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Satire in Literature with Focus on Satirical Elements in the Works of Jane Austen and T. L. Peacock

Satira v literatuře se zaměřením na satirické prvky v dílech Jane Austen a

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(Bakalářská práce)

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Poděkování

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Introduction

In 1818, two very different novels with similar names were published – Thomas Love Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey* and Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. Both of them aimed to be satires on Gothic literature, and they became classics of English literature. My goal is to identify the satiric features in both of them and compare these writings.

In order to do so, I will define what satire is and how the readers can recognize it. Consequently, I will describe the tools of satire and its various forms. As Jane Austen was a female author, I will also focus on the position of women in society during the time she lived.

I am going to provide context for Austen’s novel *Northanger Abbey*, for example the difficult way of getting the book published. It is also necessary to explain what are Gothic novels, as *Northanger Abbey* is commonly thought about as a satire on Gothic. Then, I will identify and categorize the concrete satirical elements in that book.

Afterwards, I am going to introduce Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey*, explain what it is about and provide the context of generally accepted opinion on the characters in the novel and their inspirations in Peacock’s life. This is important, as most of them were in some sense caricatures of his own friends or the people he knew. Again, I will identify and categorize the concrete satirical elements in the work.

In the end, I would like to compare the two authors, as I believe they both are not only excellent writers, but also satirists, commenting on the contemporary state of the world they lived in. Jane Austen is undoubtedly more known, but I believe that Peacock deserves to be “rediscovered” by the current readers as well.

1 Satire

As satire is one of the main themes of this thesis, I must begin with a definition of the term. There are many explanations of what satire is, said by people over the centuries. The British lexicographer Samuel Johnson defined satire as “a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured.”¹ One of the great satirists, Alexander Pope, supported the claim that satire is there to point out people’s follies. However, he also believed that the satirist is a writer in the first place, and even if there is no hope for redemption he must speak nonetheless because that is what writers do.²

English poet and writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu has written that “Satire shou’d, like a polish'd Razor keen, Wound with a Touch, that’s scarcely felt or seen.”³ Lady Montagu strictly rejected the idea of using satire for personal vendetta and stressed, that the satirist should be held morally accountable for their work. She also condemns the improper usage of satire for personal attacks by Pope.⁴

In the eighteenth century, much of the theory regarding satire came to its defense. One group claimed that satire is vicious, coming from a place of hatred and bitterness. Others defended it, emphasizing its merit in pointing at the world’s follies. It seems important to realize that satire can be all of this, it is not a black-and-white issue, because satire can be virtuous, having elevated goals but at the same time too harsh, and marked with grudges.⁵

In the twentieth century, Mary Claire Randolph introduced a “bipolar pattern” of satire. This pattern is made of two parts: in the first, the author condemns vice, and in the second comes praise of virtue. However, Randolph adds, that this is true only for formal verse satire which is insufficient.⁶

After the Second World War, the Chicago and Yale universities presented their views on satire. The scholars from Chicago stated their opinion that satire is inherently linked with its

¹ Christopher Vilmar, “Johnson’s Criticism of Satire and the Problem of the Scriblerians,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2009): 1.

² Dustin H. Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 27.

³ Mary Wortley Montagu, *Verses address’d to the imitator of the first satire of the second book of Horace. By a lady. 1735, 1735*, 4, http://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_verses-addressd-to-the-_montagu-mary-wortley-l_1735.

⁴ Amanda Hiner and Elizabeth Tasker Davis, eds., *British Women Satirists in the Long Eighteenth Century*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 1, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108938952>.

⁵ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 24–25.

⁶ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 28.

contemporary context. Chicago also acknowledged the distinction between satire that “function[ed] as persuasive rhetoric” and satire that aimed to condemn. As satire is a tool of objection, they saw it as “a clean and unambiguous attack.” On the other hand, Yale presented “a rhetorical theory of satire.” Yale saw satire as an artistic project, or “rhetorical art” depicting a fight between vice and virtue. The work, satirist, and targeted audience must be distinguished. They saw it as more important for the reader to have critical thinking and literary skills than to know the historical context.⁷

One way we can think about satire is “the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation.” Some may mistake it for the “comic.” The difference is that satire uses humor as a tool against something or someone, but in the comic, the humor itself is the aim.⁸

Satire can be formal (or direct), meaning it is told in first person by the “satiric persona” and is further subdivided into Horatian and Juvenalian satire based on “attitude and tone.” Horatian satire expresses more amusement than exasperation and chastisement. The author wants the readers to laugh at people’s absurdities and errors. Juvenalian satire is more deliberate and concerned with judging the vice and making readers think about the state of humanity. Satire can also be indirect, usually, the fictional characters are absurdly bizarre and the narrative style amplifies that. Indirect satire is further subdivided into Menippean (also called Varronian) satire. These “are written in prose, usually with interpolations of verse.” Often there “is a series of extended dialogues and debates (often conducted at a banquet or a party) in which a group of loquacious eccentrics, pedants, literary people, and representatives of various professions or philosophical points of view serve to make ludicrous the attitudes and viewpoints they typify by the arguments they urge in their support.”⁹

Amanda Hiner and Elizabeth Tasker Davis introduced a comprehensive set of rules that help us recognize the defining characteristics of satire. They list five markers, among them are: “(1) a clearly identified, but usually generalized, target of censure or ridicule; (2) the use of irony, humor, or wit; (3) the exposure of hypocrisy; (4) a literary [...] style; and (5) the aim of reform through the censure of folly or vice.”¹⁰ Thus, satire can be defined as “the genre that

⁷ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 28-29.

⁸ M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Eleventh edition (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015), 352.

⁹ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 352-353.

¹⁰ Hiner and Tasker Davis, *Women satirists*, 4.

exposed vice for the purpose of correction.” When there is much to improve, satirists tend to express themselves and share their dissent with the status quo. In that way, satirists can be viewed as utopians, believing in change for the better.¹¹

Satire is often used in writings that do not have to be necessarily categorized as satires. It accompanies well other genres and can be used in various measures. Of course, there are literary works that we identify as strictly satiric because satire in these is an “organizing principle of the whole.”¹² Griffin explains that when satire is used in different literary genres, “it tends not just to borrow it [...], but to subvert it.”¹³

Satire does not have to be only written; it occurs in various forms. While coming in contact with satire, readers ought to practice alertness and self-reflection, for the satire to have all its desirable effects. The satirist’s task is not to solve problems, but rather to bring awareness and motivate for change. The person or group of people it admonishes should be capable of change, hence the subject of satire is supposed to be “an evil of error, not pure evil.” The “unofficial law of satire” reflects the author's moral code, not the state law.¹⁴

Does satire have the power to change someone? Are the people being admonished through satire going to do something differently? These are questions that satirists such as Pope pondered about. He concluded that it may merely “anger the fools and don’t mend your foes (1:54-55).” Griffin responds to this and believes that satire is more than laughing at people’s follies. He comes up with a theory of “a rhetoric of inquiry, a rhetoric of provocation, a rhetoric of display, a rhetoric of play.” Traditionally, satires have been viewed as a planned attack on a certain vice. But Griffin questions this and instead presents his claim, that satiric works are “more open-ended,” leaving space to inquire and for the satirists themselves to see where the story will go.¹⁵

Griffin states that satirists seek validation of their skill, they desire to be acknowledged. They do this either unintentionally or on purpose. When rhetoric is rid of the responsibility to produce a solution, it becomes amusing. This is how we can observe “the element of

¹¹ Ruben Quintero et al., *A Companion to Satire: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Ruben Quintero, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 46 (Malden (Mass.): Blackwell, 2007), 1–5.

¹² Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 352.

¹³ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 3.

¹⁴ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 1-9.

¹⁵ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 38-39.

performance and display.”¹⁶ P. K. Elkin says that satire’s “function is less to judge people for their follies and vices than to challenge their attitudes and opinions, to taunt and provoke them into doubt, and perhaps into disbelief.”¹⁷ Griffin claims that if satire provokes, it is done through its “calculated difficulty” and paradox. It is difficult in its form, using allusions, elliptical clauses, or ambiguity. When satire uses paradox, it means that it stands in opposition to an acclaimed stance.¹⁸ Griffin argues that satirists can display playfulness, through which they show their skills. Sometimes irony is used in the “verbal play,” or it can be a “playful insult and invective that is teasing,” a “play with moral ideas” or even “real people who are transformed into something else.”¹⁹ Through the rhetoric of provocation and inquiry, Griffin makes his argument that “satire is often an open rather than a closed form, that it is concerned rather to inquire, explore, or unsettle than to declare, sum up, or conclude.”²⁰

The tools of satire are irony and humor, while its forms include burlesque, farce, lampoon, and parody.²¹

Irony creates a contradiction between “what is said and what is meant” meanwhile context helps the reader to recognize it.²² In its beginning, the Greek word ‘eiron’ used to have a negative connotation, because it described people who made themselves appear less clever and in consequence fooled others. That changed with Socrates, who claimed to know nothing, creating a paradox of simultaneous inferiority and superiority. The main means of achieving ironic effects are ambiguity and implication. Irony is usually hidden and one has to find it.²³ J.B. Priestley differentiates between two kinds of irony. The first one is “in actual statement,” and the second is Dramatic Irony, which denotes a discrepancy between the knowledge of a reader/audience and the character. This happens with generally known stories when the reader knows more than the actual character.²⁴

¹⁶ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 73-75.

¹⁷ Peter Kingsley Elkin, *The Augustan Defence of Satire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 201.

¹⁸ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 51-52.

¹⁹ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 84.

²⁰ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 95.

²¹ Ema Jelínková, *British Literary Satire in Historical Perspective*, First Edition (Univerzita Palackého, 2010), 129-33.

²² Poetry Foundation, “Irony,” text/html, Poetry Foundation (Poetry Foundation, April 15, 2024), <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/irony>.

²³ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 510-513.

²⁴ J. B. Priestley, “The Approach to Literature: Humor, Wit, Satire, Irony,” *The English Journal* 18, no. 7 (1929): 544, <https://doi.org/10.2307/803281>.

Humor refers to “a comic utterance or to a comic appearance or mode of behavior.” Something may be humorous despite the speaker’s intentions – in this, it differs from wit. Humor does not have to be expressed only through words, but in many ways, for instance in one’s behavior or appearance.²⁵ It is an atmosphere produced by a humorist who is attentive to people and their follies, but also kind in nature.²⁶

Burlesque is an artistic form that enables to castigate by mocking. It is closely related to parody and in the 18th century has been mostly taking the form of a play ridiculing a specific literary or dramatic fashion.²⁷ Burlesque imitates the literary “form and style” and creates a “disparity between the manner and the matter.” Its target might be concrete writing or genre. The term burlesque was originally used for plays that imitated somber dramas.²⁸

Farce is used to make the reader laugh. It does so via caricatured characters who are often in haste, finding themselves in unexpected situations. Often a play with words is implemented along with “sexual mix-ups.”²⁹

Lampoon ridicules how a person looks or behaves and to achieve that goal the authors often use caricature. The whole work may be characterized as a lampoon or it can be implemented into a longer story. Samuel Johnson distinguishes between lampoon and satire. The former is a direct attack on a particular person³⁰ or their work, whereas the latter is used implicitly.³¹

Duncan Wu sees that parody consists of “imitation and opposition.” However, to take inspiration from someone, trying to think and write as they would is not easy. In some sense, it may require the same talent as the original author possesses. In the parody, mimicking and sharing a personal stance blend. It has the power to undermine someone’s work but also to celebrate it in its own way.³² Through parody, satire can “invade any literary form: epic, pastoral, travel book, song, elegy, and so on.”³³ Parody is one of the most popular burlesque

²⁵ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 418.

²⁶ Priestley, *The Approach to Literature*, 542.

²⁷ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 162-166.

²⁸ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 40-42.

²⁹ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 58.

³⁰ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 5.

³¹ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 5, 162.

³² Duncan Wu, ed., *A Companion to Romanticism*, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 1 (Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 384-85.

³³ Griffin, *Critical Reintroduction*, 3.

forms since the 19th century.³⁴ In conclusion, satire has a long history. English authors have written satire since the Middle Ages and continue to do so.³⁵

³⁴ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 41.

³⁵ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 354.

2 Female novelists and satirists

At the time Jane Austen lived (at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century), it was difficult to be a woman, and it was even more difficult to be a female writer. Le Faye explains, that women were expected to marry, not to be professional writers. But even getting married was not easy, it depended on the financial situation of both families. The family of the bride would provide her with a dowry, which would help her take care of the children and the home.³⁶ Tomalin adds, that in everything, women had to consider their financial situation, either in terms of marriage or other means to provide for themselves. The difficulties of that knew Jane herself and also someone very close to her, her older sister Cassandra, who was engaged to a man she desired to marry, Tom Fowle. However, both Tom and Cassandra had almost no money or valuable possessions. They expected to wait a long time before they could have a wedding. Unfortunately, Tom died before they could enter into matrimony.³⁷ This serves as an example to show how difficult life was for ordinary women, who were not born into wealthy families.

Todd states, that only during the century before Austen was born women started to be able to support themselves by writing; as first is generally considered Aphra Behn. Writing was not viewed as a proper means for women to provide for themselves.³⁸ For that reason, Jane Austen did not want to be known as an author of her works. Her name did not appear on them, they were written 'By a Lady'.³⁹ But that was nothing uncommon, many women made the same decision, used pseudonyms, or published anonymously. It is interesting to note, that women writers' work sometimes sold better than those of their male counterparts. Wu declares, that "Radcliffe, More, Edgeworth and Hemans were selling better than Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats."⁴⁰

If women were writing, they were expected to contribute to certain genres only. Women were not supposed to write "political polemic, epic poetry, science or philosophy; but children's books, conduct literature, travel writing (if it was clear they had proper escorts), household hints, cookbooks, novels of manners, and poems of home, patriotism and religious piety."

³⁶ Deidre Le Faye, *Jane Austen The World of Her Novels*, 2. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., n.d.), 113-115.

³⁷ Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life*, New ed., rev.updated ed, Penguin Biography (London: Penguin, 2000), 81.

³⁸ Janet Todd, ed., *Jane Austen in Context*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5.

³⁹ La Faye, *World of Novels*, 35.

⁴⁰ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 422-423.

Women should produce the less important writings, because they were not considered to be close to the men's wit. Some were disgusted if women did not keep these standards, for instance, the author and clergyman Richard Polwhele who published a poem *The Unsex'd Females*. In the work he addresses women writers who did not follow the patriarchal expectations and wrote "like men", to name the most prominent one, Mary Wollstonecraft.⁴¹ Jane Austen's peer and an author as well commented: "To be pointed at—to be noticed & commented upon—to be suspected of literary airs—to be shunned, as literary women are, by the more unpretending of my own sex: & abhorred, as literary women are, by the more pretending of the other!—My dear, I would sooner exhibit as a rope dancer."⁴²

Female satirists had to face many issues. From the start, it was seen as a man's task to find flaws in society and admonish those who make them. The genre has been traditionally associated with the male figures of Horace and Juvenal and those writing satire were in authority, which was supposed to be the men's position. Women were supposed to be restrained and gentle. Another thing, that made it more troublesome for women to succeed, was that they usually did not have access to classical education, which left them with no other choice than to imitate or cite translations. In contrast, men could work with the original works written in Latin. To be a woman and have a classical education was not common. It has been a difficult position to write satiric poetry since the most famous authors included male authors like Shakespeare. Nevertheless, female satirists worked on their craft and published their works despite all of these obstacles. Among the well-known female satirists are Charlotte Lennox and her work *The Female Quixote*, Frances Burney, combining sentimental novels with satirical elements, and of course Jane Austen. The latter two decided to conceal or "negotiate their use of satire" to be socially acceptable.⁴³

⁴¹ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 422-424.

⁴² Tomalin, *A Life*, 220-221.

⁴³ Quintero et al., *Companion to Satire*, 276-290.

3 Northanger Abbey

Northanger Abbey, or *Susan*, as was its original title, has been written in the years 1798-1799.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the year 1803 Austen did revisions on *Susan*, and with the help of her brother Henry sold the manuscript to Benjamin Crosby & Co. and received £10 as a payment. However, Crosby never published the book, only advertised it.⁴⁵ She later wrote a letter to the publishing company, to either provide another manuscript for them or to let a different company print her work. However, they rejected her proposal, offering to sell it back for the same price.⁴⁶ In 1816 she finally could afford to buy it back. She revised it and changed the heroine's name to Catherine; thus, she created the final form of the book as we know it.⁴⁷ After Austen died in 1817, Henry helped to get it published together with another work of hers in 1818; its titles *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were probably chosen by him. The rest of her work, *Juvenilia* alongside *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* was first published in its full form in the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Some critics claim, that *Northanger Abbey* is not as good with comparison to *Emma* or *Pride and Prejudice*. What they most lack in the story is the “aesthetic unity” between the first and the second part of the book, where the parody of Gothic is most prominent. Other critics argue that it is intentional, to make the parody in the second part even more ridiculous.⁴⁹

3.1 Gothic novels

Northanger Abbey and *Nightmare Abbey* are generally viewed as satires of Gothic novels, therefore I believe it is necessary to explain what a Gothic novel is and list the identifying features of it. The Gothic novel is usually defined by its stereotyped characters, or formulaic plots involving the usurpation of a title or an estate, a hidden crime, or a pact with the devil. Gothic novelists tend to write about statues and portraits that bleed, move, speak, or show other signs of animation. The heroine's fears produce claustrophobia in castles, prisons, and caves, in which she often discovers moldering manuscripts, sees lights, and hears mysterious voices. Richetti suggests, that the stereotypical Gothic novel includes confiscation of land, sins from youth or theft of a title, a heroine that encounters a mysterious effigy or a

⁴⁴ Tomalin, *A Life*, 310.

⁴⁵ La Faye, *World of Novels*, 29.

⁴⁶ Tomalin, *A Life*, 210-211.

⁴⁷ Tomalin, *A Life*, 259.

⁴⁸ La Faye, *World of Novels*, 29-39.

⁴⁹ Laura C. Lambdin and Robert T. Lambdin, eds., *A Companion to Jane Austen Studies* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000), 131-33.

piece of art that seems to move or evince supernatural signs, and eventually will be imprisoned.⁵⁰ Wilt claims that traditionally, there is an overly sensitive heroine with an excessive imagination.⁵¹ However, the heroine's fears usually turn out to be justified and ultimately bring about ruin to the patriarchal systems or villains.⁵²

The “boom” of Gothic novels happened in the 1790s.⁵³ Conventionally, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is considered to be the first Gothic novel. He added a subtitle “A Gothic Story,” to the novel's second edition, thus giving the genre its name. Even though a few imitated Walpole before Radcliffe, she was the first to merge the classic with terror successfully.⁵⁴ Gothic novels were popular among people; however, the intellectuals sometimes considered them dangerous in encouraging depravity and recklessness.⁵⁵ *Northanger Abbey* repeatedly mentions Catherine reading *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe. This is probably Radcliffe's most famous work along with *The Italian*, which made her a beloved author, particularly among young readers.⁵⁶ Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Sir Walter Scott proclaimed her as “the founder of her own style of romance.” Radcliffe's books were one of the most well-sold in the 1790s and Gothic novels comprised approximately a third of all novels purchased.⁵⁷

Both Romanticism and Gothic stood in opposition to the Enlightenment,⁵⁸ which was a cultural and intellectual movement lasting from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. The core value of Enlightenment was a reason that enabled one to think freely and object to the blind following of religious or secular authorities.⁵⁹ Romanticism emphasized the importance of individuality, imagination, and spiritual experiences⁶⁰ and they both focused on “feelings, desires and passions” which did not align with the Enlightenment's idea of rational

⁵⁰ John J. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, Transf. to digital printing, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 257–60.

⁵¹ Judith Wilt, “JANE AUSTEN:,” in *Ghosts of the Gothic*, Austen, Eliot and Lawrence (Princeton University Press, 1980), 160, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7zv16n.10>.

⁵² Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 155.

⁵³ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 373.

⁵⁴ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 10-11.

⁵⁵ La Faye, *World of Novels*, 106–7.

⁵⁶ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 363-373.

⁵⁷ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 10.

⁵⁸ Andrew Smith and William Hughes, eds., *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.

⁵⁹ Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 108.

⁶⁰ Aidan Day, *Romanticism, The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 4.

understanding of the whole world around us. Especially Gothic, which often included supernatural events beyond human comprehension.⁶¹

The term Gothic originally pertained to the tribe of Goths. Gradually it started to be used as a synonym for “medieval.” Usually, “the story focused on the sufferings imposed on an innocent heroine by a cruel and lustful villain, and made bountiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances, and other sensational and supernatural occurrences (which in several novels turned out to have natural explanations)” and it was often set in “a gloomy castle furnished with dungeons, subterranean passages, and sliding panels.”⁶²

Before the French Revolution, Gothic was generally perceived well. With the coming of the French Revolution, the perception of Gothic changed. Gothic writers started to use more descriptions of sex and brutality, which was seen as one of the “excesses of the French Revolution.” Gothic novels were perceived as dangerous and immoral. Society feared that women’s inclination toward this kind of literature would damage the country. In addition, it wasn’t well received that female authors gained control over a part of the literary market. Gothic’s reputation was also stained due to its relation to circulating libraries and “unregulated modes of production.”⁶³

Romanticism and Gothic are viewed as separate literary movements, but some of the authors in the 18th century viewed poetry as “a kind of Gothic.”⁶⁴ The period of Romanticism and “High Gothic” mostly overlapped, from “the 1790s to the 1820s.” G. R. Thompson even called Gothic a “Dark Romanticism,” which helps us to see the many similarities between Romantic and Gothic, such as “the shared interest in subjectivity, the figure of the outsider, social sympathies, concepts of agency, will, the relation to the past, the nature of temporality, formal innovation, the divine” and more. Gothic was closely associated with the second generation of Romantics. The Shelleys both read and wrote Gothic. Mary Shelley is the author of the Gothic novel *Frankenstein* and Percy Bysshe Shelley also wrote some Gothic in his youth. Lord Byron played a pivotal role in helping to publish Maturin’s *Bertram* and wrote Gothic poetry, as did Coleridge. The Gothic flourished and was reinvented. Some of the authors started to set the plot in contemporary times (instead of the Middle Ages) or project their interest

⁶¹ Smith and Hughes, *Empire and the Gothic*, 1.

⁶² Abrams and Harpham, *Literary Terms*, 152.

⁶³ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 16-17.

⁶⁴ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 8.

in science and social philosophies in Gothic novels.⁶⁵ Ultimately, Romanticism and Gothicism intertwine and we ought to see them in dialogue.⁶⁶ Even though Gothic evolves and changes through time, a lot of its typical features remain.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 19-22.

⁶⁶ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 27.

⁶⁷ Spooner and McEvoy, *Companion to Gothic*, 7.

4 Satire in *Northanger Abbey*

There is a generally accepted view of *Northanger Abbey* as a parody of Gothic novels and their foreseeability. It is very easy to see it that way and as nothing more. In my analysis, I decided to show that there might be more to it than meets the eye. Harding states, that for many the flaw of Catherine as a character is that she is difficult to relate to as she is too naïve.⁶⁸ Her belief that Mrs. Tilney is still alive and imprisoned in her own home might truly seem a bit exaggerated. Some critics have the opinion that *Northanger Abbey* is more similar to her juvenilia, because of the hard-to-believe burlesque elements.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the psychological growth of Catherine is generally praised. She stands in opposition to the pressure of Isabella, John, and even her own brother to keep a promise she made to the Tilneys. She also later recognizes Isabella's real motives and judges her accordingly.⁷⁰ I believe that the view of Catherine as some kind of caricature in her thought process about General Tilney is a common misconception of those who read *Northanger Abbey* as a mere satire on Gothic. As I will demonstrate, the satire goes deeper and is much more complex.

4.1 Satire of Gothic Characters

Catherine Morland is for sure a non-traditional heroine. She is taught by her parents, but her results are not by any means remarkable. Ten years old Catherine is influenced by her brothers and prefers boy's games.⁷¹ However, the heroine of a horrid novel might be outside, composing poetry or having dolls to keep herself occupied.⁷² Nothing is interesting about Catherine's looks for she "is as plain as any," and does not possess a great intellect to balance that, because "she never could learn or understand anything before she was taught; and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid."⁷³ Catherine has nine siblings. Her parents are not rich, but able to provide for their children. If she had been the real heroine of a Gothic novel, she would have been extraordinarily beautiful and born into wealth; her parents would have inevitably died, and she would have had no one to teach her the right manners, but she would still have been able to behave according to them. Such a heroine would go out into the world, overcome every obstacle that comes her way, even being

⁶⁸ Denys Clement Wyatt Harding and Monica Lawlor, *Regulated Hatred and Other Essays on Jane Austen* (London; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone Press, 1998), 129–38.

⁶⁹ L. Lambdin and R. Lambdin, *Austen Studies*, 131.

⁷⁰ Harding and Lawlor, *Regulated Hatred*, 129–38.

⁷¹ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey and Persuasion*, Standard Novels (Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street; and Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh, 1848), 1–2.

⁷² Le Faye, *World of Novels*, 208.

⁷³ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2.

imprisoned against her will, but rescued at the end by a man worthy of her. Even though Catherine goes into the world, she is not imprisoned, but forced by the General to leave the Northanger Abbey. In the end, Henry does not save her, she travels home safely herself. Overall, there is a contrast between Catherine and traditional heroines, as Jane Austen paints a character that is in direct opposition to those in horrid novels. As Le Faye explains, she does not limit herself only to Catherine but extends that parody to the Thorpe siblings as well. Isabella is the “dangerous false friend who attempts to lead the heroine astray,” and John Thorpe “is the villain who abducts her.” However, the abduction has nothing to do with imprisonment, but a refusal to stop a carriage, which in the end sounds rather comical in comparison with being abducted.⁷⁴

4.2 Satire of Gothic Novels

As I stated previously, many see *Northanger Abbey* as a mere satire on Gothic and as a warning for its silly readers. However, as Jerinic argues, Austen is not opposed to reading Gothic novels, but rather to the patriarchal system that imposes their views on what women read.⁷⁵ It is shown that Austen defends reading novels, when she says that it is a “work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language.” Johnson suggests, that there are many lessons for Catherine to take from reading Gothic novels. Inspired by them, she is encouraged not to be completely gullible, because in both fiction and real life there are villains around us. Catherine is also taught that evil can be disguised, not recognizable at first glance.⁷⁶

When Henry reveals Catherine’s suspicions about General Tilney, he reproaches her with the words, “Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians.”⁷⁷ *Northanger Abbey* is truly Gothic, because “it represents a world which is far more menacing and ambiguous, where figureheads of political and domestic order silence dissent, where a father can be a British subject, a Christian, a respectable citizen, and a ruthless and mean-spirited tyrant at the same time.”⁷⁸ Austen does not reject the Gothic

⁷⁴ Le Faye, *World of Novels*, 205-11.

⁷⁵ Maria Jerinic, “In Defense of the Gothic: Rereading *Northanger Abbey*,” Devoney Looser, ed., *Jane Austen and the Discourses of Feminism* (1995): 139-143, quoted in Laura C. Lambdin and Robert T. Lambdin, eds., *A Companion to Jane Austen Studies* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000), 136.

⁷⁶ Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, Paperback ed., Nachdr (Chicago, Ill.: Univ. of Chicago Pr, 19), 39–40.

⁷⁷ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 164.

⁷⁸ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 40.

but rather affirms it.⁷⁹ Catherine is reproached by Henry, however, his argument is flawed. The fact that something is not likely to happen, does not mean it cannot happen.⁸⁰

Johnson claims, that Austen might mock the “gothic machinery” such as chests, veils, or curtains but notices the real danger in both Gothic novels and real life, the character of the “tyrannical father”.⁸¹ Although General Tilney tries to compliment Catherine, she feels the “restraint which the general’s presence had imposed”⁸², and experiences that even Henry with Eleanor can enjoy themselves better in his absence. When the General is called for a week to London, she is given “the first experimental conviction that a loss may be sometimes a gain.”⁸³ Catherine learned that mere logical arguments do not always lead a person to truth and she should keep trusting her instincts.⁸⁴ Johnson also stresses that Austen brings political overtones to the novel. General Tilney is “an officious English gentleman, publically respected on the local as well as national level,” but through it all, he is the villain of the story.⁸⁵

In *Northanger Abbey*, the characters who are villains or traitors are the kind of people who out of all are supposed to be virtuous. Johnson comments on it and says that “guardians of national, domestic, and even religious authority” are not the ones Catherine can count on.⁸⁶ Firstly, we have the case of General Tilney, who despite his position, acts so rudely and suddenly expels Catherine from his home, without giving her any explanation or providing enough time to prepare for such a journey, that is dangerous for an unaccompanied young lady.⁸⁷ However, Johnson does not let out of her list even Catherine’s older brother James. He, even more so as a future clergyman, should be opposed to joining Isabella and John’s attempts to manipulate her to ditch the Tilneys and go to Clifton with them.⁸⁸ He says, “You once were the kindest, best-tempered of my sisters,”⁸⁹ as she no longer appears to him to be. And thirdly, her domestic guardians are disappointing as well.⁹⁰ Catherine’s mother is not mean, but not

⁷⁹ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 48.

⁸⁰ Claudia L. Johnson, introduction to *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon*, by Jane Austen, ed. James Kinsley and John Davie, Reissued, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), xii.

⁸¹ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 35.

⁸² Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 183.

⁸³ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 183.

⁸⁴ Kenneth L. Moler, *Jane Austen’s Art of Allusion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 39, <http://archive.org/details/janeaustensartof0000mole>.

⁸⁵ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 35.

⁸⁶ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 47.

⁸⁷ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 185-192.

⁸⁸ Johnson, *Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 47.

⁸⁹ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 79.

⁹⁰ Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time*, 1. paperback ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28-29.

particularly helpful either. She does not talk to her daughter about important matters and doesn't ask what is wrong when Catherine goes through a difficult time after her abrupt separation from the Tilneys. Mrs. Morland just assumes she is spoiled from her time at the abbey and the best solution to this will be giving her daughter a book about proper conduct.⁹¹ In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Allen, they are unfortunately no help to Catherine as well.⁹² They are not the voice of sound judgment that she desperately needs. So, from a certain perspective, Catherine is parentless as a true Gothic heroine as she does not receive guidance either from her parents, or any other parental figures, like the Allens.

Most of the readers see the ending as happy. But the ending could be perceived as a part of the satire. Similarly, as in Gothic novels, the ending is abrupt and, in some sense, hard to believe. More so, Catherine marries Henry Tilney, the son of her 'enemy' who is never mentioned to apologize for his reproach of suspicions, which turned out to be valid. Hence, as Johnson remarks, if we consider this as a realistically happy ending, the unrealistic gothic does not seem so far away after all.⁹³

I see that *Northanger Abbey* is a parody of Gothic but gradually became a Gothic novel. The Gothic elements in *Northanger Abbey* are used differently than in a typical novel of that kind but are still there. Levine presents three arguments to support this argument. Firstly, Catherine ends up with her love interest, Henry Tilney. Secondly, she has the easy-to-believe nature of Gothic heroines. Thirdly, General Tilney turns out to truly be a villain, even though not in the way Catherine suspected. Hence, *Northanger Abbey* can be viewed as a Gothic novel, even though not literally but rather metaphorically.⁹⁴

All things considered, it is true, that in the use of parody and caricature, Austen used her skills in a way that makes it difficult for her readers to recognize what is still an exaggeration and what are someone's true characteristics.⁹⁵ But I believe she did so on purpose, and as a result, most people did not recognize its true satire of patriarchal norms and villains in real life, those who live nearby and maybe do not kill their spouses, but are evil in their behavior towards

⁹¹ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 201-202.

⁹² Waldron, *Fiction of Time*, 34-35.

⁹³ Claudia L. Johnson, introduction to *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* by Jane Austen, ed. James Kinsley and John Davie, Reissued, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), xxiv-xxv.

⁹⁴ George Levine, "Translating the Monstrous: *Northanger Abbey*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 30, no. 3 (December 1, 1975): 336-339 quoted in Laura C. Lambdin and Robert T. Lambdin, eds., *A Companion to Jane Austen Studies* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000), 135.

⁹⁵ Harding and Lawlor, *Regulated Hatred*, 13.

others. Austen concealed this satire, so most of the readers dismissed it and saw it merely as an innocent parody of the Gothic, which was socially acceptable for everyone.

4.3 Satire of Contemporary Literature

Austen mocks the usage of referencing to other works in polite literature when she uses quotes from famous authors to tell the readers what Catherine learned.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Austen also ridicules the manner of speech in sentimental novels, perhaps the best in the character of Isabella.⁹⁷ For instance, when Catherine and Isabella are supposed to meet and Isabella arrives approximately five minutes earlier than Catherine, she later says “My dearest creature, what can have made you so late? I have been waiting for you at least this age!” (chapter 6) She obviously exaggerates which the poor Catherine is not used to. A few moments later, Isabella tells Catherine to go away, because she notices two gentlemen and is convinced, that the men would follow them, which does not happen. Comically she goes through the city with Catherine to show her a hat she supposedly likes, but she is chasing the two men, dismissing her friend’s remark they could wait for a while and would not have to meet them.⁹⁸

4.4 Satire of Critics

Throughout the *Northanger Abbey*, Austen also ridicules the stance of critics on novels and directly opposes their contempt. Novels “were thought to lack artistic merit and to be dangerous in their frivolity.”⁹⁹ She captures the common treatment of novel reading as something almost shameful, and objects, saying that novels are “Only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Todd, *In Context*, 46.

⁹⁷ Waldron, *Fiction of Time*, 30.

⁹⁸ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 27-28.

⁹⁹ Claudia L. Johnson, introduction to *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* by Jane Austen, ed. James Kinsley and John Davie, Reissued, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), vii.

¹⁰⁰ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 23.

5 Nightmare Abbey

Nightmare Abbey was first published in 1818 and is generally characterized as a novel of talk. Peacock fulfills that by having a range of diverse characters in one place, interacting with each other. These characters are defined by their opinions and the conflict that naturally arises between them is the main focus of the novel. There is not much action and the plot is secondary.¹⁰¹

Mulvihill summarizes the main themes of the novel are “hopes and disappointments in both love and politics.”¹⁰² Vargo adds, that *Nightmare Abbey* is primarily about friendship, especially between Peacock and Shelley, who is satirized in the character of Scythrop. She adds a list of people, that have been recognized in the characters of *Nightmare Abbey* by the critics – Taylor Samuel Coleridge as Mr. Flosky, J. F. Newton as Mr. Toobad, Thomas Moore as Reverend Larynx, Denys de Montfort as Mr. Asterias, Lord George Gordon Byron as Mr. Cypress and Lumley Skeffington or possibly Beau Brummel as Mr. Listless.¹⁰³

5.1 Biblical allusions

Throughout *Nightmare Abbey*, Peacock frequently uses biblical allusions, mostly from the books of *Ecclesiastes* and *Revelation*, that could be placed amid the dismal books in the Bible. Butler adds that the book of *Revelation* was also favored among German critics.¹⁰⁴ It is said that after a separation from his former lover, Scythrop is in the depths of despair, and Mr. Glowry decides to “comfort him, read him a Commentary on Ecclesiastes, which he had himself composed, and which demonstrated incontrovertibly that all is vanity.”¹⁰⁵ By that, Peacock creates a sense of irony and a means of humor. The twelfth verse from the twelfth chapter of the book of *Revelation* is used plentifully by Mr. Toobad, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea, for the devil is come among you, having great wrath.”¹⁰⁶ Another possible allusion to Revelation is when Scythrop comments that seven copies of his book have been sold, “Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers of my seven copies, and they shall be the seven golden candlesticks with which I will illuminate

¹⁰¹ James Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, Twayne’s English Authors Series, TEAS 456 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 30.

¹⁰² Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 66.

¹⁰³ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 20-25.

¹⁰⁴ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 124.

¹⁰⁵ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 63.

the world.”¹⁰⁷ It is likely a reference to *Revelation*, where the number seven occurs repeatedly. Again, Peacock masterfully uses that to achieve laughter, as Scythrop is satisfied with only seven copies to be sold, which would normally be considered a fiasco. However, in the biblical sense, the number seven indicates completeness, and the same principle Scythrop applies to view his situation.

¹⁰⁷ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 58.

6 Satire in Nightmare Abbey

The satirical elements in *Nightmare Abbey* might be divided into several groups. Firstly, I will discuss satire on Peacock's friends or other literary authors, especially these: his close friend Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley's father-in-law William Godwin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and George Gordon Byron. As Marilyn Butler summarizes, *Nightmare Abbey* "is the satiric survey of contemporary intellectuals."¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that the characters in the novel do not function as a reflection of the whole person, the characters merely mirror some of their personal traits and opinions.¹⁰⁹ Afterward, I want to introduce a larger context of Peacock's satire and critique of fashionable literature of the time and his objections to it.

6.1 Satire of Percy Bysshe Shelley

The character of Scythrop is inspired by Percy Bysshe Shelley. James Mulvihill sees young Shelley in Scythrop's radical thinking and love for reading Gothic literature.¹¹⁰ It is mentioned that Scythrop "slept with Horrid Mysteries under his pillow,"¹¹¹ which is a German Gothic novel. Mary Shelley, Percy's second wife, affirmed that he used to be an enthusiast of the French Revolution.¹¹² Shelley likely saw in Scythrop his younger pro-revolutionary self. Peacock himself supported change not through violent revolution but gradual change.¹¹³ Scythrop's treatise *Philosophical Gas; or, a Project for a General Illumination of the Human Mind* is likely a humorous remark on Shelley's pamphlet *Proposals for an Association of those Philanthropists who, convinced of the inadequacy of the moral and political state of Ireland to produce benefits which are nevertheless obtainable, are willing to unite to accomplish its regeneration*.¹¹⁴ Lisa Vargo argues, that *Nightmare Abbey* serves not only as a critique of literature promoting solipsism that Shelley himself read, but she extends it to older people in their social circles who ought to serve as better models and guide them towards reason through dialogue.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed: A Satirist in His Context* (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979), 123.

¹⁰⁹ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 46.

¹¹⁰ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 59-60.

¹¹¹ Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 57.

¹¹² Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 65.

¹¹³ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 130.

¹¹⁴ Lisa Vargo, comment to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 58.

¹¹⁵ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 11.

6.2 Satire of William Godwin

Lisa Vargo suggests that the name of the novel *Devilman* that Mr. Flosky is reading carries a resemblance to Godwin's *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century* and is intended as a satirical pun on the work by Godwin.¹¹⁶ Peacock probably found amusing its main character who is very much indulged in misanthropy.¹¹⁷

Butler states that *Nightmare Abbey*'s opening burlesques *Mandeville*. In the novel, the place where Mandeville's uncle lives is described to be built on a "foundation of which was a rock, against which the waves of the sea for ever beat," near is "a long bank of sand, and in different directions various portions of bog and marshy ground, sending up an endless succession of vapours." In *Mandeville*, "the centre and the other wing had long been resigned to the owls and the bitterns." Additionally, "the courtyard exhibited a striking scene of desolation. The scythe and the spade were never admitted to violate its savage character. It was overgrown with tall and rank grass of a peculiar species, intermingled with elder trees, nettles, and briars." *Nightmare Abbey* is very similar in some points of the description. The abbey is "pleasantly situated on a strip of dry land between the sea and the fens" and "the south-western tower, which was ruinous and full of owls, might, with equal propriety, have been called the aviary." The abbey also has "a terrace, which was called the garden, though nothing grew on it but ivy, and a few amphibious weeds." There is a resemblance of the properties being near the sea, with fens nearby and birds inhabiting parts of the mansions. The gardens are left untouched, overgrown with weeds.

Butler also suggests, that in *Mandeville* Godwin supports the paradigm that one simply cannot escape the ghosts of their past which supports the dangerous attitude of letting life happen, instead of taking responsibility and trying to make it better. Its main character, Mandeville, does some terrible things but it seems that Godwin justifies it due to the environment he grew up in which Peacock condemns.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 27.

¹¹⁷ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 125-121.

¹¹⁸ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 122.

6.3 Satire of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Most of the sources state that in *Nightmare Abbey*, S. T. Coleridge is depicted as Mr. Flosky. The character is said to have a reputation in the world of literature, although Mr. Flosky believes he is underestimated. He is a man with a love for mysteries; melancholic and glum with a vivid imagination to see the unreal in the world. In his youth, Mr. Flosky was a supporter of the French Revolution.¹¹⁹

James Mulvihill claims, that in *Nightmare Abbey*, Mr. Flosky represents “Coleridge the literary theorist.”¹²⁰ Coleridge was an admirer of German literature and asserted that the best writing is “Christian and Germanic, intense, introverted, difficult and recluse.”¹²¹ Peacock reacted to Coleridge’s view of literature,¹²² knowing he enjoyed the works of the German thinker Immanuel Kant and made known his philosophy of transcendentalism to other people in England.¹²³ In the book, Mr. Flosky even names his son Emanuel Kant Flosky,¹²⁴ which can be perceived as a ridicule of his love for Kant or an allusion to his oldest son Hartley and younger Berkeley, named after the philosophers David Hartley and George Berkeley.¹²⁵ David Garnett also points out, that in the passage where “Scythrop’s romantic dreams had indeed given him many pure anticipated cognitions of combinations of beauty and intelligence,”¹²⁶ it is again Peacock making fun of Coleridge, as he and Shelley used the collocation “pure anticipated cognition” themselves for the amusement of Coleridge and Kant’s philosophy as well.¹²⁷

Relating to that, Peacock also pokes fun at the fact that Coleridge sees the complicated and intricate thoughts of Kant as intelligible¹²⁸ and useful. He achieves that in the character of Mr. Flosky when he declares:

[...] for the pleasure of metaphysical investigation lies in the means, not in the end [...]. Analytical reasoning is a base and mechanical process, which takes to pieces and examines, bit by bit, the rude material of knowledge; and extracts therefrom a few hard

¹¹⁹ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 53.

¹²⁰ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 59.

¹²¹ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 113.

¹²² Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 114.

¹²³ Tuley Francis Huntington, introduction to *Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner; Kubla Khan; and, Christabel*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Tuley Francis Huntington (New York: Macmillan, 1907), xxxi, <http://archive.org/details/coleridgesancien1907cole>.

¹²⁴ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 77.

¹²⁵ Earl Leslie Griggs, “Coleridge and His Son,” *Studies in Philology* 27, no. 4 (1930): 636.

¹²⁶ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 61.

¹²⁷ David Garnett, *The Novels Of Thomas Love Peacock*, 1963, 366,

<http://archive.org/details/novelsofthomaslo0001davi>.

¹²⁸ Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 114.

and obstinate things, called facts, every thing in the shape of which I cordially hate. But synthetical reasoning, setting up as its goal some unattainable abstraction, like an imaginary quantity in algebra, and commencing its course with taking for granted some two assertions which cannot be proved, from the union of these two assumed truths produces a third assumption, and so on in infinite series, to the unspeakable benefit of the human intellect. The beauty of this process is, that at every step it strikes out into two branches, in a compound ratio of ramification; so that you are perfectly sure of losing your way, and keeping your mind in perfect health by the perpetual exercise of an interminable quest [...].¹²⁹

Butler adds, that although an intellectual, Mr. Flosky is in opposition to “the scientific spirit of free enquiry.”¹³⁰

Another allusion to Coleridge lies in the political views of Mr. Flosky. In the 1790s, the French Revolution ideals spread in the intellectual circles in England and Coleridge was one of the most eminent supporters, but later joined the monarchist Toryism.¹³¹ Hence both Coleridge and Flosky used to be radicals in their youth and later turned conservatives, losing their ardor. However, as Mulvihill points out, Peacock satirizes not only Flosky’s radicalism but also his current extremely conservative views.¹³² Because he lost his hopes about political change, he started to study Kant and metaphysics and completely isolated himself from the surrounding world, “till the common daylight of common sense became intolerable in his eyes.”¹³³

In the eighth chapter, Mr. Flosky announces,

I am writing a ballad, which is all mystery: it is
“such stuff as dreams are made of,” and is, indeed, stuff made of a
dream: for, last night I fell asleep, as usual, over my book, and had a
vision of pure reason. I composed five hundred lines in my sleep;
so that as I had a dream of a ballad, I am now officiating as my
own Peter Quince, and making a ballad of my dream, and it shall be
called Bottom’s Dream, because it has no bottom.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 77.

¹³⁰ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 115.

¹³¹ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 205-206.

¹³² Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 64-65.

¹³³ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 53.

¹³⁴ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 93.

This is most likely a satirical allusion to Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan*.¹³⁵ He had to take opium for pain relief due to medical issues and famously composed the poem under its influence. In the preface, Coleridge explains that while sleeping "all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort."¹³⁶ Flosky's composition process thus strikingly resembles that of Coleridge.

Another Coleridge's opinion that Peacock satirizes is his treatment of reading novels.¹³⁷ In *Biographia Literaria*, he calls novels to be as useful as smoking, sniffing tobacco, or an argument between spouses. As he negates the importance of circulating libraries, he also implies reading should be meant for those rich enough to afford it.¹³⁸ However, the rich who can afford to buy books might not always read them, creating a paradox that Peacock expresses through Mr. Listless' character. Mr. Listless answers Marionetta's question about Dante, saying "I don't know how it is, but Dante never came in my way till lately. I never had him in my collection, and, if I had had him, I should not have read him. But I find he is growing fashionable, and I am afraid I must read him some wet morning."¹³⁹

In the fifth chapter, Mr. Flosky says, "Modern literature is a north-east wind—a blight of the human soul. I take credit to myself for having helped to make it so. The way to produce fine fruit is to blight the flower."¹⁴⁰ This can be viewed as an allusion to Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual*, where he (similarly as in *Biographia Literaria*) claims, that reading should be reserved for those who in his opinion have the power to make the society better – the upper classes.¹⁴¹

Peacock also doesn't spare Coleridge from humorous remarks about his collaboration with Wordsworth and Southey, when Mr. Flosky utters, "This rage for novelty is the bane of literature. Except my works, and those of my particular friends, nothing is good that is not as

¹³⁵ Carl Van Doren, *The Life of Thomas Love Peacock* (BiblioLife, 2009), 121.

¹³⁶ Coleridge, *Coleridge's Ancient Mariner ; Kubla Khan ; and, Christabel*, 97.

¹³⁷ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 20.

¹³⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Adam Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 35–36.

¹³⁹ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 72.

¹⁴¹ Lisa Vargo, comment to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 72.

old as Jeremy Taylor: and, entre nous, the best parts of my friends' books were either written or suggested by myself."¹⁴²

6.4 Satire of George Gordon Byron

Peacock criticizes lord Byron's work which tends to be misanthropic. Peacock also doesn't see the excessive portrayal of melancholy as beneficial, quite the contrary.¹⁴³ Some people see it as an undeserved attack, but as Doren argues, satire is made to point out specific vices, which doesn't mean Peacock tries to deny Byron's writing abilities.¹⁴⁴ Vargo explains that Peacock was irritated with the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* due to its "excessive introspection." Peacock on the other side composed works with a wide range of characters who not only expressed their opinions but also shared them, having the possibility of discussion with people of opposing views. Peacock also did not approve of how the readers started to associate authors with their works to such an extent, as was evident in the case of Byron; Peacock himself was a very private man.¹⁴⁵ It is possible, that the work discussed in *Nightmare Abbey* by Mr. Flosky, "Paul Jones," is an allusion to Byron's *Corsair*. Vargo adds, that only the day *Corsair* was released it sold about 10, 000 copies.¹⁴⁶ This proves Lord Byron's huge popularity.

It is agreed on, that the character by which Peacock satirizes Byron, is Mr. Cypress. He parodies brilliantly the essence of Byron's writing in the song "There is a fever of the spirit."¹⁴⁷ He captures the Byronic hopelessness in the verses:

"Till, one by one, hope, joy, desire,
Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart."¹⁴⁸

Peacock parodies Childe Harold, specifically when we consider the resemblance to particular stanzas and also through ridiculing its characteristic somber mood.¹⁴⁹ In the eighth chapter, Marionetta has a conversation with Mr. Flosky about Scythrop. She says, "I do not like to see

¹⁴² Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 72.

¹⁴³ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 62.

¹⁴⁴ Carl Van Doren, *The Life of Thomas Love Peacock* (BiblioLife, 2009), 115.

¹⁴⁵ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 12.

¹⁴⁶ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 27.

¹⁴⁷ Doren, *The Life*, 112.

¹⁴⁸ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 114.

¹⁴⁹ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 21.

him unhappy, and I suppose there is some reason for it.” Mr. Flosky answers, “Now I should rather suppose there is no reason for it. It is the fashion to be unhappy.”¹⁵⁰ Vargo claims, that here Peacock alludes specifically to canto four,¹⁵¹ which Peacock commented in his letter to P. B. Shelley, “The fourth canto of ‘Childe Harold’ is really too bad. I cannot consent to *auditor tantum* of this systemical ‘poisoning’ of the ‘mind’ of the ‘reading public.’”¹⁵²

Peacock also expresses his political opinion through the comment of Mr. Cypress, “Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife; and a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all duty to his country. I have written an ode to tell the people as much, and they may take it as they list.”¹⁵³ He satirizes Byron’s decision to travel when he was still a member of the House of Lords. Byron had a chance to change something about the course of their country, but instead, he ran away¹⁵⁴ after separation from his wife, Annabella Milbanke.¹⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that lord Byron has received the character of Mr. Cypress well and even sent Peacock a rosebud as a gift.¹⁵⁶

6.5 Satire of the contemporary literature in the 19th century

In September of 1818, Peacock writes to Shelley: “I thought I had fully explained to you the object of *Nightmare Abbey*, which was merely to bring to a sort of philosophical focus a few of the morbidities of modern literature, and to let in a little daylight on its atrabilarious complexion.”¹⁵⁷ Literature should somehow benefit the readers and not be detrimental, which is something Peacock does not see as much in the book industry as he thinks would be healthy. What he means is that “works should engage with public discourse rather than simply confirm complaisance and solipsism.”¹⁵⁸ Hence, he decided to satirize the works promoting misanthropy and vanity of everything, which claim there is nothing worthy of putting work into.¹⁵⁹ As Mr.

¹⁵⁰ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 94.

¹⁵¹ Lisa Vargo, comment to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 94.

¹⁵² Thomas Love Peacock, *Thomas Love Peacock Letters to Edward Hookham and Percy B. Shelley, with Fragments of Unpublished Mss.*, ed. Richard Garnett (Boston, The Bibliophile society, 1910), 64, <http://archive.org/details/thomaslovepeacoc00peac>.

¹⁵³ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 109.

¹⁵⁴ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 120.

¹⁵⁵ Lisa Vargo, comment to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 109.

¹⁵⁶ Doren, *The Life*, 112.

¹⁵⁷ Peacock, *Letters*, 77.

¹⁵⁸ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 29.

¹⁵⁹ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 63.

Listless remarks, “And that amiable discontent and antisociality, which you reprobate in our present parlour-window literature, I find, I do assure you, a very fine mental tonic, which reconciles me to my favorite pursuit of doing nothing, by showing me that nobody is worth doing any thing for.”¹⁶⁰ Vargo adds, that one of the core messages of *Nightmare Abbey* is a “critique of the intellectual misuse of artistic powers.”¹⁶¹

A character that might be the most influenced by this sort of literature is Scythrop.¹⁶² What influences him the most are German tragedies, Gothic novels, and transcendental philosophy, especially that of Kant.

The third chapter describes a situation where Scythrop has finally healed from his heartbreak and Peacock points out, that he mistakes the power of philosophy for the healing of time.¹⁶³ I see this as a ridicule of the intellectuals who sometimes see the world to be more complicated than it is. Another allusion to philosophy occurs, when Marionetta has a conversation with Mr. Flosky, wishing for a simple answer that he repeatedly does not provide, he says “if any person living could have it to say, that they had obtained any information on any subject from Ferdinando Flosky, my transcendental reputation would be ruined for ever.”¹⁶⁴ As his target Peacock chooses a character, who might be intelligent, however is completely useless in practical life, as he is not able to answer a simple question.

Scythrop sleeps “with *Horrid Mysteries* under his pillow”¹⁶⁵ which is a Gothic novel by Carl Grosse. This is the kind of literature that Peacock mocks, where the improbable happens, all mixed with feelings of suspicion and terror.¹⁶⁶ On the contrary, he values the legacies of the Enlightenment and Greeks, which display sensibleness and playful wit.¹⁶⁷ Peacock sees the difference between the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the former one clever with a means to express thoughts on public affairs, the latter one preaching solipsism and unconcern.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁰ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 88.

¹⁶¹ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 30.

¹⁶² Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 63.

¹⁶³ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 61.

¹⁶⁴ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 95.

¹⁶⁵ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 56-57.

¹⁶⁶ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 28.

¹⁶⁷ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 138.

In May 1818, Peacock wrote to Shelley, “I have almost finished ‘Nightmare Abbey.’ I think it necessary to ‘make a stand’ against the ‘encroachments’ of black bile.”¹⁶⁹ He uses the imagery of four humors, where black bile is associated with melancholy. Vargo comments on that metaphor and says, that Peacock saw “a connection between literature and a nation’s well-being.”¹⁷⁰ This is demonstrated in Scythrop, who lives in isolation, immersed in Gothic novels without any contact with the real world, and ends in gloomy self-absorption.

In the story, Scythrop hesitates over two young women and ultimately cannot choose which one he loves more. Some of the critics see it as an allusion to Shelley’s two wives, first Harriet Westbrook whom he left for Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. However, I am inclined to the opinion of Marilyn Butler, who argues that would be rude and inconsiderate not only to Shelley but also to the memory of Harriet who died before the publication of *Nightmare Abbey*. Instead, Butler suggests that the characters of Marionetta and Stella are personifications of different kinds of literature.¹⁷¹ Marionetta’s life resembled “all music and sunshine, and she wondered what any one could see to complain of in such a pleasant state of things.”¹⁷² On the other hand, Stella is “in a fine state of high dissatisfaction with the world, and every thing in it.”¹⁷³ This corresponds with Butler’s claim that Marionetta personifies the “light literature” with its only intention to make the reader laugh, whereas Stella serves as an allusion to the superficially intellectual and misanthropic literature.¹⁷⁴

In one scene Scythrop tells Marionetta, to “open a vein in the other’s arm, mix our blood in a bowl, and drink it as a sacrament of love.”¹⁷⁵ It is a direct allusion to *Horrid Mysteries*, and Peacock even specifies it through Scythrop, who wants to emulate the characters of Rosalia and Carlos. In *Horrid Mysteries*, these two characters take marriage vows and then Rosalia cuts Carlos with a dagger and sucks his blood, afterward, she wounds herself and lets him drink her blood. Soon after, they both faint after the loss of blood.¹⁷⁶ However, Marionetta is not a character in a Gothic novel and naturally is terrified so she decides to run away. Peacock then

¹⁶⁹ Peacock, *Letters*, 64.

¹⁷⁰ Lisa Vargo, introduction to *Nightmare Abbey*, by Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, ed. Lisa Vargo, 1. publ. 1818, Broadview Editions (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 28.

¹⁷¹ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 125-126.

¹⁷² Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 105.

¹⁷³ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 64.

¹⁷⁴ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 126.

¹⁷⁵ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 62-63.

¹⁷⁶ Karl Grosse, *Horrid Mysteries: A Story Translated From The German Of The Marquis Of Grosse In Four Volumes (One Volume Edition) by Peter Will: Fair (1968)* (London: Folio Press, 1968), 68–69.

makes this scene even more comical, when Scythrop chases after her but collides with Mr. Toobad, resulting in a crash when they both fall.¹⁷⁷

In chapter four, after Scythrop meets Marionetta and falls in love with her, Mr. Glowry comments, on how he can be “infatuated with such a dancing, laughing, singing, thoughtless, careless, merry-hearted thing” and expresses he is disgruntled.¹⁷⁸ Peacock in this instance and throughout the whole work objects to unbound pessimism and satirizes it. His friend Shelley notices it as well when he writes, “Enough of melancholy! Nightmare Abbey, though no cure, is a palliative.”¹⁷⁹

In the end, Peacock lets Scythrop ask for “a pint of port and a pistol,” after he finds out that both Stella and Marionetta left¹⁸⁰, which points out to the ending of *Young Werther*, where the main character shoots himself. At the end of *Nightmare Abbey*, he parodies the epistolary form of Goethe’s tragedy *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (which he also mentions Scythrop reading¹⁸¹), where he lets the readers know how Stella and Marionetta decided in the form of letters from both young ladies.¹⁸² In her letter, Marionetta probably alludes to Werther when she writes, “Mr. Listless assures me that people do not kill themselves for love now-a-days, though it is still the fashion to talk about it.”¹⁸³ In those passages, Peacock again and again points out the kind of literature that promotes excessive melancholy. In that, he does not try to belittle one’s grief but rather criticizes intentionally immersing oneself in sorrows and rejecting to move on.

Nevertheless, Peacock also in several instances satirizes the fashionable literature of his time, namely the cult of sensibility and sentimentality. When the Hilarys’ and Marionetta are supposed to leave the abbey, Mrs. Hilary appeals to “propriety, and delicacy, and decorum, and dignity, &c. &c. &c.” which Peacock comments “We are not masters of the whole vocabulary. See any Novel by any literary lady.”¹⁸⁴ By this, he ridicules the tendency of overusing the abbreviation, instead of expressing one’s thoughts fully or concisely. The way Scythrop reacts to their expected departure is an example of a fine parody of undue sensibility. Scythrop

¹⁷⁷ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 63.

¹⁷⁸ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 64.

¹⁷⁹ Peacock, *Letters*, 52.

¹⁸⁰ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 56.

¹⁸¹ Carl Dawson, *His Fine Wit: A Study of Thomas Love Peacock* (London, 1970), 56, <http://archive.org/details/hisfinewit0000unse>.

¹⁸² Dawson, 217.

¹⁸³ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 134.

¹⁸⁴ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 65.

“entered, and, without speaking a word, threw himself at her feet in a paroxysm of grief, the young lady, in equal silence and sorrow, threw her arms round his neck and burst into tears.”¹⁸⁵ Later on, when Marionetta finds out about Stella, she faints,¹⁸⁶ which is an overreaction for sure, but also again a perfect satire of the sentimental novels.

¹⁸⁵ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 66.

¹⁸⁶ Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 126.

7 Popularity of Jane Austen

Austen is a celebrated author now and she was already famous during her lifetime. Prince Regent read her novels and had multiple copies of them. He even requested his librarian, Mr. Clarke to guide Austen in the London palace. There the librarian advised that the next novel Austen publishes should be dedicated to Prince Regent. Thus, her work *Emma* is dedicated to him.¹⁸⁷

Austen's popularity increased again with the issue of the *Memoir of Jane Austen* in the year 1870. It is the first proper biography of the author and her readers finally got to know more about her personal life.¹⁸⁸ Between World War I and World War II, the popularity of Austen rose again. This happened due to the promotion of domestic life on a national level. In this way, domestic fiction has become more read. It also became the catalyst for an issue of all of Austen's juvenilia.¹⁸⁹

In the 20th century, Jane Austen Societies were established all over the world, the first in the United Kingdom, followed by North America. The fervency and admiration the members of the societies have felt towards Austen can be compared to devotion to saints. Her admirers have collected her personal items and put them on display at the Chawton Cottage, where she lived. The biggest quarrel happened over a lock of Jane's hair, which was in the end donated to Chawton.¹⁹⁰

Janet Todd speaks about Austen in relation to Shakespeare, describing them as the representatives of "English literature's most masterful creators of character and dialogue." Now both of them are not acclaimed merely for their writing, but also in a way unrelated to that – they are renowned apart from their works.¹⁹¹ John Bailey describes that as time passes by, the relationship between readers and their beloved author increases in intensity. In the case of Jane Austen, the first time this phenomenon was observed was with the coming of the latter half of the 19th century. In circa 1894, the Austen enthusiasts started to call themselves Janeites.¹⁹² In extreme cases, they viewed Jane Austen as divine as if she had been a goddess to be worshipped

¹⁸⁷ Le Faye, *World of Novels*, 36.

¹⁸⁸ Todd, *In Context*, 112.

¹⁸⁹ L. Lambdin and R. Lambdin, *Austen Studies*, 193.

¹⁹⁰ Todd, *In Context*, 112-115.

¹⁹¹ Todd, *In Context*, 111.

¹⁹² John Cann Bailey, *Introductions to Jane Austen* (Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Press, 1969), 23, <http://archive.org/details/introductionstoj0000bail>.

and the Janeites a part of a cult, acknowledging the supreme mastery of her novels.¹⁹³ And by understanding her view of the world from her writing, somehow, they become even closer to Jane herself. To this day, Austen is one of the most well-known British authors. Her legacy continues with countless adaptations, societies, and a still-growing fan base.

¹⁹³ Claudia L. Johnson, “The Divine Miss Jane: Jane Austen, Janeites, and the Discipline of Novel Studies,” *Boundary 2* 23, no. 3 (1996): 143–63, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303640>.

8 Popularity of Thomas Love Peacock

During his lifetime, Peacock wasn't a very critically acclaimed author. Possibly, his popularity peaked in the years of 1830 to 1840.¹⁹⁴ However, at the end of the 19th century, his literary works became more popular, also thanks to new editions and prefaces.¹⁹⁵ These days, Peacock still isn't as widely known as Jane Austen. What are the reasons behind that?

Butler asserts that the readers are naturally interested in characters and their development. This is also something they expect from a novel, to have an interesting multidimensional cast. However, Peacock isn't concerned about his characters. In the end, they might be perceived as unsatisfying and lacking something.¹⁹⁶

Doren adds, that for Peacock the most important thing was to stay true to himself and write about things that were important to him, not about something the readers required. He mainly wrote for himself¹⁹⁷ and was able to masterfully describe the time and satirize its follies.¹⁹⁸ Peacock didn't try to comment on everything, especially the deep philosophical questions. He has decided which issues he desires to address in his works and avoided others.¹⁹⁹ Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Peacock did not gain the popularity he could have – what he was interested in did not meet with the liking of readers.

Mulvihill comments, that Peacock proved multiple times that he is intellectually committed to various ideas and opinions embodied in his characters and leading them to the final rapprochement. He usually worked with this same pattern in his novels and that might be the reason why he is not so appealing to many people. He has limited his craft severely so he did not try many new things or be more experimental.²⁰⁰ As Peacock cares more about ideas than the plot, his novels are not ideal for people who require constant action in a story. If this style of novels doesn't suit somebody, they won't find most of his other novels very appealing.

Another problem comes with his treatment of the embodied ideas in his books. Peacock cares about the ideas, but it almost seems like he doesn't care about which of them should

¹⁹⁴ Doren, *The Life*, 267.

¹⁹⁵ J. B. Priestley, Introduction to *Nightmare Abbey and Crotchet Castle / with an Introduction by J. B. Priestley* by Thomas Love Peacock, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), ix.

¹⁹⁶ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 19.

¹⁹⁷ Doren, *The Life*, 206-207.

¹⁹⁸ Doren, *The Life*, 263.

¹⁹⁹ Doren, *The Life*, 273.

²⁰⁰ Mulvihill, *Thomas Love Peacock*, 123.

prevail. He purposefully didn't try to preach about what is moral and what is not. Peacock is impartial in a way that makes the reader uncomfortable because readers expect to learn a lesson, to be guided in what to think, but nothing happens in the end, as if it didn't matter at all.²⁰¹ In this way, sometimes the readers cannot identify what the point of the book is supposed to be. It almost seems that Peacock isn't concerned about the truthfulness of his ideas, but more about how they are senseless, bizarre, and odd.²⁰²

That leaves us with one final question. What is Peacock's most famous novel and why? Butler claims, that it is *Nightmare Abbey*, likely due to the continuing fame of authors it satirized, of his books resembles most a traditional novel with a plot, has a lovable main character, is genuinely funny, and is a testament to what it is like growing up into adulthood.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Doren, *The Life*, 271-272.

²⁰² Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 2-3.

²⁰³ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 102.

9 Comparison of the two novelists

Northanger Abbey and Nightmare Abbey are novels that were published in 1818, even though Austen's novel was published posthumously. Both authors alluded to Gothic fiction, which became less and less popular and by 1820 was perceived as outdated.²⁰⁴ J.B. Priestley praises Peacock and says, that even though his characters were not full-dimensional (which was intended) they are still much more natural than any other characters, apart from those of Jane Austen. Thus, he compares Peacock and Austen in their masterful creation of characters.²⁰⁵ Both of the authors created characters, who devour to read, and the lines between fiction and reality sometimes blur for them. Hence, Peacock focuses on the 'blue devils' in literature and Austen on Gothic novels.²⁰⁶ Both Austen and Peacock abound with humor, as Butler remarks: "The mastery of language, especially of dialogue, is matched by the ability to create a fictional world of unusual clarity and charm."²⁰⁷ Howard Mills observes, that in Northanger Abbey, romanticism is detached from real life, but Scythrop's romanticism "fuses with individual character and directs one's life." This he calls "lived romanticism."²⁰⁸

Various critics have differing opinions on which of the novels is better. Doren highlights Peacock's strategy to focus on ideas and the attitudes that promoted the current state of literature. He claims that Northanger Abbey falls behind Nightmare Abbey in the lack of ironic qualities.²⁰⁹ Ian Jack sees that Peacock's characters are more concerned with their words than actions.²¹⁰ Because of this, some readers might see Austen's writing as more intriguing, as it has a proper plot, whereas most of Peacock's writing is preoccupied with thoughts and ideas embodied in the characters while the plot has a secondary importance. As I stated above, there are many similarities between Austen and Peacock, but they stay unique in their own ways. I believe that both of them are extraordinary authors, each having its rightful place among English classics.

²⁰⁴ Wu, *Companion to Romanticism*, 364-365.

²⁰⁵ J. B. Priestley, Introduction to *Nightmare Abbey and Crotchet Castle / with an Introduction by J. B. Priestley* by Thomas Love Peacock, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), viii.

²⁰⁶ Doren, *The Life*, 123-124.

²⁰⁷ Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, vii.

²⁰⁸ Howard Mills, *Peacock: His Circle and His Age* (London, Cambridge U.P., 1968), 164, <http://archive.org/details/peacockhiscircle00mill>.

²⁰⁹ Doren, *The Life*, 123-124.

²¹⁰ Ian Jack, *English Literature, 1815-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 213, <http://archive.org/details/englishliteratur0010jack>.

Conclusion

In the thesis, I provided the necessary context for what satire is and its history. I also focused on the role of women in the society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the position of women writers. Hopefully, I made it clear how difficult it was to be only a woman, the more so a female satirist.

I also identified and categorized the satirical elements in both novels, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey*.

In *Northanger Abbey* I have identified, that Austen satirized the Gothic in the characters of the heroine, Catherine Morland, but also secondary characters, the Thorpe siblings, John and Isabella. Then I commented on the generally accepted opinion, that *Northanger Abbey* is merely a satire of the Gothic novels. I did not defy that claim, but shared my opinion, that *Northanger Abbey* is a tribute to the Gothic – its reinvention and affirmation. It is truly Gothic, but in a different sense than some of the readers see. It acknowledges the importance of novel reading and stands in opposition to the unhealthy patriarchal norms in society. Jane Austen does not see the danger in the supernatural, but in the ordinary, when the danger is people we might meet regularly.

Concerning *Nightmare Abbey*, I have found two main themes of Peacock's satire. The first one is his intellectual contemporaries and the influence they have. I have focused on four of his acquaintances, whom he satirizes most prominently. These are Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Godwin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and lord George Gordon Byron. Secondly, Peacock opposed the fashionable literature and current trends of gloom and misanthropy. He protested against that and chose to do so through satire with its comedy-like aspects.

In conclusion, I see both works as satirical, in some sense mocking contemporary literature of the time and Gothic novels. Whereas Austen in her own way pays a tribute to them and conceals her true satirical targets, Peacock makes it very clear what he objects to. However, it is important to note that the characters in *Nightmare Abbey* are caricatures and bearers of opinions and ideas, not multidimensional representations of Peacock's friends. Both 'Abbeys' are full of wit, humor, and allusions and deserve to be read and valued by readers today and in the future.

Resumé

Ve své bakalářské práci jsem uvedla potřebné souvislosti ohledně satiry a jak ji rozpoznat. Zaměřila jsem se také na roli žen ve společnosti konce osmnáctého a počátku devatenáctého století a na postavení spisovatelek. Snažila jsem se objasnit, jak obtížné bylo být ženou, a ještě těžší autorkou satiry.

Identifikovala a rozřadila jsem také satirické prvky v obou románech, v Northangerském opatství Jane Austenové a Nightmare Abbey Thomase Love Peacocka.

V Northangerském opatství jsem komentovala satiru gotiky v podobě parodie hlavní hrdinky Catherine Morlandové, ale také vedlejších postav, sourozenců Thorpových, Johna a Isabelly. Dále jsem se vyjádřila k tezi, že Northangerské opatství je pouze satirou gotických románů. Toto tvrzení jsem nevyvrátila, ale vysvětlila, že je to román více gotický, než se zdá. Northangerské opatství je poctou gotice, Austenová přetváří některé gotické prvky a další používá. Je to román gotický, ale v úplně jiném smyslu, než jak ho vnímají čtenáři. Autorka obhajuje četbu románů a staví se do opozice vůči nezdravým patriarchálním normám ve společnosti. Jane Austenová nevidí nebezpečí v nadpřirozenu, ale v obyčejnosti, lidech, které běžně potkáváme. Vymyslela hrdinku, která nepotřebuje zachraňovat, je dobrým člověkem a sama dochází k tomu, co je pravdivé a co je lež.

Co se týče Nightmare Abbey, našla jsem dva hlavní motivy Peacockovy satiry. Prvním jsou intelektuálové tehdejší doby a jejich vliv na společnost. Zaměřila jsem se na čtyři jeho známé, které satirizuje nejvýrazněji. Jsou to Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Godwin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge a lord George Gordon Byron. Druhým bodem Peacockovy satiry je tehdejší literatura, oblíbené prvky melancholie a misantropie. Protestuje proti nim a volí nejlepší zbraň, jíž se svými humornými prvky samozřejmě satira.

Závěrem chci říci, že obě díla jsou satirická, v jistém smyslu zesměšňující tehdejší literaturu a gotické romány. Zatímco Austenová jim svým způsobem vzdává hold a terč skutečné satiry skrývá, Peacock dává jasně najevo, co (nebo kdo) mu vadí. Je však důležité podotknout, že postavy v Nightmare Abbey jsou pouhými karikaturami, nositeli názorů a myšlenek, nikoliv popis skutečných osob. Obě „Opatství“ jsou tak plná vtipu, humoru a referencí a zaslouží si, aby je dnešní i budoucí čtenáři četli a oceňovali.

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Anotace

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Téma práce: Satira v literatuře se zaměřením na satirické prvky v dílech Jane Austen a T. L. Peacocka

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

Počet znaků: 85 435

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Klíčová slova: satira, Opatství Northanger, Nightmare Abbey, Thomas Love Peacock, Jane Austen, gotika

Jazyk práce: angličtina

Charakteristika: Cílem práce je popsat historii a vývoj satiry, vysvětlit, jaké jsou znaky satiry a gotiky a dále jmenovat satirické prvky v dílech Jane Austenové a T. L. Peacocka se zaměřením na Northangerské opatství a „Nightmare Abbey.”

Annotation

Author: Silvie Němcová

Department: Dep.of English and American studies, FF UP

Title: Satire in Literature with Focus on Satirical Elements in the Works of Jane Austen and T. L. Peacock

Supervisor: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

Number of characters: 85 435

Year of presentation: 2024

Key words: satire, Northanger Abbey, Nightmare Abbey, Thomas Love Peacock, Jane Austen, Gothic

Language: English

Characteristics: The thesis is to examine the history and development of satire, explain the identifying features of satire and Gothic, and furthermore describe and explain the satirical elements in the works of Jane Austen and T.L. Peacock, with a focus on Northanger Abbey and Nightmare Abbey.