

Newgate Narratives

Paul Clifford

Edited by
Gary Kelly



NEWGATE NARRATIVES

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Volume 4
Paul Clifford

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INTRODUCTION

Edward Lytton Bulwer: Life and Career before *Paul Clifford*

Edward Lytton Bulwer (1803–73), or Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, first Baron Lytton, to give him his full name and title, was one of the most prolific and popular novelists of the nineteenth century. He produced almost thirty works of fiction in forty-six years, reprinted many times on both sides of the Atlantic and translated into many languages and later adapted to other media, including film. Some of his novels continue to be republished in popular editions into the twenty-first century. Bulwer was born into a wealthy and aristocratic family, and made good use of those advantages. He was also a poet and, after *Paul Clifford* was published, a politician and government minister. He went on after *Paul Clifford* to write more ‘Newgate novels’, historical romances, domestic novels, succesful plays, histories and cultural and social commentary. He was an energetic campaigner for author’s copyright, support for authors and professionalization of authorship. All this has proven too much for academic literary criticism and history, which until the past two decades has tended to class him as a ‘merely’ popular, somewhat ‘sensational’, intellectually lightweight writer, though of some interest historically, and with a scandalous private life and eccentric beliefs later on in his career.¹ For example, the 1985 edition of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* summarized his career as a writer of ‘silver-fork’, ‘Newgate’, ‘domestic’ and ‘historical’ novels by noting that ‘his works, though now little read, span many of the changes in 19th-cent[ury] fiction and are thus of considerable sociological interest.’² John Sutherland, in *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*, noted that Bulwer ‘was over-valued in his own day, and has been under-valued by posterity’, having a plausible ‘claim to be the father of the English detective novel, science fiction, the fantasy novel, the thriller, and the domestic realistic novel.’³ As well as a continuing if small readership nowadays, especially for his novels of the supernatural, Bulwer retains an ambiguous status in popular culture for the self-consciously well educated as the author of what is supposedly one of the salient examples of ‘bad writing’ in English ‘Victorian’ literature: the opening words of his Newgate novel, *Paul Clifford*

– ‘It was a dark and stormy night’. Consequently, his name is now the title of a cacoliterary competition in which contestants submit a prospective bad opening sentence for a novel.⁴ To Bulwer, this would have seemed like a continuation of the ‘conspiracy’ he battled against throughout his life and career to deny him his ‘rightful’ status and achievement, at best, and at worst to denigrate him and his work. As Bulwer’s life and writings are well documented, this introduction will deal with his social and intellectual formation and literary career up to the publication of *Paul Clifford*.

Bulwer was born the third son of a landed Norfolk family who could claim descent on the father’s side from one of the followers of William the Conqueror and on the mother’s side from an equally ancient family of Derbyshire, with an estate at Knebworth in Hertfordshire.⁵ Bulwer’s father, an army general, died in 1807, but not before Bulwer experienced first his indifference and then his ‘positive dislike.’⁶ This, Bulwer recalled, ‘made my mother cling to me the more fondly’, and he was raised by her in London. As a boy, he spent time with his maternal grandfather, an erstwhile reform sympathizer, who had a large scholarly library, which young Bulwer ransacked, being especially taken with the chivalric romance *Amadis de Gaul*. He was sent to private schools, where he was intellectually precocious and an avid reader, finding time apart from schoolwork to keep up ‘my literary acquisitions by devouring the contents of three circulating libraries.’⁷ He soon took to writing and publishing poetry, assumed upper-class airs, studied fencing with the man who had instructed Byron in the gentleman’s art, and fell in love and was disappointed.

At eighteen he went to Cambridge University, where he socialized with his brother Henry’s set and befriended Alexander Cockburn (1802–80), son of a British diplomat in Germany and later a prominent lawyer, to whom Bulwer would dedicate *Paul Clifford*. Another friend was the brilliant, confident and popular Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802–39), at this time, like Bulwer, an advocate of radical reform, later a poet and politician on the Canningite side of the Conservatives. At Cambridge, Bulwer rejected the routine of lectures and instead read widely, acquiring the broad literary and intellectual culture that he would display in his many novels. A political career was a likely prospect for someone with his family, wealth and connections, and at Cambridge, after an intense period of practice in public speaking, he made a figure in the debating union. At Cambridge he met and was hugely impressed by the learned and eloquent Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), who had been raised in the heart of the Evangelical movement and later became a utilitarian and then an outstanding historian and poet. So much did Bulwer admire Macaulay at this time that he shut himself up in an effort to acquire a comparable range of knowledge.⁸ He also took up writing fiction, later recalling:

About this time I sketched the outline of the tale of *Falkland*, and wrote the commencing chapter of *Pelham*. I do not think that the idea of publishing either was then in my mind, but they were begun as experimental exercises in the two opposite kinds of fiction – the impassioned and sombre, and the light and sportive.⁹

Bulwer published more poetry and began writing for a literary periodical. In the vacation of 1824, he did the romantic pedestrian tour of the Lake District and Scotland, and spent five or six days in a ‘gipsy’ camp. In the autumn of 1824 he became involved with Lady Caroline Lamb, eighteen years older than he and the notorious former lover of Byron.

After a period spent in France in 1825, where he experienced the first of the intense attacks of melancholy that assailed him throughout his life, Bulwer returned to London. Here he fell in love with Rosina Wheeler (1802–82), daughter of an idle Irish gentleman and an Owenite socialist feminist. Bulwer’s mother intended her son to marry advantageously as a foundation for a public career, and strenuously opposed this relationship. She insisted that once Bulwer had achieved ‘distinction’ she would consent to the marriage. Reflecting on this stipulation, Bulwer told Rosina Wheeler that he would aim to create for himself a new kind of public identity:

There are two sorts of distinction to be gained – *power* and *reputation*. Mr. Canning [George Canning, government leader], for instance, has the former; Mr. Moore [Thomas Moore, poet and friend of Byron], the latter. In naming these persons you will see at once that *reputation* is obtained (in the highest degree) by exertion in literature, and power *almost solely* by devotion to politics. Now it is our object to obtain *power* rather than *reputation*; the latter gratifies *vanity*, not *pride*; it gives *éclat*, but no real importance. In this servile and aristocratic country we must make to ourselves a more independent and commanding rank. For myself I should not care a straw about the fame of stringing couplets and making books; and for you, for whom alone I covet distinction, I would wish to find a station and a destiny more worthy of your claims to admiration. Literary honors are not, therefore, so desirable as political rank; but they must not for that reason be despised; they are the great stepping-stones to our more ultimate object.¹⁰

Comparing himself and his abilities to those of self-supporting authors he knew, he calculated that he could make £1000 a year from ‘literature’, enough to purchase a seat in Parliament. Accordingly, he planned to commence ‘regular author’ by the winter: ‘If my works succeed, in the course of the winter, I expect before the *end of that* same Spring to be in the House [of Commons],’ and he and Rosina could marry. This plan evidently concerned the ‘works’ *Falkland* and *Pelham*, which he had begun while still at Cambridge.

With his aristocratic background and experience of fashionable society, he of course turned to Henry Colburn, the publisher known to specialize in fiction from and about this world, by authors like Bulwer himself. In fact, it was less that

Bulwer wanted to be a certain kind of novelist than that he thought he could be the kind of novelist that Colburn was marketing and selling so successfully; without Colburn, it is doubtful that Bulwer would have achieved what he did in his early career. Colburn was one of the most enterprising publishers of the early nineteenth century and the leading publisher of what were called 'fashionable novels'.¹¹ Rumoured to be the illegitimate son of Lord Lansdowne or the Duke of York, Colburn (1784/5–1855) began his career in the business of books as an assistant in a commercial 'circulating' or lending library in Albemarle street, in the fashionable West End of London. In about 1806 he was enabled to start his own business in this line in the same part of town, thanks to a silent partner who provided capital; he sold the business in 1824. With the knowledge of the tastes of the better-off reading public that this experience would have given him, shortly thereafter he began publishing in his own right. He specialized in French and English books, almost half his list consisted of fiction, and he also published travels, at this time the second most widely read kind of books after novels. With characteristic business aggressiveness, Colburn soon moved into periodical publishing, at a time when magazines were increasingly the medium for diffusion of current literature and cultural, scientific, political and other information among the middle and upper classes. In 1814 Colburn co-founded the *New Monthly Magazine* (1814–84), which was edited by the poet and liberal Thomas Campbell until 1831, and then by author of *Paul Clifford* from 1831 to 1833. In 1817 Colburn had founded the weekly *Literary Gazette*, in an expanding market for current literature and reviews of a 'lighter' kind. Colburn was also part-owner of the *Athenaeum*, another literary periodical, satirized in Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* as the *Asineum*.

In 1829 Colburn formed a partnership with Richard Bentley (1794–1871), who had been active in the printing business since 1819 and was known for high quality work, often illustrated with woodcut illustrations. Bentley had been printing Colburn's books before this. Together they initiated the hugely successful Colburn and Bentley's Standard Novels series, reprinting fashionable novels with elegant engraved illustrations in monthly volumes to middle-class aspirants to genteel and almost current literary culture. The partnership broke up in distrust in 1832, however, after disclosures that indicated Colburn had not been completely open about his firm's finances when forming the partnership – Colburn had something of a reputation for deviousness in his business dealings. Bentley went on to compete with Colburn, also published fashionable fiction, and founded the periodical *Bentley's Miscellany*, designed as a 'popular' fiction and essay magazine, at sixpence an issue. It was edited by Charles Dickens, followed by William Harrison Ainsworth; the *Miscellany* published the serial versions of Dickens's Newgate novel, *Oliver Twist*, and Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839–40), which was the pretext for the Newgate novel controversy

in 1840, instigated by Bulwer's rival, William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63). Thackeray worked for the rival, conservative-leaning magazine, *Fraser's*, directed by Bulwer's enemy, William Maginn (1794–1842). Bulwer was one of those kinds of novelists Colburn especially favoured, and *Fraser's* would deride and denounce – gentlemen and ladies of aristocratic family or connections able to write about upper-class society and criminal or decadent underworlds, in historical or near-contemporary settings, with a buzz of the outré and avant-garde. Colburn published Bulwer's first novels; Colburn and Bentley published *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*; Bentley would publish Bulwer's historical romance, the European bestseller *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834).

When Bulwer first turned to fiction to support his fashionable lifestyle and political ambitions, Colburn had already begun publishing controversial novels about and often by such people. These were the so-called 'fashionable novels', later known collectively as the 'silver fork' school, from the preoccupation of such fiction with depicting the manners, morals and fashionable consumption by which the upper classes enacted and displayed their cultural, social and political hegemony.¹² Colburn specialized in the market for 'fashionable' books, both fiction and non-fiction, that depicted fashionable life and that were also, in consequence, articles of fashionable consumption, in a period when such consumption was a major way of negotiating social identities and aspirations for the upper and upper-middle classes. As Ellen Moers put it in *The Dandy: Brummell to Beerbohm*, 'It was Colburn's genius to see that a literature written about the exclusives, by the exclusives (or those who knew them well) and for the exclusives would be royally supported by those who were not but desperately wanted to become exclusives: the *nouveaux riches* of post-war England'.¹³ As a subeditor on one of Colburn's magazines described it, 'Colburn always regarded, in publishing, the fashionable taste, no matter how absurd, for the fashionable is a buying taste ...'.¹⁴ Fashionable novelists Colburn signed up included the Anglo-Irish Gothic romance writer Charles Robert Maturin; Lady Caroline Lamb; the Irish social-literary figure and author of 'national tales', Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan; the humourist Theodore Hook; the silver fork novelists Robert Plumer Ward, Henry Phipps (later Lord Normanby), T. H. Lister, and lady Charlotte Bury; the naval novelist Capt. Henry Marryat; and such historical romancers as Horace Smith and G. P. R. James.

Overshadowing this kind of fiction was the real life and highly ambiguous figure of Lord Byron, who had died in 1824 fighting for the European liberal cause of Greek independence from the Turkish Empire, after a very public career of amorous liaisons, bestselling authorship, and anti-establishment political, social and moral views. Though Bulwer criticized Byron in his letters to his wife, who once held him as her 'Idol',¹⁵ Bulwer and many other writers and publishers recognized the value of assuming the Byronic for the reading public. Depictions

of 'high' life centred on Byronic protagonists, partly glamorized and partly satirical, became a fictional vogue in the second half of the 1820s, with novels such as Robert Plumer Ward's *Tremaine; or, A Man of Refinement* (1825), Thomas Henry Lister's *Granby* (1826) and Benjamin Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826), all published by Colburn. This kind of novel would have a double appeal for the well-to-do middle-class people who patronized the fashionable commercial circulating libraries that were Colburn's main market: on the one hand they could get apparently up-to-date information about the 'manners', dress, consumption patterns, speech, courtship practices and vices of the 'quality', whom they emulated; on the other hand they could enjoy the satire of these very things that they, the reading public, desired. Bulwer's first production for Colburn was an attempt to participate in this vogue of ambivalence, though in his own distinctive way. He planned to ask £100 for it – rather a lot for a first novel only a single volume in length. If Colburn refused, Bulwer intended to try John Murray, Byron's publisher, and if that failed, descend to John Ebers, another publisher of fashionable literature.¹⁶

Falkland was published anonymously early in 1827, perhaps purposely and ostentatiously in a rather dilettantish single volume, when three volumes were the norm, though he had tried to lengthen it at the publisher's suggestion – Colburn's advisor Charles Ollier thought it too short to make an impact.¹⁷ Colburn, with his usual care for publicity, arranged for advance notices to be published in friendly, tame or captive publications, such as the following in his *New Monthly Magazine*: 'A novel of great eloquence and passion, is in the press, to be entitled *Falkland*. Its plot is founded on a melancholy fact, of recent occurrence in elevated life.'¹⁸ Written in epistolary form, *Falkland* is, however, the fictional autobiography of the eponymous protagonist addressed to his male confidant and describes a disastrous illicit amour, apparently meant to suggest Bulwer's liaison with Lady Caroline Lamb. It is possible that Bulwer intended to exploit the continuing public appetite for the scandal-gossip of the *roman-à-clef*, such as Lamb's own *Glenarvon* (1816), well known to be a fictionalized account of her affair with Byron. In *Falkland*, the eponymous protagonist's name recalls that of the intellectual and philanthropic but reclusive and criminally guilty upper-class character in William Godwin's widely-read novel of social criticism from the Revolutionary 1790s, *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) – a novel Bulwer would turn to again as a model for *Paul Clifford*. In Bulwer's *Falkland*, the name of the protagonist's love, the unhappily married Emily Mandeville, recalls the female victim Emily Melville in *Things As They Are*, but also the male protagonist of Godwin's later fictional study of psychological alienation and misanthropy, *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England* (1817).¹⁹ In *Falkland*, then, Bulwer practised the silver fork or fashionable and Byronic school, but indicated his adherence to the Godwinian or

'English Jacobin' novel. There were also elements of Wolfgang von Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister* – the first long a European bestseller, the latter a *bildungsroman* or novel of an idealistic young man's introduction to society, or rather to the reality of social division and conflict.²⁰ Bulwer's aim seems to have been to construct in his protagonist and/or narrator a figure for the author as combined Godwinian social critic and Byronic philosophical rake and dandy – the partly involuntary and partly voluntary social exile who is enabled by this situation to depict 'things as they are' critically and satirically, for the purpose, declared or implied, of reforming them.²¹ Significantly, the result of Falkland's social alienation and disastrous love is his engagement in the Spanish 'liberal' revolution of the early 1820s – an obvious parallel to Byron's engagement in the Greek War of Independence. Though Bulwer deliberately constructed his narrators and protagonists to imply their identity with their author, he himself would not pursue this kind of vanguardism, but he would repeatedly offer the figure to the reading public.

Rosina Wheeler certainly took this view of the novel, and was alarmed by it. Bulwer reassured her, however, that there was no relationship between himself and his fictional protagonist, assuring her that "Falkland" has nothing to do with Puppy' – a term meaning impertinent young man, and Bulwer's name for himself in his love letters to Wheeler. He went on to declare that Falkland 'is quite a different character and ment [*sic*] as such. I have not drawn a person even whom I should be flattered to resemble.' Again, he insisted, reverting to the baby talk that he and Wheeler used, 'My own darling zoo is quite wrong in taking up the idea that Puppy has made Falkland his speaking trumpet, and therefore I shall not answer oo pretty and witty observations on oo assumption of that error.' In saying this he was lying. His aim, he told Wheeler, was to use the novel to sell his poetry; in saying this, he was probably being truthful, since success as a poet could not only make considerable sums, as Byron and Scott had shown, but was also more prestigious than success as a novelist, and so could perhaps get him into politics more quickly. In response to Wheeler's criticisms of *Falkland*, Bulwer explained that the 'want of incident' in the novel was deliberate: 'the most popular [books] are those which abound rather in thoughts than events, and for this reason – Every one has *thought*, hardly any *acted*.' Later, Bulwer would write that the art of the novel consisted in depicting the passions rather than external events. He also admitted to Wheeler that he was disappointed in *Falkland*, lamenting that 'it falls very very short of the plan I had intended to execute.'²² The reading public was similarly disappointed. *Falkland* did not sell as well as Colburn and Bulwer hoped, and a review in the June *Monthly Review* condemned the book as not only immoral but inartistic.²³ Late in the year Colburn, a master of publicity, tried the catchpenny ploy of publishing advertisements suggesting that the novel completed a series of controversial European novels of adulterous

loves that also incorporated elements of social and political criticism, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie; ou, La nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* (1774), and Ugo Foscolo's *Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis* (1802). Bulwer's plan to use 'literature' as a 'stepping-stone' to 'distinction', and so to satisfy his mother and obtain her acquiescence in his marriage to Rosina Wheeler, had not succeeded. The marriage took place on 27 August 1827, nevertheless. Bulwer's mother promptly cut off his allowance. He had already published a poem, *O'Neill; or, The Rebel*, with Colburn in June 1827, but this did not make Bulwer a new Scott or Byron. Bulwer would have to return to novel-writing in order to maintain his fashionable lifestyle and keep the plan for a political career alive.

Bulwer had the status and culture of a 'gentleman' and he affected the dandy, but he was not afraid of work, and despite or because of *Falkland's* failure, and spurred by an offer from Colburn of £500 for a new novel, he turned with a will to the standard 'triple-decker', or three-volume format, while still pursuing the fusion of Godwinian social criticism and Byronic misanthropy. In his new novel, he told Rosina Wheeler, he wanted 'to draw a Gentleman like Gil Blas'.²⁴ Gil Blas was the eponymous hero, or anti-hero, of a very widely-read French picaresque novel by Alain-René Lesage, first published between 1715 and 1735. By 'Gentleman like' Bulwer meant 'gentleman-like', that is, he intended to depict a *gentee* rogue rather than the usual lowlife protagonist of picaresque adventures, such as Lesage's Gil Blas. *Pelham; or, The Adventures of a Gentleman* was published early in 1828, less than a year after *Falkland*. Colburn, despite strong doubts from his editorial advisors, thought the work would be the book of the season and paid the promised £500 for the copyright. This was more than the combined annual income of Bulwer and his wife at this time. Bulwer is supposed to have said that if Colburn had declined the novel he would never have written another, but would instead have devoted himself entirely to politics.²⁵ Colburn made sure that, as with his other publications, readers would be aware from the novel's very physical quality that what they held in their hands not only depicted but was in itself an article of fashionable consumption. As Ellen Moers describes it:

.... three slim pocket-size volumes, each one, though over three hundred pages in length, no more than an hour's reading. The chapters are short and on each page are only twenty-two lines of a graceful type-face boxed in lavish margins and enlivened frequently by italic print.²⁶

Though *Pelham* sold slowly at first, it soon became a sensation, and its author with it. The fashionable architect John Nash (1752–1835) was so impressed with the novel that he let Bulwer have his own terms in renting an expensive London house. The 'Adventures of a Gentleman' launched Bulwer as a public personage.²⁷

In witty and philosophical first-person narration, *Pelham* depicts a Byronic world-weary protagonist-narrator who moves beyond social alienation to discover moral and social purpose in clearing a friend of a false accusation of crime and uncovering the actual villain. In this figure, as a version of himself, Bulwer was offering a prospective leader of aristocratic family and culture but a professional middle-class sense of 'duty', rejecting decadent and corrupt forms of upper-class culture and politics that he himself, like his protagonist, seemed to know all too well. The figure would reappear, reworked, in *Paul Clifford*. Supporting this protagonist-narrator-author figure is much of the descriptive content of *Pelham* – an element Bulwer later proposed as particularly important in the art of the novel.²⁸ Accordingly, the narrative of *Pelham* is larded throughout with observations on fashionable life and society, including information on many aspects of fashionable consumption. There was danger in this, as in Bulwer's assuming for his protagonist-narrator and hence for himself the contradictory character of a new Byron. This was what Christopher Lane calls 'the specter of effeminacy',²⁹ the danger of being taken for a mere dandy, an effeminate man. The possibility of such a response to a novel with a dandy protagonist (though a 'reformed' one), was enhanced by the fact that novel-writing was still widely regarded as a feminine, effeminate, or at best feminized literary pursuit. Even Walter Scott had felt the danger and only definitively disclosed his identity as the author of the Waverley Novels when forced to do so by financial embarrassment, not long before *Pelham* was published. In fact, a few years later, Bulwer and his novels would be accused of effeminacy, forcing him to purge the text of *Pelham* of what he saw as these incriminating elements.

Already aware of this danger from his own experience and reactions to his early writing, Bulwer was careful to include scenes of masculine endeavour and high moral and social purpose in *Pelham*, as he would in *Paul Clifford*, to balance the dandiacal elements of the narrative voice. Among these masculine elements were depictions of manly action and 'low' life rendered with a combination of grim realism and Gothic melodrama, subsuming the picaresque tradition. As Matthew Rosa put it in his study of the silver fork novel, *Pelham* 'is a version of the picaresque romance. It is the continuator of *Gil Blas*, *Tom Jones*, and *Roderick Random*, but with the crude *picaro* replaced by the intellectual dandy.'³⁰ Bulwer also larded his novel with a wide range of language, sociolects of social strata from 'low' to 'high', as he would do again in *Paul Clifford*. This sociolinguistic play would reinforce the 'author's' authority as someone who knew, even at the linguistic level, the entire range of contemporary society. In *Pelham*, Bulwer also reworked the classic eighteenth-century satires, such as John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, in which the criminal underworld was depicted as not only a parallel to crime in 'high' life, but emulating, connected to, and probably driven by it. This depiction of an upper-class world connected to underworld villainy and crime

was intended by Bulwer as, among other things, an exposé of upper-class hegemony as cultural consumption and 'manners' – a system of 'distinction' by which a social class exercised illegitimate sway over the others by inducing those others to accept the dominant class's inherent and acquired pre-eminence.³¹

This, at least, was his ostensible purpose; if, in the process of exposing the secret of his own class's power, he also satisfied the middle-class reading public's appetite for such information in their own quest for social emulation and upward mobility, then his work would have a double, if contradictory, appeal.³² In creating Pelham as a philosophical dandy alienated from his own kind, Bulwer was exhibiting his possession of cosmopolitanism as a kind of engaged detachment, or what Amanda Anderson describes as 'the negative freedom that permits critique, exposure, irony, or parody'.³³ In this, Bulwer was developing further both the Byronism and the Godwinism of *Falkland*. As Bulwer's grandson and biographer would put it, 'One of the immediate effects of the publication of *Pelham* was a supersession of the Byronic cult by a new fashion which, though equally affected, had at least the merit of being more cheerful than its predecessor'.³⁴ Judging by the reviews, Bulwer had found the right combination. The fashionable miscellany magazine *La Belle Assemblée* willingly identified the novel's hero with its author as 'an elegantly-minded man – a man of wit, genius, and talent – a man of the world', and reprinted a passage indicating 'the author's taste in dress, as well as taste and talent in literary composition'³⁵ – famously, Bulwer's novel is supposed to have established the colour black as *de rigueur* for men's formal evening wear.³⁶ Even the more solidly bourgeois and moralistic *Monthly Review*, which had dismissed *Falkland*, praised *Pelham* for its 'separate descriptions of social manners and individual character' and its 'uninterrupted flow of wit and lively observation', and declared it 'the very best novel we have seen of the class to which it belongs', before going on to condemn that class and *Pelham* for depicting the adventures of a 'libertine' and scenes of 'fashionable profligacy'.³⁷ The response of the reading public was even more decisive, and *Pelham* remained one of the most popular of Bulwer's novels and one of the most popular novels of the century.

By the end of the year Bulwer had published another novel with Colburn, in four rather than three volumes, entitled *The Disowned* (1828, dated 1829), for which he received £800. As its title suggests, it was based on the plot of the identity mystery-romance made famous by Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones* (1749), in which the true identity of the protagonist, Clarence Linden, is concealed or misrepresented, forcing him into a series of picaresque adventures, including apparent 'crimes', in which his subjective merit is tested and (usually) affirmed, until an *éclaircissement* reveals all and a happy ending closes the novel. This was a form to which Bulwer would return in *Paul Clifford*; in *The Disowned* he combines it with the parallel and darker story of Algernon Mordaunt, a gentleman

ruined by a lawsuit, who nevertheless devotes himself to his beloved wife, whom he married though she was a penniless orphan – a melodramatized version of the situation of Bulwer and his wife still suffering under his mother's disapproval and suspension of allowance. In the end, Mordaunt is assassinated by mistake by a republican named Wolfe – a character out of German melodrama. In the character of the artist Warner, Bulwer is also supposed to have adapted elements of Goethe's *bildungsroman*, or 'novel of education' (in the sense of socialization and acculturation), *Wilhelm Meister* (two parts; 1795–6, 1821), translated by Thomas Carlyle in 1824. Expectations among the reading public and circulating-library proprietors were so high that the first edition was reported to have been 'swept away by the booksellers on the very day of its publication', but it was criticized for ignoring plot and having too many characters and incidents unconnected with the main story.³⁸

Barely half a year after *The Disowned*, Bulwer returned to the triple-decker novel with *Devereux: A Tale*, 'by the Author of *Pelham*'. Set in a period a century before the novel's publication, it purports to be the autobiography of count Devereux, man of the world and soldier of fortune, and includes accounts of the leading English and French figures of the time in which it is set. Colburn paid Bulwer £1500 for it, an enormous sum for a novel at this time. Again there was much in the novel that was autobiographical, and probably meant to be recognized as such for the titillation and perhaps sympathy of the reading public, including the character of the narrator-protagonist's distant mother and reflections on the inevitable disillusionments of love. Again there was a great deal of social satire, with 'advanced' political and religious views, including a sympathetic portrait of an atheist, perhaps a homage to Bulwer's mentor and novelistic model, William Godwin. Elements of Godwin's novel *Mandeville*, set in an earlier period of English history, were detected in *Devereux*. One very admiring reader was Harriette Wilson (1786–1845), who had numerous lovers among the nobility and royalty, and whose ostensibly authentic memoirs, published in 1825, could be regarded as a female anticipation of Bulwer's 'Adventures of a Gentleman'. In the first of her three fan letters to Bulwer, whom she nicknames 'Mr Pelham', Wilson admitted that she did not care for *Pelham* or *The Disowned*, but was so taken with *Devereux* that she wished to offer Bulwer her 'acquaintance'.³⁹ He declined.

Paul Clifford

Paul Clifford was published in May 1830 by the partnership of Colburn and Bentley, in the familiar 'triple-decker' or three-volume format designed mainly for commercial circulating libraries. As usual, Colburn had already been busy with publicity. The *Morning Chronicle* reported:

The main design of 'Paul Clifford,' the new Work by the Author of 'Pelham,' we understand to be a general satire upon the hypocrisy of society, and the various methods of rising in the world. Sometimes this design is embodied in a covert shape—sometimes openly—sometimes in masks—sometimes in portraits. The hollowness and pretences in literature, politics, fashion, professions and callings, are the great *material* of irony and satire throughout the work.⁴⁰

It was advertised alongside Mary Shelley's historical novel *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*, about a real-life impostor and claimant to the English throne. The well-to-do portion of the reading public would recognize in *Paul Clifford* the 'historical romance' version of the Colburn and now Colburn and Bentley novel. There would be a historical setting in a somewhat sanitized, 'merry' if often agreeably dissolute and dishonest England or similar locale, a past time and place with enough period detail to make it plausible. Yet the setting would have sharp points of reference to current characters, controversies and fashions, a sense that the daily news of today also coursed through that other time and place. So there could also be a degree of dark and brooding meditation on the evils and sufferings of humanity. There would be a good display of classical learning, broad and deep familiarity with English literature and ability to quote it with casual appropriateness, and easy knowledge of current issues, events and personages, all demonstrating good education and hence good breeding. There could be a degree of dandyish wit, humour and satire, with dialogue and repartee good enough to equal those of a current theatrical success, and a waggish indulgence in punning by characters and narrator alike – all indicating that the author was a man of the 'World', or fashionable society. There could also, or instead, be passages of melancholy and afflicted reflection on and philosophizing about the degradation and abjectness of humanity. The narrative would be larded with literary matter of the kind circulating in the belles-lettres of the day, such as original poetry, evocative prose descriptions of landscape and so on, and critical asides on the arts and culture high and low – all indicating an easy and genteel intellectualism on the part of the author, which the reader could think of as something shared between them. There would be elements of what was coming to be seen as a distinctive 'Romantic' literary movement, especially Byronism, or echo and affectation of the deceased poet's works, character and glamour, suggesting a sensibility rather too fine for this naughty world, and an experience and knowledge of such naughtiness too burdensome and jading to be always overcome. And so in parts of the fiction there would be elements suggestive of autobiographical authenticity, or truth to experience, probably the parts dealing with wounded sensibility, tormented love and noble ambition thwarted by a corrupt society and public institutions. Finally, there would, as a bonus, be evident signs of command of the contemporary novel form, indicative of talent and even 'genius', a word now coming to mean not just distinctive or unique character, but

one that was transcendently so. *Paul Clifford*, like *Pelham* before it and some at least of the silver fork and other novels of the 1820s, possessed all these traits. In addition, *Paul Clifford* mobilized with sharpness and clarity a number of themes arising directly from the intensifying crisis over reform in the late 1820s and early 1830s. In this case, the themes were more particularly grouped around what might be called Newgate discourse, or the set of issues, arguments, values, practices and texts dealing specifically with crime and punishment, as exemplified and symbolized, directly or indirectly, by Newgate prison. In short, silver fork novels and Newgate novels such as Bulwer's not only made money and bestowed fashionable celebrity on their authors, they were also advertisements for the subjective – affective and intellectual – merit of their authors.

The story of *Paul Clifford* is not complex, but rather 'braided' – alternating attention between different though related characters and plot lines. The omniscient third-person narrator recounts the eponymous protagonist's life in chronological order from birth to old age, though the major part of the novel deals with Paul's life into early manhood. The notorious 'dark and stormy night' of the novel's opening line is the occasion of the death of Paul's mother, apparently a prostitute, in a squalid quarter of London. Paul is raised by a blowzy innkeeper, Mrs Lobkins, who keeps the secret of his parentage. Paul's liveliness, intelligence, independence, pride and courage are manifest early, and his character, along with the secret of his birth, would have cued readers of the time that the novel's hero will likely turn out in the end to be a gentleman by birth as well as innate character. Paul's hardihood leads him into various picaresque escapades as he grows up until, quarrelling with his foster mother, he seeks his own fortune, first as a literary hack working for and learning from the unscrupulous Mac Grawler, writer for the literary review the *Asinaeum*. Reasonably well-informed readers would easily identify this periodical with the actual *Athenaeum*, published by none other than Henry Colburn, publisher of *Paul Clifford* itself. This extended section of the novel is Bulwer's satire on the commercialized and partisan literary culture of Georgian Britain and also helps give Paul a genteel literary culture beyond that of either young men from his dubious and plebeian background or most members of the gang of highwaymen he subsequently comes to lead. Paul quarrels with Mac Grawler and then, when out at the theatre with his genteel underworld friend 'Long Ned' Pepper, he notices a beautiful young woman, but is apprehended for a theft actually committed by his friend on the young lady's elderly companion, who turns out to be a distinguished bar-rister, William Brandon. Paul is convicted in a ludicrous trial illustrating the deficiencies and class prejudice of the court system, and sentenced to a term in the bridewell, or house of correction. Here he is first plundered by the other inmates and then visited by Mrs Lobkins, who fears he will end on the gallows, and her friend, Dummie Dunnaker, a kind of go-between. Paul also meets with

Augustus Tomlinson again, and hears his inset story, headed 'History of Augustus Tomlinson'. This recounts Tomlinson's attempts to exploit his good looks and social graces to marry a rich woman, his detection as an impostor, and his resorting to thieving. Tomlinson persuades Paul to attempt a prison-break and join a robber band; disillusioned with established society and his prospects in it, Paul agrees. Thanks to his strength and tenacity, they succeed, and join the band at the country inn presided over by 'Gentleman George' – perhaps a satire on the dandy monarch, George IV. Safe in their headquarters, the band drink, tell their stories and sing songs in a characteristic moment of 'merry England' nostalgia. The narrative then shifts to Warlock House, home of the indolent country squire and widower, Joseph Brandon and his daughter Lucy, who would be instantly recognizable to the experienced reader as the novel's heroine. While visiting the neighbouring clergyman and his wife, she learns that the cleric had just been robbed by highwaymen but was assisted home by a young man who identifies himself as Captain Clifford, and whom she now meets and whom the reader recognizes as Paul 'Lobkins'. At Warlock House, Clifford and Lucy sing songs and begin to fall in love, but Clifford mysteriously takes his departure. The volume closes with an action set-piece as Ned Pepper, Augustus Tomlinson, and Captain Lovett, their leader – soon recognizable as Paul Clifford, formerly Paul Lobkins – wait for lord Mauleverer's coach to appear, and then proceed to rob him.

The second volume opens with news of Lucy Brandon's inheritance, which promptly makes her the object of a host of suitors, and a pawn in the ambition of her uncle, Lawyer Brandon, who plans to use her to advance his own career and family, whom he aims to restore to their former social and political importance. He gets Lucy and her father to the fashionable spa town and marriage market of Bath, where he intends to have her matched with his crony and dupe, the elderly arrogant rake, Lord Mauleverer. Also turning up at Bath, however, are 'Captain Lovett' and his band, and, with Ned Pepper and Augustus Tomlinson, Paul appears at the Bath assembly rooms and renews his acquaintance with Lucy Brandon. Love blossoms, despite the doubts of Lucy's father, who is quite taken with Clifford eventually, the warnings of Lawyer Brandon, who cannot believe that Lucy would reject a rich and titled suitor such as Mauleverer, and the attempts of Mauleverer to outface and scare off Clifford. Lucy turns out to be independent-minded and withstands the courtship of Mauleverer and the cajoling of her uncle, but there is a mystery to Clifford, and despite their confessed love for each other, he breaks from her in a clandestine meeting during a masquerade at Mauleverer's mansion, after which the men confront each other, and Clifford defies Mauleverer's threats and leaves. The volume ends with news of Squire Brandon's sudden death, which leaves Lucy in the 'protection' of her uncle, Lawyer Brandon.

The final volume opens as the first volume closed, with Mauleverer robbed by highwaymen. They are of course Lovett/Clifford, Pepper, and Tomlinson, who fly to lie low in their secret cavern, which turns out to be presided over by none other than Mac Grawler the erstwhile journalist. The cavern would quickly be recognized by readers familiar with the *Newgate Calendar* and true crime biography as similar to that of the real-life robber, Dick Turpin and his band. It soon transpires that Mac Grawler has betrayed the highwaymen to the police, who make a dawn raid on the cavern and seize Pepper and Tomlinson, but Paul's ingenuity and physical strength enable him to make his escape. In London, he seeks a final interview with Lucy, in which they again acknowledge their love, but he declares that his identity, both lower-class and criminal, forever precludes their union. After this scene, he sets about his plan to rescue Pepper and Tomlinson and flee with them to the Continent. The scene changes to a coach carrying Pepper and Tomlinson to prison in the custody of Officer Nabbem. As they ride along, Tomlinson delivers his satirical analogy between the members of parliament and inmates of prison, entitled 'The Libellous Parallel of Augustus Tomlinson', another piece of Bulwerian topical humour, much remarked on by the novel's reviewers. Just after this, a peasant accosts the coach, and turns out to be Clifford, who frees his comrades but is himself wounded and captured, though not before he shoots his faithful horse, Robin. In the aftermath of this dramatic confrontation, the capture of 'Lovett' is widely reported in the press, with accounts of his exploits in which it is noted that 'not a single one of the robber's adventures was noted for cruelty or bloodshed' and 'many of them betokened rather an hilarious and jovial spirit of mirthful enterprise'. Mauleverer continues his courtship of Lucy at her uncle's house, and turns out to be the principal witness against 'Lovett', but is alarmed to learn that Brandon has acquired some letters and other items that may enable him to discover the fate of his son, lost sight of at birth, and somehow involved with Mauleverer, too. Again, even an inexperienced reader could begin to suspect that this son is none other than Paul 'Lobkins', later 'Lovett' and 'Clifford'. At the same time, Brandon and Mauleverer are able to identify the highwaymen Lovett with the gentleman Clifford, whom they know Lucy loves, and they agree to conceal from her this fact and Clifford's imminent trial near Bath. The narrator then gives extracts from the letters that Brandon has acquired; these, with the following retrospective narrative, disclose that Brandon was once married to a woman named Julia – in Romantic fiction often a name attached to a character who was a fallen woman.⁴¹ Highly ambitious, the young Brandon had married reluctantly because this would hinder his career. When an accident introduced Mauleverer into their home, Brandon turned a blind eye his wife's infidelity and elopement with the rakish aristocrat.

The narrative now turns to its last movement and the denouement, a crossing pattern of, on the one hand, the tracing and disclosure of Paul's real identity, and, on the other hand, his seemingly inevitable destruction by the inexorable machinery of state justice. As Dummie Dunnaker the go-between discovers Paul's parentage, Paul's trial unfolds, Brandon learns that he has been offered the position of lord chancellor, or head of the justice system, and thus aristocratic rank, and he reflects that discovery of his son would ensure that the hard-won fruits of his ambition would pass to posterity. As it turns out, he is the presiding judge at Paul's trial, which proceeds as a grim farce of pompous prejudice and posturing, contrasted to Paul's nobly fatalistic acceptance of whatever may come, and his eloquent but even-tempered peroration in self-defence, in which he argues that social inequality and injustice are the base causes of crime – "your legislation", he tells the court, "has made me what I am! and it now *destroys me, as it has destroyed thousands, for being what it made me.*" It was this kind of sentiment, rooted in the Enlightenment materialist philosophy of Bulwer's mentor William Godwin, that would, ten years later, cause this and other novels with similar subjects and sentiments to be condemned as 'Newgate literature' supposedly corrupting the reading public. Following Paul's manifesto, Brandon instructs the jury to consider the evidence of crime alone, and they withdraw to consider their verdict. At this moment Dunnaker enters and has a paper passed to Brandon disclosing that the prisoner is Brandon's son; the jury enters and delivers a verdict of guilty, recommending mercy. The trial ends with this classic moment of melodramatic contradiction, and Brandon leaves for a dinner at Mauleverer's nearby estate, but when his coach arrives he is found inside dead. Paul's death sentence is commuted to transportation for life to Britain's overseas penal colony. Lucy learns of his fate, they meet, and reach an understanding, by which, as in a fairy tale, she must wait a year to hear from him. She sells Warlock House, transfers her fortune to France, and moves to a coastal town. A letter from abroad arrives, she takes ship, and a cloaked stranger is observed to help her aboard. Nothing more is heard of her in England. The narrator tells us that Tomlinson established himself as a philosopher of morals in Germany, and that Pepper was eventually convicted and transported to the Australian penal colony where he prospers. In time, accounts appear in the paper indicating that 'Lovett' has restored stolen property to those he had robbed. Some years later, in a great town in the United States, there is a loving couple named Clifford, who spread good all around, guided by the man's motto: "Circumstances make guilt," he was wont to say: "let us endeavour to *correct the circumstances*, before we rail against the guilt!" It is a succinct summation of the position on crime enunciated in William Godwin's 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. The novel closes with a quotation, supposedly from the flawed late eighteenth-century political

reformer John Wilkes (1725–97), ‘The very worst use to which you can put a man is to hang him!’

As this summary intends to indicate, *Paul Clifford* draws on a variety of related fictional sources, including the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rogue romance, the eighteenth-century picaresque novel, the mystery-romance of identity and the Godwinian novel of the 1790s and early decades of the nineteenth century.

The early picaresque or rogue romance, fashioned by disaffected professional men and former clerics from humorous folktales, took protagonists expelled downward from ‘respectable’ and law-abiding society and set them on the road in a series of disconnected adventures in which the protagonists were exploited, abused and disdained, but in which they also used their cunning to survive and to exact a measure of revenge on their abusers, usually with a good mix of slapstick humour.⁴² These romances included the Spanish novels *Lazarillo de Tormes* (anonymous, 1554), Mateo Alamén’s *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599–1604) and Francisco de Quevedo’s *The Swindler, or The Sharper* (*El Buscón*, 1662); Richard Head and Francis Kirkman’s *The English Rogue* (1665–71); and Hans von Grimmelshausen’s German novel *Simplicissimus* (1668). *Paul Clifford* was close enough in form to these romances for the *Edinburgh Review* to point out the resemblance.⁴³ These early rogue romances were fables for hierarchical societies with rigid institutions and despotic governments, barely able to maintain themselves by repression that always seemed inefficient and ineffective, or on the verge of collapsing, and that sometimes did collapse, into disorder worse than that enacted in the picaresque adventures of the rogue romance. In such romances, chronic crime and sporadic and ineffective punishments, formal and informal, both represented and symbolized the effects and inadequacies of the dominant order, not for a readership of actual plebeian rogues but for a readership of those in the middle and even upper classes who felt that the systematized roguery of the dominant social and political order left outsiders little option but to practise roguery themselves. This brief summary suggests some of the ways in which Bulwer’s *Paul Clifford* reprises certain themes and formal elements of the rogue romances, while it makes the latter’s social criticisms more explicit. In the mode of late eighteenth-century Sentimental fiction and early nineteenth-century Romantic literature, however, *Paul Clifford* gives much more attention to the subjective and affective life of the protagonist, in order to appeal to readers’ sympathies, than is found in the earlier fiction. At the same time, Bulwer elaborates and gentrifies the humour, often coarse, that is characteristic of the early rogue romances.

These romances were translated into English, reprinted, and widely read through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, thereby remaining part of current literature through to Bulwer’s day. They had also, however, been adapted and appropriated in the early and mid-eighteenth century in further

elaborations of the picaresque novel for different social and political conditions. These forms, too, Bulwer seems cognizant of in *Paul Clifford*. Daniel Defoe's fictional criminal autobiographies, *Colonel Jack* (1722), *Moll Flanders* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724), continued the earlier rogue romance form in English and English colonial settings, featuring protagonists imbued with a rampant bourgeois entrepreneurialism straying, often happily, to the wrong side of the law, but clearly in this respect not differing from the conduct of more 'respectable' and even aristocratic people. Such picaresque rogue narratives were highly episodic, with a plethora of briefly but sharply delineated characters, and engaging and apparently amoral protagonists having an amazing ability to gain acceptance in a wide range of social ranks and milieu. They could appeal at once to the contemporary middle-class reading public's high interest in adventure or enterprise of all kinds, legal or not, and the possibility of achieving upward social mobility through such enterprise, despite religion and occasional pangs of conscience. Just as the Spanish picaresque was written for its time, society and economy, so too with Defoe's. He was writing for a middle and lower-middle class entranced and perplexed by the contradictions of 'trade', in which dishonesty could be considered intrinsic to doing business, even at the level of the state, while traditional and Christian moralities deemed it wrong.

This was in fact the era of the glamorized enterprising thief such as Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard, that Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* incorporates in its hero. *Paul Clifford* retains traits of the Defoean picaresque too, though Bulwer has considerably gentrified it. His highwaymen and thieves operate at the higher end of such criminal enterprise, and the protagonist's adventures are retailed in third-person rather than first-person narrative, thereby establishing a more detached perspective. The main characters are more genteel, the narrator is manifestly witty and worldly-wise and so on. Nevertheless, though Defoe's louché and risqué picaresque was coming under a cloud of moral disapproval by the early nineteenth century, Defoe's novels were also still current. On the one hand there were the drastically cut-down chapbook versions of street literature, such as the edition of *Moll Flanders* included in Volume 1 of this series. On the other hand there was the literary antiquarian edition such as that of Defoe's works (1809–10) by the most famous novelist of Bulwer's time, Sir Walter Scott, an edition which, in the words of a modern scholar, 'marked the first acceptance of Defoe as a standard writer of fiction'.⁴⁴ Like Defoe, Bulwer used the figure of the outlaw as a focus for themes of the relation of the individual to society and economy, but more like Scott, Bulwer also used the figure of the outlaw, such as Scott's Rob Roy and Bulwer's own Paul Clifford, to develop his perspective on the relation of the individual to society, institutions and government, in a historical or historicized perspective.

Another early eighteenth-century picaresque novelist widely read in Britain through to Bulwer's day was the Frenchman Alain-René Lesage (1668–1747, also spelled LeSage and Le Sage), author of *Le Diable boiteux* (*The Devil on Sticks*, 1707, 1726) and especially the very popular *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1715–35), both translated into English, with several editions every decade from the 1730s to the 1820s, and George Macfarren's stage adaptation of the novel as 'a romantic drama' in 1829. Lesage's *Gil Blas* is the fictional autobiography of a common character who traverses a wide range of social crime and villainy before achieving social status and political influence. Though *Gil Blas* is set in Spain, by now almost commonly associated with the picaresque mode, it was designed to expose the hypocrisies and injustices of Europe as perceived by the middle-class reading public at that time: dominated by autocratic court monarchies, inefficient governments, rigid and parasitic ecclesiastical institutions and haughty and exclusive aristocracies – in short a system of institutionalized crime that drove others to crime. With such ideological and political bearings, *Gil Blas* was also popular in countries such as Britain which fancied themselves to be freer than European countries, but who also felt that their own country retained dangerous elements of the vicious system represented in Lesage's novel, and earlier picaresque romances. Lesage was admired, too, by intellectuals, professional people, reformists and social critics, many of whom also felt themselves excluded from or marginalized by the system of 'Old Corruption'. Walter Scott was a great admirer of Lesage, and *Gil Blas* provided a model for Scott's adaptation of the picaresque genre to his formulation of the historical romance. Through the early nineteenth century Lesage's fiction remained available, in itself and via adaptations such as Scott's, as a source and example for Bulwer and other novelists with a similar interest in taking their fictionalized social criticism to a wide middle-class reading public.

A further eighteenth-century English development of the picaresque, again adapted by Scott, provided an even richer source for Bulwer in *Paul Clifford*. This was the mystery-romance of identity as formulated by Henry Fielding (1707–54), notably in *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), and imitated by many others. Fielding was regarded in Scott's and Bulwer's day, and especially by Scott, as the 'father of the novel'. Fielding's social and intellectual formation enabled him to understand well the mentality of a growing middle-class reading public whose social aspirations, grievances and anxieties were embodied in the mystery-romance of identity. Fielding was from a genteel family but had to make his own way in the world, first obtaining a university education, and then training to be a lawyer. Instead of practising law, however, he turned to writing and made a successful career as a satirical political playwright and, when driven from that by government censorship, as a novelist. He then became a reforming and crusading London magistrate, followed by his half-brother Sir John Fielding

– one of Fielding’s novels was the fictionalized biography of a thief turned thief-catcher, *Jonathan Wild* (1743). The relationship between this novel and Bulwer’s *Paul Clifford* was pointed out by a reviewer in 1830, who described Bulwer’s novel as ‘*Jonathan Wild* romanced’.⁴⁵ In Fielding’s widely-read literary novels, *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones*, he gave new direction to the picaresque tradition from the Spanish rogue romancers through Defoe’s fictional criminal autobiographies, first by introducing substantial alterations to the form to make it more palatable and appealing to an educated professional middle-class reading public, and then by harnessing it to certain ideological and social concerns of that readership. He merged genteel literary culture with the picaresque form of a string of episodes, and rejected first-person autobiographical narration for a third-person narrative mode larded with learned allusions, literary parodies and witty discourses on a wide range of topics. Most important, Fielding recast the loose plot form of picaresque on-the-road encounters and adventures, motivating his plot as the mystery and eventual disclosure of the protagonist’s true identity – not as a rogue or criminal but as in some way a ‘gentleman.’ These innovations were adapted in various ways by many later novelists, including Bulwer in *Paul Clifford*. In this form, the protagonist’s true identity or parentage is concealed or misrepresented by certain enemies in order to promote their own interests, exact revenge of some kind, or obtain some other objective. This ‘crime’ results in the protagonist being expelled from his or her true ‘home’ and set loose ‘on the road’, in a series of adventures in which he or she seeks to make a way in the world, and may engage or be forced to engage in transgressions or even lawbreaking, or be made by enemies to appear to do so. In some cases, as in *Tom Jones* and *Paul Clifford*, the protagonist may even end up in Newgate or some other prison, apparently facing the gallows. Most such novels, including Fielding’s, are comic romances, however, and a fairly rapid denouement discloses the protagonist’s true identity, he or she is restored to his or her proper social status and rightful property, with an anticipated or actual marriage and the prospect of living happily ever after.⁴⁶

This picaresque romance-mystery of identity became one of the more widely-read forms of the novel from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century because it appealed strongly to the situation, interests and anxieties of its readership, predominantly the middle classes and especially the professional middle class – those increasingly numerous households led by men in the ‘learned’ professions such as the clergy, law, medicine, state and local administration, the ‘high’ arts, specialized branches of education and military officers. Though not yet the hegemonic social formation that they would become in the nineteenth century, by the second half of the eighteenth century these upper middle classes were growing in numbers, status, wealth and influence. In many cases, such professional men were directly related to the hegemonic landed class, by

being second or junior sons and so not inheriting the family estate, and instead being educated for and 'placed' in a profession with good income and status, but probably liable to have a rankling sense of injustice, or even dispossession. In many ways dependent on the patronage and business of the upper, landowning class, the professional middle classes had to rely heavily on inner, intellectual and subjective resources of education, culture and self-discipline to make their way in the world. The mystery-romance of identity could represent them to themselves as people of such subjective merit who were, however, undervalued, misperceived, misrepresented or wrongfully excluded from their 'rightful' place by the existing social, institutional and political order. At the same time, emulating their social superiors and in many cases close to them socially, or by family relationship, such people internalized and espoused many values and attitudes of the dominant class, and often imitated them in terms of fashion and culture, in a period when cultural consumption and the 'fashion system', which included literature and fiction, were increasingly important indicators of status. Such a situation could create tensions within the upper-middle classes, as well as tensions and conflicts between themselves and other classes and ranks. In short, the mystery-romances of identity of this period embodied for the people who wrote and read them a myth of their self-idealization, social aspirations, inner conflicts and tensions and anxieties, and a fantasy of redressing their 'wrongful' or even 'criminal' exclusion from their 'rights' and of obtaining recognition of their 'true' worth and status. Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* embodies this myth in a particularly clear, sharp and politically explicit form. It does so because it draws on the Fieldingesque version of rogue romance as it was developed in a further, late eighteenth-century adaptation of the form.

To Fielding's adaptation of the early Spanish rogue romance and later French and English picaresque novel, Bulwer joined the strong elements of social criticism found in the 'English Jacobin' Godwinian novel of the 1790s. 'Jacobin' was a smear applied to British reformists of many kinds by their opponents during the debate on the relevance of the French Revolution for Britain. The term 'Jacobin' referred to the plebeian and lower-middle-class Revolutionary faction at Paris responsible for the trial and execution of Louis XVI and many aristocrats and courtiers, as well as many of the Jacobins' political opponents within the Revolution. These Jacobins dominated the Revolutionary government during 1793 and 1794 and presided over the infamous 'reign of terror' of those years. In the aftermath of the Jacobin regime, and for decades later, the spectre of the plebeian 'mob' supposedly aroused to political violence by disgruntled and ambitious middle-class and even upper-class demagogues became commonplace in anti-revolutionary discourse across Europe and beyond. Because of these associations, the potency of the term 'Jacobin' as a smear persisted for several decades, especially applied to anyone who could be made out to be such a middle- or

upper-class demagogue. In fact, however, those British reformists smeared as 'Jacobins' were more aligned with the Girondins, a French faction of middle-class moderate reformists with whom British reformists had many personal and political connections. The Girondins were swept aside by the Jacobins in 1793; later, reformists with this political ancestry and agenda became associated with European 'liberals'. At any time that the possibility of a political revolution recurred in Britain after the 1790s, however, the fear of 'Jacobinism' could be revived, and the middle and upper classes of Britain and Europe continued to regard the 'lower orders', individually and collectively, as a potentially and dangerously explosive force – the 'mob' – liable to be ignited by middle-class 'agitators' and 'incendiaries', including writers. Such fears animated, in varying degrees at different times, middle-class views of crime and punishment, including Newgate discourse and Newgate narratives. Public condemnation and ridicule were waiting for middle- and upper-class reformists – or anyone – who could be perceived or represented as sympathizing with the 'mob', portraying the 'mob' sympathetically or, worse still, rousing them to 'criminal' political action. Bulwer and his Newgate novels, in particular, provoked such condemnation and ridicule by the 1830s, and especially in the 'Newgate literature' controversy of 1840.

'English Jacobin' or Godwinian novels included Thomas Holcroft's *Anna St Ives* (1792) and *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (1794–7), William Godwin's *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) and *St Leon* (1799), Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria* (1798) and Mary Hay's *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799). This kind of novel was often referred to at the time as the 'philosophical romance', from the French *philosophe* – not so much a 'philosopher' as an inquirer and social critic. Later, such novels were called 'novels of ideas'. The Godwinian novel was modelled on the early novels of the anarchist political philosopher William Godwin (1759–1836). Its political and ideological sources were in Enlightenment materialist philosophy and its conjunction of social and epistemological theory, represented by such figures as Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715–71), Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723–89) and others, elaborated in Godwin's treatise *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793). This book was developed by Godwin in close intellectual collaboration with Holcroft, who modelled himself on the French *philosophes*. According to this philosophy, external circumstances create individual character, and interactions of individuals constitute society, for better or (usually) worse. 'Circumstances' here would include on the one hand the natural, such as climate, soil, resulting productivity, landscape and topography, and so on, and on the other hand the social, which would include social structures, 'manners' (or social codes of conduct), kind of government, public institutions, economic relations, system of property, marriage customs, laws and so on. Particular kinds of natural circumstances condition the possibilities for social development. For

example, mountainous landscape and climate would suit a pastoral economy, with resulting simple life, small communities, local and more egalitarian form of government, and so on – mountain societies and culture were widely idealized at this time. In contrast, rich agrarian topography with higher productivity would enable accumulation of wealth and land by the few, subjugation of the majority to mere toil, the rise of trade and commerce, growth of cities, increase of population, advance in manufactures ('luxury'), the rise of court monarchies, inequality, 'vice' and so on. No matter the circumstances, individual subjectivity is formed by impressions on the bodily senses from the circumambient world, or circumstances, processed through the 'mind, which comprises both reason and imagination. Such circumstances are always local and particular, thus accounting for different societies and cultures around the world and, in Enlightenment ideology, underwriting a degree of cultural relativism. More particularly, if the circumstances are 'bad', 'vicious' or 'corrupt', then the individual formed by them will be so too, and social interactions likewise. Conversely, if the circumstances are 'good' ('virtuous', according to 'nature' and so on), then individuals and their social relations will be correspondingly good and virtuous. As elaborated in Britain and by Godwin, this Enlightenment philosophy of a radical cause-effect relationship between circumstances and individual/social character was sometimes called 'necessitarianism'. A corollary of such necessitarianism, especially as developed by Godwin in *Political Justice*, was an optimistic view that humanity is inherently good and benevolent and is only corrupted by bad government, exploitative economic relations, oppressive social structures and so on. Individuals are only vicious if ignorant of their true interests and perverted from innate goodness and benevolence. Consequently 'crime' is a form of bad behaviour due to ignorance and 'error'.

Godwin and those associated with him drew on this view of the relation between individual and society, especially as exemplified by 'vice' and 'crime', in forming their approach to novel-writing. Philosophical treatises and even polemical pamphlets would reach a certain readership but the novel, as the most widely read form of book along with travelogues, would reach many more. The question then was how to persuade readers of the 'truth' of their fictions, not just rationally or intellectually but also affectively. The task was a revolutionary one: to use the novel, at the time a widely despised genre with low cultural status but large middle-class readership, to change social and political reality, that is, to change society and government so that they would create 'virtuous' individuals and social and economic relations. Though not exactly a question of moving readers from the library to the barricades, it was nevertheless a question of how to change readers' perception of social and political reality, so that they saw injustice, exploitation and oppression not as single instances or the victims' fault or the result of humanity's sinful nature or mere bad luck, but rather as

systemic, constructed and hence liable to being changed for the better. A further function of revolutionary fiction, then, was to induce readers to want to act to effect such change. Though called 'Jacobins', the members of the Godwin circle and many others in accord with their political views did not in fact envisage or want a violent revolution. Rather, they believed in the 'spread of truth' due to human ingenuity, technology and free discussion – the printing press, more particularly. Themselves being a social fraction of the larger group of professional people, especially what were called the 'learned' professions, they were people of the book, and so they believed in the social and political efficacy of books, and even, or perhaps especially at this moment, the lowly novel. The novel was widely seen by moral, social, and literary critics as sub-literary and, with a few exceptions such as the novels of Samuel Richardson or Henry Fielding, to be shallow and inartistic and, worse still, to spread immorality and dangerous emulation of fashionable and upper-class society, which the 'modern novel', as it was called, obsessively depicted, itself being an article of fashionable consumption. To appropriate this form to enlightenment and the 'spread of truth', then, was a doubly revolutionary literary act.

The 'English Jacobin' novelists understood that the conventional and accepted social and cultural function of the novel was to represent broad conditions and issues in the individual case, in local and everyday life and relations. For their purposes, the 'English Jacobins' aimed to use the novel to show, first, how circumstances form individual character, which then engages in certain kinds of social interaction, for better or worse; second, how the systemic 'badness' of government in the system of 'things as they are' corrupts individuals and social relations; and perhaps third, how 'things as they are' might be changed to make individuals and social relations better. Whereas a philosophical treatise would demonstrate these issues in theory, a novel could illustrate them in the individual instance, for those unable or unwilling to follow arguments through a treatise. Such an approach to the novel enjoined certain formal practices. It would be useful to describe the 'education', or socialization and acculturation of main characters, in a cause-effect relationship. It would be necessary to have action and incident flow from character, in the same kind of relationship; and, correspondingly, it would be necessary to show the reciprocal effect of action and experience on character, especially so as to dramatize a 'necessary' change of character, such as enlightenment as to the systemic nature of oppression, the raising of political consciousness and so on. In order to have the protagonist encounter a variety of instances of the corruption of 'things as they are', the 'English Jacobin' novelists adapted elements of the picaresque romance, but aimed for a closer relationship between incident and character, or what Godwin referred to as the 'concatenation' of incidents, showing the necessary, cause-and-effect relation between systemic injustice and the individual plight. For this purpose,

the 'adventures' form was well suited, though it had to be tightened up, in most of their novels by using a plot of 'adventures of flight and pursuit', in which the protagonist is harassed, persecuted or pursued by an oppressor, rather than simply being bounced down the road from one scene of adventure to another, as in the earlier picaresque romances.

In general, then, the 'English Jacobin' novelists felt a need to tighten up plot, to give fuller and more varied characterization, as well as to stage 'philosophical' discussions in a plausible manner, in order to make the novel a suitable vehicle for illustrating and critiquing the system of 'things as they are'. Other devices were used to bolster and enrich the use of plot, incident, and character to embody a 'philosophical' argument. There was the use of references and allusions to historical figures, or characters in other novels, thereby generalizing the conclusions to be drawn from the instance depicted in their own novels. There was the rendering of incident and setting so as to give them a symbolic aspect, making them stand for something more than the individual instance, for a whole class of instances, for example the madhouse, the prison, the tribunal or trial, the confrontation between protagonist and persecutors and so on. There was the naming of characters so as to suggest other, parallel historical or fictional characters. There was insertion of quotations from and allusions to certain authors associated with reform, opposition to corrupt government and so on. And there were references to current political and social issues. From a rhetorical, or persuasive, point of view, English Jacobin novelists saw a need to reduce 'improbabilities' in their fiction and to use narrative voice to draw the reader in to sympathy or even identification with the oppressed fictional protagonist. For this reason, the English Jacobin novelists tended to favour some form of the first-person narrative mode, especially the epistolary novel and the confessional autobiographical narrative, as having a stronger appeal to the feelings or 'sensitivity' of the reader. These novelists also favoured settings in contemporary life, at least in their earlier novels; later Godwin in particular used historical settings in order to suggest instructive parallels, or warnings, between revolutionary eras past and present.

Especially important in the English Jacobin reformulation of the novel was the closure, or what the reader would be left with as the 'conclusion' of the novel, in the sense of its plot resolution but also in the sense of the final determination of its novelized 'argument'. While these writers aimed to use the novel to 'enlighten' the reader, or make him and her aware of the nature of injustice and oppression as systemic and constructed rather than 'natural', they also aimed to have the novel mobilize the reader for change in the real world, perhaps to pursue 'virtue', 'reason' and justice, in private life and social relations, and perhaps to those ends in the public and political sphere as well. In this light, it is notable that the English Jacobin novelists tended to eschew the 'happy ending' for some

kind of disaster or failure that leaves the protagonist still in the power of ‘things as they are’. The motive here seems to be to mobilize the reader to action in real life, as just described. All of the major novels of the Godwin circle have such an ending, and of the notable exceptions, Thomas Holcroft’s *Anna St Ives* and *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor*, the former was originally to end in such a disaster. The same is true of the novels of Godwin’s daughter Mary Shelley, from *Frankenstein* (1818) on, where, however, the intention seems less to mobilize readers to action in the public sphere than to avoid certain attitudes and practices in private life, or, as in Shelley’s novels of the 1820s, such as *Valperga* (1823), to be wary of political mobilization and of the politically ambitious.

This account of the Godwinian novel and its ideological bearings helps illustrate the extent to which Bulwer adapted this form in *Paul Clifford*. Bulwer met and admired Godwin, and they discussed writing. Clearly indebted to Godwin and his ideas was Bulwer’s later ‘Newgate novel’, *Eugene Aram* (1832), a fictionalized account of an actual murderer whose crime was not uncovered for many years, who lived a useful and philanthropic life in the meantime, but who was nevertheless eventually tried, convicted and hanged. *Paul Clifford* adapts the Godwinian novel form in several major respects. It traces the ‘education’ of its protagonist and the social formation of his character, but shows him developing his apparently innate character as a ‘gentleman’, despite being reared in the underworld of London, and leads him into a career of crime out of disillusionment with society and desire for a kind of revenge on the ruling classes. It uses the picaresque form of ‘adventures’ to bring its protagonist in contact with the injustices of ‘things as they are’. It ironizes these as ‘adventures of flight and pursuit’, however, by making the pursuer, lawyer Bandon, on the one hand an unrelenting prosecutor of Paul as the supposed thief of his watch, and then as the judge in his trial for highway robbery, but also as the father searching for his lost son. It uses parallels to actual contemporary characters, though it does so with more specifically satirical intent, casting ‘Gentleman George’ and members of his gang as the king and certain leading Tory politicians, such as the Duke of Wellington (‘Fighting Attie’).⁴⁷ It uses incidents and settings that are made to have a general significance regarding ‘things as they are’, such as the trial, the prison scene and the confrontation of Paul and Mauleverer at the latter’s estate. As in the English Jacobin novels of Godwin’s associate Thomas Holcroft, rather than the novels of Godwin himself, *Paul Clifford* casts its female protagonist as the aim and inspiration of the apparently unworthy ‘criminal’ hero, eventually producing his reclamation from being an enemy of society. Like the later Godwinian novels, *Paul Clifford* also uses a historical setting, in this case late eighteenth-century England as the supposed nadir of ‘Old Corruption’. Perhaps most important, however, Bulwer eschewed the first-person narration favoured

by the Godwinian novelists for the omniscient and prominently characterized third-person narration practised most famously by Henry Fielding.

The reasons for this important deviation from Godwinian practice lie in Bulwer's social and political, as well as literary, position during the period of his life in which he published *Paul Clifford*. This position induced Bulwer to choose the narrative mode made famous by Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones* and other novels. Bulwer, with his aristocratic background and social connections, resembled Fielding more than the bourgeois if intellectually and politically radical Godwin, and like Fielding, Bulwer clearly had a view to using literature as a path to other kinds of fame and advancement. A similar novelist among his contemporaries was Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), son of the Jewish antiquarian Isaac D'Israeli, Romantic social novelist – his early *Vivian Grey* (1826–7) was seen as a model for Bulwer's silver fork novel, *Pelham* – and later a long-serving Conservative prime minister, elevated to the peerage as Lord Beaconsfield. In the eye of both Bulwer and Disraeli was the figure of Lord Byron, dandy, rake, and up-and-coming politician until the runaway success of his autobiographical poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt*, which began appearing in 1812. Byron chose literature over what looked like a promising political career on the reform side of parliament, but notably went on to associate with English and European liberals and liberalism, and famously died serving one of liberalism's favourite causes, Greek independence. Both Bulwer and Disraeli affected a Byronic dandyism as young men, and Bulwer went so far as to concoct an affair or flirtation with one of Byron's most scandalous former lovers, Lady Caroline Lamb. Bulwer used his literary fame, family wealth, and social standing to enter politics a year after *Paul Clifford* was published, becoming MP for St Ives in 1831, and he would eventually serve in government as secretary for the colonies in 1858–9. Like Disraeli, he did not have to choose between literature and politics, but rather used literature to make money, establish a public name and gain access to the social connections that enabled a political career. Even Byron used literature to make the kind of money that would sustain the life suitable for a lord, to enhance rather than degrade his noble status, and to engage in politics, if not in a parliamentary career or government office then in the wider sphere of public culture and opinion. In life and in their fictions, Bulwer and Disraeli purposely invited comparisons between themselves and Byron, risky though that could be, because “performing” Byron, as Andrew Elfenbein puts it, was a way of accruing ‘symbolic capital’, or social, cultural and other kinds of esteem and ‘value’ for themselves with both the reading public and the political nation.⁴⁸

Byron, along with Walter Scott, who was knighted for his services to literature, also enabled the establishment of a new kind of figure, that of the ‘man of letters’, or rather ‘gentleman of letters’, different from preceding kinds, such as the professedly amateur or non-professional eighteenth-century man of letters;

the avowedly professional and versatile man of letters, such as Samuel Johnson; the genteel belletrist such as Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, who was well-to-do enough to write what he wanted and perhaps pay for publication; the 'philosophical' literary artist such as Wordsworth; the philosophico-political artist such as Shelley; or the wretched hack. Bulwer knew that in fashioning his novels he was at the same time fashioning his public literary persona and hence his literary career and the other careers to which literature could give access. Fashioning such a self was, however, a delicate business, for the man of letters could still easily slide into one of the other literary figures or, worse, seem effeminate, especially through association with the increasing number of women writers and their practice of certain literary forms. The most eminent of these forms was the novel. While Scott, for example, could freely acknowledge himself the author of bestselling narrative poems, he had to remain cagey about being identified as the 'Wizard of the North', the anonymous author of the bestselling 'Waverley novels'. Bulwer, too, set out to be a poet but soon realized that, though there may have been prestige in this line, there was little money in it, and he took up the fashionable 'circulating-library novel' of the kind published by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley. To avoid association with feminine novelistic literariness, however, he had to practise the novel form in certain ways – the ways pioneered by Henry Fielding and elaborated by Walter Scott and, with adaptations, the ways manifest in *Paul Clifford* and the novels by Bulwer that preceded it. The most important of these ways in *Paul Clifford* include the form of the mystery-romance of identity, scenes of masculine endeavour from elegant crime to elegant courtship, the worldly-wise and witty yet also learned and manifestly well-read narrator, the demonstrations of literary skill and versatility from lyric poetry to literary satire and burlesque, the treatment of topics current in the public sphere still almost entirely reserved for men, occasional touches of literary reflexivity or disclosure to the reader of the literary artifice underway (though these could disrupt popular appeal), clearly stated and novelized political views (Godwinian and reformist in Bulwer's early novels) and location of the author by means of all these devices in what was well established as a masculine and professionalized novelistic tradition – in this case, the Fielding–Scott tradition, with elements of the Byronic.

It was recognized in its time that *Paul Clifford* enacts the Fieldingesque form of the identity mystery-romance: Bulwer was often compared to Fielding, and one of the theatrical adaptations of Bulwer's novel, staged with great success by the Irish singer and actor John Collins in England and Ireland during the late 1830s and 1840s, was entitled *Paul Clifford; or, The Lost Heir*. The plot of the mystery-romance of identity perhaps enabled Bulwer to go even farther than Fielding or Scott in mounting a social satire and critique of the system of 'Old Corruption', or intertwined systems of patriarchy, patronage and paternalism.

This system had been subjected to satirical treatment and reformist critique for some decades, most acutely during the French Revolution debate and in the novels and other writings of the Godwin circle, and again by the late 1820s in the gathering conflict and confrontation that preceded the Great Reform Act of 1832. Though – or rather through – being situated temporally some time in the later eighteenth century, *Paul Clifford*'s use of the mystery-romance of identity clearly situates the novel in this confrontation of the late 1820s. In *Paul Clifford* this plot concerns the eponymous protagonist's 'true' social identity as the son of the second son of an old but declining landed family, the Brandons, whose family seat is significantly named Warlock House – a 'warlock' could be an oath-breaker or traitor, a criminal or a devil. Paul's identity is concealed by a series of related 'crimes'. These originate in the system of property and succession by which the eldest son inherits the family estate while the 'heir's spare', or second son, has to seek a professional career. The professional and family ambition of Paul's father, William Brandon, seemed blocked, however, when he married Julia for love, or lust, sacrificing professional interest and social status to 'merely' personal desire. As mentioned, readers of the time would have recognized that 'Julia' was a name often given to seducible women in novels, after the 'fallen' but virtuous heroine of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's European best-selling novel, *Julie; ou, la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), an earlier novelistic critique of the corrupt 'Old Order', or *ancien régime* that revolutionaries and reformists wished to sweep aside. Subsequent events in Bulwer's novel affirm the allusion in Julia's name. Disillusionment and dissatisfaction follow the marriage of William Brandon and Julia and, though the couple have a son, when an accident introduces the aristocratic rake, Lord Mauleverer, into the couple's rural retirement, Brandon turns a blind eye to his wife's seduction and elopement with Mauleverer, through his complaisance gaining the lord's obligation to assist his career. Julia is soon cast off by Mauleverer, and ends up as a prostitute. Knowing that her ambitious husband will eventually want a son to inherit the fruits of his professional advancement and consequent social rise, she revenges herself on him by concealing their son's identity at her death, on the 'dark and stormy night' with which the novel opens.

This grim storyline of multiple betrayals is disclosed in portions through the novel, culminating in an accelerated disclosure in Volume 3, when Brandon obtains his and Julia's letters and other items through his agent, Dummie Dunaker, and these letters and the narrator's retrospective account trace the events that led to the opening of the novel and the 'crime' against Paul. More prominent through the bulk of the novel than the Brandon-Julia-Mauleverer story line, however, is the account of Paul's adventures. This part of the novel is given humorous treatment for the most part and is a predominantly masculine world, except for the scenes of courtship between Paul and Lucy Brandon, which are treated in the tone of the serious novel of Sensibility of the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth century. Paul's adventures as a picaresque rogue proceed once he has been expelled from his 'true' identity and 'home', first into the comic world of lower-class and criminal London, as the 'son' of Mrs Lobkins, where he enjoys a merry life as a scamp, but also clearly superior to his fellows. In young adulthood Paul is then directed into the literary underworld as the hack writer and editor Mac Grawler's apprentice and assistant – the core of Bulwer's satire on literary journalism, ostensibly set in the eighteenth century but in fact relevant to the early nineteenth century and Bulwer's own day. Paul is then by bad luck embroiled by his criminal associates in an apparent crime, the theft of William Brandon's watch, he is treated unjustly by the judicial system, and victimized by the penal system in the form of the house of correction to which he is sentenced. Escaping from here with his associate, Augustus Tomlinson, in scenes reminiscent of accounts of the famous escape of the real Jack Sheppard from Newgate, Paul then expresses his sense of injustice by agreeing to take up the criminal life with the gang of Gentleman George, in characteristically picaresque on-the-road adventures, as a highwayman reminiscent in deeds, character and glamour of the real Dick Turpin and his associate Tom King – by this time all familiar figures in popular culture thanks to successive editions of the *Newgate Calendar* and other true crime compilations. This part of Paul's career is reminiscent of Tom Jones's on-the-road escapades and imbroglios. In just this way does identity mystery-romance lead its protagonist, as the victim of original 'crimes' of concealment of his social identity and misrepresentation of his moral and intellectual worth, to perpetrate or appear to perpetrate crimes of his own, taking him to Newgate or a similar prison and to the foot of the gallows.

In this unravelling, Paul's identity is kept from the reader as well as from Brandon until the last climactic scene in the novel, Paul's trial, when Brandon, now an eminent judge about to be ennobled with a major political appointment, unwittingly passes judgment on his son in court, just before discovering his identity – though any reader reasonably familiar with novelistic tradition and convention would have suspected the relationship much earlier. Furthermore, though the protagonist in Bulwer's novel, as in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, seems to be facing the gallows just before the revelation of his 'true' identity is made, the well-trained reader could reasonably expect that, because of the comic tone and treatment in much of the novel to this point, there will be some kind of reprieve and a happy ending after all. And so there is; but Bulwer makes significant alterations to the mystery-romance form in order to make his novelized political critique of Old Corruption more pointed and explicit than in Fielding or Scott. Rather than turning the disclosure of the protagonist's 'true' identity to the kind of happy ending and symbolic social reconciliations found in Fielding and Scott, and almost formulaic in the identity mystery-romance, Bulwer sharpens the social critique implicit in this novel-form by keeping Paul's identity a fam-

ily secret of no use to Paul or Brandon, who dies immediately after the trial, en route to a celebratory dinner at Mauleverer's country estate. Though Paul is convicted and sentenced to transportation to a penal colony, he arranges to return secretly, and marry his love Lucy Brandon. She is now heiress of Warlock house and estate but, choosing the personal absolute of love over the merely social values of status, she sells the place and the couple emigrate to America, where they pass a life of love, happy domesticity and social usefulness, helping to develop a new and less corrupted world than the old one they have left. This could pass for a happy ending, if a somewhat unconventional one. Rather than the festive tone and in many cases actual festivals that dominate the closure of the Fieldingesque identity mystery-romance, there is something more like the melancholy tone of the closure of Scott's romances, as the narrator of *Paul Clifford* passes over the remainder of Paul and Lucy's lives quickly and distantly, seemingly turning away from them just as they turned away from the world of Old Corruption, apparently irredeemable in their day, if not in the present or immediate future of the novel's publication.

The scenes of *Paul Clifford* dealing with its protagonist dominate the work, and emphasize his manliness, or 'gallantry', in two senses, physical courage and genteel courtship, with touches of Byronic sensibility, constituting the character after whom the novel is named as a kind of 'natural' chivalric 'gentleman' who turns out to be a gentleman by birth, as well. As with Fielding's Tom Jones, it is clearly Paul's innate and acquired qualities rather or more than his ascribed status from parentage and rank that make him the 'gentleman'; the novel's position on class and station is based on the ideology of merit that appealed so powerfully to the middle-class and especially professional reading public from Fielding's day to Bulwer's. By this emphasis, assisted by the convention that a protagonist is likely a version of the author, Bulwer makes his novel, and implicitly its author, both masculine and gentlemanly. This locating of genteel manliness and manly gentility in the 'hero', despite the appearances of Paul's birth and early life, is reinforced by contrast with other scenes of masculine endeavour involving other male characters. These concern the rakish yet aged and effeminate Lord Mauleverer, the ruthlessly and unscrupulously ambitious Lawyer Brandon, his brother the indolent and inarticulate Squire Brandon and the variously unscrupulous figures in Clifford's 'gang', including the caricature man of letters Mac Grawler, the would-be but ineffectually genteel Augustus Tomlinson, and the hot-tempered Ned Pepper. These characters provide a background for Bulwer to figure his ideal gentleman, of worth more than birth, whose merit is ironically obscured and then thrown away by the false gentlemen, but is validated by and in the end united to feminine gentility. For, though this is a novel dominated by male characters, there is also a version of Fielding's Sophia Western from Fielding's *Tom Jones* in Lucy Brandon, who is as discerning of and loyal to the 'true' gentleman

as her predecessor was, and even more independent-minded and active in his and her cause.

Though Lucy Brandon is clearly meant to be taken as a descendent of Fielding's Sophia, there may also have been a personal element in the character, as there was in Sophia, thought to be a portrait of Fielding's beloved wife Charlotte (Cradock). Like Sophia, Lucy may be taken as an idealized portrait of her creator's own wife. *Paul Clifford* was published just two years after Bulwer's marriage to Rosina Wheeler – a love-match with an independent 'free spirit' lacking social rank or money, for which Bulwer was cut off financially by his mother—and a year after the birth of their first child, a daughter. Bulwer's Lucy could well be a piece of fictionalized self-justification, self-assertion, and defiance intended for circulation within Bulwer's own family and social circle, and perhaps somewhat beyond, for news of doings in 'high life' circulated quickly in Georgian London. The character of Lucy, sacrificing rank and wealth for the man she could recognize as a 'true' gentleman in contrast to the false gentleman Mauleverer, may well have been designed by Bulwer to be taken publicly, though without direct acknowledgement, as a demonstration of his manliness and 'true' gentlemanliness, corresponding with and validating the rank into which he was born. Such a self-fashioning by Bulwer would accord with and appeal to both the period's reformist aristocratic ideology of merit and duty and a widely-held public idealization of a professionalized, meritorious upper class as 'natural' leaders of a progressive and free 'people'. Such a figure was often contrasted with figures of a decadent, corrupt, and incompetent ruling class on the one hand – as depicted through Mauleverer and Lawyer Brandon in Bulwer's novel – and a grasping, 'pushing', selfish and narrowly self-serving bourgeoisie on the other. Neither Bulwer nor his readers could know in 1830 that very shortly he and his real-life Lucy would be engaged in a very bitter, very public and lifelong marital breakdown and personal conflict that would vitiate both his literary and public career. It may be, then, that Bulwer fashioned Lucy and her socially radical love for Clifford as a fantasy of 'capture' of financially and intellectually independent femininity by the proper gentleman, such as Bulwer himself. For the time being, however, the love romance and its protagonists in *Paul Clifford* could reinforce other aspects of the particular convergence of class and manliness depicted and enacted in Bulwer's novel, and probably could continue to do so for most readers.

Because Bulwer aimed to become, among other things, the new Fielding, these elements of the 'story', or the 'what' and 'who' of the novel, are reinforced by particular features of the novel's 'discourse', or manner of telling.⁴⁹ As in Fielding's novels, and in a different way in Scott's, the narrator and narration of *Paul Clifford* are in a sense what the novel is 'about'. As in the novels of Fielding and Scott, the narrator's style implicitly constructs a character, here the 'author', who is not the real-world Edward Bulwer but a serious simulacrum of him, a fiction

created for a rhetorical and literary purpose. This character is inferred by the reader from the story and its explicit and implicit attitudes, values and themes, but also and perhaps more pertinently from the narrator's utterances and narration in addition to certain other features of the text that the reader would suppose came from the 'author', such as the chapter epigraphs from a wide range of literature and the songs sung by Clifford/Lovett's gang. The reader's sense of the 'author'-narrator's character is built up in the course of reading even the first few pages or chapters, and confirmed and varied through the text as a whole. The character formed by this impression would seem to be widely read in history and literature and other kinds of 'polite' or genteel knowledge. 'He' (the gender can only be attributed) seems learned but able to wear learning lightly. He is knowledgeable about the world of politics and public affairs and public institutions. He is witty and given to puns and other wordplay – by this time puns were no longer, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, considered necessarily 'vulgar', but had become part of a genteel literary culture, forcibly validated by Byron's verbal play in *Don Juan*, and other literary texts, such as the 'Noctes Ambrosianae' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. The 'author' of *Paul Clifford* is also knowledgeable about the 'world', or the 'World', the term used at the time to designate fashionable and upper-class society. He is worldly-wise in the sense of being sceptical about appearances and cynical about others' professions and pretensions. Yet he also accepts the possibility of social and political improvement, and especially human goodness, selflessness and social philanthropy, and both social and personal love, or rather personal linked to social love (as described in the narrator's rapid sketch of Lucy and Clifford's life in America), and sympathetic toward the apparently rare instances of these – a version of the third-person but sympathizing narrator in Byron and found in other Romantic poets and novelists. Readers of the time would likely feel, then, that the most recent 'author' of similar character was Byron, particularly in his *Don Juan* rather than the melancholy of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* or the pessimism of his 'corsair' poems. Similarly, readers could also perceive a continuity between Byron's Romantic liberalism and the social and cultural politics of the 'author' of *Paul Clifford*.

In these ways, the 'author' in the text of Bulwer's novel was constructed as a kind of new Byron, as well as a new Fielding, just as in real life the young Bulwer had emulated Byron the dandy, rake and prematurely world-wearied poet. By the time Bulwer published *Paul Clifford*, however, he had in mind for himself, as the new, novel-writing Byron, not Byron's heroic if unnecessary death in a European liberal cause, but rather the career as a reformist in English politics and government that Byron had left behind with the unexpected success of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In both its reformist themes and its reformist literary form, then, Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* was a novelized reformist political manifesto and

at the same time, through the figure of its 'author' constructed in its text, an advertisement for its actual author's preparedness to carry out its manifesto, should he enter public political life – which he did the year after publication of *Paul Clifford*. Such a figure could certainly have seemed timely precisely in 1830, a moment poised between, on the one hand, the turmoils of the late 1820s around issues of institutional reform and emancipation of Roman Catholics from restrictions on their civil liberties, and, on the other hand, the tensions and conflicts, already emergent, preceding the Great Reform Act of 1832. The manly gentleman of both rank and merit, both classically educated and highly cultivated, both critical of Old Corruption and sympathetic to the distresses of the 'lower orders', manifestly devoted to social, institutional and political reform while carrying reassuringly excellent social, cultural and intellectual credentials, could well seem to be a man, if not 'the' man of the moment, a leader in waiting. This function of *Paul Clifford* is not incompatible with other motives on the part of its author, such as making money, fulfilling artistic ambition, circulating genuinely held beliefs among a wide and influential reading public, and so on; but the self-fashioning of the author in and through the text of the novel as a certain kind of figure, say a new Byron for a time of national crisis, remained an important aspect of its meaning in its time.

It is in this respect, too, that *Paul Clifford* may be taken as a Newgate novel. Now widely accepted as a school of fiction of the 1820s and 1830s, the phrase was not first recorded until some years later. More contemporary was the phrase 'Newgate literature', by which was meant fiction, drama and poetry based on or appropriating 'true' crime biographies such as those found in the successive editions of the *Newgate Calendar*.⁵⁰ The phrase 'Newgate literature' was usually deployed disparagingly and applied to literature that depicted, usually in a positive light, crime and criminals, for purposes of appealing to a lower-class readership, for promoting certain kinds of reform sympathetic and advantageous to the 'lower orders', or for both. Concern over Newgate literature in the 1830s developed into a kind of moral panic among journalists, social commentators, moral reformers, Members of Parliament and other novelists. This concern was part of a wider middle-class anxiety about the lower classes between the Great Reform Act of 1832 and the 'second' Reform Act of 1867, when there was widespread working-class agitation for access to political power, coinciding with the notable development of a mass print culture directed at the lower and lower-middle classes. The concern over Newgate literature constituted a moral panic in the sense intended by the sociological research on this topic during the 1970s and 1980s: a largely invented 'crisis' proclaimed by elements of the media, government and certain public institutions as a way of promoting certain kinds of policing of and policies towards 'dangerous' social groups. Within this larger moral panic of the 1830s to 1860s over Newgate literature, concern over and

criticism of what would later be called 'Newgate novels' or the 'Newgate school' had its own particular moment, characteristics, and targets, among which certain novels by Bulwer, including *Paul Clifford*, were prominent.

The precipitating moment of the moral panic over the Newgate novel was the trial and execution in 1840, before a huge crowd outside Newgate Prison, of the valet François Courvoisier for murdering his elderly and aristocratic employer, Lord William Russell. Some newspapers circulated unconfirmed reports that Courvoisier had said he was inspired to his crime by reading William Harrison Ainsworth's novelized life of the criminal Jack Sheppard, serialized in 1839–40 in the recently founded *Bentley's Miscellany*. The young William Makepeace Thackeray, at the time a miscellaneous writer for the conservative *Fraser's Magazine*, and himself ambitious to become a new Fielding, began serializing in that magazine his first novel, entitled *Catherine*, based on the life of the murderer Catherine Hayes, recorded in the *Newgate Calendar*. Thackeray intended *Catherine* to be a destructive burlesque of novels such as *Jack Sheppard* and Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram* (1832), also based on a real-life criminal, and even Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837–8), also serialized in *Bentley's Miscellany*. Thackeray singled these writers and novels out in the post-amble to his novel. Clearly, in this project the targets were writers and a publisher associated with reform politics, as seen from a conservative point of view. Despite his intentions, however, Thackeray could not help sympathizing with the wretched Hayes, who was burned at the stake for murdering her husband, and who could as easily be seen as a victim of male exploitation and abuse, social prejudice and an inept and biased justice system. Nevertheless, Thackeray had also made his point and contributed to what was in fact a short-lived moral panic over that kind of Newgate fiction aimed not at the lower classes but rather at a well-to-do middle-class readership of upmarket literary periodicals and three-volume circulating-library fiction. The fear here was that from such Newgate fiction this readership might not only adopt a degree of sympathy for the 'criminal class' and reforms to their advantage, but also – and worse – be contaminated by plebeian ideology and values of the kind embodied in cheap forms of Newgate literature. As it happened, the traffic was the other way: the upmarket Newgate novels of Ainsworth, Bulwer, and Dickens were quickly taken up and adapted by cheap Newgate literature and the popular theatre.

The moral panic over Newgate literature for the lower classes remained more intense and long-lasting than that over the Newgate novel. The category, almost stripped of its pejorative implications, began a new if academic circulation with the appearance in 1963 of Keith Hollingsworth's *The Newgate Novel 1830–1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, and Thackeray*.⁵¹ Referring to the novels condemned by Thackeray in the 1840 controversy, Hollingsworth warned that generalizing about them 'makes them sound rather more like a type than they

were', and noted that they had some characteristics in common with picaresque novels and Gothic tales. Nevertheless, Hollingsworth stipulated that 'the sole common feature' of Newgate novels was that 'an important character came (or, if imaginary, might have come) out of the Newgate Calendar'. Hollingsworth notes that such novels were relatively few in the wider array of fiction of the time, and that though some of them 'have merit', none of them, with the possible exception of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847–8), 'is of the highest rank in fiction'.⁵² Later definitions have elaborated and broadened the category somewhat. The *Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*, for example, notes that earlier novels, such as Fielding's *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* and William Godwin's *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, have a similar relationship to the *Newgate Calendar* and 'true' crime and criminals.⁵³ This view does bring into the category of Newgate fiction what were important sources for Bulwer in *Paul Clifford* as well as for other Newgate novelists not usually included in the Newgate school. A more comprehensive view, however, and one likely to have made sense to generations of readers before the 'Newgate novel' controversy of 1840, and for some decades after, perhaps down to the present, would include those fictions that dealt with what could be called Newgate discourse.

This was the continuing but always changing set of discussions, practices, values and beliefs around Newgate Prison, as a reality but more important as a symbol for issues of crime and punishment. Newgate discourse took many forms over the centuries of the prison's existence and beyond, including official publications of Old Bailey trials (the court attached to Newgate), broadsheet accounts of the hanged criminal's 'last dying words and confession', chapbook criminal biographies, collections of these such as *The Malefactor's Bloody Register* and the *Newgate Calendar*, picaresque novels and rogue romances such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, plays and musicals such as John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728), prose satires such as Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* comparing the criminal underworld with the political 'overworld', novels such as Fielding's *Tom Jones* that included Newgate episodes, philosophical treatises on crime and punishment, surveys such as John Howard's epochal *State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, certain 'English Jacobin' or Godwinian novels, successive polemical pamphlets advocating or opposing particular kinds of legal and penal reform, parliamentary reports, Romantic stage melodramas and novels and poems featuring criminals and bandits of various kinds. Many of these did deal with Newgate itself in various ways, or use it as a setting or reference, but many did not. Even the latter, however, were shadowed by Newgate, which had a proverbial status and ubiquitous circulation from very early on, down to the present. As Thomas Nashe, satirist and picaresque romancer, stated as early as 1592, Newgate was 'a common name for all prisons', and, he could have added, for the economic, social, political, cultural

and institutional systems that maintain and are maintained by prisons.⁵⁴ This, then, was the diverse and long tradition of Newgate discourse that Bulwer drew on and added to in *Paul Clifford* and certain of his other novels. By this broader understanding of the 'Newgate novel' as one that draws on, adapts, redirects and contributes to this tradition, *Paul Clifford* could be said to be a 'Newgate novel'.

Even by the narrow modern definition of 'Newgate novel' proposed by Keith Hollingsworth and others, however, *Paul Clifford* qualifies. Readers of the time would have recognized its protagonist as a fictionalized fusion of two of the most famous real life highwaymen of the eighteenth century, Dick Turpin (1705–39) and his sometime associate, known as Tom King (actually Matthew King), who enjoyed the nickname 'the gentleman highwayman', and who died around 1737 of wounds accidentally inflicted by Turpin while they were escaping arrest. More broadly, *Paul Clifford* also sets forth critically certain central issues of legal and penal reform that had developed by the late 1820s, including capital punishment, transportation, prison administration, the effectiveness or otherwise of punishments as deterrents and indeed the emergent issue of the relation between poverty and crime, or the extent to which the lower classes should be regarded as inherently and generally 'dangerous' and 'criminal'. More broadly still, and in a longer view, *Paul Clifford* develops the satirical paralleling of criminal underworld and political overworld set out in such classic eighteenth-century Newgate literature as John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* and made explicit in Augustus Tomlinson's inset discourse, 'The Libellous Parallel of Augustus Tomlinson' (vol. 3, ch. 7), in which he compares crime in 'high' and 'low' life. Bulwer was reported to have avowed that William Godwin first suggested to him the project of novelizing Gay's dramatic satire, later carried out in *Paul Clifford*.⁵⁵ The scenes at Gentleman George's in *Paul Clifford*, with their jokes and songs, clearly recall *The Beggar's Opera*, and the illustrations in *Paul Clifford* of the relationship between Lawyer Brandon and Mauleverer, with their political and their related sexual intrigues, and their implication in the state system of government and justice, clearly recall, somewhat more distantly, Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. The escape of Paul from his sentence of transportation to Britain's current Australian penal colony, and his flight with Lucy to Britain's former penal colony, evoke a complex set of issues linking Newgate discourse to issues of empire and colonies – issues Bulwer would address again several years later as a member of a Conservative government. In the meantime, he would practice the 'Newgate novel' form again, in a more clearly Godwinian and less Fieldingesque form in *Eugene Aram*, before turning to still other themes and novelistic forms.

It was as a Newgate novel, before the phrase had been devised, that *Paul Clifford* received particular tributes of esteem, and perhaps a certain influence on Newgate issues. William Godwin wrote enthusiastically:

There are parts of the book that I read with transport. There are many parts of it so divinely written that my first impulse was to throw my implements of writing into the fire, and to wish that I could consign all I have published in the province of fiction to the same pyre.

Ebenezer Elliott (1781–1849), the Sheffield iron merchant, poet, dramatist and reformer, wrote:

You have ruined me by advising me to read *Paul Clifford*. Adieu, Jeremy Bentham. One of my boys – and young persons are no bad judges of these matters – thinks your comic scenes and characters as good as Shakespeare. . . . The meeting of Brandon and his wife is equal to anything in Dante Your forte is wit, of all things the one I most envy, because it never can be mine.⁵⁶

Benjamin Disraeli was also an admirer. Years later, some thought that the novel had an effect in the public and political sphere: Victor Bulwer-Lytton asserted in his biography of his grandfather, ‘The publication of *Paul Clifford* did much to stimulate public opinion in favour of Criminal Law Reform.’⁵⁷ In the early twentieth century Thomas Escott, another biographer, saw the novel rather as ‘an imaginative commentary on the efforts of those law reformers whose labours had advanced some way before the first of the criminal novels [or ‘Newgate novels’] saw the light’. Escott, who was an experienced journalist and political insider, thought that ‘*Paul Clifford*’s success was due not to its author’s philanthropic purpose, but to the daring verisimilitude at once seen in its portraits of originals celebrated in Church and State, all, for the purposes of this book, in the guise of highwaymen, cut-throats, and footpads’.⁵⁸

Reviewers at the time were pretty favourable, with the notable exception of the new *Fraser’s Magazine*. The biweekly *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, which appears to have seen an advance copy, described the novel as ‘a sort of prose Beggars’ Opera of fifty years since’, and excerpted a portrait of the heroine and one of the ‘flash songs’. Two weeks later, after the novel had been published, the *Mirror* excerpted the inset autobiography of Augustus Tomlinson, and added:

Of the work itself we need say only little, since it must already be in the hands of hundreds of novel-readers. But it will not only delight the mere novel-reader; for its biting satire, and accurate knowledge of the inmost recesses of the human heart, entitle it to rank as a philosophical production.⁵⁹

The *Derby Mercury*, a provincial newspaper in the heart of the industrial Midlands, commented:

The writer of the admirable novel of ‘Devereux’ here comes forward as the painter of scenes in low life, as well as of their opposites. By many it will be thought bad taste in Mr. Bulwer to lend his powerful pen to the delineation of slang heroes – he will also

be schooled for his personalities [satires on real people]; but, always shrewd, always captivating, it is impossible to lay down his book while a page remains unread.⁶⁰

The same newspaper column printed a poem entitled 'The Felon', by 'W. Ainslie. M. D.' On the same day, the London *Morning Chronicle* printed the novel's portrait of 'Fighting Attie' and observed that 'The great men shadowed under Fighting Attie and Mobbing Francis will be easily discovered by those at all versant in the proceedings of a certain assembly' – meaning parliament.⁶¹ The *Monthly Review*, which had frowned on *Falkland* and been ambivalent about *Pelham*, generally approved of *Paul Clifford*. The reviewer lamented the indecent introduction of underworld slang but observed that each of Bulwer's works had been distinctively different, indicating a talent that was, however, sadly wasted on such ephemeral productions as novels. Nevertheless, the reviewer gave some credit to Bulwer's defence of novel-writing in the preface, thought that the satirical parallel of underworld and overworld criminality was 'neatly executed', that 'the plot of the novel is as romantic and improbable as may be', that the heroine is 'one of the sweetest models of female innocence that love could picture', that the 'interest' (suspense) was well kept up and that the trial scene was 'the most powerful in the work'.⁶² The review in the weekly *Examiner* was almost entirely favourable, declaring:

Paul Clifford abounds in pointed applications to politics and morals, and the satire is ever in the right direction. It is indeed a 'Jonathan Wild' romanced, with this difference, that the hero is only the knave of circumstances, and is all amiability out of his vocation. The applications are often extremely happy, and always ingenious, but the scope of them is rather confined, by the part assigned to Paul Clifford.⁶³

Even the august *Athenaeum*, satirized in *Paul Clifford* as the *Asinaeum*, while admitting being offended, was nevertheless not altogether unfavourable. The reviewer accused Bulwer of changing his opinions and politics over the course of his novels to date, being 'both a philanthropist and a misanthrope – an utilitarian and a denouncer of that heresy – a lauder and a libeler of the aristocracy – a stoic and an epicurean in philosophy – a patriot and an insouciant in politics – a sentimentalist and a satirist of feeling'. The reviewer also attacked Bulwer's practice of intimating an identity between author and protagonist or narrator:

The world confounded Byron with his heroes, and he, although not really resembling them in character, had yet the foolish vanity of striving to be and to appear like them; and it detected through the flashy masquerade of 'Pelham', the less aristocratic form of Pelham's author, because in both instances, there was the mark of the beast – the not to be mistaken stamp of egotism luxuriating in its own description. Yet we never heard Sir Walter accused of resemblance to Ravenswood, or Mr. Godwin of identity with Mandeville; and those, notwithstanding, are two portraits, that for truth and life have seldom or ever been surpassed.

The reviewer thought that the novel's 'main fault is extreme improbability', and also objected to the depiction of 'low' life and correspondingly 'low' language, or underworld slang, and the satire on contemporary public figures. Yet the reviewer also noted that '*Paul Clifford* has the singular merit of being exempt from the affectation and frivolity, which so disfigured its author's earlier works', and found the trial scene to be powerful and effective.⁶⁴

These views would be overshadowed by the satirical attack on Bulwer and his works launched by 'Ned Culpepper, The Tomahawk', in *Fraser's Magazine*. The review, perhaps glancing at the recent praise of *Paul Clifford* in the *Mirror* and the *Examiner*, opened:

Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer's friends most unfortunately have been his greatest enemies. Mr. Bulwer, it seems, loves praise, as boys love their pudding, and his friends have injudiciously stuffed him till he could stuff down no more.

It got worse. Considering all of Bulwer's novels as a class and one by one, the reviewer attacked the 'fashionable novel' in general, and Bulwer for his pretensions to metaphysical knowledge, his rejection of the 'rules' of composition and the resulting disorganization of his novels, his supposed contempt for the middle classes, his pretensions to wit and wisdom, his satires on real persons in *Paul Clifford* and the false morality of redeeming the hero of that novel at the end instead of letting him be hanged.⁶⁵ There would be more ridicule and abuse in *Fraser's Magazine* from 1830 to 1833, followed by other commentators.⁶⁶ This was augmented by negative criticism of Bulwer's *Eugene Aram* (1832), and culminated in the 'Newgate novel' controversy of 1840, led by Thackeray, again in *Fraser's*.

For consolation, perhaps, Bulwer could reflect that by early in 1831 a thoroughbred racehorse had already been named for his fictional hero, and raced in the prestigious St Leger stakes at Doncaster, Yorkshire.⁶⁷ A succession of such thoroughbreds bore Paul Clifford's name over the following decades. By March 1831 the London *Morning Chronicle* reported that 'The most popular novels of the present season are unquestionably Mr. Theodore Hook's "Maxwell;" Mr. Bulwer's "Paul Clifford;" "The Heiress of Bruges" by Mr. Grattan; and Cooper's "Water Witch";' adding that 'the sarcasm of "Paul Clifford" is aimed at the Court of the late King and the present king being introduced in its pages'.⁶⁸ In a nice irony, this notice appeared on the same page as news about the doings of the royal court. In the United States, a steamboat named the *Paul Clifford* plied the Mississippi river in the early 1830s.⁶⁹ Pubs soon began to carry the name of Bulwer's fictional highwayman. A musical drama based on Bulwer's novel was mounted successfully on the London stages, both up- and downmarket, in the mid-1830s.

It is true that, by the mid-1830s, the character Paul Clifford was becoming associated with lower-class entertainments. A character dressed as Paul Clifford performed songs in a fourpenny entertainment room above a pub during Bartholomew Fair. Inevitably, reports of connections between Bulwer's fictional character and real malefactors turned up in the press. In 1839 the *Preston Chronicle* in the industrial heartland of Lancashire reported that in far away Kentucky in the United States, *Paul Clifford* was 'a favourite book' with a murderer named Lovett: 'even in his convict-cell, he perused its pages with interest, and, indeed, the name which he bore, and by which he was arraigned, sentenced, and executed, was assumed from that of the novelist's hero.'⁷⁰ Some years later in England, a man known to the police as 'the most desperate night thief in London' tried to get off a charge of assault and robbery by claiming that the crime had been committed by another man, an 'out-and-outer in Field-Lane' known locally as 'Gentle Paul', and who called himself 'Paul Clifford'.⁷¹ In 1851, it was reported that two otherwise honest young lads from Stockport, near Manchester, had been taken into custody after an attempted robbery and found to be 'regularly fitted out with masks and pistols, and all the paraphernalia of highwaymen.' The chief of police stated that they had received their 'tuition' in crime from their employer, who had encouraged them to read 'low publications, such as "Jack Sheppard," and "Paul Clifford," and other works illustrating the actions of notorious robbers and highwaymen.'⁷² It was probably for such associations that in 1849 the students at a Welsh theological academy rejoiced in the thought that the Welsh people were so pious that 'It will be for ever impossible . . . to introduce into Welsh literature such mischievous trash as Jack Sheppard, Paul Clifford, and the like.'⁷³ Outside of Wales, there continued to be dire reports of connections between Bulwer's novel and real crime. In 1868 a fifteen-year-old employee of W. H. Smith's railway station booksellers was arrested for stealing cash from his employer. The arresting police officer reported that among the youth's possessions at the time of arrest was a six-barreled revolver and a carpetbag 'containing, among other things, a couple of novels, presenting, in attractive guise, the daring deeds of highwaymen and other villains. One of the books ("Paul Clifford") appeared to have been a choice study, the leaves being turned down in several places.' When arrested, the youth said that, if the policeman had tried to arrest him when his revolver was loaded, he would have shot him.⁷⁴ The story was picked up by half-a-dozen newspapers.

But Bulwer's novel also had a contrasting cachet. In the March 1840 parliamentary debate on a motion for abolition of capital punishment, one of the members quoted the last line of Bulwer's novel for the 'aye' side.⁷⁵ Five months later a writer in the *Examiner* defended Bulwer against the aspersions of those such as Thackeray and *Fraser's Magazine* who had been attacking Bulwer and the Newgate school. The writer declared that *Paul Clifford* belonged to the 'wise and

healthy school' of Fielding's novels, and praised 'the youthful, buoyant, delightful spirit in which it is written.'⁷⁶ By now, newspapers often used the satirical maxims of Augustus Tomlinson, from *Paul Clifford*, as useful and instructive fillers on the state of politics. When, a year and a half later, *The Times*, taking the lead from Thackeray and *Fraser's Magazine*, attacked Bulwer as 'the great demoralizing agency of the time' for having created an unhealthy public sympathy for criminals that poisoned national opinion, several other papers came to his defence. The *Morning Chronicle* defended Bulwer in general and *Paul Clifford* in particular and accused *The Times* and the Tories of using the issue as a diversion in the face of national food crisis caused by taxes on imported grain, which in turn served the interests of the landowning classes rather than the people at large.⁷⁷ The *Odd Fellow* newspaper simply published Clifford's defence at his trial in the novel, with the title 'The Highwayman's Plea.'⁷⁸ In 1851, a speaker at a celebration of the birthday of Robert Owen claimed that novels such as *Paul Clifford* promulgated Owen's socialist views, though the author would not acknowledge the fact.⁷⁹

Certainly Bulwer was a well-known and successful if controversial novelist by the time he published *Paul Clifford*, and expropriators and appropriators were waiting for the next thing from his pen. The novel was immediately pirated in a New York edition, and published in French at Paris. Benjamin Webster's successful stage adaptation came out in 1832. Baudry's English-language Paris edition, aimed at tourists, came out in 1833. The novel was translated into Dutch as *De Roover* in the same year and into German a year later. In 1834 William Harrison Ainsworth, another aspiring new Fielding, appropriated the character of Dick Turpin submerged in Bulwer's novel in his enormously popular *Rookwood*, and thenceforth popularizations of Turpin would owe more to Ainsworth than to Bulwer. Nevertheless, a new edition of *Paul Clifford* came out in Bentley's 'Standard' – meaning 'classic' – novels series in 1835, and further editions continued to appear in France, Germany, Britain and especially the United States for the rest of the century, in cheap editions, and almost annually. Some time before 1850 the prolific writer of cheap fiction Elizabeth Caroline Grey published her retelling in *Paul Clifford; or, Hurrah for the Road: A Romance of Old Times*, with the firm of Edward Lloyd, the most prominent publisher of 'Salisbury Square' or 'penny dreadful' fiction for the urban working and lower-middle classes. The tide swelled with new editions of Bulwer's other novels, along with collected editions of Bulwer's novels, in both elegant illustrated formats and cheap formats. Cheap editions for as little as sixpence were published later in the century by the firms of George Routledge, Ward Lock and Co, Dicks, and 'Books for the Million'.

There were also dramatic adaptations following on Webster's 1832 *Paul Clifford the Highwayman of 1770*. There was Edward Fitzball's popular *Paul Clifford: A Musical Drama, in Three Acts*, published in 1835. There was a music drama,