CAROLYN DEVER AND LISA NILES

Introduction

Anthony Trollope was one of the most prolific, popular, and richly diverse Victorian writers. In a literary career that extended from the 1840s to the 1880s, Trollope published forty-seven novels, including the monumental Barsetshire and Palliser series and such major stand-alone works as *Orley Farm* (1862) and *The Way We Live Now* (1875). A serial and series writer whose novels traverse Ireland, England, Australia, and New Zealand and genres from realism to science fiction, Trollope also published criticism, short fiction, travel writing, and biography; his *Autobiography*, published posthumously, codified – in terms best described as notorious – the labor practices of the professional Victorian writer. At the peak of his career Trollope's standing was well established among both literary and popular readers. His reputation declined rather precipitously after his death, however, when his *Autobiography* pulled the curtain from a writing process that included a firm commitment to the production of a certain number of words each day, and a muse who kept an unblinking eye trained on the sales figures. Yet, even in the midst of what appeared to be an irrevocable critical decline, Trollope remained in print. He was always read. This unbroken continuity has something to tell scholars about the cultural relevance of Trollope's work.

Anthony Trollope means many different things to many different people. For some readers, Trollope epitomizes the most conservative, and most Conservative, aspects of Victorian fiction in novels in which the Home Counties and the thrill of the hunt feature prominently. The sword cuts both ways for readers of the conservative Trollope: for some his vulgarity smacks of self-satisfaction, an investment in the status quo; for others, Trollope is the mythmaker of an England long lost to modernity, in which honor and industry carry the day. Another Trollope has emerged more recently, however, among readers who find in those same novels plots of class mobility in all directions, queer desire, a uniquely cosmopolitan world view, the subversion of the formal and social imperatives of mid-Victorian realism.

It is both the great challenge and the great opportunity of the *Cambridge Companion to Anthony Trollope* to speak to, and of, the insights enabled by Trollope's persistently bimodal reception. Indeed, it is the cumulative argument of this volume that Trollope's very bimodality is at the heart of his readers' passionate, diverse responses to his work. Exploring that bimodality, essays in this volume contend that Britain's greatest domestic novelist is gloriously cosmopolitan; that the author behind some of the Victorian period's most memorable, and conventionally realistic, marriage plots is drawn to their queer, polymorphous, and sensationalized undertones; that this most familiar and even cozy of novelists is experimental in form and in theme; that the biographer of the Home Counties is acutely aware of modernity's creeping advent. Trollope, we contend, is an artist of the dialectic. His writing stages encounters between the polarities of the day. It drives toward a synthetic vision that holds opposing terms continuously in frame, thereby ensuring that what's old looks new, and that what's new remains familiar.

The contributors to this volume present a Trollope who is both known and unsettling. Situating Trollope in his contemporary literary milieu, for example, Mark W. Turner makes a claim for a "global Trollope," an author keenly aware of the global marketing potential of the Trollope "brand," as well as fully alive to the opportunities his globe-hopping provided for new material. Turner reveals a Trollope who worked hungrily in all genres of the Victorian literary marketplace, as a novelist, non-fiction and short-fiction writer, and editor, and a Trollope keenly attuned to the export potential of domestic fictions. Further defamiliarizing the question of what we know of the familiar Trollope, Victoria Glendinning turns the focus from Trollope's much-discussed role as an autobiographer to his four less-known works of biography. Glendinning declares *An Autobiography* indispensable to any study of Trollope, as it not only reveals an aging Trollope's values but outlines his theory of novel-writing. Through this lens, Glendinning further examines Trollope's biographies as works that provide more insight into Trollope himself than into his various subjects.

In three essays on Trollope's series fiction, the Barset and Palliser novels emerge as sites in which old and young, heritage and innovation, struggle for dominance. Mary Poovey takes up the concept of seriality in the Barset novels in order to identify a shift in critical consensus about novelistic practices in the 1860s, and about the artistic merits of Trollope's novels in particular. Poovey argues that rather than emerging as a coherent whole, the Barset series was conceived as such only through the publication of *The Last Chronicle* in 1867. Poovey argues that *The Last Chronicle* deploys narrative strategies that make the sprawling panorama of the other Barset texts

cohere, creating order from chaos. In his chapter on the Palliser series, William A. Cohen examines the reciprocity of the political and the psychological, of public and private lives. Taking Trollope's own paradoxical political stance – the self-described "advanced conservative Liberal" – as his starting point, Cohen proposes a systematic tension between the liberal and conservative that, ironically, comes to look very much like modernity. Robert Tracy further identifies the Palliser series as Trollope's most successful late fiction, in large part because these novels retain their English settings and characters, providing a familiar formula with which to experiment. Tracy identifies Plantagenet and Glencora Palliser's marriage as a template of the sacrificial marriage plot – one that is rewritten, repeatedly, throughout the series, to offer a glimpse into the problems of time and social change on character. Tracy suggests that through multiple iterations of the same plot and its resolution throughout the series, the Palliser novels offer a stability of character in an unpredictable world.

In a further examination of Trollope's experimental impulse, Lisa Niles addresses Trollope's short fiction, a genre that provided Trollope with a freedom in subject matter that is rarely seen elsewhere. Niles claims that the generic constraints of the short story – singularity of focus and spatial limitations – paradoxically offered Trollope an unrestrained hand in authorship. The short stories offer Trollope a formal template for thematic experimentation, an opportunity he pursues vigorously in his full-length fictions as well. Jenny Bourne Taylor, for example, explores the provocative tension between form and theme in her chapter on Trollope and sensationalism. Bourne Taylor reads Trollope's novels alongside those of sensation novelists such as Wilkie Collins, and argues that rather than functioning as the "other" of realism, sensationalism is embedded within Trollope's novels. Their synthetic relationship offers a more nuanced view of two forms too often conceived as oppositional. Moving to a broader claim about thematic experimentation and social worlds, Kate Flint reads much of Trollope's fiction as queer. Flint establishes queerness itself as contingent – "queer" simultaneously invokes same-sex desire and signals an aberrant form of self-presentation in the socially codified world of the mid-nineteenth century. Flint returns to Trollope's short fiction, arguing that the short story is itself a "queer narrative," a form that can imagine the absorption of the extraordinary into the quotidian.

As Niles, Bourne Taylor, and Flint suggest, Trollope's exploration of gender roles, sexuality, and erotic and romantic relations occurs on the level of form as well as theme. In "The hobbledehoy in Trollope," Laurie Langbauer further identifies Trollope's remarkable construction, the "hobbledehoy," as just such a juncture of form and theme. The

hobbledehoy is embodied in Johnny Eames of the Barsetshire novels, but he is found throughout Trollope's fiction and is perhaps a surrogate for the young Trollope himself. Langbauer argues that the hobbledehoy's intractable awkwardness counters conventional paradigms of development in favor of a reiterative, circular logic akin to serial fiction itself: gawky male adolescence illuminates Trollope's formal investment in recurrence and reiteration.

Expanding outward from the hobbledehoy to masculinity more broadly conceived, David Skilton argues that masculinity exposes Trollope's strategic layering of ethical choices within an imperfect world. Trollopian masculinity, Skilton suggests, maps the development of a middle-class, secular conscience that is so normalized by its male author as to be invisible within the masculine critical establishment. Skilton notes that for this reason, Trollope's women characters have historically attracted much more critical interest than his men. In the chapter "Vulgarity and money," Elsie B. Michie turns the lens on a number of Trollope's women who are conspicuous precisely because of their extravagant vulgarity. Michie argues that Trollope's vulgar women highlight the British ambivalence – characterized by pride on one hand and revulsion on the other – toward new wealth. In identifying with and also satirizing crass, material vulgarity, Michie suggests that Trollope demonstrates the strategies by which new commercial wealth is both claimed and set apart in mid-Victorian culture.

The law is another means by which Trollope interjects moral puzzles into his fiction, and Ayelet Ben-Yishai contends that Trollope's legal fictions index his interest in the social power of community during a time of massive social upheaval. Ben-Yishai demonstrates that Trollope presents common law and positive law as opposites, as signs of the tensions between tradition and modernity. In the negotiation of this tension, the codes of a new civil society find their expression. Trollope's novels tested relations between the old and the new, and also between the local and the global. As James Buzard makes clear in "Trollope and travel," the contours of Trollopian civil society were expanding not only conceptually in the domestic milieu, but globally: Trollope, Buzard notes, was a perpetual world traveler, with the travel books and articles to show for it. The confrontations with alterity recorded in Trollope's travel writings permeate even the domestic fictions, Buzard argues, within a common ideal of divinely ordained Englishness.

In "Trollope and the Antipodes," Nicholas Birns considers the effect of the opening of the Suez Canal on Trollope's conception of Australia and New Zealand, and particularly the tightness of their connections to the imperial center. Post Suez, the Antipodes were much closer to "home," and for Trollope they posit a vision for futurity, expanding his conception

of the social body to include the consideration of indigenous people. Closer to home, Gordon Bigelow argues that Ireland, where Trollope lived for two decades both before and after the famine, allowed Trollope to begin life as a fiction writer, and catalyzed a favorite fictional scene, the hunt. Ireland turned Trollope from hobbledehoy to man; and the Irish Land War provided the scene of his last published novel, *The Landleaguers*. If Ireland gave rise and fall to Trollope's authorial career, the United States provided his prehistory. Amanda Claybaugh investigates Trollope's revisiting of the notorious work of his mother, Frances Trollope, in her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832). Trollope's American characters, Claybaugh suggests, maintain a difference sustained over commonalities of language and history, and they function in Trollope's fiction to propose the potential for new alliances constructed against the history of colonial domination.

Today's Trollope is at once global and local, conservative and liberal, experimental and conventional, and even queer and straight. Trollope's unique literary contribution, we contend, inhabits the heart of the paradox. In a modern world of Ponzi schemes and financial bubbles, of a globe that is ever shrinking and yet prolifically diverse, of human identities that flex in response to unprecedented social pressures, and writing technologies that reveal the entanglements of creativity and automation, the Victorians' Anthony Trollope has never been more valuable in our efforts to explain ourselves to ourselves.

1

MARK W. TURNER

Trollope's literary life and times

Anthony Trollope is well known as one of the most prolific and energetic of Victorian novelists. Forty-seven novels, four lengthy travel books, four biographical studies, five collections of short stories, three collections of non-fiction sketches, a range of journalism – this would be an impressive output for any writer over a lifetime, but it is perhaps more striking because Trollope did not publish his first book until 1847 at the age of thirty-two. By this time he had already established himself as a rising civil servant in the General Post Office, having gradually worked his way up from a junior clerk in London, to surveyor's clerk in Ireland, and finally to a surveyor and inspector himself; he remained devoted to the civil service job until 1867, when he resigned, with a view to entering Parliament. But Trollope's professional life was not always so smooth; according to *An Autobiography*, it was the move to Ireland at the age of twenty-four that was the making of the man and which saved him from an aimless, unambitious London life. As a studious inspector of postal routes in Ireland, he would follow in the footsteps of postal deliverers, seeking to find ways to improve speed of delivery and generally improve service. Among his notable achievements in the Post Office was his role in developing the first pillar box for the collection of post. So, Trollope had a double professional life – as career civil servant and then as popular writer – and these professions ran parallel for nearly twenty years and mutually informed each other. As a local and global traveler often engaged in government and colonial business, and as a writer whose works were widely disseminated and reprinted, Trollope is a particularly interesting figure who sheds light on the shifting and complex literary marketplace in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Writing was as serious a profession as his work for the Post Office, and he approached both with the same industrious professionalism. There is no greater evidence of this than his writing diaries, which reveal a focused and disciplined man, quite different from the hobbledehoy he describes himself as in the early chapters of *An Autobiography*. The method documented in the

diaries suggests a workmanlike approach to writing, with an underlying belief that a few hours each day would allow a man to write as much as he ought:

> When I have commenced a new book, I have always prepared a diary, divided into weeks, and carried on for the period which I have allowed myself for the completion of the work. In this I have entered, day by day, the number of pages I have written, so that if at any time I have slipped into idleness for a day or two, the record of that idleness has been there, staring me in the face, and demanding of me increased labour, so that the deficiency might be supplied. (*A* ch. 7)

> It had at this time become my custom,– and it is still my custom, though of late I have become a little lenient to myself,– to write with my watch before me, and to require from myself 250 words every quarter of an hour. I have found that the 250 words have been forthcoming as regularly as my watch went. But my three hours were not devoted entirely to writing. I always began my task by reading the work of the day before. . . This division of time allowed me to produce over ten pages of an ordinary novel volume a day, and if kept up through ten months, would have given as its results three novels of three volumes each in the year. (*A* ch. 15)

Such a determined method of writing enabled him "to have always on hand,– for some time back now,– one or two or even three unpublished novels in my desk beside me" (*A* ch. 15). He was nothing if not reliable, always at the ready with a novel for a publisher or editor. But the writing diaries were more important to Trollope than a mere record of output, and in her study of them, Mary Hamer suggests that "the novels are evidence of a very strong need for self-approval, an approval which had to be won by proof of meritorious achievement."[1] By treating writing as a serious form of labor, Trollope was able to accept it as a suitable profession, a real career.

Such honesty about his writing met with little praise when it was revealed posthumously in the *Autobiography*, at least not by other writers, and whether Trollope's methods detract from his art has been a matter of much critical discussion. Henry James, for example, commenting on Trollope's writing method in a lengthy essay in the New York-based *Century Magazine* in 1883 believed that Trollope

> abused his gift, overworked it, rode his horse too hard. As an artist he never took himself seriously; many people will say this was why he was so delightful. The people who take themselves seriously are prigs and bores; and Trollope, with his perpetual "story," which was the only thing he cared about, his strong good sense, hearty good nature, generous appreciation of life in all its varieties, responds in perfection to a certain English ideal. According to that ideal

> it is rather dangerous to be explicitly or consciously an artist – to have a system, a doctrine, a form. Trollope, from the first, went in, as they say, for having as little form as possible; it is probably safe to affirm that he had no "views" whatever on the subject of novel-writing. His whole manner is that of a man who regards the practice as one of the more delicate industries, but has never troubled his head nor clogged his pen with theories about the nature of his business. (*Crit. Her.* 527)

The view that Trollope was more a craftsman than an artist cast a long shadow and shaped critical, though not popular, opinion of Trollope for generations thereafter, probably until the 1970s to 80s. James is expressing a particular but not uncommon set of cultural values, which is uneasy about the coupling of art and the marketplace and which sees "industry" and "industriousness" as more suited to the commercial world than to the world of letters. The mid to late nineteenth century was precisely a period of transition in the literature industry, as copyright laws were hotly debated and authorship became increasingly professionalized. Trollope was one of those writers who unapologetically kept one eye on the market, and he proudly lists in the *Autobiography* the sums he received for each of his books, totaling over £68,000 by the end of the 1870s – a staggering amount for the time. For Trollope, his industrious writing life, meticulously, even compulsively, documented in the diaries, offered proof that writing could not only provide a worthwhile career, but also ensure a comfortable life as a middle-class gentleman. Alongside his exhaustive literary output, he tells us, "I hunted always at least twice a week. I was frequent in the whist-room at the Garrick. I lived much in society in London, and was made happy by the presence of many friends at Waltham Cross. In addition to this we always spent six weeks at least out of England" (*A* ch. 15). His genteel life was made possible through the rich rewards offered by his literary career.

Unlike contemporaries such as Charles Dickens, or, to a lesser degree George Eliot, Trollope's literary success was gradual rather than immediate. His first two novels, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* (1847) and *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* (1848), were both Irish tales, mostly ignored at the time but read with great interest by critics and readers today for the insight they give into an English novelist writing about the Irish during one of the most troubled periods of Ireland's history. His third novel, a historical romance about Revolutionary France, *La Vendée* (1850), fared no better and failed to make a mark with the public. It was not until Trollope began to write about the fictional county of Barsetshire that he captured at least some of the reading public's imagination. With the publication of *The Warden* (1855) and then *Barchester Towers* (1857), Trollope became more

confident, and he found one of his natural subjects – the daily dramas of middle-class gentlemen and gentlewomen.

Trollope's literary ascent

Trollope found his natural medium in 1860, when William Makepeace Thackeray, editor of the new shilling monthly *Cornhill Magazine*, invited him to serialize a novel in his periodical. This, you might say, was Trollope's big break; that the offer came from his literary idol and perhaps the most eminent novelist of the day was all the more flattering for Trollope, who craved the acceptance of literary men. The *Cornhill* was launched as a handsome new magazine aimed at the middle-class reading market, with two serial novels in each issue, alongside a range of well-written miscellaneous articles and poetry, accompanied by lavish full-page illustrations. Trollope's *Framley Parsonage* was the lead serial in the first issue, and the success was immediate and extraordinary. While reviews of the volume form of the novel were mixed – "trivial and purposeless," according to the *Westminster Review*, but "a beautiful novel," for the *London Review* – none could refute that the serialization of *Framley Parsonage* in *Cornhill* found its popular readership and led to his being one of the most sought-after serial novelists of the next decade (*Crit. Her.* 133, 126).

The success of the *Cornhill*, with over 120,000 copies sold of the early monthly issues, points to at least two things. First, there was a huge market of middle-class readers of serial fiction, willing to pay a shilling each month for a variety of contents. Second, it demonstrated Trollope's talent for the series novel, and for writing serial fiction, both of which allow for the slow development of plot and character over an extended period of time, which suits Trollope's subjects. After the great success of *Framley Parsonage*, Trollope conceived of each novel he wrote as a serial; that is, he composed his fiction with the idea of publishing and reading in parts in mind, and, from that point on, he never abandoned this way of organizing and conceptualizing his novels. While not all of his novels published thereafter were published as serials, many did appear in either magazines or newspapers or as part-issues. Furthermore, Trollope became particularly noted for his series fiction, since *Framley Parsonage* and *The Small House at Allington*, serialized in the *Cornhill* between 1862 and 1864, both returned to Barsetshire, with characters and locations from *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers* reappearing and overlapping. Later in life, as Trollope had long hoped, all these novels, along with *Doctor Thorne* (1858) and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867) were published together as a coherent set, acknowledging that part of their power and appeal was in reading them

in relation to one another, rather than as self-standing texts. He turned to the idea of the series a second time with the Palliser novels, which focus largely on political life in London, but that series, altogether darker in its view of society, never replaced the Barsetshire novels in the hearts of his readers. While other Victorian novelists also wrote series fiction – Margaret Oliphant in her "Chronicles of Carlingford," for example – none exploited the series as successfully as Trollope.

The 1860s was the period of Trollope's greatest popularity – popular with magazine readers and circulating library subscribers who had a healthy appetite for his fiction – and he began earning large sums: £3,200 per novel at his peak. By the middle of the 1860s, "Trollope" was a reliable and hard-working brand, one that was trumpeted loudly and frequently in advertisements for his works. A review of Trollope's collection of essays, *Hunting Sketches* (1865), first published in the evening newspaper the *Pall Mall Gazette*, speaks precisely to the power of the Trollope brand:

> [The essays] are just light, pleasant, easy reading, lively enough, and apparently written by one who understands his subject. Had an ordinary man contributed them to any newspaper, they would have probably been applauded at the time and consigned to oblivion; but they had appended to them the name of Mr. Anthony Trollope.[2]

Partly as a way of testing whether readers were simply buying a "Trollope" or whether it was some intrinsic literary value that his public responded to, he experimented with anonymous publication – *Nina Balatka* (1866–67) and *Linda Tressel* (1867–68) in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for which he received a greatly reduced fee without his name attached. Neither novel was particularly popular or well received.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Trollope was not only a writer of fiction but also an editor of others'. At the same time that he had been contributing fiction to a range of periodicals – *Once a Week, Good Words*, the *Fortnightly Review*, and *Blackwood's Magazine* among others – Trollope became editor of his own shilling monthly magazine. Following the lead of novelist-editors throughout the 1860s, including popular novelists such as Mary Braddon, who edited *Belgravia*, and of course Dickens, who was editing *All the Year Round* at this time, Trollope launched *St. Paul's Magazine* in 1867, the year in which he resigned from the Post Office, with his own *Phineas Finn* as the inaugural serial. The publisher of the new venture, James Virtue, approached Trollope with the idea of launching "Anthony Trollope's Magazine," a title clearly designed to make the most of the writer's literary celebrity. By this time, Trollope had published nineteen novels, two travel books, collections of short