

SINCERITY AND REFLEXIVE SATIRE IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S *THE STRUGGLES OF BROWN, JONES AND ROBINSON*

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DESPITE THE RECENT REVIVAL of interest in the works of Anthony Trollope, his short novel *The Struggles of Brown, Jones and Robinson* has largely escaped serious attention.¹ Trollope called the book a “satire on the ways of trade,” (*Autobiography* 106) and serialized it in *Cornhill Magazine*, 1861–62. The novel turned out to be a critical and commercial failure, perhaps because it marked a dramatic departure from the familiar social comedy of *Barsetshire* novels.² Contemporary reviewers called it “coarse,” “odiously vulgar,” and “unmitigated rubbish.”³ Later readers were no more generous. C. P. Snow judged *SBJR* “one of the least funny books ever written” and thought Trollope had “perpetrated idiocy . . .” by writing it (95–96). I seek to revise this account by making the case that *SBJR* is a sophisticated satire that echoes the serious moral themes of Thomas Carlyle’s *Latter-Day Pamphlets* or *Past and Present*. We usually think of *The Way We Live Now* as Trollope’s most socially critical novel, but as James Kincaid suggests, *SBJR* forecasts the darker mood of Trollope’s *magnum opus* (164). It does this, I would argue, by reflexively critiquing the more optimistic “sincerity” ideal we associate with Trollope’s novels.⁴

As Lionel Trilling argues in *Sincerity and Authenticity*, sincerity is a deeply-rooted normative concept against which both individuals and societies can be measured. Sincerity “interrogates society on its own terms, with a view toward possible reformist action, and . . . is conceptually linked to a notion of integrity through critical reflection at both the individual and societal levels” (*The Way We Argue Now* 165). Authenticity, on the other hand, imagines social life as something we must overcome in order to achieve the full integration of the self with itself that sincerity promises but is not able to deliver. The literary exemplar is Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, a “troubling work” that “contains in sum the whole of the radical critique of European civilization that has been made by literature in the years since its publication” (Trilling 106). In *Heart of Darkness*, sincere, “civilized” society is “fraudulent and shameful” (Trilling 109) and if truth is to be found anywhere it is in shattering the comfortable web of proprieties that sincerity enables. To be authentic is precisely to see through sincerity’s illusion of normative completeness. As Amanda Anderson phrases it: “Authenticity as a form of experience not encompassed by the social helps to displace the constraints imposed by conventional life” (*The Way We Argue Now* 165). To say that a form of experience is “not encompassed by the social” is to say in effect that it lies outside of the

ambit of the sincerity norm. We tend to follow Trilling when we associate sincerity with a more naïve realism and authenticity with more advanced and experimental modernist culture.

I will modify Trilling's simple schema below, but I begin with the premise that Trollope embraces the sincerity ideal. Sincerity, which entails honesty, integrity and being true to oneself, is a core value for Trollope and correlates with his idea of the gentleman: "The . . . virtues always attributed to a gentleman are courage, courtesy, and truthfulness, but there is a special stress on truthfulness. . . . [K]eeping promises and not telling lies are only symptoms of the deeper honesty that distinguishes a gentleman" (Letwin 19).⁵ Satire is a natural ally for the writer who seeks to praise the virtues of sincerity. In Trollope's hands, "pedagogical realism" becomes a satirical weapon in a battle against hypocrisy whose goal is "to make virtue alluring and vice ugly" (*Autobiography* 143). Since Trollope needs to model sincerity in order to credibly condemn the dishonesty he is exposing, we should be able to locate a stable moral reference point within the novel. To avoid the charge of hypocrisy, a satire on insincerity should itself be sincere. This may be achieved by marking a rhetorical or narrative distance from the insincere world being satirized. Throughout his career, however, Trollope doubts whether the novel can disentangle itself from the world it satirizes. The most prominent example is the *Autobiography*, which teaches us to view satire as quintessentially dishonest. Discussing *The Way We Live Now*, Trollope writes:

[The novel] has the fault which is to be attributed to almost all satires. . . . The accusations are exaggerated. The vices . . . are coloured so as to make effect rather than represent truth. Who, when the lash of oburgation is in his hands, can so moderate his arm as never to strike harder than justice would require? The spirit which produces the satire is honest enough, but the very desire which moves the satirist to do his work energetically, makes him dishonest. (225)

This is a tantalizing comment, suggesting a reflexive awareness "that there may be no vantage of pure honesty from which to wage a critique against an impure age" (Anderson, "Trollope's Modernity" 525). It is a self-questioning stance with deep roots in Trollope. Much earlier than the so-called darker work of the later period (Polhemus 186), Trollope had begun to raise doubts about the pedagogical prospects of the novel-of-sincerity. His unpublished 1855–56 book of essays, *The New Zealander*; for example, is an extended meditation on the fate of sincerity in the modern world. The essays in *The New Zealander* echo *Past and Present* or *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and inveigh against the corrosive dishonesty of modern institutions (e.g., "The Press," "Literature," "The Church"):

We buy and sell dishonestly. In power we talk dishonestly to those below us. We, the people, murmur dishonestly at those above us. . . . Among ourselves we associate dishonestly cheating each other and ourselves with a vain belief that dullness is delightful, and tedium a pleasure. But worst of all, we write dishonestly. Even those who take upon themselves the sacred duty of instructing their brother men, of teaching from day to day what the duty of the people is; they also do dishonest work, thinking more, much more, of the greatness of the teacher than the welfare of the taught. (*The New Zealander* 7)

"We write dishonestly": the first-person plural embeds the Carlylean satirist within the satirical frame. The object of satire cannot be neatly corralled into Trilling's sincerity narrative but is rather dispersed into the institutions and culture of liberal modernity. *The*

New Zealander implicates the reader directly in the root corruption of the social: “Reader, are you honest to yourself, when you hardly endure with slow patience the tedium of some dull party, *because society requires it?*”(7). Such sentiments are out of step with the image of professional success that Trollope sells us in his *Autobiography*: “Success is necessary to excellence. Such is the motto of the present age; and the very motto is the proof of dishonesty” (*The New Zealander* 8). In short, borrowing from Carlyle, *The New Zealander* hazards a theory of “constitutive insincerity,” by which I mean insincerity imagined not as a discrete character flaw but as a generalized precondition of all social interaction.

Read in conjunction with *An Autobiography* and *The New Zealander*, *SBJR* demonstrates the double bind of a literary satire that occupies the same social field of insincerity that it satirizes. On the one hand, Trollope’s satire is meant to expose hypocrisy and promote the sincerity ideal. On the other hand, the satirist is an exaggerator, sadistically wielding a cruel “lash of objuraction” to goad us into sincerity. A Trollopien satire on insincerity thus risks performative contradiction, implicating the socially-critical satire within the field of the social it criticizes. What if there is no safe vantage point from which to critique? Worse still, what if insincerity is constitutive of social interactions? To address these global questions while still attempting to be true to his local sincerity ideal, Trollope splits *SBJR* into two frames. The first frame is darkly ironic, inviting us to mock the vulgar characters, as well as the narrator’s cynicism and ambitions to Arnoldian Culture. The second, more sympathetic frame allows the main character, Robinson, to make his case for constitutive insincerity directly. Here we are invited to be insiders to the hypocritical game that is mocked by the first frame. This second frame speaks to the cynic in all of us, but the double framing leads to a novel deeply ambivalent about its own sympathies.

Trollope attempts a stable ironic closure on the corrupt insincerity in which *SBJR*-as-satire also self-consciously participates, but this closure proves difficult for several reasons. First, the satirist cannot easily disentangle his own compromised motives from the object of satire, which is the impure society that he himself occupies (and on whose terms he desires to succeed). A sadistic desire to chastise the wicked will get the better of his sense of proportion and accuracy, leading him to enact the very insincerity he ostensibly opposes. Moreover, as we learn in the *The New Zealander*, there may be no safe, uncompromised ground from which to critique insincerity. This sense of complicity was not unique to Trollope. Victorian novelists were often ambivalent towards the commodification of their own fictions: “Adopting a moral a stance against the commodification of the world, novelists increasingly understood that literary work itself was increasingly commodified; they were, as a result, required to negotiate between their moral condemnation and their implication in what they opposed” (Miller 7). Trollope expresses this ambivalence by satirizing the viability of the sincerity ethos. Perhaps *SBJR* sits uneasily in the Trollope canon because it reflexively situates the novel-of-sincerity in the disenchanting commercial culture that it is the vocation of the novel to satirize.

Closure is also difficult because the social world that satire wants to treat ironically is itself becoming ironic: advertising and commodity culture have begun to appropriate literary language and to replace culture-as-*Bildung* (authenticity) with culture as rhetorical performance (insincerity). Here the middle term, sincerity, disappears from view. Worldly success requires each of us to be an artist of deception, and rhetoric, the aesthetic and the performative are key resources available to anyone with native talent but without much capital. *SBJR* is reflexively working out its own style of literary sociology, anticipating the

theories that we apply to the nineteenth-century novel. This is a book dissecting symbolic capital (Bourdieu 75) written by a figure who wants to disenchant the charismatic prestige of Carlyle's Man-of-Letters Hero. The basic message of the *Autobiography* is that marketable cultural production is democratically available to anyone willing to work at it. No magical or Romantic qualities such as "imagination" or "genius" are required (Kendrick 34). But even the workaday success that is supposed to act as compensation for discarding the mythology of Romantic genius has been called into question by the power of "constitutive insincerity." After all, sincerity may be able to produce good work but only insincerity (in the form of advertising and self promotion) can sell it. In order to advance this dual critique of both success and insincerity, Trollope places his own highly-valued literary capital inside *SBJR*'s satirical frame.

1. Advertising, Satire, and Displaced Bildung

SBJR RECOUNTS THE RISE AND FALL of a haberdashery in London's fashionable West End.⁶ The hero is George Robinson, a former "bill-sticker" who is now attempting to climb the social ladder by becoming rich in trade. The novel is a familiar mix of social satire, *Bildungsroman*, memoir, and domestic romance, resembling on its surface the familiar bankruptcy novels of the age (Reed 190–92). The title "Brown, Jones and Robinson" suggests that this is a novel of a generic Everyman.⁷ The narrative voice is mixed: the "Preface, by One of the Firm" is voiced in a first person memoir style and sets out Robinson's *Bildung* in the poetry of the marketplace, allowing him to explain his newfangled theories of advertising. Although much of the remainder of the novel is written in the third person, it is characterized by strong elements of free indirect discourse implying a first-person perspective. Robinson is a knowing, self-conscious narrator, and imposes his own hermeneutic on the novel, which he wants us to read as a hybrid of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Following *Lear*, *SBJR* revolves around an inheritance – here a £4,000 bequest from Mr. Brown's wife – to be divided among Mr. Brown, his daughters, and their hangers-on (including Robinson). We are asked to view a retired butter merchant, Mr. Brown, as *King Lear* while his daughters Maryanne and Sarah Jane serve as substitutes for Goneril and Regan (to whom they are explicitly compared). Maryanne is the novel's Cordelia figure and is the love object both of the narrator Robinson and a comical butcher named Mr. Brisket.

Robinson is also *Hamlet*: a self-conscious narrator trapped in a world of social surfaces. Robinson is a creative artist, "an author in his own line" (20). The early pages position him as a new kind of man who is filled with up-to-date ideas about modern business. *SBJR* even invokes *Hamlet*'s "assume a virtue if you have it not" to explain Robinson's own theory of constitutive insincerity:

Well, there you are; a young tradesman beginning the world without capital. Capital, though it's a bugbear, nevertheless it's a virtue. Therefore, as you haven't got it, you must assume it. That's credit. . . . To obtain credit the only certain method is to advertise. Advertise, advertise, advertise. That is, assume, assume, assume. Go on assuming your virtue. The more you haven't got it, the more you must assume it. . . . Advertise long enough, and credit will come. (9)

In *Hamlet*, such ideas involve bitter, tragic irony. This is not the way the world is supposed to be. Here, the distance between what *is* and what *ought to be* is collapsed. Unlike *Hamlet*,

Robinson accepts the Faustian bargain with success that we all must make. The narrator does more than flirt with cynicism: he is himself thoroughly disenchanted. The novel implicates Trollope-as-satirist, Robinson and *SBJR*'s readership in a broad and caustic critique of generalized insincerity. Rather than allow us to hang back at a distance, the passage above throws us into the world in its immediacy: "there you are." And if by chance you are "there" with no money, you will not have the luxury of rejecting insincerity as a matter of principle. To the contrary, you will need to get the world's attention with all the tools that "insincere" rhetoric has to offer. Which is to say: you will need to advertise. Trollope shows us that advertising is "better than capital" precisely because advertising is able to map the aesthetic onto the commercial world, and although we may object that business and the imagination are – or ought to be – ontologically opposed, Trollope will eventually foreclose this argument in the *Autobiography*. An exchange between Robinson and Brown illustrates the point. When Mr. Brown complains that their firm does not actually possess the merchandise that they are advertising, Robinson demurs:

"Did you ever believe an advertisement?" Jones, in self-defense, protested that he never had. "And why should others be more simple than you? No man, – no woman believes them. They are not lies; for it is not intended that they should obtain credit. I should despise the man who attempted to base his advertisements on a system of facts, as I would the builder who lays his foundation upon the sand. The groundwork of advertising is romance. It is poetry in its very essence. Is *Hamlet* true?" (75)

If taken seriously, as *The New Zealander* has taught us to do, such observations create a problem: the Trollopien novelist wants to lift the curtain to show the truth behind the fiction. But what if society is so corrupt that the question of truth is simply irrelevant to a buying public (and readership) that only cares to have its consumer preferences satisfied?⁸ And likewise, if the advertiser takes liberties with reality, who cares as long as a larger social purpose is met? "If a tradesman can induce a lady to buy a . . . cashmere shawl by telling her that he has 1,200 of them, who is injured? And if the shawl is not exactly . . . cashmere, what harm is done as long as the lady gets the value for her money?" (*SBJR* 35). What harm if the buying public and the entrepreneur enter a symbolic contract in which truth is simply superfluous, all to the end of getting their money's worth? On this strict utilitarian logic, we might say that insincerity is a victimless crime. The effects of fiction are more important than fiction's literal truth in the same way that advertising is better than capital: both are intended to create the world that they pretend to describe. To achieve this "co-creation," the advertiser/writer needs the active collaboration of an audience pursuing its own selfish gratification.⁹

It is no coincidence that Trollope chooses *Lear* and *Hamlet* as his governing textual metaphors: as Lionel Trilling reminds us, both plays lament the loss of integrity and plain speech at the heart of the sincerity norm.¹⁰ But the Shakespearean analogies are also deliberately overstretched, so that even when Robinson gets the literary quotes right, the novel mocks his grandiose self delusion. We are invited to distance ourselves from the object of satire. We see the essential absurdity of Robinson's situation, even if he cannot. Viewed from a different angle, however, *SBJR* is more sympathetic to Robinson, who, after all, gives voice to the theory of constitutive insincerity embodied in *The New Zealander*. The effect of this double-framing – sometimes sympathetic and sometimes mocking – is to create a novel with no clear moral center, which challenges the idea of a stable vantage point based on

the sincerity norm. The customary signposts have been removed, and Trollope seems to be questioning his own pedagogy of novel-writing in which vice is shown to be ugly and virtue beautiful. As participants in Trollope's generalized insincerity, where the need to sell oneself has only intensified in the democratic age, we are more like Robinson than we may care to admit. The sympathies are not coincidental, but part of Trollope's larger social critique of insincerity and his concerns with the fate of the high cultural tradition in the modern, democratic age.

SBJR bristles with literary and cultural signifiers. This is a novel about the fate of a poetic vocation in the commercial world, where the *Bildung* of art and literature has been absorbed into the rhetoric of advertising and subjected to the unbending demands of a mass public wanting its consumer preferences gratified. It is a world where the artist's vocation has lost all integrity or autonomy, where cultural capital – the hard-won cultural capital that the *Autobiography* has taught us to cherish – has become another tool in the conman's bag of tricks. Robinson, the advertising man, has his literary-cultural capital everywhere on display. The sheer quantity of allusion and quotation would have been notable in a book twice as long as *SBJR*, but is truly remarkable for such a short work. The narrator quotes or alludes to Horace (79), Juvenal (168), Molière (175), Cowper (184), Milton (71, 114), Spenser (123), Goldsmith (85), Dryden (97), George Wither (53), Shakespeare,¹¹ Lawrence Sterne (162), Thomas Carlyle (186), Charles Dickens (56), John Gay (93), Thomas Hood (59, 61, 63), Alexander Pope (17), the Bible,¹² and the Book of Common Prayer (96). At least once, Robinson mixes the quotes and references,¹³ a mish-mash that hints at a sort of counterfeit aesthetics.

This effusion of cultural references suggests that Robinson is a proxy for Trollope. Both Trollope and Robinson are types of modern, democratic man, lacking substantial capital, who nonetheless apply native talent and creativity in the only field open to them: the small entrepreneurial business enterprise. Trollope must have sympathized with Robinson's plight as an author of commercial fictions and been acutely aware that in its essential dishonesty, a literary satire on insincerity risks performative contradiction.¹⁴ This talk of cultural capital calls to mind the *Autobiography*'s disdain for the newly-instituted competitive civil service exams. Trollope was proud of his literary-cultural capital and thought that it better qualified him for a career at the Post Office than performance on some standardized test: "I could have given a fuller list of the names of the poets of all countries, with their subjects and periods. . . . I had read Shakespeare and Byron and Scott and could talk about them. The music of the Miltonic line was familiar to me. I had already made up my mind that *Pride and Prejudice* was the best novel in the English language" (*Autobiography* 32). All of those cultural reference points mean little where worldly success depends on test scores and not on hard-won erudition. As if to prove Trollope's theory, Robinson is presented to us as an autodidact with natural aesthetic talent:

He had been in his boyhood . . . a bill-sticker. . . . In his earlier days, he carried the paste and pole, and earned a livelihood by putting up notices of theatrical announcements on the hoardings of the metropolis. There was, however, that within him which Nature did not intend to throw away on the sticking of bills. . . . The lad, while he was running the streets with his pole in his hand, and his pot round his neck, learned first to read, and then to write what others might read. From studying the bills which he carried, he soon took to original composition; and it may be said of him, that in fluency of language and richness of imagery few surpassed him. (20)

Robinson's education in poetic language has given him an angle. He has learned how to wield culture and the power of imagination instrumentally, adeptly manipulating consumer psychology and capitalizing on his audience's key weakness: they are people who care less about truth than they do about getting a good deal. Like Trollope, Robinson is realistic about the limits of human nature. And like Carlyle, *Trollope* realizes that the quintessential poetry of the marketplace is advertising. He thus has Robinson invest the firm's seed capital in an extravagant promotional campaign, including branding the firm as "Magenta House," hiring men in suits of armor to carry signs, and publicizing the firm's arbitrary slogan "Nine times nine is eighty-one" on "walls, omnibuses, railway stations, little books, pavement chalking, illuminated notices, porters' backs, gilded cars" (30). With entrepreneurial verve, Robinson creates a marketing campaign for the "Katakairion Shirt," which has "thoroughly overcome the difficulties, hitherto found to be insurmountable, of adjusting the bodies of the Nobility and Gentry to an article which shall be at the same time elegant, comfortable, lasting, and cheap" (77). Robinson's rhetorical tricks establish "a considerable trade . . . within six months" (79).

These rather avant garde notions do not please Robinson's partners, who have the sort of tedious questions about inventory and merchandise that are the stuff of old-fashioned commerce. In a straightforward didactic novel, Robinson's partners could have represented some stable moral reference point. But here they just seem out of touch and lacking imagination. Robinson rebuts their common sense arguments by appealing to the most advanced commercial principles: "But I've got that which is better than capital. . . . And if you'll trust me, Mr. Brown, I won't see you put upon" (20). The two principles of this new system are advertising and credit. Why focus on advertising and credit? For several reasons. First, both advertising and credit promise the newcomer starting capital *ex nihilo* if only the new man will feign sincerity in order to achieve success. In *SBJR*, business is a species of rhetoric, the province of fast-talking salesmen and the world of the commercial hustle. Advertising relies on the style, wit, and fluency of expression that are the hallmarks of imaginative literature. The result is that great landmarks of literature may function as the training ground for commercial speculation – Arnoldian culture as seedbed of insincerity. But if *Hamlet's* "assume a virtue if you have it not" is laced with tragic bitterness, in *SBJR* it appears as a rather unremarkable, taken-for-granted feature of all social life. On a very basic level, after all, we even lie when we observe ordinary social decorum. "Is not this the way in which we all live," Robinson asks sensibly, "and the only way in which it is possible to live comfortably?" (8). Without insincerity social life would be impossible.

All of this is to say that Trollope's satire does not allow us to keep a safe distance. Our hands are dirty, too. Insincerity, which Trollope would like to channel into notions of individual character is instead routine, ordinary, and generalized. Other people's desire for prestige is easy enough to mock when located at a convenient distance, but Trollope collapses this distance by reflecting the satire back on us: we share with the objects of Trollope's satire the banal and otherwise unimpeachable desire to be successful. (But perhaps our ordinariness is the very origin of satire's quarrel with the world.) Trollope will not allow his audience to avoid complicity through the alienation effects of Dickens or Carlyle (*e.g.*, caricature and the grotesque). Instead, we are complicit in the scramble for prestige, status, and profit that we would prefer to impute to others (*e.g.*, through our morally upright reading of satirical novels). Robinson voices Trollope's suspicion that a satirical attitude towards rank has now become part of the status system that satire claims to despise. As in *The New Zealander*, *SBJR's*

first-person plurals hail us: “We of all people are not very fond of dukes; but we’d all like to be dukes well enough ourselves. Now there are dukes in trade as well as in society. Capitalists are our dukes . . . [capital] is their star and garter, their coronet, their robe of state” (30). In this sentence satire and a critique of satire forge an uneasy rhetorical alliance. Although the Benthamite marketplace is in theory a great leveler and modernizer, it has not quite broken the spell of aristocratic status distinctions.¹⁵ We may have reformed our institutions, but we have not reformed our “recalcitrant psychologies” (Anderson, “Trollope’s Modernity” 510), which frustrate any attempt to bring society in line with virtue. In fact, it may be that our desire for status and prestige, a classic object of satire, has only been sharpened by the purportedly democratic marketplace. As Trollope admits in his *Autobiography*: “I have always had before my eyes the charms of reputation” (72). The same could be said of the protagonist of *SBJR*. Since Robinson’s cynical yet enchanted attitude towards the aesthetic resembles Trollope’s own, it is worth some brief comments on the *Autobiography*.

2. *An Autobiography and the Disenchantment of Genius*

SBJR ANTICIPATES THE WELL-KNOWN discussion of writing, aesthetics, and success in Trollope’s *Autobiography*, where we discover that the writer’s relationship to his mimetic practices is essentially an ethical one. Trollope’s professional writer is a professional by virtue of craft and productivity, and does not enjoy access to a special “ontic logos” (Taylor 144) such as Romantic Imagination. In fact, Trollope would have us shed, once and for all, the Wordsworthian image of an overheated imagination cooling in solitude.¹⁶ Throughout the *Autobiography*, Trollope aligns novel-writing with clerky attention to detail, the work ethic, and accountability. Viewed uncharitably, this would reduce novels to no more than petty bourgeois clerical work. In chapter seven, he has been describing a novel writing process bound to deadlines and budgets, when he pauses to account for the opposing discourse of genius:

It will be said, perhaps, that a man whose work has risen to no higher pitch than mine has attained has no right to speak of the strains and impulses to which real genius is exposed . . . I . . . venture to advise young men who look forward to authorship as the business of their lives, even when they propose that the authorship should be of the highest class known, to avoid enthusiastic rushes with their pens and to seat themselves at their desks day by day, as though they were lawyers’ clerks – and so let them sit until the allotted task shall be accomplished. (82)

As Walter Kendrick points out, this belittling of the “man of genius” “is directed against the cult of personality that was an important feature of mid-Victorian literary criticism, as it had been of Romantic poetic theory” (33). Trollope’s critique of “real genius,” of course, causes us to suspect a petty resentment of *real genius*. Since it may seem like special pleading for a novelist to criticize “real genius,” there is a risk of costly self-exposure. Trollope seems palpably defensive about this possibility: we are to understand that he has never dreaded deadlines or passively awaited inspiration. For the true professional, this is all just the self-indulgent handwringing of the bohemian poseur. Instead, we should simply regard the novelist as a commodity producer meeting consumer demand rather than an unpredictable genius following an esoteric, creative spirit. Professionals do not whine, after all, they work.

But there is more at stake than resentment in the *Autobiography*. Trollope makes a case for exposing the machinery of artistic reputation to a kind of cultural capital critique. He argues persuasively against the bohemian view “that an author in his authorship should not regard money,” reminding us that art has always been financed by patronage or sold on the open market:

Did Titian or Rubens disregard their pecuniary rewards? As far we know Shakespeare worked always for money, giving the best of his intellect to support his trade as an actor. In our own century what literary names stand higher than those of Byron, Tennyson, Scott, Dickens, Macaulay and Carlyle? . . . [I]t is a mistake to suppose that a man is a better man because he despises money. Few do so, and those few, in so doing suffer defeat. Who does not desire to be hospitable to his friends, generous to the poor, liberal to all, magnificent to his children, and to be himself free from the carking fears which poverty creates? (71–72)

Art is a form of symbolic currency, a commodity not unlike the commodities and services produced by other professionals. Even if we want to retain the Romantic view of art, the *Autobiography* reveals what is usually a half-hidden truth: the authenticity of art has always been bound up with the insincerity inherent in its financing and distribution. Openly acknowledging this gritty empirical fact risks foregoing the symbolic promise of happiness that we would like to preserve in the aesthetic, but it also offers a critical moment of its own. Trollope disenchants the art of novel writing to prevent it from becoming part of an exclusionary, un-democratic culture of Romantic genius by marking itself off as sacred. Trollope’s “man of letters,” as opposed to Carlyle’s, is a defiant anti-hero who wants to unseat aspirants to cultural capital by demystifying their symbolic power. But on a practical level this requires a sacrifice of sorts to open up the line of communication between art and mass audience that Trollope felt had been compromised by the discourse of poetic genius. We may say that Trollope’s *Autobiography* is that sacrificial object.

The *Autobiography* wants to show us, at least by implication, that the ideal of sincerity is perfectly compatible with worldly success. But Trollope’s fiction doesn’t support this conclusion: because success is itself a moral problem, even pedagogical realism, if it would reach a mass public, will be trapped within the ethos it deplors. In *SBJR*, Trollope turns this insight into a moral critique of symbolic capital and trains the status satire on literary language. Compare Trollope’s critique of insincerity with the parallel normative projects of Carlyle and Dickens. For both Carlyle and Dickens, the commercial world presents moral challenges that must be resolved at least in part by an appeal to values that transcend that world. *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Hard Times*, and *A Christmas Carol* each posit a world redeemable, if at all, by love, generosity, and altruism. Borrowing from Carlyle, *Hard Times* depicts English society in the grips of a soul-deadening philosophy of money. For Dickens and Carlyle, the marketplace destroys social bonds and authentic community, a tragic wound that Gradgrind’s spiritually bankrupt philosophy cannot heal. *SBJR*, though, provides a more complex analysis of market society than the Dickens/Carlyle line of attack on the cash nexus. By reframing the marketplace as a site of imagination and aesthetic power – rather than as a negation of it – Trollope is able to show how modern advertising culture was adapting itself to the aesthetic and moral critiques of Dickens and Carlyle. The astute entrepreneurs of a new generation can now incorporate poetry within the framework

of commerce. This accommodation suggests that there is no pure language, no “outside” of the system from which virtue can preach sermons against vice.

Similarly, both Carlyle and Dickens had wanted to re-enchant society, to resist the ever-present allures of cynicism and instrumental reason. Thomas Carlyle encouraged the Victorians to regard the aesthetic as a moral resource available exclusively to the sacred producers of the symbolic. Since the market might not always disenchant, but rather produce other “baleful fiats of enchantment” – Carlyle’s phrase for the cultural symptoms produced by surplus value or commodity fetishism – the Man-of-Letters Hero needed to beat the enchanters at their own game (*Past and Present* 7). Carlyle’s culture critic would reify symbolic resistance to the instrumental by carving out expressive space within the professions officially recognized by modern culture. Or consider another comparison with Dickens: in *David Copperfield*, Dickens hopes that the overwhelming narrative force of the lyrical “I” will finesse the split between the hero’s cynicism and his lingering Romantic desire for a better world. David’s career describes an arc, a complete story in which the cynical can be glimpsed as merely a debt that future happiness owes to present unhappiness. Trollope is not committed to an ethics of redemption, so cynicism must be given its due in the present, without the same appeal to a future in which cynicism can be shown as just a moment of doubt to be discarded as inauthentic. Understanding that a once-critical Romanticism was on its way to becoming normative, Trollope opens the hermeneutic circle of the non-instrumental by showing that resistance to the market has become a fungible product in a second-order marketplace of symbolic goods. Carlyle draws upon an existential, charismatic Calvinism to position himself outside of ordinary experience in the tradition of the jeremiad. Dickens re-enchants everyday communities. Trollope, on the other hand, resists such transcendental appeals and largely rejects Carlyle’s “mimetic anticapitalism”: *i.e.*, where Carlyle confronts the market with a grotesquely distorted reflection of its legitimating ideas, Trollope simply does not see market society as fatally compromised by its utilitarian apologetics. For Trollope, the existence of a public, professional world is a constant feature of human history. Thus, unlike Carlyle and Dickens, Trollope is not required to twist his syntax to represent a twisted world: everyday language will do just fine. Romantic Imagination is deliberately silenced by the clockwork instrumentality of writing for money, line by line, hour after hour. By bringing literature, and thus the Imagination, into the frame of the business world, Robinson’s speculative theory of capitalism works as ironic commentary on the fate of literature and *Bildung* in entrepreneurial hands. He is worldly and even world-weary, coming across as something of a cynic: “There’s the same game going on all the world over; and it’s the natural game for mankind to play at” (8). Newcomers have no choice but to master the art of persuasive insincerity. And poetic language is the most highly-developed form of persuasion that we have. By cynically framing the very grounds of critique as just another ruse of the market, Trollope (in Robinson’s voice) refuses to indulge anti-commercial nostalgia for an authentic moment when language and culture were not bedeviled by a philosophy of money. Re-enchantment through Imagination is off the table.

3. *Plate Glass and Reflexive Satire*

IN *NOVELS BEHIND GLASS*, Andrew Miller discusses the new importance of plate glass display windows for the Victorian cityscape: “These windows radically transfigured the experience of walking through commercial sections of London, fashioning the streets into gas-lit spaces

of utopian splendor. . . . [T]he windows themselves cease to be transparent media for display and become items of display themselves, worthy of study and admiration” (1–2). Trollope does not miss the framing power of plate glass in this new world of generalized insincerity. Early on, he has Robinson argue eloquently for an outlay of capital to buy an expensive plate glass window for their firm:

Of all our materials now in general use . . . glass is the most brilliant, and yet the cheapest; the most graceful and yet the strongest. Though transparent it is impervious to wet. The eye travels through it, but not the hailstorm. . . . To that which is ordinary it lends grace; and to that which is graceful it gives a double luster. Like a good advertisement, it multiplies your stock tenfold, and like a good servant, it is always eloquent in praise of its owner. (32)

“The eye travels through it”: thus conceived, glass would ideally be a transparent medium, a technology of honesty. This is familiar territory for Trollope, who saw his own novels as anchored in an ethos of transparent representation (Anderson, “Trollope’s Modernity” 510). *SBJR* figures glass as just one more insincere “advertisement” for itself, another opaque commodity in a world of generalized insincerity and self promotion (“it is always eloquent in praise of its owner”) that transparent realism was supposed to expose. It is an icon of insincerity. The satire-as-commodity is enclosed by a rhetorical structure that is durable and attractive at the same time. The objects placed in the shop window of modern commercial literature are amplified by the framer’s aesthetic sensibility.

Robinson’s aesthetic theories would seem to be subverted when Mr. Brown reminds us that there is, after all, a final instrumental purpose to all of this framing: “It’s beautiful to hear him talk . . . but it’s the bill I’m thinking of” (32). But the bottom line is not the last word in the novel. We share Robinson’s sense that there is something naïve in Mr. Brown’s objection, something perhaps that aligns him with an outmoded, Trollopien cult of integrity. Robinson’s partners do not understand a basic truth of the modern world: because we need to advertise, ordinary commerce now requires a negation of first-order prudence in order to launch a profitable second-order enterprise upon which insincerity is merely a down payment. Instead, the old timers want business to be based on stable norms and settled expectations, those shopworn principles of small-minded Anglo-Saxon commerce. Robinson tries to enlighten them on several occasions:

The firm had commenced their pecuniary transactions on a footing altogether weak and insubstantial. They had shown their own timidity, and had confessed, by the nature of their fiscal transactions, that they knew themselves to be small. To their advertising agents they should have never been behindhand in their payments for one day; but they should have been bold in demanding credit from their bank, and should have given their orders to wholesale houses without any of that hesitation or reserve which so clearly indicates feebleness of purpose. (151)

Robinson alone understands that credit precedes capital – a firm needs to generate buzz in order to garner the support of the customers, suppliers, and financiers who are to provide the capital the business needs to establish itself on a firm footing in the first place. On this view, sound principles are ironically unsound because they seem calculated and therefore inauthentic. Prudence and sincerity ooze “feebleness of purpose,” sending signals to the buying public that you are no true artist but instead just a lowly tradesman. Telling the plain

truth simply means that you do not possess the confidence for the necessary lies. To forestall this line of attack from a jaded public, Robinson tries to redeem the firm's initial insincerity gambit by framing what may appear as a mere swindle in an entrepreneurial philosophy of life-as-risk, but his analysis reveals the instrumental and practical core at the heart of his commercial romance. In other words, maybe one really does need capital, and one's language does need to be grounded in something like sincerity.

But *SBJR* relentlessly forecloses this option. So although the other characters question Robinson's theories, none of them ever achieves the status of representative sincerity figure. Robinson's romantic rival, Brisket, for example, although described as "honest" and down to earth is in reality merely vulgar and self-interested. He shops for a rich wife like a butcher going to market. Another character, Poppins, is also a sincerity candidate. He and Robinson have several discussions throughout the novel on the advertising system. Robinson tries to explain that having a good shirt to market means nothing unless the public knows of it. "As far as I can see," Poppins responds cynically, "everything is mostly lies." Here is the narrator's commentary:

Poppins possessed a glimmering of light, but it was only a glimmering. He could understand that a man should not call his own goods middling; but he could not understand that a man is only carrying out that same principle in an advanced degree, when he proclaims with a hundred thousand voices in a hundred thousand places, that the article which he desires to sell is the best that the word has yet produced. . . . It's the poetry of euphemism. (119–20)

Robinson's theories make some sense. As a budding entrepreneur, he knows that he needs to reverse the temporal, cause-effect relationship in language: the linguistic reality principle is fine if you are already in possession of the object to which your language putatively refers. Robinson, however, must convince a buying public to co-create a future reality with him. Thus, his strategies must be performative and forward looking. Social newcomers are in a tight spot: they cannot simply say what they mean since they lack precisely those material advantages their rhetoric is intended to create. Sincerity, on this view, is a luxury reserved for the comfortable and well-established. If the newcomer speaks the truth, – "I have nothing to sell to you at present but would like your confidence and financing so I may set about acquiring it" – his efforts would simply fail. Nobody sets out to fail, so money must be obtained somehow, even if the buying public is unwilling to credit the entrepreneur without some tangible proof that he is already in possession of the goods that he needs their money to buy. Robinson knows that in order to succeed in a crowded marketplace his firm must be both *avant garde* and well-pedigreed. Sensing these conflicts, Robinson knows that he cannot afford to finance the ethic of honesty and integrity for which Trollope argues in the *Autobiography*.

4. Bankrupt by Publicity

GIVEN ROBINSON'S *HAMLET/LEAR* FRAME, the novel must end in tragedy. The downfall of Magenta House begins appropriately enough in scandal: Mr. Jones had been "ticketing" items (*i.e.*, displaying sample goods in the shop window and then selling inferior copies), a mean sort of swindle that Robinson abhors. A Mrs. Morony demands to purchase the actual ticketed article and calls in the police and the newspapers when refused. Soon, the

newspapers are attacking Magenta House and the fickle public turns against them. Bankruptcy follows. Creditors ask Robinson to help liquidate the firm's inventory in a final sale and while composing the "sacrificial catalogue," he clings to artistic autonomy and demands creative control of his work. When the creditors insist on editorial changes, Robinson bemoans the loss of creative integrity and responds as any sincere author would to the editorial meddling of commercial types: "It is a terrible thing to have to draw up a document for the approval of others. One's choicest words are torn away, one's figures of speech are maltreated, one's stops are misunderstood, and one's very syntax is put to confusion; and then, at last, whole paragraphs are cashiered as unnecessary" (175). Trollope was acutely aware that working Robinson's brand of rhetorical magic for a disenchanting marketplace comes at a heavy price. Perhaps he intuited that with its powerful aesthetic component, advertising had become a ready-made Romantic substitute for the *Bildung* that the hero of the English novel had wanted to achieve through the gentleman's education.

In the end, Robinson hopes to reinforce his own questionable claims to integrity by making a case for his disinterestedness: "I came to it empty-handed, and I shall go out as empty. No one shall say that I cared more for myself than for the firm" (162). As Robinson reflects on the failure of the enterprise, he reluctantly concedes the virtues of sound economic principles:

A tradesman in preparing the ordinary advertisements of his business is obliged to remember the morrow. He must not risk everything on one throw of the die. . . . But in preparing for a final sacrifice the artist may give the reins to his imagination, and plunge at once into the luxuries of the superlative. But to this pleasure there was one drawback. The thing had been done so often that superlatives had lost their value, and it had come to pass that the strongest language sounded impotently in the palled ears of the public. (170)

The first few sentences provide the voice of sincere common sense that we may be tempted to attribute to Trollope himself. Against the grain of its satire on entrepreneurial culture, here the novel does seem to suggest that Robinson is capable of authentic creativity as he turns the prosaic details of Magenta House's bankruptcy into a kind of poetry. At the moment when Robinson is truly working for a patron, the link between art and insincerity is broken, if only for a moment. Bankruptcy contains the seed of a more dialectical process: in failure, the luxuries of the imagination can flourish, unfettered by self-interest and the socializing restraints of sincerity. There is nothing left to do at this point but to gamble on a fleeting moment of authenticity.

5. Conclusion

ALTHOUGH BANKRUPT, ROBINSON REFUSES to "sink into a literary hack" (184). In the final chapter, "George Robinson's Dream," we learn that Robinson still clings to his fantasy of wealth through advertising. After praising the "the giants of trade," Robinson remembers the admonition of Poppins that "you advertising chaps never do anything. All that printing never makes the world any richer" (185) and then reminds us of similar comments in *Past and Present*: "A man goes into hats, and in order to force a sale, he builds a large cart in the shape of a hat, paints it blue, and has it drawn through the streets. He still finds that his sale is not rapid; and with a view of increasing it, what shall he do? Shall he make his

felt hats better, or shall he make his wooden hat bigger?" (186). Carlyle and Poppins think that if the virtuous businessman simply makes better products the rest will fall into place on its own. But Trollope knows better. Trollope, as much as Carlyle, would like to embrace the sincerity paradigm implied in Carlyle's critique of advertising. But the call of material success is powerful. The narrator continues:

If the hats sold from the different marts be not good enough, with whom does the fault rest? Is it not with the customers who purchase them? Am I to protect the man who demands from me a cheap hat? . . . The world of purchasers will have cheap articles, and the world of commerce must supply them. The world of purchasers will have their ears tickled, and the world of commerce must tickle them. . . If there be dishonesty in this, it is with the purchaser, not with the vendor, – with the public, not with the tradesman. (186–87)

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle had advocated a doctrine of noble work: "All work, even cotton-spinning, is noble; work alone is noble" (155). But Trollope identifies a flaw in this doctrine. However noble everyday work might be, we must still work with tools ready-to-hand, however smeared they are by the grime of quotidian compromise. Where the "work" is a satirical novel advancing a theory of constitutive insincerity, the compromises of its communication to a corrupt public become doubly ironic. Relying on a consumer satisfaction model to critique insincerity means that a commercially successful literary satire might be turned into just another type of insincere cultural capital. So while Robinson initially dismisses both Poppins and Carlyle as naïve, he asks us to consider the possibility that they are half right, that perhaps there is a middle road:

"What if those two philosophers had on their side some truth! He would fain be honest if he knew the way. What if those names on [Robinson's] list were the names of false gods, whose worship would lead him to a hell of swindlers instead of the bright heaven of commercial nobility. . . . Was a man bound to produce true shirts for the world's benefit even though he should make no money by so doing – either true shirts or none at all?" (187–88)

Exasperated by all the complex philosophizing, Robinson paraphrases Carlyle approvingly: "Let us each look to his own work" (187).

Perhaps the mid-Victorian petit-bourgeois hero simply lacks the money and the leisure to take the Grand Tour, to debate poetry and politics in coffee houses and avail himself of other elevated aesthetic experiences reserved for the well-heeled. The skepticism voiced by Poppins regarding Robinson's "vocation" hints at the pressures faced by the mid-Victorian hero with literary and professional ambitions: "You've been making out all those long stories about things that never existed" (159). To the eye of a clerk, imagination seems a very poor investment indeed. Similarly, Robinson's ambitions to culture reveal his status climbing, as well as Trollope's own attitude towards the indebtedness of novel writing to advertising. For Trollope's autodidact hero, the vestigial pressure to aestheticize one's life is still powerfully present as a promise of future class and status mobility. Robinson, we recall, has his culture from reading the advertisements that he pasted up as a young "bill-sticker," the cheap mid-Victorian equivalent of Schiller's aesthetic education: "From studying the bills he carried, he soon took to original composition; and it may be said of him that in fluency of language and richness of imagery few surpassed him" (20). George Robinson's defense of

advertising-as-*Bildung* also reveals the ethical dilemma faced by many Victorian novelists: even though commerce compromised the integrity of the aesthetic object and the ethos of sincerity, working novelists nevertheless committed themselves to the commercialization of literature upon which the success of their careers depended.

For Trollope, as for Carlyle, literary style is an ethical category, although we may say that Trollope's satire is self-consciously anti-Carlylean. Carlyle's social satire is meant to explode the claims of Enlightenment reason and to convey a deeper spiritual reality. If we sympathize with Carlyle's appeal to authenticity, to a space outside of society from which to critique it, then Trollope's interior view, which appears to take the way of the world for granted, may seem like ideological capitulation. We might then side with Trilling, who saw writers like Trollope struggling fruitlessly to prop up a sincerity ideal that a more critical modern culture would discard in favor of authenticity. From the more radical perspective of authenticity, any truck with sincerity seems a fatal compromise with the ways of the world. Trilling read Trollope along these lines: "The best of the novelists of the nineteenth century and of the beginning of our own epoch were anything but confident that the old vision of the noble life could be realized. But in the degree to which Balzac, Stendhal, Dickens, Trollope, Flaubert, and Henry James were aware of the probability of its defeat in actuality, they cherished and celebrated the lovely dream" (40). But Trilling underestimates the moments of "authenticity" and radical dissatisfaction with the sincerity norm that haunt the nineteenth century novel. Perhaps we should imagine Trollope's satire as a version of Robinson's plate glass window, but now a cracked symbol of itself and refracting a more authentic perspective. In *SBJR*, Trollope wants us to look into the abyss but is instead trapped in the moral economy that it is his vocation to lampoon.

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NOTES

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1. In a recent exception, Anna Maria Jones (83–90) discusses the connection between *SBJR* and Trollope's attitudes towards the business of literature in *An Autobiography*. I agree with her that the novel is "self-reflexive" and more sophisticated than it is given credit for.
2. For a discussion of the Barsetshire novels, see Kincaid 92–142.
3. One unsigned review expressed "deep regret" that Trollope had written the book at all: "[i]t was universally felt, when the story first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, that the whole affair was a blunder. Most people were unwilling to believe that the author of *Framley Parsonage* could have written such unmitigated rubbish. . . . Mr. Trollope's satire is as coarse as the people whom he describes" (Smalley 216). Likewise, another unsigned review opined that *SBJR*'s "chief characters, motives, and incidents were so odiously vulgar and stupid that the staunchest champions of realism were forced to give up in disgust" (Smalley 138–39). For a novelist so sensitive to critical reception, this was an embarrassment. Trollope wrote of *SBJR* that "[i]n this I attempted a style for which I was certainly not qualified, and to which I never again had recourse. It was meant to be funny, was full of slang, and was intended as a satire on the ways of trade. Still, I think there was some good fun in it, but I have heard no one else express such an opinion" (*Autobiography* 106).

4. Along these lines, Kincaid opines that *SBJR* is one of a handful of Trollope novels that “gives the impression of having the slightest desire to be thought ‘brilliant’” (71). In writing *The Way We Live Now* “Trollope returns . . . to his own past, to *The Struggles of Brown, Jones and Robinson*, that deformed child only he has ever loved” (164).
5. For discussions of the sincerity ideal in Trollope, see Slakey 305–20 and Kucich 593–618.
6. By setting a satire on commerce in a haberdashery, I speculate that Trollope is signaling his indebtedness to that ur-text of Victorian satire: Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*.
7. The names “Brown, Jones and Robinson” appear frequently in the Victorian era and into the twentieth century. The phrase “Smith, Brown, Jones and Robinson” appears at least as early as the mid-eighteenth century, where the named characters are young truants in Daniel Fenning’s popular and widely read *The Universal Spelling Book* (1842 edition; 45–46). They reappear throughout the nineteenth century as comic characters in popular publications. In 1837, Douglas Jerrold published a series of comic stories titled “The Lives of Brown, Jones and Robinson” in the *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* that supplied a background story to the characters, including a love and inheritance plot that Trollope’s own novel would faintly echo decades later. Richard Doyle published a popular picture book called *The Foreign Tour of Messrs. Brown, Jones and Robinson: Being the History of What They Saw, and Did* in 1854, which included some of his earlier work for *Punch*. It was a common enough phrase to be used as a generic example of Everyman (as in “Tom, Dick and Harry”) in the early twentieth century. See, for example, James Edward Hogg’s “Legal Conceptions from a Practical Point of View”: “Hence, the very prevalent custom of addressing limited companies as *Messrs. Brown, Jones and Robinson, Limited*” (*The Law Quarterly Review* [1906] 172–77, 174).
8. Robinson’s theory that advertising is *indifferent* to truth, rather than a form of lying, is remarkably similar to the concept of “bullshit” outlined in the short book of the same name by Harry G. Frankfurt.
9. In another episode, Robinson shows he is adept at manipulating public sentiment. Due to a strike at a factory, one of the firm’s suppliers had failed to deliver a promised quantity of cloth. Rather than simply tell its customers that the firm would not be able to deliver the goods, Robinson, like one of the sensation novelists against whom Trollope positions himself in the *Autobiography*, spins a serial tale of crime and scandal: “Brown, Jones and Robinson, having been greatly deceived by Johnson of Manchester, are not able to submit to the public the 40,000 new specimens of English prints, as they had engaged to do, on this day” (81). The last installment read simply “Johnson of Manchester is off! The police are on his track” (83). The series has its desired effect: “This exciting piece of news was greedily welcomed by the walking public, and a real crowd had congregated on the pavement by noon” (83).
10. “The extent to which *Hamlet* is suffused by the theme of sincerity is part of everyone’s understanding of the play. It is definitive of Hamlet himself that in his first full speech he affirms his sincerity, saying that he knows not ‘seems.’ . . . [I]t does seem to be of significance in the developing political culture of the time that Shakespeare, in what is nowadays often said to be his greatest play [*i.e.*, *King Lear*] should set so much store by plain speaking and ring so many changes on the theme” (Trilling 3–4, 22).
11. *SBJR* 8, 10, 54–55, 59, 69, 70, 103, 127, 145–46, 162, 165.
12. *SBJR* 7, 8, 11, 97, 98, 110.
13. Trollope, for example, has Robinson say: “‘Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.’ . . . And then he repeated a good deal more, expressing his desire to sleep, but acknowledging that his dreams in that strange bed might be the rub. ‘And thus calamity must live on’” (54). Several pages later he is at it again, mixing the quote from *Hamlet* above with Thomas Hood’s “Bride of Sighs” (59).
14. And there may be an uneasy element of self-satire here that I will not press too far. Robinson’s pretensions to an aesthetic vocation and to cultural capital on which he has an uneasy grasp are the main target of Trollope’s satire. But it is worth noting that once set in motion, this satire on status pretensions is unstable, since Trollope must have been well aware that he too could be the target of the same kind of status satire. Like Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence after him, Trollope is guilty of Robinson’s cultural aspirations without the institutional prestige of university credentials, and

Trollope's novels frequently show off earned, rather than "inherited," cultural capital by demonstrating mastery of classical conventions, tropes, and vocabulary.

15. Or, as the narrator of *Doctor Thorne* phrases it: "If one wishes to look out into the world for royal nomenclature, to find children who have been christened after kings and queens, or the uncles and aunts of kings and queens, the search should be made in the families of democrats" (142).
16. But see Kendrick for a discussion of the section of the *Autobiography* in which Trollope describes how he comes to "know" his characters by imaginatively living with them: "In contrast to the workmanlike routine of writing, living-with has a romantically imaginative quality that, if it were not the heart of the Trollopian creative process, one would have to call un-Trollopian. Writing can be done with equal facility anywhere, but living-with is best carried on 'at some quiet spot among the mountains'" (22).

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