Moral Dilemmas and Cases of Conscience: Trollope's Morality in The Warden and The Last Chronicle of Barset

Hannah Louise Rogers, Edith Cowan University

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Abstract
This thesis offers an exploration of Trollope's morality in The Warden and The Last Chronicle of Barset. Existing critical work which explores Trollope's morality often argues either for or against Trollope's moral relativism. This thesis argues, instead, that Trollope's morality unifies aspects of both theoretical perspectives. It reconciles the polarisation of Trollope's moral absolutism and moral relativism, taking the middle-ground. In doing so, it makes evident the contradictions and extremes in existing Trollopian criticism.

The thesis places Trollopian morality within the historical and socio-cultural context of Victorianism. It focuses on the Victorian consciousness of change, securing a definition of Trollope's morality which brings to the fore the contradictions masked by complacent assumptions about Victorian moral conservatism. Incorporating primary and secondary literary sources, the thesis interweaves the man and his work in an original assessment of Trollope's personal and professional moral code.

Recommended Citation

As far as I know, Anthony Trollope is the only novelist in the accepted canon of great writers, to have written his books (well, at least some of them) in series. By this I mean that there is some continuity, from one novel in the series to the next, in plot and in characters. (Can anyone successfully challenge my finding of Trollope's uniqueness?) Trollope has a “Palliser” series, which I really know nothing about (yet!). My acquaintance so far has been with the first two novels of the “Chronicles of Barsetshire” series. This runs, in order, as follows: The Warden *** Barchester Towers (1857) The Chronicles of Barsetshire are a series of six novels by Anthony Trollope, written between 1855 and 1867. Set in the fictional English county and … The Warden. Barchester Towers. Doctor Thorne. Framley Parsonage. The Small House at Allington. The Last Chronicle of Barset. Advertisement: The first two novels were adapted in 1982 into a BBC television serial, Barchester Chronicles, starring Donald Pleasence, Janet Maw, Nigel Hawthorne, Angela Pleasence, Barbara Flynn, Geraldine McEwan.
Alan Rickman and Susan Hampshire. Novelist, son of Thomas Anthony Trollope, a barrister who ruined himself by speculation, and of Frances Trollope, a well-known writer, was born in London, and educated at Harrow and Winchester. His childhood was an unhappy one, owing to his father’s misfortunes. His first three novels had little success; but in 1855 he found his line, and in The Warden produced the first of his Barsetshire series. It was followed by Barchester Towers [1857], Doctor Thorne [1858], Framley Parsonage [1861], The Small House at Allington [1864], and The Last Chronicle of Barset [1867], which deal with the society of a small cathedral city. Other novels are Orley Farm, Can you forgive Her? Ralph the Heir, The Claverings, Phineas Finn, He knew he was Right, and The Golden Lion of Grandpré.