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A Study of Benjamin Disraeli's Coningsby: Or, the New Generation

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A STUDY OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI'S CONINGSBY; OR, THE NEW GENERATION

BY

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ABSTRACT FOR A STUDY OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI'S CONINGSBY;

OR, THE NEW GENERATION

This dissertation, a study of Benjamin Disraeli's Coningsby, concerns itself with the following matters: (1) a comparison of the manuscript and first edition of the novel; (2) an analysis of the contribution of political and historical materials to the structure of the novel; (3) a commentary on the development of plot—with some remarks on style; and (4) a demonstration of how certain ideas of Benjamin Disraeli's father, Isaac reappear in Coningsby, contributing to the development of the novel—and perhaps more importantly—to our understanding of Coningsby's character. The most original and meaningful phase of the study, Isaac D'Israeli's presence in Benjamin Disraeli's Coningsby, received the chief attention, specifically in Chapters 1-5.

The first chapter examines similarities between the personalities of Benjamin Disraeli and his father and presents ideas found in the writings of Isaac which reappear in Coningsby. In 1849, Benjamin Disraeli composed a "Memoir" of his father in which he praised Isaac D'Israeli for the possession of the following qualities: predisposition, constancy of purpose, self-formation, and sympathy with his order. In 1792, Isaac D'Israeli had published an Essay on the Literary Character in which he described these qualities as essential to genius. They reappear in the personality of Coningsby, the hero of the first political novel. Pre-disposition, according to Isaac is a natural bent or inclination which indicates an area of talent or potential genius. For this reason, Isaac believed it necessary to study the genealogy of genius in order to understand the nature of genius. Thus it is not surprising that Coningsby's grandfather, Lord Monmouth, exerts a significant influence on Coningsby's development.

The second chapter contains an analysis of the character of Lord Monmouth, who profoundly affects the structure of the novel. He symbolically represents the old political order which is challenged by the New Generation. All of the major characters in the novel are either directly or indirectly connected with him. In addition to his hereditary influence on the character of Coningsby, the leader of the New Generation, Lord Monmouth influences the growth and personality of his grandson by determining where and how Coningsby is to live, by choosing his schools, by controlling his income, and by limiting the size of his inheritance.

Chapter three examines the evolution of Coningsby's character. While Coningsby attends Eton and Cambridge, his actions indicate that he possesses the qualities of predisposition and self-formation Coningsby is of a "good breed." He possesses a good heart, and he is predisposed to heroic leadership in the political order. He evolves intellectually as a result of independent study and meditation. Conversations with Sidonia, Eustace Lyle, and Mr. Millbank contribute significantly to his intellectual growth. Coningsby's romance with Edith Millbank and their subsequent marriage contribute to his evolution as a political hero. Despite Coningsby's disappointing inheritance
at the death of Lord Monmouth, Sidonia assures him that he will be successful in the political order if he thinks positively and remains firm of purpose. At the conclusion of the novel, Coningsby is rewarded for his determined study of the law by his unsolicited nomination and election to Parliament.

The fourth chapter also deals with the evolution of Coningsby's character; however, this chapter focuses upon the quality of genius which Isaac D'Israeli termed sympathy with his order. Coningsby demonstrates his predisposition to the political order by being magnetically drawn to history books, political conversations and friends who enjoy the study of political questions and who participate in political events. Such a group of friends is the Young England party, which chooses him as their leader because he possesses the charisma of leadership and expresses an understanding of the basic political, social, philosophical, and religious problems of the age. Disraeli the author demonstrates additional understanding of the political order by depicting parties and dinners where the political climate is both tested and molded, by interjecting political and historical commentary into the narrative by portraying election campaigns, and by depicting the activities of purely political characters such as Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper. Because of Disraeli's political experience, he was thoroughly familiar with the political order.

The fifth chapter focuses upon the structure of Coningsby. Since Coningsby was the first political novel, Disraeli was presented with a unique problem: how to integrate political material into a fictional narrative. To solve this problem, Disraeli may have looked into his father's historical study, The Life and Reign of Charles the First, King of England. In this study, Isaac combined the same materials which his son utilized in the writing of the first political novel: politics, history, political characterizations, political and historical commentaries, dramatic conversation, and fiction. In this history, Disraeli the Elder suggested the subject of a political novel, the qualities of an ideal political hero, and the creative process by which a political novel could be written; he also illustrated a fusion of the material of a political novel with a biographical narrative. Appendix I, a supplement to the fifth chapter, details the intricate relationship which exists between history, politics, and the plot of Coningsby by presenting a chapter by chapter analysis of the novel.

Appendixes II and III concern themselves with the Coningsby manuscript. As a result of the collation of the manuscript with the first edition of Coningsby, the following conclusions can now be established with certitude: (1) the Coningsby manuscript is substantially complete; (2) the manuscript was used as the printer's copy; (3) although there are hundreds of minor discrepancies between the manuscript and the first edition, these discrepancies do not significantly affect the quality of the novel.
VITA

Thomas J. Kemme was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on December 27, 1936. He attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel Grammar School and Southeast Catholic High School. After graduation from High School in 1954, Mr. Kemme was employed as a small claims adjustor by Daniel J. Walsh's Sons of Philadelphia. In the evenings, he attended St. Joseph's College. Mr. Kemme entered the U. S. Army in July, 1956 and served sixteen months in Japan prior to his discharge in the summer of 1958. In September, 1958, he returned to St. Joseph's College as a day student. After receiving a B.S.S. in June, 1961, Mr. Kemme was employed by the Philadelphia County Board of Public Assistance as a caseworker. In September, 1963, he received a Teaching Assistantship from Loyola University of Chicago where he received a Master's Degree in English in May, 1964. On September 7, 1964, Mr. Kemme married Margaret Mary Morley in Chicago and accepted a position as Instructor at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky. After the birth of a son, Thomas, in August, 1965, Mr. Kemme returned to Chicago as a Teaching Assistant and began his doctoral studies. Two years later Mr. Kemme returned to Bellarmine College as an Assistant Professor where he currently holds that rank. In addition to Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Kemme have a daughter, Maureen, age four, and a son; John Patrick, age two.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation, a study of Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby*, concerns itself with the following matters: (1) a comparison of the manuscript and first edition of the novel; (2) an analysis of the contribution of political and historical materials to the structure of the novel; (3) a commentary on the development of plot -- with some remarks on style; and (4) a demonstration of how certain ideas of Benjamin Disraeli's father, Isaac, reappear in *Coningsby*, contributing to the development of the novel and -- perhaps more importantly -- to our understanding of *Coningsby*'s character. Of these four phases of the dissertation the first, though involving enormous and painstaking detail, is capable of being reported economically and is presented in two appendices, II and III. The discussion of the use of politics and history in fiction, specifically in *Coningsby*, and of plot (the second and third of the above noted phases) is contained chiefly in Appendix I, though such matters naturally appear in other chapters as well. The most original and meaningful phase of the study, Isaac D'Israeli's presence in Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby*, receives the chief attention, specifically in chapters 1-5.

In 1849, Benjamin Disraeli composed a "Memoir" of his father in which he praised Isaac D'Israeli for the possession
of the following qualities: predisposition, constancy of purpose, self-formation, and sympathy with his order. In 1792, Isaac D'Israeli had published an Essay on the Literary Character in which he described these qualities as essential to genius. They reappear in the personality of Coningsby, the hero of the first political novel. Predisposition, according to Isaac, is a natural bent or inclination which indicates an area of talent or potential genius. For this reason, Isaac believed it necessary to study the genealogy of genius in order to understand the nature of genius. Thus it is reasonable that Coningsby's grandfather, Lord Monmouth, will exert a significant influence on Coningsby's development. (Chapter I)

An analysis of the character of Lord Monmouth reveals that he profoundly affects the structure of the novel. He symbolically represents the old political order which is challenged by the New Generation. All of the major characters in the novel are either directly or indirectly connected to him. In addition to his hereditary influence on the character of Coningsby, the leader of the New Generation, Lord Monmouth influences the growth and personality of his grandson by determining where and how Coningsby is to live, by choosing his schools, by controlling his income, and by limiting the size of his inheritance. (Chapter II)

While Coningsby attends Eton and Cambridge, his actions indicate that he possesses the qualities of predisposition and self-formation. Coningsby is of a "good breed." He possesses a good heart, and he is predisposed to heroic leadership in the political order. He evolves intellectually as a result of independent study and meditation. Conversations with Sidonia, Eustace
Lyle, and Mr. Millbank contribute significantly to his intellectual growth. Coningsby's romance with Edith Millbank and their subsequent marriage contribute to his evolution as a political hero. Despite Coningsby's disappointing inheritance at the death of Lord Monmouth, Sidonia assures him that he will be successful in the political order if he thinks positively and remains firm of purpose. At the conclusion of the novel, Coningsby is rewarded for his determined study of the law by his unsolicited nomination and election to Parliament. (Chapter III)

Coningsby also possesses that quality of genius which Isaac D'Israeli termed sympathy with his order. Coningsby demonstrates his predisposition to the political order by being magnetically drawn to history books, political conversations, and friends who enjoy the study of political questions and who participate in political events. Such a group of friends is the Young England party which chooses him as their leader because he possesses the charisma of leadership and expresses an understanding of the basic political, social, philosophical, and religious problems of the age. Disraeli the author demonstrates additional understanding of the political order by depicting political parties and dinners where the political climate is both tested and molded, by interjecting political and historical commentary into the narrative, by portraying election campaigns, and by depicting the activities of purely political characters such as Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper. Disraeli learned much about the political order as a result of his Parliamentary campaigns, his election to Parliament,
and his leadership of the Young England Party. By implication, if Coningsby is to be successful in the political order, he must learn to anticipate and counteract the plans and activities of self-serving politicians. (Chapter IV)

Since Coningsby was the first political novel, Disraeli was presented with a unique problem: how to integrate political material into a fictional narrative. To solve this problem, Disraeli may have looked into his father's historical study, The Life and Reign of Charles the First, King of England. In this study, Isaac combined the same materials which his son utilized in the writing of the first political novel: politics, history, political characterizations, political and historical commentaries, dramatic conversation, and fiction. In this history, Disraeli the Elder suggested the subject of a political novel, the qualities of an ideal political hero, and the creative process by which a political novel could be written; he also illustrated a fusion of the material of a political novel with a biographical narrative. (Chapter V)

In Coningsby, three secondary characters are crucial to the integration of political material into the fictional narrative. Edith Millbank, Mr. Rigby, and Lucretia Colonna serve as significant links between the personal life of Coningsby and the political world of the novel. Consequently, an analysis of their significance in the novel contributes to our understanding of the structure of Coningsby. (Chapter V)
CHAPTER I

FATHER AND SON

A recent biographer of Benjamin Disraeli stresses that the Earl of Beaconsfield's birthright "was neither as humble nor as alien as some people have believed" and that "it is impossible to overestimate the assets he possessed." ¹ Few biographers have overlooked the mutual feelings of affection which exists between Isaac D'Israeli and his son Benjamin; on the other hand, no biographer has indicated in any significant detail the similarity between ideas which appear in Disraeli the Elder's Essay on the Literary Character and Disraeli the Younger's Coningsby: Or, The New Generation. The purpose of this chapter will be to indicate some striking parallels in thought in these two works, as well as some temperamental similarities between the father and son. In additional chapters there will be an attempt to demonstrate that by viewing Coningsby as an evolving political genius and by giving close consideration to his genealogy, additional understanding of the novel's structure can be achieved.

When Isaac Disraeli died in 1848, Benjamin composed a "Memoir" of his father which was published as the Preface to the

1849 Edition of the Curiosities of Literature. This "Memoir" provides interesting information about both the father and the son. Significantly, Benjamin judges the Essay on the Literary Character to be "the most perfect of his father's compositions." In this composition Disraeli the Elder attempts to evaluate the nature of literary genius; however, the composition also abounds with examples of non-literary genius as well. Disraeli the Elder, it should be observed, was considered by contemporary critics to be a literary genius, and additional perspective on his accomplishments has been provided in a biography of his son published in 1952. "Isaac D'Israeli," Cecil Roth writes, "was in all probability the first European Jew since the Renaissance, if one excepts Moses Mendelsohn in Germany (whose fame indeed, though greater was perhaps less popular) who had ostensibly reached the first rank in what was termed the Republic of Letters."3 Not surprisingly, then, Benjamin believed his father possessed the genius which was the primary subject of his Essay, and in the "Memoir" Benjamin noted that his father possessed four qualities of genius: predisposition, self-formation, sympathy with his order, and constancy of purpose.4 In 1791, these qualities had received extended

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commentary in what Benjamin Disraeli considered to be "the most perfect of compositions," Isaac's Essay on the Literary Character. Besides citing these qualities as essential characteristics of genius, Isaac D'Israeli had also written that a true genius possesses altruistic instincts, and he presented a quotation from Montesquieu to illustrate this belief:

"Could I" exclaims Montesquieu, "but afford new reasons to men to love their duties, their king, their laws, their Country, that they might become more sensible of their happiness under every government they live, And in every state they occupy, I should deem myself the happiest of men." Such was the pure aspiration of the great author who studied to preserve, by ameliorating the human fabric of society. The same largeness of mind characterizes all the eloquent friends of the human race.5

A similar "largeness of mind" and ambition to ameliorate "the human fabric of society" appear in the novel Coningsby. These terms would not be inappropriate to describe the mind of Coningsby and the ambition of The New Generation.

Five years after the publication of Coningsby, Benjamin Disraeli indicated that his father deserved to be counted among those men who had worked to preserve and improve the fabric of English society through the medium of literature. "The fact that, for Sixty years," Benjamin writes, "he largely contributed to form the taste, charm the leisure, and direct the studious dispositions, of the great body of the public, and that his works have extensively and curiously illustrated the literary and political history of our country, it will be conceded, that in his life and labours, he repaid England for the protection and hospitality which this

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5 Isaaac D'Israeli, Essay, pp. 267-268.
country accorded to his father a century ago." Although such a belief may be accurate, Benjamin Disraeli, much more so than his father, contributed to the amelioration of English life, and the novel *Coningsby* represents a significant contribution in this direction. With this in mind, it is interesting to observe that *Coningsby* expresses aspirations consistent with those Isaac D'Israeli admired in Montesquieu, aspirations reflecting heroic feeling. At a critical moment in the novel, when Coningsby is reflecting upon the purpose of his existence and his aspirations of life, Disraeli the Younger comments upon the quality of his ambition:

> It was that noble ambition, the highest and best, that must be born in the heart and organized in the brain, which will not let a man be content unless his intellectual power is recognized by his race, and desires that it should contribute to their welfare. It is the heroic feeling.7

This "heroic feeling" which it might be said "characterizes all the eloquent friends of the human race" is a quality of genius found in Montesquieu by Isaac D'Israeli, a quality found in Isaac D'Israeli.

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6 Isaac D'Israeli, *Curiosities*, p. xxxvii. In the Dedication to Henry Hope in the first edition of *Coningsby*, Benjamin Disraeli had written: "But if I have generally succeeded in my object; to scatter some suggestions that may tend to elevate the tone of public life; ascertain the true character of political parties; and induce us for the future more carefully to distinguish between facts and phrases, realities and phantoms, I believe I shall gain your sympathy...." Benjamin's goals are somewhat similar to his evaluation of his father's accomplishments. Through *Coningsby* Benjamin hopes "to form the taste...and direct the studious dispositions" of the public. Through the medium of the novel he hopes to "charm the leisure" of the public while presenting to them the past and present political history of England.

by his son, and a quality depicted in *Coningsby* by the future Prime Minister.

The distinction which Benjamin makes concerning noble ambition, namely that it "must be born in the heart and organized in the brain," is not one which Isaac overlooked. In his *Essay* Isaac had written:

> To think, and to feel, constitute the two grand divisions of men of genius—the men of reasoning and the men of imagination. There is a thread in our thoughts, as there is a pulse in our hearts; he who can hold the one, knows how to think; and he who can move the other, knows how to feel.8

The hero of *Coningsby* is able to combine the genius of thought with the genius of feeling. This contrasts sharply with such characters as Coningsby's grandfather, the Lord of Monmouth, and Sidonia, one of Coningsby's most influential teachers. Both of these characters are very perceptive, but both lack affection or feeling. Of these two characters, the Lord of Monmouth is the more striking since he is not only incapable of possessing altruistic feelings, but he is also dominated by egotistical desires. Nevertheless, he does possess a genius of thought; he possesses a native intelligence which would most benefit his own person, and he does not hesitate to follow his primitive impulses. Isaac D'Israeli understood such a personality, for he wrote:

> Genius is a dangerous gift of nature. The same effervescent passions form a Catiline or a Cicero. Plato lays great stress on his man of genius possessing the most

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vehement passions, but he adds reason to restrain them. It is their imagination which by their side stands as their good or evil spirit. Glory or infamy is but a different direction of the same passion.  

Coningsby, in the novel *Coningsby*, must decide which direction his passion will take: shall he follow in the tradition of his grandfather or should he channel his genius in a more altruistic direction? On the last page of *Coningsby*, we are assured that the new generation has turned from the direction mapped by the old aristocracy as represented by his grandfather, the Lord of Monmouth. However, there is no assurance that this direction will always be maintained, since there is always the temptation to suppress altruistic instincts for egotistical ones. The closing paragraph of the novel is not a rhetorical question:

They stand now on the threshold of public life. They are in the leash, but in a moment they will be slipped. What will be their fate? Will they maintain in august assemblies and high places the great truths which in study and in solitude they have embraced? Or will their courage exhaust itself in the struggle, their enthusiasm evaporate before hollow-hearted ridicule, their generous impulses yield with a vulgar catastrophe to the tawdry temptations of a low ambition? Will their skilled intelligence subside into being the adroit tool of a corrupt party? Will Vanity confound their fortunes, or Jealousy wither their sympathies? Or will they remain brave, single and true: refuse to bow before shadows and worship phrases; sensible of the greatness of their position, recognize the greatness of their duties; denounce to a perplexed and disheartened world the frigid theories of a generalizing age that have destroyed the individuality of man; and restore the happiness of their country by believing in their own energies and daring to be great!

If Coningsby is to realize his potential as a political genius and

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if Young England is to accomplish their goals, they must be unwavering in their pursuit, demonstrating another quality of genius which Benjamin Disraeli admired in his father -- constancy of purpose.

In his study of the literary genius, many of Isaac's conclusions were unoriginal and uninspiring. That was to be expected. One such conclusion was his notion of genius and heredity. Genius, Isaac believed, was an inherited capacity which would manifest itself during youth if environmental conditions were favorable to their development. As the following lines indicate, Isaac did not restrict his study of predisposition and genius to the literary order:

The predisposition of genius has declared itself in painters and poets, who were such before they understood the nature of colors and the arts of verse; and this vehement propensity, so mysteriously constitutional, may be traced in other intellectual characters besides those which belong to the class of the imagination. It was said that Pitt was born a minister.

Additional insight into Isaac's view of predisposition appears in his discussion of Clarion, who, we are told, is a great tragic actress whose genius is "entirely the result of native sensibility."

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10 Ibid., p. 31. Isaac phrased his conclusion in the form of a question: "Can we then trace in the faint lines of his youth an unsteady outline of the man? In the temperament of the genius may we not reasonably look for certain indications or predispositions, announcing the permanent character? Is not great sensibility born with its irritable fibres?"

11 Ibid., p. 48.

12 Ibid., p. 53.
Isaac also believed that genius could not be disassociated from its nation or race, since he deduced that "true genius is the organ of its nation. The creative faculty is itself created; for it is the nation itself which first imparts an impulse to the character of genius."\textsuperscript{13} In his Essay, then, Isaac stressed the importance of birth, nation and race in the origin and evolution of genius; on the other hand, he was not unaware that some geniuses evolved from humble circumstances.

Isaac had believed that there was a consanguinity in the characters of men of genius and that "in the great march of the human intellect the same individual spirit seems still occupying the same place, and is still carrying on, with the same powers, his great work through a line of centuries."\textsuperscript{14} This seems to be true concerning Isaac D'Israeli and his son Benjamin. Disraeli the Younger also believed that nation, race, and family were vitally important for the birth and evolution of genius.\textsuperscript{15} The importance which Benjamin placed on genealogy is reflected in his father's "Memoir" and in the novel \textit{Coningsby}. In the "Memoir"

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 276.

\textsuperscript{15}Isaac had also written: "There is a consanguinity in the characters of men of genius, and a genealogy may be traced among their races. Men of genius in their different classes, living at distinct periods, or in remote countries, seem to reappear under another name; and in this manner there exists in the literary character an eternal transmigration." \textit{Ibid.}
Benjamin Disraeli wrote that his paternal grandfather "became an English Denizen in 1748, was an Italian descendant from one of those Hebrew families when the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish Peninsula at the end of the Fifteenth Century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant territories of the Venetian Republic." In Venice the family "assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never born before or since by any other family, in order that their race might be forever recognized." After flourishing as merchants "for more than two centuries under the protection of the lion of St. Mark, "Benjamin's great grandfather decided that his son Benjamin should migrate to England because of the commercial and religious liberty that existed in that country towards the middle of the Eighteenth Century." In the "Memoir" Disraeli the Younger also presents genealogical information concerning the maternal family tree. When Isaac's father emigrated to England, a Jewish family already well established in that country were the Villa Reals, who brought wealth to these shores almost as great as their name, though that is the second in Portugal, and who had twice allied themselves with the English aristocracy, the Medinas---the Laras, who were our kinsmen ---and the Mendez da Costas, who, I believe, still exist. From this information, it can be concluded that Benjamin Disraeli,

16 Isaac Disraeli, Curiosities, p. viii.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. ix.
like his creation Coningsby, believed that his ancestors possessed wealth, power, and fame. The ancestry of both, however, was the product of a fertile imagination. A prominent Jewish scholar has studied the genealogy of the Disraeli family and concluded that "No man could have a much more definite idea about the origins of his family than Benjamín Disraeli; few men could have one that is more erroneous." Very little, it seems, can be known for certain concerning the Disraeli family tree. However, it is known that the Prime Minister's grandfather, Benjamin D'Israeli, emigrated to England from the town of Cento, near Ferrara, and that when Benjamin Disraeli was in his early thirties there were still people living who recalled when the prefix D was added to the original family name of "Israeli." In light of the younger Disraeli's interest in his heritage, it is ironic that he did not know that his great grandfather had married into a noble house of Jerusalem. Ricci Rossi, his great grandfather's wife, was of the family of De Rossi.

and the family of De' Rossi, or Min ha Adumin, was according to very ancient legend one of the four noble

20 Roth, p. 1.

21 Benjamin Disraeli was the son of Isaac D'Israeli (1766-1848) and Maria Basevi. Isaac D'Israeli was the son of Benjamin D'Israeli (1730-1816) and Sarah Syprut (1743-1835). Sarah was the daughter of Isaac Syprut, who was the son of Syrut and Gabay Villareal. Benjamín D'Israeli was a widower prior to his second marriage. His first wife was Rebecca di Gaspar Mendez Furtado; his parents were Isaac Israeli and Rica Rossi. Maria Basevi, Benjamin Disraeli's mother, was the daughter of Naphtali Basevi (1738-1808) and Rebecca Riet (d.1798).
houses of Jerusalem which had been brought back to Rome from Palestine with him as captives of the Emperor Titus, and later provided Italian Jewry with some of its most notable scholars, Rabbis, and leaders. 22

On the other hand, the marriage of Benjamin Israeli, Benjamin Disraeli's grandfather, was a source of satisfaction to young Disraeli since his grandfather's wife was Rebecca Mendez Furtado. Rebecca's mother was Clara Heariques de Lara, a heroic figure who had fled to England with her children after the death of her husband at an auto-da-fe in Lisbon in 1726. Although the Lara family was not related in blood to Disraeli the Younger, since his grandfather had married Sarah Syprut about a year after his first wife's death in 1764, the Prime Minister of England "very greatly prided himself on the aristocratic Lara connection...and gave it to be understood that this family were his ancestors." 23

This presentation of the real and fictional genealogy of Benjamin Disraeli is pertinent to this study for three reasons: first, it indicates that Benjamin Disraeli believed that in order to understand the nature of genius, family and race are factors which must be considered since they may help to explain a person's natural bent or inclination, as well as his potential for genius. This approach to an understanding of genius is an attempt to explain the presence of predisposition. Isaac believed that predisposition was a quality of genius, and Benjamin believed that his

22 Roth, p. 4.

23 Ibid., p. 6.
father was naturally disposed towards literature, born with the potential to become a literary genius. Secondly, in the words of a recent biographer: the study of Disraeli's ancestry "shows us explicitly some of the elements that went to make up his genius" since this mythical ancestry, it might be argued, helped Disraeli to have confidence in himself and his future; and this belief in himself because of his accomplished ancestors fortified his ego despite humiliating failures. As Robert Blake observes, it is not so important that Disraeli's beliefs about his ancestors were inaccurate, but "what matters is that he believed his origins were highly aristocratic and the belief had no small effect on his political outlook and career." This exalted view of his ancestry may have prompted him to believe that he was capable of performing great deeds in both the literary and political arenas. Thirdly, since

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24 Ibid., p. 12.

25 Blake, p. 6. Cecil Roth comments in a similar manner, noting that despite vicious verbal abuse from bigots, Disraeli manifested no social inferiority since he

...conjured up as it were the vision of his proud descent and insisted that it was not a whit inferior to that of any English nobleman, when considered generally or in particular. When at the election of 1847 he was opposed by one of the family of the Duke of Devonshire, he boldly stated: "I am not disposed for a moment to admit that my pedigree is not as good or even superior to that of the Cavendishes." Thus he maintained not only his self-respect, but his pride. "Fancy calling a fellow an adventurer when his ancestors were probably on intimate terms with the Queen of Sheba." he observed, late in life, to his Private Secretary apropos of an attack of him. Hence, the families with which he had some sort of genealogical relationship, however remote, became raised in retrospect ipso facto to the ranks of Jewish aristocracy." (p. 60).
Benjamin Disraeli believed that family and race were significant factors affecting the nature of his father's genius, we need not be surprised if an analysis of race and family leads to a better understanding of Coningsby, a potential genius.

While predisposition indicates the presence of a capacity to become a genius, this capacity will remain dormant unless the mature talent is developed by the individual. Such a development requires an act of the will. Years before Disraeli wrote the novel Coningsby, one of his characters had expressed a dynamic belief in the human will: "Destiny is our will," Contarini Fleming said, "and our will is our nature."26 The will operates with ideas; and on a different occasion Disraeli the Younger had written on that subject: "Power is neither the sword nor the shield, for these pass away, but power is ideas, which are divine."27 Some words by Isaac D'Israeli concerning the power of the human will and the human intellect provide an interesting parallel to these words of his son. Because of the enthusiasm of genius, Isaac wrote, a dramatist dramatically affects his audience:

Real emotions are raised by fiction. They themselves become spectators or actors. Their sympathies are excited, and the exterior organs of sense are visibly effected—they even break out into speech, and accompany their speech with gestures...Far different, however,


is one closely pursued act of meditation, carrying the enthusiast beyond the precinct of actual existence. The act of contemplation then creates the thing contemplated. 28

An echo of this line is the advice which Sidonia offers to Coningsby: "Nurture your mind with great thoughts. To believe in the heroic makes heroes." 29 Coningsby follows this advice and we might infer that such meditations significantly contribute to his potential success. It is tempting to speculate that Benjamin Disraeli may also have experimented with "acts of contemplation" as a psychic device to advance his political career. We already noted that he imagined himself to be a member of the aristocracy years before he became the Lord of Beaconsfield. Another example of Benjamin Disraeli becoming that which he thought about is also a matter of public record. In 1827, years before Disraeli had embarked on his political career, when he was asked by Lord Melbourne at a dinner party to state his ambition, he shocked his audience by stating that "I want to be Prime Minister." 30 This ambition was achieved, but only after many intervening years; the struggle was slow and indirect. 31

28 Essay, pp. 136-137.
29 Disraeli, Coningsby, I, p. 254.
31 Maurois comments on the vicissitudes of Young Disraeli's fortunes, noting "that through all this darkling forest there ran a gleaming Ariadne's thread---the will of Benjamin Disraeli. On the methods and results of his acts he might have been deceived; he had almost always been mistaken. But never had he lost either a clear view of the goal or the firm resolve to attain it. Perhaps that sufficed." (p.112) Maurois also presents the following Disraeli remark: "Poetry is the safety-valve of my passions, but I wish
Benjamin could have anticipated this struggle by a reading of the *Essay on the Literary Character*, for in that work his father indicated that even for a genius such ambitions or conceptions sometimes require considerable time for execution:

Genius creates by a single conception; the statuary conceives the statue at once, which he afterwards executes by the slow process of art; and the architect contrives a whole palace in an instant. In a single principle, opening as it were on a sudden to genius, a great and new system of thing is discovered. It has happened, sometimes, that this single conception, rushing over the whole concentrated spirit, has agitated the frame convulsively.32

Benjamin Disraeli, then, it would seem, shared with his father some interesting and somewhat provocative ideas. Both appear to have believed that predisposition was an essential quality of genius, and that this quality was sometimes an inherited capacity which could be passed on in a nation or race. Both also believed that the power of the human mind was extensive. Both apparently believed, though perhaps not simultaneously, that some men can become what they want to be by controlling their thought processes; that for some people, the act of contemplation creates the thing contemplated; or, to put it differently, through an act of the will some men can control their thought patterns and thus can significantly and dramatically affect what they to act what I write." (p.176) From this quotation it might be argued that Disraeli did desire to become that which he contemplated. According to Maurois, Disraeli "always found great pleasure in transposing his novels into real life....He had himself created a Lord of that name Beaconsfield in Vivian Grey." (p.264).

32 *Essay*, p. 142.
will become.

Upon inspection, it is not surprising that father and son would share similar ideas, especially when they also shared temperamental similarities. Both were writers and both suffered what some might consider to be an occupational hazard of writers, a nervous breakdown. Both Disraelis were aware of the predisposition of imaginative minds to become excessively agitated. In his Essay, Isaac had written concerning the process of contemplation which leads to enthusiasm:33

> But this enthusiasm, prolonged as it often has been by the operation of the imaginative existence, becomes a state of perturbed feeling, and can only be distinguished from a disordered intellect by the power of volition possessed by a sound mind of withdrawing from the ideal world into the world of sense. It is but a step which may carry us from the wanderings of fancy into aberrations of delirium. The endurance of attention, even in minds of the highest order, is limited by a law of nature; and when thinking is goaded on to exhaustion, confusion of ideas ensues, as straining any one of our limbs by excessive exertion produces tremor and torpor.

> With curious art the brain is too finely wrought Preys on herself and is destroyed by thought; Constant attention wears the active mind, Blots out her powers, and leaves a blank behind-- The greatest genius to this fate may bow.34

Such insight, evidently, is not enough to prevent mental disorder.

33 Isaac D'Israeli defined enthusiasm as "that secret and harmonious spirit which hovers over the production of genius, throwing the reader of a book, or the spectator of a statue into the very ideal presence where these works have originated. A great work always leaves us musing." (Essay, p. 154)

34 Ibid., p. 146.
In the "Memoir," Benjamin Disraeli informs us that in the year 1795, when his father was in his twenty-ninth year, there came over him that mysterious illness to which the youth of men of sensibility, and especially literary men, is frequently subject—a failing of nervous energy, occasioned by study and too sedentary habits, early and habitual reverie, restless and indefinite purpose. The symptoms, physical and moral, are most distressing: lassitude and despondency.35

Despite a change of environment, the illness persisted for several years until the conclusion was reached that his physical derangement—which was diagnosed as consumption—was an effect and not a cause, and the directions of his newly acquired physician, Doctor Downing, were expanded to include "port wine, horse exercise, rowing on the neighboring river, and the distraction of agreeable society."36 Benjamin speculates that his father's psychological problems "arose from his inability to direct to a satisfactory end the intellectual power which he was conscious of possessing."; that is, he was unable to realize his ambition.37 The inability of Isaac's parents to understand or appreciate the poetic temperament may also have been a contributing cause of his illness and a basis, perhaps, of Benjamin's observation that his father possessed no vanity and that "one of his few impurities was rather a deficiency

36 Ibid., p. xxiii.
37 Ibid.
in self-esteem."\(^{38}\)

At the age of twenty-two, Benjamin suffered a similar tem-
permental disorder which a doctor described as "inflammation of
the membrane of the brain" and which today would probably be diag-
nosed as a nervous breakdown.\(^{39}\) Until Disraeli married a widow
twelve years his senior in 1839, he apparently suffered from
psychosomatic illnesses, among them throbbing headaches which were
precipitated by crisis and which frequently forced him to withdraw
to his bed.\(^{40}\) For approximately five years, from 1826 to 1831,
the future Prime Minister found it difficult to concentrate his
attention and his energies in a productive fashion. In March,
1828, he wrote:

I am at present quite idle, being at this moment re-
covering from one of those tremendous disorganizations
which happen to all men at some period of their lives,
and which are perhaps equally necessary for the forma-
tion of both body and constitution. Whether I shall
ever do anything which may make me out from the crowd
I know not...I am one of those to whom moderate repu-
tation can give no pleasure, and who in all probability,
am incapable of achieving a great one.\(^{41}\)

The last line of this letter indicates an uncharacteristic lack
of self-esteem or vanity on the part of Disraeli. This should not

\(^{38}\)Ibid., p. xxxvii.

\(^{39}\)Blake, p. 53.

\(^{40}\)Ibid.

\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 54.
be too surprising when one reflects on his preceding years. At the age of twenty he suffered a financial disaster in the stock market which was to keep him in debt until several years after his marriage. At about the same time, young Disraeli helped to persuade John Murray, his father's life-long friend and publisher, to publish a daily newspaper. Disraeli and J. G. Lockhart agreed to assume fifty percent of the expenses; Murray agreed to assume the remainder. Disraeli was not sufficiently equipped either financially or journalistically to contribute significantly to the newspaper; and when the venture failed, Benjamin Disraeli had fallen into a deeper financial pit and the D'Israeli family had lost a lifelong friend. To compound this misfortune, he was discovered to be the author of *Vivian Gray*, a novel which he had published anonymously and which contained lampoons of Murray, as well as of other prominent literary, political and social leaders. These disasters all occurred before Benjamin Disraeli was twenty-four years old, causing considerable consternation in the D'Israeli household, but not so drastic an upheaval perhaps as the turmoil experienced by Isaac when his business-oriented parents became aware that their son possessed a poetic temperament. According to Benjamin, Isaac clashed with his parents because he demonstrated no inclination to enter the business world. Isaac's father was not unduly alarmed until his son produced a poem; then his father sent him abroad for study, hoping that this environmental change would distract him from a literary career. When Isaac returned to England at the age of eighteen, instead of receiving the desired affectionate greeting
from his mother, he was the subject of her laughter. Disraeli the Younger records this traumatic experience of his father in his "Memoir":

He was prepared to throw himself on his mother's bosom, to bedew her hands with his tears, and to stop her own with his lips; but when he entered, his strange appearance, his gaunt figure, his excited manners, his long hair, and his unfashionable costume, only filled her with a sentiment of tender aversion; she broke into derisive laughter and noticing his intolerable garments, she reluctantly lent him her cheek. Whereupon Emile, of course went into heroics, wept, sobbed, and finally, shut up in his chamber, composed an impassioned Epistle.42

Such experiences demonstrate that Isaac D'Israeli's struggle to follow his literary predisposition and to become a part of the literary world or order was not without serious difficulties. The same can be said of his son, Benjamin, who pursued careers in the stock market, publishing, and writing before finding "sympathy with his order" in the political arena. A mature Disraeli admitted this problem of adjustment, commenting retrospectively to Lady Derby that some of his youthful years were spent in misery, because, he said: "I was devoured by ambition which I did not see any means of gratifying."43 Years later, we will find, that a Disraelian character, Coningsby, faces similar feelings of frustrated

42"Memoir," p. xiii. Benjamin recognized that much his father had written was applicable to his father's life and derived from his father's experiences. This is explicitly stated in the "Memoir": "On the chapter on Predisposition, in the most delightful of his works, Essay on the Literary Character, Vol.I, Ch. 5 my father has drawn from his own, though his unacknowledged feelings, immortal truths." "Memoir," p. XI. Emile is an allusion to Rousseau's book on the education of children, Emile, or a Treatise on Education (1762).

43See p. 16, Footnote 38.
ambitions, and in the novel there are indications that Benjamin Disraeli may have believed that such experiences are constructive; rather than impeding or destroying the potential genius, that these hardships can contribute to the development of the character necessary for a genius to realize his potential. Certainly he was aware, as his father was before him, that many a youth is channelled into a vocation different from his predisposition or interests. Isaac had written of this problem:

...the education of the youth may not be the education of his genius; he lives unknown to himself and others. In all these cases nature had dropped the seeds in the soil: but even a happy disposition must be concealed amidst adverse circumstances: I repeat that genius can only make that its own which is homogeneous with its nature. It has happened to some men of genius during a long period of their lives, that an unsettled impulse, unable to discover the object of its aptitude, a thirst and a fever in the temperament of too sentient a being, which cannot find the occupation to which only it can attach itself, has sunk into a melancholy and querulous spirit, weary with the burthen of existence; but the instant the latent talent had declared itself, his first work, the eager offspring of desire and love, has astonished the world at once with the birth of maturity and genius.  

Both father and son themselves, it would seem, after stumbling starts found and made their own the orders which were homogeneous to their natures: Isaac could write perceptively of the literary character because he possessed a poetic temperament; Benjamin could write a vital political novel because he was primarily sympathetic with the political order. Benjamin expresses quite clearly his belief that his father was sympathetic to the literary order:

No one has written so much about authors, and so well. Indeed, before his time, the Literary Character had never

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44Essay, p. 45.
been fairly placed before the world. He comprehended its idiosyncrasy: all its strength and all its weakness. He could soften, because he could explain, its infirmities; in the analysis and record of its power, he vindicated the right position of authors in the social scale. They stand between the governors and the governed... Though he shared none of the calamities, and scarcely any of the controversies, of literature, no one has sympathized so intimately with the sorrows, or so zealously and impartially registered the instructive disputes, of literary men. He loved to celebrate the exploits of great writers, and to show that, in these ages, the pen is a weapon as puissant as the sword...He was himself a complete literary character, a man who really passed his life in the library. 45

Just as Isaac possessed a complete literary character, as an adult Benjamin possessed a complete political character, and he achieved for the political character that which his father had achieved for the literary character: In Coningsby he illuminated the political character for posterity. The purpose of this novel, as Disraeli expressed it in his 1849 Preface, was to inform the public of the political ideas of the new generation. He thereby assumed the position of the writer which he admired in his father, that of standing as a bridge between the governors and the governed. Coningsby exercises a similar function in the novel of that name. 46

As we have already noted, to be in sympathy with one's order is not sufficient in itself to guarantee that a genius will produce according to his capacity. According to Isaac D'Israeli, in

45 Isaac D'Israeli, Curiosities, p.xxx-xxx1

46 In the Dedication to Coningsby, Disraeli stated that he wrote Coningsby in order "to ascertain the true character of political parties." In the Preface to the 1870 collected edition the stated purpose was to present "the derivation and character of political parties."
order for a genius to achieve his potential, he must also be constant in purpose. This is a quality which Benjamin admired in his father and a quality which his father admired in Benjamin Franklin. The latter reprinted the following words of Franklin in his Essay on the Literary Character in order to stress the necessity of constancy of purpose in human pursuits:

I have always thought that one man of tolerable abilities may work great changes and accomplish great affairs among mankind, if he forms a good plan; and cutting off amusements, or other employments that will divert his attention, makes the execution of that same plan his sole study and business.47

The true genius who discovers his purpose for existence will not be deterred by adversity for, "no human opinion," Isaac wrote, "can change their self-opinion. Alive to the consciousness of their power, their pursuits are placed above impediment and their great views can suffer no contraction: possunt quia posse videntur."48 Lord Bacon, Isaac recalls, expressed a similar thought, explaining to a king that "I know that I am consumed of some conceit of my ability or worth; but I pray your majesty impute it to desire---possunt quia posse videntur.49 A true genius possesses an unshakable belief in his own worth and in his ability to achieve his goals, and he will be successful if he maintains this belief and perseveres in his pursuit. Constancy of purpose, then, as well as predisposition and sympathy with his order were qualities which Isaac believed to be essential in the character of

47Essay, p. 272.
48Ibid., p. 168.
49Ibid.
literary genius. In Coningsby we will see these qualities manifest themselves in a political genius, and we will further detect the quality of self-formation in Coningsby. This is also a quality which Benjamin admired in his father and a quality which his father believed to be a characteristic possession of genius.

Study and meditation were essential for the formation of the genius' character, Isaac believed. Through concentration, if he were gifted with such a predisposition, the genius could produce enthusiasm, which Isaac defined as "that secret and harmonious spirit which hovers over the production of genius, throwing the reader of a book or the spectator of a statue, into the very ideal presence whence these works have originated." This enthusiasm, we read in the Essay on the Literary Character,

inconceivably fills the mind of genius in all great and solemn operations. It is an agitation amidst calmness, and is required not only in the fine arts, but wherever a great and continued exertion of the soul must be employed. The great ancients...in moments like these saw, or imagined they saw a divinity within man. This enthusiasm is alike experienced in the silence of study and amidst the roar of cannon, in painting a picture or in scaling a rampart...in moments like these, man becomes a perfect unity---one thought and one act, abstracted from all other thoughts and all other acts. This intensity of mind was felt by Gray in his loftiest excursions, and is perhaps the same power which impels the villager, when, to overcome his rivals in a contest for leaping, he retires back some steps, collects all exertion into his mind, and clears the eventful bound.50

The ability to produce enthusiasm is a characteristic of the poetic temperament, and Benjamin believed that it was his father's poetic temperament which "made him the most delightful biographer

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50 Ibid., 145-146.
in our language.\textsuperscript{51} This poetic temperament was nurtured by Isaac's constant preoccupation with books, a preoccupation which appeared at an early age and which derived only minimal benefit from the formal guidance of the classroom. Innumerable hours of independent study and thought secured the raw material which was to be the substance of Isaac D'Israeli's literary accomplishments; perhaps these hours of independent study helped produce, as Benjamin believed, the enthusiasm about which his father wrote.

Much of Coningsby's intellectual development results from his conversations with Sidonia, Eustace Lyle, the elder Millbank, and members of the Young England Party. Conversation was emphasized by Isaac in his \textit{Essay}; he believed that through conversation, as well as through reading, a man could acquire new information and insights, providing, of course, he was capable of maintaining an open mind and overcoming his own biases:

Literary friendships are marked by another peculiarity; the true philosophical spirit has learned to bear that shock of contrary opinions which minds less meditative are unequal to encounter. Men of genius live in the unrestrained communication of their ideas, and confide even their caprices with a freedom which sometimes startles ordinary observers. We see literary men, the most opposite in dispositions and opinions deriving from each other that fullness of knowledge which unfolds the certain, the probable, the doubtful. Topics which break the world into factions and sects, and truths which ordinary men are doomed only to hear from a malignant adversary, they gather from a friend! If neither yields up his opinion to the other, they are at least certain of silence and a hearing, but usually the wise new wisdom

\textsuperscript{51}Isaac D'Israeli, \textit{Curiosities}, p. xxvi
from the wise acquire. From the wise acquire, Coningsby demonstrates "the true philosophical spirit" in his conversations with Sidonia, Eustace Lyle, and Mr. Millbank, the three characters in the novel who Coningsby believes have most influenced his intellectual growth, despite the fact that one is a Jew, one is a Catholic, and one is an industrialist. The art of conversations is only one of several tools utilized by a genius to develop his native abilities.

Thus far, we have attempted to demonstrate that Isaac D'Israeli believed that a genius is born with certain predispositions, that is, natural bents or inclinations. Once the genius discovers these areas of potential ability, Isaac believed, he must constantly strive to develop his talents. Through study, meditation, and conversation, the genius increases his understanding of himself and his order or province of talent. Through concentration—"a great and continued exertion of the soul"—he can induce a state of enthusiasm which enables him to perceive an "ideal presence." In the enthusiastic state, we find written in the Essay on the Literary Character. "the great ancients...saw, or imagined they saw, a divinity within man." Although a genius must possess and maintain a firm belief in his own abilities and conclusions, he must test them in conversations and refine them where necessary so that they more closely conform with truth or the ideal.

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52 Essay, p. 212.
CHAPTER II

THE MARQUESS OF MONMOUTH

The generally held critical view of Coningsby emphasizes that Lord Monmouth is a dominating character in the novel. This strong personality, as an analysis of the plot will indicate, has an important, if not an essential, bearing on the birth and evolution of the hero, Coningsby. Both directly and indirectly Monmouth influences the growth and development of Coningsby, and this influence is not terminated with the death of Lord Monmouth in the last book of the novel.

The major conflict in the novel is the clash between the political values of the older generation, a generation responsible for the continuation of the "Age of Ruins," and the New Generation, a generation which, at the close of the novel, is on the threshold of public life attempting to introduce an Age of Hope through political responsibility and accomplishment. The Marquess of Monmouth is a representative of the older generation and shares with his peers in the novel a complete dedication to his own self-interest. To a significant extent, Monmouth is a parasite: contributing nothing toward the amelioration of English society, he lives in extreme comfort because he has inherited a title and wealth. In a climactic and dramatic confrontation with Coningsby, Lord Monmouth articulates the sterile political philosophy which is the gospel
of the "Age of Ruins." The Lord lectures to Coningsby concerning responsibility while attempting to persuade his grandson to campaign for the parliamentary seat at Darlford: "What responsibility is there?" He asks. "How can anyone have a more agreeable seat! The only person to whom you are responsible is your relation who brings you in...There can be no difficulty. All you have got to do is vote with your party." The Lord's political philosophy is very uncomplicated: The goal of all parties and politics is "To gain your object." And Lord Monmouth's object is "to turn our coronet into a Ducal one," he advises Coningsby, "and to get your grandfather's barony out of abeyance in your favour." Subsequently, Coningsby is advised to "go with your family sir, like a gentlemen;" and "not to consider your opinions like a philosopher or political adventurer."¹

Although Lord Monmouth advises his grandson to cast his lot with the family interests, he has rarely done so himself, choosing instead to follow his own selfish impulses. This is apparent early in the novel when we learn that the Coningsby family is famous for its hatreds and two prime examples are presented. Two sons were born to the first wife of the Marquess of Monmouth. The first son hated his father and spitefully married a lady whom the Lord romantically admired, and when Lord Monmouth attempted to continue his romantic attachment after his son's marriage, the newly married couple moved to Naples to establish their home and begin

¹Disraeli, Coningsby, III, 210-211, 214-215.
their family, severing all English and family connections in the process. Lord Monmouth's younger son was unable to solve his problems so easily; he also fell in love and married counter to his father's wishes. As a result, Coningsby's father suffered "a system of domestic persecution" which forced him to leave England to escape his creditors and which destroyed his health. After he died of fever, the widow returned to England with Coningsby, the only male heir in the Coningsby family. Undoubtedly this last fact was considered many times by Coningsby's mother when Lord Monmouth—"the wealthiest noble in the country...and the shrewdest accountant in the country"—offered her an allowance of three hundred pounds per year if she would give up her child and live in a remote Westmoreland town. She accepted. By rendering this family history in the novel, Benjamin Disraeli has suggested a question very fundamental to the structure of Coningsby: who is to inherit the Monmouth fortune?

Since Coningsby is the only male in the Coningsby family who has not alienated himself from Lord Monmouth's affections, he appears to be the logical heir to the Monmouth fortune; however, this question is not resolved until the melodramatic reading of the Marquess's will in the final book of the novel. Although there have been indications that Flora Villebecque was a favorite of the Marquess, one still feels somewhat surprised and cheated when the will is read, since crucial information concerning the romantic life of Lord Monmouth has been withheld. On the other hand, we do learn from Mr. Ormsby that Lord Monmouth seldom loves even the best.

2Ibid., I, 17-18.
of women for more than two years. This seems to be true concerning the Lord's first wife, as well as the Mirandola at Milan. We do not learn of this limitation of Lord Monmouth's affection, however, until after he marries for the second time. His bride is Lucretia, the stepdaughter of the Princess Colonna, Lord Monmouth's former mistress. At the time of his grandfather's second marriage, Coningsby is aware that Lucretia poses a threat to the size of his inheritance. Ironically, it is a romantic intrigue which does not result in marriage that diverts his inheritance. As a young man Lord Monmouth loved Marie Estelle Matteau, who bore him a daughter, and this daughter, Flora Villebecque, receives the bulk of the Monmouth wealth when the Marquess suddenly dies in 1842.

Lord Monmouth's love affair with Marie Estelle Matteau illustrates a very unsavory aspect of his character. Although the reader does not learn that Flora is the natural daughter of Lord Monmouth until the will is read in the final book of the novel, the romantic circumstances which culminated in the birth of Flora are rendered much earlier in the novel. The mother of Flora is depicted more as a victim of circumstances than a woman of vice. The reader, like her countryman, is expected to understand that the illegitimate child was the result of extenuating circumstances, and that the mother, known for her genius and beauty, should be considered as a "fallen angel," not as a risen devil since

with the whole world at her feet, she had remained unsullied. Wealth and its enjoyments could not tempt her, although she was unable to refuse her heart to one whom she deemed worthy of possessing it. She found her fate in an Englishman, who was the father of her only child, a daughter. She thought she had met in him a hero, a demi-god, a being of deep passion and original and creative mind; but he was only a voluptuary, full
of violence instead of feeling, and eccentric because he had great means with which he could gratify extravagant whims. Stella found she had made the great and irretrievable mistake. She had exchanged devotion for a passionate and evanescent fancy, prompted at first by vanity, and daily dissipating under the influence of custom and new objects. Though not stainless in conduct, Stella was pure in spirit. She required that devotion which she had yielded; and she separated herself from the being to whom she had made the most precious sacrifice. He offered her the consoling compensation of a settlement which she refused; and she returned with a broken spirit to that profession of which she was still the ornament and the pride. ³

Lord Monmouth's rejection of Marie is consistent with the advice he offers to Coningsby when his grandson is departing for Cambridge. On this occasion the Marquess "most particularly impressed on him never to permit his feelings to be engaged by any woman;... (that) feeling of any kind did not suit the present age---it was not bon ton; and in some degree always made a man ridiculous." ⁴

Ironically Lord Monmouth makes only one mistake in judgment which affects his comfort and self-interest, and this decision is the result of his emotional involvement with Lucretia. Lucretia, unlike Marie Estelle, and her mother, the Princess Colonna, persuades Lord Monmouth to marry her and then she embarrasses him by being unfaithful. On other occasions Lord Monmouth is pained or irritated by the

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³Ibid., pp. 72-75.

⁴Ibid., p. 194. This advice contrasts with an opinion expressed by Sidonia in the novel: "Man is only great when he acts from his passions, never irresistible but when he appeals to the imagination." Ironically, a major defect in the character of Sidonia is his inability to feel. Sidonia tells Lucretia: "What we call the heart is a nervous sensation like shyness which gradually disappears in society. It is fervent in the nursery, strong in the domestic circle, tumultuous at school. The affections are the children of innocence; when the horizon of our experience expands, and models multiply, love and admiration imperceptibly vanish."
actions of others, but this is the only instance in the novel where the Lord's judgment is influenced by his emotion.\(^5\) Judging from the worldly success of Monmouth and Sidonia, a lack of emotion, or minimally, a tight control of the emotions, is a helpful guide to success.

This inability to experience close emotional bonds helps to explain Lord Monmouth's lack of friends. Lord Monmouth lavishly entertains many people; nevertheless, he remains coolly aloof from everyone in the novel, with only occasional exceptions. On many occasions, relatives, associates, and employees are dehumanized. Lord Monmouth's private secretary, Mr. Rigby, is an apt illustration of Lord Monmouth's callous disregard for people. Rigby, the author narrates, "was just the animal that Monmouth wanted, for Lord Monmouth always looked on the human nature with a callous eye of a jockey. He surveyed Rigby, and he determined to buy him. He bought him.\(^6\) A significant portion of Mr. Rigby's duties is "to disembarrass his patron from the disagreeable," a difficult

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\(^5\)Disraeli narrates that Monmouth's "sagacious intelligence was never for a moment the dupe of his vanity. He had no self-love, and as he valued on-one, there were really no feelings to play upon. He saw through everybody and everything; and when he had detected their purpose, discovered their weakness or their vileness, he calculated whether they could contribute to their pleasure or his convenience in a degree which counter-balanced the objections which might be urged against their intentions, or their pleasing or profitable qualities. To be pleased was always a principal object of Lord Monmouth's but when a man wants vengeance, a gay amusement is not exactly a satisfactory substitute." \textit{Ibid.}, pp.238-239. Although Lord Monmouth lacked self-love in the sense of vanity, he was egocentric and selfishly catered to his hedonistic impulses.

\(^6\)\textit{Ibid.}, I, 22. In a similar manner, Mr. Rigby "buys" Lucian Gay. Lucian, unlike Rigby, perceptively recognizes the emotional and intellectual shallowness of his purchaser and at a private party mimics Mr. Rigby for the amusement of his friends.
task since Lord Monmouth "hated scenes... and feelings." This func-
tion was exercised by Mr. Rigby on the occasion when young Con-
ingsby first met his grandfather, causing a scene with his tears. The young boy, reminded of his own departed parents by the pre-
sence of his grandfather, destroys the serenity of the Lord's ex-
istence. Consequently, Mr. Rigby removes him to an adjoining room, admonishing him never to mention either his mother or his father in the presence of his grandfather, since he "never likes to hear of people who are dead."7

In addition to serving as an illustration of Lord Monmouth's callousness, Mr. Rigby also serves as Lord Monmouth's foil, demon-
strating the sagacity and shrewdness of Monmouth. This is especially demonstrated when Mr. Rigby conspires with Lucretia to discredit Coningsby so that he and Lucretia can receive a larger share of the inheritance. With this purpose in mind, Lucretia advises Mr. Rigby that Lord Monmouth had quarrelled with Coningsby concerning the parliamentary seat at Darlford, and Lucretia is told by Mr. Rigby of Coningsby's romantic and brotherly ties with the Millbank family. At the close of this conversation, Mr. Rigby, who has been summoned by Lord Monmouth for the purpose of being designated Monmouth's can-
didate for the seat at Darlford in place of Coningsby, agrees to present this damaging information concerning Coningsby to the Duke.

7Ibid., p. 41. Lord Monmouth demonstrates similar sentiments when Prince Colonna dies while living at his residence. Mr. Rigby performs the necessary funeral arrangements at the request of Lord Monmouth, and consequently, Lord Monmouth does not even make an appearance at the funeral of his house guest.
As usual, however, the sagacious Lord Monmouth already possesses the "inside" information concerning his grandson, and when Mr. Rigby returns to Lucretia after his conversation with Lord Monmouth, he is no longer a co-conspirator with Lucretia against Lord Monmouth. Mr. Rigby informs the wife of Lord Monmouth that she is to separate from her husband without causing him public embarrassment. To insure minimal personal discomfort, Lord Monmouth permanently departs from Monmouth House, thereby avoiding the possibility of a confrontation scene with his wife. He also directs Mr. Rigby to advise his wife that she may begin to draw her quarterly jointure immediately, providing "she find it convenient to live upon the continent." To guarantee that Lucretia choose to do that which will cause him the least discomfort, Lord Monmouth provides Mr. Rigby with letters which Lucretia had written to her lover Count Transmandorff. To firm up the courage of Mr. Rigby and to guarantee that his execution is flawless, Lord Monmouth reminds his emissary that he will continue to be one of the executors of his will and commissions him to be the Lord of Monmouth House and its permanent resident. 8

The ability to manipulate people for his own benefit and to reject them when they are no longer conducive to his comfort appears to have little or no effect on Lord Monmouth's social popularity. Lord Monmouth delights in the entertainment of his social counterparts, many of whom accept this hospitality as an exchange for the pleasure or entertainment which they provide for the Lord. Prince

8Ibid., III, 250-251.
Colonna is on such intimate terms with Lord Monmouth that his family—the Princess Colonna and his daughter, Lucretia—are frequent guests in Lord Monmouth's household for extended periods of time. After the death of the Prince, the Princess and Lucretia continue to make the Monmouth household their residence despite the threat of gossip such an arrangement would suggest. Other frequent guests at the Monmouth residence are Lord Eskdale and Mr. Ormsby. Both shared with Lord Monmouth shallow self-interest. Lord Eskdale, who along with Lord Monmouth is one of "the greatest proprietors of close boroughs in the country," is ironically described as "clear-sighted, unprejudiced, sagacious." He is "the best judge in the world of a horse or a man, he was the universal referee; a quarrel about a bet or a mistress was solved by him in a moment, and in a manner which satisfied both parties." Mr. Ormsby is a millionaire, a fact which Monmouth appreciates since Monmouth "liked his companions to be very rich or very poor; to be his equals, able to play with him at high stakes, or join him in a great speculation; or to be his tools, and to amuse and serve him. There was nothing which he despised and disliked so much as a moderate fortune." Although Lord Monmouth enjoys such company, he enjoys their companionship only under his own roof since he prefers his good dinners to their bad ones; he prefers that they would endure the inconvenience of travel and inclement weather rather than he endure them himself.\[9\]

With such a lack of concern for his friends, Lord Monmouth's

\[9\textit{Ibid.}, \ I, \ 54-55, \ 56-57, \ III, \ 42-43.\]
attitude toward his constituents is not surprising. In 1836, when Lord Monmouth returns to England to promote the necessary votes to acquire a Dukedom, he projects a benevolent image to the neighbors of Coningsby Castle, an image as "one of the most finished gentleman who ever lived." This image is projected by his generous personality. Underneath this generosity, however, there is a deep contempt for his neighbors; this feeling is not a fluctuating sentiment, not a mournful conviction ebbing and flowing with circumstances, but a fixed, profound, unalterable instinct; he was proud that with a vicious character, that after treating these people with unprecedented neglect and contumely, he should have won back their golden opinions in a moment by the magic of manner and the splendor of wealth.

Such a view encompasses the belief that each man has his price, that "wit, power, particular friendships, general popularity, public opinion, beauty, genius, virtue, all these are to be purchased."

Coningsby, too, is an object to be purchased and manipulated to further his grandfather's ambitions. When Lord Monmouth is greeted by Coningsby after a four year interval, Lord Monmouth immediately perceives that "such a relation might be a valuable adherent; an irresistible candidate for future elections; a brilliant tool to work out the Dukedom." Since Lord Monmouth demonstrates an enduring love toward no one, since he seems incapable of demonstrating affection except when it will further his comfort or advancement, the circumstances of his death suggest poetic justice.

Lord Monmouth, as we have seen, dominates and controls his relationships with people. He discards both his first and his second wife, as well as other women he loves when they no longer serve him

10 Ibid., II, 56, 57, 67.
to his complete satisfaction. The place of his death is Richmond, the time the Christmas season after his separation from Lucretia. At Richmond, far from the main flow of London society, Lord Monmouth is able to forget recent unpleasant experiences and to live "unmolested and undisturbed in his epicurean dream." His immediate world consists of people totally unaware that his basic philosophy consists of plundering the public; consequently, no disturbing questions are asked or discomforting observations offered. In the last weeks of his life he chooses the company of "persons whose knowledge of the cares of life concerned only the means of existence; and whose sense of its objects referred only to the sources of enjoyment." Clotilde, "who opened her mouth to breathe roses and diamonds," and Ermengarde, "who was so good natured that she sacrificed even her lovers to her friends," were such companions. When Lord Monmouth is stricken with his last illness, the reaction of these companions at his private dinner party is to be expected. After shrieking with fright at the sudden demise of their host, they quickly recover from their initial shock and begin to plunder the house.11

The death of Lord Monmouth symbolizes the end of an era; the "Age of Ruins" is past. However, this "Age of Ruins"—an age which, according to the Young England movement lacked altruistic feeling and a sense of social responsibility as illustrated by the life and death of Lord Monmouth—sowed the seeds of "The New Generation."

11 Ibid., III, 258, 259.
The grandfather necessarily precedes and often establishes the environment of the grandson; in this instance, Lord Monmouth makes it possible for Coningsby to become a significant voice in the Young England party. Besides representing the older generation in the conflict of generations and philosophies which culminates in Coningsby's rejection of his grandfather's offer to be the family representative for the parliamentary seat at Darlford, Lord Monmouth has additional structural significance: almost all the major characters in the novel are introduced to the reader through Lord Monmouth or they have a relationship with Lord Monmouth prior to their appearance in the novel. The reader's introduction to the novel occurs at the London residence of Lord Monmouth. Here, Mr. Rigby, acting upon the request of Lord Monmouth, presents the fourteen year-old Coningsby to his grandfather for their initial meeting. At the Monmouth household, young Coningsby meets Princess Colonna, one of Lord Monmouth's lovers; here he also meets Princess Colonna's step-daughter, Lucretia, who becomes the romantic rival of her step-mother and subsequently becomes the second wife of Lord Monmouth, and who, as a result of this marriage, becomes a threat to Coningsby's inheritance of the Monmouth title and fortune. This conflict is resolved when one of the entertainers in the Monmouth household, Flora Villebeecque, is named the major beneficiary in Lord Monmouth's will. Flora, the illegitimate daughter of Lord Monmouth and Marie Estelle Matteau, adds additional tension to the plot since she appears to have strong romantic affections for Coningsby and poses a threat to Edith Millbank for the heart of the hero.
Although the reader first becomes aware of the Millbank family upon Coningsby's return to Eton after his first meeting with his grandfather, a deep hatred already exists between the Millbank and Coningsby families stemming from the marriage of Coningsby senior to Coningsby's mother, the former fiancee of Mr. Millbank. The anger, frustration, and hatred of Mr. Millbank increases when Lord Monmouth rejects his son's wife because of her humble origin, an origin not unlike Mr. Millbank's. An additional structural complication evolves as a result of the death of young Coningsby's parents because of their cruel treatment by Lord Monmouth. When Coningsby junior and his daughter Edith wish to marry, Mr. Millbank forces the termination of their relationship, since he fears Lord Monmouth will reject and destroy his daughter, just as Lord Monmouth rejected and destroyed his fiancee years earlier. This element of the plot is resolved after the death of Lord Monmouth, and the marriage of Edith Millbank and Coningsby symbolically represents the union of the aristocracy with the new middle class. The death of Lord Monmouth, however, does not immediately guarantee the marriage of Coningsby and Edith; for before Coningsby is able to gain the approval of Mr. Millbank to marry his daughter, he must first demonstrate that his character is of the highest order. By the conclusion of the novel, Coningsby has developed such a character, a character formed to a significant degree by Sidonia and Eustace Lyle, gentlemen long acquainted with the Coningsby family. Sidonia's relationship to Lord Monmouth predates his first meeting with Coningsby,
and the Monmouth household is the place where Sidonia is formally introduced to Coningsby. Eustace Lyle, on the other hand, is a long-time friend of the Sydneys, relatives of Coningsby, and it is in the Sydney castle that Coningsby first meets Eustace. The generosity of Mr. Lyle sharply contrasts with the behavior of Lord Monmouth's lackey, Mr. Rigby, who, along with his friends Tadpole, Taper, and Lucian Gay, helps to constitute the social and political milieu of the "Age of Ruins." Coningsby's refusal to be his grandfather's candidate for the Darlford seat is an ironic rejection of this milieu since Lord Monmouth has expressed fear for the new generation's future while Coningsby was still at Eton, not realizing that it was he and his peers who would wish "evil days for the new generation." 12

Thus the structure of Coningsby is profoundly influenced by the dominating figure of Lord Monmouth; he represents and symbolizes the "Age of Ruins"; and, to this symbolic representative of the old order, all of the major characters are either directly or indirectly linked. In the climactic scene of the novel, Lord Monmouth confronts Coningsby, the symbolic representative of what might be termed the "Age of Hope." Since Coningsby will be the only surviving male member of the Coningsby family after the death of Lord Monmouth, additional suspense is created through Coningsby's expectations concerning the Monmouth fortune. Another complication in the plot and source of suspense occurs as a result of Lord Monmouth's hatred for Mr. Millbank. This reciprocated hatred has

12 "I fear there are evil days for the new generation." Ibid., I, 137.
dramatic consequences for Coningsby when Mr. Millbank forbids him to see his daughter Edith, whom Coningsby loves. And, finally, Lord Monmouth is important to the structure of the novel since he exerts a significant influence on the development of Coningsby's character. This influence is both hereditary and environmental.

According to Isaac D'Israeli, "manners, habits, and notions are hereditary." He also believed in the phenomenon of family genius. In the home of a genius, the genius "diffuses an electrical atmosphere" which tends to develop the abilities of those who reside in his home with him. We should not be too surprised, then, if we find personality traits in Coningsby similar to those found in his parents and his grandfather, especially since, on one occasion, the narrator explains that Lord Monmouth "cherished the idea that his grandson had inherited not merely the color of his eyes, but something of his shrewd and fearless spirit." As a result of his forefathers, Coningsby possesses additional advantages which are conducive to greatness. Not only were his family members of the nobility, but his family tree is pure; and this, Sidonia preaches, predisposes one to accomplishment. An apprehensive Coningsby is assured by Sidonia that he can accomplish great achievements since his "race is sufficiently pure." Coningsby's ancestors, Sidonia continues, "come from the shores of the Northern Sea, land of the blue eye, and the golden hair, and the frank brow; tis a famous

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breed,...your ancestors were doubtless great men."15 In an earlier chapter we have indicated that Disraeli himself believed that his ancestors were distinguished and that he was of a pure race. This illusory belief, we noted, had real consequences; it enabled him to have confidence in his own ability, despite public failures and humiliations. Coningsby's ancestors provided a similar reservoir of confidence; and Coningsby, like Disraeli, receives reassurance by reflecting on his ancestry. This is illustrated when Coningsby approaches the castle which bears his name and is beset by feelings of inadequacy. These feelings of inadequacy persist until the servants magically respond to the family name. The servants, competing for the privilege of carrying his luggage, create in the mind of Coningsby the illusion that he is borne to his apartment on the shoulders of the people. This feeling of security is not permanent, however; later, in Coningsby Castle, deep feelings of inadequacy return again as he is about to enter the first great party of his life. To restore his shattered composure and to overcome his desire "to sink into the earth," Coningsby regains his confidence by remembering who he is:

...he was the only Coningsby in that proud castle, except the Lord of the castle himself; and he began to be rather ashamed of permitting a sense of inexperience in the mere forms and fashions of society to oppress him, and deprive him as it were of the spirit and carriage which became alike his character and position. Emboldened and greatly restored to himself, Coningsby advanced into the body of the saloon.16

15Disraeli, Coningsby, I, p. 84, II, 204-205.
16Ibid., pp. 59, 63.
The Coningsby name, then, is a source of confidence to young Coningsby, and his identification with the aristocracy of England provides him with inspirational examples of nobility in action. Lord Monmouth, of course, is not one of these inspirational examples; yet he too, by his example, can indicate to Coningsby the tools necessary to achieve one's goals in a competitive and sometimes hostile society. Earlier commentary has stressed the intelligence of Lord Monmouth, which enables him to discern the motivation of the people he desires to manipulate in order to improve his comfort and family position. This manipulation requires not only an extensive knowledge of human nature, but also an ability to remain emotionally detached from those persons who are to be manipulated. This control of emotion, this ability to remain detached from events and persons, is a quality which all leaders must possess if they are to make disinterested decisions on emotional issues. As Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli made many such decisions, and a recent biographer observes that as a young man Benjamin Disraeli concluded that if he were to become a successful politician or statesman, he first must develop almost absolute control over his emotions. Like Lord Monmouth, Coningsby possesses abundant intelligence; however, he too must develop control over his emotions before he can be expected to become a responsible public figure. In addition, in order to guarantee

17B.R. Jerman, The Young Disraeli (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 86. In Coningsby the Duke advises his grandson to control his emotions, otherwise he would be made to look ridiculous. Lord Monmouth also warns his grandson that he should especially beware of becoming too emotionally involved with women. Years before Coningsby was written, Benjamin Disraeli wrote that he would never marry for love, since such marriages, he believed, always resulted in unhappiness. Maurois, Disraeli, p. 77.
political success, Coningsby must develop another quality prominent in the character of Lord Monmouth, namely, constancy of purpose. Lord Monmouth demonstrates total dedication to the pursuit of pleasure: all persons and all events must contribute to his epicurean existence; otherwise they are to be discarded or avoided. Lord Monmouth's ultimate goal in life is to become a Duke, and people are manipulated to satisfy this ambition. Conceivably, Coningsby too might aspire to become a Duke. However, it would seem that he would strive to realize this ambition not by a callous manipulation of people, but rather by a constant effort to improve the quality of life in England. In short, his ultimate goal, in contrast to Lord Monmouth's, would be primarily altruistic rather than egoistic. Nevertheless, the same singlemindedness, the same constancy of purpose, would be necessary if success were to be achieved. Coningsby, like Monmouth, demonstrates constancy of purpose in the novel.

Lord Monmouth's constancy of purpose, intellectual shrewdness, and tight emotional control may have had some influence on the development of Coningsby's character. More significant influences, however, may be ascertained. Lord Monmouth determined that his grandson should not be reared by his mother; he determined where and how Coningsby was to live; he also determined how and where Coningsby was to be educated. In addition, in his college years, Coningsby's life style was determined by the generosity of his grandfather. Although the death of Lord Monmouth produces a crisis in the life of Coningsby, his influence on his grandson's worldly success continues
to be significant, despite the fact that Flora Villabecque is the major beneficiary of his will and Coningsby's inheritance is only "the interest on the sum of 10,000 pounds which had originally been bequeathed to him in his orphan boyhood." Because of the meager inheritance, Coningsby lacks the financial security necessary to propose marriage to Edith Millbank, and he is unable to make romantic capital from the death of his grandfather. However, with the death of his grandfather, the question of choosing a vocation or profession becomes a serious problem since he must now provide his own financial support, while at the same time continuing to prepare himself for a leadership role in the Young England movement. Although Coningsby's disinheritance poses a serious threat to his future, the crisis also presents a challenge which could test and develop the character of the hero. In this time of crisis, Coningsby's spirit is bolstered by a revelation which occurs during the reading of the will:

What passed through the mind and being of Coningsby was thought and sensation enough for a year, yet it was as the flash that reveals a whole country, yet ceases to be ere one can say it lightens. There was a revelation to him of an inward power that should baffle these conventional calamities; a natural and sacred confidence in his youth and health, and knowledge and convictions. 18

With renewed confidence in himself and the advice of Sidonia, Coningsby is able to constructively plan his future. The execution of this plan depends on Coningsby and is a test of his character. If he is unable to discipline himself now, he will be unable to develop his potential as a political genius. Sidonia's advice stresses the positive qualities inherent in his disinheritance. "What seems

18Ibid., III, pp. 292-293.
conventionally in a limited view a great misfortune," he tells Coningsby, "if subsequently viewed in its results, is often the happiest incident in one's life." Since Coningsby possesses "health, youth, good looks, great abilities, considerable knowledge, a fine courage, a lofty spirit, and no contemptible experience," Sidonia assures Coningsby, his future success is certain if he maintains courage and perseverance. Such a future would not have been assured if he had been the primary benefactor of his grandfather's will, since he might have been tempted to live a life of epicurean existence like his grandfather, dissipating his potential for greatness in the process. "If you had inherited a great patrimony," Sidonia suggests to Coningsby, "it is possible your natural character and previous culture might have saved you from its paralyzing influences; but it is a question even with you. Now you are free."19 So, it would appear that Lord Monmouth, paradoxically, by limiting the inheritance of Coningsby, has increased the possibility that his grandson will develop his potential as a human being and as a political genius. At the conclusion of the novel, Coningsby demonstrates his worth to Mr. Millbank and the voters of Darlford, vindicating both his own belief in himself and the judgment of Sidonia.

19 Ibid., pp. 296, 297, 298.
CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF CONINGSBY

When Coningsby is introduced to his grandfather at the beginning of the novel, he is fourteen years old. Benjamin Disraeli's father believed that the unsteady outline of the man was already in evidence at this tender age. To the perceptive eye, certain indications of predispositions would be discernible. In his Essay on the Literary Character, Isaac cited both Cicero and Isocrates as authorities in support of this thesis. Cicero had written that "youth is the vernal season of life, and the blossoms it then puts forth are indications of those future fruits which are to be gathered in the succeeding periods." Isocrates, Isaac D'Israeli reminds us, "believed that Nature had some concern in forming a man of genius, and endeavoured to guess at the first energetic inclination of the mind." ¹ Perhaps it should not be surprising, then, if we are able to detect in the youthful Coningsby indications of qualities which portend the evolution of a political genius. As the limber and graceful Coningsby patiently awaits his introduction to Lord Monmouth, his appearance suggests an amenability to both amusement and instruction. In addition, the perceptive eye of Benjamin Disraeli detects in the young boy's face signs of

¹D'Israeli, Essay, pp. 31, 32. In the Genius of Judaism Isaac partly explained the difference between Jews and gentiles as heredity. He wrote that "Manners, and habits, and notions are long hereditary." p. 237.
health, innocence, contemplation, resolution, seriousness, and, through the curl of his upper lip, "a good breed."

Although the short upper lip of Coningsby indicates a good breed, the Coningsby family was not without its moral blemishes. Lord Monmouth was the oldest member of "a family famous for its hatreds," and when his youngest son married contrary to his wishes, punitive steps were initiated to guarantee the misery of the newly married couple. Despite their precarious existence, they produced a child of love, and Coningsby's early childhood was quite happy; his memory contained childhood experiences "full of tenderness and rapture." These experiences, though somewhat dim in his memory, gave a measure of security to his orphaned pre-teen years and provided him with vivid experiences of parental love. After the death of his parents, he found the ideal family life exemplified at Beaumanoir, the home of his kinsmen, the Sydneys. On his visits to Beaumanoir with his schoolmate Henry Sydney, he admired their warm familial affections especially the frank and fraternal love which existed between Henry and his older brother and the strong affection which the father felt for his sons. The Duke, in contrast to his kinsman Lord Monmouth, served as an example of true nobility.

He had that public spirit which became his station... He was munificent, tender, and bounteous to the poor, and loved a flowing hospitality...His good breeding


3Ibid., pp. 33-34.
indeed, sprang from the only source of gentle manners—a kind heart. To have pained others would have pained himself. Perhaps too this noble sympathy may have been in some degree prompted by the ancient blood in his veins, an accident of lineage rather rare with English nobility.

The Duke's wife, Coningsby's paternal aunt, also possessed a "good heart," demonstrating "that perfect good breeding which is the result of nature and not of education." The Sydneys, then as well as his parents, provided Coningsby with examples of love and affection not to be found in his grandfather. In short, Coningsby knew familial affection both from observation and immediate experience. In the instance of his parents, he remembered vividly the sweet embraces of his mother. Less vivid were the memories of his father; yet these too kindled in him sentiments of kindness and joy.\(^4\)

There is sparse information in the novel concerning the family of Coningsby's mother. Her father, we know, was a clergyman and her mother's family "were simple and innocent people, free from all the bad passions of our nature, and ignorant of the world's ways." Coningsby's mother was "the native ornament" of England, but she was not a member of the nobility. When she had the misfortune to love and marry above her class, she provoked "a system of domestic persecution" from Lord Monmouth which destroyed the health of her husband, eventually causing his death in a foreign country where he was forced to flee from his creditors. With the death of his son, Lord Monmouth's persecution did not cease. Mrs. Coningsby was to suffer still more because she had dared to love a Coningsby and bear him a son in wedlock. After the death of her husband, she

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 177-178, 33.
and her young son returned to England. Without relatives or money, she struggled to survive against a father-in-law who "was above all scruples, prejudices, and fears, who though he respected law, despised opinion." With no viable alternative she succumbed to the persecution of Lord Monmouth, relinquishing the care of her son to her father-in-law in exchange for three hundred pounds per year and a promise that she would live in a distant market town.

These, then, are the facts concerning the "good breed" or the origin of Coningsby; his parents demonstrated much love; his grandfather, though "full of a natural nobility," demonstrated much hate.

Disraeli the Elder had written that "the first step into the life of genius is disobedience and grief." The first meeting of the fourteen-year-old Coningsby with his grandfather foreshadows the climactic scene of the novel in which Coningsby rejects the opportunity to become Lord Monmouth's parliamentary representative at Darlford and thereby effects his disinheritance. The imposing presence of a Lord Monmouth might be expected to intimidate and bring grief to an orphan of fourteen starved for affection:

Lord Monmouth was in height above the middle size, but somewhat portly and corpulent. His countenance was strongly marked; sagacity on the brow, sensuality in the mouth and jaw. His head was bald, but there were remains of the rich brown locks on which he once prided himself. His large deep blue eyes, morbid and yet piercing showed that the secretions of his brain were apportioned, half to voluptuousness, half to common sense. But the general mien was truly grand; full of a natural nobility, of which no one

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5 Ibid., III, 161, 126, I, 16-17, 18.
6 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 33.
was more sensible.  

When this imposing figure addresses his young grandson concerning his opinion of Eton, an unmanly, tearful reaction follows. Lord Monmouth concludes from this encounter that his grandson is "tender hearted like his father." This, in fact, is an accurate observation, since at the moment of the tear burst young Coningsby "was thinking of poor mamma." The view of Lord Monmouth that the spooney Coningsby should pursue a career in the church is balanced by the narrator's observation that a boy's character is a mystery which is often misunderstood even by parents. In the early and formative years, Benjamin Disraeli observes, an imperceptive eye often believes a genius to be but a dunce, mistaking pensiveness for dullness, completely unaware of the passion, ambition, and volition that often reside in a young schoolboy.

This initial meeting between Coningsby and his grandfather is structurally significant since Coningsby's reaction foreshadows his later behavior in the novel. Coningsby will persevere in adversity; temporary embarrassments or setbacks will not erode his courage. On the same day that Coningsby suffers humiliation in the presence of his grandfather, he later attends a dinner party and demonstrates self-assurance. In the presence of Princess Colonna and Lucretia, he determinedly responds to the question which had occasioned the shattering of his composure earlier in the day, asserting in response that "I should like to see the fellow who did not like Eton." Coningsby, even in his formative years, reacts

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7 Disraeli, Coningsby, I, 39.
8 Ibid., pp. 41, 42.
9 Ibid., p. 68.
positively to failure; he does not lack courage in adversity. Such courage is a prerequisite for a political genius, and the value of this quality is indicated by Benjamin Disraeli's comment concerning the dismissal of the Whig government in 1834 when he observes "that the conduct of every individual eminently concerned in that great historical transaction was characterized by the rarest and most admirable quality of public life---moral courage."\textsuperscript{10} Later in the novel when Coningsby rejects Lord Monmouth's offer to be his representative from Darlford, Coningsby conspicuously demonstrates this quality.

This youthful reaction to adversity is not undetected or unrewarded. At dinner, after Lord Monmouth has observed this display of spirit, Coningsby is addressed by his first name and engaged in conversation. On the subsequent days, his stature in Lord Monmouth's eyes continues to increase through his favorable impression upon Princess Colonna, his house guest. After listening to the flattering reports of the Princess, Lord Monmouth "cherished the idea that his grandson had inherited not merely the color of his eyes, but something of his shrewd and fearless spirit."\textsuperscript{11} As a result of these circumstances and the additional exposure of Coningsby's personality to his grandfather, Lord Monmouth is generous to Coningsby when he departs for Eton after his vacation. Besides promising to visit his grandson at school, Lord Monmouth graciously offers to replenish his wardrobe whenever necessary and to honor any additional requests for provisions.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., pp. 196-197.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 84.
When Coningsby returns to Eton, indications of his predisposition for the political order become manifest. Already the young schoolboy is the acknowledged leader of his peers in both sport and study. We learn of much of his potential through a contrasting description of his schoolmate, Oswald Millbank, who lacked "that quick and brilliant apprehension, which, with a memory of rare retentiveness, had already advanced Coningsby far beyond his age, and made him already looked to as the future hero of the school."

Shortly thereafter we learn that Coningsby "had obtained over his inmates the ascendent power, which is the destiny of genius" and that he was recognized by all of his fellow students as "the hero of Eton; the being of whose existence everybody was proud, and in whose career every boy took an interest."\(^\text{12}\) In Book III there are additional indications of his leadership potential. The mind of Coningsby, we are advised, "has been the inspiring mind that had guided" the opinions of his classmates. His had been the mind which had "formed their tastes, directed and bent the tenor of their lives and thoughts."\(^\text{13}\) If Coningsby is to become a great man, a man capable of changing the "Spirit of the Age," he must continue to develop and refine these qualities.\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^{12}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 87, 95, 223.  
\(^{13}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 238.  
\(^{14}\) \textit{Ibid.}. Sidonia advises Coningsby that "the Spirit of the Age is the very thing that a great man changes." In \textit{Coningsby}, Benjamin Disraeli advises that "A great man is one who effects the mind of his generation" and that Coningsby "desired to be great" (p.261). In Ch. II of the dissertation I have indicated that Benjamin Disraeli believed that his father also influenced the taste and opinions of his Age.
over his Eton schoolmates, however, is not restricted to the world of thought. When Oswald Millbank is in danger of drowning during an afternoon outing, "tender hearted" Coningsby, who is "by nature generous," endangers his own life in "a feat of gallantry and skill" in order to save his schoolmate. As a result of this potential catastrophe, Oswald Millbank and Coningsby become firm and warm friends. In ensuing conversations, Coningsby becomes exposed to views which are different from his own. Although Coningsby is not consciously aware of the process, he accepts many of Millbank's ideas, and these ideas insensibly provoke "in his mind a spirit of inquiry into political questions, for which he had a predisposition." At Eton, because of the predisposition, Coningsby was singled out by his more politically conscious tutors for questions concerning the principles of the Conservative party, questions which were addressed to a mind who was prepared for such researches.16

It might be concluded, then, that even as a student at Eton, Coningsby demonstrated qualities which would be helpful to him in a future political career. Although there are no direct indications early in the novel that Coningsby possesses a "Divine faculty" which enables him to win the hearts of the people and to fire their

15 Ibid., p. 117.
16 Ibid., pp. 225, 229.
imagination, Benjamin Disraeli states early in the novel that the "leader who can inspire such enthusiasm will be able to command the world." By implication, we might suspect the youthful Coningsby also possesses this quality. In the next to the last chapter of the novel, after Coningsby has been elected to the parliamentary seat at Darlford, he triumphantly addresses his first public assembly. Although his constituents are anxious to hear him, it requires several minutes before their enthusiasm subsides and they are silent. Once the crowd was quiet and Coningsby began to speak, "every one looked at his neighbor, and without speaking they agreed that there never was anything like this heard in Darlford before." When Coningsby finished speaking, he had cast a spell of magic on his constituents:

There were a great many present at that moment who though they had never seen Coningsby before, would willingly have then died for him. Coningsby had touched their hearts, for he had spoken from his own. His spirit had entirely magnetized them. Darlford believed in Coningsby; and a very good creed.

This moment of triumph was caused by Coningsby's high principles, great talents, and good heart." How are such leaders shaped?

The novel Coningsby attempts to explain the origin and development of the qualities which Benjamin Disraeli believed were necessary if a person was to achieve enduring success in the political world.

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17 Ibid., p. 227, III, 344.
18 Ibid., pp. 345, 346.
In the *Essay on Literary Character*, Isaac D’Israeli had indicated that study and meditation were habits of genius. These are the habits of Coningsby at Eton. Often he was to be found in the library voraciously reading volumes suitable to his political inclinations. In this way he utilized the freedom provided by the curriculum at Eton, and "great were the obligations of Coningsby to this Eton library" since "it introduced him to that historic lore, that accumulation of facts and incidents illustrative of political conduct, for which he had inbibed an early relish."\(^{19}\) The volumes of Clarendon, Burnet, and Coxe were digested by Coningsby, as he devoted much time to the study of English history.\(^{20}\) Traces of a parallel to Coningsby’s experiences might be found in the life of Sir Walter Raleigh. After Isaac D’Israeli had advised his readers that much could be learned by studying the library of a genius since here one could "trace their first and last thoughts" and become aware of the plethora of ideas which a genius discarded in moments

\(^{19}\)Ibid., I, 231.

\(^{20}\)Isaac D'Israeli had written that the nation is the organ of genius. "Hence then, we deduce that true genius is the organ of the nation. The created faculty is itself created; for it is the nation itself which first imparts an impulse to the character of genius. Such is the real source of those distinct tastes which we perceive in all great national authors." Isaac D'Israeli, *Essay*, p. 261.
of contemplation, Isaac D'Israeli relates that Sir Walter Raleigh read of the discoveries and conquests of such explorers as Columbus, Cortez, and Pizarro. "His character as well as the great events of his life," Isaac wrote, "seem to have been inspired by his favorite histories; to pass beyond the discoveries of the Spaniards became a passion, and the vision of his life."21 Not only, we are told, did Sir Walter Raleigh constantly read about these explorers, but he also constantly conversed about them. Through both reading and conversation, he nurtured his mind with the great acts of heroes and in this way he nourished his own ambition.

The life of genius is not all action; there must be also many moments of reflection and conversation. A quality of genius according to Isaac is the ability to converse and expose oneself to ideas alien to one's own beliefs. Since a genius possesses "a true philosophical spirit" which enables him to enjoy the clash of contrasting ideas and opinions, the man of genius is one who practices and encourages complete intellectual freedom in conversations with his peers. As a result, such men are assured a respectful audience and analysis of their ideas, and in this way, "the wise new wisdom from the wise acquire."22 By the final chapter of Coningsby, Book II, we are aware that Coningsby possesses "the true philosophic spirit." In his political conversations with Oswald Millbank, Coningsby "heard things...which were new to him...in conversing with Millbank, he

21 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 57.
22 Ibid., p. 212.
heard for the first time of influential classes in the country, who were not noble, and were yet determined to acquire power."\textsuperscript{23} Despite Coningsby's native intelligence, inquisitive mind, inclination towards political questions, conscientious and independent study habits and good heart, his future success is by no means certain as the narrator indicates upon his graduation from Eton in a paragraph which has a parallel at the termination of the novel.

He will become more wise, will he remain as generous? His ambition may be as great; will it be as noble? What indeed is to be the future of this existence that is now to be sent forth into the great aggregate of entities? Is it an ordinary organization that will jostle among the crowd and be jostled? Is it a finer temperament susceptible of receiving the impressions and imbibing the inspirations of superior, yet sympathizing spirits? Or is it a primordial and creative mind; one that will say to his fellows, 'Behold, God has given me thought; I have discovered truth; and you shall believe.'\textsuperscript{24}

During the summer following Coningsby's graduation from Eton, he becomes acquainted with the first of three gentlemen who significantly influence his intellectual development by their conversation, as well as by their example, Sidonia. Immediately prior to the introduction of Sidonia in Coningsby, the fancy of the young hero was prone to dwell "with fascination on visions of personal distinction, of future celebrity, perhaps even of enduring fame."

Fortunately for his happiness, Coningsby possesses qualities which will enable him to achieve such a success: he possesses "a gentle disposition"; "his heart is pure and innocent"; and his soul is "Blessed with that tenderness...which is sometimes linked with an

\textsuperscript{23}B. Disraeli, Coningsby, I, p.224.
ardent imagination and a strong will. However, in this formative year his gifted intellect lacks the companionship of an equal or superior mind, of "one who by the comprehension of his thought, and the richness of his knowledge, and the advantage of his experience, might strengthen and guide his obscure or hesitating or unpracticed intelligence." This need for superior intellectual companionship is satisfied when Coningsby meets Sidonia at a forest inn during a violent storm which forces him to rest while journeying to Beaumanoir for a summer visit with the Sydneys.

Sidonia possesses a remarkable ability to speak in polished phrases and epigrammatic sentences. The following examples are culled from Sidonia's first meeting with Coningsby: "Every moment is travel, if understood"; "The Age of Ruins is past. Have you seen Manchester?" "The Spirit of the Age is the very thing that a great man changes"; "Great men never want experience"; "Youth is genius; genius, when young, is divine"; and "Nurture your mind with great thoughts. To believe in the heroic makes heroes." These aphorisms are the product of a very remarkable intellect. Without prejudice or passion, Sidonia is able to solve in a phrase problems which have troubled wise men for years. Some of Sidonia's conclusions and beliefs have a significant effect on the evolution of Coningsby's character and the structure of the novel.

Young Coningsby is fascinated by Sidonia's conversation. Through him he learns the power of individual character. Great men, Coningsby

26 Ibid., pp. 243-254.
is told, whether they be prophets, legislators, or conquerors, are capable of destroying the spirit of an age and creating a new one. The present age, Coningsby learns, desperately requires great legislators and conquerors. Since Sidonia believes these future leaders will be inspired by the divinity, they will prevail against public opinion. "God made man in his own image," Sidonia lectures Coningsby, "but the public is made by newspapers, Members of parliament, Excise Officers, and Poor Law Guardians."27

Perhaps, one might think, the wise man should also have added political novels to this list. In any event, "the Spirit of the Age" can be changed by Members of Parliament who receive frequent exposure in newspapers and magazines as a result of their political activities. If such men are to be elected to Parliament and remain in Parliament, however, they must mold public opinion by making speeches and writing books and articles; otherwise, they will be rejected by their constituents when they attempt to enact progressive legislation. In the political arena, Coningsby will test the theories of Sidonia relating to the formation of public opinion. Sidonia, in contrast to Coningsby, will not experience such a test since by his own admission he "is a dreamer and not a man of action."28

Another significant belief of Sidonia is his view concerning youth and genius. When a genius is young, Sidonia explains to Coningsby, he is divine. To substantiate this belief, Sidonia presents

27 Ibid., p. 250.
28 Ibid., p. 254.
a number of illustrations, including Nelson, Clive, Innocent III, Leo X, Luther, Ignatius Loyola, Byron, Raphael, Richelieu, Bolingbroke and Pitt. "The history of heroes is the history of youth" is Sidonia's message to Coningsby, thereby inspiring him to verbalize his desire to become "a great man." Sidonia's advice is thematic to the novel: "Nurture your mind with great thoughts. To believe in the heroic makes heroes." When these gentlemen part company, Sidonia intuitively believes that they will meet again. He is unaware that Coningsby is the grandson of his long time friend, the Marquess of Monmouth.

Isaac D'Israeli had written in the Essay on Literary Character that an act of contemplation can sometimes "create the thing contemplated." He had also written that a genius could become enthusiastic by meditating and concentrating upon a single idea. Enthusiasm, to Isaac, was "that secret or harmonious spirit which hovers over the production of genius, throwing the reader of a book or the spectator of a statue into the very ideal presence whence these works have originated." Through some quality of the imagination, Isaac believed that a genius could perceive the ideal—what should be. The faculties of the non-genius could perceive only the real presence; that is, the non-genius could only perceive the objects that man perceives directly through his sense faculties. For the genius, however, the idea of an object stimulates the senses "as if the real object had been presented to it." This contemplation sometimes induces an enthusiastic state. Isaac attempts to explain this experience:

29 Ibid.
This enthusiasm inconceivably fills the mind of genius in all great and solemn operations. It is an agitation amidst calmness, and is required not only in the fine arts, but whenever a great and continued exertion of the soul must be employed. The great ancients, who, if they were not always philosophers, were always men of genius, saw, or imagined they saw a divinity within man. This enthusiasm is alike experienced in the silence of study and amidst the roar of cannon, in painting a picture or in scaling a rampart...in moments like these, men become a perfect unity---one thought and one act, abstracted from all other thoughts and all other acts. This intensity of the mind was felt by Gray in his loftiest excursions, and is perhaps the same power which impels the villager, when, to overcome his rivals in a contest for leaping, he retires back some steps, collects all exertion into his mind, and clears the eventful bound.31

This passage from Isaac D'Israeli anticipates some of Sidonia's wisdom and explains some of Coningsby's emotional flights which sometimes result in flashes of perception. As we have noted, Sidonia has advised Coningsby that man is made in the divine image. Isaac had written that through meditation and concentration man is able to perceive this image. In this enthusiastic or imaginative state, the genius becomes

a strange and mysterious personage: a concentration of a human being within himself, endowed with inward eyes, eyes which listen to interior sounds, and invisible hands touching impalpable objects, for whatever they act, or however they are acted on, as far as respects themselves all must pass within their own minds.32

It will not be surprising, then, to find Coningsby receiving flashes of insight after moments of intense concentration. In this connection, Benjamin Disraeli observed that even the reading of a

31Ibid., pp. 145-146.
32Ibid., p. 149.
great book will sometimes induce the mind to make great, mysterious, intellectual leaps. The same occurs in conversation: "A great thing is a great book; but greater than all is the talk of a great man," and "a great man is one who effects the mind of his generation." While Sidonia will not directly effect the mind of his generation, his mind serves as a catalyst to the mind of Coningsby, permitting him to meditate upon and resolve perplexing questions. In Coningsby, Benjamin Disraeli attempts to illuminate this phenomenon:

What is this magic? It is the spirit of the supreme author that by a magnetic influence blends with our sympathizing intelligence, directs and inspires it. By that mysterious sensibility we extend to questions, which he has not treated, the same intellectual force which he has exercised over those which he has expounded. His genius for a time remains in us. Tis the same with human beings as with books.34

Even before Coningsby's chance meeting with Sidonia, however, the tendency of his mind is to pursue all questions to their core. At an early age he had concluded that "a want of faith was a want of nature." Nevertheless, his vigorous intellect was constantly probing for deep and enduring convictions, convictions which "the heart and the intellect, feeling and reason united" could alone supply.35 Before his meeting with Sidonia, "the strong pre-disposition of his mind" had already grappled with many essential religious and political questions. He had wondered why religions were despised, governments hated, and loyalty dead in England. Consequently,

33 B. Disraeli, Coningsby I, 260, 261.
34 Ibid., p. 261.
35 Ibid., p. 262.
several of the questions which Sidonia presents have already tested the mind of Coningsby, so that when Sidonia "descanted on the influence of individual character, of great thoughts and heroic actions, and the divine power of youth and genius, he touched a spring that was the very heart-cord of his companion."36

In addition to serving as an intellectual catalyst in the novel, Sidonia exerts a significant influence upon Coningsby when he advises him to think positively on the occasion of his disinheritance. During the reading of the Marquess of Monmouth's will, in a situation fraught with intellectual and emotional exertion, Coningsby intuitively grasps the potential that is within his being:

What passed through the mind and being of Coningsby was thought and sensation enough for a year, yet it was the flash that reveals a whole country, yet ceases to be ere one can say it lightens. There was a revelation to him of an inward power that should baffle these conventional calamities; a natural and sacred confidence in his youth and health, knowledge and convictions.37

Despite this intuitive knowledge of his own worth, Coningsby begins to despair when Flora Villebecque is named the major beneficiary in his grandfather's will. Sidonia's response is sympathetic and philosophical. "There are really no miseries except natural miseries," he counsels his young friend, informing him that "Conventional misfortunes are mere illusions. What seems conventionally in a limited view great misfortunes, if subsequently viewed in its results, is often the happiest incident in one's life."38 Sidonia's

36Ibid., p. 266.
37Ibid., III, 292-293.
38Ibid., p. 296.
attitude is strictly positive. It is true, Sidonia tells Coningsby, that you have lost your expected fortune, but you have not lost an arm, or a leg, or a front tooth, or a year of your life. These items, Coningsby readily perceives, are more valuable to him than the inheritance he has lost. Since Coningsby possesses "health, youth, good looks, great abilities, considerable knowledge, a fine courage, a lofty spirit, and no contemptible experience," he is capable of attaining the highest of fortunes providing that he does not negatively react to his misfortune. The immediate problem precipitated by Coningsby's disinheritance is the choice of a vocation or an order for the exercise of his natural abilities. The choices, according to Sidonia and Coningsby, are diplomacy or law. Coningsby rejects the field or order of diplomacy since this choice would force him to live apart from the land which he loves. Instead, he chooses "the other, the greater, the nobler career...the bar." Once this decision is made, Sidonia assures him that if he maintains constancy of purpose, he will realize his heroic ambitions. "I am absolutely persuaded," Sidonia explains, "that with the requisite qualifications and with perseverance, success at the Bar is certain. It may be retarded or precipitated by circumstances but cannot be ultimately affected" since Coningsby possesses "all qualities necessary for the Bar" and since he can "count on...perseverance...because it will be sustained by his success." With this encouragement, Coningsby resolves to enter the Bar and become Lord Chancellor; he "will try for the Great Seal."39

39Ibid., pp. 297, 301, 302.
Earlier in this conversation, Sidonia had advised Coningsby that he would be successful if he would "bring his intelligence to bear on the right object." The only possible barrier to Coningsby's success, Sidonia believes, is his indebtedness. Consequently, Sidonia offers to dispense with any debts which his young friend has incurred since Sidonia is intellectually curious about Coningsby's potential success and he believes that if the racer start with a clog "his psychological observations will be imperfect." There is a biographical parallel. As a young man, Benjamin Disraeli incurred large debts which were a hindrance and an embarrassment to his literary and political career. Isaac, too, was acutely aware of the consequences of poverty on a young genius. He had written that poverty degrades genius and causes him to be viewed with contempt, eventually robbing the intellect of vitality and causing limbs to "shrink in the palsy of bodily misery and shame." 

Coningsby will never be forced to worry about abject poverty; however, his successful future is reasonably assured. In this respect, Sidonia's comparison of Coningsby's future with that of a horse in a race is not without significance. In a much earlier chapter in the novel, Coningsby had admired the beauty of Sidonia's horse, the "Daughter of the Star." This horse "is not only of pure race

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40 Ibid., p. 299.

41 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 189.
but of the highest breed in Arabia." Her former owner, the Prince of the Wahabees, warred with the Egyptians in order to protect the famous mare which foaled the "Daughter of the Star."42 Through a demonstration of speed and endurance, "The Daughter of the Star" proves the quality of her breeding by winning the steeple chase sponsored by Lord Monmouth. Coningsby, like "The Daughter of the Star," is also "naturally well-bred." Benjamin Disraeli, as we have noted, was excessively proud of his ancestry, and both Disraeli and Coningsby believed that their ancestry contributed to their predisposition to greatness.

After winning the steeple chase, Sidonia lectures Coningsby on the importance of race. He laments the prejudice against the English Jewish community, especially since, as Sidonia believes, the Jewish people have contributed so highly to the welfare of England. In this vein, Sidonia explains the futility of an inferior race persecuting a superior one:

Do you think that the quiet humdrum persecution of a decorous representative of an English University can crush those who have successfully baffled the Pharohs, Nebuchadnezzar, Rome, and the Feudal Ages? The fact is you cannot destroy a pure race of the Caucasian organization. It is a physiological fact; a simple law of nature, which has baffled Egyptian and Assyrian Kings, Roman Emperors, and Christian Inquisitors. No penal laws, no physical tortures, can effect that a superior race should be absorbed in an inferior, or be destroyed by it. The mixed persecuting races disappear; the pure persecuted race remains. And at this moment, in spite of centuries,

42B. Disraeli, Coningsby, I, 255.
of degradation, the Jewish mind exercises a vast influence on the affairs of Europe. I speak not of their laws, which you still obey; of their literature, with which your minds are saturated; but of the living Hebrew intellect.\textsuperscript{43}

The Jewish people have exerted a great influence on Europe, we are lectured, by their participation in all intellectual movements. Included in Sidonia's list of examples are the first Jesuits; three university professors, Neander, Benary, and Wehl; the Russian Minister of France, Count Cacrin; the Spanish Minister, Senor Mendizabel; the President of the French Council, Soult; a French Marshal, Massena; the Prussian Minister, Count Arnim, and Sidonia himself, an international financier. To increase his knowledge, Sidonia advises Coningsby to study physiology, for in that pursuit he will learn the futility of persecuting the pure races of Caucasus. Coningsby receives this lecture with mixed emotions because he too desires to become great, yet he is apparently handicapped since he is not Jewish. However, his forefathers originated in Caucasus, and Sidonia informs him that the secret of race is purity. Consequently, Coningsby is told that his race is sufficiently pure. You come from the shores of the Northern Sea, land of the blue eye and golden hair and the frank brow; tis a famous breed, with whom we Arabs have contended long, from whom we have much suffered, but these Goths, and Normans, and Saxons, were doubtless great men.

Although the accomplishments of the Jewish race have been great, Sidonia continues, they would even have been more successful if their

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., II, 200-201.
great Nature had not been persecuted by man. The Jewish race has been "Favored by Nature and by Nature's God," and such men as David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Aquinas, Maimonides, Spinoza, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Mendelsohn, Pasta, and Grisi are presented as examples to support this thesis. Coningsby, if not the reader, is persuaded by Sidonia's lecture.

Apparently, Benjamin Disraeli believed that a person's race was a significant indicator of his potential value. In Tancred, Sidonia expresses the belief that "All is race---there is no other truth." In Endymion, the hero believes that "Race is the key to history." In the biography of Lord George Bentinck, Disraeli wrote: "Progress and reaction are but words to mystify the millions...all is race. In structure, the decay, and the development of the various families of man, the vicissitudes of history find their main solution." The Prime Minister of England also believed, it would seem, that the Jewish race was a superior one. "You and I belong to a race that can do anything but fail," he declared to a young friend.

To the father of Leopold Rothschild he made the following wish concerning his young son: "I hope he will prove worthy of his pure and sacred race." As we have already indicated, although Coningsby was not of Jewish origin, he was of a pure race, and purity of race is also an indication that an individual is predisposed towards great

44 Ibid., pp. 204-206.
46 Roth, p. 70.
achievements. Sidonia also believed that "an unmixed race of first rate organization are the aristocracy of Nature." In addition, he stated that "excellence is a positive fact; not an imagination, a ceremony, coined by poets, blazoned by cozening heralds, but perceptible in its physical advantages, and in the vigor of its unsullied idiosyncrasy."47

Since Sidonia reduces man in this analysis to strictly a biological mechanism, we should not be surprised to learn that he lacks a sensibility of the heart: "he was a man without affections...woman was to him a toy, man a machine."48 On occasions when Sidonia's affections are almost engaged by a woman, he invokes a protective

47 B. Disraeli, Coningsby, II, 138-139. Not unlike the mythical genealogy of Benjamín Disraeli, the genealogy of Sidonia's family is also quite impressive. Sidonia was "descended from a very noble and ancient family of Aragon" which included many prelates and an Archbishop of Toledo. His ancestors, despite persecution during the Spanish Inquisition, maintained their "belief in the unity of the God of Sinai, and the rites and observances of the laws of Moses." The fortune of the Sidonia family originated from business transactions providing supplies for the Peninsular War. After the war, Sidonia's father emigrated to England and became one of the greatest financiers in Europe as a result of the Waterloo Loan, lending money to France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. He died at the peak of his prosperity, and his young son, tutored by an ex-Jesuit, traveled extensively through the world. As a student of physiology, he, Sidonia, concluded that the human species was divided into five groups: the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the Malayan, the American, and the Ethiopian. The Arabian tribes, he believed, ranked in the first and superior class, along with the Saxons and Greeks, as well as others. The Hebrews, since they were an unmixed race, however, had an advantage over other races because they possessed "a first rate organization" and such a combination made them "the aristocracy of Nature."

48 Ibid., p. 134.
thought formula. By reflecting on all the women he has known and by recalling all of the women he has studied in history, he is able to exact a comparison by which he concludes that the charming woman of the moment is not really as beautiful, brilliant, or appealing as he had originally thought her to be.49 In his relationship with Lucretia, Sidonia's affections are not sufficiently engaged to require this thought formula and he offends Lucretia by lecturing her on his philosophy of the heart:

"What we call the heart,' said Sidonia, 'is a nervous sensation like shyness which gradually disappears in society. It is fervent in the nursery, strong in the domestic circle, tumultuous at school. The affections are the children of ignorance; when the horizon of our experience expands, and models multiply, love and admiration imperceptibly vanish."50

To receive an education of the heart, clearly Coningsby cannot depend on Sidonia. He must remember the mutual love of his mother and father and their love for him; he must observe the love of his kinsmen, the Sydneys; he must find a woman worthy of his noble affections; and he must learn from the conversation and example of Eustace Lyle.

After Coningsby's initial meeting with Sidonia during the severe rain storm in Book III, he continued his journey to the Sydneys for an extended summer visit. At Beaumanoir, Coningsby is introduced to Eustace Lyle, who greatly influences his intellectual development. The potential leader of Young England is impressed by

49Ibid., III, 24-25.
50Ibid., II, 196.
Mr. Lyle's compassion for the poor and his generous activity which alleviates their immediate hunger. Mr. Lyle does not depend on the New Poor Law to satisfy the hunger of his neighbors. Twice a week he provides alms for the poor at St. Genevieve, thereby maintaining the Monastic customs of his family. At the invitation of Mr. Lyle, Coningsby and the Sydneys are offered the opportunity to witness this medieval ritual. In keeping with tradition, the poor from surrounding parishes obtain certificates of need from their rectors. These, in turn, are countersigned by Mr. Lyle's Almoner, and when these certificates are presented to the steward at St. Genevieve they are honored at the discretion of the steward. The ceremony of almsgiving is necessary, Mr. Lyle informs Coningsby, in order for the poor to understand "that Property is their benefactor and friend."51 Although Mr. Lyle is concerned, frustrated, and confused by the political and social conditions in England, this does not deter him from accepting the direct responsibility for the poor in his neighborhood. His altruistic instincts are graphically demonstrated at the Christmas celebration which introduces the final book of the novel. At St. Genevieve, "all classes are mingled in the joyous equality that becomes the season." Inside the castle, Coningsby is one with a party which is"gay, hearty, and happy," since they are "all united with sympathy." While there are carols and mummeries for the aristocracy, the poor are not forgotten:

The Buttery Hatch was open for the whole week from noon to sunset; all comers might take their fill, and each carry away as much bold beef, white bread,

51 Ibid., p. 305.
and jolly ale as a strong man could bear in a basket with one hand. For every woman a red cloak, and a coat of broad cloth for every man. All day long carts laden with fuel and warm raiment were traversing the various districts, distributing comfort and dispensing cheer.52

Eustace Lyle, in contrast to the intellectual Sidonia, presents Coningsby with practical examples of generosity.53 However, neither he nor Sidonia provide Coningsby with the perception required to formulate a plan or system capable of solving the problems of the poor. This Coningsby must learn from Mr. Millbank, an industrialist who provides for the economic, spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic needs of his employees.

Sidonia had advised Coningsby that "the Age of Ruins is past" and that he should visit Manchester if he wished to view the promise of the future. Consequently, when Coningsby had completed his summer visit at Beaumanoir, "with a mind predisposed to inquiry and prone to meditation," he travels to Manchester to view the "inconceivable grandeur" of that city for himself.54 As a result of a series of coincidences, Coningsby is directed to visit the Lancashire factories of Mr. Millbank, the bitter enemy of his grandfather and the father of Oswald Millbank, whom Coningsby had saved from drowning while they were schoolmates at Eton. At the factory a clerk informs

52 Ibid., III, 274, 273-274.

53 Although Sidonia lacks affections and is primarily intellectually oriented, he does recognize the value of feeling as some advice to Coningsby indicates: "Man is only great when he acts from the passions; never irresistible but when he appeals to the imagination."

54 Disraeli, Coningsby, I, 319.
Coningsby that Mr. Millbank provides for "both the physical and moral well-being of his people" by building churches, schools, and institutes, as well as houses and cottages with a new system of ventilation. In addition, he has also provided gardens, a library, and singing classes for his employees. The village of his workers is located in a beautiful rustic setting unmarred by pollution, and the environment at Lancashire is in sharp contrast to the environment at Manchester:

The atmosphere of this somewhat striking settlement was not disturbed and polluted by the dark vapour, which to the shame of Manchester still infests that great town, for the river of the valley was a motive power which rendered the steam engine unnecessary, though doubtless had its presence been inevitable, Mr. Millbank, unlike the inhabitants of Manchester, would have taken care to consume his own smoke.

The factory, too, was an example of enlightened self-interest. The machinery was the most sophisticated available, and both combined "to raise a monument of the skill and power" of the new industrial class. Coningsby learns first hand the opinions of Oswald Millbank when the industrialist invites him to dinner after learning that it was he who had saved his son's life at Eton.

The conversation of Mr. Millbank indicates that he is interested in the ideas and feelings of Coningsby. As usual, Coningsby is an attentive listener, despite the fact that Mr. Millbank's views

55 Ibid., II, 23.
56 Ibid., p. 18.
57 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
concerning the aristocracy conflict with Coningsby's own. The aristocracy, Mr. Millbank advises Coningsby, should be a natural rather than an hereditary one. This natural aristocracy, according to Mr. Millbank, should be found "among those men whom a nation recognizes as the most eminent for virtue, talents, and property, and if you please, birth and standing in the land. They guide opinion; and therefore they govern."\textsuperscript{58} Isaac D'Israeli, too, possessed firm opinions concerning the formation of public opinion. "The Public Mind is the creation of the Master Writers," he believed. In addition, he also believed that "the sentiments of excellent writers although their persons be forever absent, exist in future ages; and in councils and debates are of greater authority than those of the persons who are present."\textsuperscript{59} Through the writing of the novel Coningsby, Benjamin Disraeli, who believed himself to be a natural aristocrat, attempted to inform and mold public opinion, thereby testing or demonstrating the thesis of his father.

In this same conversation, controversial ideas are promoted by Mr. Millbank for the contemplation and education of the Coningsby audience. Although Mr. Millbank believes in a natural aristocracy, he is "no leveller" believing that all men should be members of the aristocracy. However, he does believe that all men should have a real, not artificial freedom. Each English man should be "free in

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., p. 38.

\textsuperscript{59}D'Israeli, Essay, pp. 268-269.
his industry as well as his body." For true freedom, this "Disciple of progress" advises, a man must not only be protected from unjust or arbitrary imprisonment, he must also be trained to "use his hands when he is out of prison."60 Unlike Sidonia, Mr. Millbank "as got a art" and this is indicated by the people of Darlford who recognized that "his language ain't as purty as the Lunnun chaps, but he speaks from his art."61 Nevertheless, as Coningsby learns in the novel, Mr. Millbank is not all benevolence.

To summarize briefly, Sidonia, Eustace Lyle and the elder Millbank, are three men who Coningsby believed "had greatly influenced his mind."62 The demonstration of Lyle's generosity, the managerial and technical knowledge of Millbank, and Sidonia's financial acumen and proliferation of ideas provide Coningsby with an expansion of experience necessary for his intellectual and emotional growth. To a significant degree, Coningsby evolves in the novel into an imitation of Sidonia who, we are told, "took comprehensive views of human affairs, and surveyed every fact in its relative position to other facts, the only mode of obtaining truth."63 Coningsby, however, evolves into a more admirable character since he not only possesses a formidable intellect, but a generous heart as well. In this respect, Coningsby combines the two divisions

60 B. Disraeli, Coningsby, II, p. 38.
61 Ibid., pp. 267-268.
62 Ibid., p. 215.
63 Ibid., pp. 137-138.
of men of genius: men who can think and men who can feel. In addition, as a great man, we can expect that the personality of Coningsby alone will be "sufficient to accomplish a change in the taste of his age." In a moment of meditation upon his genius, Coningsby echoes this idea expressed by Fontenelle and repeated by Isaac concerning the influence of a great man:

But a word from his lip, a thought from his brain expressed at the right time, at the right place, might change their opinions, might affect their destiny. Nothing is great but the personal. As civilization advances, the accidents of life become each day less important. The power of man, his greatness and his glory, depend on essential qualities. Brains every day become more precious than blood. You must give men new ideas, you must teach them new words, you must modify their manners, you must change their laws, you must root out prejudice, subvert convictions, if you wish to be great.

Despite failures, Coningsby tenaciously clings to his ambition to become a great man. This is illustrated after his romance with Edith Millbank is terminated. With a soul seeped in despondency, he "sought refuge in the excitement of his study, and in the brooding imagination of an aspiring spirit...He recurred to his habitual reveries of political greatness and public distinction." In a later chapter, after Coningsby has decided to try for the Great Seal, a momentary despair is shattered by the sight of London and his intuitive belief in his own genius. "The greatness of this city destroys

64 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 116.
65 Ibid., p. 273.
my misery," Coningsby meditates aloud, "and my genius shall con­quer its greatness!" 67

Altruistic instincts, we have noted, were one of the charac­teristics which Isaac D'Israeli had admired in genius. Two men, Montesquieu and De Thou, serve Isaac D'Israeli as illustrations of this quality. Montesquieu had stated that he would be "the hap­piest of men" if he were only able to make his countrymen aware of their good fortune to be Frenchmen and provide them with new in­centives "to love their duties, their king, their country, their laws." A similar sentiment expressed by De Thou is recorded in the Essay: "I was not born for myself alone, but for my country and my friends." 68 In Coningsby, such sentiments are termed "heroic feeling" and they are nurtured in both the mind and heart of the hero who possesses "that noble ambition, the highest and best, that must be born in the heart and organized in the brain, which will not let a man be content unless his intellectual power is recognized by his race, and desires that it contribute to their welfare." 69 Benjamin Disraeli believed that such heroic feeling produced the vitality which is necessary for the survival of the state, the church, and the crown. Coningsby, who "is made in the image of the Creator, and is made for God-like deeds," is determined "to cling to the heroic principle" since "it alone can satisfy" his

67 Ibid., pp. 84, 307.
68 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 268.
69 Disraeli, Coningsby, II, 220-221.
soul. On one occasion when Coningsby wavers in this noble determination, Oswald Millbank reassures him concerning his destiny by a reference to the Old Testament, advising him that: "Thou art the man." To reenforce Coningsby's confidence and to persuade Coningsby not to abandon public life, Oswald Millbank reminds Coningsby of his classmates' esteem and challenges him with the promise of the future:

You were our friend at Eton; the friends of your heart and boyhood still cling and cluster around you, they are all men whose position forces them into public life. It is a nucleus of honour, faith and power. You have only to dare. And will you not dare? It is our privilege to live in an age when the career of the highest ambition is identified with the performance of the greatest good. Of the present epoch it may be truly said, 'Who dares to be good, dares to be great.'

Although man can constructively strive to achieve his potential, to become a great man requires considerably more than optimism and talent. Even a genius does not live in an historical vacuum; he too, not unlike less gifted men, is buffeted, controlled and impaired by time and circumstances. Thus far in our study we have tended to ignore the historical and political milieu of the new generation, concentrating instead upon Coningsby's genealogy. We have also stressed the predisposition of Coningsby's mind to the study of English

70Ibid., p. 235.

71Ibid., III, 112. Nathan said to King David: "Thou art the man. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hands of Saul; and I gave you your master's house,...and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if this were too little, I would add to you much more."
history and contemporary political problems, as well as the inspirational effect of his personality on his classmates. In addition, we have indicated the growth of Coningsby's mind as a result of his wide-ranging conversations with Sidonia, Eustace Lyle, and Mr. Millbank; and the quality of his heart as it is manifested in his rescue of Oswald Millbank and in his determination to pursue a public career for the purpose of ameliorating conditions in England. In the novel, the potential of Coningsby as leader will culminate in his election to Parliament which is the symbolic conquest of the old political order by the New Generation. Before we address ourselves to these political problems, let us first notice the role of romance in the life of Coningsby and explore the implications of his romantic involvement with Edith Millbank as it relates to the evolution of his personality.

Benjamin Disraeli wrote that "there is no end to the influence of woman on our life" since "it is at the bottom of everything that happened to us." His father indicated in the Essay On Literary Character several areas of domestic life in which a wife could exercise influence on the character and quality of genius. In the home, a capable and loving wife can create an atmosphere conducive to the exercise of her husband's genius. By shrewdly managing the family finances, by being solicitous of her husband's health, by not interrupting his study and meditations, and by being an amenable friend and companion when her husband desires such company, a

72 Ibid., p. 260.
woman can establish and maintain the domestic tranquility without which his genius would be mutilated.\textsuperscript{73} According to Isaac, if a genius marries a woman compatible to his personality and talents, not only will she provide him with a happy home, but she will also provide him with emotional security. Such was the experience of the poet James Thomson, whose wife provided him with emotional support and security even when they were parted. His thoughts about her, he wrote to a friend, were like "some secret darling idea to which one can still have recourse amidst the noise and nonsense of the world, and which never fails to touch us in the most exquisite manner, and is an art of happiness that fortune cannot deprive us of."\textsuperscript{74} A wife, Isaac believed, helped to formulate the character of a genius, since the exercise of "elevated emotions...would enlarge the moral vocabulary" of the husband.\textsuperscript{75} In addition, a loving wife is capable of inspiring a genius to greater heights and reanimating his spirit when his creative spring becomes dry. In such instances, we are advised in the Essay on the Literary Character, the wife exercises the power "which the ancients only personified in the Muse."\textsuperscript{76} At least by implication, Edith Millbank possesses the capacity to provide Coningsby with such domestic tranquility

\textsuperscript{73} D'Israeli, \textit{Essay}, pp. 204, 206, 208.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 200.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 183.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 208.
and inspiration.

When Coningsby meets Edith Millbank for the first time during his visit to her father's Lancashire factory, though young in years, his future wife already possesses "a radiant face," a face brilliant and lustrous, "one of those that seem as if touched in their cradle by a sunbeam." Years later, when Coningsby meets Edith in Paris, she has matured into a young lady and her graceful gait reveals a gay and active spirit. As a result of Lady Wallinger's guidance, her education has prepared her to adorn the most accomplished circles of life. In addition, we are advised that she owned a fine intelligence, a native simplicity which sprang from the heart, "a clear head, a fine taste, and a generous spirit." Since she was an obedient girl who possessed a deep affection for her father and a keen instinct for domestic life, it would seem that she possesses the qualities necessary to complement and enhance the life of Coningsby. The novel is concluded before this can be determined with certitude.

On the other hand, Edith Millbank's romance with Coningsby does provide us with some insights concerning the character of Coningsby. Unlike his grandfather, we see that Coningsby is capable of experiencing a strong, abiding, and altruistic affection for a woman. In addition, we are also able to perceive strength of character when Coningsby terminates his romantic relationship with Edith as a result of the insistence of her father. Coningsby suffers much mental anguish during the period of their separation, but in this process of disengagement he demonstrates an ability to check or govern

77 Disraeli, Coningsby, II, 28, 312, III, 34-35.
his emotions. This ability to compromise with reality is a necessity if he hopes to succeed in political life. This notwithstanding, we are also given to understand in the novel that there are times when no compromise is permissible for a man of character, and Coningsby is presented with such a circumstance when Lord Monmouth all but commands his grandson to be his representative at Darlford. In much of the novel, Coningsby is depicted as an emotionally immature young man. However, in his rejection of the Darlford seat, he demonstrates an evolution towards emotional maturity since his emotions do not determine his decision. The defeat of Mr. Millbank in a parliamentary election would provide Coningsby with great emotional satisfaction, especially since Mr. Millbank had rejected Coningsby as a potential son-in-law. Thus Coningsby ponders: "Might not he teach this proud prejudiced manufacturer, with all his virulence and despotic caprices, a memorable lesson? And his daughter too, this betrothed after all of a young noble, with her flush futurity of splendor and enjoyment, was she to hear of him only, if indeed she heard of him at all, as of one toiling or trifling in the humbler positions of existence; and wonder with a blush that he ever could have been the hero of her romantic girlhood! What degradation in the idea!" Moral courage triumphs over emotional pressure;

78 This is especially true when one considers his fluctuating emotions concerning Edith Millbank, the only girl whom Coningsby feels a strong, romantic affection towards in the novel; his exposure to female company is rather limited. Some paragraphs describing Coningsby's adolescent feelings are maudlin and awkwardly written. The form and content have much in common.

79 Disraeli, Coningsby, III, 225-226.
Coningsby subsequently rejects his grandfather's offer, exercising the quality of courage one deserves to expect in an individual who campaigns for and is elected to a high political office. Near the termination of the novel, Mr. Millbank reverses his feelings concerning Coningsby as both a political candidate and as a suitor for the hand of his daughter. This reversal occurs when the industrialist observes in Coningsby one of the qualities which Isaac D'Israeli perceived in the character of men of genius: constancy of purpose. After the death of Lord Monmouth, Oswald Millbank, observing the misery of Edith and the plight of Coningsby working at the Temple, implored his father to use his wealth to bless his loved ones by making it possible for the young couple to marry. In truth, Mr. Millbank requires little persuasion. He has already been impressed by his observations of a Coningsby who is capable, willing, and doggedly working for his bread. On the basis of such evidence, Coningsby is nominated by Mr. Millbank as a candidate for Darlford; and after his election to Parliament, he receives the blessing of Mr. Millbank for the marriage of his daughter.
CHAPTER IV

CONINGSBY: SYMPATHY WITH HIS ORDER

In the second chapter we have observed that Benjamin Disraeli believed that his father possessed a quality which both described as Sympathy with his Order. Isaac D'Israeli had commented upon this quality in his Essay on the Literary Character published in 1792. According to Isaac, man is an extension of nature. Consequently, man can achieve most success and happiness by pursuing his natural bent or inclination. At an early age, many geniuses become aware of their predisposition as a result of happiness which they experience when they become active in a specific order of existence or sphere of experience. Not surprisingly, in adult life if their vocational choice coincides with their natural predisposition, they become totally and happily immersed in their work. If this explanation of Sympathy with Order is accepted, as both Isaac and Benjamin have accepted it, Isaac D'Israeli illustrates a genius in the literary order of existence. For the literary genius, a knowledge and love of literature, intimate social and professional relationships with critical and creative writers, and successful professional performance are indicators of a harmonious relationship with the literary order.¹ On the other hand, homogeneity

with the political order is indicated by a knowledge of politics and history, by intimate social and professional relationships with statesmen and politicians, and by the respect and admiration of the populace. In addition, in order to be successful in the political arena the political genius must possess a charisma which enables him to inspire his constituents to accept his judgment; he must possess a knowledge of the political machinery and tools necessary to become elected and to enact legislation; he must possess an understanding of human nature and an ability to project a pleasant personality when it is politically and socially expedient; and he must understand what Disraeli terms "the Spirit of the Age." In Coningsby, the hero either demonstrates the possession of these qualities necessary for political success or an ability to acquire them through experience. At the conclusion of the novel, Coningsby is the leader of the Young England party, a party whose members have been elected to Parliament. This leadership role fits Coningsby comfortably since he demonstrates an understanding of the prevailing political climate in England and he possesses positive ideas which are the ideological basis for a program which will attempt to

2 Although these characteristics of a genius who is sympathetic with the political order are not specifically indicated by either Isaac or Benjamin, it would seem logical that this would be so. In the Essay, Pitt is presented as an example of political genius.

3 Political experience is obtained in the social as well as the political order. Consequently, Disraeli depicts "the wire pulling that goes on" at social functions, "the connections sought and made, the influence wielded (and) the delicate maneuvers." Disraeli is "a practical politician as well as a theoretical one. He can give us the right inside views of society, show us the social practices that regulated politics, allow us to see how the whole thing worked." Lieberman, p. 135.
ameliorate negative conditions in England. In this chapter we shall attempt to demonstrate that Coningsby demonstrates Sympathy with his Order as a result of his participation in the Young England Movement and that Disraeli the novelist makes fictional use of his sympathy with the political order through the presentation of political commentary, the portrayal of political characters, and the depiction of political activities in the novel.

The character of Coningsby and the evolution of the Young England Movement function as a lightning rod for the political material in Coningsby. The Young England alliance in the novel is the fictional counterpart of an historical movement which seems to have retained a more lasting reputation than its tangible contributions to English history may have warranted. The core of this group consisted of Disraeli, the leader; George Smythe, the model for Coningsby; Lord George Manners, the model for Henry Sidney; and Alexander Bailie Cochrane, the model for Buckhurst. Other significant

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4Two early book reviewers commented upon the biographical parallels which existed between the fictional characters of Coningsby and existing personages in the contemporary political and social world. North British Review, I (1844), 561-564 and Eclectic Review, LXXX (1844), 67. For the most part, the commentary in these reviews is general. However, the reviewer for Fraser's Magazine directly addresses the problem: "But such a series of gross personalities, such a sustained interference with the private as well as with the public lives of well known men and women, we certainly do not remember to have met with anywhere in the course of our reading. Why there is scarce a character introduced into this tale of which the prototype is not as familiar to the mind of the reader as a household word. Take but a few of the most prominent. In Coningsby himself we recognise an exaggerated, and therefore by no means a well-sketched portraiture of the Honourable Mr. Smythe; Lord Monmouth represents the late Marquess of Hertford; the Duke of Blanc is the Duke of Rutland; Lord Henry Sydney, Lord John Manners; Messrs. Earwig, Tadpole, and Taper, rather the genus Ross, Bonham,
members of the group included Ambrose Lisle Phillips, the model for Eustace Lyle, and Henry Hope, to whom Disraeli dedicated the first edition of Coningsby. Ironically, none of the members of Young England totally trusted Disraeli. They feared that he was insincere in both his political and religious beliefs. Disraeli, who was twenty years senior to the other members of the party, had known Smythe when he was a young boy. In February, 1841, Disraeli was introduced to Manners; subsequently, he was introduced to Cochrane, who, like Smythe and Manners, was a graduate of Cambridge. These idealistic young men believed in a romantic Toryism and envisioned a return to a non-existent but happier day and age. They advocated "a return to the old Feudal ideal of Society," and they pleaded "for a deepening of spiritual feeling, and an awakening of the Church to its grave duties." These young men "cried out for a return to the old English customs and ceremonies which they believed were being forgotten in the face of a growing Liberalism that seemed

and Clarke, than the veritable Charles, the true Sir George, and the undoubted store-keeper of the ordnance. Mr. Lyle is the amiable and excellent Lord Surrey; Mr. Rigby, the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker; and Sidonia, the Jew, the most sublimated nonce, with the wealth and political position of Baron de Rothschild." Fraser's Magazine, XXX (July, 1844), 71-72.

George Smythe wrote: "Disraeli's Conversion to moderate Oxfordism is something like Bonaparte's to modern Mohammedanism." Lord George Manners also expressed his doubt in writing: "Could I only satisfy myself that D'Israeli (sic) believed all that he said, I should be more happy." E.L. Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815-1870 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 110.
Anarchy. Undoubtedly, Disraeli was not as deeply committed to these beliefs as his partners; nevertheless, these ideas do surface in Coningsby. Young England, for Disraeli, appeared to be an opportunity to lead a Conservative block of youthful parliamentary members, who, on selective occasions, would be able to influence Peel, the Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative party. This was a satisfying position for Disraeli since he believed that the Prime Minister had insulted him after his election in 1841 by refusing to offer him a responsible position in his administration. Although the Young England party had occasional support from other members of Parliament, their impact upon the legislative process was not extraordinary. The power of the Young England party probably peaked while Disraeli was writing Coningsby. Perhaps, in addition to providing leverage for Disraeli's political career and substantial material for Coningsby, the greatest achievement of the Young England party was the infusion of pertinent political questions into the public conscience and the presentation of a romantic

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6Speare, p. 156.

7Although Disraeli gave the "Young England" idealists the help of his debating powers, he was not likely to support them for long. According to Woodward, "He did not want to spend many more years out of office; these young men who had time in front of them could afford to wait. Meanwhile they were useful to him; they might win him the support of the great territorial families, whose Toryism was not Peel's type. They provided him with a platform from which he could make his attacks upon Peel, and their assistance saved him from isolation in disloyalty." Woodward, p. 112.
ideal as an alternative to violence in an age of social turmoil.  

Benjamin Disraeli was much more successful politically than the Young England party, and perhaps his political instincts had warned him that this party was doomed to an early demise. Such a belief may help explain the suggestion of doubt expressed in the final paragraph of Coningsby. In 1880, when Disraeli published the novel Endymion, George Smythe again served as a model for a character. On this occasion the character, Waldershare, is a sharp contrast to Coningsby. In his final novel, Disraeli narrates that

Waldershare was profligate but sentimental; unprincipled but romantic; the child of whim, and the slave of an imagination so freakish and deceptive that it was impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for visionary caprice.  

In the flesh, George Smythe was a profligate. Although he possessed an extraordinary potential for achievement and leadership, his accomplishments were extremely disappointing. On one occasion, as Coningsby enters Cambridge, Disraeli indicates that the future of Coningsby was determined by the three or four months which intervened between the completion of his academic career at Eton and his matriculation

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8Ironically, Disraeli's aesthetic achievement was limited by his "constancy of purpose." Leslie Stephen wrote that Coningsby "wants little but a greater absence of purpose to be a first rate novel." Lieberman, p. 116. One of the earliest reviewers of Coningsby wrote that 'Coningsby' (sic) is a Benthamite novel; that is, a novel written solely with a view to utilitarian or political objects." Westminster Review, (September, 1844), 52.

to Cambridge and that Coningsby too possessed the potential to become a colossal failure:

And yet he might have been coddled into a prig, or flattered into a profligate, had it not been for the intervening experience which he had gained between his school and his college life. That had visibly impressed upon him what before he had only faintly acquired from books, that there was a greater, more real world awaiting him, than to be found in these bowers of Academus, to which youth is apt at first to attribute an exaggerated importance.  

In the novel, we first perceive the origins of the Young England party when the hero returns to Eton after his first meeting with Lord Monmouth. Unlike Coningsby, who is originally unsympathetic to the character of Oswald Millbank, Buckhurst, Sydney, and Vere admire and respect this tender-hearted young man who possesses "one of those strong industrious volitions where perseverance amounts almost to genius." We soon learn that all members of this group possess good hearts, but two members, Henry Sydney and Eustace Lyle (who is introduced later in the novel), appear to be the primary exemplars of the generous heart. Henry Sydney possesses a "sweet disposition," he is "sweet tempered and intelligent," and he is seriously concerned about the conditions which plague the poor in England. In the novel, Disraeli feels compelled "to trace predisposition" in the personality of Henry Sydney:  

An indefinite yet strong sympathy with the Peasantry of the realm had been one of the characteristic sensibilities of Lord Henry at Eton. Yet a schoolboy, he had busied himself with their pastimes and the details of their cottage economy. As he advanced in life, the horizon of his views expanded with his intelligence and his experience, and the son of one of the noblest

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of our houses, to whom the delights of life are offered with fatal facility, on the very threshold of his career, he devoted his time and thought, labour and life, to one vast and noble purpose, the elevation of the condition of the great body of the people.11

Eustace Lyle, too, has deep convictions concerning England's impoverished class. In the last book of the novel, Disraeli describes a traditional Christmas celebration at Lyle's estate. Here, Coningsby and his young friends gathered together to worship, party, and mingle with all classes "in the joyous equality that becomes this season, at once sacred and merry." The Christmas festivities were joyous and unmarred by class discord since "they were all united by sympathy." Utilizing this opportunity, Disraeli interjects commentary upon the deficiencies of the Utilitarian philosophy which he believes pervades the nation and is "the Spirit of the Age":

A mere mechanical mitigation of the material necessities of the humbler classes, a mitigation which must inevitably be limited, can never alone avail sufficiently to ameliorate their condition; that their condition is not merely 'a knife and fork question', to use the coarse and shallow phrase of the Utilitarian school; that the simple satisfaction of the grosser necessities of our nature will not make people happy; that you must cultivate the heart as well as seek to content the belly; and that the surest means to elevate the character of the people is to appeal to their affections.12

Isaac D'Israeli had written that "literary friendship is a sympathy not of manners but of feelings."13 The Young England group shared deep feelings of affection, as well as an intellectual compatibility which is manifested by the "philosophic spirit" of their

11 Ibid., I, 95, 222-223, III, 275-276.
12 Ibid., p. 274-275.
13 D'Israeli, Essay, p. 216.
conversations and their united action. All members of the Young England party have developed an ability to listen attentively and communicate effectively, a quality which the narrator praises in the personality of Lady Everingham. This group provides Coningsby with a sympathetic forum for political questions and ideas; but almost equally important, these friends provide Coningsby with needed emotional support and security. In the Essay, Isaac wrote that the delirium of love was "incompatible with the pursuits of a student; but to feel friendship like a passion is necessary to the mind of genius alternately elated and depressed, even prodigal in feeling and excursive in knowledge." The depth of feeling shared by Young England is apparent even while they are attending school at Eton. "At school, friendship is a passion," Disraeli lectures. "It entrances the being; it tears the soul. All loves of after life, can never bring its rapture, or its wretchedness; no bliss so absorbing, no pangs of jealousy so crushing and so keen!...what insane sensitiveness, and what frantic sensibility; what earthquakes of the heart, and whirlwinds of the soul, are confined in that simple phrase--a schoolboy's friendship." The friendship of these Eton schoolmates is undoubtedly permanent, since Coningsby, Sydney, Buckhurst, and Vere are "bound together by an entire sympathy, and by the

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14Ibid., I, 287.
15D'Israeli, Essay, p. 216.
affection of which sympathy is the only sure thing." Their relationship is "knit by every sympathy of intelligence and affection." (This observation is narrated in relation to the bond of friendship which exists between Coningsby and Oswald Millbank.) When Coningsby is troubled and apprehensive about his future, Oswald Millbank provides moral support, reminding him that he is the leader of Young England and that "the friends of your heart and boyhood still cling and cluster around you, (and) they are all men whose position forces them into public life." Coningsby, it seems, recognizes the nature of Young England friendship when he tells Edith that his friends "are all united by sympathy; it is the only bond of friendship." The loyalty of this group is demonstrated when Coningsby is disinherited. All are sympathetic to their leader as he languishes in near despair, and Buckhurst offers to share half of his fortune with Coningsby. A firmness of commitment is also demonstrated by Oswald Millbank, who struggles to persuade his father to accept Coningsby as his son-in-law; he lobbies with his father, attempting to accomplish a happy termination of Coningsby's romance with his sister, a romance which has caused Coningsby to rise to the heights of extreme elation and to sink to the depths of extreme depression.

As we have seen, the fictional Young England party originated in the study and conversation of sympathetic youths at Eton. While at Eton, Coningsby's tutors had suggested to him a political question which is thematic to the political structure of the novel, namely,

what principles the Conservative party wished to conserve. In an earlier chapter, Disraeli the political commentator had directly asked the same question. The failure of both the Tories and the Whigs to provide heroic leadership, Coningsby eventually concludes, is the reason for the eroding faith in the English political system. In the novel, Vere expresses the desperate political plight of the country: "The Whigs are worn out, Conservatism is a sham, and Radicalism is pollution." This summarizing statement occurs while Young England is discussing the results of the Parliamentary election of 1834, an election in which the Cambridge students successfully supported a Conservative Eton graduate in his bid for the seat of their borough. Vere's words complement the opinion of Coningsby, who thinks that the Conservatives have robbed the Crown of its prerogatives, permitted the Church to be controlled by a commission, and fostered an aristocracy that does not lead. Finally, at a post-mortem analysis of the election results, Coningsby summarizes his newly acquired perspective of the current political scene: "the Crown has become a cipher; the Church a sect; the nobility drones; and the people drudges." Since the Whigs and the Radicals are even more potentially destructive to the English people than the Conservatives, Coningsby perceives that an independent political party must be formed, a party with convictions based on principle and a determination to act according to those principles. Henry Sydney concurs that a new party is needed and that they should be as politically independent as possible since "many men waste the best part of their lives in painfully

\[17\text{Ibid.}, \text{ I, 228, 211, II, 231.}\]
apologizing for a conscientious deviation from a parliamentary course which they adopted when they were boys, without thought, or prompted by some local connection or interest to secure a seat."

Coningsby and his friends firmly resolve that principles, not party, shall be the motivation of their activities. The spirit which will permeate their party is based on the belief that "man is made in the image of the Creator" and "is made for God-like deeds." Coningsby, as the literal and symbolic leader of Young England, determines to cling to this heroic principle since it alone can satisfy his soul.

The legislative accomplishments of Disraeli's parliamentary career demonstrates a consistency in Benjamin Disraeli's political beliefs and his activities as a statesman. In Coningsby there is a similar consistency between the beliefs and actions of the hero. In the climactic scene of the novel, Coningsby experiences a crisis of conscience. If he chooses to represent his grandfather at Darford, his political future is guaranteed and he can reasonably expect to be the major beneficiary in his grandfather's will. Fortune, power, and rank are within his grasp if he chooses to sacrifice his belief in the heroic principle and bank the fires of his noble ambition. Coningsby, however, resists the temptation on the basis of principle:

No domestic despot could deprive him of his intellect, his knowledge, the sustaining power of an unpolluted conscience. If he possessed the intelligence in which he had confidence, the world would recognize his voice, even if not placed upon a pedestal. If the principles of his philosophy were true, the great heart of the nation would respond to their expression. Coningsby felt at this moment a profound conviction which never again deserted him, that the conduct which would violate the

18Ibid., II, 228, 234.
affections of the heart or the dictates of the conscience, however it may lead to immediate success, is a fatal error. Conscious perhaps that he was perhaps verging on some painful vicissitudes of his life, he devoted himself to a love that seemed hopeless, and to a fame that was perhaps a dream.19

The rejection of Lord Monmouth's offer of political stewardship is the symbolic conquest of altruism over egoism, of faith over cynicism, and represents the symbolic conquest of Young England's principles over those of an older, more selfish generation. Coningsby, like his immediate peers, will be elected to Parliament on his own merits. We are expected to believe that Coningsby and his friends will be firm men of principle and vote in Parliament as their social consciences dictate. They will be guided by altruistic instincts, not self-interest or expediency.

Unlike many of Benjamin Disraeli's personal aspirations, the goals of the Young England party were never fully realized. Although many of Disraeli's beliefs coincide with those of the Young England party, Disraeli had formulated much of his basic political philosophy before his alliance with Young England. According to a prominent Disraeli biographer, the future Prime Minister had adopted many of his basic ideas by 1832. Among these beliefs were a faith in the English populace and a firm commitment to tradition and traditional institutions. In addition, as a young man he possessed feelings of deep compassion for the less fortunate people of England and a strong antipathy for what he believed to be the selfish Whig

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19 Ibid., III, 227-228.
oligarchy. Monypenny expresses the belief that Disraeli demonstrated little tendency toward mental fickleness in his public career. He detects "an amazing continuity, not to say rigidity, of thought in the principles which underlie his whole political career." In the Vindication of the Constitution (1833), Disraeli presented many of the political beliefs which dominate the political content of Coningsby (1844). In both publications, one a political tract and the other a political novel, Disraeli indicates that the political structure of England evolved as a result of the unique character and spirit of the English people exerting centuries of influence upon their leaders. The English Constitution, he states, provides for the representation of all men, despite the fact that all men are not permitted to vote. According to Disraeli's words in Vindication, however, England is a complete democracy since each member of Parliament is actually a representative for each member of the country. Historically, Disraeli believed that the Tory party tended to be more responsive to the needs of all classes, while the Whigs tended to be more self-interested and oligarchical.

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20 Monypenny and Buckle, I, 229. Some biographers and critics contend that Disraeli was a man without principles. Woodward has the following note taken from Hodder's Life of Lord Shaftesbury: Shaftesbury regarded him (Disraeli) as "without principle, without feeling, without regard to anything human or divine, beyond his own personal ambition. He has dragged, and will continue to drag everything that is good, safe, venerable, and solid through the dust and dirt of his own objects." Woodward, p. 111. Carlyle's opinion of Disraeli was extremely negative; he called Disraeli "the superlative Hebrew conjurer." Nevertheless, when Disraeli was Prime Minister, he offered to Carlyle "the Grand Cross of the Bath with a life income corresponding to the rank." Speare, pp. 162-163.

Thus at the age of twenty-eight, the political beliefs of Benjamin Disraeli tended towards the philosophy of the Tory Democrats. To appreciate much of the political substance of Coningsby, an understanding of the principles of Tory Democracy is essential. According to one commentator:

The principle of Tory democracy is that all government exists for the good of the governed; that the Church and King, Lords and Commons; and all other public institutions are to be maintained so far, and so far only, as they promote the happiness and welfare of the common people; that all who are intrusted with any public function are trustees not for their own class, but for the nation at large; and that the mass of the people may be trusted to use electoral power, which should be freely conceded to them, as to support those who are promoting their interests. It is democratic because the welfare of the people is its own supreme end; it is Tory because the institutions of the country are the means by which the end is to be obtained.22

It is not unusual to find Disraelean biographers and critics citing Disraeli as an apostle of Tory Democracy who was able to deliver in action what he promised in theory.23 Speare and Parsons are two such critics. One prominent critic reprints the complimentary words of a leading Labor parliamentary member which expresses the opinion that Disraeli's Conservative party had "done more for the working class in five years than the Liberals have done in fifty."24

In 1872, Disraeli indicated his sustained concern for the welfare of


24Speare, p. 175.
the common man in a speech at the Crystal Palace where he concisely presented the scope of his legislative vision. His social platform included plans for

the state of the dwellings of the people, the moral consequences of which are not less considerable than the physical. It involves their enjoyment of some of the chief elements of nature--air, light, and water. It involves the regulation of their industry, the inspection of their toil. It involves the purity of their provisions, and it touches upon all the means by which you may wean them from habits of excess and brutality.25

When Disraeli became Prime Minister for the second time in 1874, the generous and all-encompassing spirit of Young England was tested in the fire of politics. The social vision of Mr. Millbank and Young England has not been found faulty despite the test of time.

During Disraeli's second term as Prime Minister, Parliament passed two important Trade Union Acts; the Public Health Act which consolidated a multitude of earlier measures; the Artisan's Dwelling Act empowering local authorities to replace slums by adequate houses; an Agriculture Holdings Act which met, though only partially, some of the tenants' grievances; an Act to safeguard the Funds of Friendly Societies; a Factory Act to protect women and children against exploitation . . . and finally the Sale of Food and Drugs Act which remained the principal measure on that subject until 1928.26

When one adds to this legislative catalogue the Rivers Pollution Act, the Merchant Shipping Act, the Education Act, the Factory Act of 1878 and recalls that Disraeli maneuvered the Second Reform Bill through Parliament in 1867, one can perceive that Disraeli


26 Blake, p. 553.
successfully implemented the principles of Tory Democracy.  

To achieve success, Disraeli told a gathering of students at Glasgow in 1873, a man must know himself and he must know the "Spirit of the Age." If this belief is valid, Disraeli's political accomplishments would indicate that he had acquired both; a study of Coningsby reveals that the hero of the novel possessed the same information. Self-knowledge is acquired through introspection and inter-communion. One perceives the "Spirit of the Age" through observation, reading, conversation, and meditation. As a result of the latter processes, Benjamin Disraeli had concluded that Utilitarianism was the spirit of Victorian England and that this philosophic cancer, as he thought, threatened the welfare and even the existence of England. Consequently, Disraeli became a determined opponent of this philosophy and much of his writing is an attempt to discredit this philosophy. Not surprisingly then, there is much anti-Utilitarian sentiment in Coningsby.

Tory Democracy or popular Toryism advocated a program which

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28 Parsons, p. 82. Parsons devotes two chapters of his dissertation to Disraeli's opposition to Utilitarianism. ("Opposition Utilitarianism in Disraeli's Early Writings" and "Opposition to Utilitarianism in Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred.") Robert Whitcomb Howard also devotes a chapter to Disraeli's opposition to Utilitarianism. (Disraeli and Utilitarianism.") Although several of Disraeli's biographers discuss Disraeli and Utilitarianism in varying degrees of depth, Parson's study is the most comprehensive in-depth treatment.

29 Ibid.
attempted to elevate the quality of life for all English people, and in some respects Tory political philosophy clashed with the Utilitarian "Spirit of the Age." As a great man, Coningsby's mission will be the elimination of this philosophy in favor of a more altruistic one. A recent study presents a detailed analysis of Disraeli's opposition to Utilitarianism and offers a concise presentation of the premises of Disraeli's chief Utilitarian target, Jeremy Bentham. According to the followers of Jeremy Bentham

happiness became "enjoyment of pleasures, security from pains" and "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" became "the measure of right and wrong." The only good was pleasure; the only evil, pain. Furthermore, the measurement of pain and pleasure was wholly quantitative, with one pleasure as good as another: poetry, for example was no better than push-pin. Morality depended, not upon motives, but upon consequences, upon their production of pleasure and pain. Conscience as a moral sense was ignored. The religious sanction modifying conduct, like the political and the moral, was reduced to the physical; all consisted "in the hope of certain pleasures and the fear of certain pains." ³⁰

Bentham's hedonistic or materialistic vision of man clashed with Disraeli's belief that man was a spiritual being and that the mission of the Church of England was a valid one. As we have previously indicated, a successful man is one who knows both himself and the "Spirit of the Age." Disraeli's self-knowledge prompted him to oppose Utilitarianism. Self-knowledge to Disraeli was two-fold: generic and personal. Generically, Disraeli believed that man possessed the highest nature in the universe since he was made in the

³⁰Parsons, pp. 11-14.
image of God, Disraeli said, but he was also created directly by God and was not a product of materialistic evolution. These religious and evolutionary beliefs had a significant effect on Disraeli's political philosophy. He vehemently repudiated materialistic evolution, and in a highly publicized address at Oxford in November, 1864, he declared that in this major conflict between science and religion, he was on the side of the angels since he could not believe that he was the descendant of an ape. According to this English statesman, the future of England depended upon the resolution of this scientific-religious argument. "In fact," Disraeli said in the same speech,

it is between these contending interpretations of the nature of men and their consequences that society will have to decide. Their rivalry is at the bottom of all human affairs. Upon our acceptance of that divine interpretation, for which we are indebted to the Church, and of which the Church is the guardian, all sound and salutary legislation depends. That truth is the only security for civilization, and the only guarantee of progress.

On another occasion, the Prime Minister emphasized the spiritual nature of man and the beneficial aspects of religion with the following words:

31Robert Whitcomb Howard links Disraeli's opposition to Utilitarianism with his opposition to the theory of evolution. He writes: "The relationship between a scientific approach to economics and a scientific approach to the problems of the universe is the link that binds Darwin to the Benthamite group of thinkers. The far off rumblings of evolutionary theories were to be heard in the eighteen forties. Darwinism, cold, calculating and rationalistic seemed to Disraeli at one with the practical aspects of utilitarian philosophy, inhuman and fundamentally destructive of idealistic beliefs of all kinds." Disraeli's Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred, p. 52.

32Kebbel, pp. 611-612.
The spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions. No government can endure which does not flow from that fountain. The principle may develop itself in manifold forms, in the shape of many creeds and many churches; but the principle is divine. As time is divided between day and night, so religion rests upon the Providence of God and the responsibility of man. One is manifest, the other mysterious, but both are facts. Religion invigorates the intellect and expands the heart. He who has a due sense of his relations to God is best qualified to fulfill his duties to man.33

In Coningsby, the hero advises Oswald Millbank that "if a nation be led to aim at the good and the great...whatever lie its form, the government will respond to its convictions and its sentiments."34 The traditional principles of the Church, the men of Young England believe, aid men in such aspirations. Although Coningsby is never presented as a participant in a religious service, after much introspection, contemplation, and meditation, he too concludes that man is a spiritual being and that the noblest members of the species strive to improve the lot of all men in contrast to the ignoble members of the species who strive to improve only their own circumstances. Lord Monmouth and his associates are members of this latter category: self-interest is their only motivational spark. To this extent, at least, such characters are linked to the Utilitarians, who believed that all moral science was founded on self-interest and "declared that a system of government should be deduced alone from the principles of human nature" as they understood it.35

33Monypenny and Buckle, II, 605.
34Disraeli, Coningsby, III, 100.
35Hutcheon, pp. 117-118.
The Young England movement presents an alternative and a challenge to the materialistic "Spirit of the Age."

"The Spirit of Utility," as Lord Everingham identifies the "Spirit of the Age," has made serious penetrations into English society. Because the appreciation of the useful has supplanted the appreciation of the beautiful, man is in danger of becoming de-humanized. However, Sidonia informs Coningsby that this utilitarian spirit is destined to fail because it is based on intellect and rejects the lessons of the heart. "We are not indebted to the Reason of Man for any of the great achievements which are the landmarks of human action and human progress," Sidonia explains to Coningsby. Human progress, as opposed to technical or scientific progress, has been the result of man's imagination, which has enabled him to identify with and feel for his less fortunate brothers. Henry Sydney demonstrates this quality of the imagination when he attempts to persuade his father to expand his vision concerning the dignity of the poor and their traditional role in England:

the order of the Peasantry was an ancient, legal, and recognized an order as the order of the Nobility; that it had distinct rights and privileges though for centuries they had been violated, and permitted to fall into desuetude. He impressed the Duke that the parochial constitution of the country was more important than its political constitution; that it was more ancient, more universal in its influence; and that this parochial constitution had already been shaken by the New Poor Law. He assured his father that it would never be well for England until this order of the Peasantry was restored to its pristine condition; not merely in physical comfort, for that must vary according to the economical circumstances of the time like that of every class; but its condition in all those moral attributes, which make a recognized rank in the nation; and which in a great degree, are independent of economics, manners, customs, ceremonies, rights, and privileges.36

36Disraeli, Coningsby, I, 282-283.
The Church, as well as the aristocracy, Young England believes, have abrogated their responsibilities to the people. Coningsby, in a conversation with Oswald Millbank, explains that the purpose of the Church is primarily spiritual and for that reason the Church should divorce itself from the state. The Church, Coningsby has perceived, is no longer "consonant with its original and essential character, or with the welfare of the nation." The Church has become weakened because its priests, the tribunes of the people, have lost their spiritual qualifications to lead and are subservient to the government. "The estate of the Church," according to Coningsby, "is the estate of the people, only as long as the Church is governed on its real principles." The Church, as Young England understands it, "is the medium by which the despised and degraded classes assert the native equality of man, and vindicate the rights and powers of intellects."37 Young England, then, wishes the Church to return to the spiritual principles which in former centuries prompted that institution to be solicitous of the welfare of all men and not just the privileged classes of England. If, in order to accomplish this, the Church must be separated from government, then this must be accomplished. Such a drastic step may be unnecessary however, since Coningsby already detects signs of spiritual regeneration in the Church and the rejection of Utilitarian attitudes within the institution. Evaluating the religious climate, Coningsby declares that "the Utilitarian system is dead. . . . It has passed through the heaven of philosophy like a hail storm; cold, noisy, sharp, and

37 Ibid., III, 105, 110-111, 108.
peppering; and it has melted away."\textsuperscript{38} The Oxford Movement has made the mission of Young England less difficult.\textsuperscript{39}

Since Parliamentary Church and Parliamentary Monarchy had generated a political climate in which a man entering political life was forced to choose between a party which practiced "Political Infidelity" and a party which advocated a "Destructive Creed," Young England had no honest alternative except to form a new and independent party. The political vision of Coningsby included "a free monarchy, established on fundamental laws, itself the apex of a vast pile of municipal and local government, ruling an educated people, represented by a free and intellectual press." Since the country continued to function when Parliament was not in session, Coningsby reasoned, Parliament was not as essential to effective government as some had thought. The King alone was capable of governing the country; his only need was the guidance of public opinion. Such a government might succeed in England since "opinion is now supreme, and opinion speaks in print. The representation of the Press is far more complete than the representation of Parliament. Parliamentary representation was the happy device of a ruder age, to which it was admirably adapted; an age of semi-civilization, when there was a leading class in the community;

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., III, p. 111.

but it exhibits many symptoms of desuetude." Public opinion on
the other hand, would be effective because it was rooted in the
national character of England. And this national character would
mold public opinion "to aim at the good and the great." The
government and the people, Coningsby implies, "will respond to its
convictions and sentiments." In advancing these views, Coningsby
is parroting the advice of Sidonia which he had absorbed on an
earlier occasion. 40

Such was the idealism and the optimism of Young England as it
presented a political program to the populace in Coningsby.
Coningsby himself, we have seen, was predisposed to the political
order, a predisposition dramatized by his attraction for books,
conversations, and friends who enjoyed the study of political
questions and who participated in political events. Again, the
friends of Coningsby, Young England or the New Generation, shared
with him a bond of respect, trust, and affection, and chose him
to be their leader. In order to be elected to office, it is nec-
 essary for a political party to recognize and understand the problems
of the age. The views of Coningsby and Young England concerning
the problems of the poor, the Church, the Crown and Parliament, are
an attempt by Disraeli to demonstrate that the political climate
was homogeneous to the nature of Young England, just as the absorption
of political material was homogeneous to the personality of Coningsby.
Similarly, an understanding of the political order was homogeneous to

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40 Disraeli, Coningsby, III, 103, 102, 100, II, 308-309.
Disraeli the politician and statesman. In Coningsby, Disraeli demonstrates additional understanding of the political order by weaving political material into the fabric of the novel by presenting the evolution of a political hero, by presenting statesmen and politicians as they attend social functions (especially at political parties and dinners where the political climate is both tested and molded), by interjecting political and historical commentary, by presenting a Parliamentary election campaign, and by depicting purely political characters, such as Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper as they maneuver within the political order.

To understand the political climate in the early years of Disraeli's political career, it is illuminating to explore the political personality of Rigby, as well as the political thoughts and activities of Tadpole and Taper. The thoughts, conversations, and actions of these individuals help to provide an understanding of the political order which Coningsby will have to master if he is to become a statesman. With the presentation of these political figures, Disraeli seems to indicate that a significant number of politicians are self-interested opportunists who will manipulate the politically innocent. One of that number is Rigby, whose physical features sharply contrast with Coningsby's. Rigby was a man of middle size and age, originally in all probability of a spare habit, but now a little inclined to corpulency. Baldness perhaps contributed to the spiritual expression of the brow, which was essentially however intellectual, and gave some character of openness to a countenance which, though not ill favored, was unhappily stamped by a sinister character that was not to be mistaken. His manner was easy, but rather audacious than well-bred. Indeed, while a vis-age which might otherwise be described as handsome was
spoilt by a dishonest glance, so a demeanor that was by no means deficient in self-possession and facility, was tainted by an innate vulgarity, which in the long run, though seldom, developed itself.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 4-5.}

On another occasion, the ugly side of Rigby's character is again described.

There was nothing profound about Mr. Rigby; and his intellect was totally incapable of desiring or sustaining an intricate or continuous scheme. He was indeed a man who neither felt nor thought; but who possessed in a very remarkable degree a restless instinct for adroit baseness.\footnote{Ibid., p. 169.}

Early in the novel we learn that Rigby is a mediocre man who recognized an opportunity to elevate his position in the political world by being "bought" by Lord Monmouth. As an employee of Lord Monmouth, he strives to make Lord Monmouth's will his own, thereby solidifying his position in the Coningsby household. He is friendly to young Coningsby because he realizes that Lord Monmouth may favor him and that Coningsby's dislike of him could some day be detrimental to his welfare. Rigby in all of his personal relationships, keeps a keen eye on Lord Monmouth's feelings; he is "extremely anxious to know which way the wind" blows so that he can make the necessary beneficial adjustments which changing circumstances require in order to protect his position with Lord Monmouth. When Coningsby is in favor with his grandfather, Rigby curries favor with him. This desire to cultivate people who have the potential to affect his welfare is a source of the comic in Rigby's character. Rigby misjudges the
primary romantic entanglement of Lord Monmouth, fawning at the words, plans, and expectations of Madame Colonna. Comically, when Lord Monmouth informs him that he is going to marry, Rigby embarrasses himself by assuming that the Marquess will marry Lady Colonna. But this is not to be; Lord Monmouth will marry her daughter, Lucretia, a member of the household whom Rigby had overlooked since she did not seem to be a romantic interest of Lord Monmouth. Since it is the function of Rigby to do the "dirty work" of Lord Monmouth, he is assigned the task of explaining his master's marriage plans to Lucretia's mother. Ironically, when Lord Monmouth decides to jettison Lucretia, Rigby has again misunderstood the direction of the wind. It is immediately after entering into an alliance with Lucretia in order to safeguard his share of the Monmouth inheritance against the potential inheritance of Coningsby that he is requested to inform Lucretia that she has lost the affection of her husband and that she must leave the household. Rigby's loyalty is only a question of expediency and self-interest.

Rigby's official duties as an employee of Lord Monmouth include the management of his employer's parliamentary interests and his estate. Both, not coincidentally, coincide with his own interests. Rigby supports the Tory party because he receives "a sly pension" from the government which "by an inevitable association of ideas, he always connected with the maintenance of the aristocracy." As an executor of Lord Monmouth's will and as a potential heir to a portion of the Monmouth estate, he had selfish reasons for his close adherence to the will of Lord Monmouth in both political and personal affairs. Rigby is very much aware that a Dukedom for Lord Monmouth will enhance his own position. Consequently, an ironical and cynical
note is added to the novel when Rigby attempts to soothe Lucretia after the death of Prince Colonna by counselling her about "the vanity of all sublunary things." Rigby's selfish pursuits are not an isolated theme in the novel. Earlier we had noted the selfishness and egoism of Lord Monmouth. Tadpole, Taper and Jawster Sharp are additional characters whose activities are antithetical to the spirit and philosophy of Young England. These men exemplify the corruption of the political order which Young England challenges in the novel.

While Young England ponders the problems of the poor in England in order to find solutions which will elevate the condition and the quality of life of the English people, Tadpole and Taper are only preoccupied with the acquisition of office. Disraeli comments upon this genus of politician:

*It is a peculiar class, that; £1,200 per annum paid quarterly, is their idea of political science and human nature. To receive £1,200 per annum is government; to try to receive £1,200 per annum is opposition; to wish to receive £1,200 per annum is ambition. If a man wants to get into Parliament, and does not want to get £1,200 per annum, they look upon him as daft; as a benighted being.*

Jawster Sharp, too, belongs to this class. He views the political order as an opportunity to improve his material lot, not as an opportunity to improve the condition of his countrymen. As a member of Parliament, Jawster Sharp feathered "his nest pretty successfully;

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44 Ibid., p. 224.
by which he had lost public confidence and gained private end."
His followers, three hundred "hopeful sons," "had all become
commissioners of one thing or another; temporary appointments with
interminable duties." With such examples, it is not surprising
that the intelligent and sensitive youth of the nation challenge
the existing order.

In Coningsby, Disraeli the politician details the methods
utilized by such men in their acquisitions of power and office. The
Rigbys, Tadpoles, Tapers and Sharps perceive the intentions of
their political leaders and arrange their opinions and convictions
to make them coincide with their potential political sponsors.
Consequently, expediency is their primary principle and hypocrisy
is their rule. The selfish end justifies the devious means. A
Lord Monmouth, realizing that he must maintain a reasonably pure
political image in order to maintain maximum political viability,
requires someone to do his "dirty work." A Rigby, searching for
such an opportunity, makes himself available at the prudent moment.
In order to cultivate a political and financial future, Rigby per-
forms the odious duty of informing Madame Colonna that Lord Monmouth
has chosen her daughter, rather than herself, to be his bride. In
the process of communication, Rigby masterfully employs deceit to
soothe her rage:

It seemed that Rigby stemmed the first violence of
her emotion by mysterious intimations of an important
communication that he had to make; and piquing her
curiosity, he calmed her passion...This little oc-
currence gave Rigby a few minutes to collect himself,
at the end of which he made the Princess several an-
nouncements of intended arrangements, all of which

pleased her mightily, though they were so inconsistent with each other, that if she had not been a woman in passion, she might have detected that Rigby was lying. He assured her almost in the same breath, that she was never to be separated from them, and that she was to have any establishment in any country she liked. He talked wildly of equipages, diamonds, shawls, opera boxes; and while her mind was bewildered with these dazzling objects, he with intrepid gravity consulted her as to the exact amount she would like apportioned, independent of her general revenue, for the purpose of charity.46

A different tactic is necessary to calm the rage of Lucretia when he informs her that Lord Monmouth no longer wishes her to live in his household as his wife. With information supplied by Lord Monmouth, he resorts to blackmail.

Tadpole and Taper will also stretch the truth and employ any means possible to attain power. Once in office, such men will discard those who have helped them when they are no longer political assets. To the Tadpoles and the Tapers, "the country is nothing," since "it is the constituency you have to deal with." A good campaign slogan is necessary to win the votes of the people, and a good campaign slogan is one which is popular but which lacks substance—a cry which "means nothing, and if successful, does not interfere with business when we are in." The plan of Tadpole and Taper to attain office is to "work well together, and keep other men down."47 Political promises are to be made, but not necessarily honored. Intentions are to be misrepresented in order to obtain political support and to insure a minimum of responsibility once office is obtained.

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46 Ibid., pp. 290-291.
47 Ibid., I, 193, 185, 219.
Taper has mastered this tactic. "A nod or a wink will speak volumes," he says, "An affectionate pressure of the hand will sometimes do a great deal; and I have promised many a peerage without committing myself by an ingenious habit of deference which cannot be mistaken by a future noble." There is little guarantee of a permanent political relationship with such unprincipled men; they will throw over men who have vigorously supported them if it is politically expedient. Tom Chudleigh is rejected even though he has performed loyally and well for the party, as Taper explains: "That, to be sure, is only an additional reason for throwing him over, as he is too far committed to venture to oppose us." If political friends are to be treated with scorn and indifference, then political foes are to be treated even more harshly. Significantly, Rigby's journalistic exploits are admired by Tadpole and Taper because he is able to destroy the political reputations of his opponents; better than anyone else, Rigby could attack "a she-liberal and could cut up a rising genius whose politics were different from his own, or sacrificify some unhappy wretch who had brought his claims before parliament, proving by garbled extracts from official correspondence that no one could refer to, that the malcontent, instead of being a victim, was on the contrary a defaulter." Rigby also had the ability to demonstrate publicly and in writing at a propitious moment "in a manner absolutely convincing, that it was impossible for any person to possess any ability, knowledge, or virtue, any capacity of reason, any ray of fancy or facility of imagination, who was not a supporter of their administration."48

Rigby, although he does the "dirty work" for Lord Monmouth, is acutely aware of his image since he realizes that this may affect his political potential. On a few occasions, Rigby is so concerned with his image that he becomes comic. In the opening scene of the novel, Rigby projects the image of an advisor and confidant to the country's political leaders. He represents himself as a man who knows the secret maneuverings behind the veil of government. Consequently, when Tadpole and Taper inform him that Lord Grey had resigned and that the King had accepted his resignation, Rigby explains in painful detail that this report cannot be true. Moments later, when the Duke of Beaumanoir enters and confirms the news of Tadpole and Taper, Rigby contradicts the Duke and depreciates the source of this information. "Authority is a phrase," Rigby intones, "We must look to time and place, dates and localities to discover the truth." Since the Duke has received his information directly from Lord Lyndhurst, who is then consulting with the King about the appointment of a Prime Minister, Rigby finds himself in a ridiculous position which he attempts to salvage by thinking aloud "what an unfortunate circumstance it was for the Sovereign, the country, and the party, that I did not breakfast with Lord Lyndhurst this morning."49 Through such poses, reputations are sometimes enhanced and public opinion is sometimes formed. The perception to know when casual information will do "a great deal of good" and when the flattering discussion of an individual will have beneficial results are

49Ibid., pp. 9, 11.
additional insights a politician must posses if he wishes to puff his own image or the image of his candidate.\(^{50}\)

Rigby maintains his influence and his power by possessing secret information about significant persons and events. This information is gathered by various methods, including stealth, accident, private conversations, and semi-private conversations at parties. We have already indicated the importance of conversation in the evolution of Coningsby; his attendance at parties is also crucial to his education and to the fabric of the novel. The political function of parties is manifest when Coningsby arrives at Beaumanoir after he has graduated from Eton. At Beaumanoir, the narrator advises, the guests were gathered "not merely to slaughter the Duke's pheasants, but to hold council on the prospects of the party."\(^{51}\) Such a gathering, besides affording an opportunity to hear gossip which might later be used for blackmail, could help to consolidate political support and increase the influence of the host; it could present an opportunity for an informal party caucus and an exchange of political theories, ideas, and gossip; and it also presented an opportunity for the host and his associates to convert members of the opposition.\(^{52}\) Therefore, it would seem, a politician must frequently attend such functions and cultivate a pleasant party personality.

\(^{50}\)Ibid., pp. 101-102, 223-224.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 138.

\(^{52}\)Lieberman, p. 147.
The selection of candidates for political office is another aspect of the political order which Disraeli presents in *Coningsby*. After Coningsby rejects the opportunity to be Lord Monmouth's representative at Darlford, Rigby is chosen by Lord Monmouth to be the Tory candidate for that borough. Rigby's Liberal opponent is not immediately chosen since the leaders of the Liberal deputation have difficulty finding a candidate who meets their requirements. "If the principles were right," they discovered, "there was no money; and if money were ready, money would not take pledges." Disraeli narrates that "in fact they wanted a Phoenix; a very rich man, who would do exactly as they liked, with extremely low opinions and with very high connections." After a demoralizing search for a candidate, the new proprietor of Hellingsley, Mr. Millbank, offers himself and is accepted as the opponent of Lord Monmouth's representative. Cynicism is rampant as Disraeli explains that Mr. Millbank "was exactly the man they wanted; and though he had 'no handle to his name', and was somewhat impracticable about pledges, his fortune was so great, and his character so high, that it might be hoped that the people would be almost as content as if they were appealed to by some obscure scion of factitious nobility subscribing to political engagements which he could not comprehend, and which in general are vomited with as much facility as they are swallowed."

The ensuing campaign between Mr. Millbank and Rigby illustrates the rough and tumble of political life on the hustings. The spicy

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give and take between the candidates and their potential constituency is illustrated by the campaign oratory and the heckling; the judicious use of political violence is illustrated by the activities of Magog Wrath and Billy Bluck. Then, as now, we learn that the votes of dead men are not to be discounted when men seek office for private gain. Through the characterization and activities of Rigby, Tadpole, Taper, and Sharp, Disraeli the writer has demonstrated that Disraeli the politician understood the grass roots problems of electioneering. The political career of the Prime Minister of England, as well as the novel Coningsby, is testimony of Disraeli's sympathetic understanding of the political order.

Such sympathy with the political order is the result of the personal experience of Disraeli during the time period between 1832 and 1844, the year that Coningsby was published. The political career of Disraeli began in 1832 when he offered himself to the residents of High Wycombe as their candidate for Parliament. When the Reform Bill was passed on June 4, Disraeli had resolved to become a candidate for that borough at the general election which was soon to follow. However, prior to the general election, he campaigned for office against Colonel Grey, contesting for the vacated seat of Thomas Baring, who had resigned abruptly from Parliament. Disraeli, who believed at that time that Toryism was worn out, ran for election as an independent Radical. Although he presented a flamboyant figure on the hustings and demonstrated an ability to

54 Ibid., p. 272.
electrify audiences, he lost the election. The experience, however, was very valuable to both Disraeli the politician and Disraeli the writer. During the campaign, a spy who had access to Grey's plans and the Whig counsels informed Disraeli of Grey's campaign strategy. Nevertheless, it was Disraeli and not Colonel Grey who accused his opponent of double-dealing and hypocrisy after the votes were counted. However, Colonel Grey did not forget. In December, when Disraeli campaigned again for the seat at High Wycombe, Colonel Grey counterattacked, accusing Disraeli's party in the earlier campaign of having "hired a parcel of drunken brawlers to follow him in his canvass, and to insult those whom he solicited for their votes." Since Disraeli was a man without strong political backing, his second defeat in a Parliamentary election was not too surprising. On the other hand, he was gaining experience in the art of political warfare. In a letter explaining his political strategy, he indicates that he has learned that he too must follow the way the wind blows if he is to win a seat in Parliament: "I write you a hurried note after a hard day's canvass," he wrote in a letter to his sister Sarah, "Whigs, Tories, & Radicals, Quakers, Evangelicals, Abolition of Slavery, Reform, conservation, corn laws, here is hard work for one, who is to please all parties." The loss of this election only momentarily damaged the confidence of the future Prime Minister. Shortly after this defeat, he acted to strengthen his political position which was threatened by gossip and anonymous articles attacking

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55 Jerman, pp. 165-166.

56 Ibid., p. 160.
his lack of party affiliation. In 1832 he had participated in the writing of an anonymous anti-Whig pamphlet entitled *England and France: or a Cure for Ministerial Gallomania*; now, in 1833, he published in his own name the pamphlet entitled *What is He?* which attempted to explain his apparent political inconsistency by indicating his tendency towards Toryism. Although he expressed a belief that the Reform Bill had destroyed the aristocratic principle, he firmly declared that since it was now the law he was fully committed to support the new democratic principle which that Bill proclaimed:

> The moment the Lords passed the Reform Bill, from menace instead of from conviction, the aristocratic principle of government in this country, in my opinion, expired forever. From that moment, it became the duty of every person of property, talents, and education, unconnected with the unhappy party at present in power, to use his utmost exertions to advance the democratic principle, in order that the country should not fall into that situation, in which, if I mistake not, it will speedily find itself—absolutely without any government whatever. A Tory, and a Radical, I understand; a Whig—a democratic aristocrat, I cannot comprehend. If the Tories indeed despair of restoring the aristocratic principle, and are sincere in their avowal that the State cannot be governed with the present machinery, it is their duty to coalesce with the Radicals, and permit both political nicknames to merge in the common, the intelligible, and the dignified title of National Party.57

In 1833, eleven years before the publication of *Coningsby*, Disraeli had publicly established a pro-Tory-anti-Whig position and advocated the formation of a new, National Party which would be above class interests. In the same pamphlet, written eight years before Carlyle's

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57 Hutcheon, pp. 19-21.
On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History, Disraeli expressed another idea which is significant to an understanding of the character and the novel Coningsby: "Let us not forget also an influence too much underrated in this age of bustling mediocrity—the influence of individual character. . . . Great spirits may yet arise, to guide the groaning helm through the world of troubled waters; spirits whose proud destiny it may still be at the same time to maintain the glory of the Empire, and to secure the happiness of the people." 58

Benjamin Disraeli was not an active candidate for election in 1834, but his thought remained in the political order. He was again defeated as a Parliamentary candidate in 1835. In the following year he lost his attempt to win the seat at Taunton and became engaged in a bitter political quarrel with Daniel O'Connell, who had supported him in his first bid for election as a Radical at High Wycombe. In reply to some remarks of Disraeli which were publicized out of context, O'Connell published the following angry letter in the London...
papers which illustrates the formidable problems which Disraeli faced in the early years of his political career. 59

How is he now engaged? Why, in abusing the Radicals and eulogising the King and the Church like a true Conservative. At Taunton this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary. Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831, than I am at present, if I ever were one; and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is—He is a liar! He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that could tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess directly the reverse? His life, I say, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating or having upon the face of her society, a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature.... He is Conservativism personified. His name shows that he is by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is the better for that in this world, and I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next. There is a habit of underrating that great and oppressed nation—the Jews. They are cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians—but no person ever yet was Christian who persecuted. The cruelest persecution they suffer is upon their character, by the foul names which their calumniators bestowed upon them before they carried their atrocities into effect. They feel the persecution of calumny severer upon them than the persecution of actual force and the tyranny of actual torture. I have the happiness to be acquainted with some Jewish families in London, and amongst them more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better educated gentlemen, I have never met. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also; and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross—whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present

59 Monypenny and Buckle, I, 287-288.
Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross!

Disraeli's political posture was made more explicit by the publication of A Vindication of the English Constitution in a Letter to a Noble and Learned Lord in December of 1835. In this document dedicated to Lord Lyndhurst, as we have already noted, Disraeli expresses his beliefs concerning Tory Democracy and advocates principles which he repeats in Coningsby. Isaac D'Israeli believed that the Vindication firmly established his son as a successful political writer and he informed his son that "you have now taken a position in the political world, by your own Genius." If this represents the political birth of Disraeli, the birth occurred when his financial position was precarious.

Even before Benjamin Disraeli began to incur the expenses of Parliamentary campaigns, he was almost hopelessly in debt. In 1825 he experienced two financial disasters. As a result of stock market speculation, young Disraeli owed £2,333; as a result of a three-way partnership in a newspaper publication entitled The Representative, a partnership in which John Murray had lost £26,000, Disraeli added another £13,000 to his indebtedness. These and additional debts complicated Disraeli's political career. Until 1849, the ambitious Disraeli was occasionally dunned for his debts; at this time he finally became solvent with the aid of his wife's fortune. His indebtedness, in the meantime, had caused him much political embarrassment and inconvenience. One such occasion occurred

60Jerman, p. 260.
in 1838 when Disraeli was accused of bribery during his successful campaign for the seat at Maidstone. According to Disraeli's most recent biographer, "the electors at Maidstone did not mind the first charge. They lived on bribes. But to promise and not to pay was much more serious; the accusation might ruin his chances for reelection." Money from his new bride rescued him from this embarrassment. Two years earlier, Disraeli had campaigned for the seat at Wycombe while maintaining an eye for the sheriff, who rumor had it, was searching for Disraeli to arrest him for indebtedness.

But Disraeli's considerable indebtedness did not seriously affect his life style. In 1832, the young bachelor left his parent's home and moved to his own quarters in the West End of London. There he became immersed in an expensive social life. After brief romances with Ellen Meredith and Lady Charlotte Bertie, Disraeli became romantically involved with Mrs. Clara Bolton, the wife of his physician. She became his mistress in 1832. After a few months, Disraeli turned his attention to Lady Sykes, the wife of Sir Francis Sykes. The private correspondence of Disraeli reveals that he and Lady Sykes were intimate for approximately three years. Sir Francis did not disapprove of their relationship. He permitted his wife her lover; and, in exchange, he was permitted to be the lover of Mrs. Clara Bolton, Disraeli's former mistress. Both couples lived under the same roof for a time and frequently appeared in public together. This romantic episode in the life of the future Prime Minister

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61 Blake, p. 156.
may have had a significant effect on Disraeli's political fortunes in 1841 when Peel was choosing his cabinet. Sir Philip Rose, Disraeli's secretary, believed that Disraeli's scandalous relationship with Lady Sykes was the cause of his exclusion from Peel's cabinet. 63 When Disraeli speaks of ladies "making visits where nobody is seen," his imagination is not necessarily restricted to vicarious experience. 64 Lord Monmouth had his secret romances, and so did his creator.

Whatever the reason for Disraeli's failure to be included in Peel's 1841 cabinet, undoubtedly his romance with Lady Sykes was detrimental to his reputation. Besides inspiring Disraeli to write Henrietta Temple (1836) and thereby advancing his literary career, however, Lady Sykes also contributed to his political advancement by introducing him to important political figures. Through Lady Sykes Disraeli was introduced to Daniel O'Connell, Lord Hertford (the model for Lord Monmouth in Coningsby), the Duke of Wellington, Lord Durham, and Lady Melbourne. Even more crucial to his political career, Lady Sykes introduced Disraeli to Lord Lyndhurst, who was asked to form a Tory government in 1834 by King William IV. Lord Lyndhurst and Disraeli soon became firm friends and Disraeli soon found himself acting as Lord Lyndhurst's confidential secretary and political messenger. In this capacity, Disraeli, much like his

63 Ibid., pp. 191-192.
64 Disraeli, Coningsby, I, p. 27.
literary creation Rigby, wrote anonymous letters and articles attacking the political enemies of his mentor. 65 With Lord Lyndhurst's support, Disraeli moved into the ranks of the Tory party and was finally elected to a Parliamentary seat at Maidstone in July, 1837. The wife of the other Parliamentary member from Maidstone, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, wrote on this occasion that Disraeli's "great talents backed by his friends Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Chandos, with Wyndham's power to keep him in Parliament, will insure his success." 66

Wyndham Lewis died on March 14, 1838. On August 28, 1839, Disraeli married his widow, who was twelve years his senior. No one contended, not even Disraeli, that he loved Mrs. Lewis during the early months of their courtship. However, his affection for her steadily increased, and once he convinced her that he was not primarily interested in her fortune, she accepted his proposal of marriage. Until her death in 1872, Mary Anne Disraeli exercised a stabilizing influence on her ambitious husband and provided him with the security he needed to realize his ambitions in the political arena.

Disraeli did not become a prominent Parliamentary leader until 1845. His first speech in December, 1837, had been an oratorical disaster. Three months later, however, Disraeli balanced this failure

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65 An unusual note was added to their relationship by Lady Sykes, who, apparently, was almost simultaneously the mistress of both Disraeli and Lord Lyndhurst. Jerman, pp. 191-192. Blake, the most recent biographer of Disraeli, discusses the same material and concludes that probably Lady Sykes simultaneously loved both men. pp. 117-119.

66 Blake, p. 147.
with a successful speech on the Corn Laws. He then settled back and maintained a low political profile until after the election in 1841. When Peel became Prime Minister in that year and did not offer Disraeli a position in his government, Disraeli's presence began to emerge more forcefully in the political arena. Although Disraeli had expected an appointment, his expectations appear to have been unjustified, especially since Peel believed that he had written an anonymous letter to *The Times* which was critical of Peel's political judgment. Disraeli denied authorship of this letter which was signed "Psittacus"; however, his word was not always witness to the fact in such circumstances. Be this as it may, Disraeli believed that he deserved recognition for his services to the Tory party, and when no office was forthcoming, his political ambitions were frustrated. At this time, Disraeli had already absorbed much material which would be useful for his political novel. More was added when he vacationed in Paris in the autumn of 1842. There, while at dinner with George Smythe and Alexander-Baille Cochrane, the idea of a Young England Party materialized. A short time later G. Sydney Smythe wrote the following lines to Disraeli:

I have fulfilled your instructions and written to John Manners and H. Baille. The first I have told that we are to sit together and vote as the majority shall decide, and that my overture involving office ought to be communicated to the esoteric council or ourselves. To the Celt I have been more guarded and reserved, having only proposed that we should sit together, in the hope that association might engender party.

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67Monypenny and Buckle, II, 167.
A year later, in the autumn of 1843, Benjamin Disraeli began writing *Coningsby; Or the New Generation* at the Deepdene home of Henry Hope. At that time Young England was already an apparent threat to the leadership of Peel as Sr. James Graham's advice to a political colleague indicates:

> With respect to Young England, the puppets are moved by Disraeli, who is the ablest man among them; I consider him unprincipled and disappointed and in despair he has tried the effect of bullying. I think with you that they will return to the crib after prancing, capering, and snorting; but a crack or two of the whip well applied may hasten and insure their return. Disraeli alone is mischievous and with him I have no desire to keep terms. It would be better for the party if he were driven into the ranks of our open enemies. 68

When *Coningsby* was published in May, 1844, Disraeli's political position was obvious. Since he had ridiculed Peel's Tamworth Manifesto, he could no longer masquerade as either a friend or supporter of the Prime Minister. In the session of 1845, Peel would have cause to regret that Benjamin Disraeli had become his political enemy.

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68Blake, p. 177.
CHAPTER V

THE STRUCTURE OF CONINGSBY

In 1844, Benjamin Disraeli wrote in his Dedication to Henry Hope that the purpose of Coningsby was "to picture something of that development of the new, and, as I believe, the better mind of England." In the concluding paragraph of the Dedication which appears in the first edition of the novel, Disraeli additionally explains that his purpose has been "to scatter some suggestions that may tend to elevate the tone of public life; to ascertain the true character of political parties; and induce us for the future more carefully to distinguish between facts and phrases, realities and phantoms." Judged in this context, Disraeli's political novel must be considered a success. In Sybil, published in 1845, Disraeli restated the purpose of Coningsby, explaining that in Coningsby he had "presumed to offer to the public some volumes that aimed at calling attention to the state of our political parties; their origin, their history, their present position. In an age of political infidelity, of mean passions and petty thoughts, I would have impressed upon the rising race not to despair, but to seek in a right understanding of the history of their country, and in the energies of heroic youth, the elements of national welfare."¹ In his preface to the 1849 edition of Coningsby, Disraeli wrote that

¹Earl of Beaconsfield, Sybil or The Two Nations (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), p. 488.
"the main purpose of its writer was to indicate the just claims of the Tory party to be the popular political confederation of the country; a purpose which he had, more or less, pursued from a very early period of his life. . . . It was opportune, therefore, to show that Toryism was not a phrase, but a fact, and that our political institutions were the embodiment of our popular necessities." In the General Preface of the 1870 edition of his novels, Disraeli again addressed himself to the purpose of Coningsby, this time explaining that Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred were attempts to portray "the origin and character of our political parties, their influence on the condition of the people of this country, some picture of the moral and physical condition of the people, and some intimation of the means by which it might be elevated and improved." Disraeli's primary structural problem, it would seem, was to weave into the fiction of the novel the origin, history, and current status of political parties, as well as a vindication of the Tory party and the political platform of the Young England party which advocated a return to the original spirit of Toryism. Primarily, Disraeli attempts to solve this problem by creating a political genius evolving within an historical and political framework. Consequently, Coningsby is similar to a lightning rod, drawing about him discussions of the political and social problems

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confronting England during the years 1832-1844. In addition to the characterization and development of Coningsby, the political material is presented in these additional ways: By the political plot dramatized in the thematic question: Will Coningsby achieve permanent success in the political order? By political scenes, characters, parties, commentaries, and conversations which naturally evolve within the plot as devices to explain the formation of public opinion, the election process, and political victories. Despite the diversity of the material presented, the novel is unified, nevertheless, since all of the material and action in the novel contributes to an explanation of the growth and evolution of Coningsby and the Young England movement. Since Coningsby was the first political novel, the problems of organizing political material in a fictional narrative presented a somewhat unique problem. As in the characterization of Coningsby, Disraeli may have looked to his father's writings for inspiration, as well as for some structural hints.

In 1828, Isaac D'Israeli published the first volume of his major historical study, The Life and Reign of Charles the First. In this biography and commentary, as in the novel Coningsby, the author traces the evolution of an individual whose life is intricately

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4See Appendix I. This appendix attempts to demonstrate the synthesis of political and historical material within the structure of the novel, as well as indicating parallels and foreshadowings within the plot, with some stylistic commentaries.

immersed in politics and history. According to Isaac, Charles the First was "a political history of human nature" which attempted to explain the significance of "the science of politics" in the "martyrdom" of Charles the First, a "martyrdom" which Isaac believed "was a civil and political one."

In this political history, Isaac attempted to trace the Anti-Monarchial "spirit of the age" which was one of the principal causes of Charles' decapitation. Coningsby, on the other hand, is a political novel which traces the rise of the Young England movement and the evolution of its leader who advocates, in the event of a civil and political revolution, a return to pure monarchy. Since both narratives culminate in a dramatic political conclusion, it is not surprising to discover similarity of content, especially in the description of political characters and tactics.

The political character of the Marquis of Hamilton is one of several political portraits which Isaac presents to support his contention that his Commentary is a "political history of human nature." As a philosophical historian, Isaac evaluates the actions and the personalities of historical figures and attempts to understand the secret causes of events, as well as the essential nature of major characters. We are informed, for example, that the Marquis possessed an "extraordinary capacity for self-preservation" as the marking feature of his character. Isaac is equally as critical of

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7 Ibid., IV, 279.
the calculating self-interest of Bishop Williams and Colonel Goring, two characters whose knowledge of political infighting is at least comparable to that of Lord Monmouth, Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper. In a passage which could be judiciously inserted into the text of *Coningsby* without significantly disrupting either the style or the content of the novel, Isaac D'Israeli describes the personality and tactics of Bishop Williams.

As a statesman, his quick apprehension acted like inspiration; his sagacity struck with the force of prediction; but his restless ambition, though capable of more noble designs, and even of more generous feelings, had systemized intrigue; and what he could not obtain by wisdom and integrity, he would circumvent by servility and cunning. A great politician, but as subtle a Machiavellian, he maintained a whole establishment of the "juggling fiends" of espionage, and a long line of secret communication made him the centre of every political movement. It was a maxim with him, that no one could be a Statesman without a great deal of money, and he once confessed that from his studies of divinity he had gleaned another principle, *licet uti altero peccato*, to make the sins of others useful. As he was not scrupulous in his means, among many other extraordinary methods of gaining men for a temporary purpose, he exercised a peculiar faculty, which, if it deserved a name, we may call political imagination. Clarenden tells us, that on any particular occasion he could invent entire scenes and lengthened conversations, perfectly appropriate to all persons, all which had never occurred. Such artful fictions had all the force and nature of truth. These apparent confidential disclosures made the stubborn, credulous; and the irresolute, firm.

As the following passage indicates, Colonel Goring is also capable of tutoring a Rigby, or a Taper, or a Tadpole in the art of political deception. Colonel Goring was bold in enterprise, and scornful of danger, with considerable abilities, he was, however, profligate in his principles.... The truth is, that Goring, versatile in his conduct, was apparently of no party, but dexterously profiting by both. His whole life was a series of such acts. He would have been willing to have been betrayed.... Goring seems always to have relied on the ingenuity
of his own duplicity, on the gracefulness of his person, and his consummate address; these resources he could command at all times; to be deceived by him was sometimes to love him, for he showed himself an excellent actor on the most critical exigencies. Accused, he had the art of persuading others of his integrity. Insincerity was the habit of the man who could be at once a favorite with the Parliament, and at all times could ingratiate himself with the King. 8

Isaac D'Israeli's description of the social activities, the appearance, and the character of the Countess of Carlisle also anticipate Disraeli the Younger's presentation of character and introduction of political material into the narrative. In The Life and Reign of Charles the First, physiognomy is utilized as an indicator of intelligence, temperament and character. In his description of the Countess of Carlisle, Isaac writes that "we may imagine voluptuousness in those eyes, with something like pensiveness; and a physiognomist would not find it difficult to detect a marked sense of self-suffering in the decided features of her countenance." (In an earlier volume, Isaac had reported the following words of another author: "The countenance is an infallible indication of the mind.") The physically attractive Countess of Carlisle frequently attended dinners where politics and diplomacy were topics of discussion, and on these social occasions she successfully elicited much valuable foreign and domestic information from the guests. This ability and habit caused Isaac to comment that "even in the times of Charles the First they gave diplomatic dinners; though it is still rare to find a lady at the head of the table, not that our modern secret history has not

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8Ibid., I, 250, II, 245-246.
furnished some instances." In *Coningsby*, dinners are always a vehicle for interjecting politics into the novel. The character descriptions of Bishop Williams, Colonel Goring, and the Countess of Carlisle indicate Isaac's understanding of the political character and the darker aspects of the political order. Disraeli the Elder, as well as Disraeli the Younger, had a keen awareness of the political talents and tactics which were necessary for survival in the harsh political world. According to Isaac, Charles the First exemplifies the fate of a political innocent in a political jungle. For survival in the political order, Isaac believed, Charles possessed too much heart; at crucial moments, sympathy and kindness controlled his decisions rather than the analytical powers of reason, and this characteristic, along with the rise of an Anti-monarchical spirit and the tactics of his opponents, contributed significantly to his downfall.

These tactics are described in a chapter entitled "The Arts of Insurgency," in which Isaac describes the political tactics used to influence public opinion and to acquire power. This chapter, an extended commentary which complements the narrative, concludes in the execution of Charles the First; Benjamin Disraeli, in *Coningsby*, is also prone to interject commentary into the narrative in order to present a fuller understanding of Coningsby's evolution and victory, and the manipulation of opinion against the King was also exercised by methods not completely foreign to Disraeli the Younger.

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The basic principle of political warfare, Isaac writes, is "the political doctrine that the end sanctifies the means." Once this principle is adopted, according to Isaac, there are then several options possible for the mounting of a political attack, including: the use of mobs—"the marshalling of a troubled multitude"; the writing and distribution of propagandistic pamphlets—these were the "poisoners of the minds of his (Charles') weak subjects"; the presentation of vitriolic, partisan speeches and sermons—especially sermons which are "like the venal 'leading articles' of the present day, trumpeting forth the most desperate alarms, and vomiting the most violent menaces"; the spreading of rumours—"the calumny which was either too vague to grapple with, or which took too long to remove, (and) always left something sticking behind it, which repeated till believed." These devices, as Disraeli well knew, were very effective devices for the manipulation of public opinion in order to secure the support of the populace. To withstand such a political onslaught would require a man of unusual quality. One such man, whom Isaac admired, was George Digby, the second Earl of Bristol, whom Isaac deemed "should rather be the hero of a romance, than of history." "Should a writer," Isaac wrote, "in some Biographical Romance—for the wantoness of our taste may find novelty even in such Fiction—make this hero independent of circumstances, by adding only a termination to the adventures of

10Ibid., IV, 144, 149, 151.
Lord Digby, which he himself never could, this Romancer, in the simple narrative of his life, could place before us an extraordinary being—a perfection of human nature, the very idealism of Romance, and the truths he would have to tell, would at least equal the fictions he might invent." This suggests, perhaps, the substance and the general organization of a political novel. On another occasion in his history, Isaac described the behavior of a noble politician or a political hero in an age of crisis. This description could very easily apply to Coningsby after he has rejected Lord Monmouth's proposal to be his representative for Darlford in the climactic scene of the novel:

But when we discover men, whose force of character scorns every disguise, and rejects every compromising principle, and who at the cost of fortune, and even at the price of life, keep their unswerving rectitude, we are struck by this unpopular virtue of sincerity. In every political man it bears a charm. We admire it even in him whose feelings we may not participate nor to whose judgment we may not assent. We appreciate its generous nature, even in an enemy, and though this unpliant morality be intractable to the hand of the most subtle leader, still the man who adheres to his Party though it be discomfited, and to his principles though they may be exploded, evinces a force of character which may well awe the more flexible and weaker dispositions. It is a giant-mind, disdaining every artifice to deceive us by feigning a sympathy it utterly abhors, and it stands before us, in the strength which has been the growth of its age, like some lofty Ilex spread into magnitude, and glorying in the same eternal verdure through all the changeful seasons.11

Such a man is the altruistic Coningsby, who opposes the Utilitarian "Spirit of the Age" in the novel which bears his name and whose basic conflict is between those who will use politics for the purpose of

11Ibid., p. 430, Vp.111.
their own self-aggrandizement.

Isaac, in his history of Charles the First, was very much interested in "the secret histories of events" as the chapter on the "Secret Histories of the King's First Ministers" would indicate. By presenting "secret histories" Isaac attempted "to penetrate into the obscure and the hidden", explaining that at times mighty interests were now operating one against the other. But uncertain and unrevealed for us must remain many secret intrigues; sudden changes in the condition of the parties; causes and motives which have never been assigned, though their important results are manifest; ambiguous proceedings and dubious matters, and many which were never told, buried in the hearts of subtle men, who governed themselves by other maxims than the rest of the world.12

Benjamin Disraeli employs a similar method of exposition in Coningsby, presenting a scene of situation, but withholding crucial information from the reader in order to bring this information forward later in the novel, thereby surprising the reader by an unexpected but logical evolution in the plot. Such is the case of Lord Monmouth's love of Stella and the fathering of Flora. Without a knowledge of this "secret history," Flora's inheritance is almost completely unexpected. In fact, a portion of this secret history is still unknown since, except for the reading of the will neither father nor daughter gives any indication by either thought or action that they are aware of this relationship. When Lord Monmouth evicts Lady Monmouth from his household, the secret history of Lady Monmouth's extra-marital activities is crucial for an understanding of this

12 Ibid., pp. 266-267. In his "secret histories" Isaac attempted to communicate information undetected by previous historians.
unexpected turn of events. Benjamin Disraeli also renders a "secret history" in order to explain Mr. Millbank's decision to nominate Coningsby as a representative for the Darlford seat. Such a "secret history" parallels Isaac's commentary on the "Arts of Insurgency," as well as his commentaries on the "History of Puritanism" and the nature of politics, since both methods of exposition serve as vehicles for the integration of political and historical material into the biographical and fictional narratives.

The purpose of Isaac's history was to present an accurate biography of Charles the First and to explain the people, events, and ideas which were instrumental in the execution of the King of England. In the process of writing this biography and commentary, Isaac engaged in considerable thought concerning the function and the methodology of the historian. In the Reign of Charles the First, Isaac notes that

"History requires its abstractions as well as poetry. The historian like the poet, should personate the character he represents, placing himself in the condition of the human being whose actions he records. With the same fixed views before him, and with the sympathy of the same feelings, he should penetrate, like Tacitus or Clarendon, if blessed with their art, into the secret recesses of the mind.

Since Benjamin Disraeli possessed a vital imagination, a poetic temperament, and considerable experience in the political arena, he probably had little difficulty creating fictionalized characters living in a political and historical framework. On at least one occasion, Disraeli the Elder informs us, Clarendon resorted to fiction in his biography of Charles the First. Despite rumours circulating that the Marquis of Hamilton, the High Commissioner of Scotland,
was disloyal to the Crown, Charles decided to retain the Marquis as his Commissioner. In order to explain the King's decision, Isaac records the dramatic conversation which Clarenden presents as his solution to this historical problem. The Marquis was a victim of a dilemma: on the one hand, he was hated by his countrymen because he implemented the King's policies and, on the other hand, because of his work as an instrument of the Crown, Hamilton complained to the King "that the actor of it must be disliked by your majesty. For though I should do all things by your royal command, yet your royal honor would oblige your majesty not to seem to care for me."

As a solution to this dilemma, Clarendon records, the Marquis requested that the King permit him a warrant "that he might endear himself to the other party by promising his service to them, and concurring with them in opinions and designs--that he supposed interest in his Majesty's favor, might have the influence they desired."

When the King accepted this proposal, Hamilton used this warrant as a cloak for disloyal activity. D'Israeli the historian accepts the authenticity of this agreement, but he rejects the actuality of the conversation, attributing the conversation to the creative imagination of Clarendon, who wished to protect the confidential sources of his information. Commenting upon this creative improvisation, Isaac wrote: "These are the creative, yet veracious, touches of a great genius, who from the familiarity with the temper, the habits, the language of the personages themselves, could speak their very thoughts, and paint their very gestures--and thus endow the men he well knew,

13Ibid., IV, 344-345, 278, 282-283.
with the immortality of his own genius; Lord Clarendon was the Shakespeare of history."¹⁴ In this dramatic conversation between the King and the Marquis of Hamilton, fiction is weaved into the political and historic fabric of the narrative.

In the Life and Reign of Charles the First, then, Isaac combined the same materials which his son utilized in the writing of the first political novel: politics, history, political characterizations, political and historical commentaries, dramatic conversations, and fiction. In this history, Disraeli the Elder suggested the subject of a political novel, the qualities of an ideal political figure, the creative process by which a political novel could be written, and illustrated a fusion of the material of a political novel in a biographical narrative. If there was not a conscious influence of the father on the son concerning the inspiration and the structure of the first political novel, the repetition of similar ideas rendered in similar settings and language would tend to indicate that there was at least a subconscious influence.

Be this as it may, in addition to understanding the evolution of Coningsby's character as a guide to the structure of Coningsby, it is important to trace the primary romantic plot involving Coningsby and Edith Millbank since this relationship dramatically affects Coningsby's inheritance and election, as well as adding a dimension of suspense to the novel. Not quite as crucial, but also significant for an understanding of the plot are Lucretia, who becomes Lady Monmouth, and Rigby, the manager of Lord Monmouth's

¹⁴Ibid., p. 287.
parliamentary affairs and personal estate, who is defeated by Coningsby in the final book of the novel at the Darlford Parliamentary election.

In tracing the effect of Edith on the plot of Coningsby, one must begin at Eton, where Coningsby and Oswald Millbank are classmates. Because Coningsby rescues Oswald Millbank from drowning, they become firm friends. Consequently, when Coningsby decides to follow Sidonia's advice and visit Manchester, the reader is somewhat prepared for Coningsby's decision to visit the Millbank factories, which are in nearby Lancashire. During this visit, Coningsby is introduced to Edith for the first time. Oswald's young sister appears to have an instant and intuitive affection for Coningsby, preparing the reader for the love, romance, and marriage which are to follow. Mr. Millbank is a gracious host, but the "cloud" which passes over his face when he first meets Coningsby, his silent reaction to Coningsby's hint that he would enjoy returning to the household for another visit, and Mr. Millbank's observation that "Saxon manners and Norman industry will never agree" indicates his antagonism towards Coningsby and prepares the reader for his opposition to the romantic attachment of his daughter to the hero of the novel. These hints of family hostility surface when Mr. Millbank purchases the estate of Hellingsley, a property which Lord Monmouth covets because it is contiguous to his property. At this point in the novel, the reader is informed that Mr. Millbank, who has spitefully purchased the Hellingsley estate, is "the personal, inveterate, and indomitable foe of Lord Monmouth."\(^15\) Lord Monmouth's hostility towards the Millbanks has been

\(^{15}\)Disraeli, Coningsby, II, 27-28, 25, 33, 237.
insinuated at the close of Book I by Rigby, who will not invite Oswald Millbank to be Coningsby's guest at dinner. With this spiteful purchase of Hellingsley, the plot moves a significant step forward because Mr. Millbank can now challenge Lord Monmouth's political control of the Darlford borough. Ironically, because of the mutual family hatred, this is the Parliamentary seat which Coningsby will occupy as a result of the generosity of Mr. Millbank. This generosity does not materialize, however, until after Coningsby's political defiance of his grandfather and the resultant paltry inheritance which is also a result of Rigby's informing Lord Monmouth of Coningsby's affection for the Millbanks. Mr. Millbank's change of heart concerning Coningsby directly results from Edith's romantic attachment to Coningsby which begins in Paris three years after their initial meeting at Lancashire. Prior to Edith's reintroduction to Coningsby by Sidonia in Paris, additional suspense is injected into the novel by Coningsby's discovery of his mother's picture among his family possessions at Charing Cross, since this picture is remarkably similar to the portrait which he had admired at the Lancashire home of the Millbanks. This mystery is not explained until the dramatic confrontation between Mr. Millbank and Coningsby in which Mr. Millbank requests that Coningsby terminate his relationship with Edith in order to guarantee that his daughter will escape the fate of his first fiancee and truest love, Coningsby's mother, who was destroyed by the vindictiveness of Lord Monmouth.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 310-311, III, 27-28, II, 301-302, III, 161-162.} This scene climaxes the romantic plot of the novel and explains the deep hatred which has smoldered beneath the
surface of the novel, a hatred which affects not only the romantic fortunes of Coningsby, but his political and financial ones as well.

In addition to the suspense caused in the novel by mutual family hatred, suspense also accrues as a result of the fluctuating nature of Coningsby's romance with Edith. After Coningsby's reintroduction to Edith by Sidonia, Coningsby's infatuation is almost immediate: "Coningsby loves." Coningsby soon recognizes two barriers to his love of Edith: his grandfather and his much admired friend and tutor, Sidonia. After receiving some indications from Edith that his love might be reciprocated, Coningsby attends a ball and is emotionally shattered when he overhears Edith and Sidonia engaging in an intimate conversation. Stunned, Coningsby departs for England the following day. 17 During Coningsby's graduation week at Cambridge, he learns from Lady Wallinger that Sidonia has never been a threat to a romantic union with Edith. Encouraged by the information that Sidonia is an intimate friend of the Millbank family and that his relationship with Edith is entirely platonic, Coningsby sends a letter to Oswald Millbank informing him that he will be at Oxford in a few days for a visit. After his first visit with Oswald in three years, Coningsby returns to Coningsby Castle, where he resumes his courtship with Edith, who is residing at Hellingsley. When the elder Millbank returns to his recently purchased estate and discovers that a strong bond of affection exists between his daughter and Coningsby, there is a dramatic confrontation between generations, foreshadowing the political climax of the novel in which Coningsby also suffers external defeat. In this chapter, the climax of the

17 Ibid., p. 28, pp. 75-77.
romantic plot, Coningsby reluctantly agrees to terminate his romance with Edith. Shattered by this traumatic confrontation in which he learns the origin of the Coningsby-Millbank feud, Coningsby returns to his castle accompanied by the sympathizing Oswald. When Rigby unexpectedly arrives and discovers that Coningsby is offering hospitality to a Millbank at the expense of Lord Monmouth, the reader understands that Rigby possesses information which is capable of destroying the affection and respect which Lord Monmouth possesses for his grandson. In order to forget his traumatic experience with the Millbanks, Coningsby departs for a year's vacation in Europe. After his return to London during the summer of 1840, misinformation concerning the love of Edith again causes Coningsby great consternation. He learns that Edith is engaged to marry Lord Beaumanoir, while, at approximately the same time, Edith is misinformed that Coningsby is going to marry Lady Theresa. At a surprise engagement party for Lady Theresa and Eustace Lyle, Lady Wallinger reveals to Coningsby there is no basis for his belief that Edith and Lord Beaumanoir are romantically involved. Consequently, as the final book of the novel begins, the Monmouth-Millbank hostilities constitute the major barrier to a marriage between Coningsby and Edith. However, unbeknownst to the reader or Coningsby, Lord Monmouth has reduced Coningsby's inheritance to a pittance as a result of his bonds with the Millbanks and his rejection of Monmouth's political patronage. Consequently, although the death of Lord Monmouth removes one obstacle to Coningsby's romantic aspirations, his meager inheritance adds two others: in his present position, he is unable to provide his love with
either the material comforts or the social prestige which he believes are necessary for her domestic happiness. These obstacles are quickly removed in the closing chapters of the novel. After Coningsby decides to study law and aspire to "the Great Seal," Mr. Millbank becomes convinced of his character and abilities as a result of the persuasions of his son and the constancy of purpose which Coningsby demonstrates in his studies. More importantly, however, he is moved by the love of Edith for Coningsby, indicated by the drastic deterioration in her personality which occurs after the termination of their romance. Consequently, he withdraws from the Parliamentary campaign at Darlford and nominates Coningsby in his place. After Coningsby defeats Rigby and becomes the Parliamentary representative for Darlford, Mr. Millbank happily approves of the marriage of Coningsby to his daughter and presents to them the estate of Hellingsley as a wedding present. This marriage symbolizes the happy union of the aristocracy with the rising industrial class, a union which Disraeli hopes or believes will demonstrate a concern for the welfare of the common people and will promote programs to ameliorate the depressing conditions which afflict England.

Lucretia Colonna, somewhat like Edith Millbank, helps create suspense and interest in the novel. Structurally, she is the rival of Coningsby for the wealth of Lord Monmouth and she serves as an instructive contrast to the character of Coningsby. Coningsby is introduced to Madame Colonna at his initial meeting with his grandfather in the opening book of the novel. The step-mother of Lucretia is the second wife of the Prince Colonna; his first marriage was
unhappy in every way, and the character of the Prince is a sharp contrast to the character of Coningsby's father. The Prince "was a man dissolute, and devoted to play; and cared for nothing much but his pleasures and billiards... According to some, in a freak of passion according to others, to cancel a gambling debt, he had united himself to his present wife, whose origin was obscure; but with whom he contrived to live on terms of apparent cordiality, for she was much admired, and made the society of her husband sought by those who contributed to his enjoyment." Lord Monmouth was one of those who appreciated the company of the Princess, and as a consequence the world recognized that there was "an intimate and entire friendship" existing between Lord Monmouth and the Prince whose family were frequent quests in his home. Unlike Coningsby, Lucretia was loved neither by her step-mother nor her father. Although Princess Colonna shared little in common with her step-daughter, early in the novel she formulates plans for her marriage to Coningsby, since she feels that this will strengthen her own position with Lord Monmouth. Lucretia, however, resolves to marry Lord Monmouth, because she is ambitious and covets power. Unlike most self-interested characters in the novel, Lucretia is capable of experiencing deep emotion, and her plans to marry Lord Monmouth are temporarily abandoned when she falls in love with Sidonia. After her rejection by Sidonia, she again concentrates her intellect on one point, namely, "to fascinate the grandfather of Coningsby."18 Disraeli presents this information, by flashback, after Lord Monmouth

18 Ibid., I, 49, II, 282.
has informed Rigby that he must inform Madame Colonna that he plans to marry her daughter. This marriage is ironical since Lord Monmouth had advised Coningsby to control his feelings with women, because he believed an excess of emotion was liable to make a man appear ridiculous. The young Princess manipulates Lord Monmouth in the romantic days of their relationship as effectively as Lord Monmouth controls Rigby.

The character of Lucretia leaves much to be desired. She lacks respect for her step-mother. More significantly, she had "not a single moral principle or a single religious truth." Her voice "was the voice of the serpent" and when she moved or spoke, there was an irresistible reminder of that animal. Although Disraeli does not free her of responsibility for her ambition and greed, he does emphasize the effect of her environment on her behavior: "Frequent absence from her own country had by degrees broken off even an habitual form of observance of the forms of her creed; while a life of undisturbed indulgence, void of all anxiety and care, while it preserved her from many of the temptations of vice, deprived her of that wisdom "more precious than rubies" which adversity and affliction, the struggles and sorrows of existence, can alone impart." 19 Coningsby, in contrast, is the product of love and a happy though troubled marriage. Since he is orphaned at an early age, his is not "a life of undisturbed indulgence, void of all anxiety and care"; young Coningsby does experience "adversity and affliction" and "the struggles and sorrows of existence." Perhaps because of the circumstances of his birth and the trying nature of his formative years, Coningsby is able to develop

19 Ibid., 284-285.
sufficient character to reject Lord Monmouth's offer of political patronage, and he is able to respond to the adversity which follows with both perseverance and courage.

The reader first becomes aware that Lucretia is a serious rival to the interests of Coningsby when the bride to be fails to mail Lord Monmouth's letter to Coningsby inviting him to their wedding. As far as the reader can determine, this is the first instance in the novel where Lord Monmouth has cause to suspect the honesty of Lucretia, who later becomes unfaithful to him as his wife. Later in the novel, the devious aspects of her character become obvious when she conspires with Rigby to discredit Coningsby in the eyes of his grandfather in order to increase her own share in Lord Monmouth's will. Surprise is again interjected into the novel when Rigby returns and informs Lady Monmouth of Lord Monmouth's decision to separate from her. Although there has been dinner gossip concerning the infidelity of Lady Monmouth and although Lady Monmouth's mother's rejection by Lord Monmouth earlier in the novel foreshadows the daughter's rejection, the reader is not consciously prepared for this dramatic shift in the plot. The reader is somewhat prepared, however, when Lucretia is not the major beneficiary in the will though he is surprised that Flora Villebecque, the natural daughter of Lord Monmouth, receives the major portion of the inheritance. Since Flora has been the maid servant to Lady Monmouth she has remained in close proximity to her father, thereby making an unexpected twist in the plot somewhat plausible.

In the opening Book of Coningsby, Rigby serves as the link between Lord Monmouth and his grandson. This is demonstrated in the
first chapter of the novel which also illustrates the comic aspect of Rigby's character and links politics to the Coningsby family. In several instances, Rigby serves as a transitional device connecting the fictional Coningsby to the historical events which occur between the passage of the Reform Bill and Peel's selection as Prime Minister in 1841. Conveniently, for the smooth evolution of the plot, Lord Monmouth decides to manipulate Coningsby as a tool for his political attainment of a Dukedom. To attain such a goal, Rigby cultivates and sustains the influence of Lord Monmouth in Parliament, often doing Lord Monmouth's political "dirty work." It is rather as the overseer of Monmouth's personal fortunes, however, that Rigby's "dirty work" is most significant in the structuring of the plot: he informs the Princess Colonna that Lord Monmouth has rejected her in favor of her daughter; this foreshadows Lord Monmouth's rejection of Lady Monmouth in which Rigby is again the instrument of bad fortune. On this occasion, Lady Monmouth predicts that Rigby too will eventually be discarded by Lord Monmouth, and this prophecy is fulfilled at the reading of Lord Monmouth's will when Flora Villabecque is named the principal beneficiary of the will. Comically, insult is combined with injury when Rigby receives a bust of himself which "he had himself presented to his lordship, and which at his desire had been placed in the vestibule of Coningsby Castle." This gift was inspired "from the amiable motive that after Lord Monmouth's decease Mr. Rigby might wish perhaps to present it to some other friend." 20 This is not the only occasion in the novel

20Ibid., III, 290-291.
where Rigby's character provides a touch of comic relief.

As we have already observed, Rigby is a political character and as such his character and his actions add considerably to the political setting of the novel, while at the same time they are instrumental in the development of the plot. As Lord Monmouth's political stooge and representative in Parliament, he symbolically represents the older generation which Young England challenges. Significantly, Coningsby instinctively dislikes Rigby and realizes as a young man that Rigby is intellectually shallow. Consequently, the reader should not be surprised when Coningsby defeats him at the Parliamentary election at Darlford. Rigby's defeat has been fore­shadowed at the close of Book I, when Coningsby and his Eton classmates engage him in an informal debate at Montero. During this debate, the taunting of the young Etonians causes Rigby to lose his temper and to lash out with slashing invectives against his youthful adversaries. Despite his experience in such matters, Rigby is unsuccessful in his argument and his embarrassment is deserved since, as the narrator advises, "he brought the infliction on himself by his strange habit of deciding on subjects of which he knew nothing, and of always contradicting persons of the very subjects of which they were necessarily master."21 The characteristics of affectation, pomposity, and ineffectualness demonstrated in this confrontation are also manifest in the opening pages of the novel; consequently, his defeat by Coningsby at the termination of the novel should not be unexpected. In this first chapter, Rigby stubbornly insists that

21Ibid., I, 136.
Tadpole, Taper, and Lord Sydney are mistaken in their belief that Lord Grey has resigned and that Lord Lyndhurst is conversing with the King concerning the appointment of a new Prime Minister. When the Duke of Beaumanoir informs Rigby that his authority for the information is Lord Lyndhurst, the posture of Rigby remains affectionate, although he becomes increasingly ridiculous in the process.

This pattern of behavior is repeated at Beaumanoir when the guests are informed at breakfast that Lord Spencer has died. Rigby refuses to accept the validity of this information, itemizing reasons why this death could not have occurred. The Duke of Beaumanoir, as in the opening pages of the novel, squelches Rigby by informing him that he is the executor of Lord Spencer's estate and that Lord Spencer has indeed died. As a result of such performances, Rigby cannot be considered as a serious threat to either Coningsby or Young England, and this is underscored by the function of Lucian Gay in the novel. Early in the novel the reader perceives that Lucian Gay is the stooge of Rigby, just as Rigby is the stooge of Lord Monmouth. Unlike Rigby, however, Lucian Gay is aware of the nature of his role, a role which requires that he be a pawn of Rigby.

In the fourth book of the novel, Coningsby is pleasantly surprised to discover that Lucian Gay utilizes his considerable talents for mimicry, talents which Rigby has pandered to Lord Monmouth, to ludicrously imitate the voice and character of the Right Honorable Nicholas Rigby for the members of the Grumpy Club. Coningsby is much entertained by Lucian Gay's performance and much pleased that others have perceived the affectation and pomposity of Rigby.
Despite the fact, as this study indicates, that *Coningsby* is a well planned and intricately structured novel, the impact of the novel is not one of power or emotional intensity. One can propose several reasons why this is so. Undoubtedly, the didactic and propagandistic intent of Disraeli has affected the quality of *Coningsby*. In writing *Coningsby*, Disraeli strove primarily to enhance his position in political life. To become a literary genius was no longer his all-consuming ambition; instead, the writing of fiction had become a literary means of attaining a political end. Not surprisingly, then, *Coningsby* is memorable because of its political substance; the fictional narrative is of secondary importance. In fact, the evolution of Coningsby the man as opposed to Coningsby the political genius is patently uninspiring and invites little interest. This is not meant to imply that the political substance of the novel is not beyond criticism. (It is not the purpose of this dissertation to evaluate the validity or historical accuracy of historical material in *Coningsby*. Such a study could very easily be the substance of an additional dissertation.) While the evolution of Coningsby as a political genius is successfully fused with the romantic plot, Disraeli's political commentaries are not equally successful in maintaining the dramatic pace of the novel. These commentaries, at times, though they can be structurally justified, impede the dramatic pace of the novel and have a tendency to bore the modern reader.

Another prominent weakness in the novel is a deficiency in the character of Coningsby: he is incapable of experiencing convincing emotion. To say this differently, in *Coningsby* Disraeli ineffectively
renders emotion; Coningsby overreacts emotionally because Disraeli has an unfortunate tendency to overwrite emotional scenes in the novel. Consequently, the romance between Coningsby and Edith is bland; Disraeli's words, rather than the character of Coningsby or Edith, convince the reader of the authenticity of their emotions. On the other hand, the most successful writing in the novel depicts political scenes and political characters. For example, the dramatic confrontation between Coningsby and Lord Monmouth, as well as the scenes depicting the political maneuvering necessary for the acquisition of power are compelling creations. The characters of Lord Monmouth, Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper are also entertaining and enhance the political dimension of the novel. In these instances, Disraeli's writing has a universal quality which makes Coningsby a significant contribution to the "political history of human nature."

In his history of Charles the First, Isaac suggested that an enterprising and innovative author might successfully rewrite the life of George Rigby, and, in the process, construct a biographical romance with a political character as its hero. For this creation, Isaac believed, the novelist should depict "an extraordinary being--a perfection of human nature, the very idealism of romance," and Isaac also believed that the truths which the novelist "would have to tell would at least equal the fictions that he would invent." Coningsby, as we have indicated, is an ideal political hero. Not surprisingly, as such, his character is also somewhat unconvincing since he must perform his political activity in a real, not an ideal, world. The dominant qualities of Coningsby, as we have indicated, are Pre-disposition, Self-Formation, Constancy of Purpose and Sympathy with
his order. These are qualities which both Isaac D'Israeli and his son believed to be essential components of the personality of genius. This, perhaps, constitutes some of the "truth" which Disraeli the novelist has attempted to present in this fictional biography of a political hero. These qualities, while they may help to explain the evolution of a political genius, are insufficient for instilling convincing life into Coningsby. Ultimately, perhaps, Benjamin Disraeli was influenced overmuch by his father in the creation of his protagonist, sacrificing in the process the spontaneous enthusiasm and conception necessary for the creation of a great novel.

Nevertheless, Coningsby is a major contribution to literary history since it is the first political novel. By Isaac D'Israeli's standards, his son had performed a feat of literary genius, for in his Essay on the Literary Character he had written that "a single great man is sufficient to accomplish a change in the taste of his age." By initiating a literary genre, Benjamin Disraeli had influenced not only the literary taste of his own age, but also that of succeeding ones. Although the author of Coningsby did not become the literary giant that he had aspired to become as a young man, his not insignificant contribution to English literature revealed considerable literary talent. The achievement of Benjamin Disraeli and Coningsby had perhaps unwittingly been described by his father when he wrote that "even genius not of the same colossal size may aspire

22Essay, p. 273.
to add to the progressive mass of human improvement by its own effort. When an author writes on a national subject, he awakens all the knowledge which slumbers in a nation, and calls around him, as it were, every man of talent; and though his own fame may be eclipsed by successors, yet the emanation, the morning light broke from his solitary study."^{23}
APPENDIX I
THE PLOT OF CONINGSBY: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

As the chapter entitled Sympathy with his Order implies, the political background or setting of Coningsby is an integral part of the structure of the novel since a political character cannot be divorced from the political and historical events of his age. For the most part, the historical and political material of Coningsby is judiciously fused into the main action of the novel which records the evolution of a political hero and culminates in his election to Parliament in the final chapters of the novel.

BOOK I

Book I illustrates the ability of Disraeli to combine politics, plot, and character without sacrificing the attention of the reader. In this expository book, Disraeli presents historical material relating to the passage of the first Reform Bill of 1832. With this legislation as his backdrop, Disraeli introduces young Coningsby and explains his activities during the days surrounding the passage of this legislation. The first chapter of the novel records one aspect of the political maneuvering which ultimately resulted in the increase of the franchise. In a comic scene, Tadpole, Taper, and the Duke of Beaumanor attempt to convince Rigby that Lord Grey has resigned as Prime Minister and that Lord Lyndhurst is in conference with
the King discussing the formation of a Tory government. In this chapter, as in other instances, Rigby functions as a transitional figure, linking politics to the life of Coningsby. The resignation of Lord Grey has generated the presence of Tadpole and Taper in the London residence of Lord Monmouth since they are anxious to discuss the significance of this event with Rigby, the manager of Lord Monmouth's political affairs. The significance of this bill to Lord Monmouth is not to be underestimated since he, like Lord Eskdale, is one of the two greatest proprietors of close boroughs in England. Consequently, Lord Monmouth has interrupted his relaxation at his luxurious Italian residence in order to lobby directly in Parliament for the defeat of this bill which would erode his power. While Lord Monmouth is in the House of Lords debating the merits of this bill, he learns from the Duke of Beaumanoir that Coningsby and the Duke's son are schoolmates. As a result of this chain of events set in motion by the impending Reform Bill, Rigby, who also manages Lord Monmouth's personal affairs, introduces Coningsby to Tadpole, Taper, and the Duke of Beaumanoir at the close of the first chapter. Rigby has brought Coningsby from Eton to satisfy Lord Monmouth's desire to meet his grandson.

The second chapter of Coningsby describes the Coningsby family history and explains the character and role of Rigby in the novel. In addition, Disraeli utilizes another device for the introduction of political material. By authorial intrusion,
Disraeli interjects commentary explaining the agitated state of the nation and explains how the "waverers" were persuaded to support the Reform Bill by King William's threat to create enough peers to guarantee the passage of the bill in the House of Lords. Since this commentary is rather brief, it does not impede the pace of the novel. (This is also true of the commentary in chapter seven.) The third chapter presents Coningsby's initial meeting with his grandfather, and Coningsby's embarrassment and failure foreshadow the dramatic confrontation between grandfather and grandson in the climactic scene of the novel. After this initial meeting, Coningsby recovers his composure and meets Princess Colonna and Lucretia at lunch. (iv) Meanwhile, Tadpole and Taper discuss the implications of the Reform Bill, and similar conversations are occurring simultaneously at the Brooks and Carlton Clubs. Later, at Lord Monmouth's dinner, Disraeli again utilizes conversation as a device to weave politics into the plot. There, Tadpole and Taper continue their discussion, and Lord Monmouth offers a friendly greeting to his grandson whose behavior has displeased him. (v) Later in the evening, Coningsby regains the respect of his grandfather as a result of his social composure and by his declaration of faith in the institution of Eton. (vi) Chapter seven is introduced by a commentary explaining the Duke of Wellington's attempt to form a Tory government and to gain Tory support for the Reform Bill. His failure is traced to the fact that he is primarily a military, not a political, genius. Additional commentary presents
historical information concerning the estates of the realm and advising that the passage of the Reform Bill "virtually conceded the principle of universal suffrage." While residing at the Monmouth residence, Coningsby is frequently exposed to political conversation. As Coningsby returns to Eton, his grandfather indicates that he has changed his initial impression of Coningsby by assuring him of ample provisions while he is at school and by promising his grandson that he will arrive at Eton for a visit during Montem. (vii) At Eton, Coningsby's classmates, the future members of the Young England Party, are thrilled by Lord Monmouth's impending visit and their conversation encompasses the agitation in the country and the passage of the Reform Bill. Oswald Millbank, whom Coningsby initially dislikes, challenges Coningsby's beliefs by his assertion that the Reform Bill will prevent revolution. (viii) In the following chapter, the rivalry between Coningsby and the industrialist's son is discontinued when Coningsby rescues Oswald Millbank from drowning. (ix-x) Their ensuing friendship makes it possible for Coningsby to meet his sister, Edith. Tension is created in this relationship, however, because of the class conflict between the aristocracy and the rising middle class, as well as by mutual hatred which exists between Lord Monmouth and Mr. Millbank. As the novel progresses, these conflicts surface and stimulate the interest of the reader. When Coningsby requests permission to invite Oswald Millbank to a dinner party at Eton during Montem, Rigby rejects this request, explaining
that "there is nothing in the world Lord Monmouth dislikes as much as Manchester manufacturers, and particularly if they bear the name of Millbank." The aspirations of industrialists such as Millbank and the passage of the Reform Bill pose a significant threat to the existing political order, and this is in Lord Monmouth's mind when he warns at the close of the first book that evil days are ahead for the new generation. This is ironical since it is he who temporarily frustrates the political, financial, and romantic aspirations of his grandson, the leader of the new generation.

BOOK II

The second book of Coningsby is primarily concerned with the political events of 1834-1835 and Coningsby's education in his final year at Eton. The introductory chapter contains a political lecture in which Disraeli laments the quality of the Tory party which has deteriorated since the ministry of Pitt. Wellington, Canning, Huskinson, and Liverpool, whom Disraeli terms "the Arch-Mediocrity," receive unflattering attention from the commentator. The Tory party relied too often upon expediency instead of principle, we are told, and once faced with the problems of peace and the deteriorating condition of England, -- a deterioration caused by man's supreme control over material power without a parallel advancement in moral civilization -- the Tory government was inept. Unfortunately, the Whig party has been
even more expedient and less able to provide effective national leadership. Despite the overwhelming victory of the Whigs in the 1832 elections and the predictions of political seers that they would be in power for at least a generation, their power crumbled as a result of party dissension, a lack of party discipline, an unnatural excess of strength, and a demoralized Tory party which provided no constructive opposition. As early as 1835, Disraeli thematically advises, there were indications that a new political party was needed to solve the problems of England.

The need for change is illustrated "by the class of Rigbys" and by the activities of Rigby himself, who at this time is an ineffectual member of the House of Commons. As in the opening chapter in the novel, Rigby provides the link between the political world and the life of Coningsby, as well as providing a comic touch to the novel. After Rigby has vigorously lobbied for the appointment of the Duke of Wellington as Prime Minister, only to discover that Mr. Canning had received this appointment, he demonstrates the hypocrisy and double-dealing which is sometimes necessary to prolong political life by rushing to the residence of Mr. Canning and exclaiming "all is right, . . . I have convinced the king that the first minister must be in the House of Commons. No one knows it but myself; but it is certain." (i)

The time of the lengthy lecture which introduces the first chapter is November, 1834, and the occasion is the hospitality of the Sidneys at Beaumanoir, where they have invited guests for sporting activities and the discussion of politics. Among the
guests are Rigby, Tadpole, Taper, and many former office holders in the Tory administration which had been defeated in 1832. In the political conversations which ensue, the present state of national affairs is examined and the possibilities of regaining political office are explored. Tadpole, Taper, and Rigby, as representatives of the older political generation, demonstrate their narrow self-interest. (ii) The following morning at breakfast, the science of politics is again the topic of conversation, as well as the health and educational progress of Lord Sydney's nephew, Coningsby. (iii) The breakfast gathering is marred by the news of Lord Spencer's death and the disruption of plans, including Lord Sydney's hurried departure for London. Before Lord Sydney's departure, however, Rigby duplicates his performance in the first chapter of Coningsby. In this instance, he refuses to believe that Lord Spencer has died until the Lord of Beaumanoir informs him that he is the executor of Lord Spencer's estate. Since a dissolution of Parliament is imminent, all guests make hurried preparations to depart for London. (iii)

The topic of conversation in London is the formation of a new government. At a political dinner, Tadpole and Taper circulate among the guests, and Lord Eskdale suggests that Rigby is about to write an important document. The Duke of Beaumanoir states that this is not true; Peel will write the document himself. (iv) This document, we are informed, is the Tamworth Manifesto, and Disraeli's scathing evaluation of this declaration
constitutes a direct attack against Peel, the new Prime Minister in 1841 and the leader of the Conservative Party. For the first time in the novel, the thematic question is asked: what are the principles which the Conservative Party wishes to conserve? (v) While this document is being written, political conversation continues at the party. Tadpole and Taper discuss the merits of discarding Rigby as their political ally. (vi) As long as there are political situations, Coningsby will be a useful tool for understanding manipulators and climbers in the political arena. The last chapter of Book II contrasts sharply with the negative view of man illustrated by Tadpole, Taper, and Rigby. At Eton, a bond of affection and sympathy has evolved among Coningsby, Vere, Buckhurst, Sydney, and Oswald Millbank. Much of their conversation concerns political events, and they, too, begin to ponder the question of principles in the Conservative Party. Because of his tutors, who consider Coningsby a future leader of England, Coningsby hears whispered the question: what are the principles which the Conservative party wishes to conserve? In his final year at Eton, a significant portion of Coningsby's time is occupied by independent study and meditation. The concluding paragraphs of this second book suggest that Coningsby possesses a primordial and creative mind, a mind capable of discovering truth through the powers of the intellect. Coningsby's apparent awareness of this capacity is demonstrated in a paragraph which reflects the inability of Disraeli to present scenes, moods, and emotions in a convincing and entertaining manner.
The night before Coningsby left Eton, alone in his room, before he retired to rest, he opened the lattice and looked for the last time upon the landscape before him; the stately keep of Windsor, the bowery meads of Eton, soft in the summer moon and still in the summer night. He gazed upon them; his countenance had none of the exultation, that under such circumstances might have distinguished a more careless glance, eager for fancied emancipation and passionate for a novel existence. Its expression was serious, even sad; and he covered his brow with his hand. (vii)

BOOK III

During the summer of 1836, Coningsby contemplates his future and the strong bonds of sympathy which he shares with his Eton comrades as he travels to Beaumanoir. When a storm threatens, he retires to an inn where he meets the wise and inspirational Sidonia. This extraordinary man stimulates Coningsby's ambitious nature, advising him that individuals can alter the "Spirit of the Age" and that the combination of youth and genius is divine. Before their separation, Coningsby is exposed to another thematic idea in the novel: "The Age of Ruins is past," advises Sidonia, who inquires, "Have you seen Manchester?" (The final paragraphs of this third book explain Coningsby's decision to visit Manchester, where he meets Edith Millbank.)

The second chapter of the third book again dwells on Coningsby's desire to become a great man. Since his graduation from Eton, two short months past, his excellent mind has undergone a maturing process during which he has given considerable thought to the civil and religious unrest which permeates the country. This unrest will be a subject of conversation at the castle of the Sydneys. Both the Sydneys and their home contrast sharply
with Lord Monmouth and his residence: Beaumanoir is a home as well as a house, and the Sydneys are conspicuous for their good feelings and generosity. Despite their gracious hospitality, Coningsby realizes that he must acquire more social experience, for he is somewhat awkward in the presence of women.

(ii) While at Beaumanoir, Coningsby is introduced to Eustace Lyle, the wealthiest commoner in the country. After a dinner at Beaumanoir, the hosts and his guests engage in a political and social discussion, and Henry Sydney expresses a deep and sympathetic feeling for the suffering of the poor which has resulted from the enactment of the New Poor Law. This is in sharp contrast to the feelings of Lord Everingham, who is not affected by their misfortune; and during this discussion he introduces an additional theme in the novel: the present age is "The Age of Utility." Eustace Lyle's reaction to the problem is more altruistic; on his estate at St. Genevieve he aids the poor by practicing the ancient monastic custom of Almsday.

At the conclusion of the chapter, all are invited to St. Genevieve in order to witness this traditional practice. (iii) During their visit the following day, the visitors admire the Lyle estate, lavishing most praise upon its beautiful chapel.

Coningsby, as well as the Sydneys, is very much impressed by the activities of Almsday and the mutual respect and admiration which exists between the poor and Mr. Lyle, who demonstrates that property owners can be protectors and friends of the poor. During his visit to Beaumanoir and St. Genevieve, Coningsby is flattered by the company of Lady Everingham as he attempts to master the art
of conversation with the opposite sex. (iv)

In the concluding chapter of this book, Eustace Lyle confesses to Coningsby his disappointment in both the Whig and the Tory parties and again introduces the question of the principles which the Conservative party wishes to conserve. The wealthy landowner derives confidence from the political opinions of Coningsby, though Coningsby has only been able to conclude at this point in his political evolution "that there are still great truths, if we could but work them out; that government for instance should be loved and not hated, and that religion should be a faith, not a form." Mr. Lyle and the Sydneys illustrate the effect that responsible and sympathetic members of the upper class can have on improving the lot of the poor. Again, this contrasts sharply with the personality and activities of Lord Monmouth, who is now planning to return to his native country from Italy and who requests a meeting with his grandson. Before travelling to Coningsby Castle for this meeting with his grandfather, Coningsby becomes sensitive to his need for additional social training by the presence of Mr. Melton, who now receives the flattering attention of Lady Everingham. Since Manchester is in the same county as Coningsby Castle, Coningsby decides to visit Manchester before meeting his grandfather.

BOOK IV

The introductory chapter of the fourth book is a brief, transitional lecture which focuses attention upon the Utilitarian "Spirit of the Age" which is epitomized by the city of Manchester.
Disraeli recognizes, however, that industrial and scientific progress is not necessarily a threat to man. "Rightly understood," he states, "Manchester is as great a human exploit as Athens." Unfortunately, it is only the philosopher "who can conceive the grandeur of Manchester, and the immensity of its future." (i) Coningsby relates this material progress to the political order, marvelling that "in this unprecedented partnership between capital and science, working on a spot which nature had indicated as the fitting theatre of their exploits, he beheld a great source of the wealth of nations which had been reserved for these times, and he perceived that the wealth was rapidly developing classes whose power was very imperfectly recognized in the constitutional scheme, and whose duties in the social scheme seemed altogether omitted." Although Coningsby is extremely impressed with the scientific and industrial expansion which he has witnessed, he is advised by an industrialist, Mr. G.O.A. Head, that even greater industrial achievements have been accomplished in Millbank, a town named for the owner of the Millbank factories. As a result of this information, Harry Coningsby tours a Millbank factory on September 2, 1836. When Mr. Millbank realizes that Coningsby is the Eton schoolmate of Oswald who had rescued him from drowning, the industrialist invites Coningsby to his home for dinner. During their initial conversation, a cloud passes over the face of Mr. Millbank when Coningsby mentions he is journeying to visit Lord Monmouth at Coningsby Castle. Despite this momentary break in composure,
Mr. Millbank reacts kindly to Coningsby and leads him for a stroll through his workers' village. At the Millbank home, Coningsby meets Oswald's sixteen-year-old sister, whose adolescent reaction to Coningsby foreshadows her deep feelings for Coningsby later in the novel. After dinner, Coningsby and Mr. Millbank engage in a wide-ranging conversation in which Mr. Millbank criticizes the English aristocracy and suggests that nobility should be based on natural accomplishments rather than heredity. To a certain extent, Mr. Millbank believes that this has already occurred in the House of Commons which now dominates Parliament. The manners of England have preserved it from its laws since the manners "have substituted for our formal aristocracy an essential aristocracy; the government of those who are distinguished by their fellow citizens." Mr. Millbank views himself as a "Disciple of Progress" and strikes a thematic note of family conflict by stating that "I defy any peer to crush me, though there is one who should be very glad to do it." Earlier in the chapter another thematic note was struck by Mr. Millbank when he advised Coningsby that "Saxon industry and Norman manners will never agree." This underlies the conflict between Lord Monmouth and Mr. Millbank and anticipates the marriage of Coningsby and Edith at the termination of the novel which unites the new industrial class with the aristocracy. An additional thematic note is interjected when Coningsby admires a portrait of a beautiful girl among Mr. Millbank's art treasures. Mr. Millbank's reaction to Coningsby's inquiry about the painting is one of
agitation and anger, since, unbeknownst to Coningsby, this is a portrait of his mother who had been engaged to Mr. Millbank prior to her marriage to Coningsby senior. This anger and agitation foreshadows the climactic, romantic scene of the novel in which Coningsby learns the origin of the hatred which exists between Mr. Millbank and his grandfather and is forbidden to continue his romance with Edith. (iv)

The fifth chapter recounts Coningsby's return to Coningsby Castle for the meeting which his grandfather had requested. After residing abroad for four years, Lord Monmouth had determined that the time was now opportune for his return to the political order. As a part of his master plan, he hoped to bribe the members of the Darlford borough with hospitality and thereby acquire control of this Parliamentary seat at the next Parliamentary election. Ultimately, he hoped to control enough votes in Parliament to acquire a Dukedom for himself, a goal which he already would have achieved except for the passage of the Reform Act which had "deprived him of twelve votes which he had accumulated to attain that object." Lord Monmouth's cynical manipulation of voters contrasts sharply with Mr. Millbank's concern for responsible government and the welfare of the populace presented in the preceding chapters. As this chapter ends, Coningsby is pleasantly surprised by the reception he receives at the castle which bears his name. (v) Coningsby Castle is again contrasted with Beaumanoir at the beginning of the sixth chapter, and emotional warmth is found wanting in the Monmouth home. Coningsby apprehensively anticipates his attendance at the first large party of his
life, but after contemplating his value as a member of the Coningsby family, he regains his confidence and boldly makes his social entry. Choosing a propitious moment, he introduces himself to Lord Monmouth, who immediately perceives that his grandson might be a useful tool in helping him attain a Dukedom. Rigby, aware that Coningsby has received a favorable reception from Lord Monmouth, shrewdly engages him in conversation. (vi)

The guests of Lord Monmouth are to be entertained by a troupe of actors managed by Monsieur Villebecque, and his step-daughter, Flora Villebecque, will make her acting debut at the evening performance. Although Disraeli narrates the events which culminated in the illegitimate birth of Flora, the reader is not informed that her father is Lord Monmouth, thereby increasing the surprise in the novel when she is named the primary beneficiary in Lord Monmouth's will in the final book of Coningsby. (vii) Although thirteen-year-old Flora performs well in the evening, she is not emotionally equal to the completion of her performance. After the evening's entertainment, Coningsby visits Flora in her dressing room to console her with admiration and sympathy. Despite Coningsby's generous concern, Flora firmly resolves that this has been her last stage performance, striking the plaintive note which is the mark of her star-crossed character in the novel. "I know myself," she advises Coningsby and her step-father, "I am not one of those to whom nature gives talents. I am born only for still life. I have no taste except for privacy. The convent is more suited to me than the stage." As graciously as possible,
Coningsby departs from the dressing room, joining Madame Colonna and Lucretia at the party where Madame Colonna attempts to promote a romance between Coningsby and her step-daughter. (viii)

In the next chapter, Disraeli again contrasts the Beaumanoir and Coningsby estates to the detriment of Coningsby Castle. Beaumanoir is tastefully furnished and has the atmosphere of a home cheerfully inhabited and enjoyed; on the other hand, Coningsby Castle is ostentatiously furnished and projects an atmosphere of coldness and impersonality. At this time, Lord Monmouth informs Coningsby that a distinguished visitor is about to appear at Coningsby Castle, and Coningsby is advised to cultivate the friendship of this enormously wealthy and wise man. Although Coningsby had never learned his name, this mysterious guest is Sidonia, whom he had met while travelling to Beaumanoir after his graduation from Eton. Pending the arrival of Sidonia, Coningsby frequently rides with Lord Monmouth and Lucretia into the country, where Lord Monmouth shows his young friends the estate of Hellingsley, which he anticipates purchasing at the death of its owner. Lucretia is very solicitous of the health of Lord Monmouth, who is flattered by her attention; this anticipates their later and sudden marriage, which shatters the romantic plans of Madame Colonna for Coningsby, Lucretia, Lord Monmouth, and especially, herself. The plot moves forward another notch in chapter nine as Flora becomes the maid-servant of Lucretia and her step-father becomes a permanent member of the Monmouth entourage. The constant presence of Flora in the Monmouth household contributes to the plausibility of Lord Monmouth's final will,
although the content of this will is still very much a surprise to the reader. (ix)

Sidonia, while visiting Coningsby Castle, instructs Coningsby of the importance of race in the potential success of an individual. Purity of race is conducive to success, we are told, and the Jewish race is deemed superior in this respect. Since England was not prepared at this time to accept a Jewish political hero in fiction, Disraeli, it would seem, was forced to preach his own racial superiority indirectly through Sidonia. At a dinner, the conversation quite naturally evolves into a discussion of the Reform Bill, and Sidonia announces that this legislation was the consequence of social power rather than physical force. Later, when Sidonia learns that Coningsby is the apparent heir to the Monmouth fortune, he warns that sometimes such wealth is enervating to the owner. Also, at this dinner party, Sidonia is introduced to Lucretia, and they appear to be mutually attracted to each other. During their conversation another thematic note is struck when Sidonia, commenting upon the boring routine of contemporary social life, suggests that "in the old days it was a routine of great thoughts, and now it is a routine of little ones."

One of the stated purposes of Coningsby is the elevation of the intellectual and political atmosphere whose sterility is exemplified by Mr. Rigby, who is satirized at the Grumpy Club by Lucian Gay. (xi)

Finally, Madame Colonna makes explicit that which already has been hinted in the novel -- she plans for Coningsby to marry
her step-daughter. Consequently, there are three potential romances for Coningsby now in the plot — Flora Villebecque and Edith Millbank as well as Lucretia. Lucretia, however, falls in love with Sidonia. (xii) Meanwhile, in a conversation with Coningsby, Sidonia traces the evolution of political power in England, concluding that the power has moved to the people. Because of England's national character, Sidonia is optimistic about the future of the country. However, he has perceived a decline in public virtue within the country, as well as a decline "of its character as a community." Although the Utilitarian philosophy has made some positive contributions to England's progress, Sidonia believes that it must ultimately fail because it lacks imagination. This chapter anticipates Young England's mission to elevate the national character of England through the presentation of noble ideas and principles. (xiii) In order to entertain his guests, Lord Monmouth plans a steeple chase and Coningsby and Sidonia are rivals. A hint of romance and mystery is incorporated in this chapter when Coningsby anonymously receives some newly made racing clothes, causing conjecture concerning their origin. (Later in the novel we can conclude that the gift was from Flora.) Coningsby's mount in the steeple chase is "Sir Robert." Prophetically, "Sir Robert" and Coningsby finished second in the race because Coningsby "had overestimated his horse's powers... and a rattling fall was the consequence." Disraeli did not overestimate the powers of Sir Robert Peel in 1845. Instead of allowing Peel an opportunity to drive him from the party, Disraeli successfully challenged his leadership role, toppling Peel
from his position as Conservative leader. (xiv) After the race, Lord Monmouth offers Coningsby some Polonius-like advice as Coningsby prepares to depart for Cambridge. Sidonia, who is also about to depart from Coningsby Castle, advises Lucretia that "the heart is a nervous sensation like shyness which gradually disappears in society." (xv) As the fourth book concludes, Lucretia weeps in her room lamenting the cold and impersonal departure of Sidonia.

BOOK V

At Cambridge Coningsby quickly adjusted to college life as a result of his training at Eton which emphasized independent study. During the intervening summer months since his graduation from Eton, he had gained in worldly experience. However, he did not neglect his intellectual faculties, contemplating the knowledge which he had acquired at Eton and pondering the fact that the three wisest men that he knew -- Sidonia, Mr. Millbank, and Eustace Lyle -- were disenchanted with the political structure of the country. This problem continues to be a subject for his vigorous intellect during his years at Cambridge, where his schoolmates included Buckhurst, Vere, and Henry Sydney, the nucleus of the Young England alliance. Although Coningsby's intellectual reputation preceded him to Cambridge, he resolved to pursue knowledge for its own sake, determining that the attainment of academic distinction was of secondary importance. As a result of his social experience during the summer months, he was not in danger of becoming a prig. In addition, he would not become a
profligate since he possessed the heroic feeling and noble ambition which are characteristics of genius. (i) After the death of King William IV in June, 1837, the dissolution of Parliament which Lord Monmouth had anticipated became a fact. Disraeli utilizes this information to interject political commentary concerning the inefficiency of the Whig government during the years 1837-1841 and to advise that "the greatest of all evils is a weak government. They cannot carry good measures, they are forced to carry bad ones." Not surprisingly, then, the Cambridge students support the Conservative candidate in their borough. After his victory, the Young England group discuss the implications of their candidate's victory and discover that the Conservative party lacks meaningful principles. As a result, they resolve to form a new party, one based on principle. As the chapter concludes, Coningsby, alone in meditation perceives that "Man is made in the image of the Creator, is made for God-like deeds. Come what may, I will cling to the heroic principle. It can alone satisfy my soul." In the climactic political scene involving Coningsby and Lord Monmouth, Coningsby remains true to this resolution. (ii)

In the next chapter, the novel reverts to the winter of 1836 and focuses upon the personal affairs of Lord Monmouth. For the first time, we learn explicitly that Lord Monmouth and Mr. Millbank are bitter enemies, although the origin of their animosity remains a mystery. The occasion of this information is the purchase of the Hellingsley estate by Mr. Millbank. Meanwhile, at Coningsby
Castle, which is contiguous to the Hellingsley estate, Prince
Colonna is thrown from a horse and killed. After the funeral,
Princess Colonna accepts Lord Monmouth's hospitality, and she
and her daughter become semi-permanent guests at the Castle.
When the Princess becomes apprehensive about gossip, Rigby,
as Lord Monmouth's emissary, persuades her to remain in resi­
dence by stressing Lord Monmouth's unexpressed intentions and
deep feeling for the Princess. As a result, Lord Monmouth be­
comes very "serene and joyous." Be this as it may, chapter
three concludes with Lord Monmouth's plans for the election of
July, 1837. Rigby will be his candidate for the seat at Darlford,
"a manufacturing town, enfranchised under the Reform Act." His
opponent will be Mr. Millbank, the new owner of Hellingsley.
(iii) The ensuing chapter depicts the election campaign at
Darlford and includes political commentary critical of the Whig
party. Although Lord John Russell was a highly capable leader,
Disraeli explains his potential was not recognized by the Whig
party. This was unfortunate for their political fortunes since
their ineffectiveness was caused by "the absence of individual
influence, of the pervading authority of a commanding voice."
Despite fights, abductions, and the polling of dead men, Rigby
is defeated by Mr. Millbank. (iv) Not surprisingly, it is a
worried Rigby who returns to Lord Monmouth in London to inform
him of his defeat. Surprisingly, Lord Monmouth is extremely
philosophic concerning this political setback, and, even more
surprisingly, Lord Monmouth informs Rigby that he will marry
Lucretia. Rigby, who had anticipated Lord Monmouth's marriage to
her mother, Madame Colonna, is dispatched to inform the mother
of Lord Monmouth's plans. (v) The Monmouth-Lucretia romance began in the autumn of 1836. At that time, prior to the meeting of Sidonia by Lucretia, Lucretia had already decided to marry Lord Monmouth. One of the central ironies in the novel is that Lord Monmouth, who had advised Coningsby to avoid feelings and emotional involvements with women, is unable to heed his own advice when he is continuously exposed to the will and the wiles of Lucretia. As a result, in a stormy encounter, Rigby finds it expedient to convince Madame Colonna that it is in her self-interest not to embarrass or inconvenience Lord Monmouth concerning his marriage plans. After the marriage, as almost an addendum to the chapter, the reader is informed that Villabecque has been made the intendant of the Monmouth household and that Flora will retain her position with the new Lady Monmouth. Thus the primary beneficiary of Lord Monmouth's will remains constantly but inconspicuously present in the Monmouth household. (vi) In August, 1838, Coningsby, the apparent and obvious heir to the Monmouth estate, has completed successfully the school year at Cambridge. The twenty-one-year-old student thirsted for knowledge, since he realized that knowledge was power. Nevertheless, he was not a recluse; he continued friendship with the Young England group and he joined the debating society. Although Lord Monmouth had written to Coningsby to inform him of his impending marriage, Coningsby had never received this letter. Lucretia, who took custody of the letter from Villabecque, chose not to mail it. When Coningsby learned of the marriage from a newspaper, he extended
his congratulations to his grandfather by letter. By question ing Villebecque, Lord Monmouth learned of Lucretia's deceit. However, the new bridegroom chose not to confront his bride with his knowledge of her deceit. In his original letter to Coningsby, Lord Monmouth had "assured his grandson that his alliance should make no difference in the very ample provision which he had long intended him; and that he should ever esteem Coningsby his nearest relative; and that while his death should bring to Coningsby as considerable an independence as an English gentlemen need desire, so, in his life time, Coningsby should ever be supported as became his birth, breeding and future prospects." At Lord Monmouth's invitation, Coningsby decides to visit the Monmouths at their Paris residence in December. While passing through Charing Cross on his journey to Paris, Coningsby receives from his family banker the personal papers of his father. Included in these papers is a picture of his mother. To his surprise and consternation, he realizes that he had admired a portrait of his mother during his visit to the Millbank home. In Paris, Coningsby finds that Lucretia has become "a great lady," greatly admired in Parisian society. (viii) While at Paris, Coningsby unexpectedly meets Sidonia, who lectures him concerning the stability of the French government, the virtues of pure monarchy, the power of public opinion, and the influence of the printing press. In an art gallery, Coningsby admires a young, English lady who he learns is the niece of Sir Joseph Wallinger. Subsequently, Coningsby learns that this lady is Edith Millbank.
Consequently, the romantic plot has moved a significant step forward.

BOOK VI

When Lucretia learns that Sidonia is in Paris, her strong, emotional attachment to him is rekindled. Sidonia, however, responds to her presence with only respect and friendliness. Lord Monmouth, Sidonia learns, has been in ill health; however, this does not impede Lady Monmouth's plans to attend a ball which Sidonia plans for the following evening. Again, almost as an addendum, information is added concerning the Villebecques. Flora, like Lord Monmouth, has been in ill health. Unlike Lord Monmouth, who is ailing from the gout, Flora is suffering from an hereditary disease. Since her mother had possessed "an inherent tendency to pulmonary disease," this information is not too surprising and somewhat anticipates her death at the conclusion of the novel. Additional plot preparation appears concerning Flora and her relationship with Lord Monmouth, which helps to explain her large inheritance. Flora, we are advised, possessed a strong emotional pull toward Lord Monmouth: "She felt indeed for the Marquess, whom she so rarely saw, and from whom she had never received much notice, prompted it would seem by her fantastic passion, a degree of reverence, almost of affection, which seemed occasionally even to herself as something inexplicable and without reason." Meanwhile, her step-father appears to have taken over much of Rigby's responsibilities. (i) At a dinner party given by
Lord Monmouth, Sidonia reintroduces Coningsby to Edith Millbank.

(ii) Later, Coningsby dreams of Edith and when he awakens he realizes that he has fallen in love. However, he remains puzzled by the mystery which surrounds the appearance of his mother's picture in the Millbank home. (iii) This mystery remains unanswered as Coningsby becomes a constant visitor at the Wallingers, the guardians of Edith during her European vacation. The happy flow of Coningsby's life is marred when he learns that Sidonia is expected to marry Edith. Although Lady Monmouth turns pale at the reception of this news, Lord Monmouth responds with contempt since he believes that Sidonia is not the marrying kind and would not stoop to marry a Millbank. (iv) On the day of Sidonia's ball, the Monmouths are involved in a carriage accident, and Lady Monmouth loses consciousness as a result of a blow on the head. Sidonia, who arrives immediately after the accident, aids in making Lady Monmouth comfortable pending the arrival of a surgeon. To the embarrassment of everyone involved, when Lady Monmouth recovers consciousness she ignores her husband and asks Sidonia if he is married. Still apparently in a state of shock, she tells Sidonia that "I could have borne even repulsion, but not for another." After this faux pas which helps to make Lord Monmouth's rejection of his wife more understandable, the Monmouths depart for home. (v) Meanwhile, Coningsby wanders about Paris suffering pangs of jealousy since he believes that Sidonia will marry Edith. Flora informs him when he returns home that there has been an accident, and shortly thereafter, the Monmouths return
home. While Coningsby helps Lady Monmouth to her room, Flora is very solicitous of the health of Lord Monmouth, who responds with unusual emotion and surprise. Before parting, she tenderly embraces the hand of Lord Monmouth in an act of concern, respect, and kindness, thereby again preparing the reader for her inheritance, especially since Lady Monmouth has lost favor with her husband. (vi)

Coningsby, in the throes of romantic despair, feels compelled to remain in Paris while the Monmouths are still suffering from the effects of their carriage accident. During a walk in the Luxembourg gardens, he unexpectedly meets Sir Joseph Wallinger and Edith Millbank. Somewhat typical of an infatuated youth, Coningsby's conversation is adolescently loaded with self-pity, despair, and innuendoes about Sidonia. Nevertheless, as a result of this coincidental meeting, Coningsby feels renewed hope in his romantic aspirations, and he promises to meet Edith at a ball on the following evening. (vii) Before meeting Edith at the ball, Coningsby again wonders about the mysterious Millbank-Monmouth feud which is a threat to his romantic aspirations. Later, enjoying being in love for the first time, he converses with Edith at the ball. This happiness is shattered when he inadvertently overhears an intimate conversation between Sidonia and Edith. When she requests that Sidonia write to her, Coningsby abruptly departs from the ball. On the following day, he sails for England. (viii)
Approximately one year later, in June, 1839, Coningsby is in the midst of graduation at Cambridge. After describing the reunion of Coningsby and Oswald Millbank, their first since their graduation from Eton, by flashback we learn of Coningsby's activities during the intervening year. Despite his hatred for Sidonia based on the belief that Sidonia and Edith would marry, Coningsby continued to ponder the mysterious connection between "the haughty house of Coningsby with the humble blood of the Lancashire manufacturer" and the reason for "the portrait of his mother beneath the roof of Millbank." Also during his final year at Cambridge he became somewhat of a recluse, immersing himself in study and "in the brooding imagination of an aspiring spirit," recurring "to his habitual reveries of political greatness and political distinction." In addition, through the exertion of unusual mental discipline, he acquired great knowledge. Coincidentally, he converses with the Wallingers, who are visiting Cambridge during graduation week, and he learns from Mrs. Wallinger that Edith and Sidonia were never romantically linked; rather, Sidonia was an intimate friend of the Wallingers who had performed a valuable personal service for Edith by recovering "for her a great number of jewels which had been left to her by her uncle in Spain, and, what she prized infinitely more, the whole of their mother's correspondence which she maintained with this relative since her marriage." Encouraged by this information, Coningsby initiated correspondence with Oswald Millbank,
suggesting the visit which is described in this opening chapter of the seventh book. (i) In the following chapter, Disraeli reflects upon the nature of schoolboy friendship, stressing the intellectual value of Coningsby's conversation with Oswald. During one of their sympathetic conversations, Coningsby presents the positive program of the Young England party. "True wisdom," he explains, "lies in the policy that would effect its ends by influence of opinion, and yet by the means of existing forms." Oswald recognizes Coningsby as the leader of the Young England party and compares him with the biblical David. Coningsby, in turn, declares his aspirations. "For myself, I prefer fame to life; and yet, the consciousness of heroic deeds to the most widespread celebrity." This political dialogue is typical of most of the political conversation in the novel; it does not impede the narrative pace of the plot and is well integrated into the fabric of the novel. This can be illustrated when one considers the function of Oswald Millbank: he is the romantic link between Coningsby and Edith, whose love for Coningsby will ultimately be the cause of his election to Parliament; he is a member of the Millbank family, whose feud with the Monmouths continues to be a mystery; and he is on intimate terms with Coningsby, as well as other members of the Young England party who are about to challenge the old political order in a noble attempt to elevate the intellectual, moral, and political atmosphere of the country. (ii) As Coningsby's visit concludes, he accepts an invitation to Hellingsley. Before visiting Hellingsley, Coningsby meditates upon his love of Edith, expressing both hope and emotion to the
beautiful river Darl. "O river!" he petitions, "that rollest to my mistress, hear her, bear her, my heart!" As usual, the rendering of Coningsby's emotions is excessive. (iii)

Prior to Coningsby's visit to Hellingsley, Lady Wallinger attempts to probe Edith's feelings toward Coningsby without success. When Coningsby arrives, conversation is pleasant, but only after initial awkwardness between Coningsby and Edith. After dinner, Sir Joseph Wallinger is confused by the political opinions of his young guests. Nevertheless, Coningsby becomes a constant visitor at Hellingsley, and during one of his walks with Edith, they sit by the banks of the Darl watching the violent storm which surrounds them. The violence of the storm parallels the deep emotions within the hearts of the young couple.

Nature, like man, sometimes weeps from gladness. It is the joy and tenderness of her heart that seek relief; and these are summer showers. In this instance, the vehemence of her emotion was transient, though the tears kept stealing down her cheek for a long time, and gentle sighs and sobs might for some period be distinguished. The oppressive atmosphere had evaporated; the grey, sullen tint had disappeared; a soft breeze came dancing up the stream; a glowing light fell upon the woods and waters; the perfume of trees and flowers and herbs floated around. There was a caroling of birds; a hum of happy insects in the air; freshness and stir, and a sense of joyous life, pervaded all things; it seemed that the heart of all creation opened.

At the conclusion of the shower, Coningsby declares his love to Edith in words incredible for their formality.

"Edith," he said in a tone tremulous with passion, "let me call you Edith! Yes," he continued, gently taking her hand, "let me call you my Edith! I love you."

She did not withdraw her hand; but turned away a face flushed as the impending twilight.
The rendering of romantic scenes and emotions is not Disraeli's forte. (v) This most important day in the lives of Coningsby and Edith is marred by the awkwardness they encounter when they return to Edith's home for dinner. This embarrassment is caused by their late arrival and the irritation of Mr. Millbank, who had unexpectedly returned to the Hellingsley estate and who now senses that the romance between a Coningsby and a Millbank is quite serious. (vi) After promising to return on the following day, Coningsby departs for Coningsby Castle and again contemplates his future, especially the effect that the Monmouth-Millbank feud may have on his fortunes. (vii) On the following day, Mr. Millbank informs Coningsby that he should terminate his romance with Edith, since he fears that Lord Monmouth will destroy his daughter just as he had destroyed Mr. Millbank's first and deepest love. The mystery of his mother's portrait in the Millbank home is explained to Coningsby in this climax to the romantic plot. His father, Coningsby learns, married Mr. Millbank's fiance. Both she and her husband were then persecuted by Lord Monmouth, who had forbidden his son to marry a person of inferior social rank. This romantic climax foreshadows the political climax which again pits Coningsby against a member of the older generation who is full of hatred, self-interested, and intractable. This chapter also prepares for the political resolution of the novel, since Coningsby, again threatening the credibility of his character, remains friendly and sympathetic toward Mr. Millbank, who pledges to aid Coningsby in any future emergency. Additional complication enters the plot
when Oswald accompanies Coningsby back to Coningsby Castle to console him in his misery. Unexpectedly, Rigby enters, and one suspects that sometime in the future this information will be forwarded to Lord Monmouth when it will serve the interests of Rigby. (viii)

BOOK VIII

One year after Coningsby's confrontation with Mr. Millbank, Mr. Melton discusses the emergence of the Young England party with a group of dandies in London. From a discussion of politics, the conversation evolves to social gossip. Coningsby, it is rumored, is engaged to marry Lady Theresa; Lord Monmouth is in failing health; and there is a rumor that Lady Monmouth has been unfaithful to her husband. Following this preparatory material, Disraeli explains Coningsby's activities since he and Oswald were observed by Rigby at Coningsby Castle. In order to alleviate his misery, Coningsby decided to visit Cadiz since "he felt a romantic interest in visiting the land in which Edith owed some blood and in acquiring the language which he had often admired as she spoke it." After visiting Cadiz, Coningsby settled in Rome for the winter, returning to London at the request of Lord Monmouth, who again anticipated a change in the government. Meanwhile, after three years of marriage, Lucretia had lost her charm for Lord Monmouth. At a party in London, Coningsby meets Edith, who is with Lord Beaumanoir. Her manner toward Coningsby is "distant and haughty" since, unknown to Coningsby, she has just heard the rumor that Coningsby is to marry Lady Theresa.
Coningsby is stupefied when Edith treats him coldly. (i) Edith had suffered a drastic deterioration of personality after Coningsby's departure from Hellingsley; so much so in fact, that Mr. Millbank had second thoughts concerning his intervention in her romance. In order to reverse this deterioration, Edith had moved to London to live with the Wallingers during the social season. Since the Wallingers were vitally involved socially, it is inevitable that she and Coningsby will meet once Coningsby returns to London. After their meeting at the London party, both return to their respective homes in an agitated state. Coningsby resolves to visit the Wallingers in an effort to understand his rebuff by Edith; however, before this is possible, he receives a letter from Lord Monmouth requesting his immediate presence. (ii) The ensuing chapter is the climactic scene of the novel. Lord Monmouth, anticipating the dissolution of Parliament, requests that Coningsby be his representative for the Darlford borough. This scene unifies three conflicts: Coningsby, who has already rejected the principles of the Whigs and the Tories, is forced to formally renounce the Tory party, the party of his grandfather. Consequently, his only remaining political alternative is the formation of a new political party, such as the one envisioned by his Young England friends. On the personal level, this confrontation intensifies the romantic predicament of Coningsby. Prior to this confrontation, Coningsby harbored some hope that he could persuade his grandfather to accept Edith Millbank as his wife. Now, however, since his grandfather has depicted the election at Darlford as an opportunity for Coningsby
to inflict a defeat on his bitter enemy. Coningsby realizes that Lord Monmouth would never accept his marriage to a Millbank. And, finally, since Coningsby refuses to do his grandfather's bidding in the political arena, Coningsby can no longer realistically expect to be remembered prominently in his grandfather's will, despite Lord Monmouth's previous assertions. Nevertheless, Coningsby rejects his grandfather's offer, thereby remaining true to the principles which he has expressed as the leader of Young England. The hard days which Lord Monmouth had predicted for the New Generation at the termination of Book I have become a reality for Coningsby. (iii)

Despondent, Coningsby wanders about pondering his dilemma. His misery intensifies when he inadvertently hears that Edith Millbank is engaged to marry Lord Beanmanoir. After intense contemplation of his future, Coningsby advises Lord Monmouth by mail of his decision not "to become a candidate for Darlford, or even to enter Parliament except as the master of his own conduct." (iv) This decision by Coningsby affects the actions of Rigby and Lady Monmouth, who view Coningsby as a competitor in the will of Lord Monmouth. Consequently, when Lady Monmouth learns from Flora of Coningsby's quarrel with his grandfather, she requests by letter that Rigby consult with her before keeping his appointment with Lord Monmouth on the following day. Immediately prior to his appointment with Lord Monmouth, Rigby learns that Coningsby and his grandfather have quarrelled over the Parliamentary seat which Rigby had considered his own. No additional
incentive is needed. Lady Monmouth and Rigby conspire to discredit Coningsby in order to increase their share of "the golden fruit" which is the Monmouth fortune. As Rigby departs for his appointment with Lord Monmouth, he has resolved that he will not tell Lord Monmouth of his grandson's affectionate connections with the Millbank family. Rigby is Lord Monmouth's pawn, however, not Lady Monmouth's. He returns to Lady Monmouth not as a co-conspirator, but as the emissary of Lord Monmouth, informing Lady Monmouth that her husband requests a separation and reinforcing this request with blackmail. Lady Monmouth has no alternative but to acquiesce; however, in the process she predicts that Rigby will also be rejected by Lord Monmouth: "Adieu! Mr. Rigby, you are now Lord of Monmouth House, and yet I cannot help feeling you too will be discharged before he dies." (vi)

Coningsby, reading of Lady Monmouth's departure from Monmouth House, resolves to visit his grandfather at his Richmond residence. There, through the intercession of two lady friends, Coningsby receives a dinner invitation despite an initial rejection by Lord Monmouth. As a result, the relationship between grandfather and grandson becomes cordial once again. Coningsby's romantic aspirations also begin to appear in a more optimistic setting as he learns from Lady Wallinger that Edith is not engaged to Lord Beaumanoir. Edith, on the other hand, becomes relieved when she learns that Lady Theresa is engaged to marry Eustace Lyle and that there has never been a romantic link between Coningsby and Lady Theresa. Thus, at the close of the eighth book, the Millbank-Monmouth feud is the only serious obstacle to the marriage of Edith Millbank and Coningsby. (vii)
At St. Genevieve, Coningsby and his friends participate in a traditional Christmas celebration as the guests of Eustace Lyle and his new wife. In the midst of this celebration in which "all classes are mingled in the joyous equality of the season," Coningsby receives a message informing him of the sudden death of Lord Monmouth. (i) The following chapter presents the climactic reading of Lord Monmouth's will. After the burial at Monmouth House, the will is read and Coningsby learns that his inheritance is quite meager. Rigby is also disappointed in his remembrance in Lord Monmouth's will, a remembrance which includes the inheritance of a bust of himself which "he had himself presented to his lordship, and which at his desire had been placed in the vestibule of Coningsby Castle, from the amiable motive that after Lord Monmouth's decease Mr. Rigby might wish perhaps to present it to some other friend." The principal beneficiary in the will is Flora, "the natural daughter" of Lord Monmouth "by Marie Estelle Matteau, an actress at the Theatre Francais in the years 1811-15 by the name of Stella." (ii) After the reading of the will, Sidonia consoles Coningsby and advises him to think positively concerning his future. Consequently, Coningsby wastes little time feeling sorry for himself; the leader of the Young England party decides to study law and to strive for the Great Seal of Lord Chancellor. (iii) Despite this decision and the moral support of Sidonia, Coningsby lapses into near
despair because he now lacks the material means to marry Edith Millbank. This despair is only temporary, however. As he wanders through the London streets in meditation, he experiences renewed faith in himself and his future. "The greatness of this city destroys my misery," Coningsby realizes, "and my genius shall conquer its greatness." On the following day, Flora offers Coningsby her inheritance as a demonstration of her affection for Coningsby. As graciously as possible, Coningsby rejects her kind offer, despite Flora's assertion that his refusal will destroy her will to live. (iv) Buckhurst also offers to share his fortune with Coningsby, but Coningsby also refuses his generosity. Although Sydney and Buckhurst assist Coningsby in furnishing his lodgings at the Temple, Coningsby maintains secrecy concerning the cause of his disinheritance. (v) In contrast to his Young England friends who are actively engaged in politics, Coningsby diligently applies himself to his law studies. During the election campaign which followed the dissolution of the Whig government in 1841, members of the Young England party campaigned for office, and as a consequence, there occurred an "intimation of new views, and of a tone of political feeling that has unfortunately been too long absent from the political life of the country." On a sultry July evening, Coningsby was stunned to read a news story reporting the withdrawal of Mr. Millbank from the Darlford campaign and his nomination of Coningsby as the candidate for the Darlford seat sought by Rigby. By flashback the reader learns that the reversal of Coningsby's political fortunes began with Villabecque,
who had told Sidonia of the secret history of Coningsby's disinheritance. Sidonia communicated this story to the Wallingers, who in turn informed Mr. Millbank. Mr. Millbank, concerned for the welfare of his daughter, prodded by the arguments of his son, and impressed by a Coningsby who could work diligently for his bread, resolved to make those he loved happy by nominating Coningsby as a candidate for Parliament. As a result, Coningsby, as well as Sydney, Vere, Buckhurst, Lyle and Oswald Millbank were elected to Parliament during the summer of 1841. The victory of Coningsby over Rigby, Mr. Millbank believes, is the result of Coningsby's "high principles, great talents, and a good heart."

To add to Coningsby's happiness, Mr. Millbank presents his daughter to Coningsby. (vi) Good fortune is added to good fortune as Flora dies, and Coningsby receives from her the estate that he had anticipated at the death of his grandfather. Since the Coningsbys had received the estate of Hellingsley as a wedding present, a wealthy Coningsby is free to make disinterested political decisions. The marriage of Coningsby symbolizes the union of the aristocracy with the middle class, and, hopefully, together they will work to ameliorate the conditions which plague their less fortunate brethren.
APPENDIX II

MANUSCRIPT AND FIRST EDITION

The manuscript of Coningsby, which is preserved at Hughenden Manor, had not been studied until this dissertation was begun. In replying to my inquiry concerning the manuscript, Mr. M. J. Rogers, the Area Agent for the National Trust, advised that "although we have no resident archivist here it would appear that upon examination of the documents that we have some three volumes of the Coningsby manuscript amounting to, very approximately, some 1800 or 1900 slides; whether this is the complete Coningsby manuscript it would not be possible to say without much closer examination by a bona fide student."¹ Making use of microfilmed copies of the Coningsby manuscript, I have completed this examination. A report of this analysis constitutes this appendix.

The collation of the Coningsby manuscript with the first edition of Coningsby has resulted in the following conclusions: (1) the manuscript is substantially complete; (2) the manuscript was used as the printer's copy; (3) some material of the first edition is not in the manuscript; (4) some manuscript material is not in the first edition. This appendix will describe, amplify, and illustrate definable problems encountered in the

collation of the manuscript with the first edition after presenting internal evidence to substantiate the conclusion that the manuscript was used as the printer's copy.

On an unnumbered page, which appears between pages X3-242 and 4-243, are the following words concerning the song which is sung at the Lyle Christmas celebration: "To the Printer Print this song in a good bold type." In addition, quite frequently the signatures in the first edition correspond with similar markings in the manuscript. Although the numbering of the manuscript is irregular, consisting often of two sets of numbers which sometimes appear out of sequence and which are frequently interspersed with unnumbered pages which continue the narrative, the pagination eventually culminates in a correspondence with the pagination and the signature of the first edition. One such example is page 252 in the manuscript which bears the additional number 289 and the letter Q and corresponds with page 289, Volume III, which also has the signature Q at the foot of the page. The irregular pagination of the manuscript, as well as the frequent lack of pagination, presents a challenge to the reader. The problem of deciphering the manuscript becomes more difficult when discrepancies occur between the manuscript and the first edition, and the reader is forced to decipher Disraeli's handwriting without the aid of a parallel text. The following passages illustrate instances where material appears in the first edition but lacks a counterpart in the manuscript.


3Appendix III, pp. 203-204.
In the concluding chapter of Book I, several lines describing the Eton Montem celebration are found in the first edition which do not appear in the manuscript. Although Disraeli directs the reader or printer to another page -- "Vid other side" --, this additional material is not in the manuscript. It would appear that this page is missing from the Coningsby manuscript. Since this material does not add significantly to the content or the quality of the novel, the loss is of minor importance.

Two additional discrepancies between the manuscript and the first edition in this chapter are worth noting since they typify the minor differences which can be frequently detected between the manuscript and the first edition. At the conclusion of the paragraph on page 134, we read, after the word history, the following clause, which does not appear in the manuscript: "since the commencement of the eighteenth century, may be observed with curious admiration." Between the writing of the manuscript and the publication of the first edition, changes were also made in the paragraphing. One long paragraph in the manuscript is divided into three shorter ones on pages 135-136 of the first edition. In the manuscript, "lads had the best of it" and "To see Rigby" are contained in the one paragraph, whereas in the first edition these words introduce separate paragraphs.

Since the following lines appear on pages 287-288, Volume I of the first edition, they should also appear on page 322 of the

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4Appendix III, pp. 205-208.
manuscript, but such is not the case.\textsuperscript{5} In this instance, as
in the other examples which follow, it seems that Disraeli had
revised parts of the novel, but the pages containing these re-
visions are missing from the Coningsby manuscript.

Lady Everingham was not a celebrated beauty,
but she was something infinitely more delightful -- a
captivating woman. There were combined in her quali-
ties not commonly met together, great vivacity of mind
with great grace of manner. Her words sparkled and
her movements charmed. There was indeed in all she
said and did that congruity that indicates a complete
and harmonious organization. It was the same just
proportion which characterized her form: a shape
slight and undulating with grace; the most beauti-
fully shaped ear; a small soft hand; a foot that
would have fitted the glass slipper; and which, by
the bye she lost no opportunity of displaying.

Though this paragraph complements the passages in the novel which
describe the person and character of Lady Everingham, it adds
nothing significantly new to the novel. The same may be noted
of the following passage which describes the character of Con-
ingsby and appears in Volume II, page 298 of the first edition
but does not appear on page 290 of the manuscript where it would
normally be expected to appear.

The habits of public discussion fostered by the de-
bating society were also for Coningsby no consider-
able tie to the University. This was the arena in
which he felt at home. The promise of Eton days was
here fulfilled. And while his friends listened to
his sustained argument or his impassioned declamation;
the prompt reply or apt retort; they looked forward

\textsuperscript{5}I have not thought it essential to reproduce photostated
copies of the manuscript to illustrate that there are gaps in the
manuscript. Such reproductions from the manuscript are possible,
but expensive. I have indicated the pagination of the manuscript
where some such gaps exist and I have presented the complete block
of material which is added in the first edition for each illustra-
tion. In every instance, the volume and pagination of the first
edition is presented.
with pride through the vista of years at the time
when the hero of the youthful Club should convince
or dazzle the senate.

This descriptive passage complements what the reader has learned
elsewhere concerning the predisposition of Coningsby to excel in
the political order; his mastery of debating again demonstrates
his potential to inspire and lead the New Generation. The fol-
lowing lines which appear on page 6 of Volume III but do not
appear on pages 4-6 of the manuscript are less essential to the
substance of Coningsby. Disraeli probably added these words to
flatter a lady friend and to stimulate the curiosity of his readers
concerning her identity. Departing from his focus upon the activi-
ties of Sidonia, Disraeli superfluously wrote,

While he, as was his custom, soon repaired to the
refined circle of the Countess de C-S-L-ne a lady,
whose manners he always mentioned as his fair ideal,
and whose house was his favorite haunt.

The passage pertaining to Edith Millbank, quoted below, adds little
to our knowledge of the beauty and personality of the future Mrs.
Coningsby. The simile -- Edith is as a flower -- is prosaic and
does little to enhance the quality of the novel.

The daughter of Millbank looked as bright and fra-
grant as the fair creations that surrounded her.
Beautiful to watch her as she arranged their forms
and composed their groups; to mark her eyes glance
with gratification at some happy combination of colour,
or to listen to her delight as they wafted to her in
gratitude their perfume.6

A few lines beyond this passage more material is found in the first

6Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby; Or, the New Generation, Vol.
III (London: Henry Colburn, 1844), pp. 121-122. Coningsby
Manuscript, p. 58, Chap.4, p. 102.
edition which does not appear in the manuscript. This additional material is nonessential to the theme and structure of the novel; however, it does interject some suspense into the novel concerning the romance of Coningsby. Although Lady Wallinger obliquely inquires concerning Edith's affection for Coningsby, Edith coyly withholds this information from her, thereby keeping both her guardian and the reader in suspense concerning her romantic aspirations.

"He is so very superior to any young man I ever met," continued Lady Wallinger.

"I think we must have this vase entirely of roses; don't you think so aunt?" inquired her niece.

"I am very fond of roses!" said Lady Wallinger. "What beautiful bouquets Mr. Coningsby gave us at Paris, Edith!"

"Beautiful."

"I must say, I was very happy when I met Mr. Coningsby again at Cambridge," said Lady Wallinger. "It gave me much greater pleasure than seeing any of his colleges."

"How delighted Oswald seems at having Mr. Coningsby for a companion again." said Edith.

"And very naturally," said Lady Wallinger. "Oswald ought to deem himself very fortunate in having such a friend. I am sure the kindness of Mr. Coningsby when we met him at Cambridge is what I shall never forget. But he always was my favorite from the first time I saw him at Paris."

Since the manuscript page after page 58 -- Chap. 4 -- 102 is unnumbered and begins with the words "first moment I saw him at Paris," it seems reasonable to conclude that a page or two is missing from the manuscript at this juncture. In the following lines, which are also found in the first edition but not in the manuscript,
eleven lines are added to the scene describing the reading of the will. The added lines begin after the word "executor."

"executor," and to whom Lord Monmouth left, among other, his celebrated picture of the family of Murillo, as his friend had often admired it. To Lord Eskdale, he left all his female miniatures, and to Mr. Ormsby his rare and splendid collection of French novels, and all his wines, except his Tokay, which he left, with his library to Sir Robert Peel; though this legacy was afterwards revoked in consequence of Sir Robert's conduct about the Irish Corporations.7

Although these lines are satiric and add some spice to the novel, they have no substantial effect upon the content or quality of the novel. In addition to the above examples, quite frequently words and phrases appear in the first edition which do not have their counterpart in the manuscript. However, the examples presented should suffice to illustrate the nature of the problem of additional material and the relative insignificance of this material in the evaluation of the novel.

Some confusion occurs in collation when material appears in the first edition which has been marked for deletion in the manuscript. There are many pages in the manuscript which have vertical lines crossing the text. Apparently, these lines were meant to indicate to the printer that this material was to be deleted from the first edition. For the most part, this material is deleted from the text; however, in some instances, material so marked is included in the first edition. The unnumbered manuscript page which appears between pages 62 and 63, as well as page 225 of the

manuscript, are examples of such marked material being included in the first edition. In the first instance, the marked lines read as follows:

It is a calamity that the scattered nation still ranks with the desolations of Nebuchadnezzar and of Titus. Who after this should say the Jews are by nature a sordid people? But the Spanish Goth then so cruel and haughty, where is he? A despised suppliant to the very cruel race which he banished for some miserable portion of the treasure.\(^8\)

To complicate the problem of reading the manuscript, eight lines are similarly marked on the preceding page, but these lines are deleted from the first edition. On page 225 the following lines are crossed by three vertical lines; nevertheless, they appear in the first edition:

A Carlist nobleman who lived upon his traditions, and who though without a son could tell of a festival given by his family before the revolution which had cost a million francs, and a Neapolitan physician, in whom Lord Monmouth had great confidence and who himself believed in the Elixir Vitae, made up the party with Lucian Gay, Coningsby, and Mr. Rigby. Our hero remarked that Villabecque on this occasion sat at the bottom of the table, but Flora did not appear.\(^9\)

These intended deletions do not appear to have any substantial stylistic or material effect upon the total impact of the novel. While additions, deletions, and material marked for deletion in the manuscript but included in the first edition present a challenge to the reader of the manuscript, such problems are not quite as


\(^9\)Appendix III, pp. 211-213.
challenging as the problems posed on pages 82-161, XX, 162, and the unnumbered half page which follows. 10

On page 82-161 the reader is directed by a tick after the word *determination* to the words and numeral *(vid XX back)* written above the line. The writing at the top of page XX is incomprehensible unless these lines are read in conjunction with the writing on the top of page 162. By this process, the cramped handwriting can be deciphered on page XX to read "As her mind was not very ingenious she did not see." On page 162 this sentence is continued with the words "questions in these various lights which makes us at the same time infirm of purpose and." The text is continued on page XX which reads "tolerant. What she fancied ought to be done, and she (The word *she* straddles pages XX and 162. The sentence continues on page 162.) fancied must be done; for she perceived no middle course or alternative. For the rest Lucretia's carriage towards her gave her little discomfort." This sentence terminates on page 162. The reader then must return to page XX and finish reading seven additional lines of this page before returning to page 161 to begin reading after the word *determination* which is followed by the direction *(vid XX back).* The sentence which follows begins with the words "She broke her purpose to Mr. Rigby." Although these words do not introduce a new paragraph in the

manuscript, they introduce a new paragraph in the first edition. After the material on page 161 is read, the text is continued on page XX below two lines which are crossed out by parallel bars which are followed by the words "be surrounded by what contributed to his personal enjoyment." At the conclusion of this page, the reader must return to page 162 and begin reading below the cramped lines written on the top of the page beginning with the words "That was the chamber where the Prince Colonna literally existed." Through all this, the only guide to the reader for following the text is (vid XX back) after the word determination. The corresponding material appears on pages 165-166, Volume II of the first edition. While this is not a "typical" problem encountered in reading the manuscript, several additional examples of this type of problem do challenge the reader of the Coningsby Manuscript.

The "typical" problems encountered in the collation of the manuscript with the first edition can be illustrated by the first and last pages of the manuscript and the novel. The first page of the manuscript is numbered 3 on the top left hand corner of the page and 5 on the top right hand corner. Since this page is accurately headed Chapter I, this numbering does not cause a problem to the reader. However, later numerical irregularities do constitute problems to the reader of the manuscript since the pagination is not always logical in sequence and since hundreds of pages are unnumbered. All too frequently, the reader must search through the

11Appendix III, pp. 220-222.
manuscript to trace the narrative. Be this as it may, the first page of the manuscript consists of twenty-one lines; approximately six of these lines are crossed out, indicating a deletion in the manuscript. Sometimes lines marked in this way are rewritten above the line or at the top of the page. For example, the opening of the manuscript originally read "It was a bright morning in the early part of the month of May in 1832." These words have been crossed out and rewritten to read "It was a bright May morning some twelve years ago." Directly below the word youth, there are four and one-half lines marked for deletion from the manuscript. Since it is difficult to decipher Disraeli's handwriting when key words are obscured by lines running through them, the consequence of this deletion on the first page of the manuscript cannot be determined. The concluding paragraph of the novel also indicates that Disraeli made corrections on the manuscript before sending it to the printer.12 This paragraph also presents an example of material marked for deletion in the manuscript which is deleted in the first edition. Such is the case with the words "that this age of political infidelity has failed." On the other hand, the words "of a generalizing age" are marked for deletion in the manuscript but are printed in the first edition. Again, as on the first page of the manuscript, some crossed out words are indecipherable.

Briefly stated, three important conclusions should be noted:

12 Appendix III, pp. 223-227.
(1) Although the Coningsby Manuscript is difficult to read, it is substantially complete. (2) The hundreds of minor word differences between the manuscript and the first edition, which would add dozens of pages to this study if they were described here, are relatively insignificant. (3) Judging from the rough copy of the text which Disraeli sent to the printer, he was unconcerned with stylistic niceties at this stage of his career.
### APPENDIX III

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

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Hughenden Manor,
High Wycombe,
Bucks,
Telephone: High Wycombe 82051/82052.
19th July, 1953

Mrs. Patricia J. Oliver,
Reference Librarian,
Belhaven-Ursuline College,
2300 Norris Place,
Louisville,
Kentucky 40205,
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Oliver,

Hughenden Manor Archive

Thank you for your letter of the 11th July. Although we have no
resident archivist here it would appear that upon examination of the documents
that we have some three volumes of the Coningsby Manuscript amounting to, very
approximately, some 1,500 or 1,600 sides; whether this is the complete
Coningsby Manuscript it would not be possible to say without such closer
examination by a bona fide student.

Any micro-filming would have to take place on the premises at Hughenden
Manor as it is not possible for the papers to be taken away from the Musician
Room. At the time of writing, Recordak - a division of Kodak Ltd. - would
be prepared to do this micro-filming at a cost of £50. 5s. 6d. for the first
1,500 exposures and thereafter 22.10. 6d. per 100 exposures.

Yours sincerely,

\[ Signature \]

Area Agent

Dated: 20th July 1953

Signed in his absence.
2

Caput Apri depro
Reddens ludent Dominus

The Baar' head I understand.
Is the chief crozier in this baar

doke where ever it be foundes

Svente eum cautio.
into account of the reader the town divided equally left coming to
Moumouth she ground. She found
the instrusted but Belinda had been
afford an obstacle.

The solicitor paused, staggered
permanently to reach for a glass of water.
While the warm sun, there was no
there was a minimum at the lower part
of the room, but little reform to speak
of. Conversation among them in this vicinity.
Corrigy was silent, his
of the lawyer. Corrigy was silent, his
how a little bent. At the job we entered
kind of concrete, but said nothing. We
fate, a maternal, but said nothing. We
fate, a maternal, but said nothing. We
moral took a drink of water and
brung took a drink of water and
D. Edelstei also was neat to
be.

The exchange planes a made
build. The exchange planes a made
some minutes about the weather, some
under this instrument that Sidonia had been appointed an executor, and to whom Lord Monmouth left, among others, his celebrated picture of the Holy Family by Murillo, as his friend had often admired it. To Lord Eskdale he left all his female miniatures, and to Mr. Ormsby his rare and splendid collection of French novels, and all his wines, except his Tokay, which he left, with his library to Sir Robert Peel; though this legacy was afterwards revoked in consequence of Sir Robert's conduct about the Irish Corporations.

The solicitor paused and begged permission to send for a glass of water. While this was arranging there was a murmur at the lower part of the room, but little disposition to conversation among those in the vicinity of the lawyer. Coningsby was silent, his brow a little knit; Mr. Rigby was extremely pale and restless, but said nothing. Mr. Ormsby took a pinch of snuff, and offered his box to Lord Eskdale who was next to him. They exchanged glances, and made some observation about the weather. Sidonia stood apart with his arms folded. He had not of course attended the

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On this day, the Captain of Stow awoke from a deep and sound slumber. He indeed awoke refreshed and invigorated. The day was bright and sunny.

The form was the right to adopt any costume that took fancy. He had the freedom to appoint amongst the scholars an attendant to any number of servants to whom he may direct to wear any costume he pleases. The only exception to this otherwise unlimited choice being a few superior sections of the school where the headmaster's uniform section of the fifth form. He had the privilege of conceiving and adopting.

Under the auspices of the headmaster, the upper form, the oldest and most dignified, were expected to declaim themselves splendidly.
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coin of the realm, to the purse collecting for the Captain of Eton, the senior scholar on the Foundation, who is about to repair to King's College Cambridge.

On this day the Captain of Eton appears in a dress as martial as his title: indeed, each sixth form boy represents in his uniform, though not perhaps according to the exact rules of the Horse Guards, an officer of the army. One is a marshal, another an ensign. There is a lieutenant, too; and the remainder are sergeants. Each of those who are intrusted with these ephemeral commissions, has one or more attendants: the number of these varying according to his rank. These Servitors are selected, according to the wishes of the several members of the sixth form, out of the ranks of the lower boys, that is, those boys who are below the fifth form; and all these attendants are arrayed in a variety of fancy dresses. The senior Oppidan and the senior Colleger next to the Captains of those two divisions of the school, figure also in fancy
costume, and are called "Saltbearers." It is their business, together with the twelve senior Collegers of the fifth form, who are called "Runners," and whose costume is also determined by the taste of the wearers, to levy the contributions. And all the Oppidans of the fifth form, among whom ranked Coningsby, class as "Corporals;" and are severally followed by one or more lower boys, who are denominated "Polemen," but who appear in their ordinary dress.

It was a fine bright morning; the bells of Eton and Windsor rang merrily; everybody was astir, and every moment some gay equipage drove into the town. Gaily clustering in the thronged precincts of the College might be observed many a glistening form; airy Greek, or sumptuous Ottoman, heroes of the Holy Sepulchre, Spanish Hidalgos who had fought at Pavia, Highland Chiefs who had charged at Culloden, gay in the tartan of Prince Charlie. The Long Walk was full of busy groups in scarlet coats, or fanciful uniforms; some in earnest conversation, some
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authorities greatly increase the amount, the most industrious, the most intelligent, and the most enlightened of Spanish subjects would not desert the religion of their fathers. For this they gave up the delightful land wherein they had lived for centuries, the beautiful cities they had raised, the universities from which Christendom drew for ages its most precious lore, the tombs of their ancestors, the temples where they had worshipped the God for whom they had made this sacrifice. They had but four months to prepare for eternal exile after a residence of as many centuries, during which brief period forced sales and glutted markets virtually confiscated their property. It is a calamity that the scattered nation still ranks with the desolations of Nebuchadnezzar and of Titus. Who after this should say the Jews are by nature a sordid people? But the Spanish Goth then so cruel and so haughty, where is he? A despised suppliant to the very race which he banished for some miserable portion of the treasure which their habits of industry have again accumulated. Where is that tribunal
Oscar, a great friend of Villebecque, was a splendid lady who had been a prima donna of celebrity, and had commanding, splendid voice for a chamber song. A great deal was written about her, and once there was a report that she was seeing a count. However, this was never true.

It is said that she lived in Paris, where she was a favorite of the court. Her love life was said to have been tumultuous, and she was often seen with various men. However, none of these stories were ever substantiated.

A story about her was that she had a son, who lived in London for a time. This son was said to be very handsome, but nothing is known of his fate.

The revolution of 1789 found her in London, where she was seen in the streets. She was said to have been a strong supporter of the revolution, and had even been a member of the Jacobins. However, this is not clear.

Legend has it that she was last seen in France, where she was said to have lived a quiet life. Some say she died in Paris, but others say she may have gone to America.
There is no end to the influence of woman on our life. It is at the bottom of everything that happens to us. And so it was, that, in spite of all the combinations of Lucretia and Mr. Rigby, and the mortification and resentment of Lord Monmouth, the favourable impression he casually made on a couple of French actresses occasioned Coningsby, before a month had elapsed since his memorable interview at Monmouth House, to receive an invitation again to dine with his grandfather.

The party was very agreeable. Clotilde and Ermengarde had wits as sparkling as their eyes. There was the manager of the Opera, a great friend of Villebecque, and his wife, a very splendid lady who had been a prima donna of celebrity, and still had a commanding voice for a chamber. A Carlist nobleman who lived upon his traditions, and who though without a sou could tell of a festival given by his family before the revolution which had cost a million of francs, and a Neapolitan physician, in whom Lord Monmouth had great confidence and who himself believed in the Elixir Vitæ, made up the party with Lucian Gay, Coningsby and Mr.
Rigby. Our hero remarked that Villebecque on this occasion sat at the bottom of the table, but Flora did not appear.

In the meantime, the month which brought about this satisfactory, and at one time unexpected, result, was fruitful also in other circumstances still more interesting. Coningsby and Edith met frequently; if to breathe the same atmosphere in the same crowded saloons can be described as meeting; ever watching each other's movements and yet studious never to encounter each other's glance. The charms of Miss Milbank had become an universal topic; they were celebrated in ball rooms, they were discussed at clubs; Edith was the beauty of the season. All admired her, many sighed even to express their admiration; but the devotion of Lord Beaumanoir, who always hovered about her, deterred them from a rivalry which might have made the boldest despair. As for Coningsby, he passed his life principally with the various members of the Sydney family; and was almost daily riding with Lady Everingham and her sister, generally accompanied by Lord Henry and his friend Eustace Lyle, between whom indeed and Co-
Columna therefore found it very much in her interest to convert with her heart to the change in order to avoid trouble. The idea to which she gave

expression determined her to hold firmly to the party that she might gain something from their needs and her expectation of accomplishing anything. As Madame Columna no

longer estimated one man in favor of another, with them any other individual quality to his policy or practice he agreed in;

Madame Columna, being fond of maintaining her husband, never consulted him about any thing; but she made it her business to be consulted. Other

men did the same to the man. This,

man who had no opinion about anything, he had no opinion about anything.

he did not require more that he did be

managed.
We shall now proceed to the
arrangement of the two
rooms which form the
suite. The larger of the two
rooms is furnished with two
beds, and overlooks the
courtyard. The smaller room
contains a sofa and two chairs,
and is used as a reading or
writing room.
and impressions. She was not naturally communicative, and conversed with no one with less frankness and facility than with her step-mother. Madame Colonna therefore found no reasons in her conversation with Lucretia to change her determination. As her mind was not very ingenious she did not see questions in those various lights which make us at the same time infirm of purpose and tolerant. What she fancied ought to be done, she fancied must be done; for she perceived no middle course or alternative. For the rest, Lucretia's carriage towards her gave her little discomfort. Besides she herself though good-natured, was obstinate. Her feelings were not very acute; nothing much vexed her. As long as she had fine dresses, good dinners, and opera boxes, she could bear her plans to be crossed like a philosopher; and her consolation under her unaccomplished devices was her admirable consistency, which always assured her that her projects were wise, though unfulfilled.

She broke her purpose to Mr. Rigby that she might gain not only his adhesion to her views,
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but his assistance in achieving them. As Madame Colonna in Mr. Rigby's estimation exercised more influence over Lord Monmouth than any other individual, faithful to his policy or practice, he agreed with all Madame Colonna's plans and wishes, and volunteered instantly to further them. As for the Prince, his wife never consulted him on any subject, nor did he wish to be consulted. On the contrary, he had no opinion about anything. All that he required was that he should be surrounded by what contributed to his personal enjoyment, that he should never be troubled, and that he should have billiards. He was not inexpert in field-sports, rode indeed very well for an Italian, but he never cared to be out of doors; and there was only one room in the interior which passionately interested him. It was where the echoing balls denoted the sweeping hazard or the effective cannonade. That was the chamber where the Prince Colonna literally existed. Half an hour after breakfast he was in the billiard room; he never quitted it until he dressed for dinner; and he generally contrived, while the
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CHAPTER I.

It was a bright May morning some twelve years ago, when a youth of still tender age, for he had certainly not entered his teens by more than two years, was ushered into the waiting-room of a house in the vicinity of St. James's Square, which, though with the general appearance of a private residence, and that too of no very ambitious character, exhibited at this period...
symptoms of being occupied for some public purpose.

The house door was constantly open, and frequent guests even at this early hour crossed the threshold. The hall table was covered with sealed letters; and the hall porter inscribed in a book the name of every individual who entered.

The young gentleman we have mentioned found himself in a room which offered few resources for his amusement. A large table amply covered with writing materials, and a few chairs were its sole furniture, except the grey drugget that covered the floor, and a muddy mezzotinto of the Duke of Wellington that adorned its cold walls. There was not even a newspaper; and the only books were the Court Guide and the London Directory. For some time, he remained with patient endurance planted against the wall, with his feet resting on the rail of his chair; but at length in his shifting posture he gave evidence of his restlessness, rose from his seat, looked out of the window into
They stood now on the
threshold of public life. They were to
walk into a moment it will be
difficult to forget. What will be their fate? Will
they maintain the great truths which
place the great truths, she:
lay
Study our solitude & have suffered? or will they fold their hands & exhaust itself in their courage? & before the struggle, their enthusiasm evaporate before their hollow-hearted ridicule? their generous impulses yield yield with a vulgar cataract to the temptations of a low ambition? or will their skilled intelligence subside into their spoiled contempt for their fortune, and with their Fortune, with their Fortune, utterly confound? or jealousy in their simple sympathy, or will they divide their véritable têtes, or will they be great, with your false, true, respectable, refuse to bow before shadow
worship phrases, esteem the greatest
men portion recognize the greatness of
their duties; announce to all peoples
of a heartened world, that this agency
natural Impulse has found that
be forged upon themes of generating
the task that have destroyed the mediocrity
age that have destroyed the mediocrity
of man; I restore the lost
happiness. Man counts by believing in that own
energy, a daring to respect
and they raised a monument to her memory in the gardens of Hellingsley.

Coningsby passed his next Christmas in his own hall with his beautiful and gifted wife by his side and surrounded by the friends of his heart and his youth.

They stand now on the threshold of public life. They are in the leash, but in a moment they will be slipped. What will be their fate? Will they maintain in august assemblies and high places the great truths which in study and in solitude they have embraced? Or will their courage exhaust itself in the struggle, their enthusiasm evaporate before hollow-hearted ridicule, their generous impulses yield with a vulgar catastrophe to the tawdry temptations of a low ambition? Will their skilled intelligence subside into being the adroit tool of a corrupt party? Will Vanity confound their fortunes, or Jealousy wither their sympathies? Or will they remain brave, single and true; refuse to bow before shadows and worship phrases; sensible of the greatness of their position recognise the greatness of their duties; denounce to a perplexed and disheartened world the frigid theories of
a generalizing age that have destroyed the individuality of man; and restore the happiness of their country by believing in their own energies, and daring to be great!

THE END.
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Jan. 18, 1971
Date

Signature of Advisor