THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTERIZATION TECHNIQUES IN THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK'S NOVELS

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PREFACE

Thomas Love Peacock's literary career is a singular one in English history. His publication dates span the average man's entire lifetime. His last novel, written during his seventy-fifth year, displays the same light humor and sharp wit of his first, written some fifty years earlier. A literary career of this length encompasses many innovations of public interest and taste, but Thomas Love Peacock's novels remain constant in style and tone from 1818 to 1861.

Thomas Love Peacock's novels are commonly divided into two groups, his tales which include Maid Marian and The Misfortunes of Elphin, and his novels of "talk" Headlong Hall, Melincourt, Crotchet Castle, and Gryll Grange. Nightmare Abbey is classified by one critic as his lone novel of "caricature" and by others as merely another "conversation" novel. It is the singularity of these novels which has marked Peacock as a novelist set apart, and has caused one critic to remark, "All the more because Peacock has no followers, he deserves to be read by those who look for fresh vistas in the forest of mind and are pleased by the untrodden track."

It is these novels of "talk" which first aroused my interest. From my first acquaintance with Headlong Hall I was aware of the unusual but appealing quality which Peacock's novels hold. With the kind direction of my major advisor, Dr. Samuel H. Woods, Jr. and the supportive criticism and aid from my second reader, Dr. David S. Berkeley, I was able to select the topic of Peacock's characterization for my thesis and

to pursue it to this end. I wish to further acknowledge my indebtedness to my advisors for their patience and aid and to express my appreciation for their assistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Love Peacock's place in literature is "pre-eminently that of a satirist."[1] He uses his novels as vehicles with which to satirize ideas that appear ridiculous or, at least, amusing to him. He takes the precaution to explain in his preface to the 1856 edition of Melincourt that he only takes as his target "public characters and opinions"; he does not trespass on private life.[2] In the role of a satirist Peacock wrote seven novels "that are unlike any other novels under the moon."[3] His novels revolve around conversation, not action. The characters who present their ideas, or Peacock's version of them, for satiric examination are also unique in the history of the modern English novel.

Unanimous agreement by critics of an author's success or failure in a particular form of his work is rare indeed. There has been, however, in the case of Thomas Love Peacock's characterization a strong element of critical condemnation. For the most part this criticism is contained in a few biographies or in the

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[1]Richard Garnett, "Thomas Love Peacock," Essays of an Ex-Librarian (New York, 1901), p. 280.

[2]Thomas L. Peacock, Melincourt (London, 1927), p. 2.

[3]Ben Ray Redman, ed., The Pleasures of Peacock (New York, 1947), p. xvii.

critical introductions of the editions of his novels. Of the available biographies, only Carl Van Doren's sympathetic The Life of Thomas Love Peacock still not be used in this study as a primary source for critical evaluation. This volume has been examined but does not add to or negate any of the critical views of the other sources.

In an examination of the biographies and essays, one discovers such bald statements as these:

> It is therefore a little disconcerting to find that Peacock does not push his characters much beyond the type stage. These distinctive but obedient puppets do not vary from book to book, any more than the arbitrary antics through which they are put vary either.[4]

> His plots do not affect his characters; his characters do not affect his plots. The characters spin independently, on their own individual axes, the stories, such as they are, proceed unobtrusively without them.[5]

> Type in Peacock hardly ever passes into character. His work continually borders on character drawing, but he values the play of wit and theory too well. The whole world is a salon to him.[6]

A. Martin Freeman goes still further in his censure of the characterization in Peacock's earliest novel Headlong Hall. "There is little characterization in this early work. The men and women are types, and exaggerated types, whose only duty is to amuse."[7] More

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[4] Ronald Mason, "Notes for an Estimate of Peacock," Horizon, April, 1944, [illegible] p. 241.

[5] Ibid., p. 242.

[6] Walter Raleigh, "Peacock," On Writing and Writers, ed. George Gordon (London, 1927), pp. 152-153.

[7] A. Martin Freeman, Thomas Love Peacock: A Critical Study (New York, 1911), p. 233.

specific criticism is given by Richard Garnett. Mr. Garnett classifies Peacock's characters as "mere puppets, or at best, incarnations of abstract qualities, or idealisations of disembodied grace or beauty."[8]

Other critics who prefer to give Peacock more credit as a novelist for his ability to do character drawing are still sparing in their praise.

> As for the characters, they begin by being almost purely representative and almost allegorical, except that they have the lively personality which allegorical figures seldom, save in the hands of Bunyan, attain.[9]

> Occasionally, but very rarely, as in Scythrop of Nightmare Abbey, Peacock transforms a fanciful caricature of an actual person into a lifelike and abiding creation; twice, in the Brother Michael of Maid Marian and the Seithenyn of Elphin, he makes fantastic personages of the highest merit; once at least, in the Dr. Folliott of Crotchet Castle, he draws a real and possible figure of his own time with extraordinary verve and success.[10]

Walter Raleigh, who is earlier cited as criticizing Peacock for failing to go beyond type personages, gives a qualified approval of two kinds of Peacock's characters, but he still reserves his full acceptance of them.

> If there are any of Peacock's persons who are felt to be living human characters, they are to be found among his young ladies and his drunkards. The first are real, perhaps because they are

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[8]Richard Garnett, p. 280.

[9]George Saintsbury, ed., Maid Marian and Crotchet Castle, by Thomas Love Peacock (London, 1955), pp. xviii-xix.

[10]Ibid., xix.

pleasant and sensible (which few of the men are), perhaps because the author takes fewer freedoms in the portraiture.[11]

The first type of criticism is protested by Louis Kronenberger. He argues that "the minute we damn Peacock's characters as one-dimensional, we have missed the point about them. They are eccentric . . . and their 'reality' lies solely in their intenseness."[12]

Even this qualification does not give a satisfactory standard for evaluating Thomas Love Peacock's unusual methods of characterization. It is quite true that Peacock's characters are eccentric, but in their eccentricity alone one cannot justify their reality. The critics who are earlier cited in this paper have not given enough time or thought to Peacock's type of novel as it intricately relates to and dictates his type of character.

Peacock's novels are novels of ideas, directly related to the French le conte philosophique. Voltaire's Candide and the "humour"[13] plays of Ben Jonson are only a part of the greatly diversified background of world and English literature which influenced Peacock during the years of his intensive reading before his first venture into novel writing. The attention of the author of the philosophical novel always remains with the level of ideas; and

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[11]Raleigh, p. 153.

[12]Louis Kronenberger, "Peacock," Nation, August 15, 1942, p. 134.

[13]John Dryden defines a humour as "the ridiculous extravagance of conversation, wherein one man differs from all others." Dryden, "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1926), I, 84.

therefore characters and action are somewhat subordinated. Peacock is not an exception to this traditionally primary concern with idea before character--but he does not abandon attention to characterization completely, as some critics would indicate.

Peacock establishes a "cosmos" for his novels, and sustains the reality of that world by creating characters who adequately function within its limits. It is not a world which appears in either the naturalistic or realistic novel, but it is a world completely justified both by literary tradition and by the author's purpose. To honestly evaluate the success of Peacock's characters, one must determine what meaning of "reality" does or can apply to these people and then examine their genre to analyze whether they sustain and support the author's intended reality.

The history of the use of reality as a term applied to literature or art extends from the time of Aristotle. His definition of "mimesis"[14] as contained in the Poetics has been variously interpreted throughout the years. The definition of reality as explained in Theory of Literature by René Wellek and Austin Warren seems very pertinent to Peacock's purpose and method. Novelists create their own world and it is within that world that the human beings they describe, though they have of course a recognizable resemblance to real people, only attain . . . their full real-

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[14] "Imitation is thus seen to be equivalent to 'producing' or 'creating according to a true idea,' which forms a part of the definition of art in general." S. H. Butcher's definition quoted by James E. Smith and Willard D. Parker, eds., The Great Critics (New York, 1951), p. 26.

ity."[15] T. S. Eliot further clarifies this same point in his essay "Philip Massinger."

> A "living" character is not necessarily "true to life." It is a person whom we can see and hear, whether he be true or false to human nature as we know it. What the creator of character needs is not so much knowledge of motive as keen sensibility; the dramatist need not understand people; but he must be exceptionally aware of them.[16]

Peacock's world is a world removed from the ordinary; it is a world filled with a variety of characters whose surface importance is their embodiment of social, economic, and cultural fads or foibles, or who are deliberate caricatures of contemporary personalities.[17] But if his creation can, after thorough examination, be judged a consistent, coherent one, and if one can discover in his characters that additional life or personality which can make them imaginable as living beings even outside the contexts in which they exist, then Peacock's world and characters are nonetheless an attainment of reality.

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[15] Rene' Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1949), p. 221. A further explanation by the same authors seems pertinent at this point. "This world or Kosmos of a novelist--this pattern or structure or organism, which includes plot, characters, setting, world-view, 'tone'--is what we must scrutinize when we attempt to compare a novel with life or to judge, ethically or socially, a novelist's work." Ibid.

[16] T. S. Eliot, "Philip Massinger," Selected Essays (New York, 1932), p. 188.

[17] Aldous Huxley has Philip Quarles, a character who is a novelist, comment on the characters of a novel of ideas in his book Point Counter Point (New York, 1947). "The character of each personage must be implied as far as possible in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible. . . . The great defect of the novel of ideas is that it's a made-up affair. Necessarily; for people who can reel off neatly formulated notions aren't quite real; they're slightly monstrous." pp. 294-295.

In an effort to determine the success of Thomas Love Peacock's attempt at characterization, his world must be examined and in this examination the definition of a novel's reality as put forth by Wellek and Warren will be used. There are some other matters concerning Peacock's novels which should be brought to the reader's attention at this point. Peacock makes extensive use of names in characterizing his persons. Perhaps Peacock, especially in his early novels, wishes to devote the majority of his talent to the idea level of his novels; if this be the case, then his use of names is easily understood, for "the simplest form of characterisation is naming. Each 'appellation' is a kind of vivifying, animizing, individualizing."[18]

Peacock occasionally takes a great deal of time to insure that the reader fully understands his character's name. In Headlong Hall, his first novel, one meets four coach travelers with the names Escot, Foster, Jenkison, and Gaster. Peacock footnotes each name with an explanation of its origin, meaning, and an explication of that meaning. These notes will be given below, as examples of the lengths to which Peacock goes in his use of character names. Time will not be taken during the examination of the individual novels to discuss this point except where it directly influences his success or failure in a particular character drawing.

[1]Foster, quasi Φωστηρ,--from φαος and τηρεω, lucem servo, conservo, observo, custodio--one who watches over and guards the light;

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[18]Wellek and Warren, p. 227.

a sense in which the word is often used amongst us, when we speak of fostering a flame. [Mr. Foster is the "perfectibilian" of the novel.]

[2]Escot, quasi ες σκοτον, in tenebras, scilicet, intuens; one who is always looking into the dark side of the question. [Mr. Escot is the "deteriorationist".]

[3]Jenkison: This name may be derived from αιεν εξ ισων , semper ex aequalibus--scilicet, mensuris, omnia metiens: one who from equal measures divides and distributes all things: one who from equal measures can always produce arguments on both sides of a question, with so much nicety and exactness, as to keep the said question eternally pending, and the balance of the controversy perpetually in statu quo. By an aphaeresis of the α , an elision of the second ε , and an easy and natural mutation of ξ into κ , the derivation of this name proceeds according to the strictest principles of etymology: αιεν εξ ισων--Ιεν εξ ισων--Ιεν εκ ισων--Ιεν'κ ισων--Ιευκισων ---Ienkison--Jenkison. [Mr. Jenkison is the "status-quo-ite" of the novel.]

[4]Gaster: scilicet Γαστηρ --Venter,--et praeterea nihil. [Peacock uses the variation of Gastro--stomach or pod--to name this clergyman whose entire frame of reference centers on food.][19]

Mr. Mason further comments on Peacock's use of characters and names thus:

> . . . each protagonist is permitted to speak under the bare sign post of his name in capitals, and in each speech we find displayed in caricature a different humour. All the old tricks of Jonsonian or Restoration comedy are resurrected, and each character is named and invested with the minimum of individuality required for the exercise of the foible he is embodying.[20]

The reader should remember in referring to such notes that Peacock, who uses footnoting techniques throughout the seven novels, is a satirist, and in the majority of instances, such as the derivations

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[19]Peacock, Headlong Hall, The Novels of Peacock, David Garnett, ed., (London, 1948), p. 11.

[20]Mason, p. 241.

of the names given above, he extends his satire to his notes as well as his novels.

CHAPTER II

THE ADOLESCENT CONVERSATION NOVELS

In 1816 Thomas Love Peacock published his first novel Headlong Hall. According to Peacock, this work was written in 1815.[1] This date would have been three years after he became acquainted with Shelley and at least two years since Peacock was a witness to and participant in the philosophical discussions of the Bracknell group.[2] This association seems important when one investigates Peacock's novels, for his books consist mainly of philosophical conversation. "Talk gives the structure of his books. They are a world of talk."[3] Peacock was essentially satisfied with this pattern of novel writing; he used the same form in five of his seven novels, his last novel of talk being written nearly fifty years after the first. One critic analyzed Peacock's type of novel in this manner:

With Headlong Hall, Peacock shaped a form peculiarly suited to his own needs of expression: a short work of fiction, with a picturesque rural

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[1]Thomas L. Peacock, "Preface to Volume LVII of Bentley's 'Standard Novels'," The Novels of Peacock, ed. David Garnett (London, 1948), p. xxi.

[2]At Bracknell, where Peacock visited Shelley, a group of Shelley's friends gathered and debated numerous questions. Peacock says of this: "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 . . . ." Ibid., p. xi.

[3]Raleigh, p. 152.

background, in which a little love and a little horseplay yield precedence to marches and countermarches of opinion: The encompassing satirical climate being mollified by genial winds of humor.[4]

In each of the first novels, one finds a number of successful characters. These persons achieve, in the short length of the novels, a vividness of personality which makes them quite acceptable as fictional characters. There are some failures in characterization and they will be analyzed also. Each of Peacock's novels will be discussed in its order of publication.

Headlong Hall opens with the introduction of four coach travelers who are all going to the home of Squire Harry Headlong for the Christmas holidays. The more important of these passengers, Mr. Escot, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Jenkison, are all "philosophers" whom the Squire has invited expressly to argue, over his old port and burgundy, "various knotty points which had puzzled his perieranium." Other guests include Mr. Panscope, Mr. Cranium and his daughter, the squire's sister, and other young ladies and their crotcheteering fathers. Mr. Escot had been the suitor of Miss Cranium, but her father had dismissed him for laughing at one of his phrenological beliefs. Mr. Panscope, after taking a dislike to Escot, determines to seek revenge by winning the hand of the lady for himself. Mr. Escot is able to thwart this plan by procuring, from a nearby sexton, a skull reputed to be that of Cadwallader. Squire Headlong uses the skull in arranging the marriage of Escot and Miss Cranium. Mr. Escot gives the skull to Mr. Cranium in exchange for permission to marry his daughter. Squire Harry also arranges a marriage

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[4]Redman, p. xix.

for himself, his sister, and his friend Sir Patrick O'Prism. The book ends with the departure of the newly married couples from the hall.

Of the characters which Peacock brings into full development, Squire Harry Headlong is the most successful. He is first analyzed by Peacock after the reader has already become acquainted with him.

> In all the thoughts, words, and actions of Squire Headlong, there was a remarkable alacrity of progression, which almost annihilated the interval between conception and execution. . . .His designs were never nipped in their infancy by the contemplation of those trivial difficulties which often turn awry the current of enterprise . . . . He had little idea of gradation: he saw no interval between the first step and the last, but pounced upon his object with the impetus of a mountain cataract.[5]

Peacock has already allowed the Squire to demonstrate this characteristic. The reader has seen him being "quadripartite in his locality," (HH, p. 13) during the preparations for his guests. The reader further witnesses the impetuous Harry as he listens to a plan of landscaping his grounds, sends for gunpowder, and blows up the embankment which subsequently sends Mr. Cranium into the waters of the lake--this course of action all occurring during an afternoon walk! Further proof of this jumping from thought to act is related by the author in his tales of Headlong's hunting and boating deeds (HH, p. 52).

It is in two additional qualities of Harry Headlong's personality that final vividness of character is achieved. It is early stated that he had long deviated from the pattern of Welsh squires by permitting books in his house, and in actually seeking to be enlightened

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[5]Peacock, Headlong Hall, The Novels of Peacock (London, 1948), pp. 51-52. Since Mr. David Garnett's text is considered the standard edition, all references to Peacock's novels will be to his edition. Subsequent references to Headlong Hall (abbreviated HH) will appear parenthetically in the text.

on philosophical questions by talking to learned men. The house party is the result of that quest. His personality is further developed by his refusal to marry either for reasons of lineage or money. His conversation with his maiden aunt seems to illustrate this point.

"What think you," said the old lady, "of Miss Nanny Glyn-Du, the lineal descendant of Llewelyn Ap Yorwerth?"

"She won't do," said Squire Headlong.

"What say you, then," said the lady, "to Miss Williams, of Pontyglasrhydyrallt, the descendant of the ancient family of---?"

"I don't like her," said Squire Headlong; "and as to her ancient family, that is a matter of no consequence. I have antiquity enough for two. They are all moderns, people of yesterday, in comparison with us. What signify six or seven centuries which are the most they can make up?"

"Why, to be sure," said the aunt, "on that view of the question, it is of no consequence. What think you, then, of Miss Owen, of Nidd-y-Gygfraen? She will have six thousand a year."

"I would not have her," said Squire Headlong, "if she had fifty. I'll think of somebody presently.

. . . .

I don't know, now I think of it, whom I can choose better than one of the daughters of my friend Chromatic." (HH, pp. 82-83)

Squire Headlong is not a character one can easily forget. He is quite likeable; his genuine concern for his guests' comfort--illustrated by the provisions he purchased for the houseparty--is an admirable one. It is, however, the remarkable quickness with which his actions are wed with his thoughts that is most outstanding. Throughout the book, Squire Headlong mildly astounds the reader with his decisions and actions. Since he is in no way an unpleasant person, the reader accepts his peculiar way and remembers him as a fully developed character in the novel.

Mr. Escot is the second most successful of the major characters. He is an illustration of a crotchet, the belief in the downward progression of society, and is a partial caricature of Shelley who held this view at one point in his life.[6] He is nonetheless an adequate character.

It may have been Peacock's intention to achieve some comedy when he has Mr. Escot help himself to another slice of beef while vehemently delivering a lecture on the evils of a carnivorous diet (HH, p. 16), but the glimpse of inconsistency in his personality makes him more believable as it makes him more understandable. Escot is also likeable as a person in that, longwinded as he is, he can listen to and appreciate another's argument.

Escot's views on love also make him more human than mere puppet. "Mr. Escot glowed like a corn-poppy at the sight of Miss Cephalis. It was at least obvious to all observers, that he could imagine the possibility of one change for the better, even in this terrestrial theatre of universal deterioration." (HH, p. 20) His nocturnal debate with himself on love and sleeplessness is also both amusing and pertinent to his characterization.

> ...he next examined, whether that passion ought to have the effect of keeping a philosopher awake? Having decided this negatively, he resolved to go to sleep immediately: not being able to accomplish this to his satisfaction, he tossed and tumbled, like Achilles or Orlando, first on one side, then on the other. . . .
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> . . . .
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> He arose with the first peep of day, and sallied forth to enjoy the balmy breeze of morning, which any but a lover might have thought too

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[6] D. Garnett, p. 8.

cool. . . .But a lover, who, like Ladurlad in the Curse of Kehama always has, or at least is supposed to have, "a fire in his heart and a fire in his brain," feels a wintry breeze from N.E. and by N. steal over his cheek like the south over a bank of violets. . . . " (HH, p. 56)

Escot illustrates his ability to use wit and reason in discussions in the following conversation. He seems to be one of the few characters in this first novel who actually are able to cope with the arguments of others, and thus displays another humanizing feature.

Mr. Escot. I contend that the original unsophisticated man was by no means constructive. He lived in the open air, under a tree.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. The tree of life. Unquestionably. Till he had tasted the forbidden fruit.

Mr. Jenkison. At which period, probably, the organ of constructiveness was added to his anatomy, as a punishment for his transgression.

Mr. Escot. There could not have been a more severe one, since the propensity which has led him to building cities has proved the greatest curse of his existence.

. . . .

Mr. Nightshade. . . . The Romans were in the practice of adhibiting skulls at their banquets . . . as a silent admonition to the guests to enjoy life while it lasted.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. Sound doctrine, Mr. Nightshade.

Mr. Escot. I question its soundness. The use of vinous spirit has a tremendous influence in the deterioration of the human race. (HH, p. 33)

Both Mr. Foster and Mr. Jenkison approach, but do not achieve, successful realization in their roles as philosophers. Foster is chiefly successful because the reader gets a physical picture of him as well as a cursory idea of his personality. Jenkison is treated very sympathetically by Peacock, and the reader responds to this warm presentation by forgiving some of the deficiencies in Jenkison's characterization. His

greatest asset is that his "status-quo-ite" philosophy is so common in everyday life.

The last character of this successful group appears but in one chapter of Headlong Hall, that which bears his name, "The Sexton." This singular figure seems well-rounded in his development, and certainly serves as an integral part of the plot. One part of his personality which seems very believable is his tendency to draw from local events and to generalize "larger truths" from his extant knowledge of what persons of his acquaintance had experienced. He proves to Mr. Escot that Owen Thomas, a local man, was mistaken in thinking that he saw the devil sitting on Hugh Llwyd's pulpit with this argument.

> For there is no toubt put the tevil, when Owen Thomas saw him, must have peen sitting on a piece of rock in a straight line from him on the other side of the river, where he used to sit, look you, for a whole summer's tay, while Hugh Llwyd was on his pulpit, and there they used to talk across the water! for Hugh Llwyd, please your honour, never raised the tevil except when he was safe in the middle of the river, which proves that Owen Thomas, in his fright, didn't pay proper attention to the exact spot where the tevil was. (HH, p. 58)

The old man's fears that Escot might be a familiar of "the tevil" are re-enforced when Escot quotes a line from Hamlet and addresses it as a question to the sexton.

> "You have been sexton here, man and boy, forty years."
>
> The sexton turned pale. The period Mr. Escot named was so nearly the true one, that he began to suspect the personage before him of being rather too familiar with Hugh Llwyd's sable visitor. (HH, p. 59)

The sexton's logic in naming the large skull he shows to Escot as that of Cadwallader is again a good device of character drawing. "He was the piggest man that ever lived, and he was puried here; and this

is the piggest skull I ever found: you see now--" (HH, p. 59) His dialect is also an aid to his characterization; the above quotations illustrate the individuality which Peacock gives him with his p's and t's.

Finally, his willingness to take money to ease his conscience while yet retaining all his rustic superstitions seems to add the final proof that Peacock has, for his fictional purpose, created a believable Welsh sexton in this son of Owen Ap-Lluyd Ap-Gryffydd Ap-Shenkin Ap-Williams Ap-Thomas Ap-Morgan Ap-Parry Ap-Even Ap-Rhys.

In Headlong Hall, as was never completely true in later novels, all of the young women remain merely shadows, or persons existing to be manipulated for plot alone. Caprioletta Headlong is never described more fully than her introductory phrase, "the lovely Caprioletta Headlong, the Squire's sister (whom he had sent for . . . . to do the honours of his house), beaming like light on chaos, to arrange disorder and harmonise discord." (HH, p. 18) The reader later learns that she is able to sing, but she, as the "beautiful Cephalis," remains a background figure which Peacock did not seem to need enough to develop. Cephalis Cranium is only slightly more successful in that there are more textual references to her. Her involvement with Mr. Escot, whom Peacock labors to characterize more fully, is one factor which aids in her development. Nevertheless, she fails to remain in one's mind as a complete individual; the reader never sees her physically and gets too few glimpses of her personality. The young lady's name is perhaps the greatest obstacle the reader must overcome before he could accept her as a true character. The combination of Cephalis (meaning of or related to the head) and Cranium seems too improbable for the reader to accept. A young lady

named in this manner ceases to represent herself as a person and presents only an exaggeration of the name. When this occurs, the name no longer functions as a symbol, but so overshadows the person that both lady and name become unbelievable.

The characters who are semi-caricatures also are very weak in this first novel. Mr. Panscope, the "chemical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, metaphysical, meteorological, anatomical, physiological, galvanistical, musical, pictorial, bibliographical, critical philosopher," (HH, p. 21) was Peacock's first attempt to present a character whose ideas would represent Samuel T. Coleridge's philosophy. This character's most effective purpose is serving as a foil for Mr. Escot's arguments, but his weakest moments occur in these same arguments when Peacock rather harshly belittles transcendental philosophy through Mr. Escot. Panscope exhibits in the following discussion with Escot the pompous pedantry which Peacock evidently deplored. The scene also illustrates a favorable trait of Escot mentioned earlier, his use of wit and reason in conversation.

> Mr. Panscope. The <u>authority</u>; sir, of all these great men, whose works, as well as 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, I have read through from beginning to end, deposes, with irrefragable refutation, against your ratiocinative 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 transcendentally self-evident, categorically certain, and syllogistically demonstrable.
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> . . . .
>
> Mr. Escot. [This speech] . . . . has only the slight disadvantage of being unintelligible.
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> . . . .

Mr. Panscope. I beg leave to observe, sir, that my language was perfectly perspicuous, and etymologically correct; and, I conceive, I have demonstrated what I shall now take the liberty to say in plain terms, that all your opinions are extremely absurd.

Mr. Escot. I should be sorry, sir, to advance any opinion that you would not think absurd. (HH, pp. 35-36)

Mr. Patrick O'Prism shows but one spark of personality as he labors to represent the ideas put forth by Sir Uvedale Price, an essayist who favored natural beauty as opposed to formal landscaping. In the conversation with Squire Harry about their approaching marriages, O'Prism becomes for the moment a living and enjoyable character.

Squire Headlong. So, Sir Patrick, I find you and I are going to be married?

Sir Patrick. Are we? Then sure won't I wish you joy, and myself too? for this is the first I have heard of it.

Squire Headlong. Well, I have made up my mind to it, and you must not disappoint me.

Sir Patrick. To be sure I won't, if I can help it, and I am very much obliged to you for taking so much trouble off my hands. And pray now, who is it that I am to be metamorphosing into Lady O'Prism?

Squire Headlong. Miss Graziosa Chromatic.

Sir Patrick. Och violet and vermillion! though I never thought of it before, I dare say she will suit me as well as another . . . ." (HH, pp. 83-84)

Miss Philomela Poppyseed is another attempt to give to a fictional character the ideas of a real person, in this case Amelia Opie, the novelist. She reaches her highest point of reality during her conversation with Dr. Gaster, whom she just discovered sleeping during her detailed recitation of the outline of her latest novel (HH, pp. 39-40). But even her brief burst of temper and obviously hurt feelings cannot approach true character drawing.

Peacock's second novel was entitled Melincourt and was published in 1818. The book's name is the same as that of the heroine's home.

This method of naming books for the location of the houseparty is used in all five of the "conversation novels."

Melincourt Castle is the home of the heiress Anthelia Melincourt, who, approximately one year after her father's death, finds her fortress besieged by a group of suitors and their sponsors. She decides to invite her bachelor uncle, Humphrey Hippy, to be acting host to these unwanted but graciously treated guests. Anthelia meets Sylvan Forester and his companion Sir Oran Haut-ton, an orangutang, after Sir Oran has used his great strength to rescue Anthelia from a mountain torrent. One of the lady's suitors, Lord Anophel Achthar, is led to hazard a kidnapping in order to attempt to force the wedding he desires. Sir Oran saves the lady again, and the greater number of the house guests travel with Forester and Anthelia to the borough of Onevote to witness Sir Oran's election to parliament. Here they meet Sir Simon Sarcastic, Sir Oran's fellow M. P., and are duly impressed with his system of conversation. On the return to Melincourt they visit Forester's other estate which is maintained by cottage farms and supervised by his maiden aunt. At an anti-saccharine tea at Forester's Redrose Abbey, the tender feeling between Anthelia and Sylvan seems secure enough that all expect a wedding for the two in the near future. But Sir Anophel is more successful in a second kidnapping and Anthelia disappears. Mr. Fax, Sylvan, and Sir Oran wander over the countryside in search of a clue of her whereabouts. During their ramblings they discuss many philosophical issues. At length they discover the lady, punish the villains according to Sir Oran's sense of natural justice, and Sylvan and Anthelia wed.

The heroine of Melincourt is Anthelia Melincourt, age twenty-one, and "mistress of herself and of ten thousand a year, and of a very ancient

and venerable castle in one of the wildest valleys in Westmoreland."[7] She is the first of Peacock's idealized heroines who are able to combine sincerity and appreciation for classical literature, and still retain complete femininity. J. B. Priestley describes her as being "intelligent, cultivated, independent, a distinct individuality, and yet not at all unfeminine."[8] Priestley also labels Peacock's characterization of Anthelia as containing the "faint outline of a new and very attractive type of heroine."[9] Peacock seems to have been very interested in giving to Anthelia all of the qualities which he considered admirable for a young lady, for she is never made the object of even gentle humor for expressing her views. He does use both the presentation of this heroine and the expression of her attitudes to point out the folly of some of the social conditions of his time, however. In describing Anthelia's situation he cannot resist a gibe at both the Irish and the clergy for being fortune hunters. "It follows of course, without reference to her personal qualifications, that she had a very numerous list of admirers, and equally of course that there were both Irishmen and clergymen among them." (M, p. 103) Peacock hastens to add that Anthelia possessed enough personal charms that one could assume that there "was at least one in the number of her sighing swains with whom her rent-roll and her old castle were secondary consideration . . . ." (M, p. 103)

In Peacock's presentation of Anthelia, there is woven into the author's usual satirical humor some crisp irony. He describes her

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[7]Peacock, Melincourt, p. 103. All further references to Melincourt (abbreviated M) will appear parenthetically in the text.

[8]J. B. Priestley, Thomas Love Peacock (New York, 1927), p. 155.

[9]Ibid.

father as "one of those who maintained the heretical notion that women are, or at least may be, rational beings. . . ." (M, p. 105) Anthelia's ideas of a suitable mate are not presented as either satire of her or as ironic understatement.

> I would require him to be free in all his thoughts, true in all his words, generous in all his actions--ardent in friendship, enthusiastic in love, disinterested in both--prompt in the conception, and constant in the execution, of benevolent enterprise . . . more desirous to distribute wealth than to possess it, to disseminate liberty than to appropriate power, to cheer the heart of sorrow than to dazzle the eyes of folly. (M, p. 112)

The reader perhaps views with some scepticism such high idealism, but Peacock wishes for these views to be accepted at face value. Anthelia is rewarded with just such a suitor in Sylvan Forester. Her ideas seem so far removed from the possibility of being realized that they put forth a barrier between the reader and her. She becomes an ideal, but not a believable, character.

In the development of Anthelia's personality, Peacock chooses to endow her with "an unfashionably sincere nature" which had the effect of making her say exactly what she meant. This is her most admirable trait which is re-enforced by her generous acts of charity, e.g., her concern and care for the Desmonds (M, p. 154), and her treatment of Forester as a suitor (M, p. 340). Especially in her attitude toward Lord Anophel while his prisoner, does she exhibit her tenacious loyalty to truth. She tells him,

> I know too well the difference between the true modesty of a pure and simple mind, and the false affected quality which goes by that name in the world, to be intimidated by threats which can only be dictated by a supposition that your wickedness would be my disgrace, and that false shame would induce me to conceal what both truth and justice would command me to make known. (M, pp. 338-339)

Anthelia cannot, however, capture the reader's imagination. One may admire her for her charity and honesty; he may even envy her spirit of optimism, but he cannot believe in her existence. Peacock seems to put too much effort into telling the reader what an exalted creature Anthelia is, and neglects to endow her with a personality which would substantiate his praise of her.

Mr. Humphrey Hippy, the uncle of Anthelia, is a far better creation. He is used, according to Campbell, to present another side of Anthelia than that which the reader had yet met.

> Peacock rarely lavished so much care on any character as he did on Anthelia. The effects are built up with an unusual subtlety. How much her uncle, old Mr. Hippy the hypochondriac, loves her is shown early in the book when he leaps up from his blue devils and his gout on the receipt of a letter from his niece inviting him to Melincourt Castle.[10]

The scene is worth quoting.

> Mr. Hippy was in his night-gown and slippers, with one leg on a cushion, suffering under an imaginary attack of the gout, and in the last stage of despondency. . . . Mr. Hippy took it [Anthelia's letter] . . . sunk back in his chair as if exhausted with the effort, and cast his eyes languidly on the seal. Immediately his eyes brightened, he tore open the letter, read it in an instant, sprang up, flung his night-gown one way, his night-cap another, kicked off his slippers, kicked away his cushion, kicked over his chair, and bounced downstairs, roaring for his coat and boots, and his travelling chariot. . . .(M, p. 115)

He can never quite give up his "blue devils," but they always manage to leave whenever Anthelia appears and/or the hour for dinner draws near. Mr. Hippy is able to "run up with great alacrity to Anthelia" even though he states that at the time he left the house "he was suffering under a complete paralysis of his right leg . . . ."(M, p. 158)

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[10]Olwen Campbell, Thomas Love Peacock (New York, 1953), p. 40.

Mr. Hippy becomes a more appealing character when, on a walking tour to Forester's estate, he notices a child and falls despondent because of his lonely life. This situation is in part sympathetically corrected by the author's treatment of his future when Anthelia and Forester marry. ". . . he comforted himself with passing half his time at Melincourt Castle, and dancing the little Foresters on his knee, whom he taught to call him grandpapa Hippy, and seemed extremely proud of the imaginary relationship." (M, pp. 342-343)

Mr. Forester is a second semi-caricature of Shelley. He is, according to David Garnett, supposed to represent the views of the mature Shelley (see note, M, p. 117). Sylvan Forester is the most tiresome of all of Peacock's heroes because he never ceases to be serious; he never fails to argue for a cause. Mr. Mason gives this summation of Forester.

> Forester is an example of the solitary and sincere crusader who, endowed with a little more vision and a little more conscientious indignation than the next man, becomes a burden to his fellows through his martyr-like insistence on carrying through his theories to a practical conclusion.[11]

. . . .

> . . . Forester's sugarless tea is as noble and futile as the renunciation of ration-books by his modern successors.[12]

Mr. Forester is not quite so tiring in the first part of the book as during the latter when he searches for the kidnapped Anthelia. This greater interest in him is achieved by the illustration of his practical concern for his friends as opposed to his theoretical analysis of the reasons mankind suffers. While he entertains Sir Telegraph Paxarett

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[11] Mason, p. 246.

[12] Ibid., p. 247.

the reader observes several instances of his exquisite sense of politeness. He takes great care than no guest of his suffers an inconvenience. Forester has a satisfactory stable, although he keeps no horses and only wishes to provide accommodations for those of his friends. He is willing to permit others to use sugar and would condescend to serve it, if he but knew of a guest's arrival in time to obtain the substance. He also keeps an excellent cellar, although he usually abstains from drinking wine when alone. His greatest asset seems to be his genuine concern for the feelings of Sir Oran Haut-ton, the civilized orang-outang[13] for whom he purchases a baronetcy and a seat in Parliament. This expenditure of money is made by Forester in order that Sir Oran might always associate in the most polite circles and therefore avoid any situation where one's crudity of manners might humiliate him.

Peacock uses Forester's tender concern for Sir Oran to ridicule the political system which would allow the orangutang to become a member of Parliament. Peacock further heightens the ridiculousness of the corrupt borough system by having Sir Oran become one of the two M. P.'s to represent only one man, while a neighboring city of 50,000 persons has no representatives. It is mainly in his extreme seriousness that Forester fails to be a truly successful character. Many of his appearances are successful. His consistency in his charitable habits makes him a very sympathetic person. He wishes to aid the Desmonds; he perpetuates his father's idea of cottage farming--which he could discard and greatly increase his own wealth--and he is willing to give aid to the victims

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[13]Peacock's spelling emphasizes his pun in the orangutang's name, Sir Oran Haut-ton. The conventional spelling shall be substituted for Peacock's throughout the remainder of the discussion of Sir Oran.

of Airbubble, Smokeshadow, Hopthetwig and Company, by purchasing their worthless bank notes with "better paper," but admonishes them to "get gold and silver for it as soon as you can." (M, p. 272) The reader is wearied by his talk in the long search for Anthelia and also is tempted to like Sir Oran more because Forester never acts quickly enough that Sir Oran has not already performed all of the noble deeds.

> Most of the action of the novel, however, has for its protagonist the civilised orang-outang, known as Sir Oran Haut-ton, a character not to be matched in the fiction of any time. Sir Oran does exactly what the hero of conventional romance always does: he is always on hand to rescue the heroine from mountain torrents and kidnappers; and he may be said to be the first of our strong silent heroes. This is one of Peacock's most impudent strokes.[14]

Peacock does achieve great success with Sir Oran and much of it can be attributed to his manipulation of the orangutang's impressions on and actions toward social customs and their perpetuators. Peacock mocks affectation in society thus:

> Lord Anophel now came up, and surveyed Sir Oran through his quizzing-glass, who making him a polite bow, took his quizzing-glass from him, and examined him through it, in the same manner. Lord Anophel flew into a furious passion; but receiving a gentle hint from Mr. Hippy, that the gentleman to whom he was talking, had just pulled up a pine, he deemed it prudent to restrain his anger within due bounds. (M, p. 159)

Mr. Forester's success at providing the orangutang a passport into society as a Baronet is illustrated by using the Honourable Mrs. Pinmoney.

> The Honourable Mrs. Pinmoney. And who is that <u>very</u> tall and remarkably ugly gentleman?
>
> Sir Telegraph Paxarett. That is Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet; to which you may shortly add M. P. for the ancient and honourable borough of

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[14]Priestley, p. 136.

Onevote.

The Honourable Mrs. Pinmoney. A Baronet! and M. P.! Well, now I look at him again, I certainly do not think him so very plain: he has a very fashionable air. Haut-ton! French extraction, no doubt. And now I think of it, there is something very French in his physiognomy. (M, p. 191)

Peacock's impudence which Priestley mentioned is well illustrated in the passage above. Mrs. Pinmoney obviously does not judge Sir Oran by her eyes, but by Sir Telegraph's listing of his titles. She accepts what is actually an orangutang as an equal because he wears, as in the fable The Emperor's New Clothes, a title she dares not disparage without belittling herself.

The last quality which will be discussed here as characteristic of Sir Oran is his sense of natural justice. His idea of appropriate retribution emphasizes his orangutang origins and yet is made to coincide with the reader's sense of justice and fair play. An appropriate illustration is Sir Oran's actions when Sir Gregory Greenmould attempts to force his daughter to marry against her will. Bursting into the apartment, he throws the assailants of the couple one by one down the stairs, and although Forester does not let him do the same to Sir Gregory, Sir Oran keeps him at bay until the lovers make good their escape. His treatment of Lord Anophel follows this same pattern. Sir Oran is delightful both as a tool for satire and as a character. Peacock did a successful job in creating this "monkey-baronet."

Simon Sarcastic, Sir Oran's brother member of parliament, is another character whose principal value may have been to satirize others, but who becomes a living creature in addition. The reader may, after observing Mr. Sarcastic's system, recognize the need for more such men and in that

manner become attached to this figure. It is certain, however, that Mr. Sarcastic is a sympathetic figure and the orginality of his creed makes him unforgettable to the reader. He explains his system to Forester: "I ascertain the practice of those I talk to, and present it to them as from myself, in the shape of theory: the consequence of which is, that I am universally stigmatized as the promulgator of rascally doctrines." (M, p. 222) An amusing incident to illustrate this is related by Mr. Sarcastic.

> I lost the acquaintance of Mrs. Cullender, by saying to her, when she had told me a piece of gossip as a very particular secret, that there was nothing so agreeable to me as to be in possession of a secret, for I made a point of telling it to all my acquaintance. (M, p. 223)

Mr. Sarcastic is both a functional character and a delightful one, whom Peacock himself resembled quite thoroughly.

Mr. Fax, the economist, shows only a few sparks of personality, although he is a pleasant enough fellow for philosophical discussions. He is quite charitable, although he perhaps does not realize so well as Forester does that this is an inherent quality in him. For when Fax mentions that the Desmonds were in arrears of five pounds rent, Mr. Forester remarks, "Which of course you paid?" Mr. Fax replies, "I did so: but I do not see that it is of course." (M, p. 180) Later Mr. Fax is as generous in aiding some of the people hurt by the paper-money bursting as Mr. Forester is. Fax's other humanizing quality is one which is shared by most of Peacock's crocheteers--a love of a good meal and appreciation for comfortable lodgings. In these few ways the economist achieves some life, but he, too, is guilty of too much talk, and the reader is rather glad to leave him.

Peacock's caricatures, as mentioned earlier, are an exaggeration of one aspect of a contemporary's public character or opinion. Peacock places in Melincourt several of these caricatures in addition to Forester. These are amusing but do not realize fullness of characterization. Priestley summarizes this group with the following comment.

> Mr. Feathernest and Mr. Mystic are obviously not creatures of this world at all but are typical inhabitants of Peacock's own Cloud-Cuckoodom. And even there, where every person is inevitably strangely transformed, they are not really Southey and Coleridge. Peacock never disavowed deliberate caricature as, for example, Dickens did, yet Dickens's Harold Skimpole is far more like Leigh Hunt than any of Peacock's characters are like their victims. This is because Peacock did not represent Southey and Coleridge in his two characters, but merely created two fantastic creatures out of their opinions. With these characters and the scenes in which they display themselves at length, he does what he maintained that all the great comic writers did, he creates fiction out of opinions.[15]

Nightmare Abbey developed from Peacock's desire to make a stand against the encroachments of black bile[16] or romantic melancholy as they appeared in the literature of the day. His particular objections to the fourth canto of Childe Harold by Byron and to the novel Mandeville by William Godwin were only minor factors in the value of the finished "comic romance," for he was able to picture for the reader his particular type of portrait of three of the great English romantic poets--Shelley, Byron, and Coleridge. These portraits, plus the amusing tale of an incident similar to Shelley's falling in love with Mary Godwin while still in love with Harriet, give some justification to the critic's statement that:

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[15]Priestley, p. 145.

[16]Peacock, see Garnett's introduction to Nightmare Abbey, p. 351.

Nightmare Abbey and Headlong Hall are not great masterpieces, but they are certainly small masterpieces . . . . They are burlesques of oneself and one's friends, and every other discussing, theorizing person and his friends. Charlatans of all kinds, literary, political, ecclesiastical and scientific . . . . he [Peacock] gets them all in, quintessentializes their doctrines into exquisitely flowing prose, and knocks their heads together with charming ruthlessness.[17]

Scythrop Glowry returns from college in a very unhappy state: he has fallen in love, and has been thwarted in that love. This unhappiness, coupled with his father's prolonged absence--his mother was dead--leads him to read extensively, to think about the problems of the world, and to publish a pamphlet "solving those problems." His father's sister and family pay a visit to Nightmare Abbey and Scythrop falls in love again. Mr. Hilary's ward Marionetta is pretty, gay, and vivacious--but poor--and Mr. Glowry opposes the affair. He arranges a match between Scythrop and the daughter of his friend, Mr. Toobad. The young lady does not like this plan at all and flees from her father. She reads Scythrop's pamphlet and comes to him for protection, but by concealing her own name and not knowing that of her intended, she lives quite unaware that they are betrothed, at least in their parents' eyes. Scythrop conceals "Stella" in a suite of rooms off his apartment. Eventually his father discovers her and discloses to Stella Scythrop's interest in Marionetta. Hearing this remark, Stella renounces Scythrop, and Marionetta renounces him because of Stella. Scythrop cannot choose between the two, and therefore cannot win back either. Both girls marry guests of the Glowrys' and Scythrop has only his Madeira to console him.

Scythrop is the central figure in the book. That Peacock intended him to represent the young Shelley is a rather important fact to remem-

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[17]Sir John Collings Squire, (Solomon Eagle, pseudonym), Books in General (New York, 1919), p. 187.

ber. He did not wish to satirize Shelley as a person, but took one part of his character and developed a fictional hero from it.

> Starting with the intention of satirising the "atrabilarious" as shown in Mandeville and Childe Harold, Peacock drew, in the character of Scythrop, a lively caricature of the more irresponsible side of Shelley, and increased the resemblance by the inclusion of Marionetta [Harriet] and Stella [Mary].[18]

Scythrop is one of Thomas Love Peacock's most successful characters. Peacock presents Scythrop using essentially the same technique used for Panscope of Headlong Hall. The technique differs, however, in that Peacock expanded his idea of presenting only the opinions of a person, and adds to a few of Shelley's ideas a personality which is somewhat like Shelley's, but is most important in that it gives depth to Sycthrop's presentation. Scythrop's most important character trait is that of youthful idealism and fluctuation. After being disappointed in love, Scythrop "became troubled with a passion for reforming the world."[19] The result of this passion was a publication of a treatise called "Philosophical Gas; or a Project for a General Illumination of the Human Mind." With characteristic youthful optimism, Scythrop expected this treatise to "set the whole nation in a ferment," (NA, p. 363) but instead seven lone copies were sold and his bookseller sent a bill for the balance of the cost of publication. This harsh reminder of reality might have dismayed a lesser spirit, but Scythrop interpreted the course of events in this manner.

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[18]H. F. B. Brett-Smith, ed., Biographical Introduction and Headlong Hall (London, 1924), p. lxxxvi.

[19]Peacock, Nightmare Abbey, p. 362. All subsequent references to Nightmare Abbey (abbreviated NA) will appear parenthetically in the text.

> Seven copies . . . . have been sold. 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. (NA, p. 364)

Scythrop's fluctuations of feeling are amusingly illustrated by his attachment to Marionetta. After she has discovered his feelings, she becomes quite cool toward him, and this so dismays him, that "he retreated to his tower, muffled himself in his nightcap, seated himself in the president's chair of his imaginary secret tribunal, summoned Marionetta . . . .frightened her out of her wits, disclosed himself, and clasped the beautiful penitent to his bosom." (NA, p. 367) He is not able to convince Marionetta, when she discovers him acting out his courtroom drama, to swear her love for him in the manner which he deems most appropriate. When he suggests that each "open a vein in the other's arm, mix our blood in a bowl, and drink it as a sacrament of love," Marionetta promptly forgets the tender passion and flees the tower, "sick at the proposition." (NA, p. 368)

When opportunity does provide him with a lady whose leanings are more toward the transcendental philosophy, Scythrop is unable to choose between the two extremes of Marionetta's gaiety and charm and Stella's intellectual appeal and physical beauty. "He could not dissemble to himself that he was **in** love, at the same time, with two damsels of minds and habits as remote as the antipodes. The scale of predilection always inclined to the fair one who happened to be present . . . ." (NA, p. 406) Time cannot help him determine which lady to give up, and when at last he has lost both, he still wishes for his love "Celinda--Marionetta--either--both." (NA, p. 429)

His throat to end his life if he cannot have "his love" is happily avoided, nonetheless. With each day of sunshine he repents his decision, and by forcing the butler to tell him that the clock was fast, thus letting the appointed hour pass, he is able to end the episode by scolding the fearful Raven and saying, "Bring some Madeira." (NA, p. 433) Both as a fictional creation and as a caricature Scythrop is a success. Mr. Olwen Campbell evaluates him in this statement:

> . . . as a portrait of the young Shelley Scythrop is almost as much a contribution to biography as a caricature: the passion for reforming the world, the fluctuations of feeling, the alternations of despair and rapture, the wilfulness, the vigour of speech, the petulant charm--it is the Shelley of the early letters--a phase which was already almost outgrown when Peacock first met him.[20]

> How much Shelley himself with his wild enthusiasms for people and causes amused Peacock can be seen from his novel Nightmare Abbey. But the novel is pure nonsense, and the friendship between the two men was something very real.[21]

Mr. Cypress, as a partial portrait of Byron, is not as proportionately successful as Scythrop is as Shelley. Peacock is content to present Cypress in only one chapter and what the reader witnesses there must suffice for this character's development. Peacock intended to poke fun at Byron's attitudinizing and does so in an interesting manner. Priestley adequately explains Peacock's method of giving the public a laugh by amusing himself with the darkness and misanthropy of modern literature.

> Byron as Mr. Cypress is made to remark: "Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife; and a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all

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[20] Campbell, pp. 48-49.

[21] Ibid., p. 29.

duty to his country," and is then compelled to paraphrase his elaborate lamentations from Childe Harold into pithy Peacockian prose, and deliver them over the bottle, thereby making them sound very foolish.[22]

A clearer view of this process can be attained by comparing the actual passages changed to "pithy Peacockian prose."

> We wither from our youth, we gasp away--
> Sick--sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
> Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
> Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first--
> But all too late,--so are we doubly curst.
> Love, fame, ambition, avarice--'tis the same''
> Each idle--and all ill--and none the worst--
> For all are meteors with a different name,
> And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.[23]

Mr. Cypress recites Peacock's adaption of his poetry below shortly after he remarks, as filling a glass, "This is the only social habit that the disappointed spirit never unlearns." (NA, p. 408)

> Mr. Cypress. I have no hope for myself or for others. Our life is a false nature. . . . 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 vanishes in the smoke of death. (NA, p. 410)

Peacock also uses his caricature of Coleridge, Mr. Flosky, to poke fun at Byron. This is evident in the speech which Mr. Flosky makes immediately after the quotation above.

> Mr. Flosky. A most delightful speech, Mr. Cypress. A most amiable and instructive philosophy. You have only to impress its truth on the minds

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[22]Priestley, p. 149.

[23]Lord Byron, "Childe Harold," Canto IV, cxxiv, Ernest Hartley Coleridge, ed., The Works of Lord Byron; Poetry (London, 1904), II, 421.

of all living men, and life will then, indeed, be the desert and the solitude; and I must do you, myself, and our mutual friends, the justice to observe, that let society only give fair play at one and the same time . . . . /to the divergent and radical systems of all the crotcheteers present/ . . . . the result will be as fine a mental chaos as even the immortal Kant could ever have hoped to see; in the prospect of which I rejoice. (NA, p. 411)

The reader bids farewell to Mr. Cypress after too short a visit to know him as a real character, but not too short to begin to appreciate Peacock's skill in discriminating caricature. "Mr. Cypress, having his ballast /old wine/ on board, stepped, the same evening, into his boul, or travelling chariot, and departed to rake the seas and rivers, lakes and canals, for the moon of ideal beauty." (NA, p. 415) Peacock kept until his death a rosebud which Byron sent to him to show that he felt no illwill at the caricature. (Garnett's introduction, p. 354)

Mr. Flosky, as mentioned above, is a caricature of Samuel T. Coleridge, and as such is used both to point out the absurdities in Byron's philosophy and to express some of Peacock's own views. That this is true becomes evident when Peacock allows Mr. Flosky to examine Devilman, a novel which Peacock intends to represent Mandeville by Godwin. Mr. Flosky says, "'Devilman, a novel.' Hm. Hatred--revenge--misanthropy--and quotations from the Bible. Hm. This is the morbid anatomy of black bile." (NA, p. 376) Flosky also examines "An Ode to the Red Book" which is Peacock's perversion of Southey's "The Red Book of Hergest."[24] Surely Peacock's own voice is murmuring under Flosky's in these words, "His own poem reviewed by himself. Hm-m-m." (NA, p. 376)

Flosky as a caricature is treated somewhat more kindly than Panscope in Headlong Hall or even Mr. Mystic in Melincourt. At one point in the

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[24]Garnett, p. 376.

narrative, the reader witnesses Mr. Flosky's ability to be pleasant socially when he states, "I should be most happy if Miss O'Carroll would remind us that there are yet both music and sunshine--" (NA, p. 384). Still again, Mr. Flosky, in attempting to elucidate a secret "with a dusky remark," is forced to stop because "he found himself unintentionally trespassing within the limits of common sense." (NA, p. 392) That Peacock is able to show sympathetically to the reader several sides of Flosky's personality accounts for his better success as a delineator of this particular character. Mr. Ferdinando Flosky is not a completely successful character, but he is successful during some moments of the novel, and his development attests to Peacock's awareness of the devices of true character drawing.

The Honourable Mr. Listless is, as one critic remarked, "perhaps the most novel figure [in Nightmare Abbey]. It is owing in great part to his character and that of Marionetta that Nightmare Abbey must be ranked so distinctly higher than anything that Peacock had yet achieved."[25] Here again, Peacock determines on a single trait to distinguish a character and devises several different methods of having his character develop this trait into a believable personality. It must be admitted that the novelty or uniqueness of Mr. Listless' singularity makes such an impression on the reader, that a great degree of reality is achieved by this fact alone. From his introduction Mr. Listless maintains a consistency of character.

> . . . finding it would give him more trouble to refuse [an invitation to visit Nightmare Abbey] than to comply, [he] summoned his French valet, Fatout, and told him he was going to Lincolnshire. On this simple hint,

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[25] Freeman, p. 268.

Fatout went to work . . . . and the postchariot was at the door, without the Honourable Mr. Listless having said or thought another syllable on the subject. (NA, p. 365)

The reader must accept, after witnessing the following events, that Listless is aptly named. When the Reverend Mr. Larnyx proposed a game of billiards, Mr. Listless replied:

Billiards! Really I should be very happy; but, in my present exhausted state [induced from listening to Miss Marionetta sing as he lay supine on the sofa], the exertion is too much for me. I do not know when I have been equal to such an effort. Fatout! when did I play at billiards last?

Fatout. De fourteen December de last year, Monsieur.

And again.:

Mr. Listless. . . . . I have thought very seriously of Cheltenham: very seriously and profoundly. I thought of it--let me see--when did I think of it? Fatout! when did I think of going to Cheltenham, and did not go?

Fatout. De Juillet twenty-von, de last summer, Monsieur. (NA, p. 415)

Mr. Listless is moved at times to summon energy to turn the pages of Marionetta's music, and when she plays allegro, the effort equates to that of moving mountains for his love. The reader is consequently not surprised to learn that Marionetta chooses Mr. Listless when she loses Scythrop. Mention must be made of another facet of Mr. Listless' character, and that is his penchant for the latest fashion. This is exhibited by his habit of retiring to make the effort of two nightly toilets in order to "present himself in becoming taste." (NA, p. 415) Listless is both an enjoyable creation and a living one; Peacock's wit and skill combine for this successful drawing.

Mr. Hilary is the last male character one needs to examine in Nightmare Abbey. Peacock uses this figure to achieve a stable balance

in the topsy-turvey talk of transcendentalism and also to discount the conclusions of the metaphysical discussions of the general group. Mr. Hilary, in defending a happy disposition, concludes a depressing argument with this acute observation. "Misanthropy is sometimes the product of disappointed benevolence; but it is more frequently the offspring of overweening and mortified vanity, quarrelling with the world for not being treated better than it deserves." (NA, p. 392) As guardian to Marionetta, Mr. Hilary exhibits genuine compassion towards her and in doing so re-enforces his contact with reality. He does not lose sight of humor even during the first small crisis of being too precipitate in proposing a settlement between Scythrop and Marionetta.

"Mr. Glowry, I do not very well understand all this."

"Whims, brother Hilary, some little foolish love quarrel, nothing more. Whims, freaks, April showers. They will be blown over by tomorrow."

"If not," said Mr. Hilary, "these April showers have made us April fools."

Marionetta is a delightful creation of Peacock's, his most successful vivacious young woman yet produced. Her lively personality and her wit--as exhibited in her recitation to Mr. Listless of a "compendious method of courtship, that would give . . . no trouble whatever,"--are charming. She spies Scythrop and describes his actions as the lesson in "courtship."

Sit with your back to the lady and read Dante; only be sure to begin in the middle, and turn over three or four pages at once--backwards as well as forwards, and she will immediately perceive that you are desperately in love with her--desperately.

. . . .

She would say, perhaps, some people have odd methods of showing their affection. (NA, p. 380)

Her role of a coquette--altering her feelings so that when Scythrop's love is flowing, hers is ebbing: when his is ebbing, hers is flowing--is one she plays quite well, but she is not without sympathy for her lover. She attempts to pacify Scythrop when he becomes distraught at her indifference, and is even willing to lay aside her scruples to visit Mr. Flosky in his chambers in order to discover the reason for Scythrop's deepening air of mystery. That she is sincere is rather evident when she faints at the sight of Scythrop holding Celinda Toobad's hand. She cannot succumb to Scythrop's transcendental flair of drinking blood to prove or pledge their love. She is practical enough to turn to Mr. Listless and find comfort in his offer of marriage when Celinda's presence makes Marionetta uncomfortable in the role as Scythrop's beloved. Peacock's sympathy for Harriet Shelley, which he exhibited in his defense of her at Shelley's desertion, may have induced him to labor to create a more loveable figure in his presentation of her lively nature, but whatever the reason, Marionetta remains a very good example of his growing skill in successful characterization.

CHAPTER III

PEACOCK'S TALES

In 1822 Thomas Love Peacock published what he told Shelley was a "comic romance" in which he intended to satirize "all the oppressions that are done under the sun."[1] This book was entitled Maid Marian. Peacock put aside his usual house-party formula for this tale and used instead an adventure-filled narrative in the style of the currently popular romantic novel. The reader must keep in mind, however, that Peacock intended for his book to be a comic romance, for his satire hit many times on the very conventions of the traditional romance.

Peacock used Joseph Ritson's 1795 collection of ballads as his source for the Robin Hood tale in Maid Marian. Sir Walter Scott also used Ritson as a source in the writing of Ivanhoe and there are many similarities in the two books. Ivanhoe was published in 1819, three years before Maid Marian's publication date, but a year after the major portion of Peacock's novel was written. Peacock wished to avoid any connection with Scott's book, and on the 1822 edition placed this comment, "This little work, with the exception of the three last chapters, was written in the autumn of 1818."[2]

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[1] Richard Garnett, ed., Thomas Love Peacock; Letters to Edward Hookham and Percy B. Shelley with Fragments of Unpublished Manuscripts (Boston, 1910), p. 81.

[2] Peacock, Maid Marian, p. 443. All subsequent references to Maid Marian (abbreviated MM) will appear parenthetically in the text.

The action in Maid Marian revolves around the lives of Matilda Fitzwater, daughter of the Baron of Arlingford, and her fiance Robert Fitz-Ooth, Earl of Locksley and Huntingdon. Robert has jeopardized his income with lavish entertaining and has incurred the wrath of King Henry by hunting deer in Sherwood Forest. At the wedding ceremony for the couple, a king's troop attempts to arrest Robert, and, when he escapes, proclaims his outlawry. Matilda refuses to renounce her lover and continues to see him until they are involved in a skirmish with the Sheriff of Nottingham. Robert, who is now called Robin Hood, gains two new members for his forest band--Will Gamwell and Friar Michael of Rubygill Abbey--as a result of this fight. He loses the privilege of seeing Matilda, however, for her father locks her in the castle to prevent possible harm to her person and to his property. Eventually Prince John attempts by force to take Matilda as a bride. She and her father are rescued by Robin and his men from the siege of their castle. Robin and Marian remain in Sherwood until Richard the First returns from the Crusades, visits them, and pardons Robins, restoring his lands. At Richard's death, John becomes king and the merry foresters return to Sherwood "to live long together" under its green boughs.

Peacock's own love of the free forests of his youth and his fond memories of his long rambles among the greenwood paths lead him to give to the book a predominantly forest setting. The drawing room settings of his conversation novels give place to Robin's hospitable table deep in Sherwood's glens. Important as Robin may be to the action, and Peacock shows more concern for physical action in Maid Marian than in the previous novels, it is not this forest king who dominates the tale. Mr. Brett-Smith gives the credit to Friar Michael in this manner:

> The hilarious action and unquenchable high spirits of the romance find their natural centre in Friar Michael, who breaks into a song or a catch as impulsively and irresistibly as he enters upon a bout of quarterstaff. The friar so dominates every scene in which he appears, that Maid Marian might almost have been written with an eye to the operatic stage.[3]

Father Michael of Rubygill first distinguishes himself as a free spirit, different from his brother friars, at the interrupted wedding ceremony of Robert and Matilda. The abbot and the tremulous friars spill over their robes, and over one another, in their haste to leave the chapel--"One tall friar alone was untouched by the panic of his brethren, and stood steadfastly watching the combat with his arms akembo, the colossal emblem of an unarmed neutrality." (MM, p. 448) During the dinner which followed the soldiers' return to the abbey, Father Michael is brazen enough to consider aloud that the law would suffer dearly from Robert's outlawry. When questioned about his defense of the earl, he replies in a manner which characterizes him throughout the book:

> Let my frock . . . answer for its own sins. It is worn past covering mine. It is too weak for a shield, too transparent for a screen, too thin for a shelter, too light for gravity, and too threadbare for a jest. The wearer would be naught indeed who should misbeseem such a wedding garment. (MM, p. 452)

Some of the friar's character is explained in a catch which he sings with Matilda before the Baron and Sir Ralph, the king's envoy. His song tells that he once was a knight, whose love of hunting and good living left him little time to consider a future life as a friar. The reader can easily believe the friar's song, for he soon sees this powerful figure mowing down the soldiers like straw men. The friar

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[3]Brett-Smith, p. cxvii.

first displays his sturdy arm on the bridge in a skirmish with the Sheriff of Nottingham, Sir Ralph, and their men.

> The friar continued flourishing his staff among the sheriff's men, knocking down one, breaking the ribs of another, dislocating the shoulder of a third, flattening the nose of a fourth, cracking the skull of a fifth, and pitching a sixth into the river . . . . (MM, p. 479)

It is interesting to note that Garnett footnotes this passage with the remark, "Imitated from Rabelais." Peacock gained much of his taste for boisterous action from his early reading in Rabelais, although he could have been, in Friar Michael's characterization, merely striving to embroider Friar Tuck of the old ballads into a character which suited his mood and purpose. Friar Michael displays his military prowess on yet another occasion. At the siege of Baron Fitzwater's castle, the Friar comes to the aid of Matilda as she is about to be taken prisoner by the licentious Prince John.

> . . . the devil suddenly appeared among them in the likeness of a tall friar. . . flourishing an eight-foot staff, with which he laid about him to the right and to the left, knocking down the prince and his men as if they had been so many nine-pins: in fine, he . . . rescued the prisoner . . . . (MM, p. 495)

This second incident showing the Friar's ardor for battle is a quite necessery one for his characterization. He earlier tells Sir Ralph, "I am, as it were, her spiritual lover; and were she a damsel errant, I would be her ghostly esquire, and her friar militant." His affection is most apparent when he comes to the castle to tell the Baron and Matilda that he must leave the abbey. The natural good humor and tuneful conversation give way to a gloominess which is apparent only this once. Both his words and action at his farewell to Matilda give insight

to his personality. ". . .'farewell, sweet Matilda again, the alpha and omega of father Michael, the first and the last'. . . He kissed Matilda's forehead, and walked away without a song." (MM, pp. 484-485)

The friar, with this one exception, proves himself both witty and full of good humor in all his actions and conversations. One part of his philosophy seems to be contained in his statement, ". . . there is often more sense in an old song than in a new homily." (MM, p. 451) He sings to Sir Ralph a reply to the courtier's intimation that many nobles will pledge their honor to capture the escaped earl.

> "The courtly pad doth amble,
> When his gay lord would ramble:
> But both may catch
> An awkward scratch,
> If they ride among the bramble:
> The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest
> bramble." (MM, p. 451)

He also explains how the trout acquired his two desirable characteristics of redness and shyness by the singing of a song which sets forth the "physical-historical, or natural-superinductive solution" to this mystery.

One other trait of his, especially evident after he becomes Friar Tuck of Robin's band, is his outstanding ability to justify, by his own set of logical standards, all that the forest kingdom wishes to do. The friar once explained to the Baron Robin's position as king of the forest and did so with both gusto and facility.

> What title had William of Normandy to England, that Robin of Locksley has not to merry Sherwood? William fought for his claim. So does Robin. With whom, both? With any that would or will dispute it. William raised contributions. So does Robin. From whom, both? From all that they could or can make pay them. Why did any pay them to William? Why do any pay them to Robin? For the same reason to both: because

they could not or cannot help it. They differ indeed, in this, that William took from the poor and gave to the rich, and Robin takes from the rich and gives to the poor: and therein is Robin illegitimate; though in all else he is true prince. (MM, p. 498)

Friar Tuck likewise defends the marriage of Matilda, now called Maid Marian, to Robin, even though the Baron strongly opposes the match.

Say you, might overcomes right? I say no. There is no right but might: and to say that might overcomes right is to say that right overcomes itself: an absurdity most palpable. . . . Your right was right as long as you could maintain it; so is ours. (MM, p. 499)

His sharp tongue is also given free rein in the presence of King Richard, who is disguised as a wandering knight. The friar finds him fighting with Marian and takes the battle upon himself.

Hast thou thy stomach full of steel? Wilt thou diversify thy repast with a taste of my oak-graff? Or wilt thou incline thine heart to our venison, which truly is cooling? Wilt thou fight? or wilt thou dine? or wilt thou fight and dine? or wilt thou dine and fight? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest. (MM, p. 533)

The friar, then, with his gift for quips, jests, songs, and battles, is a most remarkable creation. He is distinctly rounded, endowed with a unique personality, and never fails to serve his liege lady with all the devotion and spiritual affection which both his position and his nature demand. He is a worldly friar who little uses hypocrisy to cover his liking for the good life, and who is not above leaving the forest boundaries in order to break his vows of chastity. He seems to be a twelfth-century monk in name only; his actions and words fit more nearly the eighteenth-century's rational man. Father Michael is self-sufficient always and reason seems to guide all of his deeds.

Three of Peacock's clerics exhibit this same common sense throughout their appearances in the novels. In addition to Friar Michael, Dr.

Folliott of Crotchet Castle and Dr. Opimian of Gryll Grange consistently maintain a "reasonable attitude" toward their surroundings. Their actions are governed by the common sense reasoning of the rational man of the eighteenth century. Ronald Mason states that, "With their Nonnus and their Madeira and their benevolent but implacable Toryism, they form a solid phalanx of pure Peacocks."[4] This identification of the clergymen's views as Peacock's own is repeated by Brett-Smith.[4a] Peacock's views are further discussed by Redman. "His position, it seems, was arrived at by a sturdy common sense which was sharpened by an increasing scepticism. . . . If no one of his characters served him as a true mouthpiece, a good many of them enjoyed a distribution of his ideas."[5] Especially in these three novels, Gryll Grange, Crotchet Castle, and Maid Marian, Peacock uses the common sense attitudes of the clergymen to maintain the balance of conversation and ideas.

The second successful character to be discussed is the choleric Baron of Arlingford. The reader is first amused by the conflicts which display themselves in the Baron's features and actions. He passes a sleepless night worrying about the events of his daughter's broken wedding ceremony, and upon the entrance of the friar and Sir Ralph, transfers his rage to the remains of what had been intended for the wedding feast. "He looked up at them fiercely, with his mouth full of beef and his eyes full of flame . . . ." (MM, p. 459) When Sir Ralph tries to excuse himself for his action of the day before, the

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[4]Mason, p. 243.

[4a]Brett-Smith, pp. cxlvi-cxlvii.

[5]Redman, p. xxii.

baron replies in a manner not easily forgotten.

I am very much obliged to you, sir . . . very exceedingly obliged. Your solicitude for my daughter is truly paternal, and for a young man and a stranger very singular and exemplary: and it is very kind withal to come to the relief of my insufficiency and inexperience, and concern yourself so much in that which concerns you not. (MM, p. 460)

The baron becomes so aroused that he cannot agree whether Sir Ralph has done him wrong or right, at length he concludes he has done him both. The baron shows some discernment in judging character, however, for when the conversation takes a sudden turn, he pins the friar down quite neatly.

"My warfare," said the friar, "is not of this world. I am militant not against man, but the devil, who goes about seeking what he may devour."

"Oh! does he so?" said the baron: "then I take it that makes you look for him so often in my buttery." (MM, p. 461)

The baron's most vulnerable part of his nature is that which deals with his daughter Matilda. The old man is genuinely concerned for her, and has only her best interests as his goals of action. When she wishes to go hunting, she tells him he may send as many of his grooms with her as he desires,

"My grooms . . . are all false knaves. There is not a rascal among them but loves you better than me. Villains that I feed and clothe."

"Surely," said Matilda, "it is not villainly to love me: if it be, I should be sorry my father were an honest man." (MM, p. 464)

When the baron's temper does erupt, he furnishes more comedy for the reader. The friar incurs his wrath by singing an inappropriate song with Matilda, and the baron gives him this epitaph. "A hunting friar, truly! Who ever heard before of a hunting friar? A profane,

roaring, bawling, bumper-bibbing, neck-breaking, catch-singing friar?" On one other occasion he sings a welcome to the friar by naming his virtues, and receives a like favor in return.

"Ho! ho! friar!" said the baron--"singing friar, laughing friar, roaring friar, fighting friar, hacking friar, thwacking friar; cracking, cracking, cracking friar; joke-cracking, bottle-cracking, skull-cracking friar!"

"And ho! ho!" said the friar,--"bold baron, old baron, sturdy baron, wordy baron, long baron, strong baron, mighty baron, flighty baron, mazed baron, crazed baron, hacked baron, thwacked baron; cracked, cracked, cracked baron; bone-cracked, sconce-cracked, brain-cracked baron!" (MM, p. 483)

The baron makes both an amiable and lasting impression on the reader. He and the friar, in their numerous repartees, lend a good deal of spirit to the book. They are the mainstay of the novel; they are the best of all the characters.

Matilda, to be sure, is a sympathetic character, but she does not show her individual mettle enough to become identified with a personality. She is true to Robin, is faithful to her father, and graceful in her love of the sylvan life. She does not, however, seem capable of matching swords with Richard I, as Peacock says, "as long as ever man held him." It is this role of the buccaneer which perhaps is most inconsistent. The reader may readily afford her the liberty to shoot a bow and arrow, but to attempt to force a knight of the stature of Richard the Lionhearted to go where he did not wish to go seems a flight of the author's wildest imagination. Peacock seems to recommend Matilda's tastes to the reader in much the same fashion that he favored Anthelia's learning in Melincourt.

Peacock added quite a bit to the old ballads' presentation of the character of Marian. She had, according to one ballad taken from

Peacock's source, great skill with the bow, but she had not the nobility of mind which Marian displayed. Robin is able to persuade her to marry him the same afternoon that they meet.[6] Maid Marian seems to be so slight a character that the reader is able to remember an agreeable, but faintly drawn, picture of her at the book's end.

Robin, also, is not a successful character. The earl rules the forest and his men, but he never becomes the center of attention. He can fight better at quarterstaff than the friar, but the friar is so much jollier, the reader might prefer him to win over his liege lord. Robin is useful as a vehicle by which Peacock can present his satire; the forest king's practices are excellent contradictions for that which was followed both by Richard I and by the rulers bound by the Holy Alliance in Peacock's own time. Peacock is very careful that the reader should feel that Robin is a fit ruler; he therefore makes him:

> . . . as valiant, honourable and courteous as Coeur-de-Lion himself, and Peacock's Robin is noble in character as in descent; he is freed from the rough handling of the peddlers and tinkers of the ballads; the gigantic friar, who mows down everyone else, cannot guard his sconce against him in combat; as a popular leader and a practical philanthropist he wins the devoted loyalty of his followers.[7]

Robin the ruler, to be sure, is noble, but Robin the man remains an enigma. The reader cannot feel that he is a living character and therefore remembers the gay friar and grumpy baron instead of the high-born Robert Fitz-Ooth and Matilda Fitzwater.

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[6] Frances Jenkins Olcott, ed., "Robin Hood and Clorinda," Story-Telling Ballads (Boston, 1920), p. 300.

[7] Brett-Smith, p. cxvi.

Peacock owed a great amount of aid to his wife Jane Gryffyth for his creation of his second tale, The Misfortunes of Elphin. He met her originally on a walking tour in Wales in 1809, but did not see or correspond with her again until 1819. Her knowledge of Welsh tradition and her services as a guide in Peacock's reading of Welsh legends aided him in realizing his desire to contribute to Welsh scholarship, as well as to write an interesting tale.[8] The book was published in 1829 and is considered by many of Peacock's admirers as his best work.[9]

Peacock combines two legends in his book, the legend of Seithenyn the drunkard and the story of Taliesin the bard. Taliesin is the central character of the book, but Seithenyn is the most unforgettable one. J. B. Priestley credits the Seithenyn legend with giving the book its merit.

> The introduction of the Seithenyn legend was a particularly happy stroke, for out of it Peacock contrives the richest and most picturesque scenes in the tale, and its greatest character, the best of all his comic figures. Seithenyn himself. . . . Seithenyn . . . is a genuine individual creation, one of literature's immortal topers.[10]

The blending of the two legends can best be shown by examining an outline of the action. Peacock opens his narrative by setting forth the political structure of Britain in the sixth century, as it suits his

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[8] D. Garnett, Introduction to Misfortunes of Elphin. "There is no reason to think that Peacock was exaggerating when he told Sir Edward Strachey that he was proud of the fact that Welsh archaeologists treated his book as a serious and valuable addition to Welsh history." p. 550.

[9] Saintsbury prefers "it to almost all of them." Introduction to Elphin, p. vii. Herbert Wright, "The Associations of Thomas Love Peacock with Wales," Essays and Studies, ed. John Buchan (Oxford, 1926), XII, 42. Fedden considers it a "masterpiece." p. 135.

[10] Priestley, p. 69.

purpose. Uther Pendragon holds "nominal sovereignty of Britain," and several petty kings rule smaller portions of the kingdom. Gwythno rules the kingdom of Caredigion which borders the sea-coast and which is kept dry by a great embankment protecting the lowland country. Teithrin, one of the keepers of the dike, discovers by accident that his is the only portion of the embankment being kept in repair. He reports this information to Elphin, son of the king, and the two men immediately pay a visit to Seithenyn, ruler of the embankment. They find the prince "in his cups" and as little concerned about the sea or the dike as his forefathers had been. The embankment, however, gives way that same night and Seithenyn leaps into the raging waters to do battle with the "enemy." Elphin, Teithrin, and Angharad, daughter of Seithenyn, with her train, escape by walking along the remaining mound to higher ground. The kingdom is flooded and when Elphin becomes king, he has only some high hills and a salmon-weir to rule. In the weir, after his marriage to Angharad, he finds a baby dressed in rich clothes whom Angharad christens Taliesin, "Radiant brow." Taliesin grows to manhood, educated in part by old Gwythno and in part by the Druid priests who still teach their lore in the recesses of the hill country. Taliesin falls in love with Elphin's daughter, Melanghel, and is loved in return. Elphin is, however, carried to the court of King Maelgon who keeps him a prisoner. Teithrin, in revenge, is able to capture Rhun, son of Maelgon, and promises to hold him prisoner until the hand of Elphin himself sets Rhun free. Arthur, now ruler, has lost his queen Gwenyvar, and Taliesin, in his journey to Arthur's court, learns from the butler, Seithenyn, that King Melvas holds her prisoner. Arthur cannot take his troops to Avallon where Melvas has retired for the winter, and Taliesin

goes himself to seek the queen's rescue. Seithenyn again aids him and Melvas is persuaded to return Gwenyvar. For this service Taliesin is granted a boon, which he uses to secure Elphin's release, and the hand of Melanghel in marriage.

Seithenyn, from his first appearance to his last, is involved with proving his edict: "Wine from gold. That is my taste. Ale is well; mead is better; wine is best. Horn is well; silver is better; gold is best."[11] Mr. Campbell praises him in this paragraph.

> There is nothing of the mere comic silhouette or ventriloquist's dummy about Seithenyn; drink is the whole of his philosophy, but he has infinite variety in his approach to this subject. Everything that he says seems unexpected because it is so much his own. He is one of those rare characters in fiction who stand out with a glorious solidity from the first moment, making the other persons in the scene fade by comparison into mere types or shadows.[12]

Other critics also give praise to Seithenyn.

> . . . the best thing in the book is Prince Seithenyn. As Warden of the Embankment that keeps the sea from Gwythno's domains he is a terrific Pantagruelian figure, and at the same time an open and continuous satire on the opposition to parliamentary reform. He is a real creation and everything he says has the Rabelaisian ring of gigantic foolishness and wisdom.[13]

> Magnificently outrageous, he propels himself and the novel he revives into an isolated immortality. He is of Dickensian mould and Peacock either could not or would not duplicate him.[14]

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[11] Peacock, The Misfortunes of Elphin, p. 604. All subsequent references to The Misfortunes of Elphin (abbreviated ME) will appear parenthetically in the text.

[12] Campbell, p. 63.

[13] Henry [illegible] Fedden, "Thomas Love Peacock," The English Novelists, ed. Derek [illegible] Boyle. (London, 1936), p. 135.

[14] Mason, p. 243.

Seithenyn is as outstanding for his particular type of reasoning, as he is for his drunkenness. When he invites Teithrin to take a seat near him, he explains that his guest need not draw back for lack of royal blood.

> Come on, man, come on. What, if you be not the son of a king, you are the guest of Seithenyn . . . The most honourable place to the most honourable guest, and the next most honourable place to the next most honourable guest . . . and where there are but two guests, be the most honourable who he may, the least honourable of the two is next in honour to the most honourable of the two, because they are no more but two; and, where there are only two, there can be nothing between. Therefore sit, and drink. (ME, p. 560)

His defense of the rotten state of the embankment which is under his care may perhaps be the best example of his peculiar type of logic, and is surely an enjoyable example of Peacock's satire on Canning's defense of the British Constitution.

> Decay . . . . is one thing, and danger is another . . . That the embankment is old, I am free to confess; that it is somewhat rotten in parts, I will not altogether deny; that it is any the worse for that, I do most sturdily gainsay . . . Our ancestors were wiser than we: they built it in their wisdom; and, if we should be so rash as to try to mend it, we should only mar it.
>
> . . . .
>
> I say, the parts that are rotten give elasticity to those that are sound; they give them elasticity, elasticity, elasticity. If it were all sound, it would break by its own obstinate stiffness; the soundness is checked by the rottenness, and the stiffness is balanced by the elasticity . . . It is well; it works well: let well alone . . . It was half rotten when I was born, and that is a conclusive reason why it should be three parts rotten when I die. (ME, p. 561)

Seithenyn exhibits a quality which is universal among mankind. His speech satirizing the Canning defense exposes this trait in Seithenyn which never leaves him--the ruler of the embankment wishes to conserve all of his energies which are not engaged in the drinking of wine. His

system of virtual supervision--perhaps a prototype of the inertia which has led to many a modern project's doom--is condensed and presented below as an example of this universality of his character.

> The whole of these towers [erected along the embankment to give shelter to the guards who took care of the mound], and their companies of guards, were subordinate to a central castle, which commanded the seaport. . .and where dwelt Prince Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi . . . Lord High Commissioner of the Royal Embankment; and he executed it [his duty] as a personage so denominated might be expected to do; he drank the profits, and left the embankment to his deputies, who left it to their assistants, who left it to itself. (ME, p. 555)

Seithenyn is remarkable not only for his speeches, but also for his actions. His attempts to appear dignified before the son of his king are an example of the manner in which Peacock makes this character "live."

> He endeavoured to straighten himself into perpendicularity, and to stand steadily on his legs. He accomplished half his object by stiffening all his joints but those of his ancles, and from these the rest of his body vibrated upwards with the inflexibility of a bar. After thus oscillating for a time, like an inverted pendulum . . . he suddenly relaxed the muscles that perform the operation of sitting, and dropped into his chair like a plummet. (ME, p. 559)

Peacock does not, as Shakespeare did not, attempt to make a completely despicable drunkard. Seithenyn, like Falstaff, was not a coward. When Teithrin has convinced the dazed and drunken Seithenyn that the sea is the enemy who has harmed him, Seithenyn flourishes his sword and believing "that there is [no] enemy on earth against whom the sword of Seithenyn ap Seithyn is unavailing," jumps into the torrent. (ME, p. 570)

Seithenyn's impudence is perhaps best shown when he tells Taleisin that King "Elphin, as you call him, (what he is king of, you shall tell

me at leisure,) would do . . . [him] a mischief." (ME, p. 607) Seithenyn himself destroyed Elphin's kingdom, and this remark can come only from one whose greatest concern is for his own pleasures. The reader does not feel offended by any of the butler's statements, for Seithenyn has from the opening scene displayed the temper of a child. He is selfish as a child; he is unable to comprehend the seriousness of his selfish acts as a child is unable to do. His greatest concern is "Wine from gold," and in delineating this character Peacock presents a most fascinating and commanding creature. In Seithenyn alone, he proves his ability to create characters, but there are others in The Misfortunes of Elphin who warrant the reader's attention.

The best of the secondary characters is not Taleisin, but Melvas, the portly king who takes Gwenyvar for his wife. Melvas expounds the theory that might makes right, to the severe discomfort of his neighbors. A typical example of his conduct is this:

> The castle . . . presenting itself to him as a convenient hold, he had taken it by storm; and having cut the throats of the former occupants, thrown their bodies into the Towy, and caused a mass to be sung for the good of their souls, he was now sitting over his bowl, with the comfort of a good conscience, enjoying the fruits of the skill and courage with which he had planned and accomplished his scheme of ways and means for the year. (ME, p. 602)

Peacock explains him in this manner:

> His manners were, for the most part, pleasant. He did much mischief . . . . for the sake of something tangible. He had a total and most complacent indifference to every thing but his own will and pleasure. If he wanted a piece of land, he encamped upon it, saying, "This is mine." If the former possessor could eject him, so; it was not his: if not, so; it remained his. (ME, p. 622)

Melvas explains his claim to Queen Gwenyvar in this way. "The winner makes the law, and his law is always against the loser. I am so far the winner; and, by my own law, she is lawfully mine." (ME, p. 624) Even the abbot's reminder of the heavenly law does not faze him. "From that it is for you to absolve me; and I dispense my bounty according to your indulgence." (ME, p. 624) He does relent after Seithenyn reminds him of the rewards which Arthur might give him for Gwenyvar's release, and returns the queen. He bows from the picture with these words: "But I will muse on your advice; and, as it seems, I may get more by following than rejecting it, I shall very probably take it, provided that you now attend me to the banquet in the hall. (ME, p. 626)

Taleisin is not so fine a character in terms of displaying a personality as is Melvas. He seems to wander through the tale, carrying each loose end of the action to the final conclusion. It would seem that Peacock had to have someone to run errands for him, and that Taleisin was chosen. The bard is useful for presenting the Welsh ballads which Peacock either translates, approximates, or draws from his own imagination. It is not the purpose of this thesis to examine the songs, but mention should be made of the manner in which Peacock is able to fit his songs into his narrative. The War Songs of Dinas Vawr serves to characterize King Melvas and his soldiers. Taleisin's song at the circle of the bards tells of his grievance with Maelgon to Arthur, and Taleisin also chastises the bards of Maelgon for their falseness to truth in a song. The minor characters, King Elphin and Angharad, are never fully realized either. They portray

the nineteenth-century conception of chivalry, just as Taleisin and Melanghel do, but none attain clarity of character.

Peacock, in his treatment of both the Robin Hood Legend and the Welsh legends, seems to distribute unevenly his efforts at character drawing. The jolly friar, choleric baron, Seithenyn, and Melvas, are genuine creations, but all the other characters cannot be classed as such. Peacock, to be sure, is interested in satirizing the Holy Alliance in Maid Marian and uses the Friar as his spokesman. Similarly, he uses Seithenyn to satirize Canning and the other opposers to the reform of the British Constitution. Disappointing as it may be that Peacock does not attempt to do even characterization, the four whom he does present more than prove his skill to do not just character drawing, but to perform with the masters of this art.

CHAPTER IV

THE MATURE CONVERSATION NOVELS

In 1831 Peacock published his sixth novel, Crotchet Castle. For this book, Peacock returns to his houseparty setting, and again incorporates in his title the name of his host's house. In Crotchet Castle, Peacock's character drawing is more evenly distributed than in any of the novels yet to be produced. There is still one figure which dominates each particular scene in which he appears, but many of the guests are fully realized characters also. Peacock needs no apologies for his work in this novel.

Ebenezer Mac Crotchet, Esquire, the host, is a retired Scottish broker who has made his fortune in the world and now, in his retirement, wishes to hear several philosophical questions settled before he dies. To accomplish this he invites some crotcheteers to his castle in order that he may "hear some airgument betwixt ony tway."[1] Shortly before this group comes, his son, Crotchet Jr., abandons his fiancee' when he learns that her fortune is lost. The younger Crotchet wishes to make a match with Lady Clarinda Bossnowl. Lady Clarinda has been in love with Captain Fitzchrome, but feels that love in a

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[1]Peacock, Crotchet Castle, p. 652. All subsequent references to Crotchet Castle (abbreviated CC) will appear parenthetically in the text.

cottage would not be so comfortable as love in a castle, and therefore she rejects her poorer lover. The Captain is present at Crotchet Castle and pursues his suit diligently. One of the most frequent guests at the castle is the Reverend Doctor Folliott whose great appetite is matched only by his great learning among the classical authors. The party is noted for the numerous eccentrics, Mr. Henbane, Mr. Firedamp, Mr. Eavesdrop, and Mr. Trillo. All of these gentlemen consent to go on a floating trip up the Thames, which results in Captain Fitzchrome's leaving the party, having been dismissed by Lady Clarinda. His friend Mr. Chainmail, also a member of the group, wanders through the mountains of Wales, looking at the ruins of castles. He meets a young lady, Susannah Touchandgo, and falls in love with her. He has sworn that he will not marry except to a person of gentle blood, but he proposes without learning either the lady's last name or her lineage. Once she accepts his suit, she tells him that she is the daughter of a banker whose fortunes and friends have both disappeared; she is the ex-fiancee' of the junior Crotchet. On the Christmas following their marriage, the Chainmails invite the house-guests of Crotchet Castle to come to their great hall to celebrate the yule in the fashion of the twelfth century. Mr. Crotchet, Jr., has not yet wed Lady Clarinda, and during the festivities it is learned that Crotchet Junior's business has collapsed. He flees to the New World; the Captain is encouraged to pursue his suit again, and Lady Clarinda, deciding that she will not seek to marry money again, weds the Captain at long last.

One of the most charming features of the novel is the author's presentation of the two heroines, Lady Clarinda and Susannah Touch-andgo. Both young ladies have strong wills, are discreetly feminine

but well-read, and speak with charming independence, although Miss Touchandgo is the more romantic figure of the two. When her lover vanishes upon learning of her lost fortune and her friends prove unkind, also, she retires to a farmhouse in Wales and lives in complete seclusion from the world she has known. She does not pine for her lover, but adapts readily to the situation and she is soon beloved by both the Welsh family with whom she boards, and by the local swains. Her pride in determining that her new lover be interested only in herself is quite admirable. This personal pride is important in developing the reader's appreciation both for her and her suitor Mr. Chainmail.

Mr. Chainmail first encounters the young lady on one of his walks in search of some ruins of twelfth-century castles. He only glimpses at her from a distance, but the sight of a young lady, who though dressed in peasant costume carries herself with grace and style, quite captures his imagination. His actual meeting with her is quite romantic. The young lady has chosen to sleep in the boughs of a tree which overhangs a thundering cataract. Her position so alarms Mr. Chainmail that he leaps the chasm at its narrowest point and determines to insure by his own protection that his lady shall not fall into the gorge should her awakening startle her. Mr. Chainmail's action reminds the reader of Squire Headlong. The impulsive action prompted by his sincere concern for Miss Susan is outrageous but exhibits some good sense.

> . . . he saw that the first thing to be done was to prevent her throwing her feet off the trunk, in the first movements of waking. He sat down on the rock, and placed his feet on the stem, securing her ancles between his own . . . . He did not attempt to wake her, because he feared it might have bad consequences, and he resigned

himself to expect the moment of her natural waking, determined not to stir from his post, if she should sleep till midnight. (CC, p. 733)

When she awakens, the lady accepts his aid graciously and agrees that he should escort her to the farmhouse. From this first meeting Mr. Chainmail pursues his suit, even though he fails in his attempts to determine the young lady's parentage. At last he succumbs to her charms and offers her his protection as a husband. This proposal she accepts, but wishes first to tell him her story and gives him the choice of retracting his offer at the end of her tale.

You have now a right to know my history; and, if you repent, I absolve you from all obligations.

She told him her history; but he was out of the reach of repentance. (CC, p. 745)

Peacock presents Miss Susannah with an abundance of both sympathy and charm. She is learned and yet is not the "idealist" that Anthelia Melincourt was. She has much of Marionetta's charm, the heroine of Nightmare Abbey, but displays the frank nature of Matilda in Maid Marian instead of Marionetta's coquettishness. She exhibits her pride without once approaching snobbishness. She is the most Romantic of all of Peacock's heroines, but her author has given her ample individuality which impresses the reader's memory and leaves him believing in and appreciating the mountain "nymph."

Lady Clarinda is a somewhat cynical figure at the beginning of the story. To the great discomfort of her lover, Captain Fitzchrome, her remarks on love in a cottage illustrate this cynicism.

I dare say, love in a cottage is very pleasant; but then it positively must be a cottage ornee: but would not the same love be a

great deal safer in a castle, even if Mammon furnished the fortification?

. . . .

. . . a dun is a horridly vulgar creature; it is a creature I cannot endure the thought of: and a cottage lets him in so easily. Now a castle keeps him at bay. (CC, pp. 668-669)

Lady Clarinda exhibits a great deal of wit in her teasing of her anxious lover. When the captain grows somewhat angry at her views on a cottage versus castle love, she says:

. . . when I tell you that it [her heart] is still safe in my own keeping, and that I do not mean to give it away, the unreasonable creature grows angry.

Captain Fitzchrome. Angry! far from it: I am perfectly cool.

Lady Clarinda. Why, you are pursing your brows, biting your lips, and lifting up your foot as if you would stamp it into the earth. I must say anger becomes you; you would make a charming Hotspur. (CC, p. 670)

Lady Clarinda torments her lover in still another manner. At the first dinner in Crotchet Castle, she manages to tell both Mr. Mac Quedy, the economist, and Mr. Skionar, the transcendentalist, that her lover is quite interested in their particular crotchet. Throughout the meal each turns to the Captain for support of his argument, and Lady Clarinda becomes very amused at his discomfort. Her descriptions of the guests to her lover are both delightful for revealing her own perception of character and rewarding in the improvement of the novel's point of view. Some examples of her observations are:

Next to her is Mr. Firedamp, a very absurd person, who thinks that water is the evil principle. Next to him is Mr. Eavesdrop, a man who by dint of a certain something like smartness has got into good society. He is a sort of bookseller's tool, and coins all his acquaintance in

reminiscences and sketches of character. (CC, p. 678)

. . . .

Next to him is Mr. Henbane, the toxicologist. . . . The first thing he did on his arrival here, was to kill the cat; and while Miss Crotchet was crying over her, he brought her to life again. (CC, p. 679)

Her attitude toward Captain Fitzchrome also illustrates her individual wit and gives the reader an amusing example of her personality on display.

Lady Clarinda. He [Mr. Mac Quedy] has satisfied me that I am a commodity in the market, and that I ought to set myself at a high price. So you see he who would have me must bid for me.

Captain Fitzchrome. I shall discuss that point with Mr. Mac Quedy.

Lady Clarinda. Not a word for your life. Our flirtation is our own secret. Let it remain so.

Captain Fitzchrome. Flirtation. Clarinda! Is that all that the most ardent--

Lady Clarinda. Now, don't be rhapsodical here. (CC, p. 679)

For all her apparent pretensions, the Lady Clarinda is not anxious to "sell herself as a commodity." She allows her engagement to be publicized, but postpones the date until her betrothed has lost his fortune. At that time,

Lady Clarinda was more sorry for her father's disappointment than her own; but she had too much pride to allow herself to be put up a second time in the money-market; and when the Captain renewed his assiduities, her old partiality for him, combining with a sense of gratitude for a degree of constancy which she knew she scarcely deserved, induced her, with Lord Foolincourt's hard-wrung consent, to share with him a more humble, but less precarious fortune, than that to which she had been destined as the price of a rotten borough. (CC, p. 761)

Lady Clarinda is ranked by Priestley as the best of all Peacock's women characters.[2] Saintsbury also prefers her to the rest of the young or old ladies.[3] The reader will accept their judgment as a reinforcement of his own, for Clarinda so captivates both the Captain and the reader with her wit, that it is hard to dispute these critics' claim. Peacock successfully presents cynicism in Lady Clarinda's comments which gives such individuality to her person. She has that sharpness of focus which enables her to stand away from the lesser characters. Peacock's skillful presentation of her is indeed enviable. Her creation is an achievement which occurs through Peacock's combination of several virtues seen in earlier heroines. She shares Marionetta's flair for coquettishness, and shows the same ability to distinguish character that Anthelia Melincourt did. Peacock in drawing both these young ladies, Clarinda and Susannah, achieves what he tried earlier to gain, a fully developed young woman whose personal traits are becoming and whose learning is admirable.

The Reverend Doctor Folliott is described by Lady Clarinda as:

> . . . an excellent scholar, and is fonder of books than the majority of his cloth; he is very fond, also, of the good things of this world. He is of an admirable temper, and says rude things in a pleasant half-earnest manner, that nobody can take offence with. (CC, p. 684)

The reader is first impressed with his love of "the good things of this world." When he enters into the breakfast room of Crotchet Castle, he is out of patience with his cook. This person has almost

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[2]Priestley, p. 71.

[3]Saintsbury, "Introduction to Crotchet Castle," p. xxv.

set fire to his house by reading to improve her mind while in bed. He is, nevertheless, able "to compose his spirits by the gentle sedative of a large cup of tea, the demulcent of a well-buttered muffin, and the tonic of a small lobster." (CC, p. 656) Having regained his good humor, he lectures to the breakfast group, saying that Mr. Crotchet is a man of taste, and proves his point by explaining that taste is infallibly determined by the array of a man's breakfast table. On another occasion, Dr. Folliott sets forth his principles of economy much to the disappointment of Mr. Mac Quedy.

> The Rev. Dr. Folliott. My principles, sir, in these things are, to take as much as I can get, and to pay no more than I can help. These are every man's principles, whether they be the right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell. (CC, p. 658)

Both Mr. Mac Quedy and the Reverend Doctor repeat Peacock's gibes at Kant and his transcendentalism which were mentioned in Nightmare Abbey.

> Mr. Mac Quedy. I have read the sublime Kant, sir, with an anxious desire to understand him; and I confess I have not succeeded.
>
> The Rev. Dr. Folliott. He wants the two great requisites of head and tail. (CC, p. 660)

Another portion of the Reverend Doctor's personality is exposed in his answer to Mr. Firedamp's expression of hydrophobia.

> I think the proximity of wine a matter of much more importance than the longinquity of water. You are here within a quarter of a mile of the Thames; but in the cellar of my friend, Mr. Crotchet, there is the talismanic antidote of a thousand dozen of old wine; a beautiful spectacle, I assure you, and a model of arrangement. (CC, p. 661)

During his encounter with the thieves, Dr. Folliott easily proves that he can not only talk, but act. His good genius prompted him to swing his bamboo stick at just the moment the footpads prepared to hit him with their cudgels.

> The reverend gentleman recoiled two or three paces, and saw before him a couple of ruffians, who were preparing to renew the attack, but whom, with two swings of his bamboo, he laid with cracked sconces on the earth, where he proceeded to deal with them like corn beneath the flail of the thresher.

When there is but one ruffian left to deal with, and that one roars for mercy, the doctor belabors him all the harder and makes these remarks:

> "Mercy, rascal . . . what mercy were you going to show me, villain? What! I warrant me, you thought it would be an easy matter, and no sin, to rob and murder a parson on his way home from dinner. You said to yourselves, doubtless, 'We'll waylay the fat parson (you irreverent knave) as he waddles home (you disparaging ruffian), half-seas-over (you calumnious vagabond).'" And with every dyslogistic term, which he supposed had been applied to himself, he inflicted a new bruise on his rolling and roaring antagonist. (CC, p. 703)

The Reverend Doctor Folliott's actions as well as his apparent zeal for this kind of encounter bring instant reminiscences of Friar Michael of Maid Marian. The zestiness of speech and capacity for wine of the monk have been given to the parson. Dr. Folliott has an "interminable swallow" which can be matched only by that of the friar of Sherwood forest. Peacock, although obviously concerned with presenting an amiable clergyman in his portrait of Dr. Folliott, places more emphasis on the priest as a man than as a churchman. For Peacock, the nature of the clergyman is primarily important as he represents a human personality and is secondarily important as he represents a man of God. In both Friar Michael and Dr. Folliott's characters, it is obvious that Peacock enjoys them as individuals before he draws them as members of the clergy.

The priest's liking for a good discussion is quite apparent and he is able to handle all opponents; each discussion ends with his emerging victorious in defense of classical learning, good living, and the abolition of the advancement of learning movement. Peacock, according to Sir Henry Cole, used to say that "this character was intended by him to make the amende honorable to the clergy for his earlier satires of them.[4] Dr. Folliott is not without faults; he is somewhat intolerant of modern learning, but the reader still finds him very appealing. Mr. Brett-Smith gives him this praise, which seems quite deserved.

> . . . he is an original creation, impulsive, likeable, and disarmingly full of unconcealed prejudice, which he supports, in argument, with a trenchant commonsense as damaging as his own bamboo.[5]

Dr. Folliott is the most successful of the male characters in all of the conversation novels. His zest for talk, wine, and learning is a paramount characteristic. He can neither be ill-natured, nor suffer himself to remain quiet during a discussion. The reader easily accepts him as a character and appreciates Peacock's wit as it is exhibited throughout the presentation of the parson.

Mr. Chainmail is another believable character. He illustrates a crotchet--an enthusiasm for the romanticized life of the twelfth century--but his personality is strong enough to make him acceptable as a person as well as a crotcheteer. Mr. Chainmail is useful in attempting to distinguish between degrees of character achievement in Peacock's books. In each of the novels, there have been characters whose total claim to

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[4]Brett-Smith, p. cxlvii.

[5]Ibid., p. cxlviii.

success has been their striking crotchets or unusual personality. Such persons were Mr. Foster, Mr. Toobad of Nightmare Abbey, Mr. Sarcastic of Melincourt, and others. To some of these characters, especially to Mr. Sarcastic, Peacock has given a charming personality in addition to an unusual crotchet. The reader more easily understands the person when he consists of more than just words and opinions. Just such a character is Mr. Chainmail. The reader is first intrigued by Lady Clarinda's description of him.

> Next to Mr. Skionar, sits Mr. Chainmail, a good-looking young gentleman, as you see, with very antiquated tastes. He is fond of old poetry, and is something of a poet himself. He is deep in monkish literature, and holds that the best state of society was that of the twelfth century, when nothing was going forward but fighting, feasting, and praying, which he says are the three great purposes for which man was made. He laments bitterly over the invention of gunpowder, steam, and gas, which he says have ruined the world. He lives within two or three miles, and has a large hall, adorned with rusty pikes, shields, helmets, swords, and tattered banners, and furnished with yew-tree chairs, and two long, old, worm-eaten oak tables, where he dines with all his household, after the fashion of his favourite age. (CC, p. 680)

Mr. Chainmail is at first nothing but a crotcheteer. He gets into disputes with Doctor Folliott claiming the superiority of romantic over classical literature. He contends with Mr. Mac Quedy that the northern enchanter, Sir Walter Scott, has misrepresented the twelfth century by presenting it as worse than it is. Mr. Mac Quedy holds that it is presented as better than it is. Dr. Folliott ends the argument deciding: "If the enchanter has represented the twelfth century too brightly for one, and too darkly for the other of you, I should say, as an impartial man, he has represented it fairly." But a "fair" representation of the twelfth century is not enough for the learned Doctor Folliott, and

especially not for his creator Peacock.[6] The priest continues his appraisal of Scott in this manner. "My quarrel with him is, that his works contain nothing worth quoting; and a book that furnishes no quotations, is ne judice, no book--it is a plaything." (CC, p. 713)

It is when Mr. Chainmail leaves the party and wanders in search of a ruined castle that he first exhibits the personality which gives him his most acceptable place as a fully realized character. His encounter with the Captain gives him a chance to express his opinion why the Captain left the boats. His view of the soldier's departure differs sharply from that of the other crotcheteers, as the passages below indicate.

Mr. Chainmail. You vanished very abruptly, captain, from our party on the canal.

Captain Fitzchrome. To tell you the truth, I had a particular reason for trying the effect of absence from a part of that party.

Mr. Chainmail. I surmised as much: at the same time, the unusual melancholy of an in general most vivacious young lady made me wonder at your having acted so precipitately. The lady's heart is yours, if there be truth in signs. (CC, p. 725)

The other crotcheteers interpret the Captain's disappearance in terms of their own interests or fears.

Mr. Philpot thought he must have been exploring a river, and fallen in and got drowned in the process. Mr. Firedamp had no doubt he had been crossing a mountain bog, and had been suddenly deprived of life by the exhalations of marsh miasmata. (CC, p. 718)

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[6]Edmund Gosse remarked on Peacock's interest in Scott thus: "This interesting satirist displayed a survival of the eighteenth-century temper in nineteenth-century forms, and thought of Voltaire when the rest of the world was thinking of Scott, whom Peacock considered 'amusing only because he misrepresented everything.'" Gosse, English Literature: an Illustrated Record (New York, 1935), IV, 190.

Mr. Chainmail attempts to gain knowledge of Miss Susan's parentage, but she refuses, on the grounds of personal pride, to let him weigh any consideration except her own person. He then relents and asks for her hand, regardless of her fame or fortune. He wins the reader's sympathy in this moment, for his feudal pride has been quite obvious, and the reader views with pleasure the sincerity of his affection as it is shown in this action. His bravery in defending his home and guests against "Captain Swing's" marchers also adds to the list of his desirable traits. His friendship and sympathy which are extended to Captain Fitzchrome are additions to his admirable qualities, and seem sufficient for this argument. Peacock gives in his character manliness as well as a humorous crotchet and the author is quite successful in presenting this young gentleman.

Captain Fitzchrome is also a very successful character. His personality is much the same as that of Mr. Chainmail, and needs not discussion here. He best exhibits his personal traits during his conversations with Lady Clarinda. His remarks about the guests seem perceptive and yet are tinged with his affection for her. He does not play the part of a fool for his love, however; when the lady dismisses him, he leaves promptly. But his faithfulness to her proves the sincerity of his affection and he is justly rewarded with her hand in marriage.

The weakest members of the party are the host and his family. Mr. Crotchet actually has only Dr. Folliott's friendship to recommend him and does not really say or do anything which allows his personality to be known. His son is a rather disagreeable sort who is presented completely without sympathy. It is not surprising that the reader does not become concerned when Crotchet Jr.'s business is ruined. The daughter,

whose name is Lemma [meaning "gain, income, profit"], says nothing at all. The entire family, including Lemma's husband, Lord Bossnowl, is either insipid or odious. Peacock's motive for making the younger Crotchet unpleasant may be understood in terms of the plot, but the author gives no reason for failing to develop these other characters.

Of the crotcheteers, both Mr. Mac Quedy, Mr. Trillo, and to some extent Mr. Firedamp, are treated sympathetically and achieve a certain distinction of character. They are as successful as they need to be in terms of their roles in the novel.[7]

Crotchet Castle achieves in the more even distribution of character drawing, and the pleasing tale which blends with the houseparty, a degree of success which is greater than that of the other conversation novels. It gains a great deal, as mentioned earlier, from Lady Clarinda's introduction of the characters at the party. The Reverend Doctor Folliott is a charming specimen of Peacock's skill; and both Susannah and Mr. Chainmail are attractive romantic figures. Each of these contributes to the success of the novel, and each is remembered by the reader as a fully developed creation.

Twenty-nine years separate the publication of Crotchet Castle and Peacock's last novel Gryll Grange. The author was seventy-five when his seventh novel was released. The reader finds that Gryll Grange is essentially the same type of conversation novel that Peacock first used in

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[7]Wellek and Warren present the need for an integration of "flat" and "round" characters. They expound this argument: "Flat characterization" (which commonly overlaps "static") presents a single trait, seen as the dominant or socially most obvious trait. It may be caricature or may be abstractive idealization. "Round" characterization, like "dynamic," requires space and emphasis; is obviously usable for characters focal for point of view or interest; hence is ordinarily combined with "flat" treatment of background figures--the "chorus." p. 227.

Headlong Hall, but the novelist's skill with his characters and the mellowness of the satire seem to make it far richer. With few exceptions the characters are successful as people while still representing certain fads which Peacock found amusing.

Morgana Gryll is the heiress of her uncle Gregory Gryll, whose ancestry is traced from the enchantress Circe. Mr. Gryll plans that his niece's husband will take his name and thus his house will not be extinguished at his death. The young lady, however, has not yet found an acceptable suitor, and Mr. Gryll begins to fear that she never will. Their mutual friend the Reverend Doctor Opimian meets a young man, Algernon Falconer, whom he considers a likely candidate for Miss Gryll's hand. Complications in this romance present themselves in the form of seven sisters who are the handmaidens of Mr. Falconer. The young man cannot decide which mode of life is worth sacrificing for the other. He knows that no wife will accept the seven beautiful sisters, and he feels obligated to provide for these daughters of his family's household servants. The parson does find seven suitors for the girls and when Falconer can no longer resist the charms of Morgana's company, the curate produces his seven solutions. Mr. Falconer is not without a rival for Morgana's charms. Lord Curryfin asks for her hand, but soon finds himself emotionally drawn to Miss Niphet, another guest at Gryll Grange. Morgana must accept Lord Curryfin, who has proposed, or release him from his offer so that he may woo Miss Niphet. She decides to gamble that Falconer will propose and graciously gives Lord Curryfin his release. The young ladies of Mr. Falconer's house are happily settled, and Mr. Gryll is assured of his name being perpetuated through his niece and her husband.

The young ladies in this novel are quite attractive; Miss Gryll is a lovely and sympathetic character. She wins the reader's admiration for her treatment of her uncle. She accepts the role of housekeeper for him and does not in any way discomfort him by her presence. She is able to judge the characters of her suitors even when her uncle has not seen their faults. This is illustrated when she gives him her reasons for refusing her earlier swains.

"In the first place, what was your objection to the Honourable Escor A'Cass? He was a fine, handsome, dashing fellow."

Miss Gryll. He was too dashing, uncle: he gambled. I did like him, till I discovered his evil propensity.

Mr. Gryll. To Sir Alley Capel?

Miss Gryll. He speculated; which is only another name for gambling. He never knew from day to day whether he was a rich man or a beggar. He lived in a perpetual fever, and I wish to live in tranquillity.

Mr. Gryll. To Mr. Long Owen?

Miss Gryll. He was in debt, and kept it secret from me. I thought he only wanted my fortune: but be that as it might, the concealment destroyed my esteem.

Mr. Gryll. None of these objections applied to Lord Curryfin.

Miss Gryll. No, uncle; but he came too late. And besides, he soon found what suited him better.[8]

Miss Gryll never appeals to the reader more than in two scenes which shall be cited below. In the first she shows a true sympathy toward Miss Niphet and gives up her claim to Lord Curryfin.

Miss Gryll. My dear Alice, you are in love, and do not choose to confess it.

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[8]Peacock, Gryll Grange, pp. 978-979. All subsequent references to Gryll Grange (abbreviated GG) will appear parenthetically in the text.

Miss Niphet. I have no right to be in love with your suitor.

Miss Gryll. He was my suitor, and has not renounced his pursuit: but he is your lover. I ought to have seen long ago, that from the moment his eyes rested on you, all else was nothing to him. With all that habit of the world, which enables men to conceal their feelings in society, with all his exertion to diffuse his attentions as much as possible among all the young ladies in his company . . . that when it came . . . to be your turn to be attended to, the expression of his features was changed . . . to delight and admiration. I could not have failed to see it, if I had not been occupied with other thoughts. Tell me candidly, do you not think it is so?

Miss Niphet. Indeed, my dear Morgana, I did not designedly enter into rivalry with you: but I do think you conjecture rightly.

Miss Gryll. And if he were free to offer himself to you, and if he did so offer himself, you would accept him?

Miss Niphet. Assuredly I would.

Miss Gryll. Then, when you next see him, he shall be free. I have set my happiness on another cast, and I will stand the hazard of the die. (GG, p. 943)

The other scene, which will be presented in defense of her character occurs during her interview with Lord Curryfin. She shows in this conversation a sportive spirit which gives new depth and balance to her serious nature. She tells Lord Curryfin of her "right" to him in this manner.

Miss Gryll. You offered yourself to me, to have and to hold, for ever and aye. Suppose I claim you. Do not look so frightened. You deserve some punishment, but that would be too severe . . . . I shall make a present of you to Miss Niphet. So, according to the old rules of chivalry, I order you, as my captive by right, to present yourself before her , and tell her that you have come to receive her commands, and obey them to the letter. (GG, p. 945)

Miss Gryll is actually the best of Peacock's heroines who combine both common sense and a merry humor. Marionetta of Nightmare Abbey and Lady Clarinda of Crotchet Castle have the same gay spirit, but neither has Morgana's serious nature. Lady Clarinda depends more on her cynicism,

and Marionetta does not realize any need to be serious. Morgana is kind in nature, and finds a suitable mate in Algernon.

Miss Niphet is as unusual a creation as she is a successful one. Peacock's description of her as statue-like is not at first indicative of an introduction to a true character. But as her relationship with Lord Curryfin becomes more serious, her personality begins to display itself. The reader first sees her become amused at the sight of the young man cheerfully swinging above the stage of their Athenian theatre. Next she exhibits alarm at his careless attitude toward his own safety. When she sets fire to his "infallible sail," the reader learns of yet another part of her character--her independent will. Peacock presents a graceful picture of her skill in skating and in playing shuttle-cock. The reader might become amused at Lord Curryfin's admiration of his "modern Atalanta," but accepts the young lady's ability to be both graceful and athletic.

It is interesting that Peacock chooses not to have his two heroines compete at any level. Alice Niphet skates with Lord Curryfin, and causes Miss Ilex to remark. "I have seen much graceful motion . . . but anything so graceful as that double-gliding over the ice by those two remarkably handsome young persons, I certainly never saw before." (GG, p. 894) Miss Gryll, however, is caused to say, "I have tried it [skating] . . . but unsuccessfully. I admire it extremely, and regret my inability to participate in it." (GG, p. 893) Thus Miss Niphet is able to perform as the star of this scene, and yet does so without Miss Gryll's losing prestige from her action. Miss Gryll stars in the Athenian drama as Circe, but Peacock places Alice Niphet as the leader of the chorus. Both young ladies can play "feature" roles without competing

in any way. Miss Niphet prefers to sing modern songs, whereas Morgana Cryll chooses to sing ballads. Each displays to best advantage her acquisitions without the competition of the other. Alice's frankness of nature contrasts somewhat with Morgana's playful spirit. The reader will remember Morgana's dismissal of Lord Curryfin, and appreciate the difference in the two girls' natures by contrasting the scene in which Alice accepts Lord Curryfin as her suitor.

Miss Niphet. How did she take leave of you, crying or laughing?

Lord Curryfin. Why, if anything, laughing.

Miss Niphet. Do you not feel mortified?

Lord Curryfin. I have another and deeper feeling, which predominates over any possible mortification.

Miss Niphet. And that is--

Lord Curryfin. Can you doubt what it is!

Miss Niphet. I will not pretend to doubt. I have for some time been well aware of your partiality for me.

. . . .

I will not dissemble. If I have had one wish stronger than another--strong enough to exclude all others--it has been for the day when you might be free to say to me what you have now said. Am I too frank with you? (GG, pp. 947-948)

Lord Curryfin is treated with some gentle satire by Peacock. The young man is a victim of the fad for lecturing, and he chooses the subject of fish. Peacock reports his success at the lectern in this manner:

The fishermen at first did not take cordially to him; but their wives attended from curiosity, and brought their husbands with them on nights not favourable to fishing . . . by degrees he won on their attention, and they took pleasure in hearing him, though they learned nothing from him that was of any use in their trade . . . .He . . . never left a place in which he had accepted many invitations, without giving in return a ball or supper on a scale of great munificence; which filled up the measure

of his popularity, and left on all his guests a very enduring impression of a desire to see him again. (GG, pp. 837-838)

Miss Gryll sees Lord Curryfin's absurdities, but, much as Alice Niphet, does discover that there was a sincere desire to please all in his acquaintance which made the young man very admirable in her eyes.

She thought him the most amusing person she had ever known. She liked his temper, his acquirements, and his manners. She could not divest herself of that feeling of the ludicrous which everybody seemed to associate with him; but she thought the chance of life presented little hope of a happier marriage than a woman who would fall in with his tastes and pursuits . . . . Therefore, she would not say No, though, when she thought of Mr. Falconer, she could not say Yes. (GG, pp. 862-863)

Peacock presents Lord Curryfin as a manly figure; he represents the skill of the gentleman in taming horses as one laudable part of his nature. He is brave, though sometimes foolhardy, in his actions. He is a very pleasant and likeable young man, a worthy rival for Falconer.

There are parallels in the two heroes which are similar to the corresponding traits of the heroines. Both Curryfin and Falconer are theorizers--Falconer establishes an elaborate mode of living which is patterned on his theory of ideal beauty and his reverence for Saint Catherine. Lord Curryfin lives by putting his theories into action also, but he is able to adopt from the beginning of the novel those conventional ways of using his theories which Falconer cannot accept until the novel's end. Peacock presents both young men as worthy of the reader's esteem, and the problem of the novel is not so much to find a worthy suitor for Morgana but to pair the couples properly. Morgana and Falconer complement each other in the majority of their tastes and interests; Alice and Richard Curryfin present the same affinity of personal traits. Doctor Opimian remarks to Miss Gryll as they watch Richard and Alice skate away from them.

> They remind me of the mythological fiction, that Jupiter made men and women in pairs, like the Siamese twins; but in this way they grew so powerful and presumptuous, that he cut them in two; and now the main business of each half is to look for the other; which is very rarely found, and hence so few marriages are happy. Here the two halves seem to have met. (GG, p. 894)

Peacock channels much of the reader's interest into seeing if the correct pairs are finally matched, and maintains the suspense necessary for this interest by presenting the clergyman's comments early in the novel.

Falconer is in some ways a puzzling figure. He is presented sympathetically, but almost ideally so. It is hard to believe that a young man would construct the idealized system of living which Algernon had. To be certain, Peacock mentions that "It was the dissipation of a dream too much above mortal frailty, too much above the contingencies of chance and change, to be permanently realized." (GG, pp, 980-981) The "dream," however, is not presented as such throughout the book, but is treated seriously and sympathetically. The legend of St. Catherine and the seven serving maidens who represent her require some difficulty to accept seriously, and Peacock does not treat them as he does his usual crotchet.

Algernon is the only crotcheteer throughout the seven novels who gives up his crotchet. He is the only one who "grows" in understanding during the pages of the book. Peacock seems to have adopted the conventional pattern of handling "humour" characters in most of his novels. He establishes the personality and habits of each character for the purpose of the novel, and each leaves the scene essentially the same as he entered. They may be brought to disappointment or happiness, usually the latter, as Jonson's characters are, but the reader does not feel that in a similar situation they would, any more than Volpone or

Morose, proceed in a different manner. Ronald Mason states that:

> The tragedy of Peacock's characters is that not one of them ever hears one word that any other is saying. They are little isolated bits of Peacock himself, or of Peacock's enemies, and they enunciate their forthright monologues, pause for breath, and resume at the correct interval. Nothing that has passed meanwhile interests or affects them.[9]

Algernon, however, is able to not only listen to new ideas--a trait exhibited by Mr. Escot of Headlong Hall and Sylvan Forester of Melincourt--but he can also embrace a new way of life and discard his own pattern and idealized manners. Clearly this is an important step in the development of Peacock's techniques of character drawing.

The difficulty which Algernon has in determining whether to propose or not is somewhat amusing, but the reader is charmed by Morgana's manner of forcing the young man to reach a decision. Morgana first proposes that she knows the thoughts which he wishes to express but cannot find courage to say. Before she tells him what he wishes to say, she makes him promise not to reply to her words, or to revert to the subject for twenty-eight days.

> Then you may say, I have fallen in love; very irrationally . . . very irrationally; but I cannot help it. I fear I must yield to my destiny. I will try to free myself from all obstacles; I will, if I can, offer my hand where I have given my heart. And this I will do, if I ever do, at the end of four times seven days: if not then, never. (GG, p. 912)

The young man's sense of humor is shown in his interview with Harry Hedgerow, the suitor of one of the seven sisters.

Mr. Falconer. But do you think Dorothy would make a good farmer's wife?

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[9]Mason, p. 242.

Harry Hedgerow. I think, sir, she is so good, and so clever, and so ready and willing to turn her hand to anything, that she would be a fit wife for anybody, from a lord downwards.

Mr. Falconer. She is not very pretty, you know.

Harry Hedgerow. Not pretty, sir! If she isn't a beauty, I don't know who is.

Mr. Falconer. Well, no doubt she is a handsome girl.

Harry Hedgerow. Handsome is not the thing, sir. She's beautiful.

Mr. Falconer. Well, Harry, she is beautiful, if that will please you.

Harry Hedgerow. It does please me, sir. I ought to have known you were joking when you said she was not pretty. (GG, p. 964)

The young gentleman--Mr. Falconer--settles a fortune on each of the girls, and improves his standing with the reader even more by this action. Peacock chooses to develop his character slowly, but he does build a sympathetic person for the reader to enjoy.

The Doctor Opimian is another clergyman who is presented most favorably by Peacock. He is milder in speech and in action than Dr. Folliott, but his tastes are very congenial to those of the parson of Crotchet Castle. They both are learned in classical literature, and they both enjoy good wine and possess the art of mixing a bowl of punch. The clergyman in Gryll Grange is more necessary to the action than Dr. Folliott was. Dr. Opimian brings the two young people together, and then produces the suitors for Falconer's seven handmaidens. He serves as a counselor both to Falconer and to Harry Hedgerow and his six friends. Dr. Opimian is somewhat more charming than Folliott in that the reader witnesses a very pleasant home life in the parsonage. The parson and his wife are presented quite cordially by Peacock, and a portion of one scene will be given below:

The Reverend Doctor Opimian. The word [Agapetae] signifies "beloved," in its purest sense . . . . in this sense it was applied to virgins and holy men, who dwelt under the same roof in spiritual love.

Mrs. Opimian. Very likely, indeed. You are a holy man, Doctor, but I think, if you were a bachelor, and I were a maid, I should not trust myself to be your aga--aga--

The Reverend Doctor Opimian. Agapete. But I never pretended to this sort of spiritualism. I followed the advice of Saint Paul, who says it is better to marry--

Mrs. Opimian. You need not finish the quotation. (GG, p. 805)

The Reverend Doctor Opimian is very pleasing in his defense of the married state which he presents to Mr. Falconer. Throughout the novel the clergyman is a pleasant and likeable person; Peacock intended that the reader should enjoy this character, and so he is able to present many happy scenes of the clergyman's life. The reader can accept Dr. Opimian as a character readily, knowing that Opimian lacks some of the zest of spirit that Folliott displayed, but that a warmth of friendship more than replenishes this deficiency.

Miss Ilex, the spinster, should be mentioned also. She is a pleasant character, one who is fully developed and who has much the same history as Miss Evergreen, Mr. Forester's maiden aunt in Melincourt. She has been disappointed in love and has decided that she would not be as satisfied with a second choice as with the first she lost, and therefore remains single. Her conversation is sprightly and sparkles with gentle wit. She is charming when she tells Morgana of her own unhappy love, but she never asks for pity--which is admirable. The reader is tempted to believe Dr. Opimian when he observes that were Miss Ilex younger, Morgana would have a serious rival for Falconer's heart. Peacock completes in the characterization of Miss Ilex the portrait he half-drew in Miss Evergreen.

Mr. Gryll and the other crotcheteers are charming also. Mr. Gryll is presented sympathetically and is readily accepted by the reader. His congenial habits, and his affection for his niece all contribute to his development. Mr. Macborrowdale, "an old friend of Mr. Gryll, a gentleman who comprised in himself all that Scotland had ever been supposed to possess of mental, moral, and political philosophy," is a delightful character. He wishes to offend no person, and therefore chooses not to offer an opinion which would contradict another's statement. When Lord Curryfin discovers this habit, he amuses himself by anxiously asking for Mr. Macborrowdale's opinion on all issues. Mr. Macborrowdale is able to extract himself from each trap, but the amusement afforded the reader endears the Scotchman to his heart.

Critics such as Fedden and Mason have said that Gryll Grange loses as much as it gains by the improvement in the characters. Fedden criticizes the dialogue and the number of classical references.[10] Mason declares that the story itself would "not arrest attention in a woman's magazine."[11] Peacock does not abandon his mode of novel building, but rather adds to each character a personality which is in addition to his crotchet or function in the action. Peacock began this practice as early as Nightmare Abbey in drawing Scythrop, and continued it in Crotchet Castle with Mr. Chainmail and others. Peacock never abandons his use of opinions and fads for drawing characters, he simply expands more fully than ever before his combination of fad and personality.

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[10] Fedden, pp. 134-135.

[11] Mason, p. 242.

The improvement in the characterization of Gryll Grange does not impair the force of Peacock's satire, but rather enhances it in the same manner that the fuller development of individual personalities enhances his crotcheteers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In an examination of Thomas Love Peacock's novels, one discovers a progression of characterization techniques. The characters of Headlong Hall and Melincourt are only fully realized when Peacock creates persons whose crotchet is so vivid and remarkable that it becomes a part of the humanizing function of characterization, or when the characters are given individual personalities which differ only in their degrees of eccentricity from personalities of normal people. Nightmare Abbey is the first novel in which Peacock combines a crotchet with a believable personality, and in which his portraits of the Romantic poets blend with his fictional personalities to create another type of successful Peacockian figure. Maid Marian and The Misfortunes of Elphin both contain successful characters, but the majority of the characters of these tales are very slightly drawn, as are the background figures of the typical romantic novel. In Crotchet Castle and Gryll Grange, Peacock presents many fully developed characters. These persons still have eccentricities and crotchets, but they have additional life which more than satisfies their role in the novels. Dr. Folliott of Crotchet Castle and the young ladies, Morgana Gryll and Alice Niphet of Gryll Grange, illustrate two types of additional characters. Dr. Folliott is one of several characters throughout

Peacock's novels who display common sense.[1] His presence is used to balance the exaggerated conversations of the majority of crotcheteers. The young ladies are examples of one of Peacock's unique interests. They are presented as intellectual heroines with pleasing personalities and a high degree of feminine charm. They are among the first of the pleasant portraits of the intellectual heroines of the nineteenth century. Walter Allen gives this appraisal of them:

> Peacock's young women exist in their own right. If not as learned as the men of his novels, they are as witty; they have minds and wills of their own; they are independent spirits. . . . Of his contemporaries, only Disraeli has anything like the same courtesy towards and appreciation of women.[2]

Throughout the novels, one can discern the gradual expansion of Peacock's characterization techniques. In the early novels Peacock's main concern is with his "humour" characters. The few true characters are only incidental to his purpose of presenting ideas for satirical examination. But as he writes more, Peacock begins to incorporate additional qualities of personality with his presentation of humours or ideas. His work with his young women, first begun with Anthelia Melincourt, continues to improve until he produces charming characters in Crotchet Castle and Gryll Grange.

During the examination of Peacock's novels, one finds that there are two types of criticism which have been applied to his character-

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[1] Cf. James Davies, "Thomas Love Peacock," The Contemporary Review, XXV (April, 1875), p. 738. "Lord Houghton shrewdly discovers the key to his [Peacock] character and writings in an addiction of tastes, sentiments, and views of life to the 18th rather than the 19th century, and traces the influence of that 'age of free fancy and common sense' in the construction, intention, and spirit of his works."

[2] Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York, 1955), p. 152.

ization attempts. The first group includes those critics, cited in the introduction, who deny that Peacock creates living characters in his novels. This group does recognize "exceptions" in his usual mode of character drawing, but dismisses what this thesis classifies as successful characters as accidents. Such critics are Richard Garnett, George Saintsbury, Ronald Mason, Walter Raleigh, and A. Martin Freeman. The characters whom they classify as exceptions are Scythrop, Prince Seithenyn, Friar Michael, and Dr. Folliott. It is the contention of this thesis, supported by the character examination throughout the chapters, that not only the characters listed above, but also many others achieve reality in their respective novels, and that it is Peacock's intention that they do so. Peacock does not produce his greatest characters by accident, but he develops a skill of character drawing which becomes more and more apparent through his consecutive novels.

During the examination of the characters by novels, explanations were put forth, when applicable, of instances when Peacock combines one or more methods of character drawing and through this combination achieves depth of characterization which was lacking in an earlier attempt. Scythrop, of Nightmare Abbey, is the first of the characters who are the result of Peacock's combining his portrait of the opinions of one of his contemporaries, in this case Shelley, and a fictional personality. This particular method of characterization occurs frequently in the remainder of Peacock's novels. Prince Seithenyn is used to satirize Canning's defense of the British Constitution, but it is the boisterous personality which Peacock creates for Seithenyn which makes him live as a character.

When one examines the novels in the order of their publication, and when he recognizes that in each novel the number of successful characters increases, then it is impossible to concede that Peacock's people are exceptions to general conventions of characterization. It is obvious that Peacock purposefully improves or expands his methods of character drawing to suit his needs, and that the improved characters which result are not accidents.

The second type of criticism applies only to Peacock's last novel. In this novel, as indicated above, there are a large number of successful characters, and the opinion is advanced that Peacock's charm suffers somewhat from his attention to characterization. Mr. Fedden states that the dialogue loses virility. Mr. Mason gives Peacock recognition for having improved the relation of his action to the novel as a whole, but still feels that the plot is far too elementary to be noteworthy. Mr. Freeman, while recognizing that in Gryll Grange Peacock has created living beings, emphasizes that this ability in character is never a "strong point with him, and even his last book will not bear comparision with the works of the artists in character-drawing."[3] It is not the purpose of this thesis to evaluate the success of each of Peacock's novels, but to concentrate on the success of the characters in each book. Perhaps another study might investigate the validity of this criticism of Gryll Grange and in doing so ascertain what the relation of Peacock's attention to characterization has to his success as a satirist and as a novelist.

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[3]Freeman, p. 233.

Both types of criticism encountered in this study center on the difficult problem of determining a standard for judging characterization. As emphsized in the introduction to this thesis, the judgment of success in character drawing was made in terms of the character's success in relation to his own world of the individual novels.[4] The vividness of a character's personality--his ability to convince the reader that he remains, in spite of his eccentricities, true to human nature to a degree acceptable to the reader--is the criterion for the evaluation. Since it appears obvious that other criteria are used by some of the critics, a suggestion for a further study presents itself at the point.

The critics whose works appear in the introduction have surely been somewhat influenced by the naturalistic mode then prevailing in fiction. The novels which were most popular during the years of these men's publications, 1900-1945, were influenced by the realistic and naturalistic movements in literature. In the biographies and critical evaluations of Peacock's work in which these men state their opinions, they do not mention what standards they use for

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[4] Cf. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Fiction, (2nd ed., New York, 1959), p. 173. "Since a work of literature does not pretend to be a factual document of actual events, but a typical and representative 'action,' the demands of truth of correspondence tend to be limited to correspondence to human nature and to the human norms. . . . A character must be credible--must make sense, must be able to command our belief. True, the character in question may be eccentric. . . . But his thoughts and actions must ultimately be coherent." A distinction between non-fiction and fiction is plainly drawn. "History and biography give us what may be called truth of correspondence. . . . But fiction is not fact, and its 'truth' does not involve a correspondence to something outside itself--at least not in the way in which history and biography involve such correspondence." p. 27.

evaluation. It is suggested that perhaps an examination of additional work by each critic would yield sufficient evidence to isolate his particular standard for characterization. If it should prove that each critic drew from the naturalistic movement's techniques for his judgment, then the examination should attempt to determine if such criteria are valid for all characterization studies. Martin Steinmann emphasizes the need to isolate technique before passing critical appraisal.

> We must, I think, conclude that the critic or the reader brought up by the new realism to think of it as an ideal toward which the old novel was bumblingly striving will seriously misread the old novel and, indeed, some of the new. If concern with technique in literature is concern with working within a set of conventions, then the old novel is as much concerned with technique as the new: but with a different technique . . . there is abundant evidence, internal and external, of this concern. The reader who goes to Peacock, Dickens, or Emily Bronte--or, for that matter, to T. F. Powys, Lawrence, or Faulkner--equipped only with the poetic of the new realism invites both bewilderment and disappointment.
>
> We need not, of course, choose between the old novel and the new. Neither has displaced the other; both are with us; and we should rejoice that they are. . . . What we should not do is to take so narrow a view of literary conventions that we are forced to choose between them.[5]

Thomas Love Peacock's development of characterization techniques was illustrated throughout this thesis. Successful characters are found in the early novels, but the proportion of coherent characters increases in each succeeding novel until Gryll Grange, the last and most successful. It is sufficient for the purpose of this thesis to have examined and explained Peacock's characterization techniques, but

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[5] Martin Steinmann, ed., From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse (Minneapolis, 1958), pp. 305-306.

the author feels that the most important contribution of this work has been to emphasize the idea that vivid characterization is an acceptable device just as is naturalistic characterization. This emphasis can best be obtained through the examination of a novelist such as Peacock. His works have been praised with few qualifications,[6] and it is fitting, therefore, that his characters receive their deserved recognition. This recognition will not be given if each novelist must be judged by one standard of character drawing. Both Wellek and Warren and T. S. Eliot have defined acceptable standards for judging characterization. These standards could be applied to other novelists whose purposes resemble those of Peacock, and in doing so their works may gain new stature, which the author of this thesis feels that Peacock's novels have.

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[6]Cf. Allen, p. 152. "He is a novelist--one of a very small number--whose work attracts us more, and is increasingly more important, the longer the period of time since its first appearance, and as the existence of civilization becomes the more precarious, the more precious it will be."

Cf. Brett-Smith, pp. ccx-ccxi. "His novels are like nothing else in the language; we may call them bookish, and protest that even the best of his characters are types, and mouthpieces for the author's views; and bookish and opinionated in some sort they are. But was there ever a merely bookish author with so keen a zest in life, so riotous a love of physical drollery and rough-and-tumble, so discerning an eye for the ways of the world?"

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