

An Analysis of the Moral Conflicts of Six Major Characters
in Anthony Trollope's Barchester Towers

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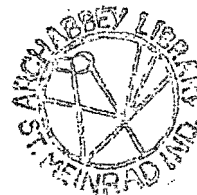


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CHAPTER I

Statement of Purpose

When one is asked to consider the authors of the Victorian Era in England, his thoughts most usually center around Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot and the Brontë sisters. The name of Anthony Trollope brings only blank stares, however. Few have heard of the man whose popularity during his lifetime was just as admired, if not equal to, that of Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot or the Brontë sisters. Unfortunately, since his death on the sixth of December, 1882, Trollope's popularity has fluxuated considerably. He has been admired by members of one generation only to be scoffed at by another. Yet admiration for Anthony Trollope is constantly reappearing, and always with greater strength than before. Those who pass over Trollope or push him aside as a pretender to literary merit do so unfairly and out of ignorance.

When Anthony Trollope penned his work The Warden in 1855, quickly followed by Barchester Towers in 1857, he was almost completely unknown to his contemporaries. He had already written three completely unsuccessful novels. The Warden, a conservative success, and Barchester Towers, which officially turned the eyes of the Victorian literary world to Anthony Trollope, set the framework for that series of novels--the Barset series--which are considered by some critics to be the quintessence of his work. This series won for him a lifetime audience of readers and admirers. This audience was indeed to be satisfied, for

before his passing Trollope had written approximately fifty novels of various worth and merit. He turned out on the average two books a year over a period of almost four decades, with only occasional lapses.

The Victorian era was an age of development, expanding wealth and high moral consciousness. And it was, more importantly, an age of change, a force that imbued all aspects of life at that time. Anthony Trollope was a chronicler of the average middle and upper class Victorian who, confronted with new changes and conflicts, had to adjust his attitudes and moral stances to new situations. His penetration of this goes, in many ways, to great depths.

Anthony Trollope perceived with great insight the potential of the human personality. Equally, he perceived what moral conflict could do to that personality. It is the purpose of this study, therefore, to delve into his novel, Barchester Towers, and discover exactly what he has to say about the human personality and its relation to the lust for power, worldliness, idealism and love. This will be accomplished through an analysis of six major characters--their actions and their attitudes--as they become involved in and resolve moral conflict.

These six characters will be divided into two groups: those tending toward virtue, including Mr. Harding, Eleanor Bold and the Reverend Francis Arabin; and those tending away from it, including Archdeacon Grantly, Mrs. Proudie and the Reverend Obidiah Slope. The remainder of this chapter shall be devoted to a study of the period in which Trollope lived, his thoughts and moral outlook and those techniques which he utilized in his novel that are pertinent to this study--namely

characterization, thematic structure and plot. The succeeding two chapters will concentrate upon the moral actions and attitudes of the aforesaid characters. And to conclude this study the final chapter will discuss the moral values that Trollope is attempting to uphold through these characters.

Trollope's Thought

Trollope's world, the Victorian world, has been looked on by many generations as an age of opulence and prudery on the one hand and squalor and perversity on the other. Superficial observers have seen only the negative aspects of a highly complex era in English history. And yet an understanding of Trollope's thought must be based upon a knowledge of the Victorian man and his world.

A spirit of reform and growth was the spirit of the Victorian era. The Industrial Revolution was already making marked changes in everyday life; industrial expansion and commercial enterprise were steadily emerging. Technology was rapidly reaching its nineteenth century peak and would ultimately build an empire under Victoria upon which "the sun never set." Traditional classes were crumbling away and new ones taking their place. A great tension had developed, and was to persist, between the old landed gentry and the new industrial middle class. The lower classes lived in abject misery, poverty and desolation. Issues such as religious equality and the universal franchise were frequently discussed by the great thinkers and reformers of the day. Extremely radical movements were demanding change in established systems to accommodate the present conditions.

A new world was blossoming before the nineteenth century Englishman. His life was taken up in the great radical forces of change and growth. George Levine observes that,

By stumbling and groping with a great expanse of human misery, the English had to create a world in keeping with the enormously complex and shifting society of a modern nation.

.....

Unfortunately, the achievements made in the material conditions of society were not matched or even approached by the achievements affecting the inner quality of ordinary human lives. Concern for this problem frequently got in the way of progressive legislation and led many to believe that a democratic society was incompatible with firmly held values. It is too easy to dismiss this attitude as merely reactionary. The ugliness of Victorian and modern cities is a reflection of the ugliness of many human lives. . . . Not only are men inadequately related to other men, but on a part of each man's life seems inadequately connected to another.¹

The Victorian man could neither understand the forces of change which confronted him nor their far-reaching effects. The old traditions to which he was accustomed and under which he could effectively function no longer applied to his world. He had no immediate, patterned reaction or response to the new problems confronting him. He was painfully aware of this and became defensive and pretentious. "In their urgency to provide ready answers the Victorians often compromised with truth and oversimplified complexities."² The Victorian did things on an impressively large scale in hopes that he would not have to deal with the more basic, intimate problems that were really threatening him. When one casually looks back on the Victorian man, these are the only things he sees-- this high moral priggery, this prudish, ostentatious, naive facade. But pushing this aside reveals a scared, uncertain, perplexed human who really only wished to live life as well as he could. Out of the

world he created and developed comes the traditions that twentieth century people now take for granted. So to understand the Victorian era is in many ways a help in understanding the twentieth century and in coping with its changes.

. . . the Victorian age exhibited, and not at its periphery but at its very center, all the diversity, and much of the perversity, of which the human mind is capable.³

A look at the Victorian man and his world is, in many ways then, a look at ourselves and our world.

Anthony Trollope was a man of that age in many ways. So many of his contemporaries scoffed and satirized the society in which they lived. Yet Trollope was happy with it, finding it indeed an adequate life. He was content with the age's ways and mannerisms; he could accommodate himself to its grand scale.

In manner boisterous and in his zest for life insatiable, Trollope seemed a man content to take and enjoy existence as he found it.⁴

His interests life in the normal accepted way of life. Michael Sadlier calls him "the articulate perfection of its normal quality."⁵ And he had a thorough grasp of the makeup of English society at all its levels.

He understands Society and the difference between the weary meaninglessness of the conventional and the vicious aimlessness of the unconventional.⁶

Probably his greatest asset was his talent for the usual. Unlike Dickens, Trollope was a realist. His ~~view~~ view of English life was broad and honest. He had the ability to comprehend with remarkable insight the commonplace people and events of everyday life be they good or bad. Trollope perceived "life as a perpetual story."⁷ Ordinary people for him became

extraordinarily interesting and important. They were the ones who made up the world in which he lived. Trollope saw their days throbbing with life and activity, filled with the richness and vibrancy that few care to realize. Nor did he neglect their miseries or their sufferings.

Robert M. Polhemus says that,

He understood that inconspicuous people are victimized by history and circumstances; but he knew also that they make history.

.....

He sees a world in which nothing is more important than how an "ordinary" man gets along with his wife, or how he comes to a moral decision about his profession, or how these commonplace personal matters affect the whole community.⁸

When Anthony Trollope wrote, he naturally wrote about what he knew. He delighted in ordinary people muddling through life as best they can. The important thing to look for in his novels is, therefore, not his "world view" but his "people view." He gives the normal man's reaction to what he sees as he watches people; and around them centers all the action. He observes with wonder the curious actions and situations of all types of people and then holds a mirror up to them--and to the reader too--that the humor of it all might be seen.

Because he had a keen eye for human foible, a tolerant smile for human scheming and an instinctive sense of the influence of rank and precedence on the actions of the times, he came to sense a social drama where no drama was evident, and so, by practice in his trade of authorship, to tell a tale of almost breathless interest without the help either of sudden incident or of striking misadventure.⁹

But entertainment is not Anthony Trollope's only purpose in writing novels. He states in his Autobiography:

The amusement of the time can hardly be the only result of any book that is read, and certainly not so with a novel, which appeals especially to the imagination, and solicits the sympathy of the young. A vast proportion of the teaching of the day,--greater probably than many of us have as yet acknowledged to ourselves,--comes from these books, which are in the hands of all readers. It is from them that girls learn what is expected from them, and what they are to expect when lovers come; and also from them that young men unconsciously learn what are, or should be, or may be, the charms of love. . . .

.

The writer of stories must please, or he will be nothing. And he must not teach whether he teach or no. How shall he teach lessons of virtue and at the same time make himself a delight to his readers? That sermons are not in themselves often thought to be agreeable we all know. Nor are disquisitions on moral philosophy supposed to be pleasant light reading for our idle hours. But the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman, and he must have his own system of ethics. If he can do this efficiently . . . he can make virtue alluring and vice ugly. . . .¹⁰

Trollope's purpose and his morality go hand in hand; one nourishing the other. With great insight he saw that writing novels carried with it the responsibility of upholding basic, established virtues. He shuns all temptations towards didacticism, using it only as a counterbalance to sensationalism which threatened his view of reality. His novels become, as a result, exempla, models of proper modes of behaviour, set up so that the reader might imitate them. They are almost all, including Barchester Towers, novels of a conflict between individual decencies and social incongruities. In every story the good triumphs over evil and virtue is rewarded.

And yet Trollope finds it possible not to make any moral judgements or condemnations of a character's personal actions.

. . . for Trollope was always conscious of what may be called the discontinuities of the moral life; he knew, even if he did not know the words, all about rationalization of motive and wish.¹¹

Trollope could see the rights and the wrongs very clearly. But he could also see, perhaps more clearly, the shadows, the greys of the moral life into which ordinary men so easily fall by the machinations of their rationale and out of which they direct their lives. He does not pry into the great problems of life or point out abuses and suggest remedies: he only relates what he observes. Moral judgements or conclusions on particular characters are left in the hands of the reader.

Anthony Trollope's morality stemmed from that prevalent in England at the time. It was, indeed, a sweeping, generalized outlook which he both accepted and rejected. Michael Sadlier states that:

Two of the essential elements of mid-Victorianism were moral thoughtfulness and a high sense of duty toward community discipline.¹²

While Victorians might have held morality for the sake of society, Trollope maintained morality through the primacy of the individual. It is only when the individual members are moral that the community at large benefits. The immoral or amoral person is one who cannot contribute to the advancement of the community, for his personality, his sensibility is dead.

He sees moral problems not in their relation to society, but to the soul. As we shall see, his conception of the thoroughly evil man is not a destroyer of others but one whose spiritual death has left him too weak to harm others.¹³

It is important that at this point special note should be taken of the study that Mr. Robert M. Polhemus has done on Mr. Trollope. Mr.

Polhemus' book, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope, is a landmark in the somewhat meagre tradition of Trollopian criticism. His interpretations tie together most ingeniously what has been examined thus far. Mr. Polhemus' major thesis is his conception of Trollope "as an interpreter of social change."¹⁴ That is, through his honest, straightforward, unbiased point of view Trollope has "chronicled imaginatively the forms of historical and psychological change."

The discovery and analysis of the "otherness" of the past and, implicitly, the future had the kind of emotional and intellectual impact on consciousness in the nineteenth century that our growing awareness of technology with all its wonderful and terrible possibilities has in the twentieth century.¹⁶

If it is kept in mind while reading Trollope that the forces of change had this intensely deep effect upon the average Victorian, the reader can come to the realization of the "special predicament of individual Victorians and of the universal human condition."¹⁷ Mr. Polhemus defines this "condition" as:

. . . the fate to live in the midst of historical flow and to struggle with the demands of one's own uncertain times.¹⁸

Change has become a very vital point in the twentieth century, constantly regenerating and revitalizing all things. Mr. Polhemus pointedly sees this fact and maintains that Anthony Trollope can bring to the reader, through his observations, not only "a deeper understanding of Victorian life and of the modern world which has grown out of nineteenth-century experience,"¹⁹ but also great insights into his own personal life--its joys and its struggles.

Trollope's Techniques

Earlier it was observed that Trollope had the ability to make the common and usual come amazingly alive. He had, what could be called, a broad sympathy for humanity. "He saw human beings as they are; but he liked them and got on with them; and within the conventions of his age and class he was tolerant of their weaknesses."²⁰ Thus Trollope's greatest literary talent, as shall be examined in particular in the succeeding chapters, was his talent for characterization. Henry James calls this talent an "instinctive perception of human varieties."²¹ Through his extremely sensitive awareness of life and an imagination always founded in actual facts,²² he was able to create a myriad of characters, each with its own distinct personality. Walter Allen pinpoints this when he speaks of the "disinterestedness of his imagination," that is,

. . . the ability to see a character wholly in the round, and without preconceived opinions, without theories of behavior, so that the character is shown as behaving at once credibly and yet mysteriously. . . .²³

Thus Trollope becomes realistic to the point of photographic. His characters are utterly free from the caricaturization and distortion rampantly common to the other authors of his age. Never will they be found to act outside the realm of Victorian normalcy.

In his novels Trollope throws the reader into the very lives of his characters. He wants the reader to react to them as he would real people and not as anemic manifestations of some vague, abstract, philosophic view of life. "He tries to make his readers believe that his

characters are so real that they cannot be manipulated to satisfy an author's whim."²⁴ A reader is never jolted by the sudden jerk of a character's personality from comic to serious, good to bad. They are not simply good or bad but seem to lie somewhere in between. His view of reality would not allow him to make such simplistic divisions. "They are the educated men and women we meet in the educated world and the situations, motives, and feelings described are seldom above or below the ordinary incidents of modern life."²⁵ Mr. Polhemus agrees when he writes that,

. . . his strange but passionate reverence for ordinary middle-class life, could make people realize that their own ordinary lives have value and consequence. He can show us that we do not always have to bear that traditional middle-class burden of justifying our existence to ourselves.²⁶

This, in part, also explains Trollope's varying popularity.

John Hazard Wildman states that his characters can be roughly divided into two groups: those characters who are in love and those who are not.²⁷ Trollope's whole view of love and marriage agrees completely with the accepted outlook of his time. People become virtuous only through the realization that love leads to marriage. And if he is going to teach anything about love, his characters who are in love must stringently follow the existing dictums of society. They must abide consistently by the rules of the important game which they are playing or forfeit all rights to be respected. In a sense, Trollope has much less freedom with these characters than he does with others. The others, too, have much to contribute but they do not have to suffer the pressure of losing respect for not applying to the set standards.

Thus in Barchester Towers, Eleanor Bold and Mr. Arabin must guide themselves in their relationship according to a certain group of highly-set mores, while Signora Neroni, Mr. Slope and Bertie Stanhope can be freer in their actions.

As a last point, and in an attempt to expand this concept of Trollope's characterization, an examination shall be made of some criticism leveled against it by a scholar a few generations past. Lord David Cecil, a noted literary scholar and critic has expressed in his work, Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation, what he terms weaknesses in Trollope's characters. Cecil, it should be kept in mind, was of that school of criticism that held that literary work ought to contain within it conundrums, that is, hidden, symbolic meanings and answers to the deep, mysterious problems of life. He states that "a large number of his creations, for all their truth to fact, are not living creations in the fullest sense of the phrase."²⁸ This statement shows, obviously, a misunderstanding of that which went behind the creating of Trollope's characters. If they are true to life portraits, as has been said, then it would be impossible to judge them in a clear-cut manner. In actual life only certain sides or elements in a personality will be dominant in the interaction of a particular situation. And although it is indeed possible to obtain a sufficient knowledge of a personality for the purpose of relating, a great amount of ambiguity remains. A perfect example is the two fold reaction, both sorrow and the passion for power, of the Archdeacon as he watches his father, the old Bishop, dying. In this instance can be seen several sides to the Archdeacon's personality. Lord David, it seems, cannot see beyond the

twofold reaction. The personality's inherent ambiguity rules out the possibility of its betraying its "identity so unfailingly by every word and gesture."²⁹

Cecil also complains that Trollope "recorded the surface of a character with conscientious accuracy; but his imagination was never fired to discover its guiding principle."³⁰ Here is found, it seems apparent, the old problem of judging one thing according to the standards of another. Trollope wished not to grapple with the deep, dark secrets of men's souls. His purpose was only to show, through his characters, how people and their actions appeared to others. It is difficult to pinpoint the complexities of the human personality. The inconsistencies of life are always present and to speak of a "guiding principle" would detract from his painting of reality. The judgements and conclusions are left up to the reader.

Turning to the thematic structure of his novels, it seems Trollope had in his possession a repertoire of themes to meet his needs and aims. All these themes center around, or more precisely evolve from, his characters and their personality situations. In fact it can be said that everything else in his novels--themes, plots, styles--is subordinate to his characterization. In life the qualities and the defects of one's personality are easily the cause of many problems, while the accidents of life the cause of others. Trollope saw these qualities and defects, always ^{on} ~~com~~ ^A place of course, and weaved them into his characters, and then placed them in a microcosmic world such as Barchester. This he did in order to illuminate for his contemporaries

--and by human extension, twentieth century man--the problems that face all men.

In a relatively recent article in the PMLA, Mr. William Cadbury reports that he has traced the thread of two basic themes through the Barset group which includes Barchester Towers.³¹ The first of these concerns "the opposition of heart and head in matters of moral choice."³² The second is "the operation of values, true or false, in the production of a workable society from the raw material of human motivation."³³ Inherent in both of these are the basic longings and yearnings of all men--love, stability, freedom, justice. Of course these themes are seldom exclusive. They appear, as they do in Barchester Towers, together, oftentimes intersecting or paralleling so closely that it is at times extremely difficult to distinguish them. In Barchester Towers we find that they actually collide. The hostilities over Eleanor Bold's triangular love affair and the "war" among Mrs. Proudie, Mr. Slope and Archdeacon Grantly for control of the Barchester diocese are constantly coming into heated conflict.

Mr. A. O. J. Cockshut also holds two recurring themes. Self-deception is the first, and endurance, "especially in a perverse and unprofitable manner,"³⁴ is the second. A distinction, to paraphrase Mr. Cockshut, must here be made between those who deceive themselves and those^e who are out-and-out hypocrites, which for Trollope is much too obvious and polarized for his sense of reality. Many characters, like their real counterparts, are not really aware of their inconsistencies. Trollope heartily enjoys gently and sympathetically pointing them out to his readers, through his characters. Trollope regards "complete sincerity

not as an elementary rule, but as a most difficult achievement."³⁵ Cockshut considers "endurance" to mean any type of overly persistent moral or social struggling for strictly personal gain outside the realm of conventional morality. Almost all the characters in Barchester Towers in some way or another partially manifest these themes in their personalities. In the following chapters of this study it shall be discovered that these themes are intrinsically related to those of Mr. Cadbury.

Next to his characters, the most important part of Anthony Trollope's novels are his plots. For it is through the action of the plot that his characters blossom and develop. It is through the action of the plot that his themes unfold and take on their full meanings. Henry James once said that "character is action, action is plot."³⁶ Through the action, through the plot the reader discovers Trollope's characters growing more important the more they contribute to the story. "They are so intimately bound up with the action that their very characters are parts of it."³⁷ Trollope was interested in how people related to society³⁸ for individuals find their worth through their dealings with others and the realization of their place and its potential within the structure of society. Thus he took great care in creating a realistic social structure in his work. It is in their relation to this social structure that makes his characters come alive. They become not only individuals but also ultra-typical representatives of the social class to which they belong.

Trollope, unlike some of his literary contemporaries, was not an innovator of plot. Rather, he utilized the type prevalent at that time.

According to Bradford A. Booth the typical Victorian plot was an extremely elaborate system supported by a plethora of subplots that led to a dramatic denouement.³⁹ Trollope only diverged slightly from this. These few divergencies can easily be understood when seen in the light of his view of reality. He did not end his novels with a climax; rather, they are made up of a series of small incidents unified by character and theme. These scenes are relatively not as detailed as those found in other Victorian novels, containing only basic, necessary information. "The finish of a Trollope novel comes from the slow, somewhat clumsy, accumulation of these small incidents."⁴⁰ These small component parts are what ultimately convey the effect of normal reality.⁴¹ His contemporaries based their stories not on actual fact, as did Trollope, but with some artistic or moral idea common to the period purposely in mind. They become, as a result, a bit artificial, didactic and much more elaborately structured than Trollope,⁴² and certainly not as realistic.

V. S. Pritchett has stated that Anthony Trollope was "an expert in crossing the intentions of his people with the accidents of life."⁴³ This is probably the most comprehensive explanation of the character-plot-theme relationship. It is through plot that Trollope gives shape and form to his themes. "The point of significance for Trollope is not what people do, but how and why they do it."⁴⁴ He wants the reader to feel the characters' feelings as they go through the situations of everyday life. All action results from the choices that they must make in their daily dealings. This is often complicated by the confrontation of two or more characters all of whom have made different choices in the same situation. In Barchester Towers, for example, the conflict

is both social and moral. Because of their varying attitudes, all the characters are in some way or another in conflict with each other. This conflict is resolved ultimately as these characters adjust these attitudes to the demands of the society in which they find they must live. And as they change so does the nature of that society. It is at this point that Trollope can be recognized as a chronicler of social change. This will be examined in greater detail in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER II

The first characters to be analyzed will be that group whose members tend toward virtue. They are the Reverend Septimus Harding, Eleanor Bold and the Reverend Francis Arabin. By stating that these characters are virtuous does not in any way imply that the second group of characters are completely lacking in virtue. It means, rather that these characters have in some manner been rewarded in the novel for their goodness and virtue. These three characters are what could be called the moral characters of the novel. It is important to note that all three were initially drawn into the novel inadvertently. This is in direct opposition to the motives of the group to be studied in Chapter III.

Reverend Septimus Harding

The first character to be dealt with is the Reverend Septimus Harding. Well into his sixties, Harding is a simple, honest, gentle, sensitive clergyman of Barchester. Within his human limitations and the Christian tenets he preaches, he attempts to get along with all men. Mr. Harding is "kindly in his relations with his inferiors, un-presuming in his relations with his superiors, selfless in his devotion to his holy trust."¹ Unlike several other characters in the novel, he is completely lacking in ambition. He is a loving father with two daughters, Susan Grantly, wife to the Archdeacon, and Eleanor Bold, widow of John Bold.

His character evokes recognition from the reader. For within Septimus Harding is contained many of the good qualities that men admire and strive for. When the reader recognizes the beauty of these qualities in Mr. Harding, he identifies with him. Harding is the character with the highest moral consciousness in the novel. Robert M. Polhemus states that

. . . Harding always tries to do the right thing, but ambitious men, irresistible social forces, and his family constantly push and pull him about. Knowing that new times make new demands on one, he finally chooses, a bit wistfully, to do what seems to reconcile his ethical standards with the world around him.²

A. O. J. Cockshut has called the character of Harding "a moral touchstone for the other characters"³ in the novel. Against him all the other characters can be contrasted, setting a moral scale or standard. When the moral qualities of Mrs. Proudie, Mr. Slope, Archdeacon Grantly, the Stanhopes and the Thornes are placed next to that of Harding's, they all seem in some way or another lacking. Thus Harding becomes for Trollope a means of exhibiting and teaching morality. A comparison will help to clarify this.

The Thornes of Ullathorne are, for all practical purposes, dead to the world. They prefer to live in the past, almost completely oblivious to the modern world. Squire Wilfred suffers from what can be called ethical shock. Politically abandoned by those he had once so staunchly supported, he is morally frozen.

But all trust in human faith must for ever be at an end. . . . to be so utterly thrown over and deceived by those he had so earnestly supported, so thoroughly trusted, was more than he could endure or live.⁴

The Squire rejects the world and its pleasures for a while, going into solitude. Unable to cope with this, he soon leaves his solitude only to enter into a new rejection and a new solitude. He, along with his friends among the landed gentry, consider themselves to be the last remnant of the true English way of life.

His sister, Monica, is in greater degrees, the same way. She completely has rejected the modern world as immoral nonsense, preferring only to live in some past dream world. "She sometimes talked and constantly thought of good things gone by, though she had but the faintest idea of what these good things had been."⁵ The Thornes refuse to adjust ethically and spiritually to the changing world, unable to cope with what they see emerging. They have deceived themselves into thinking that reverting to a vague past would stop the seemingly awful realities of the present.

Like the Thornes, Septimus Harding is a man whose whole life has been seriously challenged. Mr. Slope challenges not only the work that he loves but also the purpose of his life. Mrs. Proudie threatens his dignity. And his daughter, Eleanor, threatens the expression of his love and affection. Unlike the Thornes, Mr. Harding possesses the flexibility to adapt his moral standards and ethical principles to new situations in order to remain a productive member of Barchester society. The examination of certain scenes will aid in further clarifying this.

Harding's first conflict presents itself in the person of Reverend Obidiah Slope. Slope is an Evangelistic Low-Churchman wanting to initiate changes into the life of the Church in Barchester. Harding is

not so much a High-Churchman as he is a man who has simply accepted the ways and manners of Barchester. In the first ceremony presided over by the new Bishop of Barchester, Slope, as preacher, denounces in his sermon "any religious feeling which might be excited, not by the sense, but by the sound of words, and in fact to insult cathedral practices."⁶ Plainly, Slope is attacking what Harding has lovingly spent most of his career doing so well--singing and directing the services as chanter of the cathedral.

The second clash between the two can be found in Chapter XIII. Slope sets up an interview with Harding concerning his reappointment to Hiram's Hospital. Wishing to appoint a supporter, he designs the interview so as to aggravate Mr. Harding into refusing the reappointment.

"You must be aware, Mr. Harding, that things are a good deal changed in Barchester," said Mr. Slope.

Mr. Harding said that he was aware of it.

"And not only in Barchester that a new man is carrying out new measures and casting away the useless rubbish of past centuries. The same thing is going on throughout the country. Work is now required from every man who receives wages; and they who have to superintend the doing of work, and the paying of wages, are bound to see that this rule is carried out. New men, Mr. Harding, are now needed, and are now forth coming in the Church, as well as in other professions."⁷

Here Slope accuses Harding's life of being a complete sham. His whole life and the profession he spent it in was for naught, only "useless rubbish" to be carted out and thrown away.

Harding could get used to losing the Hospital for a second time. He could not tolerate being insulted by a man much his junior. But he could not, without intense mental and spiritual conflict, face that

question which "had worked into his blood, and sapped the life of his sweet contentment."⁸ Was his life a complete, utter failure and waste?

Had he in truth so lived as to be now in his old age justly reckoned as rubbish fit only to be hidden away in some huge dust hole? The school of men to whom he professes to belong . . . are afflicted with no such self-accusations as these which troubled Mr. Harding. They . . . are . . . satisfied with the wisdom and propriety of their own conduct. . . . But unfortunately for himself Mr. Harding had little of this self-reliance. When he heard himself designated as rubbish by the Slopes of the world, he had no other resource than to make inquiry within his own bosom as to the truth of designation. Alas, alas! the evidence seemed generally to go against him.⁹

In this passage lies Harding's great weakness. He certainly has the ability of introspection and meditative thought needed to face a situation such as this. He all too well can see the difficulties and knows he must come to some sort of resolution. But deep inside him is a gnawing doubt of his own abilities. This accounts for his ineffectuality among his fellow characters. This accounts for his tendency to be led around by others. This accounts for the ease with which the Archdeacon could bandy him about. Mr. Harding, unlike his son-in-law, lacks the self-confidence that would make weathering the storm much easier.

In their introductory visit to the new Bishop, Mr. Harding and the Archdeacon experience their first bitter taste of what Mrs. Proudie was to be like. During most of the visit she has Mr. Harding mercilessly cornered.

But Mrs. Proudie interrogated him, and then lectured. "Neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant," said she, impressively, and more than once, as though Mr. Harding had forgotten the words. She shook her finger at him as she quoted the favourite law, as though menacing

him with punishment; and then called upon him categorically to state whether he did not think that travelling on the Sabbath was an abomination and a desecration.¹⁰

Mrs. Proudie, too, becomes a threat to Mr. Harding. Never before had he been treated this way by a woman--and a woman much younger than he. Never before had he been so verbally bullied and threatened. He sees her attack as a threat to his clerical dignity. She has treated him as a child, as a fool. Harding can only sit back and take it. He cannot muster up what was needed to remonstrate her. The Archdeacon walks off in flustered indignation. Mr. Harding leaves in indignant fear. And yet, once alone with the Archdeacon he is careful not to utter an unkind word about Mrs. Proudie.

The third conflict for Mr. Harding arises over his daughter, Eleanor. He is torn between believing the talk that she is in love with Slope and his love and trust for her. He dreads the thought of having Slope as a son-in-law. This predicament is not new for him. He had once disagreed with John Bold's ideas and opinions, but he would not let that stand in the way of his daughter's love.

His Eleanor, his own companion in their happy home, must still be the friend of his bosom, the child of his heart. Let who would cast her off, he would not. If it were fated that he should have to sit in his old age at the same table with that man whom of all men he disliked the most, he would meet his fate as best he might. Anything to him would be preferable to the loss of his daughter.¹¹

And again he comes to the same conclusion. He cannot stand in the way of his daughter. He could, if he had to, live with a man who had once called his life and work rubbish.

Septimus Harding possesses a calm, inner stability that makes him capable of coping with conflict and adapting to new situations. The

playing of his violin-cello and his sporadic fingering are manifestations of this. Harding is an example par excellence of Cadbury's second theme discussed in Chapter One. He dislikes both Slope and Mrs. Proudie. Yet the questions that they introduce into his mind he can face. Despite the Bishop's wife, he knows he has dignity; yet because of his lack of self-confidence, he is unable to assert it. It is the doubt that Slope puts into his mind that creates problems, for that type of question is not easily answered in a lifetime. But he refuses to take active part in anti-Slope plots, preferring to resist more passively. "He could not agree in any praise of Mr. Slope, and it was not practice to say much evil of any one."¹² As to his daughter he cannot threaten to withdraw his love for her as the Archdeacon threatens to exclude her from his household. In each case Mr. Harding does his best to do the right thing. For it, in the end, he is rewarded.

Eleanor Bold

The character of Eleanor Bold possesses many of the qualities of the Harding family to which she belongs.

There was a quiet, enduring, grateful sweetness about her face. . . . She had none of that dazzling brilliance, of that voluptuous Rubens beauty, of that pearly whiteness, and those vermillian tints, which immediately entranced with the power of a basilisk men who came within reach of Madeline Neroni. . . . You might begin to talk to her as though she were your sister, and it would not be till your head was on your pillow, that the truth and intensity of her beauty would flash upon your ear. A sudden half-hour with the Neroni, was like falling into a pit; an evening spent with Eleanor like an unexpected ramble in some quiet fields of asphodel.¹³

Eleanor is a good, trusting woman who tries to the best of her ability

to be good. She looks on it as her Christian duty to be kind to all people. Eleanor strives to be proper and do what is right, which results in a great amount of conflict for her.

Obidiah Slope is the direct link introducing Eleanor to the main flow of action. Eleanor abhors Slope as much as her father does.

"He's the most odious man I ever met in my life. . . ." ¹⁴ However, first through his designs for Hiram's Hospital and then for Eleanor's hand, Slope is able to impress Eleanor as being a zealous clergyman. It is Eleanor's toleration of Mr. Slope that introduces the conflict of the love affairs. "I judge people by their acts, and his, as far as I can see them, are good." ¹⁵ She is kind to him because as far as she can judge Slope's motives are sincere.

The Archdeacon and his party are able to see a radically different side to Slope's personality. They see any communication with him as wanton disgrace. The Archdeacon's accusation of Eleanor's love for Slope sends her into mental conflict. Her head tells her to tolerate Slope in a true Christian fashion. Her heart urges her towards rejection of Slope as completely undesirable and a threat to the everyday life of Barchester. Should she follow her head, she will be opposing not only the deep longings of her heart but also those of her family, who threaten her with alienation. If she listens to her heart, she must resist the pangs of her conscience. However, she is a strong, independent creature and refuses to sacrifice to the forces of the Archdeacon. Her sense of propriety will not allow it. It is this propriety that prolongs the misunderstanding of Archdeacon Grantly. Had Eleanor

but confided her true feelings about Slope to her father, much of the following action would have been aborted.

In the beginning Eleanor loves no one. She still wears the widow cap, mourning for John Bold. For a while she dislikes Arabin because he is associated with the Grantlys who are causing her so much distress. However, as the story progresses she develops tender feelings for him. Arabin at first is too preoccupied with himself to realize that he also is falling in love. Neither can express their affection for each other. Arabin does not understand what these feelings are. Eleanor believes their expression to be a surrendering to the Slope issue. Suppression of these feelings result in an increasing tension for all concerned. For Eleanor it becomes a burden she can barely contain within herself.

Bertie Stanhope, Eleanor's third lover, is an aimless, unscrupulous wanderer. Frighteningly disregarding of their feelings, Bertie makes an amusement of courting women. Eleanor reads his reckless attitude towards life as casual friendliness. Misguidedly she leans on Bertie for support from her trials. Bertie has no real attraction to Eleanor; he rarely has any deep, passionate conviction about anything. He dispassionately perceives Eleanor as a comfortable provider for his wasteful life.

Eleanor Bold appeared before him, no longer as a beautiful woman, but as a new profession called matrimony. It was a profession indeed requiring but little labor, and one in which an income was assured to him.¹⁶

Bertie is in complete contrariety to Arabin. Bertie's character is weak, flighty and aimless. Arabin's character is strong, serious and principled. Whereas Bertie lacks sensibilities and lives without them,

Arabin has them but does not know how to live with them.

It is significant that Trollope climaxes these love affairs in a party scene. Against the background of Miss. Thorne's Medieval games, Slope and Bertie contest for their prize. Eleanor becomes a pawn to their selfish satisfactions and advancement⁵. Note in the two following passages how lightly they approach the whole matter.

Mr. Slope saw that it must be now or never, and he was determined that it should be now. This was not his first attempt at winning a fair lady. He had been on his knees, looked unutterable things with his eyes, and whispered honeyed words before this. Indeed an adept at these things, and had only to adapt to the perhaps different taste of Mrs. Bold the well-remembered rhapsodies which had once so much gratified Olivia Proudie.¹⁷

In this affair of his [Bertie's] marriage, it had been represented to him as a matter of duty that he ought to put himself in possession of Mrs. Bold's hand and fortune; and at first he had so regarded it. About her he had thought but little. It was the customary thing for men situated as he was to marry for money, and there was no reason why he should not do what others around him did. And so he consented. . . . He was setting himself down to catch her, and swallow her up, her and her child, and her houses and land, in order that he might live on her instead of on his father.¹⁸

Both have the same questionable motives. Both choose the identical spot to make their proposals. Both are refused by Eleanor.

Eleanor's dual refusals mark the decline of both Bertie and Slope. Her refusals initiate the punishments that must be doled out for their sins and transgressions. Slope loses the hand and fortune of Eleanor, the succor of Mrs. Proudie, the deanship, and his chaplaincy to the Bishop. Bertie also loses Eleanor's hand, is castigated by his father and permanently ejected from the Stanhope household. Eleanor was originally drawn into the action unwillingly. Oddly enough it is through her that the conflict lines merge and are directed toward their solutions.

It is Arabin who ultimately relieves Eleanor's burdens and brings her happiness. Through the eyes of love she is better able to cope with the conflicting situations of life. The conflict she endures has changed her. No longer is she alone, independent. In Arabin she has found security for herself and her baby. In her marriage is her justification that she was right in refusing to abandon her beliefs. New happiness is her reward.

Reverend Francis Arabin

The Reverend Francis Arabin is initially introduced into Barchester society to aid in the conflict against the Proudie's. Archdeacon Grantly looks to Arabin's High-Church attitude for support. Arabin is a handsome, middle-aged clergyman. Before accepting the preferment of Saint Ewold's, he had spent his clerical career within the intellectual circles of Oxford.

Previous to his introduction into Barchester, Arabin had already undergone one mental struggle. For religious reasons he had been very close to entering the Church of Rome. His worldly interests, which he thought of as his enemy, urged him to remain a Protestant. Yet he longed to subject himself to the high morality, to express his beliefs through the solemnity, the austerity of the Roman Church. He looked upon the Church of England, its people and much of his life as inferior, inadequate.

Arabin gained a great amount of strength from this ordeal, but out of it grew a new question. He is and always has been highly aesthetic. Yet there lingers in his mind a loneliness. He finds his self-imposed

celibacy unsatisfying. He begins to wonder if the things of this world which he had once rejected were as bad as he thought. Arabin has slowly grown envious of men like the Archdeacon who are settled in a comfortable home surrounded by a loving family. In the novel Arabin is found torn between dissatisfaction with the intellectual life and the realization that he may be too old to find domestic happiness.

He, like other, yearned for the enjoyment of whatever he saw enjoyable; and though he attempted, with the modern stoicism of so many Christians, to make himself believe that joy and sorrow were matters which here should be held as perfectly indifferent, these things were not indifferent to him. He was tired of his Oxford rooms and his college life. He regarded the wife and children of his friend with something like envy . . .¹⁹

In all the years that he has devoted to searching for the truth, Arabin has never once let love enter his life. It is in the process of falling in love with Eleanor that Arabin resolves his problems and finds happiness.

Arabin's change begins when he first meets Eleanor. He pleasantly notes her beauty and is strangely glad he will be able to spend some time in its presence. Rumors of Eleanor's impending marriage cause Arabin to think of Eleanor more than he had ever thought of a woman before. And yet, he cannot understand the feelings that are growing in his heart. It is when Eleanor accuses Arabin of calumny that Arabin actually falls in love with her. He is torn in that confrontation between his prideful justification for what he has said to the Archdeacon and the feelings within him which he does not understand. Had Eleanor put aside her propriety and expressed her tearful emotions, Arabin might at this point have realized his heart's feelings.

Ironically it is the completely amoral Signora Neroni that leads the proper Mr. Arabin to self-realization. As if she were his conscience, the Signora opens his heart and reveals its secret longings. She justifies his yearning for the simple pleasures of the world. Arabin has misunderstood the laws of humanity and has been struggling against the natural expression of his emotions. This has been his source of unhappiness. Out of this realization springs the realization of his love for Eleanor.

Chapter XLVIII contains the final exchange of this love. For Eleanor and Arabin it is the fulfillment of their personalities. Both realize that they are loved, finding in each other the compliment to their own characters. It is important to note that Arabin's proposal, unlike Slope's or Bertie's, was unplanned, spontaneous. His intellectual pride gives way to his heart. Arabin's apology leaves Eleanor with no reason for withholding her love. With no longer any hindrances between them, they can now merge together into one. The solutions to their conflicts can be found in each other. By their accepting each other they affirm the values each represents.

Throughout the novel Arabin has proven to be a man who can honestly confront the world and its problems. From behind the facade of conformity, Arabin's mind searches for truth wherever it may take him. Despite his struggles he is able to maintain his morality and his high ideals.²⁰ By making Arabin the new Dean, Trollope is establishing these as being good and worthy. Arabin's importance to the novel is explained by Robert M. Polhemus:

Trollope's key figure in achieving finally a harmony between worldliness and idealism is Mr. Arabin. He is even more important than Grantly and Mrs. Proudie in giving the novel shape and meaning. He is the one character who combines idealism, religious dedication, energy and intellectual curiosity. If Barchester is to be anything more than an amusing but trivial place, he must flourish there. The book would be satirical and pessimistic if he did not thrive. It would say, in effect, that the best people could not live a good life in Barchester--or in Victorian England.²¹

CHAPTER III

As has been mentioned earlier, the characters have been divided, for purposes of examination, according to virtuousness. The second group of characters to be studied, therefore, are those whose lives are not rewarded for their virtue. The following three characters--Archdeacon Grantly, Mrs. Proudie, Obidiah Slope--are the principal initiators of conflict within the microcosm of Barchester. Through their own selfish interests they inflict mental torment upon those characters studied in the previous chapter.

Archdeacon Grantly

One of the most impressive and studied characters in Barchester Towers is Archdeacon Grantly. The reason for this is the character's great complexity.

He is worldly, yet devout; hot-tempered, yet judicial; dignified, yet gregarious. It is not easy to pin him down. Just when one is about to unfrock him as graceless, he rises up in an archidiaconal majesty no less genuine than impressive.¹

Archdeacon Grantly is, in many respects, an opposite to his father-in-law, Mr. Harding. The Archdeacon possesses extreme self-confidence; Mr. Harding lacks it. Harding shrinks from open battle, while Grantly enjoys it. Archdeacon Grantly is ambitious and worldly; Harding is none of these. And Mr. Harding relies heavily on his conscience, while his son-in-law believes in his own infallibility.

The complexity of Archdeacon Grantly's character is superbly illustrated in the opening scene of the novel. In it, the Archdeacon

watches and waits as his father, the old Bishop of Barchester, lies dying in his bed. As he sits there, a thought wanders into his mind. As the rumored successor to the episcopal throne, Grantly for a moment wonders if he wants his father to die. Should his father live long enough for the present ministerial government to go out of power, the Archdeacon loses all chance of gaining a mitre. Suddenly he realizes what he is thinking and, with a guilty conscience, falls on his knees asking forgiveness.

Our archdeacon was worldly--who among us is not so? He was ambitious--who among us is ashamed to own that "last infirmity of noble minds!" He was avaricious, my readers will say. No --it was for no love of lucre that he wished to be bishop of Barchester. . . . But he certainly did desire to play first fiddle; he did desire to sit in full lawn sleeves among the peers of the realm; and he did desire, if the truth must out, to be called "My Lord" by his reverend brethren.²

Embodied within the Archdeacon is "an example of that drive for power in human nature which can appear at any unseemly time."³ Grantly is torn between the desire for power and importance and his desire to live a virtuous Christian life.

While his father was alive, the Archdeacon wielded great influence within the diocese. To him, Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope pose a threat to the power he has and the power he hopes to gain. Yet all three characters are very much alike. They have all deceived themselves into thinking that happiness lies in the exercise of power. Mrs. Proudie, Slope and the Archdeacon battle each other for supremacy. For each of them gaining influence over Bishop Proudie was the symbol of ultimate power. The Archdeacon's desire for power coupled with a pure zest for a battle causes him to see Slope as a worthy adversary. With all his

knowledge and influence he could openly plot and plan Slope's downfall.

He had sized up his opponent and knew him well.

War, war, internecine war was in his heart. He felt that, as regarded himself and Mr. Slope, one of the two must be annihilated as far as the city of Barchester was concerned; and he did not intend to give way until there was not left to him an inch of ground on which to stand. He still flattered himself that he could make Barchester too hot to hold Mr. Slope, and he had no weakness of spirit to prevent his bringing about such a consummation if it were in his power.⁴

Mrs. Proudie presents quite a different problem to Archdeacon Grantly. Mrs. Proudie is his almost exact equal on the battlefield. He cannot, however, admit this to himself or his confidants. As a result the Archdeacon attempts to brush her aside and ignore her.

When a woman is impertinent, one must only put up with it, and keep out of her way in future; but I am not inclined to put up with Mr. Slope. . . ."⁵

Throughout the whole novel Archdeacon Grantly is unable to effectively fight Mrs. Proudie. The only thing he can do is mumble frustrated-scorn from afar. He "could never forgive Mrs. Proudie for making Barchester an uncomfortable place to live."⁶ John H. Wildman comments that:

In fact, she is the strong and dominant character against whom he sets so many wills. The Archdeacon never really fears her, because he never takes the trouble to understand her; he is perpetually aghast and surprized at her influence because he refuses to admit to himself her real strength.⁷

Archdeacon Grantly is a man of extremely high standards. He loves his family but insists that they conform to his standards and earn his love. Yet when he is forced to measure up to them himself, he has some awkward moments. This is seen especially in his conflict with Eleanor. The Archdeacon sees Eleanor's tolerance of Slope as a traitorous action punishable only by expulsion from his sight. He is the initial cause

of Eleanor's intense mental anguish. The Archdeacon is quite clear as to the problem's resolution. Note the qualifications he sets down in this passage:

He loved his father-in-law; and was quite prepared to love Eleanor too, if she would be one of his party, if she would be on his side, if she would regard the Slopes and the Proudies as the enemies of mankind, and acknowledge and feel the comfortable merits of the Gwynnes and the Arabins. He wished to be what he called "safe" with all those whom he had admitted to the penetralia of his house and heart.⁸

This statement is the kind of reaction made by a man who is afraid. The Archdeacon fears the change that he must inevitably make.

It never occurs to Archdeacon Grantly that Eleanor is outraged for the same reason he is. Both regarded Mr. Slope with utter disgust. It is his fear of change and of being mistaken that prolongs the misunderstanding. When Eleanor's engagement to Arabin is finally announced, Grantly is forced to alter his position. "He could not but be disgusted to find how utterly astray he had been in all his anticipations."⁹ His conscience chastizes him for his fault. Yet in the engagement he gains satisfaction that he has triumphed over Slope.

Mrs. Proudie

Next to the Archdeacon the character of Mrs. Proudie is one of the most memorable in the novel. She is a sharp-tongued, tyrannical woman who exercises absolute control over her husband, the Bishop of Barchester. Mrs. Proudie is a grand and austere lady. Like her husband she enjoys the pleasures of life. And she conveniently adheres to strict Evangelical teachings and practices. However, the character of Mrs. Proudie is not as subtle, not as complex as that of the Archdeacon.

Bradford A. Booth comments:

Yet I do not think she is Trollope's best character. She is essentially Dickensian--an exaggeration, almost a caricature.¹⁰

Mr. John H. Wildman discusses in his book, Anthony Trollope's England, an important point in Trollope's view of women which can be applied to the character of Mrs. Proudie:

A woman's charm, according to Trollope, arises from her grace and ease of manner, and from her remaining distinctly feminine. The more she cultivates these graces, the greater is her power. Paradoxically, she is weakest when she attempts to appear strong in a manner that is not rightfully her own. When she is loud or rough or brusque, she loses her strength, because she puts herself on a level with men, and lays herself open to indignities.¹¹

This is the great flaw in Mrs. Proudie's character. It is this manly attitude that confounds Archdeacon Grantly, for he must battle her in the same ways as he does other men but outwardly give her the womanly respect that society dictates.

Mrs. Proudie's religious values point up another weakness in her personality. Its area of concern involves only a strict observance of the Sabbath. Deceivingly she thinks it can solve all the evils of the world. A man's conduct during the week is of little consequence to her. In her eyes he is in grave danger of sin if he does not keep the Sabbath. Mrs. Proudie is extremely small-minded and spitefully quick to judge and control the conduct of others.

Throughout their years in marriage, she has gained complete control of her husband. She rules absolute in all domestic affairs. In the same manner as Mrs. Quiverfull, Mrs. Proudie takes control out of the hands of her husband in order to obtain what she wants. Unlike

Mrs. Quiverfull, whose motives for such action are her fourteen babies, Mrs. Proudie does it out of her quest for power. Now that her husband is Bishop of Barchester, Mrs. Proudie is eager to extend her control to the whole diocese. This brings her into direct conflict with Archdeacon Grantly and Mr. Slope.

To Archdeacon Grantly, as was mentioned earlier, Mrs. Proudie poses an insufferable threat. Initially it is Mrs. Proudie's high moral smugness and Low-Churchism that repels the Archdeacon. He is unable to suffer the fact that she is taking away, through her husband, the power and influence Grantly had gained under his father. She wants to change too many of the old ways, upset too many of the old usages. The Archdeacon battles Mrs. Proudie by moving radically away from her in the opposite direction of High-Churchism. This is why he calls Arabin into the conflict. John Wildman illustrates how Mr. Harding fits into the conflict,

Mr. Harding is superior to her, because he refuses to come down to her plane and fight with her: he only is able to elude her, and even when she apparently has conquered him, she really has not done so; for there has been no real battle.¹²

Mrs. Proudie vies with Slope in order to protect her control and influence over the bishop. At first she sees Slope as a support in her quest. However, it is through the actions of the exotic Signora Vesey-Neroni, whom she cannot understand and sees as a threat to her high morality, that she sees Slope as a potential enemy. It is over the new appointment to Hiram's Hospital that Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope become open combatants. Slope's tactics of instilling ideas in Bishop Proudie of overthrowing his wife's oppression gives him the momentary

lead. But Slope has not counted on the one great strength of Mrs.

Proudie--the conjugal bedroom.

Mr. Slope had not a chance against her; not only could she stun the poor bishop by her midnight anger, but she could assuage and soothe him, if she so willed, by daily indulgences.¹³

Reverend Obidiah Slope

Obidiah Slope is the most contemptible of Trollope's characters in Barchester Towers. He is in many ways reminiscent of Charles Dickens'

Uriah Heep. In a masterly passage of description Trollope tells of

Slope:

Mr. Slope is tall, and not ill made. His feet and hands are large . . . he has a broad chest and wide shoulders. . . . His countenance, however, is not specially prepossessing. His hair is lank, and of a dull reddish hue. It is always formed into three straight lumpy masses, each brushed with admirable precision, and cemented with much grease. . . . His face is nearly of the same colour of his hair, though perhaps a little redder: it is not unlike beef,--beef, however, one would say, of a bad quality. . . . His mouth is large, though his lips are thin and bloodless; and his big, prominent, pale brown eyes inspire anything but confidence. His nose, however, is his redeeming feature: it is pronounced straight and well-formed; though I myself should have liked it better did it not possess a somewhat spongy, porous appearance, as though it had been cleverly formed out of a red coloured cork.¹⁴

Slope's quest is for stability through money and power. Unlike Arabin, Slope is frighteningly unscrupulous. He has chosen religion as a career, as a means to an end. To this end he uses people. Slope appeals to those who are easily taken in by a sudden, melodramatic display of emotion. He is especially gifted with the ladies, seeming to function much more profitably in feminine than masculine circles. His mannerisms, in fact, alienate men from him. Had he been able to

win men over, he might have risen to great heights; instead these mannerisms contribute to his downfall. It is Slope's selfish ways that cause much of the action.

Slope attempts to use the Proudies to gain control of Barchester. Should he be able to win the absolute confidence and intimacy of the Bishop, he will be able to overthrow Mrs. Proudie. He tries through careful strategy to maintain his relationship with her at the same time. However, by accommodating his own pleasures too far with the Signora, Slope designs his own downfall.

His first power play within Barchester is his attempt to place one of his own supporters in the wardenship of Hiram's Hospital. Should he accomplish this, he will have diminished the Archdeacon's influence. In the process he draws Mr. Harding directly and unwillingly into the action. As has been seen, Slope plants doubt into Harding's mind and sends him away in mental torment. Likewise by involving Eleanor unwillingly in his power struggle, he causes her great inner tension.

Ironically Slope ultimately gets his due from the people whom he had used the most--women. And it is from the women he had purported to love. The Signora, during one of his love scenes, reveals Slope to be the double-standard deceiver that he is, playing his conscience and passions off in the process. Eleanor devastates his self-righteous smugness with a simple slap of her hand, his reaction to which gives a wealth of insight into his character:

And then Mr. Slope's face, tinted with a deeper dye than usual by the wine he had drunk, simpering and puckering itself with pseudo-piety and tender grimaces, seemed specially to call for such action. . . . If went direct to

his pride. He conceived himself lower in his dignity, and personally outraged. He could almost have struck at her again in his rage. Even the pain was a great annoyance to him, and the feeling that his clerical character had been wholly disregarded, sorely vexed him.¹⁵

Ultimately Slope's expulsion from the community of Barchester comes at the hands of his opponent, Mrs. Proudie. Slope finally gives up the struggle but not without a warning to his exiler:

"May God forgive you, madam, for the manner in which you have treated me," said Slope looking at her with a very heavenly look; "and remember this, madam, that you yourself may still have a fall"; and he looked at her with a very worldly look. "As to the bishop, I pity him!"¹⁶

CHAPTER IV

It only remains now to show how the preceeding analysis of characters can be brought together into a meaningful whole. As has been seen, conflict in the novel arises when two or more characters with differing values clash. An analysis of these values and their situational flexibility brings about an understanding of exactly what Trollope is attempting to say. Trollope is illustrating the strength and adaptability of the characters' value system. Through analysis a basic fault in several of these systems can be seen as the primary cause of the novel's conflicts. Self-deception in one or another touches every character studied in Chapter II and III.¹ An examination of three areas will prove this. These areas are power, worldliness and idealism, and love.

Power

The desire for power is behind the motives of those characters who are directly involved in the Proudie-Grantly conflict. Archdeacon Grantly is threatened by those who, he feels, are attempting to abscond with the power and influence he had acquired under his father, the late Bishop of Barchester. The Archdeacon has deceived himself into thinking that this power is the answer to the changes going on in the world, to finding happiness. He doesn't know what he would do should Mrs. Proudie be able to destroy all of the old usages he has clung to for so many years. He is afraid to adapt, to change.

When the Archdeacon is confronted by a situation such as the Proudies or Mr. Slope, he, rather than adapting to the situation, moves in a direction unnatural to himself. He becomes suddenly High Church and calls in Mr. Arabin. He qualifies his love to Eleanor because he is afraid of taking a risk, of being hurt, of changing. He is afraid of admitting mistakes because he does not want to have to re-examine himself and his place in society. The Archdeacon cannot face the fact that he cannot direct his own life well, that is, he cannot adapt. Thus he attempts to justify himself by wanting to direct others' lives. A man is never able to effectively live his life using escapes that try to skirt basic issues. Slowly he alienates himself from others. Trollope shows how poorly he relates to the rest of society. Ultimately these escapes can only be harmful to the person. The man who will not admit things to himself goes through life frustrated, unless some strong individual should balk his self-deception and force a decision, as Mrs. Proudie and Eleanor do to the Archdeacon.

Mrs. Proudie is quite similar to Archdeacon Grantly. As has been seen, she too sought fulfillment for herself through the exercise of power. Mrs. Proudie's theology, which extended itself only to a strict observance of the Sabbath, illustrates that she could not answer the much more basic questions that confronted her conscience. Mrs. Proudie is afraid to admit this to herself. Her moral smugness is a radical attempt to escape from this. And her innate fear urges her to push this off onto other people. Mrs. Proudie doesn't have the answers, so she wants to give the commands. Maybe by this she can divert those problems confronting her. She, too, is deceiving herself.

Obidiah Slope is an opportunist. He is constantly designing his own advancement. His using people such as the Proudies and Eleanor is integral to this. Like Mrs. Proudie his religion is shallow. Slope's greatest fault is that he imagines himself unable to function effectively in the existing society. He is weak in his discourse with men, so he uses females instead. Mr. Slope deceives himself into thinking that power and money will give what he needs most--a better self-image. Slope contributes nothing positive to the Barchester society. Trollope, through Slope, demonstrates what a man who is solely for himself can do to the people around him. He can only bring misery and disgust.

Worldliness and Idealism

Like Trollope himself, the people he wrote of were devoted to English customs and traditions with a quiet, rather phlegmatic sincerity: their strength lay not in their sudden, passionate outbursts, but in the even and persisting tenacity with which they held to their convictions.²

Like her father, Eleanor Bold always did what she thought to be best. Eleanor attempted to adapt to the demands of the world as best she could without sacrificing her morality. However, through her, Trollope illustrates the problems of an over-sense of propriety. Eleanor uses her propriety as a support. And, as a result, it narrows her conception of life and the world. She judges, a little hastily, by appearances. And, in return, she is judged by appearances. Trollope seems to think that if a person could face the world honestly rather than through the eyes of propriety, he could function much easier.

Arabin is an example of an attitude very prevalent during the Victorian Age. Unable to face the world as it is, he hides behind a false

facade. It takes form as an attempt at the complete denial of the goodness of the cosmos. This included not only the exterior world but his inner nature. Arabin's feelings ^{and} his desires ~~are~~ ^{and} suppressed, ^{and} are not honestly dealt with. Trollope shows in the character of Arabin that if rejection of the world and suppression of feelings is taken to any extreme it results in a distortion of a person's ideals, a tendency to escapism, (which is what the Roman Church was for Arabin) and loneliness.

Love

In Barchester Towers, Anthony Trollope puts a great stress on love. He sees it, linked with honesty, to be of extreme importance. A. O. J. Cockshut explains Trollope's theory of love when he says:

To fall in love is in some way a virtuous art, and it becomes more virtuous if it outlasts rejection and loss of hope.³

When Arabin realizes the workings of his heart, his life takes on a new perspective. When Eleanor has no more need of propriety, she takes on a new wholeness. Their feelings justify their motives, unlike Slope, who is so involved in himself that he must push such feelings aside.

At the end of the novel, both Arabin and Eleanor have gained a new freedom. Through love and support they are able to cope with the problems of life. The loneliness that stems from worldliness and a false sense of prosperity is changed to new idealism and hope through love. Trollope saw that love involved the whole person and that if a person is not honest with himself, he will be neither a virtuous man nor a contributing member of society.

It is Mr. Harding who brings this across most effectively for Trollope. He is not ambitious. He is worldly only to the point that he enjoys the good, simple pleasures of life. And Mr. Harding could under no circumstances give up love. As a result he is able to make livable adaptations to life. It is this ability that Trollope affirms in Barchester Towers.

In conclusion it can be stated that Anthony Trollope saw change as inevitable to every man's life. He also saw the necessity of a strong and flexible value system in order to successfully adapt to this change. Trollope realized the richness and potential of human nature. Self-deception was for him its abuse. When a person deceives both himself and others, moral conflicts arise. Yet Trollope does not pose solutions to these conflicts. Rather he suggests that through honesty they may be more easily dealt with.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I.

¹George Levine (ed.), The Emergence of Victorian Consciousness: The Spirit of the Age (New York: The Free Press, Division of Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 6.

²Anthony Trollope, Barchester Towers, introd. Bradford A. Booth (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962), p. vi.

³Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. xi.

⁴Michael Sadlier, Trollope: A Commentary (Oxford: University Press, 1961), p. 154.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

⁶V. S. Pritchett, The Living Novel and Later Appreciations (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 132.

⁷Henry James, The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 94.

⁸Robert M. Polhemus, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 4-5.

⁹Sadlier, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁰Anthony Trollope, An Autobiography, ed. Michael Sadlier ("The World's Classics," Vol. CCXXXIX; London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 188-190.

¹¹Walter Allen, The English Novel: A Short Critical History (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 234.

¹²Sadlier, op. cit., p. 33.

¹³A. O. J. Cockshut, Anthony Trollope: A Critical Study (Great Britain: New York University Press, 1968), pp. 23-24.

¹⁴Polhemus, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 1.

²⁰Lord David Cecil, Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation (Chicago: Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 230.

²¹James, op. cit., p. 94.

²²Cecil, op. cit., pp. 230-31.

²³Allen, op. cit., p. 238.

²⁴Polhemus, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁵Frederic Harrison, Studies in Early Victorian Literature (Cambridge: University Press, 1895), p. 190.

²⁶Polhemus, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁷John Hazard Wildman, Anthony Trollope's England (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Pub. Co., 1940), p. 105.

²⁸Ibid., p. 329.

²⁹Ibid., p. 239.

³⁰Ibid., p. 242.

³¹William Cadbury, "Shape and Theme: Determinants of Trollope's Forms," PMLA, LXXVIII (September, 1963). This article is in response to an article also written in the PMLA: John E. Dustin, "Thematic Alteration in Trollope," PMLA, LXXVII (June, 1962). Dustin had cited that Trollope had two basic sources of conflict in his early novels. He drew a diagram showing how the author had alternated them automatically. Cadbury refutes this hypothesis in his article by stating that Trollope was much more imaginative an artist than to be so mechanical. These two articles read together give a fine understanding of Trollope's literary methods.

³²Ibid., p. 331.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Cockshut, op. cit., p. 31.

³⁵Ibid., p. 28.

- ³⁶James, op. cit., p. 95.
³⁷Wildman, op. cit., p. 19.
³⁸Cecil, op. cit., pp. 251-52.
³⁹Booth, op. cit., p. x.
⁴⁰James, op. cit., p. 95.
⁴¹Wildman, op. cit., p. 10.
⁴²Cecil, op. cit., p. 236.
⁴³Pritchett, op. cit., p. 137.
⁴⁴Booth, op. cit., p. x.

Chapter II.

- ¹Booth, op. cit., p. xii.
²Polhemus, op. cit., p. 27.
³Cockshut, op. cit., p. 151.
⁴Anthony Trollope, Barchester Towers and The Warden, introd. Harlan Hatcher (Modern Library, College Editions; New York: Random House, 1950). Chapter XXII, p. 411. All quotations from Barchester Towers in this study will be cited from this text.

- ⁵Ibid., Chap. XXII, p. 415.
⁶Ibid., Chap. VI, p. 250.
⁷Ibid., Chap. XII, pp. 311-12.
⁸Ibid., Chap. XIII, p. 316.
⁹Ibid., Chap. XIII, p. 317.
¹⁰Ibid., Chap. V, p. 240.
¹¹Ibid., Chap. XVIII, pp. 368-69.
¹²Ibid., Chap. VIII, p. 264.
¹³Ibid., Chap. XVI, p. 345.

¹⁴Ibid., Chap. XXXVII, p. 577.

¹⁵Ibid., Chap. XXIX, p. 497.

¹⁶Ibid., Chap. XLII, p. 634.

¹⁷Ibid., Chap. XL, p. 614.

¹⁸Ibid., Chap. XLII, p. 636.

¹⁹Ibid., Chap. XX, p. 392.

²⁰Polhemus, op. cit., p. 49.

²¹Ibid., p. 47.

Chapter III.

¹Booth, op. cit., p. xii.

²Barchester Towers, Chap. I, p. 210.

³Polhemus, op. cit., p. 37.

⁴Barchester Towers, Chap. VI, p. 245.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Wildman, op. cit., p. 31.

⁷Ibid., p. 121.

⁸Barchester Towers, Chap. XXVIII, p. 483.

⁹Ibid., Chap. I, p. 720.

¹⁰Booth, op. cit., p. xii.

¹¹Wildman, op. cit., p. 108.

¹²Ibid., p. 122.

¹³Barchester Towers, Chap. XXXIII, p. 544.

¹⁴Ibid., Chap. IV, pp. 229-30.

¹⁵Ibid., Chap. XL, p. 618.

¹⁶Ibid., Chap. LI, p. 731.

Chapter IV.

¹Cockshut, op. cit.: See also supra, p. 14.

²Wildman, op. cit., p. 126.

³Cockshut, op. cit., p. 114.

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