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Thomas Love Peacock's satire of his literary contemporaries

Kathleen Hammond

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THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK'S SATIRE OF HIS LITERARY CONTEMPORARIES

by

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(B. S. University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho, 1947)

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Montana State University
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) wrote his best novels during that period in English literature when emphasis was being placed on imagination, individuality, sublimity, and the natural goodness of man. To a man so thoroughly impregnated with the lore of the classics, the Romantic age could hardly be anything but a period of excess, extravagance, and immoderation. And it is in this manner that Peacock views his contemporary world. He censures a vast and diverse number of the public figures, practices, policies, institutions, habits, and theories extant in his society. Peacock's criticism of his contemporary world comes to us in satiric novels and forms the bulk of his writing.

Biographies of Thomas Love Peacock have been written by Carl Van Doren (1911), A. M. Freeman (1911), J. B. Priestley (1927), and other studies on Peacock have been made. Most of these writers indicate that some of the characters in Peacock's novels embody criticism of Coleridge, or Shelley or Wordsworth, for example. But, to my knowledge, a complete study of this class of Peacock's satire has not yet been made.
It is the purpose of this work to examine Thomas Love Peacock's literary satires of his contemporaries, namely, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, and Southey. In this analysis Peacock's criticism of his contemporaries and factors influencing his criticism will be pointed out in order that the reader may know this contemporary's opinion of these Romantic writers. These satires are the product of a man who was out of sympathy with the romanticism of his generation and one who did not lessen his criticism when directing it at living persons.

This examination of Peacock's satire will be handled one contemporary at a time. The satire pertinent to any one particular writer will be traced through his novels in their chronological order in order to gain a better concept of the figure from Peacock's point of view. For his criticism altered somewhat as he grew older. Although Peacock wrote poetry and other prose, this study will be limited to the novels which contain satires of his contemporaries: Headlong Hall (1816), Melincourt (1817), Nightmare Abbey (1818), Crotchet Castle (1831), Gryll Grange (1861).¹

Peacock attempted to conceal the identity of his caricatures and consequently no character in his novels is,

¹ Two novels, Maid Marian (1822) and The Misfortunes of Eiphan (1829), are romantic tales containing no literary satires, so they will not be used in this study.
for instance, pure Shelley or pure Coleridge. For this reason, past works on Peacock and my knowledge of these public literary figures will be chiefly instrumental in determining whether or not particular individuals in Peacock's novels depict certain Romanticists. Passages from other works on these Romantic writers will sometimes be cited in order to clarify and to enhance some of Peacock's criticism. But it should be remembered that in his caricatures, Peacock does not treat of the whole person but only those opinions, habits, and traits [of particular Romantic] in which he found provocation for ridicule.

To better understand Peacock's tastes which are reflected in his writings and his dislike for the Romantics one must look back into his personal history. Born in 1785, Thomas Love Peacock moved to the country when he was three years old, following the death of his father. This early contact with nature in the town of Chertsey, a village of less than 3,000 inhabitants, helped to make Peacock a lover of nature out-of-doors, and a person who preferred solitary walks in the country to human companionship. His early attachment to the wilds of the Windsor forest, which was near his home, perhaps accounts for the consistent romantic settings in his novels, the only element in his writing which is at all akin to the Romantics and the age in which he lived.
During his boyhood his mother directed his reading, approved of his scholarly pursuits to the neglect of other fields of action, and criticized all his literary efforts. Van Doren writes that Peacock declared that he "passed many of his best years...with his mother, taking more pleasure in reading than in society."² Freeman goes further to say that Peacock's mother was probably chiefly responsible for his literary works now existing:

He [Peacock] consulted her [his mother] judgment in all that he wrote, and some time after her death he remarked to a friend that he had never written with any zeal since.

Her death does in truth seem to have affected him more than any other even of his life. For more than 25 years from that date [1833] he wrote nothing longer than a magazine article. Many of the fragmentary beginnings of satires and romances among his manuscripts belong to that period, and it was very likely owing to that want of her encouragement that they were left unfinished.³

One of Peacock's granddaughters, Edith Nicolls, observed that his mother was a great reader of history and "Gibbon was never far from the arm of her chair."⁴ Under his mother's guidance most probably he acquired his early love for the classics. Peacock attended the school at Englefield Green and during these years prior to leaving

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² Carl Van Doren, The Life of Thomas Love Peacock, p. 5.
³ A. Martin Freeman, Thomas Love Peacock, A Critical Study, p. 185.
school at the age of thirteen he learned the rudiments of Greek, Latin and French. He early formed a taste for study which he retained throughout his entire life; his love of study, pursued according to his own taste, left him socially self-sufficient so that his life was a solitary one and his circle of friends was always small.

By February 11, 1800, Peacock had moved to London to work as a clerk in a merchant's firm in Angel Court, Throgmorton Street. Back in the city he spent much time at the British Museum, for he soon abandoned the clerical work to study at the library. His chief study was the classics, but he also gained sufficient knowledge of classic art, modern painting, and operas to become a reviewer of operas on *The Examiner*, a critical review.

Peacock never returned to school but continued to study diligently throughout his life. Van Doren makes an interesting appraisal of Peacock's learning by comparing him with his contemporaries:

...he [Peacock], of course, surpassed them [Scott & Thackeray] both in classical scholarship and was perhaps equalled in this respect among his contemporaries only by Landor and Coleridge. If Coleridge's reading was wider, it was less minute. Moreover, Peacock was exceptionally well read in Italian and French, and constantly informed as to the productions of his own generation, although often out of sympathy with it.
which he now saw as attachment and excess. He then turned to
the temper and frame of mind that he had earlier possessed,
which he just commented on, but Peacock could see in Shelley
the early type of writing and the influence of Shelley
Peacock and Shelley's friendship. Peacock's association
earliest period and it also marks the beginning of
the year 1819 generally taken as the end of the

Peacock's (1819).

next poems, genuine of the themes (1819) and philosophical or
prelude to the element of metempsychosis he introduced in the
bored scenes to be of the occasion that when sorrows to the
however, an early marriage, Peacock died the next year. Then
truly interfered broke off the engagement and after
Peacock, father and lived in the neighborhood of Chelsea.

In 1820 Peacock fell deeply in love with a belle

literary influence.

poem of philosophical discourse which substantially refelected
a tone and theme, the most outstanding being "Parlor", a
written and published several poems of the 19th century
prior to this return to the country, Peacock had

Thomas love.

It is likely that Thomas love Peacock and his mother returned

to Chertsey in 1820 upon the death of Mr. Peacock's father.
satire, directing his first attack at the contemporary 
Romantics in his poem, Sir Proteus, a Satirical Ballad, 
by F. W. O'Donovan, Esq., which was published in 1814 
with a satiric dedication to Lord Byron.

This satiric ballad was followed by his first novel, 
Headlong Hall, published anonymously in 1816. The Critical 
Review of January, 1816, called the author a sort of 
"laughing philosopher" and suspected that he was no 
ovice. It was published in an American reprint in the 
latter part of 1816 and a third edition came out in 1822, 
so apparently it was not unfavorably received by the 
general public.

Peacock set in Headlong Hall the pattern which he 
followed in all his novels. Taking some home in the country, 
he gathers together characters representative of opinions 
and often of the opinions of particular public figures 
and has the story evolve chiefly from conversations, humor-
our incidents and unexpected happenings. Occasionally 
interspersed with the conversations are brief songs and 
ballads, some of them drinking songs, which constitute the 
last poetic efforts of Peacock, except for Rhododaphne (1818) 
and a poem penned on the death of his daughter Margaret in 1826.

7 Biographical Introduction, p. lxiv.
Melincourt (1817), his second novel, was longer than all his other novels. Here the amplification of conversation and plot produced a less successful work than his shorter, more pointed Headlong Hall, and in his third work, Nightmare Abbey (1818), Peacock again returned to the more concise form of novel. In the same year he began work on a novel which he explained to Shelley in a letter in the following manner:

I am writing a comic Romance of the Twelfth Century...which I shall make the vehicle of much oblique satire on all the oppressions that are done under the sun. 8

This novel was Maid Marian, published in 1822, and in December of the same year was made into a successful opera performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. Peacock wrote a second novel on a similar theme of romance, called Misfortunes of Elphin (1829).

In 1819 he received an appointment to the Examiner's Department of the East India Company, and now financially able, he asked Jane Gryffydh, a Welsh girl he had met eight years previously and had not seen nor written since, to marry him. She consented and their marriage was a happy one. They had four children and adopted one girl, who resembled their daughter Margaret, who had died when she was three years old.

8 Biographical Introduction, p. xci.
Following his promotion to the position of Assistant to the Examiner, Peacock had little time to devote to his writing, but in 1820 wrote his *Four Ages of Poetry*, the essay condemning contemporary poetry and poets, which evoked Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. Peacock had been making contributions to the *Westminster*, but his next novel, *Crotchet Castle*, appeared in 1831. From 1830 to 1836 he published criticism of operas in the *London Review*. In 1836 Peacock was appointed Examiner and now his official career demanded so much of his time that he gave up writing reviews and did not write another novel until his last one, *Gryll Grange* (1861).

During his days at the *India House* (1819-1856) he was also assisting in taking care of Shelley's affairs; Shelley named Peacock and Byron to be co-executors of his will and Peacock was soon left to do the work alone. Peacock retired from the *India House* in 1856 and contributed articles to the *Fraser* magazine, the most notable of these articles being his *Memoirs of Shelley*.

All through Peacock's life he was primarily without company except for his mother and a limited group of friends. Among these were Shelley, Hogg, Edward Hookham, Jeremy Bentham, and George Meredith, his son-in-law.
Retired to a cottage in the country, Peacock lived peacefully until his death in 1866 at the age of 81 years. Peacock had seen several generations grow up—he had witnessed the close of the 18th century, the start and development of the Romantic age and the early growth of the Victorian period. He had seen these changes and had remained untouched by them. His early ideas on the follies of the age, the so-called progress of mankind, and romantic excesses which he witnessed remained basically the same.

While Peacock was a lover of the past, it does not follow that he was completely submerged in antiquity, for as Van Doren points out, most of his friends were liberal thinkers and his seal bore the line from Horace: "I neither follow in the rear, nor pursue those who run before me." 9

Peacock remained essentially an amateur and his writings often were too heavily imbued with learning to make thoroughly good reading, but his style is clear, concise, and definitely his own; his novels are like no others; and his opinions are marked by their dominant Peacockian flavor. He is to be admired for his independent thinking and stimulating criticism which, given in his ironic language, constitute most enjoyable reading.

9 Van Doren, op. cit., p. 274.
Sheiley makes a fitting tribute to his friend and simultaneously shows the nature of Peacock's writing, in a letter to Maria Gisborne:

And there
Is English Peacock,...his fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it,
A strain too learned for a shallow age,
Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,
Fold itself up for the serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation.10

10 Ibid., p. 146.
CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF PEACOCK'S SATIRE

To almost every reader satire has a general meaning, but were a precise definition of the literary form attempted, it would be found that this literary form tends to shade into others such as irony, wit, humor, sarcasm, or invective. However, there are characteristics which are generally assigned to satire which help distinguish and define this literary form. Most sources agree that satire must include both criticism and humor, the proportions of each varying widely from a maximum to a vanishing degree. When either element passes this vanishing point, then the form is no longer classifiable as satire, but must be relegated to such forms as wit or invective.

Within these margins, however, there is a wide range in the meaning of the term satire. One author is abusive in his ridicule of human characters and their vices, another is chiefly amused at their frailties; one writer is acutely critical of the institutions prevalent in his day when presenting them in ironic language or in amusing shapes, another makes witty judgments of them; and one author in presenting individuals ludicrously levels his
attack at particular individuals while another author levels
his at general types of individuals. Yet, all can be classed
as satirists providing that in the humorous criticism which
forms the bulk of their writing, they have censured, in
order to improve, objects, subjects or conditions.

In order "to inspire remodeling" the satirists must
apply this union of criticism and humor to subject matter
which can be altered for the better and which admits of
censure by appealing to a sense of the ridiculous. Such
material would include vices, fanaticisms, follies, vanities,
falsehoods, and most other faults universally found in
humans and in human institutions. Frances Russell has
conveniently divided the objects of satire into three groups,
acknowledging at the outset that "an Individual may, and
indeed generally does, represent an idea or an organization
or a certain temperament." Sub-divisions of the objects
of satire are:

1. Actual Individuals
2. Cohesion of individuals into groups, creating
   Institutions.
3. Artistic conversion of individuals into fic-
   titious characters, sufficiently artificial to
   be designated as Types.

Just as the object of satire can be diverse and numer-
ous, so can the vehicles of satiric criticism, satire not

11 W. F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to
   Literature, p. 386.
12 Frances T. Russell, Satire in the Victorian Novel,
   p. 167.
13 Ibid.

supercharged with satellite language and drama, for the characters and are of indistinguishable for the plot and character portrait, all types the execution of plot and character portrayal almost to another phase the dominant role in the work, almost to of the generation, written entirely in novels, poems, and prose, help him point out and criticize the foibles and excesses of society whose prose satire and the literary form to

thereby enhancing an exaggerated and comic effect.

in order to give more of the minor points in a picture, write the satirist at a distant verse, for the prose satirist finds poetry at all. the prose does not insist and claim in which the men of the romantic period could correctly get satire in England, the eighteenth century, to just the age and added, "it is significant that the great age of classical examination, is found to be prose rather than position. Walker even suggests that the satiric spirit, upon the success of satire, satire, which was in prose.

Ay are not the same qualities of satire, as overstated satire as it is to write, but the means and condition vanishing of regulating consciousness which to amenable to and the most effective literary form. Verse has the ad-

with Lutange, the inventor of satire, verse was adopted being literal to any one mode of expression.
the most part, the persons Peacock collects at various homes in the country are distinguished mainly by their pet theories which they are constantly pushing to the foreground. Such deliberate exhibitions of their irrational and narrow thinking enables full play of the satiric sword of Peacock as he attempts to cut away excesses. Ernest A. Baker describes Peacock's method as

... [letting] his characters anatomize themselves without knowing that they were shamelessly exposing their insides. His own criterion was "the comic tales of Voltaire," in which "the ridicule is never sought; it always appears." 15

Carl Van Doren wrote that Peacock did not follow native tradition in fiction as much as he did French models, the context of the 18th century. This French influence is discernible in the embodiment of opinion in fiction and the satirization of living Englishmen. 16

If one reads Peacock's novels with the idea of finding the traditional make-up of fiction, the reaction is one of irritation and perturbation. One is disturbed by the apparent complete disregard for the plot element or for the logicality of character portrayal; the lack of depth to a character causes one to conclude that the characters are the author and not distinct or separate


16 Van Doren, op. cit., p. 78.
personalities. On the other hand, if one approaches Peacock's writings with the idea firmly in mind that the author's main intent is not to entertain through fiction but to point out and expose the follies and vices, as he sees them, existing in his own society, then one finds much enjoyment in his works. One is then ready to listen to the judgments being made, to view the battle of wits (on both sides of an argument) and to see the disintegration of particular characters by their exposing their vulnerable points to attack by the language of irony.

Oftentimes Peacock devised opinions for the express purpose of encouraging others to talk, so that the symposium never lacked for debatable and lively topics. For example, in a conversation concerning the progress of mankind there would be a perfectibilian and a deteriorationist, and in their absence other characters would assert opinions which gave both points of view. These latter characters might on such occasions profess opinions which seem outside their general make-up, more particularly outside the characteristic theories held by their living prototypes. Such alterations in his characters make their identity as caricatures a little less defined.

When it is stated that Mr. Flosky is the caricature of Coleridge, the statement must be accepted with the reservations that Mr. Flosky might present ideas which cannot
possibly be ascribed to Coleridge. Or he might be described as having physical characteristics which are unquestionably not Coleridgian characteristics. Nevertheless, these variances do not necessarily detract from the effectiveness of the satire, for Peacock, like most satirists, manages to include all points which he wanted to ridicule, with only a partial portrait. We do not see a situation or person in its fullness or depth, but we do see those particular facets which Peacock aimed to point out and enlarge upon for the reader.

Peacock sets forth his opinion of what the object of satire should be when in Melincourt he has Sylvan Forester say:

The vices that call for the scourge of satire, are those which pervade the whole frame of society, and which, under some specious pretense of private duty, or the sanction of custom and precedent, are almost permitted to assume the semblance of virtue. ¹⁷

Writing from this premise, Peacock in his seven novels lashes out at the follies of mankind, more particularly those found in his own society. The scope of his satire is wide and includes social, educational, political, economical, academical, racial, and military and literary, the type which is the main interest of this study.

¹⁷ Melincourt, p. 150.
With the exception of Shelley, there appears to be no evidence of personal relationships existing between Peacock and the other contemporaries whom he satirized. Something on this Peacock-Shelley relationship will be included in a later chapter.

Peacock published all his novels anonymously and after the first one appeared, signed them 'the author of Headlong Hall.' Apparently the contemporary reviewers did not recognize Peacock's caricatures of living contemporaries or they saw fit to ignore the likenesses. *Nightmare Abbey*, Peacock's third novel which contained effective and seemingly obvious caricatures of the public figures in the Romantic age, was on the whole generally neglected by contemporary reviewers. "The Literary Gazette ascribed it to Peacock, but took no notice of its satirical treatment of living persons." In another instance

Miss Mitford, who called it 'the pleasantest of all Mr. Peacock's works (Miss Mitford, Letters, End Series, 1, 41) recognized the caricatures of Byron and Coleridge, but not, seemingly, of Shelley.

Although Shelley and Byron both recognized and acknowledged their partial portraits in *Nightmare Abbey*, Peacock either was quite successful in keeping the identity of his caricatures from his generation or the reviewers did not feel called upon to point them out to the reader.

18 Van Doren, *op. cit.*, p. 124
CARNATIONS OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

CHAPTER III
Jacobin circles and his first stand on the French Revolution; his reversion and professed endorsement of the German metaphysical systems, particularly those associated with the German philosopher, Kant; his mistaken association with the Lake poets; and his egotistical attitude. The charges enumerated are on quite a personal plane of attack, but while directing his satire at this particular embodiment of romanticism, Coleridge, Peacock was including criticism of all who in any generation possess the follies of the Romantic Age, as Peacock saw them: bigotry, complacency, ethereality, and irrationality.

In Peacock's first novel, Headlong Hall (1816), is a Mr. Fanoscope. From the combination of 'pan' and 'scope' in his name, he is all-seeing or one whose range of view and understanding includes everything. Mr. Fanoscope is one of the group gathered at Headlong Hall for Christmas vacation upon Mr. Headlong's request. Their host shows them the nearby countryside, provides lavish dinners, and sponsors his big annual Christmas Ball. The guests have their sojourn in the country, climaxed by a wedding at Headlong Hall in which eight couples are married.

Mr. Fanoscope is introduced to this festive group at Headlong Hall as
Mr. Fanscope, the chemical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, metaphysical, meteorological, anatomical, physiological, galvanistical, musical, pictorial, bibliographical, critical philosopher, who had run through the whole circle of the sciences, and understood them all equally well.\(^ {20} \)

This enumeration is Peacock's amusing exaggeration of the fact that Coleridge was poet, philosopher, critic, metaphysician, minister, lecturer, publisher. Coleridge seemed willing to count his talents in a like manner, as shown in one of his letters to John Thelwall.\(^ {21} \)

Mr. Fanscope boasts that he had "read through from beginning to end" the authoritative works of the great men, and 'understood...all equally well.' A critical

\(^ {20} \textit{Headlong Hall}, \) p. 28.

\(^ {21} \) From a letter included in James Dykes Campbell's \textit{Samuel Taylor Coleridge}, p. 52. Date of letter, November 19, 1798.

\ldots \text{I am, and ever have been, a great reader and have read almost everything—a library cormorant. I am deep in all out-of-the-way books, whether of the monkish times or of the puritanical aera (sic). ...I have read and digested most of the historic writers... Metaphysics and poetry and 'facts of mind' (i.e. accounts of all strange phantasms that ever possessed your philosophy-dreamers, from Theuth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan) are my darling studies...I am a so-so chemist...I will be (please God) an horticulturist and a farmer.}

\(^ {22} \textit{Headlong Hall}, \) p. 54.

\(^ {23} \) Ibid., "...the whole of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the entire series of the Monthly Review, the complete set of the Variorum Classics, and the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions."
review ascribed to William Hazlitt\(^{24}\) makes a similar criticism of Coleridge's notion of his own great learning.

However, this writer does it directly instead of through the medium of a Mr. Fanscope and the use of the language of irony:

Though he has yet done nothing in any one department of human knowledge, yet he speaks of his theories, and plans, and views, and discoveries, as if he had produced some memorable revolution in Science. He at all times connects his own name in Poetry with Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Milton; in politics with Burke, and Fox, and Pitt; in metaphysics with Locke, and Hartley, and Berkely, and Kant;—feeling himself not only to be the worthy cooperator of those illustrious Spirits, but to unite, in his own mighty intellect, all the glorious powers and faculties by which they are separately distinguished, as if his soul were endowed with all human power, and was the depository of the aggregate, or rather the essence, of all human knowledge.\(^{25}\)

To return to Peacock's criticism of Coleridge, only once in the course of this novel does Mr. Fanscope, who usually sits to the side of the center circle of conversation, come to the foreground to express his opinion on the value of authority as opposed to reason.

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\(^{24}\) E. H. Coleridge in *Christabel* (1907) ascribes this review to William Hazlitt.

... [these authoritative works] depose, with irrefragable refutation, against your rationelinative speculations, wherein you seem desirous, by the futile process of analytical dialectics, to subvert the pyramidal structure of synthetically deduced opinions, which have withstood the secular revolutions of physiological disquisition, and which I maintain to be transcendentlyally self-evident, categorically certain, and syllogistically demonstrable.26

Mr. Escot, the detestationist in the motley group at Headlong Hall, comments that Mr. Fanscope's talk "has only the slight disadvantage of being unintelligible."27

Mr. Fanscope rebukes Mr. Escot for his complaint on the incomprehensibility of the effusion by commenting that he does not need to furnish him an understanding. Mr. Escot retorts in a Peacockian manner that "you [Mr. Fanscope] would have some difficulty in furnishing me with such an article from your own stock,"28 by which Peacock might be saying that Coleridge is unintelligible because he himself does not understand his semi-musical flow of words.

26 Headlong Hall, p. 54-55.
27 Ibid., p. 56.
28 Ibid., p. 55.
It would seem a judgment such as this on the intellect and understanding of Coleridge is traceable to incomplete knowledge of the man or to prejudice. But judging from the evidence supplied by critical magazines of the decade 1810–20, we can see that more contemporaries of Coleridge than Peacock thought of him as a genius characterized by the preponderance of abstruse knowledge.

In 1817, a critical magazine wrote that

...either from indolence, or ignorance, or weakness, he [S. T. Coleridge] has never in one single instance finished a discussion; and while he darkens what was dark before into tenfold obscurity, he so treats the most ordinary common-places as to give them the air of mysteries...

In Headlong Hall Mr. Escot might well be Peacock criticizing Coleridge for his complicated and intricate expression, a trait attributable perhaps to Coleridge's "failure to relate his imagination to actuality." It is not known whether or not Peacock had ever met Coleridge or heard him speak, but the latter's reputation for splendid and effusive conversation was well known in his contemporary

29 Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (October, 1817). In Campbell, Pye, and Weaver, op. cit., p. 775.

30 Hugh I'Anson Fausset, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. 17.
society. Charles Lamb wrote of the talk of the young Coleridge when he was still at Christ's Hospital and Henry Nelson Coleridge, nephew and son-in-law of S. T. Coleridge, attempted to record in his Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge some of the latter's "long arrow-flights of thought" and "those ejaculations of light, those tones of a prophet, which at times have made me [H. N. Coleridge] bend before him as before an inspired man."

Our last glimpse of Mr. Fanscope in Headlong Hall comes when the discussion between Mr. Escott and him ends. Mr. Fanscope loses his temper over Mr. Escott's remark that "I should be sorry, sir, to advance any opinion that you would not think absurd." Mr. Fanscope is quite ready to retire to his former position on the sidelines.

Peacock might here be intending to represent Coleridge's impatience and lack of sympathy with any ideas which did not parallel his own. A reviewer in Blackwood's Edinburgh Review of October, 1817, made a similar observation of Coleridge's lack of tolerance:

31 From "Christ's Hospital Five-and-thirty Years Ago," in Essays of Elia.
32 Henry Morley, Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. v.
33 Headlong Hall, p. 56.
...his [Coleridge'] scorn is as misplaced and extravagant as his admiration; opinions that seem to tally with his own wild ravings are holy and inspired; and, unless agreeable to his creed, the wisdom of ages is folly;....

In *Melincourt*, (1817), Peacock's second novel, the character who has qualities parallel to those of Coleridge is Mr. Moley Mystic of Cimmerian Lodge. He is first associated with a personage who obviously is a parody of Robert Southey, Coleridge's Pantisocracy colleague, a Mr. Feathernest. The surname of the Coleridgian caricature is at once recognizable as one Peacock selected to represent one of the characteristics he found distasteful in Coleridge, the mystical. The first name, Moley, is traced to two possible origins by Peacock. The classical origin traced Moley to the name of a flower which Hermes gave to Ulysses. To Homer this plant represented the "grand transcendental science of the luminous obscure...."35 Other qualities of the flower made Peacock associate it with Mr. Mystic:

...it had a dark root which was mystery; and a
white flower, which was abstract truth; it was
called Holy by the gods, who then kept it to them-
selves; and was difficult to be dug up by mortal

men, having, in fact, lain perdu in subterranean darkness till the immortal Kant dug for it under the stone of doubt, and produced it to the astonished world as the root of human science.36

Coleridge believed that Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher, had "introduced new matter into the old logic... had enlarged its scope" and he assimilated a good portion of the positive part of Kant's teaching.37 Peacock here treats this endorsement of the German philosopher by Coleridge in ironic language. He presents Kant as having brought obscure knowledge back into the world from a perdu of darkness and called it the 'root of human science.' In his novels Peacock quite often criticized Coleridge for becoming a Kantian enthusiast and adopting those German metaphysical systems "whose pretentiousness and unsouth jargon he [Peacock] heartily disliked."38

The other origin of the name resulted from the corruption of Mole-eye. Supporters of this theory believed the mole has eyes which enable it to see or not see according to its pleasure. This characteristic implies "a faculty of wilful blindness, most happily characteristic

36 Ibid., p. 328-29.
37 John H. Muirhead, Coleridge as Philosopher, pp. 88-89.
38 Priestley, op. cit., p. 149.
of a transcendental metaphysician," and Peacock appends "...since according to the old proverb, 'None are so blind as those who won't see.'" Here Peacock seems to imply that Coleridge saw only what he wanted to see, only those things which would re-substantiate his convictions. In this way he could follow his system of logic without being disturbed by contradictory or opposing arguments.

The disputants in Peacock's second novel gather at Melincourt, the castle of a young heiress, and are, for the most part, unexpected and uninvited guests. Miss Melincourt is kidnapped by one of her suitors and the 'talking' visitors immediately form a search party. Two main groups are formed and are led by a Mr. Forester, a neighbor and suitor of Miss Melincourt, and a Mr. Fax. After scouring the nearby countryside, Mr. Forester and his party finally find the heiress. When she marries Mr. Forester, the guests leave for various other homes in the country where they might be welcome.

At some distance from Melincourt Castle is Cimmerian Lodge, the dwelling of Mr. Mystic. Peacock undoubtedly derived the name of Mr. Mystic's lodge from Homer. The Cimmerians, according to Homer, were a mythical people who lived in a remote realm of mist and gloom. On a similar

39 Melincourt, p. 329.
note, Peacock placed Mr. Mystic on a remote island which was surrounded by dense and concealing fog. In Melin-court Cimmerian Lodge is located beyond the Ocean of Deceitful Form and on the Island of Pure Intelligence. Peacock seems to say here that such a location and such an atmosphere as he provides Mr. Mystic appears to be notably congruous with the elements he found in Coleridge.

In the course of the story in Melincourt, the search party is stranded away from the castle one night and Mr. Mystic invites them to spend the night at his lodge. Having no alternative, they do. Before allowing the party of searchers to embark for the Island of Pure Intelligence, the author warns the reader "who is deficient in taste for the bombast and is no admirer of the obscure" to wait on shore until the group returns. Peacock offers forewarning against the soliloquies of Mr. Mystic which are completely incomprehensible and which constitute the bulk of the story until Mr. Fax and his searching party leave Cimmerian Lodge.

But having warned the reader, Peacock goes on to unfold the thoughts of Mr. Mystic, as if Coleridge himself were uttering the unintelligible transcendental and metaphysical jargon. While crossing the Ocean of Deceitful

40 Melincourt, p. 331.
Form, Mr. Fax's search party find solace in the thought that even though they are lost in the fog their guide and oarsman, Mr. Mystic, could not possibly lose his way in this atmosphere which was "so very consentaneous to his peculiar mode of vision." 41

After telling his passengers that he overcame the difficulty of sunlight, which caused him to sometimes lose his way from the Island of Pure Intelligence, by merely shutting his eyes, Mr. Mystic hastens to add something to the point of the story: "Experience was a Cyclops, with his eye in the back of his head." 42 Mr. Fax remarks that he does not see the connection between the two and receives a warm reception from Mr. Mystic for such a lack, "for he should be sorry if any one but himself could see the connection of his ideas, as he arranged his thoughts on a new principle." 43

Peacock is painting Coleridge in Peacockian proportions in presenting his caricature as consciously wanting

41 Ibid., p. 332.
42 Ibid., p. 332.
43 Ibid.
his thoughts presented disconnectedly. Others besides
Peacock observed this rambling effect in Coleridge’s talk,
e. g. Thomas Carlyle wrote to his brother John, on June
24, 1824—-

...The conversation of the man Coleridge is much
as I anticipated—a forest of thoughts, some true,
many false, more part dubious, all of them ingenious
in some degree, often in a high degree. But there is
no method in his talk; he wanders like a man sailing
among many currents, whithersoever his lazy mind
directs him;...  

The italicized phrase in Mr. Mystic's last utterance, 'on
a new principle,' might possibly have reference to Cole-
ridge's statement about the meter of his poem Christabel:

...Christabel is founded on a new principle,
namely, that of counting in each line the accents,
not the syllables.

Peacock admired Coleridge as a poet. In his Essay
on Fashionable Literature (1818), which he never finished,
Peacock attempted to rescue and defend Coleridge from the
reviewers who had condemned his Christabel and Kubla Khan.
Later in the evening Mr. Mystic informs his guests that
he now divides his day on a new principle, apparently
alluding again to the assertion Coleridge made about
Christabel.

44 Campbell, op. cit., p. 260. From Froude's Thomas
Carlyle, i. 222.

45 Campbell, Pyre, Weaver, p. 774.

46 Melincourt, p. 338 ...I am always poetical at
breakfast, moral at luncheon, metaphysical at dinner, and
political at tea.
Upon arriving at Cimmerian Lodge, the visitors find the fog is in all the apartments, being particularly dense in the library, which Mr. Mystic calls his "adytum of the LUMINOUS OBSOURE." Mr. Mystic leads his group of visitors through all the rooms and ignores their objections that they cannot see anything through the fog though he carries his 'synthetical torch' which sheds 'transcendental illumination.'

After dinner Mr. Mystic makes an extremely abstruse explanation on the difference between objective and subjective reality by means of a cylindrical mirror and a sphere. No one understands the abstract explanations or the abstract symbols but he concludes that such an explanation of the difference between the two types of reality is the point of view of transcendentalism. Mr. Mystic in his next soliloquy continues his flighty, unconnected thinking in telling the visitors the essence of transcendental logic.

Science classifies flowers. Can it make them bloom where it has placed them in its classification? No. Therefore flowers ought not to be classified. This is transcendental logic.

47 Ibid., p. 334.
48 Ibid., p. 336.
49 Ibid., p. 339.
In this prelude to a longer monologue Mr. Mystic touches on several completely unrelated things in one short utterance. He jumps from his acknowledgement that he divides his day on a new principle to his hopes for the world. Mr. Mystic urges the people to live by faith which is "synthetical and oracular" and to absolve themselves of analytical reason which is "experimental and practical."

Peacock obviously is parodying Coleridge's habits of talk, his disconnected ideas and tendency toward soliloquy. Thomas Carlyle makes the same observation of Coleridge, only more explicitly, in one of his letters.

...But there is no method in his Coleridge's talk; he wanders like a man sailing among many currents, whithersoever his lazy mind directs him; and what is more unpleasant, he preaches, or rather soliloquizes.

In Melincourt, Peacock selected the message from the Lay Sermon that ignorance of people, when the state is in political gloom, is the only chance the state has to be

50 Ibid., p. 338.
51 Ibid.
52 Campbell, op. cit., p. 260. Taken from a letter of Thomas Carlyle to his brother, John, June 24, 1824 (Froude's T. Carlyle, 1795-1835, i. 222)
saved. This idea he attributes to Mr. Mystic. But Mr.
Mystic sees the world becoming enlightened and bemoans the
fact that "the public in general, the swinish multitude,
the many-headed monster, actually reads and thinks!" 53
Peacock, through Mr. Mystic, is here disparaging what he
believed to be Coleridge's attitude toward the crowd. And
Mr. Mystic's views appear to be only a slight exaggeration
of Coleridge's views.

From this portion of the Lay Sermon Mr. Mystic jumps
to his discourse on transcendental logic and gives his
sermon a dramatic ending by shouting:

MYSTERY! I hail thee! ... JARGON! I love thee!
...SUPERSTITION! I worship thee! Hail, transcendent-
ental TRIAD 54

These three elements Mr. Mystic sees in the cylindrical
mirror through his smoked glasses are the same three elements
Peacock seemed to consistently find in Coleridge.

Mr. Mystic shows his guests to their various apartments
and retires to his own. He carries a 'twinkling taper'
with him and as he opens his door, the entire interior of

54 Ibid., p. 339.
his chamber becomes a mass of fire. An explosion follows and Mr. Mystic is blown down the stairs. After the servants and the guests put out the fire, the cause is ascertained. The gas-tube in Mr. Mystic’s room had been leaking all day and the spark from the taper had ignited the combustible air. A simple and logical explanation, but Mr. Mystic maintains that the accident is an evil omen——

...a type and symbol of an approaching period of public light——when the smoke of metaphysical mystery, and the vapours of ancient superstition, which he (Mr. Mystic) had done all that in him lay to consolidate in the spirit of man, would explode at the touch of analytical reason, leaving nothing but the plain common-sense matter-of-fact of moral and political truth——a day that he earnestly hoped he might never live to see.

Here Peacock seems to be sermonizing on the inevitable outcome of the political hoodwinking which he found going on in his society and which he infers Coleridge was a part. Attempting to delude the people by ignorance and superstition can, after a period of time, have only an explosive effect because it is very possible "for smoke to be too thick."

The practical Peacock sees Coleridge and his transcendental jargon as contributing factors in this directed system of efforts to keep the public ignorant and uninformed. If this method is followed the public may never become dissatisfied and rebel, as had happened in their generation in France.

55 Ibid., pp. 341-42.

56 Ibid., p. 342.
In his *Table Talk* Coleridge expresses his lack of faith in the judgment of the people, the public in general:

The miserable tendency of all is to destroy our nationality, which consists, in a principal degree, in our representative government, and to convert it into a degrading delegation of the populace. There is no unity for a people but in a representation of national interest; a delegation from the passions or wishes of the individuals themselves is a rope of sand.57

It was from this attitude of Coleridge perhaps that Peacock conjectured that Coleridge preferred an ignorant public which was away from the light of reason and consequent search for freedom. Peacock never hesitated to condemn Coleridge for deserting the cause of the French Revolution and moving away from Jacobinical circles. Crane Brinton in his book, *The Political Ideas of the English Romantics*, explains the later attitude of Coleridge which Peacock condemned:

...Coleridge had come to the conclusion that the problem of politics was not to free men but to discipline them. He, therefore, abandoned democracy and its machinery of frequent elections, popular assemblies, universal education and the rest.58

In *Melincourt*, Peacock seems to select Coleridge's ponderous jargon as the main battlement for satiric attack and in Mr. Mystic he is able to parody Coleridge with much

57 Horley, *op. cit.*, p. 120-21.

58 Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 74.
success. Peacock's satiric judgments here on Coleridge are more severe than in his other novels in that Mr. Mystic has no thoughts whatever that are transmittable. Mr. Mystic is merely a man intent on spewing forth superstition and spreading the seeds of ignorance and one who gets blown up by his own jargon and practices.

**Nightmare Abbey.** Peacock's third novel published in 1818, includes more satire on Coleridge, but in contrast to the preceding work, this satire is directed at a greater quantity of Coleridge's vulnerable points. Peacock is less severe, a fact partly traceable to his inclusion of a wider scope of the object of satire and partly to his seeming admiration of Coleridge's poetic powers.

In Coleridge's poetry, Peacock probably could see a man of genius who did not here express himself as an ethereal Romantic. Peacock's reaction to Coleridge's poems would perhaps parallel Fausset's evaluation:

"Far from the 18th century as his [Coleridge's] imagination was to roam, his style as a poet was always to preserve something of the clarity and polish of the age of good sense..."

Peacock in his third novel collects a motley group of people who become guests of Mr. Glowry at Nightmare

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59 Fausset, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
Abbey. The novel is almost exclusively dialogue, the only action being the solution of the mystery surrounding the identity of a strange girl who appears at the abbey.

Again, as in the previous novels, the name of the character serving as a vehicle for satiric thrusts at Coleridge reflects Peacock's opinion of Coleridge. Mr. Flosky, who is a partial representative of Coleridge, has a name which is derived from "a corruption of Flosky, quasi a lover, or sectator of shadows." Here we have initial evidence that Peacock will continue to assault Coleridge for his obscurity.

When first introduced into the group assembled at Nightmare Abbey, Mr. Flosky is a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman "of some note in the literary world, but in his own estimation of much more merit than name." Mr. Flosky is characterized chiefly by his mental element, which was mystery and the fact that he lived in the midst of "that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not." The comment that "he [Mr. Flosky] dreamed with
his eyes open" no doubt alludes to Coleridge's turn for
the visionary and removal from actuality though in the
presence of others:

And so, his sense gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he'd dream of better worlds,
And dreaming hear thee still,...

Coleridge at one time supported the French Revolu-
tion which he at first saw "as the incarnation of the
principle of Liberty." Later he recanted this faith;
Coleridge himself said, as is recorded by his nephew in
Table Talk for July 23, 1832,

No man was more enthusiastic than I was for France
and the Revolution: it had all my wishes, none of my
expectations. Before 1793, I clearly saw and often
stated in public, the horrid delusion, the vile
mockery, of the whole affair.

Peacock, keeping in mind Coleridge's behavior,
introduces Mr. Flosky as one who in his youth had been an
enthusiast for liberty, and

...had hailed the dawn of the French Revolution as
the promise of a day that was to banish war and slavery,
and every form of vice and misery, from the face of the
earth.

63. Ibid.

64. Morley, op. cit., p. viii. In the preface written
by Henry Nelson Coleridge.


66 Morley, op. cit., p. 163.

67 Nightmare Abbey, p. 10.
Then Mr. Flosky discovered that not all this improvement was done, so, according to his logic, he concluded that worse than nothing was done. Now, to him, the only solution would be to rebuild the feudal system without "any of those loopholes by which the light had originally crept in," the light referring to the light of understanding as opposed to ignorance and superstition. Mr. Flosky shows his concern for the light reaching the public when he poses the rhetorical question:

How can we be cheerful when we are surrounded by a reading public, that is growing too wise for its better?"

Likewise, Mr. Mystic of the preceding novel was appalled at the enlightenment of the public, a condition which could only bring about unpleasant results. And, Coleridge, himself believed the state should be governed by the legislation of interests rather than by a representation of the whole people, who would be guided by passion and prejudice.

Mr. Flosky, in order to be better prepared to keep the light from the public, a laudable task,

...plunged into the central opacity of Kantian metaphysics, and lay perdu several years in transcendental darkness, till the common daylight of common sense became intolerable to his eyes."

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., p. 110.
70 Ibid., p. 10.
Here Peacock achieves his satiric effect by means of paradox; the study of philosophy should help one to enlighten the world but Mr. Flosky's study only served to add to the obscurity of the man's thoughts as revealed to those who heard him talk.

Coleridge's enthusiasm for Kant and his philosophy is well known; and in Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* Mr. Flosky announces: "I have just christened my eldest son Emanuel Kant Flosky." By this utterance Mr. Flosky's identity is made additionally certain for there is a well-known parallel to this situation in the annals of Coleridge. He named his eldest son David Hartley "in honour of the 'wisest of mortal kind' and solemnly dedicated him to the service of the truths 'so ably supported by that great master of Christian Philosophy [David Hartley].""}

We have Coleridge's later reaction to the French Revolution and his preference for and self-placed rank in the class which is distinct from the monster public in Mr. Flosky's comment on the French Revolution—

"...the French Revolution has made us shrink from the name of philosophy, and has destroyed, in the more refined part of the community (of which number I am one), all enthusiasm for political liberty."


72 Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 56-57. In a "Letter to Poole, September 24, 1796," *(Thomas Poole and his Friends,* i, 157.)*

73 *Nightmare Abbey*, p. 50.
Mr. F. B. Pestock divided the Lince School of Poets
from the writers' books were either written or suggested by
and those of my particular friends... and... the best poets
not now in the Poems of Taylor (1662-1667) except "My work
another friend considers that no literature is Good that is
more. Being a lover of old philosophy, Mr. F. B. Pestock in
remitting the reader of the role he played in the develop-
make common sense on modern literature but he is constantly
talking about contemporary literature. Not only does he
an other appearance in the story he seems to be entirely
the young lady who is in love with the hobo, song, scyther.
F. B. Pestock spends much of the time in constructing narrative
the mental and physical arrangements above the transcendental
and depression more remarkable
attitude leaves correlatives a tendency towards the ponderous
truth, Peacock's satire becomes more deadly for such an
true. F. B. Pestock argues enthusiasmally for abstract
particularly for lauding one another's works and for praising their own writings. He has more particular reference here to the collaboration between Coleridge and Wordsworth in the *Lyrical Ballads* and the ties existing between Coleridge and Robert Southey.

Mr. Flosky calls modern literature "a blight of the human soul" and yet he takes credit for helping to make it so. He laments the fact that modern tastes have become such that fiction must have ghosts and devils in order to make up for the lack of imagination in the readers. He himself and his friend Mr. Sackbut [considered to be a caricature of Robert Southey] have written some of the best of these ghost stories. But, now, ghosts will no longer suffice and modern literature must turn to the vices and passions of man as subject material to please the reading public.

Peacock allows Mr. Flosky to become momentarily intelligible in order to better convey the author's opinion on modern literature. Mr. Flosky comes down to concrete example and cites a character having all manner of vices but made a hero of belles lettres by one redeeming feature:

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If I were to take all the mean and sordid qualities of a money-dealing Jew, and tack on to them, as with a nail, the quality of extreme benevolence, I should have a very decent hero for a modern novel.

Here Peacock seems to assign some of his own ideas to one of his caricatures for Peacock himself described the object of Nightmare Abbey as being: "merely to bring to a sort of philosophical focus a few of the morbidities of modern literature, and to let in a little daylight on its ataractic composition."

Mr. Fleary again becomes primarily a Peacockian vehicle when he says that "the art of being miserable for misery's sake, has been brought to great perfection in our days," a judgment Peacock held of his generation.

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77 Ibid., p. 52.
79 Nightmare Abbey, p. 73.
80 Peacock would no doubt have cited the melancholy Byron as a good example of this tendency. In a letter to Shelley at the end of May in 1818 (Biographical Introduction, p. lxxxii) Peacock wrote:

'I have almost finished Nightmare Abbey. I think it necessary to 'make a stand' against the 'enroachments' of black bile. The fourth canto of Childe Harold is really too bad. I cannot consent to be auditer tantum of this systematical 'poisoning' of the 'mind' of the 'reading public.'
Mr. Flosky prefers the old literature, the ancient Odyssey, which presented real misfortunes of man as opposed to the modern literature which gives out "a more instructive picture of querulous impatience under imaginary evils."\textsuperscript{31} Again, Peacock is apparently speaking directly through Mr. Flosky. The author neither makes an attempt to disguise his enthusiasm for the classics nor to conceal his discontent with the present generation.

In this novel at times Mr. Flosky does talk common sense but not for any length of time:

Mr. Flosky suddenly stopped: he found himself unintentionally trespassing within the limits of common sense.\textsuperscript{32}

In addition, the answers Mr. Flosky gives Marionetta's questions about Scythrop which lead nowhere. They all seem to be lengthy and complicated introductions to the solution, never the solution. When Marionetta asks for a direct answer, he replies: "It is impossible, my dear Miss O'Carroll; [Marionetta] I never gave a plain answer to a question in my life."\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} 	extit{Nightmare Abbey}, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 76.
...decrease himself and remain quiet and do not interrupt an answer to a question from another person. The questioner, however, should ask it in the head and maintain a straight and upright posture, and carry the whole scene of transactions or events, and carry the whole scene in the upper part of the body. In this way, the questioner does not understand the transactions or events, and God forbid, that I say that I do not know, would be to say that I...
This ridicule of the supposedly extensive knowledge of the
metaphysicians is reminiscent of Mr. Peacock's concept of Coleridge, the philosopher.

Mr. Flosky tells the group at Nightmare Abbey that he is writing a ballad which is mystery made from a dream he had. In his dream he wrote five hundred lines while asleep, so now he is making a ballad out of his dream. The name of it will be "Bottom's Dream, because it has no bottom."87 And so had Coleridge explained Kubla Khan.

The sublime Mr. Flosky frequently soars ethereally when talking so that he appears as one inspired. He is described as having his eye 'in a fine frenzy rolling' as if seeing a magical vision. Similarly Dorothy Wordsworth describes Coleridge:

...his eye is large and full, and not very dark, but gray—such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed.88

Peacock in Nightmare Abbey penetrates into Coleridge to get at points more particularly Coleridgian. Coleridge occasionally preached in Unitarian pulpits when he was

87 Ibid., p. 76.

88 Campbell, p. 68. From Memoirs of Wordsworth, i. 99.
young and it was after listening to him in such a capacity in 1796 that William Hazlitt was prompted to write his First Acquaintance with Poets (published in 1823). It is to this early role of preacher that Peacock probably refers when he has Mr. Flosky indignantly reply to Marionetta:

Know you not that you talk to the most humble of men, to one who has buckled on the armour of sanctity, and clothed himself with humility as with a garment... Peacock, perhaps had no personal affront in mind when he satirized the accepted meaning of the minister's dress, but took the opportunity to give vent to another of his dislikes—the church of his day.

Another point of attack for Peacock is Coleridge's incapability of accomplishing what he set out to do, of following up a task he set for himself. During his lifetime and more particularly his last years at Highgate Coleridge quite frequently found himself not fulfilling promises, not meeting deadlines with material he had promised for publication. In a like manner, Mr. Flosky, in making a distinction between fancy and imagination for the guests assembled at Nightmare Abbey, states that:

I have written seven hundred pages of promise to elucidate it, which promise I shall keep as faithfully as the bank will its promise to pay.

89 Nightmare Abbey, p. 75.
90 Ibid.
interference that these arise from two sources. First and

above to tell a short story: the beginning of the

preach was first asked from the group assembled at the

like a most "heretical" personage, in the detached

best intent, that of the supernatural, because he looked

Finally, Mr. Peacock appears in connection with the

in the direction of public mental causes.

with greater endorsement of the French Revolution, prepared

preach bettered than Cartesian's thought, as opposed to

in the process of which I Peacock

the Supreme Court, would result in the Fitz a mental change as soon

there is hope for society. The result of this adoption of

be assimilated by society, such as the system of metaphysics.

deportable, if various hypothetic systems of thought can

bettered that while the present political situation is

Mr. Peacock, a rather morbid transcendentalist,

work of resolution.

Cartesian system passed that initial stage to reach any

under the premise to state, that the effect of Cartesian

one would be justified in commenting that Peacock seems to
self-delusion. After telling two effective anecdotes about ghosts, he states that he had seen too many ghosts to believe in their external existence. When this comment is questioned, Mr. Flosky is quick to defend his decorum, for he asserts in his egotistically positive way, "myself and my friends, particularly my friend, Mr. Sackbut [Southey] are famous for our purity."93

Peacock criticized Coleridge for associating with the Lake School for he did not consider that Coleridge was one of their disciples, as will be seen in Crotchet Castle, Peacock's next novel. In one instance, Mr. Flosky comes to defend the character of his friend Mr. Sackbut, whom he acknowledges is a knave, but should be defended by a friend anyway. Peacock makes Mr. Flosky specially wary in defending his freedom from contamination by his associates, giving the reader the notion that Mr. Flosky is obviously too careful in insisting on his purity to be entirely free from stain.

Mr. Flosky finally marries Celinda, a rival of Marionetta for Scythrop's affections, in the last chapter of Nightmare Abbey.

93 Ibid., p. 107.
We have seen how in *Nightmare Abbey* Peacock has been able to satirize more of the vulnerable publicly-known points in Coleridge, and yet has made the criticism less severe than in the previous two novels. In *Crochet Castle* (1831), his next novel, his satire of Coleridge is less effective and increasingly less severe; yet he has Coleridge still persistent in his pet theories and ideas, namely Old Philosophy and transcendentalism. Mr. Skionar, the transcendental poet at Crochet Castle, asserts as did previous Coleridgian caricatures that Kantian philosophy is to be studied and used as a guide.

Mr. Skionar, unlike Mr. Fanscope, Mr. Mystic, and Mr. Flosky, contributes his ideas about his pet beliefs to the circle assembled at Crochet Castle without gaining the reputation of being a person who is difficult to comprehend and who is at times quite outside the scope of human understanding. However, on one occasion when the home of Mr. Chainmail is surrounded by a hundred voices demanding arms, Mr. Skionar says:

> Let me address them. I never failed to convince an audience that the best thing they could do was to go away.\(^94\)

While Mr. Skionar, like all the caricatures of Coleridge, insists on the importance of transcendentalism, Peacock has Mr. Skionar explain, for the first time, the meaning of the term. The explanation is simple and lucid and leads one to believe that now, thirteen years after Headlong Hall was published, Peacock himself more clearly understands the philosophy of Coleridge and is consequently more tolerant of it, or he is being more fair in allowing the transcendental disciple to present his case. Mr. Skionar explains:

Transcendentalism is the philosophy of intuition, the development of universal convictions; truths which are inherent in the organization of mind, which cannot be obliterated, though they be obscured, by superstitious prejudice on the one hand, and by the Aristotelian logic on the other. 95

Mr. Skionar quite rationally defends his theory, whereas previous caricatures of Coleridge had merely asserted their beliefs with no attempt at substantiating their opinions.

Crochet Castle, which is located outside the city of London, is the meeting place of a number of opinionated persons. In this novel of Peacock's the gathering of conversationalists travel en masse up the Thames and finally land in Wales. Two love stories, of Captain Fitzchrome and

95 Ibid., p. 21-22.
Lady Clarinda and of Mr. Chainmail and Susannah Touchandgo, give the story some semblance of a plot. There is an unusually large number of characters who "talk" in this novel, but only a few of them are caricatures.

Coleridge can be seen behind Mr. Skionar's comment that "we cannot look directly into the nature of things; we can only catch glimpses of the mighty shadow in the camera obscura of transcendental intelligence."96

A positive change in Peacock's opinion that Coleridge deliberately sought for abstruseness and an unalterable condemnation of Coleridge for associating with the Lake poets is noticeable in Lady Clarinda's comment that

...Mr. Skionar, though he is a great dreamer, always dreams with his eyes open, or with one eye at any rate, which is an eye to his gain: but I believe that in this respect the poor man has got an ill name by keeping bad company. He has two dear friends, Mr. Wilful Wontsee and Mr. Rumblesack Shantsee [References to William Wordsworth and Robert Southey] poets of some note, who used to see visions of Utopia, and pure republics beyond the Western deep:...97

As with most of the conversationalists in Peacock's novels, Mr. Skionar limits his ideas pretty much to one field: he loudly acclaims the merits of the transcendental

96 Ibid., p. 34.
97 Ibid., p. 59.
philosophy and argues for "intuition and synthesis, against analysis and induction in philosophy." We see Mr. Skionar representing the more rational and logical side of Coleridge or perhaps the more mature and seasoned Peacockian evaluation of him. Peacock in Crotchett Castle refrains from his heretofore emphasis on depicting Coleridge as the ridiculous, disorganized, obscure and irrational romantic specializing in the supernatural.

_Gryll Grange_, published in 1861, thirty years after his novel, _Crotchett Castle_, contains little satire of persons in particular so that we find no caricature or partial caricature of Coleridge in this last novel of Peacock's.

In conclusion, Peacock's satire of Coleridge, as traced chronologically through his novels grows gradually less severe. Peacock's opinion of the poet-philosopher seemed to steadily improve. Probably this improvement came about through greater knowledge of the man and more particularly greater appreciation of the poetic powers of Coleridge. Peacock also sympathized with Coleridge for his treatment at the hands of the critical reviewers, as found in Peacock's defence of Coleridge's poems in the _Essay on Fashionable Literature_, (started in 1818). Peacock in his

98 Ibid., p. 128.
99 Christabel and Kubla Khan.
poem Rhododaphne shows considerable influence from these poems, Christabel and Kubla Khan. However, in spite of his increasing kindliness towards Coleridge, there is a striking consistency in the charges Peacock brings against the poet. Even with most complete understanding of Coleridge, Peacock would likely have chastized him for associating with the Lake poets, for turning to German philosophies with all their pretentiousness, for failing to speak in an intelligible manner, for deserting the cause of freedom which he had earlier supported, and for praising his own talents.
CHAPTER IV

CARICATURES OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, ROBERT SOUTHEY, AND LORD BYRON

Peacock, although living during the Romantic Age, was opposed to all the manifestations of romanticism, particularly those exhibited by the Lake school of poets. He did not consider Coleridge such an elemental part of this group but rather condemned him for associating with such a degrading set, as seen in Grotchet Castle. Peacock does not leave off with his criticism of the Lake school with Coleridge, but goes on to include more particular thrusts at Wordsworth and Southey.

Wordsworth's political career, to Peacock, exhibited facets which justified ridicule and scorn. Peacock also criticized Wordsworth's egoism, this egoism which was to him one of the characteristic qualities of the Romantics. This Lake poet's work does not escape the critical eye of Peacock, although he cited lines from Wordsworth's poems in his novels.

Peacock often did not caricature all these contemporary figures in each novel. Rather, he sometimes had other characters allude to them in their conversations.
Hall contains no direct allusions to Wordsworth or caricature of him, but in *Welincourt*, the second novel, a Mr. Peter Paypaul Paperstamp conveys Peacock's criticism of some of Wordsworth's actions and deeds.

Mr. Paperstamp is first introduced to the reader when called upon to participate in the chess dance in which each person represents one of the pieces on the chess board. The Rocks are represented by Mr. Feathernest [usually thought to be Southey] and by Mr. Paperstamp who is "another variety of the same genus [as Feathernest], chiefly remarkable for an affected infantine lisp in his speech, and for always wearing waistcoats of duffil grey;...."100

As with most of Peacock's names, Peter Paypaul Paperstamp is the name selected for the connotations and meanings it represents. Peter calls to mind Wordsworth's poem, *Peter Bell*; Paypaul represents the official capacity of collector or receiving agent; and Paperstamp denotes the character of the collecting duties. In their entirety the names directly allude to the position secured for Wordsworth by Lord Lonsdale after the former had urged Lonsdale to get a "government sinecure"101 for him.

100 *Welincourt*, p. 301.
101 Campbell, Weaver, Fyre, op. cit., p. 88.
In 1813, Wordsworth was appointed Distributor of Stamps in Westmoreland County. For this position, whose duties could be performed almost entirely by deputy, he received nearly 500 pounds annually. Wordsworth had realigned his views on the French Revolution with those of the British government and had soon after started to draw a salary from the government. This action was to Peacock intolerable and he attempted to depict it as such in his novels.

Of course the "affected infantine lisp" of Mr. Paperstamp alludes to the subject matter of many of Wordsworth's earlier poems. Peacock thought Wordsworth's poetry having children as its subject matter was silly and infantile.

Whereas in this chess dance Mr. Feathernest is the King's Rock, probably in reference to Southey becoming a court poet, Mr. Paperstamp is the Queen's Rock. Peacock is likely hinting indirectly at the role the queen played in getting Wordsworth to accept the post of Poet Laureate following the death of Southey. Sir Robert Peel wrote to Wordsworth in regard to this position:

102 Ibid.
103 Nelincourt, p. 301.
The queen entirely approved of the nomination, and there is one unanimous feeling on the part of all who have heard of the proposal (and it is pretty generally known) that there could not be a question about the selection... But as the queen can select for this honourable appointment no one whose claims for respect and honour, on account of eminence as a poet, can be placed in competition with yours, I trust you will no longer hesitate to accept it.104

Mr. Paperstamp resides at Mainchance Villa and soon after the marriage of Miss Helincourt, a group of poets and critical reviewers adjourn from Helincourt Castle and congregate here. They gather to discuss the "approaching period of public light" which the alarmed Mr. Mystic of Cimmerian Lodge pointed out to them. Those in attendance at Mainchance Villa were Messieurs Paperstamp, Feathernest, Vamp, Killthedead, and Antijack, the first two being poets, the latter three reviewers. These men were consulting "on the best means to be adopted for totally and finally extinguishing the light of human understanding."105

Peacock evidently considered Wordsworth as one of those persons primarily interested in withholding knowledge rather than developing the minds of the general public. This view probably was a reaction of Wordsworth's against

104 F. W. H. Myers, Wordsworth, p. 166. (John Morley, English Men of Letters.)

105 Helincourt, p. 396.
the French Revolution and Peacock's reciprocal view of his behavior. As Wordsworth became older he was increasingly more conservative and to such a degree that "any suggested political change filled him with panic and fear." He opposed Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, freedom of the press and he was intolerant towards the younger poets such as Byron, Shelley and Keats. Hence, Mr. Paperstamp's support of the move to keep the public uninformed and ignorant so that they would be submissive and contented.

Herbert Read writes of this change in Wordsworth's views, which Peacock's friend Shelley also heartily condemned, in relation to a pamphlet

...entitled 'Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmoreland,' issued in 1816 on the occasion of a local parliamentary election, when the Tory candidate, a son of Wordsworth's patron the Earl of Lonsdale, was opposed by that brilliant Whig, Henry Brougham. I need say nothing of this pamphlet but that it contradicts every sentiment and doctrine of the 'Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff,' written twenty-five years earlier. It caused Shelley to write these bitter words:

106 Campbell, Pyre, Weaver, op. cit., p. 39.

107 Ibid. Wordsworth opposed Parliamentary Reform...because he believed that any enlargement of the franchise would lead inevitably to the national calamity of universal suffrage.
What a beastly and pitiful wretch that Wordsworth! That such a man should be such a poet! I can compare him with no one but Simonides, that flatterer of the Sicilian tyrants, and at the same time, the most natural and tender of lyric poets.\textsuperscript{108}

Peacock made no direct statements of his political beliefs and most biographers of him have preferred not to conjecture his views from what is to be found in his satiric novels.

Mr. Forester, the hero of Melincourt, is an intelligent and sincere young man wholeheartedly interested in granting the public their liberty and the rights, politically and otherwise, to which they are entitled. Mr. Paperstamp admits this incongruous person into their anti-freedom group because he has money and might sometime belong to the party who controlled the money-grants. But Mr. Paperstamp disliked Mr. Forester's ideas; "...indeed he disliked them the more, from their having once been his own...."\textsuperscript{109} Mr. Paperstamp's consideration of the money angle involved is reminiscent of Wordsworth's change from ardent radicalism to conservatism and acceptance of a public post. Peacock's ire concerning Wordsworth's apostasy of

\textsuperscript{108} Read, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 236-37.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Melincourt}, p. 398.
a cause no doubt colored his judgments of all of Wordsworth's later behavior. At any rate, Peacock considered Wordsworth a post-politician in his later years who was primarily interested in staying on the 'band wagon,' regardless of any changes in his beliefs and his ideals which would have to necessarily be made.

Herbert Read wrote that

...perhaps his [Wordsworth's] most noticeable characteristic is his extreme egotism...Wordsworth has no dramatic sense because he is his own hero and his destiny is the destiny of the world he contemplates and feels at one with.110

Peacock had a like sentiment in regard to Wordsworth, for he has Mr. Paperstamp immediately launch into a grand encomium of his own talents and virtues at the initial assembly of the group of poets and critics. He declared

...that he did not believe so great a genius, or so amiable a man as himself, Peter Paypaul Paperstamp, Esquire, of Mainchance Villa, had appeared in the world since the days of Jack the Giant-Killer...111

Again, Peacock satirically associates Wordsworth with the infantile, with the heroes of the children's world.

In another instance Wordsworth's association with the infantile is the subject of a discussion at Mainchance

111 Melincourt, p. 398.
Villa. Mr. Fax asks Mr. Derrydown if the picture hanging in Mr. Paperstamp's residence is a family piece. In Mr. Derrydown's reply Peacock again makes rapier-like thrusts at Wordsworth's poetic subject matter and apostasy from freedom for pecuniary reasons:

I hardly know whether there is any relationship between Mr. Paperstamp and the persons there represented; but there is at least a very intimate connexion. The old woman in the scarlet cloak is the illustrious Mother Goose—the two children playing at see-saw are Margery Day, and Tommy with his Banbury cake...Jack and Jill...Dickery Dock,...and the boy in the corner is little Jack Horner eating his Christmas pie. The latter is one of the most splendid examples on record of the admirable practical doctrine of 'taking care of number one,' and he is therefore in double favour with Mr. Paperstamp, for his excellence as a pattern of moral and political wisdom, and for the beauty of the poetry in which his great achievement of extracting a plum from the Christmas pie is celebrated.112

Mr. Paperstamp says that he hopes that the "coat of darkness"113 of Jack the Giant-Killer becomes the costume for the coming generation, when everybody will be able to be taught and trained. This training is to be done as the keepers of the light, chiefly the poets and critics as assembled at Mainchance Villa desire.

Mr. Anyaide Antijack, a reviewer, begins the session by urging the alarmists to begin work in order to extinguish

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112 Ibid., p. 395-7.
113 Ibid.
the light of human understanding. He commends Mr. Feather-

nest and Mr. Paperstamp, former antagonists, (i.e., ones who were on an opposite side in the Anti-Jacobin war) for altering their minds, "as the sublime Burke altered his mind, from the most disinterested motives."114 The ironic language gives with full impact Peacock's ideas of Southey's and Wordsworth's ulterior motives in their shifts from their earlier beliefs in politics.

Mr. Forester, the opposing character among those in session at Mainchance Villa, objects to the cries made in unison by the group: "The church is in danger! The church is in danger!"115 as a "blind and bigoted prejudice having no real connection to the political question in the conflict."116 His objections are overruled; encouraged by Mr. Vamp, a critical reviewer, the crowd continues to cry out this phrase after each speech. For Mr. Paperstamp points out to the group that the present situation must be recognized as an "awful dispensation"117 and he continues

114 Ibid., p. 401.
115 Ibid., p. 402.
116 Ibid., p. 403.
117 Ibid., p. 414.
...a little pious cant goes a great way towards turning the thoughts of men from the dangerous and Jacobinical propensity of looking into moral and political causes, for moral and political effects.\textsuperscript{118}

Peacock, no doubt, alludes here to Wordsworth's turn and concern for moral subject matter in his later poetry. To Peacock, Wordsworth was in his later poetry rationalizing earlier actions, namely his apostasy from a cause.

Surely, Peacock must have in mind the later Wordsworth, in some exaggeration, when he has Mr. Paperstamp approve the following remarks by Mr. Anyside Antijack in their meeting at the Mainchance Villa:

...the swinish multitude...are only fit for beasts of burden, to raise subsistence for their betters, pay taxes for placemen, and recruit the army and navy for the benefit of legitimacy, divine right, the Jesuits, the Pope, the Inquisition, and the Virgin Mary's petticoat.\textsuperscript{119}

Mr. Paperstamp believes such ideas are inherent in the "stream of Tendency...for elevation of our thought."\textsuperscript{120}

Peacock conjectured further that as Wordsworth had deserted the cause of liberty that he consequently wanted to keep the public uninformed and satisfied with their lot. Such was the Peacockian reaction and Peacock has Mr. Paperstamp behave in a fashion which portrays this theory.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 414-15.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
The climax to the meeting at Mainchance Villa ends in song. Prior to the song the men each declare that they will accomplish certain things by pursuing their plans to expel understanding. Mr. Paperstamp expects such a plan to be furthered by rebuilding "the mystic temples of venerable superstition."\textsuperscript{121}

To this group the Christmas pie is the Little Jack Horner rhyme represents the public purse and each wants his finger in the pie in order to pull out some of the plums contained therein. The quintet consists of Mr. Feathernest, Mr. Vamp, Mr. Killthedead, Mr. Paperstamp, and Mr. Anyside Antijack. They all join in chorus after individual verses are sung, Mr. Paperstamp singing two verses while the others have only one. His first verse serves to convey the meanings of the symbols.

\textbf{MR. PAPERSTAMP}

\begin{quote}
Jack Horner's CHRISTMAS PIE my learned nurse
Interpreted to mean the \textit{public} purse
From thence a plum he drew. O happy Horner!
Who would not be ensconced in thy snug corner?
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 418.
ALL FIVE (the chorus)

While round the public board all eagerly we linger,
For what we can get we will try, try, try:
And we'll all have a finger, a finger, a finger,
We'll all have a finger in the CHRISTMAS PIE.

And later in the song, Mr. Paperstamp sings:

And while you thrive by ranting, I'll try my luck
at canting,
And scribble verse and prose all so dry, dry, dry;
And Mystic's patent smoke public intellect shall choke,
And we'll all have a finger in the CHRISTMAS PIE.

In Mr. Paperstamp's second verse, we see Peacock attack
Wordsworth for writing what he called cant; he makes a
satiric comment on the value of his works; and he manages
to get another thrust at Coleridge through Mr. Mystic, for
his foggy and confusing thoughts. It is appropriate that
Mr. Paperstamp mention the role that his good friend Mr.
to
Mystic is/play in teaching the world how to see darkly,
since Coleridge and Wordsworth were so close in work and
leisure.

Mr. Paperstamp is the only caricature of Wordsworth
in Peacock's novels, other references to Wordsworth consisting
of allusions and quotations from his poetical works. Some
of these include the Peter Gray and Harry Fell, aged

122 Ibid., pp. 416-19.
domestic servants of Melincourt castle, who Peacock
believes are distant relatives of the Lucy Gray and Alice
Fell in Wordsworth's Lyric BALLADS.123 Peacock here
uses the name Harry Gill in describing voice volume and
refers his readers again to the Lyric BALLADS.

In Grotchet Castle Wordsworth is alluded to in
Mr. Wilful Wontsee as indicated by the parallel initials
with William Wordsworth and the comment that he is a poet
of some note, a friend of Mr. Skionar, and one who

...turned his vision-seeing faculty into the
more profitable channel of spying all sorts of
virtues in the high and mighty, who were able and
willing to pay for the discovery.124

The next reference to Wordsworth's works is found
in Gryll Orange, Peacock's last novel. He quotes him
several times and from the nature of the material it
seems that Peacock had in his old age come to appreciate
Wordsworth's poetical abilities. Peacock at last seems
to see merit in Wordsworth's work in spite of the poet's
earlier political actions. He quotes from the Poet's
Epitaph and introduces his quotation from the Ecclesiast-
ical Sonnets in the following manner:

123 Melincourt, p. 27.
124 Grotchet Castle, p. 59.
An orthodox English Churchman was the poet who sang to the Virgin:

Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween, Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend, As to a visible Power, in which did blend All that was mixed and reconciled in thee, Of mother’s love with maiden purity, Of high with low, celestial with terrestrial. 125

In conclusion, Peacock’s chief satiric thrust at Wordsworth was the latter’s apostasy from the cause of liberty as found in the French Revolution, 126 his infantile

125 Gryll Grange, p. 94.

126 Read, op. cit., pp. 234-35. Herbert Read wrote in regard to Wordsworth’s change in political views that:

...an explanation of Wordsworth’s change of opinion does not excuse him from any moral responsibility in the matter. Apostasy is not too strong a word to use. People who try to explain away this charge of apostasy usually argue that Wordsworth may have been a revolutionary at one period, but only in his youth, and that in his maturity he developed these conservative principles which ever after distinguished his thought. I do not know how long a man’s youth is supposed to last, but the zenith of Wordsworth’s revolutionary phase was reached in the years 1792-1794, that is to say, when he was between twenty-two and twenty-four years old. And at that time he was not more advocate of ideal liberty. In his ‘Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff’ written in 1793, he urged, among other measures, the use of violence to overthrow despotism, the confiscation of the possessions of the Church in France, manhood suffrage, the referendum, the abolition of the laws of inheritance, the equality of income, and declared himself generally in favour of a republic....

...The rising figure of Napoleon was the immediate symbol round which he built his reaction. In 1803 he was joining the volunteers, drilling two or three times a week, and Dorothy says, “surely there never was a more determined hater of the French, nor one more willing to do his utmost to destroy them if they do come.” (Letter of October 9, 1803 to Mrs. Cladson.)
diction and subject matter in his earlier poems, and his egoism. Secondly, his conformity to group rules of conduct instead of individual ones, his change into a complete conservative and his concurrent acceptance of money from the government in the capacity of Stamp Distributor. In his later years and even during the decade of the teens (1813-1819) Peacock refrained from hurling the invectives at Wordsworth as he had done in Melincourt. It seems that Peacock, while still conscious of Wordsworth's political misdemeanors, could eventually appreciate his work in spite of the poet's political activity.
If Peacock was somewhat kindly in his treatment of Coleridge, in contrast he hurled harsh invectives at Robert Southey, and when no longer abusing him in his satiric novels, Peacock ignored him.

In Headlong Hall (1816) there appears to be no caricature of Southey or allusions to him. In Melincourt (1817) Peacock seems unable to find anything in Southey or his work worthy of favorable criticism and in the character, Mr. Feathernest, he depicts Southey in a most adverse light. Peacock's chief grievance against Southey is his government pension and role as Poet Laureate after having been, like Coleridge and Wordsworth, a Revolutionist. These offenses are apparent in his name, taken from the well-known saying, "to feather one's nest," and his initial introduction as one of Lord Anophile Aethar's parasites.

As with Wordsworth, Southey is condemned by Peacock for his apostasy from the cause of freedom. Like his colleagues, Southey had supported the French Revolution in his youth. This action is viewed for us in the Preface to the Poetical Works of Southey. The anonymous author includes William Hazlitt's remarks on Joan of Arc, an epic poem by Robert Southey written in 1793, and published in 1796. Hazlitt says it is a work
...in which the love of liberty is inhaled like the breath of Spring, mild, balmy, heaven-born—that is, full of fears, and Virgin-sighs, and yearnings of affection after truth and good, gushing warm and crimsoned from the heart.

And the author notes that prior to 1807

[Southey]...had abandoned his democratic creed and taken up one diametrically opposite, and for the remainder of his life he became a most uncompromising monarchist, and in his political opinions an extreme conservatist.\textsuperscript{127}

Mr. Feathernest, in Melincourt, is taken by surprise by Lord Anophel’s question, "what is the spirit of the age of chivalry?" for "since his profitable metamorphosis into an ami du prince\textsuperscript{128} he did not dream he would ever be asked such a question. The question burst upon him

...like the spectre of his youthful integrity, and he [Feathernest] mumbled a half-intelligible reply, about truth and liberty—disinterested benevolence—self-oblivion—heroic devotion to love and honour—protection of the feeble, and subversion of tyranny.\textsuperscript{128}

After such an utterance Lord Anophel accuses him of mentioning all the ingredients to be found in a rank Jacobin.\textsuperscript{129}

To Mr. Feathernest the word Jacobin had a grating sound and in his present predicament with his Lordship he feared he


\textsuperscript{128} Melincourt, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{129} Jacobin—one of a society or club of radical democrats in France during the revolution of 1789. The term later came to mean a plotter against an existing government, a violent radical or turbulent demagogue.
had "thrown himself between the horns of a dilemma." However, by resorting to the use of the ponderous jargon taught him by Mr. Mystic, the caricature of Coleridge, he sufficiently confused the group so that Lord Anophel marvelled at the 'depth of Mr. Featherstone's knowledge.'

Like Mr. Featherstone, Mr. Southey no doubt had an aversion to Jacobinical terminology, after having shifted away from the views he once held as a member in Jacobinical circles.

Following Peacock's criticism of Southey for losing his revolutionary spirit for the cause of liberty, Peacock expressed his dislike for Southey's channeling his poetic talents to meet the desires of the court rather than his own. That Southey received remuneration for this prostitution of his talents, to Peacock's way of thinking, only served to aggravate the crime. During a lull in the informal symposium at Kelincourt castle each guest followed pursuits of his own taste and liking: at this time Mr. Featherstone wrote "odes to the crowned heads of Europe."

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130 Kelincourt, p. 86.

131 Dowden, op. cit., p. 34. "When Southey was twenty he wanted to leave Oxford to seek 'some immediate livelihood.' But Southey's reputation as a dangerous Jacobin stood in his way; how could his Oxford overseers answer for the good behaviour of a youth who spoke scornfully of Pitt?"

132 Kelincourt, p. 89.
In an ensuing conversation Mr. Feathernest makes an excellent definition of a fine poem and being somewhat religiously inclined he argues for the merits of *Paradise Lost* versus *Chevy Chase*. This cessation of satiric attack on Southey is short lived and Peacock soon returns to his original figure. Mr. Feathernest lauds the wine served to him and gives substantial reasons for its use; Lord Achthar reminds him that he has not always liked wine so well. Mr. Feathernest again begs leave from any allusion to his "youthful errors."133 He adds

Demosthenes being asked what wine he liked best, answered, that which he drank at the expense of others.134

Peacock sees Southey quite blandly and openly admitting that his change in political ideas is traceable to pecuniary rewards. Through such a revelation of his selfish motives, Mr. Feathernest comes to be seen no longer as one set apart because of his poetic abilities; rather he becomes to be like every other person who is prompted to act and produce in order to get cash for goods received. Peacock wished to expose Southey. He sought to discredit him as a poet for allowing personal monetary gains to obliterate his once earnest feelings for the cause of liberty for the masses and to stifle his individual thoughts and ideals.

Mr. Forester [probably Peacock talking] reproves Mr. Feathernest and states his reasons for thinking such behavior wrong. To Mr. Forester's statement on the vices calling for satire (p. 17) Mr. Feathernest asserts that he is callous to such abuses having become quite accustomed to them. He likens himself to one of a member of a pack who barked from the outside until he and two or three others got in. They naturally expected to hear much discontentment and cries from those who failed to be let in. This 'getting inside' has reference to the court.

The colleagues whom Mr. Feathernest mentioned as also getting in are no doubt allusions to Coleridge and Wordsworth who also gained conservative views after their youthful fervour for liberty. So let the malicious and jealous others who cry at them for their present situation continue to do so; it has no effect, for at the proper time, when 'either wanted or troublesome,'¹³⁵ those on the outside will be admitted.

Peacock is most effective in his satire of Southey when he has Mr. Feathernest continue to assert the 'every man for himself' policy. Mr. Feathernest is apparently willing to sacrifice integrity in order to gain more materially:

If there be any man, who prefers a crust and water, to venison and sack; I am not of his mind. It is pretty and politic to make a virtue of necessity: but when there is an end of the necessity I am very willing that there should be an end of the virtue.136

In answer to Mr. Forster's observation that fortunately "for the hopes of mankind, every man does not bring his honour and conscience to market...."137 Mr. Feathernest retorts that perhaps he is one who "can afford to have a conscience"138 but should not brag about this great luxury. Mr. Feathernest sums up his views:

Poets are verbal musicians, and, like other musicians, they have a right to sing and play, where they can be best paid for their music.139

Thinking to give force to his views, Mr. Feathernest cites examples of such sale of conscience in other fields such as Parliament and then again brings it down to more personal terms, that of Truth and Liberty. He reminds Mr. Forster that a few years ago these intangibles were the gods of the day and were "the only passports into the poetical market."140 Being a prudent man

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid., p. 130.
138 Ibid., p. 131.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid., p. 132.
I took my station, became my own orier, and vociferated Truth and Liberty, till the noise I made brought people about me, to bid for me: and to the highest bidder I knocked myself down, at less than I am worth certainly; but when an article is not likely to keep, it is by no means prudent to postpone the sale.

What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year.--
And that which was proved true before,
Prove false again?—Two hundred more.141

Thus Peacock gives us his conception of the motives prompting Southey to change the nature of his political views and the themes of his poetry.

Mr. Forester makes the statement that it would be better if a man of genius would become a barber rather than purchase "leisure and luxury by the prostitution of talent."142

Mr. Forester explains

The poorest barber in the poorest borough in England, who will not sell his vote, is a much more honourable character in the estimate of moral comparison than the most self-satisfied dealer in courtly poetry, whose well-paid eulogiums of licentiousness and corruption were ever re-echoed by the "most sweet voices" of hireling gazetteers and pensioned reviewers.143

The ideas expressed here are apparently condemnations of Southey by Peacock. We have here in compact form Peacock's foremost charges against the Poet Laureate: egotism; corruption of earlier ideas in order to conform to the paying court;

141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., p. 188.
143 Ibid., p. 189.
desertion of revolutionary theories to receive pay and leisure from the government; and commendation of his own works in a review manipulated and controlled by the court. Peacock in this last investive seems to have reached the outside boundaries in satire for this directly personal attack borders on a railing denunciation and had Southey's name been cited, it would have been outside the field of satire. Yet Peacock achieves by inference and implication that severe criticism for which other types of writers must stand liable, or would not dare to write.

Mr. Feathernest argues with Mr. Derrydown for the superiority of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* over Chapman's *Homer*; their quarrel ends effusively with Mr. Feathernest questioning the judgment of one who would prefer *Chevy Chase* to *Paradise Lost*. Mr. Derrydown, one in the symposium at Maintenance Villa, retorts with Peacock's keen and direct manner of stinging criticism, saying that he would expect no taste or justice in a person

...who had thought fit to unite in himself two characters so anomalous as those of a poet and a critic, in which duplex capacity he had first deluged the world with torrents of execrable verses, and then written anonymous criticisms to prove them divine.

Mr. Feathernest denies the charges that he wrote the articles on his poems and contends that those articles were all written by Mr. Mystic of Cimmerian Lodge or Mr. Vamp, the editor of the review. To this Mr. Derrydow might agree but he would add that they were all done on the "Tickle me Mr. Hayley" principle.

...by which a miserable cabal of doggerel rhymsters and wornout paragraph-mongers of bankrupt gazettes ring the eternal changes of panegyric on each other, and on every thing else that is either rich enough to buy their praise, or vile enough to deserve it...

Mr. Feathernest makes an admission of the perverted use of the critical reviews when he menacingly cries out that had Mr. Derrydow written a book, "Horrible should be the vengeance of the Legitimate Review!" while Peacock has here directed his satire and caustic criticism at Southey and the Quarterly Review in particular, he held that similar accusations could be legitimately leveled at all the contemporary critical reviews. His violent feelings towards Southey in this respect might be somewhat colored by his generally great antipathy towards reviews.

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145 Melincourt, p. 196.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid., p. 197.
In the chess dance in which Mr. Paperstamp was the Queen's Rock, Mr. Feathernest is chosen for the King's Rock. The latter was somewhat nettled until he was assured that "no mauvaise plaisanterie was intended." So might Southey have expected a double meaning and reacted similarly.

The next time we encounter Mr. Feathernest in Hellincourt is at Mainchance Ville, where the various poets and reviewers have assembled to plan means for keeping the public increasingly uninformed and deprived of the light of human understanding. Peacock has Mr. Feathernest sing his own praises, a trait Peacock believed to be characteristic of the writers of the Romantic Age. Mr. Feathernest held forth in direct praise of himself and then turned his smattering of transcendental jargon and synthetical logic learned from his friend, Mr. Mystic, "to prove himself to be a model of taste, genius, consistency, and public virtue." Mr. Feathernest suggests a return to the days of feudal darkness when the people were ignorant and knew themselves to be so. He is among the group who at

of afterthought helps put across to the reader Peacock's idea that perhaps there existed some doubt as to the purity of this man's honour.

Peacock summarizes his opinion of Southey's mercenary writings in the Review when he has Mr. Feathernest sing the following verse in the song about the Christmas Pie, meaning the public purse:

By my own poetic laws, I'm a dealer in applause
For those who don't deserve it, but will buy, buy, buy,
So round the court I linger, and thus I get a finger,
A finger, finger, finger in the CHRISTMAS PIE. 155

Southey's relation with the Review is referred to in Nightmare Abbey. Mr. Flosky, when reading "a popular Review, of which the editor and his coadjutors were in high favour at the court, and enjoyed ample pensions," 156 reads aloud to the rest of the guests at Nightmare Abbey:

The Downing Street Review. Hm. First Article—
Hm. His own poem reviewed by himself. Hm—m—m. 157

These listeners' reactions no doubt resemble the readers' and cause, as Peacock intended, the raising of an eyebrow.

155 Ibid., p. 418
156 Nightmare Abbey, p. 38.
157 Ibid., p. 39.
Roderick Sackbut obviously is Robert Southey. Their initials are parallel and Peacock most likely borrowed the name Roderick from Southey's poem, Roderick the Last of the Goths. Roderick Sackbut's association with the Review and his enjoyment of pensions no doubt stems from facts in Southey's history. Dowden wrote that by 1812 Southey was "already a state pensioner and a champion of the party of order in the Quarterly Review.""159

The quality of the mercenary in Southey is again brought out in Crochet Castle by Mr. Skienar, thought to be Coleridge, who alludes to his friends, Mr. Wilful Wontsee [William Wordsworth] and Mr. Rumblesack Shantsee [Robert Southey] "poets of some note, who used to see visions of

158 Dowden, op. cit., pp. 156-57. While Poet Laureate (1813-1843), Robert Southey also made some contributions to the Quarterly Review (1809-1839) until his faculties failed him. Of his career with this review Dowden writes:

Southey and the Quarterly Review were often spoken of as a single entity. But the Review, in truth, never precisely represented his feelings and convictions. With Gifford he had no literary sympathies. Gifford's heart was full of kindness, says Southey, for all living creatures except authors;...Against the indulgence of that temper Southey always protested; yet he was chosen to bear the reproach of having tortured Keats, and of having anonymously glorified himself at the expense of Shelley...Southey's confidence in his own opinions, which always seemed to him to be based upon moral principles, was high; and he was not in the habit of diluting his ink...

159 Dowden, op. cit., p. 181.
Utopia, and pure republics beyond the Western deep:..."160 Peacock no doubt refers to the undertaking which Coleridge, Southey, and Lovell were organizing. They called it Pantisocracy. "In this poetical paradise they were to live without either kings or priests, or any of the other evils of the Old World society, and to renew the patriarchal or golden age."161 But the plan failed to materialize because of the lack of funds.

Peacock puts the failure of this scheme on a new basis when he has Lady Clarinda, one of the group assembled at Crochet Castle, comment that the project for a perfect society failed to develop because there was no profit to be anticipated from such a venture:

...but finding that these El Dorados brought them no revenue, they turned their vision-seeing faculty into the more profitable channel of espying all sorts of virtues in the high and mighty, who were able and willing to pay for the discovery.162

In Gryll Grange, where Peacock seemed to drop all personal charges at individuals for their failures, he takes an excerpt from Southey's The Grandmother's Tale for the introduction to his chapter, "Christmas Tales."163

160 Crochet Castle, p. 59.
161 Southey, Preface in Joan of Arc, p. xii.
162 Crochet Castle, p. 59.
163 Gryll Grange, p. 348.
With Southey, Peacock was always consistently severe in those novels where caricatures of contemporary literary figures were being made. Peacock considered Southey's apostasy and consequent position in court and on the Quarterly Review staff unethical. It can be conjectured that unless Southey could give evidence that his abandonment of the democratic creed was not an intended precursor to his government position, Peacock would most likely never have modified or lessened his attack on Southey.
Byron came within the reach of Peacock's satire only once in his novels and then Peacock was careful to substantiate his representation of this Romantic's characteristics through his perusal of certain parts of the poem, *Childe Harold*. He wrote to Shelley at the end of May in 1818:

I have almost finished *Nightmare Abbey*. I think it necessary to 'make a stand' against the 'encroachments' of black bile. The fourth canto of *Childe Harold* is really too bad. I cannot consent to be auditor tautum of this systematical 'poisoning' of the 'mind' of the 'reading public.'

Peacock seems to put aspects of the poet, Lord Byron, in the person of Mr. Cypress in *Nightmare Abbey*. Mr. Cypress is about to leave England but before he goes he takes one last look at the abbey and his friends assembled there, so that to this last scene he could always look back "with as much affection as his lacerated spirit could feel for any thing." In this initial insight into Mr. Cypress, we see Peacock's primary theme in his satire of the poet—Byron's exaggerated feelings on the melancholy and deplorable condition of his self and spirit, more especially his disillusionment about all things, particularly love.

Apparantly Peacock wished to recall for the readers that Byron had a turn for the classical. Mr. Cypress

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164 *Biographical Introduction*, p. lxxxii.

165 *Nightmare Abbey*, p. 99.
comments that the mind must forever search, in spite of the
cost that what it finds is only a disappointment. He poses
the question to the group: "Have you no wish to wander
among the venerable remains of the greatness that has passed
forever?"166 Here Peacock did not fail to include the note
of melancholy which he seemed to find coexistent with Byron.

Peacock satirizes Byron's seriousness and his belief
that his role, actions and problems have reverberating
world-wide effects. Also he ridicules some of the reasoning
Byron indulged in from his hero-premise. Scythrop, a
caricature of Shelley, reprimands Mr. Cypress for leaving
England and thereby neglecting to do what is in his power
to help his own country. Mr. Cypress ably defends his step
by a Byronic system of reasoning:

Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife; and a man who
has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all duty
to his country. I have written an ode to tell the
people as much, and they may take it as they list.

In 1816 Byron's wife separated from him. Perhaps Peacock
here alludes to this incident in Byron's life in spite
of his policy of not treating the personal life of a person.
There is also in the last statement a note of Byron's de-
fiance towards the world in general.

166 Ibid., p. 101.
167 Ibid., p. 103.
From Childe Harold Peacock formulates the ideas which he has Mr. Cypress utter and which to him represent Byron. One tone is of general disillusionment and disappointment with what life has thus far been able to grant him. He sees no hope for himself or for anyone else since man is out of the harmony of things:

We wither from our youth; we gasp with unslaked thirst for unattainable good; lured from the first to the last by phantoms—love, fame, ambition, avarice—all idle, and all ill—one meteor of many names, that vanished in the smoke of death.168

We find that element of romantic melancholy which Peacock apparently thought pervaded over the spirit of Byron, when Mr. Cypress tells of the transitory and unendurable qualities of human love, "the most brittle of reeds."169 We see the Byronic character in Mr. Cypress's defiance at a world in which he has only been able to find a hollow happiness at the best. According to Mr. Cypress, "The sum of our social destiny is to inflict or to endure."170

We surely see Byron in Mr. Cypress's rhetorical question, "how can we be cheerful in the midst of disappointment and despair?"171

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168 Ibid., p. 104.
169 Ibid., p. 107.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid., p. 110.
Before setting out "to rake seas and rivers, lakes and canals, for the moon of ideal beauty," Mr. Cypress sings the following song, in which his melancholy and miserable spirit is reflected:

There is a fever of the spirit,
The brand of Cain's unresting doom,
Which in the lone dark souls that bear it Glows like the lamp in Tullia's tomb;
Unlike that lamp, its subtle fire Burns, blasts, consumes its cell, the heart,
Till, one by one, hope, joy, desire, Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart.

When hope, love, life itself, are only Dust—spectral memories—dead and cold—
The unfed fire burns bright and lonely, Like that undying lamp of old; And by that drear illumination, Till time its clay-built home has rent, Thought broods on feeling's desolation— The soul is its own monument.

Peacock's main criticism of Byron in his caricature, Mr. Cypress, is Byron's irrationality and melancholy, which he found particularly dominant in this Romantic. On the whole, Peacock was not severe or unkindly to Byron ever, an attitude no doubt attributable to their common interests in classics and their dual executor roles of Shelley's will; in addition, Byron was a friend of Shelley's, he had

172 Ibid., p. 113
173 Ibid., p. 111.
suffered at the hands of the critical reviewers who were
Peacock's abomination and he wrote poetry which Peacock
admired.

Byron recognized his caricature and "was delighted
with Mr. Cypress and gave Shelley a rosebud, [still pre-
served] to be taken to Peacock with his love."174 This
seems a positive indication of the well-disposed nature
of Peacock's criticism of this contemporary.

174 Van Doren, op. cit., p. 122.
CHAPTER V

THE PEACOCK-SHELLEY RELATIONSHIP AND
THE CARICATURE OF SHELLEY

Before studying the Peacockian characters based on a selection of some of the traits, opinions and habits of Percy Bysshe Shelley, it would be worthwhile to know something of the relationship which existed between the two men. From the sources available, Shelley apparently is the only contemporary whom he satirized that Peacock knew personally. There has been much written on this friendship. Some scholars contend that Peacock's friendship with Shelley is the only thing that keeps the name of Peacock from becoming completely obscured and forgotten; others believe that Peacock's interest in Shelley was exclusively founded on a monetary basis. It is my opinion that this friendship evolved from more permanent foundations than a mercenary motive and that with common interests they influenced one another reciprocally.

Peacock and Shelley most likely first became acquainted through the efforts of their mutual friends, Edward and Thomas Hookham, who ran a circulating library from which
both men borrowed books. Prior to their first meeting, Thomas Hockham, also Peacock's publisher, had sent some of Peacock's works to Shelley, who was known to be enthusiastic and generous as well as potentially wealthy. Hockham perhaps hoped that this "heir to a baronetcy" would by his support greatly aid the publication and sales of the works of a relatively obscure writer.

Thomas Hockham's anticipations were realized insofar as the desired praise was received. In August, 1812, Shelley read Peacock's poem, The Genius of the Thames and made the following comment in his letter to Thomas Hockham on August 18, 1812:

...the poem appears to be far beyond mediocrity in genius and versification and the conclusion of Palavra [another poem] the finest piece of poetry I ever read.

Even though such recommendation failed to improve publications and sales to any degree, it did provide Hockham with an incentive to make the two men acquainted. Peacock and Shelley initially met in October or November of that same year. From then on the relationship continued of its own volition—until Shelley's death in 1822.

175 Biographical Introduction, p. 1.
In 1813 Shelley invited Peacock to High Elms, Bracknell, home of the Bracknell circle, where Peacock might possibly have derived some of his ideas for characters in his conversational novels. In his Memoirs of Shelley which he published in the Fraser's Magazine in 1860 Peacock described this group—it might well be a description of the group assembled at Nightmare Abbey or Crochet Castle:

At Bracknell, Shelley was surrounded by a numerous society, all in a great measure of his own opinions in relation to religion and politics, and the larger portion of them in relation to vegetable diet...each nevertheless [had] some predominant crocheted of his or her own...I was sometimes irreverent enough to laugh at the fervour with which opinions utterly unconducive to any practical result were battled for as matters of the highest importance to the well-being of mankind...177

Peacock failed to take the arguments of this group seriously and he was not popular with them. Still, Shelley accorded him favor; he asked Peacock to accompany his party (consisting of himself, his wife Harriet and baby Ianthe, and Harriet's sister, Eliza Westbrook) to the Cumberland Lakes country. The party ended their journey in Edinburgh from where Shelley wrote to his friend, Thomas Hogg, on November 26, 1813, his opinion of Peacock with whom he had now become much better acquainted:

176 ibid., p. liv.

He [Peacock] is a very mild, agreeable man, and a
good scholar. His enthusiasm is not very ardent,
nor his views very comprehensive; but he is neither
superstitious, ill-tempered, dogmatical, or proud.178

The query has frequently been made: how could these
two men who seem to be direct opposites found a compatible
friendship? Peacock was essentially a classicist, Shelley
a romanticist; Peacock was characterized by his mildness,
Shelley by his enthusiasm and zeal; Peacock preferred
solitude, Shelley was frequently depressed by it; and Pea-
cock was seven years Shelley's senior. On the other hand,
both men were lovers of the beauties to be found in nature,
both sought to express themselves in poetry and prose;
both were students of the classics; both were criticized
for their religious beliefs; both condemned those who had
deserted the cause of the French Revolution and both held
an antipathy towards the critical reviews of their day.
In his Portrait of Shelley, White explains Shelley's in-
terest in Peacock:

Despite his opinion that Peacock was too lacking
in generous enthusiasm, he found pleasure in Peacock's
scholarly conversation and his easy-going, unbigtoted,
slightly cynical enlightenment.179

178 Biographical Introduction, p. 1v.
In addition to common interests, Peacock's rationality and pervading common sense served as a counteracting influence and oftentimes saving antidote to Shelley's violent emotions and impassioned enthusiasms. For example, in August, 1815, Peacock accompanied Shelley's group on a trip up the Thames River—

At the beginning of the trip Shelley was suffering from a disorder which Peacock attributed to his diet of bread, tea, and manufactured lemonade. He boasts that his prescription of "three mutton chops well peppered" immediately restored the sufferer to robust health, and gave him "one week of thorough enjoyment in his life." 180

Upon the poet's request Peacock journeyed to London where he found Shelley "in the throes of his new passion for Mary Godwin." 181 Peacock, who at that time did not know Mary but was fond of Harriet, attempted to discourage the affair, but when the couple did elope to the continent on July 28, 1814, Shelley left Peacock to manage financial affairs for Harriet. In 1816 Peacock was asked by Shelley to find them a home in a letter which reflects some of Shelley's regard for Peacock:

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180 Freeman, op. cit., p. 153.
181 Biographical Introduction, p. lviii.
You are the only man who has sufficient regard for me to take an interest in the fulfillment of this design, and whose tastes conform sufficiently to mine to engage me to confide the execution of it to your discretion.... 182

When Shelley returned to the continent to live, Peacock was left to manage his financial affairs in England and to proof *Prometheus Unbound* and have it printed. He was also given the responsibility of having *The Cenci*, Shelley's unsuccessful tragedy, performed at the Covent Garden. During his stay away from England Shelley received many of the most recent literary works being published in England from Peacock, as well as other material which he or Mary requested.

Peacock no doubt received grants from Shelley when the former was in financial straits. He was paid for his services to Shelley and received a legacy of 500 pounds and an additional 2000 pounds for an annuity in Shelley's will, of which Peacock and Byron were named co-executors. Of this grant Priestley writes:

This was handsome but by no means unearned, for all the work fell upon him and it was he who conducted the various negotiations between Mrs. Shelley and her father-in-law, and there is ample evidence...that he performed the work like the excellent man of business he was. 183

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182 Freeman, *op. cit.*, p. 155-56.

183 Priestley, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
Trelawney seems to classify Peacock as a parasite of Shelley, for he wrote that all men connected with Shelley, except the Hoggs and Smiths, used the poet as their purse.\textsuperscript{184} In a different vein Miss Mitford wrote that Peacock often served as a protector of Shelley against those who would rob him. She records

...how Hunt and Godwin would visit Shelley and demand assistance, the former carrying away on some occasion a load of furniture, and the latter threatening to stab himself; and how Shelley, unable to deal with their violence, would send for Peacock to protect him.\textsuperscript{185}

Had Shelley accepted Peacock on such a monetary basis as Trelawney implies, Shelley would probably not have put Peacock in such complete charge of his affairs in England; he would not have requested the personal favor that Peacock tell his other friends of the death of William Shelley, his son, in 1819; and neither would he have consulted Peacock when Harriet committed suicide, nor accepted his counsel to marry Mary Godwin as soon as possible. (Harriet died on December 10, 1815, and Mary and Shelley were officially married on December 30, 1816.)

Besides serving more or less as Shelley's protector and counselor, Peacock directed Shelley's reading of the

\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Biographical Introduction}, p. lxxvi.

\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Ibid}.
classics to a degree. He criticized Shelley's works but here Shelley was inclined to discredit Peacock's judgments because he maintained his friend belonged to the superficial and exact school of poetry. In London, Peacock finally induced Shelley to accompany him to the opera Don Giovanni and converted him to a taste for Italian opera, "of which he became an assiduous frequenter." 

On the other side, Shelley seems to have influenced Peacock. It has been alluded to previously that upon acquaintance with Shelley, Peacock abandoned almost completely his writing of melancholy verse and turned to satire. E. A. Baker writes that such a change might likely be credited to Peacock's reaction to the young enthusiast. In Shelley, seven years his junior, Peacock found a spirit more thoroughly poetic than he had known. Upon comparison he concluded that he lacked those qualities of enthusiasm and vivid imagination which he found in abundance in the poet, Shelley. Although Peacock failed to endorse the romantic and ethereal elements in Shelley, he nevertheless recognized his own deficiencies by such contrast with Shelley. Peacock might have made this same change in his writing had he never met Shelley but Baker's contention seems plausible.

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186 Shelley, Letter to Marie Gisborne, October 13, 1819.
187 Peacock, Memoirs of Shelley, p. 82.
188 E. A. Baker, op. cit., p. 126.
Shelley also suggested the verse from Ben Jonson's play which introduced *Nightmare Abbey* to its readers.

In conclusion, Peacock believed that Shelley did not need intellectual and enthusiastic sympathy as much as he needed balance and toning down. His favoring Harriet rather than Mary in his *Memoirs of Shelley* is perhaps traceable to this belief. Harriet, who did not follow Shelley in all his enthusiasms, exercised more of this toning-down influence than did Mary, who attempted to follow and endorse Shelley's enthusiastic theories.

While Peacock saw in Shelley those romantic excesses which he sought always to condemn, he seems nevertheless to have had a certain sympathy and understanding, as well as much appreciation for the poetic powers and abilities of this young enthusiast with his irrational and ethereal characteristics. Peacock declined writing a biography of his young friend and only wrote his *Memoirs of Shelley* (1850) in order to correct some of the errors he found in the recently published narratives which he had read. In his own words, Peacock would have preferred that Shelley be judged by the works he left the world, and not by his private life.
I could have wished that, like Wordsworth's Cuckoo, he had been allowed to remain a voice and a mystery; that, like his own Skylark, he had been left unseen in his congenial region,

Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth,

and that he had been only heard in the splendour of his song.189

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Part II
Young Shelley is again seen only diffusely in *Melinscourt* (1817). In Mr. Forester we can find only undefined tones of Shelley’s characteristics when a young man. Shelley is reflected in Mr. Forester’s enthusiasm, his insistence on the inevitable progress and improvement of mankind, his sureness of the important role poetry plays in the reformation of the world, and his condemnation of one who falls from his original post in defence of a cause, more particularly the French Revolution. He also makes a comment on the right of property which may reflect Shelley’s Godwinian doctrine. Mr. Forester believed that moral duty is "but that precise line of conduct which tends to promote the greatest degree of general happiness."¹⁹⁰ For this reason Mr. Forester did away with all vestiges of luxury, including his four horses, and started a community in which all property was held in common and each family tilled just enough land to gain a comfortable existence.

Peacock’s criticism of Shelley, which he seems to be making through Mr. Forester, is the tendency of young Shelley to let his enthusiasm carry his theories to such extremes that they become absurd.

¹⁹⁰ *Melinscourt*, p. 266.
The best and most clear caricature that Peacock made of Shelley in his novels was in the person of Scythrop in *Nightmare Abbey*. Scythrop is representative of the young Shelley and not the Shelley as one is likely to find in a biography.

Peacock’s several points of attack in his satire on Shelley are: fiery enthusiasms for liberty, love, intellectual beauty and the perfectability of man; the seriousness attached to poetry and the poet’s important and influential role.

No physical description of Scythrop is given, but Peacock immediately describes his education. Scythrop attended public school

...where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him; and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head...

This is obviously more an opening for Peacock’s attack on the universities of his days (one of his favored points of criticism) than it is an attempt to satirize the education of Shelley.

Scythrop’s susceptibility to love is perhaps intended to be reminiscent of Shelley’s yielding to his passions.

191 *Nightmare Abbey*, pp. 3-4.
Upon getting out of the university, Scythrop immediately fell in love with an Emily Girouette. When the family separated the lovers, the affair preyed on Scythrop's sensitive spirit and he retired into solitude in the tower of Nightmare Abbey. Here he steeped himself in metaphysical romance, German tragedies and transcendental philosophy, and soon became obsessed with another passion—"the passion for reforming the world." 192

In the new perfect republic Scythrop was to be the ruling sovereign and the reformation was to be brought about through knowledge and wisdom. Scythrop accepts the initial responsibility of getting the reformation started.

Shelley also had early acquired a passion for reforming the world. When he was about 11 years old, Shelley dedicated himself to "fight the false brutal world of reality and champion its victims." 193 Years later he felt he had kept his vow. Shelley's start in this direction of reforming the world through knowledge occurred in 1812 when he attempted to help the Irish patriots, who were endeavoring to free themselves from Protestant and English domination. He warned the Irish patriots:

193 White, op. cit., p. 11.
...that when they achieved their aims they would probably be disappointed. Poverty, vice, and oppression would not thereby be abolished any more than they were in England already. Ireland should be regarded as the starting-point of a movement that should truly emancipate the human spirit, not only in Ireland, but elsewhere—a movement that could be grounded only in wisdom and virtue and that would take longer than one generation to reach its goal.194

Shelley's seriousness in accepting this assigned responsibility to aid mankind can be seen in the selection of his home in Wales soon after leaving Ireland where his efforts had accomplished but little. He leased 'Nantgwillt, a house with two hundred acres,' which

seemed ideal for the seminary of revolution they had been planning since the previous autumn [1811] ....The largest room was to be equipped, on credit, as a library, an extravagance which seemed justifiable to Shelley when he considered that this establishment was for the benefit of the human race.195

It was just prior to Shelley's going to Nantgwillt that Peacock first met him. Fired with enthusiasm over the project he was immediately undertaking in Wales, Shelley no doubt impressed Peacock at their first meeting with those particular characteristics which he was later to give Scythrop in his Nightmare Abbey.

Conscious of the role he was to play in this enlightenment of the world and enthused over the project, Shelley

194 Ibid., pp. 96-7.
195 Ibid., p. 104.
addressed a group of supporters to the cause in Beaumaris at the home of Lord Lieutenant of Wales. This speech concluded:

How can anyone look on that work and hesitate to join us, when I here publicly pledge myself to spend the last shilling of my fortune, and devote the last breath of my life to this great, this glorious cause?

In his letter to Leigh Hunt on December, 1818, he was still optimistic about bringing about this reform:

...I am undeceived in the belief that I have powers deeply to interest, or substantially to improve, mankind...

Peacock satirized this awareness Shelley had of his importance to the world and his deadly seriousness in accepting this role. In <i>Nightmare Abbey</i> he has Scythrop, following his self-appointed role as regenerator of the world, more acutely realize his essentialness to society and "determine, for the benefit of mankind in general, to adopt all possible precautions for the preservation of himself."

196 The cause for the rebuilding of the community which had been partially destroyed by a flood wiping away a dike in the town. White says it was an excellent opportunity to test the science of philanthropy.

197 White, op. cit., p. 114.

198 Ibid., p. 216.

199 <i>Nightmare Abbey</i>, p. 17.
Hogg, an intimate friend of Shelley's since their college days, wrote: "The whole soul of my ardent and imaginative young friend was inflamed at this period of his life by a glowing desire to witness and to promote the improvement and progress of civil society."

Peacock observed as did Hogg that Shelley was completely dominated at this time with his 'passion for reforming the world.' Peacock had Scythrop driven by the reminiscence of the same enthusiasm and had his character theorizing on this task which to Peacock sounded impossible and quite ridiculous. As a result, the reader sees Scythrop as a young enthusiast who forces ludicrous situations upon himself. One laughed with Peacock at the radical behavior of a man who is endeavoring to reform the world and at the same time is prone to retire into solitude and an imaginary world when the real world tends to thwart him.

In February (1812) Shelley set out for Dublin, Ireland, to help bring about Catholic emancipation. The Irish Catholics designated February 26th as the day on

200 White, op. cit., p. 139.

201 The Rebellion of 1798, suppressed by a non-Catholic militia, resulted in 'torture and deportations, martial law, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.'
which they could rally their supporters and formulate some plan to attain their redresses. Shelley journeyed to Dublin with the idea of attending this meeting, but arrived on February 12th in order to be able to first distribute his document for their cause, Address to the Irish People.

He wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener [a school teacher he had met while staying with his uncle, Captain Filford, who was willing to listen to his radical theories] concerning his pamphlet:

My 'Address' will soon come out. It will be instantly followed by another, with downright proposals for instituting associations for bettering the condition of human-kind. I—even I, weak, young, poor, as I am—will attempt to organize them, the society of peace and love. Oh! that I (may) be a successful apostle of this only true religion, the religion of Philanthropy.

Similarly, in Nightmare Abbey, Scythrop wrote a treatise on his ideas of how to bring about a reformation of the world; he wrote in an obscure and transcendental style, and hidden meanings were couched in his writing. He expected these hidden suggestions to have world-shaking effects, but actually only seven copies were sold. Not thwarted by such a disheartening reception, Scythrop reacted thusly:

EO2 White, op. cit., p. 93.
Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers of my seven copies, and they shall be the seven golden candle-sticks with which I will illuminate the world.203

Neither was Shelley dampened in spirits by his unsuccessful activity in Dublin. He planned to set up another group of philanthropists to lead the world in its reform at Wales.

In Nightmare Abbey Peacock has Scythrop fall distractedly in love with two girls at the same time. In Marionetta one can see something of Harriet Shelley and in Stella a tone of Mary Shelley. If Peacock had intended to satirize a segment of Shelley's personal life, he still did not touch upon material which was not publicly known. Here Peacock, while creating a situation somewhat true to life, chiefly criticized the "high-wrought enthusiasm of the romantic inamorato,"204 Scythrop.

Marionetta, Scythrop's cousin, comes to Nightmare Abbey with her aunt and uncle; she is attractive, graceful, proficient in music but in her conversation her subjects are always "light in their nature and limited in their interest: for moral sympathies, in any general sense, had

203 Nightmare Abbey, p. 16.
204 Ibid., p. 23.
no place in her mind. Peacock's evaluation of Harriet, if Marionetta is accepted as a partial caricature of Shelley's first wife, finds its source in an explanation made by Shelley when Peacock journeyed to London in 1814 prior to Mary Godwin and Shelley's elopement to the continent. Shelley told him:

Everyone who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither.

Scythrop recognizes this same lack of 'intellectual compatibility' in Marionetta:

Scythrop's romantic dreams had indeed given him many pure anticipated cognitions of combinations of beauty and intelligence, which he had some misgivings, were not exactly realized in his cousin Marionetta; but, in spite of these misgivings, he soon became distractedly in love;... Shelley might have had similar misgivings in regard to Harriet, but in spite of that he married her.

Marionetta was at times frightened by the action of so 'outre' a person as Scythrop and in depicting him as a bizarre and irrational romantic, Peacock intended to criticize just those same excesses he found in Shelley.

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206 Ibid.
207 *Nightmare Abbey*, pp. 21-22.
Some of the fervor and strangeness of Shelley can be found in Scythrop's proposal to Marionetta that

...we each open a vein in the other's arm, mix our blood in a bowl, and drink it as a sacrament of love. Then we shall see visions of transcendental illumination, and soar on the wings of ideas into the space of pure intelligence.208

Upon this proposal, Marionetta fled and left Scythrop to lament on the crosses of love. The readers receive the impact of the preposterousness and lack of rationality in the action suggested by Scythrop.

Scythrop's father, Mr. Slowry, loudly objects to his son's attachment for Marionetta and would send her away except for the melodramatic and moving objections of Scythrop. Mr. Slowry's chief objection to the girl was her lack of fortune; he had in mind a much more accomplished girl in mind for his son, one with a fortune. This choice turns out to be Stella, who unnoticed makes her way into Scythrop's private study in the tower of Nightmare Abbey. Scythrop hides Stella, who is trying to escape a marriage planned by her father, and he soon falls in love with her.

Stella is quite opposite from Harriet in appearance and in interests as well. Stella has dark hair with eyes of almost oppressive brilliancy, and a snowy-white complexion.

208 Ibid., p. 24.
But the greatest dissimilarity is the difference in their conversations. In contrast with Marionetta, Stella has read widely in German literature and philosophy and has wide interests. She insists on talking to Scythrop on an equal level and early identified herself with his type of thinking: "I am, like yourself, a lover of freedom, and I carry my theory into practice." 209

We feel that here Scythrop has one who is more equal intellectually and therefore to be desired above Marionetta; biographers of Shelley as well as some of his contemporaries maintained that, like Scythrop, in his later love he found greater and more enduring love because of their 'intellectual compatibility.' Peacock here seems to concede that such might be the justification for Shelley's desertion of Harriet, but at all times he defended Harriet's position, without condemning Mary's, with his sympathy leaning slightly towards Harriet.

While falling in love with Stella, Scythrop still succumbed to the whims and fluctuating affection of Marionetta, who at times favored him and at other times utterly rejected him. Marionetta often made light of Scythrop's

209 Ibid., p. 92.
behavior in the presence of the other guests at Nightmare Abbey. In this quality we find something reminiscent of Harriet. Harriet likewise failed to take Shelley's rises and falls in spirit and mood as seriously as Shelley would have liked. Further, she failed to follow him in his enthu-
siasms and theories with anything of a comparable interest or ardor. Peacock reflects limitedly in his Memoirs of Shelley this attitude of Harriet when writing of the Bracknell circle:

...each of the group nevertheless had some pre-
dominant crotchet of his or her own...I was sometimes
irreverent enough to laugh at the fervour with which
opinions utterly un condolusive to any practical result
were battled for as matters of the highest importance
to the well-being of mankind; Harriet Shelley was always
ready to laugh with me, and we thereby both lost caste
with some of the more hot-headed of the party. 210

But to return to Nightmare Abbey, each day Scynthia
intended to find other quarters for his refugee but his
interest in her increased steadily so that in the end his
desires ruled his reasoning. Scynthia came to believe that
with Stella he had a greater capacity for love than with
Marionetta so that

...the form of Stella took possession of every vacant corner of the cavity, and by degrees displaced that of Marionetta from many of the outworks of the citadel; though the latter still held possession of the keep.

This seems to be a reflection of Peacock's evaluation or appraisal of the situation, one which he did not alter throughout his life. As he wrote in his Memoire:

There was no estrangement, no shadow of a thought of separation, till Shelley became acquainted, not long after the second marriage (a repetition of the marriage ceremony in March, 1814), with the lady who was subsequently his second wife.

The separation did not take place by mutual consent. I cannot think that Shelley ever so represented it. He never did so to me; and the account which Harriet herself gave me of the entire proceeding was decidedly contradictory of any such supposition.

He might well have said, after first meeting Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, "Ubi vidi! Ut perii!" Nothing that I ever read in tale or history could present a more striking image of a sudden, violent, irresistible, uncontrollable passion, than that under which I found him labouring when, at his request, I went up from the country to call on him in London. Between his old feelings towards Harriet, from whom he was not then separated, and his new passion for Mary, he showed in his looks, in his gestures, in his speech, the state of a mind "suffering, like a little kingdom, the nature of an insurrection."

Other biographers of Shelley opposed Peacock's view of the relationship and insist that Harriet and Shelley had been separated, if not legally, before his elopement with Mary Godwin. We can remain cognizant of their views and yet we can look at Peacock's opinion as independent and worthy of our consideration in view of his relationship with Shelley.

211 Nightmare Abbey, p. 65.
212 Peacock, Memoire of Shelley, p. 90-91.
In *Nightmare Abbey* we find what seems to be Peacock's attempt to explain the nature of Mary's love for Shelley. We find Stella declaring:

"If I ever love," said she, "I shall do so without limit or restriction. I shall hold all difficulties light, all sacrifices cheap, all obstacles gossamer. But for love so total, I shall claim a return as absolute. I will have no rival; whether more or less favoured will be of little moment. I will be neither first nor second—I will be alone. The heart which I shall possess I will possess entirely, or entirely renounce."

Peacock speculated on the nature of Marionetta's love as he did Stella's but apparently found Marionetta's more difficult to define. She loved Scythrop but hardly knew why. It seems that she loved him most when he was indifferent, and he loved her when she was scornful of his affection. Likewise in real life Peacock viewed the fluctuating nature of Shelley and Harriet's love. In such circumstances he believed that a divorce would have been the best for the two parties.

By carrying the conclusion reached in *Nightmare Abbey* on the love of Scythrop, Stella, and Marionetta, and translating the symbols to be real persons, we can see that Peacock believed that Mary offered Shelley increased intellectual compatibility, and more mutual support and endorsement of

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213 *Nightmare Abbey*, p. 94-95.

his theories. But from reading his later Memoire we see that Peacock does not endorse the new love as so favorable to Shelley as Harriet’s, on the grounds that Shelley didn’t need intellectual sympathy and enthusiasm as much as he needed a balance to somewhat tone down his ethereal flights.

In Nightmare Abbey, during this period of two distracting loves, Scythrop occasionally found time to converse with the group assembled at his father’s castle. When Mr. Cypress came to give a last look at Nightmare Abbey, Scythrop accused him for leaving England. Scythrop contends that a man of genius, such as Mr. Cypress, above all others, should stay to help England in her struggles. Here we find Shelley again announcing the importance of the poet’s role in society.

Peacock has the two girls in the novel meet, with the result that they both renounce their love for Scythrop. He behaves in an irrational and impetuous manner, and retires to the tower with port and pistol, with the intention of ending his life. Scythrop manages to make a dramatic setting for his act but before the fatal hour strikes, the hour which he had set for his deed, Mr. Glowry brings him letters from Marionetta and Stella. The distraction serves to make the appointed time go unnoticed. As a result, Scythrop orders Madeira instead of his pistols.
Seythrop's passion for the reformation of the world had been forgotten and neglected in the face of his passions for the two girls so completely opposite in their nature and interests. Thus did Peacock seem to view Shelley—a young enthusiast who completely submerged all his interests in any passion or theory he held at the moment. The caricature becomes kindly and reflects understanding on the part of the author; here Seythrop is able to recognize the cause of his own ineffectiveness.

How can we be cheerful when our great general designs are crossed every moment by our particular passions? 215

Shelley recognized his portrait in *Nightmare Abbey* and wrote to Peacock:

I am delighted with *Nightmare Abbey*. I think Seythrop a character admirably conceived and executed;...I suppose the moral is contained in what Falstaff says—"For God's sake, talk like a man of this world;"... 216

Such a comment seems to stand as evidence of the lack of malice or severity in this caricature which Peacock modelled after the nature of his young friend, Shelley.

There seems to be an absence of comment on Shelley in Peacock's novels, *Crotchet Castle* (1831), and *Gryll Grange* (1861) or if it does exist, it is so scanty and diffused that it is not recognizable as depicting Shelley or setting forth distinguishing qualities of him.

215 *Nightmare Abbey*, p. 110.

Throughout by the gentlemen and the sympathetic tone.

comparable to the entire of Shelley's distinguished
absent these, but unlike Pencoff's temperament of other
which to Pencoff took the form of ardent animahs and
Pencoff or the novel Shelley for the romantic excesses

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Thomas Love Peacock satirized his generation in an effort to calm them down. Those who particularly needed to be brought back into the realm of reality were those Romantics who pushed their theories and opinions to extremes. Peacock saw them behaving in an irrational manner and he condemned them for it.

Peacock criticized all that he saw in his generation which provoked his scorn and ridicule, such as universities, political economists, and critics of the literary reviews. But, the subject matter of his satire went beyond the age in which he lived. He criticized those follies and vices which deserve censure in all ages where human and human institutions exist.

Peacock especially attacked in his satire Romanticism as found in the first several decades of the 19th century. He chiefly criticized this movement as he saw it manifested in the various Romantics of his day. In his satire of his literary contemporaries, Peacock selected those characteristic traits of Romantics which he found in abundance in certain literary figures: the intellectualty of Coleridge, the ethereality of Shelley and the melancholy of Byron, for example.
By parody and by direct thrusts at their distinguishing qualities, Peacock drew caricatures of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Byron, and Shelley in order to criticize them. He depicted in exaggerated proportions those facets, publicly known, and more personal traits of his contemporaries which he sought to condemn. By such a procedure he gives us these qualities in all their ridiculousness and absurdity; and we laugh with Peacock at these persons who are dominated by opinions, who push pet theories to extremes, and who behave immoderately.

Peacock's satire is always sharp and in his early novels it is particularly severe. As he grew older he acquired more urbanity, as seen in the analysis of his literary satires. Although his satire grew more kindly and gentle, at the same time he did not alter his original opinions. His satire remains throughout the product of a man who was out of sympathy with his generation, the Romantic Age.
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