The use of politics by Disraeli the novelist and the use of the novel by Disraeli the politician: a study of reciprocity


Abstract

Disraeli's fame as a politician is well recognised: his Premier-ship under Queen Victoria and his Parliamentary duels with Peel and Gladstone, amongst others, are established in history. But, with the exception perhaps of Coningsby and Sybil, his novels are not well known, even to students of literature. This thesis seeks to redress the balance, by showing that Disraeli's career as a whole was shaped as much by his literary nature as by his political ambitions. So it is a mistake to argue that should have confined himself to one pursuit or to the other; because both were psychologically essential to him - two ambitions exerting a reciprocal influence on each other. In some instances these 'two natures' can be accused of diluting his energies, but as a rule their interaction was a dynamic which prevented introverted and self-defeating absorption in one of them. So, although Disraeli never achieved great fame as a novelist, he actually wrote more successfully after entering Parliament, than before. And this was not entirely due to the interest aroused in a politician taking his experiences into print. In themselves, the tone of his works became less self-concerned, and the style sharper: less self-conscious and ponderous. The early novels were too autobiographical and introverted: they lacked an objective outside of themselves, and political issues were to provide this. Coningsby and Sybil, written in the heat of frustrated political ambition, veered to the opposite and polemical extreme. They were rooted in the active world of politicians and political struggles, and read at times like Parliamentary reports or speeches rather than novels. The basic elements of most novels: an historical/social contest, a meaningful structuring or commenting upon it, and a suitable 'plot', are certainly present, but not always satisfactorily integrated. Nevertheless, Disraeli's position in politics gave him some unique advantages of access to, and familiarity with, the world of government. Thus in time he learnt to incorporate his perspective on the political world into more balanced works: Lothair and Endymion. Without the challenge of presenting political subjects, however, his writing would probably have tailed off into irrelevant and self-indulgent autobiography. Conversely, although Disraeli wrote few novels after entering Parliament, considering the length of his career, he still acknowledged a debt to the literary side of his nature, in the policies and speeches he initiated. Some of his moves were to fulfil the apparently wild prophecies of the earlier novels with almost uncanny fidelity. And he retained a dramatic self-consciousness and a symbolic sense, even after adopting the sober dress and impassive manner of the Conservative leader. Whether one calls his approach romantic, or spiritual, or simply sentimental, the novelist in Disraeli was borne out in a number of acts which seem to have come not from the committee-room, but from the pages of his quixotic romances.
Main Disraeli: The Novel Politician. Mark as downloaded. Disraeli: The Novel Politician. David Cesarani. While acknowledging that Disraeli never denied his Jewish lineage, boasted of Jewish achievements, and argued for Jewish civil rights while serving as MP, Cesarani challenges the assumption that Disraeli truly cared about Jewish issues. Instead, his driving personal ambition required him to confront his Jewishness at the same time as he acted opportunistically. By creating a myth of aristocratic Jewish origins for himself, and by arguing that Jews were a superior race, Disraeli boosted his own career but also contributed to the consolidation of some of the most fundamental stereotypes of modern Disraeli: The Romance of Politics examines the relation between Disraeli's novels and his political career and illuminates both in a way not previously attempted.

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Book Info.

Disraeli. Book Description: Disraeli: The Romance of Politics examines the relation between Disraeli's novels and his political career and illuminates both in a way not previously attempted. Preview â€“ Disraeli by Robert P. O'Kell. Disraeli: The Romance of Politics. by. Robert P. O'Kell. For all of their treatment as a species apart from humanity, politicians are no different than the rest of us in one respect: they harbor a passion to see their name on the front cover of a book. Many of them take advantage of their position to fulfill this ambition, with most of their efforts falling into the category of either political tract or memoir. O'Kell uses the novels and other writings to delve into Disraeli's inner life, finding within many of the works' central characters a series of portrayals of Disraeli's self-image. Many of the issues that Disraeli faced, such as his Jewish heritage and his social standing, are central to the plots of his novels, with the their resolutions serving to define his own beliefs.

Disraeli: The Novel Politician, in castigating both novelist and politician, skirts the latter. Cesarani's Disraeli is a calculating, unscrupulous opportunist whose interest in and knowledge of Jewishness and Judaism were overblown, perverse, or altogether absent. Yes, the clever and ambitious Disraeli, in his efforts to aggrandise his Jewish heritage, did get much of it wrong. Even so, at the core of the Church-going country squire of Hughenden Manor there was, for better or worse, a Jewishness that preoccupied, indeed obsessed him. The absence of any evidence that Disraeli was himself in debt to Jewish moneylenders renders his use of Jewish stereotyping purely gratuitous and all the more shocking (76). Disraeli: The Novel Politician, by David Cesarani. Fresh perspectives on a 19th-century Tory leader can be gleaned from his fiction, finds A.W. Purdue. May 26, 2016. Benjamin Disraeli was both a novelist and a novel choice as the leader of a political party, especially the mid-19th-century Conservative Party. That he was the author of a number of sensational works of fiction made him an unusual member of the party of the aristocratic and landed interest. He was also somewhat handicapped by being a near bankrupt with a suspect financial record. He argues that Disraeli's Jewish characters provided tropes and stereotypes that future anti-Semites could use, and that his concept of the Jews as an aristocratic and superior race fed conspiracy theories.