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"BUT WOULD NOT THE SAME LOVE BE A GREAT DEAL
SAFER IN A CASTLE?": LOVE AND MONEY IN THE
NOVELS OF THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between romantic love and wealth in the novels of Thomas Love Peacock. Nineteenth-century England was a time of great social mobility as well as severe economic hardship, showing the effects of capitalism to have both positive and negative influences. In his novels Peacock views the market economy as cruel and greedy, and the aristocracy as self-interested and petty. The economic and moral solution Peacock offers to redress these failings is based on an older feudalistic model which promotes benevolence and humanitarianism. To portray the development of this new yet old social model, Peacock employs romantic love as an instrument of social reform. Wealthy young individuals marry for romantic love rather than reasons of wealth and pedigree that dominate most marriages of their class, thereby heralding a new, more compassionate generation.

Peacock's solution is somewhat idealistic, yet it is an idealism that survives to this day, as twentieth-century society still invests a great deal of hope in romantic love. Though Peacock tries to separate romantic love from economic influence, he creates somewhat of a paradox by then using the romantic partnership in marriage as a method of social reform. This paradox displays the moral difficulties surrounding money that often cause literature to retreat into idealism. It is this retreat that has facilitated the cultural emphasis on romantic love, which is now an integral aspect of our popular culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Love Peacock lived from 1785 to 1866. He witnessed the excesses of England's Regency era and the transition of those excesses into the Victorians' rigid morality. He also witnessed the emergence of the London Stock Exchange and the wild speculation, easy wealth and great misery it caused. Peacock lived in a time of great social upheaval, and his novels reflect some of the conflict of those times.

English society was in the process of changing from an interdependent hierarchical structure to a system that divided society into upper, middle and lower classes. These changes were effected by the needs of the economy, where the old feudal system was being replaced by an industrial economy. Speed of change varied for different classes: for the upper class, change happened at a slower pace than for the lower class - those with the most social power were in a better position to protect their own interests.

Peacock's novels are an attempt to encourage a change of behaviour among the aristocracy, most notably in the area of marriage. In his novels he portrays the aristocracy, especially those who reside in the cities and form the 'fashionable set', as being mercenary and calculating in their marital relations. Peacock believed this practice to be the cause of much misery, leading to the development of poor character, and an unstable society. For Peacock, a happy marriage was one based on romantic love. Those marriages then promoted a stable society, where emotional well-being influenced

humanitarian practices toward those less well-off in society.

Romantic love appealed to Peacock as an element of democracy that did not alter the power structure of society: coming into the aristocracy as a stabilising effect, it allowed Peacock to accommodate the struggle between idealism and materialism. Romantic love is seen by Peacock as a mostly pleasurable emotion, but he does not leave it simply on that level. He gives it a moral purpose that approaches religion in its nature: it becomes a form of behaviour with a higher purpose, and a system of reward and punishment.

Rather than deal with each of the seven novels in turn, I have divided the chapters into topics that encompass all the novels. The first chapter concentrates on the economic situation of nineteenth-century England where industry and the money market were redistributing wealth previously monopolized by the aristocracy. The social problems that emerged provided novelists with endless material for the scrutiny of the behaviours that accompanied wealth and the ethics of those behaviours.

Chapter two examines the wealthy society of London that Peacock criticizes throughout his seven novels. Fashionable life, with its excesses, provided abundant material for the moral spotlight. The fashionable set seemed driven by appearance and greed which rendered them narrow and insincere. There is a substantial body of biographical evidence that proves this to be the case. Peacock, however, is mostly general in his condemnation, relying on characterisation to hint at reality, rather than expressing outright disapproval. Such a mode has

contributed to the detailed speculation found in many studies of Peacock's novels. Peacock associated with some of the great literary figures of his time, which has generated abundant guesswork as to the basis of his characterisations. I have kept biographical detail to a minimum in the body of this thesis, concentrating on the literature and the society of the time, rather than the specifics of Peacock's associations. Biographical information can be found mostly in the endnotes of each chapter.

Chapters three and four are titled 'Men' and 'Women' respectively, and examine Peacock's male and female lovers who are the heroes and heroines of the novels. In order to facilitate a change in marriage patterns Peacock has altered expected gender behaviours. Women are made more feminist and men more gentlemanly, allowing for a more equal interaction which facilitates easier communications between the sexes, leading to situations where they can fall in love on the basis of knowing each other's character, rather than their fashionable pedigree and bank balance.

The final chapter is titled 'Love and Marriage' and examines the history of romantic love, and the influence of economy on the emergence of the cultural emphasis Western civilization has placed on romantic love. An investigation of the economy of nineteenth-century Britain shows Peacock's view of romantic love to be in context with the disruption of his time. Romantic love, in part, is a social reaction, and Peacock's novels are part of that reaction through their emphasis on personal emotion at a time when private and public life were becoming increasingly divided.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ECONOMY



I am happy to say, I am again become a respectable Man...I have purchased five thousand acres of land, at two dollars an acre, hard cash, and established a very flourishing bank. The notes of Touchandgo and Company, soft cash, are now the exclusive currency of all this vicinity. This is the land in which all men flourish especially, - Methodist preachers, slave-drivers, and paper money manufacturers; and as one of the latter, I have just painted the word BANK on a fine slab of maple.

(Peacock, Crotchet Castle, p. 720) *

This quotation is from a letter written by Mr Timothy Touchandgo, a previously prominent banker, who robbed the till of his own bank and fled to America owing half a million pounds to his creditors. Mr Touchandgo, writing to his now disgraced daughter, left behind in England, shows little remorse for the course he has taken. From his letter, we can deduce that he took at least ten thousand dollars 'hard cash', a theft he absolves himself from by reason of its not being anywhere near the amount required to resolve his difficulties : 'The question was, whether I should keep it, and live like a gentleman; or hand it over to lawyers and commissioners of bankruptcy and die like a dog on a dunghill' (CC p.720). The comic tone which is used to describe Touchandgo's situation limits negative judgement against him, deflecting the immorality of his action and thus making him an almost endearing figure - we do not see the financial consequences of his actions.

* All quotes by Peacock come from Thomas Love Peacock: The Complete Novels. Subsequent quotes will be cited with each novel's initials, such as CC for Crotchet Castle. The only exception to this rule is Melincourt.

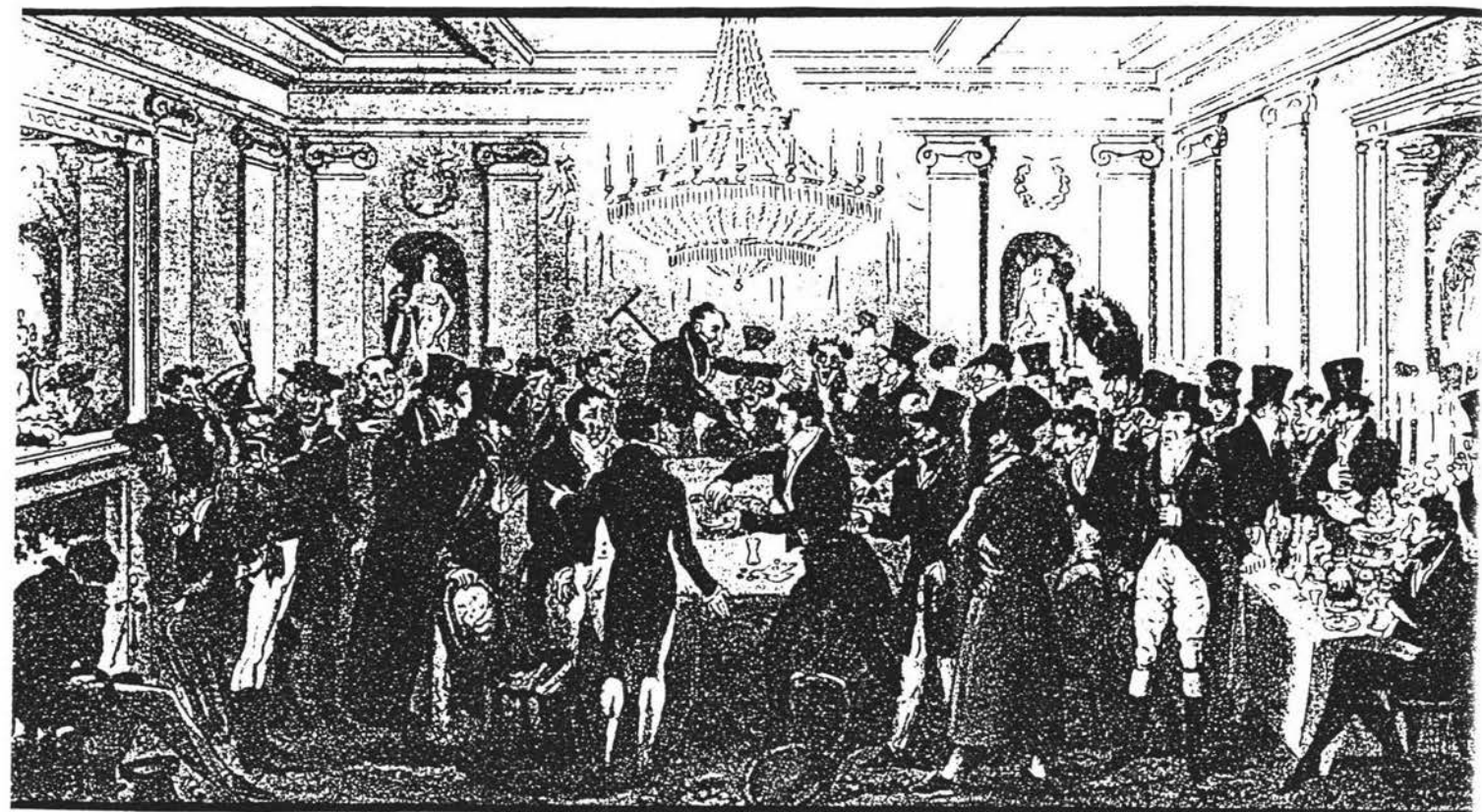
In the actual world of commerce the consequences of fraud were initially treated with severity as events in England in the 1820s portray. In 1824, Henry Fauntleroy, a managing partner in the private banking firm of Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy & Co., was arrested for fraud. The ensuing panic caused liabilities of 799,028 pounds and Fauntleroy was hanged in November 1824 in front of a crowd of one hundred thousand (Russell p.65). Four years later, the criminal actions of Roland Stephenson caused Remington, Stephenson & Co. to fail owing 508,696 pounds; like Touchandgo, Stephenson fled. Russell writes:

It is quite likely that Peacock was recalling Stephenson's flight to Savannah when, in Crotchet Castle (1831), he created 'Mr Touchandgo, the great banker'... Men of Stephenson's stamp were able to reap the benefits of their criminal actions. Through the exercise of sufficient shrewdness and alertness, they could not only escape the severe and rigorous laws under which they would have been judged, but also find in America a fresh field for the exercise of their talents. (Russell p.69)

A major aspect of the scandal that surrounded the fall of these banks was the betrayal of trust. Gentlemen were not expected to behave in such a manner, yet these examples indicate that it was indeed possible. Thirty years later, in the opening dialogue of Gryll Grange, Peacock has Mr Gryll lament this prevalence of deceit:

In my little experience I have found that a gang of swindling bankers is a respectable old firm;... that a man who successively betrays everybody that trusts him, and abandons every principle he ever professed, is a great statesman, and a Conservative ... (GG p.776)

Timothy Touchandgo's attitude bears witness to the unquestioning belief of this time that wealth equals respectability. Prior to the industrial revolution and its accompanying economic revolution, wealth had been confined within the aristocracy. The aristocracy was afforded respect within society solely for their elevated status which often excused shocking behaviour. Timothy Touchandgo's characterisation exhibits some of the difficulties which contemporary society was experiencing in its approach to wealth. Touchandgo represents a new age banker whose business is ruined because of the gap between credit and real assets. Fleeing creditors by emigrating to America was the only course he felt would enable him to live in reasonable comfort. Lack of integrity and morality are of little concern to him. Touchandgo's actions, however, are not a new phenomenon. It was often the practice of young aristocracy to accumulate great debts with tradesmen which they could not finance, and rather than face debtors' jail they too would flee across the Channel in order to escape arrest. In contrast to trade debts, debts of 'honour' which usually arose from gambling could not be escaped. These debts were financed by moneylenders at rates of up to 40%, and were often staggeringly high, even by today's standards. In Silver Fork Society,



Robert Cruikshank's 'The Interior of Modern Hell'. From The Illustrator and the Book in England 1790-1940 by Gordon N. Ray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976. (p.238)

Adburgham gives examples of these losses:

...at Brooks's Charles James Fox and other great Whigs won and lost hundreds of thousands, frequently remaining at the table for many hours without rising. On one occasion Lord Robert Spencer contrived to lose the last shilling of his considerable fortune, given him by his brother, the Duke of Marlborough... George Harley Drummond of the famous banking house, Charing Cross, only played once in his whole life... on which occasion he lost 20,000 to Brummell... Many a time after a long night of hard play, the loser found himself at the establishment of Howard and Gibbs, the then fashionable and patronised money-lenders. (Adburgham p.110)

That these debts were considered more important than trade debts whose payment would have been more economically urgent for the tradesman is indicative of a lack of consideration for lower classes. Both Touchandgo and the indulgent aristocratic youth choose to flee rather than face the consequences of their actions. Those who suffer economically further down the social ladder have no redress.

The practice of credit in both aristocratic and commercial circles was similar in nature in that both relied on trust, a trust dependent on the esteem of the persons involved. Peacock objected strongly to the emerging 'paper money' system, for it allowed persons such as Touchandgo to abuse their position of trust. The aristocracy also come under fire within Peacock's

novels for their abuse of privilege and inconsiderate behaviour. An examination of the economic atmosphere of the early nineteenth century helps to illustrate the situation Peacock finds intolerable.

England's war with France ended with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. While war was an economic burden, it had the advantage of drawing the people together against a common foe. Once peace was achieved social problems emerged, most noticeably amongst the lower classes. Rioting and machine breaking were prevalent and from 1811 to 1842 the country was subjected to a series of disturbances. In Crotchet Castle Peacock makes reference to the Swing Riots of the early 1830s, protests conducted by farm labourers. While hosting a feast on Christmas Day, Chainmail Castle is subjected to a riot, and, while the guests are somewhat sympathetic to the causes of the rioters, they still partake in fighting them off. Peacock addresses several social issues in the course of the dialogue between Chainmail's guests:

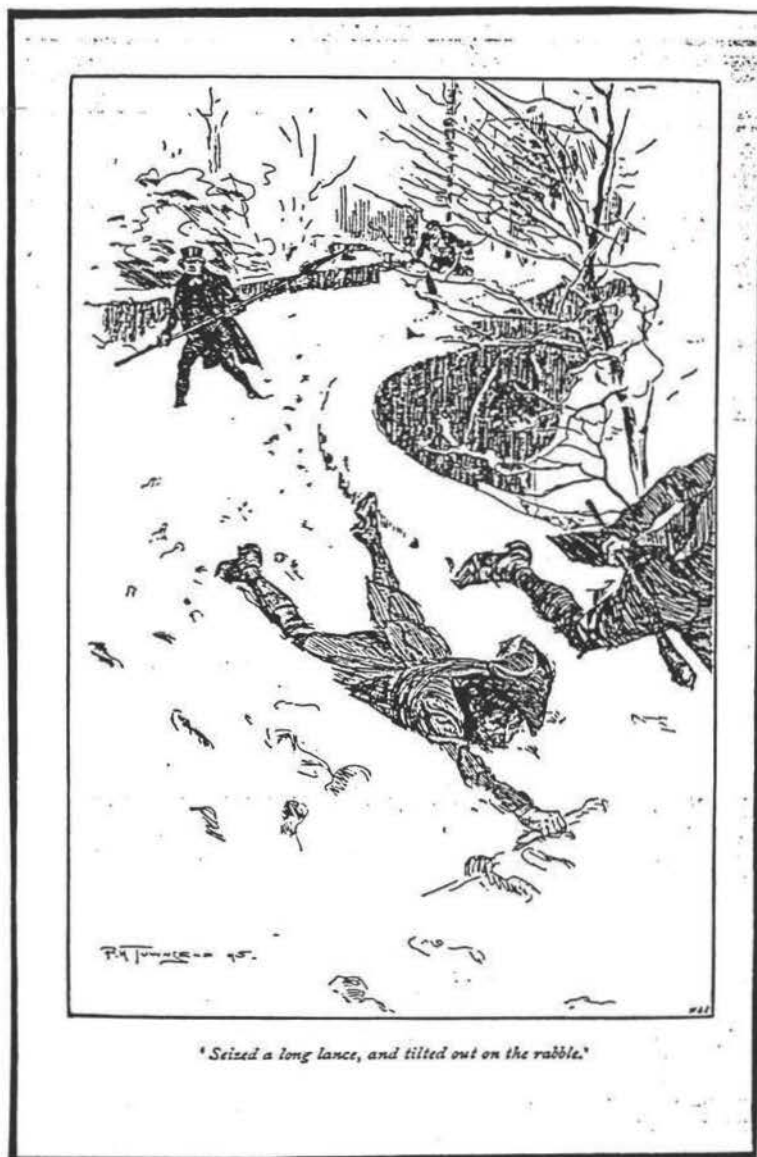
THE REV.DR.FOLLIOT.

Ho, ho! here is a piece of the dark ages we did not bargain for. Here is the Jacquerie. Here is the march of mind with a witness.

MR MACQUEDY.

Do you not see that you have brought disparates together? the Jacquerie and the march of mind.

THE REV.DR.FOLLIOT.



** Seized a long lance, and tilted out on the rabble.**

** Chainmail and guests rid themselves of the rabble.*

** Chapter headings and illustrations, except where noted, come from the Illustrated Pocket Classics versions of Peacock's novels, published by Macmillan, London in 1927. The artist is F.H.Townsend.*

Not at all, sir...What was the Jacquerie in the dark ages, is the march of mind in this very enlightened one - very enlightened one.

MR.CHAINMAIL.

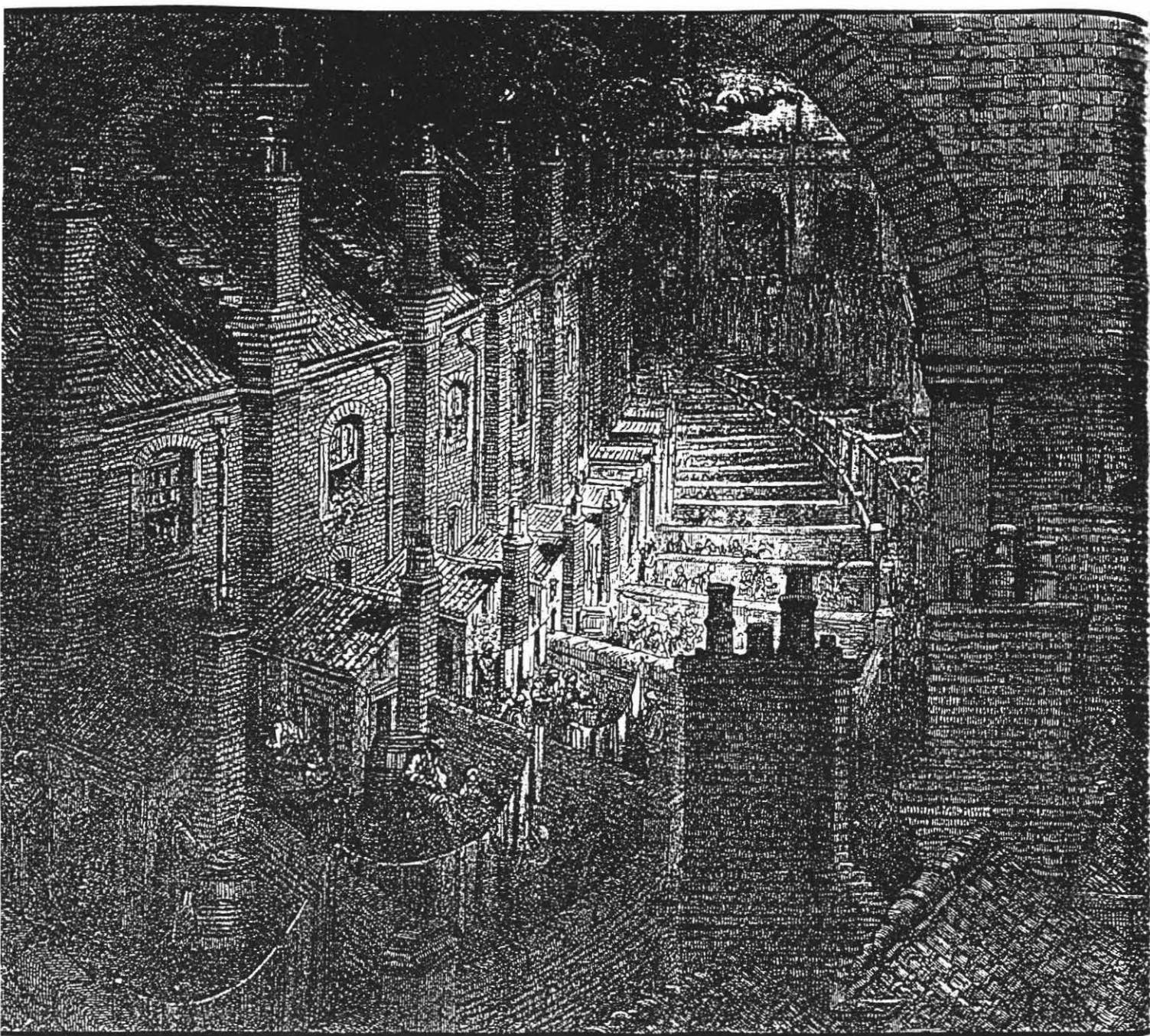
The cause is the same in both; poverty in despair.

MR. MACQUEDY.

Very likely; but the effect is extremely disagreeable...when the rabble is up, it is very indiscriminating. You are e'en suffering for the sins of Sir Simon Steeltrap, and the like, who have pushed the principle of accumulation a little too far. (CC p.753-755)

The Jacquerie were rebellious peasants who rose up against the French nobility in 1358 in protest at economic exploitation. The Rev. Dr. Folliot's analogy with enlightened times refers to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Given the proximity of the Revolution, rioting was viewed with fear and suspicion in England and severe measures were employed to prevent revolution from breaking out in England.¹

Mr. Macquedy's reference to Sir Simon Steeltrap criticises the greed of landlords in raising the rents on already substandard accommodation. Tenants were powerless to prevent abuses made against them as both legal and economic power was held solely by the aristocracy. During the war years communal land, which was farmed by the poor, was subjected to enclosure. Enclosure meant that the land was transferred to the ownership



Gustave Dore's 'London', 1871. (Gordon N. Ray p.285)

of individual landowners by acts of Parliament. These acts of Parliament were privately sponsored, making any objection by the poor totally out of their means. Food shortages during the war years were used as reasons for enclosure, to improve efficiency in production. Under the auspices of 'social concern' landowners became wealthier. Three million acres, approximately 9% of England's land, was enclosed during these years (Thomson p.288).

In Scotland, conditions for the poor were even worse. Between 1811 and 1820, 15,000 Highlanders had been cleared off the land to make way for sheep. Sheep farming, it was estimated, returned three times as much as rents from tenants (Galbraith p.27). The methods used to remove the people from their homes were extremely cruel:

At Strathnaver (as elsewhere) in May 1814, the operation assumed the definitive aspects of a final solution. In March the tenants had been given two months' notice to get out. But they were still around, for they had no place to go. So the agents of the laird moved in with fire and dogs. They were especially careful to burn the roof timbers of the houses, for that meant, in this treeless land, that the houses could not be rebuilt, the people could not return.
(Galbraith p.27)

Many of these victims of aristocratic greed were forced to migrate to the cities, where they often met with similar



*Peacock's ideal couple, Anthelia Melincourt and
Sylvan Forester.*

exploitation. In Melincourt, the wealthy heiress Anthelia Melincourt and the wealthy landowner Sylvan Forester portray the ideal Peacock believed would solve such abuses. Both see themselves as guardians of their wealth, allocating money where it is most needed, and looking after their tenants in a manner that reflects their humanitarianism. Both are lovers of simplicity and nature which Peacock sets up as a contrast to the rapid development of cities and commercialism. Though the extremity of their views makes them somewhat comical it also criticizes the self-interested mentality of those who put profit above people. In chapter XXV, Forester voices the troubles of the poor:

"The palaces" said Mr. Forester, "that every where rise around them to shame the meanness of their humble dwellings, the great roads that every where intersect their valleys, and bring them in contact with the overflowing corruption of the cities, the devastating monopoly of large farms, that has almost swept the race of cottagers from the face of the earth, sending the parents to the workhouse or the army, and the children to perish like untimely blossoms in the blighting imprisonment of manufactories, have combined to diminish the numbers and deteriorate the character of the inhabitants of the country." (Melincourt p.250)

Poverty became more personalised with the new economic theories that accompanied the industrial revolution.

Redistribution of wealth and population altered the manner in which people behaved towards each other, and for the poor, the manner in which they were treated became markedly worse. Adam Smith's economic treatise, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,² proposed that a nation's prosperity resulted from each individual's pursuit of self-interest, each individual either benefiting or suffering accordingly. Smith believed that the prosperity of the nation would automatically follow this pursuit of self-interest. He also opposed government intervention by means of tariffs, taxes, or awarding monopolies (Galbraith p.23).

Smith's theory allowed the responsibility of poverty to be placed on the individual, and though miserly treatment of the poor was nothing new - as Peacock portrays in his historical novels - the shift in social responsibility provoked a more cynical viewing of the poor. Patrick Colquhoun, a philanthropist and close friend of Jeremy Bentham,³ wrote on poverty in 1806. His theory was that poverty was necessary to the well-being of society:

Poverty is... a most necessary and indispensable ingredient in society, without which nations and communities could not exist in a state of civilisation. It is the lot of man - it is the source of wealth, since without poverty there would be no labour, and without labour there could be no riches, no refinement, no comfort, and no benefit to those who may be possessed of wealth - inasmuch as without a large proportion of poverty surplus labour could never be

rendered productive in procuring either the conveniences or luxuries of life. (May p.120)

The tone of this statement does not question the unfairness of the treatment of the poor: they are needed to provide conveniences and luxuries. Such a statement portrays a lack of humanitarianism, favouring instead those who have wealth above any other consideration. Colquhoun exhibits the self-serving nature of the power structure of the time.

Colquhoun goes on to say that indigence is the problem rather than poverty. With opinions like Colquhoun's it is not difficult to understand the somewhat cruel treatments meted out by laws designed to protect the poor.⁴ The Poor Laws according to Trevor May were not concerned with poverty, only with indigence: 'The purpose of the Poor Law...was to prevent the indigent from starving and to force the poor to stand on their own feet' (May p.120). Force came by way of the threat of the workhouse, a place where the destitute were made to labour in exchange for substandard food and shelter. The total loss of dignity as well as physical deprivation was designed to inspire the poor to go out and get paid work. Not surprisingly, the poor nicknamed such places 'Bastilles', an innuendo-ridden term intended to make politicians nervous about the possibility of revolution.

In 1784, the cost of supporting the poor was 2 million pounds; by 1832 it was approximately 7 million. This 7 million came out of a gross national income of 400 million pounds (May p.121), an amount not exorbitant by today's standards, but viewed as unacceptable at the time. The task of ascertaining need

fell to local parishes, who were given the responsibility by the Poor Laws. As many parishes were not financially well-off, the amount of money available for assistance was minimal. No newcomers were welcome as they placed even more of a burden on the parish. These laws were of no comfort to those forced off their land, such as the Scottish Highlanders and the victims of the enclosure acts.

For the aristocracy, the wealthy commercial classes, and the Government, the doctrine of each person being responsible for their own well-being permitted the pursuit of gain without conscience. Politically, liberalism promoted the idea of the individual with freedom of will and certain rights. In an economic world, liberalism coincides with the ideal of laissez-faire, i.e. non-government intervention in the private economic life of the individual. But such ideals provide perfect examples of the enormous gap between theory and practice. Individual self-interest works for those already in a position of power, but for those more vulnerable, who have no economic power to begin with, life becomes even more precarious. As Trevor May points out, 'The prevailing ethic that everything had to pay meant that those who could least afford got least' (May p.130).

In his two historical novels The Misfortunes of Elphin and Maid Marian, Peacock voices many of his criticisms against powerful people who feel no responsibility or social obligation. As with Timothy Touchandgo, Peacock's criticism is written in a comical manner, and we are invited to laugh at the absurdity in the imbalance of the situation. Though the two historical novels are set in the sixth and twelfth centuries respectively, the events within them can be viewed as a portrayal of



4. George Cruikshank: "His Most Gracious Majesty George the Fourth" (1821)

nineteenth-century happenings. In The Misfortunes of Elphin Peacock portrays a drunken and irresponsible monarch in Gwythno:

Gwythno, like other kings, found the business of governing too light a matter to fill up the vacancy of either his time or his head, and took to the more solid pursuits of harping and singing; not forgetting feasting, in which he was glorious; nor hunting, wherein he was mighty...Gwythno and his subjects went on together very happily. They had little to do with him but pay him revenue, and he had little to do with them but receive it. Now and then they were called in to fight for the privilege of paying revenue to him rather than to any other of the kings in his vicinity, a privilege of which they were particularly tenacious.

(MOE p.554)

After the failure of the French Revolution, the Monarchy enjoyed a resurgence of favour. In 1811 George III was declared insane, and his son the Prince of Wales ruled as the monarch of England in his absence. The behaviour of the Prince of Wales during his time as Regent and prior to it is an example of the excesses that a man in a powerful position can indulge in without censure. At seventeen he had admitted a weakness for wine and women, and with Charles Fox and other like-minded Whig politicians he had indulged in a lifestyle that earned his father's contempt. Deeply in debt by 1795, he married his



They began their march.—P. 27.

The storm destroying Gwythno's kingdom.

cousin Caroline to 'induce Parliament to pay his debts' (Encyclopaedia Britannica V5, p.196). Gwythno's behaviour and the Prince of Wales' are similar in their indulgences in more sensual pastimes rather than ruling.

Gwythno's kingdom borders on the sea, and requires an embankment to keep the sea out. The embankment was to be maintained by officials appointed for that purpose. One of these officials is Prince Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi, a character whose position is

...Lord High Commissioner of Royal Embankment; and he executed it 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. (MOE p.555)

Not surprisingly the embankment falls into disrepair and collapses during a storm. The kingdom of Gwythno is ruined as the sea rushes in and swallows up all the best land. Marilyn Butler in Peacock Displayed believes that these happenings represent the French Revolution, where the pursuit of self-interest and the administrative neglect of the country pushed the tolerance of the people, the sea representing the peasantry, too far.

In Maid Marian, Peacock repeats the myth of Robin Hood, who robbed from the rich to help the poor. Criticism in Maid Marian is directed at both the monarchy and its representatives as well as religion. Peacock parallels the leaders of the church in the twelfth century to bankers of the nineteenth:



Mr Fax (a character based on Malthus) warns a young couple about their fertility.

...for the abbots and the bishops were the chief usurers in those days, and...were not in the least scrupulous of employing what would have been extortion in the profane, to accomplish the pious purpose of bringing a blessing on the land by rescuing it from the frail hold of carnal and temporal into the firmer grasp of ghostly and spiritual possessors.

— (MM p.453)

In this example the leaders of the Church justify their greed within the doctrines of religion in the name of higher knowledge, just as the wealthy in the nineteenth century employ economic theory to defend their actions.

Two men who continued with Adam Smith's ideas were David Ricardo and Thomas Malthus.⁵ Ricardo's economic theory advanced the idea that workers should only receive the minimum wage - enough to support life. Termed the 'iron law of wages', it was intended to limit population increase by way of economic hardship. Such a practice did not conduce to compassion of any kind, as it would interfere with the free market and also lead to the poor having more children, thus hindering the prosperity of the country. As the population increased the cost of labour became cheaper and the poverty worse. Ricardo believed that nothing should be done about this, for intervention would upset economic freedom - in theory making the country, and the poor in turn, worse off. It is interesting to observe the subtle differences that economic theory manipulates in favour of capitalism. In terms of earning their own keep the poor

are seen as individuals - in keeping with Smith's theory. When it is obvious that Smith's philosophy has its limitations, another is created to deal with the avoidance of responsibility.

There are few direct examples of poverty in Peacock's novels as the settings are always amidst the wealthy upper classes. It could be argued that Peacock avoids the direct horrors of society and criticizes from a comfortable distance; his practice of making general comments concerning social ills lends itself to the label 'escapist' or 'idealist' (a title he deserves in some instances). Carl Dawson in His Fine Wit writes: 'Peacock's novels are safer in a castle, because he can better handle and often cares more about polite and intellectual talk than social problems or human suffering' (Dawson p.163). Given the frequency of Peacock's economic censure I think that Dawson's comment perhaps dwells too much on the setting rather than the issues Peacock is dealing with. Peacock's intent is reform of aristocratic behaviour and to achieve that purpose the setting must be amidst the upper class. The major aspect of this reform is the compassionate treatment of the poor and working classes. Given the precarious atmosphere of the time such criticisms had to be cautious, for treason was still a crime. Peacock's caution takes the form of humour, a method which allows for both criticism and entertainment.

In Crotchet Castle, Peacock makes fun of Squire Crotchet, a pretender to aristocracy who, having made his fortune on the stock exchange, withdraws from the city to assume the mantle of nobility in a country estate. Crotchet is not a bad character; however, his son is a perfect example of the commercial greed that was prevalent in England in the first

decades of the nineteenth century.

Crotchet jnr. is given the best of educations and eventually becomes a partner in the 'eminent' loan-jobbing firm of Catchflat and Company where

...in the days of paper prosperity, he applied his science-illuminated genius to the blowing of bubbles, the bursting of which sent many a poor devil to the jail, the workhouse, or the bottom of the river, but left young Crotchet rolling in riches. (CC p.652)

In the conclusion to Crotchet Castle, Catchflat and Company is bankrupt, paying sixpence in the pound, and Crotchet junior has fled to America 'with his pockets full of surplus capital, to join his old acquaintance, Mr Touchandgo' (CC p.761).

The expansion of the commercial world brought with it the need for credit - a system that represented the exchange of money without money needing to be physically present but relying on the existence of that money elsewhere. Without controls, credit can be exploited and create the situation Crotchet junior finds himself in. In England in 1825 a financial crisis was caused by excessive speculation on the stock exchange. Norman Russell in The Novelist and Mammon describes the crisis:

During 1824 and 1825, no fewer than 624 company schemes were floated. Of these, 143 died almost at birth; 236 issued prospectuses, but never offered shares; 118 opened markets in their shares, but were later abandoned. One hundred and twenty-seven

survived into 1827. Prospective investors, when the rage was at its height, flocked to put their money into undertakings that were ill-advised, fraudulent, or ridiculous. There was one company, which actually found subscribers, that proposed to drain the Red Sea in order to recover the lost treasures of Pharaoh and his host. (Russell p.45)

Between the years 1823 and 1825 speculation had created an increase in circulation of eight million pounds that could not be balanced by assets, and many people who could ill afford loss were made destitute. These events provide valuable material for literature, and Peacock is only one of many authors who use the world of finance as the main characteristic of villainy and bad character.

The stock exchange provided a means of easily gained wealth for those who were prepared to take the risk. In literature there is a tendency to dwell on the negative side of this risk and an assumption that any gain will be made at the expense of others - most noticeably the poor. Though such abuses no doubt occurred, the frequency with which Peacock and other authors (Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope to name but a few) dwell on the negative side seems to indicate the difficulty with which money is handled in both literature and society. The desire for wealth tends to corrupt personality, and in the world of literature this often proves to be the moral of the story, which is that wealth does not equal happiness.

Peacock's criticisms of the misuse of wealth encompass both the new world of finance and the aristocracy. If it

is assumed that criticism of the new economy indicates a preference for the old, then Peacock must be categorised as an advocate for the old hierarchy; his economic solutions certainly appear to indicate this preference. Peacock's criticism can also be viewed as representative of the upheaval which accompanied the change of social structure from that of a hierarchical system to one of class, hierarchy depending on behaviour and deference and class being more dependent on economic interactions. Robin Gilmour, in The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel, describes the change thus:

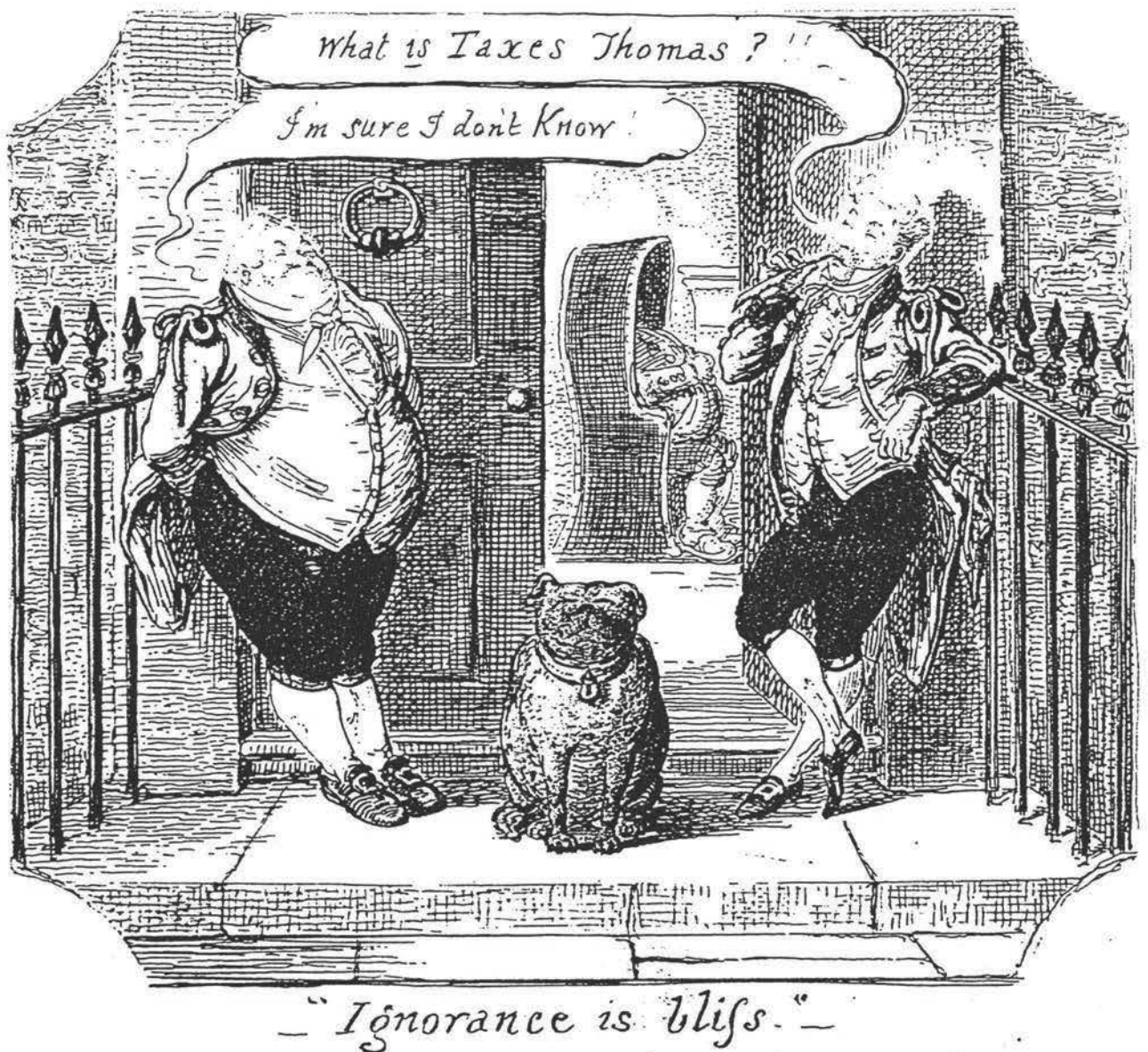
The older structure was one of 'rank' or 'degree', a social pyramid reaching down from the monarchy and aristocracy at the peak to the unenfranchised many at the base. The new structure was that of class, in which society is seen as divided into a number of mutually antagonistic groups, each united by a common series of economic interests. Conflict is present in both structures, but in theory the notion of 'rank' implies an interdependent hierarchy based on the exercise of responsibility downwards and deference upwards...What is certain is that the two categories overlapped for most of the nineteenth century, and it is questionable if the older hierarchy was ever supplanted in the minds of men and women who had some direct experience of the old society. (Gilmour p.8)

Six of Peacock's novels were written in the years 1815 to 1831, with the last, Gryll Grange, published in 1860. A bridge of

forty-five years links Peacock to Regency and Victorian times, making him one of those who experienced both old and new societies. Throughout all seven of his novels Peacock criticises political economy and the treatment of the lower classes. He also maintains a criticism of the corrupted aristocracy, church and monarchy, who exploit their social position for economic gain. These criticisms span both hierarchical and class structures, often displaying the ambivalence - as mentioned by Gilmour - which accompanies change.

The characterisation of Timothy Touchandgo presents the reader with a conflict between ethical standards and personal likeability. Ethically Touchandgo is suspect yet his personality is made attractive. In contrast to this Crotchet junior is made both ethically and personally unattractive, yet Crotchet senior appears to be a genial old man, a characterisation that contradicts Peacock's scorn of all who play the stock exchange. Within the upper classes we find the greed of Sir Simon Steeltrap and the generosity of Anthelia Melincourt and Sylvan Forester. In Maid Marian, Robin is a noble criminal, while the church and monarchy are morally suspect. In The Misfortunes of Elphin, King Gwythno and Prince Seithenyn are not portrayed as being vindictive or greedy but weak and ridiculous, yet their behaviour causes much suffering. Peacock's novels contain numerous examples that demonstrate the difficult relationship between social responsibility and wealth. The dramatic restructuring of society that accompanied the industrial revolution called for society to alter its perspective. The economic portrayals found in Peacock's novels provide a fictional example of both altering social perspectives and firmly

entrenched older attitudes.



ENDNOTES

1. In 1812 12,000 troops were occupied in controlling domestic troubles. Rioting was a great problem of this time with the Luddite riots of 1811-1818, the East Anglia and Spa riots of 1816, the march of the Blanketeers and the Penrith rising in 1817, Peterloo in 1819, the Swing riots in the early 1830s, the Reform Bill riots in 1831, Rebecca riots in 1838-39 and 1843 and Chartist riots of 1839-42 (May p.47). Control of riots was effected by utilising some of the 400,000 troops unemployed after the end of the war (May p.89).
2. Adam Smith lived from 1723 to 1790. His Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations was published in 1776.
3. Jeremy Bentham was the founder of Utilitarianism - the idea that all economic theories should be based on the promotion of 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number'; interestingly, this idea seems to oppose the doctrine of Colquhoun. R.J. White in Life in Regency England describes Bentham's Utilitarian ideal as being 'disinterested application of intelligence to social problems' (White p. 92). Several studies on Peacock promote the idea that Peacock was himself Utilitarian. Marilyn Butler in Peacock Displayed writes that Peacock is believed to have dined with Bentham once a week, having

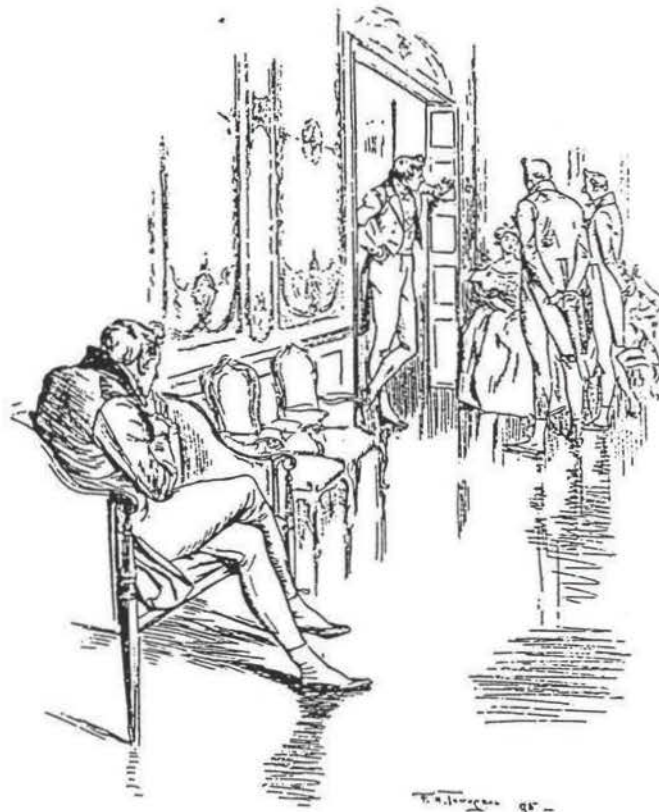
made his acquaintance through his superior at the East India Company, James Mill. Peacock worked at the East India Company for most of his life, spending the last 20 years as its Chief Examiner. James Mill himself was Chief Examiner before Peacock, and his son John Stuart Mill took over the position when Peacock retired.

4. The first Poor Laws were developed in the 16th century. In Elizabethan times, parish administration provided relief for the aged, sick and orphaned as well as running the workhouses. In the late 18th century the cost of maintaining the poor was exacerbated by a new system named Speenhamland which provided a supplement for those workers whose wages were not sufficient to support them. This system proved too costly and led to the passing of the Poor Laws of 1834 which regarded poverty as a moral failing in those who were able to work - hence the cruelty of the workhouse (Encyclopaedia Britannica V.9 p.603).

5. Thomas Malthus lived from 1766 to 1834. An economist and demographer, he created the theory that population growth would always outrun food supply, therefore it was necessary to limit human reproduction in order to avoid famine. His ideas were incorporated into various theoretical economic systems such as Ricardo's low wage ideal and his discouragement of charity. Malthus met Ricardo in 1811 and they became close friends. In 1821 Malthus became a member of the Political Economy Club, whose membership included James Mill and Ricardo.

David Ricardo lived from 1772 to 1823. His father was a Dutch Jew who made his fortune on the London Stock Exchange. Ricardo fell out with his father over religion and was forced to work for himself. He was successful on the Stock Exchange and eventually won the support of a prominent banking house. This allowed him to increase his fortune to such an extent that he was able to indulge in his tastes in literature and science. There are some remarkable similarities between Ricardo and Crotchet senior.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIETY

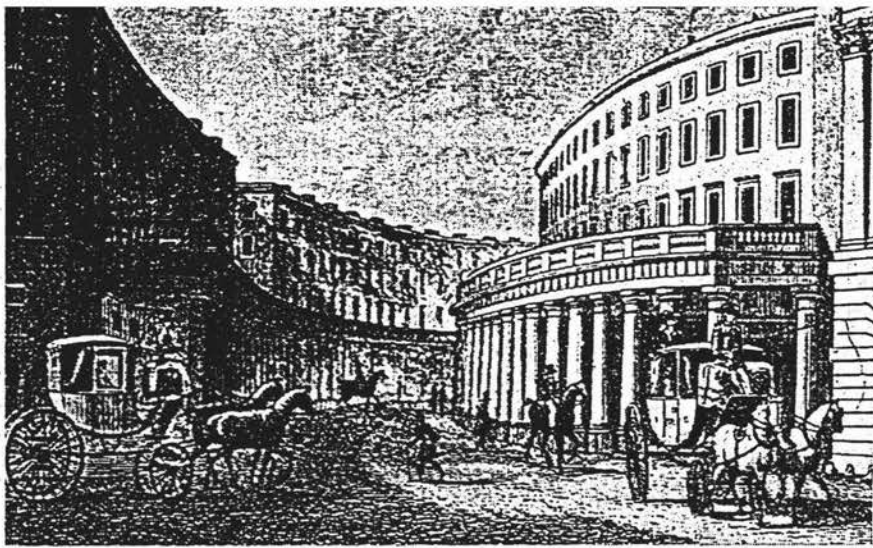


The stranger, having returned the reverend gentleman's good morning, resumed his sketch, and was intently employed on it when Mr. Crotchet made his appearance, with Mr. Mac Quedy and Mr. Skionar, whom he was escorting round his grounds, according to his custom with new visitors; the principle pleasure of possessing an extensive domain being that of showing it to other people. Mr Mac Quedy, according also to the laudible custom of his countrymen, had been appraising every thing that fell under his observation. (CC p.666)

'Conspicuous Consumption' was a term invented by Thorstein Veblen in his work The Theory of the Leisure Class. Veblen's work examines the behaviour of the wealthy American society of the late nineteenth century. The central concern of his argument is the behaviours that wealth generates. John Kenneth Galbraith in The Age of Uncertainty, sums up Veblen's theory thus:

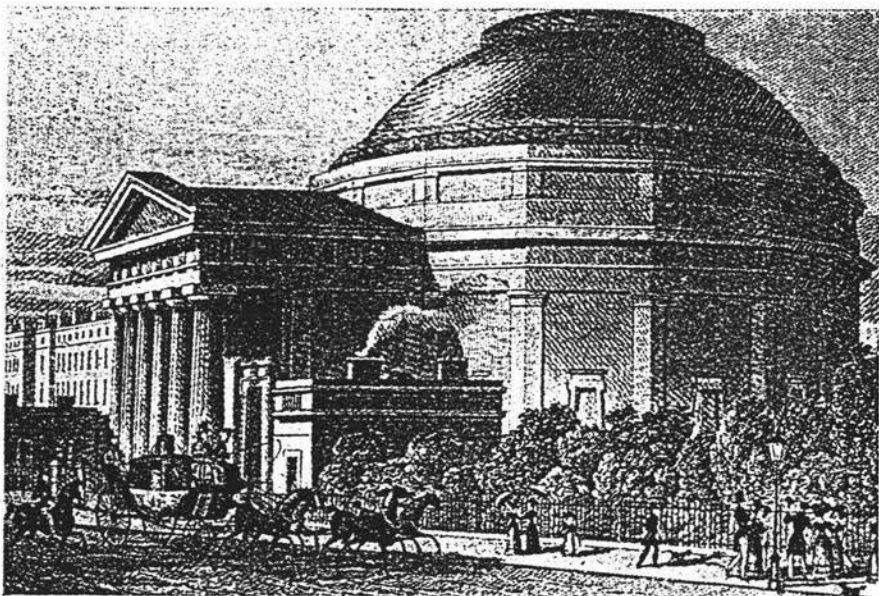
The Theory of the Leisure Class is centrally concerned with the deep sense of the superiority that is conferred on the rich by their wealth. But to be enjoyed, this superiority must be known; accordingly, a major preoccupation of the rich is the carefully considered display of wealth. Two things serve this end - Conspicuous Leisure and Conspicuous Consumption. (Galbraith p. 61)

Examples of Regency architecture.



The Quadrant, Regent Street, designed by John Nash, 1819-20

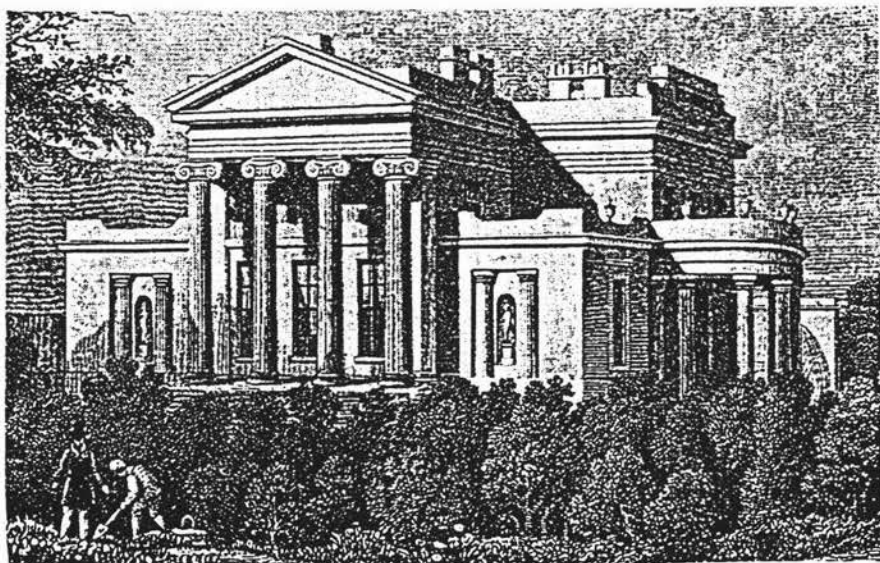
(White p.71)



The Coliseum, Regent's Park, designed by Decimus Burton

(White p.71)

A villa in the Regent's Park: Grove House



(White p.67)

When the Prince of Wales died in 1830 as King George IV, his influence on London architecture could not be missed. Large, opulent buildings in the style of ancient Rome and Greece graced the wealthier parts of the city. The cost of these buildings came from the public purse - the same purse that denied the poor any form of assistance.

Cities such as London, as well as being economic centres, provide examples of concentrated extravagance. It is this concentration that Peacock uses to portray cities as places of immorality. In comparison, the country appears as a place of simplicity - a simplicity that implies a higher morality. To confirm his generalisation, Peacock brings characters who dwell in the city into the country, exposing their behaviours as ridiculous and shallow. In order to ascertain the source of Peacock's dislike of city life, it is best to examine some of the behaviours and mannerisms that typify city life amongst the wealthy at the time of Peacock's writing.

Conspicuous consumption focused on the physical side of wealth, where large houses and many possessions were obvious. Conspicuous leisure was concerned with the behaviours that indicated wealth, and, in a society where money was no object, behaviour often became the currency for acceptability. The currency of behaviour created uncertainty of which conformity was the main power. Those wishing to be fashionable had to affect the behaviours that would guarantee inclusion in the activities of high society. It is this conformity that makes superb satirical material for authors such as Peacock, Thackeray and Jane Austen.

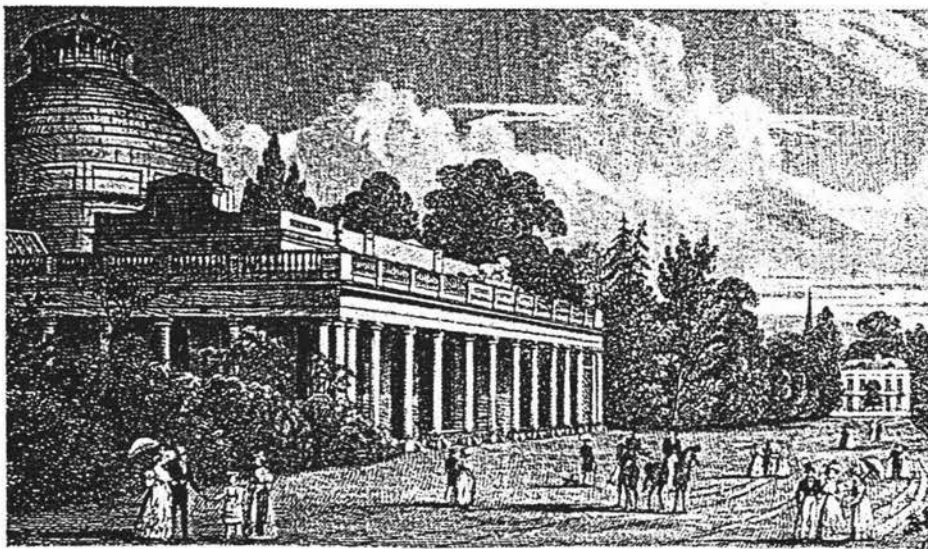
Alison Adburgham in Silver Fork Society gives numerous

examples of the ridiculous seriousness with which being 'correct' was taken, and also the precariousness of being 'in'. The procedure surrounding dances which took place every Wednesday evening at Almack's¹ provides an example of the manipulated protocol which governed high society. Invitations to Almack's were bought by a process of applying to patronesses who decided who was to be allowed to attend. Adburgham describes this process thus:

It was to these ladies that those anxious to obtain tickets for the Wednesday night ball had to apply. From April onwards throughout the season they sat each Monday at a long table on which were three baskets in front of each patroness. One basket held all the applications from the patroness' own friends, relatives and near connections; the next basket bore the words 'Almack's Accepted', and a third 'Almack's Rejected'. From the names in this third basket, they compiled a list of those who could never be admitted. The remainder would be able to try again another day. Each patroness then read out the names from her second basket...and the other ladies made their comments, stating acquiescence or objection to each. Those applicants who survived this inquisition were sent vouchers which enabled them to buy their tickets. (Adburgham p.103-4)

These balls were places where prospective marriage partners could be met, a service that earned them the title of 'marriage markets'. Acceptance at Almack's often meant acceptance

spects of 'The
season'.



(White p.128)



The morning promenade at Cheltenham

(White p.135)



*In the season. **

(Pool)

elsewhere; it was by this system the patroness could control who was to be allowed into the ranks of higher society. A satirist of the time, Henry Luttrell, wrote the following poem on Almack's:

All on that magic LIST depends;
Fame, fortune, fashion, lovers, friends:
'Tis that which gratifies or vexes
All ranks, all ages, and both sexes.
If once to Almack's you belong,
Like monarch, you can do no wrong;
But banished thence on Wednesday night,
By Jove, you can do nothing right.

(Adburgham p.105)

Balls like Almack's were part of the 'Season', a time when the aristocracy converged on London for the purpose of socializing. The Season, lasting three months, began in earnest in May. Young girls were 'presented' to the sovereign at St. James, after which they attended numerous balls, dances and visits. Daniel Pool, in What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew, writes that in 1849 Lady Dorothy Neville attended '50 balls, 60 parties, 30 dinners and 25 breakfasts.' The sole purpose of all these meetings was marriage. If a girl had not married by her third season, she was considered a failure (Pool p.53).

Dowagers and widows² assisted in the matchmaking of the young wealthy. Heiresses and eldest sons were considered the main prizes in society. David Thomas in a study titled Marriage



Well (?) brought up.

First Juvenile: "May I have the pleasure of dancing with you, Miss Alice?"

Second Juvenile: "A, no—thanks! I never dance with younger sons!"

(Pool)

Partners of the British Peerage shows that in the years 1800-19 there were 524 marriageable men, 136 of these being heirs; a total of 378 were married, 115 being heirs. Between the years 1820-39, 462 were marriageable though only 346 did marry - of those who did, 103 were heirs. These statistics show that quite a large proportion never married. Those who did marry often married out of their class. Of the 378 aristocratic marriages between 1800-19, 278 were 'out-marriages' - 65 involving heirs. Out-marriages between 1820-39 were 245 - of those, 61 involved heirs. Thomas goes on to say that 'The importance to the family estate of an eldest son's marriage is reflected in the fact that of those marrying up to about 1850, a high though declining proportion of the marriages to commoners were to heiresses' (Thomas p.105).³ There are no similar statistics for women in Thomas' study.

Primogeniture - the leaving of the estate and title to the eldest son - left younger brothers without anything except their pedigree. Such a practice was designed to maintain the exclusivity of the aristocracy, and keep wealth within a small group. Thomas' mention of heirs out-marrying for money shows how the practice of primogeniture was an influence in the breakdown of the old hierarchy; it also shows how money influenced that breakdown. The condition of the younger sons, aristocratic but poor, also allowed for the inclusion of wealthy lower classes into the aristocracy. These arrangements appeared to be barren of emotion and for social appearances only. It is this aspect of the 'marriage market' that Peacock constantly criticises throughout his novels.

The apparent absence of emotion amongst the marriage market,



'The Inconveniences of a Crowded Drawing Room', by G. Cruikshank. (M. Dorothy George p.136)

however, did not mean that the upper class did not experience love; it is in the nature of Peacock's moral satire that he habitually exaggerates the lovelessness of aristocratic matrimony. Because of their heightened profile in society, the aristocracy are fated to be the most scrutinized. The conflict between the duty of the aristocracy to be leaders of society by example and the freedom of behaviour conferred on them by their wealth, made scandal the most interesting aspect of their interactions.

Literature often provides examples of the conflict of ideas within society. During the Regency era, publications such as Thomas Bowdler's purified version of Shakespeare, published in 1802, reflected the Evangelical element⁴ within society, while so-called 'Silver Fork' novels⁵ portrayed the less moral activities that marked aristocratic behaviour. Bowdler's Shakespeare contained changes Bowdler felt were 'in the interests of Decency and delicacy'; changes such as replacing the word 'body' with 'person' (White p.142). White states that the Regency was a time of moral reaction, with behaviours tending to reflect class status. White believes that the aristocracy and the lower classes were of the same moral mould, which was very flexible; the middle classes by contrast, tended to promote much more rigid moral standards (White p.138). This theory has merit when applied to Peacock, for he was of the middle class,⁶ and the call for a more moral aristocracy is certainly an insistent one in his novels. It could be said that he brings to the milieu of the Silver Fork novel something of the moral fervour of the Evangelicals.

The aristocracy, though aware of the need for morality,

had their own way of accommodating it to fit the structure of their group. Affectation through language was one manner in which they made some token gestures to morality. Adburgham quotes Lady Susan O'Brien who has made some observations on the changes in language:

'As morals grow worse language grows more refined.
No one can say "breeding" or "with child" or "lying in", without being thought indelicate. "In the family way" and "confinement" have taken their place. "Cholic" and "bowels" are exploded words. "Stomach" signifies everything. "Fair Cyprians" and "tender" or "interesting connexions" have succeeded to "women on the town" and "kept mistresses"'. (Adburgham p.61)

Morality, for the aristocracy, was also concentrated in the expected behaviour of young girls before marriage. Discretion was a facade which they could hide behind. Evidence for these two attributes can be found in the aforementioned literary phenomenon of the time the Silver Fork novel. Silver Fork novels were a style of novel that predominated between 1814-1840; they were mostly set within the aristocracy and sometimes written by the aristocracy themselves. Adburgham writes that the novels exposed the changing standards for aristocratic women through marriage:

What the novels do reveal, again and again, is the strictness of the rules dictating the behaviour of unmarried girls, contrasted with the comparative

freedom to flirt of married women... Marriage altered everything for a girl. Once she had borne an heir and perhaps one or two other children, she could indulge in delicate...[love affairs]... - always provided she conducted them with discretion. (Adburgham p.117-18)

What these novels portray is the manner in which the upper class divided morality from the family once the continuity of the class was ensured. Within the aristocracy female marriage was the dividing line between extreme morality and a moral laxity; there was no similar judgement system for aristocratic men, a situation which allowed for the growth of prostitution.

Prostitution was very visible in the early years of the nineteenth century. With the coming of gas-light, London night-life became more busy, especially around the theatres. In Love and the English, Nina Epton reports the words of a visiting Prince on the the subject of prostitution: 'In no country on earth is this afflicting and humiliating spectacle so openly exhibited as in the religious and decorous England' (Epton p.280). These words show the gap between cultural emphasis of ideals and the manner in which society often cannot meet with those ideals due to economic realities. Prostitution was often the only manner in which a single woman, without family support, could survive in a society that did not promote the idea of women having careers.

From the king downwards, 'liaisons' (relationships conducted by married women and men, single men and courtesans or prostitutes) were a common occurrence, and Epton reports that this practice continued well into Victorian times (Epton p.296).

What did change between Regency and Victorian times was the tolerance of society towards such behaviour. In the Regency era, literature appeared to accommodate such behaviour amongst the aristocracy; Victorian literature shows the extreme opposite.⁷ Adburgham in Silver Fork Society provides a list of the qualities found in Silver Fork novels:

...there are some politics, some gambling scenes and a duel; there are dazzling balls in the London season, and country-house parties in the winter; the characters include a dandy, a toad-eater...[an obsequious hanger-on]...a scheming high-society villain, a pair of lovers ill-starred until towards the end of the third volume. There are social climbers clambering towards Almack's, provincial belles at a race meeting ball...there is satire at the expense of the middle class and the rich routiers. But above all, there are semi-flirtatious drawing-room conversations and dinner-table repartee.

(Adburgham p.92-93)

Titles as awful as The Miraculous Nuptials, Midnight Weddings and Bewildered Affections were published by the Minerva Press (White p.154). Peacock objected strongly to such novels in an essay titled Fashionable Literature published in 1818. The essay condemns the reader of such literature as being a 'literary dilettante'. White believes that criticisms such as Peacock's were somewhat exaggerated, and that readership was not confined to the ignorant and idle; he names Jane Austen, Mary Russell Mitford and Thomas Macaulay as readers of Minerva publications.⁸



HARMONY before MATRIMONY.

10 Harmony before Matrimony, Gillray

11 Matrimonial Harmonics, Gillray



MATRIMONIAL HARMONICS.

White believes that people read the books to mock and laugh at society as well as to engage the mind and the imagination (White p.155). Indeed if Peacock's novels are analysed against Adburgham's list, there are more similarities than differences. Peacock's satire invites the reader to mock and laugh at the society he portrays, and his employment of romantic love as reforming, especially amongst the aristocracy, has similarities to the intent of the novels he condemns - that is, being a guide to acceptable behaviour.

All seven of Peacock's novels contain a romance plot, and all seven criticize the mercenary nature of the aristocracy both within their public role and private lives. This regularity of criticism spans forty-five years and can be taken as an indication of the depth to which Peacock felt on the subjects of love, marriage, social position and the influence of money.

Negative attitudes to Regency marriage can be found in the voices of some of the major literary figures of the day: Coleridge for instance, wrote that 'To many of the sexes, I am well aware this Eden of matrimony is but a kitchen-garden, a thing of profit and convenience, in an even temperature between indifference and liking. What a married person wants is a soul-mate as well as a house or yoke-mate' (Epton p.270). Byron, in Don Juan, writes more bitterly:

Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine-
A sad, sour, sober beverage - by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour
Down to a very homely household savour.

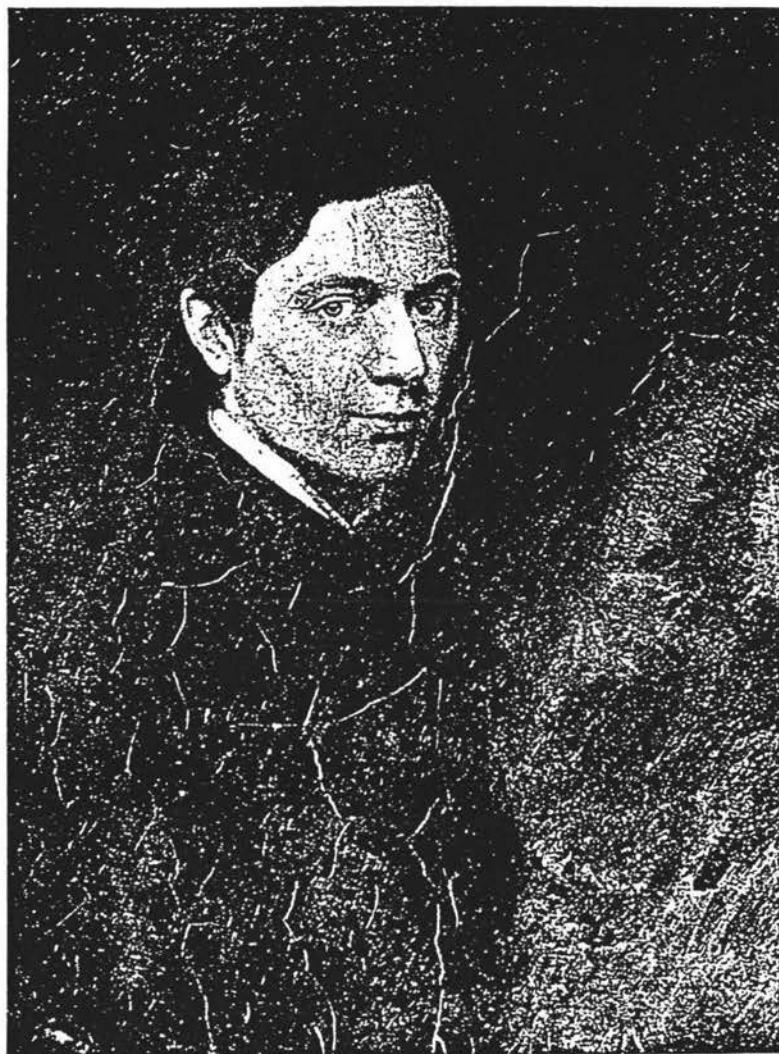


Elderly women of fashion making a sacrifice to obtain love. (M. Dorothy George p.65)

Shelley believed that love should be free, not bound within the social contract of marriage, something he likened to slavery: 'Love is free! To promise for ever to love the same woman is no less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry' (Epton p.278). All three examples dwell on the influence of time and expectations of love - Eden, wine and freedom undergo a metamorphosis into a kitchen-garden, vinegar and the loss of inquiry. Of the three, Coleridge comes closest to the philosophy promoted by Peacock.

Epton writes that the Regency era was a time when love was violent and intense. Examples of behaviour recorded both by the aristocracy and about them tend to confirm this. A most surprising example of intense emotion is to be found in the Prince of Wales, who 'rolled on the carpet in a burst of passion when he thought he had lost Mrs. Fitzherbert' (Epton p.275). William Hazlitt fell for a lodging house girl, who left him for someone of her own class; he writes of his reaction at learning this:

I tore the locket which contained her hair...from my neck and trampled it in pieces. I could not stay in the room - I could not leave it - my rage, my despair were uncontrollable. I shrieked curses on her name... I was stung with scorpions - my flesh crawled; I was choked with rage. She started up in her own likeness, a servant in the place of a woman. She had fascinated,



HAZLITT AS A YOUNG MAN

*From The Life of William Hazlitt by P.P. Howe. London:
Hamish Hamilton, 1947.*

she had stung me and returned to her proper shape,
gliding from me after afflicting the mortal wound and
instilling deadly poison into every pore; but her form
lost none of its original brightness but all was
glittering, beauteous, voluptuous grace. Seed of the
serpent or of the woman, she was divine! I was
transformed too, no longer human - my blood was of
molten lead, my thoughts on fire...(Epton p. 275-76)

Written in 1822, Hazlitt's words (from Liber Amoris) include a suggestion of the religious image that was to divide woman between angel and serpent, two polarised metaphors that divide women into heaven and hell. Ironically Hazlitt also wrote that he was proud to have felt his extreme passion because it 'gave him a kind of rank in the kingdom of love...(and that)...Perfect love has this advantage in that it leaves the possessor of it nothing further to desire. There is one object at least in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die' (Epton p.276).

Hazlitt's words mark a paradox within himself between morality and the desire to love. Angry at his loss, a loss he did not expect, he invokes religion as a judgement, yet also he feels honoured to have experienced such illicit passion because it gives his emotions a high status.

The status received from such emotion had its negative side most notably when it pushed the boundaries set by society. Lady Caroline Lamb's affair with Byron, and her behaviour afterwards, tested social limits. Having been rejected by Byron after a very public affair, Lady Caroline wrote a novel titled



Lady Caroline Lamb. (Adburgham p.17)

Glenarvon, or the Fatal Passion, a roman-à-clef that was serialised throughout the London season. It contained caricatures of several very prominent persons, who were highly offended: Lady Caroline was deleted from Almack's list and shunned from the society she had previously enjoyed. Caroline's sensational publicity and her lack of shame for her actions caused her ostracism. The condition of social opinion against her can be ascertained from the words of her cousin's wife Lady Harriet Leveson-Gower in a letter to her brother:

I expected she would have put on [sic] appearance of something, but to do her justice she only displayed a total want of shame and consummate impudence...

I looked, as I felt, stupefied. And this is the guilty, broken-hearted Calanthe [sic] who could only expiate her crimes with her death.

(Adburgham p.19)

Appearances were everything. Lady Caroline's situation shows how excesses of emotion were not tolerated if they broke the unwritten rules that governed aristocratic behaviour. Men too, were subject to social control if their behaviour threatened the structure of the group, most notably when it came to marriage: this was when the family stepped in. Such was the case when Lord Worcester (a minor), the son and heir of the Duke of Beaufort, wanted to marry Harriette Wilson, a courtesan. The Duke offered Harriette an annuity if she left London, and sent his son to Spain to join Wellington's army (Adburgham p.63). Similar actions were taken when sons fell for opera singers

or actresses - the family name could not be sullied by such persons.

Family influence was strongest in matters concerning the continuity of the group. In a satirical article published in 1826, Sidney Smith described this family influence in the marriage of daughters:

[It was]... carried to the highest pitch of excellence, when love must be made to the young men of fortune, not only by the young lady, who must appear to be dying for him, but by the father, mother, aunts, cousins, tutor, game-keeper and stable-boy - assisted by the parson of the parish and the churchwardens. If any of these fail, Dives pouts and the match is off. (Epton p.271)

The whole ritualised system provided for a hierarchy of humiliation that encouraged the pursuit of those considered to be the top prizes. This system enveloped the aristocracy in a highly competitive atmosphere which facilitated insincerity and intrigue. Edward Bulwer-Lytton described this process thus:

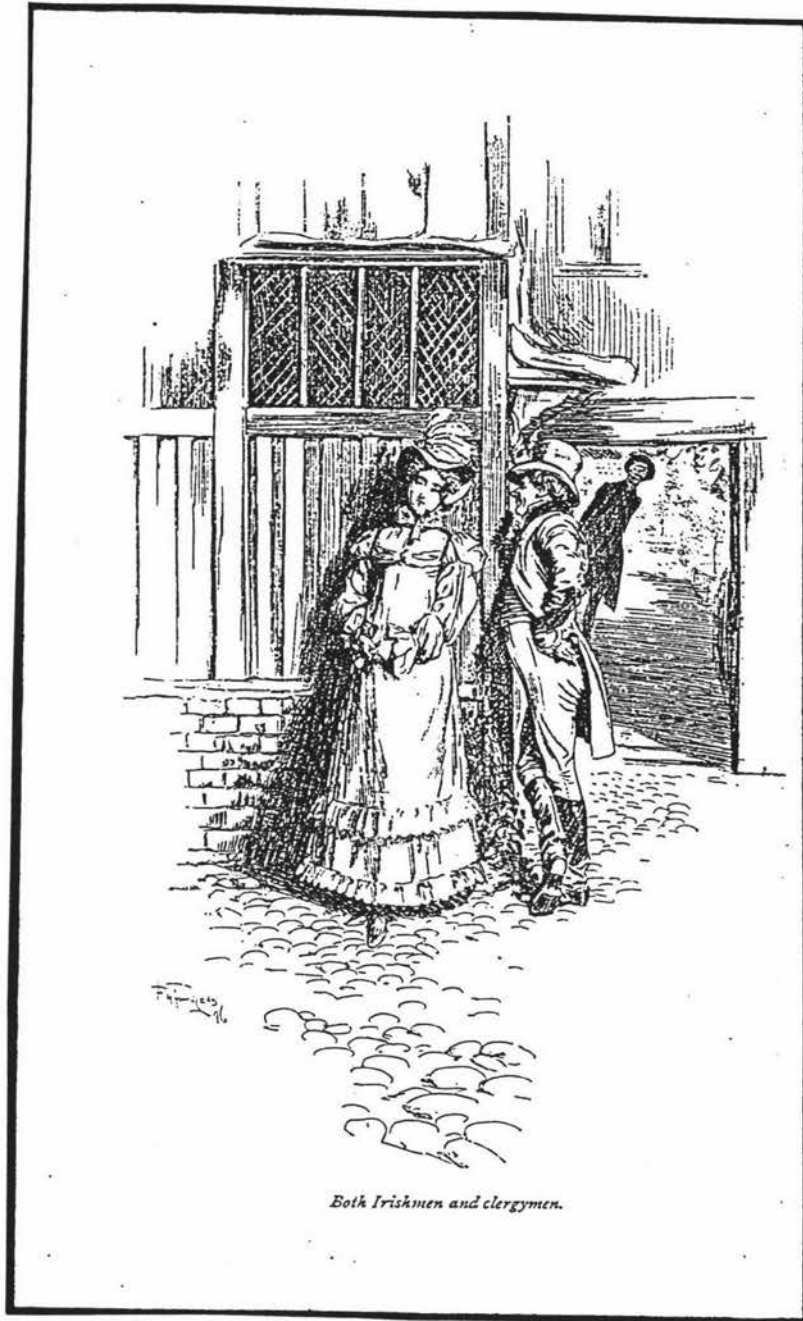
the custom of open matchmaking encourages the spirit of insincerity among all women...a spirit that consists in perpetual scheming, and perpetual hypocrisy; it lowers the chivalric estimate of women, and damps with eternal suspicion the youthful tendency to lofty and honest love. It assists to render the tone of society dull, low and unintellectual. It is not talent, it is not virtue, it

is not even the graces and fascination of manner that are sought by the fair dispensers of social reputations; no it is the title and the rent-roll...The rich young man is to be flattered in order that he may be won; to flatter him you seem to approve of his pursuits; you talk to him of balls and races; you fear to alarm him by appearing his intellectual superior; you dread lest he should think you a blue; you trust to beauty and a graceful folly to allure him. (Adburgham p.242)

Bulwer's description of the marriage market shows how society has managed to trap itself in a circle that feeds off the continuity of affectation. It implies that women know they must not be themselves, but must show eligible men what they most desire in a partner. Peacock's novels tend to reverse these stereotypic gender behaviours, making women the besieged characters rather than the men, thus undermining the predatory reputation that literature of the day attributes to women when it comes to marriage.

Peacock concludes Headlong Hall, his first novel, with a lengthy speech that criticizes the state of marriage in contemporary times. The criticisms concern the complicated commercial nature of marriage and the effect it has on what Peacock feels to be a natural element within human interactions - the ability to love:

And what accession of individual happiness is acquired by this oblivion of the general good? Luxury, despotism, and avarice have so seized and entangled nine hundred and



Both Irishmen and clergymen.

The wealthy Anthelia Melincourt besieged by suitors.

ninety-nine out of every thousand of the human race, that the matrimonial compact, which ought to be the most easy, the most free, and the most simple of all engagements, is become the most slavish and complicated, - a mere question of finance, - a system of bargain and barter, and commerce, and trick, and chicanery, and dissimulation, and fraud. (HH p.89).

Peacock objects to the intermingling of the philosophies of economy with the romantic ideals of love and marriage. In Headlong Hall, and the following five novels, criticism concerning love and marriage is of a similar nature; however, in Gryll Grange, Peacock's final novel (which also ends with a speech on marriage), we find a more mellow, hopeful tone. In Shakespearean style the book ends with nine marriages, two wealthy and titled couples, and seven within the labouring class. The situation shows a blending of all classes (the middle class being represented by the Reverend) in harmony: each marriage is being made for love, not money. The less wealthy do not mind their absence of money or status, and those with status and wealth do not mind sharing their ceremony with those of a lower class. The Reverend Doctor Opimian's speech reflects this harmony by quoting Simonides:

An old Greek poet says:- "Four things are good for man in this world; first, health; second, personal beauty; third, riches not dishonourably acquired; fourth, to pass life among friends." But Theron says the comic poet Anaxandrides: "Health is rightly placed first;

but riches should have been second; for what is beauty ragged and starving?" Be this as it may, we here see them all four; health in its brightest bloom; riches in two instances; more than competence in the other seven; beauty in the brides, good looks, as far as young men need them, in the bridegrooms, and as bright a prospect of passing life among friends as ever shone on any. Most earnestly do I hope that the promise of their marriage morning may be fulfilled in its noon and in its sunset. (GG p.982)

Peacock has little objection to wealth: it is only the behaviours that wealth appears to generate, especially in connection to marriage, that he dislikes. His main objection is the absence of sentiment in the making of aristocratic marriages. In Gryll Grange, class division is still strongly present: what is different is that each marriage is being made for love, rather than the influences of society; love appears to forgive any social division. Love for marriage, then, becomes a moral indicator that these couples are superior to couples who marry but do not continue to love each other exclusively.

Literature of the day indicates that the aristocracy did feel the emotion of love; it is the sequence of that love in relation to marriage that Peacock objects to. In his novels love comes before marriage, and is the reason for marriage. For aristocratic women - it is assumed - social requirements were the cause of their marriage, after which they could indulge in love affairs: for men, society also dictated their marriages, but for them love affairs could be conducted at any time.

The requirement of discretion in the conduct of these love affairs - especially for women - lent an air of hypocrisy to the aristocracy, for the maintenance of a facade of morality behind which they hid their love affairs indicates an element of guilt in that they knew their behaviour was not the best. In Peacock's novels, love does not need to be hidden; instead, marriage increases its public knowledge. Love and marriage in Peacock's novels reverse the sequence of behaviour found in aristocratic circles. Peacock's representations of love therefore appear to be an attempt at social reform, reform directed at the aristocracy, who, by altering the nature of their behaviour surrounding male/female relationships, will herald a new tolerance within society, a tolerance that does not ask for a change in social structure - only in behaviour.

Peacock's novels create a new hierarchy, a hierarchy dictated by emotion rather than the considerations of status and wealth. It is an idealistic reaction. From the literature of the day it appears that Regency society needed some behavioural reform, most notably in the manner in which their behaviour tended to compound the unfairness of the inequalities of wealth distribution in society. Their behaviour also tended to lean towards cruelty and intolerance of their own kind, especially when the unspoken rules that governed them were broken. The nature of social criticism in Peacock's writing is such that it can be said to be part of the attempt to influence society; it was an influence that ultimately transformed Regency morality into Victorian.

ENDNOTES

1. In 1760 a Scotsman, William Macall, felt that society needed an elegant assembly room as the current places of socializing had become 'notoriously licentious'. Macall built his assembly rooms at St. James and named the dances Almack's - which is an inversion of his own name. The dances started in 1765, the main ballroom being able to accommodate some 1700 dancers. Macall died in 1781 leaving the management of Almack's to his niece. When the Regency era was in full swing the Wednesday night dances were a strongly established ritual. Rules were maintained vigorously: the Duke of Wellington turned up one night wearing black trousers and was turned away because trousers were not regulation dress - this was shortly after Waterloo (Adburgham p.102-3). By 1840 Almack's was no longer fashionable.
2. In Melincourt, Peacock creates the character of Mrs Pinmoney, a widow who arrives at Melincourt to commend her nephew - Sir Telegraph Paxarett - to the wealthy heiress Anthelia Melincourt. Mrs Pinmoney's character represents all that is shallow amidst fashionable society. Peacock does not make her a disagreeable character; she is ridiculous and very entertaining.
3. None of Peacock's romances involves a titled man marrying a titled woman; instead Peacock's marriages tend to represent the statistics found in Thomas' study. Women

who are heiresses marry men of wealth, but only one is titled; Anthelia Melincourt is an heiress and marries Sylvan Forester who is himself wealthy but untitled; Morgana Gryll is heiress to her uncle's estate, and she marries Algernon Falconer who is wealthy but untitled; Matilda Fitzwater is an only daughter and she marries Robert Fitz-Ooth, the only titled man in Peacock's novels to marry an heiress (this couple later becomes Maid Marian and Robin Hood); Celinda Toobad, an only daughter and heiress, marries Mr Flosky, a character who appears to represent the newly emerging middle classes. None of the titled heirs in Peacock's novels marry either wealthy or titled women. Lord Curryfin marries Miss Niphet, Lord Chainmail marries Susannah Touchandgo, Squire Headlong marries Miss Tenorina Chromatic, and Lord Anophel Athcar marries Miss Danaretta Pinmoney.

4. The Evangelical revival occurred in the Regency times. White, in Life in Regency England, writes that 'A revival of propriety was in part a defence against the vulgarity which had been creeping into society with the arrival of what the old King had once called "mere moneyed men"' (White p.139). Also, the French Revolution caused a surging of the aristocracy to church, fearful that they may be seen in the same light as their French counterparts - in 1818 the Church Building Act saw 214 new churches created (White p.143). Large numbers of religious tracts were published by The Religious Tract Society; William Cobbett, after his exile, returned to England and wrote that the

purpose of these tracts was to 'teach people to starve without making a noise...keeping the poor from cutting the throats of the rich' (White p.147). The nature of these tracts promoted the ideals of a spare diet and simple and frugal living, ideals that conveniently maintained the hierarchical status within society. Evangelicals were a direct influence in the formation of Victorian morality.

5. Silver Fork novels got their name from a satirical essay written by William Hazlitt in The Examiner. In this essay Hazlitt mentioned that these novelists were inordinately preoccupied with the use of silver forks - cutlery used to eat fish (Peacock makes much of the eating of fish in his novels). Hazlitt mocks Theodore Hook, an author and publisher once imprisoned for debt. Hook was at one stage Accountant and Treasurer for the island of Mauritius, a position he took up having escaped England for his debts. Hook was returned to England in disgrace for financial mismanagement of twenty thousand pounds. Upon his return he was arrested, and it was in prison that he wrote his first novel (Adburgham p.45). Hazlitt writes of Hook: 'Provided a few select persons eat fish with silver forks, he considers it a circumstance of no consequence if a whole country starves; but these privileged persons are not surely thinking all the time and every day of their lives of that which Mr. Theodore Hook has never forgotten since he first witnessed it, viz. that they eat their fish with a silver fork' (Adburgham p.1).

6. Peacock's father was a glass-merchant who died when Peacock was three; his mother was the daughter of a master of a man-of-war who lost his leg in a battle off Dominica in 1782. Peacock was raised by his mother and grandparents. After leaving school, Peacock worked for a short time in a London office but left and started on a course of self-education. In 1807 Peacock fell in love with Fanny Faulkner and became engaged; however, her parents disapproved of the match and she married someone else, only to die one year later (Peacock wore a locket containing Fanny's hair right up to his death). Peacock tried life at sea as a private secretary to Sir Home Popham but found it not to his liking. He left the job and set off upon a walking tour to discover the sources of the river Thames. The next year he visited Wales where he met and fell in love with Jane Gryffyd, the daughter of a clergyman. As he was twenty-six with no prospects or money, he could not marry Jane, and left only to propose some eight years later by letter - she accepted. During this eight-year gap, Peacock met and made friends with the poet Shelley; in 1819 he applied for and obtained a position in the East India Company after which he wrote to Jane. Peacock's marriage was beset with tragedy: in 1826 their second daughter died; Jane never recovered from this and remained a nervous invalid for the rest of her life. Peacock had two other daughters and one son; he also adopted a child who resembled their dead child. Peacock retired in 1856 and went to live in the country, where he died in 1866 aged eighty-one.

7. Examples of Victorian literature that exemplify the prevalence of morality are Anne Bronte's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles, George Moore's Esther Williams, and every novel written by Dickens.
8. Benjamin Disraeli, twice Prime Minister of England, wrote Silver Fork novels to support himself before his political career. In his youth Disraeli was considered a dandy.



CHAPTER THREE: MEN



THE HONOURABLE MRS PINMONEY

And who is that very tall and remarkably ugly gentleman?...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.
(Melincourt p.191)

Mrs Pinmoney's regard of Sir Oran Haut-ton¹ shows both her social narrow-mindedness and her lack of shame in displaying it. Sir Oran Haut-ton is a character based on the missing-link theory: his name pokes fun at the aping of behaviour that goes on in fashionable society, and his behaviour is of such a standard that he shames many of the 'civilized' humans he comes into contact with.

Mrs Pinmoney represents the Regency valuation of form over talent. She has not yet met Sir Oran, and her first impression is obviously less than flattering. On finding out his social pedigree she retreats into flattery, exhibiting the importance that fashionable society places on social position over personal merit. Her attitude reflects the old precedence of rank over character. That Sir Oran happens to deserve admiration for his personality rather than his status is of no consequence to Mrs Pinmoney or her set.

It is this blind privileging of status over character that Peacock often criticizes. Rather than the old view of the aristocracy being respected for their position or the amount of money they possess, Peacock suggests that a person be judged



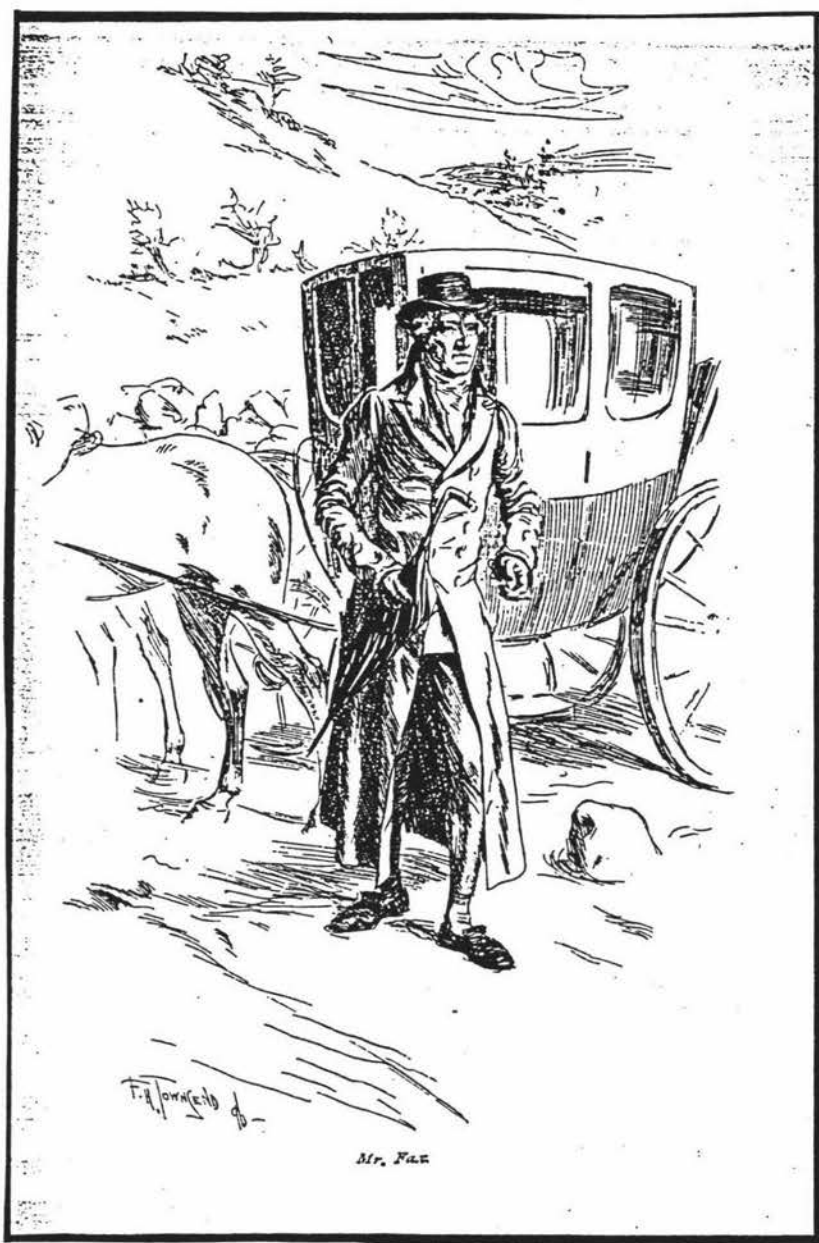
'Possibly,' thought Sir Telegraph, 'possibly I may have seen an uglier fellow.'

Another first impression of Sir Oran.

on individual merit. Such an ideal is representative of the changes occurring in the structure of early nineteenth-century England. Individual merit in theory facilitated social mobility, enabling a continuity of the old aristocracy while offering hope for others to enter the ranks. Merit, for those not born into the aristocracy, was gained by behaviour. In the old system behaviour was marked by manners, and manners could be learned, often without the necessary morality that Peacock and the Victorians desired. Though manners were still important, it became necessary for sincerity to be added to the motivation behind actions; thus, rather than going through the social motions that 'fashionable' society required, there had to be a morality provoked by the desire to do the most ethical thing. In Gryll Grange (Peacock's Victorian novel), the desire for individual morality in higher social positions is spoken of by Lord Curryfin in an after-dinner debate amongst the men:

Patronage, it used to be alleged, considered only the fitness of the place for the man, not the fitness of the man for the place. It was desirable to reverse this. (GG p.884)

Patrons bestowing their benevolence thus looked only at the esteem that they could obtain from their generosity, the character of the beneficiary not being of great importance. While this comment is still offered amidst the wealth and privilege of the upper classes, it is indicative of the morality that crept into even the still most unequal of social institutions - patronage. The change in the equation is that

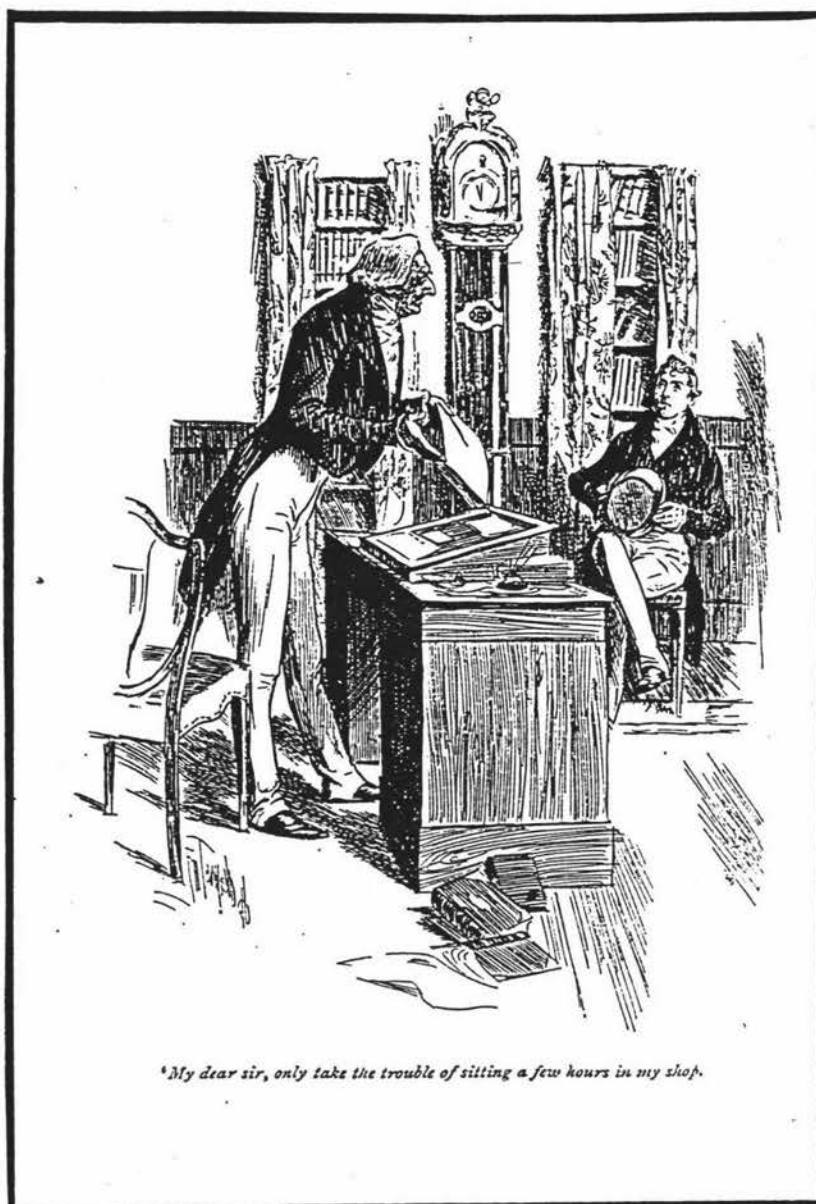


Mr. Faw

the merit of the individual must be taken into account, which shows that while gratitude is still of importance, along with the economic side of the equation, there is something else that must be considered: generosity is still prevalent but the infusion of the morality of the beneficiary reflects a social judgement upwards as well as the flow of esteem downwards. The social title, while still powerful, does not offer sole protection.

In Melincourt, Peacock creates an example of morality in patronage. Mr Fax (a character based on Malthus) tells the story of Desmond, a principled young man who attempts to work in the literary trade of the city and maintain his ethical standards. When this proves impossible, Desmond and his wife and family move to the country where poverty reduces them to a pitiful state. Anthelia Melincourt, the wealthy heiress, on discovering their plight, offers economic assistance and work. When the reader actually meets Desmond, rather than just hearing his story, Desmond is seen to be showing Anthelia the required amount of gratitude and she in turn knows that Desmond reflects the standards she herself holds.

Desmond received an education, which supposedly lifted his status - intellectually and thus morally - out of his class. Education, previously monopolized by the aristocracy, was more accessible to all classes due to the new technology of printing. The process of educational advancement was termed 'the march of mind', and often objected to by the upper classes on the grounds that education would upset the social structure and cause undue expectations of advancement amongst the working class. Desmond's case displays some of the ambivalence that



**My dear sir, only take the trouble of sitting a few hours in my shop.*

The ethical Desmond trying to get work in the city.

was created in society towards the possession of standards of behaviour that were believed to be the exclusive property of the upper class. Desmond's morality lifts him out of his class while his class status limits his opportunities. This was a social paradox in England at the time, as the upper class believed they had a monopoly on morality, given that they alone had access to education. It was also a common belief that 'the march of mind' was somewhat responsible for the French Revolution. Fear of revolution, combined with the advance of industry and commerce, created a situation in England that called for some kind of social mobility that could accommodate the advancement of the previously lower classes into the realms of a higher status, while at the same time not totally destroying the aristocratic class. For the masculine portion of the population, this change was accommodated in the creation of the gentleman. The title 'gentleman' was earned by behaviour, rather than wealth or birth, and as such became almost a classless description. Desmond could be called a gentleman, whereas Crotchet junior does not deserve the description.

Throughout all seven of Peacock's novels there are examples that contradict the previous scale of social respect while at the same time confirming it. The settings are amidst wealth and none of the characters² appears to want for money, each having a great deal of leisure time to indulge in country visits. Peacock's criticism of the paper money system leads us to the conclusion that he does not approve of economic advancement by such a means, thus making him by default a believer in the old system. At the same time he criticizes the 'fashionable' behaviour of the upper classes, especially those who dwell in

the city, disapproving of the pointlessness and triviality of their pastimes, yet it can also be said that the majority of characters in Peacock's novels are not great examples of social worthiness either. The ambivalence Peacock exhibits can be viewed as an illustration of the conflict taking place in actual society. The majority of Peacock's heroes³ are of the wealthy upper class, characters who disdain to partake in the fashionable set, and love the simplicity of the country. All display a morality that Peacock contrasts with the shallowness of the city, making them appear somewhat of an anomaly to their class by both their isolation and behaviour. What Peacock appears to be attempting in the moral world of his novels is an alteration of the morality of the aristocracy while maintaining the hierarchy that lets them have the means to monopolize wealth and education. His novels reflect the social upheaval taking place in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As a writer he could be seen as part of the transition, not overly successful in terms of popularity, due partly to his criticisms of the established hierarchy and also to his apparent condemnation of the means by which social mobility was achieved. Such condemnation only affectionately invites the term 'snob' to be applied to Peacock, because he is careful to sugar his criticisms with humour. Perhaps it is easiest to classify Peacock as disliking change and disliking meanness of spirit - he earnestly believes that the past is best, while at the same time unintentionally indicating where the future was headed.

The concept of the gentleman is not democratic. Historically its origins are in chivalry, where knights performed heroic



Proceeded very deliberately to pull up a pine.

Sir Oran Haut-ton rescues Anthelia.

deeds in honour of an aristocratic lady. Courage, courtesy and honour were the characteristics required: these bestowed status on the knight and the lady - if any physical relationship evolved then the honour of both was lost, their reputations destroyed. Such a system relies on being seen to be doing the right thing.

In Melincourt, Anthelia Melincourt's ideal suitor must have the spirit of the age of chivalry. In modern times this proves to be scarce. The numerous suitors who gather around her have little idea what this means. Lord Anophel Athcar, who later abducts Anthelia, must ask what the spirit of chivalry is. He is told chivalry is '...about truth and liberty - disinterested benevolence - self-oblivion - heroic devotion to love and honour - protection of the feeble, and the subversion of tyranny' (Melincourt p.147). Lord Anophel's response is that such characteristics are those of a 'rank Jacobin'. Another contemporary opinion reflects the Regency preoccupation with honour at all costs, which manifested itself in the practice of duelling. Mr O'Scarum defines chivalry thus: 'I think I know what that is: I'll shoot all my rivals, one after another, as fast as I can find a decent pretext for picking a quarrel' (Melincourt p.147). Both opinions dwell on the violent aspects of the code.

In Melincourt, Peacock divides the characteristics of the code of chivalry between two men - Sir Oran Haut-ton, and Sylvan Forester. Sir Oran deals with the physical side of chivalry, rescuing Anthelia by feats of great strength, and, as he cannot speak, his actions must convey his ethical standards. Sylvan Forester, on the other hand, represents the cerebral side of



Mr. Fax was of opinion that he was smitten.

A love-sick Sir Oran.

chivalry, with the only difference being that he does not wish his ideal woman to be a 'phantom of abstract perfection' (MM p.163); his concept of an ideal woman is influenced by romanticism, and a reaction against the fashionable society of the day. His requirements are mostly moral; they also presuppose wealth: she must 'love and feel poetry', she should be musical, she should have charity - not penny charity but a liberal, discriminating, practical philanthropy; she should have no taste for public pleasures, enjoying a more domestic role instead; she must also love nature in its wildness. These are the requirements for the Victorian ideal of womanhood. Peacock, by dividing the characteristics of chivalry between two men, enables the vital requirements of physical strength and emotional sensitivity to be present in the facilitation of the love plot. The chivalric side is represented by Sir Oran, whose deeds of strength and valour protect Anthelia, but do not win him her heart. His is the role of knight, unfulfilled but well honoured and respected. Sylvan Forester marries Anthelia. He is the newly sensitive gentleman, disliking the insincerity and affectations of the city.

Lord Anophel Athcar, the aristocratic abductor, ends up marrying Danaretta Pinmoney, Mrs Pinmoney's daughter. Peacock ends Melincourt with this information. With heavy sarcasm he hints at the popular need for readers to have a happy ending, knowing full well that the characteristics of these two will deny happiness in the ideal form of love. Instead of a love match Mrs Pinmoney has made a 'good match', through 'skilful management'. The reader gains the impression that this marriage alone will be sufficient punishment for Lord Anophel's crimes.

Such an ending displays the machinations of the old system to be somewhat of a joke, where the insincere can pair up without personal failings being of any great importance. In contrast, all the happiness is with the more sensitive Sylvan Forester who 'married, left off driving, and became a very respectable specimen of an English Country Gentleman' (Melincourt p.343).

In Maid Marian, Robin Hood has all the characteristics of chivalry. Though technically a criminal, he has more honour and humanitarianism than those members of society whose role would seem to monopolize such traits. His use of force both to rescue the downtrodden and to rob the greedy has a morality that lifts him above the rest of society. The story of Robin Hood displays the manner in which social structures and practices can hide the true character of a person, and how often it is only with the use of force that such a structure can be overcome. Robin's use of physical force is tinged with wit: the wealthy are invited to dine, with no right of refusal, and after they have partaken of hospitality they are then asked to pay with everything that they have. The exchange is a trade, extremely unbalanced, but it has the element of making the robbed feel and look ridiculous, thus reversing the usual disproportion in the spread of wealth. Peacock often uses this method to point out inadequacies of both society and personality. Taking some small aspect of personal interaction, and giving it an overwhelming importance which far outweighs its normal worth, enables both criticism and entertainment. It is by this method that Peacock can point out how society often elevates the most trivial to a disproportionate seriousness.

This is the disease of fashionable society, most



Drawn by Rich. Dighton.

Dec 19. 1816

The DANDY CLUB.

(M. Dorothy George p.167)

concentrated in men in the character of the dandy, 'The epitome of selfish irresponsibility...ideally free of all human commitments that conflict with taste: passions, moralities, ambitions, politics or occupations'(Moers p.13). They did nothing. In Nightmare Abbey, the dandy is made fun of in the character of Mr Listless (an academic) who cannot even think for himself. On being asked to play billiards, he replies:

Billiards! Really I should be very happy; but, in my present exhausted state, 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?...Seven months ago. You see, Mr Larynx; you see, sir. My nerves, Miss O'Carroll, my nerves are shattered. I have been advised to try Bath. Some of the faculty recommend Cheltenham. I think of trying both, as the seasons don't clash. The season, you know, Mr Larynx - the season, Miss O'Carroll - the season is every thing. (NA p.374)

In The Dandy, Ellen Moers relates an incident with Beau Brummell which is similar in nature to Peacock's portrayal. Brummell on being asked which of north England's lakes he admires, turns to his valet:

"Robinson."

"Sir."

"Which of the lakes do I admire?"

"Windermere, sir," replied that distinguished



2. Robert Dighton: Beau Brummell (1805)

(Moers p.32)

individual.

"Ah yes, - Windermere," repeated Brummell, so
it is, - Windermere."

(Moers p.18)

Brummell is an example of the social mobility of the early nineteenth century. Reputed to be the son of a valet, he reached the pinnacle of society when he became a friend of the Regent (a friendship which later soured). Brummell's sense of dress and his wit allowed him entry into upper society. Once there he adopted the exclusiveness of the class by carrying to extreme the notion of good form. William Hazlitt wrote of him:

He has arrived at the very minimum of wit, and reduced it... to an almost invisible point. All his bons-mots turn upon a single circumstance, the exaggerating of the merest trifles into matters of importance or treating everything else with the utmost nonchalance and indifference, as whatever pretended to pass beyond those limits was a bore, and disturbed the serene air of high life. (Moers p.20)

Unfortunately for Brummell luck ran out and he was forced to flee to Calais to escape his debts, dying destitute and insane. Without the protection of money or the appearance of having money he became an embarrassment and was shunned by his contemporaries. Such a rise to fame and fall from grace displays how tenuous life could be in fashionable society. Brummell's



'The Honourable Mr. Listless sitting between Scythrop and Marionetta, and fixing all his attention on the beautiful speaker, did not observe Scythrop.'

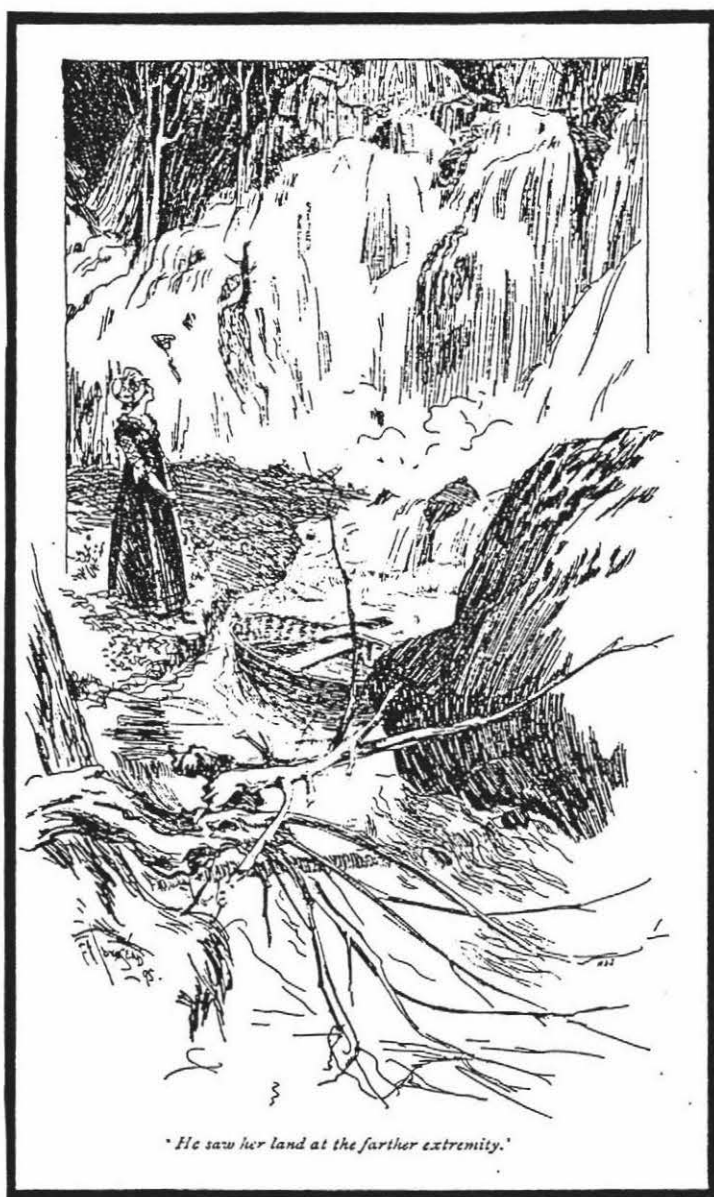
Mr Listless the academic dandy in Nightmare Abbey.

rise to fame was a triumph of his wit and style, while his downfall shows just how fragile was his likeability. Without the trappings of fashion and society he became dull and uninteresting to those who had previously found him entertaining.

Brummell's lifestyle and demise provide literature with ammunition to criticize the insincerity and shallowness of fashionable society. William Hazlitt's criticism is such an example, and while perhaps Hazlitt's criticism contains elements of truth about Brummell, it must be remembered that in such a hierarchical and leisure-filled existence, boredom was often conquered and the status quo maintained by pettiness and social bureaucracy.

Lifestyle change was forced upon Brummell as a consequence of his financial ruin. Touchandgo and Crotchet junior face a similar fictional outcome. For these two men the humiliation of such a vast change in material status cannot be faced in front of those who knew them as wealthy and successful men. Though they lose both social status and the degree of material wealth held in their old lives, the new setting for their lives offers escape from ridicule and responsibility. The shame of financial failure is left behind. These men do not appear to change in character: they move on to a different setting and continue on in their old ways.

Peacock's heroes do not alter for financial gain, but they do change for love. It is interesting to note that the majority of changing in terms of character takes place in the men of Peacock's novels. Given that men were more powerful legally and socially, such imbalance of change can be seen as a criticism of sorts. Those men who change, change in terms of expected



** He saw her land at the farther extremity.**

The remote Susannah Touchandgo in a romantic setting.

behavioural standards. They all personify some type of old philosophy that represented masculinity and the old order. They do not need to change but they choose to in order to gain a woman's love. Their change portrays a new depth of consideration and an alteration in what is important to them. Peacock's last two novels, Crotchet Castle and Gryll Grange, written in 1831 and 1860 respectively, are the two novels that contain the majority of the changes that take place in men. His previous novels mostly criticized polar opposites of character: characters either stayed all good or all bad throughout the novel. Such a style provides less depth in terms of readers' interest in character development, but does provide and maintain a constant criticism of character stereotypes. By introducing characters who are prepared to change, Peacock adds depth to the style of his criticism. The casualty of such a change in style is humour, for change in character implies depth of character, and an unawareness of their ridiculousness is a characteristic of the men of Peacock's earlier novels. As they become more self-aware they become less comical.

In Crotchet Castle Mr Chainmail falls in love with Susannah Touchandgo without having spoken to her. She appears in very romantic settings, remote and beautiful. A frantic Chainmail searches for her, eventually meeting with success; he is welcomed to her place of employment - a comfortable farmhouse where everyone is happy and contented, the picture of rural simplicity and contentment. Though in love, Chainmail is troubled by not knowing Susannah's pedigree:

Mr. Chainmail was in love; but the determination he

had long before formed and fixed in his mind, to marry only a lady of gentle blood, without a blot on her escutcheon, repressed the declarations of passion which were often rising to his lips. In the meantime, he left no means untried, to pluck out the heart of her mystery. (CC p.738)

The strength of Chainmail's love overcomes this prejudice, for Susannah confesses to him her father's crimes and his love remains. By making Chainmail fall in love before finding out Susannah's background, Peacock emphasises the strength of Chainmail's love in comparison to previously held social conventions. Love is the altering force in this equation: love has made Chainmail more of a gentleman. If he had dismissed Susannah for her lack of pedigree he would have fallen into the old hierarchical narrow-mindedness that places social position over personality. In marrying Susannah, Chainmail shows a willingness to step away from that old order to a world directed more by personal emotion than by social dictates.

In Gryll Grange two men alter for love, the equation here being a little more equal between the sexes. In Crotchet Castle the romance between Chainmail and Susannah contains elements of a fairy story where the female is passive and longsuffering and is finally recognised for her personal worth rather than material wealth and pedigree. Both Lord Curryfin and Algernon Falconer change because the women they are attracted to take a more active role in the pursuit of their love. Lord Curryfin is an amateur lecturer and a gentleman sportsman. He tours the country lecturing on fishing, telling fishermen who have



Found his lordship scrambling up the bank.

Miss Niphet and Lord Curryfin.

lived off the sea for generations what they already know. Curryfin is endured because he is not arrogant. His enthusiasm renders him somewhat ridiculous but entertaining. Curryfin represents the contemporary preoccupation with science and the explaining of things. Once in love Curryfin does not bother with fish anymore, nor does he pursue his sports with his previous recklessness. Curryfin possesses an advanced ability in sport, but it leads him to taking unnecessary risks. Having constructed a new sail for his boat he just about drowns. Miss Niphet assists at his rescue and later burns the sail to cinders after it has dried. Curryfin also takes risks with riding. He takes the most difficult horse in the stable and is last seen by Miss Niphet dashing into the woods on an out-of-control horse. Her imagination takes hold and she is concerned again for Curryfin's safety, needlessly so as it turns out, for Curryfin's ability with the horse is far better than his sailing skill. Miss Niphet is both overwrought and embarrassed at her excess of concern, for it makes obvious her true feelings. Curryfin is both touched by her concern for his welfare and prepared to alter his pastimes in order to spare her any further worry. Peacock describes Curryfin's change in these terms:

Thus prohibited by an authority to which he yielded implicit obedience, from trying further experiments at the risk of his neck, he restricted his inventive faculty to safer channels. (GG p. 870)

Curryfin's character is not wild or inconsiderate; it is just that he has never had to consider anyone else's feelings before.

Rather than continue in his old ways, Curryfin values Miss Niphet's concern and is prepared to amend the degree of his actions in order to spare her any worry. Peacock calls Miss Niphet's love 'a higher authority' which is 'prohibitive'. Such a description suggests that a woman imposes constraint with love. While Peacock portrays a man changing he is still susceptible to the prevailing comic and sarcastic notion that marriage somehow implies a loss of freedom for a man. In Curryfin's instance this appears true and though Curryfin chooses to make such a change, Peacock cannot resist the tug of making Curryfin appear to be somewhat of a lap-dog in his love. Peacock wants to have it both ways here, the man changing for love, yet at the same time appearing a little less 'masculine' for it. Wild behaviour was characteristic of Regency men;⁴ Curryfin's difference is in his temperament rather than his actions; his willingness to change his actions due to a change in emotions illustrates Robin Gilmour's idea that 'the gentleman' became a reforming concept:

What the Restoration was to the early eighteenth century, the Regency was to the first generation of Victorians. Where Addison and Steele had mocked the fashionable inanity of the beau and the fop, Fraser's Magazine and Carlyle and Thackeray were to attack the dandy. In both periods the idea of the gentleman becomes an essentially reforming concept, a middle-class call to seriousness which challenged the frivolity of fashionable life and reminded the aristocracy of the responsibility inherent in their

privileges. In the novels of Thackeray, and the early novels of Dickens, gentlemanliness is on the side of decency, the values of family life, social responsibility, the true respectability of innate worth as opposed to the sham respectability of fashionable clothes.

(Gilmour p.11)

Peacock's portrayal of men includes both of these descriptions. Squire Headlong in Headlong Hall exhibits signs of frivolity especially in the pursuit of a wife for himself. His courtship takes place in a matter of minutes and he bounds from person to person in childish enthusiasm for his new game. Provoked by his aunt's interference due to concern for lack of an heir to carry on the family name, he responds:

"Egad!" said Squire Headlong, "that is very true. I'll marry directly. A good opportunity to fix on someone, now they are all here; I'll pop the question without further ceremony." (HH p.82)

In his enthusiasm Squire Headlong manages to arrange three other marriages, one of the men being Sir Patrick O'Prism who responds to Headlong's suggestion of his marriage to Graziosa Chromatic with:

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



'The Squire, exclaiming "Music has charms!" flew over to Mr. Chromatic, and, with a hearty slap on the shoulder, asked him "how he should like him for a son-in-law."'

The triviality and speed with which marriages are made reflects comically the lack of love in the consideration of a marriage partner in a Regency setting. Though there is no mercenary element within any of these matches, Peacock is making fun of upper-class arrangements, which in reality would never take such a short time. The lack of personal emotion would still be of little importance in the arrangement, but the scrutiny of social suitability would take a great deal more time. In Nightmare Abbey, Scythrop⁵ becomes a victim of such social machinations. Scythrop falls madly in love with Miss Emily Girouette; Peacock describes the course of the romance in one brief and comical paragraph:

At the house of Mr. Hilary, Scythrop first saw the beautiful Miss Emily Girouette. He fell in love; which is nothing new. He was favourably received; which is nothing strange. Mr. Glowry and Mr. Girouette had a meeting on the occasion, and quarrelled about the terms of the bargain; which is neither new nor strange. The lovers were torn assunder, weeping and vowing everlasting constancy; and, in three weeks after this tragical event, the lady was led a smiling bride to the altar by the Honourable Mr. Lackwit; which is neither strange nor new.
(NA p.357)

Peacock's sarcasm contains elements of a moral judgement: though we are invited to laugh at the gullibility of Mr. Lackwit, and the speed with which Emily recovers from her lost love, Peacock directs our attention through humour to the lack of depth of

emotion on Emily's part, and the mercenary nature of the elder generation who obviously do not consider the emotions of the young couple. For Scythrop this is a narrow escape, Emily being a gold-digger who obviously is not marrying for love. In the beginning paragraph of chapter 1, we learn that Mr Glowry has been a victim of the same scenario, where he, in his youth, was in the shoes of Mr. Lackwit. Having been crossed in love he marries out of pique to a mercenary woman who makes his life a misery. The moral of the situation is clearly laid out by Peacock on the first page. Interestingly it is the woman who comes out looking the worst in the manner Peacock writes:

She discovered, when it was too late, that she had mistaken the means for the end - that riches, rightly used, are instruments of happiness, but are not in themselves happiness. (NA p.355)

Mrs Glowry becomes a nag and a scold, alienating everyone. Mr Glowry sees the situation with a humorous bent, stating that 'his house was no better than a spacious kennel, for every one in it led the life of a dog' (NA p.356). He turns to food as a comfort, and she dies conveniently early.

Peacock is criticizing the speed in the arrangement of a marriage, and the over-valuing of money in a decision that has an enormous impact on future emotions. In each of his more serious romances, a great deal of time is taken in getting to know the prospective partner and the relevance of money is not stressed, though it is always present by nature of the setting. In Gryll Grange the roles of money and emotion are

reversed: money is not important but emotional considerations are - almost to the extreme. Algernon Falconer is a sensitive young man with a classical academic bent. He attempts to live his life in a manner which does not engage his emotions; rather he tries to mirror the life found in the philosophies of those authors he admires. He believes that his intellect can override his emotions and struggles painfully when he falls in love with Morgana Gryll. Whenever the situation becomes too emotionally charged he retreats to his house in the woods, believing he can think his way out of his emotional predicament. On the surface his behaviour has elements of courtly love: he does not act on his emotions but admires from afar, albeit reluctantly. In Falconer, Peacock is portraying an opposite overemphasis on self-interest. Falconer is not, however, behaving in a selfish manner; it is just that he has been too used to living in a world of ideas rather than actions. Though he is in love with Morgana, he does not have the ability to act on his emotions and he has also lost the comfort of a peaceful academic existence because he cannot think his way out of being in love. In order to resolve this love plot, Peacock has Morgana be the initiator of the romance, for she is astute enough to see his predicament.

In The English Gentleman, Philip Mason suggests the creation of the gentlemanly ideal was a substitute for religion. While both religion and gentlemanliness had high ethical standards, the structure of gentlemanliness brought its rewards sooner than religion, and its ideals were less demanding. Because

the practices of gentlemanliness often necessitated the presence of wealth, it allowed a certain tolerance of wealth to prevail. If a man behaved in a gentlemanly manner, being fair, honest and humanitarian in his dealings, then his wealth and status were to be admired, not resented. The concept of the gentleman was a social accommodation that side-stepped the religious 'eye of the needle' judgement.

Peacock's novels contain little religion. Often religion is represented by a member of the church who is academically interesting to the host. Peacock mostly criticises religion for the gap between its theoretical charity and economic greed. Contemporary criticism of Gryll Grange accused Peacock of virtuous paganism⁶ (Sage p.76); written in Victorian times, Gryll Grange is imbued with what Philip Mason calls hardened 'good form', i.e. the idea that codes of behaviour often, after a period of being in practice, develop into a rigid and unbending expectation of what is acceptable. The term 'virtuous paganism' confirms Philip Mason's idea that gentlemanly behaviour was an alternative to religious behaviour. In a rapidly industrialised and thus more economically competitive world, 'gentlemanly' behaviour offered an avenue which tolerated actions that would not be seen as either Christian or charitable. Peacock in his novels, though they are largely devoid of religious ideals, does not make the Victorian split between public and private behaviours. Peacock is aware that the newly emerging 'paper money' system is increasing the potential for economic abuse, and he is aware that the old hierarchical system is also desperately attempting to protect its status and wealth.

With this in mind he makes his heroes ethically wealthy, characters who do not have the influence of religion to direct their actions, only their own sense of what is socially just. From a religious viewpoint charity without the influence of God is a paradox.⁷ Under the scrutiny of a commercial inspection the use of money without the promise of financial gain goes against the philosophy of profit. The men of economic influence in Peacock's novels appear to be interested in neither religion nor profit, but are still committed to the maintenance of the social hierarchy.

The Victorian definition of the gentleman as being divided between being a public figure and a private figure, thus allowing for the accumulation of wealth without conscience, is an indication of how economy influenced society. The characterisation of the male heroes in Peacock's novels suggests that he would have been totally against such a split. In his early novels the wealthy could behave in an economically and socially outrageous manner and did not feel the need to disguise such behaviour. In Melincourt Lord Anophel Athcar's abduction of Anthelia for the purpose of forcing her hand in marriage so that he can gain access to her fortune is of no consequence to wealthy society. Athcar appears to continue on with his life as if no crime has been committed. In contrast to Athcar, Sylvan Forester has no interest in Anthelia's money. He is interested in her personality, and, having his own personal fortune along with no tremendous urge to increase it, portrays a moral opposite to Athcar and his set. Forester gets the girl because of the genuineness of his actions. His anger at the abuse of the poor is genuine, as is his love for Anthelia.

Both are without the taint of material gain. Though legally Forester could have total control over Anthelia's wealth, we know from his character that he is not likely to behave in such a manner.

Peacock believed in self-education,³ rather than formal academic education. Given that only men could attend university at the time of his writing, the criticisms he levels at universities must implicitly condemn the state of male education. In Nightmare Abbey, Peacock sums up the process of Scythrop's education thus:

When Scythrop grew up, he was sent, as usual, to a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him; and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head. (NA p.357)

Like most of the heroes in his novels, Peacock taught himself the classics, and continued learning into his old age. Peacock believed that the best learning was to be found in older rather than contemporary literature, and he attempts to prove this in the characters of his heroes (and heroines). Men such as Sylvan Forester, Algernon Falconer, Chainmail and Captain Fitzwater all fall in love with intelligent women. In contemporary times an intelligent woman was, for many men, something unattractive and to be scorned. In order to facilitate the love plots, and to criticise education (of both men and women), Peacock had to alter gender stereotypes. In the case



*He had seen the rays of the midnight lamp tremble on many a lengthening
file of empty bottles!*

K

Scythrop's education.

of women it was the shallowness and triviality of education that needed criticism. With men's education it is less easy to discern Peacock's targets for ridicule. Some idea can be ascertained from Scythrop's course of education where more time was spent in inns than lecture halls, yet given that most of Peacock's characters converse over a Madeira bottle, it is easy to undermine the depth of such criticism. In Crotchet Castle, the group of guests undertake a canal journey during which they pass Oxford. Two of the guests have a bet as to whether anyone will be in the library - they do not find anyone. Again in Nightmare Abbey, the Honourable Mr. Listless, an academic, is found saying:

Studious! You are pleased to be facetious, Mr. Larynx. I hope you do not suspect me of being studious. I have finished my education. But there are some fashionable books that one must read, because they are ingredients of the talk of the day; otherwise, I am no fonder of books than I dare say you yourself are, Mr. Larynx.
(NA p.376)

From these three examples Peacock's common criticism seems to be that those who attend or teach at university are getting academic credit for doing nothing academic.

Those male characters who are not typical of Peacock's generalisations about education are often too stuffy for belief. In Melincourt, the course of the conversation concerning education is comic due to its intended seriousness. Forester, in reply to a lament by Anthelia concerning the social fate

of the intelligent woman, states:

I can answer for men, Miss Melincourt, that there are some, many I hope, who can appreciate justly that most heavenly of earthly things, an enlightened female mind; whatever may be thought by the pedantry that envies, the foppery that fears, the folly that ridicules, or the wilful blindness that will not see its loveliness.

(Melincourt p.189)

'[T]hat most heavenly of earthly things, an enlightened female mind' - an idea probably not in keeping with contemporary religious thought. This is one of the courtship conversations, and J.B.Priestley in Thomas Love Peacock, imagining their future, comments: 'The thought of her [Anthelia's] marital dialogues with her equally priggish and long-winded Mr. Forester makes us shudder' (p.155). In order to stress the importance of his beliefs, Peacock makes the conversation lengthy and serious, but unfortunately both comedy and reader interest are sacrificed.

The reform of masculine behaviour, within Peacock's novels, involves replacing Regency behaviours and aristocratic privilege with the idea of a meritocracy, where behaviour rather than pedigree or wealth earns esteem.

In order to promote this change the social setting must be within the upper class, and show altered behaviours as well as the elements of the unreformed society. Comparisons are achieved by contrasting these behaviours - often in the

area of wealth and benevolence. Melincourt and Maid Marian are the two novels that display these comparisons most effectively.

Though it appears as snobbery, the failure of Crotchet junior to maintain his wealth has the effect of keeping the aristocracy clean of such characters; for a man who has made his money on the stock exchange by shady and unethical dealings is not wanted amidst Peacock's reformation of the aristocracy. Peacock's criticism of Crotchet senior is a little different, for it mellows as the novel progresses - displaying some conflict within Peacock's ideas.

Nightmare Abbey deals mostly with the exaggeration of affected behaviours, of ideas that are in vogue and taken too far and become ridiculous. Scythrop's immersion in literary gloom and Mr Listless' dandyism are just two examples of such behaviour. The living results of marriages made for money are also portrayed in Nightmare Abbey, as well as the evidence that the older generation often repeat the same mistakes that made their lives a misery, by forcing tradition on the younger generation, thereby learning nothing. The marriage of Danaretta Pinmoney to Lord Athcar in Melincourt also emphasises this tradition.

The promotion of chivalric behaviour as part of the reformation of male behaviour explains how Peacock takes from the past in an attempt to alter future behaviour. The evolution of this method helps to create the idea of gentlemanliness. Traditions of the past are employed to correct failings of the present.

To criticize bureaucracy and public administration, which



'He passed whole mornings in his study, immersed in gloomy reverie, stalking about the room in his nightcap.'

Scythrop.

was the domain of men, Peacock utilizes the Robin Hood myth. The myth displays how the misuse of money under the guise of public concern feeds personal greed, and how often it is only force that can prevent this. At a time of great public dissatisfaction, Maid Marian contains a tacit approval of rebellion - even though that rebellion is amidst the upper class, not the lower classes who were rioting in reality.

Love plays a main part in effecting change in men's personal lives. In comparing Peacock's first and last novels, we can measure the progress of the role of love. In Headlong Hall, love's presence is minimal, and the choice of marriage partner displays the shallow nature of this decision in Regency times. Gryll Grange totally reverses this shallowness by emphasising emotional extremes, insofar as Falconer's exaggerated religious idealism prevents him from achieving a successful relationship, that is, until he receives some sound advice.

In his characterisations of men Peacock manages to include many of the behaviours that depict the society of the day, behaviours that range from Regency wildness to gentlemanly benevolence. Peacock also includes male characters whose ideas report the progress of science and knowledge as well as those who represent the maintenance of the old hierarchichal status quo. Amidst these representations Peacock gradually gives emotion a higher importance over the previously held attitudes and rituals that governed the behaviour of men.

ENDNOTES

1. Peacock received his inspiration for the character of Sir Oran Haut-ton from the ideas of Lord James Monboddo 1714-1799. Monboddo linked man to the orangutan, thus anticipating Darwin's theory of evolution. Monboddo's main work was Of the Origin and Progress of Language, a six-volume set which explored the origins of language and society.
2. Many characters in Peacock's works represent one idea which monopolises their conversation. Often these ideas are taken to a comic extreme in order to portray the foibles of society. Characters' names often give away their particular obsession: Mr Cranium in Headlong Hall represents the current vogue for phrenology; Mr Eavesdrop in Crotchet Castle is a man who supports himself by selling stories about society. Peacock's novels are full of such characters, most of whom are house guests chosen for their interest to the host. Most guests are representative of the new middle class whose occupations include the professions, the armed forces, parsons, doctors, dons, scientists, literary men and artists.
3. The definition of 'heroes' for the purpose of this thesis is those men who fall in love and marry. Men such as Sylvan Forester (Melincourt), Algernon Falconer and Lord Curryfin (Gryll Grange), Captain Fitzwater and Lord Chainmail (Crotchet Castle), and Robert Fitz-ooth or Robin



'Memento mori. Come, a bumper of Burgundy.'

A common scene in Peacock's novels, confirming May's statistics.

Hood (Maid Marian).

4. Wild behaviours practised by Regency men included chariot racing and gambling - gambling on anything ranging from cock fighting to boxing and cards. Duelling was another example of the excesses of behaviour indulged in, so much so that George IV passed a law prohibiting it. Drinking was a major pastime - temperance workers calculated that 67 million pounds' worth of alcohol was drunk in 1830 (May p.134); the regularity with which the Madeira bottle appears in Peacock's novels tends to fictionally confirm this statistic. High-class prostitutes such as Harriette Wilson provided the nobility with premises to indulge themselves in, and they would pay for more sexual pastimes at the wild parties held in her expensive apartments (White p.115).
5. The character of Scythrop has been likened to the poet Shelley who was at one stage a close friend of Peacock's; Shelley even supported Peacock financially. Peacock was also an executor of Shelley's will. After Shelley's elopement with Mary Godwin, Peacock remained a close friend and defender of Shelley's first wife Harriet Westbrook - even after her suicide. Shelley took no offence at the characterisation of Scythrop, a man trapped in a love triangle who is unable to choose between the two women.
6. This was an anonymous letter sent to The Saturday Review

which was published on 16th March 1861.

7. An example of an attempt to try and cure some of the social ills of the time was Robert Owen's cotton mill at New Lanark. The mill was an alternative scheme to the methods of manufacture found in capitalism, its basis being co-operation and community. Between the years 1815-25 some 20,000 visitors came to see this social experiment. Owen initially received support from authorities for his work, but in 1817 he decided to announce that religion was the principal enemy of human betterment - support was quickly withdrawn (White p.14). The actions of Sylvan Forester in Melincourt parallel Owen's practices. Forester also runs a manufacturing village along more humanitarian lines.
8. Peacock never attended university. He attended school as a child and continued his education by teaching himself through a strenuous course of reading. He never stopped learning, and was reported to be teaching himself Spanish in his old age.

CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN



ALGERNON

May I ask if you read Latin?

MORGANA

I do; sufficiently to derive pleasure from it.

Perhaps, after this confession, you will not wonder that I am a spinster. (GG p.888)

In her answer to Algernon Falconer (her future husband), Morgana Gryll captures the essence of the problem for an educated woman during the nineteenth century. Intelligence was deemed a social sin for a woman, something that rendered her unattractive, thus hindering her chances for the pinnacle of womanly success - marriage.

Peacock was strongly in favour of women being educated. His ideal was not, however, in accordance with the decorative Regency-type education.¹ He preferred a woman's education to involve literature (not the fashionable variety), classics and music. To this end, he creates women who are capable of conversing with men on an equal footing. In many instances the educated women surpass the men in their academic knowledge and social understanding.

The topic of female education, like that of political economy, never alters in its perspective throughout all seven of Peacock's novels. He is vigorous in his condemnation of the contemporary state of women's education. Regency-style education was designed to produce decorative women who had no

opinion; as befitted products of fashion, their education was geared towards the making of a 'good match' in marriage, which translated into the most wealthy and titled man they could secure. Peacock's heroines are anathema to Regency education yet Peacock still lets them be romantically successful. His purpose is to portray education as enhancing the sincerity of a woman's romantic love rather than detracting from it.

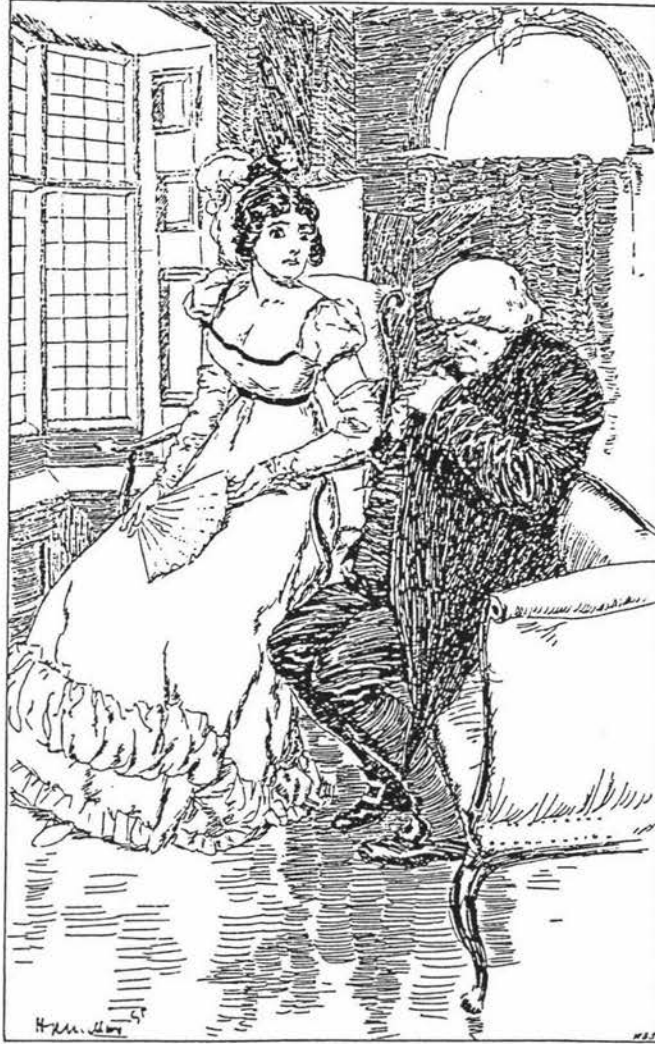
In order to emphasise his opinion on female education, Peacock makes education - especially in literature, music and art - the major attraction between prospective couples. Educated women converse with men and discover mutual sympathies and opinions. In this process they discover more about each other's personalities as opposed to the fashionable importance of pedigree and wealth. The relationship develops into sincere love, and we are persuaded to believe that the marriage between the educated couple will be more successful than a fashionable match. Unfortunately we do not see this success in fruition, as Peacock's novels conform to the style of most love stories - finishing once the love plot has been resolved.

To create female characters whose education differed from the standards of the day required unusual social settings. All of Peacock's heroines are either wealthy or can support themselves. None has the direct influence of a parent. Some have parent figures who dispense advice, and others, like Susannah Touchandgo, have parents whose circumstances prevent contact. Those characters, both male and female, who have the direct influence of a parent, usually repeat the negative habits of the parent. Danaretta Pinmoney, Scythrop Glowry and Crotchet junior are prominent examples. Celinda Toobad and Matilda

Fitzwater defy their father's wishes in favour of their own will in the cause of love. Both flee from their parents' influence.

Autonomy from parental influence afforded independence. Economic security combined with education created a situation for Peacock's heroines that was totally at odds with contemporary roles for women. Each of Peacock's heroines has the ability to survive on her own without the need for a male partner. This ability in turn gave weight to a woman's decision in the choice of a marriage partner. It is the love, rather than any kind of economic or social dependence, that Peacock is emphasising in his portrayal of women.

Many studies when examining the roles of Peacock's female characters note that Peacock is the first male author to create feminist women in a work of fiction.² In order to achieve this distinction Peacock had to defy conventional social behaviours. In Gryll Grange it is Morgana Gryll who does the proposing to Algernon Falconer.³ She does so on the advice of Miss Ilex, an unmarried yet attractive woman who inspires respect rather than pity for her singleness. In Crotchet Castle, Clarinda Bossnowl is the most astute and witty character, and even though she appears to be mercenary in her love life, she is not denied the happiness of a romantic match. Her character allows Peacock to portray the conflict a woman confronts when marriage is the only career she can choose. Though she quite rightly must consider her economic future, she learns that love is more constant than money. Her character depicts Peacock's moral that emotional value is more worthy than economic value, yet at the same time portraying how a woman who does not have



'Miss Philomela detailed to him the plan of a novel she was preparing for the press.'

The sleeping Dr. Gaster and the indignant Miss Poppyseed.

financial independence must weigh her romantic choice carefully.

In his first novel, Peacock is quite scathing towards women. The novel lacks the sympathetic tone which appears in his later books. Women are portrayed as boring and simplistic - in keeping with the education they have received. Mr Panscope, an unsuccessful suitor in spite of his ten thousand pounds per annum income, is consoled by the father of the woman he intended to win. His reply is reported thus:

Mr. Panscope begged him not to distress himself on the subject, observing, that the monotonous system of female education brought every individual of the sex to so remarkable an approximation of similarity, that no wise man would suffer himself to be annoyed by a loss so easily repaired. (HH p.87)

In Headlong Hall, women's education is somewhat of a joke amongst the men. Miss Philomela Poppyseed is a character who represents the end purpose of female education. Miss Poppyseed is a writer of popular novels and, during the course of an evening at Headlong Hall, she describes the plot of her latest novel to the Reverend Doctor Gaster. Miss Poppyseed is so long-winded that the Reverend falls asleep. On discovering his lack of attention, she angrily requests that he inform her where she left off, knowing full well that he cannot. The Reverend makes an educated guess:

I think you had just laid it down as a position, that a thousand a-year is an indispensable ingredient in



'Fans were very actively exercised, and water was strenuously called for by some of the most officious of the gentlemen.'

The ladies of Headlong Hall recover from seeing a human skull.

the passion of love, and that no man, who is not so far gifted by nature, can reasonably presume to feel that passion himself, or be correctly the object of it with a well-educated female. (HH p.39-40)

It was often the case that these popular novels doubled as behavioural instruction manuals for both the aspiring wealthy and the already wealthy. Peacock, in introducing Miss Poppyseed to the novel, describes her as 'an indefatigable compounder of novels, written for the express purpose of supporting every species of superstition and prejudice' (HH p.21). Her novels encourage the mercenary nature of marriage and the shallow quality of female thought, thus she is somewhat of a joke yet she also inspires an element of fear within the men of the party at Headlong Hall. Often such novels were written by women of a high social position who based their characters on those persons they met in the course of their socializing. In Crotchet Castle, Clarinda Bossnowl toys with the idea of writing such a novel in order to purchase 'trinkets and fal-lals' that she cannot get from her father (CC p.684). Such efforts to receive a little money of their own were exploited by newspapers and publishers of the day; ⁴ Clarinda is aware of this and is perhaps a little too sophisticated to employ such tactics. Though Peacock is mocking the nature of popular fiction and the women who write it, he does exhibit, by default, the problem of a woman trying to support herself in a world that does not prepare her for anything other than being a decoration.

The deficient Regency-style education for women was often an investment. In Crotchet Castle, Lemma Crotchet's education

has been designed to provide the Crotchet family with potential for an aristocratic match. Her father's wealth provides for a major part of her attraction. Peacock describes her:

She was ... a glittering bait to divers young squires expectant (whose fathers were too well acquainted with the occult signification of mortgage), and even to one or two sprigs of nobility, who thought that the lining of a civic purse would superinduce a very passable factitious nap upon a threadbare title. The young lady had received an expensive and complicated education; complete in all the elements of superficial display. She was thus eminently qualified to be the companion of any masculine luminary. (CC p.654)

Peacock blames the nature of women's education rather than the women themselves. Such a method places the responsibility for women's personalities on external circumstances rather than individual character. With the emphasis on superficial detail, genuineness and individuality are sacrificed. Peacock is critical of the characteristics society holds as important for they lead to people affecting those characteristics in order to be acceptable. The result of this is that everyone is the same. Those wishing to break away from convention risked ostracism. For women, this often meant they remained single.

In Gryll Grange, Miss Ilex is one who missed out on love because she believed too strongly in what was deemed 'proper' behaviour for a woman. Rather than show any outward signs of encouragement to the man she loved, she was distant. Now older

and wiser, she reflects:

If I had met him with equal earnestness, if I could have said or implied to him in any way, "Take me while you may, or think of me no more," I am persuaded I should not now write myself spinster. But I wrapped myself up in reserve. I thought it fitting that all advances should come from him: that I should at most show nothing more than willingness to hear, not even the semblance of anxiety to receive them. (GG p.924)

Miss Ilex is the seriously educated woman's equivalent to Miss Poppyseed. She is a cherished guest because of her character. Her attributes are a good-humour, agreeable conversation, knowledge of society and music and good sense in matters of conduct and dress. Though a spinster she is not mocked because of it - her character saves her. Peacock creates in Miss Ilex a woman who remains unmarried and is quite happy with that status. Because she is a woman who could only love once, her decision to remain single is one of choice rather than fate. Rather than portray her as a failure and redundant to society, Peacock gives her the role of wise woman. Her advice effects the marriage of Morgana Gryll and Algernon Falconer.

Miss Ilex encourages Morgana to defy what is socially acceptable behaviour. By proposing, Morgana is not being either delicate or submissive - two female attributes highly prized in Regency society. Many of Peacock's heroines fail the



'The next arrival was that of Mr. Cranium and his lovely daughter.'

Cephalis Cranium and Caprioletta Headlong greet each other. Peacock is cynical about this meeting:

'The next arrival was that of Mr Cranium, and his lovely daughter Miss Cephalis Cranium, who flew to the arms of her dear friend Caprioletta, with all that warmth of friendship which young ladies usually assume towards each other in the presence of young gentlemen' (HH p.20).

submissiveness test, yet they still remain perhaps not delicate but morally correct. With Miss Ilex, the end result of her advice is still what society values - marriage ; it is only the process towards that end that is altered. What Peacock is suggesting in his fiction is that with a change in educational standards for women, conventional behaviour may also have to alter, but the end process will still be the same; however, if this does not occur the alternative is still tolerable. His ideal is that relationships will be richer if women are allowed to have an opinion and act on it. He is careful, though, not to sacrifice their femininity with it. It sometimes appears to be in danger but love and marriage always bring it back into acceptable territory.

Peacock's portrayals of marriage are mostly negative. Most rely on the metamorphosis of the woman from a submissive young girl into an interfering and controlling old shrew. Such portrayals contradict the idea that women had little power in the nineteenth century. The type of power they wielded, however, was not in a public or professional sphere: it was private in nature and tended to have more of a negative emotional effect - especially on men. Such portrayals are a comic cliché. In Headlong Hall, Mr Cranium has been bribed into giving his approval to the marriage of his daughter Cephalis with a skull. He believes he has got the better of the bargain:

"I simply know," said Mr Cranium, "that if it were once in my possession, I would not part with it for any acquisition on earth, much less for a wife. I have had one: and as marriage has been compared to

a pill, I can very safely assert that one is a dose.

(HH p.86)

Marriage is the cure for wanting to get married. In Gryll Grange the cliché is still present. Gregory Gryll,⁵ Esq. will not marry because he feels it will disrupt the pleasurable things in life:

He liked to dine well, and withal to dine quietly, and to have quiet friends at his table, with whom he could discuss questions which might afford ample room for pleasant conversation and none for acrimonious dispute. He feared that a wife would interfere with his dinner, his company, and his after-dinner bottle of port. (GG p.783)

In Nightmare Abbey, Christopher Glowry remains 'a very consolate widower' after the death of his mercenary wife. Though Peacock is generous to young educated women in love, his sympathy does not extend into old age. He cannot resist the comic mileage that comes from the shrewish wife and battle-weary husband story line. He does, however, make the telling of such stories very brief.

Peacock's basic complaint against women is the paucity of their education, and how it is incompatible with any kind of serious interaction with educated men. Peacock's heroines have all had the luxury of wealth and circumstance that has enabled difference.

After Headlong Hall Peacock offers a positive role model for women rather than solely criticizing them. Anthelia



Anthelia.

Melincourt, single and wealthy, is pursued with vigour by numerous admirers. In circumstances where a great deal of wealth is in the possession of a potential partner, Peacock's cynicism as to the sincerity of the emotions of the less wealthy partner is often apparent. He introduces this attitude in the first paragraph of Melincourt:

The young lady nevertheless possessed sufficient attractions to kindle the flames of disinterested passion; and accordingly we shall venture to suppose, that there was at least one in the number of her sighing swains with whom her rent-roll and her old castle were secondary considerations; and if the candid reader should esteem this supposition too violent for the probabilities of daily experience in this calculating age, he will at least concede to it to that degree of poetical licence which is invariably accorded to a tale founded on facts. (Melincourt p.103)

In this paragraph Peacock suggests that the reader suspend his disbelief to allow the idea that one admirer might not be after Anthelia's money. He seeks toleration for his poetical licence, and by doing so, draws attention to both fictional and real worlds. That an effort is required on the reader's part to believe in the genuineness of emotion in a fictional character denies that it can be believable in both worlds. Money by its nature and power brings with it suspicion of intent - most notably in the world of private emotions.

What saves Anthelia from falling prey to the attentions



Fashionable arrivals.

Mrs Pinmoney and her daughter scrutinize Melincourt.

of these men is her education. She is well read, especially in Italian poetry. From her reading she has formed an opinion of her ideal man, and in a debate over love with Mrs Pinmoney she describes those characteristics in detail:

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 - the friend of the friendless, the champion of the feeble, the firm opponent of the powerful oppressor - not to be enervated by luxury, nor corrupted by avarice...more desirous to distribute wealth than to possess it...(Melincourt p.112)

A wealthy paragon. Most of Anthelia's requirements by the nature of their actions need wealth, for the structure of nineteenth-century society enabled only the wealthy to have the time and money for such behaviour. Ironically that behaviour must deny the importance of money. It seems that the importance of money must be renounced in order for genuineness of emotion to be more believable. In this manner, Peacock criticizes money yet at the same time uses it as a powerful indicator of true personality. For Mrs. Pinmoney, wealth equals character; she needs no other characteristic to provoke her interest:

...a gentleman's character is usually in the keeping of his banker, or his agent, or his steward, or his solicitor; and if they can certify and demonstrate

that he has the means of keeping a handsome equipage, and a town and country house, and of giving routs and dinners, and of making good settlement on the happy object of his choice - what more of any gentleman's character would you desire to know? (Melincourt p.112)

Mrs. Pinmoney's requirements are based on physical proof of wealth, and from that she ascertains character. Her character assessment forgives any negative personal traits by not taking them into consideration. Such procedures in courtship are something of a gamble, and, as Peacock would have us believe, only lead to unhappiness. Mrs Pinmoney's financial scrutiny has the nature of a business strategy rather than a romance. In the world of commerce such scrutiny would be sensible; in the world of the aristocracy, because aristocrats do not soil their hands with trade, their commercial bargaining moves into a more private arena, where they bargain with people rather than shares or paper money. In Melincourt, Peacock wants to split love from the machinations of the money world. In the domain of the city-bred Pinmoneys Peacock implies that love is conditional, and is only permitted if wealth is present. In the world of Anthelia and Forester, there is still a reliance on money, but we are persuaded to believe that Anthelia's having money is more tolerable because of her morality, morality that is mostly visible because of her wealth.

Setting his novels amidst wealth while trying to diminish the role of wealth has driven Peacock into idealism. Anthelia finds her perfect man in Forester, and the two of them live priggishly ever after. Comedy is sacrificed in the relationship



'Scythrop immediately replaced Dante on the shelf, and joined the circle round the beautiful singer.'

N

Marionetta teases Scythrop.

of Anthelia and Forester, for they are so serious as to be unbelievable. One suspects that, but is not sure whether, Peacock is still playing with our suspended disbelief.

In the character of Anthelia, Peacock has introduced the characteristics that define his heroines; however, he does not make the women of his future novels quite so ponderous and serious. In Nightmare Abbey, the next novel after Melincourt, Peacock returns to humour. The basic plot of Nightmare Abbey concerns a love-triangle, where two women totally opposite in character fall in then out of love with the main character - Scythrop. Marionetta O'Carroll is a product of a Regency education; she plays with Scythrop's emotions, being alternately attentive then cold. Scythrop revels in Gothicism and all its associated drama and Marionetta's coquetties act like a pendulum on his emotions causing them to swing from joy to misery with regularity. In contrast to Marionetta, Celinda Toobad, first known as the mysterious Stella, is seriously academic. Deeply into romantic gloom, she experiences nothing lightly. She runs away from home to avoid an arranged marriage, and ends up hiding in Scythrop's tower. Ironically it is Scythrop who was the intended groom, but neither of them knows this. Stella and Scythrop fall in love and Marionetta is forgotten, much to her chagrin.

Both women represent the extremities of their respective educations. Marionetta treats love as a game; in a conversation with Mr Listless, she outlines a method for indicating a love interest knowing full well that Scythrop is listening:

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 desperatley in love with her - desperatley. (NA p.380)

Marionetta is using Scythrop's love as a thing to be played with, for she has observed him reading in this manner, and has taken it as an indication that he is hers. Her using Scythrop's genuine actions as a trivial game shows that it is Scythrop's attention more than his love that she is interested in. She wishes to keep him in a state of insecurity for that is of more worth to her than his love. In comparison to Stella, Marionetta lacks emotional depth.

Stella's ideal of love is severe in its requirements. Hers is an all-or-nothing requirement. Peacock has her laying down the law to Scythrop in no uncertain terms:

"If I ever love," said she, "I shall do so without limit or restriction. I shall hold all difficulties light, all sacrifices cheap, all obstacles gossamer. But for love so total, I shall claim a return as absolute. I will have no rival: whether more or less favoured will be of little moment. I will be neither first nor second - I will be alone. The heart which I shall possess I will possess entirely, or entirely renounce." (NA p.406)

Of course when Stella finds out about Marionetta she renounces him as does Marionetta upon discovery of Stella; they both

marry other house-guests that have been at the Abbey in the course of their stay.

In Nightmare Abbey many of the main characters, especially the older generation, are trying to impose their will onto the younger generation. Mr Glowry, Scythrop's father, does not wish Scythrop to marry Marionetta as she has no fortune. Mr Glowry is in a difficult financial position as he has just lost a High Court action. He gets together with Mr Toobad and they arrange the marriage between their children. It is profoundly ironic that the children rebel and—at the same time are carrying out the wishes of their parents. The difference between the motivation of the older generation and the younger is that of love and free will versus money and parental influence. Neither love nor money wins out in the end, due to Scythrop's dithering.

Peacock is democratic in his poking fun at women's education in Nightmare Abbey. Both Stella and Marionetta appear as extremes of their respective educations, their differences providing one of the main plot functions within the novel. In Gryll Grange, Peacock's final novel, the situation of two women in contention for one man is repeated; however, this time the situation is treated in a much more polite and serious manner. The situation is also altered with the addition of another man, and the plot revolves around the difficulties of being socially correct. Both women, Miss Niphet and Morgana Gryll, have received separate styles of education but they are not presented as being markedly different compared to the polarities of personality that previous novels have portrayed.

Morgana Gryll is the heiress to her uncle's fortune and must weather attempts by numerous suitors as a result of that

position. In the final chapter of Gryll Grange, her uncle questions her rejection of various individuals; Morgana's answers provide a list of masculine failings that reflect the progress of the age and the trappings of high society: gambling, speculation on the stock market, politics, dislike of poetry, lack of emotion, love of speeding coaches, old age and ugliness. These men are depicted as social predators whose habits require wealth, and we are led to believe that it is Morgana's money rather than her personal attractions that they are after. Morgana rejects those male suitors on the basis of personality rather than economy; one character named Mr Long Owen is dismissed because of his concealment of the truth:

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

(GG p.979)

It is apparent from this statement that it is the lie that does more damage to Morgana's opinion of Long Owen than his fortune hunting. Peacock makes these rejections an integral part of his heroine's character, for it is in keeping with the Victorian feminine ideal to look to the emotional aspect of the interactions, rather than the economic side. Accordingly the rejections become more of a moral triumph for the women rather than an economic triumph. The economic side of the relationships is left to the reader to deduce.

The underlying assumption of Morgana's reactions is that money and personality are closely intertwined - most obviously

in the portrayal of negative personality habits rather than positive ones. Morgana's discovery of Long Owen's deceit saved her from both economic and social difficulties, and, though her decision was based on emotion, her actions still protected her inheritance by association. In structuring Morgana's decision with emotion to the fore, Peacock does not sacrifice the Victorian feminine ideal. If Morgana dwelt on the importance of her wealth in her decision it would introduce a degree of calculation into her life, for the worry of being deceived out of genuine love would bring into any relationship the attributes of commercialism; the desire of a mercenary man for profit would be met and Morgana's wish for an equal exchange of love where both partners profit emotionally would be sacrificed. For mercenary types a lifetime with money meets with their requirements; for those seeking a romantic attachment money alone leaves them unfulfilled.

Romantic love provides an avenue that can appear to be totally separated from the machinations of economy, yet ironically many of the practices and procedures that represent romantic love parallel actions found in an economic world. The concept of romantic love operates on a grand ideal, and Peacock's romantic plots promote this. Such an ideal places great weight on the choice of partner for it is a large emotional investment. As future events rely on the choice it becomes somewhat of a risk, the battle of a present ideal against an unknown, but hoped-for future. Both gambling and speculation on the stock exchange involve similar elements of risk. An investor makes the best decision he can at the time based on his research - only the future can reveal if that choice was



'The captain offered his left arm to Lady Clarinda, and followed at a reasonable distance.'

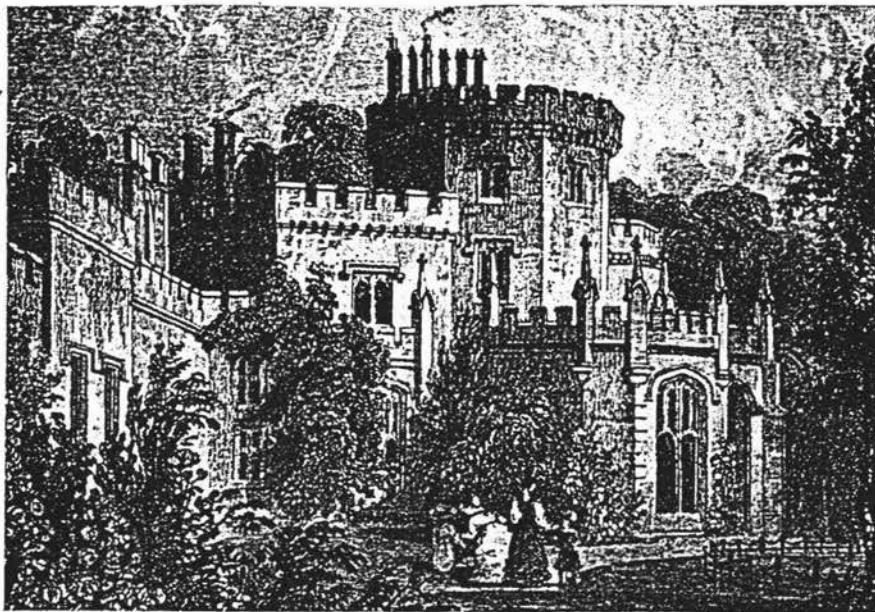
Lady Clarinda and Captain Fitzwater.

correct. In Peacock's novels, which follow the classic formula of romance novels, the future is cut off and the element of risk is left suspended.

Emotions have an economic side, but to dwell on that economy somehow undermines the idealisation of romantic love. Such idealisation was perhaps a moral over-reaction in response to the strength of the Regency marriage market, where romance appeared to be ignored in favour of economic considerations. Peacock explores the ethics of money over love in Crotchet Castle through the romance of Clarinda Bossnowl and Captain Fitzwater.

Captain Fitzwater is not a wealthy man, but he is solvent enough to indulge in a leisured lifestyle. He has no title or fortune, which makes him a second or subsequent son. His personal merit lies in the strength of his love for Clarinda and he presses his case on Clarinda at every opportunity he can. At some stage she must have returned his love, but that era happened prior to the time we meet them. Clarinda declines Fitzwater because of his lack of wealth: her logic for this refusal is that she believes love is protected by the presence of money. Clarinda is perhaps Peacock's wittiest and most entertaining female character: in her conversations with Fitzwater on the topic of marriage she displays an economic awareness that sits uncomfortably with the earnestness of his emotions. These light-hearted debates with Fitzwater serve to emphasise the polarities of emotion between commercial and private worlds; though Clarinda still believes in love, it is conditional on the amount of wealth that accompanies it. She makes the mistake of naively believing that she can have

Examples of Regency
housing.



A neo-Gothic country house: Luscombe, near Dawlish, Devonshire, designed by John Nash
(White p.120)



Cottage ornée: Endsleigh Cottage, Milton Abbot, Devonshire

(White p.119)

Middle-class homes in Park Village East, Regent's Park



(White p.68)

both. Clarinda is portrayed as perhaps more misled than outrightly greedy; the tone of her conversation reveals this:

Do you know, though Mammon has a sort of ill name,
I really think he is a very popular character; there
must be at the bottom something amiable about him.
He is certainly one of those pleasant creatures whom
everybody abuses, but without whom no evening party
is endurable. 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? (CC p.668)

Clarinda, while being romantically misled by wealth, displays self-knowledge in that she is aware of the situation her social position and education have created for her - 'I am not fit to be a poor man's wife. I cannot take any kind of trouble, or do anything that is of any use' (CC p.670). Eventually Clarinda becomes engaged to Crotchet jnr; however, the marriage never takes place, due to Crotchet's financial ruin on the stock exchange. Clarinda returns to Fitzwater and acknowledges her error in judgement, yet it must be remembered that circumstances are the catalyst to her change: if Crotchet's fortune had remained intact, the end would probably have been different - Clarinda only really changed by default.

Clarinda's moral lesson was that Fitzwater's love was not prone to the whim of fortune and that its constancy belonged to a higher wisdom - a wisdom that placed the emotion of love

above all else - and was forgiving. She makes her apology to Fitzwater in the form of a song, the final stanza being the most pertinent:

Now one day's caprice
Weighs down years of smiling,
Youthful hearts are rovers,
Love is bought and sold:
Fortune's gifts may cease,
Love is less beguiling;
Wiser were the lovers,
In the days of old.

(CC p.760)

The song is chivalric, and its message contains nostalgia for the emotions of the past and condemnation of those in contemporary society. In Clarinda's and Fitzwater's interactions it is the female who has changed when they are compared to the chivalric ideal. Fitzwater has been the faithful knight while Clarinda has moved out of the isolating world of a domestic and passive existence into a world of pursuing her own interests.

Peacock's treatment of Clarinda displays the difficulty of a woman trying to take care of both her economic and emotional well-being in the one area of her life that she may have some influence over. In Clarinda's story it is clear that Peacock believes a woman should choose romantic love over the considerations of wealth; however, in a manner similar to the end of the romantic love plot, we are left with a suspended assumption that matters of economy will not be a problem,



The forester led Matilda to the dance.

Maid Marian and Robin Hood.

and that romantic love will cushion the impact. Such an ideal lets love influence wealth, but not wealth love; initially Clarinda allowed wealth to influence her romantic life, but once she learns that wealth - especially new wealth - is not stable, she turns the equation around and lets love persuade her feelings about money. What she is giving up is the degree of material comfort that would have made her feel secure. Such an attitude in nineteenth-century England, with its lack of compassion towards poverty, is not without some merit. Insecurity is perhaps what Peacock is attempting to avoid in promoting romantic love; elevating romantic love to a place beyond the influence of material consideration conduces to isolation and therefore lack of the influences of change. This ideal shows the beginnings of the Victorian tendency to divide public and private life, where the home, as the setting for romantic love, was protected from the machinations of the outside world.

Peacock's two historical novels test love with society's needs. These social needs require the pursuit of justice in an unjust social hierarchy; for the young lovers this means poverty and the loss of their social position. In Maid Marian, Matilda Fitzwater, the daughter of a Baron, is to marry the Earl of Locksley and Huntingdon - Robert Fitz-Ooth. The marriage ceremony is interrupted by the king's men who charge Robert with poaching; his lands are confiscated and his title revoked. Before he flees he asks Matilda:

"Sweet Matilda," said the earl, "did you give your love to the Earl of Huntingdon, whose lands touch the



Matilda (Maid Marian) gets the better of her father.

Ouse and the Trent, or to Robert Fitz-Ooth, the son of his mother?"

Matilda replies:

"Neither to the earl or his earldom," answered Matilda firmly, "but to Robert Fitz-Ooth and his love."

(MM p.447)

It does not matter to Matilda that Robert has lost his fortune and social position; it does matter to her father though, and he makes every attempt to persuade Matilda out of her love. His attempts to curb her freedom are met with counter-threats that leave him no choice. As long as Matilda has freedom of action, she will return; if not, she will escape and stay away. The conversation between Matilda and her father has elements of a childish conversation, where the need to outdo each other replaces common sense:

"Well father," added Matilda, "I must go to the woods."

"Must you?" said the baron; "I say you must not."

"But I am going," said Matilda.

"But I will have up the drawbridge," said the baron.

"But I will swim the moat," said Matilda.

"But I will secure the gates," said the baron.

"But I will leap from the battlement," said Matilda.

"But I will lock you in an upper chamber," said the baron.

"But I will shred the tapestry," said Matilda, "and let myself down."

"But I will lock you in a turret," said the baron, "where you shall only see light through a loophole."

"But through that loophole," said Matilda, "I will take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly: but if once I slip through a loophole - "... (MM p.465)

Matilda's father knows full well that his daughter is capable of carrying out her threats, but only calms down when Matilda starts to cry, which he cannot bear. Matilda's character is somewhat tomboyish, but still feminine. Brother Michael (later to become Friar Tuck) describes her as beautiful, graceful, witty, sensible, discreet, dexterous, educated and brave; these characteristics cause much havoc amongst all the men she meets, often leading to the need for force in order to convince them that she is not interested. These rejected men are all powerful and wealthy, and believe that such possessions alone are merit enough to charm Matilda. To Matilda (who later becomes Marion, once she must hide in the forest), such men represent greed and corruption in power. Both she and Robert fight this corruption through 'robbing the rich to pay the poor'.

Love is the catalyst to Matilda's rebellion. Once the man she loves becomes a victim of corruption, she is prepared to sacrifice her comfort to be with him. Such a sacrifice portrays Matilda's love as noble.

In The Misfortunes of Elphin, both Angharad and Elphin lose their positions and wealth with the destruction of the kingdom. Elphin begins a new life as a fisherman, and Angharad is happy to share that life with him. Neither are concerned

with the loss of status or wealth.

Robert Fitz-Ooth, Crotchet junior and Prince Elphin all lose their fortunes and position in society. How their respective partners react to this change reflects on the natures of all the personalities involved. With Clarinda and Crotchet jnr the influence of wealth is portrayed as interfering and negative. Both partners wish money to give them comfort and security, which in itself is not a bad thing, but the manner in which Crotchet makes his money reflects that his character has little merit as far as empathy for his fellow men's suffering goes. Clarinda's preference for a market-driven marriage, and the fact that she does not have a moral problem with how Crotchet's wealth has been achieved, make her, by association, of the same cast as Crotchet. Her eventual change of attitude elevates our opinion of her.

In contrast to Clarinda and Crotchet, Matilda and Robert represent the positive use of money in personality. They are the reverse of the situation in Crotchet Castle, for they and their group of men are prepared to sacrifice their own comfort in order to bring a better standard of living to the poor, thus redressing the imbalance of power. The attitudes of Robert and Matilda reflect both the importance of money in the continuity of life and the lack of importance it holds in their own relationship. They are socially powerless, but criminally powerful. Their theft, as opposed to Crotchet's form of theft, has a moral purpose, and as such, the nature of the presence of money in their relationship enhances their moral worth rather than detracting from it.

Elphin and Angharad calmly accept their change of fortune

and get on with the process of survival by looking after themselves with their own labour and frugality.

The characterisations of Peacock's heroines all reflect what Peacock most desires within male/female relations, namely the harmony of minds that are not influenced by wealth or status. To effect this situation Peacock gives most of his heroines an education and independence. This combination emphasises individuality, which, in turn, elevates their romantic choice above the influences society promotes. Each of the seven novels contain elements that promote, in different ways, the ideal Peacock holds for the women of his era.

Headlong Hall contains no heroine, presenting women who are Regency-educated and portraying the resulting shallowness of character. In Melincourt, Peacock reverses that shallowness with Anthelia Melincourt, who sets the stage for future heroines. Anthelia's unusual situation enables Peacock to display the total opposite of characters found in Headlong Hall. Unfortunately he goes perhaps a little too far in his seriousness, for Anthelia has been criticised as being somewhat unbelievable. Nightmare Abbey contains characters who represent both types of characterisations found in the previous novels. Celinda Toobad, Marionetta O'Carroll and Scythrop Glowry reflect the comedy of taking things too far. Extremes of seriousness as well as frivolity prevent harmony in relationships between men and women.

In Maid Marian, the heroine Matilda Fitzwater displays a physical prowess that would have been frowned upon in the more delicate and affected nineteenth century. This prowess

enables Matilda to pursue her love and at the same time effect social change, without sacrificing her womanliness.

Female characters in The Misfortunes of Elphin stay mainly in the background and are less forthright. They complement the male characters, by displaying loyalty and purity - attributes that were most valued in a medieval setting.

Clarinda Bossnowl and Susannah Touchandgo represent women influenced by the changes happening within society. Both are without wealth and both attempt to support themselves as their family circumstances cannot assist them. Susannah's father represents the new financial system that moved away from family wealth to commercial control within banks. Clarinda's family is the opposite: her father, a Peer, has no wealth yet Clarinda is trading on her status to obtain wealth. Susannah is successful in supporting herself, and is rewarded by a marriage of wealth and status. Clarinda fails, but still finds love without status or wealth. Both women reflect the changes occurring in society and how love is a major influence in the upsetting of previously valued hierarchies.

The characters of Morgana Gryll and Miss Niphet in Gryll Grange are an opposition to the Victorian ideal of submissiveness. Both act on their feelings, rather than staying reserved and missing out on romance - as Miss Ilex did. Miss Ilex represents the idea that the social affectations of femininity deprive women of happiness, and happiness is what Peacock feels all his 'good' characters deserve.

Happiness is represented by love and marriage within the younger generations portrayed in Peacock's novels. Love becomes the reward for each character's ethical standards, namely

assertiveness, compassion, benevolence and willingness to renounce the attitudes of their parents' generation.

ENDNOTES

1. There were few establishments for the education of females in the eighteenth century. Those that did exist were mostly for the purpose of instructing girls from the country how to behave in society. Most girls received their education at home with governesses. In the nineteenth century boarding schools became popular. Fictional examples range from Thackeray's Miss Pinkerton's Academy in Vanity Fair, to Charlotte Bronte's Lowood in Jane Eyre. Thackeray exemplifies the type of education that Peacock criticises, while Bronte displays the extremity of Victorian morality.
2. Critics who view Peacock's female characterizations as feminist include John Crabbe, Nathaniel Brown, Carl Dawson and Marilyn Butler.
3. Queen Victoria proposed to Prince Albert in 1839. Victoria did not believe in the equality of women.
4. One such publication was the New Monthly Review; initially political, it was changed by its publisher Henry Colburn to a literary review for the purpose of promoting the novels he also published. Such a practice was carrot-dangling in front of the aristocracy, for it was often hinted in the reviews that forthcoming novels would be of 'outstanding interest to high society', thereby promoting the idea that the books were written by the aristocracy and based on the aristocracy. Colburn did not have a good reputation.

Journals could also be used for personal vendettas, such as that of James Fraser of Fraser's Magazine against Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Journals played a large part in many literary careers of the day: contributors of essays include Walter Scott, Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Southey, Sydney Smith, Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, James Hogg and Charles Lamb (Adburgham p.25-26). Peacock was also a contributor of reviews and articles, his most famous being The Four Ages of Poetry.

5. Gregory Gryll's lifestyle is Epicurean. Peacock, in his later life, was described as being a believer in this lifestyle which promoted an ethical philosophy of simple pleasure, friendship and retirement. It is based on the ideas of the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341-270 BC).

CHAPTER FIVE: LOVE & MARRIAGE



...in no state of society is any individual secure against the changes of fortune...The qualities of the heart and mind are alone out of the power of accident; and by these, and these only, shall I be guided in the choice of the companion of my life. (Melincourt p.164-5)

Heroes and heroines in Peacock's novels all express, in their own manner, the attitude Mr Forester is declaring above. By expressing confidence in their own judgement, they reject any outside influence, and are thus asserting their individuality.

The emergence of individualism has been linked to the progress of capitalism through the alteration of the structure of society. Prior to capitalism, society was kinship based, with each individual being subordinated to a variety of social structures such as the church, village or estate. Capitalism effected change in that social ties became less personal; influences such as money and nationalism undermined kinship structure thus encouraging the emergence of individualism.¹ In terms of personal relationships, this meant that the individual could choose their own partner without having the interests of the group in which they lived influencing that choice. Without that influence, romantic love began to flourish.

In relation to the upper classes, where wealth was prevalent throughout the emergence of capitalist society, the situation is not so easily definable. Money allows the freedom for individuality, yet we see that money in the aristocracy

engendered a kinship-based group with its own set of behavioural expectations. The group became more enhanced, rather than the individuals within it. In Peacock's novels that group is represented by the term 'fashionable society': it comprises the affluent class of city dwellers, all doing the same things and behaving in the same manner. In Gryll Grange, Miss Gryll expresses her view of people who belong to the group:

And indeed that is the price that must be paid for—
society. Whatever difference of character may
lie under the surface, the persons you meet in its
circles are externally others yet the same: the same
dress, the same manners, the same tastes and opinions,
real or assumed. Strongly defined characteristic
differences are so few, and artificial general
resemblances so many, that in every party you may
always make out the same theatrical company.

(GG p.841)

In such a group, where individuality is not prevalent, the pre-capitalist influence of the group in determining marriage partnerships is present. Marriage for wealth and social title ensures the exclusivity of the aristocratic group; marriage for romantic love is rare.

In his book The Culture of Capitalism, Alan McFarlane writes that it is a peculiarly western ideal that love and marriage should be 'indistinguishably united', in accordance with a 'strange pattern whereby love between a man and a woman before and during marriage becomes the basis for the familial and

emotional system of a whole complex civilization' (McFarlane p.124). In Peacock's novels we see the beginning of such a pattern. The young lovers, isolated and often without parental influence, choose their own partners with their hearts and minds, marry, and thus represent a new beginning both with each other and within society. As wealthy young upper-class individuals, they represent a breaking-away from the group to something morally, emotionally and economically superior.

There are a couple of theories that support the idea that romantic love emerged due to the influences of capitalism. One theory places the development between 1750-1850;² a time when the Romantic Movement influenced society through promoting emotional experiences in both art and literature. The Romantic Movement, seen as a reaction to the impersonal market-driven economy, thus offered something outside the influence of capitalism, yet at the same time gaining its identity from it. This theory, though having some merit, renders all relationships prior to 1750 somewhat sterile, an unpalatable assumption, perhaps, yet, according to a second theory,³ not such an improbable one.

This second theory blames the precarious nature of life prior to capitalism for the absence of emotion in human relationships. Lawrence Stone's theory explains the absence of love as being a protection against the harsh and often brief lives lived before the advance of medicine and the improvement of living conditions. The death rates of children were high, thus it was emotionally safer not to love them too much. The same attitude applied in marriage where women often died in childbirth. This theory aligns human emotion with current

economic conditions, thus relying on the presence of economic and social safety before the luxury of pursuing emotional well-being can be indulged in. This theory, while having much merit, does not account for the lack of emotional pursuit found in aristocratic society after the advance of capitalism. An explanation that does account for the lack of romantic love amongst the aristocracy is that as a group they had the most to lose by the advance of the ideal of the individual. To maintain both their wealth and their advantageous social position, they needed to keep their emotions under tight control, especially emotions that did not have social or material gain as their basis. Marriage for romantic love had the potential to undermine the strength of the aristocratic group and was thus frowned upon. Romantic love may well have existed amongst the ranks of the aristocracy but it did not interfere with the social structure of the group. Often both men and women married for social reasons, produced the necessary children for the continuity of the family name, and then indulged their passions by having affairs. One major difference between the aristocracy of fashionable society and the men and women who became Peacock's successful lovers is how they viewed romantic love, and the degree of social influence it was allowed.

Denis de Rougemont in his book Passion and Society believes that conflict over the role of romantic love in society arises out of two very different moral systems, one being religious and the other stemming from a mythical source often portrayed in early literature. Morality is ascertained by the role sex plays within each system.

Religious morality keeps sex within the bonds of marriage,

and views adultery as a sin. This morality has some similarity to the nature of romantic love, where sexual infidelity is seen as a betrayal of love. With religion the betrayal involves the prospect of being accountable to a higher being. Romantic love does not necessarily have a dimension that extends beyond death, (see Matthew 22: 24-30)⁴; however, death does play an important role in the moral system as it pertains to romantic love, a role that stems from early mythology.

The mythical literary tradition deals with romantic love which indulges in sexual activity but does not result in marriage. The main source of this tradition is the romance of Tristan and Isolde. Through the mistaken drinking of a love potion Tristan and Isolde are consumed by a passion for each other and enact a series of deceptions in order to indulge that passion. Both die of broken hearts - Tristan because he believes Isolde no longer cares, and Isolde because she arrives too late to save Tristan. Death cheats the romance out of its continued existence, yet it also enhances that romance by making it tragic. Tragedy makes us believe that the love was too powerful for mortal existence; it also suspends the love at its most powerful state, making it static and unchanging.

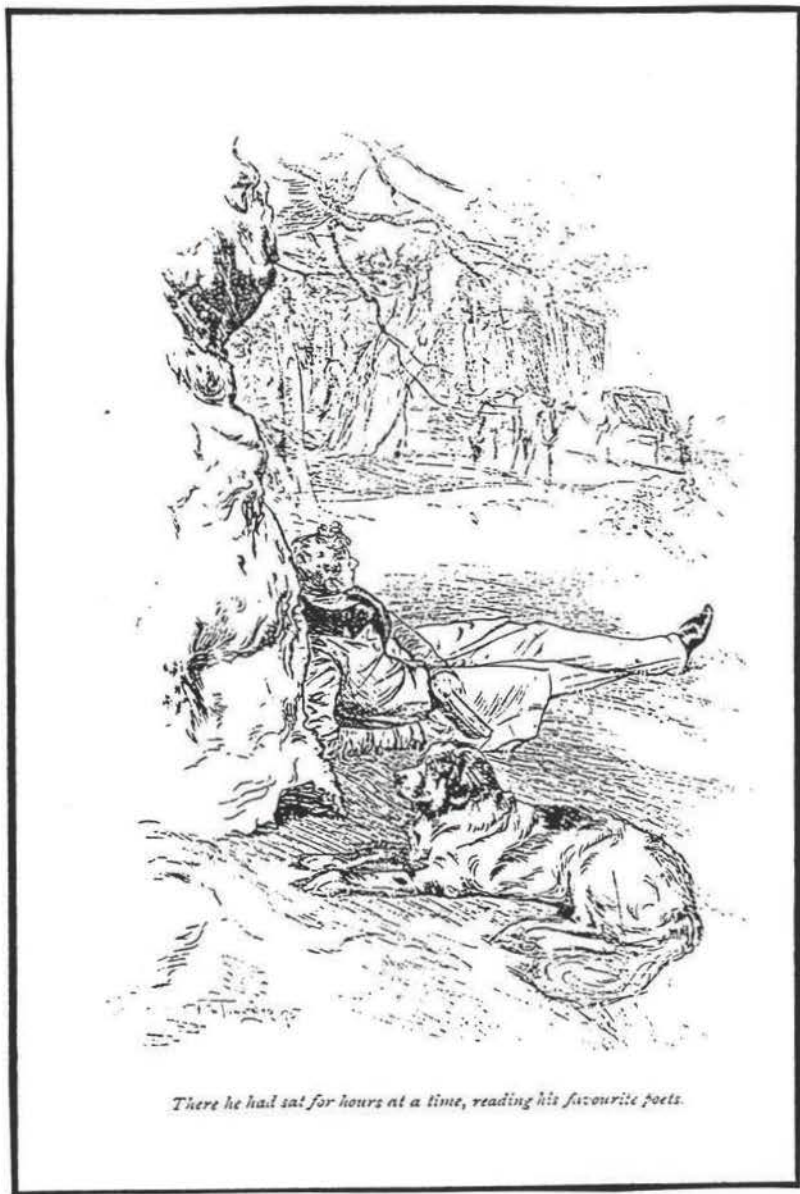
It is this static position that Denis de Rougemont believes causes problems within human relationships. He asks the question whether, if Tristan and Isolde had been able to marry, their love would have continued in such a passionate manner. His answer is a resounding 'no'; however, he also believes that humanity does not stop wishing for that continuity, a situation that is evident from the constant creation of love stories in both print and (nowadays) film. De Rougemont asserts that

the nature of passion and the nature of marriage are very different, and that we often refuse to see the difference; instead we keep looking for the constant state of passion and are inevitably disappointed. In applying this argument to Peacock's literature it can be said that Peacock is part of the continuity of the literary myth. In his romances Peacock cuts off the passion at the end of the book where it is supposedly at its strongest; however, unlike in the Tristan and Isolde romance, it is marriage rather than death that ends the story. De Rougemont asks why some authors believe that we cannot face the reality of human interactions within marriage. He asserts that the constant pursuit of happiness and the resultant boredom are to blame:

Happiness is indeed a Eurydice, vanishing as soon as gazed upon. It can exist only in acceptance, and succumbs as soon as it is laid claim to . For it appertains to being, not to having, as the moralists in all ages have insisted; and our own age brings no new factor to disprove them. Every wish to experience happiness, to have it at one's beck and call - instead of being in a state of happiness, as though by grace - must instantly produce an intolerable sense of want.

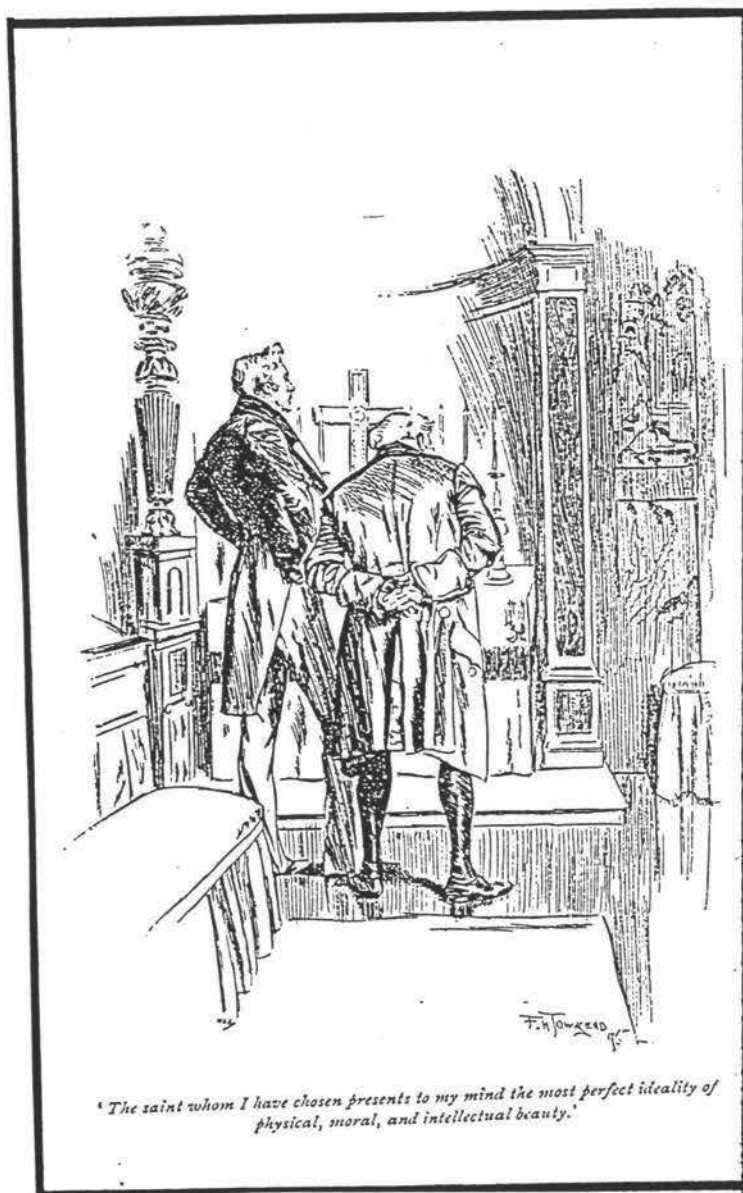
(De Rougemont p.280)

De Rougemont argues that this intolerable sense of want leads people into an enthusiasm for possession rather than to actual possession. The pursuit becomes more attractive than the gain, a gain which seldom happens because it is hard to actually



There he had sat for hours at a time, reading his favourite poets.

Falconer.



Dr. Opimian views the shrine to St. Catherine in Falconer's bedroom.

possess an emotion.

In our effort to achieve happiness, we perceive emotions as commodities which have the potential for accumulation. We like to think that we can control emotion. In Gryll Grange romantic love is portrayed as defying such control in the character of Algernon Falconer. Having just met Morgana Gryll, Falconer finds that he cannot banish her from his thoughts. He attempts a walk but finds that everything he used to look at has taken on a different view:

There, for him, Matilda had gathered flowers on the opposite bank; Laura had risen from one of the little pools - resting places of the stream - to seat herself in the shade; Rosalind and Maid Marian had peeped forth from their alleys green; all in different form, in feature, and in apparel; but now they were all one; each as she rose in imagination, presented herself under the aspect of the newly known Morgana. (GG p.829)

Falconer is an interesting character in that he represents idealism in conflict with emotion. Falconer has a shrine to St Catherine in his bedroom, a figure he holds as ideal beauty in a woman, one who depicts 'all that can charm, irradiate, refine, exalt, in the best of the better sex' (GG p.814). Falconer's friend, The Reverend Doctor Opimian, warns Falconer not to become a victim of his own mystification. Falconer replies:

I have no fear of that. I think I can clearly

distinguish devotion to ideal beauty from superstitious belief. I feel the necessity of some such devotion, to fill up the void which the world, as it is, leaves in my mind...Everything is too deeply tinged with sordid vulgarity. There can be no intellectual power resident in a wood, where the only inscription is... "Trespassers will be prosecuted;"...No; the intellectual life of the material world is dead. (GG p.818)

The modern world with its laws of ownership and the bureaucracy that ownership generates has disillusioned Falconer. His attempts to replace his loss marginalize him further from society, and it is romantic love that saves him.

Falconer possesses numerous attitudes that portray the condition of nineteenth-century society, one of them being that modern life leads to the isolation and disillusionment of the individual with society.⁵ Falconer's disappointment has led him into idealisation which in turn emphasises the impossibility of the ideal ever being found in real life. The cycle completes itself in a sense of meaninglessness and despair which then regenerates the idealisation.

Gryll Grange, Peacock's last novel, was written in 1861, making it his only Victorian novel. The presence of Saint Catherine in Gryll Grange introduces a religious element that was absent from the previous six novels. This new religious element is confined to the gender representation of women. The comments of Reverend Opimian, a man of the cloth, give St Catherine a somewhat negative air in that she obstructs Falconer from living his own life. At a time when the idea



** Then you may say, I have fallen in love*

of a woman was of an angel in the house, Peacock seems to be tarnishing that image.

The similarity between the religious and romantic idealisation is the elevating of one person above all others. The difference between St Catherine and Morgana, however, is that with Morgana and romantic love, human interaction is promoted rather than discouraged.

Falconer's idealisation is also elemental in the course of a standard romantic plot. It is the cause of the obstruction to the progress of the romance and as such provides a quest within the story. Once the obstruction is overcome, the course of the romance peaks in marriage, and the end of the story. Such a process has the tendency to enhance comparison between the romantic-in-love stage and marriage, with marriage, by the very structure of the plot, appearing to be of no interest to the reader. De Rougemont believes that this structure has the effect of making marriage appear boring. Romantic love, by comparison, becomes the most interesting state. To be in love elevates a person above the mundaneness of ordinary existence. Theoretically romantic love stories perpetuate the Tristan myth while ironically implying that marriage equals ultimate happiness.

Romantic love represents a mystery in human emotion. Falconer's inability to control his thoughts concerning Morgana shows how love eludes reason. Peacock has made Morgana closely represent the St Catherine ideal, and it is a surprise and eventually a delight to Falconer that his ideal can be met in reality. Falconer's ideal woman represents his depth of education, especially his classical education. Morgana Gryll

also has the benefit of a classical education. This similarity is what facilitates their attraction towards each other, and is often the basis of their conversations. When Morgana declares her love to Falconer she gives him a test which comes from a poem written by Bojardo in 1486.⁶ The poem concerns pursuit and capture. Orlando pursues Morgana, an enchantress, only to find that as soon as he holds her she disappears. He eventually succeeds in his quest when she turns to look at him and he grasps her golden hair. The world around them is transformed from ugliness to beauty; she ceases her condemnation of Orlando but warns him: "Beware how yet the prize you lose;/The key of fortune few can wisely use" (GG p.914). The point of this poem is that Morgana uses it to give Algernon a choice. He must wait twenty-eight days before mentioning their love again. The poem takes the place of direct conversation, with Morgana relying on Falconer's ability to understand the meaning of the poem and thus her true feelings and intentions. It is an indirect form of courtship but it serves to enhance the similarities of personality through the literature they read.

Peacock's inclusion of education in each of his romantic pairings emphasises the importance of companionship between the young couple. This education often has the effect of reducing the degree of mystery attributed to romance, for the idea that the young couple can converse on intellectual matters gives them an added dimension in their interaction; it also lets us believe that they are more adept at character analysis and thus are more confident in their choice of partner. The companionate element of Peacock's romances diminishes the strength of De Rougemont's idea that boredom will inevitably



Discoursing of many things, but chiefly of Morgana.

Falconer and Dr. Opimian.

lead to dissatisfaction between partners.

Avoidance of boredom by education has some reliance on wealth and therefore circumstance. For Peacock, education entails a heightened awareness of morality, which therefore precludes the idea that the wealthy should somehow be more moral. In Melincourt, the interaction of wealth and morality is discussed between Mr Fax and Mr Forester. Mr Fax points out that the rich, by the very nature of the structure of society, will almost always be arrogant and exacting, for their wealth allows for power and deference. Whether they are moral or not is entirely up to their own choice. Fax aligns morality with economy and states that 'An ardent love of truth and liberty will...always prove an insuperable barrier to any great degree of worldly advancement' (Melincourt p.179). In quoting William⁷ Paley, Fax affirms the notion that having a conscience is a luxury, but it does not mean that the poor are necessarily less moral.

To exemplify the morality of the poor, Peacock creates a couple whose circumstances and poverty would lead to the expectation that their love has long since died. Misfortune has rendered the wife melancholy and the husband satirical, but their love for each other has in fact survived. Contrary to Lawrence Stone's idea that love cannot survive the onslaught of poverty, Peacock makes it the link that saves the couple from despair. The couple are rescued by Forester when he discovers that his neighbour, Lawrence Litigate, Esquire is evicting them for rent arrears. (Anthelia Melincourt also assists in their financial rescue.) Forester admires the couple for the strength of their love in difficulty. That they are

uninfluenced by money in their love elevates that love. The absence of material influence somehow creates a scale of love's worth for Forester. Love, like the promise of religion's heaven, protects the participants from despair. Love is a social saviour, according to Forester:

Poverty had certainly come in at the door, but Love does not seem to have flown out the window. You would not have prevailed on them to separate at the price of living in palaces. The energy of the intellect was not deadened; the independence of the spirit was not broken. The participation of love communicates a luxury to sorrow, that all the splendour of selfishness can never bestow. If, as has been said, a friend is more valuable than the elements of fire and water, how much more valuable must be the only associate, the more than friend, to him whom in affliction and poverty all other friends have abandoned! If the sun shines equally on the palace and the cottage, why should not love, the sun of the intellectual world, shine equally on both? More needful, indeed, is the genial light to the latter, where there is no worldly splendour to diminish or divide its radiance. (Melincourt p.181)

In this passage, love cushions the impact of poverty by reducing it to being of little importance in comparison to the continuity of love. The couple do not mind where it is that they live and love, be it a cottage or castle, as long as they can continue to be together. To be poor and in love makes a luxury of sorrow. Indeed poverty increases the value of love. Love

is the 'sun of the intellectual world'; the real sun makes no material distinction in where it shines, nor then should Love. This is another ideal of romantic love, that it overcomes social division. Love does not recognize the man-made hierarchy of social structure; it will not be controlled by material or social conditions. Forester's final sentence is more patronising. Love is more 'needful' in poverty, a statement which, when analysed, shows some similarity to the nature of the financial theories of Smith and Ricardo.

The elevation of love to a scale of emotional nobility, when looked at cynically, provides for an easy economic escape from official responsibility to assist the poor. As McFarlane stated, it is a peculiarly western phenomenon that romantic love directs the basis of our familial and emotional system. Forester's comment concerning the needfulness of love in poverty places responsibility for the fulfilling of that need on the individual.

Forester's statement suggests that certain people deserve love more than others. Such an attitude tends to contradict the non-judgemental nature of idealized love. Peacock's novels tend to show that only 'good' characters can fall in love and therefore be happy. Part of the definition of 'good' is the disregarding of material considerations in the choice of lover. Peacock portrays morality as having a key influence in determining the character of a person who can fall in love and be loved. When De Rougemont's arguments concerning the nature of love in society are applied to Peacock's novels, it appears that Peacock's definition of love contains aspects of the two conflicting moral systems: the religious morality and the

literary mythical morality. Within the world of the novels, the religious morality appears to have the most strength, but the reader is affected by both moralities in that he or she experiences both the breaking off of the romance and the forces of the religious morality at work in the novel. Such a method encourages the reader to believe that love, marriage and happiness are synonymous, and that all three are achievable to those of the correct disposition.

The style of Peacock's portrayal of romantic love and marriage has the effect of dishonouring alternative reasons for marriage to romantic love. Those marriages made for social gain and wealth are shown to cause extended pain through a lack of communication which results in alienation. In an issue of the New Lady's Magazine published in 1786, comical statistics were published concerning the current dismal state of matrimony in South Britain. The weight of their intended meaning is that marriage is indeed not a happy state, and men are to blame. The scale moves from worst to best:

Wives eloped from their husbands	1362
Husbands run away from their wives	2361
Married pairs in a state of separation from each other ...	4120
Married pairs living in a state of open war, under the same roof	191023
Married pairs living in a state of inward hatred for each other, tho' concealed from the world	162320
Married pairs living in a state of coldness and indifference for each other	510132
Married pairs reputed happy in the esteem of the world ...	1102

Married pairs comparatively happy 135
Married pairs absolutely and entirely happy9
Married pairs in South-Britain in all 872,514
(Tillotson p.135)

Characters in Peacock's novels whose marriages reflect the negativity found in the New Lady's scale are depicted as lacking emotion. In the highest statistic on the scale the words 'coldness' and 'indifference' express that lack of emotion. In Melincourt, Mrs Pinmoney, as a representative of fashionable society, speaks of feelings as being a nuisance:

Now, as for feelings, my dear, you know there are no such things in the fashionable world...Feelings are very troublesome things, and always stand in the way of a person's own interests. (Melincourt p.112)

In Nightmare Abbey, Mrs Glowry, who married solely for money, finds her life empty. The hope that she had invested in money has proved mistaken:

Riches she possessed, but that which enriches them, the participation of affection, was wanting. All that they could purchase for her became indifferent to her, because that which they could not purchase, and which was more valuable than themselves, she had, for their sake, thrown away. (NA p.355)

Mr Glowry's sister, the mother of Marionetta O'Carroll, is

another example that demonstrates the New Lady's statistics. After she has eloped with an Irish officer, presumably for love, the circumstances that follow show how poor her choice of lover was and the extent to which money influenced him:

The lady's fortune disappeared in the first year: love by a natural consequence, disappeared in the second: the Irishman himself, by a still more natural consequence, disappeared in the third. (NA p.365)

The theory that capitalism brought with it a surge of sentiment seems to be supported by Peacock's novels, but it is even more applicable in contemporary reality than within the fictional world of the novels. Peacock, like McFarlane, believes that sentiment was an already well-established emotion, one that had been around at least since the twelfth century. In Peacock's novels, there is a preference for the chivalric world, and the classical world. The many literary examples Peacock includes within his texts give weight to the presence of sentiment well before capitalism. The theory is applicable to Peacock himself in his promotion of sentiment through his novels. The world within the novels, though showing some reactions to capitalism, seems more directed at the nature of aristocracy. Directing criticism towards the aristocracy implicates older literary representations of romantic love in that many representations that have come down through time are set amidst the aristocracy: romances such as Tristan and Isolde, Lancelot and Guinevere and Romeo and Juliet to

name but a few.

Peacock is interested in the way that money has influenced the behaviours of those for whom money is not a worry. Money, in the mercenary characters in Peacock's novels, seems to produce both an insatiable greed for more, and a corresponding cruelty to the lower class over whom they have a great deal of power. In Melincourt, Peacock shows how legal bureaucracy facilitates greed. When Sir Oran-Haut-ton rescues Anthelia from a rocky precipice he tears a tree from the ground in order to make a bridge. Sir Lawrence Litigate later serves an action for damages on Sir Oran for the tree. Lawrence Litigate is also the landlord responsible for evicting Desmond and his family. Litigate through his actions shows more concern for money and power than for the wellbeing of both poor and aristocratic alike. Desmond and Anthelia contrast with Litigate's mercenary nature in that they have ethical standards and compassion. These attributes render them loving and lovable. Litigate has no love because he cannot receive love from money: money is inanimate. Money gives Litigate power, and gets him his own way, but it does not make him liked. Though they are the victims of Litigate's greed, Desmond, Anthelia and Sir Oran can take comfort in the fact that people like them, and pleasure can be taken from knowing this.

Part of the aura surrounding the aristocracy was their exclusivity. Belonging to such a group brought esteem. With the alteration of society both politically and economically, more persons had access to the upper reaches of society. This situation provides for the conflict of old with new. The aristocracy were assumed to be snobbish, not wanting to

associate with the newly wealthy. The newly rich were assumed to be desirous of inclusion, for wealth alone without esteem left them to fall within a gap in society that made them belong nowhere in the structure of old society. Their wealth lifted them above the lower levels of society, but their lack of reputation kept them below the esteem that wealth should supposedly afford.

In Crotchet Castle, Peacock shows how the newly wealthy desire to become part of the exclusive group that makes the upper class. Crotchet senior must pull out of all of his speculative ventures in order to achieve some kind of status with the aristocracy. Money brings with it a particular set of behaviours. In Crotchet's case the desire for accumulation is replaced by a desire for social esteem. Once money is secure, and physical possessions are accumulated to reflect that security, Crotchet wishes to be included in the higher set. Part of the efforts of inclusion are to marry into the pedigree system, the trading of wealth for social position. Crotchet junior attempts this with Clarinda Bossnowl. Crotchet represents the commercial world, Clarinda the aristocracy. Both are portrayed as lacking in sentiment. Clarinda's recognition of the value of romantic love over wealth saves her. Crotchet junior is portrayed as unchanged in personality, though not in circumstance. Like Touchandgo, he will continue his mercenary ways in America.

The strengthening of sentiment in materialistic culture was also believed to stem from the increasingly organized society. With the coming of factories an awareness of time structured the working day; transport systems increased and



Was the young lady over fastidious?

Morgana Gryll.

ran to time. The rise of banking imposed a different structure on finance, as did the stock exchange. Romantic love could be seen as a reaction to this increased bureaucracy. Love's irrational nature contrasted with the impersonal and calculating nature of materialistic culture, and one can speculate that people might have desired some kind of disorderliness in such a structure.

Romantic love, with its irrational nature, paradoxically ended choice and doubt. Peacock makes much of doubt and the need to choose in his novels. Anthelia Melincourt is besieged by suitors, as are Morgana Gryll, Matilda Fitzwater (Maid Marian) and Lord Curryfin. The problem of making a choice is eventually resolved by romantic love, combined with intelligence. The pursued have no doubts about those for whom they feel a romantic attraction as they did with the other suitors.

McFarlane argues that the irrationality of romantic love enables a choice to be made when the reality of the depth and seriousness of the choice threatens to overwhelm. He writes:

Choice, whether in the market of marriage or other goods, is always difficult. The information is always so insufficient, the variables so complex that some external force of desire is needed to help the individual to make a choice. Hence passionate 'love' overwhelms and justifies and provides compulsive authority...Love thus seems to be at its most intense when uncertainty and risk are greatest, in that phase when humans have to choose. When they make the most momentous decision of their lives, which will turn a contractual, arbitrary

relationship into the deepest and most binding of a person's life, love steps in as though from outside, blind and compelling. The heart has its reasons, even if the mind is perplexed. (McFarlane p.142)

If this passionate love changes into a companionate love, then we are almost assured that the relationship will continue. Peacock reassures his readers that his romantic couples will have this companionate love relationship through our seeing their intellectual conversations prior to their marriage.

In relation to the austerity of life provoked by economic conditions, romantic love becomes a compensatory emotion, positive in nature and viewed as a desirable state. Romantic love occupies the private world as opposed to the public world of commerce. People may not have a great deal of control within their working life, but in their private life they have the right to choose their mate for themselves. Romantic love, though essentially irrational in nature, has some semblance of control in that it becomes the right of every individual to attempt contact with a person whom they feel some emotion towards.

Having emotional feelings for someone does not necessarily require a return. Feelings may be provoked without intention. Within the scale of emotions provoked by romantic feelings, the world of possible existence is always greater than the world of actual existence. All the suitors pursue a person with the idea of a possible world.

In societies where there is a cultural over-enhancement of the spiritual side of romantic love, idealisation tends

to follow. In a study by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski it was concluded that the idealisation of romantic love only occurred in societies where there were considerable obstacles to erotic satisfaction (Solomon p.51). Such an explanation offers a reason for the lack of romantic love amidst the aristocracy, where erotic satisfaction was indulged in after the requirements of the group had been met. Solomon also writes that 'romantic love tends to flourish in societies that have been Christianized' (Solomon p.51). The Victorian emphasis on religion that resulted from the influence of the Evangelicals, gives weight to Solomon's theory. Yet Peacock does not overtly display a religious influence; his heroes and heroines portray behaviours required by religion without the attached dogma. Peacock extracts what he wants from the philosophy, leaving that which he does not agree with.

Peacock's intermingling of wealth and romance enables romance to influence wealth in a positive social manner. Though individuals are compassionate prior to romance, Peacock promotes the idea that the marriage of these individuals will herald a change in the new generation of their children. That his negative characters repeat the mistakes of their parents gives weight to this argument, for it is the absence of the older generation's influence on his romantic couples that enable their difference.

Theories of romantic love show its existence to be linked closely to economic conditions, most notably as a reaction. The commercial atmosphere of the industrial revolution and the economic theories that it created sometimes parallel the theories of romantic love. Both emphasise the emergence of individuality;

Ricardo and Smith stress the role of individual economic responsibility which created social division and the breaking down of old kinship structures; the theories of romantic love react against this by bringing smaller units together that can cope with the newly structured society. Romantic love facilitates that coming together.

It is often the reaction in difficult social times to promote the family as being a solution to social problems - problems that usually result from economic hardship of some form. In Peacock's novels it is not economic hardship but its opposite that he believes is creating the social problem. The misuse of wealth for display and indulgence of every whim creates an atmosphere for commercially driven interactions where romantic love and a happy family life cannot survive. This situation Peacock finds offensive, and so he attempts to create an enlightened aristocracy within the world of his novels, thus becoming part of the cultural emphasis on romantic love-with-morality that typifies the work of many great writers of the time such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope and George Eliot.

ENDNOTES

1. Macfarlane writes that historians have attributed the development of the following changes to the rise of individualism between the years 1400 and 1750: the invention of private, absolute property and the destruction of group ownership; the elimination of the household as the basic unit of production and consumption; the growth of a money economy; the rise of a class of permanent wage labourers; the growing dominance of the profit motive and the psychological drive towards endless accumulation; the rise of modern industrial production; the growth of large urban centres; the elimination of those 'magical' and 'irrational' forces which prevented the rational pursuit of economic gain; the undermining of small, closely-meshed communities with the growth of geographical and social mobility (Macfarlane p.127).
2. Macfarlane p.125.
3. Macfarlane writes that Stone believes marriage lasted an average of 17-20 years in 'Early Modern England', making marriage statistically transient and temporary. Macfarlane disagrees with Stone's theory (Macfarlane p.129).
4. Matthew 22: 24-30 reads:(24)"Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.'

(25) "Now if there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother;

(26) so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh.

(27) "And last of all, the woman died.

(28) "In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her."

(29) But Jesus answered and said unto them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.

(30)"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

5. Trevor May in An Economic and Social History of Britain 1760-1970, writes on this subject: "Not only were the classes separated from each other, but individuals increasingly experienced isolation and alienation - what sociologists call anomie, a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement. Dickens noticed this in his very first book, Sketches by Boz, written at the age of twenty-three: 'It is strange with how little notice, good, bad or indifferent, a man may live and die in London. He awakens no sympathy in the breast of any single person; his existence is a matter of interest to no one save himself; he cannot be said to be forgotten when he dies, for no one remembered him when he was alive'" (May p.113).

6. There are two spellings for this poet - Bojardo and Boiardo.

I have used the one found in David Garnett's edition of Peacock's novels.

7. William Paley (1743-1805) was a Utilitarian philosopher and an Anglican priest who wrote on the subjects of Christianity, ethics and science.

CONCLUSION

Peacock asks a great deal of romantic love. As a solution to social problems it must forgive economic imbalances, thereby dispelling the concept of undeserved wealth. It must also herald a new morality that alters aristocratic attitudes towards marriage and wealth.

Peacock's ideal merges the old notion of the kinship group and the new concept of individualism. Romantic love as a catalyst to marriage offers a median between these opposing ideas. The group becomes a smaller unit of family and estate controlled by the married couple whose love provides a humanitarian benevolence towards those less well-off. In order to facilitate this change of behaviour within the aristocratic group, characters must display some kind of individualism that sets them apart from their peers. This difference creates an attraction between couples who then act on their feelings and, by their own choice, marry, thus creating the basis on which western society relies for its moral and economic well-being. The structure of the family offers society a compact unit of economic responsibility, held together by the moral ideal that love's strength will maintain that unit. Peacock's benevolent couples extend that ideal to overcome economic imbalances generated by greed and power. Peacock is taking the feudalistic model from the past and injecting humanitarianism into it via romantic love. The future contains the strong family unit; however, the benevolent aspect of Peacock's ideal has been lost with the advance of commerce. Rather than acknowledge the power of commerce, Peacock chooses

to ignore it in favour of the past.

The advance of commerce distilled the sense of separateness felt by the aristocracy, for they based their difference on wealth and birth. Peacock maintains this sense of difference mostly in the area of wealth, but he adds a morality that must be seen also as a form of superiority - for the constant negation of the world of commerce found in his novels creates an elevation by contrast. Benevolence and simplicity in wealth are portrayed as better than avarice and ostentation.

What Peacock is perhaps trying to achieve is a negation of the physical world of finance and commerce and an adoption of the morality that their presence created - the morality that centred upon private lives, rather than public lives; a middle-class morality in a feudal economy. It is idealistic of Peacock to choose to underestimate the power of commerce when the power of money in the aristocracy is so visible.

Money brings with it all the failings of human behaviour; it often has the effect of bringing those failures abruptly into light. Because money is finite it creates boundaries; those boundaries may be such that embezzlement becomes obvious or that a person may not be able to eat because they are poor. Emotions are part of the flow-on effect generated by the use of money and also the need or want of money. In the case of romantic love, as portrayed by Peacock, this effect must be ignored, for the influence of money has the effect of decreasing love's ideal state, and romantic love relies heavily on the idea of continuity - an aspect that conflicts with the boundaries imposed by money.

It is the nature of the romantic love plot in literature

to leave the romantic couple in static happiness. The permanent continuity of that happiness is created by the need for a novel to have an ending or a conclusion. The novel then becomes a commodity that must be sold, and for it to sell it must be attractive to the purchaser. That attractiveness in romance is the happy ending. For the reader, then, it appears that the romantic love story buys the idea of a static happiness.

Static happiness parallels the idea of Paradise, where those who have behaved according to the doctrines of religion are rewarded eternally for their compliance. In Peacock's novels, romantic love and marriage mirror Paradise's reward. Peacock takes from religion the idea that good behaviour deserves some kind of recognition and remuneration, thereby compensating for some of life's unfairness. Like religious doctrine, the doctrine of romance (as fostered by literature such as Peacock's) often claims too much; however, both doctrines accommodate life's adversities through humanity's sense of hope for something better in the future. Just as man creates an economic idea of profit, so too does he create a spiritual idea of profit, and though both can ultimately be dispelled through opposition to each other, they are inextricably linked by that opposition: individuals may try to elevate one over the other according to their beliefs, and the strength of one may prevail over the other depending on the cultural preference of the time. Peacock saw the cultural preference of his time as being too much in favour of economic considerations. His fiction presents the opposing force of spiritual emphasis through romantic love, and, though it is arguably a retreat into idealism, it represents a necessary element in the process of

change that humanity requires before change actually has some effect. Ideas are the beginning, and Peacock's literature is part of the progress of ideas that was evolving towards the attitudes and practices of the Victorian era.

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