THE RHETORIC OF EMPIRE AND THE FICTION OF ANTHONY
TROLLOPE

A Dissertation in
English
by
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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the lack of postcolonial criticism concerning the fiction of Anthony Trollope, himself an avid traveler in and writer about the British Empire. Chapter One provides background about the critical reception of Trollope’s writings about the Empire and traces his attitudes about foreign cultures and the superiority of English culture. I offer a textual reading of Trollope’s short story “A Ride across Palestine” to demonstrate how anxiety about the empire surfaces when Trollope relinquishes his usual narrative voice and uses a more risky first person narrator. Chapter Two compares and contrasts what were in Trollope’s opinion his best and worst writings. Through an analysis of his travel narrative *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* and his novel *He Knew He Was Right* I make an argument that *He Knew He Was Right* was written as a response to the Governor Eyre controversy as it contrasts marital relationships with colonial ones. Chapter Three contextualizes the Cain/Hopkins paradigm of gentlemanly capitalism and argues that Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*, using the figure of Trollope’s *bête noir* Disraeli, both warn of the dangers of speculation and imperial expansion into foreign markets. Chapter Four situates *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate* as reactions to the case of the notorious Tichborne Claimant and examines how Trollope’s fiction “unrealistically” eliminates the danger that those returning from the colonies bring with them. Finally, Chapter Five argues against the common contention that Trollope’s final novels demonstrate growing pessimism and out-of-character imperial zeal as I examine *An Old Man’s Love*, *The Fixed Period*, and *The Landleaguers*. My conclusion is that Trollope’s fiction is ripe with material for people interested in the postcolonial project.
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Chapter One: “Could There Be An Escape from Such Dirt”: Anthony Trollope’s Imperialism and the Fear of Cultural Contamination

“‘MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN,’ so Noel Coward’s song tells us, ‘go out in the midday sun’; and wherever the midday sun shone on Englishmen, there, like as not, would be Anthony Trollope. At the foot of a pyramid, in the midst of a jungle, in Tasmania or the Transvaal, in Ceylon, New Zealand, the West Indies, on a mail packet, a camel, a dog cart, a donkey, there would be Anthony Trollope, England’s ‘tireless traveler.’”

Patrick Brantlinger, in his groundbreaking Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914, makes an insightful observation about Anthony Trollope’s reputation as a novelist of Empire, suggesting that Trollope “is interesting in part because he wrote so much about the Empire even while he has seemed, at least to some critics, to have written little about it, and that from an anti- or at least nonimperialist point of view.”

Frederic Harrison, a contemporary of Trollope, said that Trollope, “though a great traveler, rarely uses his experiences in a novel, whereas Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Bulwer, and George Eliot fill their pages with foreign adventures and scenes of travel.”

This perceived lack of Empire-related material, where much actually exists in his fiction,

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2 Patrick Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988): 4-5. One critic, surprised at the lack of overt political material in Trollope’s fiction remarked, for example, “At the very least, one would think, a writer with major pretensions to political views ought to have something to say about industrialization, urbanization, poverty, and imperialism. Robert Hughes, “Spontaneous Order and the Politics of Anthony Trollope,” Nineteenth-Century Literature 41, no. 1 (1986): 32.
suggests that a new lens is necessary for accessing Trollope’s relationship to and portrayal of the Empire in his fiction.4

Until recently, Trollope’s treatment of colonial matters in his fiction has been largely ignored, and as Brantlinger suggests, misinterpreted. Why, considering the emphasis on colonial and postcolonial studies in the academy in the last twenty years, has so little attention been paid to Trollope? Since, according to Gayatri Spivak, “it should not be possible to read nineteenth century literature without remembering that … [it] was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English,” Trollope, the “king of the lending-libraries” should, if only in terms of quantity, be a key figure in our understanding of nineteenth century English attitudes about the Empire.5 Both Trollope’s fictional representations of the Empire in his novels and his non-fiction travel writings, bolstered by his authority as a civil servant who actually worked in the Empire, were published consistently throughout his career. Even as our knowledge and access to the Victorian’s empire is largely mediated through the texts that the Victorians left behind, it is crucial to remember that the empire itself was, to some degree, a textual endeavor, and that Trollope certainly was a textual contributor. As Elleke Boehmer reminds us:

The empire in its heyday was conceived and maintained in an array of writings – political treatises, diaries, acts of edicts, administrative records

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4 Elleke Boehmer makes the important distinction between colonial and colonialist literature – a distinction which I will use, even as I will try to complicate Trollope’s relationship to these terms. To refresh, colonial literature (the more general term) is “writing concerned with colonial perceptions and experience”; this mainly metropolitan writing “participated in organizing and reinforcing perceptions of Britain as a dominant world power” as it “made imperialism seem part of the order of things.” Colonialist literature, on the other hand, is writing that is more directly concerned with imperial expansion; this “literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire.” Elleke Boehmer, Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 14.

and gazetteers, missionaries’ reports, notebooks, memoirs, popular verse, government briefs, letters ‘home’ and letters back to settlers. The triple-decker novel and the best-selling adventure tale, both definitive Victorian genres, were infused with imperial ideas of race pride and national prowess.6

In various parts of the Empire as a representative of the British Postal Service, Trollope negotiated treatises, kept detailed administrative records, produced maps of swifter postal routes, and made suggestions about how foreign posts should be managed. He wrote letters to family in Ireland, England, and Australia while traveling and makes frequent reference to the Empire in his novels and travel books. As such, he was one of the many individuals who publicly conceived of and helped to maintain the Empire in an official capacity, even as his novels “unofficially” (re)produced his social vision of the superiority of English culture: he called his novels “thoroughly English” as he conceived of them against some foreign and inferior, less ideal form.7

Returning to Edward Said’s claim that without empire “there is no European novel as we know it,” critics have only just begun to consider Trollope’s vast canon, forty-seven novels, in its imperial context.8 Placing Trollope’s fiction alongside his non-fiction writings about the Empire, in the words of Helen Lucy Blythe, “illustrates that historicizing and contextualizing even minor references to empire in novels reveal the large extent to which they are a product of Britain’s contemporary relationship to its

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6 Boehmer, 14.
7 In this case, he was speaking about one of the Barsetshire novels, Framley Parsonage.
colonies.” Trollope’s novels are certainly filled with asides about the Empire as well as a smattering of references to colonial locations, like the novels of his contemporaries. But what I discovered in my reading of Trollope’s novels was a much deeper and essential connection to the Empire than previous critics had allowed: entire novels whose plots resonated metaphorically with contemporary anxieties about the English and their Empire, especially a profound fear of cultural contamination and a compulsion to assert repeatedly the ability of good Englishmen to avoid becoming soiled when they “rub up against” foreign matter. Trollope’s discourse employs the rhetorical mode of debasement that David Spurr outlines in his *The Rhetoric of Empire*, a mode characterized by emphasis on filth and defilement which “requires the constant reproduction of those images in various forms – a recurring nomination of the abject – both as a justification for European intervention and as a necessary iteration of a fundamental difference between the colonizer and the colonized.” Following Hayden White’s *Tropics of Discourse* such debasement is connected “with the need for positive self-definition in times of sociocultural stress.”

Trollope’s cultural xenophobia and the fear of contamination that accompanies it was not, of course, something that Trollope invented; he shared such cultural anxieties with his audience and with many of his peers. However, this anxiety needs to be seen as the *engine of his fiction*, not simply an unfortunate or occasional shortcoming. Much as Trollope tried to “capture” his perception of Ireland and external colonies for his readers to see in his non-fiction, he would, more often, try to “capture” in novels the Englishness

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11 Quoted in Spurr, 76.
that could tame and civilize the Irish and other colonial landscapes. Trollope’s fiction “captures” England in two senses. On the one hand, its realism literally tries to capture a specific image of England, replicated time after time in novel after novel, full of romanticized landed gentry, idealized rural values, slow political change, and little colonial conflict. But on the other hand, this social stability of the landed gentry is frequently threatened by outsiders, people of different classes, races, political affiliations, or simply those whose entrepreneurship and ambition threatens the supremacy of Trollope’s conception of Englishness. The old England that Trollope admires, creates, and replicates in his fiction, is in danger of eventual extinction – much as were indigenous populations who Trollope discusses in his travel writings – however, in the world of Trollope novels Englishness prevails. The narrative perspective in Trollope’s novels which employs this discourse is far from neutral and frequently contradictory in revealing ways.

Few critics in the 21st century would suggest anti-imperialist or non-imperialist motivations behind Trollope’s writing, as Trollope’s travel narratives can be seen, in part, as handbooks for potential emigrants; he admits in his *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, “If we have young friends whom we wish to send forth into the world, we search the maps with them at our elbows.”¹² Trollope provided four of these detailed maps in book form for his readers, maps that were heavily slanted toward white settler colonies where emigrants would feel most at home: *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1858), *North America* (1862), *Australia and New Zealand* (1874), and *South Africa* (1878).¹³ While scholarship in the two decades since Brantlinger’s pronouncement has begun to

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¹³ These are the dates of publication and most of them were written a year or two before publication.
reinterpret Trollope’s writings using the tools of postcolonialism, most notably colonial discourse analysis, such work focuses heavily on Trollope’s nonfiction travel writing listed above and, only rarely, on his fiction. Scholars who do read Trollope’s fiction using the tools of postcolonialism often focus on a single novel or short story, and while this work is certainly valuable, a critical void exists for those who want a broader analysis of the relationship of the Empire to Trollope’s fiction and of Trollope’s fiction to the Empire. This study seeks to reverse this trend by casting the Empire as central to understanding Trollope’s fiction, and as a secondary goal to renew interest in Trollope studies from a postcolonial perspective. This study attempts to begin filling this void and offers future scholars a foundational text for their further research into this topic.

This project examines what most would consider to be Trollope’s later novels, beginning in the following chapter with a novel written in 1867, *He Knew He Was Right*, proceeding to an analysis in chapter three of *The Way We Live Now* (1873) and *The Prime Minister* (1874), then moving to an analysis of *Is He Popenjoy?* (1874-75) and *John Caldigate* (1877), and culminating in my fifth chapter with *The Fixed Period* (1880-81), *An Old Man’s Love* (1882), and Trollope’s final and unfinished novel, *The Landleaguers*, written in 1882. This time period interests me because it was when certain key ideas about the Empire and its relationship to England were being debated, especially in the wake of events like the India Mutiny, the Morant Bay Rebellion, Disraeli’s new imperialism, the scramble for Africa, and increasing nationalist agitation in Ireland. Trollope’s contribution to such debates in his fiction has been largely ignored, and the following chapters argue for their importance in those debates. This chapter provides

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14 Some of the novels I discuss, especially in my final chapter, are out of print and older editions are expensive and hard to find, even in university libraries. Hopefully, critical interest can reverse this trend.
background information about Trollope’s critical reception regarding his attitudes about the empire and his method of literary production which has its roots in his travels both in Ireland and the colonies. I close this chapter with reading of an early short story “A Ride Across Palestine” (1860) which demonstrates that Trollope’s fear of cultural contamination in colonial contexts was something that informed his fiction from the very beginning.

Critical reception and Trollope’s colonialist writings

Like his mother, Frances Trollope, before him – “whose name became synonymous with globe-trotting” – Trollope frequently used his experiences abroad as inspiration for his writing. Among Victorian novelists Anthony Trollope is in many ways unique: his tremendous output of forty-seven novels, his dual careers as a postal employee and novelist, and his notoriously unconventional writing habits (250 words every fifteen minutes with only minimal editing) are just a few aspects of his authorial persona that separate him from most other novelists. Another is his extensive travel. What other Victorian writer could make the following statement about the “vagrant” geographic origins of a novel, that it was written in “Alexandria, Malta, Gibraltar, Glasgow, then at sea, and at least finished in Jamaica?” (125). This was true of Trollope’s novel The Bertrams (1859) and similar international roots characterize much of Trollope’s fiction. At least in a physical sense, Trollope’s fiction was often a product of the Empire; he wrote on ships, trains, and carriages, writing many of his most “English” stories while outside of England. While critics historically have found Trollope’s travels to be interesting curiosities, few have found his travels (with the exception of his travels

15 Booth, 5-6.
to the United States) to be of much relevance to a study of his novels, even as scholars have recently paid greater attention to Trollope’s travel books. While Victorianists can read book length studies about Dickens, the Bronte sisters, and George Eliot and the Empire, scholars researching Trollope will find only a few book chapters and articles, but no book length assessments of Trollope’s views about or representations of the Empire, either in his fiction or his non-fiction.

In his *A History of English Literature* Louis Cazamian notes Trollope’s place among novelists as one in which “the desire for accuracy, stimulated by what is the newest and keenest atmosphere of the time, claims as its justification the pleasure or the contentment inherent in the search for truth.” This search for the truth led Nathaniel Hawthorne to make his famous statement about Trollope’s novels that they “were just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case.” This glass case made visible various strata of society from aristocrats to peasants going about their daily lives causing contemporaries like Carlyle to accuse Trollope of being “irredeemably imbedded in the commonplace, and grown fat upon it, and prosperous to an unwholesome degree.” Those who view Trollope’s tremendous literary output as a financial ploy are likely to dismiss Trollope’s obsession with accuracy as a sign of laziness, a refusal to be creative or thoughtful. Trollope, however, seems to have viewed realism as his calling – a call that he answered again and again almost obsessively. Realism for Trollope is an ideal aesthetic quality with serious moral implications. It is not a dismissal of aesthetic concerns, but rather a condemnation of

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artifice. Nevertheless, Trollope’s notorious emphasis on money has sullied his reputation for many readers and critics. At the end of Trollope’s autobiography, he famously lists with pride his books indicating he amount that he was paid for them to date. He does this immediately after speculating, with hope, that he has written “more in amount than the works of any other living English author,” even suggesting that he may have written more than any dead writer, taking comfort in the fact that both Voltaire and Varro are dead so that he, being alive, can still “add to the pile” (363). Trollope’s obsession with quantity has traditionally been linked to his persona as a chronicler of everyday life, what Henry James called his “complete appreciation of the usual.”19 Trollope’s dual careers as a full time postal employee and a prolific novelist, biographer, and essayist suggest that Trollop was an unusual Victorian; he becomes even more unusual when we consider that he traveled more widely than any other Victorian writer and that he wrote more about the Empire than the other Victorian novelists combined. As will be demonstrated, it was Trollope’s travels to foreign cultures that aided him in producing novels that he himself would call “thoroughly English.”

Before proceeding, a word or two about the lack of critical work on Trollope and the Empire is necessary. Nicholas Birns suggests that there are three obstacles to Trollope’s writing being explored using the tools of colonial and postcolonial critics – three obstacles that still remain today. First, Trollope’s reception to this day as “a synecdoche for British national identity” whose popularity has historically increased in times of national turmoil strongly argues against alternative readings of his texts.20 His

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20 Julian Wolfreys suggests that “the familiar and domesticated Trollope … comprehensible in terms of conservative values” who John Major named the preferred author of Downing Street in 1991 is a
novels are viewed by many as comfortingly conservative, nostalgic, and self-explanatory in their emphasis. Noted admirers of Trollope include former conservative British Prime Ministers Harold Macmillan and John Major, seen by many as stereotypical examples of Trollope readers. Second, Trollope’s focus on white settler colonies, and his seemingly limited interest in issues of race, makes his wide canon seem remarkably void of material for critics looking for colonialist material. Third and I would argue, most importantly, Birns suggests that “Trollope’s colonial works are given short shrift by traditionally conservative Trollope scholars, and thus lack the visibility that would draw them to the eyes of critics involved in the post-colonial project.” Those most likely to be interested in Trollope are the least likely to be looking to analyze his presentation of and attitudes about imperialism.

That being said, there has developed a certain consensus about Trollope’s attitudes about the Empire, especially as discussed in his travel writings, among contemporary critics. Generally speaking, Trollope became more supportive of maintaining imperialist relationships as he aged, even as he continued to oppose expansion in most cases. Historian John Davidson’s 1969 essay “Anthony Trollope and the Colonies,” the first scholarly attempt to classify Trollope’s attitudes about the Colonies, suggests that Trollope’s attitude toward colonial matters went through three specific phases. The first phase lasted for most of Trollope’s life and ended around 1874; during this phase Trollope saw imperial expansion as necessary, but not completely

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desirable. Looking at the United States as an encouraging example for other white settler colonies to follow, Trollope favored eventual, non-revolutionary, separation of the colonies from England once they had established themselves and were economically viable. The desired relationship would be something like that of a proud parent relinquishing parental responsibility over a favorite child who had achieved the age of majority. Trollope viewed non-white dependencies as undesirable and as a drain on the mother country. The second phase of Trollope’s attitude shift coincides with Disraeli’s second administration (1874-1880). Trollope’s hatred of Disraeli, perhaps contributed to his opposition to Disraeli’s plans for imperial expansion (new imperialism), but nevertheless, it is during this phase that Trollope spoke more overtly about his distaste for acquiring new territories like Egypt, Figi and newly explored sections of Africa. Instead, Trollope favored maintaining the imperial relationships that already existed with white-settler colonies, and strengthening those instead of following a policy of expansion. Writing a letter to the Liverpool Mercury in 1874 Trollope states “There is, I think, a general opinion that Great Britain possesses enough of the world … and that new territorial possessions must be regarded rather as increased burdens than increased strength.”

In Trollope’s final writings (1880-82) Davidson sees a brief third phase to his colonial attitudes when Trollope becomes more overtly imperialistic as he, in Brantlinger’s words, ”adopted views closer to the bellicose, conservative attitudes traditionally identified with imperialism.” He supported the controversial annexation of the Transvaal and hardened his attitudes about Ireland in the wake of terrorist plots and boycotts against English landowners.

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23 quoted in Brantlinger, 6
24 Brantlinger, 6.
Patrick Brantlinger relies heavily on this three step transformation (relatively ambivalent separatist to anti-imperialistic to reluctantly imperialistic), but claims that labeling only this last period as “imperialistic” would call for a very narrow definition of imperialism. However, this reading of Trollope ignores trends in his fiction that demonstrate more consistent thinking, trends that make his final imperialistic phase seem less like a fluke or the result of old age. While it certainly can be argued that Trollope’s attitudes hardened as he grew older, the seeds of these attitudes can be seen in his very earliest novels and short stories. His use of colonial others, including Englishmen who speculated in the colonies, as foils for his presentation of the ideals of English gentlemen suggests that the Empire was never far from Trollope’s mind.25

Recent scholarship would suggest that Trollope’s nonfiction greatly underestimates the influence of the Empire on English identity, and I want to bring such scholarship to bear on Trollope’s fiction. Ian Baucom, Simon Gikandi, Catherine Hall, and others question the notion that England’s civilizing mission was one whose influence radiated outward to the colonies with little or no consequences for Englishness in the metropole. The relationship of the colonies to the metropole was a relationship of power, but, “more significantly, they were relations which were mutually constitutive, in which both coloniser and colonised were made.”26 According to Gikandi, narratives of travel and Englishness are fundamentally connected as “it is in the contrastive space afforded to

it by its colonies that English identity consolidates itself.”

Trollope’s persona as a chronicler of everyday English life in his novels cannot be properly understood, therefore, without considering how that understanding of Englishness was generated through his experiences in the colonies. Part of Trollope’s ideological project seems to be to continually recreate his version of what the superiority of Englishness is. Over and over again he narrates Englishness under pressure from outside and inside influence, and generally speaking, Englishness prevails. Jacqueline Rose has argued that “there is no way of understanding political identities and destines without letting fantasy into the frame.” Following this argument, Trollope’s fantasy, his fictional portrayal of Englishness, may have resonated in powerful ways with readers. A contemporary reviewer for the Nation commented that the source of “Trollope’s success is to be found in the satisfaction which he gives to the almost universal liking for accurate sketches of everyday life, and to the equally universal admiration for the easy optimism which sees in English society, as it now exists, the best of all possible arrangements in the best of all possible worlds.”

The idea that imperial ties in any way were putting pressure on ideas of Englishness was anathema to Trollope’s world even as dedication to realism insisted that such pressures be narrated, and there is noted tension in his presentation of such pressures.

The Trollopian canon, especially the non-fiction, makes a vigorous argument for the fixedness, resilience and superiority of English identity, while the fiction struggles to


do so. Ian Baucom argues that the Empire is “less a place where England exerts control than the place where England loses command of its own narrative of identity.”\(^{30}\) One only needs to look at Trollope’s publishing history, to see that Trollope’s “thoroughly English” novels were based on an idea of Englishness that was “defined against almost everything it was not.”\(^{31}\) This need to separate civilization from perceived savagery, as when Charles Dickens says that “between the civilized European and the barbarous African, there is a great gulf set,” exemplifies identity under pressure – Timothy Carens suggests that such statements of absolute difference most often “arise in the context of challenges to British imperial authority.”\(^{32}\) It is when such authority is challenged or threatened that the “confident voice of Victorian imperialism emerges”; this is the “voice in which English writers proclaim themselves the lords of humankind, invest themselves with the attributes of progressive and humane civilization, and pronounce their right to explore foreign ground and conquer and reform its inhabitants.”\(^{33}\) This confident voice is clearly identifiable in Trollope’s non-fiction, but it emerges in more nuanced and unstable ways in Trollope’s fiction.

Trollope’s characters often look at debates about imperial policies with indifference. Often the Empire is portrayed, explicitly, as unimportant to England. Characters will chat, gossip, and listen to sermons and political speeches about it, but very few of them take matters too seriously and those who do are ridiculed. In *The Eustace Diamonds* the plight of the Sawab of Mygawb, an imprisoned Indian prince


\(^{31}\) Langbauer, 15.

\(^{32}\) Timothy L. Carens, *Outlandish Subjects in the Victorian Domestic Novel* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 2. Carens goes on to say, “Imperial crisis leads … writers to smooth over differences at home – to be English is also to be British and European – and accentuate them in relation to colonial otherness.”

\(^{33}\) Carens, 2.
whose fortunes had been seized, is debated before Parliament and among characters. The mistreated prince is championed in a speech by Frank Greystock at the urging of his fiancé Lucy Morris, but we are told that the impassioned speech is really just political posturing devoid of a real dedication to justice: “Had not Frank belonged to the party that was out, and had not the resistance to the Sawab’s claim come from the party that was in, Frank would not probably have cared much about the prince.”\(^{34}\) Concerning whether the prince “should have twenty millions of rupees paid to him and be placed on a throne, or whether he should be kept in prison all of his life” was a matter about which “the British world generally could not be made to interest itself…”\(^{35}\) In *Phineas Finn, the Irish Member*, the young protagonist quickly is elevated to the position of Under Secretary to the Colonies and decorates his room with maps of all of the colonies, including one of the American colonies “as they used to be.”\(^{36}\) Much of Phineas’s time, and most of the focus of the novel, is concerned with Phineas’s various romantic infatuations and entanglements, not with his politics. At one point readers are told that he would not care if all of the colonies revolted: “He would have parted with every colony belonging to Great Britain to have gotten the hand of Violet Effingham for himself.”\(^{37}\) When characters aren’t indifferent to colonial matters, however, they are negatively affected by them. Trollope’s fiction often mocks characters who look beyond England for satisfaction. In Trollope’s tragic novel *He Knew He Was Right* the protagonist boldly travels the world to find a perfect wife in the colonies, only to spend the rest of the novel suffering because of his choice. In *John Caldigate* the eponymous protagonist, who

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\(^{35}\) *The Eustace Diamonds*, 24.

\(^{36}\) Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn, the Irish Member* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), vol. 2, 129.

\(^{37}\) *Phineas Finn*, vol. 2, 130-131.
initially profits after he leaves England to find gold in Australia, eventually is blackmailed by a woman from Australia to the detriment of his family, including his English wife. Colonial entanglements often haunt Trollope’s characters.

Trollope seems to vacillate: he suggests in some of his travel writing and novels that the colonies are ripe for settlement and an important asset to England, at other times that they are of no importance to England, and at others (these are the ones that I find the most revealing) that the Empire presents real threats to the fixedness of Englishness, an Englishness that in many ways can only be articulated at all because of colonial entanglements. Philippa Levine writes, “A fear that Britons would be affected or infected by foreign immorality haunts the literature as early as the eighteenth century…”38 As she suggests, “There was a constant concern, official and otherwise, about how far the habits and morals associated with the allegedly libidinous tropics would rub off on the new residents.”39 This “rubbing off” of perceived foreign immorality will be discussed at length later, but for now it is important to note that Trollope suggests in his travel books that he is able to travel abroad without being affected by foreignness.40 His fiction seems less confident in such ability even as it insists, in some ways, on asserting it.

Freud’s theory of the uncanny, which Homi Bhabha appropriates for postcolonial theory, is useful for exploring Trollope’s contradictory representations of the Empire. Freud’s observation that the word “Heimlich,” essentially that which is known, familiar,

38 Philippa Levine, “Sexuality and Empire” in Catherine Hall (Ed.), At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 125
39 Levine, 126.
40 Although she is mainly concerned with England prior to 1850, Linda Colley’s book Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850 has been influential in my understanding of Trollope. Colley is interested in the “smallness” of England and the insecurities that a massive Empire produced. The fear of captivity and the variety of captive stories she revisits are a fascinating counter-narrative to the dominant discourse of an ever-expanding and powerful Empire. Linda Colley, Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850 (New York: Anchor Books, 2004).
homely and agreeable, can also mean that which foreign, hidden, and strange suggests for Freud that this uncanny sensation “is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.”\(^{41}\) The realization that that which is strange is also that which is homely and familiar produces the sensation of the uncanny – “the sense of strangeness provoked by certain experiences is thus superficial and deceptive, for the ego seeks to protect the conscious mind from the knowledge of primitive impulses by forgetting them, allowing them to lapse into forms that then appear foreign to the self.”\(^ {42}\) That which is foreign is actually “closer to home” than some would like to admit; the primitive is contained in the civilized. The theory of the uncanny is useful for understanding Trollope and other Victorian writers because it “recognizes the construction of differences that serve to define Englishness and justify empire” at the same time that it “explains its ambivalent uncertainty.”\(^ {43}\)

As a travel writer Trollope was “one of the many who set that frame, who wrote in the knowledge of empire and who articulated for the English a way of being an imperial people.”\(^ {44}\) As he did so, he frequently “offered some of the pleasures and dangers of colonial masculinities and the imagined safeties of an Englishman’s identity.”\(^ {45}\) Being able to travel anywhere in the world as an objective observer and to return with knowledge (that could be converted to profit) without compromising one’s Englishness was Trollope’s goal, and, at least in the travel writing, he consistently

\(^{42}\) Carens 3.  
\(^{43}\) Carens 4.  
\(^{44}\) Catherine Hall, “Going a-Trolloping: Imperial Man Travels the Empire,” in *Gender and Imperialism*, Claire Midgley, Ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 118.  
\(^{45}\) Ibid.
maintains this image. Because Trollope could claim eyewitness status to colonial matters, his words, arguably, held more weight than those who merely theorized about them from a distance. Trollope adopts a similar persona in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), his first attempt at an extended description of a foreign place for his public. Admitting at the beginning of the travel book that he is writing from the brig of the ship on a postal mission, that he didn’t go to the West Indies with the intention of writing a narrative, and that he is simply describing what he has seen, Trollope seems to claim as Gikandi writes “that he has not gone to the West Indies to find evidence to confirm certain beliefs he may hold about the islands; the inscription of travel is not a confirmation of the already given discourse on the other but as a spontaneous act with the capacity to generate new knowledge about the West Indies.”46 Trollope could claim to be an unbiased observer, quickly documenting observations, with no preconceived agenda. However, even though Trollope’s use of irony, including the way he mocks given opinions of the West Indies in favor of his own eyewitness accounts, tries to question received opinions, he is unable, ultimately, to escape from traditional colonial discourse.47

As in Trollope’s fiction, so in his nonfiction writing about the Empire, Trollope is concerned with usualness, what Laurie Langbauer calls “the everyday.” Instead of writing sensational accounts of his travels or stressing the exoticness of colonial locations, Trollope discusses economic conditions, the landscape, food, transportation and lodgings. Such writings downplay conflict and discord in the colonies and stress their

46 Gikandi, 93.
47 As Simon Gikandi argues, even though Trollope attempts to generate new knowledge about the colonies through his travels, he cannot fully extricate himself from traditional English ways of understanding other cultures. Gikandi, 93.
similarity to England. Among Victorian novelists, Trollope traveled to most locations in the Empire, India being the only major exception. His aim in most of his travel writing was to give readers at home as much information as possible, especially for those who were considering emigration for themselves or their children. Concerning Australia, for example, where he visited each colony, Trollope traveled in the cities, the bush, the mountains, going into caves, meat markets and lunatic asylums as he attempted to construct a faithful snapshot for his readers, “hoping by diligence” he might “be able to do something towards creating a clearer knowledge of these colonies than at present exists...” He concludes that for many working people, for example, Australia would pay better wages than England.

Unlike Trollope’s fiction, which is often praised for its nuanced insight into human behavior, Trollope’s travel books are tedious and boring in comparison. However, Trollope rates his travel writing unusually highly in his autobiography, suggesting that The West Indies and the Spanish Main is “the best book to fall from my pen” (128). Trollope’s stated goal for his nonfiction was documenting only “the political, social, and material condition of these countries” (348). He traveled “not to search for new inspiration in exotic scenes and peoples” as many other writers did; instead, he traveled, in the words of one critic, either “officially in the line of his postal duties as postal missioner, or unofficially as self-appointed guardian of colonial welfare.” As a travel writer, Trollope had a tendency, to use Asa Briggs word, to “deflate” his content. Such deflating, one could argue, however, had ideological impetus behind it. Trollope

portrays the Empire through the eyes of a civil servant methodically completing a task, not through the eyes of an adventurer or one concerned with the nuances of human nature. In theory at least, Trollope tried to use his travel books to counterbalance the proliferation of exaggerated accounts of colonial life. Readers of Trollope’s travel books and even his fiction that portrays travel would hardly, based on his accounts, find the prospect of travel to colonial locations exciting or particularly enticing; instead, they would find the colonies not too different than home, certainly an option to be considered. Trollope’s non-fiction tends to open up the Empire for potential emigrants while maintaining, in some ways, that the best place for an Englishman and his family is England.

_Trollope’s Autobiography, Ireland, and the Imperial Roots of Trollope’s Mode of Production_

Even before Trollope became a postal employee and novelist, travel was an important part of his life, albeit a bittersweet one. His mother was a frequent traveler who often left her young son, Anthony, behind. For Frances Trollope, travel was intimately linked to her reputation as a writer, and though she would later write many novels, her _The Domestic Manners of the Americans_ (1832) remains her most well known work. Taking three of her children with her in 1827, but leaving the thirteen year old Anthony behind with his ailing father, Francis Trollope traveled to Cincinnati and set up a bazaar to sell foreign goods, returning home three years later. Her travel book about the Americans helped to get her family out of the enormous debt it had accrued through her

51 Jeffrey Auerbach suggests that “scholars have overlooked the pervasiveness of imperial boredom” among imperial administrators, favoring instead the imperial propaganda in popular novels, articles and biographies.” Jeffrey Auerbach, “Imperial Boredom,” _Common Knowledge_ 11.2 (2005): 284.
husband’s failed efforts as a barrister and a farmer. As a writer, Trollope’s father, Thomas Anthony, was unsuccessful: his life project, as Trollope relates in his autobiography was to write an *Encyclopedia Ecclesiastica*. “It was his ambition,” writes Trollope, “to describe all ecclesiastical terms, including the dominations of every fraternity of monks and every convent of nuns, with all of their orders and subdivisions” (13-14). His father “worked at his most ungrateful task with unflagging industry,” but the work was unfinished, and barely even begun, at his death (14). Trollope’s mother, however, after writing her travel book at the age of 52, went on to publish over a hundred volumes of fiction and non-fiction! His mother’s successful (financially speaking) career, jump-started by foreign travel, and sustained by seemingly superhuman amounts of writing, contrasted with her husband’s solitary and stationary efforts. This success doubtlessly helped to shape Anthony Trollope’s conception of the qualities of a successful author: prolificacy, remuneration, and the ability to use travel to generate material for books. Trollope would follow in his mother’s footsteps.

Trollope’s relationship to Ireland provided him with an initial framework for understanding his English identity and for creating fiction. In the first four chapters of *An Autobiography*, Trollope acknowledges two factors that contributed to his development as a writer: his wretched childhood which compelled him to make up imaginary stories as a mental escape and his postal transfer to Ireland which was his physical escape from the rejection and unhappiness he was accustomed to in England. This section analyzes Trollope’s portrayal of himself in his autobiography and highlights the importance of
Ireland for Trollope’s birth as an author – a remarkably unique author who Walter Kendrick calls “a novel-machine.”

Carolyn A. Barros notes that the “operative metaphor in autobiographical discourse” is change; this “change is presented as transformative, a significant mutation in the characteristic qualities and societal relationships of the principal persona.”

Trollope’s autobiography fits this mold perfectly, as Trollope narrates his transition from a boy who he suffered banishment from meaningful societal relationships through his adolescence and early adulthood into a popular novelist and adored public figure. Upon turning fifteen he recalls being at an age at which he “could appreciate at its full the misery of expulsion from all social intercourse.”

His transformation into a figure who warrants his audience’s attention as a successful novelist and public figure, if we believe Trollope’s account of his abysmal childhood, borders on the miraculous; nevertheless, his autobiography foregrounds the idea of transformation, even if Trollope does not adequately explain it. Most of Trollope’s autobiography consists of what Margaret Oliphant, in her own autobiography, characterizes as an intimate chat which focuses on the characters in his fiction, instead of too many details about his own life. Only the first few chapters discuss Trollope’s upbringing and transformation into an author; instead, readers get a detailed account of publication dates and Trollope’s earning for individual novels down to the pence. Constant production and accurate bookkeeping soon overshadow any sense that readers are getting an intimate portrait of Trollope’s most

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54 Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11 (All further references will be parenthetical.)
personal feelings. This “split between confession and managerial inventory” creates tension in the narrative of the autobiography.  

The autobiography has baffled critics and casual readers of Trollope with its crass portrayal of the author as a shoemaker who cannot afford to stop and marvel at a pair of well-constructed shoes, but must quickly move on to keep up with demand. Trollope, comparing his novels to shoes, claims that having “made up my mind that I could be really happy only when I was at work, I had now quite accustomed myself to begin a second pair as soon as the first was out of my hands” (324). Some looking for a nobler impetus behind the novels find Trollope’s comparison of novel writing to shoemaking a disappointing analogy as it seems that Trollope had no muse, only a perpetual compulsion to write – the process being more important than the product. This obsession, however, is significant, for it is only when one considers the therapeutic value of novel writing for Trollope that one can begin to understand his method and how that method relates to imperialism.

It can be argued that for Trollope, novel writing was a continual erasure of childhood trauma. The strikingly personal and graphic details of abuse and rejection in the autobiography are revealing as they help to explain why Trollope’s fiction is divorced from those details. Accounts of miserable childhoods were common in the 19th century and Trollope’s autobiography recounts his with Dickensian detail: his father was a failed barrister, farmer, and writer; his mother, though successful as a writer, abandoned him for long periods during his childhood; his brother flogged him daily; and his classmates bullied him because of his dirty and slovenly appearance. As an adolescent Trollope

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recalls contemplating suicide and having no friends – he recalls that his childhood was “as unhappy as that of a young gentleman could well be” (2). The dismal description of Trollope’s formative years, when he claimed that “the indignities I endured are not to be described,” become especially interesting when one considers that none of Trollope’s staggering number of fictional characters experience similar childhoods (12). While a writer like Dickens would fill his novels with suffering children modeled partially after his own experience, Trollope’s novels avoid the lives of children altogether. Though horrible, even violent, things happen in Trollope’s novels, they do not happen to children; in fact, as one critic has observed, Trollope “includes virtually no childhoods, happy or unhappy” in his novels.\(^5^7\) His protagonists begin the novels as adults and their childhoods’ have no apparent relevance to their identities. As a novelist, Trollope’s seems to have been unwilling or unable to write about the inner lives of children; instead he figuratively “gave birth” to characters who were adults from literary conception.\(^5^8\)

Trollope explains that he coped with his rejection at school by using his imagination to create story-lines (“building castles in the air”) as he created and continued stories, initially of his own heroism, in his head. Clearly, this experience was a precursor to his ability to produce novels; he writes, “I learned in this way to maintain interest in a fictitious story, to dwell on a work created by my own imagination, and to live in a world altogether outside the world of my own material life. In after years I have

\(^{57}\) P. Edwards, quoted in Leonard Shengold, *Is There Life Without Mother: Psychoanalysis, Biography, Creativity*; Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2000), 63. One important exception is Trollope’s final unfinished novel *The Landleaguers* which I discuss in my final chapter where Trollope presents a young boy in Ireland whose sympathies with some of the landleaguers leads to his murder.

\(^{58}\) For an intriguing psychoanalytic study of Trollope’s autobiography and the relationship between his childhood and his creativity see Leonard Shengold, *Is There Life Without Mother: Psychoanalysis, Biography, Creativity*; Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2000). Shengold suggests, for example, that the importance of travel and locomotion for Trollope lies in his “ability to walk away from mother – for the attainment of a sense of separate identity” (96-97).
done the same, -- with this difference, that I have discarded the hero of my early dreams, and have been able to lay my own identity aside” (43). By the time Trollope began writing novels in his late twenties, he seems to have erased his childhood, including his need to heroically escape from it, from the kinds of stories he would tell. The novels, with their blatant rejection of childhood experiences, were perhaps therapeutic for Trollope as they serve as a denial of Trollope’s own past. The world of his novels was a world where he did not exist.  

Walter Kendrick’s analysis of Trollope’s autobiography, which he reads as not so much an account of Trollope’s life as it is a book on Trollope’s theory of realist fiction, is a useful place to start for thinking about therapeutic value of writing for Trollope. Kendrick argues that Trollope literally substitutes novels for life, becoming a “novel machine” whose habit of telling stories to himself as a schoolboy became a way of life. Realism, if understood as a means of effacement of the actual story teller and the creation of an alternative, though believable, world, becomes Trollope’s coping mechanism. As with most coping mechanisms; however, there was a cost: the constant need to replicate the effacement of the story teller, in Kendrick’s words “the death of Anthony Trollope.”

This death can be linked somewhat to the kind of death Roland Barthes proposes in “The Death of the Author” in which a writer’s voice loses its origin once narration begins. According to Kendrick, Trollope “almost fills the deficiencies that drove him to dream in the first place –‘almost,’ because the detour of writing has made life dependent on

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compensation.” Such a theory helps us understand Trollope’s desire to be prolific and his focus on profit including the metaphor of the shoemaker. Near the end of his autobiography, finished on a trip to Australia, Trollope reassures his readers that if he happened to die on his trip, he had left behind manuscripts of already completed novels in good hands, assuring it seems that even if the public figure Anthony Trollope were to die, the private author would continue to die (through effacement) in print, for years to come with the profits going to his family. Clearly, the novels were a kind of second life – a second Anthony Trollope – that he valued for their prolificacy and repression of his former outcast self.

This second Anthony Trollope, the persona of the prolific author, gave Trollope the reputation that he always wanted. He writes, “I have certainly always had also before my eyes the charms of reputation. Over and above the money view of the question, I wished from the beginning to be something more than a clerk in the Post Office. To be known as somebody,--to be Anthony Trollope if it be no more,--is to me much” (107). Robert Aguirre analyzes the slippage between what he sees as “being Anthony Trollope” and “being known as somebody.” Aguirre writes that “if the two identities – the self of ‘being’ and the self of ‘reputation’—are equated, then Trollope has not escaped from, but only internalized the corrosive social pressures that caused him such misery as a child…” These corrosive pressures fuel the engine that makes Trollope continue as a novel machine. But it we look closer at where Kendrick’s analysis leads and what it compels Trollope to do, the “realism” that Trollope produces isn’t reality at all, at least not Trollope’s reality because someone with Trollope’s background would be unfit.

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61 Kendrick, 16.
62 Aguirre, 584
material for a Trollope novel. The compensation that Trollope receives, the fame and the money for each novel of which he painstakingly kept track, was compensation not only for a specific kind of fictional entertainment, but for the creation of an alternative version of England, continually replicated, where Anthony Trollope could thrive. It could be argued that Trollope’s declining reputation late in his career was, in part, due to this inability to come to terms with what Trollope himself called “the way we live now.” The England of his novels could not adapt to the times because adapting would deny that England’s reality. But to reach this point, it is necessary to look at the other major early influence on Trollope’s novels: Ireland.

Robert Tracy has suggested that “in a sense, Ireland made Trollope.” After a disappointing start as a perpetually late and clumsy postal employee in England, Trollope eagerly accepted a transfer in 1841 to Ireland, a location that his peers saw as dismal and unappealing, but that Trollope viewed as an opportunity to prove himself. While he admitted that he previously disliked his duties in England and was frequently tardy and idle, Ireland gave him a fresh start and instigated an almost complete change in Trollope’s work ethic. He was determined to succeed. Trollope called his postal assignment in Ireland the “first good fortune of my life”; it was in Ireland that he began writing novels, gained respect as a postal employee, met and married his wife, took up fox hunting, and gained the confidence and happiness that was so lacking in his early years. The autobiography explains that Trollope began building castles in the air in England, but it wasn’t until he achieved success in Ireland that he felt ready to write

63 Robert Tracy, “‘The Unnatural Ruin’: Trollope and Nineteenth Century Irish Fiction,” Nineteenth-Century Fiction 37, no. 3 (1982): 359. In fact Tracy goes as far as to say that Trollope may be the only “nineteenth-century Englishman – perhaps one of the very few Englishmen in history – to have benefited from an involvement in what Conor Cruise O’Brien likes to call ‘the Irish predicament’”(359).
down the stories he had been creating. R.F. Foster, in his *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up In Ireland*, sees Ireland as a “classic frontier” for Trollope, and he portrays it as such in his autobiography.\(^{64}\) It was the distance from England, and the respect he was shown and could demand from the Irish in his new position of authority, which gave him the time and space, the confidence, and the even material to hone his skills. In a sense, his identity as a successful public figure was created out of this colonial relationship.

Like so many other Englishmen before and after him, Trollope found the colonies the perfect place for a new start and the formation of a new identity. While the autobiography gives little information about how or why the seemingly idle, miserable, debt-ridden Trollope was able to transform into the productive civil servant that he became, Trollope clearly changed in Ireland. Ireland was “home” for Trollope from 1841 to 1859; when he returned to England he would return as a successful surveyor, a respected employee, and a burgeoning novelist and essayist. The transformation could not have been more pronounced. Trollope’s postal position in Ireland gave him quite a bit of unsupervised responsibility with duties including covering postal routes on horseback to see how long they would take and handling complaints about theft and employee dishonesty. In some cases, his was the final word, and he relished his new power. As a colonial postal administrator, Trollope demanded and received respect that had not come as easily in England, and he was able to live as a gentleman. C.P. Snow, commenting on the first miserable twenty years of Trollope’s life, writes that the one frail support that

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Trollope could cling to then was that “he could tell himself, after all, he was a gentleman.”65 After leaving Ireland this claim was a reality, affirmed by others.

Catherine Hall writes that “Trollope’s first encounter with race as difference was in Ireland, where he trained himself in careful description, learning the imaginative capacity to engage with other societies and to capture something of that otherness for consumption ‘at home.’”66 Overall, Trollope’s memories of Ireland, recounted in his autobiography over two decades later, were positive which is why they jar so much with most assessments of Ireland in the 1840’s during the time of the Famine. For contemporary English readers of Trollope’s autobiography, reading it when it was published in 1883, the peaceful and pastoral Ireland described would seem like an incredibly antiquated and fantastical description. When Trollope moved to Ireland, it had yet to experience the famine and the growing nationalist movements which would heighten near the end of Trollope’s life were only in their infancy. Yet, even when the famine struck, Trollope failed (or refused) to see the devastation around him. Trollope lived in Ireland through most of the famine, and when the worst of it was over he published a series of letters in the *Examiner* where he suggested that “in the end the Famine would be seen as a blessing in disguise, reconstructing the unsound economic structure and enabling a better life for all.”67 Trollope’s overwhelmingly positive recollections of Ireland in his autobiography, as R.F. Foster suggests, however, need to be seen for the constructions that they are. Times were good for Trollope largely because he was an Englishman living and working in Ireland, one whom the famine did not directly

touch and one who was guaranteed an income. In fact, Trollope was able to profit as a postal employee monetarily and in terms of status while at the same time he began to earn a kind of cultural capital as a novelist interested in Irish affairs. Michael Sadleir writes that in Ireland Trollope was “an ambassador of England, living in disputatious amity with one of the most race-conscious nations in the world. And from this sense of being—however humbly—an envoy of his country, his literary ambition and his politics grew rapidly and side by side.”

Mary Jean Corbett reminds us that “from the first, his employment as a traveling colonial administrator was intertwined with his work as a novelist-to-be.” His birth as a novelist was in Ireland.

Trollope’s interest in Ireland extended throughout his entire career as a novelist; his first two novels written while he resided in Ireland, The Macdermots of Ballyclaron (1847) and The Kelly’s and the O’Kelly’s (1848), were set in Ireland as was his final unfinished novel The Landleaguers (1882). In addition, Ireland was the setting for a series of short stories and for two other novels Castle Richmond (1860) and An Eye for an Eye (1878), not to mention the prominent role of the Irish character Phineas Finn in the Palliser series, notably Phineas Finn, the Irish Member and Phineas Redux. Trollope felt that he had special insider knowledge about Ireland that he was eager to share with anyone who would listen. When testifying before a parliamentary committee on the Irish postal service, Trollope was reportedly “cantankerous in his insistence” on speaking at length “even when the questioner seemed eager to move on.”

Trollope is quoted as asserting, “I do not think any other officer has local knowledge of the whole district except myself; I have local knowledge over the whole of Ireland.” This local knowledge

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68 Sadleir, 140-41.
69 Corbett, 114
70 Super, 62
shows up in the novels, and much like before the parliamentary committee, Trollope’s attitude is that this knowledge gives him special insight into the Irish character and what is best for the country.

Irish matters were not just a passing fancy for Trollope; in fact, the relationship of Ireland as an internal colony to England can be seen as foundational for Trollope’s perception of Englishness. The Irish in Trollope are portrayed in one of three ways – tragic, sullen or savage – whichever suits Trollope at the time; they are still in need of English presence for survival as they are unsuited to govern themselves. Mary Jean Corbett suggests using Guari Viswanathan’s theory of British identity formation “as a way of reading Trollope’s double position in terms of how the acquisition and production of knowledge about an ‘other’ provides a basis for establishing colonial authority and subjectivity.” She encourages readers to “read the official Trollope, traveling Ireland and amassing administrative ‘local knowledge,’ as authoring the authorial Trollope, who transforms what he acquires into literary currency, and whose representations of Ireland and the Irish justify his (newly achieved) dominance and their subject status.” For Trollope, Ireland needed to be a success story to validate his own success story. Corbett suggests that Ireland is the “great lost domain of Trollope’s mental landscape” because for his “own purposes of self-esteem, and to carry through the powerful myth of himself which he sustained in his art and life, Ireland had to be a success.” This can help explain why Trollope’s later work on Ireland can be viewed as harsher than that which preceded it; his presentation of the Irish did not change with the passage of time. That Trollope continued to tell the Irish success story in his autobiography, despite a changing national

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71 Corbett, 117.
72 Corbett, 117.
73 Corbett, 134.
consensus, reveals this important contradiction. But, by the end of Trollope’s life Ireland was no longer the success story that he remembered it to be, and what was once seen as the inevitability and even the desirability of a permanent relationship with Ireland was being seriously questioned. Despite this, Trollope’s story of the positive civilizing influence of England continued. After his tenure in Ireland and his emergence as a novelist, Trollope would continue the patterns he began in Ireland on a larger and more international scale as he traveled throughout the Empire.

In 1858, he was sent to Egypt to negotiate mail routes from Alexandria and Suez to Australia and India, a trip that is partially reconstructed in Trollope’s novel *The Bertrams* (1859) and which inspired several short stories. In 1859 he was sent on a postal mission to the West Indies and Central America where his itinerary was ambitious. Material from this trip was worked into short stories and occasionally novels, as my reading of *He Knew He Was Right* in chapter two will demonstrate. In 1861 Trollope used his leave time to go to America where he gathered material for his *North America*. He would return to America in 1868 shortly after retiring from the Post Office to help to negotiate a postal convention between Britain and America. In 1871 Trollope traveled to Australia to visit his son Fred, who had emigrated to become a sheep farmer, and accumulated material for *Australia and New Zealand*. He would return to Australia again in 1875, visiting Ceylon on the way, documenting his trip in letters to the *Liverpool Mercury*. This material would be incorporated into two novels: *Harry Heathcoat of Gangoil* (1873) and *John Caldigate* (1879). In 1877 he traveled to South Africa where his exhausting itinerary once again provided him with material for what would be his final full length travel narrative, *South Africa*. Some of this material would be useful for
his final complete novel *An Old Man’s Love* (1883). This impressive list of travels neglects his frequent vacations in Europe and his continual movement throughout Britain. Trollope was undoubtedly the most mobile of Victorian novelists.

Trollope *never* sets his fiction in places he has not been, he *never* introduces characters from places he has not visited, and he *never* describes places that to him are unknown.\(^74\) This fact that Trollope never sets his novels in places unknown to him, provides insight about realism and how he, through his narrator’s voice, creates trust with his readers. He does not indulge in fantasy or speculation. In fact, he typically writes about locations he has visited quite soon after returning. As a result, Trollope presents himself in his travel narratives and in narrator asides in his novels as an authority on the places he had visited. For example, early in his career, readers could follow Trollope’s discussion of Bermuda as a troubled colony with a large convict population in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* and, a few years later, read a short story where a Bermudan heroine is attacked by an escaped convict; or in the 1870’s readers could vicariously follow Trollope to Australia by reading the letters he sent home to the Liverpool Mercury then read, and a few years later, about *John Caldigate* (1879) who travels to Australia to seek his fortune, much like Trollope’s own son; or, near the end of Trollope’s life, readers could follow his journey to South Africa in the press and in his travel book, and soon after follow a heroine’s romance with her fiancé just returned from the diamond mines of *South Africa* in *An Old Man’s Love* (1882).

As mentioned previously, Trollope’s general denial of colonial exoticism is overt. He writes, “In the happy days when we were young, no description conveyed to us so

\(^74\) The only possible exception is Trollope’s futuristic novel *The Fixed Period* discussed at length in my final chapter.
complete an idea of mysterious reality as that of an Oriental city. We knew it was actually there, but had such vague notions of its ways and looks!” Admitting that most knowledge of oriental cities was gleaned from the “Arabian Nights,” Trollope explains that such cities were being overrun by tourists and invalids and that the “delights of the ‘Arabian Nights’ are shorn of half their value.” “When we have seen a thing,” writes Trollope, “it is never so magnificent to us as when it was half unknown.” What Trollope’s travel writing does is to take away the magnificence for his readers. By focusing on the more mundane details and reiterating that seeing these places for real would be a disappointment, Trollope domesticates these foreign lands, and by doing so, arguably, opens them up to his readers for settlement. Settlers would feel at home in these places because Oriental life “has been dreadfully diluted by Western customs.” One could travel to these places, and perhaps even settle, without compromising, except in superficial ways, his English identity. Trollope writes about Cairo:

It is not much that we deign to learn from these Orientals—we who glory in our civilization. We do not copy their silence or their abstemiousness, not that invariable mindfulness which always adheres to a Turk or an Arab. We chatter as much at Cairo as elsewhere, and eat as much, and drink as much, and dress ourselves generally in the same old ugly costume. But we do usually take upon ourselves to wear red caps, and we do ride on donkeys.

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76 Ibid, 58.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
For readers at home, Trollope suggests that removing oneself from a foreign culture or from foreign influence in that culture is as easy as removing a red cap or getting off of a donkey. It was not, however, to be so easy in his fiction: in fact, as the following section demonstrates, Trollope’s fiction repetitively reproduces such a vision of culturally pristine Englishness surviving foreign contact at the risk of, perhaps, protesting too much.

_Trollope’s “A Ride Across Palestine” and the metaphor of touching pitch_

When the novel _Nina Balatka_ was serialized anonymously in 1866, it only took a short time for Trollope to be identified as the author. Perhaps feeling that the market was already flooded with his fiction or trying to see how readers would respond to a novel without his name attached to it, Trollope began what he hoped would be a second novel-writing career, but a telling phrase exposed him. R.H. Hutton, a reviewer for the _Spectator_ observed, “If it is written by Mr. Trollope, I shall soon meet with the phrase, ‘made his way,’ as applied to walking where there is no physical difficulty or embarrassment, but only a certain moral hesitation as to the end and aim of the walking in question.”80 Seeing this phrase in _Nina Balatka_, used in such a manner, gave Trollope away. The similarity of Trollope’s style from novel to novel is easily recognized by careful readers; Laura Langbauer suggests that Trollope’s “ordinary language” is “loosely proverbial in being a mixture of colloquialisms, mottoes, maxims, platitudes, clichés, and tag lines.”81 If we view Trollope’s fiction as one continuing series where he attempts to capture English culture through iteration and an emphasis on everyday life and folk wisdom, we can classify him as a writer who “doesn’t see culture as real and certain, but

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81 Langbauer, 97.
as textual and formally constructed..."82 Culture must constantly be reiterated, and for Trollope this happens through everyday language. For Langbauer, “Trollope’s fiction provides a useful arena for considering the tension in our models of culture between a desire for fixity, closure, and totality, and a gesture to openness.”83 Trollope’s novels attempt to capture the world, in all its variety, and by doing so gesture toward unlimited possibilities even as individual novels provide closure. The vast canvas that Trollope paints, however, is in excess of any individual novel – characters often reappear in subsequent novels which gestures toward a kind of narrative openness. John Hagan notes that in the body of Trollope’s work his “instinctive or emotional conservatism continually clashes with what he felt was the more rational, utilitarian, and liberal bent of his temperament; and, these two opposing forces never being reconciled, there is often engendered in vital areas of his fiction uncertainty and ambiguity to a very high degree.”84 Although much in Trollope’s fiction is uncertain, audience consensus is gained by appeals to common sense, knowledge passed down through adages and phrases that have stood the test of time. By using proverbs and phrases recognizable to his readers, Trollope makes use of a kind of cultural capital ... “the cultural capital involved in recognizing ordinary language as such connects Trollope’s readers and characters in what they wish to be a privileged site: they want to get to define just what is ordinary, to constitute the everyday, the real, and the natural in their own image.”85

In this section I examine a specific phrase, frequently encountered in Trollope’s writing, the apocryphal Biblical adage, “He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled

82 Langbauer, 88.
83 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Readers of Trollope may recognize this phrase, but may be surprised to discover its frequency. At the level of common sense this phrase suggests the importance of keeping good company, keeping oneself clean, and protecting oneself against contamination. Mary Douglas’s classic anthropological study *Purity and Danger* argues that the process of “cleaning or avoiding dirt” through “rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience.” For Douglas, “ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating, and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience.” Such a system of classification through repetition of the phrase can be seen in Trollope’s frequent usage of this phrase. The idea of “touching pitch” becomes a kind of shorthand for Trollope to stand in for degeneracy and filth that leaves clear traces behind, literally rubbing off on those who touch it; at the same time, it has obvious racial connotations as one who touches pitch figuratively blackens oneself, possibly permanently. Ideas about skin color and degeneracy were common in the 19th century; for example, in *The Cause of Color Among Races* (1879), William Sharpe argued that dark skin was the result of the deterioration of a civilization to a lower form and warned that such deterioration was now “common in the very heart of our European civilization.” Similarly, Erin O’Connor has examined the ways in which Asiatic cholera, prominent in 19th century London slums, would blacken its victims, suggesting a connection between foreign degeneracy and the poor at home, where the poor may be just as dangerous to the middle class as foreign invaders. Cholera

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86 Ecclesiasticus 13:1
87 I discuss many examples below. As far as the criticism goes, no one has commented on the fact that this phrase is used so prevalently. I was surprised to see that Elizabeth R. Epperly’s otherwise excellent book *Patterns of Repetition in Trollope* fails to discuss Trollope’s use of this phrase.
88 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2008), 2-3. Oddly, this reprint edition omits the “s” in concepts which was the original title.
89 Douglas, 5.
90 Quoted in Levine, 130
was “an epidemic disease that could ‘make’ thousands of white working-class bodies ‘black,’” as “it lent itself to the development of a materially embodied fiction of collective vulnerability, a physiological fable in which squalid urban living enables the poor to be inflicted with a deadly dose of darkness.” As clean disease-free bodies became associated with whiteness, black bodies (regardless of actual health) became associated with disease and presented a threat to be quarantined.

According to Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, “the emphasis upon dirt was also central to the discourse which traced the concealed links between slum and suburb, sewage and ‘civilization.’” Speaking of Chadwick, they write:

Like most of the sanitary reformers, Chadwick traces the metonymic associations between filth and disease: and the metonymic associations (between the poor and animals, between the slum-dweller and sewage) are read at first as the signs of an imposed social condition for which the State is responsible. But the metonymic associations (which trace the social articulation of ‘depravity’) are constantly elided with and displaced by a metaphoric language in which filth stands in for the slum-dweller: the poor are pigs.

Such metonymic associations were certainly suggested by Trollope; however, in addition Trollope’s travels abroad gave him exposure to foreign locations that he continually described to his readers as dirty. In fact, Trollope arguably becomes an exemplar of the English traveler who travels to dirty locations and returns home clean.

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This section will examine Trollope’s use of the phrase “touching pitch” and discuss its symbolism as it relates to the Empire through an analysis of Trollope’s short story “A Ride Across Palestine.” Before discussing the short story, however, it is first necessary to examine the frequency and meaning of Trollope’s use of “touching pitch” elsewhere and to suggest its importance to Trollope’s fiction. Normally, the idea of touching pitch leading to defilement in Trollope is associated with a character, usually a gentleman, fraternizing or doing business with someone who is not a gentleman; alternatively, women can touch pitch by allowing morally inferior suitors to woo them. Although the potential “pitch-toucher” knows that the person he or she interacts with is less than a gentleman, men associate with him for temporary monetary gain or social prestige, and women are drawn to him because they think they are in love with someone exciting whom they can reform. Trollope firmly believed that it was the duty of novelists to teach their readers that such relationships would lead to defilement. In a chapter of An Autobiography titled “On Novels and the Art of Writing Them” he explains,

> In these times, when the desire to be honest is pressed so hard, is so violently assaulted by the ambition to be great; in which riches are the easiest road to greatness; when the temptations to which men are subjected dull their eyes to the perfected iniquities of others; when it is so hard for a man to decide vigorously that the pitch, which so many are handling, will defile him if it be touched; -- men's conduct will be actuated much by that which is from day to day depicted to them as leading to glorious or inglorious results.\(^93\)

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\(^{93}\) *An Autobiography*, 220-221.
Day to day, according to Trollope, novels of sensation and adventure dulled readers’ perceptions and made them more open to the idea that temporary immorality could lead to profit and success. Trollope felt that his fiction, with its depictions of everyday life and “real” consequences for actions, was instructive; those who touch pitch in Trollope are defiled. Recognizing that this phrase is essential to Trollope’s own understanding of his role as a novelist is helpful in understanding the phrase’s importance in individual novels.

In Trollope’s fiction one touches pitch through bad associations; metaphorically speaking, one is permanently blackened in a way that perceptive, vigilant, and moral Victorians could see. For example, Augustus Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now* whose possible Jewish heritage and his fraudulent sales of floating shares in the South Central Pacific and Mexican railway is personified with the word pitch. Characters who are normally upstanding moral citizens are temporarily blinded by Melmotte’s wealth and the intrigue that surrounds him – his spectacular dinner invitations to a feast with the Emperor of China being just one example. Roger Carbury, a clear gentleman by Trollope’s standards and a stand in for traditional landed values, is one of the few characters to see from the beginning the troubles that Melmotte brings:

> And to Roger Carbury also there was no second way of looking at it. That condonation of antecedents which, in the hurry of the world, is often vouchsafed to success, that growing, feeling which induces people to assert to themselves that; they are not bound to go outside the general verdict, and that they may shake hands with whomsoever the world shakes

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94 In a later chapter, this will be discussed in more detail as it will be put into the context of gentlemanly capitalism.
hands with, had never reached him. The old-fashioned idea that the touching of pitch will defile still prevailed with him. He was a gentleman and would have felt himself disgraced to enter the house of such a one as Augustus Melmotte. Not all the duchesses in the peerage, or all the money in the city, could alter his notions or induce him to modify his conduct.\textsuperscript{95}

Though old-fashioned, Carbury is perceptive. He fears that his would-be wife Henrietta Carbury might be soiled through her mother and brother’s dealing with Melmotte. At the end of the novel, Henrietta’s brother Felix is banished from England due to the pitch he touched in his dealings with Melmotte and begins a life of foreign travel: “As for Felix he had so groveled in the gutters as to be dirt all over. Nothing short of the prolonged sufferings of half a life could cleanse him.”\textsuperscript{96} His contamination is permanent. While not all characters face banishment, other characters are left to deal with the blackening effects of Melmotte, like, Mr. Longestaff, who wants “to cleanse himself from the impurities of his late contact.”\textsuperscript{97} Such associations are dangerous ones.

Similarly in \textit{Mr. Scarborough’s Family} (1881) Dolly Grey regrets her father’s association with his legal partner Mr. Barry, who she believes is pitch, thinking that “there should have been no dealings with such men as these, except at the end of a pair of tongs.”\textsuperscript{98} In \textit{Doctor Thorne} (1858) Trollope’s narrator warns readers that Mr. Romer, who dishonestly interfered with an election, will soon learn what happens when one touches pitch. Other novels use the phrase to describe villains: the stockjobber, Undy

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, 69.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, Vol. 2, 363.
\textsuperscript{98} Anthony Trollope, \textit{Mr. Scarborough’s Family} (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 317.
Scott, in *The Three Clerks* (1857); the jilter, Adolphus Crosbie, in *The Small House at Allington* (1864); the race-fixer, Major Tifto, in *The Duke’s Children* (1880); and the philanderer, Colonel Osborne, in *He Knew He Was Right* (1869) are all referred to as pitch. In *Lady Anna* (1870), *Castle Richmond* (1860), and *The Prime Minister* (1876) we see uses of the phrase as well. The idea of touching pitch and being defiled is also mentioned in the chapter titles of two novels, *Framley Parsonage* (1861) and *John Caldigate* (1879). In the chapter “Touching Pitch” in *Framley Parsonage*, Mark Robarts, seeking worldly connections, signs notes for money for Mr. Sowerby that neither he nor Mr. Sowerby can pay; he realized that he was wrong – “he had thought to touch pitch and not to be defiled.”

*John Caldigate* is full of references to the protagonist as pitch and contains a chapter about Caldigate’s wedding titled “As to Touching Pitch,” a reference to the danger to the bride-to-be. Other minor uses of the phrase occur throughout Trollope’s fiction. It is, however, possible for characters to allow prejudices to wrongly label someone as pitch. In *Rachel Ray* (1863) the eponymous protagonist’s mother lets her extreme religious views influence her feelings about her daughter’s would-be suitor. Trollope writes, “But as it was, she had resolved that Luke Rowan was a black sheep; that he was pitch, not to be touched without defilement; that he was, in short, a man to be regarded by religious people as anathema--a thing accursed; and of that idea she was not able to divest herself suddenly.” That prejudice could influence one’s perception is something that Trollope freely admits. As the Trollopian narrator suggests in *Marion Fay* (1882) “A man cannot rid himself of a prejudice because he knows or believes it to be a

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Trollope could, therefore, expose prejudice as prejudice without necessarily condemning such prejudice outright. Prejudice was part of the culture that Trollope recreates in his fiction.

To summarize, most often characters whom Trollope’s narrator characterizes as “pitch” present threats to the social order: threats that are eliminated over the course of the novel. Less frequently, characters believe they are helping their relatives by warning them of the pitch that they might encounter, even though they are wrong about the person to which they apply the term. And Trollope, himself, believes that his fiction is instructive in helping his readers tell the difference. The audience may see through the prejudice of the mistaken character while coming to understand the dangers that true outsiders may bring. Before looking at how this phrase is used in a story set in a colonial context, it seems important to consider Trollope’s own obsession with dirt. In his autobiography he remembers his own dirtiness as a child. He writes

I remember well, when I was still the junior boy in the school, Dr. Butler, the head-master, stopping me in the street, and asking me, with all the clouds of Jove upon his brow and the thunder in his voice, whether it was possible that Harrow School was disgraced by so disreputably dirty a boy as I! Oh, what I felt at that moment! But I could not look my feelings. I do not doubt that I was dirty;--but I think that he was cruel. (4)

And,

I was big, and awkward, and ugly, and, I have no doubt, sulked about in a most unattractive manner. Of course I was ill-dressed and dirty. But ah!

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101 Quoted in Miller, 84.
how well I remember all the agonies of my young heart; how I considered whether I should always be alone; whether I could not find my way up to the top of that college tower, and from thence put an end to everything? (8)

And finally,

In my boyhood, when I would be crawling up to school with dirty boots and trousers through the muddy lanes, I was always telling myself that the misery of the hour was not the worst of it, but that the mud and solitude and poverty of the time would insure me mud and solitude and poverty through my life. Those lads about me would go into Parliament, or become rectors and deans, or squires of parishes, or advocates thundering at the Bar. They would not live with me now,--but neither should I be able to live with them in after years. Nevertheless I have lived with them. When, at the age in which others go to the universities, I became a clerk in the Post Office, I felt that my old visions were being realised. I did not think it a high calling. I did not know then how very much good work may be done by a member of the Civil Service who will show himself capable of doing it. The Post Office at last grew upon me and forced itself into my affections. I became intensely anxious that people should have their letters delivered to them punctually. But my hope to rise had always been built on the writing of novels, and at last by the writing of novels I had risen. (168-169)
I quote these passages at length to demonstrate Trollope’s emphasis in his presentation of the story of his life in the autobiography. Trollope becomes clean by working hard in the civil service and working hard as a novelist, eventually becoming recognized by his superiors at the post office and the audience of his novels as a gentleman. Those who labeled him as dirty in the past were misguided, perhaps even well-meaning, but eventually Trollope is vindicated by being recognized as clean. The novel-machine discussed in the previous section, is fueled by a need to perpetually prove cleanliness, which also sometimes involves pointing to those, who unlike Trollope, can never become clean. In Marion Fay, for example, when George Roden considers pressuring Lady Frances to marry him even though his class status makes such a marriage improbable, George compares class boundaries with racial ones:

The country was so constituted that he and these Traffords were in truth a different race, -- as much so as the negro is different from the white man. The Post Office clerk may indeed possibly become a Duke; whereas the negro’s skin cannot be washed white. But while he and Lady Frances were as they were, the distance between them was so great that no approach could be made between them without disruption. The world might be wrong in this. ¹⁰²

¹⁰² Anthony Trollope, Marion Fay, J. Hillis Miller suggests that this passage, life many others, with its use of indirect discourse gives readers an “inward perception of Victorian ideology,” one in which the narrator’s speech makes the characters’ attitudes plausible to the reader or at least gives him the power to see how one might come to hold them. ¹⁰² This is, for many readers, precisely what makes Trollope’s writing so enjoyable; characters behave as real people in given situations would, they react to social pressures as real people would, and they sometimes critique societal norms even as they acknowledge the consequences of disobeying them. Trollope’s world is not perfect, and characters are forced to exist in a flawed world.
Yet while a passage like the one quoted above provides a critique of the class system, as we see George Roden confronted with a class system that places him at a disadvantage, even though “the world might be wrong in this,” we see that George can find comfort in the idea that such an obstacle is not completely incontrovertible, as a racial difference might be. Though sometimes treated like they are of different races, in actuality they are not. While a negro cannot be washed white, a postal clerk (like Anthony Trollope) can advance in society – and while Trollope did not gain a dukedom, he certainly overcame his perceived dirtiness. His career as a writer, however, seems to have been a continual affirmation of this cleanliness, and it was necessary to define that English cleanliness against that which was unclean. More often than not, Trollope targeted not the lower classes, but colonial others (sometimes racial others and sometimes British settlers in the colonies) as he warned his readers against what he saw as pitch as dangerous to the English at home.

Anthony Trollope’s “A Ride Across Palestine” was originally serialized in The London Review under the alternate title “The Banks of the Jordon” in 1861 and later published in Trollope’s book of short fiction Tales of All Countries: Second Series in 1863. One of Trollope’s oddest pieces of fiction, “A Ride Across Palestine” uses an unreliable first person narrator to recount a trip to the Holy Land at Easter time where the narrator becomes strangely attracted to a male traveling companion who he later learns is a woman in disguise. Trollope rarely uses a first-person narrator (a few short stories and the late novel The Fixed Period being the only examples), and this narrator seems, at

103 On the title page of the 1864 Chapman & Hall edition of Tales of All Countries, Anthony Trollope is described as the author of The West Indies and the Spanish Main, Doctor Thorne, Orley Farm, etc. This demonstrates the way that Trollope’s writing as a travel writer helped to establish his credibility as writer of fiction about places outside of England – he only wrote about places he had seen with his own eyes.
least in terms of his travel itinerary, like a stand-in for Trollope. The narrator, who insists on using the alias Mr. Jones, is a married man traveling alone for unspecified reasons – “Circumstances”, he tells us, “took me to the Holy Land without a companion, and compelled me to visit Bethany, the Mount of Olives, and the Church of the Sepulchre alone.”

His loneliness coupled with his distaste at the necessity of being accompanied by a French dragoman and two Bedouin Arabs for protection adds to his eagerness for an Englishman to accompany him. When he meets the likewise ambiguously named Mr. Smith he is quick to trust him based only on his appearance – that of an English gentleman. Mr. Jones recalls, “The gentleman had not sent in his card or name; but any gentleman was welcome to me in my solitude, and I requested that the gentleman might enter” (108-109). Their meeting, with its emphasis on gentlemanly status that can be recognized anywhere in the world, establishes our narrator’s naiveté while at the same time providing an explanation for the narrator’s mistakes which will follow. Mr. Jones is eager to be attracted to someone from home which causes him to lower his usual standards for contact. The two are English and alone and Mr. Jones sees foreigners as their common enemy. English travelers abroad should be able to rely on outward signs such as skin color and dress and also on the difficult to define but easy to recognize characteristics of a gentleman (“In appearance the gentleman certainly was a gentleman”, Mr. Jones recalls) (108).

104 Victoria Glendinning pushes this argument somewhat farther than I would by suggesting that Trollope was away from his wife often during this period and may be speaking in some ways from experience as a man with a wandering eye while abroad. Victoria Glendinning, Anthony Trollope (New York: Alfred B. Knopf, 1993).


106 Mr. Jones’s dislike of the Bedouins stems not just from cultural and racial differences but from the required tariff they are due for protection.
As they begin their journey amongst Eastern pilgrims to tour religious sites their perceived shared identities as English gentleman are bolstered through encounters with non-English travelers thought by the narrator to be dirty. The pilgrims “are wild men of various nations and races,—Maronites from Lebanon, Roumellians, Candiotes, Copts from Upper Egypt, Russians from the Crimea, Armenians and Abyssinians. They savour strongly of Oriental life and of Oriental dirt” (114-115).107 The narrator describes the other pilgrims as dirty, fierce-looking, uncouth, and repellant. This distaste seems not to be based on actual experiences and encounters but by arrogance – some of which is admitted by the narrator. When Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith visit the Tomb of the Virgin, for example, they push themselves through the large crowd of people waiting to enter and reach the center even though they “pushed unfairly.” Recalling his cutting in line, Mr. Jones muses “How is it that Englishmen can push themselves anywhere?” His answer to the question is that soap and water, which presumably glistens on white skin, is more intimidating than the dirty and ferocious faces of those with darker skin. His assures his readers that a dirty Maronite would have no success in pushing through the line of a London theatre. As soon as they enter the tomb the two travelers are immediately satisfied and ready to leave; this quick in and out pattern will characterize each site the two visit, suggesting that they are more interested in saying that they have been to the religious sites than in having any sort of religious experience while inside.108 Unlike the Eastern travelers, they are unwilling to be spiritually vulnerable in a foreign location. It seems that “At his visits to religious shrines, the English pilgrim finds his body a

107 In The Bertrams the narrator uses similar language saying that the Pyramids offer nothing but “dirt, noise, stench, vermin, abuse and want of air” and that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is full of “dangerous-looking, skin-clothed, dirty young Greeks.”
108 This in and out pattern has been read as a metaphor for intercourse.
problematic intrusion, in part because of the contact he is forced to make with disconcerting foreign objects. As discussed previously, Trollope’s obsession with the adage about touching pitch and being defiled helps us read Mr. Jones’s obsession with outward appearances and his fear of the dirt of Orientals. One of most important obligations of English travelers, in Trollope’s estimation, was the obligation to stay true to one’s identity: to observe and return unchanged. By letting down one’s guard or becoming too intimate with a foreign location, one would risk his objectivity and his status as an Englishman. Mr. Jones’s obsession with dirt can be read in two ways. On the one hand, the racist association with foreigners and dirt can be read at face value as an extension of Trollope’s own attitudes that come to the surface consciously or unconsciously in the text. Trollope’s travel writing demonstrates an obsession with blackness that makes this reading a possibility. But on the other hand, by looking at how and when Mr. Jones chooses bring up dirt and blackness in his retelling of his experience, and by seeing how Trollope uses the timing of these images to serve his story, we can see a more complicated picture emerging.

William A. Cohen, in his essay “Deep Skin” reads Trollope’s fixation on skin in “A Ride Across Palestine” as the story of man “perpetually stuck on the surface.” In fact, Cohen suggests that “to be Western and Christian is thus to have specially sensitive skin.” Englishmen abroad are vulnerable. Cohen reads the short story alongside an 1858 illustration in *Punch* called “Washing the Blackamoor White” in which a maharajah is placed in a tub and scrubbed as a reward for helping to suppress the Sepoy rebellion.

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110 Cohen, 64.
111 Ibid.
Surrounding the image is a discussion of Parliament’s delay in finding a way to make the Thames more sanitary. Cohen sees *Punch* as equating “dark skin, the bodily integument of the colonial subject, with the pollution that reaches inside and disturbs the metropolitan one.”\(^{112}\) “The danger for Trollope’s narrator is that he, like *Punch*’s maharajah, might not be able to scrub off the uncivilizing dirt that adheres to, and threatens to become, his skin.”\(^{113}\) The common association of homosexuality with imperial locations suggests, at least for Mr. Jones, the possibility of deviating from norms innocently.\(^{114}\) Mr. Jones, even as he recounts his past attraction to a man who he later discovered to be a woman, appears to still be attracted even as he admits his embarrassment.

The disgust Mr. Jones feels as he is in close proximity to the bodies of darker skinned pilgrims and his desire to leave the tomb immediately are magnified in the final two tourist destinations he visits: the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. Mr. Jones, convinced that he can bathe without harm to himself, is eager to bathe in each body of water, but Mr. Smith—to avoid undressing and revealing herself—refuses. Previously Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones had watched as groups of elderly and infirm pilgrims completed their journeys in hopes of increasing their chances of salvation: they were particularly disturbed by one man who, because of a vow, refused to use a crutch on the journey and whose foot stump was “a mass of blood, sores, and broken skin.” Mr. Jones seems both attracted to and repulsed by the bloody foot and the pilgrim’s diligence, as he himself is continually trying to avoid bodily pain using the comforts of Western civilization. While

\(^{112}\) Cohen, 78.
\(^{113}\) Cohen, 79.
\(^{114}\) As Philippa Levine reminds us, “it was only by configuring homosexual preference or practice as colonially produced, as a ‘colonial vice’ with no parallel in the civilian or domestic realm, that the fiction of British sexual normativity could be upheld.” Levine, 139.
the elderly man seeks to have his body penetrated as a sign of his deep spirituality, Mr. Jones, and arguably Trollope, find such openness and penetrability frightening. Speaking to his readers, would-be travelers in the Holy Land, Mr. Jones warns, “Let it be a rule with every man to carry an English saddle with him when travelling in the East. Of what material is formed the nether man of a Turk I have never been informed, but I am sure that it is not flesh and blood. No flesh and blood,--simply flesh and blood,-- could withstand the wear and tear of a Turkish saddle” (112). Mr. Jones has past experience a Turkish saddle and has left a “flayed man” as “there is not part of the Christian body with which the Turkish saddle comes in contact that does not become more or less macerated” (112). After Mr. Smith rides for part of journey on a Turkish saddle, even though s/he doesn’t complain, Mr. Jones is eager to rub his companions thighs with brandy (“You can’t conceive how efficaciously I would have done it”, he says). Mr. Jones tries to protect Mr. Smith’s skin. The homoerotic overtones are strong, but there is also an impulse to keep Mr. Smith’s skin, as well as his own, intact despite the foreign conditions.

The aspiration to maintain healthy, clean, and intact white skin is challenged by the foreign setting first in the Dead Sea and then in the Jordan River, however. Mr. Jones’s account of his descent into the Dead Sea reads more like an assault than a pleasant swim; although he had difficulty entering the water because of the foliage surrounding it, once he reached it, it forcefully knocks him down.

It must not be imagined that this knocking down was effected by the movement of the water. There is no such movement. Everything is perfectly still, and the fluid seems hardly to be displaced by the entrance
of the body; but the effect is that one's feet are tripped up, and that one falls prostrate on to the surface. The water is so strong and buoyant, that, when above a few feet in depth has to be encountered, the strength and weight of the bather are not sufficient to keep down his feet and legs. I then essayed to swim; but I could not do this in the ordinary way, as I was unable to keep enough of my body below the surface; so that my head and face seemed to be propelled down upon it. (122-123)

Instead of the water moving to accommodate his body, it is Mr. Jones who is displaced in the encounter. Mr. Jones feels like he has been dirtied by the experience, both internally, by ingesting the salt water, and externally from the film it leaves on his body. He writes,

> It may be imagined that I did not drink heartily, merely taking up a drop or two with my tongue from the palm of my hand; but it seemed to me as though I had been drenched with it. Even brandy would not relieve me from it. And then my whole body was in a mess, and I felt as though I had been rubbed with pitch. Looking at my limbs, I saw no sign on them of the fluid. They seemed to dry from this as they usually do from any other water; but still the feeling remained. (123)

It is at this time that Mr. Jones has also made himself more vulnerable to Mr. Smith. Mr. Jones is unclothed and has left his pistol, money, and other belongings in the hands of a stranger.

Images of dirt continue in Mr. Jones’s account of his subsequent bathing in the Jordan River where he hoped to cleanse himself from his experience of being “foul with
the foulness of the Dead Sea” (124). Aggravated because currents are too fast for him to bathe in a spot unfrequented by Easterners, he is forced to enter by the shore “muddy with the feet of the pilgrims” where he has to “wade out through the dirt and slush” (125). What is most peculiar about the story is that although the narrator is relating an embarrassing story that happened to him in the past, his use of language accentuates the mysterious and erotic details of his experience before the revelation of his companion’s gender in a way that made some contemporary readers uncomfortable – Thackeray refused to publish it in *Cornhill* and following its publication in the *London Review* there were “protests from readers with regard to the author’s alleged moral lapses in subject matter and tone.”\(^{115}\) The story’s somewhat ambiguous ending – it is unclear whether Mr. Jones manages to return to England – leaves Mr. Jones’s fate unclear. Mr. Smith is revealed as a woman and taken home by her guardian who insists that Mr. Jones take a different ship home. Is he able to “rub off” the pitch? In this case, the pitch could be the impetus to commit adultery at least in fantasy with the woman previously thought to be a man; worse, perhaps, for a Victorian sense of morality, is the suggestion that Mr. Jones enjoys the retelling of this story precisely for the homoeroticism it elicits. In any case, Mr. Jones can hardly return the same man he was. Moral weakness, cultural isolation, and a desire for the company of an Englishman caused Mr. Smith to let down his guard. As such, the story can be read as a warning that travelers abroad should be especially vigilant especially when it comes to differentiating between those who are gentleman and those who are not. By looking at this story and its focus on filth that might rub off on unsuspecting travelers, one sees how “filth challenges the very dichotomy between

subject and object.” According to Cohen, filth challenges this dichotomy “according to a psychoanalytic logic, whereby repulsion and attraction unconsciously converge, and phenomenologically as well: the filth of the object defiles the subject who, identifying it as such, has had to rub up against it.” Such is one example of interesting narrative slippages and ambiguities that arise when Trollope tries to narrate encounters with foreign cultures. This short story demonstrates Trollope’s anxieties about English travelers who do not keep up their guards against potential contamination, and provides a useful starting place for Trollope’s portrayal of similar dangers in his novels, the analysis of which begins in the following chapter.

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117
Chapter Two: Performing *Othello* in Nineteenth Century Dress: Anthony Trollope’s *He Knew He Was Right*

“Trollope wrote so much and, of all writers, he is the one least adapted for most kinds of academic approach. How do you start to dig into him? And with what books?” —C.P. Snow

The first chapter of this study claims a new place for Trollope’s canon among other novelists of Empire and suggests an imperialist impetus behind the production of Trollope’s fiction. Now that an argument has been established, C.P. Snow’s question of how “to dig in” and which books to dig in to becomes prescient. Initially, I was inclined to a chronological approach, then a geographical approach, and then a topical approach, but I decided ultimately to begin with something different – a peculiar claim in *An Autobiography* that, when examined, yields fascinating insights. This chapter brings together two texts, one that Trollope called his best work, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, and one that he called his worst, *He Knew He Was Right*, works that on the surface have nothing to do with each other, but beneath the surface are intrinsically linked. *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, Trollope’s first book length travel narrative, was written and published in 1859, and *He Knew He Was Right* is a multi-plot novel that chronicles a husband’s mental collapse and the subsequent breakdown of his marriage, serialized from October of 1868 until May of 1869. It has been called “the most detailed study Trollope makes of the obsessive” for in it “we see a mind driving itself past the point of sanity.”

Between the publications of these texts, the Victorian public experienced the fervor and debate that ensued following the declaration of marshal law in Jamaica by Governor Eyre in 1865 and the subsequent naming of Jamaica as a crown colony. In bringing these two Trollope works together, this chapter raises questions about

118 Snow, 1.
the relationship between Trollope’s nonfiction and fiction, explores the ethical dilemmas arising out of colonial entanglements – specifically the trial of Governor Eyre following the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica – and raises question about mental health and “fitness” to rule over others, a growing preoccupation for Trollope and for England in the late 1860’s.

Success and Failure in Trollope

When assessing his body of work in his autobiography, Trollope makes a peculiar claim about his first published travel narrative *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*: he calls it “the best book that has come from my pen.”¹²⁰ Prouder of this work than any novel in the Barsetshire or Palliser series’, his readers’ favorites, Trollope suggests that his best personal achievement recounts his postal mission to the West Indies: it focuses mainly on the troubled future Trollope sees for the British colony in Jamaica, which had formerly thrived under the slavery system, but was no longer as financially viable. Concerning Trollope’s own finance, however, this travel narrative opened up new opportunities for Trollope for future travel and for more remuneration for subsequent novels. Before departing for the West Indies, Trollope proposed a single volume travel narrative for 250 pounds, and after its success he was able to demand 600 pounds from Chapman & Hall for his next novel, making this travel narrative an important precedent for Trollope’s financial security as a writer. Trollope began making three quarters of his postal salary as a writer after the West Indies trip, and could finally call it a successful second profession.¹²¹ However, the travel book was more than just a commercial success; it illustrated what Trollope called “confidence in vision” with its primary goal to promote

readers’ own interpretations of foreign locations using his observations as a guide.\textsuperscript{122}

Calling it “short,” “amusing,” “useful,” and “true,” Trollope admits to certain inaccuracies of fact, but makes a strong claim for accuracy of vision.\textsuperscript{123}

Much like his works of fiction, \textit{The West Indies and the Spanish Main} was written quickly without significant editing or fact-checking; for example, he admits that he “is not good at dates” when discussing an earthquake that destroyed Port Royal, Jamaica around 70 years in the past and laments the lack of a Spanish to English dictionary that would help him translate “poblada” an adjective applied by a native to Trollope’s beard.\textsuperscript{124} His justification of such a free-wheeling writing style bears repeating:

Preparation, indeed, there was none. The descriptions and opinions came hot on to the paper from their causes. I will not say that this is the best way of writing a book intended to give accurate information. But it is the best way of producing to the eye of the reader, and to his ear, that which the eye of the writer has seen and his ear heard. There are two kinds of confidence which a reader may have in his author,--which two kinds the reader who wishes to use his reading well should carefully discriminate.

There is a confidence in facts and a confidence in vision. The one man tells you accurately what has been. The other suggests to you what may, or perhaps what must have been, or what ought to have been. The former require simple faith. The latter calls upon you to judge for yourself, and form your own conclusions. The former does not intend to be prescient,

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{An Autobiography}, 129. Previously Trollope had written and attempted to publish a guidebook to Ireland; he was unable to find a publisher and the manuscript is no longer extant.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{An Autobiography}, 128.

\textsuperscript{124} Anthony Trollope, \textit{The West Indies and the Spanish Main} (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1999), 13. “Poblada” means full or thick.
nor the latter accurate. Research is the weapon used by the former; observation by the latter. Either may be false,--wilfully false; as also may either be steadfastly true. As to that, the reader must judge for himself. But the man who writes currente calamo, who works with a rapidity which will not admit of accuracy, may be as true, and in one sense as trustworthy, as he who bases every word upon a rock of facts. I have written very much as I have, traveled about; and though I have been very inaccurate, I have always written the exact truth as I saw it;--and I have, I think, drawn my pictures correctly.\textsuperscript{125}

For Trollope, trust was established theoretically by allowing readers to form their own conclusions based on the observations of an admittedly flawed observer. Common sense should be his readers’ guide.

Discussing Trollope’s \textit{The West Indies and the Spanish Main}, Simon Gikandi finds it significant that Trollope discloses that the primary purpose of his trip involved matters of state, not the composition of a travel narrative. By situating his narrative in the present tense from a ship departing the West Indies, writing seemingly without significant reflection, Trollope implies that he has not “gone to the West Indies to find evidence to confirm certain beliefs he may hold about the islands”; instead, according to Gikandi, Trollope’s narrative presents itself as a “spontaneous act with the capacity to generate new knowledge about the West Indies.”\textsuperscript{126} As such, he situates his narrative as an important counterpoint to what has come before. However, what Trollope does not admit is that his discourse is founded on “important cultural accounts and doctrines that

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{An Autobiography}, 129-130.
\textsuperscript{126} Gikandi, 97.
predate travel.” In fact, the “new knowledge” that Trollope generates strongly echoes Carlyle’s “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question” (1849) much as Trollope’s The New Zealander (1855), to be discussed at greater length in chapter five, mimicked Carlyle’s Latter-day Pamphlets. As one critic links Trollope and Carlyle through their mutual hatred for the negro, they are seen as “uneasy bedfellows except in their contempt for the Negro,” and they “come off rather shabbily in their would-be exclusion of the Negro even from the circle of redemption-needing mankind.” Such was the emerging discourse that Trollope employed and helped to establish when he described St. Thomas as a “Niggery-Hispano-Dano-Yankee-Doodle place.”

In addition to mimicking the form of Carlyle and others, Trollope’s work as a postal employee helped prepare him to be a travel writer and influenced his writing style. Coral Lansbury, in her underappreciated The Reasonable Man: Trollope’s Legal Fiction, makes the fascinating observation that Trollope wrote just as many words, if not more, as part of his duties as a postal employee as he did as a novelist or travel writer. Working under postal reformers Francis Freeling and Rowland Hill, Trollope’s early writing was heavily influenced by the legalistic postal style mandated by his superiors, an ideal that he struggled to maintain. The postal bureaucracy became more efficient under Hill with the advent of penny postage, improved mail routes, and increased profits, things for which Trollope took pride. The burgeoning empire made such efficiency necessary, as mail had to be processed and shipped to foreign locations and within Britain quickly.

127 Gikandi, 97.
129 The West Indies, 12.
130 Trollope personally claimed credit for pillar boxes for mail delivery.
131 In fact, the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1853 which brought about the end of patronage in the civil service was strongly influenced by Charles Trevelyan’s administrative experience in India.
Such an efficient system could only be maintained through uniformity, a kind of uniformity that would eventually allow Trollope to travel all over the world inspecting colonial post offices and negotiating postal treaties in countries he knew little about. The conventions of writing postal reports and forms made this possible because reports were intended to be read by any reasonable (male) postal employee and could be filed away for the future regardless of who wrote them. These reports called for precision and clarity, and were supposed to be free of metaphors and jargon. Such was Trollope’s early training as a writer, and Lansbury suggests that there was tension between this kind of writing and the more imaginative kind sometimes seen in his fiction. Coexisting in the same writer, these forms – the legal and the imaginative – create visible tension in Trollope’s work. Lansbury writes, “There was to be argument and often violent controversy between the two, but the legal form allowed Trollope to suppress and exclude parts of his own experience, whereas his imagination and dreaming gave the legal structure of his novels an extraordinary tension and vigor.”

Trollope’s intended audience, reasonable people who were “neither the sinner nor the seeker of vicarious emotions,” were those who could judge for themselves if shown all sides of a situation “by the canons of common sense.” These reasonable people were the imagined readers of his travel books and his novels.

When Trollope discusses colonial locations he does so with a willful refusal to mouth received ideas or arguments about these locations, implying instead that he presents an ideologically neutral account. Against the voice of Trollope the observer is

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133 Lansbury, 20.
134 Lansbury, x.
always “a running argument with an unseen antagonist offering a different opinion and revealing an alternative point of view.” While on the one hand, Trollope is of the opinion that negroes in Jamaica were lazy and should learn to work for their sustenance, he acknowledges that he would probably refuse such work in their position: “Why should he care for the busher? I will not dig cane-holes for half a crown a day; and why should I expect him to do so? I can live without it; so can he.” Even though Trollope expresses this alternative opinion, his audience of “reasonable men” are not and never will be Jamaican negroes, and as such, the subject position of English gentlemen and women is always privileged. A reasonable person might acknowledge the context that makes negroes less inclined to work, but this reasonable person would ultimately agree with Trollope that industriousness, productivity, and class stability are the best traits of a thriving society, and need to be adopted in the colonies regardless of individual complaints. Trollope reminds his readers that “the first sign of a man in a state of civilization is for property,” and without this desire “man could make no progress.” So while Trollope is careful to indicate both sides of the debate about black Jamaican productivity, a reasonable Englishman or woman, would only conclude that black Jamaicans are less inclined to be productive, and as a result, in need of continued oversight.

Trollope takes a certain amount of pride in the way his controversial new accounts of the West Indies may not be to the liking of those with vested interests in the colonies. Trollope’s 1859 West Indies book makes arguments counter to those made by missionaries actively working to the Christianize the population and others who

135 Lansbury, 59.
136 Quoted in Lansbury, 59.
supported the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833. Trollope’s mother had been outspoken about the importance of abolition but held the belief that slavery was “far less injurious to the manners of the people than the fallacious idea of equality.”\textsuperscript{138} Anthony Trollope held similar beliefs, even as he was more supportive of eventual equality than his mother. Such changes would have to be gradual for Trollope. Catherine Hall has noted that Trollope “like most middle-class men in the mid-Victorian period” believed that “a good society was one in which the classes, the races and the sexes knew their place and stayed in it.”\textsuperscript{139} Slavery had been too brutal a method for such societal stability in Trollope’s estimation, but post-emancipation Jamaica was a failure as a colony, and while Trollope was not in favor of re-enslavement, he was unconvinced that Englishmen and black Jamaicans were suited to work side by side on equal terms; they were simply too different. Black Jamaicans were idle and white planters were inefficient managers, while creoles (those of mixed race) had promise but were deficient in numbers. This difference was often expressed using hierarchies and notions of the progress and decline of civilizations. Following full emancipation of slaves in 1838 the perceived lack of desire to work led to changing conceptions of imperialism “from an insistence that slaves be brought into the British model of wage labor and civilized behavior to a contention that their distinctiveness was racially based and required stern control.”\textsuperscript{140} It is precisely such a shifting discourse, one that was in many ways inspired by the recent response to the


\textsuperscript{139} Catherine Hall, 219.

\textsuperscript{140} Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” \textit{Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 30.
India Mutiny of 1857, to which Trollope contributes less than two years later in his travel book.

According to Hall, “Such a discourse with its assumptions of the backwardness of other peoples and their distance from the heartlands of civilization, underpinned the authority of Englishness. It was the space between Ireland and England, between the West Indies and England, between the domestic and the colonial, which confirmed the right of Anglo-Saxons to rule.” Hall’s excellent analysis of Trollope’s non-fiction pushes this argument even further as she connects Trollope’s anxiousness that races stay in their places with his anxiety about women demanding more rights (a point to be discussed in more detail below). “As a male writer of fiction,” Hall suggests, “Trollope’s manhood was constantly at risk on the feminised site of the novel, particularly because so much of his writing was focused on romance and domestic life. In his travel writing that interest in manners, in dress and in emotionality could be offset with a commentary on economic and political life – of a sort which women were not supposed, in his view, to be able to make.”

For Trollope, societal and civilizational progress toward equality would (and should) be slow. He writes concerning missionaries in Jamaica:

We are always in such a hurry: although, as regards the progress of races, history so plainly tells us how vain such hurry is! At thirty, a man devotes himself to proselytizing a people; and if the people be not proselytized, when he has reached forty, he retires in disgust. In early life we have aspirations for the freedom of an ill-used nation; but in middle life we

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141 Catherine Hall, 215.
142 Catherine Hall, 219.
abandon our protégé to tyranny and the infernal gods. The process has been too long. The nation should have arisen free, at once, upon the instant. It is hard for man to work without hope of seeing that for which he labours.143

This sounds remarkably like the passage Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden”:

And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to naught.144

The white man’s burden that Kipling suggests taking up is a thankless duty requiring one to continue working toward a goal that will probably never be reached, one with no end in sight. As such, Trollope and later Kipling foresee a never ending imperial relationship justified by the inherent fitness to rule which both see as a condition and obligation of one’s whiteness. Simon Gikandi notes that “Trollope’s keen sense of black life in the West Indies is secondary to his need to recognize, but also (conceptually) reorganize, the Other as a political object in a domestic debate that is both about the condition of England in a time of crisis and about her dominant position on the evolutionary tree of human life.”145

143 The West Indies, 50
145 Gikandi, 63.
Indeed, Trollope’s long term vision of a productive Jamaica in the future would result from gradual miscegenation as white planters could contribute a desire for productivity while blacks would contribute constitutions fit for work in tropical climates. On the surface, Trollope’s West Indies book is not a jingoistic advertisement for whites to emigrate to Jamaica – its pessimism precludes that, but it certainly makes the case that British people should not be surprised by a long, infrequently successful, imperial relationship, one for which providence had uniquely fitted Englishmen. In Trollope’s estimation, this was the best of his writing; not only was it profitable, but it was instructive, allowing him to demonstrate his white male cultural authority as a voice on colonial issues. Much as writing about Ireland in his published fiction and unpublished travel book contributed to his growing authority as a novelist and public servant, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* added to his cultural authority on a larger scale: Trollope could now claim to be a figure of importance on matters of British imperialism, one with a duty to his readers to keep reporting.

At the opposite end of his personal spectrum of successes and failures, Trollope suggests that his twenty-third novel, *He Knew He Was Right*, was his worst work – this despite the 3200 pounds he was paid for it, more than he had ever been paid for a novel.\(^{146}\) Seen as a sort of halfway point among his forty-seven novels, one could say Trollope had reached the height of his marketability. Trollope wrote most of *He Knew He Was Right* while in the United States negotiating a postal treaty in 1868. Many critics have noted that the previous year had been tumultuous for Trollope; he resigned from the post office after thirty-three years of service due to what he saw as an unfair promotion of

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\(^{146}\) He was also paid 3200 pounds for his next novel *Phineas Finn*, but he would never be paid this much again.
one of his colleagues to a position he wanted for himself, and felt that he deserved (he knew he was right), and in 1868 while finishing *He Knew He Was Right*, Trollope was making an unsuccessful run to be a Member of Parliament and was also editing *St. Paul’s Magazine*, a failing journal. It was a tumultuous time for Trollope as writing was now his primary career. Where normally financial success would be a marker of literary success for Trollope, he marked *He Knew He Was Right* as a failure because he failed to produce the audience effect, sympathy for a man who knew that he was right, that he intended. He explains:

I do not know that in any literary effort I ever fell more completely short of my own intention than in this story. It was my purpose to create sympathy for the unfortunate man who, while endeavoring to do his duty to all around him, should be led constantly astray by his unwillingness to submit his own judgment to the judgment of others. The man is made to be unfortunate enough, and the evil which he does is apparent. So far I did not fail, but the sympathy has not been created yet. I look upon the story as being nearly altogether bad.¹⁴⁷

The “he” who knew he was right is Louis Trevelyan, and it is “he” with whom Trollope wants his audience to sympathize. The main plot of the novel revolves around the slow disintegration of a marriage between Trevelyan and his young bride Emily Rowley, whom he met in the Mandarin Islands, a fictional British colonial possession, where Emily’s father served as governor. After two years of marriage and the birth of a son,

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Louis becomes increasingly jealous of Emily’s relationship with one of her father’s long-time friends, Colonel Osbourne, a known philanderer.

Although Trevelyan initially acknowledges his wife’s complete innocence, he “likes to have his own way” as does Emily – a conflict of wills that Emily’s mother sees as foreboding from the beginning of their relationship (11). The couple quarrels because of “each partner’s need for self-assertion.” As his jealousy increases, Trevelyan asks that Emily obey commands that she finds unreasonable (discarding Osborne’s letters, refusing to receive him as a visitor) if she is indeed viewed as innocent, and her refusal to obey fuels Trevelyan’s jealousy further. Ultimately, the couple separates, and Trevelyan hires a detective to investigate his wife. Convinced that his infant son is unfit to live with a woman who will not submit to his will, he orchestrates his son’s kidnapping and takes him to Italy where his own mental and physical health begin to deteriorate, culminating in Trevelyan’s intense personal identification with Shakespeare’s Othello. He views his hired detective, Bozzle, as his Iago, and he stops listening to his friends and family, who begin to question his sanity. Fearing to return to England lest he be placed in an insane asylum, the paranoid Trevelyan spends the latter part of the novel in Italy. Near the end of the novel, Emily visits with her husband and seeing that he is near death and mad, she tries to reconcile with him. She is willing to acknowledge anything, even adultery, to show that he is right, and begs for his forgiveness. Afterwards, she begs him to admit that he has been wrong as regards his fantasies of her infidelity, and on his death bed he admits with a whisper, though it may be Emily’s imagination, that she is blameless. Most critics attest that he dies “deeply disturbed and, to the last, convinced he was right” even

148 Overton, 93.
as his being right brings him intense suffering. The novel ends with Trevelyan’s death and a slew of marriages among couples in the novel’s numerous subplots. In the main plot, the novel provides a scathing critic of marriage laws that promote a husband’s unquestioned authority over his wife and children even in cases of extreme cruelty and madness, while the subplots present loving, hopeful marriages.

Trollope claims that his intention was to make Trevelyan sympathetic, and he is willing to discount the novel if he failed, which he believed he did, in this task. This begs the question of why Trollope was so insistent that such a character, one whose unwillingness to relinquish the tiniest bit of his legal right to control his wife, should be seen as sympathetic by Trollope’s usual audience of reasonable men and women. During this period, Trollope wrote several novels focusing on the extreme psychological states of characters, *The Last Chronicle of Barsetshire* (1866) being the most well known example. In this novel, the impoverished Reverend Josiah Crawley, who is nearly mad, is accused of stealing a twenty pound note, and most of the novel relates his tenuous psychological state. Trollope felt that this was his best novel as it “portrayed the mind of the unfortunate man with great accuracy and great delicacy.”

He certainly tried to do the same this with Louis Trevelyan, yet readers found him far less sympathetic than Reverend Crawley, likely because his reactions seem to be in excess of the circumstances. However such excess, what Amanda Anderson has called Trollope’s emphasis on “recalcitrant psychologies,” is precisely what continues to draw many readers to *He Knew He Was Right*. Anderson sees Trollope’s fiction as performing the central idea of Lucák’s *The Theory of the Novel*: “The novel is the epic of an age in

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150 *An Autobiography*, 274.
which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality.”\textsuperscript{151} For Trollope, according to Anderson, “this problematic seems not only to condition the narrative presentation but also to afflict the consciousness of the characters, thereby manifesting as a psychological symptom.”\textsuperscript{152} Such emphasis contributes to what Anderson calls “Trollope’s modernity.”\textsuperscript{153}

Despite Trollope’s dismissal of \textit{He Knew He Was Right} and the consensus of some of his contemporaries, today critics have acknowledged the story’s power and many rank it highly among his works. In Trollope’s obituary, Henry James comments that portions of \textit{He Knew He Was Right} are “worthy of Balzac” and that the novel is one his most memorable.\textsuperscript{154} According to James,

The long, slow process, of the conjugal wreck of Louis Trevelyan and his wife …, with that rather lumbering movement which is often characteristic of Trollope, arrives at last at an impressive completeness of misery. It is the history of an accidental rupture between two stiff-necked and ungracious people – ‘the little rift within the lute’ – which widens at last into a gulf of anguish. Touch is added to touch, one small, stupid, fatal aggravation to another; and as we gaze into the widening breach we wonder at the vulgar materials of which tragedy sometimes

\textsuperscript{152} Anderson, 511.
\textsuperscript{153} The title of Anderson’s article.
composes itself.\textsuperscript{155}

Stephen Wall calls it “one of Trollope’s most powerful achievements,”\textsuperscript{156} and it is the only novel Walter Kendrick devotes an entire chapter to in \textit{The Novel Machine}. Its density and range compels R.C. Terry to call it “one of Trollope’s most responsible and thoughtful novels.”\textsuperscript{157} Jane Nardin praises its feminist impulse as Trollope demonstrates that “in a society where power is largely reserved for the male, men may willfully seek tragedy, but are far less likely than women, to have it thrust upon them.”\textsuperscript{158}

Of particular interest to my developing argument is the suggestion by P.D. Edwards that Trollope wrote this novel as part of a literary dare to create a modern Othello with whom readers would sympathize. In a \textit{Spectator} review called “Madness in Novels” published in 1866 Mrs. Henry Wood’s novel \textit{St. Martin’s Eve} is criticized for its portrayal of a woman mad with jealousy; Wood is accused of using the protagonist’s disorder “as a sensational plot device” and not treating it “as a psychological problem.”\textsuperscript{159} The reviewer says that Wood “wants to paint jealousy in its extreme forms, and she has not of course the power, as Thackeray or Trollope might have done, [to paint] the morbid passion in its naturalist nineteenth-century dress.”\textsuperscript{160} It seems more than a coincidence that Trollope would begin a novel with so many references to \textit{Othello} one year after this review, but it helps to explain Trollope’s frustration with the lack of sympathy for Trevelyan. Andrew Wright calls \textit{He Knew He Was Right} a contemporary \textit{Othello}

\textsuperscript{155} James, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{157} Terry, 248.
\textsuperscript{158} Jane Nardin, \textit{He Knew She Was Right: The Independent Woman in the Novels of Anthony Trollope} (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 203.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
“domesticated, smoothed-out, bourgeois; translated that is, into a London marriage of the 1860’s.” What makes Shakespeare’s Othello so tragic is that he is the target of Iago’s villainy and is led by false evidence to suspect his wife of infidelity; Trevelyan, however, knows that no evidence exists and seems to desire a tragic ending to his story, by seeking out a detective who will tell him what he wants to hear, rather than give up his absolute right to be right in all things. While Othello is a sympathetic character, for many, Trevelyan is not. The sections that follow explore more fully the links between these two works, what Trollope considered his best and worst, considering the historical, legal and literary contexts that link them.

*The Governor Eyre Controversy*

In the years between the publication of *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859) and *He Knew He Was Right* (1869) an uprising in Jamaica made the colony a key site for debates about the use of force in governing dependencies. In October of 1865, a riot at Morant Bay, Jamaica began, provoking Governor Edward John Eyre to declare martial law on the island; this confrontation culminated in the executions of 439 people, the flogging of at least 600 men and women, and the burning of at least 1000 homes at the hand of British troops called on to stifle the riot. The harsh response by Governor Eyre seemed counter to his reputation as a humanitarian, given the title “Protector of the Aborigine” as a magistrate in Australia; Eyre’s long tenure as a colonial administrator did not protect him from the changing racial climate in the Empire. Before the uprising poor black Jamaicans had appealed to Queen Victoria in a letter and her response was to

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162 Catherine Hall, 23.  
163 Eyre even adopted and raised an Aborigine child.
send no relief but to suggest that they work harder. Not since the Indian Mutiny of 1857 had a colonial confrontation so strongly stimulated debate in the metropole. The uprising and the aftermath captured the British imagination; as Justin McCarthy, a contemporary journalist noted, “For some weeks there was hardly anything talked of, we might almost say anything thought of, in England, but the story of the rebellion that had taken place in the island of Jamaica, and the manner in which it had been suppressed and punished.” 164

By December of 1865 various groups began unifying around their disgust at the use of force in the handling of the uprising and formed the Jamaica Committee. Prominent early members of the committee included Thomas Hughes, John Bright, Peter Taylor, and John Stuart Mill, who were later joined by Charles Darwin, Charles Lyell, and Thomas Henry Huxley. After receiving the report of the Royal Commission in Jamaica in June 1866, the committee decided to try and prosecute the governor for murder.” 165 Others felt that violent suppression was justified. In response to the possible criminal prosecution of the Governor, many of his friends and supporters joined a fund-raising committee in his support. The most outspoken supporters were Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin; additional supporters for the Governor included Charles Dickens, Alfred Tennyson, and Charles Kingsley.

According to Linda Edmondson, “the significance of the Governor Eyre controversy lies in the debate it engendered among Victorian intellectuals”: the debate about the propriety of Eyre’s actions “was underwritten by the subtext of how the Victorians should accommodate blacks in the new social order, and how this affected the

165 Semmel, 85.
already changing face of English class relations.” In addition, Catherine Hall’s work suggests that the debate between Carlyle and Mill was about “the definition of proper English manhood” as the two men “both offered substantially opposed notions of English manhood, but both depended on a sense of difference from women and blacks.”

Concepts of masculinity, gentlemanly conduct, and fitness – none of which were fixed notions – were debated within the contexts of the colonial relationship with Jamaica, class tensions in England, and the context of gender relations. While those supporting Eyre represented a wide range of positions – from those who believed he had overstepped his bounds but wasn’t a murderer to those who praised his actions – Carlyle and his inner circle of supporters believed that the Governor was completely justified in his decisions. Carlyle wrote, “For my own share, all the light that has yet reached me on Mr. Eyre and his history in the world goes steadily to establish that he is a just, humane and valiant man, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty of executing them. … that penalty and clamour are not the thing this Governor merits from any of us, but honour and thanks …” As this statement makes clear, many of Eyre’s supporters viewed him as a hero, a patriot, who was being wrongfully persecuted by his own countrymen. Conversely, the Jamaica Committee saw themselves as upholding standards of morality central to English character and the standards of gentlemen; according to Edward Bean Underhill, the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, “They were a

167 Ibid.
168 Mrinalini Sinha’s book on colonial masculinity in which she traces the formation of the concept of the “manly Englishman” and “the effeminate Bengali” as co-evolving categories rearticulated in moments of crisis has been especially helpful in focusing my reading of this novel. See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishmen’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).
169 Semmel, 105.
body of honorable men, held in high public estimation, and representative of the best aspects of England’s political life.”

As these diverse opinions illustrate, the rhetoric of right and wrong was being used by both sides to forward their claims. When the Jamaica Committee was accused of seeking personal vengeance against Governor Eyre, Peter Taylor remarked that the governor himself meant nothing to the Committee – “he was simply the personification of wrong.”

While the debate was anchored publicly around terms of right and wrong, privately the debate was also a product of class warfare, as the working classes agitated for reform. Demanding to be treated with as equals, and not put down as blacks in Jamaica were, working men agitated for equality. As Bernard Semmel has observed in *Jamaican Blood and Victorian Conscience*, uprisings at home surrounding the Reform debates caused many people to be wary of mob behavior. “As the middle and upper classes watched the mobs of shouting workingmen, their fears naturally increased – and as their fears increased, so did their sympathies for the recently dismissed Governor Eyre.”

Trollope’s sympathies surrounding the Governor Eyre controversy, despite his tendency to frown on mobs and immediate demands for working class equality, are curiously unknown. Records show no evidence of his support for or condemnation of Governor Eyre. Considering Trollope’s shaky relationships with Carlyle and Dickens, he may have hesitated from joining Eyre’s supporters; one critic suggests that Trollope may have sided with the Jamaica Committee who favored trying Eyre for murder as Trollope’s close friend Charles Buxton was one of the committee’s founding members.

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171 Semmel, 70.
172 Ibid.
173 R.C. Terry makes this suggestion.
Another possibility is that Trollope’s friendship with Buxton made him hesitant to publicly oppose him. Catherine Hall uses Trollope extensively in her analysis of the Governor Eyre controversy, but she is careful not to align him with either camp; nevertheless, her analysis suggests the dangerous precedent Trollope set in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* as he promoted a version of Englishness founded on difference.¹⁷⁴ Most readers of Hall’s fascinating analysis would probably be surprised to discover that Trollope did not take a public position on the issue. Trollope’s silence on this issue speaks, however, in his novel *He Knew He Was Right*; the same rhetoric of right and wrong that fueled the Governor Eyre controversy fuels the novel. The troubling ending and the loss of narrative control that Trollope marks as the novel’s downfall, his own inability to make Trevelyan sympathetic, can be read as an allegory of colonialism. Specifically, it can be seen as the consequence both of the abuse inflicted on the colonized and the inability of the colonizer to maintain a sane identity; as Ian Baucom suggests, “the empire is less a place where England exerts control than the place where England loses command of its own narrative of identity.”¹⁷⁵

*He Knew He Was Right* as Colonial Allegory

One of the subplots of *He Knew He Was Right* involves Mr. Glascock, an Englishman traveling in Italy. He meets a group of American tourists, one whom he later marries. His future wife, Caroline Spaulding, is accompanied, however, by a proponent

¹⁷⁴ I was surprised recently while reading Belinda Edmondson’s *Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority, and Women’s Writing in Caribbean Narrative* to see her state outright that Trollope was “an Eyre supporter” with no footnote or indication of how she arrived at that conclusion. She reads Trollope primarily through Hall, and though I value Hall’s work immensely, I think that critics who know little about Trollope might assume that her analysis positions Trollope as an Eyre supporter, when what evidence there is suggests that the opposite is just as likely. See Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority, and Women’s Writing in Caribbean Narrative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 32.

¹⁷⁵ Baucom, 3.
of Women’s Rights, Wallacia Petrie, one of Trollope’s many caricatures of feminists. Wishing that others would fight for women’s rights with her same unyielding voracity, by refusing to marry, Miss Petrie opposes her friend’s marriage to Mr. Glascock. His Englishness stands for class-based snobbery and the subjugation of women for Miss Petrie.¹⁷⁶ She wishes that Miss Spaulding “would through life have borne arms along with her in that contest which she was determined to wage.”¹⁷⁷ Some dialogue between Miss Petrie and Mr. Glascock alludes to race relations as Miss Petrie favors equality among races and genders. She reasons,

'The antipathy is one,' continued Miss Petrie, 'which has been common on the face of the earth since the clown first trod upon the courtier's heels. It is the instinct of fallen man to hate equality, to desire ascendancy, to crush, to oppress, to tyrannise, to enslave. Then, when the slave is at last free, and in his freedom demands equality, man is not great enough to take his enfranchised brother to his bosom.'

'You mean negroes,' said Mr Glascock, looking round and planning for himself a mode of escape.

¹⁷⁶ John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* immediately preceded Trollope’s writing of *He Knew He Was Right*, and many have read the novel’s emphasis on women’s legal rights within marriage as Trollope’s entry into the conversation Mill started.
¹⁷⁷ Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right*, (New York: Penguin, 1994). (All further citations from the novel will be parenthetical), 636.
'Not negroes only, not the enslaved blacks, who are now enslaved no more, but the rising nations of white men wherever they are to be seen.
You English have no sympathy with a people who claim to be at least your equals. The clown has trod upon the courtier's heels till the clown is clown no longer, and the courtier has hardly a court in which he may dangle his sword-knot.' (474)

Miss Petrie’s words now seem extraordinarily prescient, but for Trollope they are the words of a comic, man-hating woman who is speaking about issues outside of her sphere, hence Mr. Glascock’s impulse to run away.

Nevertheless, it is Miss Petrie who makes the explicit connection between marital domination and imperial domination, a connection previous studies of this novel have ignored. Regarding marriage, according to Andrew Wright, “He Knew He Was Right goes further than any other novel of Trollope in its treatment of authority and domination.” In the novel a strong willed husband clashes with an equally strong willed wife, and while each of their positions is initially understandable – Trevelyan wishes Emily would cease communication with Colonel Osbourne, and Emily wishes her husband would not suspect her of wrongdoing – their responses are exaggerated. In the end, it is the husband who refuses to yield the slightest bit during their quarrel, an indication that he is mentally unstable. Ultimately, Emily chooses to lie to her husband, assuring him that he was right, to convince him to return with her to England to receive medical care. However, upon their return she continues to seek some acknowledgment that her refusal to yield to his unjust demands was right and proper for a respectable wife.

178 Wright, 140.
Overton suggests that for Emily “such persistence seems remorseless, but she could no longer sustain her integrity without some acknowledgment that her part in the quarrel wasn’t unjustified, so powerful in Trollope, is the need for self-determination, to know one is right.” Trollope, himself, took knowing he was right to extremes when he resigned from the Post Office just before he began work on *He Knew He Was Right*, after over thirty years of service, because he felt that a colleague was wrongly promoted over him; by so doing he completely forfeited his pension. Interestingly, however, it is not Emily that Trollope wanted readers to find the most sympathetic; he wants readers to pity the madman whose wife will not completely submit. One of the peculiar powers of novels, of course, is that readers ultimately make meaning out of the texts they read, sometimes against the narrative momentum that the novelist intends. Hence, readers can see some aspects of this novel as feminist or egalitarian in ways that Trollope may not have imagined, notwithstanding Trollope’s personal need for self determination and narrative control.

Critical debate surrounding the novel’s complexity has focused mainly on gender and madness. The Trollopian narrator and those in Trevelyan’s circle attribute his actions to madness; consequently, the reader is urged to judge the protagonist’s actions in that light. Those who cannot control themselves are typically not judged harshly for their behavior. However, the novel is unsettling because the “insanity defense” is constantly brought into question. At times, Trevelyan appears to be more stubborn than mad; he simply refuses to admit he has been wrong to doubt his wife and frequently acknowledges to himself that she is likely innocent. The more he mistreats her, the more he believes she must be guilty to have warranted such treatment. Circular logic appears to

179 Overton, 93.
be more at fault than madness. Feminist critics are quick to point to Emily’s submission to her husband and Trevelyan’s fall from the epitome of masculine independence at the beginning of the novel to a feminized, child-like, sickly creature at the end. Other critics have focused on the question of Trevelyan’s madness, looking at changing nineteenth century definitions of insanity and partial insanity.

However, no critical study has discussed the racialized colonial backdrop of the novel – a topic clearly warranted, not only by Emily’s colonial upbringing and Trevelyan’s obsession with Othello, but also by Trollope’s own intense interest in colonial issues, specifically his interest in Jamaica, a place, incidentally, where Emily’s father has worked as a colonial official. While I cannot completely account for the lack of criticism linking the gender and racial components of this novel, some thoughts do come to mind. First, my reading strongly relies on the specific historical context of the novel. By situating it immediately after the Morant Bay uprising and acknowledging Trollope’s prior literary investment in Jamaica, my reading sees that context as just as important as the traditional way that critics have read this novel as a comment on John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869) around the same time as *He Knew He Was Right*. In addition, having reading Trollope’s short story “Miss Sarah Jack, of Spanish Town, Jamaica,” first published in 1860 in which a white Jamaican planter struggles to tame a flirtatious would-be bride, I noticed parallel themes in *He Knew He Was Right*, especially

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181 David D. Oberhelman has done the most extensive study to date on the madness issue. See David D. Oberhelman, “Trollope’s Insanity Defense: Narrative Alienation in *He Knew He Was Right*,” *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 35.4 (1995).
the depiction of women from the tropics as overly flirtatious and troublesome for more conservative men.

The conflicting critical consensus regarding this novel, including Trollope’s own dissatisfaction with it, suggests that something out of the ordinary happens in the novel. Critics have often discussed Trollope’s intent always to teach a moral lesson in his novels; however, according to Walter M. Kendrick, *He Knew He Was Right* “teaches no lesson, and every aspect of its structure obstructs the effort to draw a moral from it.”\(^{182}\)

To a certain extent, this assessment is true, but looking at the way that race figures into the novel helps one to ascertain the moral lesson that the novel attempts to teach, and explains why this lesson falls apart as well. First it is important to establish that race is evoked at all. *He Knew He Was Right* has many colonial ties beginning with the first sentence. “When Louis Trevelyan was twenty-four years old, he had all the world before him where to choose; and, among other things, he chose to go to the Mandarin Islands, and there fell in love with Emily Rowley, the daughter of Sir Marmaduke, the governor” (9). This opening sentence of the novel serves multiple purposes: first, we see the echo from *Paradise Lost* foreshadowing the ensuing tragedy; second we see Trevelyan as the epitome of masculine independence, and third, we see the Mandarin Islands, a fictional group of islands likely in the West Indies, where Trevelyan is able to visit and bring back a wife (with the permission of her father, of course) to England. As the story progresses, we see Emily moved from the paternalistic colonial setting – her father being both her legal guardian and a similar type of guardian to the natives – to a paternalistic setting, where her husband expects the same obedience that she and the natives gave her father. The first chapter serves to set up the grounds for the breakup of the Trevelyan marriage,

\(^{182}\) Kendrick, 140.
and as Stephen Wall has noted, “there is not much in its later breakdown that cannot, with hindsight, be seen to have been implied in these early pages.” As noted above the three components of the opening sentence, the tragic genre, masculinity, and colonialism come together as the major causative factors in the novel. The connection that Miss Petrie makes between slavery, class struggle, and gender in the quotation at the beginning of this section serves to bring together similar themes in the subplot, albeit comically, to reinforce the connections among the various subplots.

The choice of a proper wife, tension between newlyweds, and the delicate balancing act of marital domination and submission are common Trollopian themes as is the question of “fitness” to rule a household. The question of “fitness” was one that Trollope dealt with and wrote about in other contexts including his work for the postal service, his attempted entry into politics, and his musings about English fitness to rule over colonial populations. An excellent example of the way that critics ignore, and in this example refuse to see, connections between Trollope’s travel writing and his fiction can be seen in a comment made by Asa Briggs in an essay called “Trollope the Traveler.” In a travel piece written during his trip to Washington DC in 1868, Trollope wrote that those who “occupy high spaces” are “the very men who are the least fit.” Asa Briggs has suggested that this preoccupation with fitness is scarcely reflected in *He Knew He Was Right*, the novel he was writing at the time – a suggestion that Trollope’s novels are somehow divorced from his real life concerns. However, fitness to govern is the key issue in the novel; the reader is compelled to question Trevelyan’s fitness to rule over his wife, and Emily’s father returns to England to testify before Parliament about his own

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183 Wall, 340.
184 Briggs, 27.
fitness as a governor in the Mandarin Islands. As will be discussed later, Sir Marmaduke is a fairly incompetent governor. Fitness is central to the text, but it is filtered through a racialized lens. As characters become less fit, they are figuratively, and sometimes literally, blackened.

Fitness to govern comes to the forefront in the opening chapters of *He Knew He Was Right*. The narrator clearly states Trevelyan’s error early in the novel: instead of being gentle when he tries to correct his wife, he is harsh. When considering making Emily leave his house if she continues to be disobedient readers are told concerning Trevelyan:

His resolution on these points was very strong, and yet there came over him a feeling that it was his duty to be gentle. There was a feeling also that that privilege of receiving obedience, which was so indubitably his own, could only be maintained by certain wise practices on his part in which gentleness must predominate. Wives are bound to obey their husbands, but obedience cannot be exacted from wives, as it may from servants, by aid of law and with penalties, or as from a horse, by punishments and manger curtailments. A man should be master in his own house, but he should make his mastery palatable, equitable, smooth, soft to the touch, a thing almost unfelt. (47)

The narrator clearly supports the social structure that positions wives as submissive to their husbands, but he also believes that a good husband should behave in a specific
manner. There are right and wrong ways to achieve mastery: the best being the ways that are least visible. Placing such a sentiment in a larger colonial context, specifically considering Governor Eyre’s recent actions and the high visibility of his methods of achieving obedience, from a non-slave population, should complicate our understanding of marital fitness in the novel. Trollope certainly is not directly equating marital relationships with colonial entanglements, but it seems clear that he sees power being negotiated in similar ways.

For Trollope, there is little difference between marital relationships and colonial relationships, except he believed that sometimes marital relationships could be more difficult. In “Miss Sarah Jack, of Spanish Town, Jamaica,” a short story written seven years before this novel just after Trollope’s return from his trip to the West Indies, Trollope wrote about a Jamaican planter who wants to marry a white Jamaican woman, but has second thoughts because she is overly flirtatious with other men. Our sympathies are supposed to lie with the planter who “had often been nearly broken-hearted in his efforts to manage his free black labourers; but even that was easier than managing such as Marian Leslie.” This idea is continued in He Knew He Was Right where readers are repeatedly confronted with Emily’s colonial upbringing; in fact, Trevelyan attributes her lack of obedience to this upbringing, she “had lived in one colony or another almost since she had been born” (19). Trevelyan thinks that she “picked up such a trick of obstinacy in those tropical regions” and that because of this obstinacy, “he did not know how to manage her”(19). The sheer number of times he refers back to her upbringing (often in the same sentences when he finds her difficult to control) shows us that Trevelyan

believes that growing up in the Mandarins contributes to her rebelliousness. He remembers hearing “long before he himself had had an idea of marrying, that no man should look for a wife among the tropics, that women educated amidst the languors of those sunny climes rarely come to possess those high ideas of conjugal duty and feminine truth which a man should regard as the first requisites of a good wife” (44). In addition to being Trevelyan’s perspective, at times this is the narrator’s perspective as well. The narrator tells readers that “the godsend of a rich marriage … which had come in the way of the Rowley family while living at the Mandarins … had not turned out to be an unmixed blessing” (79). The following sentence tells the reader that Emily had “proved herself to be a woman very hard to manage” (79). This repeated association with the Mandarins and Emily’s manageability is too frequent to overlook, and being written during a time when colonial behavior, that of colonial officials and those they governed, was being discussed daily the Victorian press, connections to the larger world would be hard to ignore.

Emily’s portrayal, in particular, is racialized even though she is the daughter of a white colonial governor. Theories of race and climate often linked time spent in tropical locations with changes of physique and temperament. Emily is initially described in exotic terms. Mary Hamer has noted that Emily is “presented as if she were a pagan black woman, with all the embodied desire and sexual vibrancy that the new ‘science’ of race was busy attributing to blacks.”187 Emily is tall, “with a bust rather full for her age” (14). Her eyes “looked to be dark because her eyebrows and eyelashes were nearly black,” her “brown hair was very dark,” and “her complexion was brown also” (14).

addition to these physical attributes, Emily is said to be strong “as are some girls who come from the tropics, and whom a tropical climate has suited” (14). When she quarrels with her husband her brow is said to blacken: 'Certainly it is in this way and in no other if you speak to me of what is past, without acknowledging your error.' Her brow became blacker and blacker as she continued to speak to him” (510). Granted, such brow blackening can be seen as a colloquial rendering of a bad mood, not necessarily alluding to race, but with a pattern of racialized characterization already established such choices become more meaningful. This brow blackening seems to represent a lack of control over one’s emotions, and it leads Emily and other characters to act counter to their intentions and not completely rationally. Trevelyans’s sentiment that “he almost regretted that he had ever visited the Mandarin’s, of ever heard the name of Sir Marmaduke Rowley” echoes Victorian ideas, Trollope’s ideas about Jamaica in particular, about whether small troublemaking colonies were really worth the hassle.

The colonial connections and the connection to the larger debate concerning the Morant Bay uprising becomes more apparent when one looks at Emily’s father. The character, Sir Marmaduke Rowley, could be called a kind of Governor Eyre figure in the novel, as he is recalled to England to report on his effectiveness as a colonial administrator. He instigates this return himself because he wants to visit his daughter without having to pay for the trip himself; nevertheless, his lack of knowledge about his own colony becomes an embarrassment. With eight children and a colony to govern, Sir Marmaduke found it hard to keep track of his own family let alone a colony. He never noticed Emily’s desire to have her own way: “With eight of them coming up around him, how should he have observed their tempers?” (11). While not a one-to-one connection,
there are certain similarities between Rowley and Eyre that are hard to ignore. For example, readers learn that one of Sir Marmaduke Rowley’s former colonial positions was Jamaica at a relatively lowly position. Like Governor Eyre, Rowley held numerous colonial positions in his long career. The reference to Jamaica – in a novel where Trollope obviously had no qualms against creating fictional places – cannot be accidental, and the fact that events in Jamaica were topics of daily conversation among his readers would have resonated with them as well. In addition to the connection with Jamaica, Sir Marmaduke faces a parliamentary committee in the novel which questions his governing style on the islands. Although, unlike Governor Eyre, Rowley is not being questioned concerning an uprising, the sketch of the interrogation scene given by Trollope reveals certain similarities.

The character who performs the questioning is Major Macgruder “a certain ancient pundit of the constitution” and “a stern critic of our colonial modes of government” (572). Though probably a composite character, it is easy to see Trollope’s light parody of John Stuart Mill who at the time was aging and supporting many unpopular causes in Trollope’s opinion. (*He Knew He Was Right* is exactly contemporary with Mill’s *The Subjection of Women*). Macgruder had been successful in persuading “the House to grant him a Committee of Inquiry” to investigate his “pet subject” (573), and the person sent to represent the Mandarin Islands before the Committee is the bumbling, incompetent Rowley. If Sir Marmaduke is supposed to be representative of colonial governors, then a reader would have to come to the conclusion that the colonies were not a very serious national endeavor. Sir Marmaduke is completely inept, unable to explain to the Committee of Inquiry in the House how his government is maintained; in fact, after
he is questioned the committee is “whispering among themselves that he ought not to be sent back to the seat of government at all” (785). Sir Marmaduke was chosen to speak before the committee, not because he was a very successful governor, but simply because Colonel Osbourne, a close friend, arranged the trip as a vacation.

Sir Marmaduke’s incompetence is comic, but the comedy works both ways as the reader is invited to mock Major Macgruder as well. The Major is obviously humored by parliament because of his age; his fellow members are waiting for him to “ride his hobby harmlessly to the day of his parliamentary death” (572). It is by no means the system of colonialism that this scene ridicules; instead it ridicules weak and comical individuals. The Major is eccentric and Sir Marmaduke is incompetent, but the system is left unscathed as it exceeds individuals. In theory, both are replaceable. Readers are told that before Sir Marmaduke’s testimony, the committee heard the report of an excellent governor, and even Sir Marmaduke ends up being something of a comical footnote in the larger colonial picture. Readers are told that:

Poor Sir Marmaduke remembered his defeat with soreness long after it had been forgotten by all others who had been present, and was astonished when he found that the journals of the day, though they did in some curt fashion report the proceedings of the Committee, never uttered a word of censure against him, as they had not before uttered a word of praise for that pearl of a governor who had been examined before him (576).

In the long run, neither the very bad nor the very good governors are singled out. Problems happen occasionally which require parliamentary committees, but overall the
colonial system appears to work in the world the Trollope creates. Any glitches in the system, or in Parliament for that matter, are the result of the shortcomings of individuals.

In addition to being an inept governor, Sir Marmaduke is also a poor father, having eight daughters; he admits to not knowing much about any of them simply because there are too many. He agrees to Emily’s marriage without knowing much about her suitor, and when their marital difficulties leave Emily homeless Sir Marmaduke is unable to help with any kind of reconciliation; in fact, he succeeds in further infuriating his son-in-law as he is viewed as another critic of Trevelyann’s fitness to rule over his wife – ironic because Marmaduke is so unfit to rule his colony. When Sir Marmaduke arrive in England, he manages to anger Trevelyann and does nothing fruitful to help the couple. Sir Marmaduke’s position as a colonial governor and as a father can never be far from the reader’s mind, even as he proves to be inept at both roles.

Issues of guardianship and fitness to govern arise again and again in the novel. The narrator suggest that there are some “who seem to be absolutely unfitted by nature to have the custody or guardianship of others” (234). Sir Marmaduke is the novel’s example of a poor colonial governor, while Trevelyann, who assumes his position in relation to Emily as her master and protector, becomes the example of a poor husband. Before moving on to a fuller discussion of Trevelyann’s madness, it is first necessary to look at one more aspect of the novel that is connected to the Governor Eyre controversy. As I mentioned previously, class warfare was a large part of what fueled the controversy as those less fearful of working class agitation were more likely to view Eyre’s actions as excessive. In most situations, Trollope clearly sided with those who wanted to control the mobs of working class men agitating for the vote. In his estimation, the class system had
some problems, but mainly these could be blamed on unruly or lazy individuals. Hard work and respectability were important for him regardless of class, as is made clear in *He Knew He Was Right*. One reason that Trevelyan becomes so obsessed with his wife’s relationship with Colonel Osbourne is that Trevelyan is always at home observing Emily’s every action; he has no profession and too much time on his hands to dwell on his wife’s behavior. The narrator explains how marital trouble can be avoided: “If the man be happily forced to labour daily for his living till he be weary, and the wife be laden with many ordinary cares, the routine of life may run on without storms – but for such a one, if he be without work, the management of a wife will be a task full or peril” (234). Much as Queen Victoria suggested that black Jamaicans work harder instead of organizing for reform, Trollope suggests that having too much time causes destructive responses. Hard work and a proper understanding of male/female relationships would produce successful societies.

On a personal level, Trevelyan is the kind of man that Trollope disliked; coming from a family with money, Trevelyan did not have to work and found little with which to occupy himself. As a result, one could argue that Trevelyan is unfit to govern Emily, much like her father is unfit to govern the Mandarins. The novel promotes marriage and colonialism as valuable social institutions, even as it shows how individuals can abuse power. Like Trollope’s critique of Jamaican labor and familial relationships, *He Knew He Was Right* seems to be trying to resolve such problems as they arise within one family when a controlling husband chooses a colonial bride.
Where sympathy is concerned, readers would be much more likely to pity Trevelyan, as Trollope hoped, if they believed wholeheartedly in his madness. Always the realist, Trollope tries to depict a man who succumbs to madness and creates a scenario where madness might occur. While it would be hard to deny that near the end of the novel Trevelyan is insane, determining when he loses control of his faculties and absolving him from a degree of blame for his final mental state is difficult for many readers. Ruth ApRoberts suggests that the point of insanity becomes important for our sympathies with Emily’s character as well: “We are led to consider how the moral perspective changes when that point – so hard to determine – is past. When it is past, we know with Emily his wife that the most humane thing she can do is to lie to him, falsely confessing that adultery which of all things he wants assurance of, obsessively seeking out his own destruction.”

Out of pity for her dying husband, Emily makes a choice to lie hoping that it will ease her husband’s mind and give him some peace in his final days. Certainly such a lie would be unfathomable if her husband were sane and capable of listening to reasoning. However, even at the novel’s beginning, Trevelyan seems unable to admit to being wrong, yet until his marriage, this trait seems not to have affected his daily life. Marriage, specifically Trevelyan’s understanding of the obedience a wife owes to her husband, is the catalyst that begins his descent to madness. The difficulty of the subject matter, and the precision with which Trollope paints a sick mind getting sicker makes this novel one of Trollope’s most powerful. That fact that Trollope draws on colonial material and compares types of domination adds to this novel’s power. In this

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188 apRoberts, 103.
section, I examine Trevelyan’s personal identification with Othello and explore the ways
that this identification racializes Trevelyan in a way critics have ignored. By first
looking at the specific context for Trollope’s definition of madness, alluded to in the
novel’s title, reviewing contemporary ideas about monomania, then looking at the
particulars of Trevelyan’s “madness,” I want to demonstrate how the markings of a
colonizer/colonized relationship becomes mapped onto Trevelyan’s character,
complicating the novel’s earlier racializing of Emily as one raised in the tropics.

Sally Shuttleworth has compared Charlotte Bronte’s fiction with Victorian
psychological writings as she sees them linked through their “preoccupation with the
realms of excess,” specifically “with the workings of insanity and nervous disease.”
Mental disease could arise from “an excess or deficiency of elements integral to normal
function.” Similarly, Shuttleworth draws attention to how Victorian economists and
medical authorities used similar analogies about problems of excess. Wealth, for
instance, if not used properly could become wasteful. “Excessive activity in one sphere
might engender physical or mental breakdown: valuable qualities might turn into agents
of pollution if developed to too high a degree.” Social economists and medical
authorities “both sought to bring health through organized management of resources.”
Alongside a fascination with excess was a discourse of control and regulation which
depended on strategies of surveillance to detect deviation from the norm. Michel
Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* illuminates how institutions like prisons, mental

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189 Not a single book or article that I’ve looked at has even mentioned race when discussing Trevelyan’s obsession with Othello.
191 Shuttleworth, 12
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
institutions, the military, and schools discipline bodies using practices of surveillance (sometimes just the illusion of surveillance) to discipline bodies which become trained to self-police. As will be seen below, Louis Trevelyan both practices surveillance on his wife to achieve marital mastery, but also deeply fears the surveillance of others.

Bronte certainly had more exposure to and was more interested in psychological writings than Trollope was; however, *He Knew He Was Right* seems to be Trollope’s attempt to depict realistic mental illness. In *He Knew He Was Right* one does not often get a glimpse of the inner workings of Trevelyan’s mind as one does of Lucy Snowe in *Villette*. As is common with Trollope, he is more interested in how society responds to Trevelyan’s diminishing mental state than in Trevelyan himself. Trevelyan’s outward changes are chronicled through the observations of those who try to help him. When Mr. Glascock tries to visit Trevelyan, he observes his well-fortified gateway, “defying any intruders not provided with warlike ammunition” (650). When Sir Marmaduke visits him in Italy, he is greatly changed and shows signs of physical and mental duress:

- His beard had been allowed to grow, and he had neither collar nor cravat.
- His trousers were unbraced, and he shuffled in with a pair of slippers, which would hardly cling to his feet. He was paler and still thinner than when he had been visited at Willesden, and his eyes seemed to be larger, and shone almost with a brighter brilliancy. (652).

This description sounds close to Hamlet’s performance of madness and the brilliant eyes remind readers of Ophelia. Such evocations of mad states on Trollope’s part is in line with Shuttleworth’s claim that 19th century psychological writings often looked to
literature, Shakespeare in particular, for evidence and examples.\textsuperscript{194} Although Trevelyan is never brought before a court or medical board, the fear of police or medical interference drives the fearful Trevelyan to Italy where English courts cannot reach him. Whether such actions are the result of rational or irrational paranoia is never fuller explained.

Trollope seems to be portraying a case of monomania. James Pritchard in his \textit{Treatise on Insanity} (1836) defined monomania as a form of insanity “in which the understanding is partially disordered or under the influence of a particular illusion, referring to one subject, and involving one train of ideas, while the intellectual powers appear, when exercised on other subjects, to be in a great measure unimpaired.”\textsuperscript{195}

Trevelyan’s unreasonable questioning of Emily’s purity is the one subject that he obsesses over, and while Emily remains the object, Trevelyan’s identification with Othello becomes a crucial component to his fantasies of Emily’s infidelity. He grows unable to conceive of a world outside of the Othello tragedy. Until his flight to Italy with his son, he seems able to go about daily business and maintain relationships with friends; his mental faculties are not diminished, except in that one area. The relationship of this kind of partial insanity to legal definitions of insanity was ambiguous and a debated topic during the period.

At one point, Trollope even introduces monomania as a possibility. A family doctor is hesitant to call Trevelyan mad, but Emily’s sister Nora disagrees:

According to the doctor's idea there was more of ailment in the body than in the mind. He admitted that his patient's thoughts had been forced to

\textsuperscript{194} Shuttleworth, 13.
\textsuperscript{195} quoted in Shuttleworth, 51.
dwell on one subject till they had become distorted, untrue, jaundiced, and perhaps mono-maniacal; but he seemed to doubt whether there had ever been a time at which it could have been decided that Trevelyan was so mad as to make it necessary that the law should interfere to take care of him. A man, so argued the doctor, need not be mad because he is jealous, even though his jealousy be ever so absurd. And Trevelyan, in his jealousy, had done nothing cruel, nothing wasteful, nothing infamous. In all this Nora was very little inclined to agree with the doctor, and thought nothing could be more infamous than Trevelyan's conduct at the present moment unless, indeed, he could be screened from infamy by that plea of madness. But then there was more behind. Trevelyan had been so wasted by the kind of life which he had led, and possessed by nature stamina so insufficient to resist such debility, that it was very doubtful whether he would not sink altogether before he could be made to begin to rise. But one thing was clear. He should be contradicted in nothing. If he chose to say that the moon was made of green cheese, let it be conceded to him that the moon was made of green cheese. Should he make any other assertion equally removed from the truth, let it not be contradicted. Who would oppose a man with one foot in the grave? (796)

Insanity as a legal term was a contested topic in the Victorian period. As Oberhelman has observed in his article “Trollope’s Insanity Defense: Narrative Alienation in He Knew He Was Right,” “there is a connection between the narrator’s
assertions of Trevelyan’s madness and the highly controversial Common Law criteria for insanity established by the 1843 M’Naghten Rules”: these rules defined insanity as the inability to know right from wrong. After Daniel M’Naghten, a Scottish laborer, shot Prime Minister Robert Peel’s personal secretary, his lawyers argued that he was not responsible for his actions because he did not understand that his actions were wrong.

M’Naghten was under the delusional impression that the Tories were out to get him. In a controversial ruling, M’Naghten received a verdict of not guilty on the basis of insanity; interestingly, the “delusion was considered almost a side effect of the more fundamental failure to know right from wrong.” This definition of M’Naghten’s insanity “consisted mainly of an obstinate insistence that he was right when everyone else believed that he was wrong.” The most interesting result of this new definition was that it “replaced the more empirical standard of delusion with an ethical standard, a knowledge or right and wrong in a specific case.” Such a change allowed for much more subjectivity both in the courtroom and among the reading public for making determinations about sanity.

Chapter titles in He Knew He Was Right like “Verdict of the Jury – ‘Mad, my Lord’” and “Acquitted” invite the readers to consider whether or not Trevelyan is mad in this legal sense. (Interestingly, other chapter titles like “Mr. Glascock is Master,” “Bella Victrix, ”Lady Rowley Conquered,” and “Camilla Triumphant” suggest that marriage is a battle with winners and losers). But as with most and arguably all Trollope novels, such a judgment is not really left to the readers; the narrator confirms that Trevelyan is mad. He

197 Ibid.
198 Ibid.
199 Oberhelman, 793.
tells readers in the conclusion that “at last the maniac was dead, and in his last moments he had made such reparation as was in his power for the evil that he had done” (820).

On the surface readers are given the answer to the problem of the novel; Trevelyan is mad. This ending is unsettling, however, because the reader is presented with contrary evidence as well. Trevelyan is remarkably lucid at times, yet seems to lose his temper in his wife’s presence. The very language that Trollope uses opens up this interpretation to questioning. The OED definition of the term “maniac” says “a person affected with mania; a person who is, or looks or behaves as if, mad.”200 The word suggests that the madness may be only a label given to a kind of behavior or a performance, not necessarily a clinical definition of madness. As has been stated earlier, the M’Naghten standard for madness opened up the topic to similar questioning. Is the failure to tell right from wrong a precursor to madness or an after-effect of a clinical aberration? This new definition of madness is messy. Whether or not one is mad depends on who is making the judgment. If insanity is dependent on one’s knowledge of right and wrong, it would be necessary for “right” and “wrong” to be fixed categories with clearer guidelines for interpretation. John Charles Bucknill in his *Unsoundness of Mind in Relation to Criminal Acts* (1854) acknowledged this very problem when he suggested that knowledge of right and wrong is “an innate principle of the human mind” and that “the innate and essential principles of mind are present where mind exists.”201 Bucknill argued that power to act on one’s knowledge of right and wrong was much more important than knowledge about right and wrong. Trollope’s seems to acknowledge that Trevelyan realizes in his most lucid moments that what he is doing is wrong, but a form

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200 OED
of mental disease prohibits him from changing his behavior. In fact, at one point
Trevelyan views his isolation in Italy as a form of self-sacrifice because he feels his own
punishment in isolation is better than punishing his family with his presence. His is
unable to change, even though he sometimes wishes he could.

Looking outside the text and returning to the trial of Governor Eyre, one can see
another situation where the terms “right” and “wrong” were being used by both sides for
different purposes. Trollope’s position on the issue may have been one of situational
ethics, if he treated real life situations like he treated situations in his novels: Governor
Eyre wasn’t a great leader; he may even have gone overboard, but his position should be
respected and upheld nonetheless, just as Sir Marmaduke’s ineptness does not condemn
the entire colonial system and as Trevelyan’s unfitness as a husband does not diminish
the institution of marriage. The chaos that ensued during the debate surrounding the
Morant Bay rebellion was the result of the failure of the terms “right” and “wrong” to
stand for concrete things. The novel’s attempt to sort out similar issues fails as well, as
Trollope himself noted, as his fixed notions of right and wrong sit poorly with readers.
Trevelyan has too much time on his hands and allows himself to dwell on his wife’s
fidelity excessively which leads to his madness. Similarly, I would argue, for Trollope
England had resources around the globe – land, goods, men – that were mismanaged and
poorly maintained. Trying to manage Jamaica, in Trollope’s estimation, was a nearly
impossible goal and fixating on maintaining that control led to Eyre’s shortsighted and
impetuous decisions. Hence, what Trollope saw as an excessive investment into a colony
of little worth can be viewed as a kind of monomania, the Victorians’ mental illness. At
this point, Trollope was still very much opposed to imperial expansion.
Nevertheless, reading this novel as an implicit critique of the Governor Eyre controversy does not change the fact that Trollope comes to this critique through the racial assumptions of his culture, which was seen earlier in my discussion of *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* and which continues in *He Knew He Was Right* through the figure of Othello. A major problem with the assertion that Trevelyan is mad is the eerie method to his madness. He begins performing the role of Othello in his own mind, specifically by mentally reciting the line “The pity of it, Iago!” Choosing an Iago figure as his interlocutor is the beginning of his path to destruction; one who knows the play would know that Iago is the villain, not one to rely upon. Soon, Trevelyan desires a real Iago to speak too and hires a detective to monitor his wife. Trevelyan wants to be Othello, to write a tragic ending to his story and persists with this identification till the end of the novel. One consequence of Trevelyan’s identification with Othello is the suggestion, not realized in the novel, of violence against Emily for her perceived betrayal. Fearing that he will be declared legally insane and lose legal custody of his child, Trevelyan avoids England for the middle portion of the novel, a very logical decision for one who is supposed to be mad. Beginning with his trip to Venice, Trevelyan begins to see himself as an Othello figure, like a second Moor of Venice.

He orders a sleazy ex-policeman, Bozzle, to continue spying on his wife; the narrator tells us that “we remember Othello’s demand of Iago” (375.) Othello had told Iago to prove his love a whore. Instead of seeking to find evidence of Emily’s innocence, Bozzle, like Iago, is told to find evidence of guilt because Trevelyan wants her to be guilty. Trevelyan looks at the trajectory of events as they are unfolding with glee: “He almost reveled in the idea of the tragedy he would make” (378). Like Othello who vowed
to tear his wife to pieces, Trevelyan vows to “tear the Colonel to fragments” and destroy his wife (378). He takes pleasure out of the pain he inflicts on those around him. Near the time of his death, Trevelyan mutters words from *Othello* in his wife’s presence. Readers are told:

> He would speak of dear Emily, and poor Emily, and shake his head slowly, and talk of the pity of it. ‘The pity of it, Iago, oh, the pity of it, he said once. The allusion to her was so terrible that she almost burst into anger as she would have done formerly. She almost told him that he had been as wrong throughout as was the jealous husband in the play whose words he quoted, and that his jealousy, if continued, was likely to be as tragical (794).

Emily has changed, in the narrator’s perspective, for the better. She becomes a kind of Desdemona figure for her husband, even though she is innocent, to humor him in his illness. While some critics have commented on the novel’s continual allusions and even direct references to *Othello*, the only connection that people make is to the similarities of the men’s jealousy and rigidity. No one has drawn attention to the fact that *Othello* was a racial outsider who commits a barbarous act against an innocent white woman. He was unable to control his passion.

While Emily has physical and cultural traits associated with one who has spent time in the West Indies, her husband is often described as “black” when he confronts his wife – a fact that gains significance considering his identification with Othello. For
example, early in the novel when he first begins to dislike Colonel Osbourne, Trevelyan clenches his fist and allows “a black frown to settle upon his brow” (19). Later, Lady Milborough, a family friend, tries to casually warn Trevelyan about Colonel Osbourne, and as she looks at his face, she “saw that it was black” (31). As she continues speaking to him, readers are told, “the face before her became still blacker, but still the man said nothing” (31). At home with Emily he becomes blacker still: “There was silence again for some minutes, and the cloud upon Trevelyan's brow became blacker than before. Then he rose from his chair and walked round to the sofa on which his wife was sitting. 'I presume,' said he, 'that your wishes and mine in this matter must be the same'” (53). Near the end of the novel during an attempt at reconciliation, Trevelyan comes close to putting the past behind him, but blackens when he thinks about admitting any fault.

As it was, her words wounded him in that spot of his inner self which was most sensitive, on that spot from whence had come all his fury. A black cloud came upon his brow, and he made an effort to withdraw himself from her grasp. It was necessary to him that she should in some fashion own that he had been right, and now she was promising him that she would not tell him of his fault! He could not thus swallow down all the convictions by which he had fortified himself to bear the misfortunes which he had endured. Had he not quarrelled with every friend he possessed on this score; and should he now stultify himself in all those quarrels by admitting that he had been cruel, unjust, and needlessly jealous? And did not truth demand of him that he should cling to his old
assurances? Had she not been disobedient, ill-conditioned, and rebellious? Had she not received the man, both him personally and his letters, after he had explained to her that his honour demanded that it should not be so? How could he come into such terms as those now proposed to him, simply because he longed to enjoy the rich sweetness of her soft hand, to feel the fragrance of her breath, and to quench the heat of his forehead in the cool atmosphere of her beauty? 'Why have you driven me to this by your intercourse with that man?' he said. 'Why, why, why did you do it?' (566)

As mentioned earlier in my discussion of Emily’s similar blackening, these phrases could certainly be used in ways without racial connotations. But what interests me about how these words are used with Trevelyan, and with Emily earlier, is how the blackening happens when he is becoming mentally agitated. He is only described this way when he is, or his becoming, monomaniacal. Not only does Trevelyan see connections between Othello’s story and his own; he is described as black when he is at his most irrational.

It is important to note that in the nineteenth century the figure of Othello was highly racialized. According to a writer in the Theatrical Journal in 1840 characterizations of Othello could follow two divergent paths: “on the one hand … retaining all the fiery qualities of his native clime with little or no restraint; on the other hand his original nature and warm passions, being in some degree under self-control, in some consequence of having been accustomed to the high bearing and polished manner of the Venetian state.” The highly passionate version was a holdover from the romantic period while the tamed version was becoming prominent in the Victorian period.

Victorian performances of Othello are often noted for the ways in which they attempted to tame many of the events in the play. For example, in many Victorian productions a curtain surrounding the bed shielded the playgoers’ eyes from the violence of the actual murder and from the sight of an interracial couple in a bedroom. Reviewers of the 1855 performance staring Macready commented on the appropriateness of this separation. However, this taming only served to highlight the racial tensions. As Michael Neill has argued, this bed was “intensely identified with the anxieties about race and sex stirred up by the play” and the curtain separating the viewer from the climactic event actually “gave freer play to the fantasy it was designed to check.” In addition to the curtained bed, Victorian audiences were also presented with a “lighter” version of Othello who was not as black as in earlier portrayals: Charles Macready played Othello as a kind of desert warrior. Great tension revolved around the argument about Othello’s origins. Charles Lamb suggested that Othello’s skin color was detrimental to a truly sympathetic reading of his character. He wrote “I appeal to everyone that has seen Othello played whether he did not sink … Othello’s mind in his colour.” Lamb called him a “blackamoor” while Coleridge lamented that he was a “veritable negro”: as a result of such criticisms players beginning in the early 1800’s began using brown makeup instead of black. Whatever the skin tone of the Victorian version, playgoers including Anthony Trollope, would have seen Othello as a racial outsider, but an outsider who was forced into the mold of a

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204 Ibid.
205 Hankey 63..
206 See Hankey 66.
British gentleman. By identifying with Othello, Trevelyan chooses blackness and rejects his duties to society. \textsuperscript{207} His gentlemanliness is compromised.

In a way, Trollope the narrator becomes the real Iago to Trevelyan’s Othello. It is, of course Trollope who plants the seed of jealousy and pulls the strings behind the scenes. Trevelyan is effeminate (a bad characteristic for Trollope) and does not work, like the black Jamaicans in Trollope’s imagination. When one considers that the original title of \textit{He Knew He Was Right} was \textit{Mrs. Trevelyan} one can see that Emily has heroic characteristics, and considering that we see more of her in the novel than her husband, she still remains something of a protagonist as well. As the novel progresses, she moves from the role of a colonial figure to a heroic, virtuous wife. She ends up submitting to her husband’s wishes and admits that submission is appropriate. She is tamed through tragedy and mental abuse. By the end of the novel, Trevelyan has not only become a jealous madman like Othello, but he has become a kind of racial outsider, in need of constant oversight. He has exactly those qualities that Trollope despised among the Jamaicans: he sees them as lazy and an unable to govern themselves – this, all because Trevelyan sees himself as a wronged black man.

Emily C. Bartels has argued quite convincingly that Shakespeare’s \textit{Othello} is demonized not because of his difference from the Venetians, but because of the danger of his similarity to and his acceptance by them. \textsuperscript{208} Othello is honored for his military prowess, he gets to marry a senator’s daughter, and his stylized language marks him as

\textsuperscript{207} In \textit{He Knew He Was Right} we see Trollope’s favorite adage concerning touching pitch and being defiled three separate times, but not in the main plot. Of particular interest is Miss Jemima Stanbury, an old woman, set in her ways, who disapproves of a match between her houseguest and her nephew who has chosen to write for a “filthy newspaper.” She complains that the newspaper blackens her nephew, “And I’m told that what they call ink comes off on your fingers, like lamp-black. I never touched one, thank God; but they tell me so.”

one of the Venetians, perhaps even a superior one. It seems that Trollope’s inability to create sympathy for Trevelyan, as he commented in his autobiography, is similar to his inability to truly identify and sympathize with the Jamaicans in The West Indies and the Spanish Main. The Jamaicans could never really become British, and Trevelyan, because he does not act “British” in Trollope’s sense of the word, has to be mad – or if not mad, colonial. However, his deterioration into what Trollope calls madness is a way of “blackening” him. He goes from being an independent man to a feeble shell in need of constant care and medical attention. He “goes native” and becomes like a Mandariner (or a Jamaican). Even though Sir Marmaduke is sometimes comical, his lack of passion and his easy-going attitude toward familial and colonial rule emerges as a superior strategy to Trevelyan’s constant surveillance and desire for mastery.

When we remember the way that the mid-nineteenth century productions of Othello were trying to make the protagonist more British and less foreign and look at Trollope’s historical context – the Jamaican uprising – we can see similar tensions when it comes to presentation. The fictional Mandarin islands serve as a kind of generic colonial space for Trollope. Similarly generic were Shakespeare’s somewhat simplistic portrayals of Moors. In a study of Othello and Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare’s two plays to feature a moor as a character, Geraldo U. de Sousa argues that these characters “function as displaced representatives from geographically remote and culturally exotic places.” Unlike the Europeans who “are embroiled in historical enterprises” the moors “have incomplete, partial, or no cultural memory.” We learn nothing about the Mandarin people in He Knew He Was Right. For Emily, her colonial upbringing is only

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210 Ibid.
kind of a distant background to her character; her family comes and goes to and from the
Mandarin islands, much like Trollope could come and go from the colonies, but still
retain his Britishness. Jamaican culture and history for Trollope was irrelevant; he only
spoke of them in relation to the homeland. However, as much as Trollope would like to
write off colonial issues as comic subplots in the novel, racial problems continually
present themselves, in spite of his efforts – hence his difficulty in making Trevelyan
sympathetic. The novel highlights the uncomfortable tension with Trollope’s idea that
there were clear, fixed differences between the homeland and the colonies. The actual
narrative reinscribes these differences, but in a way that is unsettling and unsatisfying for
many readers.

The novel is filled with binary oppositions: British/Colonial, husband/wife,
sane/insane and right/wrong among others. These binaries all collapse in one way or
another in the novel. Emily is not quite British, but she’s not really a native Mandariner.
Trevelyan is supposed to be British, but he behaves like Trollope’s idea of a colonial
man. By the end of the novel the wife is caring for the husband. The narrator proclaims
Trevelyan’s madness, even as readers may see it as performance. Even right and wrong
becomes hazy as Emily rides the line between obedience and outright rebellion.
Oberhelman writes that “In the end Trevelyan becomes a character who is both himself, a
sane Victorian gentleman, and a mad Othello in nineteenth century dress, and He Knew
He Was Right becomes a narrative that is at once a ‘sane’ realistic novel and a ‘mad’
Shakespearean tragedy.”

Conclusion

\[211\] Oberhelman, 790.
He Knew He Was Right holds an important but tenuous position in the Trollope cannon. Henry James called He Knew He Was Right one of Trollope’s best novels while other critics claim that the plot is absurd, the protagonist is unsympathetic, and the conclusion is unsatisfying.\(^{212}\) Such a wide range of critical perspectives— from praise to disdain— is representative not only of this particular novel, but of Trollope criticism in general. Bill Overton refers to this split in critical appreciation as the “Trollope problem”: on the one hand, “writers on Trollope assume or claim outright that he is a major Victorian novelist”; while on the other hand, others “for apparently the strongest of reasons …enter severe reservations.”\(^{213}\) New critical trends, feminist and colonial studies in particular, have tended to further alienate Trollope from a position as a major Victorian novelist because his positions on “the woman question” and “the colonial question” seem to be so uncompromising and uncomplicated— therefore uninteresting. Often, one could argue that Trollope’s narrative voice shuts out any dissenting opinion in both his novels and his non-fiction work. The very rigidness of form in Trollope’s novels and his imposition of moralistic endings often leave the reader doubting the realism of Trollope’s stories, even as Trollope claims to be a thoroughly realistic writer. Bill Overton has pointed to a new way of assessing Trollope’s relevance; he suggests that critics look both at his conventional modes and surface statements as well as at the complexity of presentation.\(^{214}\) As Peter K. Garrett suggests, the complexity of presentation in Trollope often “far exceeds the narrator’s powers of summary generalization.”\(^{215}\) In He Knew He

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\(^{212}\) Henry James, “Anthony Trollope,” The Trollope Critics (New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981), 18. Negative critical stances are numerous (see Chauncy Brewster Tinker’s observations in The Trollope Critics for a representative example)

\(^{213}\) Overton, 1.

\(^{214}\) Overton, 2.

\(^{215}\) Quoted in Overton, 2.
Was Right the ambiguous causality for Trevelyan’s madness is unsettling yet fascinating for those who seek to understand it. It is unclear whether Trevelyan suffers from a mental breakdown that is a random kind of ailment or whether it is purely a reaction to his wife’s perceived disobedience. Does Victorian marriage itself with its emphasis on husbands ruling over their wives invite such madness? Through parallel plotting that would remind readers of the Governor Eyre controversy such are the kinds of questions that this novel asks.

My reading of He Knew He Was Right suggests that Trollope’s work is doing much more interesting things with gender and colonialism than critics have previously allowed. Trollope certainly seems to privilege the marital relationship over the colonial relationship, something in line with his known opinions on both subjects; as a result, the colonial relationship is used as one of many contexts in which the Trevelyan marriage can be judged. Diagnosing Trevelyan as a monomaniac draws attention to the excessiveness of his reaction to his fears about his wife, and connecting such excessiveness with Governor Eyre’s overreaction and subsequent cruelty in Jamaica casts zealous imperialism based on mastery as a kind of mental disorder. My reading looks beyond Trollope’s own assertion that the novel was a failure and places it in a larger historical context. Ironically, it is this perceived failure that makes the novel so interesting. Trollope wants his reader to be sympathetic toward Louis Trevelyan because, according to the narrator, madness is the reason for his cruel treatment of his wife, but the reader is forced to question whether or not Trevelyan is mad as well as whether such madness absolves him from responsibility. The novel ends up being much messier than Trollope intended as it reflects continuing anxiety over colonial uprisings and brings the
questions of audience sympathies to the forefront. The fact that one’s sympathies might lie with Governor Eyre or with Jamaica depending on one’s perspective, and knowledge of right and wrong, was unsettling for Trollope who wanted to project a world where the system was fine and everyone has a specific place and a specific role to play. To put it simply, *He Knew He Was Right* was written at precisely the moment when questions of right and wrong were persistently haunting the Victorians; the novel both reflects and participates in this larger debate. Reading the novel in this light, makes this novel a much more important artifact of its time critics have previously allowed.
Chapter Three: (Un)Gentlemanly Capitalism and Foreign Speculation in *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*

Victorian finance and speculation has been a growing area of interest among scholars for the last decade, burgeoned no doubt by our contemporary anxieties about the stock market’s precarious, albeit omnipresent, impact on our daily lives. Like ourselves, the Victorians were increasingly inundated with news about the stock market, foreign speculation, the value of exotic products, and the frequent tales of those who had gained or lost large amounts of money. They watched as stocks increased in value, fueled by hopes that they would do so, and eventually saw some of them crash when the bubbles burst. Though they lacked the speed and resources of the internet to facilitate trading shares, they read newspapers, monitored transcripts of stockholder meetings, and conversed with friends about trends in the market as buying and selling shares became more accessible to some in the middle class. A recent special issue of *Victorian Studies* dedicated to “Victorian Investments” presented a series of articles exploring “the processes through which investing, particularly investing in the stock market, became a more pervasive part of Victorian financial life.”216 The journalism of Walter Baghot and the fiction of Anthony Trollope, the editors suggest, were sites where Victorians learned the basic workings of and attitudes about the stock market.217 In the 1870’s in particular, much of Trollope’s fiction aims to instruct readers about the “ungentlemanly” characteristics of those who seek to earn money through risk. How those

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“ungentlemanly” characteristics become connected to imperial expansion in Trollope is the focus of this chapter.

That a distinction between speculation and gambling might not exist can be seen in a famous quotation from Sir Earnest Cassel, a banker to Edward VI: “When I was young, people called me a gambler. As the scale of my operations increased I became known as a speculator. Now I am called a banker. But I have been doing the same thing all the time.” Such ambiguity of character distressed Trollope because the end result (making or losing money) was more important than the ethics of one’s actions. Victorians, like us, began to understand the complicated relationship between a stock’s value and public opinion about that stock, especially in times of market crisis. Today, gas prices rise and fall not so much because of supply and demand but because of feelings about supply and demand. And feelings, as we know, can often be inadequate indicators of value. In an article by Audrey Jaffe, she associates Alan Greenspan’s term “irrational exuberance” with Trollope’s market anxieties. Put simply, irrational exuberance occurs when “investors use[d] their positive feeling about the market as a basis for further investment, investing, in effect, in their own emotions.” This drives up prices, creating a situation where the bubble will finally burst. Jaffe sees a lineage from Trollope to Greenspan that begins with Trollope’s “uneasiness about the unpredictability of investing in shares and about the attenuated relationship between investors and the objects of their investment.” Too much excitement and emotional investment could be risky, and, for Trollope, success and failure were closely tied to character and moderation. Several

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220 Ibid.
recent articles have examined Trollope’s mostly negative portrayal of speculation focusing especially on the fine line between responsible investments and risky speculation. Trollope railed against speculation, most famously in *The Way We Live Now* (1875), but in other novels as well including *The Prime Minister* (1876) and *The Duke’s Children* (1880). Of special concern to Trollope were swindlers who invested in foreign products and projects, specifically corrupt stock jobbers who preyed on naive investors by selling them floating shares in questionable overseas ventures. Distance from London made such projects difficult to monitor from home; such shares were sold with promises of high yields, yet the products, if they existed at all, were seldom seen by investors.

The stock market was a new kind of globalizing force that connected individual investors with places around the globe, making English society “vulnerable to foreign charm.” Frequently in Trollope, those who promote the sale of shares dishonestly are rumored, sometimes strongly so, to be of Jewish origin. As Trollope’s readers were well aware, Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister during the serialization of *The Way We Live Now* and the writing of *The Prime Minister*, lost considerable amounts of money in the stock market in his youth after investing in a non-existent Mexican railway and encouraging others to do the same. Trollope’s hatred for Disraeli – in a letter written in 1876 he called him “the meanest cuss we have ever had in this country”— is especially

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222 Jaffe, 46.
apparent in those two novels. Critics attest that Trollope wrote a series of novels in the 1870’s “whose anti-Semitism is unparalleled in the nineteenth century,” but there is a decided lack of analysis on the implications of that anti-Semitism as it intersects with Disraeli’s imperial policies. This is not to say that Trollope’s anti-Semitism should be ignored, but rather that Trollope’s caricatured portrayal of Disraeli-inspired investor characters needs to be unpacked further and connected with Disraeli’s imperial policies – policies that Trollope would likely have opposed even if they had not been promoted by a Jew. Disraeli’s promotion of imperial expansion simply made Trollope’s opposition more pronounced.

In his 1872 Crystal Palace speech Disraeli asked his listeners to become emotionally connected with – to invest in – an expanding empire symbolizing Britain’s greatness. This chapter contextualizes *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister* as reactions to Benjamin Disraeli’s rise to political power, as numerous critics have previously suggested, but will push this argument further by reading these novels as critiques of Disraeli’s imperialist rhetoric, his empire of speculation. Specifically, I will demonstrate that Trollope was a critic of what Cain and Hopkin’s have called “gentlemanly capitalism” and that those looking for literary representations of their paradigm should look to Trollope’s fiction for its clearest illustration in the Victorian period. Disraeli could be called the father of the New Imperialism, a series of policies

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that promoted the maintenance and expansion of the Empire; this is an issue seldom brought to bear in analyses of Trollope’s portrayal of Disraeli-inspired characters.225

In 1872 just before Trollope began writing *The Way We Live Now*, Disraeli laid out the goals of his “New Imperialism” in his famous Crystal Palace speech where he promotes the idea that:

…the people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belonging to a great country, and wish to maintain its greatness – that they are proud of belonging to an Imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their empire – that they believe, on the whole, that the greatness of the empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land. 226

My reading of *The Way We Live Now* and of *The Prime Minister*, which shortly followed, considers both books to be critiques of Disraeli’s imperialism as it was expressed in that speech. Trollope’s anxiety about speculation demands further examination for it reveals more about his attitudes toward colonial ventures, his distaste for outsiders to English culture, and the moral instruction his novels were meant to provide for readers. Empire building like investing was a risky business. It was Trollope’s mission as a novelist to “teach ladies to be women and men to be gentlemen,” and there is unease in Trollope’s fiction regarding the gentlemanliness of foreign speculation and expansion.227

225 There is considerable debate surrounding the actual impact of Disraeli’s imperial rhetoric on what would later be called the “New Imperialism.” Whether, as some recent scholars claim, Disraeli began this New Imperialism with the Abyssinian expedition off 1867-8 or with his treatment of the Bulgarian atrocities or with a new policy during his second term characterized by “an unashamed militant and illiberal spirit that glorified the achievements of British rule overseas,” the association of Disraeli’s name with the New Imperialism is persistent. Quoted in C.C. Eldridge, *Disraeli and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1996), 2.


ungentlemanly speculation is often associated with Jews in Trollope, it is English gentlemen who are lured into these schemes, and English gentlemen more generally who were threatened, in Trollope, by globalization and risky overseas ventures.

This chapter probes Trollope presentation of speculators in an effort to illuminate why – despite my arguments in previous chapters about Trollope’s imperialist views – Trollope held anti-expansionist positions throughout most of his life. Because the time of Trollope’s writing coincides with the beginning of the height of British imperialism – he died as the scramble for Africa was getting underway and just after the death of Disraeli who supported the “New Imperialism” – Trollope’s writing provides a unique site for examining in fiction what the expanding empire looked like and how that empire was discursively portrayed by some writers as threatening to traditional English society. Some of Trollope’s anti-expansionist views are better understood as reactions to Disraeli’s Jewishness, his success in Parliament, and his rivalry as a fellow political novelist and colonial policy maker rather than as an outright rejection of the empire on Trollope’s part. Trollope and Disraeli were promoters of nearly opposite imperial visions. Leadership, whether in Parliament or in colonial endeavors, should have been the work of British “gentlemen” in Trollope’s estimation, a category which excluded men like Disraeli, but certainly included men like Anthony Trollope.

*Gentlemanly Capitalism and the Victorian Gentleman*

The editors of “Victorian Investments” suggest that much critical work in the field of Victorian finance has yet to done, specifically “scholarship on the constitutive
imbrication of British finance with the project of colonialism. “They suggest the Cain and Hopkins paradigm of “gentlemanly capitalism” as a likely starting place for such research – this paradigm should be of particular interest to Trollope scholars as it is frequently observed that “the identity, role, manners and duties of a gentleman provide some of the most persistent themes in Trollope’s writing.” This section provides background on the Cain/Hopkins paradigm and examines how Trollope’s emphasis on gentlemanliness is inseparable from his vision of the empire.

In *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914*, P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins provide an influential model for explaining the expansion of the British Empire, a model that depends not solely on economic, political or social factors, but instead emphasizes the rise and acceptance of a specific class of individuals who they call “gentlemanly capitalists.” Comprised of bankers, financiers, and Whitehall politicians, among others, these men dominated the expanding service sector centered in London and provided funds for numerous imperial endeavors both in the formal and informal areas of British influence. Unlike industrialists who were frowned upon as suitors for daughters of aristocratic parents, these men stood a greater chance of marrying into landed families because, unlike the industrialists, they possessed “gentlemanly” characteristics, as they emulated the values of the landed class. Likewise, as public schools taught gentlemanly ideals to the traditional landed class, preparing younger sons for positions in the civil service and the professions, the success of this new class of entrepreneurial

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228 Schmitt, 8.
229 Mullen, 191.
230 Although this paradigm has been critiqued from a variety of angles it still provides good material for reflection.
231 For a perspective that questions the sharp distinction between industrialists and gentlemanly capitalists see M.J. Daunton, “‘Gentlemanly’ Capitalism and British Industry 1820-1914,” *Past and Present* 122 (1989): 119-158.
individuals could be awe-inspiring to those in the landed class seeking new opportunities. The intermingling of the landed elite and gentlemanly capitalists, both in the public schools and in new family arrangements, was, according to the Cain/Hopkins paradigm a significant force behind the expansion of the British Empire. The merger between the two groups allowed the landed elite to maintain a semblance of power and provided capital, status, and occasional seats in Parliament for the gentlemanly capitalists who financed the expanding empire – an empire comprised not just of land, but areas of financial influence as well. More specifically, gentlemanly capitalism “helped to promote expansionist forces of investment, commerce and migration throughout the world” as its “main dynamic was the drive to create an international trading system centred on London and mediated by sterling.”

Cain and Hopkins suggest that such a vision “was not inevitably imperialistic” and that its imperialist forms were not “invariably militaristic,” yet they see in this vision “expansionist impulses to be imperialistic, especially where they came up against societies which needed reforming or restructuring before expansionist ambitions could be realized, and which also seemed to be either amenable to change or incapable of resisting it.” As such, this paradigm is useful for understanding how the British Empire expanded informally in areas like China, the Ottoman Empire, and South America, areas outside of the formal colonies yet under the umbrella of British influence. Seen through this lens, the British Empire becomes much larger than traditional maps of formal colonies would indicate, as capitalists continually sought new markets around the globe as they both demonstrated gentlemanly characteristics and expected them in return from

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233 44-45.
those with whom they did business. As a result, a network of British gentlemen spread out around the globe.

Gentlemanly capitalism was not simply something exported to the outside world, however; it was the force that allowed the English landed class to maintain their social position at home, even as other countries were having revolutions and experimenting with democracy. The gentlemanly ideal was maintained at home and exported internationally, and as Cain and Hopkins keenly remind us, “it is no coincidence that the most pervasive images of imperialism and empire were those which projected gentility rather than industry.” 234 By loosening the traditional ties that bound the landed elite together to allow those with other types of wealth, who were well behaved, to enter, the landed elite prolonged its political control, and in the process, helped to further imperial expansion and minimize radicalism at home. Gentlemanly (anti-revolutionary) ideals were fostered at home and around the globe by those representing British financial interests abroad. 235 As one scholar has observed, it is important to view gentlemanly capitalism as “a mélange of attitudes, class affiliations and agencies” that “exerted a powerful political influence in the carving out of new imperial domains.” 236 One of the key points Cain and Hopkins make is that there was a “definite link-up (brought about by common, class, cultural and institutional allegiances) between the financial and service sector elite of the City and their counterparts among politicians, Cabinet ministers and

234 45.
235 The paradigm of gentlemanly capitalism has certainly had its detractors, including many Marxist scholars and those who study post-colonial discourse; for an excellent introduction to the debate see Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire, ed. Raymond E. Dumett (New York: Longman, 1999).
higher civil service mandarins in Westminster and Whitehall."\(^{237}\) Both groups shared an interest in fiscal responsibility and the result was that the “British Empire was held together mainly by the widely held concern for sound public finance and balanced budgets in both the metropole and the colonies and dominions."\(^{238}\) It was their dual cumulative influence that drove imperial expansion.

Though the definition of a gentleman was constantly negotiated and evolving, Cain and Hopkins attest that “the perfect gentleman adhered to a code of honour which placed duty before self-advancement."\(^{239}\) A gentleman was a Christian, he learned values through schooling, he socialized in clubs, and he needed to have enough income for leisure activities. Despite the need for wealth, “he was not to be sullied by the acquisitive process any more than he was to be corrupted by the power which leadership entailed."\(^{240}\) Because he earned money from a distance and was not directly involved in the production process, he lacked the perceived cultural inferiority of those who worked with their hands. He was influenced heavily by the landed classes – indeed, he wanted to become one of their own by marrying into their ranks or buying land. Landowners worked to maintain and ideally to improve their properties for their heirs at home while investors in foreign projects financed railroads, agriculture, and trade abroad – improving underdeveloped land. The landed class gained much in the bargain: “in return for social recognition, the middle-class urban gentleman was co-opted into the struggle against

\(^{237}\) Dumett, 9.
\(^{238}\) Ibid.
\(^{239}\) 23.
\(^{240}\) Ibid.
radicalism and its looming consequence democracy, and assigned a leading role in introducing an alternative programme of improvement.”

P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins’ argument that a productive understanding of British imperialism must consider “the role of that elusive creature, the English gentleman” can find no stronger 19th century parallel than in the writings of Anthony Trollope whose fascination with the figure of the gentleman in his fiction, and his insistence on gentlemanly ideals in colonial management in his non-fiction, provide an abundance of material on which to examine their claims. Clearly, the gentlemanly ideal is central to Cain and Hopkins’ theory of imperial expansion, and such an ideal is equally central to understanding Trollope’s fiction, even as Trollope’s most gentlemanly characters frequently eschew imperial, expansionist endeavors and speculation more generally.

Concerning the makeup of a gentleman it has been said “no other writer in English, whether fiction or nonfiction, ever puzzled so much over the matter as Trollope.” This was due, no doubt, to Trollope’s own tenuous claim to being a gentleman and the significance he attached to being recognized as one. Though related to landed families, the Trollope’s were not direct heirs to any property, so Trollope had to rely on his schooling and his profession to stake his claim to gentlemanly status. In school he was ridiculed by more established gentlemen as a dirty outsider, but through hard work in the civil service in Ireland and by virtue of his struggle for recognition as a novelist, Trollope transformed himself from the poor social outcast he into an upstanding and respected English gentleman. He so assimilated himself into their ranks, in fact, that he became their chief portrait artist in his novels.

241 33.
Though hesitant to name the precise qualities of a gentleman, Trollope frequently makes such distinctions among characters in his fiction. In particular, his characters reflect on their own status within their communities and often gossip about the status of others as they negotiate the slippery definitions of gentlemanliness. Mary Thorne, a character in *Framley Parsonage* whose illegitimacy hinders her social position, contemplates:

If she were born a gentlewoman! And then came to her mind those curious questions; what makes a gentleman? what makes a gentlewoman? What is the inner reality, the spiritualised quintessence of that privilege in the world which men call rank, which forces the thousands and hundreds of thousands to bow down before the few elect? What gives, or can give it, or should give it?

Gentleman and women, it would seem, were born to rule and elected by God – a class deserving of deference. They were of a social rank to be envied and emulated, they were society’s born leaders and the best judges of future policy, and they needed to be financially secure enough to devote their energies to leadership and estate maintenance, not acquisition.

George Newlin has suggested six characteristics of the Trollopian gentleman: ancestry, appropriate occupations, merit, education, manners, and conduct. If called upon to define the word “gentleman,” Trollope suggests that a gentleman “would be defied to define the term,--and would fail should he attempt to do so. But he would know

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243 Audrey Jaffe suggests that the novel is “that vehicle par excellence both for teaching the nineteenth century how to look upon things and, in Trollope's case as in others, for securing the admission of middle-class authors into gentlemanly circles” (55).
245 Newlin, 49-52.
what he meant, and so very probably would they who defied him." It is the landed class, those who already claim gentlemanly status by virtue of birth, who have the power to admit or reject outsiders. In *The Last Chronicle of Barset* Johnny Eames and Conway Dalrymple converse about a speculator, Dobbs Broughton, who they both concede is not a gentleman, but is of a type that they see everyday. Such men spend extravagantly, entertain lavishly, and mingle with gentlemen – yet they are “downright Brummagem to the ear and to the touch and to the sight, and we recognize them as such from the first moment.” Johnny Eames admits “I can’t define a gentleman, even in my own mind; -- but I can define the sort of man with whom I think I can live pleasantly.”

Generally speaking, characters involved with trade, were not those with whom gentlemen could live pleasantly. This is where Trollope’s conception of a gentleman and that of Cain and Hopkins differ somewhat – for Trollope, “gentleman” is usually a noun (one is or is not one), for Cain and Hopkins “gentlemanly” is an adjective modifying “capitalists” who by definition seek capital through trade. They may or may not be gentlemen; they are judged on their performances and their reception by gentlemen. What makes such capitalists “gentlemanly” is that even as they actively invest, they ideally behave as if such ventures are less important than they are. As such, they present an interesting contradiction in Trollope’s fiction, and tellingly Trollope allows some investor-type characters to be real gentlemen, and he most often depicts those who are not gentlemen as foreigners. Out of the six characteristic of the gentlemen in, ancestry emerges as the most important trait. The easiest way to gain entry into the society of

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246 Trollope, 34. Shirley Robin Letwin observes that although “Trollope assures us repeatedly that we will know what he means when he says that someone is or is not a gentleman, he always excuses himself from explaining.” 22
248 Ibid.
gentlemen was choosing an appropriate profession, even as Trollope admits that those who were not gentlemen were gaining ground in some of them. In his autobiography, he writes:

There are places in life which can hardly be well filled except by "Gentlemen." The word is one the use of which almost subjects one to ignominy. If I say that a judge should be a gentleman, or a bishop, I am met with a scornful allusion to "Nature's Gentlemen."

Were I to make such an assertion with reference to the House of Commons, nothing that I ever said again would receive the slightest attention. (39)

Being a gentleman was no longer a prerequisite for a seat in Parliament, a jibe at Disraeli among others, or for Civil Service jobs.

Definitions of gentlemanliness were socially negotiated, and the new class of gentlemanly capitalists pushed those definitions. These questionable gentlemen, the genuine and the fake, constituted a new breed that traditional English landed society were unsure about. The landed class frequently had to decide which of these men to invest in (socially and financially). Jaffe directly compares these new investors to “stocks”:

“However, the allowance of exceptions to the rule means that gentlemanliness must be determined in each individual case; once exceptions are admitted, each candidate becomes, in effect, a stock, his value a function of the assessment of the group.”

Those who invested in foreign markets, sought fortunes in the colonies, or promoted shares in foreign projects could sometimes earn enough money to behave like gentlemen and sometimes they were accepted into the ranks of gentlemen even if by birth they might not

249 Jaffe, 48.
consensus among Trollope’s characters is often difficult as characters are said to “seem” like gentlemen or “behave” like gentlemen. Trollope’s novels reflect the evolving meaning of a term that was less ambiguous in the past, lending some support to Cain and Hopkins suggestion that this was a new breed whose gradual acceptance is connected to globalization in the 19th century. Trollope opposed this new class and imperial expansion. According to Cain and Hopkins’ theory many of these new gentlemen went to work in the empire or worked in London’s service sector in support of the expanding empire while maintaining familial and social connections to landed interests at home. In Trollope, we see little of this – at least little that is successful. The litmus test for Trollope in determining one’s status as a gentleman is ancestry, which in England is difficult to separate from race.

Cain and Hopkins are historians with specialist knowledge of British financial history who seek to discover truths about the past while Trollope was a creator of fictions about his present. But while Trollope’s fiction is certainly not a suitable place to go searching for facts, or impartial truths, it is an ideal place for locating attitudes, prejudices, and fears about the diminishing numbers of the truly secure landed families at home and increasing imperial responsibilities and liabilities abroad. Trollope’s fictions about British financial endeavors abroad reflect his discomfort with an empire based on speculation as many of these speculators were in his estimation not gentlemen and, therefore, bad for the mother country. While explorers and adventurers were Homeric ideals, “the Victorian ideal” as promoted in Trollope “was the decent, unobtrusive English gentleman, who sustained the nation morally and economically.” As Trollope once claimed, “Dullness is our line as cleverness is that of the French. Woe to the

English people if they ever forget that.”²⁵¹ Risky behavior whether at home or abroad would not be ideal work for a gentleman.

Disraeli’s New Imperialism and Trollope’s Attitudes about Colonial Expansion

Trollope fundamentally disagreed with Disraeli’s zeal for expansion. As J.H. Davidson astutely observes, “Trollope’s view of the colonies was conditioned by his belief that for a gentleman, the best place in all the world was England.”²⁵² Perhaps this is why Trollope is often overlooked as an imperial thinker – although he worked in and wrote about the colonies, his attitude was often that he could not get home soon enough, usually with completed novels (about England) and travel writing in his suitcase. His attitudes about foreign locations were unromantic – when offered a paid tour of India in return for a travel book about it, Trollope turned down the offer saying the trip would be “a bore.”²⁵³ He was more comfortable visiting colonies of white settlement where shared language and culture were reminders of home. He lacked an overarching imperial vision of land controlled by the crown and found the ruling of people he viewed as cultural inferiors as distasteful. His was more of a cultural imperialism that promoted language, customs, and values. As Trollope grew older, he slowly began to favor longer periods of imperial oversight, yet he never completely renounced the goal of eventual separation. As long as colonial offshoots began to produce gentlemen and were not too radically different from Britain their separation would be mutually beneficial. What Trollope believed young colonies lacked was “that great English asset, a gentry caste of hereditary

²⁵¹ Quoted in Tracy 94.
²⁵² Davidson, 308.
²⁵³ Recall Trollope’s anticlimactic attitude during his trip to the Holy Land discussed in chapter one.
wealth capable of devoting its energies to the public weal and to that alone.” Most people emigrated because of motives of self-interest, and too much self-interest was not a mark of a gentleman. A gentlemanly class would not arise overnight, as most English gentlemen would choose to stay in England if they could. Trollope’s initial unhappiness with his son Fred’s decision to emigrate to Australia, doubtlessly stemmed from such attitudes as Trollope had hoped that his hard work might have made a gentlemanly living more attainable for his son. Leaving home to earn money could be viewed as a forfeiture of gentility; some believed that “gentlemen could be neither imported nor exported.”

Trollope’s views about separation were the generally accepted views of Gladstonian liberals through the 1860’s, but with Disraeli’s second term as Prime Minister (1874-1880) and his platform for Victorian conservatism, with its strong emphasis on the Empire, a new trend toward imperial expansion began. The New Imperialism brought new areas under the control of various European countries as they struggled to secure future markets and jockeyed for position as global powers. Disraeli’s speech at the Crystal Palace promoted two goals: to maintain the institutions of the country,” and to “uphold the Empire of England.” The emphasis of the speech is on the latter. Disraeli accused liberals of trying to bring about the disintegration of the empire and claimed that their emphasis on financial matters (the fact that colonies were costly to England) was at the expense of moral and political reasons for maintaining the empire. As the end of the speech, he encourages his listeners to promote the imperial cause in

254 Davidson, 314.
255 Davidson, 309. Davison quotes Ruskin “You can’t have colonies of Englishmen … It is not merely logically impossible: it is vegetable, mineraly, and animally impossible. You must turn out those blackguard Goths. You must grow Englishmen in England” (309).
their communities; he encourages his listeners to shun mediocrity and become “a great country, -- an Imperial country, -- a country where your sons, when they rise, rise to paramount positions, and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world.” Such was the mission that Disraeli claimed for conservatives, and when he became Prime Minister for the second time, he promoted that agenda. Disraeli would bring the Suez Canal under British rule in 1875, formally declare India as a crown colony, naming Queen Victorian Empress of India in 1876, acquire Cyprus in 1878, and pave the way for the Scramble for Africa in the 1880’s.

Disraeli remains a fascinating figure in the history of British imperialism because his imperialism was based not on a notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority, but on a complicated notion of joint Semitic and English superiority. Pronouncing that God only spoke to the Jews, and clinging to his Semitic heritage (with a close association with Arabs as well), Disraeli’s vision of imperialism was a merger of East and West where both would benefit. Unlike Trollope, who always tried to keep a clear distance between himself and those in foreign locations, Disraeli enjoyed dressing up as a native and trying to experience foreign cultures. He is paradoxical because “he was not just an orientalist; he was also a self-made oriental.” He was an “imperialist who felt a romantic kinship for Empire’s distant subjects.” Such an agenda of romantic expansion was anathema to Trollope who clearly felt that his first-hand knowledge and reports about colonial matters made him a more trustworthy and impartial source for colonial

257 Ibid, 89.
258 According to one story, Disraeli pretended to be a Muslim to gain access to a holy site he was curious about, feeling a certain kinship with Muslim Arabs based on shared heritage. If his duplicity were discovered he would likely have been killed.
policy. Trollope’s unemotional, detailed analyses of foreign locations were in his estimation more reliable than Disraeli’s “irrational exuberance” for a larger empire. Disraeli’s basis for his imperialist agenda, was too romantic for Trollope and it clashed with his own presentation of racial others as unfit for leadership.

Disraeli was Trollope’s bete noire for personal and political reasons. Robert Tracy suggests that for Trollope “the acceptance of Disraeli was a sign of the degeneracy of the age” as it went against the standard practice of the English to distance themselves from outsiders.”

262 Trollope’s dislike of Disraeli went deeper, however, as their careers were connected in revealing ways. Like Trollope, Disraeli became successful despite an unpromising upbringing, but the two employed nearly opposite strategies. Trollope worked his way up through the civil service while Disraeli took risks, losing money in the stock market. As a young man, Disraeli wrote pamphlets for the financier J.D. Powles and later worked with the publisher John Murray to create a newspaper promoting questionable mining companies in which he had heavily invested. Trollope began a second career as a novel writer, as did Disraeli: Trollope claimed moral instruction as his aim as a writer while Disraeli made no secret that he wrote to make up for his losses in the stock market. Though they both were successful novelists, to Trollope’s distain, Disraeli was a more marketable novelist than Trollope late in his career (likely because the market was flooded with Trollope novels making Disraeli’s more of a novelty). While Disraeli’s novels were full of individualistic power-seeking heroes, Trollope’s used such characters as villains as his novels favored characters who respected customs and were not radical.

262 Tracy, 48.
Disraeli sat in Parliament and became Prime Minister twice, while Trollope was unable to win a seat despite his best efforts. After resigning from the Post Office in 1867, Trollope almost immediately began a quest for a seat in Parliament. In the first of his political series of novels Can You Forgive Her (1864), Trollope’s narrator voices what surely must have been Trollope’s own feelings about retaining a seat. Speaking of the gilded lamps that light the entranceway to the national hall, where only MP’s could enter, Trollope writes:

It is the only gate before which I have ever stood filled with envy,—sorrowing to think that my steps might never pass under it … I have told myself, in anger and in grief, that to die and not to have won that right of way, though but for a session … is to die and not to have done that which it most becomes an Englishman to have achieved.263

Such an honor, however, was never to be Trollope’s. He stood unsuccessfully for the borough of Beverley 1868 as a Liberal. Though some of Trollope’s political positions might have aligned him with the Conservatives, Victorian Glendinning suggests that Trollope’s disapproval of imperialism and his dislike of Disraeli explain why “he could not be a Conservative.”264 Trollope campaigned aggressively, and one of the targets of Trollope’s speeches during the election was Disraeli who Trollope called “a maid of all work.”265 Trollope was especially angry that Disraeli had argued against the proposed Liberal reform bill in 1866 only to introduce his own measure with Derby in 1867, culminating in the Tories taking credit for the Second Reform Bill. Trollope always viewed Disraeli as an opportunist and, perhaps wishfully thinking, referred to him as one

264 Glendinning, 382.
265 Quoted in N. John Hall, 326.
“in whom, certainly, the nation has no confidence.” However, some did have confidence in Disraeli as he was able to promote an imperial agenda, while Trollope’s volumes on colonial matters were largely neglected as sources for policy. In 1876 a young Thomas Hardy was in the audience when Trollope spoke at a gathering on the Eastern Question opposing Disraeli’s polices. Hardy watched as Trollope refused to quit speaking even after the Duke of Westminster began tugging on his coat. Despite a strong desire to be heard, as Trollope grew older he became increasingly frustrated with those who were not persuaded by his arguments and especially outspoken about Disraeli.

Concerning what seem to be contradictory impulses and opinions about the empire on Trollope’s part, Robert Tracy has observed that “Trollope was caught between his personal dislike of Disraeli’s expansionism, and his belief in the future of the colonies as places where England’s race, language, and customs would increase in power and importance.” Trollope felt that his vision of an English-speaking, white-settler Empire was being high-jacked by a romantic charlatan. Note the probable sarcasm in the following statement Trollope made about eventual black leadership in South Africa: “In coming ages a Kafir may make as good a Prime Minister as Lord Beaconsfield but he cannot do so now, -- nor in this age, -- nor for many ages to come. It will be sufficient for us if we make up our minds that at least for the next hundred years we shall not choose to be ruled by him.” Just who should not be a ruler … a Kafir or Disraeli? R.H. Super finds such statement ambiguous at best “in view of Trollope’s opinion of Disraeli”

266 Ibid., 324.
267 238.
268 Super, 371
who at that point was Lord Beaconsfield.\textsuperscript{269} For Trollope true progress was only possible at a slow pace, and Disraeli represented the threat of a rapidly changing world.

Because of the threat he presented, no other living figure is more derided in Trollope’s writing than Disraeli.\textsuperscript{270} While editor of \textit{Saint Paul’s} (1867 – 1870) Trollope wrote two articles critical of Disraeli, one which has been called “the harshest thing he ever published.”\textsuperscript{271} That was his review of Disraeli’s novel \textit{Lothair} (1870) in which he claimed the “quack” and “conjurer” had produced a story which was “vulgar, ill-written, passing all previous measures of absurdity in its adulation of rank, false as it can be made in its descriptions of rank, stuffed with folly.”\textsuperscript{272} Trollope went on to warn aristocrats who had coddled Disraeli not to reelect him as Prime Minister as \textit{Lothair} had “rubbed their noses in the dust, covering them with grotesque ridicule.”\textsuperscript{273} In an earlier article for \textit{Saint Paul’s} Trollope had chastised Disraeli for giving an important position to a close friend instead of honoring the system of seniority, a touchy issue for Trollope who had resigned from the Post Office after being similarly passed over. Trollope dedicates two paragraphs to Disraeli in his autobiography in his chapter “On English Novelists” and is unable to muster a single kind word regarding his novels as the following excerpt demonstrates:

\begin{quote}
To me they have all the same flavour of paint and unreality. In whatever he has written he as affected something which has been intended to strike his readers as uncommon and therefore grand … But the glory has been
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{270} Interestingly, Trollope and Disraeli met at a social gathering following the publication of Trollope’s \textit{The Eustace Diamonds} (1872) and Disraeli spoke of how much he enjoyed reading about the dishonest character Lizzie Eustace – there is no indication that Trollope returned the compliment.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{273} Quoted in Hall, 354.
\end{flushright}
the glory of pasteboard, and the wealth has been a wealth of tinsel. The wit has been the wit of hairdressers, and the enterprise the enterprise of mountebanks. An audacious conjurer has generally been his hero,—some youth who, by wonderful cleverness, can obtain success by every intrigue that comes in his hand. Through it all there is a feeling of stage properties, a smell of hair-oil, an aspect of buhl, a remembrance of tailors, and that pricking of the conscience which must be the general accompaniment of paste diamonds. I can understand that Mr. Disraeli should by his novels have instigated man a young man and a young woman on their way of life, but I cannot understand that he should have instigated any one to good.274

Trollope and Disraeli were later linked for their unique contributions to a relatively small sub-genre of novels, the political novel, of which they were the two primary English contributors. In Morris Edmund Speare’s 1924 study The Political Novel: It’s Development in England and America he suggests that political novels deal “with characters directly engaged in the operations of state apparatuses.”275 Trollope’s Palliser series and Disraeli’s Young England trilogy certainly fit that definition and both authors, unlike other contributors to the genre like George Eliot and George Meredith, traced political themes through multiple novels. Trollope is unique, however, in that he included his rival novelist as a recurring character and a series of caricatures in his ongoing political series’ – novels that were being written, published and read while Disraeli was Prime Minister. Trollope sketched a rough version of Disraeli in the Palliser

series in his character “Daubeny” (sometimes calling him by the nickname “Dubby” close to “Dizzy”, Disraeli’s real life nickname) and other sporadic allusions to him show up in Trollope’s fiction. Despite Trollope’s frequent denial that his political characters (Daubeny and Gresham as stand-ins for Disraeli and Gladstone, in particular) were based on real people, N. John Hall admits that of all of Trollope’s political characters, “Daubeny has all the daring and what Trollope considered the unscrupulousness of the hated ‘conjurer’ and ‘Cagiostro’ Disraeli.”

Before closing this section and moving on to a discussion of The Way We Live Now and The Prime Minister, a word must be said about Trollope and anti-Semitism because those novels often face that accusation. It would be hard to deny that racism was a part of Trollope’s personal dislike of Disraeli. In Trollope’s early novels, Jews show the capacity to be assimilated if their intentions are good, if they are willing to “regulate their own racialized behavior”; however, in the 1870’s, one critic has argued, “an increasingly pessimistic Trollope began to lose faith in the capacity of ‘the Jews’ to regulate their own worst excesses and in his mode of realism to adequately ‘know’ the dark intentions of the semitic ‘other’.” In her analysis of the figure of the Jew in Victorian novels, Anne Aresty Naman observes that Trollope typically does not malign characters who practice the Jewish religion choosing instead to demonize those who are trying to pass themselves off as English and Christian. Only when these characters become aggressive in their attempts at assimilation does Trollope resort to Jewish stereotypes and anti-Semitic

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276 N. John Hall, 337.
rhetoric to deride them.\textsuperscript{278} The use of such stereotypes belies Trollope’s belief that English gentlemen should guard their ranks against new members, using race as a marker of ungentlemanly self-interest.

The figure of the speculating Jew comes to symbolize the opposite of the English gentlemen in Trollope because the speculator is one who is ever increasing his sphere of influence while the gentlemen’s chief duty is to preserve his property fully intact for the next generation. Paul Delany has stressed the importance for Trollope of what he calls “the myth of the land.” This myth promotes the idea of the “continuity of landed property” as the foundation for the “social myth of England, and of the good life” and is based on three elements: identity, trusteeship, and duty.\textsuperscript{279} Put simply, one’s identity is based on one’s ancestral linkage to a tract of land, one works and maintains that land in trust to the community (an erasure of one’s unique identity), and one dutifully preserves that land or estate based on the values of the community. As Delany explains, Disraeli would find no place in such a myth as he lacked a genuine connection to land. He was also flamboyant – not the type to submit his will to a community. The Jews in particular, having no land or nation, were outsiders to the “myth of the land.”\textsuperscript{280} “Yet the Jews also epitomize, for Trollope, a different and specially modern kind of identity, one that springs full-blown from assertive individualism.”\textsuperscript{281} If according to Kendrick’s theory of Trollope as a novel machine, Trollope’s fiction reproduces again and again the death of

\textsuperscript{280} Delany, 766.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
Anthony Trollope; the very concept of a Disraeli figure – one who celebrates his identity as an outsider – has no place in that world, except as a figure of ridicule.

Defenders of Trollope are quick to point out that he sometimes uses the anti-Semitism of his characters to show their prejudiced attitudes in a critical light and that there are examples of unquestionably moral Jewish characters in his work: Mr. Breghert in *The Way We Live Now* is an oft-cited example. Nevertheless, Trollope most frequently presents Jews as a threat to English culture. As Edward Rothstein observed in his recent review of the BBC movie adaptation of *The Way We Live Now*, an adaptation that acknowledges the novel’s anti-Semitism, a fear of too rapid change is what fuels much of the novel’s anti-Semitism. Rothstein reminds readers that “Modern anti-Semitism, after all, is less a matter of physical disgust than a view of the rootless, cosmopolitan Jew who was seen as a political and cultural threat to a traditional society.”

The perceived ease with which Disraeli and the two characters to be discussed in the next sections, Augustus Melmotte and Ferdinand Lopez, are able to infiltrate the upper echelons of British society confounded Trollope. The next section examines two of Trollope’s novels that could best be classified as meditations on the changing nature of Victorian gentlemen both of which connect such changes with imperial endeavors. Their speculations are of an imperial nature and the work they do internationally has dire ramifications for families in the metropole. As such, both novels serve as cautionary tales about foreign speculation and by extension discourage expansionist policies through their caricature of Disraeli.

*The Way We Live Now and Melmotte’s Paper Empire*

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Critics of Trollope’s work are often quick to decry his arguable emphasis on quantity over quality, and it is no accident that Trollope’s two longest novels, the two which used the most paper, are the focus of this chapter. Their similarity, their length, and their strong sense of morality make them showpieces for the Trollopian project. Now considered by most to be one of Trollope’s greatest achievements, *The Way We Live Now* was poorly received and was surprisingly “out of print from 1879 – 1941.” Written in succession following an eighteen month absence from England, *The Way We Live Now* (written in 1873) and *The Prime Minister* (written in 1874) both bemoan what Trollope called “the commercial prolificacy of the age” and they do so at length. The target of these two novels is London and both are far removed from the country atmosphere of the Barsetshire novels. They are city novels and they include characters eager to invest in imperial goods and projects, who by doing so, risk money and land for the promise of questionable returns, risking their status as gentlemen in the process. As Davidson suggests, it makes sense that Trollope’s attitude toward the London he returned to was in many ways conditioned by the time he had just spent in Australia: “the savage attack mounted on English society should, therefore, be seen not isolation but as a sequel to the glowing one given of the new settler society arising in the Antipodes.” When he returned, he discovered a different England than the one he reminisced and wrote about during his absence: a more modern, more globalized London full of people willing to go to great lengths to get ahead – willing to invest in foreign projects and easy prey for speculators.

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Such a problem was not entirely new in Trollope’s estimation, it was a problem he also saw in ancient Rome and discussed in his Life of Cicero (1880). Trollope characterized Cicero as one who knew the importance of keeping his hands clean, yet he writes “The practice then was much as it is now. A gentleman in our days is supposed to have his hands clean; but there has got abroad among us a feeling that, only let a man rise high enough, soil will not stick to him.” Gentlemen were becoming comfortable with getting their hands dirty, welcoming Caesar’s into their homes. According to Sadlier, “England was in the grip of evil and transforming powers,” and what angered Trollope was that these evil powers were welcomed and sought out by Londoners. Arguably, Augustus Melmotte, the “great financier” is less at fault for his schemes than those who welcomed him into their homes as they would a gentleman. Though not a gentleman by birth, one character admits, “he is one whom we would not admit into our kitchens, much less to our tables, on the score of his own merits.” Nevertheless, Melmotte becomes so sought after that gentlemen fight for tickets to Melmotte’s dinner table when he hosts the Emperor of China. The only attractiveness that Melmotte has in the eyes of the public is his bankroll; even his most ardent followers give him no more credit than that.

287 Sadleir, 356.
288 Trollope’s initial plans and notes for The Way We Live Now suggest that Melmotte was intended to be a relatively minor character – his influence would come to take over Trollope’s novel, much as Melmotte temporarily came to control the lives of the other characters.
Tellingly however, *The Way We Live Now* does not begin with the villainous
Augustus Melmotte – not mentioned until the third chapter – but with Lady Carbury, an
aspiring novelist, who sought monetary gain “to be obtained not by producing good
books, but by inducing certain people to say that her books were good” (17). She, like the
rest of her social circle, attributes value to various kinds of paper (books, paper notes of
debt, records of shares) and actively tries to inflate the value of that paper. Like Trollope
(and Disraeli), Lady Carbury uses novel-writing as a source of income, but she has no
desire to work painstakingly, like Trollope did, to create crafted works of fiction: she
wants the most money for the least work, and she is willing to write anything audiences
wish to read, regardless of moral content. *The Way We Live Now* opens with three letters
– we are told that there were many more – written to men in the publishing world from
whom Lady Carbury solicits favorable reviews for her new book *Criminal Queens*, a
sensational history of immoral women. Innuendos of possible romantic attachments in
return for positive press suggest that Lady Carbury is prostituting herself to promote her
hastily written novels. She seeks to inflate the worth of her paper in the public mind by
soliciting others to falsely promote it as having literary value. Though “false from head to
foot”, she is nevertheless portrayed as somewhat sympathetic: “there was much of good
in her, false though she was” (17). She is a widow who desperately needs to earn money
because of her irresponsible son Sir Felix Carbury, who is a gambler, a drunkard, and a
liar – he conveniently forgets when his mother loans him money and circulates paper
notes of questionable value at his club. Refusing to enter a gentlemanly profession, he
hopes to marry an heiress (any would do), and continue his irresponsible lifestyle. He is
certainly not a gentleman, though his uncle Roger Carbury is an exemplary one, but Felix
feels no duty to his family or to his community. He creates his mother’s pecuniary dilemma by living beyond his family’s means and enjoys games of risk with no qualms about burdening his family.

Others in the Carbury circle are equally desirous of social advancement without substantial effort. Through Felix’s social club, the Beargarden, readers are introduced to Dolly Longestaffe, a young man who is only slightly more responsible than Felix. Adolphus Longestaffe, Dolly’s father, has trouble maintaining his properties and is willing to sell one of his properties, Pickering, to Melmotte even though he finds Melmotte to be personally distasteful. Miles Grendall is another young man in Felix’s circle, one who cheats at cards and seeks work with Melmotte, as does his father, Lord Alfred Grendall, who becomes Melmotte’s personal secretary. The senior Grendall hates his servitude to Melmotte, who insists on calling Alfred by his first name. Trollope explains, “in spite of his habitual idleness and vapid uselessness” he “had still left about him a dish of vigour, and sometimes thought that he would kick Melmotte and have done with it” (36). Yet he does not kick Melmotte. Lord Alfred knows that he is compromising his aristocratic claims to gentlemanly deference, yet his desire for money prevents him from abandoning Melmotte. What attracts people to Melmotte is that so many people believe in his greatness that others are eager to join the crowd. Melmotte represents a non-traditional, non-English, risky means of building wealth, but in return he expects to be treated as if he were a gentleman – he never claims to be one, yet he insists on living like a gentleman and being treated as a peer.

290 Robert Tracy suggests that the “Bear” in the “Beargarden” echoes popular slang about stocks in which a bear “means stock that exists purely for speculation” (165).
One of the few characters who is not enamored of Melmotte, even temporarily, is Felix’s cousin Sir Roger Carbury. He rails against Melmotte to anyone who will listen to him. From Carbury’s point of view society was settling upon Melmotte’s “carcase as so many birds of prey” (138). “The old-fashioned idea that the touching of pitch will defile still prevailed with him. He was a gentleman;-- and would have felt himself disgraced to enter the house of such a one as Augustus Melmotte” (69). According to Roger Carbury, it was the duty of gentlemen to set examples for the nation as a whole. He argues:

What are we coming to when such as Melmotte is an honoured guest at our tables? You can keep your house from him and so can I mine. But we set no example to the nation at large. They who do set the example go to his feasts, and of course he is seen at theirs in return. And yet these leaders of fashion know – or at any rate they believe – that he is what he is because he has been a swindler greater than other swindlers. Though they themselves mean to be honest, dishonesty of itself is no longer odious to them. … Of course he’s a failure – a miserable imposition, a hollow vulgar fraud from beginning to end. But his position is a sign of the degeneracy of the age. (vol. 2, 44)

Concerning his cousin Felix, Roger feels that he “has so groveled in the gutters to be dirt all over” and worries that “nothing short of the prolonged sufferings of half a life could cleanse him” (vol. 2, 69). Roger’s inclination of Felix’s inability to cleanse himself is perhaps substantiated at the end of the novel when Felix is bribed to leave England permanently; however, it is worth noting that Roger felt he had already touched pitch
before becoming directly involved with Melmotte’s railway because of his refusal to act like and accept the responsibilities of a gentleman.

Melmotte’s power over all but the more “old-fashioned” gentlemen, like Roger Carbury, stems from a variety of factors, but his mysterious origins certainly enhance his appeal. Augustus Melmotte has numerous potential literary and historical antecedents: Maturin’s Melmoth the Wanderer and Dickens’ Mr. Merdle are oft-named possibilities as are John Sadlier and George Hudson. Sadlier was an infamous MP who speculated in railways and committed suicide when his forgeries were discovered; Hudson, an MP and friend of Disraeli, followed a similar path, speculating and entertaining foreign royalty, eventually committing suicide as well. Though Melmotte is certainly not a direct stand-in for Disraeli, certain aspects of his character reverberate. Though never explicitly said to be Jewish himself, Melmotte’s wife is a Bohemian Jewess of unknown origins, and gossip concerning the paternity and maternity of their daughter Marie abounds. It is said that Melmotte made his money in France, but he is essentially rootless, and decidedly unwelcome in places he formerly lived and worked. His lack of community ties creates a sense of mystery around him.

One of the first things readers are told about Melmotte is that he had “enormous dealings in other countries”: “It was said that he had made a railway across Russia, that he provisioned the Southern army in the American civil war, that he had supplied Austria with arms, and had at one time bought up all the iron in England. He could make or mar any company by buying or selling stock, and could make money dear or cheap as he pleased” (30). His whims affected the value of money, and as a result he made enemies around the world and was known as “a gigantic swindler.” No longer welcome in France

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or Austria, he discovered that “British freedom alone would allow him to enjoy, without persecution, the fruits of his industry” (31). Not only was he welcome in English society, but that society was also in a perfect position financially and geographically speaking, with ties throughout the empire, to fund his projects on a larger scale. Much of Melmotte’s business was not illegal – in fact, he is only pursued criminally when for dealings with English property – and the promise of high returns made him a magnet that attracted overreaching landed families not satisfied with simply preserving their property.

To many, “it seemed that there was but one virtue in the world, commercial enterprise,--and that Melmotte was its prophet” (411). What Melmotte prophesied in London was a railway. The proposed South Pacific and Mexican railway, 2000 miles of track connecting Salt Lake City and Vera Cruz, was not originally Melmotte’s idea; instead, it was the scheme of one Hamilton K. Fisker, an American, who had “sprung out of some California gully” (324). Unlike Melmotte, Fisker survives the novel, continuing his schemes in the United States with Melmotte’s daughter, who becomes his wife, complicating any sense of closure brought about by Melmotte’s suicide. Ultimately, the Melmotte’s of the world are interchangeable, with others being eager to fill their places.

The power of such swindlers was their ability to evoke confidence from those around them. Knowing Melmotte’s reputation as one who could make it seem “as if San Francisco and Salt Lake City had been suburbs of London” (81), Fisker chose Melmotte as the chairmen of the project, knowing that his name would make people believe in it. The newspapers, especially the ‘Evening Pulpit’, praised the project of “civilizing Mexico by joining it to California” – gentlemanly capitalism at work – and readers could
not tell whether the paper endorsed or criticized the railway. Seeing the project in print made it seem real.

Augustus Melmotte—with his Roman Emperor’s name—launches more imperial schemes and endeavors than any other Trollope character, exhibiting imperial zeal that was unmatched even by the most ardent real Victorian gentlemanly capitalists. Like Disraeli, his plans for the future involve increasing expansion. As Melmotte’s power and influence as the “head and front of the railway which was to regenerate Mexico” (411) reaches its apex, readers are given a list of Melmotte’s future projects: a railway line running from ocean to ocean across British North America, negotiations for farming tea-fields in China, a railway from Moscow to Khiva, ownership of a fleet of ships that would aid discontented Irishmen to emigrate to the Empire, a submarine wire running around the Cape of Good Hope to maintain contact between Britain and India during times of war, and a “philanthropic scheme for buying the liberty of the Arabian fellahs from the Khedive of Egypt for thirty millions sterling,—the compensation to consist of the concession of a territory about four times as big as Great Britain in the lately annexed country on the great African lakes” (412). That Melmotte’s ambition knew no bounds is evident in the diversity of his schemes, but more important than this variety is the fact that each of his endeavors is in service to the maintenance and expansion of the British Empire, formal and informal. These schemes however are not simply plans for the future; during the novel, he meets with a delegate from Canada, pressures workers in the India Office, dines with the Emperor of China, and discusses the interior of Africa with speculators. Melmotte embodies a kind of imperial gluttony, running a one man Empire, not sanctioned by, but ultimately in service to the British crown. These endeavors and the
paper notes that circulate in support of them allow Melmotte to invest at home as well. In one of many examples, Melmotte “induced a foolish old gentleman to consent to accept railway shares in lieu of money” for the sale of his home (250). Melmotte’s insatiable hunger for continual expansion at home and abroad seemingly knew no bounds.

Four specific instances in the novel make Trollope’s critique of “gentlemanly” capitalist ventures clear: Melmotte’s rude behavior and demands at the India Office, his embarrassing dinner for the Emperor of China, his conduct as a member of parliament, and the manner of his suicide. Melmotte felt that he should be formally introduced to the Emperor of China at the India Office two days before he would entertain the emperor in his home. He demanded equality with those who worked at the office and wanted to be with “the Secretary of State for the second great Asiatic Empire” when he entertained “the ruler of the first” (vol. 2, 37). Seeing himself as an exception to the rules of hierarchy within the office, he drinks heavily and threatens to cancel his dinner if he isn’t presented to the Emperor. He puts those in the India Office in compromised positions as they struggle to find the right words for such an introduction, despite Melmotte’s lack of connections with India or China (a possible telegraph line is suggested). Essentially, those at the India Office face an embarrassing situation; Melmotte does have a certain degree of power over them as he can afford the elaborate dinner, yet those in the Office find his presence distasteful and are ashamed to honor him with an official introduction to the Emperor. Melmotte’s presence destabilizes the traditional hierarchy of gentlemanly foreign relations and encourages deviations from protocol; metaphorically, he stands in for (in exaggerated form) gentlemanly capitalists and Disraeli-like imperialists who encourage changes to traditional imperial policy, yet do not look like Englishmen.
The dinner with the Emperor of China is largely a disaster as rumors that Melmotte may have committed fraud, and could be arrested, cause some of the more upstanding citizens to forfeit their tickets to the event at the last minute—making the sold-out event suspiciously under-attended. The Prime Minister, royalty, an ex-Governor of India and other dignitaries attend Melmotte’s dinner in deference to the Emperor, but gossip about the host persists. In addition to that embarrassment, communication with the distinguished guest is nearly impossible. The Emperor of China is paraded around, but there is a decided lack of conversation between the Emperor and the other guests. One interpreter translates Manchoo into Chinese and another translates the Chinese into English and vice versa. The narrator suggests that “if the spirit of an Eastern Emperor be at all like that of a Western man” he must have “had a weary time of it” (vol 2, 83). Trollope writes: ‘And this,’ he must have said to himself, ‘is what they call royalty in the West!’” (84) Despite cultural and language differences, the Emperor of China sees through Melmotte immediately, knowing that Melmotte deserves no deference. Those of actual rank find him embarrassing. One critic, however, points to the Emperor of China as an analogue for Melmotte: Trollope “reminds us of the Emperor’s isolation and unreal qualities to reinforce our sense of Melmotte’s isolation and unreality, and places both men at the center of meaningless movement and excitement.” Considering that China was an area of informal influence in the British Empire, such blunders in real life or signs of weakness could be costly. The kind of empire that Melmotte lorded over was extremely unstable; it is suggested that his entire “life must have been a life of terrors!”

292 Tracy, 177-178. I agree with him here, but believe that the Emperor functions more than only as an analogue for Melmotte.
(vol. 2, 79), as he could never be sure when he might be arrested for his actions. He resembles the “Criminal Queens” that Lady Carbury wrote about.

Despite the rumors of fraud, Melmotte still manages to win a seat in Parliament representing Westminster: “Brought into the world in a gutter, without father and mother, with no good thing ever done for him, he was now a member of the British Parliament, and member for one of the first cities in the empire” (vol. 2, 134). Returned as a Conservative, many in the party hearing of his fraud accusations withheld any praise for him, and contemplated who should introduce him the first time he went to the House. Ultimately, the conservative leader (unnamed, but clearly Disraeli) would introduce him. His ability to charm the populace would serve the party:

But with this feeling of shame on one side, there was already springing up an idea among another class that Melmotte might become as it were a Conservative tribune of the people,-- that he might be the realization of that hitherto hazy mixture of Radicalism and old-fogeyism, of which we have lately heard from a political master, whose eloquence has been employed in teaching us that progress can only be expected from those whose declared purpose is to stand still (vol. 2, 171).

The narrator makes a revealing claim about Melmotte’s, and by extension Disraeli’s, international vision: the newspapers herald Melmotte as “a political hero, preaching with reference to his commercial transactions, the grand doctrine that magnitude in affairs is a valid defense for certain irregularities” (171).

The narrator critiques men like Melmotte through the following comparison that speaks to imperial expansion and the danger or grand schemes: “A Napoleon, though he
may exterminate tribes in carrying out his project, cannot be judged by the same law as a young lieutenant who may be punished for cruelty to a few negroes” (171). Certainly, such a statement makes light of “cruelty to a few negroes,” but it also implies that a grander imperial vision would be monumentally more destructive and likely indiscriminate. Such destruction of tribes takes place locally in England at first as rules are bent to allow Melmotte into clubs he does not qualify for and as members of parliament equivocate when they allow Melmotte into the House drunk, inappropriately dressed, and making light of House protocol. The tribe of gentlemen is endangered. That Disraeli himself was only allowed to be an MP once rules were changed to allow Jews to sit is an easy correlation to make. Disraeli is certainly invoked as the “political master” referenced above as that statement reflects Trollope’s pessimism that the Liberals might soon lose power. Trollope goes as far as to choose the leader of the Conservatives, who readers would immediately recognize as Disraeli, to formally introduce Melmotte in Parliament. He is introduced by “the very founder of that new doctrine of which it was though that Melmotte might become an apostle and an expounder” (174). When members of the House see Melmotte walking side by side with the party leader many assume that the accusations of fraud must be false and temporarily accept Melmotte as an honorable colleague. The Disraeli-figure has the power to manipulate the gentlemanly instincts of his party, silencing them.

Finally, a word must be said about Melmotte’s suicide – certainly not as dramatic as that of Felix Lopez who throws himself in front of a train – but appropriate and meaningful nonetheless. When Melmotte realizes that his fraud has been discovered and that his daughter will not give him access to money he has hidden in an account in her
name (even after he savagely beats her), he shows up drunk in the House and continues to
drink at home throughout the evening, eventually taking prussic acid and expiring. As
Stephen Wall suggests, as Melmotte’s “projects pile up” he “becomes more and more
vulnerable to a loss of confidence.”

He realizes the enormity of his projects. It is at this point, however, that Melmotte becomes much more than just a caricature of a Disraeli-type – one with whom Trollope could feel little sympathy – instead, he becomes
strangely pitiful. Having been admitted into British society, courted by royalty, elected as
an MP, sold a country estate, and held in the confidence of all he interacted with,
Melmotte had come “almost to believe in himself” (vol. 2, 57). The bursting of that
bubble was profoundly devastating for Melmotte. Trollope humanizes Melmotte and
because of the “strong sense that we finally have of Melmotte as an individual” he
becomes “something more interesting than a mere symptom of a social malaise.” That
Trollope can elicit sympathy for such a scoundrel as Melmotte is an example of what
Ruth ApRoberts means when she says that Trollope’s “interest in complex cases is
thoroughly and frankly and consistently ethical.” Readers are invited to “see into his
murky self-awareness and appreciate a certain virtu in him.” Melmotte’s virtu is almost
a social one: the belief of others in his abilities is what sustains him. George Herbert
Mead’s concept of the looking-glass self, whereby we see ourselves as the reflection of
other people’s ideas about ourselves, can help explain Melmotte’s dilemma: without
some social approval (and financing) from society, Melmotte as a force ceases to exist.

293 Wall, 376.
294 Wall, 379.
295 apRoberts, 42.
296 apRoberts, 167.
297 I’m reminded of the short story “Cipher in the Snow” by Jean Mizer in which an ostracized teenager
drops dead in the snow after getting off of his school bus, not due to a physical condition, but because of
He is explicitly compared to Disraeli in this regard: “But he was true to his party. Melmotte was not the first vulgar man whom the Conservatives had taken by the hand, and patted on the back, and told that he was a god” (vol. 2, 37). It is almost as if Melmotte is a victim of English gentlemanly ambition. Certainly, he is a swindler, but he could not work on such a large scale alone.

In a telling scene earlier in the novel, Melmotte spends time burning documents so the police will not find them, yet he pauses with one sheet of paper that he disposes of in a dramatic, yet unexplained, manner: “This one he took bit by bit into his mouth, chewing the paper into a pulp till he swallowed it” (vol. 2, 119). The significance of the specific sheet of paper is never explained; instead, it seems to symbolize all of Melmotte’s paper relationships. Money, and paper notes substituted for money, is Melmotte’s only sustainable connection to English society. By chewing on the paper, he tries to sustain himself – the slow chewing an indication that he savors it – yet ultimately the paper is valueless. Not even Melmotte can make it substantial. Derek Cohen sees this scene as evoking traditional anti-Semitic images. Melmotte who “had been fed upon the blood of widows and children” may “bring to the readers mind the charges of cannibalism and ritual slaughter leveled against Jews elsewhere in English literature.”

While this is certainly a possible meaning, it is not too much of a stretch to see this act also as a metaphor for Disraeli’s plans for an England sustained by its historic and newly acquired (and growing) Empire, likely funded financially by gentlemanly capitalists and those, like himself, romantically fascinated by the East. Paper could not sustain a nation or an empire. That Melmotte later takes prussic acid is only the culmination of the poison

his lack of social recognition (no one offers to speak at his funeral because no one remembers a thing about him).

with which he had been sustaining himself all along. Melmotte, frequently observed to be overweight, is a bubble who finally bursts. For Trollope, such would be the fate of speculators and of an empire formed through speculation.

*The Prime Minister*

Trollope’s *The Prime Minister* is the penultimate novel in his Palliser series, and undoubtedly the most ambitious of his novels; whereas in earlier political novels he caricatures living politicians, he adds a new dimension to the political world as his own Plantagenet Palliser becomes Prime Minister and presides for three years over a coalition government. Two seemingly separate yet intimately connected storylines comprise the main plot of the novel: the first follows the marital and economic prospects of Ferdinand Lopez, the son of a Portuguese man, possibly a Jew, who marries Emily Wharton over the objection of her father who doubts Lopez’s status as an English gentleman; the second chronicles the apex of Plantagenet Palliser’s political career as he forms a Coalition government and presides as Prime Minister for three years before being pressured to step down. The two plots are treated separately for the most part, but they intersect when Lady Glencora Palliser, the Prime Minister’s wife, is charmed by Lopez at a social gathering and encourages him to consider running for Parliament, suggesting that he would have a good chance of being returned in her husband’s borough, especially with a good word from her husband. On principle, Palliser refuses to endorse any candidate, believing that the tradition of “pocket boroughs” is unjust; however, the unscrupulous Lopez asks for Palliser to pay his election expenses after he loses his bid for the seat, claiming that he was wrongly enticed to run by Lady Glencora. It looks bad when the

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John Halperin makes a strong case that Palmerston and Russell were likely prototypes.
press discovers that Palliser paid Lopez’s expenses, and the press demands investigation. Palliser’s refusal to expose his wife to public scrutiny and his avowed silence on the subject of Lopez brings about Palliser’s eventual resignation. Despite the grand scale of the political plot, *The Prime Minister* is primarily a domestic novel, one that suggests a firm connection between what happens at home and what happens on the national and international stage.

By writing a novel called *The Prime Minister* and having its protagonist be the unscrupulous Lopez, a would-be politician, Trollope implicitly critiques the actual PM, Disraeli, who was nothing like Trollope’s “perfect gentleman” Plantagenet Palliser. Trollope called the Palliser series “the best work of my life” and characterized Plantagenet Palliser as one who “stands more firmly on the ground than any other personage I have created.”\(^{300}\) Palliser is the embodiment of an argument for old-fashioned values; he is a gentleman “such a one as justifies to the nation the seeming anomaly of an hereditary peerage and of primogeniture.”\(^{301}\) He was worthy of Trollope’s highest praise: “I think that Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium, is a perfect gentleman. If he be not, then am I unable to describe a gentleman.”\(^{302}\) (361). However, *The Prime Minister* more than any other Trollope novel calls attention to the increasing slipperyness of the term “gentleman”; if not “slipperyness,” perhaps Trollope would have accepted “greasiness.” When Disraeli became Prime Minister he proclaimed that he had “climbed to the top of the greasy pole,” and Trollope often uses greasiness to indicate his

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\(^{300}\) *An Autobiography*, 185.

\(^{301}\) *An Autobiography*, 181.

\(^{302}\) *An Autobiography*, 361.
characters’ Jewishness. While Trollope’s Palliser, a genuine gentleman, presided over Parliament in his fictional world, Disraeli, not a gentleman, was governing in the real world. The very title demanded audience reflection about the current prime minister. The *Prime Minister* contrasts Trollope’s “perfect gentleman” Prime Minister with Ferdinand Lopez, a power-seeking investor who, like Melmotte and by extension Disraeli, finds some acceptance in gentlemanly circles, but ultimately fails to persuade them to accept him. Like Melmotte, he commits suicide when his schemes fail, but in a much more dramatic way: he throws himself in front of a train at Tenway Junction, obliterating any sign that he existed.

Unlike in *The Way We Live Now* where those who invested in the idea of Melmotte knew he was not a gentleman, the problem presented in *The Prime Minister* is that many people are unsure about whether Ferdinand Lopez could claim the title of a gentleman, as they are willing to make exceptions on a case by case basis. They feared being called prejudiced for making quick assumptions. Emily’s father acknowledges that his prejudice toward Lopez stems from knowing so little about his roots; Lopez lacks “those far-reaching fibers and roots by which he thought that the solidity and stability of the human tree should be assured” (92). In addition to lacking roots, Lopez’s career path raised questions about his status as a gentleman. Lopez is a speculator and his peers seem unable to determine whether that nebulous career path affords him gentlemanly status. All they know is that he behaves as if he has money and is friendly with sons in landed families. In the following passage Trollope outlines the dilemma:

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It was admitted on all sides that Ferdinand Lopez was a ‘gentleman’.

Johnson says that any other derivation of this difficult word than that which causes it to signify ‘a man of ancestry’ is whimsical. There are many, who in defining the term for their own use, still adhere to Johnson’s dictum;-- but they adhere to it with certain unexpressed allowances for possible exceptions. The chances are very much in favor of the well-born man, but exceptions may exist. It was not generally believed that Ferdinand Lopez was well born;-- but he was a gentleman. And this most precious rank was acceded to him although he was employed,--or at least had been employed,--on business which does not of itself give such a warrant of position as is supposed to be afforded by the bar and the church, by the military services and by physic. He had been on the Stock Exchange, and still in some manner, not clearly understood by his friends, did business in the City.\(^{304}\)

The nature of Lopez’s business becomes clearer as the novel progresses. He invests capital, borrowed from gullible acquaintances, in foreign stocks like guano or Kauri gum, buying when costs are down and waiting to sell them for a profit. As a result, Lopez has difficulty stating how much money he has (a traditional topic of discussion when a man seeks to marry another’s daughter); what wealth he has is invested in stocks whose value are constantly in play. Because he cannot access his money directly, he has to seek out new investors to fund his endeavors.

\(^{304}\) Anthony Trollope. *The Prime Minister* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 3-4. All subsequent references will be parenthetical.
His operations are on a much smaller scale than Melmotte’s, he preys on much more gullible and less wealthy victims, and he is infinitely less successful; however, imperial expansion into foreign markets can be observed in Lopez’s case, nevertheless. A useful example is when, as an active investor, Lopez comes up with a scheme late in the novel to move to Guatemala with his English wife to oversee a mine he owns shares in. In this case, Lopez plans to be an informal empire-builder as a necessary consequence of his work as an investor. The scale of his involvement in the Empire connects him to fewer areas of the world than Melmotte, but his role as a gentlemanly capitalist sustains the comparison.

In an under-examined passage in *The Prime Minister’s* opening pages, Trollope makes Lopez’s problem of acceptance into gentlemanly circles clear, explicitly connecting the problem to one of “imperial” origins: “I would not say that Ferdinand Lopez was prone to do ill-natured things; but he was imperious, and he had learned to carry his empire in his eye” (6). If we read Lopez as an ironic contrast to Plantagenet Palliser, and see Lopez’s alleged Jewishness as more like the actual Prime Minister (Disraeli) than Trollope’s fictional one, such a connection to imperialism becomes more meaningful. Disraeli had an empire in his eye and was overtly imperious. Trollope’s Palliser has much duller ambitions: his pet project is an argument for converting to decimal coinage. He does not speculate about the future. One way of reading the novel could claim that the smattering of references to the Empire and to colonial matters demonstrates the relative unimportance of the Empire to Trollope’s conception of Victorian politics and domestic life. My reading, on the other hand, suggests that this novel, and the Palliser series more generally, treats the Empire, and the emerging
speculator class whose livelihood depended on colonial products, as a threat to English identity, which for Trollope depended on respect for the aristocracy whose power was waning. This respect for the aristocracy was meaningless formality to Lopez who “knew how to speak, and how to look, how to use a knife and fork, how to dress himself, and how to walk” like a gentleman would, but who “had not the faintest notion of the feelings of a gentleman” (203). This “feeling” should promote preservation instead of expansion.

Similarly, Emily Wharton, who falls in love with and marries Ferdinand Lopez in opposition to the wishes of her father, has been linked with the ethos of a speculator by Audrey Jaffe. The lesson of the novel according to this reading is Emily’s eventual understanding that she must “invest her emotions, as she would her money, wisely.” Mrs. Fletcher, the mother of Arthur Fletcher who Emily marries at the end of the novel following Lopez’s suicide, long felt that her son would have been the more appropriate choice as it was “incumbent on females” of her class to “restrain their affections” and marry a proper suitor. She broods concerning Emily, “But to love one below herself, a man without a father, a foreigner, a black Portuguese nameless Jew, merely because he had a bright eye, and a hook nose, and a glib tongue,—that a girl from the Whartons should do this—! It was so unnatural to Mrs. Fletcher that it would be hardly possible to her to be civil to the girl after she had heard that her mind and taste were so astray” (177). That Emily damages herself in her association with Lopez can be seen Trollope’s familiar language of blackening when it is suggested that the “slightest soil had already marred the pure white of the girl’s natural character” (46). Nevertheless, the Trollopian narrator is hopeful that there is something about Emily that protects her from being destroyed or

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305 Emily joins a long line of Trollope heroines faced with two romantic choices: one a type of Byronic hero and the other a more boring, but nevertheless devoted, suitor. Typically the latter turns out to be the proper choice.
defiled “by small stains” (47). Following Lopez’s death, and Arthur Fletcher’s proposal of marriage, Emily initially characterizes herself as one who has been “thrust so far into the mire that she can never again be clean” (vol 2, 402). Yet, she eventually accepts his proposal.

Choosing Lopez as a companion is a gamble, as his exoticness makes predictions about him difficult. He is not a sure investment. Emily’s father is financially secure which is one reason why Lopez wants to marry her; he assumes that his father-in-law will support him financially. Emily is naïve and has no idea how much money her father has or how much will be given to her; money sustains the family but it is never spoken of. For Trollope, such was a proper attitude for gentlemen and women to have about money. For Jaffe then, “the marriage plot is, in fact, the financial plot: the lesson Emily Wharton learns about Lopez is taught by way of her increasing knowledge of his financial dealings. His value—more precisely, his lack of value—emerges for her, as it does in the novel as a whole, in a series of demonstrations of the nature of his feelings about money.”306 After marrying Lopez she is immediately surprised that he wants her to intercede for him by asking her father for money, pay attention to his transactions, and intermingle with those below her social class with whom he does business. She is forced to get her hands dirty as Lopez does, literally speculating in guano. As Jaffe astutely observes:

In Emily’s desire not to know, as in her feeling of repulsion toward her husband and herself, the narrative of speculation, with its moral baggage about greed and the defiling touch of money—and of the Jew—is intertwined with a necessary cultural narrative whose trajectory

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306 Jaffe, 48.
demonstrates, with the unmistakable clarity of a plunging line on a stock market graph, the irrationality of her investment in Ferdinand Lopez.\textsuperscript{307}

The perversity of Emily’s relationship with Lopez which R.C. Terry calls “one of the most troubling studies of marital pain and failure in English literature” reminds me of the issues of marital dominance discussed in the previous chapter – the marriage between the overbearing and insanely jealous Louis Trevelyan and another of Trollope’s Emily’s.\textsuperscript{308} In that chapter I made an argument for reading their relationship as an interracial one – as Emily was a child of the colonies and as her husband became an Othello figure. Trevelyan’s obsession over his wife’s imagined promiscuity coupled with his perverse desire for her to submit to his outrageous demands leads him on a path of self-destruction that he welcomes. Similarly, Terry writes concerning Emily Wharton that her “attraction to Ferdinand is overpowering, linked in obscure ways to rebellion and a willful masochism.”\textsuperscript{309} Once married to Lopez, Emily quickly discovers that she should have trusted her father’s instincts about him; nevertheless, she refuses to separate from her husband without his explicit permission. She is morbidly attracted to the pain she will endure. Even after she tells him that she no longer loves him, she vows to emigrate with him to Guatemala if he insists.

Lopez’s plan to go to Guatemala with Emily comes about as a kind of retribution against her father who refuses to fund any of his investments. Ferdinand Lopez appears to have several motives for marrying into the Wharton family including, at least initially, genuine affection for Emily which is confirmed by Trollope’s narrator. More powerful than this affection, however, is Lopez’s need for capital for his foreign investments, and

\textsuperscript{307} Jaffe, 56.  
\textsuperscript{308} Terry, 445.  
\textsuperscript{309} Ibid.
despite Lopez’s original claims that monetary motivation had nothing to do with his marital choice, his later behavior and demands for money from Emily’s father reveal his true motivation. After Emily accepted Lopez’s proposal of marriage, Mr. Wharton never communicated with Lopez about money and made no promises of any kind of support, likely hoping that Lopez would back out of the marriage if money was not discussed. That Lopez chose Emily for her wealthy family connections was certainly part of his attraction to her. Following their marriage, Lopez quickly pressures Emily to discuss financial issues with her father. On two occasions, Mr. Wharton does give money to his son-in-law, first a lump sum for Lopez to invest and second reimbursement for election expenses (Lopez accepts this money from Wharton and Palliser). When Wharton suggests that his financial assistance has come to an end, Lopez tries to use the Guatemala venture as leverage knowing that Wharton would be desperate to keep his daughter in England. That Emily views leaving England as a metaphoric death – she does not know where Guatemala is – is evident when she pleads with Lopez to let he remain in England: “I ask it of you as if I were asking my life” (vol 2. 100). There were few suitable places in the world for English women to live, and the novel suggests that relationships with gentlemanly capitalists could send daughters (and their children – Emily was pregnant at the time) to unsuitable places. Her connections with her family would cease if she moved away.

While some would claim that anti-Semitism fuels Trollope’s portrayal of Lopez, I would argue that career choice, much more than ancestry, makes him an unsuitable husband for Emily and an unsuitable MP for England. The novel abounds with references to Lopez’s probable Jewish heritage including an explicit comparison with
Shylock and repeated epithets like “nasty Jew-looking man”, “swarthy Son of Judah”, and “black Portuguese nameless Jew” spoken mostly behind Lopez’s back. Much of the anti-Semitism in the novel is clearly Trollope’s although certain characters, Mr. Wharton in particular, are much more anti-Semitic than others. The novel, to a certain extent, asks readers to consider the foundation and consequences of such prejudice. Within the context of the novel, Wharton’s decision to give in to his daughter’s wishes to marry Lopez and his eventual change of heart concerning the possibility that Lopez could be a gentleman appear to stem from a desire not to seem unfairly prejudiced towards Lopez and his own family. Instead of refusing to allow the marriage based on ancestry, Wharton questions whether he should “not better make the usual inquiry about the man's means, and, if satisfied on that head, let the girl do as she would?” (92). Unfortunately for Wharton, working in the City and maintaining a residence which Lopez did was increasingly viewed as an acceptable occupation, even a gentlemanly one. Not wanting to appear unjustly prejudiced, he gives in.

But ultimately Lopez’s work in the stock market was hollow; he invested in things he never saw and mocked those who suggested that seeing one’s products was important. An important marker, in Trollope’s estimation, of a gentleman was his pursuit of conventionally gentlemanly careers like the church, law, medicine or the military, careers with fairly long traditions and clear hierarchical paths toward advancement based more on time spend in service than on personal ambition or ingenuity. That Lopez’s friends do not understand his business as a foreign investor, and that Mr. Wharton must repeatedly ask Lopez for evidence of his yearly income, income tax records, and other forms of book-keeping – evidence that Lopez is unable to provide – draws attention to
the precarious position of such profit seekers, especially investors like Lopez who must find capital to invest. Lopez gets money for investments three different ways in the novel. First, he goes into business with the poor and gullible, Sexty Parker, who he cons into investing in large quantities of guano. By manipulating Parker into signing his name to a bill that he promises to repay, Lopez lures Parker into a series of hazardous investments that nearly leads to his family’s starvation and does lead to his death. The Whartons eventually help the widow and her children. In this case, Lopez uses his reputation as a gentleman to trick Sexty Parker, who blindly trusts his gentleman friend. At no point in the novel does Lopez show any sympathy for Parker or his family; he feels no guilt for his role in Parker’s downfall. Fittingly, it is Emily and later her father, who after Lopez’s death, provides Mrs. Parker with an annual allowance to make up for Lopez’s irresponsibility. In addition to targeting the gullible, Lopez later befriends rich widows, like Lizzie Eustace, who, invests some money in his projects. Though Lizzie isn’t nearly as malleable as Sexty Parker, Lopez’s choice of unprotected females, further demonstrates the way that his business leads him to prey on the weaker members of society. More importantly for my argument however, is the way that Lopez tries to infiltrate the aristocracy in an effort to gain more capital for his investments. While he is unsuccessful at gaining a seat in Parliament, he uses aristocratic circles to advance his schemes. He initially charms Lady Glencora Palliser and as a result helps to bring about the end of the leadership of Trollope’s most gentlemanly character. Though most aristocratic men see though Lopez’s charm, women are initially drawn to him, and I wonder if Trollope does this to reference that Benjamin Disraeli was a favorite of Queen Victoria. Regardless, for Trollope how one manages money has important implications
for how one manages people; as Kincaid suggests this novel is mainly about governing “whether it be a nation, a party, or a daughter.” By extension, it also raises questions about governing an empire.

Finally, a word must be said about Lopez’s suicide, certainly the most violent and spectacular death in Trollope’s fiction; after walking toward the train platform he steps “down before the flying engine” and is “knocked into bloody atoms” (235). Because so little remained of him, confirming that he had indeed killed himself took time as there was nothing to identify him with; Trollope explains, “The fragments of his body set identity as defiance, and even his watch had been crumpled into ashes” (236). Lopez has been the “problem” of the novel and healing only begins after he, always of questionable identity, is eliminated. Courtney Berger reads *The Prime Minister* as a novel in which “parties have mingled, and otherwise separate spheres, such as economics and politics, have become indistinguishable.” The intermingling of gentlemen with non-gentlemen is a logical addition to that list; Lopez is initially invited into the Wharton home because he belongs to the same club as her brother. Lopez promotes a kind of malleability which troubles Trollope as he flaunts the importance of fixed identity. Berger writes, “To cultivate a genuine or sincere relationship to one’s identity, such as Palliser does with his Whig heritage, would be burdensome to Lopez, who believes that the trappings of sincerity would only harness him to an unprofitable position.” Such an attitude, with its emphasis on individual endeavors and profit, conflicts with Trollope’s political theories as “political duty for Trollope is not about self-interest; the politician adopts a

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312 326.
Those without roots, the Melmotte’s and Lopez’s of the world, are literally written out of Trollope’s world. Their chameleon-like qualities (recall Melmotte courting the Protestant and the Catholic vote simultaneously) could not exist in Trollope’s world. Though frequently spoken of together, The Way We Live Now and The Prime Minister share an additional commonality: Melmotte proposes a fake railway and Lopez is killed by a very real train in the heart of the Empire’s center.

My conclusion brings together The Way We Live Now and The Prime Minister as formal cousins with similarities of tone, content, and character. What brings them together even more meaningfully is their publication during Disraeli’s second term as Prime Minister in a time of increasing interest in imperial expansion and increasing tolerance of non-traditional individuals joining gentlemanly circles. Both novels demonstrate willingness on the part of English men and women to take risks, make exceptions, and invest in questionable “futures” – something Disraeli suggested might be necessary if England were to remain a great country. Trollope’s novels present a world of fantasy, a kind of parallel universe, where Disraeli-like figures remove themselves from society willingly by committing suicide and where any policies or conflict beyond the level of English families are meaningless. What my reading does is suggest an undercurrent of anxiety about England’s future as either a strong nation or an over-extended Empire. Modernization and globalization confronted traditional society with the threat of extinction or retrogression, in Trollope’s estimation, and this was represented in these two novels through their emphasis on the stock market. Unpredictable, influenced

313 Ibid.
by feeling, and manipulated by self-interest the market becomes an analogy to feelings about the Empire and certainly Trollope favors disinterest over emotional investment.
Chapter Four: Colonial Return and the Threat of Foreignness in Trollope’s *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate*

On March 10, 1875 Anthony Trollope was on a ship heading to Australia for his second time in three years to visit his son Frederic, an emigrant sheep farmer, when he wrote a letter to his wife lamenting a lack of newspapers at the ship’s last stop. Always one to keep up on events at home, Trollope wrote to Rose that he had seen “from a borrowed paper that Kenealy had begun to make a beast of himself.”

Trollope suggests that although the public had “bore with him” in the past they would soon “find that they will not bear with him long.”

While 21st century readers might not recognize Kenealy’s name, most Victorian men or women stumbling across this letter would have fully comprehended Trollope’s meaning. Edward Kenealy was the attorney who had defended the notorious Tichborne imposter in his 1874 criminal trial; although Kenealy prolonged the trial to 188 days – the longest criminal trial in English history to that point – he was unable to save his client, Arthur Orton, from the charge of perjury. In 1875, following the trial, Kenealy was elected to the House of Commons where his outbursts became legendary. Kenealy was elected on a platform that included continuing his fight to get the verdict against the Tichborne Claimant reversed, and he strongly supported this and other populist causes. From Trollope’s letter and statements in his book about Australia, written during his previous trip, one can see his dislike for Kenealy and the Tichborne cause. Nevertheless, Trollope must have felt strangely connected to events occurring at home during second journey: his destination, Australia, was intrinsically

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315 Ibid.
316 The McLibel lawsuit in the 1990’s lasted longer.
linked to the Tichborne Claimant’s story, and Trollope was finishing a novel on the ship, *Is He Popenjoy?*, in an effort to capitalize on the excitement surrounding the Claimant. Trollope finished that novel before he arrived in Melbourne and by the time the novel was serialized three years later, Trollope had completed another novel, *John Caldigate*, with even stronger connections to the Tichborne affair, this time with a novel set partially in Australia. In the 1870’s it would be fair to say that Trollope, like his fellow Victorians, had Tichborne on his mind.

The Tichborne affair which so interested Trollope and the Victorian public was a spectacle of international proportions, a national obsession that exposed class, race and gender anxieties regarding those who spent time in the colonies, especially anxieties about those who tried to return home to live as gentlemen (or women) again. Like Dickens’ Magwitch, those who returned from the colonies could inspire fear and unease in those at home, especially as it was becoming more and more difficult to separate “home” from its economic, cultural, and increasingly familial connections in the colonies.

Whether colonial return was desirable was a question that prompted a reevaluation of the purpose of the colonies – were they places to send undesirables or excess populations, new budding nations entitled to their autonomy, or sources of wealth for Englishmen to exploit for their resources? How should those who returned be treated and to what degree should their colonial habits be tolerated? What effect might outside influences have on English identity? Examining European expansion more generally, Laura Otis has drawn attention to the ways in which cell theory in the 19th century with its increasing emphasis on the permeability of cell membranes shaped ways of thinking about colonization: “While they were happy to expand outward, Westerners became horrified when the
cultures, peoples, and diseases they had engulfed began diffusing, through their now permeable membranes, back toward their imperial cell bodies.”

Viewed this way, in the words of Donna Haraway, “the colonized was perceived as the invader.” Though Trollope was certainly no cell theorist, his fiction reflects similar anxieties. As is typical for Trollope, his fiction is mainly concerned with realistic portrayals of white English society; only a few non-white characters appear in all of Trollope, and when they do they are hardly threatening. Instead, Trollope is concerned with what happens to English people when they live in foreign places and come into contact with other cultures, and this concern extended to those living in England who were exposed to foreign ideas, as the previous chapter explains. His novels demonstrate nostalgia for an aristocracy in decline as it is threatened by the working classes at home, agitation for women’s rights, the American threat of democracy, and occasionally by those returning from abroad, sometimes from the colonies, whose values differed from those of gentlemen at home.

In *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate* Trollope explores these and other problems in each case exposing the problems that ensue when foreign elements threaten familial stability – much like Arthur Orton’s claim to be the Tichborne heir ignited controversy not only in the popular imagination, but also within one of the oldest landed families in England. Trollope’s novels present troubling answers to questions about how England’s aristocracy could survive such obstacles – in *Is He Popenjoy?* the novel’s solution is what I call “evolutionary” and in *John Caldigate* the solution is the panopticonical power of social institutions to safeguard English identity. As this chapter will demonstrate, neither of these solutions produces satisfying narrative fidelity, yet each

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318 Quoted in Otis, 5.
is a predictable outcome of Trollope’s “novel machine” as it faced the pressures of the literary marketplace, declining aristocratic power, and the peculiar fascination his contemporaries – himself included – for the Tichborne Claimant. In the following sections, I will provide necessary background on the Tichborne Claimant case, examine Trollope’s attitudes toward the Claimant and Australia, and analyze *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate* as I suggest it is within a colonial, Tichbornian, context that these novels are best understood.

Trollope’s later fiction, of which *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate* are typical examples, are the products of Trollope’s evolution of a writer and of his experimentation with new forms. Like *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister* but to a greater extreme, these novels are more pessimistic in tone and often less satisfying to devotees of his lighter novels, hence the relative lack of critical attention they have received. In these novels, Trollope frequently withholds important information from his readers creating plot-related suspense in an attempt to mimic the popular sensation novels of the 1860’s.

Those familiar with Trollope’s celebrated series fiction will no doubt remember Trollope’s promise of full disclosure with his readers in *Barchestor Towers*: “Our doctrine is that the author and the reader should move along together in full confidence with each other.” For Trollope author-invented suspense was likened to deceit – “And is there not a species of deceit in this to which the honesty of the present age should lend no countenance?” While Trollope would still promote honesty as an ideal in this later

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320 Ibid. 143.
fiction, many of his characters are dishonest and Trollope certainly no longer insists that the author and reader share all pertinent information. It was his audience’s interest in legal cases, like that of the Claimant, which prompted Trollope to satisfy such appetites; yet his manner of satisfaction was still distinctly Trollopian.

Background on the Claimant’s Story

Before moving to an analysis of *Is He Popenjoy?* and *John Caldigate* it is first necessary to review key elements of the Tichborne affair as they relate to Trollope’s knowledge and references to the case. It bears mentioning that the Tichborne Claimant has received much critical attention in the past decade as people see his story intersecting a variety of their interests like colonialism, identity, class tension, and populist causes; the Claimant has been called “a foil for reflections on social or ethical agency.”


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323 Rebecca Stern, xii.
dedicates the first chapter of her new book *Home Economics: Domestic Fraud in Victorian England* (2008) to the Claimant as she shows how the Tichborne case “negotiated contemporary debates about speculation, particularly about the discrimination between who had the right to access the risks and thrills of the market, and who did not.”\(^{324}\) Important for Stern is the government’s predominant interest in imprisoning the Claimant for his fraud against an established family as opposed to the popular public interest in promoting the Claimant’s story as people both imaginatively and monetarily (through Tichborne Bonds) invested in his claims. Finally, and most importantly for my own interests, Carrie Dawson’s article “‘The Slaughterman of Wagga Wagga’: Imposture, National Identity, and the Tichborne Affair” suggests that the case “exposed the precariousness of the distinctions that were said to differentiate nineteenth-century upper-class English identities from their colonial counterparts.”\(^{325}\)

This precariousness of identity was complicated by the colonial context of the case: its story touched on Australia, Chile, various locations in Central and South America, and included an array of international witnesses including an African Tichborne family servant. Such foreign and colonial intrigue fascinated Trollope and his contemporaries; a summary of the case is necessary for understanding why such fascination ensued. When twenty-two year old Roger Tichborne, heir to a baronetcy, set sail for South America seeking foreign adventure on March 1\(^{st}\) 1853, he could not possibly have imagined the ramifications of that choice for his family or that the journey


he was taking would put into play a series of events that would culminate in civil and
criminal trials. And, as I side with the majority of critics who agree that Roger never
returned from abroad and became the posthumous victim of what 21st century readers
would call “identity theft,” it would be safe to assume that when Roger had two
daguerreotypes of himself sent to his mother when he arrived in South America he did
not anticipate that these pictures would become some of the most talked about artifacts of
a sensational criminal trial. After traveling for a year around South America and spending
heavily for liquor, Roger Tichborne ran out of money and was considering returning
home; he boarded a ship, the Bella, in Rio De Janeiro and was never heard from again.
His ship was said to have sunk off the coast and all hands were believed to have been
drowned. A year later Roger Tichborne was declared dead and his younger brother Alfred
was awarded the baronetcy.

Nevertheless, Roger’s grieving mother, the Dowager Lady Tichborne, desperately
wished to find her son alive and was hopeful that he had survived based on a
clairvoyant’s proclamation and rumors that some of the Bella’s crew had been spotted in
Australia. In an effort to find her son, she placed notices in newspapers around the world
offering rewards for information leading to the return of Roger Tichborne. Lady
Tichborne was French and had married into the English Tichborne family whom she
came to despise, believing that the English were culturally inferior. She raised Roger in
France, over the wishes of his father that he live in England and her son had to be
sneaked out of France – essentially kidnapped – by his father to attend school there. In
1865, nearly twelve years after the Bella disappeared, a man who had been working in
Australia as a butcher using the name Thomas Castro contacted the Dowager Lady
Tichborne through a solicitor and claimed to be her long lost son. Following a short correspondence Lady Tichborne began to believe that he was indeed her son and sent money for his passage home. On Christmas Eve 1866 Thomas Castro arrived in London with a wife and several young children; he was later recognized by Lady Tichborne – reportedly she visited him when he was in sick in bed with a blanket over his face – and she awarded him an annuity. Although he was recognized by several schoolmates, fellow Carabineers, and a few family friends, the Tichborne family – with the exception of Lady Tichborne – declared that he was an imposter. They claimed that Castro learned details about the family from a man named Bogle, an African former Tichborne family servant, who Castro had befriended in Australia, and that he likely bribed others to learn details about the estate.\(^{326}\)

Firmly declaring that Castro was imposter, the Tichborne family argued that he was an illiterate overweight buffoon trying to cheat an infant heir out of a baronetcy.\(^{327}\) Their argument resounded even more loudly after Roger’s mother died before testifying in either of his trials. Following the death of his most important ally, Castro faced an uphill battle. Much of the family’s argument and that of the prosecution during the trials stemmed from their assertion that the man who had lived as Thomas Castro in Australia was physically, mentally, and culturally inferior to his betters in England and that any reasonable person would reach the same conclusion. A man could not have changed so drastically during a decade in the colonies, they claimed. In fact, in the trials it was suggested that the Claimant was an English butcher from Wapping named Arthur Orton

\(^{326}\) As has been mentioned previously, following the trials the Claimant was presumed to be an English butcher from Wapping. One of the Claimant’s first tasks when he arrived in England was to visit and inquire after the Orton family, claiming to have been asked to do so by the real Orton in Australia. There is much speculation that money changed hands to keep the Orton family from claiming Castro as their kin.

\(^{327}\) Roger Tichborne’s brother Alfred drank himself to death, leaving his wife pregnant with a male heir.
who went to Australia seeking a better life and had decided to return and swindle a fortune from a respectable family. Such an argument was supported by Castro’s almost immediate visit to this family in Wapping following his return to England.

Landed families were more likely to oppose the Claimant’s cause as they believed that they could ascertain by sight that he was not of their rank. Many in the working classes, however, saw in the Claimant a symbol of their own oppression; as they made continuing arguments for their worthiness for suffrage, the Claimant was made to argue for his admittance into a family of rank, that he argued was deserved. Broadside ballads, pamphlets, rallies, and reenactments testified to what many saw as the cruel mistreatment of the Claimant. Many were angry that the Crown was so eager to prove Castro a butcher instead of a baronet; as a result, an alternative literature was developed as a counterpoint to the mainstream press which was typically against the Claimant. In particular, the trials evoked powerful emotions in those with populist leanings. Patrick Joyce has observed how “ideas of a corrupt ruling class and legal system, of rule by conspiracy, of an excluded people against a corrupt state apparatus, a messianic leadership and a lost golden age were all very much in evidence.”\textsuperscript{328} And Michael Roe suggests that the propaganda of the Tichborne cause demonstrated “a basic difference in the socio-political behavior of classes and masses”: while “the former were predisposed to act in defense of self-interest, and in devious, conspiratorial ways; the latter upheld truth and justice.”\textsuperscript{329}

When the Claimant went on tour selling Tichborne bonds to finance his trial, guaranteeing a return to investors if his identity was verified, many with populist leanings bought shares in his success. Such risky speculation on the part of poorer Victorians led


\textsuperscript{329} Michael Roe. \textit{Kenealy and the Tichborne Cause} (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1974), 47.
to arguments that they were not educated (or gentlemanly) enough to have access to the market.\textsuperscript{330} Seeing what the lower class would invest in, monetarily and overwhelmingly emotionally, made those with traditional ties to the markets and land uneasy. Keeping such ambition at bay became a top priority.

One of the most interesting lines of attack against the Claimant involved ridicule of his physical demeanor. The issue of weight and other physical characteristics like genital appearance, tattoos, and earlobe variations would become some of the most discussed and parodied aspects of the case. Regarding weight, the two daguerreotypes from South America depicted Roger as slender as his family had always known him to be, even as the Claimant was fat and getting fatter. By the criminal trial he was just less than 400 pounds and during the civil trial he needed props to lean on so he could stand upright. He addressed his weight in a letter to his mother: “Surly my dear Mama you must know my writing. You have cause a deal of trouble. But it matters not. Has I have no wish to leave a country ware I enjoy such good health I have grown very stout…”\textsuperscript{331} Medical testimony concerning the tinyness and possible retractability of the Claimant’s penis would be brought forth to stake a claim that he, like the real Roger, justified the nickname “small cock,” a nickname to which Roger’s friends attested. Whether or not the Claimant could demonstrate the same marks on his body – tattoos – as some suggested the real Roger had would become the most damning and contested evidence in the civil trial. Even earlobes would become the focus of days of deliberation as the public fought – sometimes literally – for seats in the notoriously overcrowded courtrooms.

\textsuperscript{330} Rebecca Stern makes this point.  
\textsuperscript{331} Quoted in McWilliam, 17.
This physicality has been seen by Rebecca Stern as performing powerful ideological work in service to the crown; whether in the courtroom, in newspapers or in popular pamphlets like *The Tichborne Malformation*, people were eager to discuss the physical evidence. What the public witnessed was the Crown paying tremendous amounts of money and investing an enormous amount of time to humiliate and deride a man, imposter though he might be, for questioning whether someone like him *could actually have been a Tichborne*. According to Stern, “By making Orton’s privates available to the public, the Crown both reasserted hierarchies of access and worked upon public investments in privacy.”

One source of excitement for working-class followers of the trial was an intimate peek at the body of one who claimed to be a gentleman, and what horrified their gentlemanly counterparts was that family members of the drowned Roger were forced to publicly testify about their private lives.

That one like the Claimant and others who had lived in the colonies might also return was not a new source of anxiety but one that was becoming more and more prevalent; as a result, there were increasing questions about how the colonies might change people. According to Carrie Dawson, “even those who supported his claim suggested that his whiteness was somehow compromised by time spend in the colonies.”

To make their case, the defense had to suggest that Roger Tichborne had never been very intelligent, but also that time spent in the colonies was a likely excuse for his lack of knowledge – things like his not remembering his native tongue (French), his inability to distinguish Latin from Greek, and his inconsistent spelling of his own name were frequently purported as consequences of the more rugged lifestyle he led in the

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332 A popular pamphlet with detailed descriptions of Roger Tichborne and the Claimant’s unusual genitals.
333 Stern, 44.
334 Dawson, 4.
colonies. As the excerpt from his letter above demonstrates, Castro’s letter writing style does not bear the marks of gentlemanly education. The prosecution often made similar arguments about colonial exposure, but they used colonial backwardness to suggest that those in the colonies were poor mimickers of their betters; in the trials “the Claimant’s detractors constructed Australia as a barbaric and strange place populated by degenerates given to mimicking their English counterparts.”

It was believed that such inferior mimicking could be detected by those on the jury empowered to tell truth from fiction. To ensure that the fraud was detected, the Crown funded a merciless prosecution.

A number of factors influenced the Crown’s expensive investment to prove the Claimant a fraud, the most important of which was Thomas Castro’s lack of consideration for the family and community his testimony scandalized – in particular many could never forgive him for questioning the reputation of a married woman. Before leaving for South America, Roger Tichborne wooed his cousin Katherine Doughty and hoped to marry her, but was faced with the opposition of her parents. During the first trial, testimony about a mysterious locked box that Roger had left with a family friend led to questioning of the Claimant about the contents of that box. Such questioning was problematic to begin with as the letters in the box had been destroyed and no one could truthfully attest to what had been inside. Nevertheless, when asked to give an account of the contents of the box, the Claimant insisted that he left instructions about what to do if Katherine Doughty was pregnant and delivered a child while he was abroad. At the time of the trial Doughty was a happily married woman who firmly denied fornication with Roger Tichborne. Many agreed that the Claimant overstepped the bounds of decency by implicating his cousin, proving himself a fraud by his claim. The opposition, of course,

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335 Dawson, 3.
could claim that gentlemen frequently produced children out of wedlock and that the original Roger was no different.

The court showed little sympathy for the Claimant and he was sentenced to fourteen years in prison, yet many of his followers refused to relinquish support and continued to agitate for his release. Geddes Macgregor has likened sympathy for the Claimant following his imprisonment to a kind of religion with various tenants that followers supported and debated; he suggests that while some honestly believed that Castro was Tichborne, others thought that he was actually an illegitimate member of the Tichborne clan, and still others thought that even though he wasn’t Tichborne his performance had earned him a baronetcy. Kenealy kept the cause alive in a publication, *The Englishman*, which continually weighed evidence in favor of the Claimant as it promoted other populist causes, like “political equality of women,” while a rival publication, *The True Briton*, espoused the beliefs of those certain he was an imposter. The titles of these publications demonstrate how the Tichborne affair struck a deeply personal cord among those with a stake in defining British identity: were the voices of working men like Castro, a butcher from Wapping, less worthy of attention than those of a baronet? Would the steady number of lower class men and women emigrating to the colonies be treated more equally abroad and if so could they claim such equality if they returned?

The fascination for the Claimant’s seemingly never-ending trials is often likened to the way that Victorians were also drawn to lengthy sensational tales in serialized fiction. Tichborne literacy, a knowledge of obscure details and minutia about the trials, was enormous according to Rowan McWillaim who compares such knowledge to the

336 Macgregor, 275.
knowledge of avid readers of serialized fiction: “Readers found a new identity, based on fascination with the narratives contained in novels or newspapers, that linked them to other individuals and helped constitute that imagined community called ‘public opinion’.”

Like readers of sensation fiction, followers of the trial vicariously saw themselves as detectives and ideal jury members with each side claiming that their view of the case was the most consistent with the facts. Sensation fiction itself became an issue in the trial as the real Sir Roger had been avid reader of Paul de Koch’s racy novels which Kenealy read from at length during the criminal trial, after women had been removed from the courtroom. The Claimant had read many books in Australia and particularly enjoyed books by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, among others. The Claimant’s reading habits caused problems for him during the trial as it was argued that such reading was likely what gave him the idea of forging a new identity in the first place. When Mary Elizabeth Braddon came across a newspaper account of the trial, she recognized words from the imposter’s journal brought into the court record as evidence – “Some men has plenty money and no brains were made for men with plenty brains and no money.” Though slightly misquoted, these were the words of a stable-keeper in her *Aurora Floyd* (1862) who concocted nefarious plans to get money from his betters. Braddon, herself, provided evidence in court that these words did come from her novel and this cast the Claimant in a poor light as it hinted at a kind of premeditation of his scheme to get money using his brains against those who he saw as without brains.

The ideas that such sensational works could inspire criminals was a common criticism of their moral worth, and Anthony Trollope had been a frequent critic of their popularity as he saw his fiction as promoting honesty while theirs celebrated deception.

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337 McWilliam, 35.
In a letter Trollope expressed worries that the public might prefer reading about the Tichborne trial to reading his fiction, resulting in a decline in his audience.\textsuperscript{338} Trollope clearly saw Tichborne and his story as competition and as Richard Mullen suggests “it may have sparked off the emphasis on the inheritance of estates and titles that became a prominent feature of his writing in the 1870’s and early 1880’s.”\textsuperscript{339} Trollope wasn’t the only one who saw his books in competition with the Tichborne affair. For example, “the poet Edward FitzGerald … said that he much preferred \textit{The Eustace Diamonds} [1871] to the Tichborne case.”\textsuperscript{340} In an effort to keep up with his competition, Tichborne headlines and sensation novels, Trollope adapted his fiction during this period to these changing interests.

\textit{Plotting the Claimant in a Darwinian Narrative}

That the Claimant’s story involved Australia, a colony with which Trollope had extensive experience, only made Trollope’s work as a travel writer and a novelist during this period more prescient. No colony was as important to Trollope personally as was Australia: Trollope’s youngest son, Frederic, emigrated to Australia in 1865 determined to become a sheep farmer. When Trollope wrote his book on Australia, he did so not just as a travel writer, but as a concerned father. Trollope lost several thousand pounds lending his son money for a sheep station and is rumored to have frequently given his son money for other expenses as he adjusted to life in the bush – like Frederic, Trollope was hopeful that a strong work ethic would make life there tolerable. But for Frederic and countless others, emigration was not an easy path to a better life. Like his friend George

\textsuperscript{338} The actual letter has never been found but is referred to by Trollope’s sister-in-law. See Mullen.  
\textsuperscript{339} Mullen, 493.  
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid, 494.
Eliot, who had extensive monetary and familial investments in the colonies, Trollope’s writing also “reflects interdependencies of English domestic life and colonial expansion,” yet as with Eliot such interdependencies have been “overlooked, oversimplified, or unknowingly suppressed in literary criticism ostensibly interested in imperialism during the Victorian period.” Trollope’s work shows a great awareness of the impact of the colonies on life at home. One piece of advice that Trollope gave his son, likely inspired by the Tichborne trial, was to keep detailed records about the births of male heirs, perhaps to avoid any drama should one of his own heirs ever return from Australia. In fact, Trollope’s advice proved sound as all of Trollope’s current descendents are of the Australian branch of the Trollope family.

Trollope visited his son twice: during the first trip in 1871 he stayed for twelve months visiting Frederic and traveling throughout Australia and New Zealand gathering material for what would become his travel book and during the second shorter trip in 1875 he wrote a series of ten letters to the Liverpool Mercury documenting his experience. Despite his son’s struggles, Trollope viewed Australia favorably; his book Australia and New Zealand has been read as a “kind of advertisement for colonial life that provided a fair assessment of that which awaited the would-be English emigrant.” Although the book met with some unfavorable reviews in Australia and has been criticized for its length and lack of method, The Times called it “the most agreeable, just and acute work ever written on the subject.” As is typical, it is Trollope’s skills as an

342 Mullen, 494.
344 Quoted in Durey, 170.
observer of the intricacies of societal hierarchies and close attention to detail, not his ability to spin exciting yarns that won him praise.

*Australia and New Zealand* is divided into a discussion of each individual colony in the Antipodes with detailed information about each area’s history, its weather, animal and plant life, education system, transportation, government, agriculture, mining, and religion to name only a handful of topics included. Trollope’s view of colonial rule was that the well-being of the colonists themselves should be the primary goal of any decisions made concerning a colony. Because the colonies were areas where English-speaking people could emigrate, Trollope believed that such colonies should be seen as successful even if they eventually requested and were granted autonomy from England. Such reasoning, for Trollope, made the United States England’s most successful colony, one which Australia might someday rival. Trollope viewed the United States and India as opposite kinds of imperial successes. He writes: “That India and the United States, -- so absolutely unlike each other in all the condition of humanity, and yet so prosperous after its own fashion, should, the one be governed from England, and the other speak the English language, is a combination that makes an Englishman conscious that, let the faults have been what they may, the race has been more successful than other races.”

Trollope’s belief in the success of the white race along with his prejudice for British rule over that of other European nations was closely tied to his belief that British rulers and by extension their populace tended to be governed by rationality: they were in favor of economic viability, expanding infrastructure, promoting agriculture, and establishing strong local governments. Trollope was not insensitive to the plight of the aboriginal population of Australia or the Maoris in New Zealand, even as he saw their eventual

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extinction as an inevitable effect of their contact with white populations. The success of the white race around the globe was in Trollope’s estimation inevitable.

This inevitable success was something that Trollope saw less as the work of adventurous individuals or aggressive colonial policy and more as the gradual result of hardworking English men and women forming communities and establishing roots around the globe. Shared language and traditions would foster strong bonds and the longer such communities existed the more self-regulating they would become. However, Trollope did not believe that white colonials in newer colonies like Australia were necessarily as rational as their counterparts in Britain. As many of them came from the lower classes, it would take time for them to be ready to be self-governing. As budding new nations, they were sometimes less than level-headed in a way that was similar to the way that the lower classes at home were less than rational as Trollope believed they were in their support for the Tichborne Claimant.\(^{346}\) In fact, their very support of such a cause was for many evidence of their inability to rule themselves. That many in Australia supported the Claimant was evidence that they also weren’t ready for self-government.

During his first trip to Australia (1871-1872) Trollope remarked “the Tichborne case was at its highest and people had much to say."\(^{347}\) In his \textit{Australia} Trollope makes use of geographical locations that readers would associate with the Tichborne trial to introduce locations. When describing small towns in New South Wales, Trollope pauses when he tells readers about Wagga Wagga because he knows that those in England and in Australia already know about it as it is “celebrated for ever in the annals of the colony as

\(^{346}\) For example, in \textit{Australia} Trollope characterizes the British attitude toward Australia as overly “rational” while he sees the colonists as irrationally excited over rumors about colonial policy.

\(^{347}\) Anthony Trollope, \textit{Australia} ed. P. D. Edwards and R. B. Joyce (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1967), 597
having once been the residence of the great Tichborne claimant. ”

Similarly, when describing Gippsland he says that the town’s name “will be familiar to the ears of English readers, chiefly because that great hero of romance the Tichborne claimant for a while carried on there is trade as a journeyman butcher.”

According to Trollope’s account, colonists were far too supportive of the Claimant’s cause. Trollope was a vocal opponent to Arthur Orton’s claim, yet he recognized the story’s power to resonate differently depending on one’s social class and location on the colonial map. Trollope generalized the Australian response to the Tichborne case in this manner:

I may here remark that throughout the colonies generally I found that the opinions of men and women ran very very much in favor of the claimant; - not in any way because he was an Australian, for no colonist was fond of him, but apparently because there was a pleasurable excitement in the idea that such a man should return home from the wild, reckless life of the Australian bush and turn out to be an English baronet. I discussed the question with an Australian judge, who is perhaps second in reputation as a lawyer to no English lawyer out of England, inferior to very few if any at home, - and I found him to be strongly in favor of the butcher. The evidence, in his mind, was in the butcher’s favor. Had he heard the case with his wig on, I do not doubt but that he would have thought differently.

348 Australia, 265
349 Australia, 412
350 Australia, 413.
Here Trollope suggests that local pride can lead to a lack of sober judgment among those in the colonies, even as he hopes the judge’s wig would mitigate such bias. As Michael Roe suggests the “theme of return from Antipodean poverty to metropolitan grandeur” was likely “the stock of many a colonial day-dream.” For those hoping to advance in society these were pleasant daydreams, but for those with land and money to protect such schemes were the product of collective nightmares. If the colonies were more democratic and less hierarchical, what was to stop their inhabitants from returning home and demanding similar recognition? What safeguards were in place to ensure that people could expand outward, and even use the colonies as repositories for those in favor of democracy without compromising stability at home? The novels discussed in the following sections are two examples of Trollope’s attempts to mitigate such risks through the structure of his fiction.

As Robert Tracy and other critics have observed, Trollope’s later novels showcase “the darker aspects of human behavior,” and in the words of A.O.J. Cockshut they display a “Progress to Pessimism.” Several arguments as to why this was the case have been proposed. Some see his increasing pessimism as the natural effect of old age. During the 1870’s Trollope saw a decline in the popularity of his fiction and was writing novels at a pace that the market for them did not warrant. However, Trollope’s reputation as a author concerned with monetary gain is complicated by his refusal, in some respects, to give his readers what they wanted in the 1870’s, the last full decade of his tenure as a writer. Robert Tracy claims that Trollope really meant it when he said farewell to the people of Barsetshire at the end of The Last Chronicle of Barset; despite tremendous

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351 Roe, 146.
352 Tracy, 6. The Cockshut quote is quoted in Tracy.
public demand for more of the same, Trollope’s fiction in the 1870’s took on a decidedly darker turn. Generally speaking, according to Tracy, “The great majority of readers . . . have preferred the comforting familiarities of Barsetshire, unwilling to enter the social and psychological turbulence he explores in his later, more complex novels.” Those, like Tracy, who take the time to look at these later novels are often surprised by their complexity, their range of topics, and their serious tone.

Trollope lacked the plotting skills of a Wilkie Collins or a Mary Elizabeth Braddon so it is understandable that few examine his fiction alongside theirs. Even when his characters are confronted with a mystery, Trollope emphasizes how characters respond to the mystery – how they adapt, take sides, and treat their peers – instead of focusing on the mystery’s resolution. Plot is a means to reveal character and little else in Trollope. George Levine has related Trollope’s peculiar plotting in terms of evolutionary theory: for Levine, Trollope is his “central example of Darwinian novelist.” He likens Trollope to Darwin in a number of ways: both viewed themselves primarily as observers, both worked doggedly, and both depersonalized their achievements in their autobiographies suggesting that anyone could have done what they did. Each saw patterns in his observations about the world and conveyed those patterns to readers. At the same time, both Darwin and Trollope’s worldviews are ultimately conservative as they view big changes as rare and potentially fatal; each traces and promotes the idea of gradual change over time. As such, both downplay the role of individuals because their efforts are ultimately inconsequential: for Darwin mutations that result in change happen randomly and can’t be initiated by individuals and in Trollope’s stories characters who

353 Tracy, 3.
impose their wills too strongly are silenced. Levine also links Darwin and Trollope to the system of laissez faire economics outlined by Adam Smith:

Smith’s theory, like Darwin’s, and like Trollope’s novels, depends upon the assumption that humans and animals move freely and without artificial interference from government, scientist, breeder, or novelist. The consequence of observing free movement – goes each of the three fictions – will be the discovery that apparent disorder is transformed by natural means, sometimes apparently cruel, into a present order.355

The idea that Trollope’s characters move freely echoes Hawthorne’s famous statement that Trollope’s novels are “just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case.”356 Like a scientist, Trollope watches his characters and makes detailed notations about their responses to various stimuli, the stimuli being the plot elements that he introduces at the beginning of each novel. Trollope’s realism lasts until the end of his novels when the giant’s glass case is shattered by his happy endings; for reality is seldom so neatly brought together as are Trollopian endings. Nevertheless, in Trollope’s later novels when he focuses on darker themes, his endings fail to completely counteract all that came before: his endings belie a “quiet skepticism that makes them very different than Austen’s happy endings.”357 As such, Trollope implies “that the romantic dream of ideal endings cannot be enacted in realistic narrative.”358

355 Levine, 185.
356 Quoted in Super, 125.
357 Levine, 189.
358 Ibid.
As I’ve argued previously, other examples of this later fiction (He Knew He Was Right, The Way We Live Now and The Prime Minister) promote a sense of unease concerning England’s imperial responsibilities, her risky investments in global commodities, and her ability ward off foreign villains. English gentlemanly values were being slowly degraded, in Trollope’s estimation, as Victorians became more worldly, enamored with foreign goods and attitudes, and increasingly dishonest. In some ways Trollope’s later, darker fiction anticipates changes in literary emphasis that are more commonly associated with late Victorian fiction more generally; critics often characterize late-Victorian fiction as “saturated with the sense that the entire nation – as a race of people, as a political and imperial force, as a social and cultural power – was in irretrievable decline.” Writers like Bram Stoker, Joseph Conrad, H. Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Rudyard Kipling crafted stories whose plots reveal fear of reverse colonization, miscegenation, atavism, and the frightful possibility of “going native”. The claim that Trollope prefigures such changes in fiction is a novel one, but it is not as farfetched as it initially sounds. What surely differentiates Trollope from those who followed is that unlike many in that group, Trollope still harbors faith that English society can ward off decline even as he becomes increasingly ambivalent about how they will manage to do so. For Trollope, it is the form of the novel itself that ensures the continuation and stability of English identity, and this is most clearly seen in the two novels Trollope wrote in the wake of the Tichborne affair.

360 For one of many such readings see Yumna Siddiqi, “The Cesspool of Empire: Sherlock Holmes and the Return of the Repressed,” Victorian Literature and Culture 34 (2006): 234-247
Like so many of Trollope’s novels, *Is He Popenjoy?* was written while Trollope was trotting the globe. Begun in England in 1874, Trollope continued to write the novel after his departure for Australia: “He wrote as he sailed down the Red Sea from Suez to Aden, he wrote as the ship rounded Arabia and passed the Indian coast, he wrote in the intervals of his tour of Ceylon, and he finished this ‘tale of modern English life’ in the Indian Ocean between Ceylon and Australia, on 3 May 1875.” Trollope began writing *Is He Popenjoy* during the final stages of the Claimant’s criminal trial; the novel’s title, John Sutherland asserts, “alludes – as readers of the 1870’s would have picked up – to the question of the day: ‘is he Tichborne?’” McWilliam notes that “the tale of a disputed inheritance in an old aristocratic family was bound to have resonance for the original readers.” While on the surface *Is He Popenjoy?* may seem only tangentially related to the Tichborne affair, there is more to the comparison than just surface resonance as the novel reveals much about Trollope’s attempt to reconcile English identity with the threat of what he perceived as imposture. How such threats are mitigated reveal some problematic threads in Trollope’s thought.

As mentioned previously, much of Trollope’s later fiction is concerned with the inheritance of titles and estates, frequently with an authorial interest in seeing that by the end of novels a rightful, and right-thinking, heir continues the time-honored legacy that was interrupted by the plot. In this novel, “Popenjoy” is a title bestowed on the heir to the marquisate of Brotherton, an honor that is passed on in the Germain family. However,

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361 Tracy, 186.
362 John Sutherland, *Is He Popenjoy?*, viii
363 McWilliam, 268. The Claimant’s story inspired Charles Reade’s novel *The Wandering Heir* which was also staged as a play as well as the Antipodean classic *His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke.
“the wealth of the family of the Germains was not equal to their rank” (4). The Germain estate is impoverished due to the mismanagement of the current Marquis of Brotherton, who prefers life in Italy and cares little for England. Lord George Germain, the Marquis’ younger brother, is one who “at a very early period of his life had been entrusted the difficult task of living as the head of his family with little or no means for the purpose” (4). Clearly the more fit of the siblings to manage the estate, George, as the younger son, has little power and chooses to live in near poverty to do what he can for the estate, and is morose, justifiably bitter, and of necessity frugal.

The novel begins with the marriage of George Germain and Mary Lovelace and with the typical narrative voice one would expect in a Trollopian comedy; however, after the first few chapters, that voice recedes “leaving us at the mercy of a duplicitous shift away from the comedy of manners we had thought we were reading.”\textsuperscript{364} As with \textit{He Knew He Was Right}, the marriage quickly begins to disintegrate. As is frequently the case in Trollope, our sympathy is with the wife as Trollope hints it should be with this early statement to his audience: “I must let them understand how it came to pass that so pretty, so pert, so gay, so good a girl as Mary Lovelace, without any great fault on her part, married a man so grim, so gaunt, so sombre, and so old as Lord George Germain.”\textsuperscript{365} The age difference and conflicting demeanors were the result of a marriage for monetary security instead of love, even as the two eventually do develop fondness for each other. Previously, George had been in love with a worldly socialite, Adelaide Houghton, who declined his offer of marriage to marry a man with more money. George has the outward demeanor of one who is a deep thinker, but readers are told that “birth and culture had

\textsuperscript{364} Kincaid, 241.

\textsuperscript{365}Anthony Trollope, \textit{Is He Popjenoy?} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 2. All further references will be parenthetical.
given him to look of an intellect greater than he possessed”; furthermore, he is described as “simple, conscientious, absolutely truthful, full of prejudices and weak-minded” (7). He is an imperfect representative of his class, yet he is a character who has his priorities – his family and their estate – most in balance.

Mary is the daughter of the Dean of Brotherton, the son of a stable-keeper who married a rich woman. Although he is not quite a gentleman by birth, the Dean is able to give his daughter a significant amount of money much needed by her new husband. The Dean relishes the marriage of his daughter into a landed family even as he encourages his daughter not to give up her independence by living in the country for the entire year with her husband. Because Mary has never wanted for money, she is more light-hearted than her husband, less concerned about how much things cost, and comfortable in the social circles of London. The Dean maintains an apartment for the newlyweds in the city and arranges with George that the two live there for six months out of the year, interference that George comes to see as invasive. The Dean has ambitions for his daughter and hopes that Mary’s firstborn son would become Popenjoy as it appeared unlikely that George’s misanthropic, sickly brother would produce an heir.

As the Germains begin their life together, their marriage is tested in a variety of ways. George is tempted by his old flame Adelaide, who sees her own marriage and George’s as no reason to end their romance, and Mary tries to establish a healthy balance between submissiveness and autonomy within her marriage, even though George is much older and clings to his authority in the marriage. Her husband becomes increasingly jealous of her friendship with a young Byronic Guards captain, Jack De Baron. Neither of their would-be suitors are concerned with the morality of their actions and are actively
predatory, and those in their social circles frequently gossip about them. Though neither Mary nor George seriously considers adultery, each is jealous of the other’s company which leads to a certain degree of sexual frustration between the newlyweds – Mary seems to want more physical closeness and frequently touches her husband and makes gestures of affection, but he is less responsive than she wishes, leading to some speculation of impotence.  

As they face these challenges, the mysterious homecoming of George’s brother, with a foreign wife and infant son, further puts pressure on the couple’s relationship. The Marquis demands to live in the family estate and evicts his mother and sisters which adds to George’s stress. The Marquis is secretive about his wife and as she doesn’t speak English, he discourages his family from socializing with her. Similarly, he rarely allows anyone to see his son which results in gossip within the family and the larger community about the child. When George finally is allowed to see his supposed nephew, he describes what he saw to the rest of his family he says he saw “a nasty little black thing” (233). Many in Brotherton suspect the Marquis of trying to pass off his Italian wife’s bastard as his own. The Dean’s desire to see his daughter’s child inherit the title prompts him to pressure George into fully investigating the case hoping that the courts will declare the infant illegitimate. While George is also determined to investigate, he resents the Dean’s interference. Near the end of the novel, however, the infant Popenjoy dies as does his father shortly thereafter, making the question of identity moot – in fact it is never answered – and Mary’s infant son is given the title Popenjoy. George and Mary reconcile

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366 Margaret Markwich keenly explains how Trollope is able to convey to readers that what is experienced is sexual frustration, perhaps even a lack of consummation in the marriage, without gaining the attention of the censors. See Margaret Markwich, Trollope and Women (London: The Trollope Society, 1997), 146.
their differences and presumably live together happily having achieved a healthier balance in their marriage and warding off outside threats.

John Sutherland calls the ending “aggressively happy” as it contains “a catalogue of convenient deaths, legacies, wedding bells, nursery arrangements, and future prosperity.” But as Sutherland suggests, such an ending “masks anxieties” and masks what he calls a “savage moroseness” cultivated in what until the ending is an extremely pessimistic novel. Contemporary reviews of Is He Popenjoy? were overwhelmingly negative: a reviewer in the Saturday suggested that Trollope was showing signs of diminishing ability: “all the finer touches, the tender, subtle gradations are all worn out, and strength is supplied by a hardening of the strongest lines . . . all the delicacy and nicety of touch is gone.” The Spectator called it “poor as a work of art and to some extent unwholesome.” Polhemus notes that especially in this novel Trollope “seems resigned to the badness of a world inhabited mostly by knaves and fools, and this resignation makes the book even more pessimistic than its predecessors. Though readers are given the sweetmeats and sugar-plums Trollope prescribed as proper endings for novels, the ending of Is He Popenjoy? fails to lessen what for most readers is the bleakness of tone of what came before. For with the possible exception of Mary Germain, none of the characters are particularly sympathetic and many are exemplars of shallowness, self-centeredness, and cruelty. Few learn from their experiences in the novel.

367 John Sutherland, xviii.
368 Ibid.
370 Ibid.
More generally, Trollope’s novels in this period were seen by some as “dangerous” and “repellent” for their depiction of realistic vice: “Indeed they are rendered dangerous by this very realism –the fact that, as the *Athenaeum* supposes, Trollope disclaims any moral purpose beyond the photographic delineation of human meanness.”372 The meanness, ineptitude, and shallowness of the families portrayed in *Is He Popenjoy?* is so realistically rendered, that the ending (with its reminder that this is indeed a work of fiction) seems fantastical, supported by nothing other than the author’s wish that it be so. Returning to Levine’s suggestion that Trollope is a Darwinian novelist, the bulk of *Is He Popenjoy?* is a candid and realistic portrayal of characters under a microscope – they behave as their flawed characters dictate that they should, which is for the most part badly. Characters whose individuality puts them in conflict with the status quo of established societal norms, the Marquis and his son as well as the two would-be adulterers and a group of parodied feminists, are eventually silenced. This silencing is a product of the Trollopian genre of the novel. Similarly, the Tichborne Claimant could certainly be seen as one who tried to manipulate English society using a combination of dishonesty and an impressive amount of creativity and willpower. Yet despite some popular support, his attempted swindle failed as he was recognized by the respectable public as foreign to an established English family. For Trollope, this was something that even the most flawed person of rank could clearly understand and something that could be imposed on a story.

As N. John Hall has noted “one of the special features of *Is He Popenjoy?* lies in its satire of English mistrust of everything foreign.” This distrust is most obviously seen in the reaction of most of the Germain family members and Mary’s father to the Marquis and his darkly complexioned son, but it extends to several other situations in the novel as well. One of these foreign threats involves German and American feminists (Baroness Banmann and Olivia Q. Fleabody) who unsuccessfully petition for Mary’s support of their Women’s Rights movement, an association that George found embarrassing. These women congregate at the “Rights of Women Institute” which was “Established for the Relief of Disabilities of Females” (158). A typical member, the Baroness Banmann, has a double-chin and moustache indicating Trollope’s idea that fighting for women’s rights was decidedly unfeminine. Another threat involves George’s jealousy over Mary’s desire to dance a popular foreign dance: the Kappa Kappa. Kincaid writes: “At the center of the novel is the display of the new dance, the Kappa Kappa, but is it an innocent expression of joy or the occasion for dark sexual intrigue? Whatever it is, it gives no one any joy. We are certain that everyone misunderstands it and reacts to it blindly or hysterically.” When George sees Mary as Jack de Baron’s dancing partner (she intended to dance with someone else), George angrily drags her home and nearly accuses her of infidelity. Similarly, the Germain marriage is challenged by other sources that could be seen as “foreign.” George’s family members view Mary’s lesser parentage as a threat to their way of life as they view Mary as in need of moral instruction. George’s sisters pressure Mary to devote her free time to sewing clothing for the poor and frequently attending church as they worry that their

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374 Overton calls it “his crudest attack on women’s emancipation.” 6
375 Kincaid, 241.
brother has married beneath him. George himself proposes an extensive reading schedule for his new bride. That the Dean continually advocates for his daughter’s independence presents a threat that George sees as an assault on his authority as a husband.

The greatest foreign threat, however, is the return of the Marquis from Italy as his presence and that of his infant son threatens the stability of many more people than the newlywed couple. In fact, the Marquis would be pleased to see the entire English way of life abolished: he wonders “that Englishmen can hold their own in the world at all” (39). George briskly responds that they do and views his brother’s words as “ear-piercing blasphemy” because “the national conviction that an Englishman could thrash three foreigners, and if necessary eat them, was strong with him” (vol. 2, 39). Even with the mild critique of George’s national pride, readers would likely be repulsed by the Marquis’ suggestion that the rest of Europe looks on Englishmen “with infinite disgust” and “must be saying, ‘Pig, pig, pig,’ beneath their breath at every turn” (39). The Marquis comes across as an unfit estate manager, an unfit brother, and, considering his values, an unfit father for a future English marquis. The question of the infant’s identity, however, is never fully answered and finally becomes moot following the death of the sickly infant and later his father.376 Trollope’s unwillingness to declare whether the dead infant was deserving of his title reveals Trollope’s purpose, not to weave a mystery to its fruition but to showcase how society reacts to a mystery: “The reader is called upon to relive a story in terms of character, not event.” 377 In a similar way, the novel asks readers to examine

376 One critic goes as far as to claim that the title “Is He Popenjoy?” is a question that is not simply unanswered in regards to the dead infant but that lingers over birth of Mary’s son as well. He implies that Mary may actually have cheated on her husband with Jack De Baron. Such a reading seems, to me, very inconsistent with Trollope’s writing.
how a variety of circumstances challenge a newlywed couple’s relationship – the stimuli are far less important than the couple’s reactions and their triumph over foreign elements.

There are at least three characters who can be seen as imposters, echoes of the Tichborne Claimant: the Marquis’ infant son, the Marquis himself, and the socially-reaching Dean of Brotherton. Each is a different kind of imposter, yet only the Dean survives the novel and has his hopes realized as his method of social advancement receives the novel’s nod of approval, if not its complete endorsement. Clearly, the infant Popenjoy is not a willful imposter, yet his very existence is destabilizing. He is one “whom everyone regards as a potential title-deed rather than a human being” and his death is viewed as a godsend by all but his reprobate father. Despite the child’s inactivity, Cockshut suggests that, “he controls the plot, and the two events in his life – birth and death – are enough to nullify all the plotting and planning about the inheritance.”

Though characters take sides in the inheritance question and plan legal actions, the problem is resolved by providence through the author’s guiding hand or a kind of natural selection. The child simply cannot survive once he is brought to England. Like the aborigines who Trollope projected would “naturally” become extinct as a result of British contact, little Popenjoy conveniently is too weak to survive.

Unlike the child, the Marquis is willful in his efforts at imposture: after his child dies the Marquis admits “Upon my soul, I don’t know whether he was legitimate or not, according to English fashions” (vol 2, 202). He also admits the he could never discover the true marital status of the woman he married. The Marquis can be seen as an imposter in two ways: on the one hand, he tries to pass off a questionable bride and a possible

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bastard who may not even be *his* bastard as the rightful heir to a title, but on the other hand, his own mismanagement of the family estate suggests that he is a kind of imposter, filling a role meant for a gentleman and doing so poorly. He vows to stay alive to have another son as he feels that the investigation into his claims was unfair: “They have something to stand upon, but – damn it – they went about it in such a dirty way!” (vol. 2, 202). The Marquis reveals himself as “an idle, self-indulgent, ill-conditioned man” and the blame is squarely placed on his lack of a familial or a community sense of duty (4). He, like the Claimant, was fond of French novels.

While some foreign elements like the dance and caricatured feminists are treated more comically, the threat of the infant Popenjoy and his misanthropic father are given more serious consideration. Juliet McMaster calls the Marquis Trollope’s “most sustained study of a landlord who uses his estate to control and punish his family.”379 His choice to return is never fully explained; it seems that hearing of his brother’s marriage compels him to do whatever he can do destroy that happiness. The Marquis drives his family including his dependent sisters out of the family home and dictates the visitors they can see, threatening them with banishment and destitution if they disobey him. The Marquis’ only unwavering support comes from his mother, the Marchioness, who refuses to speak badly of her son even after he drives herself and his siblings from their home. The Marquis is one of Trollope’s most distasteful creations, thoroughly unlikable, and hated by all around him, except for his long-suffering mother. One can easily see an exaggerated portrait of the Claimant’s mother in the Marchioness, her Italian background

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(like the French heritage of the Claimant’s mother) only adding to the caricature.\textsuperscript{380} According to Cockshut, “In this old woman’s vagaries are to be found Trollope’s judgement on the dangers of respect for rank as a corrupter of intellect and morals.”\textsuperscript{381} She uses sentiment as her guide instead of judging her son’s actions rationally.

The Marquis claims to hate his Englishness, refuses to acknowledge his social responsibilities, and denies his duty to his family to live above ridicule, proclaiming, “I wish with all of my heart that I had been born a Chinese or a Red Indian.”\textsuperscript{382} It is implied that his vices extend beyond what Trollope was comfortable narrating. He is likely syphilitic, cares nothing for his family, and seems to want his child to be the heir merely to make the rest of his family angry. He rages against “that pigheaded English blindness which makes us think that everything outside of own country is, or ought to be, given up to the devil” (295). While the Marquis may be right about a certain degree of pigheadedness, his is certainly not the privileged voice in the novel. A certain degree of critique is acceptable in Trollope, and the novel clearly satirizes some fears about foreign threats; nevertheless, the more serious threat that the Marquis poses for English identity is ultimately not tolerated.

Like the Claimant’s preposterous claims, the Marquis’s claim to have been legally married when his son was born is contradicted by seemingly sound evidence. Just before George and Mary were married, the Marquis informed his brother in a letter that he also was going to be married (“I am to be married”) to an Italian widow. Several months later when he announced his return home he declared that he had been married for a year and that he was bringing his son to England, contradicting his previous

\textsuperscript{380} Sutherland makes this connection.\textsuperscript{381} Cockshut, 47.\textsuperscript{382} 299.
implication. Later the Marquis suggested that he had been married to the widow twice, and added the interesting twist that his Italian bride had never been married to the man who she had lived with in Italy, but had only pretended to be. This necessitated a second marriage after the man died to satisfy those who knew them as husband and wife. For George, this secretiveness was unforgivable and it made “him doubt whether he could ever again have fraternal relations with a man who knew so little of his duty” (127). Not only did he mistrust his brother’s foreign bride, but he loathed his brother’s abdication of duty: “But he mistrusted an Italian widow, because she was and Italian, and because she was a widow, and he mistrusted the whole connection, because there had been in it none of that honourable openness which should, he thought, characterize all family doings in such a family as the Germains” (128). Like George saw his brother, the Tichborne family viewed the Claimant as one who, if he were telling the truth, had married and started a family without even a courtesy letter to let his family know that he was alive. From such reasoning, even if Arthur Orton were actually the Claimant, he so neglected his family duties through his absence and behavior abroad that he became undeserving of their attention. Such figures, claimants and degenerate Marquis’, have no permanent home in Trollope’s universe. The Marquis dies, like his son, and only his mother mourns. As Robert Tracy has observed “the Marquis’s plight is symbolized in little Popenjoy, for legally, socially, and even physically, the child cannot exist”; in Trollope’s theory of society “only an acknowledged social position can infer identity.”

This brings the discussion to the Dean who is in some ways a destabilizing character, but who is ultimately rewarded with all that he desires. His position in the novel is privileged in revealing ways. The Dean aspires for his daughter to have land and

383 Tracy, 207.
a title; he worked hard as a poor clergyman before marrying a rich woman who died soon after leaving him with “one only daughter on whom to lavish his cares and his affection” (3). The Dean is, perhaps, the novel’s most complicated character. Sadleir calls the him “a Trollope dignitary of the first water”\textsuperscript{384} Several have seen him as a kind of stand-in for Trollope as both the Dean and Trollope moved in gentlemanly circles yet were frequently reminded that such status was shaky at best. Both Trollope and the Dean were boisterous and awkward in social situations, speaking their minds and frequently inviting conflict. One anecdote has Trollope interrupting a conversation at a party to proclaim that he completely disagreed with the claims of one of the guests, only to pause when attention was centered on him to inquire what it was they were speaking about. Trollope practiced this aggressive and confrontational style when he worked in Ireland according to N. John Hall in an attempt to “impress and order about.”\textsuperscript{385} Hall writes, “As this new manner succeeded so well, Trollope cultivated it until his aggressive behavior became his habitual way of meeting the world; this new ‘persona’ he extended beyond his professional work, and it eventually became the Anthony Trollope of record.”\textsuperscript{386} N. John Hall sees the dean as a kind of stand in for Trollope’s ideas about ambition; while the Dean’s near celebration of the infant Popenjoy’s death is somewhat distasteful, Hall suggests that his actions and “the dean’s words echo Trollope’s own frequently expressed views.”\textsuperscript{387} At the same time, others see the Dean as a character “not wholly approved of by his creator.”\textsuperscript{388} The Dean is impetuous, highly protective of his daughter, and frequently impulsive in his actions: when the Marquis insults his daughter (probably

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384 Sadleir, 397
385 N. John Hall, 106.
386 Ibid.
387 N. John Hall, 440.
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calling her a whore), the Dean strikes the Marquis and is arrested, refusing to apologize for his actions despite his position as a clergyman. While George prefers inaction, the Dean is one of the few characters in the novel who takes action against the potentially usurping Marquis. And, it would be difficult to deny that the beating the Marquis received from the Dean likely sped up his demise. Murder charges, however, are never pursued. Like the Marquis, the Dean often speaks his mind to the disdain of those around him, but unlike the Marquis the Dean’s words are always in service to his family’s and by extension his community’s well being. While a man like the Claimant tried to get land and titles immorally, the Dean can be seen as an example of one who is socially ambitious, but who channels that ambition appropriately, into his career and family. He may be boisterous, but he is honest. While still poor, he chose a career meant for a gentleman and worked like one.

Having a career was immensely important to Trollope. It is possible to call Trollope the most career-minded of Victorian novelists; his own example as a dual careerist, his arguments in favor of hard work, and his attention to character’s careers positions Trollope as an important voice in mid-century debates about professionalism and career advancement, debates that were strongly influenced by events in the Empire. The influence of reports on the efficiency of the Indian Civil Service directly prompted the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1855 which argued for reform in the metropole while events like the 1858 Government of India Act inspired debate about greater bureaucratization at home. This “curious interchange of ideas and possibilities between imperial and domestic settings” contributed, as Nicholas Dames has argued, to the development of the modern idea of the career as “the sequential ascension of one
ambitious individual within a profession whose stations were carefully graded (by Civil Service procedure), whose intended public or client-range (imperial subjects) was distanced from the sources of professional expertise, and whose justification lay, importantly, in the boundaries that that distance, and those degradations, put around the ambition that initiated the entire sequence.” Put differently, career options in the colonies created, for some, the ideal of what a career should be—a gradual progression through stages of advancement, each step carefully trodden in the footsteps of previous members of the profession, with a clear sense of seniority, based less on natural skill or ambition than on studious, methodical attention to the task at hand. Dames asserts that Trollope reveled in the work that a career performs, what he calls the “harnessing of ambition.” That a career provided a clear sense of identity and purpose for Trollope’s characters (and for Trollope himself) is clear, and that this career could harness and focus potentially destructive kinds of energy into more social acceptable forms is in evidence in *Is He Popenjoy?* in the figure of the Dean.

Roger Tichborne, like the Marquis, grew tired of England and left in search of adventure and foreign intrigue. Rich enough to avoid too much work, both men indulged their whims, and neglected what could have been more gentlemanly, career-minded paths. Trollope abhorred idleness and often suggests that those who neglect their duties become inhuman. As Cockshut explains, “The final consequence of the dreaded boredom and idleness is the inability to feel anything at all. For Trollope anaesthesia is the final horror, but all except the rich are protected against it by the necessary economic struggle.”389 The Marquis certainly suffers from this kind of anaesthesia – he admits that he wasn’t particularly fond of his son. George may be dull, but his diligent work at

389 Cockshut, 25.
maintaining the family estate at Manor Cross, keeps him from becoming like his brother; in fact, it serves to make him patriotic and proud of Englishness, even if he isn’t very bright.

Unlike the Claimant who tried to tarnish the name of a respectable woman, the Dean went to extraordinary lengths and was unapologetic about striking the Marquis to defend his daughter’s honor – a step that her husband fell short of condoning. It would make sense considering Trollope’s personal wish to be accepted in gentlemanly circles that he had sympathy with his position. At the end of the novel, Trollope summaries the Dean’s weaknesses in this way:

    But he had been subject to one weakness, which marred a manliness which would otherwise have been great. He, who should have been proud of the lowliness of his birth, and have known that the brightest feather in his cap was the fact that, having been humbly born, he had made himself what he was – he had never ceased to be ashamed of the stable-yard. And as he felt himself to be degraded by that which he had sprung, so did he think that the only whitewash against such dirt was to be found in the aggrandizement of his daughter and the nobility of her children. (298)

Trollope’s insight here is insightful and explains why, though the Dean may be flawed, he does not ultimately condemn him to the fate of the Marquis and his son. His career is what saves him. Terry suggests that the “Germains are worse snobs than the Dean, joyless, hypocritical and small minded. A rapprochement is achieved, but it is the Dean’s
frankness and his daughter’s spontaneity and courage which show the superior attitude to life.”

One lingering question is whether Trollope’s novel critiques or endorses a society where as Polhemus notes “property and status mean more than life.” Once again, returning to the view of Trollope as a Darwinian novelist is helpful. Certainly celebrating the death of a child reveals a degree of barbarism; however, because property and status transcend the individual, they can be seen as more important for posterity than the fate of single individuals in Trollope’s worldview. As such, the novel’s ending with its suggestion that society will continue on as is, despite the efforts of individuals, could be seen to some as comforting. Nevertheless, using death as the way to get rid of foreign threats is decidedly distasteful as it is unclear what the real world mechanism of such change might be. The Germain marriage, for all of its flaws, remains impenetrable to the forces that intentionally and unintentionally would harm it.

*John Caldigate*

Trollope began *John Caldigate* in February of 1877 and completed it in June of the same year while at sea heading to South Africa. “Perhaps the most ‘sensational of Trollope’s novels,’” *John Caldigate* was inspired “by the celebrated Tichborne case.” Even more so than *Is He Popenjoy?* which presents various American and European threats to English identity, *John Caldigate*, more literally echoes the Tichborne case as Caldigate lives for three years in Australia and returns to England, only to find himself on trial for bigamy. That Caldigate was previously a less than exemplary representative of

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390 Terry, 225.
391 209.
392 Terry, 278.
the landed class only strengthens the comparison. *John Caldigate* and *Is He Popenjoy*, in addition to having connections with the Tichborne case, are thematically linked as well; for *John Caldigate* “returns to the social theme” of the “political, social, and moral disruption created when a country gentleman does not perform his duty by living on his estate, where he can maintain the miniature society that depends on him.”³⁹³ Like the Marquis, John Caldigate relinquishes his duty and seeks society elsewhere. And as with *Is He Popenjoy?*, what begins as a Trollopian comedy quickly shifts in *John Caldigate*: “The comedy dissolves into bleak irony which at last is made to yield again to comedy.”³⁹⁴ The novel’s ending restores a sense of order, once again with the appearance of a character with links to Trollope himself, but the ending hardly minimizes the bleak tone of the rest of the novel. Instead of using a string of convenient deaths to restore order, Trollope restores order though the diligent work of postal worker.

Unlike *Is He Popenjoy?* which is a multi-plot novel, *John Caldigate* is similar in length, but more narrow in focus. Trollope considered *Mrs. John Caldigate* as an early possibility for the title, and if he had used that title, it would have made sense to add a question mark as with *Is He Popenjoy?*. The primary question of the novel is whether or not Hester Bolton, Caldigate’s English wife, is, in fact, his only wife. *John Caldigate*, however, makes more sense as a title as events in the novel are narrowly focused on Caldigate’s life and how his life is impacted by others as well as how he impacts those around him.³⁹⁵ The novel begins by explaining how the young John Caldigate became estranged from his father Daniel Caldigate, a country squire and widower who was “just”

³⁹³ Tracy, 209.
³⁹⁴ Kincaid, 244.
³⁹⁵ One critic suggests that *John Caldigate* “seems to be an experiment in search of a method to replace the multiple plot” because it “combine[s] a tight linear plot” with a “broad statement about the essential rightness of the English system.” Tracy 234
but at the same time “hard and unsympathetic.” Following the loss of his wife and two daughters, Daniel Caldigate felt it would be best to “inculcate good Liberal principles into that son of his” and was frustrated that his son preferred to watch and arrange fights among rats in the corn-stacks instead of discussing politics: he believed that things might be better “if he could only convince the boy that politics were better than rats.”

To John Caldigate, his family estate Folking had few attractions “beyond the rats” and the estate is described in bleak terms: the dike which bisected the property was “so sluggish, so straight, so ugly, and so deep, as to impress the mind of a stranger with ideas of suicide” (4). Unhappy and bored at the estate, he came to care little for it. While at school, Caldigate accumulates a large amount of debt, some to traders at Cambridge and more to unscrupulous lenders. When Daniel Caldigate learned that his son needed the £800 he owed in “regular” debt paid before he could graduate, he told his son “that he was expelled from his father’s heart and his father’s house” (7). Continually hounded by lenders, Caldigate decides to ask his father for a sum of money that will essentially buy himself out of his inheritance, including the family estate at Folking, and give his father the ability to break the entail and leave the property to one of his nephews.

John Caldigate planned to use the rest of the money to travel to Australia: “There was gold to be found at this moment among the mountains of New South Wales, in quantities which captivated his imagination” (9). Willing to gamble, he hoped to strike it rich while at the same time proving to his father that he was a hard worker and had reformed his ways. Caldigate chose to travel to Australia with a schoolmate Dick Shand, from a family of lesser means, who hoped to find opportunities unavailable for him in

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396 Anthony Trollope, John Caldigate (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3. All further references will be parenthetical.
England. Shand reasons, “There are a dozen of us, and the sooner some of us disperse ourselves, the more room there will be in the nest for the others” (28). John Caldigate had other reasons for wanting to leave England in addition to financial problems and a poor relationship with his father; his cousin Julia Babington was in love with him and felt that he had promised to marry her, causing his Aunt to pressure him to do so. Dick Shand’s younger sister was also in love with him, and Australia was a means of escaping from those relationships. Before leaving, Caldigate became smitten, surreptitiously, with Hester Bolton, the daughter of his father’s lawyer. Though the two only meet once, it is Hester that Caldigate imagines marrying if he ever returns to England. Knowing that most who go looking for gold fail, Caldigate vows that he will work painstakingly to achieve his goal of finding gold, promising not to turn to drink or to draw attention to his gentlemanly status. He tries to convince Dick Shand to agree to his plan of “honesty, sobriety and industry” (37). Nevertheless, he has his doubts about Shand’s ability to ward off temptations.

While traveling to Australia, on the Goldfinder, Caldigate meets a mysterious woman who calls herself Mrs. Smith and both John and Dick become interested in her. She has a shady past that includes work as a dancer, and the two hear rumors that she was married to a drunkard who drank himself to death during the first year of their marriage. During their journey Mrs. Smith and Caldigate become close, and at one point the ship’s captain warns him that on ships one meets many “queer passengers” and that “the women are the most dangerous” (57). Defying the captain’s warning, they continue spending time together and Caldigate begins to wonder whether he can easily depart from Mrs. Smith when they reach Australia. Even though he enjoys her company, he knows that
marrying her would be beneath him. When they arrive in Melbourne, they weigh their options and Mrs. Smith suggests that they behave as if they are engaged to each other. Feeling pressure, he agrees but still hopes to find a way to extricate himself from the situation and is happy that she can’t accompany him on his journey to the gold fields. Incidentally, one of the towns that Caldigate passes through is Wagga Wagga which readers would immediately associate with the Tichborne Claimant. Later, Caldigate sees in a newspaper that Mrs. Smith has become a stage dancer calling herself Madame Cettini, and Caldigate travels to visit her. After only seven months, Caldigate strikes gold, and very little is said about his ongoing relationship with Madame Cettini.

Caldigate writes to his father with the good news and begins a correspondence that helps to repair their relationship. Daniel Caldigate feels increasingly certain that allowing his son to buy out of his inheritance was a mistake. He welcomes his son to return home and live as the heir. After three years, Caldigate sells his shares in the mine to a man named Crinkett and returns to England without his friend Dick Shank, who had succumbed to drink and disappeared. Soon after returning, Caldigate proposes to Hester Bolton, and despite the protests of her fanatically religious mother who remembers Caldigate as a debtor, Hester accepts. The two begin their married life together and Hester soon gives birth to her son.

The trouble begins when Caldigate receives a letter from Mrs. Smith, who partnered with Crinkett in buying up the mine shares, demanding compensation because the gold ran out just after they bought the shares. She asserts that she and Caldigate were married in Ahalala and that if Caldigate wants the original copy of the marriage certificate, he should send the money (£20,000). She signs the letter Euphemia.
Caldigate, and tells him that she will happily marry Crinkett after the certificate is destroyed. When he refuses to pay, Crinkett, Smith and others come to England and threaten to expose Caldigate as a bigamist. Because Trollope’s narrator relates no details about the two and a half years Caldigate spent in Australia after finding gold, readers are in the dark about whether any of these claims were true. Indeed, when readers last encountered Mrs. Smith, she and Caldigate were engaged. Nevertheless, Caldigate denies that he was ever engaged in Australia when confronted by Hester’s brother Robert Bolton. Crinkett and Mrs. Smith press charges, claiming that Caldigate is a bigamist who abandoned his wife in Australia and whose son with Hester Bolton is illegitimate. Caldigate assures his wife and family that he is the victim of a blackmail scheme and that Mrs. Smith’s evidence, including the testimony of witnesses claiming to have been present at the wedding, is fabricated. He asserts that the right thing to do is to “defy these claimants” (228). He does admit that he lived with Euphemia Smith for a time while in Australia and that they lived as husband and wife, but that he never actually married her. He explains that social rules are less rigid in Australia and that people often call themselves by different names and live by different rules than in England. His father believes him, and Hester’s devotion to her husband is complete in spite of her mother’s continuous sermons about the consequences for her soul if she does not denounce Caldigate. While waiting for the trial, Mrs. Bolton tricks her daughter into visiting and locks her in her house for several days refusing to let her return to her husband. Hester is only released after her father sees that she is starving herself in protest and likely endangering her child. Such extreme measures make this one of Trollope’s most sensational works.
Although it is apparent to the jurors that Mrs. Smith and Crinkett have a monetary interest in participating in the trial, two important pieces of evidence make a verdict of not guilty for Caldigate nearly hopeless. First, before the trial started Caldigate decided to pay the £20,000 because he felt that is was the morally right thing to do. His fortune was more than enough to cover those he sold the mine to; in fact, he had been friendly with both of them and regretted that they made no return on their investment. However, the payment of the money looked like a bribe to the jurors. Incidentally, as Terry has noted, the loans reportedly owed by the Claimant, £20,000, equaled the sum paid by Caldigate to the conspirators, suggesting that Trollope was in yet another way reminding readers of the Claimant. At one point, Mrs. Smith claims that she would “sooner have fourteen years for perjury like the Claimant” than give up her share of the money (532). The second, and most important, piece of evidence was a letter purportedly sent by Caldigate in his handwriting to Mrs. Smith in Australia, bearing the addressee “Mrs. John Caldigate.” The letter was sent through the mail and stamped in Sydney, evidence according to Mrs. Smith that she was publicly acknowledged as his wife. Caldigate claimed that while he playfully addressed a letter to her, in her presence as a sign of affection, he never sent it through the mail, and he cannot explain how it came to be stamped. He argued that the postage stamp and marking from Sydney must have been forged. The testimony of postal employees affirms that Caldigate’s claims were possible, but it was not enough to save him from a verdict of guilty. Caldigate is sentenced to six years in prison, his son is declared illegitimate, and Hester was ruled to be a victim and unable to visit him.

397 Terry, 527.
Caldigate’s salvation would come from an unlikely source, but one not too surprising in a Trollope novel: a diligent English postal worker named Bagwax. An eccentric character, almost in the Dickensian vein, Bagwax was so moved by the idea that Hester Bolton, who so diligently supported her husband, was suffering without the man she loved that he worked day and night, on the job and off, at proving the letter admitted as evidence was a fraud. He studied the stamps used in Sydney and other markings on the letter and suggested that the stamp on the letter was too neat, not showing the same marks of wear of other letters from the period which he painstakingly collected. This evidence was not considered conclusive enough, and the Post Office offered to send Bagwax to Australia to inspect the posts personally, a prospect that excited the clerk greatly. However, as Bagwax continued to research he solved the mystery on his own without the necessity of the journey. Once it was determined that the stamps were fraudulently placed, Caldigate was pardoned and freed. And Bagwax was awarded with a six month postal appointment to Sydney to clean up the colonial posts to ensure that those who helped the conspirators were punished. The novel ends with Bagwax’s marriage to the daughter of a fellow postal clerk and with the birth of John and Hester Caldigate’s second son. Unlike the Marquis in Is He Popenjoy?, time outside of England impresses on Caldigate a renewed sense of duty: “Caldigate, like Odysseus embarks on a voyage only to discover later that he prefers life in England.”

Nardin remarks on what she calls the “Hegelian thesis of the novel” as she sees Trollope addressing the opposing worldviews of free will and determinism. The first part of the novel is about Caldigate’s “mistaken belief in the freedom of the will,” the second is focused on Mrs. Bolton, Hester’s fanatically religious mother “whose determinism

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398 Terry, 234.
offers an antithesis to Caldigate’s position,” and the third as is primarily concerned with
Bagwax who “synthesizes the acceptable aspects of free will and determinism.” I would add that Bagwax’s association with the British Post Office demonstrates yet another kind of synthesis. Certainly, Caldigate’s choice to sell his birthright and gamble it for a chance at gold is risky; nevertheless, he is confident that he can recreate himself in the Antipodes and careless about the consequences of his actions there. Mrs. Bolton, however, is “an Evangelical fanatic with an iron will and considerable powers of self-deception.” In her frenzied desire to keep her daughter away from sin, she would rather keep Hester protected from all human contact. According to Terry, “her possessiveness is revealed as one of those studies in monomania peculiar to Trollope.” Caldigate’s confidence that the world is there for him to conquer and Mrs. Bolton’s belief that total isolation is the only path to salvation is nicely balanced by Bagwax. He follows a respectable career path, works diligently, and is ultimately viewed as hero for freeing an innocent man; in addition, he is awarded with the travel he always sought in an official capacity with minimal risk. Unlike Caldigate who was incredibly lucky, both to strike gold and to be freed from prison, Bagwax is less exciting but decidedly safer. Bagwax is “perhaps Trollope’s one traditional hero: simple, noble, and with true romantic energy.”

Surprisingly, John Caldigate is “the only one of Trollope’s books in which for the purpose of his plot he uses his knowledge and experience of the Post Office.” What interests me, however, is that such a statement is not completely true: Trollope’s novel

400 Nardin, 75.
401 Terry, 147.
402 Kincaid, 246.
403 Sadleir, 420.
makes at least one false statement about colonial post office procedures, a claim that stamp collectors assert Trollope must have known was false.\textsuperscript{404} A mistake or a pure piece of fabrication in almost any other author’s fiction would not be as noteworthy, but considering Trollope’s dedication to realism in his novels, and his own intimate knowledge of British and colonial posts, such an error provides extraordinary insight concerning Trollope’s desire that the colonies be regulated through British institutions. In fact, it was these institutions that could help safeguard English identity for those traveling away from and perhaps returning to England. To explain Trollope’s “error”, Bagwax’s detective skills deserve more attention. Initially, Bagwax tried to show that one of the stamps on the letter was too neat, by comparing it to other letters from the period. Stamps would become worn with use, yet the stamp on the letter was perfect. The letter had a twopenny stamp from New South Wales and a postmark stamped in Sydney on May 10\textsuperscript{th} 1873. By looking closely at the stamps, Bagwax began studying the peculiar markings and discovers that the letter in evidence has a letter P in its lower corner. By looking at the impression of the date stamps used in the Sydney post office, Bagwax discovers that date stamps containing the P were not manufactured before 1874, proving the letter a fraud. The date stamps were manufactured in England and sent to Sydney which meant that Bagwax could look at the duplicate impressions without ever leaving England. Tangible markings as indicators of identity were one of the strongest kinds of evidence used in the Tichborne trials; the Claimant’s body was poked and prodded as he was examined for tattoos and other features. How to read those markings became the topics of the day. For the purpose of \textit{John Caldigate}, Trollope invents a British postal stamp with

the Queen’s picture that is manufactured, duplicated, and eventually monitored from
England, a stamp that didn’t exist. Sydney produced its own stamps. That Trollope
imagined a colonial system that was more imperially regulated than it actually was is his
way of resolving the problem of colonial return in the novel. In Terry’s words, “Because
it can detect and redress injustice the system itself is justified.”405

The need to invent a solution to get Caldigate out of prison comes from Trollope’s
own ambiguity about how the colonies ultimately would impact Englishness. While in his
non-fiction, he usually allows for little to no impact, his novels suggest more complexity.
Trollope never explains how “Australian life stabilizes John Caldigate, but it destroys
Mrs. Smith, Shand, and most of the miners we see.”406 The reasons for Caldigate’s
success are unexplained, and his striking gold so quickly borders on the miraculous.
According to Terry, “Trollope is not even sure that conventional morality ought to be
expected from a dweller in the Antipodes.”407 Tracy sees Trollope’s ambiguity as a sign
of his mixed feelings about the colonies: “Trollope was caught between his personal
dislike of Disraeli’s expansionism, and his belief in the future of the colonies as places
where England’s race, language and customs would increase in power and
importance.”408 Like with the Tichborne case, Caldigate has strong supporters and vocal
detractors, including fascination for the case in Australia. As with the Tichborne case, the
wildness of Australia is used as an excuse for Caldigate’s lapsed morals. The Bolton
family is bitterly opposed as were the Tichbornes to the Claimant. Overton sees the plot
of John Caldigate with the extreme prejudice of the Bolton family and the equally strong

405 Terry, 239.
406 Tracy, 237.
407 Terry, 239.
408 Tracy, 239.
family support from Hester and John’s father as a common Trollopian dilemma:

“Trollope’s fiction often springs from such a tension between prejudice and a truth which he is convinced will finally come to light.”

In the face of colonialism, however, Trollope has to imagine a more orderly and easily monitored Empire to ensure that truth comes to light.

Conclusion

For Trollope, the correct resolution to the Tichborne case, a guilty verdict, happened in the real world and for many that verdict was a symbolic rejection of the populist causes Keneally and other Tichborne supporters would later support. That some of their zeal disappeared is suggested by the way most people ignored the Claimant after he served his sentence and was released in 1884. He struggled for money and became something of a side-show freak. He tried to capitalize on his story by publishing a confession, and later retracting it; when he died in 1898 he was buried in a coffin on which was inscribed what he still claimed was his name, Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne.

In the previous sections, I’ve argued that Is He Popenjoy and John Caldigate speak to a specific cultural moment when excitement about the Tichborne imposter was at its height. From the landed perspective, a perspective that Trollope gravitated toward, safeguards needed to be in place to ensure that such imposters were quickly punished to discourage others from emulating them. In both of Trollope’s novels imposters make untrue claims about marital status: the Marquis tries to take the baronetcy away from his brother by falsely attesting to the offspring of a questionable marriage, and Mrs. Smith

\(^{409}\) Overton, 49.
falsely claims to be Caldigate’s wife. These imposters are Trollope’s “Claimant’s” and the two novels work toward resolutions in which they are found to be imposters. In both cases, Trollope uses characters with strong resemblance to himself to unmask the imposters. The Dean, though unsuccessful initially, is the most vocal opponent to the Marquis. Though the Dean has questionable claims to gentlemanliness, like Trollope, he is the most vocal advocate of gentlemanly values. Bagwax is a lowly postal clerk like Trollope once was who works doggedly and continually seeks the approval of his peers and social betters. As Trollope told his publisher, Blackwood, “There was a touch of downright love in the depicting of Bagwax. Was I not once a Bagwax myself?” Bagwax is able to free Caldigate and clean up colonial posts, something that Trollope did in Ireland.

Trollope’s resolutions to the novels are troubling, however, as one suggests that the English are more suited to survival than the non-English and as the other would impose more institutional oversight to colonial life, making detection of deviants easier. Both imagine a world where foreign threats are eliminated, where landed values are upheld, and where those who want to enter the gentlemanly classes through hard work as Trollope did – the Dean and to a certain extent Bagwax – are able to contribute to England’s ongoing success. This fantasy played out in the press surrounding the Tichborne Claimant and Trollope was able to capitalize on this success in his fiction.

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410 Quoted in N. John Hall, 458.
In the preceding chapters I have made a case that a number of Anthony Trollope’s later novels reveal anxieties about English identity in the face of increasing imperialist zeal during the latter half of the nineteenth century, zeal which Trollope was ambivalent about at best. Thus far, my analysis of Trollope has been roughly chronological, and this chapter considers some of Trollope’s final novels (three of his final four) which found him experimenting with new and familiar forms. These final novels, two of which have been neglected by most critics, only further my case that Trollope’s interest in the Empire was amplified during this period. In fact, it is in these final novels that Trollope seems to most fully explore and embrace some aspects of a British imperialist identity.

Although Trollope’s health was rapidly declining – he suffered from heart problems and cardiac asthma – he still felt it was important to remain productive: in a letter to his son Harry in 1881, a year before his death, he admitted that “nothing really frightens me but the idea of forced Idleness.” He made this statement just before he finished The Fixed Period a dystopian novel set one hundred years in the future. In this novel a group of colonists pass a law to increase productivity which mandates euthanasia for those who reach sixty-eight years; Trollope was nearly sixty-seven when he wrote it. Set around 1980 in Brittanula, a colonial offshoot of New Zealand in the South Pacific, the novel is narrated by the deposed President, John Neverbend, who is sailing to England on a gunboat and recounting his experiences. Trollope would go on to write An Old Man’s Love, a nostalgic tale about an aging man facing romantic competition from a

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young man returning from the diamond mines of South Africa. Trollope would never complete his final novel *The Landleaguers*, set in Ireland, which provided a scathing critique of land reform and terrorist attacks on English landowners. He completed forty-eight of the projected sixty chapters. Until his death he was actively engaged with current events. He traveled to Ireland twice to gather research for his final book – and was eager to know and to predict what the future might be like both for England and her empire.

Previous studies of the final few years of Trollope’s life have followed one of two paths. The first was proposed in J.H. Davidson’s foundational essay “Anthony Trollope and the Colonies” which sees Trollope becoming pessimistic in his later years “when troubles in Ireland, the Transvaal, and Egypt led him to break with the Liberal party, despair of the future, and embrace *machtpolitik* whenever the necessity arose.”412 One of the important fictional texts that informs Davidson’s reading is *The Fixed Period* which ends with a British gunboat putting an end to the euthanasia law by threatening to use force, by deposing the elected president, and by bringing the wayward colony back into the imperial fold. This path sees Trollope as overtly imperialistic during this period. More recently, critics have tried to reassess some of this later work, *The Fixed Period* in particular, by suggesting that this novel does not wholeheartedly endorse the annexation of Brittanula and that it questions imperialist aggression. A handful of recent articles see a hesitant and qualified critique of imperialism in *The Fixed Period*. Helen Lucy Blythe sees Trollope as “proud of England’s expansionism, yet increasingly haunted by colonial guilt,” and Dominic Alessio reads the novel as “somewhat, but not entirely, critical of

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412 Davidson, 329.
British imperialism. Both of these paths suggest that Trollope changed during his final few years, one arguing that Trollope “adopted views closer to the bellicose, conservative attitudes traditionally identified with imperialism” and the other suggesting that mounting guilt began to spill over into Trollope’s fiction and informed his futuristic novel. Such divergent readings speak to the complexity of The Fixed Period and to Trollope’s skill for telling stories that remain fascinating and relevant to readers. While there is much to admire in both of these readings, I find neither of them satisfying or convincingly supported by Trollope’s later novels, especially considering the context in which they were written. In fact, I see few major differences between these novels and the other forty-four that preceded them.

What I do see in Trollope’s final novels and what will guide the sections that follow is an increase in imperial themes and plotlines that correspond to the increasing emphasis on these issues in the press as well as a clarification of attitudes and anxieties that were established and articulated previously. In particular, Trollope’s An Old Man’s Love looks to the past, The Landleaguers examines the present, and The Fixed Period projects a future where the British Empire figures in interesting, yet troubling, ways. In the following sections I examine each novel in turn, following the past, present, future pattern suggested above and explore how each novel ponders imperial issues as I demonstrate that Trollope’s attitudes were consistent with his positions earlier in his career. Before my analysis of these three late Trollope novels some important context is

415 This approach ignores the chronology in which they were written for the purposes of the unfolding of my argument. The fact that they were written in such a short time period makes this deviation from their order more acceptable.
necessary to understand Trollope’s attitudes as he stated them at mid-century when he was a much younger man, disturbing attitudes about racial and cultural superiority that would change very little over the following decades but that shed light on his final output.

*Trollope’s “New Zealander” and the Extinction of Primitive Races*

Trollope has been seen by some, especially by twentieth century critics, as the prototypical mid-Victorian man, if not in his personal life then for the presentation of fictional men and women in his novels. W.L. Burn’s *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (1964) holds an important place in the historiography of Victorian England; together with G.M. Young’s *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (1936), Burn’s book characterizes the mid-Victorians, especially land-owning mid-Victorians, as confident, capable and influential members of their communities. These are Trollope’s characters. Although, like Young, Burn is nostalgic about the Victorian period, Burn’s book’s much narrower focus (1852-1867) allows for greater specificity in his attempt to define the “spirit of the age.” To put Burn’s argument simply, the mid-Victorian generation experienced a period of relative stability in which the opposing forces of individualism and collectivism as well as localism and centralization balanced each other out. Burn’s concludes his book with the claim that

> Theirs was not, indeed, a sparkling generation. But in spite of, or perhaps because of its moralistic platitudes, its naïve assumptions and its comfortable though illogical compromises, it found life on the whole enjoyable and beneficent. Under the surface there were ugly depths of fanaticism and savagery and on top there was a *debris* of sensuality and
tawdriness. Yet the surface was reasonably firm and reasonably clear. A man who had the good sense or the good fortune to pick his ground well could stand erect, confident and self-respecting.⁴¹⁶

The state of equilibrium that allowed this confidence, Burn argues, was a product of various disciplinary measures, some legal and some social, which kept would-be rabble-rousers in check while protecting the freedoms of upstanding citizens. The family, the courts, church, school, charitable organizations, and organized sports are just a few of the disciplinary units that Burn outlines.

As he builds his argument about mid-Victorian equipoise, Burn frequently mentions Anthony Trollope and Trollopian characters; in fact, he names characters like Plantagenet Palliser, Mrs. Proudie, the Duke of Omnium, Mr. Harding and even obscure characters without always referencing the fact that these are fictional characters. A reader not immersed in the Trollopian canon, as Burn was but as many readers now are not, could conceivably mistake these characters for actual people. Trollope is mentioned in every chapter of The Age of Equipoise. Though Burn rejects the idea of titling his book the “Age of” a specific individual – he rejects figures like Cobden, Bright, and J.S. Mill as “altogether too unrepresentative” while suggesting that Bagehot and Palmerston would be closer to the mark – Trollope emerges through example as the figure most representative of the age.⁴¹⁷ In fact, Trollope is the Victorian figure most responsible for perpetuating that atmosphere of equipoise that Burn presents. In his Victorian People Asa

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⁴¹⁷ Numerous critics have called the Victorian era the “age of Trollope”. M.A. Goldberg claims that The Warden is an ideal example of the “spirit of the age” exemplified by “peace, quietude, equipoise, stability, compromise.” M.A. Goldberg, “Trollope’s The Warden: A Commentary on the ‘Age of Equipoise’”, Nineteenth Century Fiction 17.4 (March, 1963), 383.
Briggs clearly links Bagehot and Trollope as similar political thinkers. The emphasis that Bagehot placed on blind deference to one’s social superiors and confidence in a “select few,” presumably those in Parliament, to govern the masses, serves as a blueprint for much of Trollope’s fiction. As Briggs notes, “Both Bagehot and Trollope recognized that the peculiar characteristics of the English constitution in the middle years of the century depended upon a social as well as a political balance.”\textsuperscript{418} Bagehot stresses the imaginative appeal of the dignity of the constitution on “an uncultured and rude population” where “primitive barbarism lay as a recognized basis to acquired civilization.”\textsuperscript{419} Trollope’s tenuous claim to being a gentleman and his desire to be accepted in landed circles would, in his autobiography, be challenged by his own realization that as a child his filthiness and his poverty precluded him from those circles. Yet, he believed that by performing the identity he sought, he would attain it. As I’ve previously argued, much of this happened for Trollope in the colonial context of Ireland.

As Ross G. Forman notes, Burn’s \textit{The Age of Equipoise} “downplayed the importance of imperialism in the mid-Victorian period and focused, as many Victorians did, on domestic images and discourses about Britain’s sense of itself.”\textsuperscript{420} The same could be said for much of Trollope’s fiction during the period of Burn’s study (1852-1867) as many of these novels seem, at least on the surface, to be devoid of material about imperialism. In particular, the Empire is treated lightly and conflict is downplayed as his characters express ambivalence about the world outside of England. However, a somewhat neglected non-fiction work by Trollope called \textit{The New Zealander}, written

\textsuperscript{419} Ibid.
around the time that Trollope wrote his first successful novel, *The Warden* (1855), sheds light on Trollope’s attitudes about the rise and fall of historical empires and his anxieties about the British Empire. He was unable to find a publisher for the book, but continued working on it for years after it was rejected.\(^{421}\) In the book’s introduction Trollope asks, “Is the time quickly coming when the New Zealander shall supplant the Englishman in the history of the civilization of the world?”\(^{422}\) The title figure of the antipodean visitor was taken from Macaulay’s tremendously popular *History of England*. It referred to the inevitable day when someone from a distant shore would visit the center of the British Empire and sketch the ruins of St. Paul’s Cathedral while standing on the ruins of London Bridge. The New Zealander was an oft-referenced figure in the 19th century, as a recent essay by Robert Dingley illustrates: “amputated from its context, the New Zealander became lodged in the collective cultural consciousness of the later nineteenth century, endlessly invoked as an apocalyptic bogeyman, or as a joky *memento mori*, or simply as part of that common vocabulary of allusion which can facilitate relations between writer and reader.”\(^{423}\) That empires rose to greatness and eventually fell as they strayed from their original values was inevitable in Trollope’s estimation, but Trollope’s book was to be an attempt to hold off the New Zealander’s visit for as long as possible. Each chapter gives advice for warding off the coming of the New Zealander.

\(^{421}\) Anthony Trollope, *The New Zealander*, Ed. N. John Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). *The New Zealander* was, in fact, not published until 1972. After submitting the manuscript to Longman, Trollope received a reply from a reader saying that “all the good points in the work have already been treated of by Mr. Carlyle, of whose *Latter-Day Pamphlets* this work, *both in style and matter*, is a most feeble imitation” (xii). Trollope continued to revise his manuscript for possible publication, but he does not list it in *An Autobiography*.

\(^{422}\) *The New Zealander*, 3.

According to ApRoberts, in *The New Zealander* Trollope “achieved the articulation of his views on just about everything” and “this book serves to remind us of the solid conceptual basis of the novels, which have been from time to time wrongly thought unconsidered and commonplace.”\(^{424}\) Even though it wasn’t published in Trollope’s lifetime, it provides useful context and insight into Trollope’s thinking at mid-century and foregrounds the importance of the empire for England’s future, including the far future end of the British Empire. In his recent study of “anticipated ruins” David Skilton outlines how “the contemplation of future ruin sharpens the perception of the qualities of the present civilization.”\(^{425}\) Trollope’s fiction was a sketch of the qualities of his present. Only by maintaining the integrity of English institutions (the dual houses of parliament, the press, the church, the crown, literature, etc) argues Trollope in *The New Zealander*, could England maintain her status as the center of the civilized world. The integrity of these institutions was being compromised by what Trollope simplistically calls a lack of honesty. *The New Zealander* clearly echoes and in places seems to mimic Carlyle and other writers pondering the “condition of England” question. The line “It’s gude to be honest and true” serves as an epigraph, is often quoted in the body, and is set off from the text three times in the book’s short conclusion. *The New Zealander* is a kind of diagnosis of mid-century England – the question that begins the book asks “Is England in its decadence?” Trollope’s response is a firm “no.” Yet, it is a qualified “no.” In order for England to maintain its dominance society must strike a balance between opposing

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forces – between tradition and progress, the very equipoise that Burn would later use Trollope to illustrate.

Interestingly, Trollope neglects to examine the empire at any length in this book, being more concerned with specifically English institutions and warding off London’s inevitable destruction. Nevertheless, I would argue that the absence of the colonies as an individual category analyzed in *The New Zealander*, despite the importance of the colonial figure of the New Zealander himself, is highly revealing of Trollope’s surface level ambivalence, but deep fears about how the Empire was related to Englishness. Clearly, if the British Empire were to fall, it would be to another empire. David Skilton finds it significant that Macaulay’s original naming of one from New Zealand as the future visitor in 1840 is significant because “a ‘New Zealander’ would have been a Maori, and not the descendant of European settlers, whose numbers were insignificant at that time,” suggesting “a new civilization founded by another race.”426 This claim is questionable, and although it may have been true for Macaulay’s original pronouncement, Trollope’s makes his understanding of the fate of New Zealand, and its native population clear in his book on Australia and New Zealand. While relating the history of British involvement Trollope looks back to the 1820’s before British people had heavily populated New Zealand. This is how he characterizes the British attitude toward the Maori population in the 1820’s: “They must either be exterminated or Christianized, -- and probably the too rapid extermination which would go hand in hand with the slower Christianization, might bring more blame than praise upon a philanthropic Secretary of the Colonies.”427 Trollope argues that even then “it was in vain

426 Skilton, 118.
that any Secretary of State should endeavor to stop the tide of those who have been born to people the earth.”

When New Zealand became its own dominion in 1840 an influx of British settlers began. So when Trollope speaks of a future New Zealander in the mid-1850’s he means a man who would be white and English speaking as he believed the Maoris would be extinct in the near future.

The figure of the New Zealander should not be seen as only a negative figure, even as Trollope urges his readers to see him that way. Interestingly, by having someone from New Zealand, a future former British colony, sketch the ruins, the impact of cultural ruin is mitigated somewhat. As such, it demonstrates clear bias for white English-speaking future populations. As Dingley notes, “If, however, nineteenth-century English readers could view the arrival of the Antipodean tourist as a presage of national decline, they could at least console themselves with the thought that he would be the inhabitant of a British colony.”

As a result, there is a pro-imperialist impulse in The New Zealander, even at mid-century, which suggests that cultural preservation could come about by the means of a scattered population. While Englishness itself was valuable and while Trollope was hopeful that Englishmen would remain superior far into the future, his New Zealander figure is used to prompt the home country to remain true to its traditional values even as it continues to populate the globe.

In his recent work Dark Vanishings, Patrick Brantlinger draws attention to the ways in which those who wrote about colonial extinction of primitive races used proleptic elegy. This occurs when writers are seen to be “sentimentally or mournfully expressing, even in its most humane versions, the confidence of self-fulfilling prophecy,

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428 Ibid.
429 Dingley, 26.
according to which new, white colonies and nations arise as savagery and wilderness recede." Trollope viewed the eventual extinction of native populations like the Maoris as inevitable. Speaking of the ongoing conflict with Maoris fighting for their land, Trollope suggested patience while waiting for their extinction “All that we can do is drift through the difficulties, -- while they are melting.” Trollope suggests that this natural trend happens often with European contact despite the best efforts to minimize it. He writes, “It has often been said that we have struggled our very best to make our landing on a shore an unmixed blessing to those to whom we have come. In New Zealand we have strove hard for this; --but in New Zealand the middle of the next century will probably hear of the existence of some solitary last Maori.”

It would be difficult for critics to deny, as one critic has observed, that “Trollope’s own politics in depicting colonialism’s role in the fretwork of culture are often predictable and disturbing.” As Boehmer suggests, Trollope’s writing tended to judge other civilizations based on their perceived ability to survive contact or invasion with European civilizations. That the same author who could write at length about the possible virtues of the despicable Mrs. Proudie following her literary death could simply write off native populations as the casualties of history is, and should be, unsettling for readers. Trollope would write in South Africa, for example:

There we have gone with our ploughs and with our brandy, with all the good and with all the evil which our civilization has produced, and

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431 Australia, 403.
432 Ibid.
433 Ibid., 89
434 Boehmer, 81.
throughout the lands the native races have perished by their contact with
us. They have withered by commune with us as the weaker weedy grasses
of Nature’s first planting wither and die whenever come the hardier plants,
which science added to nature has produced.435

Trollope, like many of his contemporaries, claimed that savagery itself would be the
ultimate ruin of native populations, instead of European intrusion and the violence and
disease it brought with it.

According to Brantlinger, this “fantasy of auto-genocide or racial suicide” helps
to “occlude the genocidal aspects of European conquest and civilization.”436 Mourning
for native populations not yet dead, but destined to become so, -- what Brantlinger calls
the “future-perfect mode of proleptic elegy” is a way of mourning for something not yet
lost as a form of wishful thinking. When Trollope writes about this future extinction, he
“exemplifies how settlers exaggerated the population decline to justify colonization and
the illegal acquisition of land.”437 According to Brantlinger:

If, from a psychoanalytical perspective, the identities of both individuals
and nation-states are founded on lacks, then the nation-founding discourse
of proleptic elegy is founded on the lack of a lack or, in other words, on a
wished for lack that is instead an all-too-real obstacle to identification.

Rather than absences, primitive races such as the Australian “black

436 Brantlinger, 2
437 Blythe, 162.
“fellows” were and remain presences disturbing the process of national unification and identification.\textsuperscript{438}

If Englishness was something teleologically destined to outlive inferior forms, one could use proleptic elegy, as did Trollope, in reference to Ireland as well. Brantlinger writes, “Like the Bushmen and the Australian aborigines whom he declares in his imperial travelogues to be inevitably doomed, the starving Irish are, for Trollope, a surplus or refuse population needing to be swept away to make room for a tidier, more English world.”\textsuperscript{439} Recall that when speaking of the Irish, Trollope called them “perverse, irrational, and but little bound by the love of truth,” the very truth that the New Zealander suggests was England’s strength. As such, he envisions England as the protectors of the Irish who would go the way of lesser populations if it weren’t for imperial oversight.

An interesting phenomenon that Brantlinger overlooks, however, is the way that Trollope’s \textit{The New Zealander} is, itself, a form of proleptic elegy, but in this case it is really an elegy for England. Trollope mourns the end of the British Empire and its fall to a future empire. The choice of a white New Zealander sketching the ruins of London Bridge allows Trollope to imagine the end of England’s dominance without really doing so. He mourns for a future event for his own people even as he projects a future where many native races will be extinct. The frank callousness with which Trollope is willing to exterminate entire populations, while mourning the day when England’s offshoots might supplant her, sits uncomfortably with readers who

\textsuperscript{438} Brantlinger, 4. What makes such arguments even more problematic is that “their racist and imperialistic arguments frequently entail denunciations of humanitarian attempts to protect indigenous peoples as misguided sentimentalism.” 9

\textsuperscript{439} Brantlinger, 114.
appreciate Trollope’s fiction for its delicate exploration of moral issues. However, these cultural biases are consistent throughout Trollope’s career.

Showing both (sometimes multiple) sides of complicated issues, as Trollope’s novels do, has long been seen as the marker of his particular style. What has sometimes been seen as Trollope’s “divided mind” – his seeming unwillingness to take a strong stand on any issue – is the source of his novels’ appeal. As Ruth apRoberts explains, it is his casuistry – his insistence that abstract moral principles often fail when applied broadly to individual situations – that constitutes Trollope’s art. “His concern is always moral, and he is always recommending, by means of his cases, a more flexible morality.”

This moral flexibility fails when Trollope, admittedly infrequently in his fiction, represents non-white colonial subjects because he is unable or perhaps unwilling to address the possibility that racial others have the same kind of interiority or can suffer as greatly as his English characters. When it came to native populations, Trollope’s ability to see multiple sides of issues shows evident flaws. For example, Trollope shows an awareness of some of the moral dilemmas that colonization brings with it. Concerning Maoris he admits, “But it is impossible not to feel that whereas the strangers had no moral right to attack the natives, the natives cannot have been morally wrong in attempting to destroy their invaders.”

However, Trollope quickly simplifies the ramifications of colonialism in the case of New Zealand when he says that “perhaps in no case since Europeans have sought for new homes in distant countries, has so true an attempt been made to treat the old inhabitants with justice as has been done in New Zealand, -- it has been so because New Zealand had been the last discovered ;-- but the

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440 apRoberts, 50.
441 Australia, 305.
result has been the same."⁴⁴² He applauds British sensitivity to seeing that justice is done, even though the result, eventual extinction, will happen anyway.

R.C. Terry says that *The New Zealander*’s “merit lies in the balancing of judgments about controversial issues, so intrinsically part of Trollope’s ability to see both sides of a question and to maintain ‘the equal mind’” so evident in his later life as a novelist.⁴⁴³ The problem that I see with readings of Trollope that suggest growing pessimism and increasing imperialist attitudes as Trollope aged is that these readings neglect the fact that these cultural biases are evident in all of Trollope’s writing from his first novel to his last, biases that he shared with many of his contemporaries. They may be expressed more frequently in his later novels, but the seeds of these biases are everywhere in his earlier work. As I examine Trollope’s final novels, I will demonstrate how they promote imperialist attitudes even as they show consistency with past attitudes.

*Trollope’s An Old Man’s Love and Imperial Nostalgia*

What I mean to suggest by calling *An Old Man’s Love* a meditation on the past is not that it evokes images from history, but that it looks at how a man with older, traditional perspectives like those Trollope expressed at mid-century was challenged in a world where colonial travel and return was becoming more common. In this novel, Trollope returns to the threat of colonial return that he studied at length in *John Caldigate*, yet this time, Trollope is less concerned with the character who returns from the colonies. Instead, he focuses on how colonial return affects one English man.

⁴⁴² Ibid.
Trollope seems to endorse the idea that although older perspectives are declining, the colonies present possibilities for cultural rejuvenation. When Trollope began writing *An Old Man’s Love* in February of 1882 his declining health made him feel like the old man in his title. Always one who treated novel writing like a trade, Trollope began to find the physical work of writing difficult. As a result, most of this novel was dictated to his niece, Florence Bland. Like he had done in *The Way We Live Now* with Roger Carbury, Trollope presents a lonely older man, representing traditional values, who faces a changing society. There are some biographical elements that suggest a close kinship between the protagonist, Mr. Whittlestaff, and Trollope himself, including their mutual love of the classics, Horace in particular. Most critics like N. John Hall claim that “he put something of himself into the central figure.”444 As Tracy notes, “Trollope considers once again the rights and duties of the old in a world that is passing them by.”445 R.C. Terry claims that “the ageing Trollope studies an aging man reluctant to cease participation in life”446

The story itself is somewhat slight and the novel is fairly short, but most see it as a more fitting farewell novel than the unfinished *The Landleaguers* which was more pessimistic in tone. Unlike that novel, *An Old Man’s Love* is a love story, somewhat bittersweet, about an older man who becomes engaged to a younger woman. William Whittlestaff is fifty years old (not as old as the title might suggest) and a bachelor with a stable, but modest, income who lives with his household servant, Mrs. Baggett. While their relationship is platonic – in fact, Mrs. Baggett is married to a drunk who occasionally visits to her great embarrassment – Mr. Whittlestaff and Mrs. Baggett bicker

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444 N. John Hall, 500.
445 Tracy, 311.
and live much like a husband and wife would. Mr. Whittlestaff is somewhat somber for despite some success, he felt that he had failed in two important aspects of his life. First, he frequently was in conflict with his father over a career choice, strongly desiring to become a poet to his father’s disdain. Mr. Whittlestaff failed to procure a fellowship and because of his rejection he “suffered greatly” and “he became plaintive and wrote poetry, and spent his pocket-money in publishing it, which again caused him sorrow, not for the loss of his money, but by the obscurity of his poetry.” While still a young man he felt that his rejection was complete – his father laughed as his endeavors – and he “never again put two lines together” (13). Something of Trollope’s early failures and his need for acceptance can be seen here. Mr. Whittlestaff’s second failure occurred when he was around thirty when he fell in love with and was later jilted by a woman. This was a life-changing event: Fishing, hunting, and shooting had been his pastimes, but after being jilted “he never fished or shot, or hunted again” (14). The narrator relates that “I think that young lady would hardly have treated him so badly had she known what the effect would be” (14) These two failures cloud Mr. Whittlestaff’s life as a bachelor, but as the novel begins a new romance seems possible.

Following the death of a close friend and the friend’s wife, Mr. Whittlestaff decides to take in their daughter instead of seeing her become a governess. Twenty-five year old Mary Lawrie comes to live with him, and after a year and half, Mr. Whittlestaff begins to wonder whether marriage would be possible. Shyly, he puts off asking her, fearing that she might reject him, but he eventually does so. Mary Lawrie is pressured by Mrs. Baggett who believes that it is Mary’s duty to marry the man who had done so much

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447 Anthony Trollope, An Old Man’s Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 13. All further citations will be parenthetical.
for her. Although Mary does feel affection for Mr. Whittlestaff, she confesses that years ago she had fallen in love with a man named John Gordon whom her family disapproved of because he was poor. Although they never spoke of marriage and even though she hadn’t heard from him in three years, Mary felt it was her duty to tell Mr. Whittlestaff about that relationship. After that confession, she accepts his offer of marriage. The plot hinges on an uncanny coincidence when later, on the very day she accepts his offer, John Gordon returns from the diamond mines of South Africa and visits Mr. Whittlestaff’s home looking for Mary hoping to renew their relationship. Mary is devastated and feels unable to take back her two-hour-old acceptance of Mr. Whittlestaff’s offer, and Mr. Whittlestaff does not want to be jilted a second time. Both Mary and Mr. Whittlestaff struggle with “opposing claims of duty and self-assertion”\textsuperscript{448}

Through most of the novel readers are privy to Mr. Whittlestaff’s thoughts as he faces this moral dilemma. He loves Mary and knows that she would not take back her acceptance of the offer of marriage, but he knows that she wishes to be married to John Gordon. After several visits with Gordon and much personal anguish over losing the second person he thought he would marry, Mr. Whittlestaff withdraws his offer, offering even to have the young couple live in his own home, in a gesture of love for Mary. He still dislikes Gordon, and is unconvinced that he could care for her as well as he could. Tracy sees Mr. Whittlestaff’s behavior as an example of Trollope’s realistic rendering of characters: “His desperate attempt at a gracious act is ungraciously performed, in a thoroughly believable way.”\textsuperscript{449} Mr. Whittlestaff offers to buy John Gordon’s shares in diamond mines to give the young man a secure amount of money for maintaining his

\textsuperscript{448} Tracy, 312.
\textsuperscript{449} Tracy, 316.
wife. During the course of this bizarre love triangle, Mr. Whittlestaff even considers taking off for South Africa himself, but is discouraged by Gordon who thinks he would not find that life suitable. Mr. Whittlestaff decides to stay in England as a kind of father figure to Mary and as the continual friend of Mrs. Baggett. By making this difficult decision, Mr. Whittlestaff “fulfils himself more satisfactorily by denying himself for the sake of the girl he loves than he could have by marrying her.” And according to one critic “by doing this he performs a deed that Trollope shows as more heroic than all John Gordon’s exploits in Africa”

Few critics have examined this novel in much detail, and the use of South Africa as anything more than a plot device has not been seen as significant to an understanding of the story. Perhaps this is because while Gordon’s character is important to the plot, his character is not developed. In fact, Mr. Whittlestaff is the only character who is fully developed. Polhemus does mention the South African context to illustrate, interestingly enough, that Trollope is un-jingoistic.

In An Old Man’s Love the course of true love runs smooth because a poor young man can mine diamonds in South Africa. Like Disraeli, of whom he disproved, Trollope hoped his people could invigorate themselves by turning outward. There is no jingoism in him, but in his tendency to see internationalism as a crutch for his culture – an American to reinvigorate the nobility, Australian gold to achieve statues – we can see how jingoism developed.

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450 Overton, 87.
451 Tracy, 316.
At least in the term’s colloquial sense, it would be hard to argue that there is no jingoism in Trollope. Such is the way that the bulk of Trollope criticism, until the past two decades, has misunderstood Trollope by wishing to see him only in a positive light. The novel provides few details about South Africa other than citing it as unsuitable for permanent habitation by Englishmen and by frequently referring to it as dirty and to miners as groveling in the mud.

If there be a place on God's earth in which a man can thoroughly make or mar himself within that space of time, it is the town of Kimberley. I know no spot more odious in every way to a man who has learned to love the ordinary modes of English life. It is foul with dust and flies; it reeks with bad brandy; it is fed upon potted meats; it has not a tree near it. It is inhabited in part by tribes of South African niggers, who have lost all the picturesqueness of niggerdom in working for the white man's wages. The white man himself is insolent, ill-dressed, and ugly. The weather is very hot, and from morning till night there is no occupation other than that of looking for diamonds, and the works attending it. (68)

With a few changes, this passage and several others in the novel are lifted from Trollope’s travel narrative *South Africa*.

Trollope himself had recently traveled to South Africa to write that book just after the controversial annexation of the Transvaal in April of 1877. During his time in South Africa “Lord Carnarvon’s scheme of South African Confederation was being debated in the House of Commons,” and Trollope “was fascinated by the mix of British colonists,
Boers and natives, particularly the Zulus.’ He visited the diamond mines in Kimberley, and Terry summarizes his observations and attitudes about the diamond fields nicely: “Graphic descriptions of frenzied greed are complemented by statements of Trollopian creed – ‘Who can doubt but that work is the great civilizer of the world?’ and, almost immediately afterwards, the assertion that the work ethic in Kimberley has been instrumental in the civilizing of the natives…” His overall feelings about South Africa can be found in his conclusion that “South Africa is a black country and not a white one,” but that “the coloured man has been benefited by our coming.” Trollope did not wholeheartedly endorse policy in South Africa and was openly critical of British and Boer behavior at times, taking a pro-Zulu stance during the Zulu War in 1879. Nevertheless, in An Old Man’s Love the ongoing tensions in South Africa, and his own reservations about Englishmen being there which he expressed in the travel book, are completely ignored. South Africa is simply cast as an undesirable place where great risks and potential rewards await those willing to make the trip. According to the narrator, “If there be a place on God's earth in which a man can thoroughly make or mar himself within that space of time, it is the town of Kimberley” (68).

Trollope vocalizes most of the opposition to Gordon’s claim through Mrs. Baggett’s character as her lower class status allows her more freedom to speak her mind and to express prejudice. She urges Mr. Whittlestaff not to give in to the younger man citing his time in South Africa as detrimental to his character: “You don't mean to say that you're going to be put upon by such a savage as that, as has just come home from South Africa” (114). Mr. Whittlestaff worries about the nature of diamonds as wealth

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453 Terry, 503.
454 Terry, 504.
455 Terry, 504.
calling that source of income “volatile.” Mrs. Baggett reinforces his unspoken fears: “Diamonds! What's diamonds in the way of a steady income? They're all a flash in the pan, and moonshine and dirtiness. I hates to hear of diamonds. There's all the ill in the world comes from them; and you'd give her up to be taken off by such a one as he among the diamonds!” (173). Mrs. Baggett is an ideal servant figure as she supports Mr. Whittlestaff and looks out for his best interest. She sees no kinship with Gordon even though they both come from humble origins. Instead, in Trollopian fashion she instinctively advocates for the gentlemanly class.

Trollope introduces a character who is the antithesis of John Gordon, one who becomes corrupted in South Africa, in the figure of Mr. Fitzwalker Tookey. Like John Caldigate’s friend, Dick Shand, discussed in the previous chapter, Tookey goes astray in his quest for wealth.

Diamonds had become more to him than either briefs or pleadings. He had been there for fifteen years, and had ruined himself and made himself half-a-dozen times. He had found diamonds to be more pleasant than law, and to be more compatible with champagne, tinned lobsters, and young ladies. He had married a wife, and had parted with her, and taken another man's wife, and paid for her with diamonds. (192).

Tookey had been a lawyer before becoming a speculator, but turned to alcohol and was rumored to be physically abusive to his wives. He has three children with the second wife and the children suffer from neglect. Unlike Tookey who is blinded by the possibilities of unbounded wealth, John Gordon went to the colonies to become worthy of Mary Lawrie as his lack of money made him
unsuitable; similarly John Caldigate went to Australia to redeem himself in the eyes of his father and dreamt of marrying Hester Bolton when he returned. He nearly becomes like Tookey through his entanglement with a woman in Australia. I see *An Old Man’s Love* as nostalgic because even as it tells a story that is personally tragic to Mr. Whittlestaff, the story itself hinges on Mr. Whittlestaff’s desire to see Mary Lawrie properly married to a suitable man. Mr. Whittlestaff’s own status as a gentleman is unquestionable, but he and others in society are unsure about whether time in the diamonds mines of South Africa is a respectable or even an acceptable way of gaining wealth for the maintenance of an English woman. Mr. Whittlestaff has experience supporting a married woman already because the work he allows Mrs. Baggett to do for him protects her from her drunken husband. Mr. Whittlestaff is not above bribing the drunken man to stay away, essentially supporting him to keep Mrs. Baggett safe. He represents an ideal landlord/tenant relationship with Mrs. Baggett as he looks out for her interests. The question of John Gordon’s gentlemanliness is up to Mr. Whittlestaff, and after much consideration, he grants it to him reluctantly. To come to terms with Gordon, Mr. Whittlestaff offers to buy out the shares, making Gordon legitimate by financing him himself. Offering his home to the couple is another example of how Mr. Whittlestaff tries to make the relationship he is endorsing more traditional, even though this makes their triangular relationship more awkward. Finally, Mr. Whittlestaff’s brief flirtation with the idea of taking personal trip to the diamond mines to try his own luck reveals his gradual acceptance of work in South Africa as an option for gentlemen, even as he realizes that it would not be to his liking. There is a generational shift wherein work in the Empire becomes more acceptable.
In doing this, Trollope downplays the ongoing conflict in South Africa by ignoring it, in a sense opening up an imagined stable South Africa for his audience, a place where the native populations are only referenced once, in the passage cited above. The real question in the novel becomes one of gentlemanly status, which Gordon is granted and which Mr. Whittlestaff exemplifies through his sacrifice. Through example, Trollope emphasizes the personality traits of those who will make it in South Africa and those who likely won’t. And in this respect, Letwin is mistaken when she asserts that An Old Man’s Love is only “a charming vignette of true love which could hardly be further removed from the intrigues and disasters of The Way We Live Now.”\textsuperscript{456} The plot of An Old Man’s Love is more sedate as it does not attempt to represent all of society as The Way We Live Now did, but there is similarity in theme and tone. As such, the book returns to the questions of gentlemanly status as it grants that status to Gordon, suggesting that given the right circumstances the Empire is a suitable place to prove gentlemanliness even as such choices may be difficult for those with more traditional values to accept. The values of the past would change to deal with the present.

\textit{The Landleaguers and the State of Ireland in Trollope’s Present}

Trollope both began and ended his novel writing career with books set in Ireland. His first two novels examined landlord and tenant relationships before and after the Great Famine. His first novel, \textit{The Macdermots of Ballycloran}, was written between 1843 and 1845 and \textit{The Landleaguers} was written nearly forty years later in 1882 during an equally tumultuous period. Mullen suggests similarity between these novels, noting that \textit{The

\textsuperscript{456} Shirley Robin Letwin, \textit{The Gentleman in Trollope: Indivi
duality and Moral Conduct} (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982, 28.)
Landleaguers “rivals The Macdermots of Ballycloran for the designation of his most depressing novel.” There is thematic continuity and a sense of hopelessness in each novel. Unlike the Fenian movement which had supported armed rebellion for an independent Ireland, the new Land League movement used parliamentary channels to reform land policies, giving more rights to Irish tenants. Some did use violence but the Irish contingent in parliament, especially under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell, legitimated their grievances. As has been discussed previously, Trollope had vehemently opposed Disraeli’s imperialist strategies, but he came to disagree just as much with Gladstone’s domestic policies toward Ireland, part of the internal empire, during his second premiership which began in 1880. In particular, Trollope despised policies toward Ireland which were supportive of Home Rule and more favorable to Irish tenants than English landlords. In fact, Trollope was willing to break with the Liberals over this issue. In 1881 the Land Commission was established which allowed courts to judge between landlords and tenants, often protecting tenants from paying rents they could no longer afford. The courts would decide which rents were exorbitant, and Trollope opposed such interference. Some tenants stopped paying rent altogether without going to court. According to Hall, “the Land League he deemed immoral and inimical to that healthy closeness and mutual trust so often found – as he thought – between landlord and tenant.” That healthy closeness had been demonstrated in Trollope’s first few novels and was attested to in his autobiography, yet current events were putting pressure of those fictions.

457 Mullen, 271.
458 In a strange coincidence during the final years of Trollope’s life Parnell was actually living in Trollope’s family home at 16 Keppel Street although it is unknown whether Trollope was aware of it.
459 N. John Hall, 502.
The Landleaguers was written in the wake of escalating violence in Ireland. Four months before he began writing, news of the notorious Phoenix Park Murders had reached England. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Thomas Henry Burke, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, Gladstone’s nephew, were stabbed to death near Dublin in Phoenix Park by a group of Republicans who called themselves the Irish National Invincibles. Trollope was outraged by these events and angry that people could not travel freely in Ireland. He also hated boycotts against English landowners which were becoming more common. He would visit Ireland twice in 1882, despite his rapidly declining health, to gather information for his novel. According to Briggs, “it was Ireland more than any other place on his itineraries which brought together the ‘real world’ of fact and the world of fiction which he created, and, if he never wrote a travel book about it, he felt deeply about all its problems.”

His deep feelings, however, were against movements for greater autonomy for Irish people.

In the Trollopian canon The Landleaguers has been pointed to as “the closest he ever came to writing documentary fiction.” The Landleaguers takes place in Trollope’s present (1882) and the story focuses on the family of Mr. Philip Jones who bought an estate in Ireland in 1850, Castle Morony in County Galway. Personally, Trollope had endorsed these purchases by Englishmen following the famine. Mary Jean Corbett sees Trollope as envisioning “something like a revived system of colonial plantation in post-famine Ireland, which would draw clearer lines of class and culture between landed English capital and landless Irish labor.”

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460 Briggs, 28.
462 Corbett, 135
Irish property in 1850” as Trollope’s creation of such a figure, one who improves the land and by extension improves life for those who live off of his land.\textsuperscript{463} For years Mr. Jones “was as much respected as though he had been an old O’Jones from the time of Queen Elizabeth.”\textsuperscript{464} However, the narrator relates, “but now the American teaching had come up, and things were different” (1). Too much American influence was dangerous and threatening to English safety, according to Trollope’s narrator.

At the beginning of the novel Mr. Jones becomes the victim of sabotage when his sluice gates are opened and his fields are flooded. His anger becomes more profound when he learns that his ten year old son, Florian, witnessed the act of sabotage and knows who the perpetrators are. However, he refuses to confess because he has sworn an oath to a local priest. Florian was a recent convert to Roman Catholicism much to the disdain of his Protestant family. As the novel progresses, Florian eventually confesses that it was Pat Carroll, a land leaguer, who damaged the gates. On the way to testify against him Florian is murdered, shot with a rifle, and the community refuses to admit that they know who did it because they are afraid of violent repercussions by the Land League. Near the end of novel, an Irish family of six are murdered – some shot and some stoned to death – because a woman in the family refuses to be silent about crimes she has seen. Trollope viewed these terrorist tactics as evidence that the Irish were unfit to rule themselves making victims of their own people and their landlords. Perpetrators wore masks and terrorized their communities into silence about their activities. Although Trollope did not complete this novel, his son Henry was privy to Trollope’s intention that a man named Lax would be hanged for Florian’s murder suggesting that Trollope might have planned

\textsuperscript{463} Corbett, 136.
\textsuperscript{464} Anthony Trollope, \textit{The Landleaguers} (London: The Trollope Society, 1995), 1. All further citations will be parenthetical.
on resolving some of the conflict in his novel by having the community rally around the
Jones’s family and expose the conspirators.

In addition to the political “state of Ireland” plot, several romantic plots coalesce
into a substantial subplot. That Trollope intended two marriages was confirmed by
Trollope’s son. Mr. Jones’s daughter Edith would eventually marry Captain Yorke
Clayton, an enforcer of the law who spends the latter half of the novel being nursed back
to health by Edith after being shot by conspirators. Mr. Jones’s surviving son Frank
courts a woman named Rachel O’Mahony, the daughter of an Irishman who was born in
America. Her father is an MP in favor of the Land League. Rachel wants to marry Frank
but knows that he may not have the means to marry her until tensions in Ireland die
down. Choosing to earn money for herself, against Frank’s wishes, she travels around
England as a singer and encounters one of Trollope’s stereotypical Jewish characters who
vies for her hand to her great disdain. Trollope’s narrator clearly is unfavorable toward a
career path for a woman, especially one that takes her away from her potential
relationship with Frank. Near the end of the novel, she damages her voice and must give
up her career as a singer, but reestablishes her relationship with Frank, who Trollope
intended that she would marry. Given her American connections and Trollope’s dislike
for the Land League which her father avidly supported, having her lose her voice is a
somewhat heavy-handed ending for her story as it is her silence, and perhaps by
extension the silence of those like her father, that brings about her happy ending.

Most critics regard *The Landleaguers* as a failure: Sadlier regards it as little more
than a pamphlet and Terry criticizes the story itself claiming that because Trollope “was

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crusading against land reform agitation” he “made up a story to fit his thesis.” Many critics are disappointed to find him “presenting the Irish question so unremittingly from the viewpoint of the landlords.” Trollope seems to have been unable to separate his strong feelings about this current event from his task as a storyteller. He frequently inserts intrusive commentary and includes an entire editorial chapter called “The State of Ireland” where he explains his views as he tells those who are interested only in the sensational elements of the story to skip this digression. Trollope suggests that the current problems in Ireland are really foreign problems. He sees the Irish as vulnerable to outside influence and incapable of generating such attitudes on their own, yet he acknowledges that it is in the Empire’s best interest to maintain its stable relationship with Ireland. The narrator claims that the current evils “had been engendered in America by Irish jealousy, and warmed into hatred by a distance from English rule” (296). That some of the agitation was being funded by Americans angered Trollope as he believed their object was to “undermine the prestige of the British Empire” (296). As was typical of Trollope’s attitude toward Ireland, he blamed the Irish themselves for their problems, refusing to examine how English rule exacerbated, and had in fact created, such problems. Recalling the famine which he witnessed personally he contextualizes it as an act of divine retribution: “when man has failed to rule the world rightly, God will stop in, and will cause famines, and plagues, and pestilence – even poverty itself – with His own Right Arm” (298). Trollope viewed agitation for Home Rule as the new sin that Ireland was being punished for.

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466 Barbara Arnett Melchiori, *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 84.
Plot trumps character in this novel – a peculiar style for a Trollope novel – as none of the characters seem to have much interiority. They merely react to events and readers witness their behaviors. For example, Florian’s character is devoted to Catholicism and must decide between duty to his family and duty to a religion he believes in. This could have been excellent material for a novelist like Trollope, yet he never goes beneath the surface to examine the moral uncertainty that a true convert to the faith would feel. The narrator’s attitude towards Florian is frequently one of contempt, not of that contemplation of multiple sides of an issue that Trollope was famous for. The problem should not be seen as a sign of Trollope’s diminishing skills, but rather an extension of the way he frequently treated Irish characters. Florian is, in fact, the son of an Englishman, but by converting and supporting those who favored land reform, Trollope suggests that he forfeits his Englishness and therefore the right to interiority. Barbara Arnett Melchiori recognized the significance of Trollope’s choice of names: “Florian, fussy and foreign for the Roman Catholic 10-year-old who lied to his family and Frank, a name which speaks for itself, for his Protestant anti-land-leaguing brother.”\textsuperscript{467} Pollard suggests that Florian suffers from a “lack of frankness.”\textsuperscript{468}

Like with his other novels and travels, Trollope went to Ireland and made an attempt to gather information for his readers to ensure that he gave them a responsible and accurate narrative. Readers were already privy to the attention in the press, including Gladstone’s controversial land reform policies, but they were also privy to the arguments of people like Parnell. However, when Trollope went to Ireland he didn’t speak with actual landleaguers; instead, he interviewed local authorities and visited with people he

\textsuperscript{467} Barbara Arnett Melchiori, \textit{Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel} (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 85. 
knew there. The result is an extremely one-sided view of the issue that ultimately links all landleaguers together as terrorists who murder children, ruin land, and join secret societies determined to destroy English families. Trollope’s enormous blind spot when it came to Ireland remained to the day he died with no sign of a more complex understanding of the relationship of Ireland to England. His attitude toward Ireland was not changed by the new political developments; in fact, for Trollope his existing beliefs were reinforced.

The Fixed Period and the 20th Century British Empire

By far the most interesting of Trollope’s final novels is his futuristic *The Fixed Period*. One critic has called it “one of the strangest novels in the English language.” Kincaid suggests that both *The Fixed Period* and *An Old Man’s Love* are “bizarre things.” Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of this novel, even stranger than its future setting and science fiction elements, is that it is the only Trollope novel that uses a first person narrator. Readers may recall Trollope’s use of the first person in “A Ride Across Palestine” and the gender and cultural anxieties that that story conveyed. Trollope seldom deviated from the aggressive omniscience of his usual narrative voice. Only in this one novel and a handful of short stories does he experiment with the voice of an unreliable first person narrator. One could guess that Trollope was uncomfortable with the narrative possibilities of this form; in a letter to Kate Field he called first person narration “too egoistic” and “dangerous.” Although as careful readers we know that the author and the narrator are different personas, Trollope makes efforts in his other novels to convince

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469 Harvey, 33.
470 Quoted in Rogers, 16.
readers that in his case their relationship is close and occasionally that they are one and the same – he does this in his “State of Ireland” chapter in *The Landleaguers*. Because *The Fixed Period* is narrated by President John Neverbend, who tries to convince those reading the book that forced euthanasia should be considered in England and America, critics have found Trollope’s own position on this issue and his attitude toward Neverbend difficult to pinpoint. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that soon after writing the novel Trollope met a close friend on the street and when asked about *The Fixed Period* proclaimed, “It’s all true – I mean every word of it.”

Trollope loosely based *The Fixed Period* on the Jacobean play *The Old Law, or a New Way to Please You* written by Middleton, Rowley, and Massinger. In that play Duke Evander reinstates an ancient law that requires mandatory euthanasia for men when they reach eighty years of age and for women at sixty. At the appropriate time they would be pushed off a cliff into the sea. The play follows the reactions of the community to this troubling law; in particular, the play contrasts the behavior of two sons as they reflect on the impending deaths of their fathers. Cleanthes is so saddened by the loss of his father that he stages his death to try and subvert the law. Alternately, the ruthless Simonides relishes in his father’s death and the inheritance he would receive. Ultimately the reinstatement of the old law is revealed to be a test of virtue, no one actually was killed, and the elders of the community become the society’s moral leaders and judges. “The play effectively demonstrates how social cohesiveness depends not on love or family loyalty, but on a materialist process of deferred expectations and on the sheer

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471 Terry, 202.
472 Trollope likely read Samuel Butler’s New Zealand utopian novel *Erewhon* written in 1871.
unpredictability of death” According to Harvey, “unlike the authors of The Old Law, Trollope’s concern with the human conflict between love and material self-interest is secondary to his satiric attack on utilitarianism, on its inhuman conception of social efficiency and on the tyrannical power of the state.” As in The Old Law where the old people were eventually allowed not only to live but to use their wisdom as rulers, The Fixed Period endorses the viability of aging populations. In addition, Trollope’s novel sanctions the use of imperial force for countries who question the authority of the British Empire.

At the beginning of the novel Neverbend explains the history of Brittanula including its path to independence from Great Britain. The novel begins:

> It may be doubted whether a brighter, more prosperous, and specially a more orderly colony than Brittanula was ever settled by British colonists. But it had its period of separation from the mother country, though never of rebellion,—like its elder sister New Zealand. Indeed, in that respect it simply followed the lead given her by the Australias, which, when they set up for themselves, did so with the full co-operation of England.  

Such was the desired path to separation that Trollope advocated for white-settler colonies. When Trollope visited New Zealand in 1872 he was surprised that the colony was so much less exotic than Australia, and so much like home. Because it was newly

473 Harvey, 32.
474 Harvey, 33.
settled, he observed that “in New Zealand everything is English.”476 Those in New Zealand followed the colonization plans of those like Wakefield and took their scientific experiment for a new self-sustaining colony seriously. Neverbend’s group of colonists who broke off from New Zealand were even more serious than those they left behind calling themselves “’peculiarly intelligent.’” He explains, “We were the very cream, as it were, that had been skimmed from the milk-pail of the people of a wider colony, themselves gifted with more than ordinary intelligence” (11). These colonists took pride in fiscal responsibility and superior laws that they felt were more moral than those in England. They banned capital punishment and promoted cremation for monetary and environmental reasons, a position that Trollope himself advocated publicly.477

When the story begins it had been thirty years since the founding Britannula. As a young man of thirty, Neverbend and a group of other young colonists and their families had founded their own colony and created their own legislature. Obsessed with staying out of debt, the young colonists debated and proposed a plan called “the fixed period” to save old people from the miseries of old age and to save the young from the burden of caring for people who were no longer productive. Incidentally, the amount that the colony would save through “the fixed period” was £1,000,000, the amount of debt that New Zealand had accrued when Trollope visited in 1872.478 Although various ages were proposed, it was decided that at sixty-seven years, men and women would be “deposited” in a college called the Necropolis where they would live out their final year in a comfortable setting: “They would be prepared for their departure, for the benefit of their country, surrounded by all the comforts to which, at their time of life, they would be

476 Australia, 324.
477 Trollope was one of the founding members of the Cremation Society of England in 1874.
478 Alessio, 76 Alessio makes this comparison.
susceptible, in a college maintained at the public expense; and each, as he drew nearer to the happy day, would be treated with still increasing honour” (3). The Britannulans saw this as a more dignified death than many of the aging were afforded in most societies. After the year at the college had passed, they would be given morphine in a warm bath where their veins would be opened. Such had been the proposal and it was made into a law. Neverbend’s story begins thirty years later when the first person in the colony is about to turn sixty-seven years old. He is Gabriel Crasweller, a remarkably fit and productive man, and Neverbend’s closet friend.

Crasweller is a successful farmer with a young daughter named Eva who Neverbend’s own son, Jack, is in love with. Eva is engaged, however, to another man named Arthur Grundle who is eager to inherit Crasweller’s land after his departure and is worried about what will happen to his legal rights to the property if Crasweller refuses to go quietly to the college. When Neverbend visits Crasweller he is surprised that his friend denies that he is approaching sixty-seven, claiming he is sixty-five, and cowardly trying to avoid the law that he once supported. In the future, such claims would be impossible because infants were tattooed at birth to avoid this confusion. Neverbend realizes the entire system will fall apart if Crasweller does not set a good first example and he is surprised to find out that many people including own wife and son have come to oppose the fixed period. Neverbend is a pure utilitarian, feeling that emotion should not get in the way and believes that once people become used to the idea of being deposited they will treat it as something natural. He is angry that his friend “should be anxious to throw over the whole system to preserve the poor remnant of his life” (20). As the time grows closer for Crasweller to move to the Necropolis, Britannula is visited by a British steamship
transporting the British cricket team for a much anticipated match which the Britannulans
manage to win in dramatic fashion.\textsuperscript{479} The British visitors are understandably curious
about the fixed period and they ask questions that make Neverbend uncomfortable. He
fears that they might try to subvert his country’s law on humanitarian grounds.
Neverbend continues to advocate for his policy, honestly believing that it is the best thing
for his population.

Nevertheless, on the day when Crasweller is to be deposited, a group of
Britannulans stops Neverbend from escorting him. They are supported by a British
gunboat with its guns pointing at the capital city of Gladstonopolis. The gunboat is
ironically named \textit{The John Bright} after England’s well known pacifist and is sent by
England’s curiously named \textit{Secretary of Benevolence}. Neverbend is taken away on the
gunboat, the fixed period is put to an end, and Britannula becomes part of the British
Empire, ruled by a governor send from England. After he leaves, his son marries Eva
who was disgusted by Grundle’s attitude toward the possible death of her father. There is
no indication that Neverbend’s wife desired to go with her husband.

Even on the gunboat, Neverbend tries to convince the crew that his policy would
be good for the rest of the world. In fact, the novel ends with Neverbend planning on
traveling around, perhaps to America, to try to find people who will try his plan. He
relishes in the idea that in future generations “I shall be spoken of as the first who
endeavoured to save grey hairs from being brought with sorrow to the grave” (21). He
compares himself to other great thinkers like Copernicus and Galileo who were ridiculed
by their societies only to be proven right by history. The British view the fixed period as

\textsuperscript{479} C.L.R. James was a great lover of Victorian novels and I can’t help but wonder whether he read this
novel considering its suggestion of imperial ties being maintained through cricket.
murder, but Neverbend disagrees claiming that something sanctioned by the state cannot be called murder. By the same logic, he suggests, British soldiers on gunboats are murderers as well as they use the guns “for the sake of killing many people” (170). The British, he argues, are just as murderous as they accuse him of being. As Blythe suggests, “Trollope compromises the reader because while we easily dismiss the idea of compulsory euthanasia, some of Neverbend’s arguments have a compelling logic.”

Trollope clearly pokes fun of at Neverbend by granting him such an apt name and reveals that he is somewhat ridiculous. His inflexibility makes him a poor leader for his people and his belief that calling murder by a different name would make it less inhumane reveals deep moral insensitivity. Nevertheless, there is some method to his madness as dealing with aging populations is a continuing source of debate. Christopher Buckley’s recent bestseller *Boomsday* (January 1, 2008, the day when the first baby boomer can retire will full Social Security benefits) treats the problem of what to do with the elderly comically using the same ironic devices that Trollope uses in *The Fixed Period*. In a recent essay Sam Silverman makes one of the first arguments against the standard reading of the novel as a satire which denounces euthanasia as inhumane. Trollope’s own ailing health, his fear of physical deterioration and idleness, and his comments about not wanting to prolong his life lead Silverman to see Trollope’s middle ground on the topic of euthanasia. He claims that Trollope “believed that something needed to be done, that perhaps euthanasia was an idea whose time would come, but that making it a societal imperative at any given age was not an appropriate way of dealing

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480 Blythe, 170.
with the problem.” 482 We do not know, claims Silverman, whether Trollope “recognize[d] the slippery slope that implementation of a fixed period would lead to.” 483

Jane Nardin grants the novel predictive power about the 20th century as she links the “fixed period” with the Nazis’ attempt to exterminate the Jews and other undesirables. “The Nazis tried to justify their crimes for the good of their country, they marked their victims for identification purposes, they built crematoriums, and they planned a ‘final solution’ akin to a ‘fixed period.’” 484 Trollope seems to dismiss utopian schemes on the grounds that they upset the natural order which is inherently flawed, but more desirable than human schemes for improvement. According to Lansbury, “It was far better to condone a pervasive inequality in an organization and accept a degree of inefficiency that reflected human fallibility than to attempt to impose an unnatural and theoretical hierarchy of talent.” 485 This becomes clear because “imbedded in the humorous sketch is a brutal picture of how bringing heaven to earth can reduce real men and women to dust.” 486 Trollope struggles with this moral question of what to do with ageing populations as he saw himself as one of them, but even as he toys with ideas, he opts not to interfere with the natural course of events.

Trollope’s The Fixed Period presents a younger dystopian society that is rescued by an older and more established empire. Alessio directly links the utopianism of New Zealand during Trollope’s period with Britannula through an interesting passage in Trollope’s Australia and New Zealand:

482 Silverman, 280.
483 Silverman, 282.
485 Lansbury, 51.
486 Letwin, 183.
I can hardly but fail in expressing …my admiration for the spirit in which these gentlemen worked, and my conviction that they were wrong … in their theory as to the construction of a settlement in which colonists should live a blessed life after some special fashion to be determined fixed by them. The scheme had all the merits and all the faults which have attended the fabrication of Utopias…  

As Alessio notes, even the word “fixed” is connected interestingly to the “fixed period” of the novel. The novel paints a disturbingly conservative future as it is “so thoroughly Victorian in its values of class and status consciousnesses, financial parameters of success, the role of women, the rules of courtship and marriage, and the continuing sovereignty of Britain.” Nevertheless, it is not those aspects of the society that Trollope critiques. It is only when they plan to commit murder that their society becomes a dystopia. Tellingly, Trollope’s future has no problems with indigenous cultures as did New Zealand because Britannula appears to have been uninhabited on their arrival. Trollope gives no indication one way or another about the fates of such cultures in other places. However, by not mentioning them it would seem that the future he proposed, where the last Maori would die, had come to pass in his vision of the future.

It is not impossible to see some critique of imperial excess in the novel. The gunboats do put an end to the argument in a way that seems unfair to Neverbend who is willing to argue the plan’s merits to anyone who will listen. Instead of debating the morality of the plan, they use force. But, it is Neverbend’s inflexibility and his inability to

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487 Alessio, 79.
488 Terry, 202.
see the big picture that makes the gunboats an easier solution to the problem. He will in fact, never bend making rational arguments useless. This is similar to Trollope’s diagnosis of Maoris as those who could not adapt to Western culture and would eventually become extinct. In a fresh and thoughtful analysis of *The Fixed Period* Henry Lucy Blythe argues that Trollope’s travel books and this novel in particular “foreground the contradictions and paradoxes into which the British empire threw thoughtful liberals like Trollope who believed in progress through reason, individualism, duty, honesty, industry, and philanthropy, yet witnessed the violent effects of these principles in the colonial field.”489 She is mistaken, however, when she links Neverbend with Maori cannibals and uses that linkage and Trollope’s sympathetic treatment of Neverbend to argue that Trollope shows sympathy to indigenous populations in this novel.

At one point before the fixed period is brought to an end, Neverbend confides in a close friend that he understands why the British are opposed to the law: “I believe that they think we mean to eat them” (166). He is happy when his friend perceives “that I was not a bloody-minded cannibal, but was actuated by a true feeling of philanthropy” (166). It becomes obvious to readers that Neverbend is something like a cannibal and because of this he must be removed from his country and from his own family. In fact, when Neverbend marvels at the lengths they are willing to go to stop him he asks why they went to such lengths. “When I asked him why there was this great necessity for kidnapping me, he assured me that feeling in England had run very high on the matter, and that sundry bishops had declared that anything so barbarous could not be permitted in the twentieth century. ‘It would be as bad, they said, as the cannibals of New Zealand.’” (166)489 It would seem that such behavior has been abolished by the twentieth century and

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489 Blythe, 164.
that Neverbend represents a return to barbarism perhaps a kind of atavism. Although the British Empire will not execute him – they still use capital punishment, but they stop Neverbend before he commits a capital offence – they insist on separating him from the general population. I don’t see sympathy for Neverbend through his comparison of himself to a cannibal. Trollope’s future has no cannibals with which to sympathize.

Before closing, I would like to suggest a more appropriate context for The Fixed Period than cannibalism or the annexation of the Transvaal. This context is what became known as the ‘Bulgarian Atrocities.’ In July of 1876 Bulgarian Christians staged a rebellion against their Turkish rulers and they were violently suppressed. The ‘Bulgarian Atrocities’ “provoked a furious outburst of indignation in England against the Turks and, more to the point, against the pro-Turkish Eastern policy of Disraeli’s government.”

Trollope publicly denounced Disraeli’s stance and favored bolder moves to protect the Christians of European heritage against Eastern violence. Trollope gave speeches and read aloud from Gladstone’s “Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East” as he publicly advocated for immediate action. In this treatise, Gladstone characterizes Muslims as inhuman, using language that is strikingly similar to contemporary discourse following September 11th.

Let me endeavour very briefly to sketch, in the rudest outline, what the Turkish race was and what it is. It is not a question of Mohometanism simply, but of Mahometanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race. They are not the mild Mahometans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria, nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great

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490 R.T. Shannon,
anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and, as far as their dominion reached, civilisation disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. For the guide of this life they had a relentless fatalism: for its reward hereafter, a sensual paradise.\textsuperscript{491}

The Turks had been supported by England to prevent too much influence by the Russians which put Disraeli in a difficult position. It was the Liberals however, before Trollope broke with them over policies toward Ireland, who suggested that intervention against the Turks was a humanitarian issue. By suggesting that the Turks were less than human and that they presented dangers to those who were fully human, the Liberals justified interference. Similarly in The Fixed Period it is when the time of “the fixed period” has come and a “murder” is about to happen that interference becomes justified. Simply chatting about the fixed period was acceptable during the cricket match visit, but actual implementation was seen as an anti-human crime and the population had to be protected against its own ruler. Considering Trollope’s personal interest in the Bulgarian atrocities during this time, it seems that his The Fixed Period similarly endorses the British Empire’s interference in certain situations when the lives of white settlers are at stake. By comparing himself to a cannibal and placing himself in a non-white category, he becomes for Trollope very much like Maori cannibals. He is to be tolerated until his own death, but his death is the desired solution.

\textsuperscript{491} Fix!
Ultimately, Trollope’s picture of the British Empire of the future is one of military
dominance and cultural influence where the former colonies exercise independence only
insofar as they remain close to the Empire’s ideals. “In a deceptively simple narrative,
Trollope returns to not only the subject of expendable human groups, but the role of force
in extending and maintaining the British empire.” Certain minor deviations would be
acceptable like promoting cremation or outlawing the death penalty, but the Empire
would have the final word if certain lines, that they determined, were crossed. The future
would be less challenging as the British would have superior gunboats and would be able
to enforce their will unilaterally. In fact, certain problems like wars with indigenous
cultures over land would no longer detract from the formation of a strong white-settler
empire.

492 Blythe, 163.
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DEGREES AWARDED

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor  
Northern Arizona University  
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Interim Coordinator for Summer S.T.A.R. Program  
Courses Taught: Honors 190 – 2 sections  
Honors 191 – Special topics course on Victorian sensation fiction – 1 section  
Honors 191 – Special topics course on legacies of imperialism – 1 section  
JLS 130 – Writing for Communication Channels – 1 section  
SC 111 – Fundamentals of Public Speaking – 5 sections  
Com 101 – Introduction to Communication Studies – 1 section  
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ENG 222 – British Literature from 1798 – 1 section  
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ENG 202 C – Technical Writing – 5 sections

CONFERENCES PRESENTATIONS
“Madness, Othello, and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An Imperial Reading of Anthony Trollope’s He Knew He Was Right" presented at the University of South Carolina 19th Century Conference "Identity Politics and the Politics of Identity." Spring 2003