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# ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S BARSETSHIRE HEROES

by

David Michael Mazurowski

A Dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English.

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DAVID MICHAEL MAZUROWSKI. Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire Heroes
(Under the direction of Charles E. Edge.)

## ABSTRACT

By the 1850s, the Victorians had developed a deep-seated ambivalence toward heroes and heroism. Rapid changes in society, religion, and culture compelled some writers to search for new heroes, while other writers questioned whether the hero could exist in the modern world. Mid-Victorian authors, drawing on or reacting against classical, chivalric, and Romantic models, revealed their society's paradoxical feelings on this subject. Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels also reflect this Victorian cultural and literary ambivalence toward heroism.

Trollope, following a trend stretching back to the origins of the English novel, undermines any belief in classical heroism. In the first two Barsetshire novels Trollope employs a mock-heroic technique and an intrusive narrator to undercut Archdeacon Grantly's comic posture as an epic hero. In Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle Trollope seriously studies the psychology and character of the Reverend Josiah Crawley, demonstrating his failure, through self-martyring pride, to achieve heroic stature.

Every Barsetshire novel includes a variation on the not-quite-heroic young gentleman. Trollope, reacting against the Romantic hero and conventional heroes of Victorian popular fiction, creates young men who always strive for, yet fail to achieve, true heroism. With an ambitious Mark Robarts, an unthinking Lord Lufton, a flirtatious Johnny Eames, or a cowardly Adolphus Crosbie, Trollope exhibits the flaws which ruin the youth's quest for heroism.

In contrast, and roughly paralleling the rise of the democratic hero, Trollope offers two men who embody his idea of a realistic hero: Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne. Trollope's Barsetshire hero is a mature country gentleman, endowed with moral integrity, compassionate manliness, and self-respect, who creates harmony within his community. Though imperfect, both of these characters act as moral exemplars and as saviors for their society.

Passages in Trollope's autobiography, his critical lectures and biographies, and several other novels and historical works reveal his pervasive and consistent thinking on this topic. Insisting on the novelist's didactic function, Trollope offers Harding and Thorne to his readers as examples of moral excellence and caring: these heroes bring the gifts of harmony and healing to their society, providing stability and moral direction to a troubled Victorian era.

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## Chapter I. Heroism in the Mid-Victorian Age

Many Victorian authors, including Carlyle, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Dickens, and Thackeray, explored the concept of heroism in their essays, novels, and poetry–illustrating their society's need for heroes to serve as leaders or moral examples. At the same time, however, several of these authors revealed deep and lasting doubts about the very heroes they created. Anthony Trollope's six Barsetshire novels, published between 1855 and 1867, mirror the provocative and sometimes paradoxical attitude Victorians expressed toward heroes and the heroic. This dissertation will explore Trollope's complicated ideas about the hero in these six novels, a topic which drew Trollope's interest throughout his career.

**Overview: Defining the Hero**

The concept of the hero is so closely associated with the history of literature and mankind that it almost defies simple definition. As Victor Brombert concedes in the opening line of his essay on this subject, "The problem of the 'hero' is still very much with us" (11). The hero's roots lie in the earliest myths and legends of man, some of which were passed on for centuries before being written down. These early prototypes and divine heroes have, in some ways, shaped and influenced many of the heroes of literature, including the fierce warriors of the classical epics, the chivalric knights of King Arthur, and the young rebels of Byron and Scott. Several commentators employ lists of characteristics in an attempt to define just what makes a hero. Bill Butler, for example, in The Myth of the Hero, begins his second chapter with a set of thirty key traits of the superhuman

or divine hero.[1] Robert Folkenflik mentions Lord Raglan's "checklist" of twenty-two heroic attributes, noting that "Oedipus gets full marks; Arthur nineteen; Hercules seventeen; and Robin Hood thirteen" (15).

Other commentators, rather than scoring individual heroes against a list of specific characteristics, have taken a broader approach, searching for a few general traits that seem crucial to the hero's definition. From a review of some of the best essays which struggle with the definition of the hero, three principal characteristics emerge: the hero is an archetypal figure, a gift-giver or savior of mankind, and a man whose skills and success are measured through confrontations with an antagonist. A brief glance at these three traits will provide a foundation for an examination of the Victorians' cultural and literary views of the hero.

All heroes, in one fashion or another, appear as some sort of example or ideal to fulfill the needs and aspirations of ordinary men. As Bill Butler says of this key attribute: "The hero is an archetypal figure, a paradigm who bears the possibilities of life, courage, love – the commonplaces, the indefinables which themselves define our human lives" (6). Any hero is simply better than the average man, whether measured by his fighting skills, physical strength, intelligence, nobility, cleverness, or leadership. "In the poetry of heroic action," C. M. Bowra argues, "leading parts are assigned to men of superior gifts, who are presented and accepted as being greater than other men" (22). Oftentimes the early heroes became society's leaders and kings: they were outsiders, men of mysterious birth, direct descendants of the gods, or men who merited special relationships with the gods. In any event, something sets all heroes apart from the rest of their society and elevates them into examples for all men. Robert Folkenflik captures this archetypal aspect of the hero with one telling phrase: "the

idea of heroism is a mirror of an age's very conception of itself at its best" (16).

A second fundamental attribute of a hero, closely allied with his role as an exemplar, stems from his status as a gift-giver or savior of the community. "The gift of the hero," Butler explains, "is salvation of the community or the tools or symbols of that salvation. He is a solver of problems, whether they are his own or those of others" (10). The stories of Prometheus, who brought fire to mankind, Jesus Christ, who gave his life for man's salvation, and King Arthur, who enriched his society with the concepts of order, harmony, and fellowship, all contain this characteristic gift-giving.[2] An element of self-sacrifice often accompanies this second role of the hero. Explaining the hero's relationship to the group or society, Victor Brombert says that "there is epic heroism but there is also an epic sacrifice of self to a broader idea or ideal" (13). Many times, commentators note, this sacrifice may lead to a sudden or violent death of the hero or of his closest followers.

The hero's performance–as an example for all mankind or as their savior–is measured by a third key attribute: the hero's relationship with his antagonist. This antagonist can appear in a variety of forms. The hero may have to fight against the gods (or with monsters), rebel against established society (to replace it with a new order), battle with himself (or his double), or survive a long and perilous quest (or a journey to the underworld). In any event, the dangerous meeting with an adversary tests the hero's valor, moral strength, fighting skills, endurance, and worthiness, that is, whatever characteristics set him apart from the common men who follow him. "The measurement of a hero," Bill Butler states, "his definition, is in his confrontation with an antagonist. . . . And

so the hero's life is one of test after test, imposed by the author, Fate, the gods, demonic powers, or potential fathers-in-law. In conflict is his delineation" (18). Thus the hero, functioning as an exemplar or savior, ultimately triumphs as a man of action and confrontation. "A hero differs from other men by his peculiar force and energy," C. M. Bowra concludes, and he "has an abundant, overflowing, assertive force, which expresses itself in action, especially in violent action, and enables him to do what is beyond ordinary mortals" (26-7).

**The Victorians and the Hero**

With these general characteristics of a hero in mind, we can begin to explore the rich diversity of Victorian cultural and literary opinions of the heroic. Some prominent Victorian authors and social commentators raised the hero to new heights, while others severely questioned the role of heroes in a modern society. Works such as Thomas Carlyle's On Heroes and Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History (1841) staunchly supported powerful men and hero-worship as a solution to society's ills. In contrast, works like Charles Dickens's David Copperfield (1849-50), Great Expectations (1860-61), and William Makepeace Thackeray's Vanity Fair (1848), raised many doubts about the hero's very existence. This keen interest in heroism was not limited to a few mid-century English novelists and writers; indeed, this topic formed a part of the very fabric of Victorian culture and ideas.[3] The Victorian age saw the expansion and solidification of the British Empire; a wave of rapid industrialization, invention, and progress swept across the country; and strong leaders and "great men" were needed to lead Britain into this new era. Walter Houghton links hero worship to an early Victorian sense of optimism and a "cult of enthusiasm" that arose during the rapid changes of the mid-Victorian period (306). The

British public came to revere military heroes like Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington. Tennyson's 1852 "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," for example, his first public poem as Poet Laureate, celebrates the Duke's role as a statesman and military hero:

> Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
> The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
> Whole in himself, a common good.
> Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
> Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
> Our greatest yet with least pretence,
> Great in council and great in war,
> Foremost captain of his time. . . . (lines 24-31)[4]

And Carlyle, concluding his 1820 biographical essay on Nelson, enthusiastically wrote that "Nelson's name will always occupy a section in the history of the world, and be pronounced wherever it is understood, as that of a HERO" (Montaigne and Other Essays 91).

In the midst of this sort of enthusiasm, praise, and optimism, however, many Victorians seemed to suffer from a profound sense of doubt, and these doubts permeated the public's attitude toward their leaders and heroes. Social critics, including Richard Altick and Walter Houghton, delineate some of the reasons the Victorians could not sustain the expectations of the early part of the nineteenth century. Houghton lists several major causes of Victorian anxiety and doubt: "Expanding business, scientific development, the growth of democracy, and the decline of Christianity were sources of distress as well as satisfaction" (54). In almost every decade of Queen Victoria's reign significant shocks battered some of the foundations of English society: the church, the aristocracy, and the landed gentry.

In the 1830s and 40s, for example, controversy erupted over the Church of England, for centuries a source of England's leadership and

authority; these conflicts came from pressures building within the church itself and from without.[5] High church supporters, led by the members of the Oxford Movement, battled the low church Dissenters and Latitudinarians, while the public press and Parliament viciously attacked the corrupt system of church preferments and the pay of bishops and clergymen (Victorian People and Ideas 207-8). And additional shocks came later with the well-publicized findings of prominent geologists and scientists, whose revelations about the ancient history of the earth's surface–along with Darwin's theories on evolution–further eroded Victorian beliefs and ideals. The Victorians believed that a "decline of Christianity and the prospect of atheism" would trigger disastrous consequences, according to Houghton, and "it was then assumed, in spite of rationalist denials, that any collapse of faith would destroy the sanctions of morality; and morality gone, society would disintegrate" (58).

More stresses arose from the growth and spread of the Industrial Revolution, transforming new social crises into vigorous calls for democracy and workers' rights. Traditional family structures and local authority withered away with the mass movement of people from the country into the industrial cities and towns. In Victorian People and Ideas, Richard Altick describes the first decade of Victoria's reign as "the most harrowing and dangerous of the entire century" (89). In the 1840s the pressures on the working class intensified, Altick notes, and

> Times were worse than they had been in living memory. There was a general economic depression, with factories closing or working part time as unsold goods piled up in warehouses. The labor market, already swollen by seasoned workers thrown out of employment, was glutted with new recruits, for machines had displaced additional tens of thousands of hand workers (89).

Linked with these significant social problems, a very real fear of revolution contributed to the anxieties of the aristocracy and the gentry, with the workers demanding more rights, better living conditions, decent wages, and universal manhood suffrage. The general condemnation of the Poor Laws, the rise of the Chartist movement, and wide-scale working class demonstrations–many of them violent–all worked to undermine the traditional leadership by the aristocracy and the country squires in Parliament.

The military and its most famous heroes came under fire by the middle of the nineteenth century, as well. Though Wellington was buried in 1852 with much pomp and public ceremony next to Nelson in St. Paul's Cathedral, Tennyson's commemorative ode on Wellington was roundly condemned in the press (Poems of Tennyson 2: 481). In fact, Wellington's fate may form the perfect example of the stereotype of a Victorian public hero; he exemplified the virtues of duty, honor, courage under fire, and service to country. Initially lionized by the masses, Wellington became the "Hero of Waterloo"; he was also a statesman and leader in several Tory governments, but by the time he died, his victory at Waterloo and his public fame had long been eclipsed by controversial stands against parliamentary reform, strong support of the Corn Laws, and his use of British troops to counter the Chartist movement. Leonard Cooper, in The Age of Wellington, notes that "like others of his sort, he passed from adulation to unpopularity, from that to acceptance and, in the fullness of years, to the dignity of an institution . . ." (296). Arthur Bryant reaches a similar conclusion in his biography The Great Duke. He finds Wellington near the end of his life reduced to a sort of London landmark like St Paul's Cathedral; and, he concludes, "the Duke had not always seemed a hero to

his countrymen. Fifteen years after Waterloo, the hated champion of a lost political cause, he had been booed by the rough mob of the unpoliced capital whenever he appeared in the streets" (13-4).

The British involvement in the Crimean War (1854-56) provides another example of the Victorian ambivalence toward heroism that prevailed by the middle of the century. The British working class in the large towns like Birmingham and Sheffield, looking for new heroes and supported by the public press, enthusiastically clamored for a chance to teach the aggressive Russians a lesson in a conflict over influence in the Turkish empire (Briggs 56). A sort of jingoistic nationalism swept across England, with the Czar portrayed as the "bully of Europe" (Seaman 101), a despot who was threatening to invade Europe with his "semibarbarous" Russian hordes from the Asian steppes, pursuing a terrifying goal of "universal domination" (Briggs 55). The press celebrated individual acts of heroism like those of Florence Nightingale and the cavalry members of the Light Brigade. Nightingale, whose name became a synonym for a Victorian heroine, was a "seemingly fragile gentlewoman" who employed her "ruthless resolution and efficiency" in the battle against military neglect, bureaucratic incompetence, and the horrific conditions in hospitals near the front (Briggs 55). And Tennyson's famous 1854 poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," glorifies the unforgettable heroism of the cavalry as they charged into a concentration of Russian artillery:

> Storm'd at with shot and shell,
> While horse and hero fell,
> They that had fought so well
> Came thro' the jaws of Death,
> Back from the mouth of hell . . .

> When can their glory fade?
> O the wild charge they made!
> All the world wonder'd.
> Honor the charge they made!
> Honor the Light Brigade,
> Noble six hundred! (lines 43-55)

This stirring valedictory, nevertheless, is qualified by the damning lines of Tennyson's second stanza, which echo the newspaper account of the action: "Was there a man dismay'd? / Not tho' the soldier knew / Some one had blunder'd" (lines 10-12, my emphasis). Of the 700 men who rode out in this charge, Robert Hill notes, only 195 returned, and all of this heroic yet senseless slaughter occurred due to the misinterpretation of a superior's order (212). Here again we see a celebration of the hero, but on an individual level, with praise reserved for the common soldier's unquestioning devotion to duty and bravery in the face of crushing odds. On a broader scale, however, both the public and press lashed out against the supervisory blundering, the army's general incompetence, and the staggering economic costs of the Crimean War. The resulting turmoil finally led to military reform, and these efforts, L. C. B. Seaman concludes in Victorian England, further weakened aristocratic control of the military (205). Gladstone, in the late 1860s, was able to push through several significant reforms, including the abolition of a long-standing aristocratic practice of buying commissions and promotions and the revocation of the lord lieutenants' privilege of appointing all officers in the militia (Seaman 204-205).

Religious controversy, the distress of the working class, and involvement in a disastrous foreign war all contributed to the Victorians' ambivalent feelings toward their heroes and leaders. The traditional sources of leadership for the country–the Church of England, a Parliament

dominated by the gentry, and an aristocracy entrenched in both government and the military–came under almost continuous attack during the nineteenth century. At the same time, however, the rapid changes in society, scientific assaults on long-held beliefs, and an increasing sense of isolation made the cry for new leaders, who would unite this fragmented society and reinvigorate its sense of virtue, louder than ever.

Thomas Carlyle's lectures and writing provide a window into Victorian literary attitudes toward the hero, attitudes that were just as varied as those held by society. In a series of six lectures, entitled On Heroes Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, Carlyle expounded on this wide-ranging topic to an audience in London in the spring of 1840 (Lehman 40). Carlyle praised the heroes and "great men" he discovered in many different walks of life–among poets (Shakespeare), prophets (Mohammed), priests (Luther), and men of letters (Samuel Johnson)–in addition to military dictators and "kings" like Napoleon and Cromwell. Notably absent from Carlyle's list are any scientists, such as Galileo or Newton, and the entire English ruling class, including the aristocracy and the landed gentry. In Carlyle's Theory of the Hero B. H. Lehman lists several common characteristics shared by the Victorian Sage's great men: they all are somehow "inspired," closely linked with "the divine," or have "the gift of Insight"; they display great sincerity or "Earnestness"; and they all serve a very practical function as models for society in general (54-56). In Carlyle's own words:

> They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that

> dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world . . . (Hero-Worship 1).

This last characteristic may be the most significant one: as a role model Carlyle's hero mirrors the needs of ordinary men and the unique requirements of the age in which he lives. Carlyle admired the strength, virtue, manhood, and ability to act in his exemplary men, and Houghton argues that these same qualities served as a complement to the skills of the Victorian worker: "as the Worker able by common sense and perseverance to build steamboats and railroads is exalted, so also is the Hero able by sheer force of will to found a great commercial nation, at home or abroad" (122-23). To lead these workers into a modern industrial age, some writers envisioned a new man, the "captain of industry," who would replace the corrupt aristocracy and tired gentry as a heroic force for the modern era.

Carlyle's Past and Present (1843) also reflects an English enthusiasm for heroic man, comparing the strong leadership and harmony of England's distant past with the sense of malaise and uselessness the author observed in his own day. In this work Carlyle contrasts the corruption, idleness, and waste of human potential he came across in an English country workhouse with the efficiency, self-regulation, and purposeful life described in an account of the twelfth-century abbey at Bury St. Edmunds. The difference, Carlyle notes, lies in the powerful but beneficent leadership of Abbot Sampson, a man who had the personal strength to direct all of the monks' labors, worship, and daily activities, leading them to a contented life in a self-sustaining society. Carlyle juxtaposes this harmonious operation with life in nineteenth-century England: an age dominated by the complete isolation of individual workers,

fraught with greed and idleness, and fragmented by the pathetic rule of a hopelessly divided and powerless Parliament.

While Carlyle may have been the first and most vocal champion of the hero in Victorian England, many other authors presented a wide variety of heroes in a favorable light. Young boys received countless books recounting the old tales of the chivalrous knights gathered around King Arthur or the stories of Scott's memorable heroes fighting their way through the wilds of Scotland.[6] Scores of popular conduct books emphasized not only proper manners and gentlemanly behavior, but also the more heroic qualities of manliness, courage, and noble self-sacrifice.[7] Samuel Smiles' Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character and Conduct (1859), spiced with its exemplary anecdotes of Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston, and even George Washington, may have been one of the most successful conduct books in the entire nineteenth century: 55,000 copies were sold in the first four years, and a staggering total of 258,000 by 1905 (Common Reader 390). Greek heroes also served as role models for the male youth of Britain; Charles Kingsley's The Heroes (1856), an adaptation of the Greek legends of Perseus, Theseus, and Jason, "became a children's classic," according to Brenda Collans, "introducing countless readers to the Greek legends, and it has been reprinted by so many publishers that it would be impossible to estimate the numbers of copies sold" (208).

With all this popular interest in and enthusiasm for heroes, it is not surprising to find other noted Victorian authors exploring the role of the hero in their poetry, essays, and novels. Classical epic heroes, various heroes from the tales of chivalry, and the Byronic heroes popularized by the Romantics served as sources for these authors in their examination of the perplexing question of heroism in the Victorian age. A closer look at these

three sources of literary heroism, using selected references to specific works by Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, Dickens, and Thackeray, will highlight the Victorians' diverse and sometimes conflicting views of the hero.

**Classical Heroes**

Charles Kingsley, Matthew Arnold, and Alfred Lord Tennyson all tapped the rich lode of Greek mythology and the epic heroes to obtain sources for poems, essays, and stories. In The Heroes, for example, Kingsley's 1856 book of children's tales, the author draws on Greek heroes as role models to deliver a didactic message without the heavy-handed moralizing found in other Victorian children's literature (Collans 208). The opening of Kingsley's tale about Jason and the Argonauts addresses his youthful readers directly, moving easily from these stories of legendary heroes to current events (Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War), while praising heroic action and self-sacrifice:

> And there are heroes in our days also, who do noble deeds, but not for gold. Our discoverers did not go to make themselves rich when they sailed out one after another into the dreary frozen seas, nor did the ladies who went out last year to drudge in the hospitals of the East, making themselves poor, that they might be rich in noble works. And young men, too, whom you know, children, and some of them of your own kin, did they say to themselves, "How much money shall I earn?" when they went out to the war, leaving wealth, and comfort, and a pleasant home, and all that money can give, to face hunger and thirst, and wounds and death, that they might fight for their country and their Queen? No, children, there is a better thing on earth than wealth, a better thing than life itself; and that is, to have done something before you die, for which good men may honour you, and God your Father smile upon your work (64).

Kingsley does not alter the qualities of these ancient heroes like Jason and his fellow Argonauts to make them appropriate for his own day; instead, he uses the old heroes to exemplify the very best attributes Victorian men and women should strive for: courage, patriotism, and noble self-sacrifice.

Matthew Arnold also turned to the Greek writers and their heroes to illuminate proper conduct and noble behavior. Arnold concentrates on the hero's fundamental role as exemplar, as well; he proclaims "actions; human actions" as the core and object of all poetry, and he concludes in his Preface to Poems, 1853: "A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it [the elementary part of our nature] than a smaller human action of to-day . . . " (4). He cites examples to support his claim, dismissing works like Byron's Childe Harold and Wordsworth's Excursion in favor of Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Aeneid, and Aeschylus' Oresteia. Why? "Simply because in the three last-named cases the action is greater," Arnold answers, "the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone" (5). These noble men and great actions could provide instruction and solace to an individual as well as an entire society. In Arnold's short poem "To a Friend" (1849), the poet responds to the opening question "Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?" with reference to Greek works that have become his teachers as well as friends: the epics of Homer, the Stoic philosophies of Epictetus, and the plays of Sophocles (Poems 110-11).[8]

Not all of Arnold's references to the Greek writers and heroes are this comforting, however. Arnold sometimes draws on a specific image of an ancient hero to illustrate the boredom, isolation, and stagnation he saw dominating life in mid-Victorian England. In "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" (1855), for example, Arnold envisions one of the best-known

heroes of the Trojan War, not in glorious combat, but withdrawn and inactive, as he appears at the opening of the Iliad:

> Achilles ponders in his tent,
> The kings of modern thought are dumb;
> Silent they are, though not content,
> And wait to see the future come.
> They have the grief men had of yore,
> But they contend and cry no more. (lines 115-20)

In his own age, Arnold fears all the crucial characteristics of the hero have been stripped away: the decisive action, courage, and noble speech of an ancient warrior such as Ulysses or Aeneas have disappeared, replaced by the hesitation and pouting of Achilles. With this single, striking image the poet reveals how far he has moved from the enthusiasm and relish for heroes found in both Carlyle's essays and Kingsley's heroic stories.

Perhaps Empedocles on Etna, Arnold's long poetic drama of 1852, best illustrates his use of the ancient Greeks to explore the malaise and ennui he found in mid-Victorian England. In this poem, rather than choosing one of the legendary Greek adventurers like Odysseus, Hercules, or Achilles for his protagonist, Arnold turns to Empedocles, a Sicilian Greek philosopher from the fifth century BC. The Victorian poet delineates modern woes through the mouth of this social commentator of the past–as if he were a man of letters living in nineteenth-century England. In an extended soliloquy in the first act Empedocles describes and details the evils of modern life: a world where each man stands alone, dominated by "Tyranny, pride, and lust" (I.2.121). In this world science promises an understanding of all things, yet this burning quest for knowledge only increases man's doubt and isolation, because "Man's measures cannot mete the immeasurable All" (I.2.341). Tinker and Lowry cite a passage

from an 1849 letter Arnold sent to Clough, which echoes the problems Empedocles describes in this poem:

> 'My dearest Clough these are damned times--everything is against one--the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great natures, the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, [and] moral desperadoes like Carlyle . . .' (298).

In this first act Empedocles, like Arnold himself in this letter, sees a society desiring more and more freedom, and happiness, and fulfillment of all "that longing of our youth" that "Burns ever unconsumed" (I.2.369-70). In one sense Arnold and Carlyle find themselves in agreement; they both expose the sickness, ennui, and materialism of their society. Where they vigorously differ, as Arnold's comment in his letter reveals, is in the solution to these problems: in Arnold's view, blind hero-worship of powerful men such as Cromwell or Napoleon would be an act of moral desperation, not the road to Victorian salvation.

In the second act, feeling increasing pressure from the hopelessness and boredom of modern life, Empedocles gradually strips away all ties with the world. He rejects the purple robes and golden circlet, the symbols of his political power; then he discards his laurel bough, a symbol of his intellectual role; finally, he finds himself completely alone, with "no friend, no fellow left, not one" (II.271). Rather than submit to depression, boredom, and the insufferable isolation that surrounds him, Empedocles hurls himself into the active volcano on Mount Etna; the poet ends his life with an act symbolic of the failure of the philosopher as hero, a far cry from the rousing actions of Carlyle's great men. In a manuscript note to the poem, Arnold himself describes Empedocles' last fatal act:

> Before he becomes the victim of depression & overtension of mind, to the utter deadness to joy, grandeur, spirit, and animated life, he desires to die; to be reunited with the universe, before by exaggerating his human side he has become utterly estranged from it (Arnold: A Commentary 292).

In the final analysis, Arnold's own reaction to this poem reflects the ambivalence of the mid-Victorian period. Arnold obviously felt a strong attraction to a classical character like Empedocles, a man of honesty and intellectual vigor, who could understand and expose the illness and woes of his troubled society. At the same time, however, Arnold could not promote the withdrawal and suicide of Empedocles as heroic. This poem's message, in fact, troubled Arnold so much that he withdrew it from his collected poems in 1853, calling it "painful" and "morbid" and dismissing this work as the sort of poem "in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done" (2-3). Although Arnold was clearly attracted to classical sources and the great actions of the past, some of his choices for models betray the ambivalence of his own age.

While Arnold employed his classical heroes to illustrate vividly the woes of the Victorian era, a poem concentrating on another famous Greek hero, Tennyson's 1842 "Ulysses," also reflects the deep-seated ambivalence many Victorians felt toward the heroic. Even though Tennyson takes for his subject one of the most famous of all the Greek heroes, the unique setting and situation of this poem immediately strike the reader. The poet does not choose to write of the strong, crafty, and clever adventurer who appears in Homer's epics; instead, he draws on the older Ulysses who speaks in Dante's Inferno.[9] Tennyson's restless hero, reunited with his

aging wife and dissatisfied with a quiet life leading his people, longs for yet another journey:

> I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.
> How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
> To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use! . . .
>
> And this gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
> (lines 18-23, 30-32)

Ulysses' attraction to the quest and his intense desire for ultimate knowledge link him with the Victorians, and the classical hero, although older and weaker, protests "I cannot rest from travel; I will drink / Life to the lees" (lines 7-8).

At first glance the ending of this poem boldly proclaims Tennyson's praise of heroism in the face of debilitating age and adversity. As Hallam Tennyson reports, his father said this poem "was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life . . ." (1: 196). Ulysses relinquishes his leadership of the Ithacans to his son Telemachus, calls on his old warriors to man the oars, and then plans to set sail, knowing a certain death lies at the end of his journey. The poem's final lines resound with his noble cry:

> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are, –
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. (lines 66-70)

The reader must wonder, nonetheless, if a possible irony undercuts this final portrait of Tennyson's hero.[10] Is it really heroic for the leader to relinquish all his public and familial responsibilities to satisfy a personal

yearning for adventure? Who are these old men Ulysses commands to man his boats? According to Homer, hadn't all his loyal followers been lost long ago on the treacherous Odyssey? And is this really a genuine quest to seek and find new knowledge, or is it Ulysses' escape from advancing age, the struggles of life, and tiresome civic duty? These final lines, like the ambiguities that undermine so many of the Victorians' attitudes towards their public leaders and heroes, can be read either way.

**Chivalric Heroes**

While some Victorian authors returned to the heroes of the Greek legends to struggle with the concepts of heroism, by the middle of the nineteenth century a broad interest in chivalric tales, Arthurian legend, and medieval heroes swept across England. With this widespread Arthurian revival came new enthusiasm for the hero, yet in the very midst of this celebration we still encounter some uneasiness. Tennyson's early poems, like "The Lady of Shalott" (1832) and "Morte d'Arthur" (1842), helped generate this Arthurian revival, which grew tremendously by the time Tennyson published the first four poems of his Idylls of the King in 1859. "Despite an external and internal landscape apparently hostile to romance," Beverly Taylor states in the opening chapter of The Return of King Arthur, "Arthur returned to English literature after more than three hundred years with an intensity remarkable for both the quality and the quantity of works produced" (15). By the middle of the century, for example, with the Arthurian revival in full swing, Tennyson's Idylls were an immediate best-seller; the publishers printed 40,000 copies of the first edition and sold over 10,000 of them in the first week (Common Reader 387). Other poets, especially the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, developed and promoted this keen interest in medieval romance and the

Arthurian tales, and their attention even spilled over into the sister arts, including painting, architecture, furniture, and design.[11]

Legendary figures like King Arthur and his famous knights derive many of their characteristics from the divine heroes of myth; in the Arthurian tales we find a mysterious birth and death, close links with magic and the supernatural, the importance of the quest, and legends of the leader's future return circulating after his death. Other characteristics, however, differentiate these chivalric heroes from those found in Greek and Roman epics. New virtues and codes of conduct–courtesy and loyalty, the chivalric code, and courtly manners–became as important as the knight's strength, courage, or fighting skills.[12] "The new feudalism with its leisure and highly stratified class structure demanded a new hero," Charles Moorman concludes, "a man attuned to the niceties of conduct and indoctrinated in the values of courtly life" (112). Elisabeth Brewer points to other attributes which made Malory's heroes so attractive to the Victorians: the "noble fellowship of good knights," the shared dedication to an ideal, and, above all, the recognition of "the ideal of the gentleman" (3).

Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" and its framing poem, "The Epic," illustrate how one Victorian poet revitalized this legendary tale of the heroic knights of the Round Table. The introductory poem relates how the manuscript came into being, a rewriting of the old Arthurian tales by a young poet, who, not seeing the value of ancient tales dressed in a modern form, has burnt eleven of the twelve books he has written. "Why take the style of those heroic times?" this young man asks, "For nature brings not back the mastodon, / Nor we those times" (lines 35-37). His friends gather around the fire, however, to hear the one story that has survived, and soon

Tennyson's narrator is lost in the world of ancient legend, learning about the final days of Arthur and the fate of the king's famous sword, Excalibur. Significantly, though, the narrator returns to the framework of Victorian England at the very end of the poem, suggesting that a hero like Arthur could aid a society beset by religious faction, unsettling scientific discoveries, and a crisis of faith. In fact, the narrator dreams of this new hero after the story-telling has ended:

> And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd
> To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
> Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
> Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
> To me, methought, who waited with the crowd,
> There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
> King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
> Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
> "Arthur is come again: he cannot die." (lines 339-47).

Tennyson's point is unmistakable: these old legends can serve a modern purpose, and a hero like Arthur, with his exemplary nobility, honesty, and unshakable morality, can provide direction and meaning to a society overwrought with anxiety, rapid change, and human isolation.

Publication of the entire series of Idylls, beginning with this 1842 version of the "Morte d'Arthur" (adapted by Tennyson to become his twelfth idyll), spans most of the Victorian period, with the last of these long poems appearing in 1885. F. E. L. Priestley sees the individual idylls forming a loose pattern, and, he argues, "this pattern is best appreciated by interpreting the whole in terms of Tennyson's last intention, and recognizing that it is not his primary purpose to re-vivify Malory's story in a dramatic narrative, but to use the Arthurian cycle as a medium for the discussion of problems which are both contemporary and perennial" (635). Not only Arthur himself, but other knights as well, including Galahad,

Percival, and Gareth, are interwoven into this pattern, as they all embody some aspects of the human ideals of courage, fellowship, loyalty, and courtesy.

While Tennyson himself protested in 1869 that reviewers were reading the idylls "too allegorically," a broad didactic outline can be discerned within the poems. King Arthur, the exemplary hero, has close ties with other divine heroes from mythology, and he serves as an ideal and cohesive figure for a society torn by strife, faction, and a lack of a unifying force. On the other hand, Tennyson's idylls also contain traces of Victorian ambivalence; for every Arthur and Galahad in these poems we discover a Lancelot or a Gawain, and, ultimately, the society of the Round Table collapses under the weight of disloyalty, greed, and betrayal by the very knights who founded it. Tennyson's hero, nevertheless, is transformed into a modern gentleman of "stateliest port," and Arthur's courage, faith, and strong leadership reflect the very ideals that could invigorate and renew a troubled Victorian age.[13] These twelve poems, along with Carlyle's enthusiastic works, contain the most confident statements on heroism written in the Victorian period.

Robert Browning's dramatic monologue, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," published in Men and Women in 1855, leaves the reader with a more troubling impression of the chivalric hero. Browning crafts an intense, psychological portrait of the youth on a quest, but this journey turns out to be anything but heroic or ennobling. The hero's mental state is one of overwhelming weariness and pain, and when he grudgingly accepts a cripple's directions pointing toward the final goal of his quest, the Dark Tower, he proceeds out of resignation, not bolstered by courage or idealized strength:

> Yet acquiescingly
> I did turn as he pointed: neither pride
> Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
> So much as gladness that some end might be.
> (lines 15-18)

The downtrodden Roland begins the final stage of his journey down a lonely dark road, and as he rides, his mental state deteriorates from confusion to anguish, as the landscape takes on a horrifying, nightmarish quality that reflects the hero's own mind. Roland thinks the cripple's directions were a lie, though they prove to be correct; he concludes that a broken, starving horse he passes "must be wicked to deserve such pain"; and with every step forward, the terrain and vegetation become grayer, scantier, and more terrifying. To Roland the mud on the blades of grass looks like blood; stepping stones at a shallow ford remind him of a dead man's cheek; and the squeal of a water rat sounds like a baby's shriek.

The ending of this poem contains the same sort of uncertainty found in the final lines of Tennyson's "Ulysses." Roland, at last, discerns the Dark Tower at the end of a narrow, forbidding valley, but the surrounding hillsides are lined with the ghostly figures of his compatriots. All of Roland's fellow knights have died in this futile quest–a quest with a goal that is never named–and his friends' names and deeds resound in his ears like the tolling of funeral bells. Childe Roland realizes his fate: this journey will end with his death rather than with victory; yet in the final stanza a grudging and dogged heroism may, just possibly, shine through:

> There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met
> To view the last of me, a living frame
> For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
> I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
> Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
> And blew. '<u>Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came</u>.'
> (lines 199-204)

Much as Tennyson focused on the dilemma faced by an aging Ulysses, Browning's interest lies in his hero's conflicting weaknesses and his stamina; the poet concentrates on the mental and psychological aspects of the quest rather than on the more classical themes of the hero's role as a savior or his displays of ideal strength, courage, or nobility. Here, as with Tennyson's aging adventurer, the hero may exemplify an unyielding determination in the face of adversity, but, if we consider this poem in a loosely allegorical fashion, in Browning's world–a world blasted by weariness, isolation, and mental anguish–perhaps the hero's role is reduced to one of lonely persistence instead of social salvation or heroic leadership.

**Romantic Heroes**

While some Victorian authors struggled with classical and chivalric sources in their search for heroes, others reacted against the defiant and dramatic heroes of the Romantic poets, especially those popularized by Lord Byron and praised by Shelley. In the decades preceding the Victorian era, the English reading public knew and clamored for the brooding, dark Byronic heroes. Byron's Childe Harold and several of his verse tales appear in a list of nineteenth-century best sellers. In 1812, for example, Byron's publishers sold 4,500 copies of the first two cantos of Childe Harold in under six months; and, just two years later, a staggering 10,000 copies of The Corsair were sold on its first day of publication (Common Reader 386). Many of the young Victorians read and idolized Byron, one of the first poets to gain widespread public popularity. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, some major Victorian poets and novelists rejected or satirized the Byronic heroes that had formed a part of their youth.

Unlike many of the heroes found in classical literature or chivalric romance, the Byronic hero does not function as an exemplar or a savior of the community. Several of Byron's characters appear as youthful, brooding, aggressive men, who somehow seem tortured by an unnamed or mysterious sin in their past. In Manfred (1817), for example, disturbing hints of some unlawful relationship with a sister named Astarte persecute the young protagonist, while in Shelley's Alastor (1816) the poet figure ignores and dismisses the tender love of an Arab maiden in his all-consuming quest for perfect knowledge. The hero's defiance–of all gods and the laws that govern other mortals–forms another major characteristic of these Romantic heroes. Victor Brombert, in his essay on "The Idea of the Hero," finds the Romantic hero, above all else, a rebel, "searching for a spiritual aristocracy to which he might belong, and considering himself–often with duplicity–a glorious antagonist of society" (19). Milton's Satan, as he appears in Paradise Lost, and the defiant Prometheus of Greek mythology exhibit the rage and unyielding independence that attracted the later Romantic poets. In Shelley's Preface to Prometheus Unbound, the poet compares Prometheus to Satan and judges Prometheus to be "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature," but note how attractive Satan seems in this same paragraph:

> The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan because, in addition to courage and majesty and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest (133).

These young, defiant heroes of the Romantic poets, raging over cosmic indifference and battling against the supernatural and all human society, triggered aggressive reactions in some Victorian poets and novelists.

The youthful narrators of some of Tennyson's poems, like the despairing, orphaned speakers in "Locksley Hall" (1842) and Maud (1855) show one Victorian rejection of the well-known Romantic heroes. In Tennyson's poems the young narrators are disenchanted social outcasts, not heroic rebels. The youth in "Locksley Hall," for example, spurned in his love affair with his cousin when she chooses a wealthier suitor, cannot achieve the majestic defiance of a Prometheus or a Manfred. Instead, the modern hero utters this rather plaintive cry:

> Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
> Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!
>
> Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's Rule!
> Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!
>
> Well—'t is well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved–
> Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.
> (lines 59-64)

This somewhat overwrought hero does not find solace in a vigorous rebellion against the unfair gods or a capricious society; instead, he dreams of ways to counter the suffering he has undergone. First, he turns towards commerce and industry, optimistically imagining himself commanding a fleet of trading vessels that would span the globe and spread prosperity, universal law, and peace to form a "Federation of the world" (line 128). On the other hand, he also dreams of an escape to a tropical island, far away from the modern world, where he could bring up the children of his union with a native woman amidst a paradise of golden beaches, bright parrots, and wild goats. The poem ends somewhat cryptically, with Tennyson's

young hero rejecting the dream of any tropical paradise and going off, presumably, to join the legions of industry in the march of civilization and progress.

Tennyson explores the character of a similar sort of youth in Maud, his major dramatic and psychological monologue. In this poem another poor, orphaned youth finds himself thwarted in his passionate love for the daughter of a wealthy squire. Following an altercation in which he wounds his lover's brother, the narrator flees to the Continent and ends up in an asylum suffering from the throes of madness. Here, as in "Locksley Hall," the young man rejects the commercial and material world, but his melancholy and diseased musing, when he damns his era as the "Wretchedest age, since Time began," seems weak and powerless compared to the rebellious and spirited defiance of Byron's Childe Harold or Manfred. John Killham, in his assessment of this hero's mind, sees a frightened youth shocked by the circumstances of his father's brutal death and horrified by the intense competition of the commercial nation. "What wonder that his whole desire is for withdrawal!" Killham asserts, since this lad "is cowed by life and regrets that he ever came to possess the consciousness which causes him to believe that life involves an unremitting resort to either violence or cunning, the struggle inevitably culminating in death" (630).

The narrator ultimately recovers from his illness in the third and concluding part of the poem, finding a spiritual regeneration and a patriotic purpose for life in the Crimean War:

> Let flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
> We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
> And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind.
> It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;

> I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
> I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned.
> (lines 54-59)

By the time this poem appeared the early enthusiasm for the Crimean War had waned, leading to some severe public criticism of Tennyson and an unintentional irony that distracts the modern reader. Nevertheless, the youthful, despairing narrators of both of these Tennyson poems never achieve the spirited rebellion and heroic rage of the Byronic figures forged by the Romantic poets. Byron "taught us little," Matthew Arnold concludes in his 1850 poem "Memorial Verses," but he must also admit: "our soul / Had felt him like the thunder's roll" (lines 9-10).[14]

Other realistic rejections of the titanic rebels of Byron and Shelley appear in some of the novels of the mid-nineteenth century. The youthful protagonists in David Copperfield (1849-50) or Great Expectations (1861), for instance, have little of the spirit of Byron's Harold or his Corsairs. The young boy David in the opening chapters of David Copperfield has much more in common with the narrators of Tennyson's Maud and "Locksley Hall"; he has been orphaned at a tender age, overwhelmed by melancholy and doubt, and crushed by a cruel and uncaring world. Dickens calls attention to the role of the hero with the very first lines of this novel, too, as the narrator opens his life history. "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life," Copperfield begins, "or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show" (49). Indeed, over the course of the novel the reader learns just how crucial this statement is. The narrator's first choice for a hero is the bright and capable James Steerforth, who adopts the shy David at boarding school and both protects and dazzles the young innocent. As the novel unfolds, however, Copperfield's idol is revealed as anything but heroic; and, as Donald Stone points out in The

Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction, the unmasking of Steerforth's Byronic character shows Copperfield the "excesses of a Romantic way of life" (262). Steerforth treats young David more as an amusement and a diversion than as a true friend; he introduces him to the evils of inelegant society and excess drink; and, worst of all, he engineers the elopement and disgrace of Copperfield's first true love, Little Em'ly. For Dickens, a young man living as a law unto himself–as illustrated here in the character of Steerforth, or in the mistakes and sorrows of a character like Pip in Great Expectations–cannot be laudable or heroic.

Perhaps the most devastating censure of the Romantic hero comes in the brilliant social satire of Thackeray's Vanity Fair (1849-50), a work with the revealing subtitle "A Novel without a Hero." Almost all of Thackeray's male characters diminish or destroy some aspect of the Romantic hero. George Osborne, for example, idolized by his fluttering bride Amelia, is actually a scheming libertine and a shallow scoundrel who can plan a secret liaison with Becky Sharp–in front of his wife–on the eve of the battle of Waterloo. "George Osborne," Donald Stone aptly notes, "plays the stereotyped role of the Don Juan figure, a Corsair without even the one redeeming Byronic virtue of tenderness toward women . . ." (32). Jos Sedley, Amelia's spineless brother, develops into a hollow and satiric caricature of the Byronic hero. Sedley sees himself as the epitome of the Byronic character: young, courageous, independent, well-dressed, a dashing and mysterious figure traveling around the world. In reality, he is anything but heroic: overweight, middle-aged, a parasite and a boaster who cowers at the first sign of danger. While the battle rages at Waterloo, all of Sedley's attentions turn to the saving of his own skin and his eventual flight from Brussels. This supreme coward disappears without a trace,

only to surface again in India with tales of his heroism at the front, and here, the narrator gleefully relates, our friend Jos "made a prodigious sensation for some time at Calcutta, and was called Waterloo Sedley during the whole of his subsequent stay in Bengal" (452). Even the conscientious and long-suffering Dobbin, the most appealing of all Thackeray's male characters in this novel, reflects the author's scorn for the Romantic rebel. Dobbin's devotion to Amelia is a pale shadow of the mysterious sin that tortures Byron's majestic heroes, and his pathetic eighteen-year wait for Amelia's hand makes a mockery of the titanic suffering of a figure like Prometheus or Manfred.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen, by the middle of the nineteenth century very diverse and often ambiguous views of national heroes and public leaders dominated Victorian England. The rapid changes transforming English society and undermining its values, along with the almost constant attacks on traditional sources of leadership, led writers like Carlyle, Kingsley, and Tennyson to search for heroes to serve as role models for their troubled age. At the same time, however, English military heroes like Wellington lost their status or became hollow symbols for the masses, while the patriotic and popular involvement in the Crimean War led to disastrous consequences and significant military reform. Some of the novels, essays, and poetry of the mid-Victorians reflect these complex and sometimes paradoxical attitudes toward the hero. Drawing on many sources, including the heroes of the Greek epics and the immensely popular Arthurian legends, several Victorian authors illustrated their attraction to, as well as intense doubts about, the status and function of a hero in a puzzling modern world. Other writers, including Tennyson and Dickens,

signaled their rejection of the dramatic, rebellious heroes popularized by Byron and Shelley with the sensitive, more lifelike characters of some of their novels and poems, while Thackeray, with his accurate and polished satire, completely denied the possibility of any Romantic hero's existence.

Anthony Trollope, another widely-read Victorian novelist, wrote and published his six novels of the Barsetshire series between 1852 and 1867, at the very height of this cultural and literary scrutiny of heroism. In July of 1852 Trollope began writing the first of the Barsetshire novels, The Warden, just three years after Dickens's David Copperfield and Thackeray's Vanity Fair began appearing in London in monthly parts. This first clerical novel and its companion, Barchester Towers, were published in 1855 and 1857, respectively, in the midst of the searing public debate and newspaper campaign against the mistakes and horrors of the Crimean War. And in 1859 the first edition of Tennyson's immensely successful Idylls of the King appeared at the booksellers, the same year Trollope's fourth Barsetshire novel, Framley Parsonage, helped launch Thackeray's brilliant new periodical, the Cornhill Magazine. The remainder of this dissertation will focus on Trollope's study of heroism in the six Barsetshire novels, a study which mirrors, in a distinct and provocative manner, this deep-seated Victorian ambivalence with respect to the hero.

While Trollope's thoughts on heroism reflect the social and cultural climate of his day, his examination of this subject also follows or reacts against some of the broader trends in the history of the English novel. Overviews in each of the next three chapters introduce a few of these significant trends, including the decline of the hero, so closely associated with the beginnings of the English novel; the success of Sir Walter Scott's original heroes, who were transformed into the conventional heroes of the

popular novel; and the rise of the democratic hero, a celebration of new heroic qualities authors discovered in the common man. These three trends, in some rough fashion, influenced Trollope's undermining of classical heroism, his firm rejection of the ideal of the heroic youth, and, ultimately, his affirmation of the realistic hero he found in the Barsetshire countryside.

## Notes

[1] While not all of Butler's traits apply to every epic or literary hero, it is well worth listing a few of the most important ones. According to Butler, the divine hero is:

> (1) Of mysterious origin or unknown parentage. Sometimes the product of a miraculous conception or a miraculous birth, often in a wild place.
>
> (2) Expelled or exiled, either soon after birth or in his youth.
>
> (3) Severely tested to establish his fitness to be a hero.
>
> (4) Consecrated by acquiring weapons; endowed with a special name.
>
> (5) Blessed with "larger-than-life actions, size, beauty, courage, intelligence, wit." An ideal or example for other mortals.
>
> (6) A constant wanderer or a loner.
>
> (7) Devoted to one purpose in this world: the quest.
>
> (8) A deliverer of a gift to mankind. This gift may be tangible, such as fire or the invention of writing, or intangible, like life or leadership.
>
> (9) Removed by a strange, brutal, or mysterious death.
>
> (10) Remembered by legends or signs foretelling his return (28-30).

Butler applies these characteristics of the divine hero to a broad and somewhat eclectic set of examples, ranging from Hercules, Christ, and King Arthur all the way to John F. Kennedy, John Wayne, and Elvis Presley.

[2] Not all gifts that heroes bring to mankind are benign. Butler offers the Trojan horse as one classic example of the "double-edged" quality of some heroic gifts; while this gift brought salvation (for the Greeks), it also

was the source of destruction and death (for the Trojans). Similarly, Bulfinch's Mythology notes that while Prometheus's gift of fire gave man light, warmth, tool-making and superiority over wild animals, it also led to weapon-making, coinage, trade and competition, and thus to war (13).

[3] Three chapters in Walter Houghton's book, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870, trace the rise of Victorian interest in the hero. His second chapter, "Optimism," the ninth chapter entitled "The Worship of Force," and the twelfth chapter on "Hero Worship" provide invaluable background on the cultural and literary forces that contributed to the Victorian attraction to the hero.

[4] All references to Tennyson's poetry in this chapter come from the three-volume, 1987 edition of The Poems of Tennyson, edited by Christopher Ricks.

[5] A useful source for background on the Oxford Movement and the battle within the Church of England is "Religious Movements and Crises," the sixth chapter of Richard Altick's Victorian People and Ideas. Altick details the controversy that raged between the Tory high church supporters, led by Edward Pusey, John Keble, and John Henry Newman, and the powerful, low church Whigs and the Dissenters. Tracts for the Times, the Oxford Movement's series of ninety position papers, appeared between 1833 and 1841, fueling a bitter and public debate that culminated in Newman's sensational defection to the Catholic faith in 1845.

[6] J. S. Bratton's study, The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction, especially the chapter on "Books for Boys," highlights the rise of adventure stories starring the Victorian boy as hero. Bratton notes that the 1850s boom in this sort of literature, much of it patterned on Robinson Crusoe and

the heroes of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels, continued for several decades and even led to the founding of several magazines devoted to boys' heroic literature.

[7] Some notable examples: William Cobbett's 1830 conduct book, Advice to Young Men, and (incidentally) to Young Women, contains a wealth of practical advice on staying healthy, avoiding vice and debt, reading the right books, and even choosing a proper wife. Sir Arthur Helps' Friends in Council, A Series of Readings and Discourses Thereon, published in 1854, includes a chapter on "Greatness," where he lists the gentleman's required traits of courage, sympathy, and openness of mind and soul.

[8] All references to Arnold's poetry come from the revised one-volume edition of The Poems of Matthew Arnold, edited by Miriam Allott.

[9] Christopher Ricks cites two sources for the poem: Homer's Odyssey xi, 112-137, where Tiresias foretells Ulysses' gentle death at sea; and Dante's Inferno, xxvi, 90 ff. Tennyson included the lines from the Inferno in his introduction to the poem in the Eversley edition. Tony Robbins' essay, "Tennyson's 'Ulysses': The Significance of the Homeric and Dantesque Backgrounds," Victorian Poetry 11 (1973), 177-93, finds support for the heroic spirit of Tennyson's Ulysses in Dante's Ulisse, perhaps ignoring the fact Ulisse speaks from the eighth circle of hell, reserved for the fraudulent and liars, as John Pettigrew aptly notes in "Tennyson's 'Ulysses': A Reconciliation of Opposites," Victorian Poetry 1 (1963), 27-45.

[10] This poem has been a source of vigorous critical controversy, much of it centered on the problem of whether to read the poem ironically or to accept Ulysses' heroic statements at face value. The opening of Linda K.

Hughes' essay, "Dramatis and Private Personae: 'Ulysses' Revisited," Victorian Poetry 17 (1979), 192-203, gives a historical summary of the critical argument. Major supporters of the ironic reading include E. J. Chiasson, "Tennyson's 'Ulysses'–A Re-interpretation," in Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. John Killham (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), 164-173, and Clyde de L. Ryals, Theme and Symbol in Tennyson's Poems to 1850, (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1964), 126-9. These ironic readings, for the most part, have been refuted; see, for example, Jerome H. Buckley in Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960), 60-61, and Charles Mitchell's "The Undying Will of Tennyson's Ulysses," Victorian Poetry 2 (1964), 87-95. John Pettigrew's judicious appraisal of the richness of this poem in "Tennyson's 'Ulysses'" (cited above) is particularly enlightening. Pettigrew evaluates the four sections of the poem, concluding that two parts (the second and fourth) show the true heroism of Ulysses, while the other two reveal his less attractive qualities.

[11] See the first chapter of Brewer and Taylor's The Return of King Arthur for an exhaustive survey of the medieval revival in nineteenth-century England. Their fifth chapter focuses on the Pre-Raphaelites, most notably Morris and Swinburne, illuminating the Arthurian influence on mid-Victorian painting and poetry, which several artists, William Morris being the best example, extended into architecture, the crafts, and wallpaper, cloth, and furniture design. Helpful, too, is the tenth chapter of Mark Girouard's The Return to Camelot. In this "Mid-Century Miscellany" he measures the breadth of the chivalric influence in

nineteenth-century England with examples from novels, paintings, and castle architecture.

[12] Indeed, the Victorians adopted many of these virtues into their own codes governing a gentleman's behavior. See Girouard's chapter on "The Public Schools," where he discusses the linking of a young gentleman's moral fitness with physical fitness and organized sport, as well as the use of chivalric tales and Arthurian legend to teach patriotism, duty, and fair-play.

[13] Although Hallam Tennyson quotes his father as saying "I intended Arthur to represent the Ideal Soul of Man coming into contact with the warring elements of the flesh" (Ricks 1464), not all critics have accepted Arthur as an ideal hero. Clyde de L. Ryals, in "The Moral Paradox of the Hero in the Idylls of the King," Journal of English Literary History 30 (1963), 53-69, for example, finds Arthur the hero and villain of the poem, with Arthur's insistence on perfection and unquestioning allegiance from his knights the cause of his kingdom's downfall. Stanley J. Solomon's "Tennyson's Paradoxical King," Victorian Poetry 1 (1963), 258-71, takes issue with Ryals, concluding that "Tennyson was intent on depicting Arthur as a real man–the perfect real man." See also F. E. L. Priestley's seminal essay, "Tennyson's Idylls," University of Toronto Quarterly 19 (1949), 35-49, for a convincing assessment of Arthur's spiritual and heroic character.

[14] Arnold is less complimentary of the Romantics in "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse," lines 127-144, seeing little that has been gained from their efforts. The speaker asks, "What helps it now, that Byron bore, / With haughty scorn which mock'd the smart, / Through Europe to the

Ætolian shore / The pageant of his bleeding heart?" And of Shelley: "What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze / Carried thy lovely wail away, /. . . Inheritors of thy distress / Have restless hearts one throb the less?"

## Chapter II. Trollope's Clerical "Heroes"

Within the boundaries of the broad canvas known as the Barsetshire novels, Anthony Trollope turns time and time again to the theme explored by other Victorian authors and social critics: the definition of heroism and the role of the hero in a modern society. This chapter will examine, on the one hand, Trollope's humorous and subtle rejection of classical heroes in The Warden and Barchester Towers, and on the other, his serious psychological study of the failure of the hero in Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle of Barset. These four novels illustrate the range and depth of Trollope's dismissal of the hero: on a very broad scale in the former, with their mock-heroic tone and ironic treatment of the high church's champion, Archdeacon Grantly, and in a more narrow fashion in the latter, with their detailed study of the character and mind of the poverty-stricken curate, the Reverend Josiah Crawley.

### Overview: Heroism and the English Novel

Although Anthony Trollope and many of his contemporaries subjected the ideal of the hero to careful examination, the Victorians were by no means the first English authors to take up this inquiry. Indeed, the questioning of the role of the hero may have much to do with the beginnings of the English novel. Eighteenth-century authors like Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, for example, following the example set by Cervantes' monumental Don Quixote, investigated and renounced the superhuman, idealized epic hero in novels like Joseph Andrews (1742), Tom Jones (1749), Roderick Random (1748), and Humphry Clinker (1771).

As Cervantes avows in the prologue to Don Quixote, his work aims to destroy the illusory and false impressions created by the fantastic heroes of chivalry and romance. Cervantes scoffs at the "vain and empty books of chivalry" near the end of this prologue, and he also quotes an unnamed friend who urges the author to remember his stated goal:

> And keep in mind, above all, your purpose, which is that of undermining the ill-founded edifice that is constituted by those books of chivalry, so abhorred by many but admired by many more; if you succeed in attaining it, you will have accomplished no little (16, my emphasis).

While one could argue that Cervantes found delight in the antics and gutsy perseverance of the Don and Sancho Panza by the end of this massive work, much of Cervantes' satire takes direct aim at the conventions of chivalry, outdated codes of conduct, and the reading public's celebration of unrealistic heroes. Henry Fielding's first novel, Joseph Andrews, in some ways follows the direction established by the Spanish author, boldly announcing on its title page: "Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote" (3). In a preface Fielding discusses the roots of his craft, relating it to the Greek classics and naming his own effort a "comic epic-poem in prose," yet he turns away from the character of the hero found in the classical epics or in medieval romances, stating that comic writers "should ever confine ourselves strictly to nature, from the just imitation of which will flow all the pleasure we can this way convey to a sensible reader" (4). Along with the undeniable influence of Don Quixote, the cultural and literary context of Fielding's own era contributed to the diminishing of the hero in the novel. As J. Paul Hunter points out in "Fielding and the Disappearance of Heroes," during Fielding's youth some of the great English mock-heroic poems and satires appeared: Swift's

Gulliver's Travels, Pope's expanded Rape of the Lock, Gay's Beggar's Opera, and the two versions of Pope's Dunciad (118-28).[1]

Writing in an age that relished "heroes" like Lemuel Gulliver, Macheath, and Colley Cibber, Fielding presents two protagonists in his first novel, Joseph Andrews and his friend Parson Adams, who bear little or no resemblance to the legendary, superhuman knights of medieval romance, or, for that matter, to the classical heroes found earlier in Homer or Virgil.[2] Neither of Fielding's characters comes from a noble family, possesses ideal strength or virtue, or battles supernatural powers or horrific monsters. Instead, the author toys with the mundane and undistinguished background of his young hero and the unconventional behavior of his eccentric friend. In the opening paragraph of the second chapter, for instance, Fielding declares Joseph Andrews his novel's hero, but in an extended mock-heroic passage that follows he immediately undercuts this pronouncement. In elevated, stylized language Fielding heralds Andrews' dubious and obscure ancestry (with a great-grandfather renowned only for his card-playing) and his less than illustrious education (as an apprenticed bird-keeper, stable hand, and then footman). In the middle of the novel the author appears to lose interest in this character, and the main action shifts to the adventures of the less-than-perfect parson, Abraham Adams. Fielding's portrayal of both of these characters broadly challenges any ideals derived from the classical hero, such as Ulysses' quick-wittedness, Hercules' endurance, or Aeneas' piety; the parson resolves a host of arguments with blows and scuffles while Joseph's "heroic" tests consist of a comic series of attempted seductions by his master's wife, her housekeeper, and a country maid.

Fielding's second novel, Tom Jones, continues this process of undercutting the literary hero. Again following Cervantes' lead, perhaps even more closely here than in Joseph Andrews, Fielding structures this novel around some of the romance's oldest conventions: the hero's mysterious birth, his expulsion from paradise, his subsequent wandering and severe testing, followed by discovery of his true heritage, an initiation, and a return to paradise. Fielding, however, turns almost all of these conventions upside down. The hero's "mysterious" arrival is reduced to the rather comic scene of the baby being found in Squire Allworthy's bed. Young Tom fails in a series of three tests of his virtue, first with Molly Seagrim (who bears a child, though not necessarily his), then with the seductive Mrs. Waters (reputed to be his own mother), and finally with the disreputable Lady Bellaston, who gives him gifts of money and fancy clothes.[3] Fielding ultimately undercuts even the discovery of his hero's true identity, and Tom Jones is not revealed as a descendant of the gods or as the noble king; instead, he turns out to be the illegitimate son of Allworthy's sister and her dead lover. Some critics, to be sure, do not see in this character a complete denial of heroism. J. Paul Hunter, for example, argues that Tom Jones is heroic, but in a limited sense; he is a hero who mirrors his age: "Tom Jones is no Ulysses, certainly no second Adam, but he will do. A new reign of possibility has come, rescued from the human farce of contemporary history and the crippling limits it placed on man's ability to believe in better times and better people" (141). Ian Watt points to the general, externalized nature of Tom Jones's character and heroism. Watt sees a young man with normal faults, including imprudence, a "lack of worldly wisdom," and a "healthy animality," but he also argues that Jones displays "courage, honour, and benevolence," and that these traits

lead us "to trust Fielding's implication, which is that his hero will be able to control his weaknesses by the wisdom he has learned of experience" (274).

Just as Fielding recasts the hero in the mold of a commonplace Everyman named Tom Jones, so Smollett modifies heroic conventions in both his first and last novels, The Adventures of Roderick Random and The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. Smollett knew the work of Cervantes as well as Fielding did, if not better, since he published an English translation of Don Quixote in 1755. Although Smollett adopts one technique from Cervantes in Roderick Random–writing of a wandering hero and his obligatory devoted servant–a very different sort of hero develops in the course of Random's myriad travels, more like Lesage's Gil Blas (a model Smollett invokes in his preface) than the chivalrous Don. Robert Spector finds this protagonist "the stereotype of the easily aroused, tempestuous, yet fundamentally good-natured character. The key words in the novel are pride and revenge; touch the one, and the other follows . . ." (36). Spector is perhaps too kind: Roderick Random is not good-natured. He emerges as a prickly fellow, always scheming to secure a position, make money, or impress others, and Smollett's realistic hero does not possess the good-heartedness, warmth, or compassion we cherish in the characters of Don Quixote or Tom Jones.[4] Smollett's protagonist, Arthur Lindley aptly concludes, almost appears as an actor on the stage: "Roderick Random hardly exists except as a series of reactions: a center of nervous energy generating a series of performances" (195).

While this young Scot, with no exemplary virtues, strength, or courage, undermines the concept of the hero, the character of Humphry Clinker forms an emblem that may explode the notion of the classical hero

entirely. Here we find not a warrior or an adventurer at all, but a shabby, starving coach driver:

> He was accordingly summoned, and made his appearance, which was equally queer and pathetic. He seemed to be about twenty years of age, of a middling size, with bandy legs, stooping shoulders, high forehead, sandy locks, pinking eyes, flat nose, and a long chin–but his complexion was of a sickly yellow; his looks denoted famine, and the rags that he wore could hardly conceal what decency requires to be covered . . . (113).

Humphry Clinker does not make his first appearance in this novel of his own "expedition" until almost a quarter of it has passed; he plays only a relatively minor role once he does join Matt Bramble's entourage, and, when his mysterious past–as Bramble's own illegitimate son–is finally revealed, he simply settles down as a servant on his father's estate and marries one of the maids. In short, Smollett successfully challenges the entire notion of a hero–as noble protagonist, as an adventurer, or as an achiever of great deeds–with this memorable comic characterization.

The humble Joseph Andrews, the combative Parson Adams, a mistake-prone Tom Jones, the lowly Humphry Clinker, or an unlikeable Roderick Random–all of these characters highlight the intimate connection between the questioning of the hero's role and the beginnings of the English novel. Some of the great Victorian novels, including Thackeray's Vanity Fair and Dickens's Great Expectations, fall in neatly with this eighteenth-century examination and reshaping of the hero, a tradition stretching back from Dobbin and Pip to Jones and Clinker. Anthony Trollope, as well, follows this well-established tradition with his questioning of the heroic in the six Barsetshire novels. The next section of this chapter will focus on techniques Trollope employs in the first two Barsetshire novels, techniques similar in many ways to those used by Cervantes, Fielding, and Smollett, to

introduce and illuminate the heroic theme he pursues throughout the Barsetshire novels.

**Trollope's Mock-Heroic**

Trollope repeatedly turns to a mock-heroic technique in The Warden and Barchester Towers, sometimes echoing classical literature's highly stylized language or parodying its epic conventions. By interweaving this mock-heroic form into both of these novels, Trollope creates a sort of muted backdrop that continually draws attention to, on a rather grand scale, his examination of the classical hero.

The primary plot of The Warden, for example, revolves around a conflict cast as an epic battle. This epic confrontation erupts over John Hiram's will, which created a charity hospital for twelve retired laborers and a sizeable income for its clerical director. On the one side gather the forces of the church, led by "the archdeacon militant," Doctor Grantly (66). Trollope almost transforms Grantly into a modern Achilles; he becomes the crusader battling for a glorious cause. With him are the chapter's clergymen, his "clerical allies," and these forces assemble in daily meetings, "discussing their tactics, and preparing for the great attack" (89). Opposing the church are forces led by an eager young surgeon, John Bold, who, Trollope's narrator tells us, "has a special mission for reforming" (15). And allied with Bold are his lawyer Finney, the journalist Tom Towers, and the overwhelming might of the Jupiter, a daily London newspaper. The narrator links this newspaper to the most powerful symbol of the classical world, Mount Olympus:

> Who has not heard of Mount Olympus,—that high abode of all the powers of type, that favoured seat of the great goddess Pica, that wondrous habitation of gods and devils, from whence, with ceaseless hum of steam and

> never-ending flow of Castalian ink, issue forth eighty thousand nightly edicts for the governance of a subject nation? (179)

Even the poor, decrepit bedesmen are enlisted in the cause when Finney visits the hospital, "raising immoderate hopes, creating a party hostile to the warden, and establishing a corps in the enemy's camp" (43).

Trollope carries this grand battle metaphor into Barchester Towers,[5] and in this second Barsetshire novel the mock-warfare suggested by the plot, if anything, gains in complexity. Here again the controversy centers on Hiram's Hospital, as the opposing forces clash over the appointment of a new warden by the recently installed Bishop of Barchester. Again Archdeacon Grantly raises the banner of the church militant in his vigorous effort to get Mr. Harding reinstalled as the warden. Allied against the archdeacon we find Mr. Slope, the bishop's chaplain, and the domineering force of Mrs. Proudie, the bishop's wife. Explicit terms of warfare also define this second clerical conflict. The archdeacon fears the upcoming "combat" with Mr. Slope, when his "antagonist" might "walk triumphant over the field, and have the diocese of Barchester under his heel"; the archdeacon finds himself preparing for "war, war, internecine war" with Mr. Slope, in which one of the two must be "annihilated"; finally, the archdeacon vows never "to give way until there was not left to him an inch of ground on which he could stand" (1: 43-6). Trollope conjures up these overt references to all-out war and, with a clever comic twist, applies them to yet another level of conflict. The real battle, the reader soon discovers, will actually be joined over the right to be the true bishop of Barchester, and Dr. Grantly, Mr. Slope, and Mrs. Proudie all vie for this ultimate power over the diocese.

While Trollope weaves these combat metaphors into the very fabric of these two novels, on a smaller scale he toys with various epic conventions to help undermine the heroic. As Mario Praz notes, "Trollope's anti-heroic point of view led him, as it did Thackeray, to see the other side of every situation, to prick every bladder he saw with a sharp pin . . ." (316). The best example of this technique, perhaps, comes quite early in The Warden, as Archdeacon Grantly, the hero and defender of the church militant, prepares himself for a face-to-face confrontation with the opposition. Trollope's narrator relies on elevated language to depict his archdeacon preparing to meet the opponents of the church:

> As the indomitable cock preparing for the combat sharpens his spurs, shakes his feathers, and erects his comb, so did the archdeacon arrange his weapons for the coming war, without misgiving and without fear. That he was fully confident of the justice of his cause let no one doubt. *Many a man can fight* his battle with good courage, but with a doubting conscience. Such was not the case with Dr. Grantly. . . . He was about to defend the holy of holies from the touch of the profane; to guard the citadel of his church from the most rampant of its enemies; to put on his good armour in the best of fights; and secure, if possible, the comforts of his creed for coming generations of ecclesiastical dignitaries (55).

The humor in this passage strikes home when the reader realizes that Grantly's "armour" is merely his best shovel hat and black coat, while the enemy he is about to conquer consists of the twelve aged pensioners sitting peacefully in their hospital courtyard. Trollope's language, in fact, comically transforms Grantly into a larger-than-life symbol of the heroic warrior when he rises before the hapless band of bedesmen:

> As the archdeacon stood up to make his speech, erect in the middle of that little square, he looked like an ecclesiastical statue placed there, as a fitting impersonation of the church militant here on earth; his shovel hat, large, new, and well-pronounced, a

> churchman's hat in every inch; . . . his heavy eyebrows, large open eyes, and full mouth and chin expressed the solidity of his order; the broad chest, amply covered with fine cloth, told how well to do was its estate; one hand ensconced within his pocket, evinced the practical hold which our mother church keeps on her temporal possessions; and the other, loose for action, was ready to fight if need be in her defense . . . (64-5).

This lofty language faintly echoes the classical hero's arming, as it recalls, for instance, the majestic words Homer employed to describe Achilles' preparations for combat after Patroclus died in The Iliad. Needless to say, this stylized language, along with details of the archdeacon's fine dress and statuesque appearance, does not make this character into a hero; instead, this mock-heroic arming deflates Grantly before our eyes, exposing his tendency to bully the weak and covet material wealth.

Another example of Trollope's playfulness with epic convention comes in an extended description of Mr. Harding's tea party in the sixth chapter of The Warden. Although Trollope consistently represents major conflicts in the first two Barsetshire novels in the terminology of warfare, significantly, his mock-heroic parody of the epic battle (a far cry from Aeneas' awe-inspiring war against the Latins and Rutulians in The Aeneid) depicts an otherwise trivial event: a clerical gathering of the Barchester diocese and their eligible young ladies. The bachelors and young women congregate before the upcoming clash in the warden's drawing room:

> Young gentlemen, rather stiff about the neck, clustered near the door, not as yet sufficiently in courage to attack the muslin frocks, who awaited the battle, drawn up in a semicircular array. The warden endeavoured to induce a charge, but failed signally, not having the tack of a general; his daughter did what she could to comfort the forces under her command, who took in refreshing rations of cake and tea, and patiently looked for the coming engagement (79).

The ensemble of musicians rouses the opposing forces, playing "now loud, as though stirring the battle; then low, as though mourning the slain" (80). The result, nothing less than pitched battle:

> How is it at this moment the blackcoated corps leave their retreat and begin skirmishing? One by one they creep forth, and fire off little guns timidly, and without precision. . . . At length a more deadly artillery is brought to bear; slowly, but with effect, the advance is made; the muslin ranks are broken, and fall into confusion; the formidable array of chairs gives way; the battle is no longer between opposing regiments, but hand to hand, and foot to foot with single combatants, as in the glorious days of old, when fighting was really noble. In corners, and under the shadow of curtains, behind sofas and half hidden by doors, in retiring windows, and sheltered by hanging tapestry, are blows given and returned, fatal, incurable, dealing death (80-1).

Why employ all of this epic, heroic language to glorify an insignificant, innocuous meeting of young ladies and men at a tea party? In both The Warden and Barchester Towers such passages help create an overall atmosphere and background of heroic proportion, an atmosphere that Trollope time and time again undercuts by applying the loftiest flights of diction to the most trivial events. "The main point of mock heroic," William Cadbury reminds us, "is to give perspective, to place the tempest in the teapot, and the comparison of Trollope's clerical characters to the heroes of another tradition accomplishes this admirably" (159). The warden's tea party, Archdeacon Grantly's arming, and the epic description of Grantly's victory at whist all contribute to Trollope's deflating of the classical hero. In Barchester Towers, as well, this mock-heroic technique often surfaces: when Mr. Slope calls on Eleanor and Mary Bold, when Bishop Proudie agonizes over whether to join forces with his wife or with Mr. Slope, and in the marvelous scene where Mrs. Proudie (recast as a

scornful Juno) loses her dress as Bertie Stanhope pushes Madeline's couch across the drawing room floor.

This chapter began by examining some of the eighteenth-century antecedents of the nineteenth-century novel, and Trollope's mock-heroic technique bears a striking resemblance to the manner in which Fielding slips in and out of an epic mode in both Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. Fielding's best mock-heroic passages, much like Trollope's, tend to describe and embellish the insignificant. Reviewing Fielding's widespread use of the mock-heroic in his first novel, Ian Watt concludes, "Fielding's novel surely reflects the ambiguous attitude of his age, an age whose characteristic literary emphasis on the mock-heroic reveals how far it was from the epic world it so much admired" (254). In Joseph Andrews the author glorifies the obscurity of Joseph's apparent heritage or celebrates his scuffle with a squire's two hounds; in Tom Jones he can soar when describing something as simple as a summer morning or as comic as a Sunday brawl. "Ye muses then, whoever ye are, who love to sing Battles," Fielding intones in Tom Jones, "assist me on this great Occasion" (1: 178). Then with relish and an ornate vocabulary, Fielding narrates an epic tale, cataloguing the warriors who fall in the fray over Molly Seagrim's fancy dress:

> Recount, O Muse, the Names of those who fell on this fatal Day. First, Jemmy Tweedle felt on his hinder Head the direful Bone. . . . How little now avails his Fiddle? He thumps the verdant Floor with his Carcass. Next old Echepole, the Sow-gelder, received a blow in his Forehead from our Amazonian Heroine, and immediately fell to the Ground. He was a swinging fat Fellow, and fell with almost as much Noise as a Horse. His Tobacco-box dropt at the same Time from his Pocket, which Molly took up as lawful Spoils. . . . Betty Pippin, with young Roger her lover, fell both to the Ground.

> Where, O perverse Fate, she salutes the Earth and he the Sky. . . . Miss Crow, the Daughter of a Farmer; John Giddish, himself a Farmer; Nan Slouch, Esther Codling, Will Spray, Tom Bennet; the three Misses Potter, whose Father keeps the Sign of the Red Lion; Betty Chambermaid, Jack Ostler, and many others of inferior Note lay rolling among the Graves.
>
> Not that the strenuous Arm of Molly reached all these; for many of them in their Flight overthrew each other (1: 178-79).

Trollope's use of the mock-heroic and its effective irony, therefore, flows quite naturally out of a long tradition that includes Fielding's novels as well as the mock-heroic poems of Pope and Dryden, a tradition that stretches even farther into the past, to the marvelous forays of the famous Don against windmills, herds of sheep, and travelling barbers. Trollope's mock-heroic technique, much like Cervantes' and Fielding's, undercuts the classical hero on a grand scale, using epic and stylized language to glorify characters and their actions, while ironically deflating their heroic stance.

**Trollope's Personified Narrator**

Trollope employs a distinct narrative persona in his Barsetshire novels to support his broad questioning of the hero, and this second technique dovetails neatly with the many mock-heroic passages and the language of war found in both The Warden and Barchester Towers. In fact, this distinctive narrator plays a crucial role in the deflating of the hero, and a brief study of his character and his relationship with the reader will further our understanding of Trollope's deft attack on the classical hero.

During the course of the six Barsetshire novels, Trollope's narrator, though never named, assumes a personality and a character of his own. This novelist is witty, cosmopolitan, playful, and educated, often delighting

in his clever classical allusions, Latin quotations, or parodies of epic convention. In many ways Trollope's writer reminds us of Fielding's intrusive narrator in Tom Jones, a "clubable," personable fellow who likes to think of himself as an innkeeper, host, or the reader's amiable traveling companion on a coach. In a similar fashion, James R. Kincaid finds Trollope's narrator "interrupting, defining, applying, complicating, anticipating, parodying the action, [and] playing with the conventions the novel is at the same time exploiting ruthlessly . . ." ("Trollope's Narrator" 196). Above all else, Trollope's created narrator participates in these novels and personally knows the characters he writes about. He has met, for instance, the Reverend Mr. Slope, and his first description of Slope betrays a distinct prejudice against him. Unwholesome images dominate this physical description. Mr. Slope's hair forms "three straight lumpy masses . . . cemented with much grease"; his face is as red as beef, "beef, however, one would say, of a bad quality"; and his nose has a "spongy, porous appearance, as though it had been cleverly formed out of a red coloured cork" (29). Most telling of all, in the next paragraph the narrator slips in his own reaction to the bishop's chaplain: "I never could endure to shake hands with Mr. Slope. A cold, clammy perspiration always exudes from him, the small drops are ever to be seen standing on his brow, and his friendly grasp is unpleasant" (29). With this one, vivid description the narrator shatters any notion that the bishop's chaplain will ever attain the stature of a classical hero.

As this example illustrates, sometimes the narrator emphasizes an unfavorable aspect of a character's appearance or personality, heightening or even exaggerating it for comic effect. At other times, he works hard to gain his readers' allegiance, even if this leads to a subversion of the form of

the novel itself.[6] The best example of this, often cited by Trollope's critics, comes in the fifteenth chapter of Barchester Towers when Mr. Harding's widowed daughter, Eleanor Bold, finds herself being courted by both the crafty Slope and the flighty Bertie Stanhope. "But let the gentle-hearted reader be under no apprehension whatsoever," the narrator openly declares, "It is not destined that Eleanor shall marry Mr. Slope or Bertie Stanhope" (1: 143). He then digresses for over a page on the special relationship that must exist between a novelist and his readers, concluding "that the author and the reader should move along together in full confidence with each other," and, even if the characters in the novel undergo a self-inflicted comedy of errors, "let the spectator never mistake the Syracusan for the Ephesian; otherwise he is one of the dupes, and the part of a dupe is never dignified" (1: 144). The question remains, however, whether we are duped by this narrator; that is, do we believe his judgments about "heroes" like Slope, Bold, and Grantly or do we not? Or, to put the question in more technical terms, borrowing Wayne Booth's definitions in The Rhetoric of Fiction, is this persona reliable or unreliable?

For Booth, the test of a created narrator's reliability lies in the relationship of the narrator to the implied author: "For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms) unreliable when he does not" (158-9). As we have seen in the preceding section, Trollope's narrator invites the reader to participate in the attack on the heroic, and his rhetoric of war, mock-heroic parodies, and irony all reinforce this strategy. Kincaid highlights the "chumminess" and flattering manner of this narrator, two characteristics which guide the reader toward a state of comfort and "relaxation" ("Trollope's Narrator" 199-

200). Underlying this relaxed and friendly atmosphere, however, the careful reader finds the true norms of the work: Trollope's realization of the moral complexities of life and his rejection of the "heroic" in characters like Bold, Slope, and Mrs. Proudie. While this narrator may on occasion subvert the form of the novel, he never subverts the norms and values of the implied author. Instead, Trollope employs this clever narrative voice as a way to educate the reader, offering a surface view of a delightful and easy-going world that challenges the reader to see its multifaceted and turbulent underpinnings.[7] Over time, the actions of characters like Bold, Mrs. Proudie, and Slope vindicate the narrator's early views of them: they are not heroic at all. In this manner, Trollope's narrator employs irony much as Fielding's narrator does in Tom Jones. As Robert Alter points out in a discussion of Fielding's technique:

> Irony operates upon the reader not only to make him aware of mutually qualifying meanings, but also to implicate him in a particular relationship with the narrator and the material narrated, and this relationship is important both in winning his assent to the values affirmed through the novel and in engaging his sympathetic appreciation for the kind of literary enterprise that is being undertaken (81).

A closer look at a specific character, Archdeacon Grantly, will illustrate how Trollope's narrator works in concert with the implied author, not against him, in the effort to deny the existence of the classical hero.

**Archdeacon Grantly's Character**

Trollope's characterization of Archdeacon Grantly, especially as he appears in these first two Barsetshire novels, is intimately connected with the use of the mock-heroic and his intrusive narrative voice. Throughout The Warden Trollope's narrator calls attention to some unfavorable aspects of Grantly's personality: the archdeacon's aggressive and combative

nature, his worldliness and appreciation for material pleasures, and even his secret taste for racy French satire. The narrator's first assessment of the archdeacon is rather mixed; he admits that Grantly does the hard work in the diocese, and "in that capacity he was diligent, authoritative, and, as his friends particularly boasted, judicious" (20). He also calls Grantly "a moral man, believing the precepts which he taught," but with his next breath he adds, "we cannot say that he would give his coat to the man who took his cloak, or that he was prepared to forgive his brother even seven times" (21).

In many of the mock-heroic passages we have looked at, the narrator casts the archdeacon as the staunch defender of the conservative church. Although, according to Mark Girouard (142), the term "muscular Christianity" did not appear in the public press until 1857, in many ways Grantly's character seems to anticipate this term. Grantly serves as Barchester's "general" and "the archdeacon militant," to use the narrator's terms, in the combat against reformers like John Bold and low-church advocates like Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie. Even when he participates in the innocuous game of whist, Grantly marshalls his cards like soldiers, pitching them eagerly into the fray and then emerging victorious. Over all, Trollope's narrator concludes about Grantly's spirited nature, "To give him his dues, we must admit that the archdeacon never wanted courage; he was quite willing to meet his enemy on any field and with any weapon" (21).

Although Grantly's aggressive nature and "militant" Christianity dominate many of our early views of him, the narrator contrasts these traits with the archdeacon's worldliness and love of the good life. In the scene where the archdeacon delivers his speech to the bedesmen of Hiram's Hospital, for example, the narrator carefully details Grantly's healthy

physical appearance and his well-fitted clerical garb. And Grantly's house, his furniture, his smart carriage, and the lavish meals on his table all manifest his enjoyment of power, wealth, and position. The narrator's descriptive "tour" of Plumstead Episcopi generates his strongest reaction against the archdeacon's character. He catalogs the fittings and furnishings of the rectory in detail, beginning with the heavy furniture, expensive curtains, and embossed wallpapers, moving on to the silver and table linen, and ending with a tantalizing description of the abundant food served at the archdeacon's breakfast. In fact, in a wry, personal comment reminiscent of his reaction to Mr. Slope's sweaty handshake, Trollope's narrator interjects: "I have never found the rectory a pleasant house. The fact that man shall not live by bread alone seemed to be somewhat forgotten; . . . and excellent as were the viands and the wines, in spite of these attractions, I generally found the rectory somewhat dull" (104). Finally, this passage ends with the archdeacon retiring to his study, where he carefully lays out a partially completed sermon and his inkstand; then, with equal care, he locks the door, stretches out by the fire, and begins reading about "the witty mischief of Panurge" from his hidden volume of Rabelais (105).

At this point the reader suspects the narrator will declare Grantly a hypocrite and abandon any interest in him altogether, and indeed some of the archdeacon's early behavior in The Warden appears to reinforce this belief. Grantly delights in a technicality London lawyers discover that will lead to a church victory over the reformers. He humbles John Bold when the surgeon gracefully comes to announce the abandonment of the suit, and he attempts to bully Mr. Harding into remaining the warden of Hiram's Hospital. The reader must suspend judgment, however, as Ronald Knox

warns: "Do not be deceived by his portrait in The Warden; by the secret volume of Rabelais, by the ungracious triumph over a repentant John Bold; all that was but the raw material of the Archdeacon" (99). In the first novel's penultimate chapter, for instance, the narrator steps back to reassess the character of the archdeacon that has dominated his tale. "We fear that he is represented in these pages as being worse than he is" our narrator admits, "but we have had to do with his foibles, and not with his virtues" (266). In reality, the archdeacon's fondness for having his own way, his bigotry, and his desire for a large income reflect only a portion of his true character. After listing these faults, the narrator attempts to balance our view of the clerical warrior with these favorable words:

> Nevertheless, the archdeacon is a gentleman and a man of conscience; he spends his money liberally, and does the work he has to do with the best of his ability; he improves the tone of society of those among whom he lives. His aspirations are of a healthy, if not of the highest, kind. Though never an austere man, he upholds propriety of conduct both by example and precept. He is generous to the poor, and hospitable to the rich; in matters of religion he is sincere, and yet no Pharisee; he is in earnest, and yet no fanatic. On the whole, the Archdeacon of Barchester is a man doing more good than harm . . . (266-67).

This crucial passage reveals how the norms of the implied author and Trollope's narrator finally come together. While this narrator occasionally withholds information or exaggerates a bit, ultimately he forces a careful reader to move beyond the pleasant facade of his story-telling to consider the implied author's troubling questions of moral paradox, complex human motivation, and man's heroism. As Trollope himself points out in An Autobiography, "My archdeacon, who has been said to be life-like, and for

whom I confess that I have all a parent's fond affection, was, I think, the simple result of an effort of my moral consciousness" (93).

Throughout this chapter we have seen how Trollope's repeated use of the mock-heroic, in collusion with his intrusive narrator, sets up the unspoken question: is Archdeacon Grantly a hero? The answer, of course, is no. Over time and in passages like the one above, Trollope unveils the true character of the archdeacon as a man with ordinary foibles, normal desires, and less-than-perfect behavior, on the one hand, while on the other, he insists that Grantly is a just, moral, and generous man. Nevertheless, in these two novels Trollope clearly illustrates that the archdeacon, as well as his opponents–the Bolds, Slopes, and Proudies of the world–are not classical heroes, either. They do not display superhuman strength or courage; their "battles" often seem parochial and insignificant; and their virtues and behavior are less than ideal. As if to illustrate this key point, Barchester Towers opens with a marvelous scene depicting Archdeacon Grantly at the bedside of his dying father, the Bishop of Barchester.

In this scene Trollope highlights the depth of conflicting emotions that can exist within a single man. Dr. Grantly hovers quietly near his father's bed, but his mind keeps vacillating between genuine grief and meticulous calculation of his chance to secure his father's position. These mixed feelings lead to a moment that captures the very essence of Grantly's intricate character:

> Thus he thought long and sadly, in deep silence, and then gazed at that still living face, and then at last dared to ask himself whether he really longed for his father's death.
>
> The effort was a salutary one, and the question was answered in a moment. The proud, wishful, worldly

> man, sank on his knees by the bedside, and taking the bishop's hand within his own, prayed eagerly that his sins might be forgiven him (1: 4).

Here we see not an ideal, god-like, or superhuman classical hero, but a human being having to cope with his own limitations and desires. And Trollope's narrator, characteristically, excuses the momentary weakness of the archdeacon, concluding: "If we look to our clergymen to be more than men, we shall probably teach ourselves to think that they are less, and can hardly hope to raise the character of the pastor by denying to him the right to entertain the aspirations of a man" (1: 9). This passage hammers home the subtle lesson Trollope and his intrusive narrator have been working for. The narrator ends this passage with questions aimed squarely at his friends and readers: "Our archdeacon was worldly—who among us is not so?" And furthermore: "He was ambitious—who among us is ashamed to own that 'last infirmity of noble minds!'" (1: 9-10). Trollope does reject the heroic in Archdeacon Grantly, as he laughs at an image of the clerical warrior girding himself for epic battle with reformers and Sabbatarians. What Trollope offers instead is a realistic portrait of an ordinary man, whose true enemies consist of worldly aspirations, conflicting motivations, and human weaknesses.

Although Trollope introduces his theme of heroism in a rather indirect manner in the first two novels of the Barsetshire series, undermining conflicts between characters with mock-heroic comedy and his narrator's subtle irony, he undertakes a much more focused study of heroism in both Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle of Barset. In these two novels Trollope's intense, almost psychological examination of the character of the Reverend Josiah Crawley exhibits the depth and

seriousness of Trollope's interest in the question of human heroism in the Barsetshire series.

The portraits of Mr. Crawley and Archdeacon Grantly form a vivid and dramatic study in contrast. Trollope depicts both men, of course, as clergymen in the Church of England and supporters of the high church doctrines of their time. In addition, both are gentlemen, a point Trollope makes much of near the end of The Last Chronicle. In terms of position, wealth, power, and influence, however, worlds of difference separate these two clerical "heroes." Doctor Grantly holds the high office of archdeacon; he is the vicar of Plumstead, and, before his father's death, he directs all the business of the diocese while managing his own land and an ample income of over £3000 a year. Mr. Crawley, on the other hand, holds only the position of "perpetual curate of Hogglestock"; his parishioners consist of rural laborers and brick makers, and he struggles to feed and clothe his family on a meager £150 a year. Sociable, vigorous, and well-dressed, the archdeacon comfortably dines with bishops and the aristocracy; solitary, formal, and shabby, the perpetual curate worries over scraps in his study or tends his sick parishioners. Archdeacon Grantly's character is aggressive, bright, and he seems a sort of joyful, New Testament warrior; Mr. Crawley is withdrawn, learned, and he reminds us more of a stern, Old Testament prophet. With these two characters side by side, the breadth and range of Trollope's examination of the heroic begins to unfold.

**Mr. Crawley's Character**

As we have noted, Trollope relies on many oblique references to classical heroes and epic battle to deny the archdeacon's heroism, but when the Reverend Crawley takes the stage, Trollope's questioning of his heroism, or failure as a hero, more directly commands the reader's

attention. Indeed, in both Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle we discover characters in the novels themselves pondering, praising, or rejecting Mr. Crawley's heroism.[8] An excellent example of this occurs in a conversation between Mrs. Robarts and Lucy after they have visited the Crawley household on a mission of mercy, delivering much-needed food for the family. The two women engage in a dialogue over the differences in the spirit and strength of Mr. Crawley and his wife, with Lucy asserting "how much higher toned is her mind than his! How weak he is in many things, and how strong she is in everything! How false is his pride, and how false his shame!" While Mrs. Robarts concedes "we must remember what he has to bear," she goes on to reach this firm conclusion: "Because you have one hero in a family, does that give you a right to expect another? Of all my own acquaintance, Mrs. Crawley, I think, comes nearest to heroism" (265). In another example near the end of The Last Chronicle, Major Grantly and the lawyer Toogood debate Crawley's decision to accept arrest and bear suspicion of theft rather than contradict the Arabins' statement about the missing £20 check. Both men are nearly reduced to tears after speaking with Crawley, and, as they near his house at Hogglestock, Grantly turns to Toogood and offers this stark conclusion: "I call that man a hero." The down-to-earth lawyer, however, rejects his companion's statement:

> I don't know about being a hero. I never quite knew what makes a hero, if it isn't having three or four girls dying in love for you at once. But to find a man who was going to let everything in the world go against him, because he believed another fellow better than himself! There's many a chap thinks another man is wool-gathering; but this man has thought he was wool-gathering himself! It's not natural; and the world wouldn't go on if there were many like that (795).

With this sort of vigorous debate between participants in the novels, centered on the actions and character of Mr. Crawley, Trollope forces us into questioning his character ourselves. Is the perpetual curate guilty or innocent? Is Crawley sane or a madman? And, most importantly, is he a hero or a failure?

Undeniably, on several occasions Mr. Crawley acts in a very fine, indeed, almost a noble manner. One such example occurs early in Framley Parsonage when Lady Lufton, concerned over Mark Robarts' increasing involvement with the local fox hunt, asks Mr. Crawley to show him the error of his ways. With a wonderful combination of eloquence and openness, Crawley reveals Robarts' errors by cataloguing for him the sort of men who are talking about his behavior:

> The men around you, of your own neighbourhood; those who watch your life, and know all your doings; those who look to see you walking as a lamp to guide their feet, but find you consorting with horse-jockeys and hunters, galloping after hounds, and taking your place among the vainest of worldly pleasure-seekers. Those who have a right to expect an example of good living, and who think that they do not see it (182-83).

Trollope's narrator even expresses surprise that this "singular man; so humble and meek, so unutterably inefficient and awkward in the ordinary intercourse of life" can speak with such power and sympathy. Crawley gazes straight into Mark's eyes and asks him if he is leading a fit life for a parish clergyman; then, in a climactic moment, he crosses the room and places his hand "tenderly" on the young clergyman's shoulder, begging the younger man to open his heart. The stern curate does not press Robarts when he breaks down, however, choosing instead to end their meeting on a cautious, hopeful note:

> No, Mr. Robarts, [you are] not a castaway; neither a hypocrite, nor a castaway; but one who in walking has stumbled in the dark and bruised his feet among the stones. Henceforth let him take a lantern in his hand, and look warily to his path, and walk cautiously among the thorns and rocks – cautiously, but yet boldly, with manly courage, but Christian meekness, as all men should walk on their pilgrimage through this vale of tears (184).

This scene reveals some of the depth and strength of Crawley's character, and when the reader considers the perpetual curate's own suffering and poverty, his compassionate performance here becomes all the more impressive.

While this admirable counseling of a fellow clergyman in Framley Parsonage illustrates Crawley's kindness and understanding, the downtrodden curate comes even closer to nobility and triumph when he is summoned to the bishop's palace in The Last Chronicle. Accused of a serious crime, Mr. Crawley refuses to submit to the bishop's unlawful request for his resignation, and when he appears before Bishop Proudie and his wife, he does not seem defeated, humiliated, or weak:

> The deep angry remonstrant eyes, the shaggy eyebrows, telling tales of frequent anger, – of anger frequent but generally silent, – the repressed indignation of the habitual frown, the long nose and large powerful mouth, the deep furrows on the cheek, and the general look of thought and suffering, all combined to make the appearance of the man remarkable, and to describe to the beholders at once his true character. No one ever on seeing Mr. Crawley took him to be a happy man, or a weak man, or an ignorant man, or a wise man (180).

Over the course of the next several pages, Mr. Crawley quietly keeps his composure as he explains why he will not resign until he has been convicted by a proper ecclesiastical court, all the while ignoring the intrusive and insulting comments of Mrs. Proudie. The bishop is almost

hypnotized by the curate's forcefulness, and he sits "looking with all his eyes up at the great forehead and great eyebrows of the man, and was so fascinated by the power that was exercised over him by the other man's strength that he hardly now noticed his wife" (187). Mrs. Proudie, however, is not overawed by Crawley's appearance and strength, so the resolute clergyman takes her on as well before departing for Hogglestock. In answer to her final insult he utters just two mighty words: "Peace, woman," causing even the dumbfounded bishop to rise out of his chair, not out of anger but from admiration. Then Mr. Crawley takes his leave of the couple with these straightforward, yet devastating, words of advice to Mrs. Proudie: "Madam, you should not interfere in these matters. You simply debase your husband's high office. The distaff were more fitting for you. My lord, good morning" (188). This memorable moment, perhaps the only occasion on which Mrs. Proudie finds herself thoroughly routed in the entire Barsetshire series, ends Mr. Crawley's confrontation with the bishop and his wife.

Although the narrator considers this performance a "victory" and Mr. Crawley begins his long walk home in a "spirit of triumph," Trollope offers many clues, not only here but in other scenes as well, that underscore the long-suffering curate's failure as a hero. When Crawley first learns he has been summoned by the bishop, for instance, he actually relishes the meeting, setting himself up for the role of the tragic hero. After the bishop's messenger leaves, the narrator relates,

> Mr. Crawley was all alert, looking forward with evident glee to his encounter with the bishop, – snorting like a racehorse at the expected triumph of the coming struggle. And he read much Greek with Jane on that afternoon pouring into her young ears, almost with joyous rapture, his appreciation of the glory and the

> pathos and the humanity, as also of the awful tragedy, of the story of Œdipus. His very soul was on fire at the idea of clutching the weak bishop in his hand, and crushing him with his strong grasp (175).

These words, at first glance, may appear as simple excess or even deception by Trollope's narrator, but Mr. Crawley's subsequent acts reinforce the truth found in this passage. The curate insists that he will walk the entire twelve miles to Barchester for his meeting, refusing offers of help from his wife, neighbors, and friends. Anticipating his "triumph over the bishop," Crawley wants to appear disheveled at the palace: "He took great glory from the thought that he would go before the bishop with dirty boots, – with boots necessarily dirty, – with rusty pantaloons, [and] that he would be hot and mud-stained with his walk, hungry, and an object to be wondered at by all . . ." (176). And when Crawley meets Mark Robarts during the actual trek to Barchester, he again refuses assistance, with his studied gestures revealing much about his true character:

> Then he stalked on, clutching and crushing in his hand the bishop, and the bishop's wife, and the whole diocese, – and all the Church of England. Dirty shoes, indeed! Whose was the fault that there were in the church so many feet soiled by unmerited poverty, and so many hands soiled by undeserved wealth? If the bishop did not like his shoes, let the bishop dare to tell him so! So he walked on through the thick of the mud, by no means picking his way (178).

These two acts, the symbolic clenching of the fist and the deliberate muddying of his boots, elucidate the primary reason Trollope denies Crawley status as a true hero: the curate's false and excessive pride.

Time and time again Trollope points to the curate's "false pride and false shame" that Lucy Robarts spoke of in her conversation with Fanny Robarts. Ruth apRoberts finds in this portrait Trollope's "most careful study of human perversity," noting that the author "places him in

circumstances that push his endurance very near the breaking point" (108). Indeed, Mr. Crawley seems almost fanatical in his rejection of help from any source. In Framley Parsonage he refuses any aid or comfort from the Robarts family, and when Fanny and Lucy bring food and simple treats for his children, they are forced to sneak them into the house. In both Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle he repeatedly spurns his oldest friend Arabin, scorning his advice, invitations to visit, or offers of financial support. And in The Last Chronicle Crawley denies that he needs legal assistance, pursuing this folly even after he is arrested and must appear before the magistrates at Silverbridge. Even worse, as Trollope makes quite clear over the course of these two novels, Mr. Crawley willfully indulges in his suffering to the point where it imperils his wife and children. During his first curacy in Cornwall, for instance, we learn that two of his four children had died after a long illness; yet still Crawley "would ask aid from no man – such at least was his boast through all" (Framley 173). At Hogglestock he refuses Lucy Robarts' offer to nurse his wife when she contracts a dangerous fever, reluctantly backing down only when faced with her cheerful persistence and charm. And in this same passage he actively resists the removal of his children to the safety of Robarts' parsonage, even though this refusal would condemn them to further exposure to his wife's deadly contagion.

Trollope sees much good in the troubled and complicated character of Mr. Crawley; nevertheless, he clearly illustrates how the curate's pride overwhelms him, turning him into a selfish, self-pitying, and ultimately self-indulgent martyr.[9] In Framley Parsonage, for example, Mr. Crawley tries to isolate himself from the world, even feeling "a savage satisfaction in being left to himself" (257). His former friend Arabin becomes a special

object of derision: he refuses to dine with him, sneers at his "sleek, fine horse," and will not forgive the dean for paying off his debts (257). In The Last Chronicle Mr. Crawley spends hours alone in his study, pitying himself because he sees the whole world arrayed against him, and when his wife calls attention to this "over-indulgence of your own sorrow," he even claims she is against him (112). Finally, in a very telling scene in The Last Chronicle, we see Mr. Crawley actively adding to his own misery when Mark Robarts comes to call:

> Even in his own house, Mr. Crawley affected a mock humility, as though, either through his own debasement, or because of the superior station of the other clergyman, he were not entitled to put himself on an equal footing with his visitor. He would not have shaken hands with Mr. Robarts, – intending to indicate that he did not presume to do so while the present accusation was hanging over him, – had not the action been forced upon him. And then there was something of a protest in his manner, as though remonstrating against a thing that was unbecoming to him. Mr. Robarts, without analysing it, understood it all, and knew that behind the humility there was a crushing pride, – a pride which, in all probability, would rise up and crush him before he could get himself out of the room again (206).

Mr. Crawley's "crushing" and false pride, his selfish indulgence in his own suffering, and his studied and affected humility: all of these elements contribute to this devastating and accurate portrait of a failed hero.

Even though Mr. Crawley styles himself as an Œdipus–a long-suffering and noble tragic hero–Trollope underscores his character's failure to achieve this noble height. "Most of the time," Laurence Lerner forcefully concludes, "we must speak of Mr Crawley as 'almost' a tragic figure" (23). Yet one must admit, and this comes near the very core of Trollope's art, there are times when we feel the dogged curate will succeed.

He eventually goes to London to seek legal advice from his cousin Toogood, even though he refuses to dine at his house. When he resigns his curacy he does it with dignity and grace; and he continues to minister to the sick and needy brick makers in his district in the midst of his own suffering and illness. Nevertheless, as G. M. Harvey appropriately argues, "egotism is the root of moral failure" in this novel, and Crawley's actions underscore his failure: "Mr. Crawley's search for sympathy among the labourers of Hoggle End is not in keeping with heroic dignity. . . . The curate's final gesture of relinquishing his church is the deliberate choice of an unnecessary martyrdom. Egoism makes Mr. Crawley's best actions perverse, and this is something he is partly aware of" (461-2).

None of these instances overshadows the fact that Mr. Crawley never realizes how much his own pride and stubbornness contribute to his family's suffering and misery. In the final analysis, the perpetual curate never does change, and it is only through the unselfish aid and actions of others–the heroism of Lucy Robarts, the determination of Mrs. Crawley, and the persistence of Major Grantly and Mr. Toogood–that Mr. Crawley is saved at all. As Helen Corsa notes at the end of her study of the curate's personality, "Mr. Crawley is not 'cured' nor changed–he is merely no longer subjected to the many psychic pressures that threatened to overwhelm him" (170).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter we have seen the extensive range of Anthony Trollope's doubts about and questioning of the existence of the hero. In both The Warden and Barchester Towers Trollope comically attacks literary heroism on a rather grand scale, applying his mock-heroic language and narrative irony to a host of insignificant scenes and actions: the warden's

tea party, Grantly's "arming," Slope's visit to Eleanor, and Bold's arrival at Plumstead, to name just a few. In Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle of Barset, on the other hand, Trollope adopts a completely different approach, as he undertakes an intense, almost microscopic study of one man's character under pressure. Even Trollope, at least by the time he finished writing An Autobiography, realized the contrarieties of this singular character: "I claim to have portrayed the mind of the unfortunate man with great accuracy and great delicacy. The pride, the humility, the manliness, the weakness, the conscientious rectitude and bitter prejudices of Mr. Crawley were, I feel, true to nature and well described" (274). Still, Trollope illustrates quite clearly that Grantly and Crawley, one a powerful archdeacon and the other a humble curate, both fail to achieve status as true heroes. Archdeacon Grantly, the mighty defender of the English church, fails in a comic sense, as Trollope's narrator delights in exposing his flaws, contradictions, and mixed motives; the Reverend Josiah Crawley fails in a much more serious way, as Trollope unmasks the curate's excessive pride, damaging egotism, and self-indulgent suffering.

Notes

[1] James William Johnson's pithy essay, "England, 1660–1800: An Age without a Hero?" examines the other side of the coin. Johnson finds heroes everywhere in the literature of the Augustan age: "There were the heroes of biblical and Greco-Roman antiquity, the noble founders of a glorious England, and an international array of illustrious monarchs, generals, patriots, even scholars. Furthermore, from 1660 to 1800, eulogists proclaimed the heroism of living contemporaries from General Monck to Queen Anne to Dictionary Johnson. An age without heroes indeed! On the contrary, it seems an age with far too many" (25).

[2] The first chapter of Ian Watt's The Rise of the Novel details the growth of "formal realism" in the works of Defoe, Richardson, and, to a lesser extent, Fielding. Although Watt does not specifically address the diminishing of the hero in the novel, several of his main points relate directly to this trend. Watt shows, for instance, the emphasis these three authors give to the particular and minute over the general and universal (especially in Defoe and Richardson), their use of common, believable names for important characters (Moll Flanders, Clarissa Harlowe, Tom Jones), and the inclusion of intimate, specific details that firmly link their characters to a particular time and place.

[3] I do not use this example of Tom Jones's "heroic" tests to stir up the controversy over Fielding's ethics and morals, a point much discussed in Fielding criticism. See, for example, Ian Watt's discussion of Fielding's morality (The Rise of the Novel, 280-88), or Martin Battestin's arguments in The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art and in his key essay, "The Definition of

Wisdom: Tom Jones." Instead, by comparing Tom Jones's amorous tests with the "heroic" ones such as the twelve tests of Hercules or the adventures faced by Odysseus after the Trojan War, we begin to see Fielding's deflation of the hero for what it is.

[4] In "The Definition of Wisdom: Tom Jones" Martin Battestin finds this good nature a key to many of Fielding's heroes: "Good nature and charity are the indispensable qualifications of Fielding's heroes–of Parson Adams, Heartfree, Tom Jones, Captain Booth–who demand our affection despite their naïveté, their foibles and indiscretions" (176).

[5] Since the Oxford World's Classic edition of Barchester Towers retains the two-volume format of the first edition, all parenthetical references to this novel will be by volume and page number.

[6] The effects of Trollope's narrator have been vigorously debated by his critical commentators. For the best summary of the various viewpoints, see James R. Kincaid's The Novels of Anthony Trollope, neatly excerpted as "Trollope's Narrator" in N. John Hall's 1981 collection, The Trollope Critics. As Kincaid points out, two major critics support an " aesthetic distancing" achieved by Trollope's narrator (William Cadbury and Ruth apRoberts), while two others argue that the narrator draws the reader into the work (Hillis Miller and Robert Polhemus). Kincaid himself adopts the diplomatic middle ground: "The suggestion that they both are right, depending on which passage one examines, and that Trollope's narrator in fact draws us into the fiction or distances us from it according to the demands of the moment is embarrassingly obvious, but, I think, accurate" (Trollope Critics 196).

[7] See Paul Lyons' lively essay, "The Morality of Irony and Unreliable Narrative in Trollope's The Warden and Barchester Towers," South Atlantic Review 54 (1989), 41-54. While Lyons perceptively points out that Trollope's narrator contributes much to irony in these novels with his pleasantness and disarming rhetoric, his conclusion that the narrator is unreliable and untrustworthy is less than convincing.

[8] The critical consensus seems to favor Crawley as Trollope's most profound, and most successful, character in the Barsetshire series. Unfortunately, he has also been subjected to some critical misjudgment. Helen Storm Corsa's article on Crawley's "paranoid personality," for example, while justly focusing on the curate's rage and excess pride, blunders in attempts to explain these characteristics in terms of repressed homosexual tendencies and anal and oral fixations. These psychiatric accusations tend to limit, rather than expand, any appreciation of the complexities Trollope found in this singular character.

[9] Frances Cogan's 1981 dissertation, Martyr-Villains of Barsetshire, contains some keen insight into the character of the long-suffering curate. Cogan points out that two of Crawley's illusory goals, to be a "perfect pastor" and a "heroic martyr of church history," contribute to his own failure. Cogan also accurately illustrates how Crawley pursues these fantasies even at the risk of hurting members of his own family. Her choice of terminology, however, is unfortunate and misleading: she describes Crawley, Lily Dale, and Mr. Harding, among others, as martyr-villains. While Crawley does attempt to martyr himself under the intense pressures of his poverty and pride, there is nothing sinister or villainous in his character.

## Chapter III. Trollope's Young Gentlemen

The preceding chapter introduced two of the most dynamic characters in the Barsetshire novels, Archdeacon Grantly and the Reverend Crawley. These two men, although separated by vast differences in wealth and position, share some notable characteristics: they are both middle-aged, serve as clergymen in the Church of England, have wives and children, and can honestly call themselves English gentlemen. Both, as we have noted, fail to succeed as heroes. But Trollope's examination of heroism only begins with these two middle-aged clerics. Always aspiring, striving, yet somehow failing, many of Trollope's younger characters also stumble in their quest for heroism, dramatically highlighting Trollope's impatience with the independent, rebellious heroes of the Romantic period. In The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction, Mario Praz takes a very firm stand on Trollope's view of the hero: "Honesty is the best policy. No deception with regard either to events or characters. No mystery, and no hero. The abolition of the hero is a salient feature in Trollope, no less—perhaps even more—than in Thackeray" (267-8). This chapter will illustrate how thoroughly Trollope dismisses idealized heroism in the young male, focusing on two "pairs" of young gentlemen. First, we will examine the behavior of the young vicar, Mark Robarts, and his friend Lord Lufton, who both dominate the primary plot of Framley Parsonage; then we will turn to a study of two of Trollope's most fascinating young characters, Johnny Eames and his rival, Adolphus Crosbie, who play such a

significant role in The Small House at Allington and reappear in The Last Chronicle of Barset.

**Overview: Sir Walter Scott and the Conventional Hero**

The last chapter briefly surveyed a few of the novels of Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, underscoring the close association between the birth of the English novel and the questioning of the literary hero's role, an undertaking that Trollope and some of his contemporaries continued. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, new and different types of heroes emerged in the immensely successful novels of Sir Walter Scott, and these heroes had an almost incalculable influence on the deluge of popular novels which flooded England in the decades following Scott's death. Even Anthony Trollope, writing in his autobiography of his early taste in literature, admits the attraction Scott's work had on him as a young clerk in London. "I had read Shakespeare and Byron and Scott," Trollope says, "and could talk about them. . . . I had already made up my mind that Pride and Prejudice was the best novel in the English language,—a palm which I only partially withdrew after a second reading of Ivanhoe . . ." (41). A brief look at Scott's heroes, and their transformation into the Victorian popular hero, should increase our understanding of the type of character Trollope and his contemporaries reacted against. What sorts of heroes populated the narrative poems, novels, and tales of this vastly influential novelist? Two distinct types–the "dark" hero and the "passive" hero–appear throughout Scott's works, and these two strains disclose the romantic and anti-romantic sentiments of their author.[1]

Scott's dark hero may be the more interesting character type of the two, for this swashbuckling figure displays some of the traits of the Byronic heroes who followed him: he is young, aggressive, rebellious, and willing to

fight on against all odds. From the beginning of Scott's career, characters like Marmion, Roderich Vich Alpine Dhu, and Fergus Mac-Ivor drew the attention of Scott's readers and commentators, and these intense, original figures share some distinctive characteristics. First, all are Scotsmen of decisive action; whether they are stealing Lowland cattle, exacting Highland justice, or battling English invaders, these dynamic heroes never hesitate or falter. Second, these characters are vividly native; they lead their Scottish clans and speak in a natural, local dialect. In addition, the dark heroes appear as outlaws or even villains; they cherish their independent lives, lives which recall simpler, more heroic, and illustrious days. Finally, almost all of Scott's dark heroes die before the end of the works they appear in, as if to signal that these old customs and lifestyles must give way to the new.

One of Scott's best examples of the dark hero appears in Waverley (1814), in the figure of Fergus Mac-Ivor, a man of action, cleverness, and vitality. Fergus sparkles as the heroic adventurer and outlaw, ruling his clan with strength and wit; he is a fascinating mixture, John Lauber concludes, "of impulse and calculation, of pride and dissimulation, of Highland barbarism and Gallic sophistication" (28). In direct contrast with the novel's central hero, Edward Waverley, Fergus seems equally comfortable jesting with the roughest brigands in a Highland cave or dining with noblemen at the Young Pretender's court. Alexander Welsh, though granting the existence of this Robin Hood quality in a hero like Fergus, also describes some other, more disturbing characteristics of this character type. Welsh finds a "rough and irregular" aspect within the dark hero, a lack of balance, and an "intuitive morality that is anterior to law and perhaps even independent of divine law" (65). Fergus, for instance,

unmercifully exploits his relationship with Waverley to suit his own interests, and his attraction to Rose Bradwardine grows out of his selfish desire for her fortune more than from any love or admiration for her (Welsh 62). All in all, whether appearing as carefree outlaws, fierce defenders of freedom, or even outright villains, these dark heroes reveal Scott's sympathy for the independence and national pride found in his romantic hero, an impulse that he counters with his more passive, central characters.

Although Scott's dark heroes amplify and celebrate some of the same characteristics as Byron's dramatic rebels and thus had wide appeal, his passive heroes may have had even more influence on the popular writers of the mid-Victorian age. The common traits of these passive heroes, characters like Edward Waverley and Ivanhoe, form a striking alternative to those of romantic heroes like Manfred, Fergus Mac-Ivor, or Childe Harold. Even though Scott's passive heroes occupy a central position in most of his narrative poems and novels, their very passivity heightens the contrast with the darker heroes: figures like Waverley wander from place to place, blown about like leaves under the influence of the impassioned, stronger-willed people around them. These passive heroes are often outsiders, as well, men who come from different cultures and do not understand the intricacies and dangers of situations they must face. Also, as Donald Stone points out, Scott's passive heroes display an "imaginative cast of mind, nourished by the romantic fancies of the literature of chivalry," and during the course of the novel they must discover and then reject their romantic notions (15). Finally, in contrast with the inevitable death and defeat suffered by Scott's darker heroes, his passive characters seem almost "too good to be true," as they survive their most serious

mistakes, marry the virtuous heroines, and reappear in society with established fortunes, thus "living happily ever after."

Edward Waverley, of course, serves as the archetype for the hundreds of conventional English heroes who have followed him. Young Waverley comes on the scene as the classic outsider, an English officer who deploys with his regiment to a post in Scotland. This uninspired character, however, serves as Scott's focal point, with all the novel's plots revolving around him. This hero, for instance, develops an intense attraction to the passionate Flora Mac-Ivor (even though he is already in love with Rose Bradwardine), and his naïve infatuation with the Scottish clansmen and their romantic lifestyle leads to his dismissal from the army, support for the rebellion, and eventual capture. He exudes an almost unbelievable goodness: Waverley refuses to duel with a Scotsman who insults him (fearing he would distress his host); and, while the battle between the English and Highlanders rages at Preston-pans, Scott's champion spends most of his day rescuing wounded soldiers rather than fighting. In the end, Edward's passivity overshadows almost all of his other traits. He invariably reacts to events with little insight or reflection, instead yielding to the influence of any strong personality in the vicinity–be it the rebellious Fergus or the proper Colonel Talbot.

Some critics attempt to dismiss Scott's passive heroes because of their woodenness, the stiffness of their dialogue, and their insipid personalities and love affairs.[2] Others discover much more in a Waverley or an Ivanhoe. David Daiches, for example, reasons that these passive heroes serve as the "disinterested observer" in Scott's historical novels, and he argues, "to censure Scott for the woodenness of his heroes–characters like Edward Waverley, Francis Osbaldistone, and many others–is to misunderstand

their function. They are not heroes in the ordinary sense, but symbolic observers" (37). Similarly, Donald Stone concludes that these heroes champion a "Burke-derived loyalty to the structures of political and religious restraint," signalling Scott's triumph over his own romantic impulse and "almost Byronic fascination with the disruptive energies of the individual" (12).

While recognizing the dull, unrealistic nature of Scott's passive heroes, we must not overlook their overwhelming influence on the popular novels of the Victorian era. Unfortunately, Walter Allen notes, much of Scott's influence on later novelists was bad, for he "helped to establish unreal romantic heroes and heroines as a convention" in the novels of the nineteenth century (135). In the decades following Scott's death in 1832, historical novels and popular romances flourished in England,[3] and in many of these countless novels we find conventional, stereotyped heroes, the direct descendants of Scott's Waverleys and Ivanhoes. The unrealistic heroes in several of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novels (Pelham, for example) and the domestic romances of Charlotte Yonge (The Heir of Redclyffe, Heartease, and The Daisy Chain)[4] drew Thackeray's scathing criticism in the The Yellowplush Correspondence and later in Vanity Fair. Young naval heroes monopolized the popular works of Charles Marryat, while carefree army officers and Irishmen appeared in many of Charles Lever's historical novels. A brief glance at just three representative works–William Harrison Ainsworth's Crichton (1837), Lever's Charles O'Malley (1840-41), and Charlotte Yonge's The Heir of Redclyffe (1853)–will illustrate the sort of conventional hero that came to dominate the popular fiction of Trollope's era.

Set in sixteenth-century France, Ainsworth's second successful novel, Crichton, combines elements from both types of Scott's heroes to form the flawless man of action. James Crichton, Ainsworth's heroic Scotsman, triumphs at every turn, successfully debating students at the Sorbonne, rescuing a hapless maiden from the clutches of the evil magician, and then triumphantly riding to victory in the lists. Critics, however, dismiss this sort of invincible and lovestruck hero, finding most of Ainsworth's heroic characters "inept," or, as Malcolm Elwin concludes, "almost always sterile or stereotyped" (Worth 90-1). Charles Lever continued Scott's tradition of the historical novel, as well, although he transferred the setting to Ireland. Lever's importance stems not only from his commercial success, but from the fact he was a close friend of Anthony Trollope, a friendship that began during the young Trollope's first years in Ireland.[5] We find another example of an unrealistic valor and heroic goodness in Lever's Charles O'Malley, a novel about the adventures of an Irish military officer at the time of the Napoleonic wars. One can hear the biting sarcasm and dismissal in Edgar Allan Poe's brief summary of O'Malley's unbelievable actions: the hero "returns to the Peninsula," Poe writes, "is present at Waterloo, saves the life of Lucy's father for the second time, as he already twice saved that of Lucy herself, is rewarded by the hand of the latter; and making his way back to O'Malley Castle, 'lives happily all the rest of his days'" (4935). Finally, the pious hero of Yonge's successful domestic novel, The Heir of Redclyffe, takes the passivity and goodness of a Scott hero to the extreme. The heir, Sir Guy Morville, having been banished from his uncle's house because of lies told by his cousin Philip, travels to the Mediterranean, rescuing shipwrecked sailors along the way. Meeting Philip in Italy, Yonge's hero seeks no revenge, although, being hot-

tempered, he thinks about murdering him. Horrified at his mental "crime," Guy forgives his cousin, nurses him back from a fever, and then dies of the same illness. Overcome by this Christian example, the devious Philip reforms and returns to England to accept his dead cousin's inheritance (Mare 136-7). Trollope's young gentlemen, therefore, like Thackeray's Dobbin or Rawdon Crawley, must be seen in the context of these other nineteenth-century heroes, and characters like Mark Robarts or Johnny Eames represent Trollope's unwavering rejection of these insipid heroes of Victorian popular fiction, who, in turn, can be traced back to Scott's passive protagonists.

**Framley's Young "Heroes": Mark Robarts and Lord Lufton**

In a rather long digression in The Eustace Diamonds, Trollope's narrator interrupts his tale to discuss the novelist's problem in presenting a hero who is believable:

> It is very easy to depict a hero,—a man absolutely stainless, perfect as an Arthur,—a man honest in all his dealings, equal to all trials, true in all his speech, indifferent to his own prosperity, struggling for the general good, and, above all, faithful in love. At any rate, it is as easy to do that as to tell of the man who is one hour good and the next bad, who aspires greatly, but fails in practice, who sees the higher, but too often follows the lower course (1: 318).

The first half of this quotation could apply to the entire horde of conventional heroes who dwell in the popular novels of Ainsworth, Yonge, Bulwer-Lytton, Lever, and others. The second half, on the other hand, almost perfectly describes Trollope's young gentlemen, characters like Mark Robarts and his friend Lord Lufton. These two less-than-perfect gentlemen in some fashion reflect Trollope's disbelief in the youthful or perfect hero, reinforcing the conclusion Trollope's narrator offers about

real life in the final chapter of The Three Clerks: "heroism there may be, and he [the author] hopes there is—more or less of it there should be in a true picture of most characters; but heroes and heroines, as so called, are not commonly met with in our daily walks of life" (544).

In Framley Parsonage, perhaps more than in any other novel of the Barsetshire series, Trollope's questioning of heroism seems to permeate the entire work. Here the narrator, in a manner reminiscent of the first two Barsetshire novels, continues to use his mock-heroic technique. Mimicking his language in The Warden, for example, the narrator turns again to classical allusion, puffing up a cabinet meeting into a summit of Greek gods, while describing a dissolution of government and the subsequent election as a clash between Titans and Olympians, with the giants toppling the upstart Joves and Dianas (chapters xx, xxiii). In addition to this mock-heroic comedy, Trollope's narrator ironically calls many characters–from a broad spectrum of society–heroes, again raising questions about the entire concept of heroism. Early on, for instance, Mrs. Proudie becomes "the hero of the hour" when she shouts down the public lecture of Harold Smith with her vocal support of evangelical Christianity (74). At the opposite end of the social ladder, the narrator dubs Tom Tozer, the indefatigable London bill-collector, as "the real hero of the family" when he begins to tighten his grip on Sowerby and Robarts and then refuses to let go (498). As a matter of fact, Mark Robarts himself, Lord Lufton, the Reverend Crawley, and Mr. Crawley's wife all are called heroes by either the narrator or by other characters in the novel–forcing the reader to join in Trollope's debate on this crucial question of what constitutes a hero.

The character and actions of Mark Robarts, the young clergyman and newly-installed vicar of the parish of Framley, serve as the focal point of this debate. Trollope artfully draws attention to the differences between this bright, rising vicar and the suffering, middle-aged curate of Hogglestock; at the very beginning of his career Mark Robarts has been blessed with all the advantages of steady income and aristocratic patronage that have somehow eluded the impoverished Mr. Crawley. Still under thirty, Robarts has an Oxford degree, the strong support of the influential Lady Lufton, a close friendship with her son, a secure position as her parish's vicar (with a generous salary of £800 a year), and a delightful parsonage nestled in the shadow of Lady Lufton's house.

Even though Trollope's narrator calls Robarts a "young Hyperion" and appoints him as "our hero" in the book's first chapter, a closer look at his introductory description of the bright young vicar reveals a studied ambiguity:

> Here it may suffice to say that he was no born heaven's cherub, neither was he a born fallen devil's spirit. Such as his training made him, such he was. He had large capabilities for good – and aptitudes also for evil, quite enough: quite enough to make it needful that he should repel temptation as temptation only can be repelled. Much had been done to spoil him, but in the ordinary acceptation of the word he was not spoiled. He had too much tact, too much common sense, to believe himself to be the paragon which his mother thought him. Self-conceit was not, perhaps, his greatest danger. Had he possessed more of it, he might have been a less agreeable man, but his course before him might on that account have been the safer. In person he was manly, tall, and fair-haired, with a square forehead, denoting intelligence rather than thought, with clear white hands, filbert nails, and a power of dressing himself in such a manner that no one should ever observe of him that his clothes were either good or bad, shabby or smart (5-6).

In physical detail this could describe any of a number of protagonists from Victorian popular novels: Robarts is the handsome, fair-haired Englishman. In addition, as Russell Fraser points out, Mark seems to share some of the passivity of a Scott hero: "There is no single fact about Mark Robarts so important as his complaisance. He is first and last a mover with the tide. . . . The fact [is] that Mark Robarts is a weak man" ("Younger Characters" 97). But the language and tone in Trollope's description warn that this clergyman is not a Victorian Waverley. Trollope uses chiasmus (repel temptation–temptation repelled), balanced opposites (capabilities for good / aptitudes for evil, good / bad, shabby / smart) and subtle negatives ("Self conceit <u>was not</u>, <u>perhaps</u>, his greatest danger") to raise disturbing questions about this young character from the opening pages of the novel. What <u>has</u> his training made him into? And if self-conceit is <u>not</u> his greatest danger, what is?

As the plot of the novel unfolds, Trollope graphically depicts Mark Robarts' relentless journey down the path of temptation, and each step reveals more about the young vicar's imperfection and "worldliness" (Wall 42). This journey begins innocently enough, with Robarts accepting an invitation to visit an acquaintance of Lord Lufton's, Mr. Sowerby, at his country estate. Even though Lady Lufton does not like this "Chaldicotes crowd," Robarts thinks his visit will be advantageous, if only to meet one of the government's rising stars, Mr. Harold Smith. Robarts yields to temptation, however, as soon as he comes under the influence of the people he meets at Chaldicotes. Within a few days he agrees to a visit of the Duke of Omnium's estate, where he will meet even more influential people, including the Bishop of Barchester, Mrs. Proudie, and the crusty old Duke himself. Clearly, Robarts is not without fault in this matter; the young

vicar is ambitious and thinks highly of himself, as Trollope's narrator describes:

> Mark, too, had risen in the world, as far as he had yet risen, by knowing great people; and he certainly had an ambition to rise higher. I will not degrade him by calling him a tuft-hunter; but he undoubtedly had a feeling that the paths most pleasant for a clergyman's feet were those which were trodden by the great ones of the earth. . . . Of course he felt that he was different from other parsons, – more fitted by nature for intimacy with great persons, more urbane, more polished, and more richly endowed with modern clerical well-to-do aptitudes. He was grateful to Lady Lufton for what she had done for him; but perhaps not so grateful as he should have been (37-8).

Compounding his initial mistake, Robarts does not even return to Framley to announce the visit to Omnium's castle (realizing that Lady Lufton abhors the Duke and his lifestyle); instead, he takes a coward's way out, writing to his wife Fanny for more money and asking her to inform Lady Lufton of his plan.

Even so, after arriving at the Duke of Omnium's Robarts begins to realize his mistake, as he discovers the shallowness and lack of character in many of the Duke's guests, including Sowerby, Fothergill, the Proudies, and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smith. While at Gatherum Castle, nevertheless, Robarts makes the crucial mistake that guarantees his eventual downfall. In a private meeting with Sowerby Robarts allows himself to be talked into signing a bill for £400, even though he realizes immediately afterward the impropriety of this sort of behavior. From this point the hapless clergyman's slide accelerates. Within a few months he is in the clutches of a London bill-collector, and, after he meets Sowerby again, he signs a second bill for £500 pounds more, rationalizing (incorrectly, of course) that this new bill cancels the first one. Later, Sowerby manages to extort a

further £130 from Robarts by selling the vicar his favorite hunter, just as the hunting season ends and the horse will be of little value. And, as a crowning touch to all these financial misdealings, Mark Robarts actively participates in a far more serious ethical error. At the urging of Sowerby, Robarts travels to London to enlist the political support of Harold Smith, seeking the award of a prebendary stall at Barchester, a blatant courting of ministerial favoritism which comes back later to haunt him.

Just as Mark Robarts privately ruins himself by dealing with the unscrupulous Sowerby, so he publicly falls from grace through his growing attraction to the local Framley hunt. Again, this minor flaw in the young vicar's character surfaces gradually, almost as if the reader sees Trollope stripping away layer after layer of paint to uncover the rust underneath. At first, Robarts merely rides out to keep Lord Lufton company and view the local gathering of the hounds and hunters. Within a few weeks, though, and still with the encouragement of his friend, Mark starts riding along slowly behind the hunters just to observe how they get along. And then, as if by magic, and certainly without forethought or malicious intent, Robarts finds himself out two or three days of the week, chasing the cry of the hounds at full gallop while matching Lord Lufton jump for jump. All of this, of course, leads to Lady Lufton's open displeasure, her summoning of the stern Hogglestock curate, and the crucial scene discussed in the previous chapter, where Mr. Crawley guides Mark toward an understanding of his errors. Now the brilliance of this short scene can be fully realized: Crawley thinks Robarts breaks down because of his shame at being associated with the "pleasure-seekers" and "horse-jockeys" who hunt; Robarts, on the other hand, is really shattered by the secret he has been keeping inside himself (and the direct result of these associations)—the

choking debt of the two Sowerby bills and his growing fear of exposure and ruin. In the end, Robarts' pride provides yet another interesting link with the poverty-stricken Mr. Crawley. The Framley vicar, just like Hogglestock's perpetual curate, cannot comprehend or admit his errors publicly; he refuses to ask for Lady Lufton's forgiveness or to accept Lord Lufton's financial support, until the bailiffs take possession and begin an inventory of his house.

Superficially, while Robarts may physically resemble the popular Victorian hero, Trollope's characterization contains much more depth and complexity than that of a Pelham or a Sir Guy Morville. As the ambiguities in Trollope's opening description of Robarts show, this aspiring clergyman's character embodies both good and bad elements; his "tuft-hunting" and ambitious pride contribute to a realistic portrait far removed from that of a popular hero. In addition, the young vicar's characterization mocks the heroism of the romantic rebel. Mark Robarts' rebellion, after all, pales when compared to the defiance of Byron's Prometheus or Milton's Satan; the vicar's most rebellious acts consist of a few poor decisions, such as his visit to Sowerby's or his persistence in hunting after knowing of Lady Lufton's displeasure. "Robarts," Robert Polhemus aptly concludes, "is basically good, despite his naïveté and callow conceit. He can learn from his humiliation that he is not better than less fortunate people . . ." (70).

Although Trollope clearly illustrates how the flawed Robarts participates in his own downfall, making him an unworthy candidate for the title of hero, the author also shows that Mark is not the only young gentleman in the novel with character defects. Trollope's portrayal of Lord Ludovic Lufton, Mark's Oxford classmate and closest friend, reinforces the novelist's conclusion that the youthful hero cannot exist in real life. Not

surprisingly, too, many of Lord Lufton's mistakes seem quite similar to those made by Robarts. In Lufton's choice of companions, his monetary affairs, and his relationship with his mother, the young lord's actions foreshadow many of the errors his friend will make.

Lufton, a handsome young bachelor with all the advantages of wealth and a noble title, chooses not to live at Lufton Park with his mother after he leaves Oxford; instead, he sets himself up on his own estate and falls in with the devoted hunting crowd, which includes acquaintances like the sporty Captain Culpepper, the notorious Sowerby, and the shallow Harold Smith. Much as Mark Robarts will later do, Lufton falls prey to the honeyed words and empty promises of Mr. Sowerby, only Lufton's losses seem even more dramatic: he must sell part of his inheritance (with Lady Lufton's approval) to obtain the £8000 he needs to get clear of Sowerby and the bill-collectors (111). In Trollope's eye, the young lord's most damning flaw seems to be his inability to think through any of the consequences of his actions. Lord Lufton, after all, first introduces Mark Robarts to the Chaldicotes crowd, purposefully engaging his friend to negotiate with Sowerby about his debts, and this leads to Mark's own monetary entanglement and eventual embarrassment. Even worse, in a manner reminiscent of Mark's cowardice, Lufton enlists his friend to act as a go-between with Lady Lufton, as he searches for a way to avoid personally breaking the news to her about the required sale of a parcel of the family estate. And, as we have seen, Mark's joining with the Framley hunting crowd owes itself, in no small part, to Lord Lufton's companionable recruitment: it's almost as if the young lord has been blind to the impropriety of his gestures towards his close clerical friend.

While Trollope highlights this young nobleman's imperfections through his less-than-perfect behavior, he also employs his narrator's comic irony to question Lord Lufton's outward appearance as the perfect hero. When Lady Lufton, for instance, points her son toward the eligible beauty, Griselda Grantly, the narrator cheerfully interjects this satiric metaphor:

> Young men in such matters are so often without any fixed thoughts! They are such absolute moths. They amuse themselves with the light of the beautiful candle, fluttering about, on and off, in and out of the flame with dazzled eyes, till in a rash moment they rush in too near the wick, and then fall with singed wings and crippled legs, burnt up and reduced to tinder by the consuming fire of matrimony (243).

Rejecting the heroic, dramatic rebel found in Byron or Scott, Trollope and his narrator offer us a very different picture: a hapless bachelor fluttering about a beautiful, silent woman in mothlike fashion. And, in a passage occurring shortly after Lucy has lied to Lord Lufton, telling him she does not love him, the narrator cannot resist commenting on the perfect heroes found in books and their less-than-perfect counterparts in life:

> I know it will be said of Lord Lufton himself that, putting aside his peerage and broad acres, and handsome, sonsy face, he was not worth a girl's care and love. That will be said because people think that heroes in books should be so much better than heroes got up for the world's common wear and tear. I may as well confess that of absolute, true heroism there was only a moderate admixture in Lord Lufton's composition; but what would the world come to if none but absolute true heroes were to be thought worthy of women's love? What would the men do? and what – oh! what would become of the women? (251)

Even Lucy Robarts, the dark, attractive girl who finds herself courted by this young lord, participates in the ironic undercutting of her noble, heroic suitor. Admitting to her sister-in-law, Fanny Robarts, what an

"absolute fool" she has been, Lucy attempts to downplay her attraction to Lord Lufton: "He is no hero. . . . I never heard him say a single word of wisdom, or utter a thought that was akin to poetry. He devotes all his energies to riding after a fox or killing poor birds, and I never heard of his doing a single great action in my life" (311). Furthermore, Lucy tells Fanny, all Lord Lufton can offer are the conventional physical attractions (required in the stereotypical hero): "he has fine straight legs, and a smooth forehead, and a good-humoured eye, and white teeth. Was it possible to see such a catalogue of perfections, and not fall down, stricken to the very bone?" (311) This sort of banter leads to one of Lucy's best lines, indicative of the irony and humor that Trollope realizes can arise even in moments of very real pain or hopeless love. Lucy ends the conversation with her sister with this series of questions:

> What is it that I feel, Fanny? Why am I so weak in body that I cannot take exercise? Why cannot I keep my mind on a book for one moment? Why can I not write two sentences together? Why should every mouthful that I eat stick in my throat? Oh, Fanny, is it his legs, think you, or is it his title? (313)

Lines like these, with their delightful comic touch, drive home Trollope's conclusion about conventional heroes. Trollope uses Lucy as his mouthpiece on this occasion, as even she realizes there is something ridiculous about considering a young, eligible man (handsome and attractive as he may be), as some sort of perfect hero from a popular novel.

In Framley Parsonage, therefore, much as we saw with Grantly and Crawley, Trollope paints from a mixed palette of good and bad elements, and this results in realistic portraits of young men who fall far short of either romantic defiance or conventional heroism. Not that these two characters are in any way villainous or evil: both Robarts and Lufton have

many likeable qualities, and Trollope's narrator openly admits "a man may be as imperfect as Lord Lufton, and yet worthy of a good mother and a good wife" (367). Nevertheless, in Framley Parsonage Trollope's young men cannot claim the title of hero; Robarts' ambition and pride, Lufton's thoughtlessness, and their series of dreadful mistakes highlight Trollope's firm rejection of both the dramatic rebels of Byron and the perfect heroes of Ainsworth, Lever, and Yonge.

**Trollope's Barsetshire Heroines**

We have been concentrating on the techniques and characterizations Trollope employs to raise doubts about the heroism of his male figures; paradoxically, perhaps, a quick glance at a few of Trollope's young women exposes a somewhat startling fact: often they seem more heroic than Trollope's young men. In Framley Parsonage and The Last Chronicle, for example, Trollope documents Mr. Crawley's failures in almost microscopic detail. In both of these novels, however, Trollope contrasts these failures with the quiet successes of Mrs. Crawley, whose stoic nobility and courageous suffering inform Trollope's definition of the word heroic. Mrs. Crawley never complains or wails against her fate. She never contemplates suicide or gives herself up to despair; she even accepts charity and food for her family with an almost majestic grace. In the portraits of Trollope's "good girls," as well, young women like Lucy Robarts, Fanny Robarts, and Mary Thorne, the novelist offers a more stalwart heroism than can be found in many of his feckless young men.

On several occasions, Lucy Robarts and her sister-in-law Fanny outshine the young vicar of Framley and his noble companion. When Mark Robarts slinks off to Gatherum Castle directly from Sowerby's, for instance, leaving Fanny to face the brunt of Lady Lufton's displeasure, not only does

she bravely defend the actions of her husband, but her unyielding, loyal response also earns her Lady Lufton's increased respect. In addition, when Robarts finally gets up enough nerve to tell his wife how deeply in debt they are, owing to his stupidity with Sowerby over the bills, Fanny responds with quiet strength and firm support for her husband, without one word of hysteria, bitterness, or reproach (399). Fanny Robarts, also, becomes one of the driving forces in the campaign to help the Crawley family, even enlisting the patronage of Lady Lufton for this charitable cause.

While Mrs. Crawley and Fanny Robarts display remarkable strength of character in Framley Parsonage, Trollope's inspired creation of Lucy Robarts may best exemplify his ideal of feminine heroism. Indeed, Lucy has the sense and presence of mind to refuse Lord Lufton's first offer, perceiving that his marriage to a penniless, orphaned girl could cause a breach between Lady Lufton and her son. In addition, as we have noted already, Lucy has a rather wry sense of humor. Even in the very trying period after Lufton's first offer, she maintains her composure, as she uncovers the irony of her own situation with the joke about Lufton's fine leg, refusing to surrender to hysteria or despair. These seem like minor points, though, when viewed in the light of Lucy's heroic self-sacrifice for the Crawley family. As Stephen Wall aptly describes her, Lucy "turns out to have far more force of character than anyone else in her circle; in her conduct towards others she shows a degree of scrupulosity coupled with an almost ferocious insistence on her own integrity . . ." (50-1). When Lucy and Fanny travel to Hogglestock, only to learn that Mrs. Crawley has been stricken with typhus, Lucy reacts with determination and courage. She brushes off the objections of Fanny and Mark, stares down the protestations

of the stern curate, and moves in to nurse Mrs. Crawley back to health. Even Trollope's narrator seems somewhat amazed at the courage and pluck of this girl of nineteen, noting that at Hogglestock "Lucy in her new power was ruthless" (412). Over the course of the next few weeks, Lucy not only rescues Mrs. Crawley from the horrendous fever, at considerable risk to herself, she also touches the heart and soul of Mr. Crawley. As Mrs. Crawley begins to recover, she tells Lucy that her husband sees this young nurse as a "ministering angel," and, what's more, Mrs. Crawley adds, "he says that if he were to write a poem about womanhood, he would make you the heroine" (549). Lucy Robarts, in the eyes of Mr. Crawley, Trollope, and his narrator, blossoms into a model of the heroic young woman, as she displays the virtues lacking in so many of Trollope's young gentlemen: patience, common sense, moral integrity, and noble self-sacrifice.

Just as the young women in Framley Parsonage eclipse the heroism of their beaus and husbands, in Doctor Thorne Trollope unveils a similar dramatic contrast in the relationship between Mary Thorne and her lover, Frank Gresham, the son and heir of the Gresham family. Frank, by reason of his flirting and an almost puppyish manner, belongs in the same stable with Trollope's other young men: always moving toward, yet somehow falling short of, true heroism. In the same season he declares his undying love for Mary, for instance, Frank can be found walking with Patience Oriel, dallying with Miss Dunstable, or involved with "a certain belle of the season" in London (429). Frank's most celebrated heroic act, eloquently puffed up by Trollope's narrative irony, comes with his rather half-hearted thrashing of Moffat, a London tailor who has jilted his sister Augusta.[6] In short, Gresham is another of Trollope's slightly tarnished young men, with his boyishness, repeated concessions to the wishes of his

mother, and his unthinking flirtations all revealing his partially flawed, immature character.

Trollope's characterization of Miss Mary Thorne offers a refreshing counterpoint to Frank Gresham's adolescent behavior. Mary Thorne, another young woman with no connections or money, displays impressive strength, common sense, and a mature outlook that far outdistances her tender age. Indeed, Michael Sadleir points to something very special in this small, retiring girl: "it may be claimed that in Mary Thorne is embodied the true essence of the Trollope heroine" (384). The narrator's first description of Mary calls attention to "her mind and inner qualities," which seem more remarkable to him than her physical beauty (46). Even as a girl, Mary evinces strength of character and honesty: when a maid-servant is accused of stealing a valuable necklace at the Gresham manor, Mary fights for her, convincing Mr. Gresham and the local magistrates of the maid's innocence and eventually drawing a tearful confession from the guilty French governess (47).

Throughout the novel Mary acts with patience, determination, good sense and self-reliant pride. She views herself, right from the novel's opening, as an equal with the Gresham family and a suitable match for Frank, even though she lacks wealth, property, or a title. She quietly endures her banishment from the Gresham household and local society after Frank admits to his family he has fallen in love with her. Most important, her love for Frank never wavers, as it endures over his thoughtless wandering and the disruptive schemes of his mother, the domineering Lady Arabella. In the novel's climactic scene, Mary meets the aggressiveness of Lady Arabella with her corresponding frankness and wit, and, in a manner reminiscent of Elizabeth Bennet's routing of Lady

Catherine de Bourgh in Pride and Prejudice, she emerges victorious. Mary openly admits to Lady Arabella her engagement with Frank; she turns around her ladyship's words and uses them in her own defense. Then, with quiet determination, she insists she is worthy to be Frank's wife. Trollope's narrator records Mary Thorne's victorious moment in exquisite detail:

> She was still standing when she finished speaking, and so she continued to stand. Her eyes were fixed on Lady Arabella, and her position seemed to say that sufficient words had been spoken, and that it was time that her ladyship should go; and so Lady Arabella felt it. Gradually she also rose; slowly, but tacitly, she acknowledged that she was in the presence of a spirit superior to her own; and so she took her leave (552).

In the end, with her steadiness, courage under pressure, and an admirable sense of pride, Mary Thorne triumphs over the objections of Lady Arabella and the selfish De Courcy interests.

Many of Barsetshire's bright young women, therefore, women like Lucy Robarts and Mary Thorne, play a crucial role in Trollope's questioning of the heroic male. As we have noted, the behavior of Mark Robarts and Lord Lufton seems a far cry from the titanic defiance found in the Romantics' Prometheus, or Byron's swashbuckling Corsairs, or even the impassioned resistance of Scott's Mac-Ivor. In addition, we can see how Trollope's bright young ladies turn the tables on the conventional heroism of popular Victorian fiction. John Bold's passion for reform is exposed as a vain and destructive force. Frank Gresham's bravest act consists of his paltry whipping of a hapless tailor. Lord Lufton's nobility radiates only from his well-shaped leg, while Mark Robarts' worldly ambition leads to public disgrace. Even the Reverend Arabin, before he marries Mr. Harding's daughter, falls in line with these other figures, as

he foolishly dallies with the seductive Madeline Stanhope. Meanwhile, the admirable behavior of Trollope's female characters covertly underscores this lack of heroism in the young gentlemen; their quiet endurance, cheerful humor, stalwart common sense, and noble self-sacrifice all highlight exactly what is missing in their husbands and suitors.

**Allington's Young "Heroes": Johnny Eames and Adolphus Crosbie**

While Trollope exposes some of the imperfections of a young gentleman through his characterizations in Framley Parsonage, his most focused study of unheroic youth may come in The Small House at Allington, the fifth novel of the Barsetshire series. In no other Barsetshire novel does Trollope include so many eligible young bachelors and the tales of their wooing. In this novel, as well, Trollope's narrator refuses to settle for just one hero, offering instead separate "fragments" of heroism divided among three or four different gentlemen, "to none of whom will be vouchsafed the privilege of much heroic action" (10). Captain Bernard Dale, his friend Adolphus Crosbie, the steady country doctor, Crofts, and the awkward Johnny Eames–these four hopeful bachelors and their imperfections dominate the pages of The Small House from start to finish. In particular, Trollope seems drawn to the portraits of two of these young men, John Eames and Adolphus Crosbie, and they become the focus of his most captivating, in-depth scrutiny of the failure of the heroic youth.

With Eames and Crosbie Trollope undertakes a unique doubling of character, holding up some vivid parallels between these two young men against their striking differences, contrasts which intensify as the novel unfolds. As Stephen Wall remarks, "although Eames is theoretically the hero of the book, his affairs are curiously parallel to Crosbie's" (65). Both of these aspiring gentlemen are civil servants in London; both of them are in

love with the same young woman, Lilian Dale; both of them aspire to excel in their professional lives; and, most notably, both are unfaithful to the one woman they love (Wall 65). Trollope, however, just as carefully outlines the differences between them. Crosbie is a Londoner, visiting Allington and meeting Lily Dale for the first time. Eames comes from an old country family, and he has known the Dales all his life. Crosbie already has tasted success; a rising star in the London social world, he is always well-dressed, and comfortably living on an income of £800 a year; Johnny Eames, on the other hand, is just beginning his career: he is an immature "hobbledehoy" with one decent suit, struggling to live on a meager salary of less than £100 a year. Nevertheless, an almost eerie similarity exists between the two, as the Adolphus Crosbie of the novel's beginning in some fashion represents the pinnacle of success Johnny only dreams of reaching.

The characterization of Johnny Eames draws on much of Trollope's keenest personal insight, and The Small House could almost be seen as a novel of this young man's growth. Trollope's commentators have drawn attention to the biographical similarities between Eames and the young Trollope working in London as a Post Office clerk.[7] Michael Sadleir, for example, views the author's treatment of Eames as a look toward his own past: "Once Johnny Eames had been made alive and set to move through the long pages of two long novels, the callow Trollope of the 'thirties had been sized up and with a wry smile accepted by the mature Trollope of the 'sixties, as a fact regrettable and rather comic, but satisfactorily undisclosed" (127). A single word monopolizes the narrator's early descriptions of Eames, "hobbledehoyhood," and even Johnny himself recognizes his uncomfortable immaturity: "He had acknowledged to himself," Trollope's narrator affirms, "in some indistinct way, that he was

no more than a hobbledehoy, awkward, silent, ungainly, with a face unfinished, as it were, or unripe" (37). And this awkward lad, just as Edward Waverley or the young Trollope had done, imagines himself the hero of his own fantasies.[8] Within the broad panorama of this novel, and continuing in The Last Chronicle, Trollope offers a series of episodes that mark the maturing process Johnny undergoes, a consistent movement upward in terms of wealth, position, and personal confidence.

In each of these episodes Trollope discloses more and more of the favorable qualities which seem to sprout from this character like tender shoots from a young oak. In a celebrated encounter with Lord De Guest's bull, for example, Johnny's quick-witted response pays immeasurable dividends. Trollope's narrator, with his characteristic sense of humor, exploits an incident which appears, at first, almost laughably insignificant. Walking down a country lane, young Eames comes upon Lord De Guest cornered in a field by one of his own bulls. Johnny hops into the field, momentarily distracts the bull, and then leaps over a hedge as his lordship escapes through a gate. Of course, all the villagers make much of Eames's bravery, and, after Lord De Guest presents Johnny a gold watch, he is declared a hero by his family and friends. Although by now the careful reader views with skepticism any appearance of the word "hero" in these Barsetshire tales, here the narrator does not use the word ironically. In this instance, characters themselves nominate Johnny for his "heroism" (much as Lucy Robarts elects Mrs. Crawley a hero); in addition, Eames's own response to this incident points towards his budding maturity. He gracefully downplays his role in the rescue, and he accepts Lord De Guest's gratitude and offer of friendship without fanfare.

Throughout the last two Barsetshire novels, incidents like this one demonstrate the continuing progress and growing confidence of the young clerk, detailing his almost meteoric rise in stature. He becomes the private secretary to the head of the Income-Tax office. His income increases, supported by his promotion and a generous allowance arranged by Lord De Guest; and, with this new-found independence, he counters the demeaning requests of his boss and escapes from the vulgar rooming house where he has lived. In The Last Chronicle, we even find our private secretary defying his superior, as he races off to Italy to fetch Mrs. Arabin and secure the evidence that will rescue the Reverend Crawley from a conviction for theft. Nevertheless, in spite of all his successes and endearing qualities, Johnny Eames, much like his distant cousin Mr. Crawley, ultimately fails as a hero.

One crucial incident, Eames's "duel" with Crosbie, dramatically underscores Trollope's ambivalent feelings for this young man. Returning to London from a Christmas visit to Lord De Guest's manor, Johnny Eames finds himself sharing a railway coach with his archenemy, Adolphus Crosbie, who has abandoned Lily Dale for his engagement with Lady Alexandrina De Courcy. Notably, the narrator reports the clash between these two at Paddington without any mock-heroic eloquence or tongue-in-cheek irony: Eames calls Crosbie a "confounded scoundrel," then he leaps for his enemy's throat and lands one solid punch, resulting in an unforgettable black eye for his adversary (368). At first glance, Eames and his reputation appear to benefit from this act: he gains respect from his fellow clerks at the office, as they transform him into the "conquering hero" and a "leading man among them" (385, 395). Out in the country, too, Johnny's fight finds a favorable audience, as Lord De Guest and Lady Julia

admire the young man's manly revenge, and De Guest and Squire Dale decide to provide financial support for Johnny's budding courtship with Lily. This incident, however, also illustrates the Victorians' tenuous belief in heroic action. As we noted in the first chapter, often a hero's success is measured by his intense combat with an adversary. Yet this conflict between Eames and Crosbie pales in any comparison with the glorious clashes of the traditional heroes, such as Achilles' legendary battle with Memnon, for example, or Launcelot's stirring victories in the lists. Johnny's fight, when compared with Richardson's climactic account of Colonel Morden's duel with Lovelace, is diminished to the level of a public brawl, a police matter reported in the public press, and an embarrassment to both the "warriors." The mid-Victorians, living in an age concerned with public image and gentlemanly behavior, could no longer see this individual combat as a heroic act.

In many carefully crafted episodes like this one, Trollope takes great care to emphasize the imperfections of his aspiring hero. Bradford Booth also calls attention to the complexities at work in Eames's portrayal: "Trollope saw him as a typical junior clerk, somewhat at loose ends in the city – swaggering a bit at times, perhaps, but more often grave and self-conscious. He has his moods of easy confidence and exuberance and his moods of blackness and impotent despair . . ." (53). And quite early in The Small House, we find the narrator's own valuable assessment of this young clerk's rather mixed character:

> And thus John Eames was thoughtful. They who knew him best accounted him to be a gay, good-hearted, somewhat reckless young man, open to temptation, but also open to good impressions; as to whom no great success could be predicted, but of whom his friends

> might fairly hope that he might so live as to bring upon them no disgrace and not much trouble (147).

Much as Mark Robarts' ambition leads to his public downfall, Johnny Eames's "recklessness," especially where London women are concerned, keeps him from achieving heroic success. In both The Small House and The Last Chronicle, Johnny remains true to his one love, Lily Dale, at least in his own mind. But every time he leaves the Allington countryside to return to work in London, he cannot resist the temptation offered by some rather dangerous, alluring woman he associates with in the city. In The Small House, for example, Johnny gets so entangled with Amelia Roper, the thirty-year old daughter of his landlady, that he even gives her a handwritten offer of marriage, preening and imagining himself as something of "the character of a Don Juan" (40). And in The Last Chronicle, we find an older (yet not wiser) Eames mesmerized by another London socialite, Madalina Demolines. He only manages to escape from this siren (and her ancient mother) by hailing a policeman from their drawing room window.

In this last Barsetshire novel we discover a much more realistic portrait of the young "hero," and Trollope's narrator admits, "I do not know that he [Eames] was very much out of the common way" (140). Now Eames's brash resistance to his supervisor borders on insolence; his reputation as a hero derives solely from exaggerated tales passed between the clerks in his office, and he runs with the rather fast and shallow crowd, including the likes of a Dobbs Broughton and the artist Conway Dalrymple. The narrator, however, still finds much that is likeable in this realistic portrait of a young man:

> Johnny was not ecstatic, nor heroic, nor transcendental, nor very beautiful in his manliness; he was not a man to

> break his heart for love or to have his story written in an epic; but he was an affectionate, kindly, honest young man; and I think most girls might have done worse than take him (811-12).[9]

Even so, he illustrates quite clearly how Eames's flaws return to haunt him, much as Robarts' ambition led to his eventual downfall. Near the conclusion of The Last Chronicle Lily Dale travels to London, and, after Johnny's triumphant flying trip to Italy, she very nearly accepts his renewed offer of marriage. In the end, though, she refuses him. Lily's reason directly relates to Johnny's thoughtless dalliance with his Miss Demolines, who, as part of her own campaign, sends Lily a suggestive, almost sordid letter inquiring about Lily's relationship with him. So Johnny Eames's unsteadiness, reminiscent of Lydgate's "spots of commonness" in Middlemarch or Robarts' worldliness in Framley Parsonage, leads to his just punishment, reinforcing Trollope's contention that perfect heroism cannot be found in a young gentleman.

Just as Trollope depicts Johnny Eames in an upward, maturing movement (a progress that can never quite reach a heroic peak), so his portrayal of Adolphus Crosbie offers a mirror image of this process: a gradual disintegration of Crosbie's stature and character. At the beginning of The Small House Crosbie comes as close as any of Trollope's young gentlemen to the perfection of the conventional hero; Crosbie glitters as a "swell" and an "Apollo" in the eyes of his sweetheart, Lily Dale (11,16). He is also a man to be reckoned with, handsome and smartly dressed, with "elegant" lodgings in London, an expensive hack, and attractive manners to match. Yet from the moment of his engagement to Lily, Crosbie's doubts and ambitions start to gnaw at him. Crosbie does not think of the joys and happiness of married life; instead, he dwells on what he will lose–his

clubs, his fashionable clothes, his freedom, and his aristocratic friends (166-7). Crosbie, in many ways, may appear as Eames's dark shadow; when Crosbie visits the De Courcys, for example, he faces a situation that strongly foreshadows Eames's own entrapment by Miss Demolines in The Last Chronicle.

The events at Courcy Castle signal the beginning of Crosbie's slow and agonizing downfall, for they reveal the significant flaws in this less-than-heroic character. This young man falls from his weakness and an overwhelming ambition for a glamorous life into the engagement with Alexandrina De Courcy. As soon as Crosbie, in a brief moment of weakness, denies any engagement to Lily Dale, a mere country girl and a commoner, the die is cast. He pathetically attempts to rationalize his change of heart, thinking himself unworthy of Lily's love, but, at the same time, he calculates his chances for advancement, dreaming of secretariats and chairmanships that may be teased out of a De Courcy connection (246). Even Crosbie, though, is not entirely at fault; the narrator notes that Crosbie feels he is "being caught," and his welcome to the De Courcy family is only "setting the seal of his own captivity" (261). An anonymous reviewer in the Athenaeum praised Trollope's skill in the portrayal of Crosbie, noting that

> Mr. Trollope has shown great skill in the management of the character of Adolphus Crosbie. He has kept the reader in charity with him, in spite of all his sins. . . . The temptation to which he yielded was so suited to his weakness, and the point of view from which he saw things is given so fairly, that it is impossible not to understand how he fell from his own steadfastness under the enchantments of De Courcy Castle (29).

Subsequent events, nevertheless, betray Adolphus Crosbie as merely a spineless, weak reflection of the romantic hero; this character is anything

but the spirited rebel with the hidden sin, or the dark, courageous youth found in works such as Childe Harold or Waverley. Instead, Crosbie's ambitious engagement unmasks his cowardice and inability to resist temptation. Crosbie flees from Courcy Castle for the safety of his club in London, since he does not even have the decency to break his engagement with Lily in person. At his London club he shirks a meeting with Squire Dale, slinking out a back passageway after he sends a friend to meet with the angry squire. He proceeds to jilt his fiancée in a most cowardly fashion, first in a hand-delivered letter to the squire, and then in a long, villainous letter to Lily's mother. Still, Trollope insures that Crosbie's punishment, much like Eames's, matches his weakness and flaws. Firmly ensnared, Crosbie is drained by the De Courcy family like a carcass of beef at a slaughterhouse. Under the direction of Mortimer Gazebee, Crosbie's new brother-in-law, all of Crosbie's money goes for a new house, furniture, rugs, wedding clothes, and insurance for his bride. Then the pace of Crosbie's fall quickens: his miserable, lonely marriage falls apart in a few months, and he agrees to a complete separation from Alexandrina (allowing her a crushing £500 a year). Characteristically, however, even though this character serves Trollope as the epitome of the unheroic youth, the author does not condemn Crosbie as a complete villain.[10] In fact, Robert Polhemus argues, by the end of the fifth Barsetshire novel Crosbie has been transformed from villain into victim (96). Significantly, Trollope ends The Small House with an image of Crosbie as a shipwrecked vessel. This small boat bravely ventured out into deep water, but, neglecting sound navigation and a firm lookout, Trollope's narrator notes, Crosbie "shivered his bark to pieces" on "the first rock he met" (666). In a brief appearance in The Last Chronicle, the passing years have reduced Crosbie to an object of

pity. At the party where John Eames first meets Madalina Demolines, Crosbie appears in a much altered state: "The man looked older than when he had last seen him, – so much older that Eames was astonished. He was bald, or becoming bald; and his whiskers were grey, or were becoming grey, and he was much fatter" (241).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined at some length Trollope's debunking of the myth of the heroic youth. In his precise, realistic characterizations of Robarts, Lufton, Eames, and Crosbie, Trollope turns away from the perfection and shining virtue of the conventional heroes offered by writers like Bulwer-Lytton and Yonge, while, at the same time, dismissing the titanic defiance of the Byronic hero. These misguided and hapless young characters appear in every one of the Barsetshire novels, beginning with John Bold in The Warden and ending with John Eames in The Last Chronicle. And all of these characters share one common trait: in Trollope's eyes there is something not quite right in any young gentleman, and their flaws, ranging from Bold's reforming zeal to Robarts' ambition to Eames's (and Crosbie's) unfaithfulness, prevent them from becoming heroes. Taken together, this bevy of young characters, in conjunction with figures like Archdeacon Grantly and Mr. Crawley, reinforce the stark conclusion Trollope's narrator offers in The Eustace Diamonds: "We cannot have heroes to dine with us. There are none. And were these heroes to be had, we should not like them" (1: 319).

Notes

[1] Alexander Welsh's 1963 book, The Hero of the Waverley Novels, remains an invaluable source for a study of the types of Scott's heroes and heroines. His second chapter provides a detailed examination of the passive hero, while the third looks not only at Scott's dark heroes, but also at his two types of heroine (romantic brunettes and English blondes).

[2] Pertinent to this discussion is E. M. Forster's distinction between flat and round characters in Chapter 4 of Aspects of the Novel. There is a wide diversity of critical opinion in regard to Scott's characters. Lionel Stevenson, for example, argues that along with Scott's story-telling skill, "he possessed in equal measure the other requisite of a good novelist, the power to create three-dimensional characters and endow them with life" (203). John Lauber, summarizing the opposite view, notes: "Readers and critics have always found the official heroes and heroines to be the least interesting characters of the Waverley Novels. From the vagueness with which most of them are described, it seems clear that Scott had never really imagined them; indeed, almost any pair would serve in almost any novel" (101).

[3] Although many of the titles and authors of these popular novels have been long forgotten (in most cases, rightfully so), a few surveys keep them from descending into total obscurity. Walter Allen's The English Novel: A Short Critical History contains some information on the better minor Victorian novelists (Reade and Bulwer-Lytton). Perhaps the best single source of information, though, is Lionel Stevenson's The English Novel: A Panorama. Stevenson not only offers a paragraph or two on some

of the more obscure authors, including Marryat, Ainsworth, and Lever, he also includes a very handy list of titles by many now-forgotten Victorian writers.

[4] Novels like Pelham and The Heir of Redclyffe captured the attention of the Victorian reading public. James L. Campbell tells how Bulwer-Lytton's novel went through six editions in its first year, and shortly thereafter was translated into Spanish, German, French, and Italian, "generating as much interest abroad as at home. In fact, Pelham was consulted as an index to English manners by foreign readers" (27). The popularity of Yonge's second work launched her thriving career. In a preface to the novel, Charlotte Haldane reports that "The Heir of Redclyffe had a sensational success and by no means only with middle-class women readers and clergymen. It was immensely admired by judges, statesmen, the pre-Raphaelites painters, undergraduates, young officers in the guard, and William Morris" (xi). And Lionel Stevenson notes that Yonge published over one hundred and fifty books in her lifetime, a number that makes Dickens's quantitative output (or Trollope's, for that matter) seem small by comparison (309).

[5] Stevenson, writing of the decade of the 1840s, says that for ten years "Dickens and Lever held the public captive with a series of diffuse but entertaining novels" (258). For Trollope's assessment of his friend's work, see An Autobiography, 251-2.

[6] Commenting on this scene, Elizabeth Bowen illustrates how thoroughly an author's comic irony can be misunderstood. Beginning with the observation "Nothing changes more than the notion of what is shocking," Bowen adds: "we feel Trollope himself uneasy: he resorts to a

rhetorical facetiousness which makes the pages in question all but unreadable, apart even from their unpleasing content. Frank, he tries hard to persuade himself, should be 'manly' – we, alas, see the Gresham heir transformed (though briefly) into a fascist bully" (174).

[7] R. H. Super's new biography, The Chronicler of Barsetshire: A Life of Anthony Trollope, published in 1988, expands the information available about Trollope's early education and his years in London. Although the book is shorter, sections of Michael Sadleir's 1947 Trollope: A Commentary contain valuable critical insight, bringing together the life of the young Trollope and the psychology of a character like Johnny Eames.

[8] In a fascinating passage in An Autobiography, Trollope describes his youthful "castle-building" as a lonely schoolboy. "I myself was of course my own hero," he writes, noting that in his imaginary world, "I was a very clever person, and beautiful young women used to be fond of me. And I strove to be kind of heart, and open of hand, and noble in thought, despising mean things; and altogether I was a very much better fellow than I have ever succeeded in being since" (42-43).

[9] The wide range of critical opinion on Eames is a tribute to Trollope's artfulness at balancing diverse elements in a realistic fashion. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch calls Johnny "that faithful, most helpful, little bounder" (214), while Ronald Knox finds the Eames of The Last Chronicle "older, but still a fool" (102). Russell Fraser, on the other hand, praises the young clerk, arguing that "Young Lufton and Johnny Eames seem to be as far as [Trollope] will go in realizing the excellence of the male protagonist" ("Younger Characters" 98).

[10] In a rather long footnote in his article on Trollope's younger characters, Russell Fraser reminds us of a crucial point: "The unwillingness to inflate a character to heroic size is paralleled by an aversion for unmitigated baseness" (98). Almost all of Trollope's "villains," including Mr. Slope, Mrs. Proudie, Crosbie, and Nathaniel Sowerby, are a delightful mixture of good and bad traits, and Trollope's kindness and sensibility prevent these characters from appearing as perfect villains. Perhaps Trollope was influenced by one of his favorite authors, Jane Austen, whose Wickhams and Willoughbys, after suffering their just punishment, in the end never seem all that villainous.

## Chapter IV. Trollope's Barsetshire Heroes

The last two chapters have illustrated Anthony Trollope's extensive rejection of heroism in the Barsetshire novels. Trollope toys with classical heroic models, denies the role of the tragic hero to a self-martyring curate, and finds an entire host of younger characters lacking in the stuff heroes are made from. Once the reader accepts the reliability of Trollope's narrative voice, the cumulative weight of the intrusive passages in Framley Parsonage, The Eustace Diamonds, and The Three Clerks seems to indicate that no heroes exist in Trollope's world. But is this truly the case? The answer is an emphatic, if somewhat qualified, no. In reality, Trollope disavows the existence of any perfect hero, the Crichtons and Morvilles who dominated Victorian popular fiction. He does not decide, however, that there are no heroes at all, and in the Barsetshire series he offers two men who stand above the rest of his crowded cast of characters: the quiet, mild-mannered clergyman, Septimus Harding, and the hard-working, independent doctor, Thomas Thorne. This chapter will explore the characteristics shared by these two somewhat unlikely heroes, with this examination leading to a better understanding of how Trollope, in these six novels, reflects the paradoxical nature of his own Victorian culture and society. Ultimately, while casting much doubt on the concept of heroism in these Barsetshire novels, Trollope also realistically affirms its existence in his characterizations of Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne.

**Overview: The Rise of the Democratic Hero**

The overview of the second chapter of this dissertation traced the close links between the eighteenth-century English novel and an intense questioning of heroism. The decline of the hero actually occurred over centuries and may be attributed to several cultural forces, including the Protestant Reformation, the repudiation of the divine right of kings, and the gradual movement to the city.[1] Over the same period of time, however, an equal and opposing point of view–an affirmation of the heroic in common man–began to emerge, and this competing trend can be found in works by Defoe, Richardson, and, much later, in poems by Wordsworth and novels by George Eliot. Just as the disbelief in heroism manifested by Trollope and his contemporaries harks back to the eighteenth-century questioning of the hero's role, so the Victorian affirmation of the hero may develop, in part, out of this opposing perspective.

Cervantes, of course, had much to do with the origins of the English novel, with authors like Fielding and Smollett borrowing freely from him; Cervantes' open attacks on the outdated codes and vain fantasies of the books of chivalry influenced the anti-heroic sentiments of these eighteenth-century English novelists. Yet even amid the satire of Don Quixote Cervantes discovers some enduring heroism in common man. For example, in the celebrated incident where the Don tests his courage against the uncaged lion (Part II, chap. xvii), the author offers a careful reader much to ponder. On the surface he gleefully ridicules the actions of his Don, as the knight faces the uncaged beast alone, wearing only his rusty armor and fabulous barber's helmet, while remnants of curds visibly drip from his head. Meanwhile, the prudent traveller dressed in green and Sancho Panza withdraw to the safety of a nearby hillside to watch Quixote's

encounter: the lion turns his back on the solitary knight and then lies down in his cage. Underneath this marvelous satire, though, Cervantes forces the reader to consider an unsettling question: who emerges victorious in this incident, Don Quixote or the man in green? Although the man in green seems to exemplify the traits that Cervantes argues for early in this work–common sense, rational thought, and prudent behavior–the author's steadfast answer to this question, revealed throughout the second half of his account of the Don's adventures, favors both Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. In fact, the indefatigable spirit of the Don and Sancho, the compassion and friendship these two men share, and their willingness to endure all manner of hardship during their quest transforms Cervantes' masterpiece from an unforgiving satiric attack into a celebration of the heroic in man.

A similar sort of admiration for the fortitude and endurance of the common man emerges early in the fiction of the eighteenth century, with some of the best examples coming in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Moll Flanders (1722), and Samuel Richardson's Clarissa (1747-48). Ian Watt attributes this newfound heroism to two broad social forces: the rise of capitalism, which gave the individual economic independence, and the spread of the Protestant faith (especially in Puritan and Calvinistic forms), which emphasized self-reliance and hard work (60-1). Defoe may have been one of the earliest eighteenth-century champions of the common man, and his characterizations of resourceful, tenacious men and women like Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders illustrate the author's regard for a hero unrelated to classical and chivalric models–gods, kings, aristocrats, or warriors. Indeed, as Watt has noted, Defoe's "ethical scale has been so internalised and democratised that, unlike the scale of achievement

common in epic or romance, it is relevant to the lives and actions of ordinary people" (78). Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders, for instance, both possess a singularly undistinguished background: he as the third son of a merchant who emigrated from Bremen to Hull, while she is born in prison, the daughter of a woman convicted for theft.

Discounting these obscure backgrounds, Defoe endows both of these characters with a confident outlook on life and an enduring, unquenchable spirit. Robinson Crusoe, of course, could be viewed as the epitome of the Puritan work ethic in action, or, as Watt declares, "a distinctively modern culture-hero" (87). Early in his career Crusoe perseveres in the face of overwhelming odds, as he survives a shipwreck off Yarmouth, manages to escape from his enslavement by pirates, and then makes a fortune on his plantation in Brazil. After a second shipwreck, he enthusiastically strips the wreck of its useful weapons and tools; then, over the course of many years, he becomes the emperor of his own kingdom, with his fortified residences, fields of grain, herds of goats, and a pottery all providing evidence of his industrious, dauntless spirit.

Although faced with an entirely different set of circumstances, Moll Flanders displays much the same resilience as Robinson Crusoe. Throughout her memoirs, the dauntless Moll finds a way out of every predicament, no matter how hopeless her situation. "Above all," James Sutherland remarks, "Moll has the toughness, the resilience, the ability for mere survival that usually go with indomitable energy and great physical stamina" (vii). Even if her methods seem distasteful–prostitution, theft, and oft-repeated marriages of convenience–in the end Defoe tends to overlook these moral lapses, and he applauds Moll's zest for life and her ability to succeed in a heartless world. In spite of cruel seducers, dying

husbands, lost fortunes, incest and imprisonment, somehow Moll's pluck and irrepressible spirit shine through, and if the crowning title of heroine fits only awkwardly on this multifaceted character, Defoe includes much of the heroic in her development.

While Defoe celebrates the heroic nature of common man by cheerfully emphasizing the ability of men and women to endure and succeed, Samuel Richardson, in works like his massive epistolary novel Clarissa, unremittingly focuses on heroic qualities of a different sort. If "Defoe's low-born heroes and heroines had struggled through misery with courage," James William Johnson asserts, then "Richardson's anguished heroines proved the transcendent worth of Christian virtue and piety" (33). Yet Richardson also raises the question of Clarissa's self-reliance and economic independence from her family. From the novel's opening pages Clarissa appears trapped, as the Harlowes, led by her brother James and her sister Arabella, attempt to coerce Clarissa into a match with the odious Mr. Solmes. Clarissa's heroic rebellion against her family's misguided effort serves only as a prelude for the major focus of the novel, a fundamental clash between Clarissa's purity and Lovelace's wickedness, lust, and guile. Clarissa's heroism, therefore, stems from her Christian goodness and her valiant resistance to temptation and transcendent evil. Richardson even uses Clarissa's eventual demise to illustrate this belief in her heroic nature: he devotes almost a third of his book to Clarissa's slow decline, her consistent refusals to meet or marry her seducer, and her moving and almost saintlike death.

While not as vivid as Richardson's portrayal of a girl's heroic resistance to fundamental evil, many of Wordsworth's poems highlight his interest in the enduring heroism of the common man. Wordsworth's

heroes, unlike those of the eighteenth century, emerge from the glorious possibilities of individual freedom offered by the early successes of the French Revolution. As Mario Praz remarks, one of Wordsworth's triumphs was "his discovery of a note more truly moving, more genuinely heroic, in humble people than in the great and celebrated . . ." (46). Some of Wordsworth's early poems ("Guilt and Sorrow," 1793, and "The Old Cumberland Beggar," 1797) and many of his poems from Lyrical Ballads (1798), including "The Thorn," "The Idiot Boy," "Simon Lee," and "The Last of the Flock," focus on common, rural people and their everyday struggles. Wordsworth carries this examination of heroic rural life into the first decade of the nineteenth century, as well, in poems like "Michael" (1800) and "Resolution and Independence" (1807).[2] Just as Defoe and Richardson turned away from the classical and medieval models of heroic conduct, so Wordsworth champions a simple heroism he discovered in the very lowest classes–among the shepherds and laborers of the English countryside.

Wordsworth offers one example of this rugged heroism in "Michael," a poem describing the honesty and life-long toil of a shepherd. Michael struggles for years to pay for his own land; yet even after his son falls prey to the evils of the city, he soldiers on alone, tending to his fields and his flocks although crushed by the fact his son will never return. So in this simple country setting Wordsworth discovers true heroism in this shepherd's rugged honesty, quiet courage, unyielding morality, and Spartan determination. Wordsworth unearths a similar stoic heroism in the character of an old leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence." In this poem, Praz asserts, Wordsworth "achieved a monumental quality of truly heroic proportions, the sublimation of the humble, democratic prompting given him by some nameless, earthy being, who became thus

transfigured into a creature of myth and legend" (49). The dejected speaker of the poem, impressed with the understated cheerfulness and nobility of this unknown ancient, sees his own melancholy dissolve, and in the last stanza the poet vows to remember the enduring symbol of the solitary leech-gatherer. In both of these poems, Wordsworth commemorates the heroism he found in the most unheralded of men, a heroism grounded in tenacious determination, simple honesty, and a harmonious relationship with nature.

A final example of this rural, democratic hero comes in the work of one of Trollope's contemporaries, George Eliot, whose first novel, Adam Bede, appeared in 1859, the same year Trollope began writing Framley Parsonage. Much like Trollope, Eliot had many doubts about the existence of the ideal hero, and, in her crucial exposition on realistic art in the seventeenth chapter of Adam Bede, she says:

> There are few prophets in the world; few sublimely beautiful women; few heroes. I can't afford to give all my love and reverence to such rarities: I want a great deal of those feelings for my everyday fellow-men, especially for the few in the foreground of the great multitude, whose faces I know, whose hands I touch, for whom I have to make way with kindly courtesy (224-25).

Yet Eliot endows her Adam Bede, a common craftsman and forester, with many heroic qualities; his character embodies manly courage, honesty, courtesy, and silent grace. These ennobling qualities never collapse, either, even under intense pressure and personal tragedy.[3] Calling Eliot's protagonist an "idealized artisan," Barbara Hardy views Bede as a version of the "Noble Savage," whose morals serve as a reprimand "to those who are more sophisticated but less noble" (33). Bede endures a series of blows–the drowning of his father, his mother's illness, and the seduction, trial, and

conviction of Hetty for murder–and emerges from them all with his heroic nature severely tested but unbroken. In the novel's climactic scene, Adam Bede meets Captain Donnithorne, the squire's son who had debauched and abandoned Hetty Sorrel, and instead of exacting vengeance, he offers the young squire forgiveness and his hand. Thus, with these two characterizations George Eliot modifies conventional models of heroism: Arthur Donnithorne, the aristocratic regimental officer, is indolent and corrupt, while Adam Bede, the lower-class manual laborer, is hard-working and just.[4]

Trollope's ambivalent view of the hero, therefore, must be studied within the context of these two competing themes in English literature: the questioning and rejection of the traditional hero on the one hand, and the discovery and celebration of the democratic hero on the other. The remainder of this chapter will focus on Trollope's affirmation of a realistic hero, developed in part from this tradition of democratic heroes, in his portraits of the Reverend Septimus Harding and Doctor Thomas Thorne. These two somewhat improbable candidates, as Trollope himself acknowledges, are by no means perfect; nevertheless, a careful examination of their key attributes will guide us to a better understanding of this Victorian author's unique concept of the hero.

**Characteristics of the Barsetshire Hero**

While Trollope disavows the heroic claims of a wide variety of characters within the broad spectrum of his Barsetshire society, in the end he chooses two individuals, Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne, to define his notion of the hero in a realistic world. A quick, first glance reveals some intriguing similarities in the social positions and lives of Trollope's two heroes. Both Harding and Thorne are older country gentlemen. Both are

single yet responsible for unmarried female dependents: in the first instance, Harding appears as a widower with two children, one of whom, Eleanor, is unmarried and living at home; in the second, Thorne begins as a bachelor who has adopted his niece, Mary, the product of the illicit relationship between Thorne's dead brother and a country maid. Also, just as we saw with some of the characters of Defoe, Richardson, Wordsworth and Eliot, neither Thorne nor Harding possesses any direct connection with the aristocracy. In terms of wealth, position, social rank, and influence, Trollope's heroes are more closely related to a Crusoe or a Harlowe than to Ulysses or Aeneas. While Harding and Thorne in some manner complement the affirmation of the heroic in common man, they are not democratic heroes in the mold of Moll Flanders or Adam Bede. Solidly in the middle to upper-middle class, both Harding and Thorne may be Trollope's own version of an Arthur in Victorian garb, with their gentlemanly behavior and concern for others subtly linking them with the virtues and chivalry of Arthur's court. Nevertheless, Trollope highlights the lack of status or position of both his warden and his doctor in their society: Mr. Harding, for all practical purposes, retires from Barsetshire society after he resigns as the warden of Hiram's Hospital, while Dr. Thorne, owing to his quarrels with the wealthier branch of his family and neighboring physicians, lives in relative isolation with his niece in a tiny country cottage.

Trollope emphasizes one other similarity between his two Barsetshire heroes: the author, along with his narrator, clearly insists that both of these unheralded gentlemen suffer from imperfections. Mr. Harding's most notable flaw rises to the surface early in The Warden, as the reader learns that more than a twinge of selfishness taints this most

excellent clergyman's character. Mr. Harding enjoys his substantial income (£800 per annum) as the warden of the hospital, and, the narrator satirically adds. Mr. Harding is quite proud of his scholarly collection of ancient church music, which "he has published, with all possible additions of vellum, typography, and gilding," in an edition which has "cost more than any one knows, except the author, the publisher, and the Rev. Theophilus Grantly, who allows none of his father-in-law's extravagances to escape him" (9). The hero of Doctor Thorne, unlike this somewhat selfish warden, suffers from quite a different flaw: excessive pride in blood. Trollope's narrator reveals that, while only a second cousin of the ancient Thornes of Ullathorne, "Dr. Thorne belonged to a family in one sense as good, and at any rate as old, as that of Mr. Gresham; and much older, he was apt to boast, than that of the De Courcys" (19). In fact, the narrator says, the young doctor established his practice in Barsetshire solely in the hope of profiting from this Ullathorne connection, and, "this trait in his character is mentioned first," the narrator baldly concludes, "as it was the weakness for which he was most conspicuous" (19, 21). Trollope's candid assertions that neither of these two men is perfect, as we shall see, in no way diminish the stature they ultimately achieve as his chosen heroes.

Admittedly imperfect, both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne share some distinctive traits that set them apart from the other aspiring heroes of Barsetshire. In Trollope's Barsetshire world, the hero is:

1. A middle-aged (or mature) country gentleman;
2. endowed with moral integrity,
3. compassionate manliness,
4. self-respect; and
5. a creator of harmony within his community.

As the following sections will illustrate, some of these qualities correspond quite closely with the general traits we began with in the first chapter. Harding and Thorne serve as exemplars, especially in terms of their unyielding integrity and compassionate caring, for other characters within the novel and for Trollope's readers. Moreover, these two heroes may be considered saviors, in an understated way, as they bestow their gifts of harmony, peace, and healing on their society. A closer examination of each of these five characteristics will show how they inform the heroism of Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne, and, in addition, reveal how these same characteristics bring into focus the failures of some of the characters studied in the preceding chapters.

**A Mature Country Gentleman**

The first characteristic Trollope uses to define the heroism of Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne is their standing as mature, country gentlemen. Actually, all three components of this one descriptive phrase–maturity, ties with the country, and status as a gentleman–play a fundamental role in distinguishing Trollope's heroes. In almost every Barsetshire novel Trollope reiterates his argument that the heroic youth is more an illusion than a reality. From the overzealous John Bold in The Warden to the flirtatious John Eames of The Last Chronicle, Trollope finds something inherently unheroic in the character of a young man. As we have already seen, the ambitious Robarts, the unthinking Lufton, the puppyish Gresham, and the cowardly Crosbie–each young gentleman who parades across Trollope's stage somehow fails in the quest for heroism. In contrast, both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne repeatedly display a mature outlook on life, with their accurate judgments and correct moral decisions illustrating comfort with their position in society and a firm belief in their own abilities.

Another observation strengthens Trollope's implication that the hero's age matters: some of Trollope's thoughtless young men actually do mature and eventually become respected citizens in the Barsetshire community, but this happens only with experience and the passage of time. Mark Robarts, for example, learns much in Framley Parsonage from the humiliation he suffers at the hands of the bailiffs and the outcry of the public press. Thus, by the time he reappears in the pages of The Last Chronicle, the young vicar has been transformed from the ambitious, hunting cleric who must be corrected by a stern, old-fashioned curate; instead, with a very clever twist, in this last novel Trollope portrays a now-steady, decisive Robarts giving advice to a tortured and hapless Crawley. Much the same process occurs in Trollope's continuing development of the adolescent Gresham's character. Frank Gresham, near the end of Doctor Thorne, finally casts aside his immaturity, weds Mary Thorne, captures a seat in Parliament, and becomes a well-respected squire and master of the local hounds. Trollope, therefore, makes this first point unmistakably clear: his hero requires the solidity and experience that come only with a certain age, and here a comfortable, sixty-year-old Harding and the forty-year-old Thorne outpace the entire herd of Barsetshire's thoughtless young stallions.

The second component of Trollope's description of a hero also deserves attention: both Harding and Thorne reside in the country, as opposed to living in London. In fact, Trollope's narrator offers conclusive evidence that both of these men do not enjoy travelling to or even visiting the city. In The Warden, for instance, the Reverend Harding's dramatic trip to London reveals much about the clergyman's attitude towards the city. For all practical purposes, Harding's wanderings about London–to the

chambers of the lawyer Haphazard, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster cathedral, and, finally, in search of an evening meal (chap. xvi)–read like the travels of a stranger lost in a foreign land. Dr. Thorne's actions reflect a similar attitude. After he marries the "oil of Lebanon" heiress, Miss Dunstable, Thorne continues to live in the comfort of their country home; and, while his wife maintains a London house for the fashionable season, he most grudgingly comes to the city for just a few days at a time, and then only after his wife's determined efforts to command his attendance (Framley Parsonage 575). Trollope severely contrasts Harding and Thorne's love of country life with the attitudes of a variety of characters who do live in the city, people such as Crosbie, Dalrymple, Miss Demolines, and the Dobbs Broughtons: all of these Londoners betray a certain shallowness or lack of sincerity. They are, in fact, antecedents of figures like Lizzie Eustace and Ferdinand Lopez (who appear in the Parliamentary novels) and Augustus Melmotte, the consummate swindler in The Way We Live Now–characters reminiscent of the Veneerings and Podsnaps of Dickens's London world.

Trollope sets his heroes apart from all of these less-than-heroic London characters by emphasizing Harding and Thorne's concern for their families, an interest in the welfare and happiness of others, and a joyful satisfaction with a peaceful and undisturbed life. Finding a "bedrock of moral conviction" in Trollope's work, Robin Gilmour argues that "it is the complexity of his commitment to the binding sanctions of his world—marriage, inheritance, the code of the gentleman, the responsibilities of land—which leads him to understand the moral and psychological strain they put upon individuals" ("A Lesser Thackeray" 201). Both Harding and Thorne, for instance, expend much time and energy looking after their

immediate dependents. In The Warden Mr. Harding shows concern for Eleanor, as much of his pain from the publicity about the hospital comes from his concern for his daughter, anxiety over how she will live if he loses the income, and possible threats to her engagement with John Bold. Throughout Doctor Thorne, one of Dr. Thorne's primary considerations is the happiness and well-being of his niece Mary, and he never once loses sight of this goal during his ethical trials and the financial dispute between the Scatcherds and Greshams. Similarly, both Harding and Thorne value the well-being of their neighbors and friends. Harding's regard for others leads to better lives for the Quiverfuls, the Crawleys, and a deanship for Mr. Arabin; Thorne's caring directly affects the health of his many patients, as well as leading to the salvation of the entire Gresham family's estate and fortunes. Ultimately, both of Trollope's heroes find satisfaction and comfort in their unobtrusive lives, surrounded by a small circle of family and friends. Ezekiel Bogosian, in his dissertation on the perfect gentleman in the English novel, finds a sense of "repose" that distinguishes certain characters of the Barsetshire world. Praising the composure and self-assuredness of Mr. Harding, Lady Lufton, and Dr. Thorne, Bogosian asserts: "In view of the growing turmoil, noise, confusion, and breakdown of order in the world, the attainment of repose in the individual becomes all the more remarkable and meritorious" (144). Unequivocally, both of Trollope's heroes vigorously reject a London lifestyle and demand the solitude of their peaceful and satisfying country life.

Trollope clearly differentiates the values these two men hold dear from the attitudes displayed by some of his Londoners. Many of these London characters, including Adolphus Crosbie, Conway Dalrymple, Dobbs Broughton, and in some ways even Johnny Eames, have little regard

for either their families or their friends. In contrast with the contentment of a Harding or a Thorne, the young gentlemen of the city devote most of their energy and attention to increasing their personal fortunes, advancing in their jobs, or rising in their social set. By showing their overweening interest in material goods (Crosbie's attention to clothes, a carriage, and his clubs, for example) and their eagerness to be seen with the "right" sort of people, Trollope highlights the shallowness of these London characters. So the fact that Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne enjoy life in the country, a rejection of the materialistic and self-centered lifestyles of London, strengthens their position as Trollope's heroes.

While Trollope plainly documents how Harding and Thorne cherish the values of country life, he also emphasizes a third element of their heroic makeup: they are both gentlemen. The very concept of the gentleman, of course, looms as a central question in Victorian literature, not only in Trollope's writing but also in the works of many of his contemporaries. Not that Trollope was confused over this matter, Robin Gilmour argues, noting that Trollope's "notorious reluctance to say what he meant by a gentleman, which is sometimes taken as a sign of his confusion, implies just the reverse: he knew, or thought he knew, very well what a gentleman was, and his refusal to spell it out came partly from a feeling that gentlemen should not be too specific on such matters . . ." ("Squires" 149). Critics and scholars have devoted articles, dissertations, and even entire books to the study of this one complicated theme,[5] but a quick review of two primary ways of tackling the notion of the gentleman–as a member of a distinct social class or as a man following a particular code of conduct–will further our discussion of how Trollope links this concept with his unique definition of a hero.

The first, and perhaps the original way of approaching the question of who is a gentleman, may be as a member of a discrete social class, that is, by defining the gentleman in terms of his family heritage, breeding (education and manners), power, position, and money (Shrewsbury 5).[6] Using this definition, Plantagenet Palliser, Trollope's central character in many of the Parliamentary novels, exemplifies Trollope's ideal of the English gentleman. Trollope bestows on this character every advantage the gentleman requires: nearly unlimited wealth, exalted social rank (as the Duke of Omnium, one of England's oldest aristocratic families), a powerful position (as Chancellor of the Exchequer and then as Prime Minister), and proper breeding. Yet Trollope's gentlemanly hero cannot be defined by considering social rank and political power alone.[7] As we have already noted, Trollope emphatically downplays the importance of rank, wealth, and position in the characterizations of Harding and Thorne in the Barsetshire novels; nevertheless, both <u>are</u> gentleman. In terms of position (as a respected cleric and precentor or as a country doctor), in terms of education, in terms of family heritage, and, especially, in terms of their conduct, both the warden and Dr. Thorne must be considered gentlemen. Comparing Trollope with Henry Fielding and Jane Austen, Shirley Letwin maintains: "There is so much talk in their novels about 'gentlemen' not because, as it is fashionable to believe, they were concerned with class distinctions but because they were exploring the moral world of the gentleman" (56). To understand why Trollope considers his two obscure country gentlemen heroes, even though they do not enjoy the prestige of the great and powerful, we must turn to this second way of describing the gentleman–through examining his distinctive code of conduct rather than relying on his membership in a unique social class.

Significantly, Trollope does not regard the words "gentleman" and "hero" as interchangeable terms: Trollope insists that his heroes be gentlemen, but not all of his gentlemen are heroes. The perfect example of this may be a figure like Nathaniel Sowerby in Framley Parsonage. Sowerby is a man of property from a distinguished family, who maintains a powerful position as a member of Parliament. All the same, his profligate behavior and the misuse of his friends' funds make him more of a villain than a hero. Although Arthur Pollard asserts that, for Trollope, "clearly the idea of the gentleman involved a fairly well-defined degree of social exclusiveness" (87), in all of the Barsetshire novels Trollope finds a gentleman's behavior much more important than his social rank or class. Just what elements make up this gentleman's code of conduct? James Shrewsbury devotes an entire chapter to this topic, breaking the code down into two behavioral categories, specifically, a gentleman's manners and his morals. Shrewsbury lists several attributes relating to the gentleman's manners, including courtesy, hospitality, liberality, justice, and temperance (63). In addition, he describes in great detail several features of the gentleman's moral code, such as complete honesty, devotion to duty, a respect for women, family honor, and unselfishness toward others (73-95). In Trollope's mind, nevertheless, two overriding elements dominate all of these other specifics of a gentleman's conduct: moral integrity and manliness. A closer examination of these two qualities illustrates just how thoroughly Trollope intertwines the notion of the gentleman with his idea of the realistic hero in the figures of Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne.

**Moral Integrity**

While moral integrity forms just one portion of the multifaceted code followed by a Victorian gentleman, Trollope views this trait as a

cornerstone in the development of his Barsetshire hero. In both The Warden and Doctor Thorne Trollope places his heroes in difficult situations that demand a thoughtful weighing of alternatives and difficult ethical decisions. Speaking of Trollope's mastery of these complexities, Ruth apRoberts forcefully declares: "Trollope's interest in complex cases is thoroughly and frankly and insistently ethical" (42). And in all their predicaments, without exception, both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne always make the correct moral choice.

The entire plot of The Warden, of course, revolves around a troubling ethical dilemma.[8] Even Trollope, writing years later in An Autobiography, recognized the difficulty he created by attempting to attack two evils (bloated clerical salaries and a vicious public press) at the same time: "I had been struck by two opposite evils,—or what seemed to me to be evils,—and with an absence of all art-judgment in such matters, I thought that I might be able to expose them, or rather to describe them, both in one and the same tale" (93). Commenting on this novel, some critics have found Mr. Harding's final decision as essentially a selfish one, with the warden resigning because he cannot face the public drubbing he receives from the all-powerful Tom Towers and his Jupiter newspaper. Careful study, however, reveals that from the very beginning of the novel Mr. Harding views his choice in a moral context; his journey to London and subsequent resignation signal a hard-fought moral victory rather than an ambiguous, self-centered surrender.

Early in the novel, for example, after the warden's first meeting with John Bold, Trollope's narrator shows that the warden's mind already harbors doubts about the entire question of the will:

> What right had he to say that John Hiram's will was not fairly carried out? But then the question would arise within his heart,—Was that will fairly acted on? Did John Hiram mean that the warden of his hospital should receive considerably more out of the legacy than all the twelve old men together for whose behoof the hospital was built? Could it be possible that John Bold was right . . . ? What if it should be proved before the light of day that he, whose life had been so happy, so quiet, so respected, had absorbed £8000 to which he had no title, and which he could never repay? (34)

Just a few chapters later, when Mr. Harding explains the battle over the will to his daughter Eleanor, he does not blame Bold for his troubles; indeed, the narrator notes, Mr. Harding "apologised for Bold, excused what he was doing; nay, praised him for his energy and intentions, [and] made much of his good qualities . . ." (83). For the warden, this matter evolves into a clear moral question–does he have a right to accept the income?–and this dilemma drives him toward his momentous flight to the city and his talk with the famous barrister, Sir Abraham Haphazard.

Harding's meeting with the lawyer dramatically underscores the moral integrity at the core of this mild-mannered clergyman's character. Harding demands an answer to just one question: "What I want you, Sir Abraham, to tell me, is this—am I, as warden, legally and distinctly entitled to the proceeds of the property, after the due maintenance of the twelve bedesmen?" (233). Of course, since John Bold has already abandoned his suit, the barrister considers the question moot. So he tries to convince the quiet cleric that, since Mr. Harding and his daughter need the hospital's income to survive, it merely becomes a simple question of economics. Unsatisfied with this weak argument, the warden announces his intention to resign, stands his ground the next morning against his bullying son-in-law, Archdeacon Grantly, and immediately writes to the bishop to explain his decision:

> Were I convinced that I stood on ground perfectly firm, that I was certainly justified in taking eight hundred a year under Hiram's will, I should feel bound by duty to retain the position, however unendurable might be the nature of the assault [by the London press]; but, as I do not feel this conviction, I cannot believe that you will think me wrong in what I am doing (254).

Within minutes of posting this letter, the warden, "with something of triumph in his heart," leaves his London hotel to catch the train back to Barchester. And Trollope's narrator intrudes almost immediately to comment on the warden's victory with this series of profound questions:

> Had he not cause for triumph? Had he not been supremely successful? Had he not for the first time in his life held his own purpose against that of his son-in-law, and manfully combated against great odds—against the archdeacon's wife as well as the archdeacon? Had he not gained a great victory, and was it not fit that he should step into his cab with triumph? (256)

Herein lies the crux of this first Barsetshire novel. If the reader considers only the short-term consequences of Mr. Harding's decision, a bitter irony lurks within this set of questions, for The Warden ends with a sense of a fallen Eden: after his resignation the warden's gardens decay and within months six of the twelve bedesmen die unattended. But in the longer term, Mr. Harding's dramatic trip actually becomes a symbol of this clergyman's moral courage and heroic triumph. James R. Kincaid aptly summarizes the nature of Harding's victory:

> Mr. Harding's resignation, therefore, is a radical affirmation, a refusal to live by a morality which crudely equates virtue with success and therefore disregards the private life altogether. He rejects proof of being in favour of being itself and thus affirms the primacy of conscience. . . . His act is a moral one and asserts a connection between will and act, between the public and private life, that Tom Towers will never see ("Pastoral Defined" 69).

Caught between the aggressive forces of Archdeacon Grantly and the overzealous, reforming spirit of John Bold and the Jupiter, Septimus Harding emerges as a heroic center, and his actions throughout the remainder of the Barsetshire series validate this favorable conclusion.

In Barchester Towers, for instance, Mr. Harding refuses to reaccept the wardenship of the hospital when Mr. Slope tries to attach conditions to the offer, and then he actively supports the appointment of Quiverful, even going out of his way to introduce the new warden to his skeptical old bedesmen. In The Last Chronicle, as well, the aging Harding stoutly defends Mr. Crawley's innocence from the beginning. And, nearing the end of his life, Harding also offers a solution to the Crawleys' gnawing poverty. He bequeaths his position as vicar of St. Ewold's to the perpetual curate, making the archdeacon promise to promote Mr. Crawley as soon as Harding dies (833). Thus, as a weakening Harding approaches his hour of death, the archdeacon pays his father-in-law a most fitting tribute, accurately assessing the moral core of the warden's character:

> I feel sure that he never had an impure fancy in his mind, or a faulty wish in his heart. His tenderness has surpassed the tenderness of woman; and yet, when occasion came for showing it, he had all the spirit of a hero. . . . The fact is, he never was wrong. He couldn't go wrong. He lacked guile, and he feared God, – and a man who does both will never go far astray (860-61).

While Septimus Harding slowly gains in moral stature over the course of the several Barsetshire novels he appears in, Thomas Thorne quickly emerges as Trollope's other example of moral excellence in the third Barsetshire novel, Doctor Thorne. Yet Dr. Thorne, just like Mr. Harding, finds himself trapped between two opposing forces: the new wealth and commercial values of the Scatcherds on the one side, and the

aristocratic values and rank of the Greshams and De Courcys, on the other (Polhemus 53). In this novel Trollope challenges his protagonist with a series of interconnected ethical dilemmas, a moral minefield which forces the doctor to ponder every step he takes. And, just as the warden's triumph emerges over time, so the feisty doctor's unerring ability to navigate safely through these delicate situations becomes a testament to his unwavering moral integrity and heroism.

Trollope weaves several related moral problems into the plot of this third Barsetshire novel, including the problem of Sir Roger Scatcherd's will, the crushing debt of the Gresham family, Thorne's guardianship of Scatcherd's son, and Mary Thorne's relationship with Frank Gresham. Dr. Thorne finds himself at the vortex of all of these problems, as physician, advisor, and friend to both the Gresham and the Scatcherd families. Yet time and time again this country doctor manages to work through these ticklish situations without compromising his integrity. The problems associated with Sir Roger Scatcherd and his will, for instance, give rise to one of the most troubling ethical predicaments Thorne must face. Just before he drinks himself to death, Sir Roger rewrites his will, making Thorne the executor of his estate and guardian of his wayward son, Louis Phillipe. Furthermore, Scatcherd adds another vexing clause to his will: if his son dies before the age of twenty-five, the entire fortune will go to his sister's eldest child. What Scatcherd does not know (and Thorne agonizes over) is the fact that Mary Thorne, the young girl Thorne had adopted and cared for over so many years, is Mary Scatcherd's illegitimate daughter and would inherit the estate under the imprecise language in Scatcherd's will. Thus Thorne's torment comes from two competing loyalties: first, as Scatcherd's executor, hiding his knowledge of the will's possible benefactor

from its author would be unethical; second, as Mary's uncle and guardian, he owes her his devotion and wishes for her success. Dr. Thorne must use all of his diplomacy and skill in this situation, and he finally solves the dilemma by relying on his uncompromising honesty and strength of character. He tells Scatcherd the truth about Mary, but he also insists that she remain with him in order to protect her from a close relationship with the drunken Scatcherd and his wayward son.

Trollope tasks his doctor with many other vexing problems besides this agony over Scatcherd's will, and in each case Thorne emerges with his moral standards intact. After Scatcherd dies, for instance, Dr. Thorne does everything in his power to save Louis Phillipe from his addiction to alcohol and a certain death, even though the young man's demise would lead to Mary's inheriting a vast fortune. As Sir Louis Phillipe's guardian, Thorne also must balance the eager claims of this vulgar, new baronet against his own concern for the crumbling financial situation of his closest friend, Squire Gresham (since the young Scatcherd holds all the mortgages to the Gresham property). Finally, Dr. Thorne must weigh his close relationship with the Gresham family against his unqualified support for Mary Thorne, in the face of Lady Arabella's campaign to keep her son from marrying this penniless, unknown girl. Here again, as in every other situation he tackles, Dr. Thorne's high ethical standards triumph, and he finds a way to avoid a total break with the Greshams. Thorne maintains his friendship with the elder Gresham in a time of misery and need, while continuing to treat Lady Arabella and her daughters with professional respect (as their personal physician). But he also refuses to visit them socially since Mary has been banned from their house. Ultimately, with Mary's inheritance

and her acceptance as Frank's bride, Thorne's stalwart position is vindicated.

The moral behavior of both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne, therefore, serves as a cornerstone for their conduct as heroic gentleman. In every quandary and ethical dilemma these two men face, their unyielding standards and an almost ferocious integrity, reminiscent of the qualities Trollope celebrates in his heroine Lucy Robarts, rise to meet the occasion, reinforcing their position as Trollope's exemplary heroes.

**Compassionate Manliness**

Another crucial trait governing a gentleman's behavior, one which Trollope closely allies with the moral integrity of his hero, is manliness. Although the term manliness most often connotes strength of character, bravery, endurance, or nobility, characteristics that link the English gentleman with classical heroism, in Trollope's definition of his gentleman-hero, manliness contains a second key component–gentleness, or a concern for others–and this trait links Trollope's heroes with the qualities of the chivalric knights and their codes of courtesy. "Manliness," as James Shrewsbury aptly writes, "fundamentally, consists of the spontaneous, unsought-for, unselfish, emotional reaction to life, for Trollope's gentleman is a creature of the heart, and not the head" (115). Perceptively, Henry James finds this "great natural kindness" an unmistakable trait of Trollope himself: "There is something remarkably tender and friendly in his feeling about all human perplexities; he takes the good-natured, temperate, conciliatory view . . ." (102). Trollope infuses his own tenderness, or compassionate manliness, into the heroic characters of both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne.

Undeniably, much of Mr. Harding's unforgettable character is forged from his compassion and tenderness. Trollope himself, in An Autobiography, offers just three words which capture the essence of his warden's constitution: "good" and "sweet" and "mild" (94). Archdeacon Grantly, as we noted in the last section, fully realizes the magnitude of this almost feminine aspect of his father-in-law's character; furthermore, in a talk with his wife shortly before Harding's death, the archdeacon tells of the similarities he sees between his own father, the former bishop of Barchester, and Mr. Harding:

> My father, who was physically a much stronger man, did not succumb so easily. But the likeness is in their characters. There is the same mild sweetness, becoming milder and sweeter as they increased in age; – a sweetness that never could believe much evil, but that could believe less, and still less, as the weakness of age came on them (Last Chronicle 828).

Just as Mr. Harding's moral integrity is reinforced with every appearance he makes in these six novels, so his spontaneous, unhesitating concern for others is revealed over the course of the Barsetshire series.

In almost every Barsetshire novel Mr. Harding displays a heartfelt sympathy for others, whether they are old friends like his crusty bedesman, Mr. Bunce, or new adversaries like Doctor Bold or the Reverend Slope. Indeed, Mr. Harding refuses to quarrel with John Bold at all, and, throughout his agony over the will and fate of Hiram's Hospital, he supports Eleanor's courtship with the young reformer and praises Bold's just cause and good intentions. In Barchester Towers, as well, Mr. Harding never joins Archdeacon Grantly's campaign to annihilate Mr. Slope, and at one point he even remarks that Slope should be allowed to preach in the cathedral, since his message might be worth

listening to (1: 57). Over time, Trollope elucidates how his warden's sweetness and compassion increase with age, and Harding also speaks about this guiding principle in a short dialogue with Griselda Grantly in Framley Parsonage. On the eve of Griselda's marriage to Lord Dumbello, Mr. Harding clearly spells out his philosophy of caring for others to his silent, unimpressed granddaughter:

> 'You are going to be a great lady, Grizzy,' said he.
> 'Umph!' said she.
> What was she to say when so addressed?
> 'And I hope you will be happy – and make others happy.'
> 'I hope I shall,' said she.
> 'But always think most about the latter, my dear. Think about the happiness of those around you, and your own will come without thinking. You understand that; do you not?' (480).

Conclusively, in the pages of The Last Chronicle, we discover an ancient Mr. Harding spending hours at the deanery with his daughter's only child, Posy Arabin, playing cat's-cradle and allowing her to touch or even pluck the strings of his now-encased cello, a symbolic act which illustrates the depth of feeling and the true sympathy Mr. Harding shares with this little girl (515).

If Mr. Harding's compassionate manliness seems to have an almost feminine tenderness at its core, in Dr. Thorne this same characteristic appears with a sharper, more masculine flavor. In the narrator's first description of the doctor, for instance, he reveals that Thorne "was brusque, authoritative, given to contradiction, rough though never dirty in his personal belongings, and inclined to indulge in a sort of quiet raillery . . ." (Doctor Thorne 37). Just a few sentences later, however, Trollope's narrator must qualify his own opinion, as he acknowledges that Dr. Thorne was only short-tempered to those with "trifling ailments," and, he

continues, "to real suffering no one found him brusque; no patient lying painfully on a bed of sickness ever thought him rough" (37) [9] Indeed, Dr. Thorne's underlying compassion is reinforced by his behavior in many episodes that take place during the novel.

In Thorne's complicated relationship with Sir Roger Scatcherd and his wife, Trollope provides ample evidence of the doctor's warmth and concern for others. Even though Scatcherd tries Dr. Thorne's patience with his hard drinking and uncontrollable rage, the doctor continues to treat him with professional respect and care. More important, Dr. Thorne goes out of his way to support Lady Mary Scatcherd as she struggles with her husband's demands for brandy and her own isolation in their uncomfortable, huge manor. Ultimately, as Scatcherd nears his death, Thorne promises to look after Lady Mary, and he tells the dying man, "she has been an excellent wife, Scatcherd; and what is more, she is an excellent woman. She is, and ever will be, one of my dearest friends" (340). In the months after Scatcherd's death, Thorne continues to visit and support the lonely woman. He sends his niece to stay with her and also actively works to save Scatcherd's son, Louis Phillipe, from suffering the same fate as his father–at one point even accepting the repugnant youth as a guest in his own home.

Perhaps the best illustration of Thorne's compassionate manliness, though, comes in the doctor's relationship with his own niece, Mary Thorne. When Mary begins to question her guardian about her mysterious past, Dr. Thorne responds with tender and honest sympathy, and he agonizes over the awkward position he has placed her in by educating and raising this abandoned, illegitimate child as a young lady (chap. vii). Later, when Lady Arabella decrees that Mary will no longer be welcome in

the Gresham household, this gruff country doctor actually breaks down when he attempts to tell Mary the horrible news; and so, as the narrator reports, Thorne cannot even speak, he just silently holds his niece close beside him, with "big tears running down his cheeks" (198). With scenes like these Trollope stresses the importance of compassion and tenderness in his definition of manliness, and he richly endows the characters of both of his chosen heroes with these qualities.

**Self-respect**

We have examined how gentlemanly status, along with moral integrity and compassionate manliness, contribute to Trollope's definition of a hero; a fourth component of this definition is the hero's determined self-respect. Of course, many Victorian authors wrestled with this concept, and works such as Jane Eyre, Bleak House, Great Expectations, and Middlemarch rigorously study the creation or preservation of the self. In Shirley Letwin's view, self-awareness also operates as a pivotal aspect of a gentleman's character, since it is "the ground for both how he thinks of himself and how he relates himself to others. In his understanding of himself, the idea of integrity is central. And he cares about his integrity because the more coherent a character, the greater its integrity, the more perfect the humanity" (66). In his characterizations of both Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne Trollope includes a measure of this self-respect as a crucial component of their heroic development.

As we have seen, in The Warden Trollope demonstrates that Mr. Harding decides to resign his wardenship of the hospital because of his sincere doubt over his right to the hospital's large annual stipend. At the same time, however, many clues point to another factor that weighs on the warden's decision: his abhorrence of publicity and an instinct for self-

preservation. At the very beginning of The Warden the narrator highlights Mr. Harding's need for privacy, as the meek cleric decries the transformation of his hospital into a battleground and mourns the invasion of his "sheer love of quiet," while inwardly weeping over the "public scorn" heaped on other churchmen by the public press (70). Trollope's narrator, with yet another set of questions, illustrates the depth of Harding's own desire to escape any public outcry:

> Was his humble name to be bandied in men's mouths, as the gormandizer of the resources of the poor, as of one who had filched from the charity of other ages wealth which had been intended to relieve the old and the infirm? Was he to be gibbeted in the press, to become a byword for oppression, to be named as an example of the greed of the English church? Should it ever be said that he had robbed those old men, whom he so truly and so tenderly loved in his heart of hearts? (70-1).

When Tom Towers' first scathing article does appear in the Jupiter, severely chastising the warden as one of the unfeeling clerics of a greedy church, Mr. Harding's distress becomes even more acute. Still, while Trollope does see a fundamental need for privacy as an extension of Harding's somewhat selfish nature, this aspect of the warden's personality never dominates his behavior. As Mr. Harding's letter of resignation to the bishop confirms, the warden would have endured any misery created by the public press if only he could have found someone to assure him that he legally and unequivocally had a right to his generous salary. Accordingly, while the warden's hatred of publicity and longing for privacy may spur him into action, Harding's decision to resign is made on a moral basis; his instinct for self-preservation is driven by his Christian sense of justice and integrity, not by a selfish longing for quiet and tranquillity. In this aspect of Mr. Harding's character we see Trollope's realism at its very best:

Harding, who may be the finest figure Trollope ever created (in terms of his Christian goodness and compassion), is by no means a perfect hero, although the author quite clearly insists that Harding's selfishness does not overwhelm his personality.

In Dr. Thorne's character we also discover a measured amount of this heroic self-determination, and in this instance Trollope tightly binds the doctor's self-respect to his pride and a firm belief in his own equality. In fact, Thorne's assertion of this equality may be one of the strongest links between any Barsetshire character and the democratic heroes mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Elizabeth Bowen praises Thorne's "outstanding, best democratic qualities," concluding that "the doctor despises pretension, honours, tradition. Taken all-in-all, he realises, I imagine, Trollope's sense of what a man not only should be but also could be" (167). In the opening pages of Doctor Thorne the narrator highlights this distinctive trait in his first description of his chosen hero:

> Let him enter what house he would, he entered it with a conviction, often expressed to himself, that he was equal as a man to the proprietor, equal as a human being to the proprietress. . . . He would in no way assume a familiarity with bigger men than himself, allowing to the bigger man the privilege of making the first advances. But beyond this he would admit that no man should walk the earth with head higher than his own (36).

So Dr. Thorne's stubborn insistence on his equal footing with other men, not to be confused with his overbearing pride in his heritage, informs his behavior throughout the novel that bears his name.

Quite early in the novel, for example, when Mary Thorne starts taking music lessons with the Gresham sisters at their house, Lady Arabella tries to dissuade Dr. Thorne from making any payment on Mary's behalf. Nevertheless, the doctor insists that he must settle with the music

master himself, and here he carries his point: his pride demands that neither he nor his dependent will accept any special favors from the Gresham family (45). Of even more importance, Dr. Thorne's handling of the vexing situation created by Frank's courtship of Mary (and Lady Arabella's campaign against it) demonstrates his earnest self-respect. Dr. Thorne always listens to Lady Arabella's views with courtesy and respect; yet, at the same time, he never yields to her mean-spirited pleas, and at every opportunity he insists on Mary's own equality and worthiness to be the wife of the Gresham heir.

Eventually, Dr. Thorne's forthright pride and self-respect triumph during a visit Lady Arabella pays to his small study at the Greshambury cottage, and here Dr. Thorne's success foreshadows the victory Mary ultimately attains in her own confrontation with the domineering mother of the Gresham clan. Brandishing a handy thigh-bone from his desk to emphasize each point he makes, Dr. Thorne refutes all of Lady Arabella's arguments: he denies he has assisted the young couple's courtship (implying she should not meddle in it either); he contradicts her assertion that the lovers are being imprudent, and he reminds her that she alone is responsible for Mary's banishment from the Gresham household (348-9). Finally, with his forthright honesty, Dr. Thorne conclusively routs Lady Arabella's final argument that her duty demands she stop any love affair between Frank and Mary: "I have not the least objection in life," Thorne tells her; "If there is such a love affair, put a stop to it – that is, if you have the power" (349).

Just as the tender warden displays a surprising amount of unyielding self-respect and a heroic resistance to any attempts to injure it– by the archdeacon's bullying or through the machinations of the clever

Slope–throughout Doctor Thorne this poor country doctor forcefully defends a sense of his own equality and self-worth.[10] Of course, Trollope acknowledges the complexity of this idea of the self and its protective aspect, since the one significant flaw in his warden's character is an undeniable amount of selfishness, the one defect in an otherwise perfect gem. For Trollope, the concepts of the self and constructive pride must be viewed within the context of a larger continuum, a scale running from selflessness (a total lack of pride) toward self-respect (and manly pride) to selfishness (and harmful egotism). A quick backward glance at a few of Trollope's other characters reinforces this point. Mark Robarts and the Reverend Crawley, for example, display some of the same instinctive pride and protection of the self as Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne; the differences between them arise from a distinct matter of degree. Both Mr. Crawley and Mr. Harding may be selfish; however, Mr. Crawley's selfishness overwhelms his personality, leading to his self-induced martyrdom and increased suffering for his wife and children. The selfishness of Mr. Harding, on the other hand, never distorts or ruins his otherwise excellent character, and the warden's proper amount of self-protection, so necessary for his very survival, lies much nearer the center of the continuum than Mr. Crawley's all-consuming self-denial and destructive rage. Much the same conclusion surfaces in a quick comparison of the pride and self-respect found in characters like Mark Robarts and Dr. Thorne. Robarts' excessive pride in himself, much like Crawley's, overpowers and warps his character, and this leads to his worldly ambition for advancement in both society and the church. Dr. Thorne's manly pride and his insistence on equality, on the other hand, although just as powerful as Robarts' ambition and egotism, never take control of the doctor's character.

Therefore Trollope, while admitting that character flaws like pride and selfishness exist in the world, also argues that these faults do not necessarily prevent a man from achieving heroic stature, as long as they are held in check and do not overpower the personality.

**A Creator of Harmony**

The fifth characteristic of Trollope's Barsetshire hero may be the natural outgrowth of the four previous traits: ultimately both Septimus Harding and Thomas Thorne emerge as quiet, yet impressive creators of social and political harmony in their communities. Thus Mr. Harding, in each of the Barsetshire novels he appears in, spreads his calming influence–in his very spiritual and almost transcendental manner–over broad areas of the clerical and civil society he lives in. And in a more open and practical manner, Dr. Thorne achieves much the same harmonious result, as he advises, compromises, counsels, and then solves the major dilemmas which threaten the social fabric of the eastern half of Barsetshire.

Although one aspect of Mr. Harding's relationship with music seems distinctly negative, with the warden's ornate music book serving as a clue to his one character blemish, Trollope also employs music in a much more symbolic way: musical harmony becomes a grand metaphor for the social concord Mr. Harding creates out of Barsetshire's conflict and strife. Sherman Hawkins, using the warden's tea party as an example, illustrates how this symbolism functions: "Once more the association of music and community is stressed: the false concord of good manners, with its stiff discomfort and embarrassed distances, gives way to the cheerful melee of a happy party, and the catalyst is music" (221). Indeed, much as martial imagery and mock-heroic language dominate the earliest portraits of

Grantly, Bold, Slope, and Mrs. Proudie, images connected with music flourish in the portrayal of Mr. Harding. In The Warden, for instance, when John Bold first comes to the hospital to accost the warden over Hiram's will, he finds Harding playing the cello for a gathering of his bedesman in "a precinct specially fit for the worship of St. Cecilia" (28). Then, while Mr. Harding finishes the last piece he is playing, the narrator notes, "Bold sat down on the soft turf to listen, or rather to think how, after such sweet harmony, he might best introduce a theme of so much discord, to disturb the peace of him who was so ready to welcome him kindly" (31). On several occasions Mr. Harding relies on a most peculiar device to counter any discord he encounters: the warden begins playing an imaginary cello, using the celestial melodies created by his act to resolve or suppress the discord of the moment. In a most telling passage, the narrator describes how this wondrous playing operates:

> 'Twas his constant consolation in conversational troubles. While these vexed him sorely, the passes would be short and slow . . . , but as his spirit warmed to the subject—as his trusting heart, looking to the bottom of that which vexed him, would see its clear way out,—he would rise to a higher melody, sweep the unseen strings with a bolder hand, and swiftly fingering the cords from his neck, down along his waistcoat, and up again to his very ear, create an ecstatic stain of perfect music, audible to himself and to St. Cecilia, and not without effect (60).

The key to this passage lies in its last short phrase: Harding's celestial music does not just sooth his own inner disturbances; it also spreads this sense of harmony and peaceful calm to others who happen to come near it. Moreover, this imaginary playing prevails in the warden's finest hour when he crushes the specious arguments of Sir Abraham Haphazard; significantly, the narrator mentions Harding's spiritual music four times

in this one short passage. When the meek clergyman first sits down in the lawyer's office, the narrator reports, Mr. Harding "began to play a slow tune on an imaginary violoncello" (233). As the interview continues, Mr. Harding's gestures intensify and the music swells, eventually reaching an almost fevered crescendo as the warden stands to deliver his ultimatum to the startled lawyer:

> And, as he finished what he had to say, he played up such a tune as never before had graced the chambers of any attorney-general. He was standing up, gallantly fronting Sir Abraham, and his right arm passed with bold and rapid sweeps before him, as though he were embracing some huge instrument, which allowed him to stand thus erect; and with the fingers of his left hand he stopped, with preternatural velocity, a multitude of strings, which ranged from the top of his collar to the bottom of the lappet of his coat. Sir Abraham listened and looked in wonder (236-7).

In this one brief moment, the normally meek, almost invisible warden is transformed into a man of immense, heroic stature. And the word choices in this passage—"gallantly," "bold," "rapid," "huge," and "erect"—reinforce this startling change, illustrating the strength and heroic justice of the warden's resignation.

Mr. Harding's gestures and heavenly melodies, therefore, so effective in the warden's efforts to subdue discord on a personal level, also reflect the widespread harmony this mild, unassuming clergyman imposes on the social order of Barsetshire. As noted throughout this chapter, time and time again the warden quietly conquers any opposition, as his questions and suggestions invariably lead to a more stable, peaceful world. In the struggles over the wardenship, in confrontations with Slope and Mrs. Proudie, as a champion for Arabin's promotion to dean, or with the bequeathing of St. Ewold's to Mr. Crawley, Mr. Harding's actions spread a

blanket of harmony over a turbulent Barsetshire world. Quite clearly, Mr. Harding's conduct affects the behavior of others, and Trollope illustrates this process in the development of Archdeacon Grantly and Mr. Arabin. By the time of The Last Chronicle, the materialistic, combative archdeacon of The Warden has given way to a more compassionate, understanding man. In his touching meeting with Grace Crawley, or during the enlightening dinner scene with the Reverend Crawley, a different archdeacon, perhaps sweetened by years of close contact with the warden, takes the stage. Much the same occurs with Arabin. The tenuous bachelor of Barchester Towers settles down under the influence of Mr. Harding, accepts the deanship, marries Eleanor Bold, and in The Last Chronicle appears as an influential and stabilizing force for the Barsetshire community. Trollope's narrator underscores the pervasiveness of Mr. Harding's effect on others, too, in his description of the death and funeral of this sweet, mild warden. On the day of Mr. Harding's burial, the narrator notes, "all Barchester was there to see him laid in his grave within the cloisters" (862). Even the worn and tired Bishop Proudie appears at the grave site, and we discover that the warden's calming influence continues even after his death: when the unforgiving archdeacon spies the bishop lurking nearby, the narrator reports, Grantly immediately "resolved that there should be peace in his heart, if peace might be possible" (863-4).

While Trollope fashions Mr. Harding's symbolic metaphor from the notes of the harmonious music the warden alone can hear, he chooses a metaphor of healing to express Dr. Thorne's effect on society. "The changing world that Thorne lives in," Robert Polhemus asserts, "still allows him, like Arabin and Harding, to keep the sanctity of his individual conscience and also to serve the best interest of his whole society" (57). At

various times during the course of the third Barsetshire novel Dr. Thorne acts as an uncle, friend, financial advisor, executor, and guardian; yet his role as physician informs all of these other functions he undertakes in the society of East Barsetshire. And much as Mr. Harding's harmony quietly spreads to all corners of his society, Dr. Thorne's healing profoundly affects the political and social body of the surrounding neighborhood.

On three separate occasions in Doctor Thorne, Trollope's country doctor finds himself dismissed by his somewhat fickle patients, twice by Lady Arabella and once by Sir Roger Scatcherd. Each time this occurs, however, Trollope's narrator clearly illustrates that the patients, as well as their families, suffer as a result of this dismissal. After Lady Arabella had replaced Thorne (in the early years of his practice) with the more socially-correct Dr. Fillgrave, four of her young children died, the narrator reveals, and eventually Lady Arabella must swallow her pride and humbly ask Dr. Thorne to return (41). Much the same happens when Scatcherd throws Dr. Thorne out of his house in a rage over the doctor's orders that he be kept away from his brandy: within weeks Scatcherd's wife sends a personal plea to Thorne, begging him to return, and, as a result, angering the obsequious Fillgrave when they collide in the baronet's hallway. Even at the height of the Greshams' campaign against Mary Thorne, when Lady Arabella falls ill and does not respond to treatment, the great London doctor Sir Omicron Pie can only recommend that Dr. Thorne be readmitted as the lady's physician, and, quite naturally, her recovery begins as soon as Thorne takes charge of the case (414). Thus, the good doctor's medical and professional abilities far outdistance those of his peers; moreover, as with Mr. Harding and his music, Dr. Thorne's curative powers symbolically reflect his capacity to heal society at large.

From all of the intricacies of the interconnected dilemmas in Doctor Thorne, this poor country doctor emerges as a force for stability and harmony. Dr. Thorne saves the Gresham family from utter humiliation and financial ruin by arranging favorable loans with Sir Roger Scatcherd. Later, acting as Sir Louis Phillipe's guardian, Thorne uses his negotiating ability and calm, forthright manner to prevent Scatcherd's son from calling in all the mortgages which would bankrupt the Gresham estate. In his role as Mary's uncle and Frank Gresham's friend, Dr. Thorne neither crusades for the young couple's marriage nor hinders it in any way, keeping alive the chances for a favorable solution to this vexing problem. Finally, as Sir Roger Scatcherd's friend and the executor of his will, Thorne is the one man in East Barsetshire who holds all the pieces of the puzzle in his hand, and the sense of harmony that comes at the end of the novel, with Mary Thorne's inheritance, the salvation of the Gresham estate, and the marriage of Mary and Frank Gresham, arises out of Dr. Thorne's patience and moral integrity in his handling of Scatcherd's will. Ultimately, just as the Reverend Harding's calming effect influenced much of Barsetshire's clerical society, so Dr. Thorne's healing skills re-establish a harmonious civil community in East Barsetshire.

This one trait, an ability to bring healing and harmony to society, more than any other quality transforms these two country gentlemen into uniquely mid-Victorian heroes. Superficially, Thorne and Harding seem to recall certain conservative qualities of some eighteenth-century characters, like Squire Allworthy or the Vicar of Wakefield, both compassionate gentlemen who live in the country. Yet this comparison soon breaks down, as both Allworthy and Primrose, in some fashion, serve their authors more as chesspieces than as fully rounded, believable characters. In any event,

neither Fielding's squire nor Goldsmith's vicar ever bestow on their society the widespread harmony and spirit of healing that Harding and Thorne give to their communities. As creators of harmony, Barsetshire's heroes fulfill a role especially suited to Trollope's mid-Victorian era. Over the ages, both the cultural and literary hero's success has been tested through his meeting with an adversary. Trollope, writing in an age beset by rapid change and filled with social anxieties, puts forward two heroes who serve as a unifying force, but who do so by refusing to fight. Rather than offering powerful leaders and warriors, such as Carlyle's Cromwells, Napoleons, Knoxes and Luthers, Trollope invokes a quieter heroism, one which spreads a soothing harmony throughout society, healing the ills of this troubled era.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored Trollope's definition of the hero by studying five major characteristics shared by two of Trollope's best characters: the Reverend Septimus Harding and Doctor Thomas Thorne. Trollope's hero is a mature English gentleman who lives in the country rather than in London. Three crucial personality or behavioral traits inform the character of this Trollopian hero: exemplary moral integrity, a compassionate and caring manliness, and determined self-respect. Finally, although this hero may appear to live outside society (and definitely does not serve as its political or military leader), Trollope's hero exerts a profound, harmonious influence on all those around him. Needless to say, all five of these attributes work together in an intricate fashion to form the final portrait of the Barsetshire hero. The conduct of both of these characters as English gentlemen, of course, is intimately bound up with their moral integrity and compassionate manliness. The social and

political harmony these two men create within their communities, as well, flows from their own self-respect, unbending moral standards, and compassionate concern for others. In short, for Anthony Trollope, all of these traits act in concert to achieve a believable, realistic heroism.

A quick glance at Plantagenet Palliser, most often cited as Trollope's ideal or perfect gentleman, illustrates how all of these attributes, in Trollope's mind, work together to form a hero's character. On the surface this figure appears to have every qualification necessary for heroism; Plantagenet Palliser, the powerful Duke of Omnium, represents Trollope's most rigorous portrayal of the great man. With his unlimited wealth, unassailable social rank, strength of character, and impressive political power, Palliser's credentials as a gentleman are impeccable. In addition, throughout his long and successful political career, this stalwart gentleman's personal conduct and moral integrity never falter. For the majority of his life, Plantagenet Palliser lacks only two traits of the five Trollope finds necessary for the hero–compassionate manliness and the ability to create harmony–yet, for Trollope, the absence of these characteristics prevents Palliser, his ideal gentleman, from serving as his ideal hero. Palliser never fully understands the needs and desires of his wife, Glencora, and Trollope illustrates repeatedly how much more comfortable "Planty Pall" is poring over his blue books on decimal coinage than interacting in any meaningful way with people or his own family. Indeed, the sixth and final Parliamentary novel, The Duke's Children, examines Palliser's failings at some length. After Lady Glencora's death, Palliser's initial lack of understanding of his children's aspirations and loves, which he would sacrifice for the sake of socially "correct" marriages, underscores Trollope's point: all of the status, rank, and proper conduct in

the world may not transform a perfect gentleman's into a hero. Yet, like the Grantlys and Arabins of Barsetshire, even Palliser changes over time, and he learns to care for his children, eventually yielding to their desires in order to secure their happiness and love.

Of all Trollope's Barsetshire characters, therefore, just two figures stand out as real heroes. Of course, Trollope's sense of realism insists that neither of his heroes may be deemed "perfect." Yet, as Robin Gilmour writes of Mr. Harding: "He is Trollope's natural gentleman, the embodiment of 'heart' and 'grace of character'; more than that, he is a good man, the one completely convincing good man in the series, and as such Trollope's touchstone of moral value" ("Squires" 163). I would argue that the same might be said of the character of Dr. Thorne: both the doctor and the warden serve as moral touchstones of heroic goodness and human compassion in their Barsetshire society.

Notes

[1] Many of these forces seem to culminate in the Augustan age, with the mock-heroics of Dryden ("Mac Flecknoe"), Swift (The Battle of the Books), and Pope (The Dunciad) contributing much to the hero's demise. Peter Hughes views this trend as a part of a much broader movement in literature. Beginning with Franco Venturi's premise, that during the Enlightenment "honor, the cultural and ethical principle of monarchy" was overthrown "by the republican principle of virtue," Hughes adds: "That, as we shall see, is precisely what happened in the transformation of the heroic. Tragedy, epic, the heroic epistle—all literary modes based upon the principle of honor—are subverted and displaced by satire, history, and the novel (first composed of familiar letters)—all literary modes based upon the principle of virtue" (169).

[2] These poems can be found in the first volume of the three-volume standard edition, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, edited by Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire.

[3] In the opening pages of his section on George Eliot (The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction), Mario Praz makes specific connections between Eliot's Adam Bede and Silas Marner and Wordsworth's rugged country figures, including the leech-gatherer, the idiot boy, and the Scottish narrator of The Excursion.

[4] Of course, any distillation of a complex novel like Adam Bede seems an oversimplification. George R. Creeger's article, "An Interpretation of Adam Bede," illustrates the sympathy Eliot evokes with her portrait of Arthur Donnithorne, in many ways a likeable, though undisciplined,

young man who falls when faced with the overwhelming temptation of Hetty Sorrel. Creeger notes that Adam Bede is less than perfect, and this hero undergoes a maturing process before he reaches the point at which he can eschew revenge, forgive Donnithorne, and accept Dinah's love.

[5] See, for example, Robin Gilmour's The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel or Mark Girouard's The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman. Shirley Letwin's exhaustive study covers just Trollope's ideas in The Gentleman in Trollope: Individuality and Moral Conduct, while dissertations by Juanita Lewis, James Shrewsbury, and Ezekiel Bogosian all touch on various aspects of Trollope and the concept of the Victorian gentleman. Among all these sources, James Shrewsbury's second chapter, "The Gentleman's Code," contains the clearest exposition of the essential attributes which contribute to the definition of a gentleman.

[6] Arthur Pollard's article, "Trollope's Idea of the Gentleman," begins with some useful references to discussions on the Victorian gentleman in magazine articles written by some of Trollope's contemporaries.

[7] Trollope himself, while discussing the Civil Service in the third chapter of An Autobiography, reveals the essentially conservative nature of his definition of an English gentleman: "A man in public life could not do himself a greater injury than by saying in public that the commissions in the army or navy, or berths in the Civil Service, should be given exclusively to gentlemen. He would be defied to define the term,—and would fail should he attempt to do so. But he would know what he meant, and so very probably would they who defied him" (40).

[8] Somewhat surprisingly, R. H. Super's detailed biography of Trollope contains an unfortunate misreading of The Warden. Dismissing

this work as "less a novel than a collection of essays," Super decrees that Harding's "journey to town . . . serves more to give a view of contemporary London through the eyes of a naive provincial clergyman than to advance the plot." Furthermore, he concludes, "the warden himself is something of a caricature, as he perpetually fingers and bows his imaginary cello . . ." (70). Henry James comes much nearer the mark in saying: "The Warden is a delightful tale, and a signal instance of Trollope's habit of offering us the spectacle of a character. A motive more delicate, more slender, as well as more charming, could scarcely be conceived. It is simply the history of an old man's conscience" (113, my emphasis).

[9] Letwin's sixth chapter, "Manners," makes an excellent point concerning Dr. Thorne's somewhat gruff behavior and dress. For Trollope, outward deportment is much less important than "inward refinement," and if Thorne slips a bit in the former, he never fails in the latter.

[10] Critical opinions on Doctor Thorne seem to vary as wildly as those on The Warden. Stephen Wall, for instance, finds this book written with a "relative listlessness," and he mistakenly asserts that the entire plot can be reduced into one rather "crude narrative question," which is, "how long will it be and what do the characters have to go through before the hero gets the heroine and the heroine gets the money?" (35). Michael Sadleir, at the opposite end of the spectrum, ranks this novel as "one of the five (in a technical sense) flawless books [Trollope] was to write" (375); Sadleir maintains that "though there may be an extreme of tranquillity there is not a loose end, not a patch of drowsiness, not a moment of false proportion" in this entire novel (376).

## Chapter V. Trollope's Continuing Interest in the Hero

Earlier commentators called Anthony Trollope a "mirror" or a "photographer" of Victorian society, yet today these metaphors seem the faintest of praise, as if Trollope's novels offered little more than a static record of Victorian conversation, society, manners, and customs.[1] While Trollope does depict many everyday aspects of Victorian society, the preceding chapters of this dissertation have illustrated how his best works, including the six novels of this Barsetshire series, also capture the essence of a troubling Victorian quandary–the question of heroism–in a much more profound and provocative fashion than a mere snapshot of Victorian life ever could.

The first chapter of this dissertation introduced some of the cultural forces prevalent during the mid-Victorian era, an age struggling to cope with rapid change and disarray in its social, political, and religious institutions. The Church of England, long a source of stability and moral values, suffered attacks from within (the Oxford Movement), and from without (by the public press and members of Parliament). The rigid class system began to disintegrate under the pressures of the Industrial Revolution and the new wealth and demands of the expanding middle class. Even some long-held traditions of the English parliamentary system came under fire, with an entire series of laws, beginning with the Reform Act of 1832, chipping away at the widespread existence of "rotten" boroughs and the practice of illegal vote buying, while at the same time enfranchising ever-increasing numbers of new voters. Asa Briggs, in an

essay on "Trollope, Bagehot, and the English Constitution," describes some of the far-reaching implications of this social turmoil:

> The social bases of the constitutional stability of the age of Palmerston often appeared to be undermined by dangerous patches of shifting sands. The expansion of the world of wealth was making it difficult to distinguish between fortune-hunting and real industry, between social aspiration and legitimate self-help, even between 'gentlemen' and 'cads' (96).

While all this was happening, a rapidly altering English society, searching for new heroes to provide stability, leadership, and a sound moral foundation for these troubling times, also found itself doubting the very concept of heroism. This was an era, in short, when a work calling for dramatic leadership and aggressive hero-worship, such as Carlyle's On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History (1841), could gather widespread support at the beginning of a decade, while just seven years later the same audience would applaud a scathing rejection of all human heroism in a novel like Thackeray's Vanity Fair.

Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire series, as the last three chapters have demonstrated, ultimately reflect this Victorian ambivalence toward heroes and heroism. In several of these novels Trollope questions and then jettisons a number of aspiring heroes, clearly renouncing any idea of conventional or perfect heroism. At the same time he does discover a laudable, though imperfect, heroism that survives in the English countryside, a heroism far removed from the city of London and its commercial, social, and political centers of power. What this talented author presents in the Barsetshire series, therefore, are two delicately counterbalanced ideas: he dismisses human perfection and any notion of

the epic hero and the romantic, or ideal, youth, while openly affirming the muted, enduring heroism of two obscure country gentlemen.

Trollope's interest in and examination of the concept of human heroism did not end with the six novels of the Barsetshire series. The rest of this chapter will glance at a few other works by this prolific Victorian writer, illustrating how this pivotal concept drew his attention throughout his writing career. In An Autobiography Trollope discusses his life during the 1850s, providing valuable clues about the origins of the Barsetshire hero. In several different works, Trollope's critical commentary on his friend and favorite author–William Makepeace Thackeray–shows Trollope's continuing concern with and strong support for a realistic representation of the hero. In addition, some of Trollope's other novels, his biographies of Cicero and Lord Palmerston, and his introduction to the The Commentaries of Caesar, reveal that the portrayal of the hero in literature, as well as the related question of the role of the great man in society, were ideas that aroused his curiosity over a long period of time.

**Trollope's Autobiography and English Country Life**

Biographical details of Trollope's life in the 1850s, as well as Trollope's own comments on this period in An Autobiography (published after his death in 1883), inform us about this novelist's lifelong interest in the hero. We have already mentioned how young Anthony's experiences as a nineteen-year-old clerk in the General Post Office provided background material for the portrayals of some of Barsetshire's not-quite heroic youths like Johnny Eames and Adolphus Crosbie. Yet Trollope's career after he left London may have had an even greater role in shaping his views of the hero, as he rediscovered the attractiveness of the Irish and English countryside, learning at the same time about the values held by country

gentleman, values which animate the portraits of his two Barsetshire heroes.

At the age of twenty-six, Anthony Trollope seemed to have reached a point of stagnation. As Trollope admits in his autobiography, he was mired in his position as an insignificant clerk in London's Postal headquarters, constantly in debt around the city and often in trouble at the office (50-57). Changes in Trollope's career and outlook on life came rapidly, however, in August of 1841, when he accepted a post as the assistant to the surveyor responsible for one of the rural Irish postal districts. Within three years Trollope's salary quadrupled, he married, and for the first time he could afford to ride to the hounds, a country sport he passionately pursued for the next thirty years. Moreover, Trollope quickly seemed to benefit from the move away from an office environment and London: he did well in his new job, travelling widely throughout Ireland while investigating customer complaints, auditing local postmasters, and setting up new postal routes. Although Trollope lived almost exclusively in Ireland for the next ten years, his competent work arranging efficient rural deliveries in Ireland did not go unnoticed. In 1851, at the age of thirty-seven, he undertook a series of special commissions (which lasted almost two years) to design new postal routes in many rural counties in England and the six southern counties of Wales (Autobiography 88). Trollope continued this migratory life for almost nine years, dividing his time between his postal duties in Ireland and special assignments in England and Scotland. He was promoted to Surveyor in 1859, and soon purchased a house just north of London at Waltham Cross. Here he had quick access to his London publishers and clubs, yet still lived out of town so that he could travel freely about his postal district (and reach the best fox hunts three or four days a week).

These years of traveling and living in the country clearly affected Trollope's outlook on life and his portrayal of the Barsetshire hero. In An Autobiography Trollope tells that he conceived of the original story for The Warden during his very first surveying trip in England, while sitting one evening in the vicinity of Salisbury cathedral (92-3), and he openly admits of his work in developing rural postal routes for England and Wales, "I spent two of the happiest years of my life at the task" (88). Outside of London, for the first time Anthony Trollope found work he enjoyed, a satisfying family life, and a growing sense of peace and personal prosperity. In a perceptive study of the Barsetshire and Palliser novels, Robert Polhemus finds a gradual movement in these twelve novels from brightness and cheerful optimism towards a more serious, darker, and pessimistic point of view (248-49). At the same time, Trollope's novels undergo a perceptible shift in setting from the pleasantness and quiet of the country (which dominates The Warden and Barchester Towers) toward a balanced presentation of the country and London (in The Last Chronicle), to the novels which take place almost entirely in the city (Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux, and The Prime Minister). In the Barsetshire series, however, Trollope's basic optimism prevails. These six novels conjure up an almost nostalgic love for the English countryside and its people, a feeling somewhat akin to the one in Oliver Goldsmith's The Deserted Village or The Vicar of Wakefield. Thus, Trollope's portrayal of harmony, goodness, honesty, and a sense of community in the Barsetshire countryside may have grown, in some fashion, out of the stability and personal happiness which came to him with middle age in the 1850s. As An Autobiography establishes, these personal factors, along with the values learned from the

country people he met, inspired and enriched the character of the country gentleman Trollope chose as his model for the Barsetshire hero.

The last chapter underscored the importance of the fact that both of Trollope's heroes–Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne–live contented, private lives in the country rather than active, public lives in London. As we noted then, Trollope carefully crafts distinctions between the quietly heroic gentlemen residing in Barsetshire and the impulsive, shallow men of the city, and these differences mirror some of the biographical details Trollope provides about his own life.[2] Trollope's youthful dissatisfaction, self-interest, and constant debt in the city of London gave way to middle-aged optimism, a satisfying family situation, and a contented life in the English countryside. To a remarkable degree, within his novels similar sorts of details highlight the distinctive differences between his chosen heroes and a host of characters who live in the city.

**Trollope's Critical Views of Thackeray**

Much as An Autobiography serves as a window into Trollope's attraction to the English countryside, his critical writing becomes a doorway into an understanding of his idea of the hero. We have described some of the close ties between the first flourishing of the English novel and the hero's decline, and Trollope himself had studied his eighteenth-century predecessors and their views of the hero. In his 1870 lecture "On English Prose Fiction as a Rational Amusement," for example, Trollope briefly discusses the novels of Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, concluding that the single work most worthy of immortality is Robinson Crusoe, and that "Tom Jones is of all heroes the least heroic, and Clarissa of all heroines the most ill-used and most divine" (101-3).[3] Although Trollope was well aware of novelists who had preceded him and had

thought about the role of the hero in their works, perhaps Trollope's critical approach to one of his own contemporaries–William Makepeace Thackeray–best reveals the consistency of Trollope's concern with lifelike characterization and a realistic portrayal of the hero. Henry James, in his seminal essay on Trollope, underscores the strength of this author's relationship with Thackeray: "It is probably not unfair to say that if Trollope derived half his inspiration from life, he derived the other half from Thackeray" (118).

Trollope enjoyed a close working relationship with Thackeray for several years. The serial publication of Framley Parsonage, after all, the first novel to appear in the Cornhill Magazine, not only helped launch Thackeray's famous periodical but also established Trollope as a major English novelist. James, among others, attributes Trollope's penchant for carrying characters from one novel into the next to Thackeray's influence, as well, citing the reappearance of Becky Sharp and Colonel Dobbin in The Newcomes as an example of a technique Trollope adopted (Super 95). Trollope himself, for that matter, makes no secret of his admiration for his fellow author, and much of this praise grows out of Trollope's critical study of Thackeray's heroes and heroines. In the chapter of An Autobiography where Trollope ranks successful authors of his own time, he openly declares: "I do not hesitate to name Thackeray the first" (243). Citing Thackeray's realistic heroes, lucid style, and unassailable "knowledge of human nature," Trollope deems his friend supreme among his contemporaries, placing him above even the likes of George Eliot and Charles Dickens (243-5). In his lecture on prose fiction Thackeray's mastery of character draws Trollope's highest praise: "According to my idea he has described humanity,—the real flesh and blood with the heart

and mind working within them,—the human beings whom we see and know,—our very selves,—with an accuracy that has been within the reach of no other writer of English Prose Fiction" (117).[4] So this overt admiration of his friend's talent, fueled by Thackeray's insistence on realistic characterization and careful attention to man's imperfections, reinforces and expands our understanding of Trollope's interest in the hero.

Almost all of Trollope's Barsetshire characters, of course, must struggle with a variety of mixed motives; in Trollope's realistic world the villains are often driven by the best of intentions while the heroes are tarnished by selfishness or pride. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that when Trollope compares Scott's heroes and heroines with Thackeray's, he concludes that his colleague's characters satisfy far more than those of the Scottish author, because Thackeray's display more realistic, human imperfections. "Ravensworth," Trollope says, "never descends to any of the foibles of humanity. Edie Ochiltree as a beggar is without spot or flaw,—perfectly heroic. . . . Of [Scott's] higher-class heroines it would be impossible to imagine that they would ever flirt, ever run in debt for bonnets and gilt boots, or pay sly visits to the pastry-cook" ("Prose Fiction" 118). On the other hand, Trollope salutes the flaws he sees in many of Thackeray's protagonists: "Thackeray's heroines do require meat, and his heroes a good deal of drink to wash the meat down. But then,—such is the way with men and women in the world! I do not remember a single heroine of Thackeray's who does not now and then fall off from the heroic" ("Prose Fiction" 118). Thus Harding's selfish desire for a quiet corner to play his cello, along with Thorne's excessive pride in his family's heritage, are illuminated by this critical admiration Trollope gives Thackeray's down-to-

earth heroes and heroines, an admiration anchored in Trollope's realistic outlook.[5]

In a similar manner, Trollope's reading of the novels of Thackeray praises his friend's mixed portrayal of the heroic youth. In his essay on English prose fiction, Trollope offers this assessment of his colleague's skill:

> But Thackeray with his minute feminine glances into life, seeing the workings of the human heart with that magnifying-glass with which nature had supplied him, could not paint his portraits in the Raphaelistic manner. He saw what there was of good and evil in men and women, and he had to put it all down. He felt with intensity the duty of so writing that he should teach no evil;—and I make bold to say that he has taught none; but he could not describe the world around as other than he saw it (119).

In Vanity Fair, instead of the conventional English gentleman or the intense Byronic hero, Trollope encountered characters like Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne and Jos Sedley, three figures who may be rather distant cousins of Barsetshire's Mark Robarts, Johnny Eames, and Adolphus Crosbie. Particularly notable, in his biographical survey of Thackeray's writing, is Trollope's emphasis on a mixture of good and bad elements he sees in some of Thackeray's most unheroic characters, including Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne. In spite of many faults, Trollope notes, Crawley truly loves his wife and child, and never "did Rawdon ever become quite bad" or "quite heartless" (Thackeray 100). Even in a selfish, self-centered rake like George Osborne Trollope can discover a few traces of decency. While admitting that Thackeray adds a few touches which come close to making this character "odious," Trollope also calls attention to the fact that Osborne was a "brave soldier," and he sums up Osborne's character with these three observations: ". . . when [Amelia's]

father is ruined he marries her, and he fights bravely at Waterloo, and is killed" (Thackeray 104). The portraits of Trollope's less-than-perfect young characters may not be drawn with the same razor-sharp pen Thackeray used for his best satire, yet Trollope's critical commentary illustrates the consistency of his thoughts on the ideal youth. Trollope does not condemn an Adolphus Crosbie to the same brutal fate George Osborne suffers, although Crosbie's bad marriage, quick separation, decline, and poverty seem harsh enough. Nevertheless, the shallowness, overweening selfishness, and mistreatment of women found in some of the youthful characters of both authors clearly demonstrate their creators' scorn for the popular notion of the romantic or conventional hero.

**Trollope's Other Novels and Historical Writing**

While much of this dissertation has focused on Anthony Trollope's concentrated treatment of heroism in the six novels of the Barsetshire series, a survey of a few of his other novels and some of his historical writing reveals a widespread interest in the issues and questions pertaining to heroism. In fictional works like The Three Clerks (1857), Orley Farm (1862), and the six novels of the Palliser series (1864-1880), Trollope brings onto his stage other characters who allow him to examine further what makes a man heroic (or not). In addition, several of Trollope's prose works, including his translation of The Commentaries of Caesar (1870), a Life of Cicero (1880), and a short biography of Lord Palmerston (1882), illustrate Trollope's keen interest in the idea of the great man in history, a subject closely associated with the concept of the hero.

As we have seen, several of the Barsetshire novels contain characters who furnish the basis for Trollope's questioning and repudiation of the conventional English hero and the romantic youth. Although many

variations on the failures of the young gentleman evolve from this series–in portraits of Robarts, Lufton, Eames, Gresham, and Crosbie–other Trollope novels also investigate the character of the young male. In The Three Clerks, for example, a book Trollope wrote after the first two Barsetshire novels had been published, the three main characters could almost be seen as prototypes of the more rounded, young Londoners in the Barsetshire series. One of these clerks, Harry Norman, a lad of impeccable honesty and diligence, successfully rises through the ranks in the office of Weights and Measures and marries into a good family. His closest friend, Alaric Tudor, also advances rapidly (much as Crosbie does in Small House), but he succumbs to his own greed and the evil influences of the city, falls in with an influence peddling scheme involving Cornish mining interests, and ends up in prison. A third clerk, Charley Tudor, Alaric's cousin, experiences London much as young Trollope did: he works in a dingy, insignificant office responsible for Internal Navigation, finds himself constantly alone, drinking, and in debt, and avoids a disastrous marriage to a barmaid only through the generosity and aid of Harry Norman and his wife. In summary, this novel exposes many of the pressures and temptations young, underpaid civil servants must face in the city, exactly the same setting and situation Trollope later uses to unmask the failings of less-than-heroic youths like Eames and Crosbie.

Some of the novels of the Palliser series, as well, reveal Trollope's continuing fascination with the dilemmas faced by young gentlemen. In Phineas Finn, the second Parliamentary novel, the narrator persistently labels his youthful Irish protagonist "our hero." He repeats this phrase so often, in fact, that the reader soon discovers its unmistakable irony: Finn joins the ranks of Trollope's young gentlemen who can never quite attain

heroic stature. The son of a retired country doctor, Phineas luckily gains a seat in Parliament while still in his early twenties; yet, with his rakish attitude, ever-increasing debts, unsuccessful love affairs, and bitter squabbles over Irish politics, he always skirts the edge of disaster. Just as Mark Robarts and Frank Gresham develop favorably with age and experience, coming ever closer to the heroic norm set by Harding and Thorne, so does young Phineas. In the later Palliser novels he steadies considerably, marries the fascinating (and wealthy) Madame Max Goesler, and becomes a trusted advisor and ally of the Duke of Omnium.

While the younger characters in some of these novels reinforce Trollope's impatience with the notion of the conventional hero, in other works Trollope extends his exploration of a more realistic heroism. Nestled away in a narrative intrusion in Chapter 35 of The Eustace Diamonds, Trollope offers his clearest explanation of realistic heroism. This passage, reminiscent of Eliot's essay on realistic art in the seventeenth chapter of Adam Bede, leaves little doubt that Trollope knew exactly what he was doing with heroism in the Barsetshire series. Trollope repudiates art that depicts human perfection, where every woman becomes a Venus and every man a hero ("a man absolutely stainless, perfect as Arthur"). He denounces a reading world that has "taught itself to like best the characters of all but divine men and women" (318). And he demands, much like middling oats and average port, that the heroes and heroines of novels must reflect the imperfections of man:

> The persons whom you cannot care for in a novel, because they are so bad, are the very same that you so dearly love in your life, because they are so good. To make them and ourselves somewhat better,—not by one spring heavenwards to perfection, because we cannot so use our legs,— but by slow climbing, is, we may

> presume, the object of all teachers, leaders, legislators, spiritual pastors, and masters. . . . The true picture of life as it is, if it could be adequately painted, would show men what they are, and how they might rise, not, indeed, to perfection, but one step first, and then another on the ladder (320).

So Trollope insists on the importance of the novelist's didactic function, and his realistic Barsetshire heroes, imperfect though they are, can teach his readers how to find their way up the ladder, one step at a time.

In Orley Farm, which appeared the year after Framley Parsonage, Trollope continues this search for a realistic heroism. In this novel Sir Peregrine Orme, a protector and staunch friend of Lady Mason, embodies some of the traits of a Mr. Harding or a Dr. Thorne. Orme is also a quiet, mature gentleman who lives in the country. Although this aging squire fails to save Lady Mason from her eventual downfall and the humiliation of a public trial, he, like Harding and Thorne, focuses on the well-being of others: Sir Peregrine even offers to marry Lady Mason as a way for her to escape the vicious rumors and official investigation she faces for altering her deceased husband's will. Sir Peregrine shares a few traits with the Barsetshire heroes, such as honesty and compassion, but he fails to attain the special heroic status Trollope bestows on Mr. Harding or Dr. Thorne. Though a good man and a solid English gentleman, Orme never displays the spiritual harmonizing or unique healing quality that Harding and Thorne quietly spread throughout their communities.

Another topic Trollope explored over the course of his long writing career–the role of the great man in society–also illustrates the persistence of this author's examination of human heroism. The study of the great man, of course, is not necessarily the study of the hero; nevertheless, a glance at some of the traits Trollope found most laudable in these historical

figures yields further insight into the forming of his hero. The last chapter briefly mentioned one of the central characters of the Parliamentary novels, Plantagenet Palliser, Trollope's detailed analysis of the great man (and the perfect English gentleman) in a literary setting. But as some of his lesser-known prose works reveal, Trollope also felt drawn to a study of some of the greatest social and political figures in history. In the introduction to his translation of Caesar's Commentaries, for instance, Trollope notes that Caesar may have been the greatest man in history, not just because of his military prowess, but because of his varied excellence, including his skills as an organizer, writer, and statesman (20-1). Trollope also admires Caesar's virtue, remarking that "it may be said of Caesar that he was in some sort guided in his life by sense of duty and love of country; as it may also be said of his great contemporaries, Pompey and Cicero" (11). Furthermore, on the first page of his introduction to the Life of Cicero, Trollope boldly proclaims: "I may say with truth that my book has sprung from love of the man, and from a heartfelt admiration of his virtues and his conduct, as well as his gifts" (7). Trollope then lists these virtues, celebrating some of Cicero's many outstanding traits:

> It is not only that Cicero has touched all matters of interest to men, and has given a new grace to all that he has touched; that as an orator, a rhetorician, an essayist, and a correspondent he was supreme; that as a statesman he was honest, as an advocate fearless, and as a governor pure; that he was a man whose intellectual part always dominated that of the body; that in taste he was excellent, in thought both correct and enterprising, and that in language he was perfect. . . . But there was a humanity in Cicero, a something almost of Christianity, a stepping forward out of the dead intellectualities of Roman life into moral perceptions, into natural affections, into domesticity, philanthropy, and conscious discharge of duty, which do not seem to have been as yet fully appreciated (8).

In Trollope's mind, the thread that ties together this interest in historical figures like Cicero, Caesar, and Lord Palmerston with the quiet heroes of his Barsetshire novels is their role as moral exemplars for their societies. Thus, nearing the end of this dissertation we return to two of the hero's most basic qualities: all heroes serve as an ideal for mankind to follow or as a savior for their society. The moral integrity, caring for others, and exemplary self-respect in Harding and Thorne closely resemble the virtues which attract Trollope to these great historical figures. Similarly, these great men drew together entire societies and nations, gifting them with political stability, moral excellence, and a sense of direction in an age of unrest, just as Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne bestow a sense of harmony and a feeling of well-being to their Barsetshire community in a time of turmoil, anxiety, and conflict.

**Conclusion**

Time and time again, in prose lectures on English fiction, in letters to aspiring novelists, in his study of Thackeray, and even in his own autobiography, Anthony Trollope returns to the same point: all novels must be morally instructive, as well as pleasing to their readers. Trollope's most succinct statement on this theme comes in a familiar passage from An Autobiography:

> The writer of stories must please, or he will be nothing. And he must teach whether he wish to teach or no. How shall he teach lessons of virtue and at the same time make himself a delight to his readers? That sermons are not in themselves often thought to be agreeable we all know. Nor are disquisitions on moral philosophy supposed to be pleasant light reading for our idle hours. But the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman, and must have his own system of ethics (222).

Trollope's enduring interest in the hero, therefore, seen not only in the Barsetshire novels but in works spanning his entire career, must be understood in the light of the writer's didactic purpose. Henry James, writing with characteristic honesty and insight, captures the spirit of this Victorian author with a single sentence: "Trollope will remain one of the most trustworthy, though not one of the most eloquent, of the writers who have helped the heart of man to know itself" (133). Trollope's realistic examination and oft-repeated exposition of the failings of youth move well beyond humorous satire and a comic dismissal of the conventional, all-too-perfect heroism found in the popular novels of his day. These characters also serve as an example and a warning to Trollope's younger readers about the hazards, temptations, and vices that can lead the unwary astray. In his fourth Rambler essay, Samuel Johnson cautions the novelist that since "the power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will, care ought to be taken that, when the choice is unrestrained, the best examples only should be exhibited" (22). Following this sound advice, yet always insisting on realistic portrayals of man's imperfections and failures, Trollope presents Mr. Harding and Dr. Thorne as the heroes of his Barsetshire novels, two men who exemplify the proper sort of gentlemanly behavior, unyielding integrity, and compassionate manliness that could provide moral direction and harmony for a rapidly changing Victorian society.

## Notes

[1] A useful survey of Trollope's critical reputation can be found in Rafael Helling's A Century of Trollope Criticism. Tony Bareham also includes excerpts of early Trollopian criticism in The Barsetshire Novels: A Casebook. Bareham's introduction points out that in Trollope: The Critical Heritage twenty-eight references compare photography and Trollope's fictional technique (xix). Henry James also uses the mirror analogy, stating that Trollope "was content to go on indefinitely watching the life that surrounded him, and holding up his mirror to it. Into this mirror the public, at first especially, grew very fond of looking—for it saw itself reflected in all the most credible and supposable ways . . ." (101).

[2] These vivid distinctions can be found in other Trollope novels, as well. In The Way We Live Now, for instance, Trollope contrasts the solid values and impeccable honesty of a country squire, Roger Carbury, with the hypocrisy and bankrupt moral character of the great stock swindler, Augustus Melmotte.

[3] In The New Zealander, a set of thirteen essays written in 1855, Trollope's list of eighteen notable British authors (beginning with Spenser and ending with Tennyson) curiously includes only two novelists, and both of them are eighteenth-century authors: Defoe and Goldsmith (174).

[4] Writing of Trollope's reaction to Thackeray's sudden death in 1863, Michael Sadleir chronicles the strength of feeling Trollope had developed for Thackeray. Sadleir says that the event "struck Trollope with peculiar poignancy. He had worshipped the genius for so many years, [and] had come to know and love the man so recently" (252).

[5] For more information on Trollope's attitudes toward and opinions of Thackeray, see Robert A. Colby's "Trollope as Thackerayan," Dickens Studies Annual 22 (1983), 261-77, and J. Hillis Miller's "Trollope's Thackeray," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 37 (1982), 350-57.

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