caribbean and on the South American coast, were paid £20,000,000 outright by the British Government, the calculated loss to them of the slaves. To this great boon was added the stipulation that all slaves over six years of age were to serve an apprenticeship of seven years to their "former" owners, after which they were to be

unconditionally free. There were exceptions to the apprenticeship, but these did not materially affect the general burden upon the subjugated population.

The opposition to legislation favorable to persons enslaved under British jurisdiction did not come only from the West Indies Interest, which had always been strong in Parliament, though less so after the passing of the Great Reform Bill; Radicals like Hume and Peelites like Gladstone were hesitant in the face of outright Abolition, the latter to the point of voting against the Bill of Emancipation in 1833, although, to be fair, his father, Sir John Gladstone, a wealthy merchant with West Indies interests, had long opposed Abolition as an Member from Liverpool. Still, to understand how gruelingly painful was the going of Abolitionists against the entrenched slaving Interest, it might be representative to note that in 1823, a "recommendation" that women no longer be flogged and that overseers be denied the use of the whip in the fields met with absolute intransigence from planters who feared labor shortages, increased production costs and, above all, insurrections (Woodward 355). The juxtaposition of the merest threat of economic or social inconvenience with the awful fact of persons' bodies torn by the lash indicates the moral and psychological vacuity of the owners, but it also indicates the obvious lengths to which the planters were willing to go to maintain their economic standing. All of these factors make themselves felt in Bulwer's speech, including one, more laughable than iniquitous, with respect to Gladstone.

Bulwer begins the speech with an appeal to Providence, calling for an immediate end to the apprenticeship, that is, for most of the "apprentices," though not all, two years early. Agitation with respect to full Abolition, he says, is the result of the feelings "implanted in our nature," and the ensuing "excitement [is that] which in all ages has existed where Humanity could lift its voice against Oppression" (*Speeches*, I, 68 [Hansard 3rd, 43, 110]). He continues in similar language, referring to virtue, charity and religion.

> But though I rejoice in the almost universal feeling which exists upon this subject, and which makes the people of England more anxious, more importunate, more resolute, in behalf of others, than they have ever been in demanding justice for themselves, I am not insensible of the disadvantage under which those who agree with me labour on this solemn occasion. (69 [110].)

Bulwer here implies that the work against slavery has captured more devotion in the English than work on behalf of any rights of their own or on behalf of their own well being. What Bulwer really means is Public Opinion, not agitation, and in this he may be right, given the small numbers of persons who stood to lose with respect to Emancipation, compared, for example, to the much wider displacement following, at least in potential, upon Reform. But this degree of agitation carries its own burdens:

> The agitation that may swell the number of votes in favour of our motion, diminishes the influence of the arguments by which it is supported. Too often jealous of our rights as deliberate legislators, we forget our first character of responsible representatives; and where a man is supposed to be influenced by his constituents, we are inclined to doubt the sincerity of his own opinions - as if Truth were discovered only by individuals, and lost in its value in proportion as it penetrated the multitude. (69 [110].)

This is a sound insight into the dynamics of mass political understanding: on the one hand, the prejudice against the views of the "multitude" has to do with the manner in which convictions are arrived at by individuals, especially those intelligently deliberating, rather than blindly representing, as Bulwer implicitly distinguishes the character of the two roles; on the other hand, the prejudice against the views of the "multitude" has to do with the intrinsic value afforded the common group, as opposed to the elites that guide it, by those elites themselves.

In his later speeches on Reform, Bulwer argues just the contrary from what he has argued here in cautioning against speed with respect to Constitutional change, displaying in several ways an express distrust of the voice of common opinion. It is nevertheless an interesting phenomenon upon which Bulwer has here placed a finger, for, be it in their constituents the consequence of intellectual susceptibility, political inexperience, individual powerlessness or civic indifference, deference can generally be expected by leaders and, when received, can be certain to be treated by leaders as a sign of their own superiority in political judgment, and this to the point of leaders' intellectual integrity and political effectiveness being judged on the basis of their willingness to depart from the general views of the group they speaks for. But add to the onus of Bulwer's embracing of a popular cause, the "languid[ness]" of the audience he addresses, then it becomes "almost a hopeless prayer when I ask for that patient and

unprejudiced attention which you have refused to men whose abilities would, on other subjects, have enforced the claim" (69 [110-111]).

Bulwer now presents the range of his argument. It will not be an "abstract inquiry, whether there was a contract with the planter, or whether we only passed a law with conditions attached to it" (69 [111]). The preferred diction of the planters is, of course, the former and of the Abolitionists the latter. The announcement of his view in this respect receives premature applause. "Heaven forbid," he says, "that England should resort to casuistry whenever there is a question of her faith! I allow at once that the honour of Parliament was pledged to the planter" (69 [111]). With this, he is greeted with a resounding "Hear!" from one of the Members. "Ay," he returns, "but are there no other parties in the bond?" He dampens the enthusiasm of his listener in affirming that the bond was also "to the negro-population, and to the British people, whose gold we obtained upon the most explicit promises - upon the most definite understanding" (69 [111]). Yet debate in Parliament is rife with talk of the contract accorded the planters, while the contracts with the remaining parties are ignored (70 [111]). This is a good move on Bulwer's part, undermining what vigor an "abstract" divergence between "a contract with the planter" and "a law with conditions attached to it" may possess by passing over the difference altogether and calling attention to the fact that, insofar as a contractual aspect subsists at all, it does so in the tripartite matrix between the planters,

the negroes and the taxpayers of Britain. The complexity of this interrelationship subverts the special link the West Indies Interest wants obtaining between the planters and Parliament. Conversely, it enables Bulwer to challenge the planters on the ground of their own favored construction, that of a contract, and to bring evidence to bear that the reciprocity of its tripartite complexion has been violated indeed - and by the planters themselves. This he proceeds to do.

When asked whether the planters have complied with their part in the agreement, "[t]he hon. Baronet the Under-Secretary for the colonies [Sir George Grey (1799-1882), nephew of the 2nd Earl, Charles, and prominent Minister in various Liberal Administrations into the last third of the century], says - yes, by the majority; he says that 'in the great majority of instances there has been on the part of the West-India proprietors a *bona fide* adherence to the spirit as well as to the letter of the Emancipation Act'" (70 [111]). But the Governors of the affected Colonies have complained that the Legislative Assemblies have violated the contract.

Though the Government defends itself with respect to enforcement, Bulwer is able to name several leading figures on the scene and at home who explicitly contest this. He cites them one by one to great effect, quoting them or referring to page numbers on which their evidence can be found, as suits his argument. Lord Sligo, Governor of Jamaica, claims that the Jamaican Assembly has contravened the law in every respect - "in

the hours of labour, in the allowance of food, in the flogging of females" - and pays not "the smallest attention to his remonstrances" (70 [112]). Mr. Jeremie in an appendix to the Report from the Select Committee on Negro Apprenticeship supports the Governor's characterization of the situation exactly. "Who is Mr. Jeremie?" Bulwer inquires. "Why, the prime, favorite, selected, panegyrised authority of the Government," he answers. Mr. Beldam, another Government functionary, has analyzed the acts of the West Indies Legislative Assemblies and found not a one he has inspected in conformity with the Act of Parliament. Mr. Baynes, another "favorite" of the Government, has discovered like behavior among the magistracy. Outside the Government, Sir Lionel Smith insists that the grand juries have violated their oaths in the matter; "the first lawyer in England," the tory Sir Edward Sugden, insists that Jamaica has broken the compact. Bulwer specifies the brazen preposterousness of the hypocrisy involved; he asks, "What can we say of a coroner's jury who, in the celebrated instance of the woman tortured to death at the treadmill, returned a verdict - 'Died by the visitation of God'?" (70-71 [112-113]). There are many eloquent moments in this speech, which Bulwer's grandson considered "his greatest oratorical triumph" (Lytton, I, 520), and the use of facts and instances, as always with Bulwer, has an eloquence particularly its own, but for sheer grandeur of phrase few exceed the words by which he concludes the segment just discussed:

> I then throw back upon you your own assertion of breach of faith. I assert that with the planter we have kept faith;

> that there was no adulteration, no paring and filching of the gold he received; perfect it was in tale and weight. You have kept faith with the planter; but I tell you with whom it is you ask us to break faith - with the thousands and tens of thousands whom you mocked with the name of free - with the majesty of the Imperial Parliament, whose acts have been trampled under foot - with the people of England who paid their millions, not to abolish the name slavery, but the thing slavery. You ask us to break faith with justice, with humanity, with Heaven itself, in order that you may keep faith with Mammon. (*Speeches*, I, 72-73 [Hansard 3rd, 43, 114].)

Bulwer now directs himself upon Gladstone: "the hon. Member for Newark, in that speech the ability of which is above all praise, but the arguments in which are happily not beyond all reply, claims exemption for British Guiana" (73 [114]). Bulwer fairly deluges the House with sarcasm: give the Member Guiana as a present; it's only one Colony; "its population sinks into absolute insignificance" when compared to other Colonies; grant that it is "immaculate," that Gladstone's figures on its acquiescence to the Act are correct; still, Guiana's innocence, even if it existed, is no criterion for judgment. *But* it does not exist:

> The hon. Member for Newark on a former night complained of *ex parte* and unproved statements. Did he indulge in none himself? Have not some of his facts - have not most of his deductions - been denied in public meetings and in the face of day - denied by eyewitnesses of the state of Guiana - denied by the references to Parliamentary documents? (73 [115].)

At this point, Gladstone shakes his head and smiles. "Ay," returns Bulwer,

> and though it may suit hon. Members to sneer at the zeal of the friends of the negro, I say that, according to all the laws of testimony, it is more likely that men having no sinister and selfish interest to serve will give more faithful accounts than the planters, who have a direct personal interest to bias their judgment.(73-74 [115].)

This said, Bulwer returns to authorities in a special attack on British Guiana. Gladstone has claimed that in Guiana the negro is much better off than in other Colonies. Bulwer grants it, but better off is not the same thing as in conformity with the Act. It is interesting to notice how Bulwer argues here: he establishes a point of inquiry; he characterizes the authority; he quotes the authority; he cites the authority; he moves on to the next point, nearly always a specification or subsidiary implication of the previous point, which is rendered similarly in argument. While this manner of argument occurs repeatedly in Bulwer, with equal competence and sometimes greater yield, here he employs it against Gladstone, himself a master of the technique. And it is clear that the onslaught has taken its toll upon him, for later in the speech, attacked on more general terms, Gladstone shouts out a denial against what Bulwer has said, only to be rechallenged by Bulwer in a silencing assault of specifications. Further, the argumentation here, while well done, is possessed of less density than the greater portion of Bulwer's arguments corresponding in form to this one. It is a long quote, but well worth the reading. It is to be kept in mind that Bulwer is addressing Gladstone directly:

> I grant that in Guiana the negro is much better off than in Jamaica. I grant that it is the colony in which slavery seems least odious. But is Guiana innocent? Has not Guiana violated the law? Has it not invaded the contract? Listen again to your own beloved authority in the report upon the system of apprenticeship. Does not you own analyst assert that in many most important points the British Guiana Act violates the compact, that is the Imperial Act, for the Act and the compact you allow are one and the same: - "The power of inflicting unlimited extra

labour as a punishment for grievous complaints is repugnant to the Imperial Act, and would of itself explain much of the apparent content of this colony." So again, sections 9 and 10 - "These classes contain direct infringement of the rights of manumission, and are plainly repugnant to the Imperial Act." But is that all? I will concede to the hon. Member that punishments in Guiana have greatly decreased of late. But in the returns before the House, the third table, from the 1st of June 1836 to the 31st of May 1837, gives a total of punishments of 7596, which averages one in every nine apprentices throughout the colony; and if you will compare this with any return from Jamaica (for that or any other year) you will find it (compared to the relative populations) equal in the average to the number of punishments in Jamaica - viz., to the most barbarous of all the colonies. But punishment has decreased since. Yes! and why? I call in Sir James Carmichael Smyth, who is your authority for maintaining the apprenticeship, as my witness for its abolition - because (according to Sir James Smyth's uniform testimony), not of the leniency of the planters, but because of the exemplary conduct of the negroes. He tells you that whatever complaints have been made against the labourer, it has appeared on investigation that the fault arose from the fraud or illegal exactions of the planters. He asserts that in no part of the globe are the labouring population more peaceable, more industrious, than in Guiana. In his speech of January 1836 (2. Part III., p. 120), he says, "I ask if any gentleman can point out any part of his Majesty's dominions where fewer crimes are committed, where greater tranquillity is enjoyed, or where the labouring population is more industrious?" Well, will the House believe that in the very year - the very month - in which he pronounces this eulogium on the population, the returns of punishment - yes, in that very month of January 1836 - amount to 922, which would give an average of 11,064 for the whole year, being nearly a sixth part of the whole population - a population thus industrious, thus orderly, thus free from crime, and yet thus punished under the orders of the special magistrate! Oh, blessed inversion of all the laws by which society redeemed from barbarism is bound! Behold the maximum of punishment accompanying the minimum of crime! What do Sir James Smyth's statements prove? Why, that this admirable population is fit for liberty, and every word in favour of that population is a testimony in favour of the motion before the House. (74-75 [115-116].)

Bulwer's offensive against Gladstone continues with references to arguments and examples in Gladstone's own speeches, which Bulwer turns topsy-turvy in the case against

him. He exploits anaphoric constructions to configure his examples and his questions; in a segment alone of some eight hundred words (75-78 [116-118]), he employs the device six times with such clause- or sentence-initiating phrases as "Not fit for liberty/freedom ...," "not a ...," and "Can [proper name] tell us ... / Can you tell us ...." Instances of anaphora layer sometimes lists, sometimes narratives and sometimes sets of rhetorical questions followed by putative answers. The speech as a whole contains some of the most sustained examples of the technique to be found in Bulwer, who is, on the whole, exceedingly fond of it in any case, a technique which is especially effective when the speaker is conducting what he wants his listeners to take as an interrogation of a person present, but necessarily silent, or nearly so. The great example from classical times is, of course, Cicero's *First Oration Against Catiline*, the delivery of which has been rendered in the splendid painting of Maccari, with Cataline sitting alone in the foreground of the Senate rotunda, malevolently intent upon the backs of the empty seats before him, while the congregant Senators are packed together, frightened, enraged or agast, far behind him and around the back wall to the distant turn of the room, each listening to Cicero relentlessly pummel the would-be tyrant with an endless train of anaphoric questions.

Gladstone was, of course, no Catiline, but the accusations voiced by Bulwer against the planters, their Assemblies, their magistracies and their advocates in Parliament were of a degree

in their implications far more grave than those uttered by Cicero against Catiline. Bulwer does not hesitate to render grisly examples of inhumanity, lawless behavior and indifference to agony on the part of whites in the West Indian colonies, nor to disparage the absurd arguments of the planters. He mocks the Jamaican planters' claims of a great threat from newly freed slaves on an island where force enough exists to crush any conceivable rebellion, and points to Antigua - on which the blacks already possess the full rights of freedom - as a place where blacks outnumber whites in so great a degree that *they* have been made police constables, with not the slightest danger to anyone. He scorns the distinction made between "prædials" and "non-prædials," that is, between the landed and the nonlanded apprentices - "your unintelligible verbal barbarisms," he calls the terms - (77, 79 [118, 120]), the latter of whom would be free on the 1st of August, 1838, while the former would be required to labor two years more for their "former" owners. Finally, he points to the one principal feature of the resistant planting Assemblies' importunity: they have *said* they do not wish to supersede with Acts of their own what can be done with "more safety and with greater chance of success by that august body," the British Parliament. "The fact is, that the very colonies that hold out are the very colonies that have most insulted the mother country, most duped the English people, and most flagrantly violated the compact." Indeed, Bulwer charges, "they hold out avowedly in the hope of extorting a large ransom, and doubling the pieces of silver they

have already received as the price of blood." Bulwer address the Ministers: "It is not to them - it is to us you owe an account; we have paid the ransom - it is for you to obtain the redemption" (77 [118-119]).

Bulwer has been asked why "make this stir and commotion for two years - two little years" (78 [120]). He turns the question back upon those who ask it. Bulwer's is a suggestive argument here, for it tells us something of what kind of concern a Member might possess based on the kind of analogous situation Bulwer believes might bring a Member to his point of view. This is a fair example of an important aspect of Aristotle's definition of rhetoric: "the faculty for discovering in any given case the available means of persuasion." The relevant notion here is of "available means." It is clear that many listening to Bulwer will not be inclined in their votes to support an immediate termination of the apprenticeship based solely on abstractly-put humanitarian grounds; Bulwer must find grounds directly pertinent to their experiences as Members to persuade them in this matter of the apprentices. He discovers - "invents" in Aristotelian language - these via the topic of time in a comparison as follows:

> What! are two years nothing in the life of a man? Do we not know - we who have constituents - that when one individual in whom those constituents are interested, is tried, found guilty, condemned, sentenced to the prison or the hulks - do we not know what interest is made to strike two years from the term of punishment? Two years of loss of liberty, two years subjected even to the discipline of responsible and mild control - what effort do we make to save a fellow-creature from that affliction! But now we ask the boon, not for one man, but for thousands - not for guilt, but for innocence - not for exemption from legal penance, but from irresponsible oppression! Complete the picture - add to

> the loss of liberty all the whips and stings which power can inflict on weakness, and, then, will you dare to tell us that two years are nothing in the aggregate of human existence? (78-79 [120].)

But it is not some planters nor some colonies nor some group of Assemblies which preserves the lawlessness; it is a system.

This system is so suffusive that it is capable of producing a Commission of Inquiry which, in one particular case, was able to dismiss a magistrate explicitly for executing the law exactly "in the spirit of the English Abolition Act" (quoted 80). But such condemnations are neither so explicit nor so frequent; few magistrates make the mistake of conforming to the law. In pursuit of the law, magistrates are "harassed by commissions of inquiry, calumniated by the planter, abandoned by the Government, superseded solely for the offence of keeping faith with England;" abandoning the law, the magistrate "who lends himself to the planter, who reports in his favour - who applauds the system and vindicates its instruments," finds himself "quoted by the Ministers as an admirable authority - admired by planters as an exemplary judge - praised and flattered - [given] patronage here - [and] pensions there" (80 [121]).

Bulwer again turns upon Gladstone: "The hon. Member for Newark would represent the planters as men equally merciful and maligned." Gladstone shouts out a "no." "What!" returns Bulwer, "did you not attempt to defend their general conduct; to prove them innocent of the charge of cruelty? - if you did not, where is the answer to our accusations? But if you did, what then? Is it not the old reply to the earliest advocates of

emancipation?" (81 [122]).

Bulwer now turns from Gladstone again to make a most remarkable statement, one amounting to an accusation of collective guilt, a concept utilized in the moral analysis of crimes committed in the present century of such magnitude in abhorrence and participation that an attribution of individual guilt seems insufficient. To this analysis, he appends with seamless transition of moral implication his summation in proof:

> I accuse not the planters; I accuse the system: men are but the tools of the circumstances that surround the. Where tyranny is made legal, I execrate the tyranny, but I acquit the tyrant. You have heard from me no individual cases, branding individual persons - you have heard from me no doubtful references to anonymous authorities. My charge is against communities, not persons - my facts are in the books you appeal to as undeniable records. If the dispatches of your governors, if the reports of you magistrates, if this whole mass of parliamentary evidence be not one lie - I tell you that your arguments against this motion are shivered to the dust! I have proved, that not individuals, not minorities, but (where legislative assemblies exist in your colonies) whole communities have been, from first to last, invaders of your law, violators of your compact. I have proved that faith is due, not to the planters, but to their victims and their dupes. I have proved that there is no danger in the course we recommend - proved it by reference to actual experience in Antigua, to the assertions of your governor in Jamaica, where all parties would abandon the system for compensation - proved it by your own recommendations to the colonies. Answer all this if you can; if you answer it to your satisfaction, you belie your governors, you impeach your witnesses, you condemn yourselves. (81-82 [122-123].)

This is splendid argumentation. Bulwer is in no way seeking to lighten his accusations against the planters. Collectively, they do as they do. What he has succeeded in is a recontextualizing of the origin and thus the purview of the transgression. Parliament is responsible for the enduring

condition in which "tyranny is made legal." As he explicitly refuses to accuse the planter, implicitly he accuses the Members around him. He can do this because he has proved the origin of the conditions which permit persistent lawlessness in the tacit permission rendered by Parliament for the ongoing violation of the Act. While he, of course, does not say so, one can find in his continual returning to Gladstone, to the point of provoking him to emphatic denial, the indication of this. This is a clear indication of whom he intends to accuse, for Gladstone is the surrogate for the entire West Indies Interest. The source of the system, of the circumstances, institutions and political communities involved, subsists in Parliament and in the common activity of certain of its Members.

Bulwer ends his speech with an appeal to religion, with all branches of Christianity mentioned as able to unite in this cause. It is rather a stirring ending:

> I do believe that he who votes against this dark hypocrisy of slavery in disguise will obtain something better than the approval of constituents - something holier than the gratification of party triumph and political ambition - in the applause of his own conscience, and in those blessing that will not rise the less to the Eternal Throne because they are uttered by the victims of human avarice and pride. (82 [123].)

Because of the fame the speech acquired as a speech, something should be said of it with respect to its general rhetoric. There is no question that it was a great speech; whether we can accept it as Lord Lytton did to be his unsurpassed oration is a question ultimately of taste, taste with respect not just to the use of language in rhetoric, but the use of facts, data and content. With regard to both these

considerations, Bulwer did as well and, occasionally, better in other speeches. With regard to the immediate reception of the speech, its importance, if not greatness, is a matter far less undecided. The measure passed by three votes only; after the division, three Members approached Bulwer to say that they had changed their votes in direct consequence of hearing his speech (Lytton, I, 526). Daniel O'Connell is said to have referred to the speech as "one of the most vigorous efforts of impassioned reasoning that he had ever heard in the House of Commons" (522). Lord Lytton also conveys what he calls an unverifiable "anecdote, that at the close of Bulwer's speech, O'Connell, who had himself intended to speak, tore up his notes and cried out: 'The case is made out - there is nothing to add - divide!'" (522). Hansard makes no record of it; the Division directly followed Bulwer's speech (Hansard 3rd, 43, 123); O'Connell did not himself speak in the debate (87-126), but was present for the vote (124). It is certainly possible that the incident occurred; O'Connell spoke with prodigious frequency and was as well a great one for shouting out in the House.

On the other hand, the issue of the speech is hardly one with respect to which a competent speaker would experience difficulty in raising an enthusiastic reaction. What makes the speech significant, it seems to me, is not so much its pathotic or ethotic aspects, but its logos, which was supreme both in marshalling argument and in assigning blame. And while eloquent, it is difficult to assign the description of impassioned to it. With respect to its delivery, on the other

hand, we are entitled to do little more than repeat what listeners said of it, so that the character of its impassionedness may reside more in a zealousness on the part of its audience to be moved than in any the effect the speech was was of itself prepared to stimulate. Of course, expectedness is as central to the rhetor's art as persuasion, a feature found perhaps more in sermonic rhetoric than elsewhere. In the final analysis, then, it is probably fair to say that the rhetoric of *The Abolition of the Negro Apprenticeship* was in essence meant to buttress listeners, not to persuade them; the three members who confessed their change of heart to Bulwer can hardly, given the complicated interests at play in Parliament, have been *argued* over to the other lobby, particularly given the fact that all of the information in the speech was fully available to every Member, whether any had availed himself of it or not. Besides, the whole question was one rather of moral rightness than policy, as Bulwer's concluding remarks indicate. So the logogic aspect, while masterful of itself, became the handmaiden of the more fundamental purpose of the speech, to lend fortitude to those already inclined to vote as the speech argued. Today, however, the "impassionedness" of the speech, as read, may seem superfluous, while the employment of its resources may appear the impressive thing.

### *The War with China*

The great difference between the speeches from the Thirties, which have just been discussed, and those from the

late Fifties, whose discussions follow, is that with respect to the latter Bulwer, when he gave them, was in a position to influence policy from the Opposition, in the case of the first two to be considered, or to make policy as a member of the Cabinet, in the case of the remaining three. With these later speeches, all given within two years of each other, the tone becomes both more authoritative and more generous, while the arguments, without loss in complexity, are allowed to manifest themselves more straightforwardly. This lucidity is due in part to Bulwer's position as a policymaker and the imperative of clearness which such a position demands, if it does not always receive, but in part, no doubt, it is due as well to the fact that most of these speeches deal with matters which do not carry the considerable emotional, economic or ideological baggage which the great majority of his speeches did.

The speech now to be considered has as its received title, *The War with China*. This is a rather deceptive title, for there were two wars between Britain and China in the period and several skirmishes. The circumstance at issue in the present speech was a skirmish, the *Arrow* Incident. A few historians have dubbed these two confrontations between China and the West the Opium Wars, with the implication that the sole purpose of the conflicts was to force the Chinese to accept the trade in opium. While it is certainly true that opium was an element in the relations between China and the Western Powers, it was at no time a *casus belli*, nor was it even a central feature of the European - the British were never alone in any of this -

construction of grievances or demands. Further, the sale of opium was not an institution of Europeans, while it was certainly a substantial source of income for Chinese bureaucrats, especially in southeast China. Nevertheless, the national Government in Beijing was positively correct in its every attempt to limit or eradicate the trade.

Still, the incident of the lorcha *Arrow*, particularly given both its pivotal share in the advent of the Second China War - the name which will be employed in this essay - and its objects from the points of view of both the British, the sole European power initially involved in the Incident itself, and the Chinese is an effective illustration of the fact that far more was enmeshed in the First and Second China Wars than opium. Indeed, could opium have been taken entirely from the scene, all events and all outcomes would likely have remained in essence the same. Opium was an embarrassment to those in power in the West and a despised presence to those in power in China; both could have done without it. That they were in the actual turn of events unable to was due not to players in the various capitals but, rather, to actors, minor but many, at opium's source, mainly India, its *entrepôt*, Hong Kong, and its destinations, the smoking gear of millions of addicted Chinese in cities up the coast and inland. All of this is covered in countless histories, specialized and general, but the notion of coerced opium as the great and single cause of the two wars seems impossible of disabuse. Be that as it may, one of these histories, Douglas Hurd's *The* Arrow *War: An Anglo-Chinese*

*Confusion, 1856-1860*, notes that, while an effort to enforce the Chinese prohibition against opium in 1839 was the inceptive event of the First China War (1839-1842), opium played no explicit role in the Second China War - the *Arrow* episode was the precipitating factor - and its legalization, requested by the British, was refused by the Chinese at the conclusion of the war, with no further insistence from the British (172). It is clear, then, that we should not be surprised that Bulwer at no time mentions the opium trade, and, conversely, we should not expect him to regard the trade as an aspect of the circumstances with which he is dealing in the speech, if only one which he might feel compelled to treat circumspectly.

A lorcha is a relatively small (something around 100 tons), but swift trading vessel with a crew of about fourteen. The *Arrow* was a lorcha owned by a Chinese resident of Hong Kong, who took it upon himself to have it fly the British flag after he had finagled British papers for her; its captain was a young Irishman by the name of Thomas Kennedy; its crew was, however, entirely Chinese (Hurd 11-12). On the morning of October 8th, 1856, as the *Arrow* lay by Canton and her captain was at breakfast with two other Western captains on another boat, the lorcha was forcibly boarded by Chinese officials and accompanying guards, who arrested the entire crew (12). The mandarin who had ordered the action was Yeh Ming-chen, "a fat sour intelligent man with a taste for astrology [who d]uring seven years in Canton ... had earned a high reputation as a conqueror of rebels and pacifier of the European and American barbarians" (17-18). The grounds

for his decision were that the lorcha's crew contained three pirates, one of whom was of specific importance, and, indeed, nine of the twelve crewmen taken from the lorcha were returned at various points very early in the affair (21). On the face of it, circumstance seems plain enough, but there were currents, shallow and deep, which complicated every aspect of the incident without exception. These will be discussed in so far as a knowledge of them is indispensable to an understanding of Bulwer's speech.

The speech was delivered on the 26th of February, 1857, some five months after the boarding of the *Arrow*. Richard Cobden (1804-1865), of the Manchester persuasion, who was then representing the West Riding of Yorkshire, had moved a Resolution aimed at getting the Government, Palmerston's first, to justify the actions of its agents in China. The Resolution also called for a Select Committee to "inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China" (Hansard 3rd, 144, 1421). Bulwer supported the Resolution and begins by calling attention to certain legal features of the question. The fundamental species of these is the ownership of the vessel; British ownership of Chinese vessels can only occur under the colonial ordinances, but China is not a colony. "You might as well," Bulwer felicitously analogizes, "by a colonial ordinance attempt to turn a tea-tree into an oak-tree" (*Speeches*, II, 49 [Hansard 3rd, 144, 1434]). British subjects may be bound by such ordinances, "but neither a colonial ordinance nor even an Act of Parliament can have the effect of

altering the international law with regard to other nations whom such ordinance or Act of Parliament may concern" (49 [1434-1435]). There is too the question of the existing treaty between Great Britain and China, the Nanking Treaty of 1842. While nothing in the Treaty specifies a class and crew of vessel described by the lorcha *Arrow* to be indubitably British, if in the course of the Treaty's negotiation the Chinese had asked precisely what defined a British vessel, the only possible response would have been to refer them to the British navigation laws in force at the time, which called for the owner to be a British subject and three-fourths of the crew as well. These have been modified since, that is, in 1854, but it is basic to an understanding of the nature of treaties that the laws in force at the signing of a treaty remain in effect vis-à-vis the treaty for the life of that treaty.

Making case for the Government, the current Colonial Secretary, Henry Labouchere (1798-1869), a Liberal who represented Taunton for a few days short of thirty years, had appealed to the British defense of shipping in the Mediterranean - the "Mediterranean pass" system, as it was called - which Labouchere considered to have persisted for more than two centuries and under which, by prerogative of the Crown, a vessel's owner's fifteen year's residence in a British colony was sufficient for protective classification (Hansard 3rd, 144, 1426-1427), but this was at the time directed mostly against pirate vessels seized at the behest of North African states and with the acquiescence, if not the consent, of the

European powers. Bulwer, who was to succeed Labouchere thirty-two months later as Secretary for the Colonies and knew the colonial and navigation laws at least as well as his predecessor, who had indeed admitted his weaknesses with respect to the case at hand [1426], pointed out that The Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 allowed a British ship with only a British owner, by which the Government has "attempted to torture this Chinese vessel into an English one" (*Speeches*, II, 50 [Hansard 3rd, 144, 1435]), but this Act, in addition to its coming into force after the Treaty of Nanking, would require a further legality, the Alien Act of 1847, by which "you may grant naturalization to every Chinese in Hong Kong," but by which you are nonetheless unable to bring "the force of ... protection to such natives in their own country against the independent sovereign whose natural-born subjects they are" (50 [1435-1436]). Bulwer is thoroughly intent upon getting this point across: a British-naturalized Austrian could expect no protection from a British passport against Austria, unless Austria had in the first place denaturalized him. So, too, for the Chinese owner of the lorcha in Hong Kong and the Chinese crew upon the lorcha. "This axiom belongs not to law only but to civilisation, and it is founded upon the most obvious principles of reason" (51 [1436]). To attempt otherwise would be to usurp "the sovereign rights of the Emperor of China in his own dominions" (51 [1436]).

There are two things interesting about Bulwer's case here, and one of them has to do with what he thinks is obvious, and the

other to do with what he thinks of China. In the first place, it is not altogether clear that sovereignty over an individual is tantamount to sovereignty over land. While many even today would accept what Bulwer claims, although the obviousness of its reasonableness may prudently be taken as overstated, the point is nonetheless disputable. The general sense is that, while the nation grants naturalization, the individual quits citizenship. Equally controversial is Bulwer's notion of China, which in every instance he was wholly willing to treat as he would any European nation. Indeed, as his argument progresses, it becomes clear of it that nearly all he says depends upon an assent to the country's national and civil integrity. This was not the prevailing notion then. Much less would one have expected the kind of sentiment evinced the following year, in a letter to Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, by Lord Elgin, commander of the forces that won the Second China War, that the Western signatories to the Treaty of Tientsin, which ended the war, "shall have to convince [the Chinese] ... if we are rigorous in requiring that good faith should characterize their conduct towards us we are no less scrupulous in adopting it as the rule of ours to them" (quoted in Hurd 178). Bulwer's sensitivities toward China were, contextually, no less surprising than Elgin's. In order to underscore the logic of his position, Bulwer specifies aspects of the Treaty of Nanking. The 17th Article to the Supplementary Treaty of 1843 requires sailing letters of British vessels, these to be given to the British Consul while the ship is in port. The 9th Article

to the Supplementary Treaty requires the Chinese to work through the British Consul if they wished to arrest a Chinese crew member on a British vessel (*Speeches*, II, 52-53 [Hansard 3rd, 144, 1437-1438]; q.v. Hurd 17). "If at the time of signing the 17th Article of the Supplementary Treaty [of 1843]," Bulwer asks sarcastically,

> you had said to the Chinese, "We claim the right hereafter to sell all the privileges and protections of the British flag to vessels belonging to Chinese natives," do you suppose the Chinese would have acceded to such a demand, or that England would have renewed the war for the monstrous privilege of selling the flag of England for fifty dollars? (*Speeches*, II, 51-52 [Hansard 3rd, 144, 1436].)

At this point, Bulwer expands his argument to include a more general principle. He does so by referring to the American scholar of international law, Henry Wheaton, whom he renders as saying

> that where a nation alters its existing laws of trade and navigation so as to affect another nation, it may require the Act of the internal Legislature of the nation so affected in order to procure the adoption and execution of such alterations; and he instances the well-known case of the commercial treaty of Utrecht, which the British Parliament refused to execute, though the treaty itself had been concluded by the negotiators. It follows from this, as clearly as one problem of Euclid follows from another, that if, after a treaty has been concluded, you, as one of the contracting parties, alter your existing law so as to affect the Chinese, the other contracting party, your alterations will be binding on your own subjects, but that it will require the legislative power of China to give those altered laws force and effect in that country. (52 [1437].)

This is in part a restatement of the principle Bulwer has already articulated, but it is as well a groundwork for his next point. The 9th Article of the Supplementary Treaty applies only to British merchantmen, and, since, by the 17th Article, the lorcha cannot be called a British vessel, then, by the 9th

Article, Chinese aboard it possess no special claim on the protection of the the British Consul. With respect to the Treaty of Nanking, then, there are no grounds for grievance.

Bulwer moves now to a different perspective: he allows that the vessel be considered British. "[T]hen, I ask, was the act of the Chinese so inexcusable - was it so outrageous, so insulting to the dignity of this country, as to warrant the terrible revenge we have inflicted?" (53 [1438]). The revenge to which Bulwer refers was Admiral Sir Michael Seymour's several bombardments of and forays into Canton between the taking of the *Arrow* and Sir John Bowring's call in January 1858 to Lord Canning in India for 5,000 troops. Bowring (1792-1872), variously famous as a Radical Member of Parliament (1835-1837 [Kilmarnock] and 1841-1849 [Bolton]), Jeremy Bentham's executor, the editor of the *Westminster Review*, an insatiable learner of languages (the lore is near 200, though certainly he was competent in many) and an inveterate imperialist, was Governor of Hong Kong at the time of the Incident and very much at the center of much of the local British response. Bulwer ignores the Chinese activity, which included the burning of British warehouses outside Canton with immense losses to the owners and numerous murderous attacks on the British in the vicinity: for every decapitated English head Yeh was offering thirty dollars (Hurd 33). In fairness to Bulwer, these facts might not have been known to him; but he further contests the absolute certainty of the lorcha's captain and his breakfast companions that the mandarins and their guards in boarding the

lorcha had hauled down the British flag. Bulwer makes great ado over the fact that "it is the established custom in those waters not to have the flag flying until the vessel is under way" (53 [1438] q.v. Hurd 30). In reality, although Bulwer was fully correct in his assertion, the flag was all the same up; as Douglas Hurd has it, the flag had been raised in anticipation of the ship's imminent departure (30). Hurd feels controversy is further dampened when it is noticed that Yeh did not deny the hauling down of the British ensign in his response to the letter of grievance sent two days after the event by the British Consul in Canton (30).

Bulwer does not dwell long on the circumstance of the flag, but in leaving it moves to ground even less secure:

> Grant that the mandarin was wrong [in pulling down the flag]; but still, when he comes in search of a pirate on board a vessel that had been notoriously a pirate ship - which was known to be so by all the Chinese authorities - which was stated to have been employed in the disturbances between the imperialists and the insurgents [that is, between the central government's representatives from Beijing and the Taiping rebels] - and when he does not find a single foreigner there, may he not excusably believe that the flag was fraudulently hoisted? (53-54 [1438-1439].)

The reasoning is competent enough; unhappily, Bulwer is incorrect in most of his points, but desultory news of the events in question and the Government's disinclination to share all the details available to it from its appointees on the scene have occasioned in this case one of the rare times during which Bulwer can be found arguing - and arguing well - from fiction. Briefly, the best Yeh could do was that one of the three men held might have been involved in petty piracy, but never the ship; no

connection with the Taipings ever came up and surely would have, for Yeh was a Taiping hunter of prodigious accomplishment (sometimes "two hundred heads a day" [Hurd 18]) and would surely have mentioned a connection in his correspondence with the British had he suspected one; finally, not a single foreigner was found because the single foreigner - the ship's captain - was away at breakfast, but close enough to return to the lorcha while the mandarins and their troops were still on board. Despite the fact that Bulwer has got much of it wrong, he follows through with an argument which, admissible or inadmissible in its support, is hardly objectionable in its warrant: The question is not one of right or wrong, but of the degree of justification upholding the "terrible punishment" (*Speeches*, II, 54 [1439]): "Englishmen are not the Dracos of legislation. Every offence with us is not punishable by death" (54 [1439]).

In and of itself, this is a worthy point, although the unintended irony in the implicit comparison of English and Chinese legal modes is impossible to ignore. Bulwer, having made the general, contextualizing point, gives it a specificity which indicates a kind of precis of advanced tory thinking with respect to, on the one hand, the imperial mandate and entrepreneurial concerns and, on the other, the dichotomy between equitableness at home and injustice abroad:

> Are we mild philosophers in our domestic legislation, and ruthless exterminators in the enforcement of every questionable point of international law? It would be a monstrous inconsistency if, while we are mitigating, and have for the last thirty years been mitigating, our criminal code, and dealing mildly with offenders who prey

> upon the very vitals of the State, we should wage a ruthless war - no, not a war, but a wholesale massacre - on our helpless customers at a remote corner of the globe. (54 [1439].)

There is no getting around the prima facie oddness which the word choice - from "philosophers" to "customers" - takes on here, but two things must be considered. First of all, Bulwer is here working with brand new ideas; there simply did not yet exist the vocabulary and phrasing to indicate, if not the superiority , then certainly the parity of business interests in a colonial/imperial world hitherto exploitatively economic or purely political, not to say, military in its inclinations. Bulwer's plea to take Yeh on his own terms - that is, as one who, however differently behaved from a similarly situated Western functionary, represents a legitimacy which is not just independent, but autonomous of any comparable legitimacy in the West, viz., Britain's own - is something more or less novel. Bulwer, and others who thought like Bulwer, among them, the Manchester Schoolers, many of the Radicals, the Benthamites and the like, although clearly not Sir John Bowring, were only then building up a lexicon available to a rendering of the coalescence of business imperatives with a clearcut ideological perspective, which in combination subsumed other economic interests and the concerns of the political/military system.

Bulwer goes on to argue that Yeh is being asked by Bowring and Harry Parkes, British Consul in Canton, to turn "traitor to his sovereign and his country, and to admit that the representatives of a foreign sovereign can dictate laws to

China" (54 [1439]). It is interesting how he wants to rewrite Parkes' correspondence with Yeh. Parkes has said, "I have seen clear and conclusive proof of the facts that your Excellency attempts to deny" (55 [1439]). Bulwer is truly incensed at the language:

> Attempts to deny! Where, Sir, in all Yeh's correspondence shall we find a phrase so gratuitously insulting as that? It would have been quite as easy and more in conformity with diplomatic usage to say, "Your Excellency is misinformed." (55 [1439-1440].)

Bulwer reiterates the facts as he knows them and accuses Parkes of something "more than prevarication", indeed, of "deposing as to two facts being so clear and conclusive that there could be no doubt or question respecting them, while upon one of those 'facts' he goes directly into teeth of his own evidence" (55 [1440]). Bulwer now turns his attack upon Lord Clarendon, Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, who has claimed Yeh asserted that the *Arrow* was a Chinese ship "as an afterthought" (55 [1440]). Bulwer's sarcasm burgeons mightily in the assault.

> Is it not too much to ask Lord Clarendon to condescend to look into the papers concerning any case before him[? I]f we had a Minister of less commanding capacity who would descend to that drudgery, he would see that, so far from its being an afterthought, Yeh states in his first letter that the *Arrow* was not an English lorcha. (55 [1440].)

Bulwer is, of course, right in his analysis of this aspect, but that - as his being wrong in other aspects - is not as significant as is the fact that he is in as full a possession of the documented circumstances of the affair as it was then possible to be. Right or wrong, Bulwer is never sloppy.

As he continues his attack upon Clarendon, Bulwer resorts

to a favorite tactic: The Russians are listening to all of this! In the first place, both Clarendon and the Colonial Secretary, Henry Labouchere, have spoken of the "honour of the English nation" and its "vindication" (56 [1441]). "The honour of the nation! Sir," Bulwer repeats, incredulously,

> prevarication and falsehood have nothing to do with the honour of the English nation; they appertain rather to the honour of an Old Bailey attorney. We have heard a great deal about the dissimulation and duplicity of Russia. How Russia will chuckle at this! Here is a Minister of the Crown [Clarendon], the austere negotiator of the Paris Conference, the rebuker of Russian duplicity, approving colonial agents in the maintenance of a claim which they knew to be illegal, and the assertion of a fact which they knew to be untruth! (56 [1441].)

Bulwer never tires of employing Russia as a lesson in some behavior of just the mistaken kind in which Britain is about to engage. He points out further instances of "prevarication," particularly by Bowring, with respect to the licensing of the lorcha. The license had, in reality, expired. The Colonial Ordinances applying to Hong Kong permitted any vessel return time, were the vessel out of port upon expiration. Bulwer contends that the license's expiration might have given Bowring an excuse to let go of the dispute; Clarendon, however, has chosen to approach the Chinese as though the license had remained fully in effect. Bulwer now comes near to accusing the Government of provoking the affair. He suggests additional alternatives to the course of action elected. "Good heavens," he exclaims when he has finished listing them,

> it is a stain on the nineteenth century that we hurried on to the shelling of a city, the destruction of its property, the slaughter of its inhabitants, who were disavowing offence and imploring mercy! And all for what? In order that we may convince these barbarians how unenlightened is

their prejudice against foreigners. (57 [1442].)

Again, Bulwer, despite the delightful mordancy, has very little to aid him here but the words themselves. The bombardments killed few, if any, and did even less damage; the populous was irritated temporarily; the Manchu government Yeh represented was far more hated than any but the most reprobate foreigner. Again, Bulwer had little means by which to know these things, but the words "shelling" and "city" combined were enough for whatever rhetoric the day required.

And then there was the matter of the Treaty of Nanking. The Chinese had granted five ports for access to foreigners, among them Canton, but had kept them out of Canton, something which, reasonably enough, dissatisfied many, particularly Bowring. In his discussion of the treaty, Bulwer shifts his attention to Palmerston - "than whom no greater authority exists as to the law of nations" (58 [1442]), Bulwer says caustically - in order to cite Emmerich de Vattell, the great Swiss systematizer of international law, to the effect that if a treaty ends in being "pernicious" to those whom it is designed to secure, then it can be discarded (58 [1443]). He follows this by adverting to comments by Sir George Bonham, Bowring's predecessor as Governor of Hong Kong, who has said that the Treaty of 1842 is in any case unenforceable (60 [1444-1445]). In 1849, Palmerston had himself said that, while full adherence to the treaty would be advantageous, it was not, Bulwer quotes him, "worth a naval and military operation" (60 [1445]). Bulwer's explanation for the turn of events, even in the face of each of these grounds for

caution, although it does not explain the Government's support of them, is interesting: however "humane and honorable a man may be to his own countrymen [as Bowring is], ... when agents of European Governments come in contact with oriental nations, they are apt to be gradually warped from the straight line of humanity and justice they would adopt at home" (61 [1445-1446]). While it is not clear what reasons he would give for this transformation or even if, indeed, he felt himself possessed of such reasons in the first place, it is certain that Bulwer's remarks about Bowring, about whom he is at one with most historical observers, are repeatable, European agent for European agent, on a grand scale. Be that as it may, Bulwer remains unable to escape a sense of superiority vis-à-vis the East, despite his manifest empathy with the Chinese Government and its functionaries; he ends with the advice that "[i]n dealing with nations less civilized than ourselves, it is by lofty truth and forbearing humanity that the genius of commerce contrasts the ambition of conquerors" (62 [1446]). Still - not a bad thought, all in all. With respect to the speech in general, however, it must be said that being right in one's principles does not excuse one from being right in one's facts. Had Bulwer - and those who shared his concerns about the relationship between Britain and China - been more in command of those very distant details with which they had to deal, had they a clearer sense of the complicated internal realities of China and understood to a nicer depth the vast, pelagic fluxes generated by the confluence of Chinese and European persons and

ideas, then the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries might each have been spared a great deal of the bad blood which arose between China and the West and likely even more of the good blood which fell. In the event and fortunately for China, Bulwer's oratorical remonstrances about a "commerce [which] recoils from unnecessary bloodshed" (62 [1446]) were added to by a sense in Britain that, after all, the place was simply too far and too dangerous for efficient intervention.

*Transference of India to the Crown*

Not so India. On the 12th of February, 1858, when Bulwer gave the speech which will now be discussed, the Mutiny, which had been underway for about a year, had yet to be fully put down, and British authority would not be entirely restored throughout the Subcontinent until the end of the present year. But there was at no time any question either of British will or of British competence to do the task. It is not necessary to go into the details of the Mutiny, for these do not bear directly on the subject of the speech. The question which Bulwer addresses is whether India should be transferred in its government from the East India Company to the Crown. When the debate took place, Derby's Administration was mere days from power, although Bulwer would not take office until May. Palmerston had himself introduced the Bill, since he was very eager for the transfer, so eager, indeed, that he had greeted the Mutiny with some satisfaction as a means of achieving that end (Steele 334). In the speech, *Transference of India to the Crown*, Bulwer is not

kind to Palmerston in his ambition, but the main thrust of the attack is upon the untimeliness of the transfer, not upon the transfer itself, with which Bulwer implies no difficulty. In the Thirties, he had sat on the Parliamentary Committee on the Monopoly of the East India Company (Lytton, I, 426) and was not particularly favorable toward the Hudson's Bay Company, as will be seen from speeches discussed below, after he became Colonial Secretary later in the year. He begins the speech by saying that he will not discuss the content of the Bill at any length, although he calls it "at once audacious, incomplete, and unconsidered" (*Speeches*, II, 64 [Hansard 3rd, 148, 1676]). It is the first because it insures for the governance of India the appointment of "a set of irresponsible nominees of the Ministers of the day;" it is the second because it gives no assurances against "despotic policy;" it is the third because "any practical acquaintance with the affairs of India [shows the proposed council] preposterously inadequate for the discharge of the amount of business which the council undertakes to perform" (64 [1676]). It is unconsidered even more significantly in the Ministers' doubtlessly honest belief that their patronage will not be expanded by their new power of appointment. Bulwer's argument is of great interest here, for he wants to claim that the power of appointment - "patronage" - of the Ministers will not only be "enormously increased," but it will be so "in a direction that is peculiarly dangerous, because it applies to the class of gentlemen ... of whom this House of Commons is composed," thus opening up the House to a potential

for violating its "virtuous horror of bribery and corruption" (64 [1676-1677]).

Bulwer's intent here, however great the danger, is not to warn against bribery and corruption of themselves; he wants to counter an argument placed by Palmerston against delay, who complained that "it is always said that it is not the right time for change" (65 [1677]). Bulwer's rebuttal takes two forms, one substantial and one analogical. First, he notes that a use of Bentham's Fallacies of Delay is of surprise to him because "[t]he noble Viscount is unquestionably the highest authority of any man living as to the right time for change," but cannot "distinguish between the mere hollow cry against a time for change" and "times which are peculiarly unpropitious to change" (65 [1677]). Bentham, a philosopher, had common sense as well; he would not only agree in this delay, but would make available "his immortal chapter on the 'Fallacies of Confusion,' in which is explained the fallacy of Ministers making use of the name and authority of the Crown for the purposes of corrupt patronage - a chapter that her Majesty's Ministers have, no doubt, studied with extraordinary diligence and care" (65 [1677]). Not content with this substantial imputation, Bulwer argues in analogical rebuttal that, despite the Viscount's "life-long attachment ... to the cause of Reform" (65 [1677]), he had found no difficulty in delaying it during the hostilities in the Crimea until after the war with Russia had been concluded. Palmerston's attachment to Reform was at best lukewarm, and his acceptance of it in the Thirties was as a means of preserving

"aristocratic predominance" (Bourne 504); by the Fifties, he had developed an acceptance of Reform based on its capacity to insure a government of "property and intelligence" and "was attracted to a professional franchise" in addition to the rental (Steele 76). Bulwer's sarcasm here, then, is transparent. Yet why does the Premier want this change and want it now, with "this particular promptitude and decision?" He is "in a state of abnormal and temporary difficulty," Bulwer answers (*Speeches*, II, 65-66 [Hansard 3rd, 148, 1678]). Why, Bulwer implies, did Palmerston delay political Reform during a war which had nothing to do with it, when now he wants to delay administrative Reform during a war which has everything to do with it?

Given the situation faced by this Government, it in no way surprises Bulwer

> to find that this measure is incomplete and unconsidered, because I do not think that the government could have had the requisite calmness of temper to devise a complete, safe, and comprehensive measure for the civil administration of India at a time when revolt is still raging - at a time when no man knows or can conjecture how far disaffection has spread or is spreading - at a time when none can know the proper remedies that ought to be applied - and at a time when all our thoughts are, or ought to be, concentrated on the fittest military measures for the support of a handful of our countrymen, amid the dangers that surround them. (64-65 [1677].)

This is well argued, sober advice, had it been offered a man less pleased, albeit surreptitiously, with the events as they had transpired in India. To this advice, Bulwer adds some general comments which, although of merit and insight of themselves, extend beyond their exigent perspicacity to give us an impression not only of how persons of Bulwer's views understood

the Imperial responsibility, but how they denominated its aspects rhetorically:

> I object to legislate for the securities of permanent and normal administration in a time of abnormal and temporary difficulty. I object to legislate for the provisions of peace at a time when your thought are concentered on the exigencies of war. I grant that war requires promptitude and decision - but peace requires deliberation and caution; and I believe that the slowness produced by the checks and counter-checks of which the noble Viscount [Palmerston] now complains, have saved the empire from many fatal blunders which would have been committed by the rashness of a Minister if he had had no better advisers than the complaisant nominees of himself and his party - men not like the present Court of Directors [of the East India Company], who have nothing further to expect from the Government, but men who, if they are of the mark and ability you desire to secure for your new Board [for the civil administration of India under the Crown], will be comparatively young and ambitious - men who will, perhaps, only take their place at your Board with a view to some higher and more dignified position in India, and who will thus be stimulated to a discreet acquiescence in the policy of their Ministerial patron by a lively sense of the prospective benefits of Ministerial patronage. (66 [1678].)

This rather long quotation is worth looking at formally, despite its paucity of elegance relative to Bulwer's capacities, because it, first of all, moves nicely from rather general points, some of which Bulwer is repeating, sometimes nearly verbatim, some of which he is making new, to the specifics which are of equal importance in his eyes and, second, because it covers every major point in the speech: the permanent and the temporary as defining states; war and peace as contextualizing circumstances; the role of "checks and counter-checks" in proper Imperial governance, with their concomitant slowness, but competence in deterring "rashness" and consequent "blunders;" the situation of Crown-chartered entities, such as the East India Company, at midcentury; the

complicated procedures and dangers in a transfer of authority from these back to the sovereign and, implicitly, but most centrally, from business directors to government administrators. These issues will play critical roles in the next two speeches, so that it serves good purpose to notice them now. With respect to content, these are the initiators of a new age, in which business, the haphazard undertaking of individuals is indiscernibly becoming the rationalized undertaking of groups - and what better existed to teach rationalization than that ultimate of all rationalizing institutions: the government.

Bulwer moves at this point to another argument which deals with the reception in India of the British response in England to the Mutiny. The Administration minimally is sowing doubt in India among those who are neutral and justification among those who are in rebellion, Bulwer claims, by openly questioning the ability of the East India Company to govern and its representatives to behave without "rapacity and perfidy" - a phrase Bulwer attributes to George Cornewall Lewis (1806-1863), who was Chancellor of the Exchequer (66 [1679]) in the Palmerston Government which would fall within days. It is a credit to Bulwer's near universal interests that at this point in the debate he is able to surface the then-startling fact that every word of relevance spoken or printed in England is quickly printed or reprinted, in English and in translations, "from one end of India to the other" (66 [1679]). Indeed, he has in his hands "a portion of a dispatch from a commissioner of revenue"

in India (68 [1680]), who declares the prevailing assumption in England that Indians do not have access to or, if they had, would not care about what is said in England, not to say what is said in England about *them*, is erroneous in the extreme. Actually, during the Mutiny, any who have both a newspaper and the ability to translate are surrounded on the streets and asked to render the news. Bulwer's conclusion is suggestive not only in what it says in absolute terms, but in what it implies about Bulwer's sense of the relative maturity of British and Indian political consciousness:

> In England we think little of imprudent speeches. Gentlemen may cheer the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he denounces the founders, and questions the value, of the Indian empire. But what will be thought of such opinions stamped with the authority of the Queen's advisor, by men who are actually rebelling or considering whether they should rebel? (68 [1680].)

This is a meaningful insight on Bulwer's part, for - acutely aware of both the potential of mass communication in and of itself and its implications for governance - he is warning not only against inexpedient language as such, but against what we today might refer to as the arrogance of power, that is, in so far as such arrogance impedes one in one's legitimate objectives.

The remainder of the speech is divided into three aspects: Bulwer, in some very fine moments of sarcasm, attacks one Minister after the other; he discusses the legal and Constitutional circumstances under which the transfer would be taking place and predicts some of the consequences for procedure and practice in the House; he calls upon Members who

hear him and Ministers who are promoting the legislation to organize their thinking in terms which are informed by some understanding of the Indians' perspective - ally, rebel or neutral - so as to avoid error in judgment and failure in policy. These aspects are somewhat conflated, but will be treated here independently. He says that Palmerston has been

> fifty years ... in the service of his country ... during which we have had momentous wars in India; and yet in that interval the evils of what is called the "double Government," or what the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty [Sir Charles Wood (1800-1885), after 1866, 1st Viscount Halifax] called the "compound Government" never seemed to occur to the noble Viscount (68 [1680-1681].)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, questioning the ability of the Company to govern in India and defending the proposal to replace it with Government agents, has said that "it is only in stress of weather that the vessel can be proved. The metaphor," Bulwer says, "is not very new; but, as coming from a gentleman of his solid attainments, any metaphor acquires the grace of novelty" (69 [1681]). Yet the metaphor collapses, for in no way has the Company failed; on the contrary, it is to its "ability and heroism" (70 [1682]) that the successes thus far in India are owed. But instead of recognition and appreciation, the Company is to receive dismissal and annihilation, from "that grateful Administration, whose numberless blots of policy and prudence, of energy and foresight, [the] Company has been lavishing the blood of its best and bravest in the endeavour to efface" (70 [1682]).

Returning to Palmerston, Bulwer mentions that

> [t]he noble Lord [has]condescend[ed] to flatter us by

> saying that it is all very well for people out of doors to disparage the House of Commons, but he does not think that any hon. gentleman will get up here and say that we are not just as wise, just as capable of administering the affairs of India as a set of merchants. (73 [1685].)

Bulwer first disallows that Members will fall for this "species of adulation" and then makes a delightfully effective double characterization of Palmerston on the one hand and on the other of "wise" backbenchers "administering the affairs of India."

> We all know the merits of this illustrious assembly, ... we also all know its defects - there is no man who knows them better than the noble Viscount. If upon any question, however trivial - if upon any question of foreign policy, not half so important to us as the affairs of India, not half so delicate to deal with - some hon. Gentleman were to ask a question of the noble Viscount, would not the noble Viscount rise with more than usual stateliness, and would he not as good as tell us that we had better attend to our domestic legislation, and imply that it was not well that such delicate matters should be handed over to the tender mercies of a popular assembly? Suppose that this bill passes, and some young and innocent member, anxious to assert that vigilant superintendence now held out as so strong and seductive an inducement in favour of this measure, should venture to put such a question as - What are the intentions of the Government regarding Nizam? - what the true state of our relations with Holkar or Scindia? - do we not know perfectly well that the noble Viscount would rise in his place and say, as he said the other night, "that without meaning anything personal, the question was extremely absurd"? And indeed, for my part, I own to an wholesome dread of hon. gentlemen cramming themselves with blue-books, and coming down to the House with an elaborate speech about Rajahs and Nawabs conceived in accordance with the respective interests of party; sometimes, as the case may be, to defend some more than ordinary act of duplicity by which we had annexed a kingdom - or, on the other hand, to declaim against some measure which might be necessary to the stern necessities of oriental rule, but painful to the feeling of an English popular assembly. (73-74 [1685-1686].)

But, of course, the real problems lie neither with Palmerston, nor with his supposed advisors, but with the question itself.

Bulwer appeals to "any lawyer in the House" (71 [1683]) to

deny that the intervention of the Crown would necessarily constitute the destruction of the Company. Indeed, it is not the Crown which is at issue, for the Company comprises "trustees of the Crown" and "every act that is done in relation to the government of India is at this very moment approved of by the Crown, [and] ratified by a responsible minister of the Crown" (71 [1683]). Conversely, even if Bulwer agrees that the Company must be destroyed and that this is the best time in which to do it, must he agree as well that its replacement is to be a Board with members nominated from within Parliament? He sees no ground for such agreement (72 [1684]). It boils down to a question of independence. Members, however eminent, have their own concerns and would not be free to govern. Outside of Parliament, Parliamentary control would just as much hamper independence, for the nominations would still remain within the gift of Parliament. "If you want to govern India by clerks, call them clerks; and, as clerks, let them be nominated," Bulwer demands. But if "you want councillors, councillors must be free" (73 [1685]). But before anything can reasonably be done, India must first be understood.

It is interesting that Bulwer does not here refer to the experience of the Company, for clearly its experience is relevant to the point he makes: "Before you can judge with discrimination of a policy applied to orientals, you must learn to orientalize yourselves" (74 [1686]). This may seem obvious after a century of anthropology, but in Bulwer's day societies such as India's were subjected either to the mystification of

the totally mysterious or to what has been called "mirror imaging," that is, a projecting onto the other society the attitudes and motivations found in one's own. Bulwer remarks, among other things, that his listener may, given the position to,

> sanction penalties which, to your English ideas, will seem mild and equitable, and which, to a Hindoo, seem the most exquisite torture. And why? Because such penalties, mild in their operation in this life, may, according to his creed, affect him in the life to come; and, in forfeiting the sacred privileges of his birthright, condemn him to countless ages of degradation. (74 [1686].)

Of course, the rudiments of Hinduism were known to many of Bulwer's listeners as *facts*, but they were not often, if at all, given as *elements of government*. But Bulwer quickly moves on, to his conclusion, Parliament

> will peaceably escape this danger. The House will have the wisdom to shun it; the House will never habitually exercise the superintending vigilance you [that is, Palmerston] commend to it - it will only interfere with the despotism you are about to establish whenever it suits the interest of party to assail a Minister or asperse some illustrious name. (74-75 [1686]).

Moving on from this rare instance in his rhetoric of cynicism, Bulwer inserts a final entreaty in his conclusion that, after "your Indian empire has passed through the perils of a mutinous army[,] do not expose it to the more fatal ordeal of an organized system of favouritism and jobbery" (75 [1687]). Ultimately, of course, it was not so exposed, and the Indian Civil Service, which had been developing out of the East India Company's slow transmutation into a function of Government over the last decades (Spear 277, 278), had much about it to commend; nevertheless, Bulwer's expressed fears where not without

ground (281-282). As to the Motion itself, Palmerston prevailed, 318 to 173, and the fact became the law.

## Bulwer's Ministerial Speeches: *On the Colony of British Columbia*

The fate of the Hudson's Bay Company was similar to that of the East India Company, with the difference that it was incorporated, if that is the term, into the Government of Canada, which, in contrast to India, had a separate existence - as a Colony of Settlement - from the Government of Great Britain. This was a slow process as the Company's charter rights were acquired from midcentury on in conjunction with the increasing surrender of British jurisdiction in general to Canada (Brebner 388-89). The next two speeches which will be considered have Canada as their subject, although the role of the Hudson's Bay Company in one contrasts somewhat with its role in the other. The third and final speech taken up in this Chapter concerns the issue of immigration from British Asia to the British West Indies. All three are Minister's speeches, and all three both suffer and exploit that attribute. In their character as official statements of the Administration by a representative of the Crown, they are far less bellicose than the great majority of Bulwer's oratory, but neither are they submissive or fawning. They tend to a certain pedanticism in some of their aspects - although they are not didactic and certainly never tendentious - this pedanticism being a tone which is a temptation for Bulwer whenever he has become

convinced that what he knows is something more than those he is addressing seem to him to know.

The first speech was given on the 8th of July, 1858, and has for its subject the *Colony of British Columbia*. At the time of the speech, only parts of Vancouver Island had been settled, but gold had been discovered along the Fraser River in what was then called New Caledonia, that is, the mainland across from Vancouver Island east to the Rockies. The object of Bulwer's speech was to obtain consent of Parliament for initiating the Queen's rule throughout this territory with the organization of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, and the immediate stimulus for this request was the lawlessness accompanying the gold rush which had inevitably followed gold's discovery in 1856. It will be recalled that the Gold Rush in California was less than a decade old, and the lessons of that event occurring not many hundreds of miles to the south were not lost on Bulwer and his colleagues in the Administration, nor were they unaware of the fact that as the California fields were decreasing in their superficial yields, so word of the finds in New Caledonia would bring gold seekers who were veterans not only of the Gold Rush rivers and mines, but of the Gold Rush society as well. Longer-range motives for Bulwer's request were the potential of the lands and forests in the region to receive extensive colonial settlement and the status of the Hudson's Bay Company, which would be denied New Caledonia and required to give up exclusivity on Vancouver Island.

But the presence of gold is the primary focus. His initial

argument is an interesting example of the manner in which the the colonial interest is advanced:

> I need say no more to show the imperative necessity of establishing a Government wherever the hope of gold - to be had for the digging - [exists than that it] attracts all adventurers and excites all passions. At this moment there is no Imperial Government at all in the place, for the Governor of Vancouver's owns no commission on the mainland. Thus the discovery of gold compels us to do at once what otherwise we should very soon have done - erect into a colony a district that appears, in great part, eminently suited for civilised habitation and culture. (*Speeches*, II, 77-78 [Hansard 3rd, 151, 1097-1098].)

At this point, Bulwer gives a fairly detailed description of the region, but even in this cannot eschew argumentation:

> Hon. gentlemen who look at the map may imagine this new colony to be at such an immeasurable distance from England as to be fatal to anything like extensive colonisation from this country; but we have already received overtures from no less eminent a person than Mr Cunard for a line of postal steam-vessels for letters, goods, and passengers, by which it is calculated that a passenger starting from Liverpool may reach the colony in about thirty-five days by way of New York and Panama. (78 [1098].)

(It will be recalled that, since the Canal was not completed until 1914, the Panama segment of the trip would have been overland between two steamships.)

Bulwer returns to a description of the geography and then renders a history of the discovery of gold and the particulars of the communication of the discovery to the Colonial Office. He then discusses the measures taken by the Governor of Vancouver Island, James Douglas, and the limits to the Governor's authority, both practically and in law. Bulwer strongly praises him, but in very general terms - the specifics were not entirely known at the time - despite his having exceeded considerably his authority. Bulwer apparently judged

rightly in both aspects, that is, with respect to the Governor's activities and his response to the limits of his authority. Brebner says that Douglas's "intelligent energies on the spot prevented what might easily have been chaos with over 10,000 miners on the Fraser by the autumn of 1858 - a territory which had no legal governor," but over which Douglas "assumed the powers on his own in December, 1857" (252). Bulwer quotes extensively from letters sent to the Colonial Office by Douglas and refers to "private letters" he has seen from San Francisco indicating departures of gold seekers in numbers above 20,000, all having left already for the Fraser or about to leave (*Speeches*, II, 82-84 [Hansard 3rd, 151, 1100-1101]). He then discusses the legal circumstances and implications of the colonialization of British Columbia as they have been developed by law officers who have advised the Colonial Office. What is interesting about these portions of the speech is the magnitude of detail which Bulwer includes. In the speeches Bulwer gave as Colonial Secretary, it is fully clear that he sees his role as much as informative as persuasive. In speeches he gave without office, he employs details - and he does so very often and very well - nearly always to the end of persuasion. In these speeches of 1858 and 1859, however, while he seeks to persuade, he fulfills the additional obligation of sharing knowledge with Members simply so that they will be possessed of it. It is not necessary to quote from these divisions of the speeches, for they are not as rhetorically dense as those devoted to persuasion. But they are, as nearly all of Bulwer's work,

exceptionally well written, and they would have captured the attention of his commonly appreciative listeners quite as fully as the more argumentative segments. Nevertheless, there are certainly moments in the speech which are designed to be persuasive, for Bulwer needed a vote on the Motion for a Second Reading of the Bill for the institution of the Colony of British Columbia which this speech was intended to procure.

For one thing, he wants British Columbia treated differently with respect to the normal elements of self-rule which are built into the governments of at least the Colonies of Settlement.

> I think that most hon. gentlemen will agree that it would not be fair to the grand principle of free institutions to risk at once the experiment of self-government among settlers so wild, so miscellaneous, perhaps so transitory, and in a form of society so crude. This is not like other colonies [Bulwer adds] which have gone forth from these islands, and of which something is known of the character of the colonists. (82 [1102].)

Particularly relevant is the fact that the rush is "not for land but gold," a circumstance which creates an inherently unstable society. On the other hand, he thinks that "all complicated attempts to construct half-and-half forms of government for such new societies are unsatisfactory ... [and] only serve to weaken the executive, and to form an excuse for retarding the completion of popular systems" (83 [1102]). He suggests that for five years the Crown rule the Colony directly through the Governor and that self-governance, as it takes place in other Colonies, be brought into effect at the end of that period. At this point, Bulwer puts forward the counterargument some may offer that five years would be too short a time given the

population likely to inhabit the Colony - a population he has already more than enough described. His response is novel, although, one would think, not altogether unreasonable. Most of the miners will be Americans, who are used to governing themselves and will be uneasy at a lengthy withholding of the possibility. To this he adds the more general, philosophical point that

> if you desire a strong Government for the preservation of internal order, no Government we can make, without the aid of armies, is so strong as that where the whole society is enlisted in securing respect to the laws which it has the privilege to enact, and has no motive to rebel against the authority in which it participates. (84 [1103].)

On the other hand, the gold may fail, in which case, immigrants will arrive from Great Britain or elsewhere already prepared to farm the land or develop others of the Colony's resources.

Bulwer continues to add specifics in aid of his Bill and for the background of the Members. He states with little attempt to persuade that the present Governor of Vancouver's ought be the Governor too of New Caledonia, pointing in precedent to the fact that the Governor of the Cape, "which has a free constitution, is also Governor of the Crown colony of British Kaffraria, holding separate commissions for each" (85 [1104]). He states that "Canadian jurisdiction is a dead letter; and though it has subsisted nominally for nearly forty years, it has never been put into execution" (85 [1104-1105]). He states finally that, from this time on, "the servants of the [Hudson's Bay] Company will ... have in [the] two colonies [of Vancouver's Island and New Caledonia] no privileges whatever apart from the rest of her Majesty's subjects there" (86

[1105]). He is "glad to hear the hon. and learned gentleman the Member for Sheffield [the Radical John Arthur Roebuck, who, raised there, was a ardent advocate for many matters concerning Canada] express his opinion that the present occasion was not a fitting opportunity for raising the question of which he had given notice" (86 [1105]). It is interesting how Bulwer characterizes Roebuck, even as he placates him:

> It is desirable to keep any discussion upon this bill free from the more angry elements which may be involved in the general question as to the powers of the Hudson's Bay Company, by virtue of its charter, on the different districts of Rupert's Land, on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, a question which the hon. Member for Sheffield will have a distinct opportunity to introduce (86 [1105].)

In addition to the more obvious aspects of this comment, that controversy exists and that the occasion for it to arise will occur, it should be noticed, with respect to the rhetoric, that the tone here becomes almost conversational. This kind of thing does not occur in Bulwer's persuasive speeches, although often enough he returns heckling and baiting in kind. But, rhetorically, this is a different matter entirely.

Now, it's been said here that Bulwer is not engaging entirely in persuasive, but rather often in informative rhetoric. That he is doing so is entirely conscious to him. Indeed, he points out that he wishes to avoid "exaggeration, " "conjecture" and "over-colouring" on the basis of "imperfect knowledge." He justifies his restraint in the following way:

> Nothing can be more cruel to immigrants and more dangerous to the peace of the settlement than to give undue favour to any extravagant expectations as to the produce of these

> gold-fields. It is a terrible picture, that of thousands rushing to what is already called the new El Dorado, influenced by avarice and hope, and finding not wealth, but disappointment and destitution - provisions dear and scanty, and the gold itself meagre in its produce, and guarded by flooded rivers and jealous Indians. (86 [1106].)

With this, he raises an altogether apposite comparison, which is intended to sober not so much the Members who are listening to his speech in the House, but those hundreds of thousands who will receive a report of the speech in the double intensity of their interests in the gold and the intentions of the British Government:

> At present, whatever may be the riches of the discovery, it is fair not to forget the fact that California exported in the first eight months from the discovery of its mine 150,000 ounces of gold-dust; while the largest amount ascertained or conjectured from Fraser's River since 1856 [two years before] is not more than 1000 ounces. (86-87 [1106].)

Given the facts, little more is needed to be said of the gold rush. "More rational, if less exciting, hopes of the importance of the colony rest upon its other resources, which I have described, and upon the influence of its magnificent situation on the ripening grandeur of British North America" (87 [1106]). It is clear now that Bulwer's intention has been, at least in part, to use the discovery of gold to generate a colony. His next statement is both insightful and prophetic considering that the enterprise was not even to be initiated for another twenty-two years, nor completed for another twenty-seven (Brebner 308-310):

> I do believe the day will come, and that many now present will live to see it, when a portion at least of the lands on the other side of the Rocky Mountains being also brought into colonisation and guarded by free institutions, one

> direct line of railway communication will unite the Pacific to the Atlantic. (87 [1106].)

If we may divide oratory, as Aristotle does, into that which seeks to establish facts about the past, that which seeks to establish policy for the future and that which seeks to establish value in the present - dicanic, symbouleutic and epideictic rhetoric, respectively - then there are elements of all three in this speech, as there are in all of Bulwer's speeches. However, as befits a public figure who is performing a public function, epideictic rhetoric is of particular importance in Bulwer's present speech; it is a form which is ceremonial and occasional - similarly to occasional poetry - and seeks to bring praise and honor, or their opposites, to bear upon persons or things its intention is to display. Bulwer ends this speech with comments that initially appear symbouleutic, that is, to the end of the establishing a policy:

> [O]f one thing I am sure - that though at present it is the desire of gold which attracts to this colony its eager and impetuous founders, still, if it be reserved, as I hope, to add a permanent and flourishing race to the great family of nations, it might be, not by the gold which the diggers may bring to light, but by the more gradual process of patient industry in the culture of the soil, and in the exchange of commerce; it must be by the respect of the equal laws which secure to every man the power to retain what he may honestly acquire; it must be in the exercise of those social virtues by which the fierce impulse of force is tamed into habitual energy, and avarice itself, amidst the strife of competition, finds its object best realised by steadfast emulation and prudent thrift. I conclude, Sir, with a humble trust that the Divine Disposer of all human events may afford the safeguard of His blessing to our attempt to add another community of Christian freemen to those by which Great Britain confides the records of her empire, not to pyramids and obelisks, but to states and commonwealths whose history shall be written in her language. (87 [1106-1107].)

The conclusion begins with statements of general policy which

change slowly into statements of characterization, statements which change from a consideration of what is politically expedient to what is customarily proper, from what is supposed to occur to what is acceptable in its occurrence. There is an appeal to religion, which is the context of the epideictic, as the person is of the dicanic and the state is of the symbouleutic. Bulwer ends in a display which distinguishes other empires from that of the British, as he might end an dicanic speech with a proof and a symbouleutic speech with a call to act or to desist from acting. It is all very neatly and eloquently done. Now, elements of this conclusion contain what we obviously might today wish to refer to as cultural imperialism, but for Bulwer, who believed in the superiority of his society and its cultural heritage, though not of individuals in it, this was a benign way to spread and share its virtues. The speech is acknowledged as founding, as Bulwer is acknowledged as being the founder - in so far as these sorts of things could occur in London, far from the physical location of the foundation - of British Columbia. All in all, it was a very good speech.

**Bulwer's Ministerial Speeches: *On the Hudson's Bay Company***

Bulwer's speech on *The Hudson's Bay Company* was given on the 20th of July, 1858, twelve days following the speech on the founding of British Columbia. It was, in its own way, as important a speech as that on British Columbia, for it articulated a philosophy of policy with respect, specifically,

to the Hudson's Bay Company and, in general, to the notion of settlement in so far as this process was within the purview of the Government. There is much in the speech which is informative and even less, *mutatis mutandis*, than in the previous speech which is persuasive. It should also be noted, however, that the present speech, as the previous, was given within the first months of Bulwer's Secretaryship, and both were intended to manifest, to the degree that a policy orientation can or, for that matter, should be manifested, Bulwer's general intentions with respect to the direction the Colonial Office would take under his leadership. And in this sense, the speech is meant to be persuasive.

John Arthur Roebuck (1801-1879), the writer, scholar and Radical, who sat in the midcentury for Sheffield, where his famous grandfather had made the family fortune in chemicals and iron, put a Motion to the effect that the Hudson's Bay Company's privileges, which were about to expire, not be renewed (Hansard 3rd, 151, 1794). For Roebuck, this was a simple matter of British imperial expansion, which he thought better accomplished under direct rule than through trading companies; indeed, he says that he intends to bring no charges against the Hudson's Bay Company, but merely resist the extension of its charter, which would terminate the following May (1794). His express fear, however, was of America, which had a civilization inferior to that of England, in large measure due to "the infernal blot of slavery" (1793). In addition to providing "England's name, and England's laws, and England's literature"

to what was left to England of North America, direct rule would "afford a refuge to the slave" (1793).

Bulwer begins by stating "the general views by which I venture to think that we ought to be guided" (*Speeches*, II, 89 [Hansard 3rd, 151, 1814]). He asks whether it is "possible that so great a segment of the earth under the English sceptre, can have so long been abandoned as a desolate hunting-ground for wandering savages and wild animals" (89 [1815]). Civilization, he concludes, must "find its own voluntary channels" (89 [1815]). But the Hudson's Bay Company wishes to possess sole rights to these vast tracts in Canada, untrammeled by the activities of those who would interfere with its fundamental enterprise. And Bulwer acknowledges that a trade which depends on wild animals "has a direct interest in excluding civilised men" (89 [1815]).

At this point, the speech takes on a decidedly modern ambience Gladstone had come before the Hudson's Bay Committee with the compromise that the "country capable of colonisation should be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of" the Company and "the country incapable of colonisation should be left to that jurisdiction" (89 [1815]). Bulwer attributes the compromise to "a practised statesman ... by which

> civilisation may gain all it asks at present, and humanity may not only preserve to the savages scattered over frozen deserts, inaccessible to regular government, the trade on which they depend for existence, but guard them from the terrible demoralisation produced by rival bribes of ardent spirits, and the strife and bloodshed among themselves, or between themselves and the whites, which might follow if the administrative machinery which it is the interest of a trading company to establish were destroyed before any effective substitute could be

found. (89-90 [1815].)

It is within this context that the Government must consider renewing the Company's license. The license will not be renewed for areas - Bulwer calls them "the Indian territory" (90 [1815]) - that may be settled in the near future, but "more remote and northern regions, taking care that the Crown shall have always the power to withdraw from that licence any land that may be required for the uses of civilised life" (90 [1815-1816]), may remain with the Company. This is, of course, a pretty straightforward statement of policy. At first sight, things do not look promising for the Indians; however, Bulwer makes as integral to the policy that land "held as yet only by the Indians" must come under the license of the Company only if such licensing would "work well" for them (90 [1816]). In effect, the license is available solely if it does not interfere with the Indians. Later in the speech, Bulwer reaffirms this regard for the Indians in insisting that, insofar as the Company retains control of portions of the territories under consideration, it must "respect that considerate humanity which is due to the Indians" (94 [1819]). Bulwer makes a distinction here between the charter the Hudson's Bay Company has traditionally held and the license which will provide for privileges now under discussion. While he attempts to present a neutral case in all of this or, at least, a case possessed of no bias against the Company, he betrays himself in distinguishing the Company's work from that of others which, in his view, is more appropriate to the age. The Crown, he says,

> shall retain all the imperial rights to fisheries and mines, and whatever may call forth human industry and enterprise in pursuits more congenial to our age that that gloomy trade in the skins of animals which seems to carry us back to a date before the annals of history. (90 [1816].)

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the speech, at least with respect to perspective, occurs when Bulwer attempts to set the stage for a discussion of the potential for Canadian Government involvement in areas previously under the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company:

> turning our eyes from a trade which, unlike all other commerce, rests its profits, not on the redemption, but on the maintenance of the wilderness, it must cheer us to see already, in the great border-lands of this hitherto inhospitable region, the opening prospect of civilised life. (90-91 [1816].)

The cohabitation of the terms "redemption" and "civilised life" in the statement as it is here made clearly indicates that Bulwer and, presumably, the Colonial Office under him suffered no romantic notions about the intrinsic beauty and value of unclaimed wilderness. The argument concerning Canadian Government participation is interesting as well and returns to an argument already found in the British Columbia speech. Assuming the Canadians reject territorial extension and jurisdiction, two alternatives remain: leave jurisdiction to the Hudson's Bay Company; found a new colony. Bulwer will in no way hear of the first (91 [1817]), the second, however, is more complex than simple acceptance and rejection will respond to. There is first of all the question of expense. To this objection Bulwer answers that, while colonies should be self-supporting, they will be so "in so far as you leave them to raise their own

revenues under free institutions" (91 [1817]). The assumption here is that free institutions bring about economic self-sufficiency. Second, there is the question of settlement itself. Some are concerned that because the area, which lies east of the Rockies and west of Ontario, is in its southernmost reaches adjacent to the United States, settlement will come from there, rather than from the British Isles. "This objection," Bulwer says, somewhat preemptively, "does not alarm me" (91 [1817]). While there's nothing to say that American proximity will make American immigration inevitable, there is the additional circumstance that, "Americans, once settled as British colonists, it is probable that they would soon identify their national feelings and interests with the land in which they lived, and the conditions of the Imperial Government" (92 [1817]).

Bulwer extends this facet of the speech into history and sociology. First, history:

> No less than sixteen counties in this kingdom were given up to the immigration of the Danes - and probably the great mass of the population in those counties, more particularly in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk, are of Danish origin to this day; yet in a very short time they became as heartily English and as hostile to the Danes of the Baltic as the Anglo-Saxons of Kent. (92 [1817]).

Bulwer instances like developments of national sentiment among the Normans. But these examples are propaedeutic to a very general thesis Bulwer wants to advance: "no matter where men come from, place them in ground covered by the British flag, overshadowed, though at a distance, by the mild British sceptre, and they will soon be British in sentiment" (92

[1818]). This sociology of allegiance is followed in short order by a moral injunction and a more encompassing sociological observation:

> All that I say on the score is, do not, on account of such jealousies and fears, obstruct civilisation. Here is land fit for settlement; if civilised men will settle in it, let them. Never let us mind the difficulties of access, soil, or climate. Leave the difficulties to them. Nature and man will fight their own battle and make their own peace. (92 [1818]).

In short, because persons are capable of overcoming the obstacles of the wilderness on their own, they will do so best under British authority, which is intrinsically noninterventionist. And this has to do with the Company, whose intention was settlement, but the "shadow" of whose "protection" was "chilling" (93 [1818]).

Bulwer moves on to consider a number of points, only a few of which need concern us here. He renders a general analysis of the potential of a successful attack by the United States on the settlements. Sir William Eyre, a lieutenant general who commands all forces in British North America, is quoted, with details from the evidence he has submitted to the Colonial Office, that such an attack could be met without difficulty. Bulwer gives considerable corroboration for the argument that the Hudson's Bay Company has already *de facto* abandoned its monopoly in trade. But the Company has not given up its charter, by which the land, if not the trade, is the exclusive property of the Company. Nevertheless, Bulwer argues, colonization may occur, despite the Company's charter. Labouchere, who, it will be recalled, preceded Bulwer at the Colonial Office, has

presented a plan to the Hudson's Bay Committee by which the territory would be ceded to Canada, the Company would have its trading license renewed for twenty-one years "over the wilderness not fitted for colonisation" (95 [1820]) and a commission would be formed comprising one representative each from Canada, the Imperial Government and the Company, whose task it would be to settle the matter of compensation for the Company in its loss of land judged fit for colonization.

The conclusion of the speech is interesting for three reasons: it provides a summation of Bulwer's major points with clarity and precision; it contextualizes ethically and historically the circumstances under which the Parliamentary decisions are here to be made; it embodies a notion of "mission," which Bulwer feels should inform the decisions and actions taken in the House and, ultimately, in Canada. The summation is interesting because it employs language which might today be considered highly value-laden, but which Bulwer clearly considers objective:

> [F]irst, I think the [Company's] licence ought not to be renewed except where civilisation has no requirements and law no other machinery but that of the Company. Secondly, with regard to raising the question of the validity of the charter, it will be submitted to our law officers, and we can obviously say nothing one way or the other till their opinion is received. Thirdly, I grant the expediency of strengthening our empire in North America by substituting, and in one connected frontier line, the colonies of Great Britain for the hunting-grounds of a trading company. (96 [1821].)

I think it fair to say that Bulwer's understanding of words such as "civilisation," "empire" and "colonies" is without doubt operational; that is, he is not using them to any heightened

effect or with an aim to stimulate response: civilization is civilization, and empire is empire; colonies are the means by which empire brings civilization where there is none. The term "hunting-grounds," however, is intended by Bulwer as a pejorative in his work against the Hudson's Bay Company's retaining dominant jurisdiction in Canada. Bulwer now makes a personal statement in his role as Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> It is my sincere wish and hope that arrangements for that object [settlement and the transition from Company jurisdiction to public jurisdiction in the areas settled] may be effected in a spirit of reasonable conciliation to all parties concerned, and that we may thus lay the foundation of a civilised community, upon the principles of humanity towards the red man, and of honour and honesty towards the white, which our civilisation should carry along with it wherever it extends, as the colonisers of old carried along with them a fragment of their native earth, and a light from the altar of their ancient council-hall. (96 [1821]).

Again, Bulwer seeks to show analogy between previous empires and the British Empire by pointing to the abstract principles of humanity and justice as comparable to the earth and flame the ancient colonizers set out on their journeys with; it is a metaphor with which his audience has considerable sympathy. The conclusion contains some workaday comments on scheduling projections for further discussion on this issue and a concluding nicety thanking his listeners for their attention; these indicate the Ministerial nature of the speech. There is as well, however, a statement which characterizes in very few words, but overtly and simply, the motivation for the British imperial effort as Bulwer sees it: "In the object before us we all have a common interest - to fulfil the mission of the Anglo-

Saxon race, in spreading intelligence, freedom, and Christian faith wherever Providence gives us the dominion of the soil, and industry and skill can build up cities in the desert" (96 [1821]). This is a significant statement, not because it is uncommon, for it is not, but because it expresses both a purpose and a rationale for for British colonial and imperial activity at midcentury. On the other hand, simply because Bulwer's sentiments were not uncommon does not mean they were universal. Many opposed the imperial undertaking throughout the century and into the next, with varying degrees of intensity and from varying perspectives. But it is surely clear that if Bulwer had reservations about the enterprise, he kept them to himself as Colonial Secretary and, no less, as a Member of Parliament.

## Bulwer's Ministerial Speeches: *On Immigration into the West Indies*

The last speech to be considered in this Chapter is *Immigration into the West Indies*, which Bulwer delivered on the 3rd of March, 1859. At the time of the speech, large numbers of persons from British possessions in South Asia were moving to the West Indies and giving great competition as laborers to primarily the former slaves who continued to work in these colonies. The Anti-Slavery Society, which had continued to be active of course against slavery, an institution needing to be fought elsewhere than in the British dominion, not the least in the United States, but in West Asia and Africa as well, persisted too in its interest in bringing the freed slaves in

the West Indies into a state of economic independence. Its members were represented in the House of Commons by the Liberal Member for Maidstone, Charles Buxton (1823-1871), the son of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845), leader of the antislavery movement in the Commons after the retirement in 1825 of William Wilberforce (1759-1833), who had himself fought the antislavery fight in the House for nearly forth-five years. In the Fifties, the younger Buxton sought to limit this immigration as a threat to the economic well-being of the former slaves.

Bulwer began the delivery of this Minister's speech with a generous address to Buxton. This is a thing which many today may find both idle and empty. The argument can be made, however, that, unrestrained by such idle and empty forms, speech may be easily made all too ready to provoke and all too easily prone to violence. And, while it is clear that speech of this nature coming from someone in power, as it does from Bulwer, may have more uses than simple courtesy, it has always been Bulwer's choice of language when he could have gained little from it or even when it might have worked something to his disadvantage.

> Let me, in the first instance [Bulwer says] express my sense of the temperance as well as the ability with which the hon. gentleman has introduced his motion. The bearer of his father's name enters into the discussion of all questions that affect humanity with an hereditary title-deed to respect. It is clear that he will preserve that heirloom without a flaw. If I question his views I can equally honour his sincerity. (*Speeches*, II, 97 [Hansard 3rd, 152, 1226].)

Bulwer divides the question into two parts: the present

state of the West Indies and the issue of immigration. He will treat immigration first. He takes it that the antislavery Interest is wholly against immigration for the purposes of labor despite the fact that this has been firmly instituted in the British West Indies. Now, as has already been discussed in this essay, Bulwer has always been a vigorous and effective, if not a central, opponent of slavery from the beginning of his career and has based his opposition, as he has his concern for Indians, on a thoroughgoing sense of slaves' common humanity with him. As the *Apprenticeship* speech indicated, for Bulwer, the imperatives of this common humanity did not cease with manumission. Now, opposed in a specific circumstance by a group with which he is normally in absolute agreement, he feels he must carefully delimit the parameters of that dissent. Conversely, with respect to the matter in which he is in contention, he must be forthright and unambiguous. Finally, he is determined to base his argument upon details available to all. It is a ticklish moment, and he handles it well:

> On my part, I so sympathise with zeal on behalf of the negro, even where I think those who entertain it misguided and misinformed on details, that I entreat beforehand forgiveness if inadvertently a single word should escape me that may seem to disparage the humanity that I hold in reverence. But I must say, frankly and firmly, that from that system of immigration I am convinced that no Minister, responsible for the welfare of the West India colonies, can depart. Let the House listen to facts and figures, and then say if I am wrong in the convictions I express. (98 [1226-1227].)

Bulwer now gives a complex, but easily followed, rendering of the economic situation in the West Indies which purports to show that the South Asian immigration has actually benefited not

only the South Asian immigrant, but the colonies as well. His facts and figures are compelling.

If "you advocate the cause of the negro, [you] must advocate equally the cause of the [East] Indian" (99-100 [1228]), Bulwer argues. The East Indians have left the worst possible economic conditions, come to a better place and, indeed, saved it "from ruin" (100 [1228]). It is true that they come under a "system of indentures to a master," but before the system existed, they wandered the island and starved (100 [1229]). Bulwer cites sympathetic magistrates and the Immigration Commissioners, whose evidence shows not only the economic effectiveness of the immigration policy, but a steady improvement in conditions of transport, which, in the past, had been deplorable. This segment of the argument is funded by a considerable array of facts and figures. The following is one of Bulwer's many points, but it is interesting in two respects: the figures themselves and the comparison.

> Take the very worst cases that occurred. In Calcutta ships the average mortality was in the year 1856-1857 a little more than 17 per cent; but in 1847, on board the vessels that carried the Irish immigrants to America by a far shorter voyage, the mortality was much the same - about 17 per cent. Imagine what advantages would have been lost to Ireland, England, and America, if, on account of that melancholy average, the Irish exodus had been stopped. (100-101 [1229].)

It is a curious argument, but indicative of what a person such as Bulwer, who was and was known for an interest in, as he puts it, humanity, thought about mortality on ships and the benefits of immigration. That these immigrants were forced to their lot by so grim circumstances seems to be taken as the norm by Bulwer.

He is careful, of course, to point out that these are worst cases. He follows this example with a relatively lengthy examination of mortality figures for many cases in many years. He concludes that there has been "exaggeration by which honest and well-meaning men have been deceived" (102 [1230]).

Arguments of ill done to those already in the colonies are next to be treated. Some say there is no scarcity of labor and that the immigrants are brought in to compete with persons already living in the colonies (102 [1230]). But the planters pay extra to immigrants, for they cannot obtain the labor at home (102 [1230-1231]). Further, colonies like Barbadoes do not bring in immigrants because there is a sufficient labor force on the island (102 [1231]). Further, wages are higher on, say, Jamaica, where immigrants are brought in, than on Barbadoes, which is self-sufficient in labor (102 [1231]; Bulwer provides the figures in daily pay). Bulwer points out that wages, which are the same for both the immigrants and those born in the colonies, "cannot be low, if, as we have seen, they enable the Coolie [that is, the immigrant from South Asia] to return home in a few years with what to him is affluence for the rest of his life" (103 [1231]). Imperial loans have been extended to the planters to aid in the import of South Asian labor. Some object that the community should not bear the burden of the planters' expense. But, says Bulwer, if some of the expense is borne by the community, the community benefits from the immigration and should be expected to share in the cost. The following argument is one of the most curious Bulwer

has ever offered:

> Increased prosperity is always followed by increased civilization; more money is required for schools, for religious worship, for public works; every individual in the country rises higher in the scale in proportion as it becomes more prosperous; is it unjust to call on the Creole [that is, one born in the colony] to pay something towards what enriches and exalts the country in which we have made him a freeman? (103 [1231-1232]).

One cannot help but wonder whether Bulwer would so argue were this not a Minister's speech. Still, if the ideal economy he indicates is the real economy in these colonies, then he does not, at least, argue inappropriately with respect to pure economics.

Bulwer now informs his listeners that a great deal of information has been gathered on the subject - bulky blue books, Parliamentary papers and the like. True to the fashion of any government official anywhere in a democracy, he enjoins his listeners to wait until they are possessed of all this information before they undertake to criticize his policies. "It must not be supposed that we shrink from inquiry," he assures them and makes two proposals (103 [1232]). First, if all these papers do not meet the needs of Members, he will agree to a Committee of Inquiry; if, on the other hand, a Committee is required now, he will accept it so long as the Motion to form it reads - and Bulwer specifies what he thinks the exact wording should be - "To inquire into the present mode of conducting immigration into the West Indian colonies, *and the best means of promoting that object*" (104, [1232]; italics added). Bulwer would appear thoroughly opposed to a Committee and a bit testy about it to boot.

The conclusion of this speech is intriguing for two reasons, one having to do with Bulwer's perspective on slavery, which he again defends his record on, and the other having to do with his understanding of economics:

> Every hundredweight of sugar produced by the immigrant at Jamaica is a hundredweight of sugar withdrawn from the market of Cuban slaves. Will slave States [in America] follow our example unless capital flourish under it? Can capital flourish unless it has the right to hire labour wherever labour is willing to be hired? I warn them, that if by any indiscretion of overzeal on our part one West Indian colony becomes vitally injured, it is we who shall rivet the bonds of negro slavery wherever it yet desecrates a corner of the earth. (104 [1232].)

What is most striking here is not Bulwer's view of the economic persuasions against slavery with respect to capital and its acquisition but the zero-sum argument he offers in lining up the immigrant in Jamaica with the slave in Cuba and, by extension of crop, in the United states. There is no question that Bulwer wants the immigration to continue, and to that end he has amassed great quantities of facts and figures and marshalled every argument he can think of either to substantiate them or to extrapolate in his favor from them. This is not the kind of speech Bulwer normally gave and, be it in its details and conclusions right or wrong, in its ambitions well taken or mistaken, it is a speech which all the same indicates the considerable breadth and depth of his skills as a Government Minister.

# Chapter Seven

## Conclusion

In 1949, the BBC Third Programme undertook to broadcast a series entitled *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: An Historic Revaluation of the Victorian Age*. Many, if not all, of the great British Victorianists of the day were represented, along with a sprinkling of others, such as Bertrand Russell and Julian Huxley, whose opinions were at the time widely considered authoritative on nearly any subject. G.M. Trevelyan was asked to start the series off, in his "double capacity as an historian and as a relic of the Victorian Age," having been, he told his listeners, "already twenty-five when the Queen and the century came to an end together" (15).

Trevelyan pointed out that "all the thought of the age arose out of the circumstances of the age" (15). This might seem rather an obvious observation, unless one looks at other "ages" to discover just how much in thrall to outside influences many have been, yokes, one must hasten to add, shared by non-British places and "ages" contemporaneous with the time and abode of the Victorian Age and by most "ages" and places since. Trevelyan, whose concern for Rankean appearances often led him to such assurances, affirmed that his "first talk would be factual, on

some of the circumstances that conditioned [Victorians'] thinking and feeling" (15). Trevelyan seeks to do this in a mere four pages of print - before Bertrand Russell's equally brief excursus on the "many great merits" (22) of that period he had hated so often and so loudly during his previous near eighty years. His examination of the Victorian Age, says Trevelyan, who was born and raised, as had been Russell, entirely within it, would be done "without prejudice," given the time which had passed and the reaction against it which had passed away (15). Perhaps not among the listeners of the Third Programme, some of whom must have shared the time of Trevelyan's - and Russell's - coming into full adulthood, but certainly among readers of these short talks today, there cannot help but be skepticism about Travelyan's sense of distance - not to say Russell's abundance of praise. Yet it is not these remarks and others like them which best indicate what Trevelyan has to say to us, nor Russell; out of his own experience and the mountain of materials Trevelyan had read himself through during more than half a century of historical research comes one of the great characterizations of that period, uttered almost as a toss-away. It was, he says, an "era ... [of] constant change, variety and self criticism" (16).

On the face of it, this characterization seems better to fit the twentieth century than the nineteenth. Indeed, Russell, in the next talk, points in contrast to the first half of the twentieth century as "filled with uncertainties and haunted by the dread of disasters," so much so as to allow the

reception of the Victorian period as a kind of "golden age" (19). The "mood" of Victorian security itself - to the degree that it existed - was prompted by "industrial monopoly, naval supremacy, and a vast Empire," says Russell. But all was not well, and the Victorians acknowledged this. However, the difference between the two eras lay in the fact that, for the Victorians, "the perception of present evil was bearable, since men felt that they knew what to do about it, and that it would soon be lessened" (21). It wasn't that the Victorians were unjustifiably happy and, worse, self-satisfied in this happiness; simply - and Russell is thoroughly correct in this - they were not cynical about what made them unhappy, whatever it was.

Lord David Cecil, of august and ancient lineage, adds in the third prefatory talk that, while the "Victorians were always vigorous and sometimes hopeful ... they were worried" (24). Lord David lists among their worries God, the poor, women, sex and democracy, but implies much else. Finally, Christopher Dawson, whose expertise lay in the decline of God's own Middle Ages, exercises a similar perspective in the fourth and final inaugural talk when he says that the great misstep of the Victorian period was away, not so much from religion, as from the spiritual fires that religious controversy stoked early in the period: out of "the bleak rationalism of the Utilitarians and the narrow pietism of the Evangelicals," who "were like flint and steel to one another ... sprang the spirit of moral idealism and the passion for reform which burn like

fire beneath the hard surface of the age of iron and steam" (30). Although Victorian answers - despite "the gradually increasing secularisation of culture" into which the Victorian fell, even as did the rest of Europe - involved an applying of "the accumulated reserves of its religious tradition to the contemporary social situation," the Victorians "failed to preserve those resources" and, as they were "gradually exhausted, ... Victorian culture itself lost its strength and its spiritual vitality" (30).

These four men say the kind of thing we might expect of more recent students of culture. They are variously cognizant of a living, complex way of life, a civilization, a culture, whose residues may easily get lost outside, indeed, from time to time inside the architectures of canon. Bulwer can help us here. First, he was worried about all the things Lord David Cecil lists and all the things Lord David doesn't; but he worried about them as an individual, true, as a massively published individual, but as an individual all the same and, thus, a thing we can get our mental hands on. Providentially, he is outside the canon, entirely outside, and, thereby, available fresh. Add to this that he is a talented writer and a fixture of the Victorian age, a writer who consciously and largely successfully tried to represent and embody that age, and we have ourselves possessed of a mine, if not a gold mine, in large measure at least a mine of silver. And for those who, even if they try, are unable to grow into the appreciation of his style, there is his content, by which he seeks to bring rather the

detailed event, than, as with Dickens, the epitomized character, to bring rather a consciousness of complexity than, as with John Stuart Mill, the exemplification of abstractions, to bring rather the flesh, blood and urgency of the issue than, as with Gladstone, the detachment, even the aloofness of the point or the number or, as with Disraeli, the emotive sweep of ideology. It is best to begin with Bulwer's work in Parliament. For there we see Bulwer in contact and congruity with the needs, ambitions, weaknesses and accomplishments of other and living people. In this way, an avenue can be found, carefully if inadvertently laid by Bulwer himself, back to his prose, poetry and drama. And the style of his speeches, less burdened by the imperative to say all, imply or speak to, rather than bring with them, their contexts. In them, Bulwer is in control; around them, he is not. In this they offer in small, what Trevelyan claims of the whole age. This is not to say that they exist apart, but as with the Victorian consciousness generally the speeches, so Christopher Dawson might note, seek to change what is outside them by means of resources they maintain within. The Victorian was above all a missionary, and Bulwer, despite a Georgian upbringing, was quintessentially and self-consciously a Victorian.

But what has been said above refers primarily to Bulwer's production; it is he himself that is just as much an avenue to the age and, more, its relevance to us, for he lived his life, in Lord David Cecil's phrase, a worried man: worried by his conscience, though he himself committed no great evil, worried

by his family, though, in truly Victorian fashion, as Trevelyan has it, he had created that family's worries himself, worried by social and political dilemmas and exigencies, though less illusioned than many of his contemporaries about what *he* could *himself* do, even as he was - and he would *not* have liked to have heard this said about him - nearly Gladstonian in his resolve to do *something* at least. But we are ourselves worried, if not in every particular, about the things that worried Bulwer and his contemporaries: the state of our world, the state of our families, the state of our inner selves, all this within a context of "constant change." And, too, we are now more or less in a state of "peace, security and wealth [which is] favourable to the higher aspects of civilization" (Trevelyan 18), a circumstance similar to that of the Victorian century. It is questionable whether we are doing quite as well with it as the Victorians did, especially when we look to global, rather than national obligations. While the Victorian worried, particularly the Victorian of Bulwer's generation, it was a worry, as has already been implied, sustained - yes, *sustained* - by a level of personal and social conviction that urged action, rather than sentimental talk.

While great talk in Parliament, great speechmaking, great debate, grew somewhat out of fashion as the century moved past its middle years, to be replaced often by compact analyses and taut, cold arguments, exactly what Bulwer disliked most in Gladstone, who had almost personally constructed the ethos of the Commons for the last forty years of the century, and by a

great deal of Party work out of doors, the questions did not decline in significance nor the answers in gravity. The franchise remained central, Ireland a constant, the position of women, children, the ill and the elderly insistent, the roles of trade, industry, labor and the Imperial economy remained emphatic. The "variety" of these problems, to use Trevelyan's meet phrasing, matched the variety in any aspect of Victorian life: the variety of religious doubt and hope, the variety of art and letters, the variety of social and ethnic origins in their contributions to Victorian Britain: aristocratic, rich, middle class and poor; English, Welsh, Scotch and Irish, Settlement-Colonial, Imperial. Bulwer showed himself thoroughly open to these many varieties, and we, with all our varieties today, might do worse than to emulate that openness.

And more than emulate, bringing us to the question of "self criticism" - we might look to the work that Bulwer and others like him did in and out of Parliament. Bulwer was not the only person of letters to sit in that great deliberative body, as Bulwer and his contemporaries liked to refer to it, though he was among these writers and intellectuals certainly politically the most active and accomplished. There was little sense in Bulwer's day that to sit in the Commons or, for that matter, in the Lords was to sell out to something or other; even before the Great Reform Bill, when seats upon seats were bought and sold like so many fish in the market, it was esteemed an honorable thing to represent, if not always a constituency,

surely an idea or an issue in either House of Parliament, although then, as later and now, politicians did much to incur the distrust of those who saw them at work and received that distrust often in abundance. While it was self-critical, Trevelyan rightly says that the Victorian century was not cynical. Our days of manipulative victimhood, feigned virtue and a personal hypersensitivity counterbalanced between rage and deep feelings of inadequacy - this last often *disguised* as "self-criticism" - might well spur us to look back on these old Victorian notions of doing one's duty, staying the course, turning at least a bit of a stiff upper lip to the vagaries and afflictions life is *supposed* to put upon us. And, of course, such behavior is impossible in the absence of a genuinely self-critical attitude.

Often the excessive politeness and the laying on of honorifics in Parliamentary exchange not so much displayed equanimity as positively choked back the vehement and poisonous instincts of men at each other's political throats. But it was not very different out of doors, where civility was highly regarded by all classes and in all settings, despite excuse enough for rudeness or anger, if one fell to it. Certainly there was often a surfeit of courtesy in Parliament and, too, in society, but it served a purpose: conciliation. This was a cardinal aspiration of the age, that issues might be resolved and Interests brought into harmony by the conciliatory word, gesture or act. Bulwer was representative in his attachment to this course; and it was no idle attachment, for it worked again

and again, though always and forever very slowly, a connotation of "deliberative." An end to the Taxes on Knowledge took half a century, Reform near a century. Protection lost entirely, at least in that century. The major impetus behind the war in the Crimea - clearly as Bulwer took it and not unreasonably as it has turned out - the containment of Russian authoritarianism, has yet to find its object. The British Colonial enterprise and Imperial ambition are no more; Bulwer would have taken their demise with composure. Bulwer, as did his Victorian contemporaries, took change in his stride. I think in the final analysis this was for the same reason they delighted in variety and did not hesitate to look inwardly upon themselves with a critical eye: there was something of substance within, something which might be improved in consequence of criticism, ameliorated in the contact with variety and made stronger by the winds of constant change. It is clear that Bulwer did not succeed at every issue, not for want of competence, but for want of support; deliberators in deliberative assemblies deliberate, they do not dictate. But in a deliberative assembly, when the work ends and the vote is tallied, if all is right, the share of victory is upon each and every Member; issues come and go and return again; Divisions are called and called again and then again; the victory is in the process, not the product. The Victorian Member was sure of himself - and of his fellow Members - first, because the process worked, second, because it was available to betterment and to increasing numbers of persons in the Nation, third, because it was done in

behalf of what Members believed was right. The greatest, most effective, most valued Members, Bulwer fully in this set, were those willing to accept and, if they could not accept, to wait. This Victorian faculty, to accept or to wait, not to demand and then rebel, was that age's greatest gift to us. Yet it was not without a price and attendant worry. Bertrand Russell says that his "maternal grandfather, who died in 1869, while wandering in his mind during his last illness, heard a loud noise in the street and thought it was the revolution breaking out"; Russell reminds us how the fear of revolution had stayed with his grandfather during "long prosperous years" of that Victorian century (20). Bulwer's last important work before his death a few years after Russell's grandfather's was on the Paris Commune.

The qualities of constant change, variety and self-criticism, then, lead to still another feature of the Victorian character which is found no less in Bulwer: acceptance of limitations. On those very rare occasions when he had his facts wrong or was inadequately informed, he was quick to admit it; he was equally willing to maintain himself tenaciously against assertions that he had been wrong when he hadn't. Both these take a degree of character. But as has been pointed out, particularly with respect to the issue of Free Trade and Protection, when he knew the thing was against him from the start and, while not agreeing, could see the warrant of the other side's argument, he persisted, not so much because he thought himself right, but because he thought he must proclaim

and defend the situation, even more than the Interest, of those whom he represented. This as much as anything made him an effective politician in a day when, as has been said, the politician might rise above scorn and was looked to by large numbers of his fellows for backbone and moral fiber. One can, if one likes, call this the rhetoric of action; it got Bulwer trusted, except, as we have seen, by some players in the fight against the Taxes on Knowledge, who themselves had a variant approach to the game. Given this, what Bulwer, though sometimes wrong, often stubborn and nearly always affected, has most to teach us politically today is not how to speak or what to say, but how to do and how to be as a politician. That this message and similar ones can as well be discovered in Bulwer's literary efforts, although more complexly and often more implicitly, deserves hardly less to be noted, though not in the present essay.

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ABSTRACT

A PERSON OF LETTERS IN PARLIAMENT:
EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON'S CAREER
AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
AND A MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT
1831-1866

by

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May 1998

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Major: English

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Edward Bulwer-Lytton, received today as a prolific but minor author of the early and middle Victorian periods, was an accomplished politician and orator and acknowledged so by his contemporaries. The context and content of Bulwer's work in Parliament and in the Cabinet provide insight not only into Bulwer himself, a literary person who was, in his day, politically prominent, but as well into the role that a person of letters might play in the Victorian House of Commons. Through a variety of approaches, conceptual, analytical, biographical, argumentational and rhetorical, this study reveals Bulwer's grasp of events and policy and his ability to interpret them politically, economically, militarily and socially in the course of complex, but well-received delivery in Parliament. It also examines the historical, social and cultural contexts of Bulwer's labors in Parliament, because it is not possible to understand such a writer-politician apart from the age in which he was so fully located.

## Autobiographical Statement

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| Birth: | Detroit, Michigan, July 25th, 1943. |
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