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Article

A Rhetorical Criticism of Deliberative Speeches of Two British Statesmen: Duels between Gladstone's Logic and Disraeli's Art in Victorian Politics

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0. Introduction—Maiden Speeches—

In *Gladstone, Greatest Member of Parliament* (2018), Teruhiko Onabe says "one of the major alternatives contemporary Japanese seek may be related to parliamentary politics, and that we should know people who played active roles in the 19th century British history, which saw a typical development of parliamentary politics." Representing those contemporary Japanese, Hiroshi Masuda wrote *A Study of Ishibashi Tanzan* (1990) in which he said that there were great debates between two statesmen, William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli, in modern Britain over the two alternatives: "Little Englandism" or "Large Englandism." In this paper, therefore, deliberative speeches of these two British statesmen will be examined, analyzed and evaluated in reference to the theories of rhetoric.

The two books, *Post Communication—Criticism and Evaluation*—by Robert Cathcart (1966) and *Rhetorical Criticism – A Study in Method* – by Edwin Black (1978) are mainly used for an examination, analysis and evaluation of the speeches.

This speech criticism focuses not on one single speech made by a single

person, but several speeches made by the same two British statesmen over a long period of time, from their maiden speeches, to their major speeches as Chancellors of the Exchequer and Prime Ministers and to the last speeches as a member of the House of Commons or one of the House of Lords, so what will be done in this rhetorical criticism belongs in the "genre criticism" of deliberative speeches. To try to know the basic elements of each speaker in different situations, their maiden speeches will be first examined, analyzed and evaluated, hoping that we can find an underlying principle or policy of each speaker.

When William Gladstone made his maiden speech, slavery trade was already prohibited (1807) and emancipation of slaves was on the way of being realized. As an antagonist of the slavery system, Viscount Howick made a long speech of 12,217 words on 14 May,1833. The speech referred to a report of the relationship of the sugar cultivation to the decrease of the Negroes in Vreeden Hoop, the estate belonging to Mr. John Gladstone, the father of William Gladstone. In this report, the management of this estate was criticized for "inflicting unnecessary pain on their fellow-creatures than other men." Part of the speech was used to point out how badly the Negroes in Vreeden Hoop were treated, while the rest of the speech, to emphasize the inhumanity of the slavery system: "Slaves…labour only because if they do not do so they are punished. Their stimulus is terror."

Gladstone was not an antagonist of Howick, but he could not help making a speech of 2,771 words in rebuttal of the one of Howick. In his speech, Gladstone denied most of what Howick had said in reference to his father's estate, based on the results of his own thorough investigation. He clarified his argumentative points with specific examples, the first point of which goes like this: "I have a letter in my pocket from the estate, dated the 20th of April; and it appeared from it that the number of punishments inflicted there from the 1st of January up to that date announced exactly to one." All the other argumentative points resulted in the conclusion that Howick's statement was not correct. Thus Gladstone defended his father's position with logical reasoning, which is summarized as follows:

"I deprecated cruelty—I deprecated slavery; it was abhorrent to the nature of Englishmen; but, conceding all these things, were not Englishmen to retain a right to their own honestly and legally acquired property?"

As is often the case with a maiden speech (Onabe, p.53), Gladstone's was well accepted by the House, but a clear difference existed between Gladstone and Howick. In the last part of his speech, Gladstone said, "It is the duty of the House to place as broad a distinction as possible between the idle and the industrious slaves, and nothing could be too strong to secure the freedom of the latter; but, with respect to the idle slaves, no period of emancipation could hasten their improvement." He was for a gradual and partial emancipation of slaves. Howick, on the other hand, said, "Sir, I trust…that we shall at once proceed to restore to the negroes the full enjoyment of their rights as men." He demanded an immediate and complete emancipation of slaves.

Not all maiden speeches, however, were well accepted by their audiences. Parry (2007) called Disraeli's maiden speech "that unpropitious beginning." St John (2010) says, "Disraeli delivered the most notorious maiden speech in history." And the minutes of *Hansard* comment as follows: [The impatience of the House would not allow the hon. Member to finish his speech, and during the greater part of the time the hon. Member was on his legs, he was so much interrupted that it was impossible to hear what the hon. Member said]. But why did derisive shouts and bursts of laughter interrupt Disraeli?

Before he became a member of the House of Commons on 27 July 1837, Disraeli had tried four times: June 1832, December 1832, January 1835, and April 1835. For the first three elections, Disraeli presented himself to the electors of High Wycombe. In June 1832, he was assisted by leading Irish radical Daniel O'Connell. Later in 1835, however, his relationship with O'Connell began to deteriorate. His misreported remarks about O'Connell even led the latter to charge him with being a Jew "of the lowest and most disgusting grade of moral turpitude" (Parry, p.13).

Disraeli's maiden speech of 2,086 words was delivered against such a background. When he began to speak, he was hooted down by Irish MPs, who saw him as an enemy. Even under such a circumstance, Disraeli did deliver his speech, focusing on the Spottiswoode subscription, which O'Connell suspected "was a subscription established for the particular object of supporting a Protestant faction against the Catholic people," referring to the fact that "this project of majestic mendicancy had now wholly vanished." Before this speech, O'Connell had finished like this: "…the object of this (Spottiswoode) conspiracy is… to make the Tory party triumphant, and the people of Ireland their victims." Even if Irish people seem to be victims of England, it does not necessarily mean Irish people are allowed to do fraudulent activities, such as "the stain of borough mongering assumed a deeper and darker hue," "seats were openly bought and sold."

However highly O'Connell was respected by his fellow Irish people, Disraeli wanted to make his claim heard, but, unfortunately, as the speech came toward its end, "he was so much interrupted that it was impossible to hear" what he said, so was this speech a "failure" because he did not accomplish his purpose? This may be called a "result standard," which is to judge a speech by its results (Cathcart 1966). It is true that Disraeli himself seems to have been "disconsolate at his failure" (St John, p.13), but there was a man who proved a better judge of Disraeli's maiden speech than Disraeli himself. It was Sir Robert Peel, the Conservative leader, who was more complimentary, remarking that "he did all that he could do under the circumstances. I say anything but failure; he must make his way" (*Ibid.*). Actually, Disraeli said this finally, "I will sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me!"

1. Gladstone, Disraeli, Fathers and Wives

1.1 William, John and Catherine

William was born on 29 December 1809 to John Gladstone and Anne

Mackenzie Robertson as their fifth child. As a successful businessman, John supported George Canning, MP for Liverpool, but business loomed too large in his mind and hoped one of his sons could follow the example of Canning. William was sent to Eaton College, then to Christ Church, Oxford.

Eaton and Christ Church gave him intellectual interests and analytical skills. William was molded, however, primarily by his home. His energy, ambition, and hard work came from his father. John was 45 and a busy man when William was born. John also pointed his son toward politics. William became interested in contemporary issues when family meals often resembled public debates.

Catherine, William's wife, was a woman of personal warmth. When her sister Mary died, she became a virtual stepmother to Mary's twelve children. Catherine identified closely with William's political career. When he was considering retirement, Catherine wanted William to remain at the center of affairs, believing his services were invaluable for the country. Catherine was a buttress to William's work.

1.2 Benjamin, Issac and Mary Anne

Benjamin was born on 21 December 1804 to Issac D'Israeli and Maria Basevi as their eldest son. Issac quarreled with the local synagogue and resigned from it in 1817 and had his children baptized. If Disraeli had remained a Jew, his political career would have been impossible since Jews were not allowed to enter the House of Commons until 1858.

Issac wrote a book on genius, saying, "Genius was born, not made and rarely excelled academically. He is a daydreaming dawdling child,…" When he was 16 years old, Disraeli read it. He "felt different from the other boys at first because he was Jewish; now he knew that he was different because he was a genius" (St John 2010, p.3).

Disraeli became MP for Maidstone on 27 July 1837, but with the other candidate, Wyndham Lewis. Shortly afterwards, however, Lewis died. Disraeli married his relatively wealthy widow, Mary Anne. She shared something of

Disraeli's love of striking clothes and social glitter. Her money, house and solid position were attractive, but her vivacity and her childless motherliness appealed most to Disraeli.

2. Queen Victoria and her Prime Ministers

2.1 Queen Victoria

Alexandrina Victoria was born on 24 May 1819 at Kensington Palace, London, as the only legitimate child of the fourth son of King George III, Edward Augustus, duke of Kent. On June 1837, when King William IV died, the lord chamberlain and the archbishop of Canterbury were dispatched to Kensington Palace to bring the news to the new queen.

Queen Victoria's first mentor was her uncle, Leopold I of Belgium, who advised Victoria to listen to clever and informed people of prudence and discretion. Then came Lord Melbourne as a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man. The most devoted mentor may be Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha whom Victoria fell in love with and married on 10 February 1840.

2.2 Gladstone and Queen Victoria

Gladstone became MP in his first attempt and when he did, he was still a student at Oxford. He then began to distinguish himself as a financier under Sir Robert Peel, and thanks to Peel, Prince Albert gave Gladstone a seal of approval. After Disraeli was defeated at the polls in November 1868, Gladstone was formally appointed as Prime Minister.

Queen Victoria admired Gladstone's religious earnestness and cleverness, but with the death of Albert, these virtues overbalanced into their opposites. The more strongly Gladstone urged Victoria to play public roles, the more stubbornly she would reject Gladstone's requests. But however much she might loathe Liberal governments led by Gladstone, even Victoria didn't think she had the power to prevent them.

2.3 Disraeli and Queen Victoria

Disraeli could not become MP until he secured the nomination for Maidstone, but he became prime minister in February 1868, after he demonstrated his art of steering the reform bill. When Disraeli was officially appointed as Prime Minister, Victoria recorded as follows (St. John, p.91): "Mr Disraeli is Prime Minister! A proud thing for a Man 'risen from the people' to have obtained!"

In December of 1868, however, Disraeli resigned and could not become prime minister again until 1874. His second ministry continued for six years, during which Disraeli helped Victoria become Empress of India. Where Gladstone revered the institution of monarchy, Disraeli targeted the person of the monarch, making a systematic effort to woo, flatter and entertain Queen Victoria as a woman.

3. Deliberative Speeches in Victorian Politics

3.1 On the Maynooth Bill: Persuasion vs. Dissuasion

In his speech of 11 April 1845, Benjamin Disraeli referred to Sir Robert Peel as a "supreme master of Parliamentary tactics," and William Gladstone did believe so. From the moment he took office in Peel's 1841 government, Gladstone saw his duty to support Peel as paramount and supported him after Peel proposed an increased grant to Maynooth on 3 April 1845. Maynooth was the chief centre in Ireland for the training of Roman Catholic priests. The college received an annual government grant of £9,000, but not well funded. Peel's idea was to raise its funding to £30,000 per annum, make it permanent and formalize its corporate status in an attempt to secure greater loyalty among the priests to the British government.

Peel's proposal aroused more furious a storm than Peel and Gladstone had expected. That is why Gladstone made a speech of 14,021 words. In this speech, Gladstone first mentions Mr. Perceval's declaration made back in 1812, in which the then prime minister first resisted the increase when it was proposed the annual

grant to Maynooth be augmented. Mr. Perceval "thought, on principle, that it was wrong in a State endeavouring to establish a particular system of religion to provide a public supply for the maintenance, encouragement, and propagation of another," so he opposed the increase. The same man, however, was found in one of his speeches in *Hansard*'s Parliamentary Debates, Session 1812, vol. xxi. p.1226, to have said "he regarded the grant to the College of Maynooth as being a virtual portion of the legislative Union with Ireland." Thus he supports Peel's proposal in reference to such a specific statement of Mr. Perceval. Then Gladstone's characteristic logical reasoning follows as he refers to the declaration of the Duke of Wellington, Mr. William Pitt's experiment, Mr. Edmund Burke's letter, Mr. Danniel O'Connell's speech, and we are finally led to heed what Mr. Burke said when he supported the Colonies at the period of the American War: "Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interests, and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, … against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry."

Peel's proposal was a classic example of Peelite Conservatism and Peel's policy of appeasing Roman Catholic sentiment in Ireland was sensible. In conventions of the 19th century, Peel's proposal and Gladstone's supportive speech would have been accepted by the majority of MPs, but not by Disraeli, who was so much offended by Peel's rebuff and ready to launch a sustained and personal attack on Peel. Disraeli's criticism of Peel led to the collapse of his ministry and made Gladstone resign as President of the Board of Trade. Considering these "effects" of Disraeli's speech, is it right to judge the speeches of Peel and Gladstone as "bad" ones? No, but we can evaluate their speeches as highly as their previous ones, for their conventional speeches did not just meet the purpose of one unconventional speech.

In his April 11 speech, Disraeli referred to Peel as a "supreme master of Parliamentary tactics," but Disraeli did not mean it. From the moment he was

excluded from the offices of Peel's 1841 government, he could not believe so. No matter how highly Peel may have been admired as a leader of the House of Commons, therefore, Disraeli was determined to attack him as severely as possible, but how did he attack?

In his speech of 5,691 words, Disraeli begins his criticism of Gladstone, who gave a supportive speech of his Maynooth proposal. Gladstone said in his 1838 book *The State in Its Relations with the Church* that the government should support only the Established Church of England, but he suggests the English government endow the Roman Church because the English government has endowed the Anglican church. Not knowing any case where the State has endowed the Anglican Church, Disraeli claims: "the right hon. Gentleman, with all his historical lore, and with all his trained casuistry, cannot place his finger on any page in history which shows that the State endowed the Church." As for the Maynooth Bill, Gladstone mentions that there are three courses open to the English government: there is the course Gladstone has left; there is the course Gladstone is following; and there is the course Gladstone ought to follow. Disraeli is now adding that there is a fourth course…indicated by Gladstone, and this is the fourth course the Commons is likely to adopt but may vote for it to rescind its vote. If this is the case, Sir Robert Peel will not forget that the Maynooth Bill has been firmly supported by Gladstone but rescinded too soon. Gladstone also tells the House of Commons to go back to precedents, such as Mr. Perceval, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke, but Disraeli wonders whether circumstances have not changed since their times. Disraeli denies that "the Church of England is the creature of the State. The alliance between them has been one formed and maintained upon equal terms; and if it be attempted,…to place all ecclesiastical affairs under the control of Downing street, …the people of this country will never endure such a system." That is why Disraeli, representing those people, opposes the Bill. Even if both Peel and Gladstone say the Maynooth Bill is a great grant, Disraeli does not think it is. To him, it is "a mean, a meagre, and a

miserable grant."

In conclusion, Disraeli asserts what Peel and Gladstone have been trying to do is nothing but "cunning" and calls on the House of Commons to bring back "the legitimate influence and salutary check of a constitutional Opposition," "by dethroning this dynasty of deception, by putting an end to the intolerable yoke of official despotism and Parliamentary imposture." Rhetoric is often identified with persuasion, but this is a case of dissuasion in which Disraeli was successful in the art of dissuading "500 isolated individuals" from voting for the Maynooth Bill.

3.2 On The Budgets: Amateurism vs. Professionalism

In his speech on the Maynooth Bill in 1845, Disraeli showed himself as a genius in rousing the excluded majority against the governing elite. His scathingly sarcastic speech led to the collapse of Peel's ministry and the resignation of Gladstone as President of the Board of Trade. Disraeli's speech on the budget on 16 December 1852, however, did not work as well as in 1845.

Early in 1852, when he took office as Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby appointed Benjamin Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The income tax would expire unless it was renewed, leaving a large deficiency; but Disraeli must devise a remission of some burdens to satisfy, or at least appease, the agricultural party. Accordingly, his December budget included sops to the shipping interest and the sugar-planters, while it appeased the farmers by halving the malt tax and the duty on hops. A more popular proposal was a reduction of the tea duties by successive stages from 2*s*. 2*d*. to 1*s*. per 1b. The income tax was to be renewed for three years, and was to be extended downwards to industrial incomes of £100 and to propertied incomes of £50, but at the same time the rates on several schedules were to be reduced. He also proposed to increase the house tax, and to extend it to houses of only £10 annual value. This is a brief summary (Hirst, pp. 128–129) of what Disraeli said in his speech of 15,503 words on the budget. Listening to this speech, Gladstone admitted it was "grand, the most powerful I

ever heard from him" (Drew, p.125), but he also felt it was "disgraced by shameless personalities." Then what were these "shameless personalities"?

Among those who had objected to his proposals, Peelite Sir James Graham was one of the targets of "personalities" by Disraeli, who pointedly remarked him as "That right hon. Gentleman, whom I will not say I greatly respect, but rather whom I greatly regard." Another was Sir Charles Wood, who had accused Disraeli of a proposition which "recklessly increases the direct taxation of the country." After sarcastically criticizing him for what Wood did as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1842–1852), Disraeli said this:

> "…the right hon. Gentleman tells me, in not very polished, and scarcely in Parliamentary language, that I do not know any business. He may have learned his business. The House of Commons is the best judge of that; I care not to be his critic. Yet if he has learnt his business, he has still to learn some other things—he has to learn that petulance is no sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective."

Disraeli speaks as if "sarcasm" and "invective" were his patented arts of expression, but completely forgets what he wrote in his own memorandum: "The Queen said, 'I do not approve of his conduct to Sir Robert Peel'" (St. John, p.40). The Queen was a strong supporter of Disraeli, but even she could not approve Disraeli whose sarcasm and invective led to Peel's fall.

The last target, regarded as one of the three "great authorities" mentioned in Disraeli's speech, was William Gladstone, but Disraeli was no match for him in financial reasoning. Disraeli had had no financial experience. Gladstone, on the other hand, had been fully trained as a financier since he was appointed as Vice-President of the Board of Trade in 1841. When Disraeli introduced his budget on 3 December 1852, Gladstone set about preparing a counterblast. On 8 December, he said to his wife, "I am convinced that Disraeli's is the least conservative budget I have ever known." Catherine urged him on: "I want a good

stirring unanswerable conservative speech" (St. John, p.53). In the conclusion of his speech of 11,921 words, Gladstone declared that:

> "If I vote against the Government, I vote in support of those Conservative principles, which I thank God are common in a great degree to all parties in the British House of Commons, but of which I thought it was the peculiar pride and glory of the Conservative Party to be the champions and the leaders."

Gladstone began his speech by rebuking Disraeli for his personal attacks on his opponents (personalities):

> "…I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that whatever he has learned – and he has learned much – he has not yet learned the limits of discretion, of moderation, and of forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every Member of this House,..."

Gladstone castigated Disraeli's entire budget as an exercise in unsound and immoral finance. As is often the case with his logical reasoning, he points out what is lacking in his opponent's argument and shows or implies a way of improving it as follows:

> "The right hon. Gentleman is going to impose new taxes upon the householder; he increases taxes that have been paid already, and imposes them upon large classes that have not yet paid them, in order to repeal a portion of the malt tax. That is, I should say, he is going to impose a tax on the general body of the community, to make a most ineffectual and worthless attempt at the relief, not of a class, but of a portion of a class. This is precisely an inversion of the policy of Sir Robert Peel, for he imposed a tax on a class to relieve the entire body of the people."

When Gladstone finally resumed his seat at 4.00 a.m. and the Commons proceeded to vote on Disraeli's budget, the Government was defeated by 285 votes to 305. It promptly resigned.

Gladstone referred to Sir Robert Peel 16 times from the middle to the last of his speech, which may be regarded as a victory of "not merely a battle but a war," as the *Times* described it (Drew, p.127), for the late Sir Robert Peel. Later, Lord Aberdeen became Prime Minister and Gladstone was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. On 18 April, 1853, he made one of the greatest speeches on the budget in British history.

3.3 On Commercial Treaties: Economics for Peace vs. Politics for Peace

In the budget of 1853, he recommenced the task left unfinished by Peel. But his work was interrupted by the Crimean War. When he rejoined it in 1859, the level of expenditure had risen so high that the project of repealing the income tax had to be again postponed, in order to carry out another series of reforms which were to complete the emancipation of British commerce and manufacturers, and thereby promoting an expansion alike of trade and revenue. Napoleon III's Italian intervention of 1859 awoke fears of a possible French invasion, which resulted in upward pressure on defense spending. Gladstone wanted to avoid war, trying to improve the relations between Britain and France by means of a commercial treaty. Napoleon was a warm supporter of free trade, but his political object of improving relations with Britain was uppermost in his mind. Under such circumstances, Gladstone delivered a speech of 7,466 words on 9 March, 1860.

In this speech, Gladstone introduced a way of Britain and France uniting "cordially in a great act of policy, fraught with benefit to both countries." As the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gladstone wanted to avert war with France, so he was happy to know members of the House of Commons made various speeches for the Treaty of Commerce of France, but among them were some made with deep concern over the Treaty. One of them was by Mr. Edward Horsman.

Mr. Horseman expressed his greatest worry: “the object of France in regard to the article of coal is a military one,” In response to this worry, Gladstone said:

> “Not less than 180,000 tons of small coal, which one single company burns at the pit’s mouth for the purpose of getting rid of it, because it finds no market in England, may, under this Treaty, find a market in France, where good coal is scarce. There is no military object involved in this matter; it is a question of cost, and… that the estimated difference of cost, looked at from a French point of view, will be 10s. a ton. The French expect to gain 10s. a ton; and from that very estimate it will become evident to the House that a great deal of coal that is unsaleable in this country is certain to find a market in France, where the price is so much higher.”

Mr. George Bentinck also said, “a war with France and Europe would be better than that this Treaty should receive a final sanction.”

In spite of these oppositions, however, this Treaty was agreed in January 1860, the French pledged to reduce tariffs on a range of manufactured goods and raw materials from Britain, with no tariff to exceed 30 percent. In return, Britain would remove all tariffs on manufactured imports from France and reduce duties on wine and brandy. The result was a significant boost in trade: the value of British exports to France rose from £4.75 million in 1860 to £9.25 million in 1863.

In the 9 March 1860 speech, Gladstone was critical of Disraeli who said the Commercial Treaty with France should be judged only on political ground, and suggested that “the Treaty must be tried upon its merits with reference to commerce and trade, and with reference also to the indirect effects which commerce and trade would produce.” Now I have just read Disraeli’s 17 February, 1863 speech titled “Commercial Treaty with Italy,” only to be disappointed to know that it is not about any treaty itself but about his being fed up with the fact that too much emphasis has been laid on the “abstract principles of a free exchange

of commodities between nations," especially between Britain and France. To suggest his profound disgust over free trade, he used "abstract" five times in a short speech of 2,301 words. That is why he said this:

> "Every day we hear, 'We have had a successful commercial treaty with France; why not with Italy, why not with Austria?' You know very well that you cannot have the same results as with France. You had something to give to France. You had that principle of reciprocity to act with,…"

Now, if we went on to read without enough care, we could have dragged into Disraeli's characteristic sarcasm. The passage above is followed by this:

> "…the principle which you have always despised and always condemned. That led to your success—that led to the results which have been obtained, and you claimed that as a discovery which was accomplished more than a century ago by some of the greatest Statesmen that have ever existed in this country. It is past. The age of commercial treaties is past, because you have no means and no material for negotiation. All you can do is to exercise that moral influence, of which we hear so much, with foreign countries with which you are placed in communication, to lead them by your own example and your own prosperity….That was a good theory twenty years ago, and not only a good theory but a good theory which could be put in beneficial practice. I will not enter into a discussion now—at all times a barren controversy…"

What was "a good theory twenty years ago"? It was a theory advanced by Sir Robert Peel. And what does "that moral influence" remind us of? William Gladstone. In conclusion, Disraeli said:

> "You have adopted unrestricted competition as the principle of your commercial

> code…You have played all your cards, and to attempt at the present moment – to pretend that you can assist and support the commerce of this country by commercial treaties is a mere delusion."

To Disraeli, any commercial treaty "must be negotiated by political influence, and not by the influence of commercial considerations," no matter how severely he was criticized by Gladstone. It is a pity, however, that Disraeli could not recognize that Gladstone depended on the influence of commercial considerations only after they saw the limitations of political influence.

3.4 As Prime Ministers: Establishment vs. Disestablishment

With the death of Lord Palmerston in October 1865, John Russell was appointed Prime Minister and Gladstone, while remaining Chancellor, also became the Leader of the House of Commons. In the Reform Bill of 1866, Gladstone drew the bottom line of the new urban electors firmly at those who paid £7 a year for their homes in rent, for he intended that only the elite of the working classes was to receive the vote. His colleagues were, however, still influenced by Palmerston's fears that the diluting of the electorate by the working classes was a dangerous concession. As the government party was bitterly divided, the bill was defeated in June and the government resigned.

Lord Derby became Prime Minister and Disraeli, Chancellor. Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867 was more radical than Gladstone's. Since every male householder in a town was given the vote, a new age of mass democracy had opened. With this achievement, Disraeli secured his position among Conservatives, becoming Prime Minister in February 1868.

Disraeli's speech of 1,606 words, delivered on 5 March 1868, began with his gratitude to Lord Derby for his guidance and services. Derby was afflicted by ever more painful bouts of gout, and, being asked if he was ready to assume the leadership, Disraeli said he was and on 27 February 1868, the Queen formally appointed Disraeli as Prime Minister.

This speech functions as an inaugural address of Disraeli as Prime Minister, but just like one of the usual parliamentary speeches. Disraeli's "inaugural address" can be summarized on three main points, each of which is summarized as follows:

1) "On the retirement of Lord Derby Her Majesty was most graciously pleased to instruct to me the office of forming a Government….I trusted to the support of my Colleagues;…to the sympathy of a generous party; and…to receiving fair and impartial treatment from a House of Parliament... Under these circumstances…I am bound…to express my sense of the generous manner in which they have granted me their assistance.
2) "With respect to the foreign policy of the present Administration, we shall follow that course which has been pursued under the guidance of my noble Friend near me (Lord Stanley),…with approbation of Parliament,…with the confidence of Europe. That policy is a policy of peace…not…secured by a selfish isolation on the part of this country, but,…secured by sympathy with other countries, not merely in their prosperous fortunes, but in their anxieties and troubles.
3) "With reference to our domestic policy,…I mean a truly liberal policy—a policy that will not shrink from any changes which are required by the wants of the age we live in,…upon the question of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus in Ireland,…. We look upon that measure not as directed against the Irish people, but as a means of protecting the Irish people from the machinations of an unprincipled foreign confederacy."

The first two points may have caused no problem, but the more important issue in the last point seems to have been overlooked – the Irish church issue.

Back in 1845, Gladstone recognized through his speech on the Maynooth bill that his claim for exclusive state patronage was insupportable and he now

realized the Church of England had proven incapable of effecting any change in the religious culture of Ireland. According to St John (2010, pp.92–93), "In 1867, Irish grievances were brought forcibly before the English people. In September 1867, two members of the Irish revolutionary group, *The Fenians* (formed in 1858), were freed from prison in Manchester, a police officer being killed in the process, while in December 1867, a bomb exploded against the wall of Clerkenwell prison in London, killing 12 people." Advocating a firm response to these attacks, Gladstone urged that the time had come to undertake a broad based approach to tackling the main Irish grievances of land, church and education. The one to which Gladstone had given the greatest consideration was that of the church and he now argued that the solution to this problem was the radical one of *disestablishment and disendowment*. The Anglican Irish Church should lose not only its official position as the established Church of Ireland, but relinquish its large holdings of property as well. That is why Gladstone introduced a bill to suspend all appointments to the Irish Church.

In his 4 May 1868 speech of 5,616 words, Disraeli said while expressing his surprise as "a new question arose in the House of Commons": "At a few days' notice the House was asked to consider a proposition of a startling character,… the disestablishment of the Church…" And this proposition was presented by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire (Gladstone). Disraeli and his government "opposed the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, firstly, because we considered it…ran counter to that policy of conciliation of classes and creeds which had for thirty-four years been pursued in this country,…. Secondly,…because we thought it endangered property. Thirdly,…because it disunited the principle of religion from authority. And fourthly, lastly, and chiefly,…because, if that principle were adopted, we could see nothing that would prevent its application to England…much sooner than was anticipated."

The House, however, by a large majority decided in favour of the policy of Gladstone. Disraeli wen on to say, "it is our profound conviction that the

opinion of the nation does not agree on this subject with the vote of the House of Commons." Gladstone's proposition passed the Commons in May 1868, only to be thrown out by the Lords by 192 votes to 97. The final settlement of the issue must await the General Election. In the election, the new working class voters were expected to vote Liberal. As a result, the Liberal did better than anticipated, increasing their majority to over 110. With the scale of the Liberal victory apparent, Disraeli immediately resigned as Prime Minister. On 2 December 1868, Gladstone received a telegram at his Hawarden estate, and on the following day, at the age of 59, he became Prime Minister for the first time.

3.5 On the Suez Canal: Financial Investment vs. Political Transaction

By linking the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal reduced by several weeks the time spent sailing between Britain and India. Four-fifths of the traffic passing the canal was British. As it was the route by which troops and supplies passed to and from India, the canal was a crucial link. However, 56 percent of the canal company shares were held by France and the other 44 percent being owned by the Khedive (Ismail Pasha) – the ruler of Egypt.

Disraeli was keen to acquire a stake in the company. The British Cabinet was determined that France should not own the entire company and in November 1875, Britain's consul in Egypt was instructed to offer to buy the shares outright. The Khedive agreed to sell his stake for £4 million. Parliament was not sitting at the time, so to raise the money at short notice, Disraeli dispatched his private secretary, Montagu Corry, to the house of his old friend Baron Rothschild. Corry told the Baron that he wanted 4 million pounds. 'When!' 'Tomorrow', Corry answered. The Baron chewed on a grape and ejected the skin. 'What is your security?' 'The British Government.' 'You shall have it' (Onabe, p.148).

This is a famous story of Disraeli's achievement behind the purchase of Suez Canal shares in 1875, but Gladstone expressed his opposition in a speech of 9,511 words delivered on 21 February 1876.

In a letter to Queen Victoria (St. John, p.188), Disraeli wrote:

> "It is just settled: you have it, Madam. The French Government has been out-generaled.…The Khedive…offered your Majesty's Government to purchase his shares outright. He never would listen to such a proposition before. Four millions sterling! And almost immediately. There was only one firm that could do it – Rothschilds. They behaved admirably; advanced the money at a low rate and the entire interest of the Khedive is now yours, Madam."

This passage apparently gives the impression that Britain had acquired the entire canal; that Disraeli had done all of these things for the Queen; and that the Rothschilds solved this complicated problem for Disraeli. That is why Gladstone began his opposition by citing a statement by Sir Stafford Northcote, his former secretary and now Chancellor of the Exchequer under Disraeli:

> "…it is we, and not the firm of Rothschilds, that have made the purchase; that it is with us, and not with the Rothschilds, the Khedive has contracted; and the seven zinc boxes which contain those valuable shares have,…been handed over…to the custody of the Queen's officers, and not to Messrs. Rothschilds."

Gladstone opposed the way Disraeli solved this complicated problem because he cannot understand "the mode of operation which has been adopted by the government. So far as I know, it was not only without precedent, but it was contrary to our financial principles…. I wish to know whether there is… any instance in which the Government have made a financial arrangement of a character corresponding to this, or for an amount either equal to this,…or with a private firm."

By early 1872, Mary Anne was dying of cancer. Disraeli tended his wife devotedly, but she died on 15 December, leaving him desolate with grief. In January 1874, after defeated over the bill on an Irish university, Gladstone dissolved Parliament and called a general election, which turned out to be a

Conservative triumph. So began Disraeli's Second Ministry (1874–1880), which was the first Conservative government with a clear majority since Peel. Disraeli, however, was now 69 years old and frequently ill. By 1874, he was suffering from gout, asthma and bronchial trouble.

Old, frequently ill and melancholy as he was, Disraeli began his speech in a challenging manner to Gladstone: "…had the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Gladstone) been the Prime Minister of this country, the shares in the Suez Canal would not have been purchased," and his speech of 3,613 words, which came last in the 21 February 1876 parliamentary debates, was divided into two parts: the operation and the policy.

As to the operation of this purchase, Disraeli justified himself through his ingenious art of asking the Rothschilds to advance £4,000,000 at short notice by expressing his sarcastic surprise that

> "two right hon. Gentlemen (William Gladstone and Robert Lowe), both of whom have filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer,…should have shown by their observations such a lamentable want of acquaintance with the manner in which large amounts of capital are commanded when the Government of a country may desire to possess them under the circumstances under which we appealed to the House in question….nor can I suppose that (Gladstone and Lowe) can really believe that there is in this country anyone who has £4,000,000 lying idle at his bankers."

And Disraeli concluded the operation part of his speech like this:

> "Ought we to refrain from doing what is necessary for the public welfare because it leads to stock-jobbing? Why, there is not an incident in the history of the world that led to so much stock-jobbing as the battle of Waterloo, and are we to regret that that glorious battle was fought and won because it led to stock-jobbing?"

As to the policy part, Disraeli pointed out two important aspects of the purchase. Mr. Lowe said, “You have your shares, but you have no dividends,” while Gladstone said, “You have your shares, but you have no votes.” In response, Disraeli said, “You have no votes and no dividends, though you have the shares,” for “the Government should become encumbered with all these shares, and yet possess neither the advantage of dividends nor of voting power.” And what is the essence of the purchase of Suez Canal shares? To the two critics, it is a financial investment, but to Disraeli, it is “a political transaction.” Thus the same thing was viewed in different ways by different people. As far as this purchase is concerned, Disraeli’s ingenuity seems to have been more persuasive, for it was believed by the Queen, the House and the nation to have strengthened the Empire (Onabe, pp.151–152).

4. Conclusion —Last Speeches—

Late in March 1881, Disraeli caught a chill which developed into severe bronchitis. He took to his bed, became progressively weaker, and died there on 19 April 1881. Fifteen days earlier, how was he? On 4 March 1881, he was already suffering, but, having taken a drug to fortify him, Disraeli made his last speech of 4,746 words. Not being well-organized, the speech is easily found to have two main points. He first stressed the importance of retaining Candahar as follows:

> “…everything that has been alleged respecting the retention of Candahar, and the consequent expenses of thus retaining it, was about the Panjaub when you took it. We heard, when the retention of the Punjaub was proposed, that it was impossible to raise any respectable revenue there,…But, eventually, you found a very prosperous country in the Punjaub… I will not believe, without much better proof, that the retaining Candahar – the capital of an extremely fertile district – will entail upon you a result less satisfactory than the result of the retention of the Punjaub…in time, probably paying more than its expenses.”

Disraeli then referred to "the celebrated Proclamation of the Queen when she accepted the Sovereignty of India," though it is "essentially a domestic Proclamation addressed to the Princes of India," and went on to say this:

> "My Lords, the key of India is not…Candahar…(but) London. The majesty of sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of your Parliaments, the inexhaustible resources of a free, an ingenious, and a determined people—these are the key of India…. You have observed that system in this country for the last 100 years. You have skilfully acquired many of the strong places of the world. You have established a chain of fortifications which has connected the Metropolis with its most distant dependencies,…If we pursue the same policy, Candahar is eminently one of those places which would contribute to the maintenance of our Empire."

In retaining Candahar in Afghanistan, Disraeli clearly showed his "forward policy," but this is incidental. During the 1850s and early 1860s, when Palmerston dominated the scene, he was a critic of aggressive and expensive foreign initiatives and posed as a prudent Little Englander. From the 1860s, however, Gladstone's policies of conciliation, non-intervention and scepticism towards the boons of Empire pushed Disraeli into the more attractive position of advocate of Empire and defender of British prestige.

Disraeli started later than Gladstone as MP, but became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister earlier than Gladstone and won his ultimate success as Queen Victoria's last mentor, but it is to Gladstone, not to his own genius, ironically, that he owed that success, for all that he had done after defeating Sir Robert Peel on the Maynooth Bill was to try to outdo Gladstone in any of his rhetorical activities as well as political performances. When he ceased being Prime Minister, Disraeli wrote a novel. This fact suggests he saw his whole life as an artistic expression through the medium of the governance of men and women.

Gladstone died in the early morning of 19 May 1898. He died peacefully

among his family. About four years before, however, when he made his last speech in the House of Commons on 1 March 1894, he was still active. This speech of 2,562 words showed his strong dissatisfaction with the then state of affairs in the House of Lords:

> "…this operation of sending and re-sending and again re-sending backwards and forwards between the two Houses on this particular Bill (the Parish Councils Bill) is an operation which has continued long enough…I confess…if we were to prolong this operation the result would be a considerable loss of dignity to both Houses."

Gladstone himself had a hard time when he took up the Second Home Rule Bill for Ireland in his fourth ministry. The bill was introduced at the start of the 1893 session. Gladstone was severely taxed by the interminable succession of fierce debates, but his stamina enabled him to last out what became the longest session in the history of parliament. The bill was carried on its third reading in the Commons by 34 votes, but the peers turned out in force to reject the bill. Of the 560 members of the House of Lords who could have voted, 419 opposed it and a mere 41 supported it. The resistance of the upper house was one of the reasons why, just before his retirement early in 1894, he was trying to rouse his cabinet colleagues for a campaign against the Lords' veto on legislation. The 1 March 1894 speech was one such in this campaign:

> "The issue which is raised between a deliberative Assembly, elected by the votes of more than 6,000,000 people, and a deliberative Assembly occupied by many men of virtue, by many men of talent, of course with considerable diversities and varieties, is a controversy which, when once raised, must go forward to an issue. The issue has been postponed, long postponed,…in many cases to a considerable degree, by that discretion, circumspection, and reserve in the use of enormous privileges which the House of Lords, on various occasions in my recollection, in the time of the Duke

> of Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, and other periods, have shown; but I am afraid, Sir, that the epoch, the age of that reserve and circumspection, may have gone by….the situation is intolerable,…"

Since this is his very last speech, he announced that his Government would accept the Lords' latest amendments, but part of the speech mentioned above strongly implies that the House of Lords should be reformed as soon as possible in such a way as reflects the following statement: "No doubt, Sir, there is a higher authority than the House of Commons. It is the authority of the nation which must in the last resort decide." Like his previous speeches, this speech shows Gladstone's logic characterized by factual detail and robust argument based on a thorough study. And all of these rhetorical efforts were ultimately crystalized into "the people's William" as their national hero.

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