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

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Date of Award
1999

Degree Type
Thesis

Degree Name
Bachelor of Arts Honours

Faculty
Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences

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)