THE EDINBURGH COMPANION TO ANTHONY TROLLOPE
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EDITED BY FREDERIK VAN DAM, DAVID SKILTON AND ORTWIN DE GRAEF
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Unable to pay his debts, Anthony Trollope’s father moved his family to Belgium in 1834 to avoid arrest. Although Trollope was soon rescued from his exile by a job offer from the General Post Office in London, the Belgian experience probably remained a bad memory. Yet, by a curious twist of things, he owes the present tribute to his lasting relevance in good measure to a Belgian priest. In 2004, Father Paul Druwé decided to leave his earthly belongings to KU Leuven with the express purpose of furthering the public appreciation and scholarly investigation of the works of Anthony Trollope. We think we have put this generous bequest to good use, first by supporting master’s theses and doctoral research on Trollope, then by commissioning a graphic novel adaptation of a Trollope novel (Simon Grennan’s Dispossession), which was subsequently launched at the Trollope Bicentennial Conference in Leuven in 2015. It is on the basis of this conference that the present Companion came about, and we are confident that Paul Druwé would have been proud of it. This book would never have seen the light of day without the kind support of Jackie Jones and Michelle Houston and their team at Edinburgh University Press. We thank Carlijn Cober for her assiduous assistance in the final stages of the editing, and Nigel Starck for going beyond the call of duty in supplying obscure references in an hour of need.
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Introduction

Frederik Van Dam, David Skilton and Ortwin de Graef

Since the turn of the century, Anthony Trollope has become a central figure in the critical understanding of Victorian literature: his work has proved itself to be a powerful lens for the study of discursive regimes and cultural practices of the long nineteenth century. The ambition of this volume is to test that lens to the full by rereading Trollope’s work in new ways. Bringing together eminent Victorianists with various specialties, this is a collection of innovative and challenging perspectives: it presents new ways of understanding this supposedly ‘safe’ Victorian novelist in his third century, with a particular attention to Trollope’s use of language, not least in his manipulation of the reader’s responses.

Trollope’s emergence as one of the central authors in Victorian studies has coincided with, and perhaps benefited from, the emergence of a new critical climate. Since the turn of the century, after more than three decades of mining literary texts for their hidden depths, scholars have begun to feel that ‘critique’, as Bruno Latour alleges, has ‘run out of steam’. Instead of reading texts ‘symptomatically’ through the lens of the so-called hermeneutics of suspicion, critics have gained a renewed appreciation for the visible and the concrete. This development within current scholarship is apparent in the affiliation with new disciplinary partners (such as political philosophy) and a host of new methodologies: new formalism, new aestheticism, surface reading, strategic presentism and post-historicism, among many others. Though the means by which scholars within these movements proceed often differ widely, they seem to have the same end in view: they aim to foster an engagement with aspects of literary culture which are easily overlooked as utterly ordinary, but which nonetheless carry important meanings. Their interest lies not so much in the ideological ramifications of the literary text, as in the more tangible aspects of its composition, be these formal or contextual. It is unclear, at this point, if these developments will come to be seen as a distinct ‘turn’. According to Joseph North, for one, the new methodologies that we have just listed continue the assumptions behind the historicist and contextualist paradigm that has dominated literary studies since the late 1970s. Even so, this volume hopes to offer a modest contribution to reorient the discipline in general and the study of Anthony Trollope’s work in particular. By and large, the contributors to this collection do not treat Anthony Trollope’s novels as manifestations of political discourse or social theory; instead they highlight dimensions that have hitherto received only scant attention, and by doing so they aim to cultivate the aesthetic capabilities of Trollope’s twenty-first-century readers. The innovative potential in the volume thus lies in the themes it uncovers and the methodologies it displays, more than in its corpus. Our rationale was to present a new Trollope not by looking specifically at neglected works...
nor by consolidating the state of the art, but by bringing Trollope’s work into contact
with cutting-edge debates, while tapping into the potential offered by the achievements
of the past.

Indeed, the publication of other guides to Trollope in the very recent past has
been a decisive factor in the composition of this Edinburgh Companion. Our aim
was to complement and not to duplicate these guides. Perhaps the best way to cap-
ture the features of the present volume, then, is to compare it to the two most recent
companions. The Cambridge Companion to Anthony Trollope (2010) aims to intro-
duce Trollope’s work to undergraduates.4 It opens with two biographical essays and
a survey of Trollope’s major works: the Barsetshire novels, the Palliser novels, the
later novels and his short fiction. The essays which follow are more argumentative,
probing into some of Trollope’s thematic concerns: the sensation novel, queerness,
the hobbledehoy, masculinity, vulgarity, the law. A third group of essays stresses
Trollope’s global interests, containing essays on Ireland, the Antipodes, travel and
America. The reader is thus given a substantial and lucid overview of Trollope’s
work, with many insights into Trollope’s capacious mind. The pattern of many of the
essays and their ambition to cover the whole of Trollope’s extensive oeuvre privilege
breadth over depth: after the introduction of the topic at hand, chapters generally
move to synopses of relevant writings, followed by two or more illustrative read-
ings. The Edinburgh Companion to Anthony Trollope does not have the ambition to
cover the whole of Trollope’s output. Instead, most essays in this collection revolve
around issues which at first sight appear of mere passing significance, but which when
examined reveal major critical issues for the fiction as a whole.

The Routledge Research Companion to Anthony Trollope (2016) offers a very dif-
ferent complement.5 This collection presents the graduate student and the researcher
with a comprehensive overview of the state of the art. It is summative of work to date,
giving scholars a solid basis for planning new research projects on the basis of gener-
ally accepted common knowledge. Although older arguments are updated and new
directions are indicated, the historicist and contextualist paradigm of the last three
decades of the twentieth century is markedly present. The Edinburgh Companion to
Anthony Trollope is more speculative and tentative, creating the lines of investiga-
yet to be pursued. It refers to and incorporates existing scholarship, but mostly insofar
as it points the way to new readings and interpretations. This approach is refl ected in
the profile of its contributors, who are on the whole eminent Victorianists rather than
dedicated Trollopians. Bringing their experience in the study of other authors to bear
on Trollope, they open up new lines of investigation. This approach has also resulted
in a focus on Trollope’s works from the 1870s, which may be taken as a sign of the
direction that Trollope studies will be taking in the years to come. Although the many
contributions in this volume range across Trollope’s work, it appears likely that in the
future critics will focus on major texts that have been neglected in favour of the works
from the 1860s.

In short, by involving the reader in new readings of Trollope’s work, The Edin-
burgh Companion to Anthony Trollope hopes to be a statement of where Trollope
studies and Victorian studies might well be the day after tomorrow. We have identified
four such lines of investigation and have accordingly divided the essays into four con-
stellations: style, circulation, media networks and economics. As a caveat, we should
highlight that this exercise in grouping the essays in such a fashion is an artificial one:
arguably, most essays could easily be brought under other headings. We hope, however, that by assembling the essays together in this fashion we create more interactions between essays within the various different clusters, as well as between the different clusters themselves, thus maximising the *Edinburgh Companion*’s critical purchase. In the remainder of this introduction, we provide a map of this expanse of ideas.

**Style**

Trollope has often been regarded as a skilled observer of a solid, completely understandable world, which he reproduces, in the words of Nathaniel Hawthorne, as though ‘solid, substantial, written on strength of beef and through inspiration of ale’. Trollope cannot resist citing this judgement in *An Autobiography* (1883), to the confusion of multitudes of subsequent commentators. It has been difficult to think about Trollope’s writing in terms of common indices of formal power, like precision, complexity and thoughtful revision. Even criticism focussing on Trollope’s form often includes caveats about his laxity, his writing’s rapidity, and his novels’ tendency to include plot holes and vanished characters: ‘an incident is ever preferable to an event’, as Henry James put it. As a result, the sophistication of Trollope’s style has not been awarded the attention it deserves.

Claire Jarvis suggests that Trollope’s novels’ formal experiments have been read as formal failures because of Trollope’s interest in hesitant narration, marked by the narrator’s outspoken ambivalence about characters’ flaws and failures. This investment can be made clearer if we notice his use of qualifying language as a barrier between narrator and character. By tracking Trollope’s use of ‘almost’ over the course of the Palliser series, she argues that his novels are marked by a hesitancy to enter fully into his characters’ minds, in distinction to other nineteenth-century realists. By remaining ‘almost’ insightful (and as a result only ‘almost’ in his narrated world), Trollope manages his narrator’s nearness to his characters with a model of insight that is asymptotically, rather than proximately, related to narrated thought.

Patrick Fessenbecker examines this hesitant narration from the point of view of moral philosophy. In depicting moral agency, he points out, Trollope’s narrator tends to portray the act of believing as itself admitting of moral evaluation: in Trollope’s fiction, to believe something is sometimes all on its own a moral success or failure. When describing his characters as having ‘taught [themselves] to think’ one thing or another, Trollope’s narrator marks the ways in which characters are responsible for what they believe, thus rejecting a simpler morality that would limit moral evaluation purely to physical action. At some moments, teaching oneself to think something is part of a crippling self-deception that licenses selfishness; at other moments, it is part of a recognition of one’s own weakness, and an integral part of morally praiseworthy self-fashioning.

While Fessenbecker highlights the cognitive aspects of Trollope’s narrative method, Sophie Gilmartin draws our attention to the more physical aspects. In her view, free indirect discourse creates a slightly removed, indirect intimacy that underlines the relationship between the physical environment, the body, mind and language. So frequently in Trollope’s work, an emotionally revealing free indirect discourse is preceded by seemingly mundane and material details; a character’s complex interiority is discovered in the midst of tables, chairs, coffee cups and ‘tea things’, and a preoccupation
with how to navigate these objects. Trollope’s fiction involves his characters not only in precise geographical locations (fictional Barchester, the Suffolk seaside, London, the Australian outback) but also in very precise physical spaces within these places: the corner of a room, the fireside, on a rug or balcony, by a mantelpiece or in a stairwell. If others occupy the room, they must be navigated around as well, but they are often brushed against, and skirts and sleeves touch. Because it is so specific about physical details such as these, Trollope’s writing can reveal much about the mental pictures that the reader entertains when reading a novel’s description of scene.

Just as Sophie Gilmartin’s essay echoes the principles of phenomenology, so Helen Blythe’s chapter plays with a deconstructive approach. Using as her point of departure Henry James’s dismissal of Trollope’s late fiction as repetitive, she investigates the way in which Trollope’s readers are conscripted: in An Old Man’s Love (1884), one of the overlooked tales written shortly before he died, Trollope obsessively repeats and alludes to characters and plot-devices from earlier novels, Latin tags, and information from his travel works, as well as the motif of the diamond that is so central The Eustace Diamonds (1873). As a result, Trollope’s readers are nudged to look for a unity that is actually shaped by their desires and memories.

David Skilton explores readerly conscription in yet another way, examining the function of the figure of the reader in An Autobiography while situating this text in the context of contemporary advice literature. This generic context highlights the many rhetorical tricks that Trollope pulls in order to bring his readers alongside and convince them of his professional ethic, a concern that resonates with Patrick Fessenbecker’s essay. At the same time, Skilton’s observations about Trollope’s style can be traced back to the pioneering work of Hugh Sykes Davies in the 1960s. A particularly intriguing topic in this regard is the distinct rhythm of deliberation in Trollope’s writing, a Trollopian cadence, which Davies identified and which demands further investigation.8 Remarkably, Davies’s work has not been properly picked up to date, even though technological advances in the field of computational linguistics have made this increasingly feasible, as Claire Jarvis’s essay illustrates.

Lauren M. E. Goodlad’s contribution looks at genre as well, but from a transtemporal and transnational perspective, in which longitude becomes a narrative dimension. Comparing Victorian novel chronicles to contemporary television series, she detects an underlying similarity, or what one might call a structure of feeling, which is tied to their economic moment: both genres flourished at a time of abstraction, a time when the conditions of global financial speculation were creating a drive for art forms that refused closure and instead kept on growing.

Circulation

The essays in the second constellation bring scholarship to bear on various aspects of Trollope’s literary afterlife. The three of us have attempted to make a modest contribution to this afterlife by commissioning graphic novelist Simon Grennan to create an adaptation of Trollope’s novel John Caldigate (1879). The graphic novel was conceived in two ways: the challenge was to create a new, complete work of visual literature while also introducing readers to the logic of adaptation. One might fruitfully see Dispossession: A Novel of Few Words (2016) as a critique of Trollope’s original novel. Grennan’s graphic novel derives an enigmatic satisfaction in more accurately representing John
Caldigate's representation of emigration to Australia than John Caldigate itself, in interrogating the novel's plot, and in replacing Trollope's narrative voice, with its attention to internal focalisation, with a distinct visual style that keeps readers at a distance as they ‘waltz’ through the scene. By developing these historically informed forms of equivalence, Dispossession inquires into the truth buried within Trollope's novel and painstakingly unveils what is missing. Importantly, however, it performs this critical work in a manner dramatically different from the ‘symptomatic’ or ‘suspicious’ academic critique we mentioned earlier, and this can be taken quite literally: instead of argumentatively exposing Trollope’s putative blind spots, Dispossession effectively dramatises the haunting presence of what Trollope left out within the world he has left us.

Trollope himself was not opposed to criticising his contemporaries in such a creative fashion. Critics have long noted Trollope's definition of himself in opposition to Dickens, yet the significance of this for the seemingly minor holiday stories has not been fully appreciated, as Steven Amarnick indicates. Focusing especially on Harry Heathcote of Gangoil (1874), Amarnick argues that Trollope found in the genre of the Christmas tale a means with which to define himself against the Dickensian aesthetic. Even in the late part of his career, Trollope continued to nurture his gripe with Dickens to maintain the vibrancy of his own work.

The following two chapters move to the twentieth century. In his reading of 'From Trollope's Journal' (1965), an 'anti-Eisenhower' poem by Elizabeth Bishop, John Bowen shows how Bishop takes a fragment of Trollope's monumental oeuvre to create a distinctly un-monumental work that is profoundly sceptical about men and their monuments. 'From Trollope's Journal' draws directly both from Trollope's letters and North America (1862), cutting down Trollope's expansive prose to a succinct dramatic monologue in the form of a double sonnet, voiced by Trollope. It is a poem about disease, both its transmission and its cutting out; about death and infection in war; and about statues and monumental art in Washington, through an international, cross-gendered and cross-century voicing.

Continuing this cluster's exploration of the aesthetics of transmission and creation, Luca Caddia examines the representation of Trollope as a character in works of fiction from the second half of the twentieth century. Novels from Philip Roth's The Counterlife (1986) to Alan Hollinghurst's The Line of Beauty (2004) present the contemporary reader with a gallery of Trollope's images, in which Caddia detects a concern with issues of soli-
tude and unfitness. At the same time, Trollope's presence also serves as a focal point for self-reflexive debates about the canonical status of contemporary novels.

The following three chapters look at Trollope's reception from a world-historical point of view. Boris M. Proskurnin and Xiaolan Zuo provide insiders' views of Trol-
lope's afterlife in Russia and China, respectively. They provide a detailed overview and periodisation of the various stages of Trollope's reception in both literary criticism and creative writing. Proskurnin thus sketches the history behind (and following) the well-
known fact of Lev Tolstoy's interest in Trollope, while Zuo brings a completely novel voice to current debates about Trollope's novels as forms of world literature. Both also pay attention to the commercial, social and political factors that propelled the way in which Trollope was read. These two chapters reveal and describe only the tip of the iceberg, and we hope that they will pave the way for new research and collaboration. Moving even further towards the East, Lydia Wevers's chapter examines Trollope's contemporary reception in New Zealand. By the time Trollope visited New Zealand
in 1872, crowds flocked to hear and see him. Tiny local papers all over the country reported his progress from the minute he left Southampton for Australia. Every speech was reported, every sighting noted, and Trollope duly rewarded his audience by publishing *Australia and New Zealand* in 1873. Wevers discusses the traces of Trollope’s readers and readership that survive in the print culture of this remote colonial society, and shows how reading may transfer itself into a shared public domain. By examining how Trollope’s fiction was read outside England, these chapters prepare the way for what might be the first satisfying geography of a single oeuvre.

**Media Networks**

The Victorians witnessed a revolution in communications as great as our own, including steam navigation to Australia and the trans-Atlantic telegraph. The chapters in this cluster examine Trollope’s interest in various communication technologies. Presiding over many of the following chapters is Bruno Latour, whose actor-network theory has done much in making the cultural impact of technological developments the object of critical scrutiny. Together, these essays highlight how Trollope’s experience as a Post Office official and a political journalist made the media networks a formally constitutive element in his fiction, which has previously barely been recognised.

Helen Small examines the figure of the confidential agent as a repository of some of Trollope’s most interesting thinking (in his later years) about the nature and the proper limits of political responsibility. Drawing on local records in the East Riding Archive relating to Trollope’s failed candidacy for the seat of Beverley in the 1868 parliamentary election, and the subsequent petition and official inquiry into the borough’s corruption, she explores the centrality of the managing agent to Trollope’s brief and unhappy experience of practical politics, before taking a wider view of how he and certain other mid-Victorian writers came to conceive of the agent, politically, philosophically and dramatically, as indicative of deep, perhaps ineradicable, flaws within a democratic system of election and representative government.

Clare Pettitt explores Trollope’s ‘ordinariness’ both in terms of the media rhythms of the late nineteenth century, and in terms of an emergent liberal consensus in the 1870s, arguing that the two are, in fact, structurally connected. She argues that liberalism performed a distributive function which resists conglomeration or massification by working to separate and relate the increasing numbers of visible and knowable subjects in the modern social world. An extending media network supported the work of connectivity without completion, which came to define the experience of living in a global world in the 1870s. Trollope’s literary texts are perhaps best understood as part of this network. If liberalism is always future-directed, open-ended and multinodal, so Trollope’s literary world also resists closure and replaces judgement with juxtaposition. The chapter suggests that Trollope’s work is structured by a model of seriality which has already become not just an important literary form, but also the most important cultural and political form of the nineteenth century.

Approaching Trollope’s fiction and career through media archaeology, Richard Menke suggests that Trollope’s conceptualisation of authorship was fundamentally shaped by media forms and technologies. In *An Autobiography*, fluent writing is figured as a performance like music, oration, print compositing or telegraphy; daily fictional production is synchronised to the watch, and its material rewards sorted...
into a notorious table of income. By highlighting the media mechanics of Trollope’s authorship, with special attention to the Post, Menke’s chapter bridges the gap between his art of representation and the function of the media that helped him practise and understand that art.

In ‘Trollope’s Living Media: Fox Hunts and Marriage Plots’, Tamara Ketabgian explores a very different kind of media network. She addresses the broader social, ecological and narrative aspects of hunting, as a complex network of various human and non-human ‘actants’, unfolding in the form of a strategic, geographically rooted pursuit. Readers have often dismissed Trollope’s sporting scenes, either viewing them as mere action sequences or as naïve idealisations of harmonious class hierarchy. This chapter, however, shows how Trollope unsparingly analyses the role of human and non-human habit, identity, cultivation and character – whether in horses, hounds, foxes, groups or individuals moving through space and time within the marriage plot, a realm that he frequently likens to blood sport. In short, Ketabgian reveals what it means for Trollope to treat ‘the system and theory’ of hunting as principles of human conduct and character.

Taking the curious conjunction of narrative perspective and knowledge acquired on roads as a starting point, Claire Connolly explores the connections between the narrative strategies of Trollope’s Irish novels and the road network along which so many of his plots run. Roads are present in Trollope’s Irish fiction in all their various forms: as avenues, paths, cuttings, lanes; and as shaped by grand juries, relief works and mail companies. She argues that Trollope’s most compelling imagination of the ironies and instabilities of infrastructure come in the Irish novel that critics find to be his most troubling, *The Landleaguers* (1883).

Robert D. Aguirre’s chapter continues the theme of travel. Drawing on recent work in mobility studies, he reads *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859) as an expression of Trollope’s own mobility as a travelling subject, as well as a trenchant examination of how travel and mobility were reshaping Central America, and in particular Panama, in the decade prior to Trollope’s visit. The question of global transit – of persons, information and commodities – had thrust Central America to the centre of worldwide attention, as travellers demanded swift passage to California, the United States sought to connect the disparate parts of its transcontinental expanse, and the British government fretted about mail delivery to British Columbia and trade with Pacific nations. As a result, the Central American republics became enmeshed in transnational and trans-regional formations. Trollope’s mission put him in a privileged position to comment on and, indeed, shape these changes.

**Economics**

‘Of all novelists in any country’, W. H. Auden famously wrote, ‘Trollope best understands the role of money. Compared with him even Balzac is too romantic.’ The essays in the fourth constellation move beyond an analysis of the representation of money in Trollope’s fiction and show how the complex economic context in which he was writing can be detected in the very fabric of his writing.

Nancy Henry’s chapter situates Trollope’s work within the context of recent research on nineteenth-century women investors by historians. Literary critics have paid attention to the financial plots and themes that are so central to Trollope’s works, but no one has specifically considered the prevalence of the female investor, a figure who also...
appears in fiction by his contemporaries. While Miss Dunstable, Lady Laura Kennedy and Lady Glencora had their fortunes invested for them, Mrs Van Siever, Alice Vavasor, Miss Mackenzie, Lizzie Eustace and Madame Max Goesler are investors whose stories explore the profoundly economic nature of human relationships. Trollope’s novels suggest that investing was not just something women did; it was a distinctly modern way of thinking about independence, risk, global communities and the future in general.

Opting for a biographical approach, Francis O’Gorman explores the significance of Trollope’s move to Montagu Square, both in his life and for his writing. With the ownership of 39 Montagu Square, the novelist could express his pleasure in the success he had made of his life. It was a life that might, after such an unpromising start with a lost paternal inheritance, the disastrous Harrow farm(s) and the lean years in rented rooms at 22 Northumberland Street, have been a failure. The novelist himself, picking up his new house keys sometime in or just before April 1873, had done far, far better than could have been expected; unlike that of many of his speculative investors, his achievement was both real and legal. The property plot of *The Way We Live Now*, the first fiction he wrote in Montagu Square, celebrates it.

John McCourt approaches Trollope’s Irish novels with a similar fusion of biography, economics and literary criticism, to which he adds an ethical twist. The major social and ethical issue of hospitality, he argues, provides a useful key for understanding Trollope’s relationship with Ireland as staged in his Irish short stories and novels. His chapter examines Trollope’s position as a guest of the not-yet-formed Irish nation in a crucial and hugely difficult period in its history. McCourt further draws our attention to Trollope’s subsequent hosting of matters Irish (characters, names, political issues) in his more pointedly English fiction, such as *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*. He concludes with a brief look at how Trollope uses moments of hospitality to enact crucial advances in the plots of his novels.

In ‘Power in Numbers: Fetishes and Facts between Trollope and Law’, Anat Rosenberg investigates a peculiar occurrence of commodity fetishism in law which gained historical momentum in the late nineteenth century and which can be summarised as a fear of the social basis of economic evaluation. Trollope’s writings may illuminate this process. Rosenberg reads *An Autobiography* as a response to the problem of evaluation posed in *The Way We Live Now*. Trollope’s obsession with numerical representations of words, pages, hours and finally their corresponding list of prices, is, as critics have noted, a flight from the sociality of the market; it emerges in an almost ridiculously objectified representation of the value of Trollope’s (book) commodities. The process in Trollope, in its bluntness, sheds light on similar but less observed processes occurring in areas of consumer credit law. In these areas, numerical representations helped counter the fear of the masses entering markets. Representations of value through balance sheets and budgets were treated as having an asocial objective logic, as an express and overtly willed alternative to a social one.

Kate Flint’s chapter makes the *Edinburgh Companion to Anthony Trollope* come full circle. While Claire Jarvis reveals the sophistication behind the alleged shoddiness of Trollope’s language, thus understanding shoddiness in a figurative sense, Kate Flint draws a rich skein of meanings from the word ‘shoddy’ itself – meanings to which a Victorian reader would very likely have been sensible, but that are almost invisible today. On occasion, Trollope employs ‘shoddy’ in its original meaning, signifying a material made of recycled woollens. The inferior nature of shoddy products gave rise to what is, today, the term’s common understanding: something of poor quality and workmanship. Trollope
was an author who cared deeply about workmanship, tools and the degree of effort and self-regulation that went into his own writing. He regularly deploys – and relies on his reader to recognise – the web of cultural reference surrounding this particular word in order to link literary production, the importance of maintaining standards within a profession, and probity of character.

Notes