The un-Trollopian Trollope: some notes on the Barsetshire novels

Pérez Pérez, Miguel Ángel

Literatura inglesa | Novela | Sociedad victoriana | Trollope, Anthony | Barsetshire

nov-1999

Universidad de Alicante. Departamento de Filología Inglesa

The six Barsetshire novels are not only Anthony Trollope's most popular ones, but also those which are usually considered to represent the author at his mildest and most conventional, as regards the Victorian social and ethical codes. Without entirely disregarding this view, this paper argues that Trollope disguises many of his own opinions behind an apparently unproblematic presentation of characters, situations and attitudes. The essay is therefore an attempt to delineate some of these techniques of "concealment", with the aim of exposing some of the double readings discoverable in Trollope's novels.
“A novel,” Trollope wrote, “should give a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos.” Today, at any rate, the reaction against the creator of Barsetshire and Plantagenet Palliser is probably easier to understand than is his enduring popularity. [2] Tolstoy exclaimed that “Trollope kills me, kills me with his virtuosity.” the vessel overcrowded, the voyage detestable; but Trollope shut himself up in his cabin every morning for a purpose which, on the part of a distinguished writer who was also an invulnerable sailor, could only be communion with the muse. But while Mrs. Quiverful understands some of this and rightly regards Mrs. Proudie as “stiff and hard and proud as piecrust,” she nevertheless concludes that the bishop’s wife is “right at bottom.” But Trollope’s own experiences with money in the years before the novel, discussed in this essay, suggest that he was intriguingly un-self-conscious about his own relationship with money and always declined to perceive in his own financial practices any reason to reflect on the morals of legitimate business. Examining the documentary evidence of Trollope’s attitudes to finance in his own life, the essay concludes that The Way We Live Now continues the novelist’s private assumptions by declining to probe the unsettling question of the ethics of capitalism within the law. To this extent, one of JAMES GINDIN Trollope. DAVID SKILTON. Trollopian Realism. C. P. SNOW Trollope's Art. JOHN HALPERIN Fiction that is True: Trollope and Politics. JULIET McMASTER The Author in his Novel. Notes on the Authors. Selected Bibliography. Index. The omission of all the Barsetshire novels except Doctor Thome was doubtless by arrangement with Chapman & Hall, who brought out the series in 1878, 1887 and 1891-3. The following is an incomplete tally of other London publishers’ Trollope titles, issued during the period of neglect, or supposed neglect, 1885-1915.