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The hobbledehoy's choice: Anthony Trollope's awkward young men and their road to gentlemanliness

Mark King

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

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THE HOBBLEDEHOY’S CHOICE:
ANTHONY TROLLOPE’S AWKWARD
YOUNG MEN AND THEIR ROAD TO GENTLEMANLINESS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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by

Mark King
B.S., Towson State University, 1983
M.A., DePaul University, 1998
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Dedication

To Bear—and all the other women who never lost faith in *their* hobbledehoys.
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Abstract

This study reads the rise, reign, and fall of the English gentleman through the lens of the hobbledehoy novels of Anthony Trollope. It explores Trollope’s use of the hobbledehoy (a term, now almost archaic, for an awkward young man) in eight novels appearing between 1857 and 1879: *The Three Clerks* (1857), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), *Phineas Finn* (1869), *Phineas Redux* (1874), *John Caldigate* (1879), *The Way We Live Now* (1875), and *The Prime Minister* (1876). Since the hobbledehoy figure serves as a cultural reference point or touchstone, then by examining the permutations and adjustments in Trollope’s hobbledehoy, the study clarifies and challenges existing suppositions regarding Victorian notions of class, gender, and nationality. For example, the work argues that the “crisis of gentlemanliness,” identified by Robin Gilmour in *The Idea of the Victorian Gentleman* as developing in the final years of the century, actually begins much earlier—as early as 1871.

Not only is this argument important for Trollope scholars, but it also has ramifications for the larger world of Victorian studies and the discipline as a whole. For instance, “The Hobbledehoy’s Choice” argues that Trollope’s hobbledehoy tales form a distinctive sub-genre of the *bildungsroman*. Additionally, by examining Trollope’s hobbledehoy figure within the larger framework of Victorian texts, the dissertation illustrates the shifts in connotations of gentlemanliness from mid to late century. Furthermore, the arc of Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives illustrates the author’s initial unswerving belief in the unconditional benefits of hard work—ideas popularized by the essayist Thomas Carlyle. However, as the century wore on, Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives demonstrate a steadily increasing suspicion of this Carlylean “gospel of work.” Finally, I argue that Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels negotiate a distancing from much of mid-nineteenth-century self-help literature, especially the work of Samuel Smiles.
This cultural infusion of the hobbledehoy narrative with the corpus of nineteenth-century conduct literature illuminates the manner in which Victorian conduct literature twists and distorts the traditions of its progenitor, courtesy literature.
Chapter One: Introduction: “The Fruit That We Keep for Our Winter Use”

At six p.m. on December 6, 1882, novelist, essayist, editor, and retired postal surveyor Anthony Trollope died (Sadleir 331; Hennessy 15, 13). In some ways, his life story formed a quintessential Victorian success narrative, and it is possible to view Trollope as a poster child for Victorian-era “up-by-the-bootstraps” optimism. Born into a family of limited resources and modest connections, but blessed with perseverance, resolve, will, and, most of all, an unflagging commitment to the redeeming qualities of work, Anthony Trollope had risen from disheveled and slovenly schoolboy to the very pinnacle of success.

By any measure, Trollope’s life had been a triumph. He had amassed a fortune (Trollope, Autobiography 319). He had traveled the world. He represented his nation on diplomatic missions to Egypt, the West Indies, and the United States (Hall, Trollope 159, 171, 316). He had been presented to the Prince of Wales (317). He had even been seriously considered for a peerage (515). He had helped raise two sons. He was a well-liked and important member of some of London’s most fashionable gentleman’s clubs (244). So popular and familiar was his writing style that it was lampooned in a full-length parody in the pages of Punch, which ran for almost a full year (“The Beadle!”).

However, to declare that Trollope’s life personified the Victorian spirit is not to say that his life was ordinary; on the contrary, Trollope’s life was exceptional. For example, he excelled in not one but two distinct careers. His prodigious output of sixty-seven books (an estimated eight or nine million words) is all the more incredible when one considers that most of those millions of words were written while carrying out the responsibilities of a full-time career. To an
extent that still unfairly damages his reputation, Trollope made writing a business. As one critic notes, Trollope “converted his desk into a portable production line” (Overton 61).

Once established, this “portable production line” provided the Trollope family with a comfortable income. For most of his life, Anthony Trollope could afford to hunt three days a week and lived in a succession of comfortable homes. His residences included Waltham Cross, Harrow Weald, Julian’s Hill, and Garland’s Hotel. Despite the frequency of his moves, Trollope ended his adult life not far from where it began; the location of his last home—a nursing home at 34 Welbeck Street in London’s Cavendish Square—was a mere quarter mile from the dingy bachelor lodgings he had lived in upon arriving in London some forty years earlier (Super 434). Such proximity seems fitting. The period of Trollope’s early adulthood, from 1834 to the time of his marriage to Rose Trollope in 1844 (Hennessy 60, 104), formed a seminal event in the author’s life. Seminal, but not happy. This study examines that transitional period—his hobbledehoyhood—as it appeared in Trollope’s work.

Despite its prevalent place in Trollope’s works, the hobbledehoy motif has received little attention from scholars and critics. For example, surprisingly, the word hobbledehoy does not even merit an entry in the six hundred twenty-four page *Oxford Reader’s Companion to Trollope*. This dissertation fills that gap. It examines the role hobbledehoys play in Trollope’s works and asserts that the hobbledehoy motif is both more prevalent and more significant in Trollope’s fiction than previously shown. Furthermore, it shows how Trollope uses a set pattern to illustrate the growth and development of these awkward young men into Victorian gentlemen. I argue that Trollope’s great social experiment of the hobbledehoy novel, an attempt to transfer

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1 The assumption to which I allude to here—that a novelist’s output is necessarily inversely proportional to the quality of his or her work—remains with us even today. However, the elitist sneering over Trollope’s voluminous output began during his life. In one review, *The Saturday Review* chirped that Trollope wrote novels “as fast as a hen drops eggs” (qtd. in Super, *Chronicler* 203).
the values of the countryside to the urban world, is a failure: the gentleman’s values fail to take root in the metropolitan world. Finally, by looking at the hobbledehoy novels in concert with the subtle but steady changes that Victorian gentlemanliness underwent through the latter half of the nineteenth century, this study considers Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels as prescriptive and didactic texts that simultaneously distance themselves from much of Victorian conduct literature. This introductory chapter considers some of the assumptions that underpin the larger work, defines key terms, examines the paradoxes involved in gentlemanliness, reviews some of the literature in the field, and previews the following chapters.

This transitional period between youth and adulthood is not easy in any era, and the Victorian era was no exception. As John Tosh maintains, “the transition from boy to man was fraught with tension” (97). Trollope might label Tosh’s assertion an understatement. The novelist’s transition from boy to man was not just fraught with tension, but was rather a gangling and self-conscious nightmare netherworld. As one of Trollope’s biographers put it, the early years in London “were the most lonely and miserable of his life” (Super, Post Office 7). For Trollope, the period between adolescence and adulthood was a time of fits and starts, of pie-in-the-sky hopes and cold, harsh realities, of earnest striving and moral dissipation, of genteel courtship and injudicious sexual liaison.

Trollope called this period his hobbledehoyhood, and it fascinated him. It would be studied, worked, and re-worked in more than a dozen of the writer’s works. The process by which these gangly youths became indoctrinated into the ranks of English gentlemen would become one of the key elements in his fiction. Along with marriage narratives, ethical dilemma narratives, and inheritance narratives, the hobbledehoy narrative became a story Trollope came back to again and again. So, as Trollope’s final hours ticked away, he lay silent and paralyzed in
a neighborhood in which he had been a young man of twenty—then a lonely and debt-ridden young man who felt unsuited and unqualified for the responsibilities of adult life. As he lay dying, he was a wealthy and respected novelist who had garnered that respect in part by churning his adolescent pain into fictive narratives. In some ways, a part of Trollope had never left the neighborhood of his hobbledehoyhood.

Hobbledehoys appear in surprising and odd places in the Trollopian canon; they surface in prose non-fiction texts such as his travel books, his biography of Cicero, and his autobiography. Hobbledehoys also appear in some of Trollope’s most popular and critically esteemed novels: *Phineas Finn* (1869), *The Three Clerks* (1857), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), *The Prime Minister* (1876), *John Caldigate* (1879), *Phineas Redux* (1874), and *The Way We Live Now* (1875). Sometimes hobbledehoys appear as peripheral characters; at other times, they propel the action. Although Trollope uses the hobbledehoy in different ways, what he seems most comfortable with is a hobbledehoy archetype or pattern: a recurring motif of descent into dissipation, aid from an outsider father figure, redemption, and proper placement within the sphere of Victorian gentlemanliness.

Trollope’s hobbledehoy motif is vital to understanding Trollope’s work and Victorian fiction as a whole. Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives appear just as specific historical, social, and economic forces begin to slide into alignment: increased need for gentlemen in a burgeoning Empire, the transfer of wealth and power from the agrarian areas to the metropolitan centers, and greater identification of the gentleman figure with nationhood. All of these factors begin to coalesce in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives are one of the venues upon which Victorian society worked out the problem of who exactly was and was not a gentleman, and the hobbledehoy became a social bellwether or touchstone. As Shirley
Robin Letwin argues in *The Gentlemen in Trollope*, “there has been persistent disagreement about what Trollope was trying to do and what he achieved. And at the heart of these differences we regularly find something to do with gentlemen” (22). Letwin is certainly correct: a clearer understanding of how this hobbledehoy motif appears in the novels will help shed light on Trollope’s work, the work of his contemporaries, and the Victorian world in general.

This inquiry is based on at least three assumptions. It assumes that Trollope intended that his novels teach as well as entertain. Additionally, this study draws on the connection between an artist’s work and life using a somewhat biographical approach. Finally, this study asserts that the hobbledehoy novels are distinct from *bildungsroman* novels. I will treat each assumption separately. Whether Trollope’s sixty-seven works successfully impart a moral lesson to their audience today is a question that I will leave to others.² Certainly the increases in readership that the books enjoy during times of trouble³ seem to indicate that there is something morally comforting about the novels. However, whether (or not) Trollope intended the works to have a didactic component is a fair question.

Judging from comments Trollope made in a variety of venues, it is clear that he expected more out of the novel than mere entertainment. Critics have noted this tendency in Trollope’s works: one of Trollope’s earliest critics, his brother Thomas, felt that Trollope’s didacticism caused the quality of the author’s writing to suffer. Thomas Trollope maintained that Anthony

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³ For example, Trollope’s novels enjoyed a sharp spike in popularity during the blitz in World War II. In a 1946 article, V.S. Pritchett said of Trollope’s return from the relative obscurity he suffered during the Edwardian period, He has come back. Since 1918 he has become one of the great air raid shelters. He presides over the eternal Munich of the human heart and Barsetshire has been one of the great Never-never Lands of our time. It has been the normal country to which we all aspire. As the religious wars continue and the new revolutions break out, we hide our heads in the sand of Victorian England between the Fifties and the Eighties, and admire the settled conventions and domestic quiet of that time. (415)
was too didactic and too little interested in writing a good novel (qtd. in Glendinning 351).

Modern critics are more sympathetic; Robert Polhemus maintains that by modeling behavior in the novel, writers like Trollope “nurtured common values” (*Chronicler* 246), a position supported by others such as Mark W. Turner (9). 4

Additionally, the morally uplifting nature of literature was a favorite topic of Trollope’s when he was speaking in public. At a 1869 Royal Literary Fund dinner he said, “the novel writers of the country are the great instructors of the country. They help the church and they are better than the law. They teach the women to be ladies and they teach the men to be gentlemen” (qtd. in Super, *Chronicler* 157). At another RLF dinner, he spoke at length of the young novelist’s desire to “touch the pulses of the world” (qtd. in Booth “Royal Literary” 214). He added later, “it is much more pleasant to teach or to amuse, than it is to be taught or to be amused” (214).

Trollope also spoke of literature’s power to uplift in his *An Autobiography*. He writes,

There are many who would laugh at the idea of a novelist teaching either virtue or nobility, --those, for instance, who regard the reading of novels as a sin, and those also who think it to be simply an idle pastime. They look upon the tellers of stories as among the tribe of those who pander to the wicked pleasures of wicked world. I have regarded my art from so different a point of view. . . . I think that no youth has been taught that in falseness and flashiness is to be found the road to manliness; but some may perhaps have learned from me that it is to be found in truth and a high but gentle spirit. Such are the lessons I have striven to teach.

(146)

Trollope’s prose non-fiction mirrored this commitment to morally uplifting literature. In 1879, he published a defense of novel reading in *The Nineteenth Century*; he wrote, “there cannot be a doubt that the character of those around us are formed very much on the lessons which are thus

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4 The idea that Trollope’s novels, or any popular novelist’s works, nurture common values is important to understand when looking at figures like the hobbledehoy as cultural touchstones or bellwethers.
taught . . . Our boys\textsuperscript{5} grow into manhood, either nobly or ignobly partly as they [popular novels] may teach” (25).

Though instilling a moral component in fiction was important, Trollope did not wish to risk being prudish or stuffy. The novelist knew instinctively that the writer must first entertain and then moralize. To his friend Kate Field Trollope wrote, “Teach, preach, convince if you can—but first learn the art of doing so without seeming to do it” (qtd. in Super Chronicler 269). The importance of subsuming the text’s lesson to its entertainment value was a subject of intense interest to Trollope—he called it a snake in the grass. He wrote of it at length in the final pages of his 1871 novel, Ralph the Heir.

It is a test of a novel writer’s art that he conceals his snake-in-the-grass; but the reader may be sure that it is always there. No man or woman with a conscience – no man or woman with intellect sufficient to produce amusement, can go on from year to year spinning stories without the desire of teaching; with no ambition of influencing readers for their good. Gentle readers, the physic is always beneath the sugar, hidden or unhidden. (2:338)

The seriousness with which Trollope took the duty of moral instruction may be inferred by some of his language. In his An Autobiography, Trollope asserts, “I have ever thought of myself as a preacher of sermons, and my pulpit as one which I could make both salutary and agreeable to my audience” (146). In Ralph the Heir he reiterates the analogy saying, “we

\textsuperscript{5} It is important to note that when Trollope is addressing the transition between childhood and adulthood, he is almost always examining that transition as it exists in males. I believe this androcentric turn of Trollope’s is partly due to the era in which he lived, perhaps partly due to the fact that he was solely the father of sons, and partly due to the fact that he considered work (i.e., the male-dominated worlds of business and government work) the primary venue for turning adolescents into adults. Therefore, all of Trollope’s hobbledehoys are male. However, females (hobbledehoys) go through a similar pattern in some Trollope novels. Their venue for the transition to adulthood, however, is almost entirely kept to the area of marriage and family. Examples of Trollopian hobbledehoys include Arabella Trefoil in The American Senator and the eponymous heroines of Rachel Ray and Lady Anna.
novelists preach to you from our pulpits, and are keenly anxious that our sermons shall not be inefficacious” (2:338). Clearly, even though novels are not sermons, Trollope meant for his novels to have a didactic and morally uplifting component.

Another assumption underpinning this study regards the relationship between a writer’s life and work. Normally, scholars must use caution when moving between an artist’s work and an artist’s life. Academics continually remind one another that novels are works of fiction and often caution students to believe the tale, not the teller. However, there exists a particularly fine line between tale and teller in the works of Anthony Trollope. R.H. Super has noted the frequency with which real life people and events have crossed over into Trollope’s fiction verbatim (Chronicler 13, 84-85). As Victoria Glendinning notes, “it was characteristic of Anthony to make amends and heal old sores in his fiction. In that parallel world, as in daydreams, he could invent alternative histories” (13). Glendinning goes on to point out that Trollope’s civil service examination, like many events from An Autobiography, finds its way directly into the pages of Trollope’s novels (71), whereas Super has noted that even the names of his fictional characters seem based on real-life Trollopian associates (Chronicler 13).

The final assumption behind this work concerns genre. Just as the line between art and life can be blurry, so too can the line between the hobbeldehoy novels and bildungsroman appear blurry—blurry, but present. Trollope’s hobbeldehoy novels are distinct from bildungsroman.\(^6\) Robert Polhemus maintains that there is nothing like Phineas Finn in all of literature (149). Polhemus’ astonishment, I reason, comes from the fact that the sub-genre of hobbeldehoy novels has not received much attention in the past. Although bildungsroman, novels such as Dickens’s

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\(^6\) Trollope’s hobbeldehoy pattern is a generic cousin to the bildungsroman. Simultaneously, it prefigures the immigrant assimilation novels of mid-twentieth century American fiction by writers like Saul Bellow, Phillip Roth, and Bernard Malamud.
David Copperfield, and Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels share characteristics, it is important to
differentiate between them. M.H. Abrams defines bildungsroman as

signifying a “novel of formation” or “novel of education.” The subject of
these novels is the development of the protagonist’s mind and character, in
the passage from childhood through varied experiences and often through
a spiritual crisis—into maturity and recognition of his or her identity and
role in the world. (132)

The hobbledehoy novel differs from bildungsroman in three key ways: protagonist,
focus, and crisis. In hobbledehoy novels, the protagonists are of a distinct character. Trollopian
hobbledehoys are males of somewhat gentrified background; for example, second sons of second
sons often make prime candidates for hobbledehoyhood. They are also cash-poor individuals
who struggle to attain or maintain a foothold in respectable society. Generally pure of heart but
handicapped by an innate ineptitude and a crushing lack of resources, these young men stumble
through life saying the wrong thing, wearing the wrong clothes, and cavorting with the wrong
associates.

The two genres also differ in focus. If bildungsroman is about coming of age and a quest
for a sense of self as in Tom Brown’s Schooldays, hobbledehoy stories are about regaining a
sense of lost gentlemanliness via the placement of that self within society’s structure. Often, the
hobbledehoy story seems to be less about the development of mind and character and more about
the development of a worthwhile and remunerative career. In simple terms, the hobbledehoy’s
question is not “who am I?” but rather “what should I do?” and “how do I fit in?”

Given their existing differences, it is not surprising that the bildungsroman and
hobbledehoy novels differ in their climatic moments as well. Abrams maintains that
bildungsroman often involves a “spiritual crisis” (132). Hobbledehoys weather a crisis, but it

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7 Other contributions to the genre include George Meredith’s Evan Harrington and Dinah Maria Mulock Craik’s
John Halifax, Gentleman.
tends to be financial. Hobbledehoys often find themselves far behind in their rent (Phineas Finn), forced to sell their patrimony (John Caldigate), or being arrested for debt (Charley Tudor in *The Three Clerks*). In these three ways, the hobbledehoy novels form a separate sub-genre of their own: as René Wellek and Austin Warren claim, the nineteenth century’s increasing number of books permit and even demand the recognition of new genres (242).

Having looked at some assumptions that underpin this study, it is perhaps now appropriate to consider some slippery terms. At least five terms require definition: hobbledehoy, manliness, fop, dandy, and gentleman. Though some of these terms may be dispatched in short order, others, especially gentleman, require a somewhat lengthy discussion. Hobbledehoy can be dispensed of quickly: the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the usage of hobbledehoy to 1540, declares its origin uncertain, and defines the word hobbledehoy as “a youth at an age between boyhood and manhood, a stripling, especially a clumsy or awkward youth” (7:276-77). Trollope defines hobbledehoy with an elegance and affection that the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition lacks. Speaking of these young men, Trollope writes,

> Englishmen of this class in question are boys for a more protracted period of their life and remain longer in a state of hobbledehoyhood, than the youths probably of any other nation. They are nurtured on the cold side of the wall, and come slowly to maturity; but the fruit, which is only half-ripe at the end of summer, is the fruit that we keep for our winter use. I do not know that much has been lost in life by him who, having been a boy at twenty, is still a young man at forty. But even in England we are changing all this now-a-days. Let us hope that what we gain in time may not be lost in flavour. (*Travelling Sketches* 46-47)

Trollope’s affection for the hobbledehoy is apparent, and even when he describes the awkward young men at their most buffoonish, the buffoonery is tempered with warmth and fondness.

Any consideration of hobbledehoys must be careful to differentiate between the hobbledehoy and other sorts of quasi- or ersatz-gentlemen, such as the fop and the dandy. The *OED* reports the word *fop* has “uncertain origins” and it speculates that its origin might have
something to do with the German *foppen* meaning “to hoax” (6:22). Among the definitions the *OED* lists for the word are “a foolish person,” “a conceited person,” and “one who is foolishly attentive and vain of his appearance, dress or manners” (6:22-23). In her consideration of the fop for *Studies in English Literature*, Susan Staves lists a litany of fop characteristics. She cites “refusal to fight, extreme complaisance, sexual passivity, avoidance of drunkenness, fondness for the company of women, concern with fashion, interest in dancing and singing, and delicacy of all kind including sensitivity to odors, cultivation of table manners, and fainting” (421) as the chief characteristics of the literary fop.

With the exception of the connotations of hoaxes or trickery, the definition of *dandy* is roughly equivalent to the definition of *fop*—most dictionaries define each term by the other. For example, the *OED* defines dandy as “one who studies above everything to dress elegantly and fashionably, a beau, a fop” (4:238-39). The fop and the dandy have recently received a considerable amount of critical attention, and scholars often look closely at the idea of overt concern over appearance when contemplating the fop. For example, Staves maintains that fops receive so much derision from others because their fascination with the outer man leaves them open to the assumption that their inner man is incomplete, missing, or corrupt (413). Jessica R. Feldman has noted a similar fascination with appearance in the dandy figure; she refuses to discriminate between dandies in literature and dandies in “real” life since the dandy persona is always fictionalized (26). Feldman finds the dandy’s concern with appearance so acute that she asserts that the dandy’s motto should be “paraître est c’être” or “to appear is to be” (91). James Eli Adams’s work, *Dandies and Desert Saints* agrees; Adams maintains that “the dandy is a fundamentally theatrical being” (22). Most research agrees that it is the dandy/fop’s focus on

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appearance not his perceived effeminacy that separates him from the true gentleman.

The *OED* traces *manliness* to the fourteenth century and defines it as “the state or quality of being manly; the possession of manly vigour, or of those virtues characteristic of a man” as well as mentioning an obsolete definition of “humanity; human kindness” (9:322). *Manly* is defined as “possessing the virtues proper to a man as distinguished from a woman or child; chiefly, courageous, independent in spirit, frank, upright” (9:322). It is here that the definition comes closest to what the Victorians meant by manliness. Victorian manliness was roughly analogous to what early twenty-first-century Americans might call *maturity*. To Letwin, Victorian “manliness means not ruthlessness nor callousness but the opposite of squeamishness. It is a quality required of gentlemen in all activities, but in some walks of life, and above all in politics, to a higher degree. Manliness does not replace, but sustains discrimination. It is a species of courage” (204). To others, however, manliness became inexorably intertwined with the century’s Muscular Christianity movement, and the term itself became laden with religious connotations. David Alderson notes that manliness was “bound up with Protestantism” (15). Though perhaps imbued with religious connotations, *manliness* was rarely saddled with class-based associations. If the concept of gentleman struggled (and failed) to break free of class-based definitions, manliness never had such a problem. A street-sweeper could not be a gentleman, but he could exhibit manliness.

In contrast to the unambiguous definitions of *hobbledehoy*, *fop*, and *dandy*, defining the word *gentleman* is a perilous journey down a slippery slope. Trying to define the word gives one a glimpse of why the concept of gentlemanliness was so contested during the Victorian period. Yet an understanding of the term with all its shadings and contradictions is integral to this undertaking. To be sure, the hobbledehoys in Trollope’s fiction and elsewhere struggled to attain
gentlemanliness. In that respect, Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels can be read as simple quest narratives. But gentlemanliness—the object of that quest—is not static, but rather it is an exceedingly amorphous, slippery, and occasionally self-contradictory concept. To complicate matters further, gentlemanliness is changing during the Victorian period. In fact, this study argues that from its very beginnings, the concept of the gentleman has been bound up with flexibility, indeterminacy, and uncertainty. Although this state of indeterminacy reached a fevered pitch in the late nineteenth century, it was present from the very outset.

The Oxford English Dictionary lists twenty distinct meanings of the term gentleman (6:451-53). Of course, multiple definitions of a single term are nothing new; however, what makes the term gentleman particularly troublesome is that some of the definitions of the word seem antithetical to some of the other definitions. For example, the OED lists some applications of the word that are exceptionally narrow—“one of forty gentlemen who act as guards or attendants to the sovereign on state occasions” (6:452). Simultaneous uses of the word are disturbingly vague; to wit, “a courteous synonym for ‘man’, without regard to the social rank of the person referred to” (6:452). The entry’s first definition seems to contradict itself, because it refers to a personage seemingly simultaneously with and without rank; it reads, “A man of gentle birth, or having the same heraldic status as those of gentle birth; properly, one who is entitled to bear arms, though not ranking among the nobility, but also applied to a person of distinction without precise definition of rank” (6:452). These inconsistencies are even more apparent when the term is examined within the context of nineteenth-century literature.

Nineteenth-century commentators and essayists agreed that definitions of the term gentleman were exceedingly difficult to articulate. In this manner, gentleman almost became defined by its very indefinable nature. For example, William Hazlitt wrote, “we all know it
when we see it; but we do not know how to account for it, or to explain in what it consists” (209). The anonymous courtesy writer who penned *The Fool of Quality* shared Hazlitt’s perplexity; he or she wrote, “there is no term in our language more common than that of gentleman . . . Yet perhaps no two living are precisely agreed respecting the qualities they think requisite for constituting this character” (qtd. in Palmer-Smythe, 38). Though eighteenth-century commentators and essayists were generally a bit more secure than their nineteenth-century brethren in what was meant by *gentleman*, they too occasionally expressed uncertainty over the term’s exact definition. In 1749, Phillip Dormer Stanhope, better known as Lord Chesterfield, maintained that gentlemanliness was based on “a thousand nameless things which nobody can describe” (Letter, April 19 OS, 1749).

Of course, Chesterfield is overstating a bit; people—then and now—did try to describe gentlemanliness. In *The Idea of a Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*, Robin Gilmour writes, “Victorians themselves were, if not confused, then at least much more uncertain than their grandfathers had been about what constituted a gentleman, and that this uncertainty, which made definition difficult was an important part of the appeal which gentlemanly status held for outsiders hoping to attain it” (3). Other critics concur: in *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal*, Phillip Mason maintains that one of the reasons that the concept of English gentlemanliness was so successful was that “no one was quite sure who was a gentleman and who was not” (9). To critics like Mason, the term’s flexibility is a decided advantage.
Trollope shared his era’s uneasiness with a precise definition of the word *gentleman*. In *The Duke’s Children*, Trollope’s quintessential gentleman, Plantagenant Palliser, is confronted with the idea that his daughter may marry a man beneath her social station. Assured that his daughter’s would-be suitor is a gentleman, Palliser testily replies,

“So is my private secretary. There is not a clerk in one of our public offices who does not consider himself to be a gentleman. The curate of the parish is a gentleman, and the medical man who comes here from Bradstock. The word is too vague to carry with it any meaning that ought to be serviceable to you in thinking of such a matter.” (68)

One of the puzzling inconsistencies in the gentleman is the tension inherent in the term’s recognition and its definition. If Victorians were uncertain how to define gentleman, they were paradoxically sure that they knew exactly who was (and was not) a gentleman. As a matter of fact, the ability consistently to recognize a gentleman became an aspect of gentlemanliness itself: one of the ways to define this indefinable person was by his ability to recognize others like himself. Writing of gentlemen in *Scribner’s Magazine*, Robert Louis Stevenson pronounced, “for all this ambiguity, for all these imperfect examples, we know clearly what we mean by the word” (637). In his characteristically bombastic manner, Trollope echoed Stevenson’s assertions. In *Rachel Ray*, Trollope insisted that a clergyman should be a gentleman and then impatiently anticipated his readers’ reaction by asserting, “I am by no means prepared to define what I mean by the term” (6). Later in the same passage, Trollope confidently insisted that everyone could guess his meaning (6). So, though Trollope and his fellow Victorians felt they

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9 In his study on the nature of Victorian gentlemen in fiction, Robin Gilmour has considered this tension between being able to recognize a gentleman and being able to articulate a firm definition. Gilmour writes, It would obviously be absurd to suggest that only a squire can be a gentleman in Trollope’s fiction. But to counter the view that his notion of a gentleman was confused and inarticulate, or merely a vague sentiment, one would point to the precision of his social description and to the frequency with which, in successive novels, integrity is shown to have grown from ancestral loyalties. To be a gentleman in Trollope, it is necessary to show “manliness” and “heart”, but also to possess the “hard” quality of principle which his squires have. (Idea 160)
could recognize a gentleman, articulating a definition of a gentleman kept them sputtering. It is significant that the elegance with which Trollope defines hobbledehoy in Travelling Sketches (the endearing “fruit for our winter use”) is complemented by and contrasted with the bombastic and stumbling definition (“I am by no means prepared. . .”) with which he attempts to define gentleman in Rachel Ray and the testiness he has The Duke of Omnium show in The Duke’s Children.

Although playing armchair psychologist with long-dead authors is a tricky business, one is tempted to see in this contrast a biographical component. Although he insisted throughout his life that he was a gentleman and was not troubled, as was Thackeray, by the concept of the gentleman and the act of being paid for writing books, nevertheless, there seems to be a bit of hollowness in some of Trollope’s own protestations of gentlemanliness. For example, Hall reports Trollope pointedly wrote “gentleman” in response to the question “Father’s Profession?” on both his sons’ birth certificates. Despite his assertions, one wonders if Trollope was not quite convinced that he had managed to hold on to gentlemanly status.

If Trollope was not quite sure about his own gentlemanliness, then he certainly was not alone. Then (as now) the line separating upper middle class and lower upper class was an ambiguous one. In The Gentleman in Trollope, Shirley Robin Letwin argues that the word’s origin comes not from the French gentil-homme, as one might expect, but rather from a much older source, the Greek word eugenia meaning “good lineage” (11).

Victorian commentators placed the word’s genesis at a point almost as ancient: writing in 1888, Robert Louis Stevenson declared the word came from the Latin word for family, gens (635). In an Edwardian collection of meditations on gentlemanliness, A. Palmer-Smythe traced the notion of gentlemanliness to the fall of the Roman Empire. Palmer-Smythe argued that as
the Goths overran Rome, the Romans applied the label *gentiles homines* to their conquerors (5). The name, reports Palmer-Smythe, was derogatory and roughly analogous to the Latin *barbari* (7). As the *gentiles homines*’ fortunes rose and as their power and responsibility became institutionalized, the word’s connotations changed (7). These stories have reverberations that go far beyond their value as endearing etymological anecdotes. The stories demonstrate that the idea of gentlemanliness has always been intertwined with the notion of the birth of a new order—one class rising into a power position, as did the conquering *gentiles homines* who supplanted their former superiors, the Romans. The stories also demonstrate how the concept of gentlemanliness has always been based on two almost competing conceptions: family (the Latin *gens* or the Greek *eugenia*) and behavior (the French *gentil-hommes*). As Phillip Mason explains the dichotomy,

Clearly the word “gentleman” was used in two senses. It might be a social label, indicating some degree of distinction about the lowest rung of society. . . . But there was a second meaning, also carrying many different shades of significance in different mouths and at different times, but always suggesting certain standards of behaviour. (16)

Therefore, although the anxieties surrounding gentlemanliness in the nineteenth century were particularly tense, they were based on anxieties that were always present in the very nature of the term. This bifurcated gentlemanliness—a rendering of gentlemanliness based on family while simultaneously, and often independently, basing gentlemanliness in behavioral terms—became solidified in the Middle Ages. Mason continues, “since at least the time of Chaucer, there has been a distinction between the social meaning of the word and the moral; social rank and the behaviour proper to that rank don’t always coincide, and no one was more aware of this than Chaucer” (10). By 1413, gentlemanliness—bifurcated and ambiguous as it might have been in practice—had become codified; an edict of that year required all court defendants to state their
“estate, degree, and mystery” (qtd. in Letwin 5). Younger sons of the nobility, those men lacking a title or military rank of their own, fell into the habit of referring to themselves as simply “gentlemen” (5). The 1486 manuscript attributed to Dame Juliana Berners, Boke of Saint Albans, complicates the matter even further by adding a third layer to the bifurcated concept of gentlemanliness. Berners lists not two but three types of gentlemen: those of blood, those of conduct, and those of service (Palmer-Smythe 145).

One of the most prominent and straightforward descriptions of gentlemanliness comes from the sixteenth century. In 1580 William Harrison published a Description of England that narrowly defined those qualified for gentlemanly status. Harrison’s text reads, in part,

> Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, whoso abideth in the university, giving his mind to his book, or professeth physic and the liberal sciences or beside his service in the room of a captain in the wars, or good counsel given at home whereby his commonwealth is benefitted, can live without manual labour and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall for money have a coat of arms bestowed upon him by heralds . . . and shall be called master, which is the title that men give to esquires and gentleman, and be reputed for a gentleman ever after. (qtd. in Mason 27)

Harrison’s Description of England is often presented as a portrait of gentlemanly stability in Tudor England. Many scholars contrast Description of England with the sort of gentlemanly chaos that reigned in late Victorian London, a milieu when it was often virtually impossible to tell who was a gentleman and who was not. At first glance Harrison’s text seems to support the reading of stability in Tudor England. However, a closer reading of the passage reveals ambiguities, contradictions, and incongruities: the very same ambiguities and contradictions, and incongruities that would manifest themselves so readily in Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels three hundred years later.

For example, in the first line, Harrison discusses gentlemanly status as belonging to him who “abideth in the university, giving his mind to his booke.” Harrison’s edict is widely read as
conferring gentlemanly status on scholars. Of course, every university student, then as now, does not necessarily give his whole mind to his book. *Description of England* is silent on the fate of this group and their status seems uncertain. Additionally, Harrison’s text contains a built-in flexibility that indicates the importance of appearance when considering gentlemanliness. The text states that those who fill the requirements will “be called master, which is the title that men give to esquires and gentleman, and be reputed for a gentleman ever after.” The choice of wording in the passage is important; it prefigures gentlemanliness obsession with appearance and acceptance by peers. The adherent to the code is never deemed *to be* a gentleman or *be* a Master, rather he is *called* Master and *reputed* to be a gentleman. By the dawn of the seventeenth century, the concept of gentlemanliness was leaning decidedly in the direction of the code of behavior. A famous story attributed to James I illustrates the point: asked by his beloved childhood nurse to make her son a gentleman, James I was purported to reply, “I can make him a baronet, madam, but the devil himself cannot make him a gentleman” (qtd. in Palmer-Smythe 159).

Those studying later periods—for example, those studying eighteenth-century conceptions of English gentlemanliness—are lucky to possess a valuable and candid resource. Philip Dormer Stanhope, the Fourth Earl of Chesterfield, wrote a series of instructive letters to his natural son over an almost twenty-year period. Many of the letters illustrate Chesterfield’s concern with his son’s gentlemanliness. Though Victorians skewered Chesterfield’s unmercifully for his dandified and Frenchified portrait of a gentleman, many of Chesterfield’s letters demonstrate a fairly reasonable and startlingly modern conception of the gentleman. Chesterfield writes, “good breeding, you know, does not consist in low bows and formal

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10 See, for example, Charles Dickens’ *Barnaby Rudge* and its portrait of Sir John Chester, a character based on Chesterfield. By most accounts, Dickens’ unsympathetic portrayal of Chesterfield is unfair.
ceremony; but in an easy, civil, and respectful behaviour” (Letter: November 19, 1745). Despite the reasonableness of much of Chesterfield’s position, to the Victorians he came to personify Regency excess in gentlemanliness. The inflexibility of Augustan-era manners had declined significantly by the mid-nineteenth century and so did Lord Chesterfield’s reputation (Glimour Idea 21).

Modern critics sometimes point to Continental events as defining moments in English gentlemanliness. In particular, the French Revolution curbed many of the excesses and affectations associated with Regency-era gentlemanliness. Simultaneously, gentlemanliness in England became intertwined with nationalism as never before and “the gentleman” in writing and in speech became “the English gentleman.” As Tony Tanner argues in his study of Jane Austen, English manners and behavior carried the weight of the Empire. Tanner writes,

it was not a matter of decorum for its own sake: good manners and morals were seen as essential to the preservation of order in society. They alone could or should do what excessive laws, an often recalcitrant militia, and the absence of any properly organised police force were (it was felt) unable to do. It was as if the security and stability of the nation depended on good manners. To put it as bluntly as possible, good manners were no longer regarded merely as a seemly adjunct to the life-style of the upper classes: they became England’s answer to the French Revolution. (27)

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11 For an amusing literary representation of this type, see the senior Mr. Turveydrop in Charles Dickens’s Bleak House.

12 David Alderson expresses a similar view; to Alderson, the development of nineteenth-century gentlemanliness and the Muscular Christianity movement was a direct response of the English perception of hysteric behavior of revolutionary Catholics in France and rebellious Catholics in Ireland. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the French Revolution in the history of English gentlemanliness. As Mason argues, in nineteenth-century England the gentleman and gentlemanliness became akin to a cult—a cult where the members of the gentry served as the high priests (105).
As Mason posits, ground-zero for this new, counter-revolutionary gentleman figure had shifted since the Tudor era from the court to the country estate (144). At first glance, this move seems inconsistent with the general social tide of the Victorian era. During the nineteenth century, capital, people, and power moved toward the large metropolitan centers. Yet the seat of gentlemanliness moves in the opposite direction. An appreciation of that countermovement is a vital part of gentlemanliness’ importance. As the British Empire expanded in the nineteenth century, more young men were needed to run it. It was essential that these young men be gentlemen to ensure the new modern world did not become disassociated from the traditional (rural) values. One of the ways this disassociation was prevented was by tightening the association of gentlemanliness with the country (Gilmour Idea 8). The expansion of the gentlemanly class was easy enough to effect. There were more than enough young men anxious to get in, and the size of the public school system increased dramatically to facilitate their entrance into the elite. Mason has even gone so far as to call the nineteenth-century public school system “factories for gentlemen” (161).

No matter how easy the opening of the gentlemanly class was in the nineteenth century, the process was not without its ramifications. The chief problem involved keeping gentlemanly status valuable as more individuals were attaining it. The Victorian middle classes, Gilmour explains, “wanted to widen the basis of qualification to include themselves, without sacrificing the exclusiveness which gave rank its social esteem” (Idea 4). Moving one group up and out, the middle class was left with a vacuum that others were only too happy to fill. In turn, this vacancy triggered wide-ranging class uncertainty. As Tosh sees it, “as the middle class expanded, people

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13 Of course, it is easy to see the way this association of gentlemanliness and the countryside plays out in Trollope’s novels. The squirearchy is often presented as the very pinnacle of gentlemanliness; for example, rural residents such as Sir Roger Carbury in The Way We Live Now, Frank Gresham in the Barsetshire series, or Sir Peregrine in Orley Farm all act as the personification of Trollopian gentlemanliness.
became more and more preoccupied with their precise standing within it” (23).

Around mid-century, a variety of social and political forces began to collide in a distinctive fashion to create a new state of affairs; there dawned a crisis of gentlemanliness. The uncertainty of who was and was not a gentleman—always present due to the indeterminacy of gentlemanliness—became exacerbated by the shift of capital from land to commercial ventures (Gilmour Idea 174). Many feared the standards demarking gentleman were being eroded. As Glendinning asserts, the idea of a gentleman was “under stress from new and destabilising ideas” (52). It is at this point and it is in response to these conditions, these “destabilising ideas,” that Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels begin to appear. The appearance of the hobbledehoy novels in 1857 is a response to the conditions enumerated in this lengthy discussion of gentlemanliness: Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels seek to articulate a definition for that indefinable quality, the gentleman.

Arguably, by the time Trollope died in 1883, the crisis in gentlemanliness had eased (Gilmour Idea 182). By the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of the gentleman itself seemed doomed for the ash heap of history. Although Letwin attributes the disappearance of the gentlemen to the fact that “Few wish, or know how to be gentlemen” (267), Castronovo’s more widely accepted opinion is that the concept of the gentleman became a victim of its own success. Gentlemanly status became less and less important as more and more of the populace could lay claim to it. The words of Trollope’s fictional Duke of Omnium, “The word is too vague to carry with it any meaning that ought to be serviceable to you in thinking of such a matter” (The Duke’s Children 68), proved to be prophetic: by the middle of the twentieth century, the concept of the gentleman seemed archaic.
Despite his dwindling importance, the gentleman remains an important figure in a variety of texts. However, his function changed as he became a less vital figure of social regulation; the gentleman changed from a heroic figure to a figure of contempt or fun. In many traditional gentlemanly texts, the gentleman’s skills remove him from turmoil. Modern treatments of gentlemanliness invert this pattern, and it is the gentleman’s very nature that places him in turmoil. For example, Martin Amis’s 1995 bitingly funny and savage examination of the modern gentleman figure in *The Information* is a good example of this type of work. *The Information* features a gentleman of letters, Richard Tull, who assumes that his friends and associates live by the same code he lives by. Ultimately, it is this assumption that leads to Tull’s downfall. A softer version of this type of work was recently seen on weekly television. In the NBC television program *Frasier*, it is the protagonist’s gentlemanly behavior that leads to the weekly comic complication.

To the Victorians, the gentleman represented the very bulwark of society and they agreed on many aspects of his conduct. Of course, one of the things that they agreed on was that the concept was hard to define. Many Victorian writers made the best of this indeterminacy and settled on the French idea of *je ne sais quoi* (Gilmour *Idea* 84). As discussed earlier, many did know what, or at least thought that they did. However, many of these articulations failed to get beyond the most generalized and commonly held social virtues. Thackeray merely described a gentleman as “a loyal son, a true husband, [and] an honest father” (qtd. in Castronovo 29). Other commentators did not get beyond commonly held standards of conduct like the Judeo-Christian tradition of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Letwin 68). The problem with such boundaries, of course, is that they are not very accurate—such standards of gentlemanliness would confer the status on many who are not usually thought of as gentleman
and deny the status to many who are used to thinking of themselves as gentlemen. Those subscribing to the view purported by nineteenth-century critic J.R. Vernon encountered a similar problem. Vernon maintained that a gentleman was “simply a just man” (qtd. in Palmer-Smythe 126). Vernon’s definition bestows the ranks upon scores of men who would be as comfortable in a drawing room as the Duke of Wellington would be in a hog trough.

Given the complicated nature of the definition of the term gentleman, it is perhaps not surprising that the term is intricately related to a series of paradoxes: paradoxes of manners, money, and birth. Trollope, among others, believed that a gentleman could always be distinguished by his manners (Super Chronicler 184). However, like the association of gentlemanliness with idealized behavior, gentlemanliness’ association with manners is problematic. Commentators agree that manners are an unreliable barometer of gentlemanliness. Additionally, conceptualizing the gentleman as continuously well behaved fails to allow for the times a gentleman might need to transgress traditional codes of behavior. As Letwin reasoned, “of course shallow, unimaginative people may identify being a gentleman with always being pleasant to one’s guests, just as the vulgar may expect a ballet dancer always to wear white net and pirouette on her toes. But those who know better will not be astonished by rudeness even in a gentleman” (89). To Victorians, an overt preoccupation with manners smacked of the Regency-era dandy type whom they so reviled. Such dandyism also carried with it connotations of effeminacy, as Hazlitt implied when he wrote, “he is supposed qualified to dance a minuet, not to dance on the tight rope” (213). The Victorian gentleman should not overdo anything—even gentlemanliness itself. Yet as the enduring Winchester school motto “manners mayketh the man” indicates, the association of gentlemanliness with manners remained strong throughout the Victorian period. Some commentators seem to embrace the idea of a manners-based definition
of gentlemanliness while shying away from the word “manners.” For example, while disdaining a manners-based definition of the gentleman, Letwin defines gentlemanliness as “a way of being in any circumstances” (106, 267).

Manners were the most common trait associated with the gentleman, but other traits were associated with the status as well. Early in the nineteenth century, Hazlitt suggested that every gentleman be a member of the Tory party and the Anglican church (218). In the twentieth century, Mason suggested that although the Victorian era gentleman was no longer required to bear arms, he was required to ride and shoot (144). Glendinning notes that the public schools’ obsession with Latin and Greek gave members a “secret code” by which to identify themselves—the seemingly careless quoting of classical aphorisms and texts actually served to signal fellow gentlemen (58). Gilmour notes that Trollope insisted a gentleman always possess the “feelings of a gentleman” (Idea 155). Predictably, Trollope refused to enumerate on what those feelings might be.

What was much more important than any trait or attribute to the gentleman was a poised sense of self that gave the gentleman a confident stability in a variety of social circumstances. Though it was called by a variety of names (Oscar Wilde called it earnestness and wrote a comedy about it), commentators from both the Victorian era and our own see this sense of self as being at the very heart of gentlemanliness. In The Gentleman in Trollope, Letwin called this quality a “fixity” (68), whereas in Dandies and Desert Saints, Adams separated the gentleman’s persona from the dandy’s theatricalized sense of self by calling the quality simply “sincerity” (53) and maintaining that it was “identified above all with honest, straightforward speech and action” (14). Mason’s The English Gentleman points out that the gentleman must have an amount of a dignified seriousness about him which Mason refers to by its ancient Roman name,
Mason expands on this idea by adding that the gentleman’s solid constancy even borders on the stoic at times (147). To Gilmour, such a feeling was best described as “disinterestedness,” a way of seeing one’s position as part of a greater whole and deferring one’s own self-interest. In this manner, reasons Gilmour, the gentleman is diametrically opposed to the merchant who is conditioned by market forces to place his own economic self interest ahead of everything, and everyone, else (Idea 98).

Though Gilmour’s perspective seems reasonable, I believe that the gentleman might find his direct opposite in the fop, not the merchant. The gentleman’s earnestness (or sincerity, or gravitas, or disinterestedness) gives him a reified, earthy persona that stands in opposition to the dandy’s theatricalized self. The gentleman offers few baubles and no surprises; the connection between appearance and reality, so tenuous in the dandy, is rock solid in the gentleman. If, as we determined earlier, the dandy’s motto is “paraître c’est être” or “to appear is to be,” then the Victorian gentleman’s motto might well be “être c’est paraître” or “to be is to appear.” Seen in this light, the appearance of Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels makes perfect sense: the hobbledehoy novels are often explorations to see what is really beneath the appearance of a young man. They ask, “Is the appearance real?”

The gentleman’s appearance operates along a very narrow spectrum of social acceptability but, at the same time, the gentleman cannot be overly concerned about that appearance, lest he veer off into the world of dandyism. This paradox of gentlemanly appearance is only one of several paradoxes that swirl around gentlemanly status. I reason that the presence of these paradoxes is part of what has made gentlemanliness so difficult to define. In 1888, Robert Louis Stevenson maintained that the territory of gentleman may only be
demarked by what they cannot or should not do. Stevenson said, “we could only be gentlemen by negatives” (640). With Stevenson’s rejoinder in mind, it is fitting that we attempt to define it by embracing its intrinsic paradoxes.

Manners are not the only paradoxical issue surrounding the gentleman; the paradox of money is one of the most prevalent of the three contradictions surrounding gentlemanly status. By the Victorian era, few would agree with Thomas Adams, a 1618 commentator, who claimed “money makes a gentleman” (qtd. in Palmer-Smythe 225). Theoretically, nineteenth-century gentlemanly status was unconnected with income. Gentlemanly status could neither be purchased nor lost because of financial setbacks. Letwin claims the Victorian gentleman “would not mind being found planting cabbages” (122). Despite this egalitarian posturing, street-sweeper gentlemen were rare. The paradox of money, then, puts the gentleman in difficult circumstances: although the gentleman must have access to ready money, he must be utterly unconcerned with keeping it and is limited in the amount of employments he may take to procure it. The true gentleman is the one who is lucky enough or shrewd enough to negotiate this confounding paradox.

The final paradox involves birth. Once again, the status was theoretically open to anyone who could qualify and, once again, that qualification process tended to exclude many individuals without the “right” family ties. In Dickens’s Oliver Twist, for example, the orphaned Twist demonstrates the characteristics of a gentleman that are seemingly at odds with his low birth. At the end of the novel, however, it is revealed that Twist possessed a birthright to gentlemanly status. Nevertheless, gentlemanly status was seemingly open to almost anyone. Conduct books, many aimed at the working and middle classes, were often prefaced with the idea (little more than a hope, really) that virtually anyone could become a gentleman. Samuel Smiles, author of
the Self-Help series, decidedly asserted that the true gentleman was essentially classless (Gilmour Idea 99). Thackeray agreed; his gentlemen were often indifferent to rank (77-78). Yet, such indifference is much easier to demonstrate or to acquire if one had some rank to claim in the first place. In The Gentleman in Trollope, Letwin poses the problem as a rhetorical question: “if gentlemen are made, not born, and if one has to learn to be a gentleman and it is not like blue eyes passed on by genes, why is there so much talk among Trollope’s gentlemen and ladies about ancestry?” (123). The answer is obvious; clearly gentlemanly status was not open to all—despite the promises from those like Smiles—and at least a modicum of family respectability was necessary to lay claim to gentlemanly status. Some young men, sons of peers and the very wealthy, for example, could claim gentlemanly status as an outright birthright. But for others, class affiliation was not quite as black and white: some young men could claim family but not money; others could claim substantial bank balances but lacked family connections. Still others seemed caught in transitional generations: whereas their fathers had been gentlemen, they seemed destined for middle-class vulgarity. Negotiating these three paradoxes, appearance, money, and birth, was essential for the novice gentleman to claim status in the gentlemanly tribe. The final hurdle, as we established earlier, was to be granted acceptance by one’s peers. As the 1860s wore on, that process was acted out in the pages of Anthony Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels. It is hoped that this work will fill a particular gap within the existing critical canon.

That existing Trollopian critical canon, it must be mentioned, is quite strong, and so is the oeuvre of gender studies. This study follows some outstanding work in the field of gender studies within the last generation of literary studies: Elizabeth Langland’s Telling Tales, which appeared in 2002, and Piotr Sadowski’s Gender and Literature, which appeared in 2001. These
critics were influenced by an earlier generation of studies, including Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick’s *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, which appeared in 1985; Richard Dellamora’s *Masculine Desires*, which appeared in 1990; and Jonathan Dollimore’s *Sexual Dissidence*, which appeared in 1991. Certainly this work has been inspired by their work, but it is also the next logical step. Others have laid theoretical framework, but much of the work of applying the theory to specific texts remains to be accomplished. Indeed, virtually no work has been done applying their theories to Trollope’s texts.

Recently, there has been a great deal of work examining Victorian masculinities. Prime examples of this type of venture include Roper and Tosh’s 1991 collection *Manful Assertions* and James Eli Adams’1995 offering *Dandies and Desert Saints*. Texts like this one, which focus a masculinity-based study on a single writer, are somewhat more rare. This study examines *The Three Clerks* (1858), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), *Phineas Finn* (1869), *Phineas Redux* (1874), *The Way We Live Now* (1875), *The Prime Minister* (1876), *John Caldigate* (1879), and *An Autobiography* (1882).

The present study is divided into seven chapters. The following chapter, “‘That Most Hopeless of Human Beings,’” will address Trollope’s posthumously published *An Autobiography*, much of which defies the generic expectations of autobiography. The anti-solipsistic posture Trollope takes can in part be explained by the fact that he told his life story repeatedly through the pages of his hobbledehoy narratives. Although both Trollope’s family members and his biographers have occasionally questioned his veracity, contemporary, first-hand accounts of life at Harrow and Winchester in the early nineteenth century tend to support Trollope’s claims. Additionally, current thinking in autobiography studies questions whether terms such as *truth* and *fiction* are even relevant to the medium.
Chapter three, “‘To What Heights a Dull Boy May Grow.’” examines Trollope’s hobbledehoy in three of the author’s early novels—*The Three Clerks*, *The Small House at Allington*, and *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. Underpinned with xenophobic and nationalistic tinges, these early hobbledehoy stories feature a young man torn between the rollicking depravity of the city and his “rightful” place among the pastoral and idealized English country gentry. The city has its function as well; its industry and governmental functions provide the hobbledehoy with a source of work—the benefits of which are endorsed unequivocally.

*Phineas Finn: The Irish Member* and *Phineas Redux* will be the focus of chapter four, “‘It’s Gude to be Honest and True.’” The Phineas novels, 1869’s *Phineas Finn* and 1874’s *Phineas Redux*, feature an expanding conception of gentlemanliness in which many of the xenophobic and nationalistic features of the structure begin to fall away. In fact, Trollope’s mid-career rendering of gentlemanliness manages to highlight non-English men (the eponymous protagonist of the works is Irish) living in unconventional ways (the protagonist finds his place within the city and in the arms of a non-English woman). Though the novels are still heavily indebted to the Carlylean “gospel of work,” mentors in the works are not necessarily connected with the land and often guide the hobbledehoy toward a sense of inner truth or self-realization. The rewards of gentlemanliness are not merely wealth and ease, but rather can be found in an increasing sense of self-satisfaction, confidence, and pride.

In chapter five, “Hobbledehoy Upside Down Cake,” the expanding definition of gentlemanliness that marked the Phineas novels continues in *John Caldigate* as the eponymous hobbledehoy seeks to regain his sense of gentlemanliness in the Empire’s most remote corner—Australia. However, in *John Caldigate*, Trollope begins to realize that the gentlemanly class cannot continue to expand unchecked. Strikingly, Trollope abruptly reverses himself, and in this
novel laden with reversals, inversions, masquerades, and unstable identities, the usual aspects of
the hobbledehoy pattern become disjointed. Carlylean conceptions of work begin to be subverted
as chance begins to play a larger role in attaining the appurtenances of gentlemanliness.

Amidst the backdrop of decaying standards of civility, two novels from late in Trollope’s
career, *The Prime Minister* and *The Way We Live Now*, are the focus of chapter six, “‘Most
Fellows Are Bad Fellows.’” In these works, Trollope illustrates the failure of the late nineteenth-
century English aristocracy to police the boundaries of gentlemanliness while simultaneously
demonstrating the limitations of the Carlylean gospel of work. Hard work, these texts reveal,
fails to produce traditional values such as honesty and respect in equal measure to the rapacious
self-interest with which the Carlylean gospel of work had become associated. In this manner, the
hobbledehoy narratives negotiate a discriminating but important line of separation between
Trollope’s gentleman-hobbledehoy and the self-made man, as popularized by Victorian essayists
such as Samuel Smiles. This world without gentlemen—a free-floating, unstructured,
metropolitan world in which hayricks have been replaced by balance sheets—portends the
destruction of the English pastoral ideal.

The work’s seventh and final chapter, “Shards,” summarizes the preceding chapters and
puts the hobbledehoy narratives into dialogue with other forms of nineteenth-century conduct
literature. Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels fail to find a way to transport eighteenth-century rural
values to a nineteenth-century metropolitan world. Carlylean hard work produces greed, but not
virtue. Nevertheless, the hobbledehoy novels hold other attractions as well: a cultural infusion
of the hobbledehoy narrative with the corpus of nineteenth-century conduct literature illuminates
the manner in which Victorian conduct literature twists and distorts the traditions of its
progenitor, courtesy literature. Before embarking on that journey, however, perhaps it is fitting
to consider the life story of the man whom Victorian Glendinning deemed “no ordinary hobbledehoy” (87).
Chapter Two: “That Most Hopeless of Human Beings”: Truth, Fiction, and Reading An Autobiography as a Hobbledehoy Narrative

In the nineteenth century, the transition between boyhood and manhood was a difficult period—as it is now. However, Victorians had little conception of what we would call “adolescence.” In twenty-first-century Western societies, a gawky awkwardness during the transitional period between boy and man is accepted; in fact, it is almost expected. Such was not the case for those living in the Victorian era; then, at the age of eighteen or nineteen, duty, conviction, responsibility, and the advantages of a solid public school education were believed to be all that were necessary to lift a gangly and awkward middle-class boy into the knock-about world of the fully grown Victorian male. Fuel in the form of well-trained and serious-minded young men was always needed for a seemingly ever-expanding economic and political empire. When the need for this human fuel outstripped its natural development, Victorians believed the process could simply be speeded up and boys could be expected to complete the transition at a snappier pace. As social historian John Tosh notes, “parents, employers, and teachers were often intent on forcing their charges through the remaining stages to manhood as quickly as possible” (105).

Anthony Trollope’s attitude toward this transitional period diverged from that of his peers. Trollope knew, from personal experience if from nothing else, that this transitional phase could be challenging, or even traumatic. The period held such an interest for Trollope that he made it the subject of much of his writing. Those writings took the form of hobbledehoy stories.

Most of Trollope's hobbledehoy stories are, ostensibly at least, works of fiction. However, the last hobbledehoy Trollope portrayed was himself. His final re-working of the motif came not in a novel, but in a work of prose nonfiction, his posthumously published
Autobiography. The image Trollope creates of himself as hobbledehoy par excellence in the Autobiography is an enduring one. An Autobiography’s powerful rendering of a young Trollope, a boy virtually abandoned by his parents and hated and ignored by his school fellows, has drawn the interest of scholars as well as general readers and remains a mainstay of Trollope criticism to this day. As Trollope biographer N. John Hall asserts, the Autobiography contains some of “the most personal, moving, and convincing prose he ever wrote” (Trollope: A Biography, 410). Sally Brown goes even farther and maintains that “the sad, grubby little ‘charity boy’ at Harrow, constantly beaten and derided, excluded from the friendships and pursuits which other pupils took for granted, and secretly craving them ‘with an excessive longing’, never quite fades from the memory” (170).

The oft-told story of Trollope’s youth perhaps needs repeating one more time: Trollope was born into a household of gentlemanly pretensions, but one that lacked the financial resources to carry off those pretensions. Young Anthony Trollope was ignored at home, reviled at school, and cast out to make his own way in London on a mere £90 per year from his salary as a low-level clerk at the General Post Office.14 Lonely, miserable, ill-fed, and debt-ridden in London, Trollope seemed to be destined for a life of little consequence and even less happiness until he accepted a position as a Surveyor’s Clerk in Ireland. In Ireland, the young Trollope bloomed. In short order he became a valued civil servant, a happily married man, and a successful novelist (Autobiography 1-39). Triumphanty returning to London, Trollope went on to become a wealthy, urbane, and well-traveled Victorian man of letters.15

14 The scandalously low wages paid to young government clerks had become a point of national discussion by the time Trollope’s semi-autobiographical novel The Three Clerks appeared in 1857. See, for example “How Young Men Become Dishonest” The Times [of London]. 1 January 1857. 6.

15 At the height of his popularity, Trollope was such a well-regarded man about town that his General Post Office retirement dinner was covered by The Times. See “Dinner to Mr. Anthony Trollope.” The Times [of London]. 2 November 1867. 9.
Despite his successes, it would be inaccurate to maintain that Trollope lived happily ever after: the privations and despair of his youth nagged at him throughout his lifetime. The pre-war Trollope scholar Michael Sadleir wrote, “he never outgrew the nervousness that had made a tortue of his school days—the terrified conviction that he was not like the other boys; that he was odd or dowdy, in some way liable to the contempt of the cold-shouldering of those more securely placed, more certain of their right to live” (335). However, the link between hobbledehoy status and identity in Trollope’s makeup is best illustrated by a story N. John Hall unearthed in researching his biography of the novelist. While a student at Winchester, Trollope was forced by his school fellows to relate the story of his surname’s origin. According to the story, a Trollopian forefather traveled with William the Conqueror. One day the Trollope progenitor killed three wolves, or trois loups in French. Though stretching the bounds of credulity, the tale was a particular point of pride in the Trollope household. After each round of tale-telling, young Trollope received a sharp kick in the buttocks from his schoolmates (19).

How young Trollope managed to cope with such daily humiliations, we do not know. However, we do know that by his early twenties, Trollope was reacting with a mixture of wretched indignation and sulky rage to the miserable poverty and lonely squalor of his hobbledehoy life. As personal writings from the period indicate, what really bothered Trollope about this period was not its poverty, or its tedium, or even its loneliness—but rather, its disorder. Trollope, though not orderly by nature, longed for a sense of order—as his Commonplace Book makes clear. Trollope wrote, “the first impression which a parent should fix on the mind of a child is I think a love of order” (qtd. in Hall, “1835-40,” 24). Later in the same unpublished manuscript, Trollope berates himself with, “I am myself in all the pursuits (God help them) & practices of my life most disorderly & unmethodical--& the injury which this
failing has occasioned is so near as this to utter ruin that I can but set up myself as an example to others” (24). The Commonplace Book even connects disorder with an inattention to one’s soul, reasoning: “the idler says in his heart that the morning—will serve—when he neglects his God in the evening—on the morning—the same excuse is ready—till he is soon only orderly in his disorder” (qtd. in Hall, “Commonplace Book,” 1028). Likewise, a longing for order manifests itself in young Trollope’s reading list: he writes of the joys of reading the paean to order and godliness, Alexander Pope’s An Essay on Man (qtd. in Hall, “1835-40” 23).

In part, it is this quest for order that sends Trollope into the world of letters. With paper and ink Trollope could re-write what went wrong in his life. Nor was Trollope a man to shrug off perceived slights and insults: his biographer Victoria Glendinning insists, “old deeds and misdeeds still burned in him years later” (21). However, prose fiction gave him the opportunity to give voice to his best retorts and respond with the perfect line. As Glendinning notes, “it was characteristic of Anthony to make amends and heal old sores in his fiction. In that parallel world, as in daydreams, he could invent alternative histories” (13). If Trollope were unable to save the day at the office (as the postal clerk Bagwax does in John Caldigate) or win the young woman’s heart (as Charley Tudor does in The Three Clerks), at least he could enjoy such triumphs in the novels he penned. This chapter, then, will examine what Trollope borrowed from his real life and placed into his fiction; it will examine the persistent notion that the hobbledehoy stories in Trollope’s Autobiography are embellished or fictionalized. Finally, this chapter will reappraise Trollope’s An Autobiography, not as an awkward and exaggeration-ridden example of autobiography, but rather as a sharply crafted hobbledehoy story.

That Anthony Trollope borrowed from real events in his writing is undeniable. What he appropriated from his life and what he fabricated is debatable. In novels such as The Small
House at Allington, The Three Clerks, and The Last Chronicle of Barset, Trollope chronicled and re-chronicled, worked and re-worked the tale of a young man’s fall into disgrace and rise into triumph following the trajectory of his own life, his hobbledehoy motif. However, not all readers have perceived that hobbledehoy motif in the Trollope corpus. Oddly, in his 1927 critical biography of Trollope, Michael Sadleir maintained that the actual biographic element in Trollope’s forty-seven novels is “surprisingly small” (176); however, today’s scholars point to a substantial number of biographical references in the Trollope canon. Many of these references are clustered in a handful of novels: The Small House at Allington, The Three Clerks, Phineas Finn, and John Caldigate. Other biographical references are distributed throughout the Trollope oeuvre. For example, the de rigueur Trollopian hunting scene traces its genesis to the novelist’s own penchant for the sport. In a similar fashion, the topsy-turvy medieval Ullathorne House appearing in Barchester Towers was based on a home Trollope knew well—Montacute House in Somersetshire (Letters, “To?” March 8, 1866). Trollope drew on his life for names as well as places: R.H. Super notes that classic Trollopian character names such as Toogood (The Last Chronicle of Barset), Sowerby (Framley Parsonage), Mogg (Ralph the Heir), Round (Orley Farm), and Vesey (Barchester Towers) all have their genesis as names of young Anthony Trollope’s fellow Harrow students.

Trollope was not content with using people he knew for characters in his books; he also used himself. Keith Cushman notes that the lumbering, hunt-loving author in Can You Forgive Her, Mr. Pollock, is a good-natured self portrait (20). In addition, the postal clerk Bagwax, a minor character in John Caldigate, was a partial self-portrait as well. Bagwax, a low-level clerk with a burning desire to unravel mysteries and see the world, solves the novel’s central puzzle with a mixture of pluck, knowledge of philately, and dogged determination. Trollope even
confesses to the autobiographical nature of this characterization: in a letter to his publisher, John Blackwood, he states, “there was a touch of downright love in the depicting of Bagwax. Was I not once a Bagwax myself?” (Letters, 6 February 1879).

As a self-based character, Bagwax is far from alone in the Trollopian body of work. Robert Polhemus notes strong similarities between the author and Phineas Finn’s eponymous protagonist. Polhemus contends that similarities between the fictional Finn and Trollope include the fact that they both came from Ireland to London to become successful and they both became more and more disillusioned as they garnered success (Changing World, 151). Phineas Finn’s bill discounter, Clarkson, whose tag-line of “do be punctual” stems from Trollope’s own experiences with a usurer who whispered to him, “‘Now I wish you would be punctual. If you only would be punctual, I would like you to have anything you want’” (Phineas Finn 169; qtd. in An Autobiography 48-39).

The lion’s share of such references however, may be found in two accounts of Trollope’s hobbledehoy period—The Three Clerks and The Small House at Allington. In his 1981 study of Trollope’s Post Office career, R.H. Super declared, “the experiences of The Three Clerks [. . .] are somewhat transformed from Trollope’s memories of this part of his life” (Post Office 9). Hall assents, calling The Three Clerks’ portrayal of Charley Tudor a “not too carefully disguised self portrait” (A Biography, 156). Although James Pope Hennessy challenges the notion that The Three Clerks is autobiographical,16 overwhelming evidence points to the contrary. In An Autobiography Trollope confesses that the story of Charley’s entrance examination into the Civil Service is a virtual verbatim transcript of the author's own entrance exam. Trollope writes:

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16 In James Pope Hennessy's 1971 critical biography, Anthony Trollope, Hennessy refers to the conjecture that Tudor represents a young Anthony Trollope simply as, "a theory," which "may or may not be valid." (161). Hennessy does not expand on the nature of his doubt nor does he offer any evidence to support his supposition.
the story of that examination is given accurately in one of the opening chapters of a novel written by me many years afterwards, called *The Three Clerks*. If any reader of this memoir would refer to that chapter and see how Charley Tudor was supposed to have been admitted into the Internal Navigation Office, that reader will learn how Anthony Trollope was actually admitted into the Secretary’s office of the General Post Office in 1834.\(^\text{17}\) (35-36)

Clearly, Trollope is convinced that there is a strong autobiographical component in *The Three Clerks*, even if Hennessy is not quite so sure.

A unanimous critical consensus forms around the biographical connection of another Trollope hobbledehoy—Johnny Eames—one of the principal characters in Trollope’s *The Small House at Allington*.\(^\text{18}\) Michael Sadleir remarks that *The Small House at Allington* “anticipates” the autobiography that was to be written four years later (117). Glendinning asserts that Trollope used Johnny Eames to relive his youth (82) and Hall has called Eames a “partial self portrait of the youthful Anthony Trollope” (*A Biography* 248). Hall later notes that “some of the paragraphs in *The Small House at Allington* on Eames are almost word for word those used later in *An Autobiography*” (57). Even Hennessy subscribes to the biographical element in *The Small House at Allington* (252).

Some critics and scholars distrust the connection between art and life in the Trollope canon. Although they do not doubt that there is a symbiotic connection between Trollope’s life and fiction, they distrust the arrangement by which that connection is commonly presented. To these critics, Trollope’s life did not inspire his fictional work; rather, Trollope’s fiction inspired the account of his life he presented in *An Autobiography*.

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\(^{17}\) The use of competitive exams in the Civil Service was a subject of great national debate as Trollope was writing *An Autobiography*. In *Fraser’s Magazine*, A.K.H. Boyd insisted that the exams must be flawed—if for no other reason, simply because the “ungentlemanly” could, and did, do well on them (“Competitive” 72).

\(^{18}\) Eames also appears in Trollope’s *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. 
Ever since Trollope’s brother, Thomas Adolphus, challenged the novelist’s recollection of facts in his memoir *What I Remember*, Anthony’s *An Autobiography* has been under suspicion as mendacious. This line of thinking was given a boost with the publication of Thomas Escott’s *Anthony Trollope: His Work, Associates, and Literary Originals* in 1913 and further augmented by the publication of a number of surveys in the 1980s and the early 1990s. One of the first modern critics to cast doubt on Trollope’s veracity was James Pope Hennessy, who, in 1971, speculated on Trollope, psychology, and the effects of an unhappy childhood in his critical biography of the novelist. Hennessy reasons that because Trollope’s life story is unusual, it is probably untrue; he writes,

> The enduring effects of an unhappy childhood upon later life are now so widely recognized that by most people they are taken for granted. But thoughtful persons—let alone psycho-analysts—also know that these effects often have less to do with childhood fears and fancies, and that in this context what actually happened may be of less consequence for adult life than what to the child seemed to be happening at the time. Those who have read Anthony Trollope’s *Autobiography* can never, I think, forget his account of an atrocious childhood and adolescence, so atrocious indeed that some of his contemporaries could not believe it to be altogether true. (31)

Hennessy’s critique fathered a minor critical movement of sorts, and in the next decade, it became open season on Trollope’s veracity. In his 1982 study, *The Unofficial Trollope*, Bill Overton stated, “Trollope’s distinction between ‘facts’ and ‘novels’ is worth thinking about” (23). In the same year *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* stated that Trollope’s memoir “often suggests an unusually explicit awareness of its fictional character” (Kincaid 340). Also in 1982, Sally Brown managed to call the truthfulness of the entire *An Autobiography* into question (168). In *Trollope: A Biography*, N. John Hall reminds readers that belief in Trollope’s life story is solely based on Trollope himself and, furthermore, that there would be virtually no knowledge of the novelist’s horrific childhood had he himself not said something (408).
The suspicions that T. A. Trollope, Escott, Hennessy, Overton, Hall, and others voice concerning Trollope’s veracity in *An Autobiography* may be clustered into the three major areas. First, Trollope overstated the brutality with which he was treated in public school. Second, he exaggerated the degree of his family’s poverty while he was growing up. Third, he embellished the degree to which he was unloved and lonely as a young man. Skeptics base their beliefs on a number of factors: their own recollections, a “novel-esque” quality in *An Autobiography*, and the unusual behavior Trollope exhibited about the work.

That a prose non-fiction text from a man whose writing habits were honed by composing forty-seven novels bears characteristics of fiction is not particularly surprising. However, to those who question Trollope’s veracity, the novel-like features of *An Autobiography* create grounds for suspicion. For example, Kincaid suggests that the *Autobiography* presents its subject as if he were a fictional character (341). Furthermore, Kincaid notes a strong resemblance between *An Autobiography* and *bildungsroman* such as *David Copperfield* (342); Kincaid is quick to point out a similarity between characters like Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield* and Trollope’s father (345). Similarly, Hall asserts that the *Autobiography* provides a carefully crafted, more lugubrious view of the novelist’s life to contrast with the one presented in *The Small House at Allington* and *The Three Clerks* (*A Biography* 57). Hennessy goes even farther; he writes,

> We should never forget when reading it [*An Autobiography*] that it is indeed the memoirs of a novelist. Its theme and its structure are that of a success story – a miserable boyhood, a dreary youth, an ignored first novel, the whole building up to fame and fortune. To present this sequence of events (or, rather, of sensations) in the most emphatic way it was essential the dark years should be made more umbrageous, the chrysalis more constraining. (107)
On the other hand, as critics have long noted, the line between “fiction” and “autobiography” is not as clearly demarcated as librarians and bookstore managers might have us believe. Furthermore, as Mandel J. Barrett maintains, there is a difference between a work belonging to a particular genre and a work containing elements of a particular genre; he writes: “of course it is true that autobiographers use techniques of fiction, but such usage does not turn an autobiography into a fiction any more than Dvorák’s use of folk motifs turns The New World Symphony into a folk song” (53). Avrom Fleishman assents, adding, “autobiography merges with novel writing by small graduations” (10). Furthermore, Fleishman insists that a certain amount of fictionalization in the autobiographical process might be inevitable, “the unstable character of autobiographical intention in one of the inveterate conditions that call on the autobiographer to fictionalize – that each shift of intention generates a new fiction in behalf of a totalized account of one’s life. Paul de Man wonders whether autobiography is a genre at all, or just prosopopoeia a “figure of reading” (921). James Olney wonders whether all texts—fiction included—might reasonably be lumped under the rubric “autobiography” (“Cultural Moment” 4).

Those who believe Trollope’s An Autobiography overstates its case point to inconsistencies in Trollope’s behavior regarding life-writing in general and his An Autobiography in particular. Victoria Glendinning notes that Trollope distrusted journals and diaries, frequently referring to them as “exaggerations” (40). Others key on the fact that Trollope defended the ancient Roman speaker Cicero for cheerily mixing fact and fiction in his autobiography (Super, Post Office 6). Critics also point to the text of the Autobiography itself: the first page, for example, contains Trollope's disavowal of a creed of strict truthfulness; he writes, “that I, or any man, should tell everything of himself, I hold to be impossible” (1).
Trollope even resists the very word *autobiography*: “In writing these pages, which for the want of a better name, I shall be fain to call the autobiography of so insignificant a person as myself” (1). The apprehension with which Trollope approaches *An Autobiography* can be seen as he refers to the work as a “so-called autobiography” (385). Why, these critics wonder, would Trollope refer to a true and honest account of his life as a “so-called” autobiography? What was “so-called” about it, they wonder? A sense of apprehension also seems apparent in the way Trollope physically handled the manuscript. His son, Henry Merivale Trollope, remembers Trollope saying, “Now we’ll lock it up and say no more about it.” Henry Merivale Trollope adds that his father handled the book “as if he was ashamed of it” (qtd. in Hall, “Seeing” 197). To those critics already pre-disposed to doubt Trollope’s version of the facts, Trollope’s behavior indicates that the novelist was uncomfortable with the autobiography. To such critics, his behavior indicates that his discomfort stemmed from his lack of honesty in its pages.

When these doubters are asked what Trollope may have been lying about, they often point to Trollope’s tales of the brutality at Winchester and Harrow. The novelist reports daily floggings so pitiless that the young Trollope contemplated suicide (9). This brutal version of Trollope’s school career has been questioned by Trollope’s friends, colleagues, and family members. Thomas Henry Bayliss, one of Trollope’s Harrow classmates, thought Trollope exaggerated his woes and pointed out many young men received much worse treatment then did young Trollope (qtd. in Hall, *A Biography* 37). Trollope’s brother Thomas Adolphus, who like Anthony attended Harrow and Winchester, claimed that the pain of a “scrouging” at Winchester was “really not worth speaking of, and […] nobody cared the least about it” (43). Escott minimized the severity of Trollope’s beatings and assured his Edwardian readers that Trollope was “capable of holding his own, in the schoolroom and on the playground” (16-17).
In the modern era, doubt continues to plague Trollope’s version of events. In *The Chronicler of Barchester*, R.H. Super wonders if the beatings at public school were really as bad as Trollope reports (7), and in *A Biography*, Hall claims that “the severity of floggings, ‘birchings’ administered by masters at public schools is much disputed; some maintain that the beatings were more ritual charade than punishment” (24-25). The notion that floggings were more of a carnivalesque presentation rather than a torturous corporal punishment is picked up by John Chandos in his study *Boys Together*. Chandos asserts,

> In the first three to four decades of the century, flogging in the public schools was part of a conventional charade, ritual comedy, with the headmaster, in the role of fierce and irascible Punchinello, struggling to subdue and chastise a multitude of obstreperous Harlequins. (226)

Of course, what might seem like merciless brutality to the recipient might seem like innocuous “ritual comedy” to a detached observer.19 As one of Trollope’s contemporaries, the prolific columnist A.K.H. Boyd, said,

> the sorrows of childhood and boyhood are not sorrows of that complicated and perplexing nature, which sit heavy on the heart in after years; but in relation to the little hearts that have to bear them, they are very overwhelming for the time [. . .] it is unquestionable that a thing which is little to one man may be great to another man” (“Concerning the Sorrows” 304-05).

Nevertheless, those who believe Trollope prevaricated point to the memoir’s tales of brutality as a prime example of their contention.

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19 Indeed, even during the nineteenth century, reports of alleged cruelties at Harrow solicited a wide range of opinions and many ex-Harrovians rushed to school’s defense. W. Lucas Collins wrote in *Blackwood’s* insisting, “no-one except a few silly mothers and still more silly story-writers protest against the fagging which forms a necessary part of such a system” (“School and College Life” 138) and Francis Trench told the readers of *Temple Bar* that “occasionally there were clouds, but they soon passed away” (470). Nevertheless, even the most impassioned defenses of the public school system could carry inadvertent and unintentional critiques of the system. Lucas jocularly remembers an armed rebellion at the school that included gunpowder-laden booby traps and jauntily compares the life of a fag at Harrow to the life of a slave; as the Civil War rages across the Atlantic he writes with shocking nonchalance, “a fag’s life at Harrow is a tolerably happy one. Like the Southern nigger, he is not half so much shocked at his condition as the good old ladies who overwhelm him with sympathy” (“Harrow” 469; 474).
These skeptics also see fabrications in the novelist’s descriptions of his family’s poverty. In *An Autobiography* Trollope describes the period in which he remained in England while most of the family went off to America. Trollope portrays this era as a dirty, brutal, near-starvation level existence at the Harrow Weald farm with his father (32). Trollope’s brother, however, maintains that Anthony’s recollection of the small farm was far too pessimistic. T.A. Trollope asserts,

> Living in that Harrow Weald farmhouse which my brother Anthony, in his *Autobiography*, had described, I think too much *en noir*. It had once been a very good house, probably the residence of the owner of the small farm on which it was situated. It certainly was no longer a very good house but it was not tumbledown as Anthony calls it, and was indeed a much better house than it would have been if its original destination had been that of merely a farmhouse. (77)

In general, Thomas Adolphus’s recollections of the Trollopian childhood tend to be rosier than those of his more famous brother. This is especially apparent when examining memories of the extent to which Trollope was (or was not) treated with affection within the family, at school, and in London.

Family members, contemporaries, and modern critics contend that Trollope overstated the degree to which he was lonely and unloved during his early years. In fact, T. A. Trollope called Anthony the “Benjamin” of the family (Super, *Chronicler* 4; T.A. Trollope 28).

Trollope’s nightmarish description of life at Harrow and at Winchester has drawn more than its share of detractors. For example, Captain F. Markham who, like Trollope, attended public school in the first half of the nineteenth century as a town boy believed that his treatment was excellent—even nurturing. Of his instructors Markham says, “I have pleasant memories of them all” (26). Many modern critics have a similar view; Hall states unabashedly that “the loneliness in *An Autobiography* is exaggerated” (*A Biography* 60), and Super reminds us that although
Trollope tries to present himself as being absolutely forlorn in An Autobiography, he did have friends during his London hobbledehoy period (Post Office 7).

Despite evidence that indicates that Anthony Trollope might have overstated his sufferings, belief that An Autobiography is exaggerated is by no means universal. In fact, even some of Trollope’s severest critics find “most of his statements in the Autobiography straightforward and convincing” (Hennessy 66) and deem whatever “discrepancies” the text contains as “inevitable” due to the passage of time (68). As John Sutherland once remarked, “sixty-one year-old men may be forgetful” (248). Defenders of Trollope’s reliability make a strong case; there is considerable reason to believe that Trollope’s Autobiography is essentially truthful—or at least, truthful as far as Trollope remembers it. As Peter Allen points out, “we cannot assume that some of what he says is not simply the truth as far as he knows it” (13).

At first glance, it seems natural for readers to expect—even demand—veracity from autobiography. However, the relationship between “truth” and “autobiography” is slippery. Curiously, just as Trollope’s An Autobiography was facing renewed criticism for its alleged lack of veracity, other critics began to wonder how essential a concept like “truth” was to the genre of autobiography. Some of these critics go so far as to wonder whether or not truth was even possible in an autobiography. In the 1980 collection Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical, Georges Gusdorf insists that autobiography “cannot be a pure and simple record of existence,” (42) whose “significance should therefore be sought beyond truth and falsity” (44).

In the same collection, James Olney points to the passage of time as a factor in autobiography’s struggles with “truth;” he writes, “in trying to remember the past in the present the autobiographer imagines another person, another world into existence” (“Ontology” 245). Jerome Bruner dismisses the whole question, stating, “an autobiography is not and cannot be a
way of simply signifying or referring to a ‘life as lived.’ I take the view that there is no such thing as a ‘life as lived’ to be referred to. In this view, a life is created or constructed by an act of autobiography” (38). By the mid-1990s, questions of “truth” in autobiography seemed almost quaint and old-fashioned. In the work Auto/biographical Discourses: Criticism, Theory, Practice, Laura Marcus dismisses the question: “very few critics would demand that autobiographical truth should be literally verifiable—this would, after all, undermine the idea that the truth of the self is more complex than ‘fact’ (3). However, even among those who clamor for “truth” in autobiography, many believe that Trollope’s An Autobiography is, for the most part, true. This belief focuses around the texts, Trollope’s behavior and motivations, his accusers’ behavior, other nineteenth-century accounts of public school life, and modern research into the nineteenth-century public school experience.

It is important to remember that the most vociferous of Trollope’s nineteenth-century critics, his brother Thomas, never accuses the novelist of prevarication per se. Instead, T.A. Trollope accuses Anthony of exaggeration and overstatement—chiefly in the extent of bullying in the public schools and the conditions around the family home at Harrow. Additionally, it is important to remember that the area of disagreement is comparatively small and the elder Trollope agrees with his brother on most of the particulars of their boyhood. T.A. Trollope confirms Anthony’s recollections of their father’s brutal pedagogical style; the elder Trollope brother writes,

> I never remember his caning, whipping, beating or striking any one of us. But he used during the detested Latin lessons to sit his arm over the back of the pupil’s chair, so that his hand might be ready to inflict an instantaneous pull of the hair as the poena (by no means pede clAUDIO) for every blundered concord of false quantity. (26)

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20 See also James Olney’s Metaphors of Self for an examination of how the autobiographer gives birth to a new self in the process of composing his or her autobiography.
Other details of their young lives are similarly replicated: Thomas’ *What I Remember* concurs with *An Autobiography* on their father’s lack of business acumen (Anthony Trollope 13, 32; T.A. Trollope 28)

The elder Trollope brother boldly addresses these points of divagation in his memoir. Anthony’s description of their mother’s political leanings sends T.A. Trollope into a near apoplectic fit. In *An Autobiography*, Anthony Trollope writes of his mother, Fanny,

> She loved society, affecting a somewhat Liberal rôle, and professing an emotional dislike to tyrants, which sprung from the wrongs of would-be regicides and the poverty of patriot exiles. An Italian marquis who had escaped with only a second shirt from the clutches of some archduke whom he had wished to exterminate, or a French prolétaire with distant ideas of sacrificing himself to the cause of liberty, were always welcome to the modest hospitality of her house. In after-years, when marquises of another caste had been gracious to her, she became a strong Tory, and thought that archduchesses were sweet. But with her, politics were always an affair of the heart, as indeed were all her convictions. Of reasoning from causes I think that she knew nothing. (28)

The elder Trollope took issue with Anthony’s rendering of their mother’s political tastes. T.A. Trollope gave voice to that viewpoint in *What I Remember*. Of the preceding passage, T.A. Trollope writes,

> Now there is hardly a word of this in which Anthony is not more or less mistaken; and that is simply because he had not adequate opportunity for close observation. The affection which subsisted between my mother and my brother Anthony was from the beginning to the end of their lives as tender and as warm as ever existed between a mother and son. Indeed I remember that in the old days of our youth we used to consider Anthony the Benjamin. But from the time that I resigned my position at Birmingham to the time of her death, I was uninterruptedly an inmate of her house, or she of mine. And I think that I knew her, as few sons know their mothers.

> No regicide, would-be or other, ever darkened her doors. No French prolétaire, or other French political refugee was ever among her guests. She never was acquainted with any Italian marquis who had escaped in any degree of distress from poverty . . . nothing can be farther from the truth. (243-44)

Anthony’s perceived misrepresentation of their mother’s politics clearly bothers T.A. Trollope, and he seeks to correct the record and to support his own version of events with objective
evidence. Significantly, the passage is the only selection of his memoir where T.A. Trollope goes to meticulous trouble to correct the public record. Other points at which Thomas Trollope disagrees with his brother are left untouched.

Similarly, motivations of other Trollope critics can be interrogated. Family friend T.H.S. Escott questions Trollope’s version of the truth on several points of contention in his 1913 biography of the writer. Despite being written by an acquaintance, Escott’s biography is not without its irregularities and errata. The work refers to the near-sighted, gouty, and grossly overweight middle-aged Trollope as being in “the highest state of physical fitness” (135) and refers to Trollope’s handwriting as “clear” (40)—an observation that would strike anyone who has attempted to read the novelist’s writing as curious.\(^2\) Stronger evidence comes from the work of writers, memoirists, and social historians from both the nineteenth century and our own times whose examination of the public school system closely mirrors Trollope’s own.

In all probability, a definitive resolution to the points of contention between Trollope’s version of the family home life and the version that his brother presents will never occur. However, Trollope’s truthfulness in his rendering of life in public school becomes slightly more likely in light of the work of social critics from both his century and from our own. Though some of Trollope’s contemporaries scoffed at his description of life at Winchester and Harrow, others support his view of public school life. Some nineteenth-century texts even make Trollope’s rendering of public school brutality seem tepid by comparison. Certainly, the opportunity for abuse was present in the often unmonitored public school system and no one disputes that “incidents” did occur. John Chandos points to a joke of the time that asserted that

\(^2\) Modern critics of Trollope’s honesty are, like the Edwardian Escott, not immune from scholarly sloppiness themselves. For example, Sally Brown, one of Trollope’s key debunkers, proclaims in a 1982 piece for The British Library Journal that Trollope was born in 1812. Actually, Thomas and Fanny Trollope of Keppel Street in London were blessed with the arrival of their son in Anthony 1815.
there were three absolute rulers in the world: the Great Mogul, a captain of a British man-of-war, and the praefect of hall at Winchester school (89). As a young Trollope was fighting his private wars in public school in 1830, the Edinburgh Review remarked that public school was a place where “a boy begins as a slave and ends as a despot” (Lewis 76) and where the weak are “broken in spirit, and bent to the ground by this relentless and imperious domination” (76).

First-hand accounts of public school life by individuals such as Sir William Gregory and Captain Markham are of particular interest. Gregory was a classmate of Trollope’s and his autobiography confirmed the novelist’s version of events. Though Sir William’s autobiography is long out of print, the passage concerning Trollope was reproduced in Michael Sadleir’s 1927 study of Trollope’s life. Gregory writes,

> It is pitiable to read in his autobiography just published how bitter were his feelings at that time, and how he longed for the friendship and companionship of his comrades, but in vain. There was a story afloat, whether true or false I know not, that his father had been outlawed, and every boy believed it was the duty of a loyal subject of the crown to shoot or otherwise destroy ‘Old Trollope’ if possible. Fortunately, he never appeared among us. I had plenty of opportunities of judging Anthony, and I am bound to say, though my heart smites me sorely for my unkindness, that I did not like him. I avoided him, for he was rude and uncouth [. . .] he gave no sign of promise whatsoever, was always in the lowest part of the form, and was regarded by masters and by boys as an incorrigible dunce. (56-57)

Gregory’s comments are convincing for a number of reasons: he lacks any motivation to lie; furthermore, his account of his behavior is far from self-serving and, indeed, Gregory seems rather embarrassed by his cold treatment of Trollope. Furthermore, Gregory never disputes Trollope’s memory of the difficulties the novelist had while in public school.

Other nineteenth-century memoirs provide similar endorsement. Captain Markham, like Trollope, was a town-boy at an exclusive public-school. Like Trollope, Markham shared his recollections of public school life in a book; Markham’s Recollections of a Town Boy was
published in 1903. Unlike Trollope, however, Markham found the public school experience positive. However, even in this generally rosy account of public school life there is extensive evidence that corroborates Trollope’s descriptions. Markham confirms Trollope’s assertion that town boys were especially subject to teasing and beatings (169), and although Markham’s experiences are positive, Markham is physically strong and dominating on the school’s athletic fields; he admits to being as “deep in the chest, big boned for my age, pretty good with my fists, and accustomed to all manner of games” (14). If Markham’s popularity (and hence his pleasant memories) is due to his physical prowess, is it not possible to conjecture that an oversized and awkward Anthony Trollope would have suffered a corresponding lack of popularity? Furthermore, all of Markham’s pleasant memories entail tales of physical size, ferocity, and a willingness (even an eagerness) to fight; for example, Markham boasts of making a frail student have a nosebleed at will by giving the young man a sharp slap between the shoulder blades (160). The portrayal of the public school as a violent and harsh locale is not impeached by Markham’s account.

Other accounts, such as George Melly’s 1854 *Experiences of a Fag at a Private and Public School*, directly corroborate Trollope’s version of school life. Melly began his education in 1838, so he would be a bit younger than Trollope. Nevertheless, his experiences virtually replicate Trollope’s. Melly’s tale of woe mirrors Trollope’s misfortunes not only in content, but also in tone. Melly writes,

None but those who have suffered it can imagine the misery of returning to a study that is more like a dog-kennel than a Christian habitation – rushing through the yard pursued by young ruffians, whose object may be to give you a pinch or a kick or to whisper a polluting word or a sentence in your ear, which hurts the mind much more than any injury they could inflict on the body would hurt it; --of feeling that protection is not afforded by the monitors, who hardly dare interfere;
while your sense of schoolboy honor prevents your acquainting the master with
the cause of your unhappiness which is made up of hundreds of petty torments.
(198-99)

Not only does Melly’s account replicate Trollope’s account in terms of the violence endured, but
he also supports Trollope’s assertion of the loneliness endured. When arriving at Weston, Melly
recalls, “not one friendly face greeted me, not one kind smile cheered me and I sat, wretched and
forlorn” (16).

Some Trollope-doubters might still counter that these memoirs, like Trollope’s, are
subject to exaggeration and faulty memory. Although contemporary accounts of life at public
school, such as those found in The Edinburgh Review and in the memoirs of Gregory, Markham,
and Melly, support Trollope’s version of public school life, even more convincing corroborative
evidence comes from twentieth-century scholars.

A compelling examination of the public school comes from John Chandos and his 1984
study, Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864. Much of Chandos’s account supports
the version of events Trollope provides in his Autobiography. Chandos is quick to point out that
the enduring and endearing portrait of public school life provided by works like Tom Brown’s
Schooldays only served to tell the Victorian public what they wanted to hear about public
schools (45). To Chandos, the pre-reformed public schools were a place where “to be weak was
to be wretched and [. . .] the state of nature is the state of war” (28). Though Chandos
emphasizes that it would be a mistake to believe that all public schools were consistently brutal
in their application of discipline (224), he admits that “certainly, acts of cruelty were committed”
(103) and maintains that “what today would be accounted grievous bodily harm, or worse,
abounded” (70). Significantly, Chandos lists Winchester and Harrow—the two schools Trollope attended—as the worst and “most sinister” of the five premier nineteenth-century public schools (80).22

Those who believe An Autobiography contains fabrications and exaggerations often point to Trollope’s rather cagey behavior surrounding the manuscript as part of their body of evidence. To scholars of autobiography, however, Trollope’s behavior around the manuscript is merely part of a trend in life-writing. Avrom Fleishman points out that many Victorians felt that writing an autobiography was somehow “unmanly” or “ungentlemanly” signaling an unhealthy overabundance of self-regard (108; 118). If Fleishman’s hypothesis is correct and Trollope shared such feelings, his behavior around the manuscript does not seem curious at all.

Additionally, those who maintain that the memoir is essentially factual may point to Trollope’s behavior as evidence for their cause. Since the manuscript was only to be published after his death, most of the usual reasons for exaggerating one’s woes—e.g., revenge on one’s enemies, an increase in sympathy—would disappear. Furthermore, even those who vehemently disliked him testified to Trollope’s scrupulous (arguably, even pathological) obsession with the truth and with honesty. Once, Trollope received a payment slightly larger than the one due to him; he promptly wrote the publisher—on Christmas Day, no less—asking how best to make repayment (“To George Smith,” 25 December 1859). At another point in the Letters, he mildly rebukes Smith for the publishers “liberally premature” cheques (“To George Smith” 3 March 1860). Clearly, Trollope was not a man to take what did not belong to him—be it money, credit, or sympathy. If Trollope is a generally honest autobiographer, he is not alone. Barrett J. Mandel has noticed that these critiques of honesty have become almost de rigueur in autobiography.

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22 Those top five public schools were (and, to a large extent, still are) Westminster, Winchester, Eton, Rugby, and Harrow.
studies; “it has become fashionable in critical circles to say that autobiographers cannot be trusted. In my experience most autobiographers are honest (that’s the whole point of the genre)” (66) [Mandel’s parenthesis].

Yet, despite the collected pile of convincing evidence from Trollope’s contemporaries, twentieth-century critics, and Trollope himself, the integrity of An Autobiography continues to be questioned. Why? Furthermore, why is Trollope’s autobiography singled out for the sin of prevarication? Similar divagations from absolute veracity go all but unpunished in the autobiographies of Trollope’s contemporaries such as John Stuart Mill. The answer, I believe, is two fold. One of An Autobiography’s most memorable features is an accounting sheet upon which Trollope lists every penny he had earned by writing through 1879. Critics have often seized on this balance sheet as damning evidence that Trollope wrote (only) for money. Writing for money and fictionalizing one’s autobiography both share a peculiar character that is decidedly at odds with Romantic aesthetic notions of what an author (or any true artist) should be. The true artist, waits for divine inspiration (not an overdue butcher’s bill) to begin composing a new novel. The true artist bares his innermost secrets in his autobiography. Trollope was certainly guilty of the first offense—he wrote for money. Having found Trollope guilty of one offense, his critics find it easy to declare him guilty of the other offense as well.

Additionally, what seems to be a problem of veracity is in fact, I think, a problem of genre and to read Trollope’s An Autobiography (italics) as simply an autobiography (no italics) is to perhaps miss some of the work’s nuance and fall into a frustrating discussion of “truth” and “fiction.” In fact, I argue that Trollope’s An Autobiography needs to be read (at least in part) as a hobbledehoy narrative. Trollope’s memoir, like so many of the objects and ideas that swirl about the author, only seems simple. In fact, the work defies categorization. It is called An
Autobiography, but that is really not what it is; part of the text is just advice to would-be writers, part of it is an apologia, part of it is literary criticism, and part of it is famously (or infamously) an account book or a tax return. If Trollope’s An Autobiography occasionally approaches the edges of other genres, it is not alone. Many critics have noticed a sense of slipperiness throughout the genre. This is partly a matter of how the work is received. As one critic maintained, what is autobiography to one reader might be sociology or literature to another reader (Olney, “Cultural Moment” 5). Others see the genre of autobiography as intrinsically unstable—a central contention of Laura Marcus’s Auto/biographical Discourses (12). Still others see the term autobiography as a bit of textual catch all, a phenomenon particularly acute in Victorian autobiographies; Clinton Machann maintains,

the truth is that most of the works that have been classified traditionally as Victorian autobiographies contain at least some components of the apology and of res gestae memoirs of reminiscences, and many of them contain sections that could be described as travelogues, criticism, annotated bibliographies, theoretical and philosophical essays, and various other modes of writing as well. Still current usage has made autobiography the only available term for us to use (2).

Perhaps Robert Folkenflik voiced an opinion similar to Machann’s when he said simply, “autobiography, as I understand it, has norms but not rules” (13).

If Folkenflik’s appraisal of the genre is correct, and I suspect it is, then Trollope’s An Autobiography forms a particularly sharp example of a text with “norms, but not rules.” Michael Sadleir called An Autobiography a “queer bleak text book of the mechanics and economics of novel writing” (qtd. in Kincaid, 348). And, though Sadleir’s designation gets a bit closer to the truth, there is more to An Autobiography than Sadleir observes. That “queer bleak text book” accounts for only the last four-fifths of the work and only in its first forty pages or so does An Autobiography live up to its title. This generic shift tends to make the first forty pages—the

23 The irony that Trollope’s critics are also writing for money is rarely explored in these pieces.
hobbledehoy passages—seem awkward and ill-fitting. Perhaps the hobbledehoy passages of *An Autobiography* protrude so awkwardly, not because they contain untruths or exaggerations, but because they are the only autobiography-like passages in a work that is grouped—by its title if nothing else—with that genre.

Certainly readers’ expectations of a work are colored by its title. However, if we can stop reading *An Autobiography* as a traditional autobiography, we can see it as something else entirely. Without the weight of the generic expectations that come with its title, *An Autobiography* reemerges as a bifurcated text in which a hobbledehoy narrative has been (somewhat awkwardly) fused to some other type of text—call that other text Sadleir’s “queer bleak text book.” What is jarring about *An Autobiography* is not the candor of the early passages, but its lack of candor about virtually anything else. This phenomenon too, like the autobiography’s alleged casual relationship with veracity and its generic instability is seemingly part of a larger tendency in life writing. A.O.J. Cockshut observes that “it is a commonplace that the early chapters of autobiographies, which describe childhood, are the best” (*Art* 36).

Simply, Trollope’s *An Autobiography* is an autobiography by a person who decided not to write an autobiography after the first few dozen pages and then embarked upon writing something else. The awkward fissure that is evident between the two portions of the text might be explained when it is remembered that the novelist had a peculiar fascination with order. The hobbledehoy tale that was Trollope’s life had no neat and clear resolution. Years after the privations of his boyhood and adolescence had ended, the novelist was still haunted by their memory. Given this lack of resolution and Trollope’s fascination with order, it is not particularly surprising that the hobbledehoy narrative of *An Autobiography* quietly trails off as Trollope gently changes the subject.
This reading of An Autobiography would perhaps account for Trollope’s curious behavior around the manuscript. We know, for example, that Trollope was extremely uncomfortable with the sort of self-aggrandizement that characterized autobiographies such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s (Hall, “Seeing” 191). Discomfort with the genre and awareness that the genre was not a perfect fit with what he created would also explain why Trollope was uncomfortable with the term itself; he is “fain” to call it an autobiography (1).

In 1993’s A Community of One Martin Danahay posits that a prevailing characteristic of nineteenth-century autobiography is its move to an essentially solipsistic position in which the subject/author took a position not unlike that of the one taken by Rousseau in his autobiography: “I am unlike anyone I have ever met; I will venture that I am like no one in the whole world” (Danahay 17, 81; Rousseau 17). Danahay’s argument is persuasive, and it might help explain the abrupt change in direction found in Trollope’s autobiography. By the end of his life, Trollope did not want to voice his difference; he had had quite enough of being different. Trollope wanted to acknowledge his sameness. Trollope loved fitting in: he loved his gentlemen’s clubs, he loved his hunting, he loved his Royal Literary Fund dinners. Even Trollope’s famous (and oft-maligned) analogy of the writer as shoemaker proclaims his sameness; it says, “I’m just like you; I’m one of the crowd.”

The autobiography begins in an autobiographic fashion, but after describing the horrors of his boyhood and the forlorn and incompetent wretchedness of his young adulthood, Trollope turns away from the confessional style and spends the remainder of the book in literary tasks with which he is more comfortable—accounting his profits and losses, cheerily offering advice to would-be scribblers, and targeting his fellow writers’ strengths and weaknesses. Other writers might have made appropriate adjustments to this curious structural anomaly during the revision
period, but not Trollope. His habitual composition style did not allow for revision, so the hobbledehoy passage that opens An Autobiography seems like an inappropriate and ill-fitting appendage. Yet in reality, if anything is inappropriate or ill-fitting, it is the remainder of the memoir. As for the hobbledehoy in Trollope—it only *seems* as if the archetype gets short shrift in the pages of An Autobiography; to take Jerome Bruner’s point and run with it, “the life created or constructed” by Trollope’s autobiography is the life of the hobbledehoy. The “re-ordering” that a scrupulous devotion to the truth left him unable to do in An Autobiography was executed in his hobbledehoy novels. The hobbledehoy novels, as the remainder of this work will demonstrate, are excessively orderly devices that utilize a basic pattern over and over again. This repeated hobbledehoy pattern had its genesis in Trollope’s life and contains many elements of a schoolboy’s daydream. The hobbledehoy pattern begins with a flawed but good-hearted young man—a hobbledehoy—in his late teens or early twenties. The hobbledehoy usually possesses some limited family connections, often of the “shabby genteel” variety, but these connections are buttressed by little wealth or income. Indifferently educated and modestly employed, the hobbledehoy vacillates between a lower-middle-class existence and pretensions of gentlemanliness. With his birth father deceased or absent, the hobbledehoy is often figuratively adopted by a “true” gentleman, i.e., one with strong connections to England’s traditional land-based squirearchy. Whereas the hobbledehoy pattern itself has received little attention, these Trollopian “mega-gentlemen” have long been studied by preceding generations of Trollope scholars. Escott referred to the mega-gentlemen as Trollope’s “*preux chevalier*” (195), whereas Robin Gilmour has pointed out that Trollope was often consumed by the “myth of the squire” (159).
Significantly, the hobbledehoy’s pattern of adoption or mentoring by an elder gentleman figure mirrors patterns anthropologists and sociologists have perceived in studies of gentlemanliness. For example, scholars such as Robin Gilmour, David Castronovo, and John Tosh all agree that laying claim to gentlemanly status is a two-step process: one must request acceptance and then be accepted by one’s peers (Gilmour 6, Castronovo 6, Tosh 3). In Trollope’s hobbledehoy pattern, the older gentleman guides the would-be gentleman along a path that terminates at full gentlemanly status. When necessary, the mentor figure even shapes and constrains the hobbledehoy’s behavior.

Historically, it is no accident that Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels appear as Britain is becoming firmly entrenched as an industrial economy. In the mid-Victorian era, money and wealth (and hence the means to conduct oneself as a gentleman) gravitate toward the large industrial cities. It is a time Michael Sadleir dubbed “the Indian summer of squirearchy” (15), and the squirearchy is understandably frustrated as it watches its power fade and move to the cities. To the mentor, the hobbledehoy figure represents an opportunity to pass on a value system to one more likely to thrive in the contemporary social and business climate.

The hobbledehoy is aided in his quest for gentlemanliness not only by people, but also by objects. Despite the perennial contention that Trollope’s work is devoid of symbols, symbolic tokens figure prominently in the hobbledehoy narratives. Under the pattern, the hobbledehoy receives a symbolic gift—a talisman of sorts—symbolizing his commitment to the world of gentlemanliness. The talisman, like the gentlemanly mentor, guides the hobbledehoy and delimits his behavior.

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24 Ruth apRoberts, among others, has expressed this idea. In her *The Moral Trollope*, she asserts that Trollope is “as little symbolic as an artist in words can be” (16).
The action of the story rises as the hobbledehoy is confronted with societal pressures (e.g., debt or ill-advised romantic entanglement) that threaten to pull him away from gentlemanliness and into the lower middle class. The forces of lower-middle-class vulgarity and lower-upper-class gentlemanliness are thus poised in a battle for the hobbledehoy’s character. This situation climaxes as, despite formidable pressures, the hobbledehoy willingly chooses the more difficult path of gentlemanliness. The hobbledehoy stories make it clear that vulgarity is easy, but true gentlemanliness is difficult; it requires self-control, discipline, and the ability to put the needs of the community above one’s own at all times. In the hobbledehoy stories, it is imperative that the hobbledehoy willingly chooses the more difficult path. This moment is akin to what J. Hillis Miller calls the “ethical moment” in Trollope. Miller defines the ethical moment as an instant when

there is a claim made on the author writing the work, on the narrator telling the story within the fiction of the novel, on the characters within the story at a decisive moment of their lives, and on the reader, teacher, or critic responding to the work. This ethical ‘I must’ cannot, I propose to show, be accounted for by the social and historical forces that impinge upon it. In fact, the ethical moment contests these forces or is subversive of them. (8)

Having successfully negotiated his “ethical moment,” the hobbledehoy is often tested by being placed in the difficult position of having to live a gentleman’s lifestyle without its concomitant wealth and ease. Eventually, fate and fortune intercede and provide the hobbledehoy with enough monetary support to live up to his gentlemanly status. By the end of the novel, the hobbledehoy is metaphorically re-born as a full-fledged English gentleman.25 This hobbledehoy pattern was not, strictly speaking, Trollope’s autobiography; however, it is what Trollope wanted his autobiography to be.

25 This pattern of symbolic death and re-birth also mirrors a pattern in Trollope’s own life. Sadleir notes that after Trollope’s life-threatening illness of 1840, “he nearly died; but while the body failed, the spirit toughened and became invincible” (109).
Finally, for Trollope to write an autobiographical hobbledehoy story at the end of his life was, perhaps, unnecessary. The novelist had been writing hobbledehoy stories throughout his career—at least since 1857’s *The Three Clerks*, the book which will be the focus of the following chapter.
Chapter Three: “To What Height a Dull Boy May Grow”: Trollope’s Hobbledehoy Ur-Texts

As the previous chapter indicated, Anthony Trollope was not particularly forthcoming in An Autobiography. Part of the reason, I believe, for Trollope’s reticence in An Autobiography stems not from the fact that he wished to conceal the story of his early life, but rather that Trollope was perhaps tired of sharing the story of his youth. The most compelling part of Trollope’s life story—the tale of how a poor, lonely, and slovenly young man became one of his nation’s most respected civil servants and beloved writers—had been told repeatedly. Certainly there was something novel-esque about Trollope’s life-story. The rags-to-riches motif of Trollope’s life seems almost cliché, and it personifies Samuel Smiles’s adage, “one cannot tell to what height a dull boy may grow—he must have time to develop” (Life and Labour 147).

Trollope had certainly made good use of the tale of his early life. It had been set into text time and time again in the form of Trollope’s hobbledehoy pattern. Chronologically, the first two hobbledehoys in the Trollope canon are Charley Tudor in The Three Clerks (1859) and Johnny Eames in The Small House at Allington (1864) and The Last Chronicle of Barset (1867). Although a considerable amount of scholarship has been devoted to these works, virtually none of it has approached the texts with the hobbledehoy characters in mind. This chapter, then, examines Trollope’s first uses of the hobbledehoy figure. It argues that Trollope’s original hobbledehoy narratives are tentative and cautious undertakings whose protagonists, unlike later Trollopian hobbledehoys, still look to the land-based squirearchy for validation and must sacrifice significant parts of themselves to attain the gentlemanliness they desire.

Although hobbledehoy characters appear in some of Trollope’s earliest works—most notably the artist/would-be bishop Bertie Stanhope in Barchester Towers—Trollope’s first novel
to exhibit a fully developed hobbledehoy pattern is 1857’s The Three Clerks.

Uncharacteristically, Trollope rested for three months before beginning The Three Clerks after completing Barchester Towers (Super 83), but he was suddenly stirred into action by developments in the Civil Service. In 1855, two of Trollope’s superiors at the General Post Office, Sir Charles Trevlyan and Sir Stafford Northcote, penned a blue book lamenting the shortcomings of Civil Service clerks (Super 83). Trollope fired off a peevish and shrill response to the Dublin University Magazine (“Civil Service”). Once raised, Trollope’s ire was difficult to quell, and shortly after penning the periodical piece, he embarked upon composing The Three Clerks.

Writing without rough drafts (Trollope, Autobiography 135) and nattily scheduling his writing in a ledger (Mullen 492), Trollope’s “pen fairly sped” through the composition process (Super 83). Incredibly, in one week-long period he averaged twenty-four pages a day (Mullen 492). Working at such a pace, Trollope took only six months to complete The Three Clerks; Trollope began work on February 15, 1857, and having padded the text with an essay on the Civil Service and the novel-within-a-novel, Crinoline and Macassar, he completed his task on August 8, 1857 (488). Trollope’s unhappiness with the way his fellow clerks were portrayed in the Trevlyan-Northcote report might explain some of speed of composition; outrage is, of course, a great motivator. However another reason for the book’s hasty completion was much more prosaic—the novelist had planned a visit to his mother in Italy and was anxious to finish the composition before leaving for the continent (492).

26 Trevlyan and Northcote were not the only individuals who looked at the members of the Civil Service this way. In 1860 Blackwood’s Magazine remarked that young government clerks “on entering the public service are very apt to become drowsy and indifferent” (“Civil Service Appointments” 511).
Some of the book’s reviewers sensed the work’s hurried composition; one contemporary reviewer lambasted the book, saying it bore traces of “rapid writing” (Saturday Review 57). Trollope defended his composition process in the Autobiography; he wrote: “I believe that the work which has been done quickest has been done the best” and “the rapidity has been achieved by hot pressure, not in the conception (174, 175).

The “hot pressure” to which Trollope refers might well manifest itself in The Three Clerks’ strong autobiographical component. For example, the entrance examination that Charley Tudor undergoes is identical to the manner in which Trollope was examined when entering the General Post Office (Autobiography 35-26). An Autobiography also reveals that Jabesh M’Ruen’s obsequious tag-line of “pray be punctual” matches the rejoinder repeatedly whispered in Trollope’s own ear when he was a debt-ridden young postal clerk (48-49). Trollope reports that he, like Charley Tudor, was surprised by a workplace visit from a woman seeking to extract a promise of marriage from him (47-48). Trollope’s biographers have noted other similarities between the author’s life and the fictionalized account in the Three Clerks: Victoria Glendinning observes that the youthful Trollope was well-acquainted with sleazy taprooms such as The Three Clerks’ Cat and Whistle (90) and James Pope Hennessy speculates that the character Katie Woodward might have been based on Trollope’s sister Emily (161).

If the composition process of The Three Clerks was hurried, it was no more rushed than the process by which Trollope sold the novel: in the course of one afternoon, Trollope pitched the work to three publishing houses. Based on the success of Barchester Towers, Trollope hoped to receive at least £200 from Longman for an outright sale of the copyright. However, the

27 The reviewer is correct; such traces of rapid writing are present, and clearly the text could have used a rigorous edit. For example, Fidus Neverbend is employed by the Department of Woods and Forests early in the book (68); later he is mysteriously and inexplicably transferred to the Department of Works and Buildings (260). Similarly
publisher failed to see why he should offer more than half-profits with an advance of £100 (Hall, *A Biography* 154). In response, the harried Trollope tried to offer the manuscript to Hurst and Blackett (154). Those publishers, however, missed their appointment, so Trollope hurriedly offered it to a third publishing house—Richard Bentley. At Bentley’s, an assistant cautioned him against the marketability of historical novels—an exchange of advice Trollope would later give his fictional authoress Lady Carbury in *The Way We Live Now* (Epperly 175). After getting past the helpful underling, Trollope negotiated a meeting with Bentley himself and a deal was promptly reached, selling the copyright outright for £250 (Hall, *A Biography* 154).

Trollope was pleased with the book as were those in his circle.\(^{28}\) In addition, reviewers seemed pleased with the novel. However, despite its initial success, *The Three Clerks* has not fared particularly well over time, and few critics list the work among Trollope’s finest novels. Within the last twenty years or so, however, the book’s reputation has improved—if ever so slightly. For example, Tony Bareham applauds the book’s structure and finds the head-versus-heart tension that pervades all Trollopian fiction clearer and more direct in *The Three Clerks* (67, 59). R.H. Super found the story “very moving” and praised the story’s “Swiftian satire” (*Chronicler* 84). Few critics examine *The Three Clerks*’ hobbledehoy pattern, a fact that is surprising when it is remembered that all of Trollope’s hobbledehoy texts can be traced to one of two ur-texts, *The Three Clerks* or *The Small House at Allington*.

The three clerks of the title, Harry Norman, Alaric Tudor, and Charley Tudor, represent a spectrum of morality and ethical behavior. Harry Norman rigidly adheres to narrow

\(^{28}\) Trollope was probably most pleased with the compliment he received from one of his literary heroes, William Thackeray, who wrote to him confessing that although novels usually put him to sleep promptly after dinner, *The Three Clerks* had him searching his home for the next volume well into the night (Trollope, *An Autobiography* 137-38).
interpretations of strict Judeo-Christian ethics and rigidly supports traditional codes of English
gentlemanliness. Alaric Tudor, on the other hand, embraces a cozy ends-justify-the-means
system of situational ethics and never misses an opportunity to cut moral corners. The final
clerk, young Charley Tudor, described as “neither man nor boy” (18), teeters in a sort of moral
no-man’s land between the two as the book’s hobbledehoy. Charley is poised between
Norman’s somber and ascetic morality and Alaric’s casual, laissez-faire situational ethics. The
book, I argue, may be read as a battle for young Charley’s character.

Charley Tudor is the son of a Shropshire clergyman. Young Tudor is employed by the
fictional Department of Internal Navigation. The department name is significant; Charley’s
“internal navigation,” his self-steering, is a major concern of the book. The material Department
of Internal Navigation is a shiftless, irresponsible environment filled with hard-drinking ne’er-
do-wells and coarse, feeble-minded clerks or “navvies”; Trollope describes them in this manner,

The men of the Internal Navigation are known to be fast, nay, almost furious in
their pace of living; not that they are extravagant in any great degree, a fault
which their scale of salaries very generally forbids; but they are one and all
addicted to Coal Holes and Cider Cellars; they dive at midnight hours into Shades
and know all the back parlors of all the public-houses in the neighborhood of the
Strand. (16)

Charley becomes swept along in the dissipated lifestyle of his fellow “navvies,” but Trollope
seems sympathetic with the young man, and the novelist places the blame for Charley’s growing
dissipation on his environment:

Into all these malpractices Charley Tudor plunged headlong. And how should it
have been otherwise? How can any youth of nineteen or twenty do other than
consort himself with the daily companions of his usual avocations? Once and
again, in one case among ten thousand, a lad may be found formed of such stuff,
that he receives neither the good nor the bad impulses of those around him. But
such a one is a lapsus naturæ. (21)
Charley, who is by no means a *lapsus naturae*, quickly falls into the low habits associated with his colleagues. His habits bring him in contact with the sleazier side of London’s West End, including an unscrupulous bill-discounter, Jabesh M’Ruen. M’Ruen, a “low blackguard” (257), controls a good portion of Charley’s quarterly pay. As the novel progresses, Charley sinks deeper into a quagmire of debt.29

Equally unfortunate, Tudor becomes romantically connected with a young working-class woman, Norah Geraghty. In time, he finds himself virtually engaged to Geraghty, an Irish barmaid with an affectionate nature and perennially dirty fingernails.30 After a particularly libation-filled evening at Norah’s place of employment, the Cat and Whistle, Charley’s acquiescence to the proposed union is assumed by his fellow patrons and the pub’s owner. That night “Charley walked off a miserable man. He was thoroughly ashamed of himself, thoroughly acknowledged his own weakness; and yet as he went out from the ‘Cat and Whistle’ he felt sure that he should return there again to renew the degradation from which he suffered this night. Indeed, what else could he do now?” (210) Charley is seen spinning off into this shabby lower-middle-class vortex, and there appears to be little to impede his downward spiral.

Charley is not without help in his quest for self-degradation; M’Ruen and Geraghty aid his descent. The pair represent twin curses to the lower middle class, debt and drinking. Both M’Ruen’s ever-mounting notes-of-hand and Geraghty’s ever refilled pints of porter threaten to pull Charley down. It is significant that both these agents of Charley’s decline are from outside the traditional framework of English-Anglican society: M’Ruen is Jewish and Geraghty is Irish.

29 The danger presented to young professional men by debt was a favorite topic of mid-nineteenth-century writers. For example, Patrick Kennedy paternalistically cautioned young men about the danger of debt in the pages of the *Dublin University Magazine* (315), and, as Trollope composed *The Three Clerks*, The Times ruefully noted that “silly young men, determined to ruin themselves” continue to incur huge debts (“A Glimpse” 6).

30 Norah’s dirty fingernails are significant because cleanliness and personal hygiene are often indicative of character in Trollope. As Glendinning notes, “in novel after novel, sluttishness and grubbiness are deplored” (133).
and it is difficult to miss the symbolic significance of Charley Tudor’s last name. By the terms of the book, these “outsiders” are leading him away from his proper role as a sober and financially stable *English* gentleman. Charley’s descent into alcohol abuse is not only unhealthy, in some quarters it may be considered un-English and un-gentlemanly: some nineteenth-century commentators linked overindulgence with race, ethnicity, and class. Two years before *The Three Clerks* appeared, Blackwood’s declared (perhaps with more wishful thinking than facts), “the Red Indian drinks himself dead drunk because he can; so does the negro slave; so unfortunately, and to the scandal of our social condition does our jolly tar and railway navvy. The well bred gentleman with his tastes and appetites fully developed, and his cellar fully supplied uses its contents rationally” (Burton 105).

Trollope describes Tudor as living “a very mixed sort of life” at this time (111), and M’Ruen and Geraghty are counterbalanced by a pair attempting to pull Tudor up: Harry Norman and Katie Woodward. Pulling Tudor away from lower-middle-class vulgarity and toward traditional English gentlemanliness is the aptly named Harry Norman. Norman is steady, sober, church-going, scrupulously honest and heir to a large country estate. Throughout the novel, his influence over young Charley Tudor grows. Trollope writes:

> Norman had taken Charley by the hand and been with him a good deal. He had therefore spent an uncommonly respectable week, and the Norfolk street houri would have been *au désespoir*, but that she had other Charleys to her bow. When he found himself getting into a first-class carriage at the Waterloo-bridge station with his two comrades, he began to appreciate the comfort of decency. (111)

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31 Names always play a significant role in Trollope. Here, the name “Norman” works as a nod to the landed-based squirearchy of England’s past. Interestingly, “Alaric” is the name of the Goth leader responsible for the final sack of Rome—a fact with which the classically educated Trollope would have no doubt been aware. Trollope’s practice of using character names as labels might well stem from his long-held interest in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama—a genre that made liberal use of such names.
Aiding Norman in his struggle is young Katie Woodward, youngest daughter of a Hampton Court widow. The Woodward’s cozy, warm, and pastoral home of Surbiton Cottage in Hampton stands in marked contrast to the mangy pubs and unruly offices that populate the book’s London scenes. It is at Surbiton that the rakish Charley is brought face-to-face with the respectable comforts that will never be his if he continues on his dissipated path. Charley is cognizant of the price his fast life demands, and during a Hampton Court visit Trollope foreshadows Charley’s coming challenges. “‘I am not fit to be here,’ and as he spoke his manly self-control all gave way, and big tears rolled down his cheeks” (250). At the quiet Eden of Surbiton Katie becomes Charley Tudor’s love interest, and she has the important task of bestowing upon Charley his talisman of gentlemanliness.

Charley earns his talisman through an act of physical courage; while boating on the Thames with Harry and Charley, Katie is abruptly thrown into the water. To Katie’s delight, Charley jumps into the water and pulls her to safety. In so doing, he cements her love for him. Trollope writes,

‘I know he saved my life’ said Katie, as soon as she could trust herself to speak without betraying her emotion—‘I know he jumped into the river after me, and very, very nearly drowned himself; and I don’t think any other man in the world would have done so much for me besides him.’ (247)

When trying to decide upon the proper gift to bestow upon her new hero as she recuperates, Katie rejects her sister’s other suggestions—a pair of slippers and a tobacco pipe—and settles on a purse. The certainty with which Katie settles upon her choice underscores the symbolic nature of the gift. Slippers and pipe have a connotation of the hearth and home, but

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32 The setting here is particularly significant. The Thames forms the pipeline (literally) between the pastoral purity of Surbiton and the corruption of the city. If Charley is indeed on the border between the purity associated with Hampton Court and the depravity of London, to actually immerse him in the waters of the Thames is a particularly apt image. In addition, Victoria Glendinning points out that water is often the scene of sexual energy in Trollope’s works (465).
they are also associated with indolence—one does, after all, lounge in one’s slippers while smoking a pipe. Charley has no need of tokens urging him on to more indolence. On the other hand, the purse is associated with sound financial management; it is, after all, how one looks after one’s money. As debt threatens to crush Charley’s social aspirations, the purse serves him as a reminder of the importance of careful financial management.

Tony Bareham notes the importance of the purse as a symbol; he says,

It is intended as a girlish gesture of innocent thanks, but even as she weaves it Katie begins to realise that her heart is touched, that she is changing from girl to woman. The purse symbolizes a healthy union of money with passion—the thing that Alaric fails to achieve and this balance, granted to Charley and Katie is at the root of the message of *The Three Clerks*. (79)

Also significant is Katie’s rejoinder to Charley as she bestows it upon him and the occasion upon which she gives him the gift. Accompanied by friends and family, the sixteen-year-old Katie marks her entrance into the social world by attending the Chiswick Flower Show.

At Chiswick, Charley receives his talisman in a short scene packed with meaning:

after a while the people passed on, and there was lull before others filled their places, and Katie found herself opposite to a beautiful black rose, with no one close to her but Charley.

‘I have got something for you,’ she said; and as she spoke she felt herself to be almost hot with blushing.

‘Something for me!’ said Charley; and he also felt himself abashed, he did not know why.

‘It’s only a very little thing,’ said Katie, feeling in her pocket, ‘and I am almost ashamed to ask you to take it. But I made it all myself; no one else put a stitch in it,’ and so saying, and looking round to see that she was not observed, she handed her gift to Charley.

‘Oh! Katie, dearest Katie,’ said he, ‘I am so much obliged to you—I’ll keep it till I die.’

This exchange is replete with meaning—of both their life together and their coming tribulations. The “beautiful black rose” next to Katie is, of course, symbolic of Charley, but it also prefigures her coming brush with death. Similarly, the burning flush that she undergoes
when handing Charley the purse symbolizes her passion for Charley just as it symbolizes the sickness and fever that will soon consume her. Charley’s promise to keep the purse “till I die” is, of course, another intimation of immortality, but it also prefigures the “till death do us part” moment of the Anglican marriage ceremony, which Charley and Katie will undergo shortly. In fact, it is in the Edenic atmosphere of Chiswick that Charley and Katie are, symbolically at least, engaged.33

After Charley receives the talismanic purse, the change in his inner life is immediate—although his outward behavior is prone to backsliding. Immediately after receiving it, Charley vows to give up his old life: “He looked at her with his eyes full of love; and as he looked he swore within himself that come what might, he would never see Norah Geraghty again, but would devote his life to an endeavor to make himself worthy of the angel that was now with him” (270).

Though Charley’s declaration is noble, at its heart, the hobbledehoy story is the story of an imperfect young man, and Charley’s vow does not hold completely throughout the novel. However, this instant—which J. Hillis Miller would call Charley’s “ethical moment” and which I refer to as the “hobbledehoy’s choice”—is a watershed moment for Charley Tudor. The choice he has made is cemented later that afternoon when he takes some of the money he has borrowed from the moneylender M’Ruen and purchases a Chiswick flower for Katie’s hair (272). On one hand, this completes an exchange of tokens with Katie—the purse is exchanged for the flower. However, the exchange also symbolizes Charley’s choice; he willingly chooses to spend his limited funds at the gentlemanly, Edenic English world of the Chiswick Flower Show rather than at the loutish, Anglo-Irish pandemonium of raucous pubs like the Cat and Whistle.

33 For an examination of the Edenic qualities of the Chiswick scene in The Three Clerks, see R.C. Terry’s Trollope: The Artist in Hiding (97).
Later that night, Charley avoids another pitfall and rejects his cousin Alaric’s plan to arrange a marriage between Charley and a rich but empty-headed heiress whom Charley does not love. When Alaric presses the marriage and mentions Charley’s mountain of debt, the younger man responds with uncharacteristic force and new-found maturity:

‘For myself, I have nothing to say in my own defence. I have made my bed badly, and must lie on it as it is. I certainly will not mend it by marrying a girl that I can never love. And as for you, Alaric, all who know you and love you, watch your career with the greatest hope. We know your ambition, and all look to see you rise in the world. But in rising, as you will do, you should remember this—that nothing wrong can become right because other people do it.’ (277-78)

In the preceding exchange with Alaric, Charley manages to accomplish several things simultaneously. Hours after receiving the talismanic purse and making the hobbledehoy’s choice, Charley informs his cousin that he will not sell himself for money on the marriage market. He remarks, “I have made my bed badly and must lie in it,” thus exhibiting that elusive quality Victorians would have referred to as “manliness.” Finally, Charley renounces Alaric and his pliable, ends-justify-the-means situational ethics. For Charley to lecture his older and worldlier cousin would have been unthinkable even hours earlier.

Katie reinforces the talismanic value of the purse by taking her leave of Charley with the rejoinder, “‘You will be steady won’t you? You will try to be steady, won’t you, dear Charley?’” (286) Charley responds with merely squeezing Katie’s hand and, in the difficult days that follow, the words “be steady” become a mantra for Charley.

Difficult days do indeed follow, and debt and dissipation severely test Charley’s resolve to be steady. The trouble begins shortly after the flower show. One afternoon at the office, Charley receives a most unwelcome visitor—Norah’s employer, Mrs. Davis. Much to the clerk’s embarrassment, Mrs. Davis vociferously presses him to name a wedding date—even as senior clerks and under-ministers swirl around her. In response, Charley can only think of
Katie’s mantra, “you will be steady, Charley, won’t you?” In his despair and embarrassment, Charley even considers suicide. “Steady! Would not the best thing for him be to step down to Waterloo Bridge and throw himself over? He had still money enough left to pay the toll—though not enough to hire a pistol” (294). Scheduled to make a visit to the Cat and Whistle and thus cement his fate and break his vow to “be steady,” Charley receives a reprieve from an unlikely source—Charley is arrested for debt:

Returning to his room, he took his hat and went down stairs. As he was sauntering forth through the archway into the Strand, a man with a decent coat but a very bad hat came up to him.

“I’m afraid I must trouble you to go with me, Mr. Tudor, “ said the man.
“All right,” said Charley; “Outerman, I suppose, isn’t it?”
“All right,” said the bailiff.
And away the two walked together to a sponging-house in Cursitor Street. Charley had been arrested at the suit of Mr. Outerman, the tailor.
He perfectly understood the fact, and made no special objection to following the bailiff. One case was at any rate off his mind; he could not now, be his will to do so ever so good, keep his appointment with Norah Geraghty. (300)

Charley’s period of incarceration, though unpleasant, is rather mild. Norman bails him out within a day, and the pair work to right Charley’s troubled finances. Of course, arrest for debt carries with it social penalties far exceeding the actual deprivation of liberty; the arrest is a source of considerable ignominy. The most severe penalty is Charley’s banishment from the world of Surbiton. Katie’s mother, Mrs. Woodward, aware of Charley’s debt, suspecting his dissipation, and well aware of her daughter’s increasing affection, summons Charley to the cottage. Trollope’s characterization of the event seems to highlight Mrs. Woodward’s awkwardness even more than Charley’s embarrassment. After accepting his banishment, “as Adam did when he was driven out of Paradise” (334), Charley quietly returns the talismanic purse to Katie and departs.
Charley’s banishment from the Woodward home marks his nadir. Returning to London without his talisman and without the companionship of his friends at Surbiton, Charley’s final descent into vulgarity seems imminent. Trollope writes, “when he got back to town, he felt that he had lost his amulet, his charm had gone from him, and he had nothing now left whereby to save himself from ruin and destruction” (337). With the purse absent, Charley breaks his vow to be steady; he reasons that if a life of respectability is to be denied him, he might well keep his promise to marry Norah. Dejectedly, he heads back to the Cat and Whistle and, he assumes, a life of debt and drinking with the dirty-fingernailed Norah. There, fate intervenes and Charley arrives at the public house just in time to help celebrate Norah’s wedding to the boorish Mr. Peppermint (341-43). Aware of his extraordinary good fortune, Charley then reaffirms his vow to avoid the low company of the Cat and Whistle: “he sat there about half an hour, and then went his way, shaking hands with all the ladies and bowing to the gentlemen. On the following day, as soon as he left his office, he called at the ‘Cat and Whistle’ and paid his little bill there, and said his last farewell to Mrs. Davis. He never visited the house again” (342). Denied both his suburban haunt and his urban stomping ground, Charley is free to work on Charley (his internal navigation) and his character begins to improve.

As Katie’s physical condition worsens, she asks to see Charley again. At that interview, she returns the purse to him: “‘There, Charley, you must never part with it again as long as there are two threads of it together; but I know you never will; and Charley, you must never talk of it to anybody but to your wife’” (451). Katie is not the only woman Charley visits during this redemptive phase. As Alaric’s fortunes decline and he begins his prison term, Charley steadfastly stands by Alaric’s wife, Gertrude, thus highlighting the importance of caring for others as part of the maturation process. Charley’s efforts at being “steady” begin to pay off:
Charley at this time was a much altered man; not that he had become a good clerk at his old office—such a change one may say was impossible; there were no good clerks at the Internal Navigation, and Charley had so long been among navvies the most knavish or navviest, that any such transformation would have met with no credence—but out of his office he had become a much altered man. As Katie had said, it was as though some one had come to him from the dead. He could not go back to his old haunts, he could not return like a dog to his vomit, as long as he had that purse so near his heart, as long as that voice sounded in his ear, while the memory of that kiss lingered in his heart. (478)

Katie’s depiction of Charley’s improvement is important; she says it is “like some one had come to him from the dead.” This supernatural image establishes the impression of the hobbledehoy pattern as a type of re-birth. Charley the rake dies and is reborn as Charles the gentleman. Charley/Charles is not the only one who is reborn. Katie, too, is lucky enough to come back from the dead; her seemingly terminal psychosomatic illness ends happily with her recovery.

Also fortuitous is the deus ex machina ending in which the Department of Internal Navigation is eliminated and its rag-tag clerks are dismissed, retired, or farmed off to other corners of the Empire. Charley receives the most sought-after assignment and is sent to the prestigious and sober-minded Department of Weight and Measures, occupying Norman’s old desk (459, 461). By this point in the book, Charley has not only avoided choices leading to a lower-middle-class existence, but also become reborn as a version of Norman.

During the book’s conclusion two years later, we meet Charley—or Charles—welcomed back to Surbiton and, by virtue of his marriage to Katie, now the patriarch of the cottage. At Surbiton, he receives the reviews of his books, “habitually sent down to him at Hampton, and his custom was to make his wife or her mother read them, while he sat by in lordly ease in his arm-chair, receiving homage when homage came to him, and criticising the critics when they were uncivil” (491). Having grown from a dissipated and debt-ridden third-rate clerk to a successful
author, dutiful husband, and loving father, Charles Tudor has indeed proven Smiles’ adage that there is no telling to what height a dull boy may grow.

Like The Three Clerks, The Small House at Allington was written quickly. Trollope began composition on May 20, 1862, and completed work three months later on September 1, 1862 (Mullen 461). The Small House at Allington is an anomaly in the Trollope oeuvre: it is a romance that ends unhappily. The book tells the story of Lily Dale and her broken engagement with the worldly Adolphus Crosbie. Crosbie, anxious to remain in the fashionable world, impetuously asks the worldly daughter of an Earl to marry him shortly after engaging himself to Lily. Crosbie breaks off his engagement with Lily and, to his great unhappiness, marries the Earl’s daughter. The book’s hobbledehoy, Johnny Eames, described as having “not yet shown to the world what his character might be” (21), nurtures a passion for Lily and presents himself as a substitute suitor for Lily. Contrary to the reader’s expectations and despite her sisterly regard for Eames, Lily finds it impossible to disengage her heart from Crosbie and insists on remaining unmarried.

Though Trollope was satisfied with The Small House at Allington (An Autobiography 178) and the general public was pleased by the novel, the timing of the book was ill-advised. The novelist was flooding the market with his wares; no less than four other full-length works by the author were being hawked by booksellers in the autumn of 1862. It was, perhaps, too much of a good thing. Perhaps in part because of this market saturation, many of the book’s reviews were mixed or only grudgingly positive—a trend that has continued to this day.34 Critical

34 Some delight in this novel; the Saturday Review declared that the book compared favorably with the works of Jane Austen (205), Virginia Woolf declared that (along with Austen’s Pride and Prejudice) The Small House at Allington was one of the world’s two perfect novels (qtd. in Hall, Trollope Critics, xvi), and former British Prime Minister John Major declared it was his favorite book of all time (Mullen 466). Others have shown reservations: renowned Trollope scholar P.D. Edwards complained that it was the “least interesting of the Barchester novels” (44) and Arthur Pollard wrote it off as being “too long and slow” (Anthony Trollope 70).
attention tends to center on the Crosbie/Lily Dale/Lady Amelia love triangle that forms the center of the plot, and little attention has been showered upon the book’s hobbledehoy, Johnny Eames.

Trollope’s introduction to Eames in *The Small House at Allington* has become the archetypal description of the hobbledehoy figure:

> I have said that John Eames had been petted by none but his mother, but I would not have it supposed, on this account, that John Eames had no friends. There is a class of young men who never get petted, though they may not be the less esteemed, or perhaps loved. They do not come forth to the world as Apollos, nor shine at all, keeping what light they may have for inward purposes. Such young men are often awkward, ungainly, and not yet formed in their gait; they struggle with their limbs, and are shy; words do not come to them with ease, when words are required, among any but their accustomed associates. Social meetings are periods of penance to them, and any appearance in public will unnerve them. They go much about alone, and blush when women speak to them. In truth, they are not as yet men, whatever the number may be of their years; and, as they are no longer boys, the world has found for them the ungraceful name of hobbledehoy. (35)

True to the hobbledehoy pattern, Eames is fatherless and flawed. Though he does not handle his personal finances as poorly as does Charley Tudor, Eames makes an even bigger mess out of his love life. What begins as a harmless flirtation between Eames and his landlady’s daughter grows more and more difficult until the hobbledehoy finds himself virtually engaged to the unrefined Amelia Roper. Johnny has even been so foolish to make a written declaration to the young woman. Amelia Roper represents a two-fold danger to Johnny Eames. Continued flirtation would almost certainly eliminate whatever chance Johnny had with Lily. Additionally, Amelia’s decidedly lower-middle-class background (she was formerly employed as a hat shop clerk in Manchester) threatens to pull Johnny down. In fact, the entire atmosphere at the

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35 Trollope’s description of the elder, deceased Mr. Eames is worth noting. Often, readers consider class mobility as being *upward* mobility; the hobbledehoy narratives continually show that for those in the lowest parts of the gentlemanly ranks, there is an “up or out” quality to their sense gentility and their condition is often quite precarious. Trollope writes of the elder Eames: “He had been a man of many misfortunes, having begun the world almost in
boarding house at Burton Crescent is permeated by vulgarity: at the Crescent married women behave inappropriately with young men, tenants return home stinking of gin, and the specter of physical violence threatens everyone.

The downward pull on Johnny Eames is moderated and offset by Eames’s relationship with the local lord of the manor, Earl de Guest. De Guest fulfills the function played by Harry Norman for Charley Tudor in The Three Clerks: he is Eames’s gentleman mentor. Trollope describes De Guest as a man who,

knew what privileges were due to him on behalf of his blood, and was not disposed to abate one jot of them. He was not loud in demanding them. As he went through the world he sent no trumpeters to the right or left, proclaiming that the Earl De Guest was coming. When he spread his board for his friends, which he did but on rare occasions, he entertained them simply with a mild, tedious old-fashioned courtesy. We may say that, if properly treated, the earl never walked over anybody. But he could, if ill-treated, be grandly indignant; and if attacked, could hold his own against all the world. He knew himself to be every inch an earl, pottering about after his oxen with his muddy gaiters and red cheeks, as much as though he were glittering with stars in courtly royal ceremonies among his peers at Westminster – ay, more an earl than any of those who use their nobility for pageant purposes. Woe be to him who should mistake that old coat for a badge of rural degradation! (129)

Stumbling upon a sleeping Eames in a copse of wood, Earl De Guest recalls his friendship with Eames’s father and openly declares his interest in the young man; he says, “if you want any – any advice, or that sort of thing, you may come to me; for I knew your father well” (150). The old Earl is willing to help Eames, and he clearly knows a thing or two about appropriate behavior. Earl De Guest makes an exemplary mentor for Eames, in part because De Guest knows the importance of remaining true to one’s gentlemanly status regardless of the situation one finds oneself in. Trollope pointedly describes the Earl as a man who “never dined, even when alone, without having put himself into a suit of black, with a white cravat, and having affluence, and having ended it in poverty.” The same could have been said of the novelist’s father, Thomas Trollope.
exchanged the old silver hunting-watch which he carried during the day tied round his neck by a bit of old ribbon, for a small gold watch, with a chain and seals, which in the evening always dangled over his waistcoat” (232-33). De Guest is always a gentleman—regardless of whether or not anyone is watching.

De Guest and Johnny cement their unlikely friendship when the latter comes to the Earl’s aid as an unruly bull threatens to gore and trample the peer. (This act of physical courage parallels the courage Charley Tudor demonstrated when he jumped into the Thames to save Katie in *The Three Clerks.*) Their shared adventure and Johnny’s unflinching bravery motivate De Guest to bestow a gentlemanly talisman upon Johnny. “It’s my own watch, that I have been wearing for some time; but I’ve got another – two or three, I believe, somewhere upstairs. You mustn’t refuse me. I can’t bear being refused” (234). De Guest’s gift is significant for several reasons. On a rudimentary level, the watch serves to remind Eames to stay focused, to stay on course, and to stay on schedule. Time is linked with respect throughout *The Small House at Allington*; the watch helps track that respect. Just as Charley Tudor—a young man prone to debt—needs the purse to remind him to beware of financial embarrassments, Johnny Eames—a young man prone to making lifestyle detours like Amelia Roper—needs the watch to remind him to stay the course.

On a deeper level, the watch serves another function. Despite his wealth, title, and power, De Guest lives life on the margins of gentlemanliness. Spending his days stomping through his dung-covered fields in his old hunting coat, De Guest uses the formal gold watch to remind himself (and others) that he is a gentleman and deserves to be treated as a gentleman.36

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36 The Earl’s habit of using the formal gold watch and dressing for dinner even when alone is, perhaps, not altogether as eccentric as it might first appear. In 1869, the *Contemporary Review* said of the gentleman, “he will not even thus forego some decent ceremony; not sit down to dinner, for instance, without some little ordering of his
Therefore, the gold watch becomes the means by which De Guest transforms himself from a rugged breeder of cattle to a distinguished gentleman and a peer of the realm. Like De Guest, Johnny too exists on the borders. His modest income forces him to live life on the margins of gentlemanliness, and his relationship with the denizens of Burton Crescent threatens to move him even farther away from the polite world. Therefore, the watch’s message to Johnny is clear: “present yourself to the world as a gentleman; insist on being treated as a gentleman and the world will treat you that way.” It is an invaluable message to young Eames.

Possessing his new watch but rejected by Lily, Eames returns to London and to the rooming house at Burton Crescent. Though the watch acts to deflect some of Amelia’s movements toward him, Eames finds himself in an embrace with the ex-hat shop clerk (320). Eames risks becoming hopelessly entangled with the vulgar Amelia, but a London visit from Earl De Guest helps to solidify the young man’s resolve. As in The Three Clerks, The Small House at Allington contrasts the pastoral, polite world of the country with the money-loving vulgarity of London. The Earl’s presence in the capital makes the difference all the more apparent: “John Eames acknowledged to himself that it was odd that he should have an earl leaning on his arm as he passed along through the streets” (346).37

At dinner that evening, John Eames receives the advice that will change his life. As the candles in a private dining room at Pawkins’s Hotel burn low and the two men sip their wine, the Earl advises Johnny with, “Above all things, never think that you’re not good enough yourself. A man should never think that. My belief is that in life people will take you very much at your own reckoning” (353). Upon leaving the Earl that evening, John Eames undergoes a slightly

appearance. He would not, I think, either help himself or feed, when alone, otherwise than as he would in company” (Vernon 577).
curious physical ritual: “The earl as he spoke gave his left hand to his guest, and looking somewhat grandly up over the young man’s head, he tapped his own breast thrice with his right hand. As he went through the little scene, John Eames felt that he was every inch an earl” (353). The odd ritual practiced by the older man—almost like an initiation into a fraternal order—serves as John Eames’s investiture into the Victorian cult of the gentleman.

Bolstered by the initiation into the gentlemanly class, Eames is virtually reborn in the dining room of Pawkins’s:

Eames then left the room without another word, and walked out into the cold air of Jermyn Street. The moon was clear and bright, and the pavement in the shining light seemed to be as clean as a lady’s hand. All the world was altered to him since he had entered Pawkins’s Hotel. (354)

The reborn John Eames discovers new powers of fortitude when he returns that evening to his dingy quarters at Burton Crescent. Waylaid by Amelia on the stairs, Eames refuses to become entangled with her. While on previous occasions he willingly trades endearments and demonstrations of physical affections when alone with Amelia, on this night he returns to his room alone, “passing her by on the stairs without another word” (354).

Despite his new found resolve, John Eames’s life continues to careen downward. He happens upon Crosbie while riding in the first-class compartment of a train and cannot resist the temptation to strike Lily’s love in the eye (371). Although the deed further endears him to Earl De Guest, it does little for Eames’s reputation at his office and needs to be kept secret from Lily Dale. He receives a promotion at his office, but his new boss is the boorish and blustering Sir Raffle Buffle. Sir Raffle is a man not above blurring the line between private secretary and personal servant—Sir Raffle sometimes expects his personal secretary to fetch his boots for him.

37 As Eames makes his transition from hobbledehoy to gentleman, he (like Charles Tudor in The Three Clerks) loses the boyish “–y” appendage to his first name.
Sir Raffle represents a new set of challenges for John Eames, and Eames must negotiate some difficult terrain with his new boss. Although the increased income and prestige that come with being a personal secretary are desirable, arguably they are not worth the loss in status and self-respect that come with being a bully’s sycophant. For a time it appears that Eames is faced with the paradoxical choice of holding on to his tentative gentlemanly status and the extra income necessary to live up to that status. Eames sticks to his guns and takes the Earl’s advice about being accepted at his own reckoning: “A man is not asked to bring another man his shoes,’ said Eames to himself, ‘until he shows himself fit for that sort of business.’ Then he made within his own breast a little resolution about Sir Raffle’s shoes” (512). Sir Raffle is disappointed, but he backs down.

Another threat to Eames’s gentlemanly status comes from his continued flirtations with Amelia Roper. Given Amelia’s background and character, to do the “gentlemanly thing” and to honor his commitment to Amelia would lead him inexorably to forsake all claims to gentlemanly status. Paradoxically, the only way he has a chance of retaining gentlemanly status is by behaving like a cad (like Crosbie) and by jilting Amelia. This moment forms the crux of Eames’s hobbledehoy’s choice, and it is, I believe, a considerably more engaging choice than the one faced by Charley Tudor in The Three Clerks. Tudor only had to master his baser instincts. Eames has to master his baser instincts, but he also has to intentionally behave in a manner that will hurt someone who, though perhaps manipulative, is innocent of any real wrongdoing. Critics have long found Eames’s jilting of Amelia problematic; Christopher Hebert wisely sees it as enhancing the texture of the book:

38 In fact, a case might be made for the contention that Amelia Roper is simply doing what Johnny Eames is doing: using available resources to improve social position. Eames uses the fact that his father was a gentleman coupled with the interest of the local Earl; Roper uses her physical attractiveness.
If Crosbie’s desertion of Lily in The Small House at Allington is severely blamable (as it seems even to Crosbie’s worldly pal Fowler Pratt), how can we justify excusing Johnny Eames’s desertion of Amelia Roper as nothing more serious than a trifling misadventure of a basically good-hearted hobbledehoy? [. . .] Trollope sets up difficult conundrums like these, we can only suppose to dramatize that the moral system driving his fiction is reducible to no rigid calculus, but always fluid. (163)

Hebert is correct and Johnny’s misadventure with Amelia is far from “trifling”; its importance to the book is vital. Once again, the hobbledehoy narrative demonstrates that attaining gentlemanly status has a price. This time the price involves hurting others.

It is his desire for gentlemanly status as well as his desire for Lily Dale that motivate John Eames to face his ethical moment and make his hobbledehoy’s choice. He rationalizes that under such a condition he could never make Amelia happy. The only course he can take is to preserve his gentlemanly status and leave the rooming house at Burton Crescent, to Amelia Roper’s disappointment:

Poor John Eames had been so placed that he had been driven to do his flirting in very bad company, and he was now fully aware that it had been so. It wanted but two days to his departure for Guestwick Manor, and as he sat breathing for a while after the manufacture of a large batch of Sir Raffle’s notes, he made up his mind that he would give Mrs. Roper notice before he started, then on his return to London he would be seen no more in Burton Crescent. He would break his bonds altogether asunder, and if there should be any penalty for such breaking, he would pay it in what best manner he might be able. He acknowledged to himself that he had been behaving badly to Amelia, confessing, indeed, more sin in that respect than he in truth committed; but this, at any rate, was clear to him, that he must put himself on a proper footing in that quarter before he could venture to speak to Lily Dale. (556-57)

Like Charley Tudor, once John Eames negotiates the hobbledehoy’s choice, he exhibits the concomitant maturity or “manliness” by accepting his actions for what they are. Having told Mrs. Roper of his intention, young Eames must face Amelia, but his newfound sense of “manliness” and his forthright honesty do not desert him in the interview: “I tell you that I know I haven’t behaved well . . . I couldn’t do it. I should ruin myself and you too, and we never
should be happy” (566-67). Eames departs from Burton Crescent for Allington and promptly declares his passion for Lily Dale. In most Victorian three-decker novels she would have realized that she loved him all along and the pair would live happily ever after, but not in this one. Lily summarily rejects Eames’s suit, and he returns to London and checks into a hotel until he can find more suitable accommodation. As Trollope takes his departure from Eames, the reader sees the former hobbledehoy alone, eating a solitary dinner in a railway hotel.

Here we will leave John Eames, and in doing so I must be allowed to declare that only now, at this moment, has he entered on his manhood. Hitherto he has been a hobbledehoy – a calf, as it were who had carried his calfishness later into life than is common with calves; but who did not, perhaps, on that account, give promise of making a worse ox than the rest of them. His life hitherto, as recorded in these pages, had afforded him no brilliant successes, had hardly qualified him for the role of hero which he has been made to play. I feel that I have been in fault in giving such prominence to a hobbledehoy, and that I should have told my story better had I brought Mr Crosbie more conspicuously forward on my canvas. He at any rate has gotten himself a wife – as a hero always should do; whereas I must leave my poor friend Johnny without any matrimonial prospects.

It was thus that he thought of himself as he sat moping over his solitary table in the hotel coffee room. He acknowledged to himself that he had not hitherto been a man; but at the same time he made some resolution which I trust, may assist him in commencing his manhood from this date. (653-54)

Though the book is lengthy, there is something slightly unfinished about the way the reader departs from Eames at the end of The Small House at Allington. Johnny has, Trollope tells us, just entered into his manhood when we are taken away from him and Trollope’s bittersweet-tinged dénouement seems to leave the door open for more gentleman-hobbledehoy adventures.

Given the unfinished quality of Eames’s hobbledehoy tale in The Small House at Allington, it is not surprising that Trollope included John Eames in The Last Chronicle of Barset. Trollope began composing The Last Chronicle of Barset on January 21, 1866, and completed work on the text on September 15, 1866 (Mullen 274). Originally titled “The Story of a Cheque for £20 and the Mischief That it Did” (Hall, Biography 298), the book was re-titled and
published by Smith and Elder; it was one of the few Trollope efforts to be published in weekly parts (274). Its run began December 1, 1866, and was completed by July 6, 1867; Trollope earned a healthy £3,000 for his efforts and financially, as well as critically, Last Chronicle marked the apex of Trollope’s literary career.

Though critics complained about John Eames’s presence in the work, overall reviews were loud in their praise of the work. Since then, the sound of praise has become even louder. Interestingly, Trollope predicted the novel’s enduring popularity; he once prophesized that his reputation as a writer would rest on his characterization of Reverend Crawley and one or two others (qtd. in Hall, Biography 399).

Eames’s inclusion as an ancillary character allows Trollope to showcase the former hobbledehoy as a fully blossomed specimen of Victorian gentlemanliness. Though at first glance some of Eames’s adventures in The Last Chronicle of Barset appear as if they are repetitions of his Small House exploits, from his first appearance in the later work, it is clear that he is a different sort of man than the one the reader might remember from The Small House at Allington. Trollope’s introduction of Eames as the young man sits in the cozy quarters of his Income Tax Department office in Last Chronicle is tinged with a tone of reminiscence that is almost bittersweet:

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39 Although the book was published in weekly parts, it was completed and typeset before the first number appeared (Super, Chronicler 209). Unlike Charles Dickens, Trollope had no desire to allow public opinion to influence his writing. Also, as N. John Hall observes, since the work was completed before it was typeset, the notion—promulgated by Trollope himself—that Trollope eliminated Mrs. Proudie because he overheard two clergymen excoriating her in his club must be untrue (Biography 298).

40 The term “masterpiece” has been applied to the book repeatedly by several different critics scattered throughout the novel’s critical history: Thomas Escott referred to it that way in 1913 (110), as did R.C. Terry in 1977 (Artist 65) and Andrew Wright in 1983 (70). The renowned Trollope scholar Ruth apRoberts called the book’s protagonist Josiah Crawley the author’s “most brilliant achievement in a single character” (Moral Trollope 103) and, twenty years later, N. John Hall concurred, pointing out that Josiah Crawley remains Trollope’s “most admired single creation” (Biography 301).
it was remembered by many a man how raw a lad he had been when he first came there, not so very many years ago; and how they had laughed at him and played him tricks; and how he had customarily been known to be without shilling for the last week before pay-day, during which period he would borrow sixpence here and a shilling there with energy, from men who now felt themselves to be honoured when he smiled upon them. (141)

At the office, Eames has become legendary for his skill in fashioning written correspondences in difficult or delicate situations. A superior boasts of Eames’s epistolary skill by saying, “it isn’t cleverness, so much as tact” (148). Notably, Eames’s career has been furthered by his ability to merge a gentlemanly attribute, tact, with the needs of a business office, communication and correspondence. Eames has taken the values and skills taught to him by people like Earl De Guest and found a function for them in the modern nineteenth-century mercantile world.

Even as Trollope pointedly refers to the ex-hobbledehoy as Mr. John Eames, the novelist carefully illustrates how increased social responsibilities are attendant with the heightened prestige gentlemanly status brings. Time and time again through The Last Chronicle, we see John Eames using his newfound wealth and status to help others. Eames has become a surrogate brother to a woman in difficult circumstances. Throughout the novel, the former hobbledehoy is seen running errands and attending to business affairs for Lady Julia De Guest—the unmarried and elderly sister of Eames’s mentor (Last Chronicle 145, et al.). When the lawyer defending Reverend Crawley, Mr. Toogood, needs someone to travel to the continent to track down Dean and Mrs. Arabin, Eames is quick to volunteer and even insists on paying his own expenses (401). Though accommodating to Lady Julia and indispensable to Reverend Crawley’s defense, Eames can be firm, too; when pressured for (yet another) loan from a friend from his hobbledehoy days,

\footnote{Perhaps it is noteworthy that, by the end of their respective tales, John Eames and Charley Tudor both earn their livings through their ability to write—Eames handles office correspondence, and Tudor pens romance novels.}
Cradell, Eames replies, “I won’t be Johnnyed out of another shilling. It comes too often, and there’s no reason why I should do it. And what’s more, I can’t afford it. I’ve people of my own to help” (147).

In the *Small House at Allington*, John Eames becomes entangled in a messy romance and attempts to navigate the tricky world of office politics. In the latter work, Eames still has a taste for low company, but it has matured into a taste for low company of a distinctly higher sort. In the three years elapsing since the conclusion of *The Small House at Allington*, Eames has traded his association with the minor clerks, petty shopkeepers, and theatrical scene painters of Burton Crescent for formal dinners with the society painters, stock-jobbers, and marriage market mavens of Kensington and Bayswater. Eames’s romantic dalliance with Amelia Roper in *The Small House at Allington* is presented almost as if he is endangering his very life by involving himself with the former hat shop clerk. His dalliance in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* with the overly dramatic Madalina Desmolines is presented almost in the spirit of a music hall farce. Desmolines’ taste for mystery and gothic romance is the perfect diversion for Eames, who has just been rejected by Lily Dale for the final time. Speaking of Desmolines to a colleague, Eames says, “I’ve got hold of a young woman – or rather, a young woman has got hold of me, who insists on having a mystery with me. In the mystery itself there is not the slightest interest. But the mysteriousness of it is charming” (385). Eames has played the game of love with Lily Dale and lost; but, having done so, he sees nothing intrinsically noble in remaining home alone every night.

Eames’s office adventures in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* illustrate his newfound power and respect and demonstrate the quality of manliness. When departing for Italy in search of the Arabins, Eames requests leave from his superior, Sir Raffle Buffle. Buffle summarily rejects
Eames’s request and intimates that Eames will be discharged if he insists on departing. Sir Raffle seems certain that he has trumped the younger man and that Eames will relent and cancel his trip. Eames’s response shocks his supervisor:

he turned round as though he were going to leave the room; but suddenly he turned back again. ‘I don’t like to leave you, Sir Raffle, without saying good bye. I do not suppose we shall meet again. Of course you must do your duty, and I do not wish you to think that I have any personal ill-will against you.’ So saying, he put out his hand to Sir Raffle as though to take a final farewell. Sir Raffle looked at him in amazement. He was dressed, as has been said, in black, and did not look like the John Eames of every day to whom Sir Raffle was accustomed. (488)

Sir Raffle relents and allows Eames his sought after leave of absence. Eames’s victory is based, at least in part, or his mastery of the tools of gentlemanliness; Trollope demonstrates how Eames’s very politeness disarms the knight and pointedly refers to Eames’s sober black suit as helping Eames defeat the older man. In some ways, Eames has become reborn as a business world version of Earl De Guest: Eames cares for the Earl’s sister and like De Guest, though he is not flashy about asserting his rights, can do so when pushed. Even though he surfaces in The Last Chronicle of Barset as a secondary character, Eames’s reappearance allows Trollope the opportunity to complete the hobbledehoy’s pattern Trollope began in The Small House at Allington and show Eames functioning in his role as Victorian gentleman.

There are some small but significant differences in the way the hobbledehoy pattern functions vis-à-vis Charley Tudor in The Three Clerks and the way it functions vis-à-vis Johnny Eames in The Small House at Allington and The Last Chronicle of Barset. For example, Charley Tudor receives his gentlemanly talisman from his love interest, Katie Woodward; Johnny Eames receives his talisman from his mentor, Lord De Guest. However, despite these differences, the core pattern that is established with these two characters forms an ur-text that is repeated (with slight variations) throughout the Trollope oeuvre.
Trollope’s hobbledehoy ur-texts, *The Three Clerks*, *The Small House at Allington*, and *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, share a cautious tentativeness in bestowing gentlemanly status upon those who, in earlier eras, would have been regarded as denizens of the middle class. The novels inch toward a liberalizing definition of gentlemanliness, but, as they do so, they keep one foot conservatively planted in England’s agrarian past.\(^{42}\) Therefore, the countryside becomes particularly important in the novels and serves as a sort of “safe haven” for the gentleman-hobbledehoy figures. For example, at the end of *The Three Clerks* Charley transports himself from his seedy life in London to the cottage at Hampton Court after he has transformed himself from a bumbling navvy into a (somewhat) polished English gentleman of letters. The only time Charley sees Katie in London during their courtship is at the Chiswick flower show—which, after all, is an agricultural fair. Similarly, in *The Small House at Allington* John Eames meets up with Earl De Guest as the younger man dozes in the Earl’s pasture—for Eames is socially asleep as well, and it is De Guest (who, through the course of the novel, is always associated with the land—cattle, hayricks, dung) whose mentoring manages to break John Eames out of his social slumber.

A popular conduct manual of the 1850s cautioned its readers that one should “never, in an evening, speak to a man about his profession” (*Etiquette for Gentlemen* 43)—as if the world of work was somehow an anathema to the polite world. Such a barrier seems to exist in Trollope’s early hobbledehoy narratives and, concomitant with the privileging of the rural world, there is in the hobbledehoy ur-texts a deep suspicion of city-based labor. Tudor and Eames regain their gentlemanliness despite, not through, their occupations. Charley Tudor is pulled

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\(^{42}\) This association of gentlemanliness with the rural districts can be seen in the periodical pieces of the Victorian era as well. For example, in 1865 the *Dublin University Magazine* informed its readers that the reputation of gentleman in populated areas was so poor that “many parents would rather send their sons to the cart [i.e., have them work as field laborers] than to college (Doran 4).
down to the base level of his fellow navvies and John Eames’s gentlemanliness is constantly threatened by his boorish, overly-familiar supervisor, Sir Raffle Buffle. Even Charley’s transformation exists only in his off-duty hours; Trollope pointedly remarks that “outside the office, he was a changed man” (*Three Clerks* 478).

Likewise, both Tudor and Eames must make significant sacrifices to attain their gentlemanliness: Charley rules Surbiton by the end of *The Three Clerks*, but he has also been domesticated by the cottage. His reign at Surbiton is a kind of house arrest, and he has forsaken the rollicking good times of the Cat and Whistle for the dignified dullness of a comfortable chair and the warm fire of an English cottage. Eames’s sacrifice seems even more consequential; since he is unable to win the love of the pastoral English beauty he seeks, he defaults to a life of ascetic chastity. Eames wins his gentlemanliness by taming his libido—but in doing so, he is condemned to a solitary and lonely existence. It is significant that Eames first wins the Earl’s confidence, and sets into motion his ascension into the gentlemanly class, by taming a sexually charged animal—the bull in the Earl’s pasture.

All in all the hobbledehoy-gentlemen figures in these ur-texts live in a narrow, constrained, and xenophobic world where the gentleman hunkers down in a defensive position. Perhaps this defensive position is appropriate to a denizen of an empire that fears and distrusts those on its margins; it is perhaps therefore no accident that the dangers to Charley Tudor’s gentlemanliness come from debt (personified by the Jewish bill discounter M’Ruen) and drink (personified by the Irish barmaid, Geraghty). Such defensive xenophobia softens a bit in Trollope’s next hobbledehoy novels, the two Phineas novels, which will be the focus of the following chapter.

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43 The prolific writer and journalist A.K.H. Boyd praised the “Dignity of Dullness” in a piece by that name in 1860 in *Fraser’s Magazine*. 

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Chapter Four: ‘It’s Gude to be Honest and True’: *Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux*, and the Triumph of the English Gentleman

In 1888, Robert Louis Stevenson observed that a gentleman’s life during the Regency had the feeling of a “rehearsed piece” in which life was reduced and simplified to ceremony (640). If Stevenson was correct and the Regency gentleman lived in a precisely choreographed world, then Trollope’s Phineas Finn (1869’s *Phineas Finn* and 1874’s *Phineas Redux*) lives in an improvisational world. Outwardly commonplace, *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* tell the story of the political and personal tribulations of a handsome, charismatic, but impoverished Irish Member of Parliament. Set at a time before MPs received financial compensation and in a world where political favors are doled out by party leaders who expect unflinching loyalty in return, the novels position Phineas’s conscience against his ambition. The novels become, in the words of one critic, explorations of the “tension between scruples and survival” (Wall 131).

In some ways, the Phineas sequence makes an unlikely candidate for a study of Trollope’s hobbledehoy pattern. Finn is devoid of the hobbledehoy’s usual awkwardness; his social skills are extraordinarily smooth and he shines brightly in the company of women. In fact, his popularity among women is so strong that at one point he is referred to as the “ladies pet” (*Redux* 1, 332). Furthermore, despite Shirley Robin Letwin’s curious suggestion to the contrary (152), Finn’s status as a gentleman is usually secure. As a graduate of Dublin’s Trinity College and a Member of Parliament, he is entitled to gentlemanly status. As stated in the first chapter of this work, William Harrison’s 1580 *Description of England* bestowed gentlemanly status on those who give “good counsel given at home whereby his commonwealth is benefitted” as well as on him who “abideth in the university, giving his mind to his book” (qtd. in Mason 27). Finn qualifies as a gentleman on both counts. This status is also acknowledged by his contemporaries
within the fictional world; his friend Violet Effingham says, “‘his manners are perfect;— not Chesterfieldian, and yet never offensive. He never browbeats any one, and never toadies to any one. He knows how to live easily with men of all ranks’” (Finn 283). His character is equally unimpeachable; the Duchess of Omnium vouches for him by saying, “there is nothing cowardly about him” (Redux 2, 74).

A beloved, well-educated hobbleshoy who is also an MP and confident with women is a bit of an oxymoron, and, not surprisingly, readers have struggled with exactly what to make of Trollope’s Phineas tales. To some, the saga has no equivalent; Robert Polhemus said that “there is nothing much like Phineas Finn in all of English fiction” (Changing World 149). Others tentatively link the Phineas novel sequence to the hobbleshoy’s generic cousin, the bildungsroman (Felber 122; apRoberts, “Casuistry” 25; Turner 175), a “loose sort of bildungsroman” (apRoberts, “Casuistry” 25), and a “male bildungsroman” (Turner 175). Others, such as Bradford Booth, Richard Mullen, and Juliet McMaster, are sensibly apprehensive of applying the bildungsroman label to Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux. Their apprehension is well founded, for the Phineas novels are not about the formation of character, as a proper bildungsroman should be.44 Rather the Phineas tales are about the placement of that character within the framework of society. Despite their protagonist’s gentlemanly status, Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux are hobbleshoy stories.45 This chapter explains how the basic hobbleshoy pattern is repeated and modified in the Phineas sequence and further demonstrates how Trollope

44 For a precise definition of bildungsroman, see chapter one of this work or M.H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms.

45 When Phineas is being pressured by the bill-discounter, Clarkson, the moneylender is initially held at bay by the machinations of Laurence Fitzgibbon’s sister, Aspasia. In her short conversation with Finn, she pointedly refers to Finn’s financial dealings with her brother with the archaic word hobble; she asks, “You ain’t in any hobble with him, then?” (236). The word hobble once meant “an awkward situation” but that use of the term was falling into disuse even as Phineas Finn was being written. One wonders if Trollope, who never pointedly refers to Phineas Finn as a hobbleshoy in the story, is serving up a small literary hint or clue with the use of this archaic term.
uses the hobbledehoy pattern in the Phineas novels to break the hobbledehoy-gentleman figure free of his rural, agrarian shackles and showcase the charms (and perils) of a hobbledehoy-gentleman within a larger, urban, and cosmopolitan context. In Phineas Finn, Trollope’s hobbledehoy figure comes of age and manages to find his gentlemanliness in concert with, not despite of, his work.

Trollope’s rise in popularity was hardly meteoric; his labors went largely unrewarded for over a decade. However, once his popularity began to grow, so did his remuneration, and by the time he began work on Phineas Finn, he commanded a copyright fee thirteen times the amount he received for The Three Clerks. Trollope’s fee rate was then at its apex (Sadleir 289; Mullen 389). In fact, Trollope had several reasons to feel fortunate as he labored on the text of Phineas Finn. With the financial backing of publisher and printer James Virtue, Trollope launched a monthly shilling magazine in October of 1867 (Terr 475). The magazine, named Saint Pauls,46 would pay Trollope £1,000 per year for his duties as editor. Trollope would also be compensated for any writing he would do for the magazine. Virtue and Trollope agreed that Phineas Finn, the author’s first full-length work since The Last Chronicle of Barset, would anchor the inaugural issue (Halperin 70).47 Given the dramatic upturn in his financial prospects, it is not surprising that shortly after the first issue of Saint Pauls emerged, Trollope resigned his position at the General Post Office and forfeited his Civil Service pension (Hall, Biography 311; Wall 125). The attractions in writing Phineas Finn went beyond the pecuniary, for Trollope had always been interested in politics (Autobiography 317).

46 With characteristic modesty, Trollope rejected the suggestion to call the magazine Anthony Trollope’s Magazine (Terry 320).
47 An extant letter from Trollope to James Virtue securing the transaction promises a novel “of not less than 480 pages—(such pages as those of the Cornhill Magazine)” for which Trollope expected to be paid “for the copyright £3,200 in monthly installments of £160 per month—on acct from 15 October next” (Letters, “To Virtue and Co.” 24 January 1867).
Having managed to procure the services of John Everett Millais as illustrator (Hall, *Biography* 309; *Illustrators* 75), Trollope began work on the text on November 17, 1866, and completed the book on May 15, 1867 (McMaster 219). Unlike Dickens and Thackeray, Trollope’s manuscript was finished before the first number appeared before the reading public (Sutherland, “Appendix B” 724). *Finn* appeared in the inaugural issue of *Saint Pauls* in October 1867 and continued to run until May 1869 (Mullen 389). Trollope prefaced the first number by declaring his intention to “describe how love and ambition between them may cause the heart of a man to vacillate and make his conduct unsteady” (qtd. in McMaster 38). As Trollope and Virtue wanted *Saint Pauls* to bridge the gap between the high-minded political journals and the humbler, middle-class magazines, *Phineas Finn* shared space with a sensational potboiler, *All for Greed*, by Madame Blaze de Bury (Hall, *Biography* 310).

The novel’s appearance was exceptionally well timed. Elections during the novel’s run allowed for many of the novel’s fictionalized events to be enacted in and around Britain’s polling places. As *Phineas Finn* ran in *Saint Pauls*, *The Illustrated London News* published a detailed article bemoaning the ill-mannered behavior found at the hustings at election time (“Nominations” 509); such behavior is skewered unmercifully throughout both books. Peter Bayne declared in *Saint Pauls* that time was desperately out of joint in England and the old codes of behavior were being supplanted by an ethic that swore allegiance to profit and only profit (715). Yet despite the novel’s timely attractions, neither it nor *Saint Pauls* ever became particularly popular. David Skilton observes that *Saint Pauls’* sluggish sales stem from the

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48 The notion held by some Trollope scholars (notably Bradford Booth) that similarities between Trollope’s biography of Palmerston and *Phineas Finn* stem from the fact that Trollope worked upon the texts simultaneously has been discredited. See John Halperin’s Introduction to the 1981 Arno Press edition of the Palmerston biography.
uneven quality of work placed around *Phineas Finn* and notes that the book was the only contribution to *Saint Pauls* “good enough to compete with that journal’s mighty rivals” (24). Virtue attempted to offset disappointing sales by publishing a book-form version of *Phineas Finn* in March 1869 (Mullen 389).

The easiest way to describe the critical reaction to *Phineas Finn* would be to call it “mixed,” but that designation does not do justice to the degree to which the work solicited complicated and inconsistent reactions. Positive reviews of *Finn* contain an almost peevish quality, while its negative notices trumpet positive aspects of the book. Typical was the unsigned *Spectator* critique, probably written by R.H. Hutton,\(^50\) which praises the parts while damning the whole: “*Phineas Finn* contains some of Mr. Trollope’s best work, but it is not, as a whole, one of his very best tales” (356). For Hutton, *Phineas Finn* evades mediocrity by its portrayal of the melancholy Robert Kennedy and the untamed Lord Chiltern (357). Unfortunately, Hutton did not review 1874’s *Phineas Redux*; he would have seen his desire for a more reflective Phineas answered.

The composition and publication history of *Phineas Redux* are speckled with false starts and changed plans. Although some argue that Trollope never intended to bring Finn back to literary life (Pollard, *Trollope* 93), the inconclusive ending of *Phineas Finn* coupled with the fact that Trollope began work on the text months after *Finn* completed its run indicate that Trollope planned to resuscitate Finn from the beginning. He intended to place *Phineas Redux* in *Saint Pauls*, but the magazine’s declining revenues meant that Trollope’s fiction was beyond its means.

\(^{49}\) Bayne’s complaint turned out to be prophetic. The gradual usurpation of the honorable gentleman by the all-powerful attraction of profits forms a key element of Trollope’s works later in the century—see Chapter Six of this work.

\(^{50}\) Hutton’s status among Trollope’s Victorian-era reviewers is unparalleled because he unraveled the mystery surrounding Nina Balatka’s authorship. In 1866, Trollope, afraid that novels bearing his name were flooding the
(Hall, Biography 393). When Trollope gave up the editorship in July 1870, the manuscript was set aside (Terry 475, 427); it sat untouched for almost four years (Wall 150-51).

By the time Redux began its fifteen-month run in The Graphic on July 19, 1873, Trollope’s popularity with readers had passed its apex and initial reviews of the book were not particularly generous. Part of the reason for the unenthusiastic reviews might be traced to Trollope’s prodigious output. Arguably, he had flooded the marketplace and readers were perhaps growing tired of his work. A sense of weariness permeates many reviews; the Athenaeum’s critic moaned, “it is not easy to say anything new of Mr. Anthony Trollope. He has been so long before the world, his success in his degree is so thoroughly well known, that when we have said ‘Phineas Redux’ is a good specimen of his manner, all novel-readers will know what they have to expect” (382). Subsequent critics tend to conflate the books and look at them as if they were one story—as Trollope suggested they should be treated.

Although playing a game of critical “Who’s Who?” is responsible for the lion’s share of the Phineas criticism,51 other aspects of the saga occasionally receive attention. Though the novels’ reputation suffered through the mid-twentieth century, late-twentieth and early twenty-first century scholars have been somewhat kinder to the two works. What has long gone unexamined, however, is the books’ hobbledehoy pattern. Of particular interest is the way the marketplace, attempted to set up a second career by publishing novels anonymously. Hutton correctly identified Trollope as the author (Terry 266).

51 Throughout the years, a tremendous amount of critical ink has been spilled trying to develop exact one-to-one pairings for virtually everyone in the novel. Despite their efforts, critics fail to agree on Phineas’ corporeal prototypes. For example, the hero has been identified variously as Colonel King-Harmann, Lord Carlingford, Joe Parkinson, nobody at all, and James Pope Hennessy’s grandfather. (Escott 264; Halperin, Politics 82; Hall, Biography 337; Cockshut 242; Hennessy 292). Phineas’ mentor, Mr. Monk, has been recognized as purely fictitious, Trollope, William Everett Gladstone, or Edmund Burke (Escott 265; Polhemus 165; Escott 264; Halperin Politics, 82). By the late 1960s, deciding how much clef was in the Phineas roman was becoming a self-perpetuating obsession, but J.R. Dinwiddy greatly simplified the matter when she suggested that real-life counterparts could be determined, but only for the saga’s peripheral characters. By the mid-1970s, Phineas criticism was ready to move on, and P.D. Edwards noted that real-life politicians provided Trollope with nothing more than a “point of departure” (140).
Phineas saga seizes the pattern from *The Three Clerks* and *The Small House at Allington* and changes it—often fragmenting and scattering key pattern elements—the dysfunctional romances, debt, mentor figures, tests of courage, a talisman, ethical moments, and a rebirth to a new status.

In the two hobbledehoy ur-texts, *The Small House at Allington* and *The Three Clerks*, the hero is torn between a pure, pastoral love interest who resides in the countryside (e.g., Katie Woodward in *The Three Clerks* or Lily Dale in *The Small House at Allington*) and the affections of more worldly women who live in the city (e.g., Norah Geraghty in *The Three Clerks* or Amelia Roeper in *The Small House at Allington*). That pattern repeats in *Phineas Finn*; Phineas is attached to a chaste young woman from his hometown (Mary Flood Jones), but his attachment to her does not preclude romantic interest in others. Unlike the early hobbledehoy stories, *Phineas Finn*’s hero experiences a series of love interests.

In addition, there is a fragmentary quality to Finn’s romantic entanglements, and the object of his affections seems to switch every hundred pages or so. Throughout the novel, Phineas becomes infatuated with Jones, Lady Laura Kennedy (née Standish), Violet Effingham, and Madame Max Goesler. As one of the novel’s first reviews states, Phineas is “always in love with some lady or other, though the reader is always a little in doubt as to which” (Hutton 356). The unabashed way women are attracted to him makes Finn’s character function not unlike the way the sexual deviant does in Jonathan Dollimore’s idea of the perverse dynamic.

As outlined in his 1991’s *Sexual Dissidence*, Dollimore’s perverse dynamic sees the deviant as being not removed from society, but integral to it. As Dollimore puts it, “even as the sexual deviant is banished to the margins of society, he or she remains integral to it, not in spite of but because of that marginality” (222). Dollimore’s sexual deviant is a person with an alternative sexuality, but his analysis transfers well to those who, like Phineas, possess a surplus
of sexual energy. Phineas is banished in the course of both books—in *Phineas Finn* he is sent packing from London back to Ireland and in *Phineas Redux* he is pointedly kept out of the Liberal cabinet.

Yet, sexual energy triumphs in the Phineas novels in a way it does not triumph in the earlier hobbledehoy stories. To a large degree, sexual energy is tamed in *The Three Clerks* and *The Small House at Allington*: Charley Tudor’s sexual energy has been domesticated at the end of *The Three Clerks*, and John Eames attains his gentlemanly status at the cost of being forced to lead a monkish, ascetic (and, one might reasonably assume, asexual) existence at the conclusion of *The Small House at Allington*. In the Phineas novels, the eponymous hero manages to convert his sexuality into a currency that allows him to attract the wealthy widow Madame Max and cement his political independence.

These romantic false starts also propel the novels’ plots, and as McMaster observes, Finn’s romantic infatuations mirror his career steps. The first London woman Finn is involved with is Lady Laura Standish. Phineas is attracted to her in part because she is a member of a powerful political family, but his plans are stymied when she accepts another proposal mere hours before Phineas declares his love (*Finn* 173). Despite her romantic feelings for Phineas, Lady Laura agrees to wed Robert Kennedy, arguing that she will be more useful to Phineas as the wife of a influential Whig politician52 (175).

Following Lady Laura’s rejection, Phineas becomes enamoured with the vivacious Violet Effingham. Although intended for marriage to Lord Chiltern by her friends and family, Violet yearns for flexibility in life choices that only men may access; she states, “when I was a child they used to be always telling me to mind myself. It seems to me that a child and a man need not
mind themselves” *(Finn* 134). Phineas’s attraction to Violet—motivated in no small part by her sizable fortune—has dire consequences; when Chiltern gets wind of it, he challenges Phineas to a duel (379). Phineas thoroughly bungles the attempted courtship with Violet Effingham: he runs afoul of Chiltern and inexplicably and callously turns to Lady Laura for aid in wooing Violet Effingham (388-89). These clumsy efforts go unrewarded and Violet accepts Chiltern’s proposal. As Juliet McMaster sharply observes, Effingham rejects Finn in part because he is too much of a friend to everyone and not discerning enough in his personal acquaintances (54).

After losing Violet Effingham, Finn becomes smitten with the independent and outspoken Madame Max Goesler, the wealthy widow of a Jewish businessman. Madame Max is the wild-card in the deck of Finn’s paramours. Born outside England, she, like Finn, is an outsider. As a wealthy widow, she is not subject to the same constraints that bind women like Lady Laura and Violet Effingham. As Elizabeth Epperly declares, Madame Max’s wealth and her status as a widow allow her to do and say what she pleases—a right few men or women possess in the world of *Phineas Finn* (32). Distraught after the Violet affair, Phineas turns to Madame Max for comfort; she provides solace by singing to him. The song Madame Max sings to console the heartbroken Phineas elucidates the theme of honesty that runs through the Phineas saga. Trollope writes:

> Then she sang the old well-worn verse of the Scotch song with wonderful spirit, and with a clearness of voice and knowledge of music for which he had hitherto never given her credit,
> A prince can mak’ a belted knight,  
> A marquis, duke and a’ that;  
> But an honest man’s aboon his might  
> Guid faith he mauna fa’ that.⁵³ (519)

⁵² Lady Laura’s decision to sell herself on the marriage market in *Phineas Finn* has dire consequences. Her passionless marriage exacerbates Robert Kennedy’s slide into madness and helps turn her into a maudlin, self-pitying, neurotic shell of a person by the era of *Phineas Redux.*

⁵³ Madame Max’s Scotch song not only reiterates the theme of honesty that runs through the books, it also is reminiscent of the story of James I and his nanny repeated in Chapter One of this work; James was asked by an aged
The potential Phineas-Madame Max romance seems all the more likely since Madame Max seems to be undergoing her own version of growth and development (as Phineas learns to navigate the tricky waters of London politics, Madame Max learns to navigate the tricky waters of London’s social scene). However, for the romance to blossom, Phineas would have to renounce the love of Mary Flood Jones, so Phineas returns to Ireland and weds Jones. Before the beginning of *Phineas Redux*, however, Mary conveniently dies in childbirth, leaving Phineas free to marry Madame Max.

The Phineas romances differ from romances in earlier Trollopian hobbledehoy novels. As in the earlier texts, the pastoral love of the country is contrasted against a worldlier London-based love affair. However, in the Phineas saga, city romances shed their tinge of tawdriness. Phineas’s soul-mate is not found among the green fields of Herefordshire, but rather in the personage of the worldly and sophisticated Madame Max. The Finn-Goesler marriage—a happy and fulfilling one—also serves to give Phineas what he has been searching for throughout the saga, the financial means to preserve his political independence.\(^{54}\) One critic even calls Phineas and Madame Max the precursor to the modern, two-career couple (Nardin, *He Knew* 201).

Debt, like romance, is a hallmark of Trollope’s hobbledehoy pattern. Early in the first novel, Phineas signs a note of hand for his colleague Laurence Fitzgibbon (149). Although Fitzgibbon assures him the note will be quickly settled, Phineas faces a series of wearisome visits from a bill discounter, Mr. Clarkson. The debt subplot in *Phineas Finn* replicates elements of the pattern Trollope laid out in *The Three Clerks* and *The Small House at Allington*. Trollope

\(^{54}\) The Phineas novels take place at a time when MPs did not receive a salary for their labors.

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recycles the bill-discounter’s character, Clarkson, and his repeated mantra of “do be punctual” (Finn 224, et al.) from Jabesh M’Ruen in *The Three Clerks*. From *The Small House at Allington*, Trollope harvests the means of extradition from debt: like Johnny Eames, Phineas Finn receives a small legacy from an unexpected source (*Small House* 566; *Finn* 355).

In the Phineas saga, several characters initially vie for the mentor position. In the ur-texts, the hobbledehoy’s relationship with his mentor is simple and unswerving: a symbolically (or de facto) fatherless hobbledehoy meets a single man who is older, wiser, and more aristocratic than himself. Although Phineas is symbolically fatherless55 (his father is hundreds of miles away in Ireland), the novels’ version of the hobbledehoy-mentor relationship is more complicated and fragmented than the relationship is in earlier texts. Lady Laura Standish is among the first to volunteer to serve as Phineas’s mentor; early in *Phineas Finn* she wonders, “whether you will be angry if I take upon myself the task of mentor” (113). Later Trollope writes that Phineas “had addressed her as her Telemachus” (162). Yet, for a variety of reasons (Phineas’s unrequited passion for Lady Laura, her own unhappy marriage to Robert Kennedy, and the jealousy induced by Phineas’s infatuation with Violet) the Mentor-Telemachus relationship between Phineas and Lady Laura never fully develops.

The barrister under whom Phineas reads law, Mr. Low, is a logical candidate for mentor. Low advises Phineas against entering Parliament, asserting that a poor man cannot serve without jeopardizing his integrity. In fact, Low goes so far as to contend that it is “unmanly” for Phineas to seek a seat; prophetically, he states, “I see nothing in it that can satisfy any manly heart. Even if you are successful, what are you to become? You will be the creature of some minister; not his colleague. You are to make your way up the ladder by pretending to agree whenever agreement is demanded from you, and by voting whether you agree or do not” (87). Low
becomes estranged from Phineas when Phineas enters the House, but the barrister never forsakes his young colleague and Low promptly reappears by Phineas’s side during the murder trial in *Phineas Redux*.

Lady Laura’s father, Lord Brentford, is an early candidate for mentor; like *The Small House at Allington*’s de Guest, Brentford is an Earl and has the requisite amount of power tempered by earthy gruffness. Phineas beams with pride when Lord Brentford warmly addresses him as “Finn” (165). Brentford helps Phineas’s aspirations by providing an expense-free seat via a pocket borough (*Finn* 312-22). The relationship with Brentford fails to develop because of Phineas’s designs on Violet Effingham and because Phineas “had never quite liked Lord Brentford” (321).

Brentford’s son, the wild and passionate sportsman Lord Chiltern, also contends for the mentor’s role. The friendship between the two men is cemented when Phineas successfully rides Chiltern’s wild horse, the aptly named Bonebreaker. Phineas’s physical courage earns Chiltern’s respect, but their relationship fails to blossom, and later in the novel, the two men face one another in a duel (*Finn* 470).

Although a host of individuals contend for mentor, the position is finally bestowed upon the radical MP, Joshua Monk. Monk, whom Juliet McMaster called “Trollope’s ideal member of Parliament” (41), is described in adoring terms by Trollope:

> Mr. Monk was a thin, tall, gaunt man, who had devoted his whole life to politics, hitherto without any personal reward beyond that which came to him from the reputation of his name, and from the honour of a seat in Parliament. [. . .] Ten years since, when he had risen to fame, but not to repute, among the men who then governed England, nobody dreamed that Joshua Monk would ever be a paid

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55 Although Finn’s father is alive, he is hundreds of miles away in Ireland.  
56 The Bonebreaker episode in *Phineas Finn* is an example of Trollope’s somewhat heavy-handed use of symbolism— not unlike Charley Tudor’s employment at the Department of Internal Navigation in *The Three Clerks*. Phineas’s stormy ride on Bonebreaker serves as a metaphor for his wild ride in the topsy-turvy world of parliamentarian politics. In fact, all through the Phineas saga, horses are used as metaphors for MPs.
servant of the Crown. He had inveighed against one minister after another as though they all deserved impeachment. [. . . ] He had been regarded as a pestilent thorn in the sides of all ministers. (Finn 165)

Like The Small House at Allington’s Earl de Guest, Joshua Monk is a man whose integrity is buttressed by simple and unpretentious habits. Early in the book, the MP, who lives without the services of a butler, is shown decanting his own wine (Finn 195). In the London political world, where the ability to compromise is prized and prevarication is tolerated, Monk stands out. He is scrupulously honest—when Phineas delivers his first speech in the House, a rambling, poorly structured, and nearly inaudible affair, he is vilified by his political opponents but applauded by his political allies. Only Monk, “the scourge of cabinet ministers” (Fox 218), offers honest and clear-headed critique:

‘As far as I am able, I will tell you the truth. Your speech, which was certainly nothing great, was about on a par with other maiden speeches in the House of Commons. You have done yourself neither good nor harm. Nor was it desirable that you should. My advice to you now is, never to avoid speaking on any subject that interests you, but never to speak for above three minutes till you find yourself as much at home on your legs as when you are sitting.’ (Finn 278)

But, as John Halperin points out, Monk’s unadulterated honesty, however admirable, is a dangerous characteristic around a young man like Finn. Finn cannot afford—literally—the sort of honesty that is Monk’s hallmark. Yet it is this honesty that makes Monk such a compelling figure; the younger man follows Monk with a zealous devotion. As Trollope puts it, Finn is “almost disposed to call himself a disciple” of the radical MP (Finn 165). But devotion has its price: when Monk breaks with the party leadership over the rights of Irish tenant farmers, Phineas follows his conscience and follows him. Consequently, Phineas must resign his lucrative government job and is left without the means to support himself. So, in The Three Clerks and The Small House at Allington, the hobbledehoy follows the mentor and is led into a life of wealth and relative ease. In Phineas Finn, Phineas follows the examples set by his
mentor, but they lead him away from wealth and ease. That is not the only manner in which Trollope toys with the hobbledehoy pattern in the Phineas saga.

In the saga’s second novel, 1874’s *Phineas Redux*, Trollope continues to tinker with the mentor’s role. When Phineas is unjustly charged with murder, many of his supports are knocked out from under him—including Mr. Monk, who, in his unswerving commitment to rationality, is never completely convinced of Phineas’s innocence. Even after the trial, Monk’s doubts rankle Phineas; he is clearly referring to Mr. Monk when he says, “As far as I can analyse my own feelings, I entertained anger only against those who, though they knew me well, thought that I was guilty” (*Redux* 2, 308).

Despite this strain on their friendship, Monk counsels Phineas at the younger man’s most crucial moment. After the trial, Phineas is tempted to retreat from public life and renounce Parliament and public service forever; he states, “I am like a man who has had his knees broken, or his arms cut off. Of course I cannot be the same afterwards as I was before” (*Redux* 2, 293). Chiltern, Low, and Lady Laura try to rouse Phineas but “it was Mr. Monk who at last drew from him a promise that he would go down to the House and be sworn in early on a certain Tuesday afternoon” (*Redux* 2, 293-94). In the Phineas novels the mentor figure is fragmented, and initially a number of individuals vie for the position. Additionally, Phineas’s mentor leads him away from wealth and ease and allows the hobbledehoy to face key challenges without his mentor’s support. Nevertheless the mentor figures prominently in placing the hobbledehoy in the appropriate societal role at the conclusion of the story.

In the hobbledehoy pattern, the talisman may come from either the mentor or the hobbledehoy’s love interest. *Phineas Finn* follows the latter pattern when Finn cuts a lock of hair from and accepts a letter from Mary Flood Jones. After Finn decides to break with the party
over Irish tenant rights, Lady Laura attempts to entice Phineas to embark upon a marriage of convenience to a wealthy widow. Phineas relies on the talismanic letter to help him resist the temptation to go back on his word. Lady Laura asks Phineas, “‘Then why should you not establish yourself by a marriage that will make place a matter of indifference to you?’” Phineas put his hand up to his breast-coat pocket, and felt that Mary’s letter, —her precious letter — was there safe” (Finn 655). Having touched the talismanic letter, Phineas is strong enough to resist Lady Laura’s suggestion of marrying for money.

The physical tests of courage are plentiful in Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux. Indeed the saga is so full of rough-and-ready adventures that it sometimes reads as a boys’ fiction adventure romp. In Phineas Finn, the hero wins renown by riding Lord Chiltern’s riotous horses (202) and single-handedly fighting off a pair of garrotters who attack Lady Laura’s husband (308-10). Later, when Chiltern learns of Phineas’s fondness for Violet Effingham, he challenges Finn to a duel. Finn courageously faces Chiltern and accepts a bullet in the shoulder without returning fire (383). In Phineas Redux, Finn is shot at yet again—on this occasion the gunman is Lady Laura’s deranged husband, Robert Kennedy (1, 207).

Phineas is never fazed by these tests; however, the final test—his trial for murder—is considerably more stressful. He is, in the words of one critic, “simply abandoned” during the trial in Phineas Redux (Kincaid 213), and the knowledge that all Britain believes him capable of a heinous act forces Finn to his breaking point. In fact, one of Finn’s most dauntless acts comes in the form of his simple set of instructions to his barrister, Mr. Chaffanbrass. When Chaffanbrass presents Phineas with the hope of being freed on a technicality or through a

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57 Phineas’s deft use of the “life-preserver” (a metal club-like instrument used to fend off attackers) in this episode might well have stemmed from a bit of wish-fulfillment on Trollope’s part. He wrote of the necessity of such devices in the pages of Saint Pauls; see “The Uncontrolled Ruffianism of London as Measured by the Rule of Thumb.”
deadlocked jury, Finn is courageously vehement in his rejection of such duplicitous strategies: “My life will be nothing to me unless it can be made clear to all the world that I am innocent. I would be sooner hung for this, —with the certainty at my heart that all England on the next day would ring with the assurance of my innocence, than be acquitted and afterwards be looked upon as a murderer” (Redux 2, 181). Later Finn insists that his defense be devoid of legal chicanery: “No subterfuges, no escaping by a side wind, no advantage taken of little forms, no objection take to this and that as though delay would avail us anything” (2, 182). Phineas’s courage touches even the well-hardened heart of Mr. Chaffanbrass. After his meeting with Finn, Chaffanbrass remarks, “I never did, —and I never will, —express an opinion of my own as to the guilt or innocence of a client till after the trial is over. But I have sometimes felt as though I would give the blood out of my veins to save a man. I never felt in that way more strongly than I do now” (2, 183).

The courageous Finn, who calmly rides wild animals, scuffles with street thugs, and unflinchingly faces gunfire, is left broken and demoralized by a trial in which he is found innocent. The irony is not lost on the book’s other characters: Low says, “Oh, yes; —he could go over to Flanders and let that lord shoot at him; and he could ride brutes of horses, and not care about breaking his neck. That’s not what I mean. I thought that he could face the world with dignity;—but now it seems that he breaks down” (Redux 2, 251). Juliet McMaster has gone so far as to assert that Phineas suffers what we might call a nervous breakdown after the trial (70).

After Madame Max’s savvy detective work uncovers the real murderer, Phineas is pronounced innocent and released. His subsequent reaction is not one of joy, rather he is angry and even his sense of patriotism is affected by the false accusation; “I was to be hung or saved from hanging according to the chances of such a thing as this! I do not care for my life in a
country where such injustice can be done.” (Redux 2, 220). Courage, so simply defined in novels like *The Small House at Allington*, is defined in much different terms in the Phineas saga. It is not facing gunfire (or a wild charging bull) that demonstrates a man’s courage in the more cosmopolitan and complex world of *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*. In the Phineas novels, the definition of courage expands along with the definition of gentlemanliness, and true courage is found in simply finding the strength to continue soldiering on when the institutions and principles in which one believes have been shown to be spurious.

Each novel in the Phineas sequence has its own ethical moment or hobbledehoy’s choice when the hobbledehoy must choose between a lower course of action and a higher one. In *Phineas Finn* the moment of choice is obvious: Phineas must choose between party loyalty and conscience in the tenant right matter. The downward pull in *Phineas Finn* is not toward lower-middle-class vulgarity; the downward pull in *Phineas Finn* is toward a lax moral relativism where MPs ignore their conscience and their constituents simply because others do so. This paradox, formed when men of conscience try to simultaneously demonstrate party loyalty, is explicated by Finn’s landlord, Bunce; he says, “the worst of it is that a man gets so thick into the mud that he don’t know whether he’s dirty or clean. You’ll have to wote [sic] as you’re told, and of course you’ll think it’s right enough” (*Finn* 425).

This hobbledehoy’s choice is not a facile good/evil selection. If Finn follows his conscience and does the “right thing,” he will have to surrender his Parliament seat (and will subsequently be prevented from doing politically “right things” in the future). Additionally, Finn’s choice is intertwined with his marriage to Mary Flood Jones, and the matter is further complicated when Phineas receives an implicit offer of marriage (and substantial fortune) from Madame Max Goesler. Madame Max’s offer leads Phineas to conclude that faithfulness to Jones
is somehow dependent upon his giving up his Parliament seat. Faced with his hobbledehoy’s choice, Finn opts for Mary, poverty, and conscience; to critics like Bill Overton, Finn’s choice “reaffirms his integrity which he has all but compromised” (4).

Finn’s choice is the same type of blind leap-of-faith toward gentlemanliness that Charley Tudor makes in *The Three Clerks*. Forsaking Madame Max and her money leaves Finn without fortune and without a career—but *with* a fiancée. Like Tudor, Finn is faced with the prospect of living a genteel existence without any of the usual assets (e.g., money, influence) gentlemen have to promote such a lifestyle. As it was to Tudor, fate is kind to Finn. Having faced life without a gentleman’s comforts, Finn is rewarded with a party job as a poor law inspector in Ireland and his inspector’s salary allows him to wed. Although faithfully replicating the ending of *The Three Clerks*, Finn’s ending has never seemed satisfying and has been a frequent target of critics—N. John Hall, for example, felt that it was abrupt and artificial (*Illustrators* 86).

If *Phineas Redux* has no other raison-d’être, its ending alone would justify the work’s existence. *Phineas Redux*’s moment of choice and its ending are faithful to the basic hobbledehoy pattern while simultaneously stretching it in fresh new directions. However, pinpointing the exact location of the hobbledehoy’s choice in *Phineas Redux* can be confusing, in part because the trial dominates so much of the book. Readers seem pre-conditioned to look at trials as large, extended metaphors, and therefore, it becomes easy to assume that the crucial moment of choice in *Phineas Redux* can be found in its courtroom scenes. The trial is undeniably important, but it is not the text’s hobbledehoy’s choice; during the trial Phineas has little to choose—he impassively faces the court while his fate is being decided. The ethical moment occurs after Phineas has been acquitted and released. Still feeling the shame from his accusation, Phineas resigns his seat in Parliament, reasoning that “There may be and probably
are men down at Tankerville who still think that I am guilty. There is an offensiveness in murder which degrades a man even by the accusation” (2, 253). Despite his resignation, Phineas finds himself the focus of a new groundswell of positive public opinion in his old borough. Phineas’s response to his imminent re-election indicates the degree to which he has been wounded; he says, “Things seem to be so different now from what they did. I don’t care for the seat. It all seems to be a bore and a trouble. What does it matter who sits in Parliament? The fight goes on just the same. The same false-hoods are acted. The same mock truths are spoken. The same wrong reasons are given” (2, 254). Despite Phineas’s cynicism, he is promptly re-elected and is lauded by his constituents—chiefly because he did not commit murder (2, 282).

The hobbledehoy’s choice presents itself shortly after Finn’s re-election to Commons. Phineas bravely faces the stares of colleagues as he resumes his seat in the Commons (2, 297). His minor celebrity and his new popularity as one falsely accused make him an attractive political asset, and he is shortly summoned by the Prime Minister to discuss a possible Cabinet appointment (2, 328). This moment, then, when Phineas is presented with the opportunity to re-enter Cabinet-level government service forms the hobbledehoy’s choice in Phineas Redux. Finn obeys Gresham’s summons and returns to London for a meeting; he does so, however, as a changed man, and now that the party wants Finn, Finn seems to have little use for the party. Finn’s meeting with the new Prime Minister fails to restore his faith in the Labour party political machine. Prime Minister Gresham demonstrates little empathy with Phineas’s burgeoning sensibilities and even less inclination to listen to the MP’s complicated explanations. When Phineas asks for time to think about the offer, the Prime Minister risks drawing Phineas’s ire by his cavalier dismissal. Gresham tells Finn that a brief telegraph message on the following day will be,
‘Quite sufficient. Yes or No. Nothing more will be wanted. You understand your own reasons, no doubt, fully; but if they were stated at length they would perhaps hardly enlighten me. Good morning.’ Then as Phineas was turning his back, the Prime Minister remembered that it behoved him as Prime Minister to repress his temper. ‘I shall still hope, Mr. Finn, for a favourable answer.’ Had it not been for that last word Phineas would have turned again, and at once rejected the proposition. (2, 238)

Gresham’s well-tempered parting words notwithstanding, Phineas soon completes the hobbledehoy’s choice and rejects the under-secretaryship. Phineas is doing much more than making a simple career decision in rejecting the Prime Minister’s offer: he is choosing unencumbered integrity at the expense of worldly success, personal honor at the expense of political influence, and honesty at the expense of flexibility. In fact, Phineas is choosing Monk’s mode of political service over the political service practiced by the political hacks that fill the pages of Phineas Redux. As Shirley Robin Letwin maintains, a true gentleman has an obligation to see things the way they really are (244-45). Phineas can no longer look at dishonest behavior and think it merely “supporting the party.”

The Phineas novels and Phineas Redux in particular depict a world whose sagging moral standards make it difficult, but not impossible, for the true gentleman to thrive. As Nardin notes, Phineas’s world “is losing its grip on the rules of common morality” (Moral Philosophy 54). The Phineas novel sequence answers the question, “What is a gentleman in a world where gentlemanliness itself is distorted?” By the books’ terms, the answer seems to be “alone.”

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58 The novel’s sentiments might well have struck a cord with Victorian readers—as the novel was running in Saint Pauls, Blackwood’s chided its readers and maintained, “neither wealth nor position is worth the sacrifice of self-respect” (Lucas 545).

59 The hack’s credo is summed up by the Labour party stalwart Barrington Erle, who, when told of a member’s “convictions,” replies, “Convictions! There is nothing on earth that I’m so much afraid of in a young member of Parliament as convictions [. . .] a fellow with convictions is the worst of all.” (Finn 638).

60 The tension between flexible morality and strict moral codes that is explored in Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux is also explored in some of the periodical articles of the 1860s. See, for example, “Manners and Morals; As Affected by Civilization.”
Finn’s hobbledehoy’s choice leaves him outside the society of (ersatz) gentlemen who fill the ministries and the seats on the Treasury bench in Commons. Although the hobbledehoy ur-texts show the gentleman moving toward the fellowship of others, no such movement occurs in the Phineas saga, and, in fact, Phineas’s move toward true gentlemanliness is a move away from the fellowship of others.\(^{61}\) As John Halperin reasons, “Phineas finally puts honesty and loyalty above mere ‘success’ — which indeed is incompatible with honesty and loyalty — and so he cannot succeed where success is all that matters” (*Trollope and Politics* 108). The particular brand of gentlemanliness Phineas arrives at by the end of *Phineas Redux* is a very lonely existence.\(^{62}\) Phineas’s existence as a gentleman in an un-gentlemanly world does not leave him completely solo—he has his mentor, Mr. Monk, of course. Significantly, Monk is the first person Phineas visits after declining the Prime Minister’s offer (2, 339). Assured by Mr. Monk that Mr. Gresham is an honest man, Phineas replies, “‘I care but little for honesty,’ [ . . . ] ‘which is at the disposal of those who are dishonest’” (2, 339). Phineas then rejects the appointment.

Having negotiated the hobbledehoy’s choice and having fixed himself with those who prize honesty over success, Phineas can then claim the love of Madame Max Goesler. Phineas’s declaration to Madame Max is presented almost as if it were an event long expected and eagerly anticipated. Trollope writes,

‘I have come—’
‘I know why you have come.’
‘I doubt that. I have come to tell you that I love you.’
‘Oh Phineas;—at last, at last!’ And in a moment she was in his arms.

(354)

\(^{61}\) For an examination of the importance of the gentleman being accepted by other gentlemen, see Robin Gilmour’s *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*.

\(^{62}\) When contemplating the lonely but noble political life Finn attains, one cannot help but think of the solitary John Eames eating his dinner at a table for one in the dining room of a railway hotel at the end of *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. The gentleman, so it appears from Trollope’s novels, is a lonely animal.
Phineas’s engagement to Madame Max neatly wraps up a number of the book’s loose ends: as Halperin observes, their union brings the books’ two outsiders together (*Trollope and Politics* 105). Robert Polhemus sees their marriage as forming a Trollopian ideal as Finn’s career will be united with his home life—his independence depends on his wife’s money (*Comic Faith* 187).

In terms of the hobbledehoy pattern, Finn’s marriage to Madame Max allows him to be metaphorically reborn in a new status—as a fully independent Member of Parliament, beholden to no one.63

Clearly the Phineas saga contains all the elements of the hobbledehoy pattern he first developed in *The Three Clerks*—the awkward romantic entanglements, the danger of uncontrolled debt, the acts of physical courage, the positive influence of a mentor figure, and the precise moment of choice when the hobbledehoy figure willingly chooses a higher and more noble path. Even though Trollope twists the hobbledehoy pattern in *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*, the novels contain all the usual elements—awkward romances, courageous acts, a mentor figure, and the precise moment of choice when the hobbledehoy willingly chooses a higher and more noble path. Reading the Phineas novels as hobbledehoy stories is enlightening in itself, and the benefits of such a reading do not end with the books themselves. Examining the novel sequence in this manner has ramifications for commonly held viewpoints about the author, his work, and Victorian notions of success.

Trollope scholars note a perceptible shift in his writing just after the time the Phineas novels appear. They note that the relatively cheerful novels of the 1850s and 1860s fade into

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63 It is perhaps interesting to note that the author himself seemed to have no intentions of going into Parliament as an independent man. His speech to the electors of Beverley promises unwavering support to the Liberal party agenda. See Trollope’s “Speech to the Electors at Beverley.”
more pessimistic books by the 1870s and 1880s (Briggs, Victorian 113; Cockshut, Trollope 11; Polhemus, Changing World 186; MacDonald 73). In trying to pinpoint a precise cause for this change in tone, scholars often point to Trollope’s failed attempt to win a Parliament seat for the borough of Beverley in 1868 (Wall 125; Hall, Biography 394; et al.). Though this view seems logical at first, viewing Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux as hobbledehoy narratives—and therefore as part of an extended string that runs through all of Trollope’s work—reveals the fissures in this thinking.

Extant evidence fails to demonstrate that Trollope was emotionally damaged by the loss at Beverley. When writing of the bustle of 1868-1869 and its various demands, Trollope remembers the period as a happy one. In a passage that praises the value of work in a manner worthy of Thomas Carlyle or Samuel Smiles, Trollope lauds his sense of industry during this period.

And how happy I was with it all! I had suffered at Beverley, but I had suffered as a part of the work which I was desirous of doing, and I had gained my experience. I had suffered at Washington with that wretched American Postmaster, and with the mosquitoes, not having been able to escape from that capital till July; but all that had added to the activity of my life. I had often groaned over those manuscripts; but I had read them, considering it—perhaps foolishly—to be part of my duty as editor. And though in the quick production of my novels I had always ringing in my ears that terrible condemnation and scorn pronounced by the great man in Paternoster Row, I was nevertheless proud of having done so much. I had always a pen in my hand. Whether crossing the seas or fighting with American officials, or tramping about the streets of Beverley, I could do a little, and generally more than a little. (Autobiography 322-23)

Furthermore, even if Trollope was crushed by his defeat at Beverley, he did not skewer the election in the Phineas books. Readers agree that if the Beverley election is fictionalized anywhere, it is fictionalized in Trollope’s Ralph The Heir, not in Phineas Redux.

Those believing that Trollope wrote caustic novels because of the loss at Beverley fail to see that Trollope’s core beliefs did not change through his lifetime. In fact, Phineas Redux’s
aspects of social critique are remarkably similar to texts the author wrote at the beginning and end of his career. Much of the social criticism found in *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* had its genesis in a manuscript Trollope wrote in 1855 and 1856 (before the Phineas saga and the Parliamentary bid). The collections of essays, called *The New Zealander*, bore the subtitle “it’s gude to be honest and true” and is a sharp indictment on Victorian prevarication. Much of the social criticism of *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* seems to have been lifted out of the pages of *The New Zealander*. For example, in *The New Zealander’s* examination of the House of Commons, Trollope writes,

> The House of Commons may boast its omnipotence ever so loudly, and prove that its boasts are not vain by ever such manifestations of its power, and yet lack the elements of permanent strength. It will lack those elements as long as pretence and show are among the recognised tactics of Parliament life; as long as purism prevails to the exclusion of honesty, and men allow themselves to profess one code of morals for the public, and a far different code for their private circles. (129-30)

As *The New Zealander* demonstrates, Trollope’s sour political attitude might have been augmented by his unsuccessful bid at Beverley, but it was not formed by Beverley. Trollope’s political orientation had been in place since at least 1855—fifteen years before his Parliamentary bid.

Once set, Trollope’s core political skepticism remained with him. The theme of honesty in politics that he sketched in the pages of *The New Zealander* and explored in detail in the Phineas books continued to interest Trollope to his final moments. One of the last books Trollope completed was his biography of Lord Palmerston. Throughout the book it is evident that Trollope clearly admires many of the same qualities in Palmerston that he created in Phineas Finn. The author says of Palmerston, “against his honesty, his industry and courage we feel that no true word can be said” (214).
Trollope’s literary career, then, is sandwiched between two non-fiction texts stressing the importance of honesty in political life—*The New Zealander* at the beginning of his career and *Lord Palmerston* at the end of his career. Between these two non-fiction texts are two novels—*Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*—that demonstrate that it is indeed “gude to be honest and true” (Trollope, *The New Zealander*, n.p.).

Finally, changes in the hobbledehoy pattern from Trollope’s early works (e.g., *The Three Clerks* and *The Small House at Allington*) to Trollope’s mid-career works (e.g., *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*) can be read as a cultural barometer, and these shifts chronicle societal alterations. In short, Victorian conceptions of what constitutes “success” showed signs of changing between 1859 and 1874. As defined by the early hobbledehoy ur-texts, success is defined in traditional, narrow, and even xenophobic terms. Early Trollopian hobbledehoys immigrate to London, make their fortune, and struggle to avoid cultural and moral traps (e.g., debt and lower-middle-class foreign women). For these early hobbledehoys, success is measured in material terms and in an increased sense of social and family responsibility. Having successfully negotiated the hobbledehoy’s choice, the young men return home to the country flush in the glory of their newly-won status.

Yet, there is something entrenched and excessively guarded about the early hobbledehoy-gentlemen figures. At the end of *The Three Clerks*, it is difficult to determine whether Charley Tudor is master of Surbiton cottage, or a prisoner there, or a bit of both. To be sure, Tudor has attained a sense of gentlemanliness by the end of the book, but he has been banished to the suburbs to hold onto to it. In *The Small House at Allington*, John Eames’s gentlemanliness
becomes intertwined with his vow to never marry and remain true to Lily Dale. A romantic
gesture to be sure, but Eames’s gentlemanliness has therefore been purchased at the price of his
sexuality. His gentlemanliness is entwined with his monastic asceticism.

Phineas moves toward a much more broadly constructed and forgiving definition of
gentlemanliness, and he is able to access an increasingly flexible definition of the nature of
success. The young man goes off to the city and faces his hobbledehoy’s choice, but—having
successfully negotiated the choice—he stays in the metropolis; no retreat to the suburbs or to the
agrarian regions is necessary—or even particularly useful. Foreign-born women do not offer the
young man physical intimacies in exchange for social ruin; they offer him consolation and a
sophisticated, mature love. Significantly, success for the Phineas-era hobbledehoy is defined by
more than just increased leisure and wealth; rather success means a deeper and more critical
knowledge and environment.

Most importantly, the high-Victorian-era, mid-career Trollopian hobbledehoys of
Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux find their sense of gentlemanliness through, not despite, their
work. It is no accident that Finn’s defining moments occur in and around the House of
Commons—his workplace. In the earlier hobbledehoy novels, work was one of the pulls away
from gentlemanliness—Charley Tudor’s gentlemanliness is threatened by the low company he is

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64 In the mid-1860s, when the Phineas novels began to appear, Victorian readers were inundated by a large wave of
success books—the most famous of which were written by Samuel Smiles and were modeled on his immensely
popular Self-Help of 1858. See Asa Briggs’s “Self-Help: A Centenary Introduction” for details. For explication of
the self-interest vs. honesty dynamic that runs through Trollope’s novels, see Phillip Collins’s “Business and
Bosoms.”

65 As Trollope was opening up the nature of the fictional Victorian gentleman in the pages of the Phineas novels,
columnists were discussing opening up the nature of the gentleman on the streets of London; in 1869, J.R. Vernon
couraged readers of Contemporary Review to join him in “disencumbering ourselves of things external merely—
rank, wealth power show” when considering the gentleman. For these things, Vernon maintained were “all the mere
setting of the stone” (562).
brought in contact with in the offices of the Internal Navigation Department. By the 1860s, the gentility’s association with idleness began to fall away—as long as the gentleman chose his profession carefully; as Gilmour observes,

The pressure was [. . .] to choose occupations which would be compatible encouraged: the professions, the Indian Civil Service, the home and colonial services. In the short run, this development served Victorian society well, for it broke the traditional connection between gentility and idleness, and provided a steady stream of able and principled young men to run the Empire. (98)

Such a dynamic is obviously at play in the Phineas novels: Phineas negotiates a way to work and to remain a gentleman.

Therefore, in the pages of Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux, Trollope’s conception of gentlemanliness embraces the Victorian “gospel of work” preached by Thomas Carlyle in the early Victorian era and later by Samuel Smiles and others. This precept maintained (among other things) that work, far from being a emblem of vulgarity (as it had been for gentlemen up to at least the Regency era), could, if executed properly and under the correct circumstances, be a means of attaining gentlemanliness. However, most of Carlyle’s work and all of Smiles’s work touts the benefits of work for the lower and middle classes. Such a belief, as Gilmour indicates, was certainly handy for a burgeoning Empire and found no shortage of proselytizers among Victorian commentators. In 1856, Oxford and Cambridge Magazine’s inaugural issue proudly proclaimed the arrival of the new world of work in terms perhaps better suited for a religious epiphany than a doctrine of labor; the author, believed to be William Fulford, mixed Christianity and patriotism as he wrote:

Many in the middle ranks are girding themselves in youthful eagerness for the Work of Life, panting with desire to claim their privilege of Work; and ready, strong in faith, glad in hope and passionate in loving earnestness, to pave the way for the time when the wild bells, shall, with unearthly sweetness “Ring in the
Christ that is to be.” [. . .] And men like this, humble, yet self-reliant, independent in spirit, yet with more of gentleness and chivalry than the noblest knight of old, men—young men like this are the present need of England. (560; 563)

Fulford’s hyperbole notwithstanding, the belief that one could work one’s way into gentlemanliness is, in many ways, an attractive doctrine. What is different about Trollope’s mid career novels, such as *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*, is that they begin to move toward an appreciation of work for the upper middle class and gentry. Trollope, who was himself certainly no slouch in the work department, packages that doctrine attractively in the pages of *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*. The novelist, however, did not remain an acolyte to this gospel for long. As we shall see, as the 1860s dragged into the 1870s, his work displayed doubts about the gospel of work.
Chapter Five: Hobbledehoy Upside Down Cake: The Topsy-turvy World of John Caldigate

“Nothing’s as precious as a hole in the ground”
-Midnight Oil

By the time Anthony and Rose Trollope visited their son Fred in Australia in 1871, Trollope had been profitably churning out hobbledehoy narratives for over fifteen years. During that period, Trollope’s imagination produced a myriad of similar young men seeking gentlemanly status. However, the nature of the gentlemanly status they sought developed and changed over time. The constrictive and pastoral rural-based form of gentlemanliness of The Three Clerks, with its latent xenophobic and nationalistic overtones, gradually gave way to a more cosmopolitan and urbane work-based conception of gentlemanliness in The Small House at Allington, which in turn gave way to the sort of internationalist (proto-jet-setting?) gentlemanliness of Phineas Finn. Gentlemanliness in Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives through the 1850s and 1860s was like an ever-expanding balloon. Then, in 1871, Trollope went to Australia, and that expanding balloon of gentlemanliness suddenly popped.

By almost any standard of judgment, the novel that resulted from Trollope’s Australia trip, John Caldigate, is a peculiar piece of literature. Its opening sentence, “Perhaps it was more the fault of Daniel Caldigate the father than of his son John Caldigate, that they two could not live together in comfort in the days of the young man’s early youth” (1), is cumbersome. At times, the novel seems to waver between two possible heroes—the eponymous Caldigate and his wife Hester. Occasionally, its focus shifts abruptly away from critical events in its development. In fact, John Caldigate is so unlike any other work in the Trollope corpus that even Anthony Trollope’s brother, Tom, did not recognize its prose style when John Caldigate appeared in
*Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1879 (Terry ix). Today, many readers find *Caldigate* an acquired
taste, and it is seldom taught, rarely written about in the critical journals, and often out-of-print.
The novel is met with an indifference that echoes the sentiments of an 1879 *Times* review that
declared, “*John Caldigate* is a good novel expanded into a dull one” (455).

Arguably, the novel’s poor reputation is not justified; many aspects of the odd little
romance are quite attractive: it manages to be both original and familiar while featuring
unexpected twists. What strikes some readers as baffling is, in fact, Trollope’s inverting aspects
of his hobbledehoy pattern. It is fitting that he writes the topsy-turvy 66 *Caldigate* just as Gilbert
and Sullivan stage their comic opera *The Sorcerer* and, that the publication of *Caldigate* in
*Blackwood’s Magazine* coincides with the London stage production of *HMS Pinafore* which runs
for 571 performances (*G&S Archive*). In *Caldigate*, white is black, black is white, good is bad,
bad is good, and few are what they appear to be. This chapter looks at *John Caldigate* as the
turning point in the overall project. Amid the chaos of the gold fields of New South Wales, *John
Caldigate* uses inversion, disguise, and especially masquerade to force the reader to begin to
rethink Trollope’s earlier optimistic and expansive view of the triumph of English
gentlemanliness. In *John Caldigate*, the expanding and liberalizing conception of what it means
to be an English gentleman is abruptly halted and reversed.

*John Caldigate* tells the story of an heir to a Cambridgeshire estate who, after falling into
debt and becoming estranged from his father, sells his entail to the family property to finance an
Australian gold mining venture with a Cambridge colleague, Dick Shand. After striking gold in
Australia, Caldigate returns to Cambridgeshire, reconciles with his father, pays off the estate’s
mortgage, and marries a young local woman. A significant portion of Caldigate’s wealth stems

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*66 In the world of Gilbert and Sullivan, “topsy-turvy” referred to a cheerful embrace of the chaotic and the illogical,
often executed to highlight the irrational aspects of nineteenth-century British society.*
from the sale of a mine to his former partners. Soon after Caldigate sells his interests in the mine to his partners, it stops producing and his former partners are ruined. They appeal to Caldigate to absorb a portion of the losses and he refuses.

All this transpires as Caldigate’s wife is bearing the couple’s first child. Shortly before his son’s christening, Caldigate receives a letter from the Australian partners attempting to extort £20,000 from him by threatening to expose Caldigate as a bigamist if they do not receive it (while in Australia, Caldigate had lived with a female colonist). Caldigate refuses to pay and the conspirators swear out depositions against Caldigate, claiming his Australian cohabitation with Euphemia Smith was sanctioned by a passing minister, making his English marriage null and void. While Caldigate is awaiting trial, public and family pressure mount on his wife to leave their home and return to her parents’ home; the parents even forcibly hold her at the family home for a time. Despite this pressure, she remains loyal to Caldigate. Shortly before his trial, Caldigate decides to pay the conspirators—not to buy their silence, but rather because he thinks it is his moral responsibility to share the loss with them: “When he had been given to understand how bad had been the fate of these old companions of his in the matter, with the feelings of a liberal gentleman he was anxious to share with them the loss” (213). The case against Caldigate is bolstered by this apparent bribe, and he is found guilty. After his conviction, the tireless efforts of a young post office clerk and the testimony of his partner, Shand, combine to secure Caldigate’s freedom via a royal pardon.

Trollope based much of the local color of 1879’s *John Caldigate* on his experiences while visiting Australia eight years earlier (Hall, *Biography* 362). That first Australian trip (Trollope was to make a second voyage to the antipodes in 1875) had also furnished him with grist for the mill of a two-volume travel book, *Australia and New Zealand*. Using *Australia and
New Zealand as a starting point, Trollope began work on *John Caldigate* on February 3, 1877, and finished it shortly before landing in South Africa on July 22, 1877 (Terry, “Introduction” x; Hall, *Biography* 425). *Blackwood’s Magazine* paid him £600 for the serialization rights; Trollope later sold book rights to Chapman and Hall for an additional £1,200 (Terry, “Note” xvii). Extant letters from Trollope to Blackwood indicate that the latter was not altogether happy with the book and found Caldigate’s payment of the £20,000 especially troubling (Glendinning 457).

Despite Blackwood’s reservations, critical reaction to the book upon its release was generally positive. As Hall notes, the critical reaction to *Caldigate* “marked a decided turn upwards” in his standing among reviewers (*Biography* 458). Today, however, the book’s reputation is far from stellar; *John Caldigate* is ignored or dismissed as a “minor” work. When it is discussed, reactions like Robert Tracy’s tend to be typical. In his 1978 work *Trollope’s Later Novels*, Tracy called it, “perfunctory in plot, motivation, and structure, full of inexplicable leaps forward that avoid a number of essential events” (233). Furthermore, Tracy noted, he “cannot see in *John Caldigate* that unity among plot, theme, and method which is so marked in the major novels of the mid-seventies” (233).

If it is difficult for critics like Tracy to find the unities in *John Caldigate*, it can also be difficult to fathom the relation between this novel and the hobbledehoy pattern that appears in much of Trollope’s other writing. Through most of *John Caldigate*, the hero is thirty years of age, wealthy, respected, in close communication with his father, and happily married—these are

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67 At least one lengthy passage, Trollope’s description of a gentleman miner eating his dinner directly from a frying pan, is lifted virtually verbatim from the pages of *Australia and New Zealand* and deposited in the text of *John Caldigate*. See *Australia and New Zealand* (1, 88-90) and *John Caldigate* (78).
hardly the ambient factors associated with other Trollopian hobbledehoys, such as John Eames, Charley Tudor, or Phineas Finn. Caldigate’s youthful indiscretions, chiefly in the form of gambling and debt, occur long before the novel’s action commences.

Yet, Caldigate is poised at the very crux of Trollope’s hobbledehoy pattern. The hobbledehoy novels that predate John Caldigate are generally optimistic in tone; they offer wider and increasingly liberal interpretations of the gentleman and gentlemanliness; after John Caldigate the hobbledehoy novels turn darker and more conservative and presage a smaller, less effective role for the English gentleman. John Caldigate makes a feint toward extending this pattern of optimistic expansion, but ultimately the novel reverses Trollope’s optimistic, expansive interpretation of the hobbledehoy. Caldigate seems to be asking how far the expansion may be stretched; one begins to wonder how far afield (morally, ethically, even geographically) the hobbledehoy figure can be allowed to wander without risking permanent injury to his gentlemanly status. Trollope sends Caldigate not just to the vulgar city, but halfway around the world to the gold fields of New South Wales. Caldigate does not just metaphorically dirty his hands toiling in a government office from ten until four like Tudor and Eames, Caldigate dirties (and calluses!) his hands roughly working pick and shovel in the Australian gold fields for twelve hours a day. Caldigate does not develop an unsuitable flirtation with a woman of lower social class, he cohabits with such a woman. Although he returns to the English countryside, Caldigate comes back with secret skeletons in this closet as well as gold in his pockets. The gold props up the family estate, but the secrets threaten his gentlemanly existence long after his hobbledehoyhood has passed.

As Trollope toys with seeing how far the hobbledehoy pattern may be stretched in the pages of John Caldigate, he is also turning the pattern upside down. A key image in John
Caldigate is that of champagne being consumed out of a bucket. Shortly after arriving in New South Wales, Caldigate and his partner Dick Shand meet up with an irascible old miner who tells them, “I’ve drank champ-paign out of buckets—I have” (74). Such anomalous juxtaposition between beverage and vessel seems appropriate for a novel in which so many expectations are undercut and so much is turned on its ear. Trollope’s project in Caldigate starts with the idea of the antipodes—a land that, to denizens of the Northern Hemisphere, seems “upside down” with its balmy Decembers and cool Julys. This image of an “upside down” land is extended into the hobbledehoy pattern and forms the dominant trope that propels most of the narrative forward. The lush verdure of Caldigate’s home in the Cambridge countryside stands in marked contrast to that of this upside down world where,

those hideous signs of mining operations which make a country rich in metals look as though the devil had walked over it, dragging behind him an enormous rake. There was not a blade of grass to be seen. As far as the eye could reach there stood those ghost-like skeletons of trees in all spots where the soil had not been turned up; but on none of them was there a leaf left, or even a branch. (68)

Onto this barren landscape saunters John Caldigate, antipodal hobbledehoy. Although Caldigate undergoes steps in the process similar to those taken by Tudor, Eames, and Finn, those steps have different connotations and results when Caldigate embarks upon them.

For example, in the paradigmatic hobbledehoy story, the hobbledehoy is often fatherless; John Caldigate inverts that idea and the young man’s father, Daniel Caldigate, is an ever-present figure in the book. Even when John and Daniel Caldigate are separated, strong bonds of filial affection are present. Caldigate names his Australian gold mine “Folking” after the family estate (94), and his letters home betray an honest, affectionate filial closeness that transcends the familial quarrel. Caldigate writes, “‘Dear Father—I think of you every day, and am already

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68 For Trollope’s description of the gold mining operations of Australia in a non-fiction work, see his travel book, *Australia and New Zealand* Volume 1, pages 83-84.
looking forward to the time when I may return and see you again” (93). Such a sentiment is not wasted on Daniel Caldigate; as his reaction demonstrates—“as he read it, the tears rolled down his cheeks” (93). After John Caldigate’s return to England he and his father are inseparable—Caldigate, though thirty years of age and extremely wealthy, moves back into the family estate, and his father assumes a role of chummy, older confidant—exactly the sort of function usually performed by the mentor figure in the traditional hobbledehoy tale.

While Caldigate is in Australia, two figures vie for the title of mentor: the good-natured alcoholic Mick Maggot and the wealthy mine owner Thomas Crinkett. As mentors, both Maggot and Crinkett present problems. Maggot fulfills many of the functions of mentor, but he lacks the personal characteristics associated with the role. Despite Maggot’s roughness, his kindness to Shand and Caldigate is apparent from the very beginning. On their first night in the gold fields Maggot treats them to the lion’s share of an unexpected and rare culinary treat:

The potatoes were evidently the luxury; and, guided by that feeling, the man who had told the strangers that they need not be afraid of being robbed, at once selected six out of the bowl and deposited three each before Dick and Caldigate. He helped the others all round to one each, and then was left without any for himself. (64-65)

Mick Maggot’s knowledge of the nuts and bolts of mining—the building of support shafts and trussing—is indispensable to Caldigate and Shand. In his role as antipodal surrogate parent, Mick even goes so far as to christen Caldigate while simultaneously breaking down class barriers that separate a workman like himself and two gentlemen like Caldigate and Shand.69 When embarking with the two on their journey to the gold fields, Maggot pointedly refuses to refer to the pair by the courtesy title of “Mister.”

69 Maggot’s republicanism provides a tidy contrast with other mentor figures like Earl de Guest in The Small House at Allington. De Guest, it will be remembered, for all his outward friendliness was a stickler for the conventions of class distinction.
‘My name’s Mick. This chap’s name’s Dick. I didn’t exactly catch your’n. I suppose you’ve been kursed.’
‘Yes—they christened me John.’
‘Ain’t it never been Jack with you?’
‘I don’t think it ever was.’
‘John! It do sound lackadaisical. What I call womanish. But perhaps it’s for the better. We have such a lot of Jacks.” (77)

Despite his innate compassion, his knowledge, and his paternalistic attitude toward Caldigate, Mick’s alcohol addiction makes him an unacceptable mentor. Mentors like Phineas Finn’s Mister Monk and The Three Clerks’s Harry Norman lead by example and are consistently models of self-control. Maggot lacks such control, and his addiction makes him powerless around alcohol. It condemns him as a mentor and condemns him to death.

The other potential mentor, Thomas Crinkett, does not suffer from Maggot’s lack of self control, but is nevertheless equally problematic. Bearing a letter of introduction, Shand and Caldigate visit Crinkett at the elder man’s mining operation on their first night in the gold fields. Crinkett has given up the devil-may-care prospector’s life for the more conservative and reliable method of crushing great loads of quartz to extract the gold dust within. Although this rock crushing method offers little chance of overnight riches, it is a steady way to make an investment grow. Crinkett even lets Caldigate and Shand in on the deal, “‘You put your money, what you’ve got, into ten-shilling shares. I’ll accommodate you, as you’re friends of Jones. We’re getting two ounces to the ton. The books’ll show you that’” (71). Crinkett’s unsuitableness is apparent even in the source of his wealth for what Crinkett owns is a mine—a hole; that is to say his wealth is generated by a negation of space. Even Crinkett’s goodwill is short-lived; he violates the first rule of friendship by betraying his comrade Caldigate and filing the false charge

70 Though Crinkett’s opinions on the foolishness of prospecting and the wisdom of steady investment in paying mines mirror Trollope’s own opinions (see Australia and New Zealand; 1, 84).
of bigamy against him.\textsuperscript{71} In the usual hobbdehoy pattern the mentor figure is a unqualified gentleman who aids the hobbdehoy; in Caldigate’s inverted world the mentor figures are poor examples of gentlemanliness who hinder the hobbdehoy.

In the traditional hobbdehoy narratives, these mentor figures work to counter the influence of friends, colleagues, or associates who threaten to pull the hobbdehoy figure down to a crass level. Charley Tudor is tempted toward rowdy behavior by the raucous “navvies” who frequent the Cat and Whistle pub, John Eames is pulled downward by the residents of his sleazy boardinghouse, and Phineas Finn is tempted to moral laxity by the cheap party hacks with whom he works. Like the mentor figure, this pattern is inverted in John Caldigate—Dick Shand’s habits are bad, to be sure, but he does not pull Caldigate downward, he rescues Caldigate from prison. It is Shand’s sworn testimony—in addition to Bagwax’s efforts—that saves Caldigate from serving the entire term of his sentence; shortly after arriving back home in England Dick declares, “as sure as my name is Richard Shand, John Caldigate never married that woman” (384). In the topsy-turvy hobbdehoy world, the hobbdehoy’s ne’er-do-well friends offer succor, not degradation.

In the early hobbdehoy stories, an object usually takes on fetishistic or talismanic significance. These objects hold an almost preternatural power that helps the hobbdehoy stay on track and regain his gentlemanly status. In The Three Clerks, Charley Tudor is aided by the purse that Katie Woodward knits for him, in The Small House at Allington Johnny Eames has Earl deGuest’s pocket watch, and Phineas Finn finds emotional strength by the mere touch of Mary’s letter. The talismanic object in John Caldigate is also a letter, but Caldigate’s letter is in

\textsuperscript{71} Crinkett’s betrayal seems particularly egregious when examined against the tradition of Australian literature. Coral Lansbury has demonstrated that loyalty to one’s comrades—what she has deemed “mateship” is particularly vital in the tradition of Australian novels or English novels set in Australia. See Lansbury’s Arcady in Australia.
his own hand and it is addressed to Mrs. John Caldigate. The letter forms the most damning piece of evidence against Caldigate, and it weakens rather than strengthens Caldigate. Furthermore, this “anti-talisman” is not itself “true,” that is, it is a forged and phony document; as a talisman it not only spreads corruption, it also is corruption.

A similar reversed quality is given to John Caldigate’s ethical moment or “hobbledehoy’s choice.” In the prototypical hobbledehoy story, the young man’s final test rests upon a moment of decision—what J. Hillis Miller calls an “ethical moment” (8). In The Three Clerks, Charley Tudor chooses sobriety and steadiness even though he seemingly has little chance to win Katie Woodward. John Eames spurns the charming tawdriness of Amelia Roeper and waits for a Lily Dale who will probably never be ready to accept his heart. Phineas Finn commits a sort of political suicide by voting with his conscience on the question of Irish tenant rights. In all these cases the hobbledehoy’s blind leap of faith into the world of honor and gentlemanliness results in the ironic restoration of full gentlemanly status—Charley Tudor’s sobriety ultimately wins him Katie Woodward; John Eames becomes a comfortable and relatively prosperous public servant in London; Phineas Finn marries a woman whose private fortune allows Finn to serve both his Queen and his conscience. In John Caldigate, the protagonist is faced with a similar ethical dilemma. The results of his decision, however, are quite different.

When Caldigate’s partners in Australian gold ventures—Thomas Crinkett and Euphemia Smith—are ruined, they appeal to Caldigate to absorb some of the losses and intimate that if he fails to do so, they will expose him as a bigamist. Caldigate knows he has no legal duty to help Smith and Crinkett, but he feels a gnawing moral imperative to do so. However, since the pair have bundled their request for aid with veiled threats, Caldigate feels he cannot help them
without surrendering to blackmail. The situation therefore presents a paradox: by doing the “honorable” thing (absorbing part of their loss) he gives into extortion and makes himself appear guilty of bigamy; by doing the “selfish” thing (ignoring their request for aid) he preserves his reputation and strengthens his legal defense.

The horns of this devil’s dilemma form John Caldigate’s hobbledehoy’s choice or his ethical moment. He chooses to pay the conspirators the money, but only after carefully disassociating the payment from their threat. As he turns a £20,000 cheque to Crinkett and Smith, Caldigate says: “‘You have combined to rob me of all that I value most by the basest of lies; but not on that account have I abstained from doing what I believe to be an act of justice’” (305). Given Trollope’s use of the hobbledehoy pattern in earlier novels, such behavior would be expected to result in Caldigate’s acquittal. However, in the topsy-turvy world of John Caldigate, negotiation of the hobbledehoy’s choice results not in salvation, but in damnation. Caldigate is convicted of bigamy not despite the payment, but because of it. Even Caldigate’s barrister, Mr Seely, sees the power inherent in the payment: “‘When he told me that he had been up to town and paid that money, I knew it was all up with him. How can any juryman believe that a man will pay twenty thousand pounds, which he does not owe, to his sworn enemy, merely on a point of conscience?’” (333) The ramifications of Caldigate’s misguided choice are apparent at the end of the book. Even after the forged letter has been discredited and after Dick Shand testifies on Caldigate’s behalf, the presiding judge is slow to overturn the verdict because of Caldigate’s payment of the £20,000. As Judge Bramber mulls overturning the verdict, the narrative’s voice merges with his own:

72 Even today, the £20,000 payment strikes many readers as peculiar and some maintain that the payment fatally flaws the book. In the context of Trollope’s relationship with money, however, the payment seems logical. Trollope’s relationship with money was forged by severe childhood privation and tempered by his middle-age prosperity. He was particularly scrupulous about debt. When he received a few shillings overpayment for a writing
He had been quite convinced of Caldigate’s guilt—not only by the direct evidence, but by the concurrent circumstances. To his thinking, it was not in human nature that a man should pay such a sum as twenty thousand pounds to such people as Crinkett and Euphemia Smith—a sum of money which was not due either legally or morally—except with an improper object. (420)

Reversals and inversions permeate *John Caldigate*: dissipated friends provide salvation, talismans portend only ill-tidings, trusted mentors betray their charges, and close scrutiny of moral dilemmas results in damning consequences.

But can we then conclude that Caldigate is “wrong” in making his hobbledehoy’s choice and paying off the conspirators? The barrister, the judge, even Trollope’s publisher and a significant portion of his readership seemed to think so. But to assume Caldigate bungled his hobbledehoy’s choice seems incongruous; other Trollopian hobbledehoys choose self-sacrifice and honor over selfishness and short-term pleasure and they are rewarded. Caldigate chooses self-sacrifice and honor over selfishness and short-term pleasure and he is punished severely. Perhaps what has changed in *John Caldigate* is not the nature of the choice the hobbledehoy must make, but the world in which that choice is made. The judge—a spokesperson for society’s conventional views—maintains that “to his thinking, it was not in human nature that a man should pay such a sum as twenty thousand pounds to such people as Crinkett and Euphemia Smith” (420) [emphasis added]. Herein lies the problem: the judge cannot conceive of a world where such a gesture is considered necessary. Trollope’s hobbledehoy makes the correct and honorable choice, but in the topsy-turvy world of *John Caldigate*, honor is no longer considered a plausible motive and the “honorable” choice brings the dishonor of a two-year prison sentence.

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job, he dispatched a hurried letter to the publisher (on Christmas Day!) offering several options for repayment. See *Letters*, “To George Smith,” 25 December 1859.
Caldigate not only signals a break with the upbeat hobbledehoy stories of Trollope’s early career such as *The Three Clerks* and *The Small House at Allington*, but it also heralds the darker books of Trollope’s late career such as *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister.*

Trollope’s motive in inverting the hobbledehoy pattern in *John Caldigate* can seem puzzling. Answers are at first elusive—until the role masquerade plays in the text is considered. Play-acting forms a handy metaphor for the novel’s business—on the voyage, second-class passengers strain against their tightly regulated social position aboard ship by becoming voracious players of charades (35). Bagwax becomes so emotional as he is engrossed in the Caldigatian soap opera that his officemate is sure that he will forswear the comfort of the post office for a career upon the stage (403). If Bagwax *did* look for a career upon the stage, perhaps he could join Euphemia Smith (alias Mademoiselle Cettini, alias Euphemia Caldigate, alias Mrs. Salmon), who makes her living in Sydney by “dancing dances, singing songs, and acting tableaux” (87). Many of the *dramatis personae* in *John Caldigate* dress up, strike poses, or even assume aliases while other characters struggle to penetrate their disguises. Ultimately, this role playing takes its toll.

Masquerade and disguise go through three distinct phases in *John Caldigate* and serve to divide the text into three portions of varying lengths. The majority of the carefree references to masquerade occur early in the text (prior to page 100); most references to peering through the disguise and outing the masqueraders come in the middle of the text. Finally, references that signal a breakdown of stable identity come in the latter portion of the novel (from page 250 or so

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73 Ordering Trollope’s novels is always difficult due to the fact he wrote at a rate outpacing public demand and hence often had one (or more!) completed texts awaiting publication. Strictly speaking, Caldigate appears after *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*. However, for the purposes of this study I discuss it before those works for thematic reasons—as well as because it seems so heavily influenced by events in Trollope’s life in 1870-71—well before the writing or publication of *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister.*
to page 500). Clearly, there is a movement or progression afoot in John Caldigate’s dealings with costume and masquerade: what starts off being a cheerful flirtation with play-acting becomes a dangerous contest in which identity can become permanently destabilized.

Virtually all of the major characters don a costume at one point or another, and the text goes out of its way to stress that characters are not always who they seem to be. As they sail to Australia, Caldigate and Shand “were both dressed according to the parts they were acting, and which they intended to act, as second-class passengers and future working miners” (31). Their miner “costumes,” the text is careful to point out, have been labeled with their names (26)—as if they are in danger of losing their identity by playing their role too effectively. Landing in New South Wales, Caldigate and Shand seek vocational advice from the successful miner Thomas Crinkett, who, despite his rough-and-tumble ways, tries to look the part of a gentleman with a chimney pot top hat perched incongruously upon his head (69). As the conspiracy unravels, Crinkett and his fellow conspirators try to escape London and avoid a charge of perjury disguised as a family of immigrants (429). Upon returning to England, Dick Shand sports a garish pair of bright yellow trousers (388); throughout the rest of the novel, the trousers serve to identify him to others. The yellow trousers are Shand’s calling card; by the end of the novel, he has become the man in the yellow trousers.

As some of the denizens of the world of John Caldigate try to assume a secondary identity through costume, others (with occasional help from the text itself) struggle to police those boundaries and keep the masqueraders in their original role. At first, this game of disguise and detect or “outing” has the merry and carefree connotations of children’s play. Caldigate and Shand fool no one among the second-class passengers aboard the Goldfinder; the pair are not

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74 In a text so taken with the idea of shifting identities, it is fitting that the reader never does know her actual name. Smith, we can assume, is also an alias.
quite accepted by their shipmates since “they were known to have saloon rather than second-cabin antecedents” (31). Later Dick Shand laughingly confesses that he and Caldigate are gentlemen “in spite of our trousers” (33).

After the pair arrive in Australia, the game of disguise and detect continues and, at least initially, the text manages to control the shifting and disguised identities. Caldigate goes off in search of Euphemia Smith “dressed as a miner might be dressed who was off work and out for a holiday” (89). Yet Caldigate’s game of dress up is not successful; the text unmasks him, declaring “the main figure and manner were so completely those of a gentleman, that the disguise was not perfect” (89). Later, back in Britain, as the conspirators infiltrate Caldigate’s estate and transcend legal boundaries, they transcend sartorial boundaries as well; visiting Caldigate’s estate for the first time “they were decently dressed, dressed probably in such garments as gentlemen generally wear on winter mornings—but anyone would know at a glance that they were not English gentlemen” (205). Lawbreakers are not the only ones who try to circumvent boundaries of identity through clothing; the state’s representatives do so as well. The policeman who arrests Caldigate does so in “dark plain clothes,” but nevertheless Caldigate recognizes him for a policeman “at once” (223). Facing his accusers at the magistrate’s office, Caldigate must peer through Euphemia’s costume as well. The text seems to be slyly winking at a bawdy joke based on Caldigate’s physical relationship with Smith as it proclaims she was “closely veiled so that he could not see a feature of her face; but he knew her figure well” (224). The conspirator’s representative, Richard Bollum, faces a similar scrutiny. Told by his gardener that a “gentleman” wished to see him, Caldigate encounters Bollum for the first time:

Caldigate, as he looked at the man, distrusted his gardener’s judgement. The coat and hat and gloves, even the whiskers and head of hair, might have belonged to a gentleman; but not, as thought, the mouth or the eyes or the hands. And when the
man began to speak there was a mixture of assurance and intended complaisance, and affected familiarity and an attempt at ease, which made the master of the house quite sure that his guest was not all that Darvell had represented. (292)

As the novel progresses, however, detection becomes more difficult. Caldigate can still manage to see through the disguise, but to do so requires significant dissection: Bollum’s outward appearances may bespeak gentlemanliness; even Bollum’s hair and whiskers seem willing to go along with the ruse, but the living tissue of eyes, mouth and hand betray his fraudulent secret. Ultimately, it becomes impossible to see through the costumes that proliferate in *Caldigate*, and in the latter half of the book the stability of identity itself collapses under layers of disguise and masquerade.

Although slightly comic intimations of unstable identities pepper the early chapters of the book—when news of Caldigate’s infatuation with Hester Bolton reaches Caldigate’s cousins at Babington, the wealthy Evangelical banker Mr. Bolton is dismissed as an “errand boy” by the jealous sisters there (149)—later the unstable identities that begin to creep up in *John Caldigate* turn very serious. At the christening ceremony of Hester and John Caldigate’s child, the conspirators make their public charge of bigamy against Caldigate. Therefore, in a masterful combination of the work’s dominant trope, inversion, with its dominant theme, the fragility of identity, the ceremony that should have firmly established the baby’s identity instead makes that identity suspect by questioning the very legality of the baby’s parents’ marriage and hence the baby’s right to call himself “Caldigate.”

The alleged Australian marriage destabilizes other identities as well and, as the ramifications of the bigamy charge grow, even the text itself seems unsure of who is who. When the story of Caldigate’s relationship with Smith is related to Hester, the text is unsure of what to

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75 Baby Caldigate, like the alias-branding Euphemia Smith, is never granted the luxury of a reliable first name. Even the child’s mother, Hester, refers to him only as “Baby.”
call her: “all this, down to the smallest detail, was told to Hester—Hester Bolton or Hester Caldigate whichever she might be” (233). Euphemia suffers from a similar problem—when asked to sign a receipt for the £20,000 payment, she is paralyzed by the simple request and Crinkett must sign for himself “and partners” (305). Crinkett signs for Smith as if Euphemia were illiterate or a small child.

‘There is a difficulty about the name, you see,’ said Bollum. There was a difficulty about the name, certainly. It would not be fair, he thought that he should force her to use a name she disowned, and he did not wish to be hindered from what he was doing by her persistency in calling herself by his own name.

‘So be it,’ said he. ‘There is the cheque. Mr Gray will see that I put it into both their hands.’ This he did, each of them stretching out a hand to take it. ‘And now you can go where you please and act as you please.’ (305)

Caldigate provides a perverse benediction turning the transfer of the cheque into a quasi-religious ceremony that mirrors the Anglican marriage rite. In this ceremony, however, the happy couple, Crinkett and Smith, is united by money, not love.

By the terms of the novel, then, disguise can start out as a pleasant diversion—Cambridge alumnae can pose as miners on an ocean voyage even though they have Latin phrases at their command and significant balances at their bankers. They can play charades and flirt with the second-class passengers. Most of the time, the perceptive can “out” people from behind their disguises and can distinguish the policeman in plain clothes or the ruffian in a gentleman’s cloak and hat. But “take care,” Caldigate warns, for disguise and play-acting can go too far and our fondness for disguise can begin to erode the identity that we thought was so stable.

Which is exactly what happens to Trollope’s friend and colleague Dick Shand. It is in the story of Dick Shand where the text of John Caldigate reveals its real attitude toward the gentleman, the hobbledehoy, and the nineteenth century’s shifting nature of gentlemanliness. In the novel’s opening chapters, Shand’s anxiousness to play at identity outstrips even Caldigate’s:
A cabin had been taken for the joint use of the young men on board the *Goldfinder*, a large steamer which was running at the time from London to Melbourne, doing the voyage generally in about two months. But they were going as second class passengers and their accommodation therefore was limited. Dick had insisted on this economy, which was hardly necessary to Caldigate, and which was not absolutely pressed upon the other. But Dick had insisted. ‘Let us begin as we mean to go on,’ he had said; ‘of course we’ve got to rough it. We shall come across something a good deal harder than second-class fare before we have made our fortunes, and worked probably with mates more uncouth than second-class passengers.’ It was impossible to oppose such counsel as this. (27)

Aboard the *Goldfinder*, Shand engages in both sides of the identity game: he hides his own identity under the coarse trousers of a miner while simultaneously trying to unmask the deceptive Euphemia Smith who he realizes “talks a great deal better than her gown” (32). But what is fun and games on the transcontinental voyage becomes deadly serious when reaching land. In the topsy-turvy world of Australia, Shand’s identity truly begins to etiolate, and the change seems to be permanent.

Shand’s problems with identity begin with the third member of their gold mining operation, Mick Maggot. Maggot is forthright about his drinking when the trio begin work together, but since public houses are few in the Australian bush, his fondness for drink is of little consequence—at least at first. One day, after they have been at work about three weeks, all that changes and Shand’s attempt to separate Mick from the bottle has an unintended and unpleasant result:

It was Caldigate’s turn to work till noon, whereas Dick went off at nine, and Mick would come on from nine till three. At nine Mick did not make his appearance, and Dick declared his purpose of looking after him. Caldigate also threw down his tools, as he could not work alone, and went in search. The upshot of it was, that he did not see either of his companions again till he found them both very drunk at a drinking-shop about two miles away from their claim, just before dusk! (80)

Shand’s flirtations with the wild side of a miner’s life continue as the trio continue to develop a mining operation. Gradually Shand’s infatuation with acting the part of coarse miner coupled
with his growing alcohol problem combine and reduce him to “a shepherd far away in the West, hardly earning better wages than an English ploughman” (98).

Of course, it might be possible to read the story of Shand’s fall as a simple cautionary tale about the corrupting power of alcohol. This would certainly be a plausible reading of the text were it not for the fact that Shand manages to conquer his alcohol addiction without regaining his status as a gentleman—were alcohol Shand’s only problem, we could reasonably expect that conquering his drinking problem would result in restitution of his gentlemanly status, but the text pointedly refuses Shand that courtesy. When offered whisky upon his return, Shand admits to having “sworn off these two years” and drinks nothing stronger than tea for the rest of the novel.

As Shand prepares to testify on Caldigate’s behalf, he realizes that not all of the Australian dirt will wash off. In preparation for the deposition, Shand made himself look as much like an English gentleman as the assistance of a ready made clothes shop at Pollington would permit. But still he did not quite look like a man who had spent three years at Cambridge. His experiences among the gold diggings, then his period of maddening desolation as a Queensland shepherd, and after that his life among the savages in a South Sea island, had done much to change him. (388)

Shand expects, as does the reader, that Caldigate will be freed upon the registration of Shand’s sworn deposition in the matter. Shand was present at the events in question, he has no reason to prevaricate, and, most importantly, Shand is (or was) a gentleman and a gentleman’s word is his bond. What Shand fails to realize, however, is that he has somehow forfeited the privilege of unquestioned belief since he traveled to the antipodes.

The judge declared to himself that Dick’s single oath, which could not now be tested by cross-examination, amounted to nothing. He had been a drunkard and a pauper—had descended to the lowest occupation which the country afforded, and had more than once nearly died from delirium tremens. He had then come home penniless, and had—produced his story. If such evidence could avail to rescue a
prisoner from his sentence, and to upset a verdict, what verdict or what sentence could stand? Poor Dick’s sworn testimony, in Judge Bramber’s mind, told rather against Caldigate than for him. (421-22)

Judge Bramber’s reasoning merits attention; although the judge doubts Shand’s veracity, he never questions Shand’s honesty. Poverty, low social status, alcoholism, near fatal bouts of delirium tremens—these things, not a lack of honesty or a known history of lying—are what impugn Shand’s story (a story that is itself theatricalized in the Judge’s mind). It has been “produced” not “remembered.” Interestingly, Shand seems unaware that his fall in social status precipitates a change in his reputation for veracity. Many passages after his return find him in almost a petulant fit of pique as he vainly insists on being believed. When reminded that he could not prove that he knew nothing of the Caldigate trial before returning to England, Shand retorts, “‘Certainly I can. I can swear it’” (390). Shand insists that his word is commensurate with proof in the legal sense—a privilege belonging to gentlemen whose characters cannot be impugned upon. But such privileges are reserved for those who do not wear bright yellow trousers and Shand’s declaration is received with gentle bemusement. Later Shand tries to spread word of Caldigate’s innocence among the imprisoned man’s in-laws.

‘All this about a marriage at Ahalala between John Caldigate and Mrs Smith is a got-up plan, Mr. Bolton.’
‘The jury did not seem to think so, Mr. Shand.’
‘I wasn’t here then to let them know the truth.’ Robert Bolton raised his eyebrows, marveling at the simplicity of the man who could fancy that his single word would be able to weigh down the weight of evidence which had sufficed to persuade twelve men and such a judge as Judge Bramber. (397)

Though Bolton “marvels at the simplicity” of a man who assumes his word holds such power, basically all Shand is doing is insisting on what is due a gentleman (this is, after all, the very sort of thing gentlemen once fought duels over). Had Shand carried with him all the appurtenances of gentlemanliness, one could assume his word would carry significantly more weight. Later,
when the merits of Shand’s version of events are questioned by a local newspaper, the returned expatriate “wished his father at once to proceed against the paper for libel” (426). That final example is particularly compelling—Shand, like any good English gentleman, prickles at the idea of his word being questioned, but he lacks the resources to seek redress on his own and must, like a little boy, beg his father to help him fight his battles.

As order is restored to Cambridgeshire and Caldigate is reunited with his wife and re-installed as the squire of Folking, Shand is banished from the island nation. The language the text uses in stipulating his banishment is worth quoting at length.

One of the few things which Caldigate did before he took his wife abroad was to ‘look after Dick Shand’. It was manifest to all concerned that Dick could do no good in England. His yellow trousers and the manners which accompanied them were not generally acceptable in merchants’ offices and suchlike places. He knew nothing about English farming, which, for those who have not learned the work early, is an expensive amusement rather than a trade by which bread can be earned. There seemed hardly a hope for Dick in England. (495)

Five years in the antipodal bush have wiped away twenty-five years of English training and centuries of breeding. Shand, who is scrupulously honest, who is loyal, who has conquered a debilitating disease single-handedly, has no place in the land of his birth—chiefly because, it would seem, he sports garish trousers.

If we read John Caldigate as a novel with two hobbledehoy characters, Caldigate and Shand, then the way the work presents the hobbledehoy pattern is perplexing. Caldigate strays from gentlemanliness by living with a woman without benefit of marriage; Shand strays from the path of gentlemanliness through his drinking. Both men reform, but only Caldigate is welcomed back into the fraternity of gentlemen. Why? The reformed drinker, it would seem, presents no different threat to society than does the reformed fornicator. Perhaps clothing has
something to do with it; Shand stubbornly resists the muted grey and somber black uniform of gentlemanliness. In that respect, we might conclude that Shand chooses a non-gentlemanly path by refusing to don the gentleman’s uniform. But even this imperfect and ungainly answer refuses to hold; for when Shand does abide by the gentleman’s strict dress code, as he does “with the help of a ready-made clothes shop in Pollington” (388), his re-entry into the realm of the gentleman is thwarted.

When considering the differences in their respective literary fates, it is hard to overestimate the value and nature of work to Caldigate and Shand. To risk oversimplification, Caldigate becomes successful because he works diligently; Shand is less successful because he lacks Caldigate’s commitment to work. In keeping his nose steadily on the grindstone, garnering wealth, and then bringing that wealth home to mother country, Caldigate acts in a manner that much of the British populace believed to be the heart of the purpose of the colonial enterprise; in 1876, one member of Commons outlined the colonial enterprise project in fairy-tale-like terms:

A colonist finds a nugget, or he fleeces a thousand flocks. He makes a fortune, he returns to England, he buys an estate, he becomes a magistrate, he represents Majesty, he becomes High Sheriff; he has a magnificent house near Hyde Park; he goes to court, to lévees, to drawing rooms, he has an opportunity of plighting his troth personally to his sovereign. (Hansard’s 1726, col. 227)

Reverence for the virtue of substantive work was, of course, not limited to colonialists and, in fact, permeated much of Victorian culture. By 1870, Thomas Carlyle’s 1831 sentiments—“man is actually Here; not to ask questions but to do work” (“Characteristics” 32)—had not softened in the ensuing forty years; in fact, such sentiments were even more entrenched as the Victorian era wore on. Oxford and Cambridge Magazine proudly proclaimed, “it is on those who are yet young that the future of the World depends. Their task, their duty, what is it? 76

76 Out of the reader’s purview, Shand goes through his own hobbeldehoy pattern of descent and redemption. It is easy to imagine him awakening after a particularly vicious alcoholic frenzy and renouncing drink all the while
Their duty is to work. The Age of Idleness has passed away” (Fulford 559). By the late nineteenth century, belief in the curative powers of work was accepted on an almost *sine qua non* basis; work was valuable simply because it was work. In the same year Trollope traveled to the Australia, Samuel Smiles wrote: “We have spoken of work as a discipline: it is also an educator of character. Even work that produces no results, because it *is* work is better than torpor—inasmuch as it educates faculty, and is thus preparatory to successful work” (*Character* 109). However, attributing Caldigate’s success and regained status to hard work is particularly problematic. Street sweepers, grooms, and porters worked hard, but none of them could reasonably be expected to attain gentlemanly status, and the original definition of gentlemen included those who could live without manual labor—those to whom work was unnecessary.

After all the reasonable alternatives are exhausted, one is finally left with the idea of money and property: Caldigate is welcomed back to the gentleman’s world because he is rich; Shand is not reinstated because he is penniless. This conclusion seems unavoidable, yet it challenges some of Trollope’s previous writing on the subject and much of the contemporary writing about gentlemanliness, which doggedly insisted that gentlemanliness existed beyond the realm of mere financial concerns. But the importance of money in this novel is unavoidable; Caldigate successfully re-represents himself as a gentleman because he can fund such representation with the gold he brought back from New South Wales. Shand has no such resources, and when his gentlemanly merits are challenged (as they are by the newspaper’s insinuation that he is speaking untruthfully), he is left impotently sputtering invectives against absent foes and sponging off his father. Earlier, more optimistic hobbledehoy novels refuse to bundle gentlemanliness with money so tightly: Phineas Finn was near destitute on a couple of holding onto a talismanic letter from one of the Shand sisters as he sits in his cold and forlorn shepherd’s hut.
occasions, but he never appeared in danger of losing his status as a gentleman. So, in the final analysis *Caldigate* does begin to provide an answer to the question, exactly how far afield can the hobbledehoy go and still be welcomed back into the world of the gentleman? The grim answer the text provides would seem to be somewhere between where John Caldigate goes, but not as far as Dick Shand goes, depending on one’s bank balance.

Examining *John Caldigate*’s inverted hobbledehoy pattern tells us *how* the hobbledehoy pattern works in the novel, but what is still unanswered is *why* it works that way. Why, when Trollope’s popularity and critical reputation were still relatively high, would he seemingly turn his back on everything he had written previously on the subject and begin to refute his own position? Was he, as he did so often in his fiction, carefully weighing both sides of an argument? Or did he simply decide his earlier position was incorrect?

Certainly he would not be the first person, or even the first writer, to grow more conservative as he grew older. Nor would he be the first person, or even the first writer, to develop an increased appreciation for money as he entered his sixties. Visiting his son in Australia (and, by the way, giving Frederick Trollope a *second* infusion of capital for his sheep farm) could well have gotten Trollope thinking about the way gentlemen are created. However, in the final analysis, the way in which *John Caldigate* begins to rethink Trollope’s earlier progressive and somewhat egalitarian stance on gentlemanliness and returns to a more conservative, land-based idea of gentlemanliness seems to have connections to the novelist’s biography. *Caldigate* began to germinate at a time of great change and upheaval for Anthony Trollope, and it is not surprising that the personal circumstances he found himself in made him particularly prone to introspection. The story, as previously noted, began to take shape as

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77 One need only think of *Phineas Finn*’s Mr. Monk nobly living without the services of a butler here to understand Trollope’s attitude on the subject.
Trollope was preparing to go to Australia to visit his son, Fred. That long voyage and extended visit precipitated the necessity of closing up and selling Trollope’s beloved home at Waltham Cross. That Trollope found some opportunity for bittersweet reflection among the packing crates is obvious from Trollope’s Autobiography. As Trollope writes of the home at Waltham Cross, his tone befits an eighty-five-year-old man more than a fifty-five-year-old man.

Altogether the house had been a success, and the scene of much happiness. But there arose question as to expense. Would not a house in London be cheaper? There could be no doubt that my income would decrease, and was decreasing. I had thrown the Post Office, as it were, away, and the writing of novels could not go on forever. Some of my friends already told me that at fifty-five I ought to give up the fabrication of love-stories. The hunting, I thought, must soon go, and I would not therefore allow that to keep me in the country. And then, why should I live at Waltham Cross now, seeing that I fixed on that place in reference to the Post Office? It was therefore determined that we would flit, and as we were to be away for eighteen months, we determined also to sell our furniture. So, there was packing up with many tears and consultations as to what should be saved out of the things we loved. (An Autobiography 342)

Other autobiographical touches appear scattered throughout the novel and seem to indicate that Trollope was in a particularly introspective mood as he set upon working on John Caldigate. The hero, like Trollope himself, makes his fortune and redeems his character in an English-speaking colony. In addition, the over-eager postal clerk, Bagwax, seems a particularly warmly drawn self-portrait of Trollope as a young man; Trollope even admitted as much in his correspondence. In his letter finalizing the deal to sell John Caldigate to Blackwood’s, he wrote, “there was a touch of downright love in depicting Bagwax. Was I not once a Bagwax myself?” (Letters, “To John Blackwood” 6 February 1879).

Personal autobiographical touches pepper the novel. As Caldigate embarks upon the fateful meeting to pay off his ex-mentor Crinkett, he selects a shady coffee house “lying between Lombard Street and Cornhill” (302). The word “Cornhill,” of course, must have still had associations with Trollope’s mentor, William Thackeray, for it was Thackeray and his Cornhill
that helped catapult Anthony Trollope to literary fame twenty years earlier. Trollope adds a delightful personal touch when Bagwax mentions that although he is not a particularly well-traveled young man, he did once manage a brief holiday in Ostend (407). Ostend, Trollope’s readers would learn four years later when his posthumous Autobiography would appear, is the city in Belgium where the Trollope family fled to escape creditors.

Although viewing John Caldigate through an autobiographical lens partially explains the change in Trollope’s attitudes toward the hobbledehoy social mobility, social and economic factors must be taken into account as well. While some critics have downplayed the Australian setting, seeing the novel in its topsy-turvy Australian context is essential to understanding its place in the pantheon of hobbledehoy narratives. The novel needs to be set in Australia, I believe, so Trollope can examine the hobbledehoy’s class mobility in a super-charged economy where fortunes can be made very quickly. Post-gold-strike Australia gives Trollope that opportunity and therefore forms the perfect social laboratory to look at the relationship between money and class. Trollope believed that, for most gold seekers, the rush to the Australian gold fields was little more than a fool’s errand and that “every ounce of gold raised [had] cost more in its raising than the price for which it [had] been sold” (Australia and New Zealand 1, 58). Though there might be some doubt about the worth of the overall gold-seeking experience, there could be no doubt about what the presence of gold strikes did to the local economy. Opportunities for advancement or submersion were plentiful.

There is, perhaps, a fine line between widening opportunities for social advancement and an utter breakdown of the class system. Whereas some Victorians, like Trollope, might endorse

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78 See, for example, R.C. Terry’s “Introduction” to the 1995 Trollope Society edition of the work.

79 Trollope might have had a point. Despite the well-publicized magnificent strikes of some, most miners squeaked by on meager sums. One M.P. figured that by dividing the value of the total amount of gold found in Australia by
the former, few except the most virulent anarchists would sanction the latter. In 1863, *Fraser’s Magazine* worried about the advance of uneducated men who lacked social and familial connections; *Fraser’s* was particularly worried about the development of egalitarian “hot spots” locales “where anything like refinement or cultivation would be a positive hindrance to a man” (Boyd, “Concerning the Estimate” 543). Perhaps Trollope’s Australia in *Caldigate* is one of those places. In *John Caldigate* the gradual and measured social mobility of the hobbledehoy figure that transpired in earlier hobbledehoy narratives (*The Three Clerks, The Small House at Allington*, and the Phineas novels) becomes electrified and energized, but what results is not opportunity for social mobility and “betterment” but rather chaos. Trollope wrote about a visit into the gold fields in which he met a variety of individuals: “some were miners working for wages, and some were shareholders, each probably with a large stake in the concern. I could not tell which was which. They were all dressed alike, and there was nothing of the master and the man in the tone of their conversation” (*Australia and New Zealand* 1, 289). But Trollope saw life on the gold fields not as an egalitarian utopia, but as a hellish anarchy: “everything was disordered and out of place. All that had been at the bottom was at the top. That which had been at the top was at the bottom. How were these men to be governed, who by the very nature of their calling want much of that protection that we call government” (1, 380). The preceding passage from *Australia and New Zealand* shows Trollope echoing many of the sentiments found in the magazines of the day. As Trollope was visiting Australia in 1871, *Fraser’s* published these sentiments on the colonial enterprise on the continent:

> Isolation breeds petty ideas and narrow views; local interests overpower national interests; neighbours intermarry all around, and family clanship is added to provincial localism there is rapid amalgamation of all classes; for in each district all classes are forced for society’s sake to mingle freely; the sons of

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the total number of miners present, the average miner earned a mere £69 per year in the “boom” years of 1859-1861—or a wage roughly comparable with that of a British laborer (Barkly 155).
gentlemen are thus inferior to their parents and petty tradesmen are superior to theirs; and as each district is but a type of all the rest, the amalgamation of classes becomes national” (Old Colonist 604-05).

Trollope’s worry over such amalgamation might explain the abrupt about-face in his attitude toward social mobility apparent in the pages of John Caldigate.

The autobiographical and socio-economic touches in John Caldigate, however, mark more than a mere walk down memory lane; they signal a full-fledged reconsideration of the hobbledehoy figure as a sympathetic character whose ascent into the world of the Victorian gentleman is to be saluted as a triumph. Caldigate marks the beginnings of Trollope’s tinkering with the hobbledehoy pattern as an obstruction to some men—some unsuitable men—entering the ranks of Victorian gentlemen with nothing more than their bank books to recommend them. It was an idea Trollope would explore more fully in The Way We Live Now and The Prime Minister.
Chapter Six: “Most Fellows are Bad Fellows”: The 1870s, *The Way We Live Now, The Prime Minister*, and the End of the Victorian Gentleman

The progression of hobbledehoy narratives from the 1850s to the 1870s showcases a gradually expanding conception of what it means to be a Victorian gentleman; fueled by the redemptive properties of a seemingly all-powerful Carlylean gospel of work, Trollope’s narratives demonstrate the way in which Victorian society gradually became more accepting of a looser, more liberalized conception of what it meant to be a Victorian gentleman.

That is, they do so until two works of the 1870s, *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*, I argue, are significant milestones that mark a distinct reversal of Trollope’s earlier treatment of the hobbledehoy figure. These works—the only hobbledehoy novels that *fail* to produce gentlemen—are often interpreted as anti-Semitic or xenophobic, but *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister* may be read as responses to the increasing popularity and omnipresence of the figure of the self-made man—an archetype made popular in works by writers such as Samuel Smiles. Additionally, reading the 1870s era hobbledehoy novels as responses to Smiles demonstrates the way in which Trollope had become disenchanted with the Carlylean gospel of work.

By the 1870s, conceptions of gentlemanliness had changed; James Pope Hennessy has asserted that terms such as *gentleman* and *lady* had become devoid of all meaning by the end of the nineteenth century (191). In part this sense of unease was due to social and economic factors that have been well documented: increased wealth from manufacturing interests swelled the ranks of what could reasonably be termed “good” society. The gentry, who in earlier times were able to recognize every guest with whom they would come into contact, now found themselves sharing London’s salons with comparative strangers. In 1873, *Macmillan’s* observed,
One of the most important changes which society—in the restricted sense of the word—has undergone of late years is its enlargement. The barriers that were formerly only opened to or by a few, are now rarely prohibitive. And the power of wealth to pass where it will is far greater than it was a few generations ago. (Boyle, “Ball” 459)

Of course, the Macmillan’s commentator declared, such increased egalitarianism did not come without its price; “The lines by which that inner circle of society which goes by such various names as ‘the good people’ ‘the smart people,’ ‘the nice people,’ &c. is marked, are far less clearly defined than they were a generation ago. Whether this is an advantage or not is a deep question, but it is in accordance with the spirit of the age” (462). Concern over this perceived dilution of “good” society manifests itself in Trollope’s novels; in The Prime Minister the narrator grouses, “every prosperous tallow chandler throughout the country was made a baronet as a matter of course” (114).

To some conservative commentators, the egalitarian societal changes of the 1870s marked nothing less than a full-fledged regression. Additionally, by 1876, the feminist writer Frances Power Cobbe called society’s move toward egalitarianism a “retrograde movement” pervading “several departments of human activity” (232). Dublin University Magazine wondered about the world of the 1870s in which the “bold, handsome, fearless English lads” of previous generations were replaced by the “sallow dyspeptic, timid nervous creatures, with all of the weaknesses of girlhood and none of its graces” (Axon 297). Attention to small social courtesies was lapsing as well. In 1873, Courtneay Boyle noted young men were quite happy to attend balls wearing the same foul-smelling, smoke-drenched clothes they wore to their clubs (“Ball” 465).

While earlier nineteenth-century pundits defended the men of their present day by assuring periodical readers that gentlemanliness was always a problematic concept (Doran) or by
hoping that national boorish behavior would turn out to be a passing fancy (“Manners and Morals”), essayists of the 1870s found little to praise in their own era. Indeed, readers were cajoled with a seemingly unending list of misdeeds and faux pas. Some misbehaviors were minor: Macmillan’s reported sadly that some young men failed to relinquish their seats as an elderly lady at a fancy dress ball searched for an unoccupied seat (Boyle “Ball” 465). Letters to the editors of The Times decried the lack of consideration at the opera (“Bad Manners”), whereas others lamented those who spent blustery afternoons at the docks laughing at the seasick passengers disembarking from the arriving trans-Channel vessels (“Insular Manners” 10).

However, not all bad behavior was harmless. In 1871 The Times reported the nighttime exploits of a group of gentlemen on a rampage of vandalism in Tulse Hill. Six drunken gentlemen forcibly separated pillar caps from their bases and tossed the caps through the windows of several homes in the neighborhood (“Young Gentlemen” 12). Such alcohol-fueled ruffianism was not rare; the Contemporary Review reported a shocking 203,000 arrests for drunk and disorderly conduct in 1875 (Peek 30). Macmillan’s reported that a visitor from the continent was heard to remark that “the manners of young gentlemen are such that a well-educated kitchen maid would find them bad” (qtd. in Boyle, “Ball” 465). Saint Pauls surveyed the deterioration of the nation’s manners and asked ruefully, “Is this England?” (Rands 656).

Of course, the lack of manners in the current generation—any generation—has long been a mainstay of social commentary. Pundits have always been able to rely on the de-evolution of society to generate a few sharp quips; in “Signs of the Times” Thomas Carlyle gibed, “The King has virtually abdicated; the Church is a widow, without jointure; public principle is gone; private honesty is going; society, in short, is fast falling in pieces” (464). It is tempting to write off the flurry of articles on the lack of civility to this all-too-human tendency to idealize the mores of the
past. But the sheer number of articles bemoaning the 1870s’ incivility suggests the existence of a consensus that manners were deteriorating. Additionally, the periodical press of the 1870s expressed a uniformity of opinion when looking for a reason behind this bad behavior: the influx of money. Specifically, City money.

While some periodicals tried to remind their readers of the positive societal contributions made by the capitalists of the era (Newman), in general the 1870s looked at the capitalist (sometimes known as “City men” or “money men”) with a mixture of fear and distrust. In 1876 *Blackwood’s Magazine* described with horror that an untitled City “money man” had several members of the gentry and the aristocracy at his beck and call (Shand, “Some Gentlemen” 348). Special contempt was reserved for those who practiced “speculation.” Land-based wealth was seen as more honorable than riches accumulated via speculation. In 1875, *Fraser’s Magazine* intimated that wealth “easily” come by would be easily lost or wasted; it quipped, “what is obtained by luck, is apt to be squandered in folly” (W.M. 475).

Of course, the only outcome worse than profit via speculation was loss via speculation. Bold, risky ventures, supervised only by the laws of the marketplace and questionable ethics, often ended badly. In 1876, *Blackwood’s* intimated that the ranks of stock jobbers had been swelled by the unscrupulous; the author suggested that “had they to confine themselves strictly to legitimate business, instead of being a tolerably thriving body on the average, it is certain the better half of the fraternity would be starving” (Shand, “Speculative” 311). In 1876, *Blackwood’s* reported that “things had been going from bad to worse; disappointments and disillusionment had been following each other fast” in the City of late (306). Speculation was

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80 The *Blackwood’s* passage is similar to a moment in Trollope’s fictional *The Way We Live Now*. In the novel, City financier Melmotte proudly brandishes the number of men from England’s first families at his command. At one point, he delights in making one of them, Mr. Longestaffe, wait outside his office for over two hours. Longestaffe fumes, but he does not budge (*Way We Live Now* 411).
morally indistinguishable from gambling.\footnote{The writings of the 1870s are peppered with allusions equating speculation with gambling, and many thought of gambling as an unforgivable vice destined to corrupt. For example, a Macmillan’s piece of 1874 insisted on deeming a deck of playing cards “A Child’s Best Guide to the Gallows” (Taylor 504).} This England, then—a place of decreasing civility, a place where the gentry’s fortunes were in decline, and a place crawling with a new, boorish class of self-made “money men”—is the country to which Anthony Trollope returned after his 1871 trip to Australia. Disembarking from his voyage, Trollope might have well echoed Saint Pauls and asked, “Is this England?”

Predictably, Trollope responded to this new set of issues by writing. After setting up housekeeping in Montagu square, Trollope began a new book, The Way We Live Now, on May 1, 1873 (Hall 384). The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of a City financier, Augustus Melmotte, and also follows the falling fortunes of the Carbury family—mother, son, daughter, and cousin. The mother, Lady Carbury, is a dilettante novelist who attempts to trade affection for positive reviews. Her son, Sir Felix, is a caddish baronet who racks up enormous debts and unsuccessfully chases Melmotte’s daughter, Marie. Sir Felix’s sister Hetta is in love with one of Melmotte’s associates, Paul Montague, and is simultaneously pursued by her old-fashioned country-squire cousin, Roger. Roger Carbury fiercely retains the old English values that are eroding.

Critics in Trollope’s day hated the novel. Although The Times praised it, saying the work “should make us look into our own lives and habits of thought, and see how ugly and mean and sordid they appear” (409), most critics failed to see the novel as a means of introspection. The Athenaeum politely remarked that The Way We Live Now was not one of Trollope’s best novels (396). The Saturday Review was not quite as politic; it huffily reminded its readers that “we” do not all live that way (88). Meredith White Townsend remarked that the book’s heavy-handed
satire was reminiscent of an earlier Trollope debacle, *The Struggles of Brown, Jones, and Robinson* (826). Since its release, however, the work’s popularity has grown, and it is now widely considered Trollope’s masterpiece.

*The Way We Live Now* features two hobbledehoys, Sir Felix Carbury and Paul Montague. Selfish and unfeeling, Sir Felix has nothing but his looks to recommend him. Although Felix’s drinking and gambling threaten to impoverish his family, his mother continues to indulge him while placing her every hope for the future on this worthless man.

He never read. Thinking was altogether beyond him. And he had never done a day’s work in his life. He could lie in bed. He could eat and drink. He could smoke and sit idle. He could play cards; and could amuse himself with women—the lower the culture of the women, the better the amusement. Beyond these things the world had nothing for him. (511-12)

This scoundrel shares the book’s hobbledehoy status with Paul Montague—a distant relation. Whereas Felix has developed a bad character, Montague has not developed any character and is easily swayed by those around him. When his limited parental legacy becomes entangled with the fortunes of a rakish American financier, Hamilton Fisker, Montague becomes an unwilling accomplice in Melmotte’s stock inflation scheme. But Montague’s fence straddling extends beyond the boardroom, and he vacillates between two love interests—the virginal Hetta Carbury and an imposing American widow, Mrs. Hurtle.

The twin hobbledehoys of *The Way We Live Now* share one mentor, Roger Carbury, Sir Felix’s cousin. Though Squire Carbury is stubborn, opinionated, and generally irascible, everyone agrees he is a first-rate gentleman and genuinely good human being. Falling land values and changing economic realities have limited Roger Carbury’s income—and his power.
Moreover, Carbury is stymied by his own sense of propriety. Carbury’s personal code of gentlemanly conduct is so strict that it forbids a great portion of human intercourse, and he is being smothered by the very code of gentlemanliness that he so proudly touts.82

If the world of Carbury Manor forms the epicenter of good behavior in *The Way We Live Now*, then the epicenter of knavish behavior in the book is a gentlemen’s club where the members can act, not like gentlemen, but like animals. Dedicated to all the lower appetites, the appropriately named Beargarden Club is a place that “contains the most odious spawn of nineteenth-century parasites existing outside Miss Havisham’s wedding cake in *Great Expectations*” (Polhemus 193). Boldly and publicly renouncing all the higher aspirations of gentleman’s club, the Beargarden’s organizing principles proudly state, “there were to be no morning papers taken, no library, no morning room. Dining-rooms, billiard-rooms, and card-rooms would suffice for the Beargarden” (25).

If the nature of the true gentleman, as Shirley Robin Letwin insists, is to see things the way they really are (244-45), then the Beargarden’s “odious spawn” pursues an antithetical course. Beargarden members play cards for outrageous stakes and trade worthless IOUs from each other in lieu of cash. Card cheats are tolerated, but those who identify the cheaters are not. Truth has become bad form. What is more, the “speculative fever” (Ikeler 238) that infects the City has reached the young men of the Beargarden. Propelled by Melmotte’s promise of easy money during the day and Beargarden’s worthless profligates at night, Paul Montague degenerates into the proverbial good boy gone bad; Felix Carbury becomes a bad boy gone worse.

82 By the end of the nineteenth century, gentlemanly behavior had become extremely restrictive and was increasingly defined in negative terms. A popular 1883 conduct book, *Don’t*, is little more than a mere list of social peccadilloes, e.g., “don’t use hair dye,” [. . .] “don’t say pants for pantaloons,” etc. (*Censor* 28, 65). Daunted by the breadth and weight of the forbidden, the reader might well wonder, “What is acceptable?”
The hobbledehoys of *The Way We Live Now* manage to find inappropriate companions among both sexes. Paul Montague spends a good portion of the text attempting to extricate himself from a hastily made and regrettable engagement, while Sir Felix Carbury amuses himself by pursuing a naïve farm girl. Both romantic affairs serve as a showcase for the hobbledehoy’s shortcomings, and both affairs end badly. As the novel begins, Paul Montague has managed to get himself engaged to Mrs. Winifred Hurtle, a forceful and dynamic American woman representing herself as a widow. As an egalitarian American, Hurtle’s outlook allows for little class difference; if anything, she sees herself as Montague’s superior. Nor does Hurtle make it easy for Paul to extradite himself from her company. When Montague broaches the subject of parting, she calls him to task. “‘And I, who have come hither from California to see you, am to return satisfied because you tell me that you have – changed your affections?’” (207). Later she even threatens Montague physically: “‘I desire you to come to me – according to your promise – and you will find me with a horsewhip in my hand’” (392).

Hurtle’s blunt manner serves as a counterpoint to Montague’s timidity. The American’s final verdict on Paul Montague—she calls him a “soft over-civilized man” (691)—points to the fact that his civilizing graces have robbed him of all his will and inner strength. In short, he has purchased gentlemanliness at the cost of that elusive Victorian characteristic—“manliness.”

Genteel behavior was never meant to become indecisive behavior. In the beginning of the century, English gentlemanliness had connotations of “manliness”—and was thus detached from the presumed foppish and effeminate gentility found in France and on the rest of the continent. As his treatment of Hurtle illustrates, Montague’s “gentility” only serves to render him ineffective. He is frozen in a conduct book.

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83 *Manliness*, in the Victorian sense of the term, should not be confused with connotations of *machismo*. For a discussion of the Victorian idea of manliness, see chapter one.
While Paul Montague is struggling with the American spirit, Sir Felix’s descent is abetted by romantic problems of his own. Everything about Carbury’s romance with Ruby Ruggles is misguided: “he probably did not enjoy it much; he cared very little about her, and carried on the liaison simply because it was the proper sort of thing for a young man to do” (145). The relationship with Ruby exacerbates Sir Felix’s downward slide: “They were sitting together at a music-hall – half music-hall, half theater, which pleasantly combined the allurements of the gin-palace, the theatre, and the ball-room trenching hard on those of other places” (328). The indirect allusion to brothels (“other places”) is particularly salient; Sir Felix’s sense of gentlemanliness is quickly mortgaged to serve his lascivious desires. Meeting Ruby also requires Felix to trade his gentleman’s garb and don working men’s clothes. “Sir Felix was smoking, dressed, as he himself called it, ‘incognito’, with a Tom-and-Jerry hat, and blue silk cravat, and green coat. Ruby thought it was charming” (328).

In most hobbledehoy novels, the young man faces financial challenges and *The Way We Live Now* is no exception. Paul Montague ties up his money in an absurd railway venture that is actually little more than a pyramid scheme. His problems, however, pale beside Sir Felix Carbury’s struggles: “a Baronet, holding a commission in the Guards, and known to have had a fortune left him by his father, may go very fair in getting into debt; and Sir Felix had made full use of his privileges” (18). The extent of Sir Felix’s profligacy is matched only by his ridiculous attempts to economize. He says, “‘I pay for nothing that I can help. I even get my hair cut on credit, and as long as it was possible I had a brougham to save on cabs’” (23).

One reason why the hobbledehoy pattern fails to produce gentlemen in *The Way We Live Now* is the utter breakdown of the relationship between the mentor (Roger Carbury) and his charges (Sir Felix Carbury and Paul Montague). In *The Way We Live Now* hobbledehoys either
ignore their mentor (Sir Felix) or are ignored by their mentor (Paul Montague). Roger seems like a natural to play the mentor with his cousin Sir Felix; he is older than Felix, more settled, and the head of the family. However, Felix refuses to listen to Roger’s appeals. The chapter titled “Mentor” devolves into a grim and cheerless satire on the hobbledehoy-mentor relationship, in which the hobbledehoy’s ignorance is matched only by his arrogance. Thereafter, Roger makes little effort to save the dissipated baronet.

Roger’s relationship with Paul Montague should be successful; Montague values Roger’s opinion and regards the elder man as a moral compass. Yet their relationship sours, chiefly because of Paul’s treatment of the American widow Mrs. Hurtle and their shared affection for Hetta Carbury. Paul’s fading relationship with Mrs. Hurtle and his burgeoning relationship with Hetta vexes Roger for two reasons: Roger’s chivalric notions of courtship refuse to admit the possibility that attachments can be made and broken so quickly and, given Roger’s own feelings for Hetta, he feels betrayed by Montague’s affections for the woman. Roger believes Paul “owed it to me not to take the cup of water from my lips” (551). These differing senses of loyalty, morality, affection, and romanticism make a functional hobbledehoy-mentor relationship impossible. By the 1870s it is as if the hobbledehoy and the mentor have mutated into different species.

Traditionally, the young man in the hobbledehoy stories makes his mark by demonstrating physical courage. For example, John Eames saves Lord De Guest from a bull in *The Small House at Allington*. In *The Way We Live Now* physical tests are present but are not presented in a traditionally heroic fashion, and there is a satiric cartoon-like quality to the feats. For Montague, his challenge involves not a wild-charging bull, but a scorned American woman.
Mrs. Hurtle summons Montague to her lodgings, and Paul (despite his knowledge that she threatened to horsewhip him) dogedly obeys. Answering Mrs. Hurtle’s call requires a type of courage, but it is not a courage that merits much boasting.

On the other hand, Sir Felix Carbury is severely humiliated. Whereas Phineas prevents a crime in his test of courage in *Phineas Finn*, in *The Way We Live Now* the hobbledehoy is the perpetrator of a crime. Sir Felix tries to force Ruby into physical relations just as her working class fiancé John Crumb passes by. Crumb thrashes Sir Felix, “[striking] the poor wretch some half-dozen times violently in the face, not knowing or caring exactly where he hit him, but at every blow obliterating a feature” (545). While being pummeled, Sir Felix invokes the chivalric tradition of quarter, begging “‘don’t hit a man when he’s down’” (545). Felix invokes quarter not to save himself from the dishonor of dying on the ground, but rather to merely save himself from being struck in the face. Crumb forcibly raises Sir Felix from the pavement with one hand and strikes him with the other, thus honoring the tradition of quarter while still giving Sir Felix a deserved thrashing.

Having botched the mentor relationship and having floundered through their physical tests, the hobbledehoys of *The Way We Live Now* then set out to bungle their ethical moments. Usually, the young man faces the hobbledehoy’s choice with aplomb and is later restored to gentlemanly status, but in *The Way We Live Now*, both hobbledehoys make shoddy choices and have their full gentlemanly status denied. Sir Felix attempts to woo Marie Melmotte in hopes of gaining her fortune. Predictably, Melmotte refuses to sanction any marriage between Sir Felix and his daughter. However, Marie is aware that Melmotte has hidden a considerable portion of his fortune under her name. If Felix can ignore the old man’s Sturm und Drang and take a leap of faith with Marie, then the money will fall under his control. Marie and Sir Felix conspire
together to elope; however, Felix fritters away his traveling expenses in a drunken night of card playing at the Beargarden and limps home penniless (389). Marie manages to forgive Felix for his wastrel ways, but she cannot forgive him his cowardice; Felix’s ethical moment is a disaster.

Strictly speaking, Paul Montague negotiates his hobbledehoy’s choice more adroitly than does Felix. But the price Montague pays is high, and his triumph is a Pyrrhic one. Montague’s real test of character occurs after he proposes to Hetta Carbury and his previous relationship with Mrs. Hurtle is revealed to Hetta, who, in turn, then refuses to see Montague. Montague’s response to this setback serves as his ethical moment. Rather than develop the fortitude to learn from this romantic reversal or stoically accept his fate, Montague begs for aid from the two individuals his actions have hurt—the jilted Winifred Hurtle and the betrayed Roger Carbury. Montague is thus unmasked as a passive and cowardly individual. Interestingly, after he crawls to Mrs. Hurtle and Squire Carbury, Montague quickly fades into the text’s background. Pushing Paul Montague to the margins also manages to function as the young man’s customary isolation at the end of a hobbledehoy narrative. For Sir Felix, however, that isolation comes in the form of a self-imposed exile after his failure to run away with Marie Melmotte. Felix’s isolation becomes even more pointed after he is beaten by John Crumb.

In *The Inward Revolution*, Alex J. Tuss asserts that Montague’s marriage to Hetta Carbury dulls the edge of Trollope’s satire. But *The Way We Live Now*’s marriage is not a typical literary marriage that marks a restored social order. At Roger Carbury’s suggestion, Hetta and Paul plan to take over the Carbury estate and Roger will live in a small cottage on the grounds. Ostensibly head of Carbury Manor, Paul is in fact a mere figurehead and the real power will still rest with Roger. Thus, Paul begins married life with the unsuccessful suitor lying in wait at his very feet. Paul does not win gentlemanly status for himself; Hetta acquires it for
him via her relationship with Roger Carbury. Status acquired in such a roundabout manner is indeed tainted. But if Montague’s gentlemanly status is tainted, then Sir Felix’s status is abandoned. He is conveniently schlepped off to the continent under the tutelage of a dour clergyman. With Montague in his gilded cage at Carbury Manor and Sir Felix banished to Germany, Britain is purged of its malformed gentleman.

The twisted hobbledehoy pattern in the novel is unusual to be sure, but *The Way We Live Now* is pure Trollope. If the novel seems unlike other Trollope efforts, it may be because of its use of the grotesque, a figure Trollope rarely uses. One of the most common focal points for the grotesque in the work may be found in its descriptions of social interaction. Venues for social interaction in the book become grotesque parodies of their original purpose; for example, the Beargarden is a parody of what a Victorian gentleman’s club *should* be. Young men frequent the club not due to common interests or in search of fellowship but rather only to wallow in vices unfettered by societal taboos. Lady Pomona’s country-house weekend is another such grotesquerie. Despite the outward manifestations of social intercourse, the weekend features no attempt at real friendship or genuine neighborliness. Additionally, Melmotte’s dinner party for the Emperor of China has none of qualities of camaraderie one might expect in a dinner. Social intercourse is actually *discouraged* at the party as the guest of honor dines from behind a railed-off portion of the dining room. The dinner party actually serves to increase the anti-Melmotte feeling in society.

The satire of *The Way We Live Now* extends both to people and to events. For example, Mr. Longestaffe vilifies his neighbor, Mr. Primero, who “owed no man anything” (167). Longestaffe’s twisted conception of gentlemanly behavior cannot conceive of a gentleman unfettered by debt. Felix’s fatherlessness is inflated and the baronet mutates into a whining
mamma’s boy who slinks back to the parental home whenever he is faced with a challenge. Montague must cope with absurdly grotesque situations. For example, Paul realizes he must jilt the American widow to preserve his own gentlemanly status (207, 324).\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, a heightened sense of propriety prevents Roger Carbury from acknowledging Mrs. Hurtle on the beach at Lowestoffe (360). Hence, in both cases, gentlemanly behavior necessitates rudeness, not politeness.

Any analysis of \textit{The Way We Live Now} would be incomplete without considering the novel’s villain. At first glance, it might seem obvious that the villain is Augustus Melmotte. But Melmotte is dispensed with too easily (he spares society the trouble of purging him from their ranks by committing suicide) and too early in the narrative (his death occurs with more than one hundred pages remaining in the book) to qualify for the villain’s role. To unhesitatingly label Melmotte the villain of the book is a mistake.\textsuperscript{85} The true villain of \textit{The Way We Live Now} are the old families of the aristocracy and gentry—Longestaffe, Grendall, and Nidderdale. They are the men who allow Melmotte into the upper reaches of society. Melmotte is not the problem; his acceptance is. There have always been hucksters and members of the \textit{nouveau riche} eager to elbow their way into society. But Trollope’s text presumes that in previous eras the old families

\textsuperscript{84} In \textit{The Small House at Allington}, John Eames faces a similar situation; he must jilt Amelia Roeper to preserve his own gentlemanly status.

\textsuperscript{85} The extent of Melmotte’s villainy is not the only hasty conclusion critics make when considering the work. Perennially, critics present Melmotte’s supposedly Jewish background as evidence of Trollope’s virulent anti-Semitism. (See, for example, Micahel Ragussis’s book \textit{Figures of Conversion} or Derek Cohen’s article “Constructing the Contradiction.”) Although Trollope was no model of religious tolerance and his work contains multiple crudely drawn and offensive portraits of Jewish characters (see, for example, the moneylender in \textit{The Three Clerks}), Melmotte is not one of those anti-Semitic characterizations. Although the text reports that Melmotte’s wife is Jewish, his religious background is left unclear—purposely so. Perhaps some critics confuse what the narrator states about Melmotte and what the (notoriously unreliable) characters in the book say about Melmotte. People accuse Melmotte of being Jewish in the novel, but such unsupported accusations serve only as part of a larger overall campaign to label Melmotte as “other.” At other points in the text, he is accused of being a vociferous anti-Papist Protestant (423) or a pious Roman Catholic intent on undermining Anglican Britain (429). As N. John Hall observes, when the narrator comments on Melmotte’s heritage he labels him only as Irish; his religious background is left murky (Hall 384).
had been strong enough to resist and avoid the interlopers. In the 1870s, that strength is failing; Lord Alfred tolerates Melmotte’s boorish behavior in the futile hope that his own financial prospects might be repaired. “Lord Alfred had been born and bred a gentleman, and found the position in which he was now earning his bread to be almost insupportable” (417). The qualifier is important: Lord Alfred finds such company “almost insupportable” and he manages to choke down an association with Melmotte. As Robin Gilmour has observed, the problem in *The Way We Live Now* is not speculation *per se* but the fact that speculation has spread to the landed classes (173).

Midway through the novel, a fellow squire assures Roger Carbury that Melmotte need not bother the Suffolk squirearchy. Roger’s reply makes the full stakes of the situation clear and clarifies the duties of the aristocracy:

‘You can keep your house free from him, and so can I mine. But we set no example to the nation at large. They who do set the example go to his feasts, and of course he is seen at theirs in return. And yet these leaders of the fashion know – at any rate they believe – that he is what he is because he has been a swindler greater than other swindlers. (423)

The breakdown in gentlemanliness—a breakdown caused in part by the failure of the mentor/hobbledehoy relationship and the dereliction of the aristocracy—that begins in Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* continues in *The Prime Minister*.

In his *Autobiography*, Trollope called *The Prime Minister* a failure (398), and an examination of the contemporary reviews reveals his reasoning: *The Spectator* merely said that the book was not of Trollope’s “pleasanter” novels (419). *The Times* maintained it would never number among his readers’ favorites (424). Perhaps most stinging of all, *The Saturday Review* called the book “vulgar” and implied that its vulgarity could be traced to its progenitor.
This “vulgar” book tells the story of a marriage between a successful barrister’s daughter and a young man of uncertain background and may be read as a hobbledehoy story of Ferdinand Lopez. A prototypical outsider, Lopez represents an unknown commodity and tends to bring out particularly xenophobic attitudes from those around him. As the barrister, Mr. Wharton, explains, “when a man has connections, a father and mother, or uncles and aunts, people that everybody knows about, then there is some guarantee of security” (44). Lopez, lacking such connections, lacks that security guarantee as well. Mr. Wharton finds longtime family friend Arthur Fletcher a more desirable suitor for his daughter Emily’s hand because “he is a gentleman of the class to which I belong myself” (88).

In most Trollopian hobbledehoy narratives, the young man’s gentlemanly status is in doubt as the text begins and through the course of the novel that status is regained. The Prime Minister reverses that format; Lopez begins the novel secure in his gentlemanliness and loses that status by novel’s end. Lopez, “who looks always as though he had just been sent home in a bandbox” (13), is accepted as a gentleman by those around him. Yet Lopez has merely cloaked himself in the appurtenances of gentlemanliness (in that respect he is literally a “self-made” man); he has not earned the status. Such reliance on appearance is key to Lopez’s ruse, but in the second half of the book, Lopez’s reliance on appearance begins to fail him. Next to “real” gentlemen like Arthur Fletcher, Lopez’s shortcomings become apparent and even the narrator hesitates to call Lopez a gentleman, saying only “he knew how to talk and to look like a gentleman” (464). By the end of the book, no one is fooled by Lopez; Glencora Palliser refers to him as “a horror” (325).

In most hobbledehoy novels, the young man becomes attracted to a woman of lower socioeconomic status; in The Prime Minister it is the male who hails from the lower stratum, and
it is the female who risks her status in pursuit of her lover. Lopez insists on breaking down the social barriers that exist between Emily and himself, and despite Mr. Wharton’s half-hearted efforts, the pair marry.

Lopez needs a mentor, but the mentor system is completely dysfunctional in *The Prime Minister*; mentors are either ill fitted for their jobs or unwilling to accept the responsibility. Sextus Parker is a stockjobber and financial crony of Lopez. Parker makes an especially poor mentor figure; even Lopez admits Parker is “the vulgarest little creature you ever put your eyes on” (339). Lopez’s real mentor in *The Prime Minister* is Emily’s father, Abel Wharton. Wharton has many of the characteristics of the typical Trollopian hobbledehoy mentor figure and he is described with the slightly bemused respect Trollope reserves for the old-fashioned gentlemen who pepper his novels. Wharton also possesses a thorough knowledge of the conduct expected from gentlemen. When Lopez languidly replies that he finds it difficult to say exactly what counts as “making love,” Wharton angrily rebukes the younger man: “D— it, sir, a gentleman knows. A gentleman knows whether he has been playing on a girl’s feelings, and a gentleman, when he is asked as I have asked you, will at any rate tell the truth” (30). Yet Wharton never accepts the mentor’s role; his personal dislike of Lopez makes such a relationship impossible. In response Lopez pushes harder and even moves into the elder man’s home. In fact, much of Lopez’s pushiness is a feeble attempt to get the older man to pay attention to him.

Part of the reason that Lopez is in such desperate need of a mentor is the precarious nature of his finances. Lopez’s entire relationship with money is different from that of his hobbledehoy predecessors; whereas people like Abel Wharton are able to accrue wealth by steady saving, Lopez, representing the new breed of self-made City “money man,” craves *immediate* and *unlimited* wealth. Speaking to Parker about Wharton’s pecuniary habits, Lopez
That was the old-fashioned way, and the most sure. But, as you say, it is not rapid enough” (256). Later Parker’s wife simply says of Lopez, “he wants to get rich too quick’” (400). In *The Prime Minister* then, the hobbledehoy’s usual impecuniousness mutates into a full-blown avariciousness.

Greed is not the only imperfection Lopez demonstrates; he is also a bully. The hobbledehoy’s usual test of courage involves standing up to protect the defenseless: for example, Charley Tudor jumps into the Thames to save Katie Woodward in *The Three Clerks*. The test of courage featured in *The Prime Minister* features hobbledehoy as perpetrator, not protector.

When Arthur Fletcher writes the married Emily an innocent letter, Lopez becomes enraged and publicly threatens to horsewhip Fletcher. Despite his savage posturing, Lopez’s bluster masks a cowardly inner nature. When an important letter arrives, Lopez is afraid to open it and makes Emily do so for him, assuring her that “when I am really anxious I become like a child” (246).

Such inner cowardliness foreshadows failure in the ethical moment and, predictably, Lopez blunders. Having exhausted his opportunities in England, Lopez semi-seriously embarks on a plan to take control of a mining operation in Guatemala, which functions as a final effort to raise capital from Emily’s father. Although Wharton decides to accede to Lopez’s monetary demands, Lopez “blinks first” and commits suicide by standing in front of the train at Tenway Junction.86 In order for Lopez to fulfill the last stage of the hobbledehoy pattern and be cast out

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86 Lopez’s dramatic suicide at the Tenway Junction—so reminiscent of Anna’s suicide in *Anna Karenina*—was probably not inspired by Tolstoy’s text; more likely, it was based on real-life events commonly reported in the English periodical press of the late nineteenth century. In the years immediately preceding Trollope’s composition of *The Prime Minister*, *The Times* routinely reported suicides virtually identical to Lopez’s. See, for example, “Death on a Railway” and “Killed by an Express Train” for details. Also, Trollope’s choice of setting for Lopez’s suicide is significant for the Junction is really a place of no place at all; there are no homes or businesses at Tenway: it is a thoroughly and nightmarish machine-age locale that exists only to allow railway trains to change tracks.
alone, a significant amount of textual energy must be expended. The Lopezes of the world are
difficult to shake off, and a speeding train at Tenway Junction is needed to expurgate Lopez from
upper-class London; he is “knocked into bloody atoms” (520) by the speeding express.

Bill Overton has noted Trollope’s writing often demonstrates an “instinctive, though
often ambivalent, sympathy for the exposed or isolated person” (13), and in death, Lopez
manages to find some of the acceptance that he was unable to garner in life. Certainly Emily
demonstrates increased affection and loyalty to her husband after his death. She asks, “Who is
to tell the shades of difference in badness? He was not a drunkard, or a gambler. Through it all
he was true to his wife” (526). Others develop sympathy for the man as well; for example,
Glencora Palliser admits, “I have a sort of feeling, you know, that among us we made the train
run over him” (659).

Comparisons between The Prime Minister and The Way We Live Now are easy to locate.
Like The Way We Live Now, the reputation of The Prime Minister has been steadily improving
since its initial release, and it is now among the most-respected of Trollope’s efforts.

Furthermore, Trollope uses the grotesque in The Prime Minister just as he used it in the earlier
work: Sextus Parker is a grotesque figure of a mentor and helps teach Lopez vulgarity, not
gentlemanliness. The grotesque’s fascination with bodily functions is also present: presenting
himself as a great international businessman, Lopez actually buys and sells shit—much of his
speculation is in bird guano futures.

Also, if Lopez is partially redeemed by the end of the novel, then the Prime Minister, like
The Way We Live Now, has a problematic villain. One could argue that Mr. Wharton is the
villain of the piece; despite his reservations about Lopez’s background and character, he
acquiesces to the marriage. Ironically, it is Wharton’s own sense of fairness that spells the doom
in the book. Wharton assumes that his dislike of Lopez is based solely on nationalistic and anti-Semitic prejudice, so eventually he relents and allows Lopez to court his daughter: the text confirms Wharton’s prejudices.

Though the text might corroborate Wharton’s xenophobia, it refuses to acquit him. The barrister’s ideas of gentlemanliness are old-fashioned; his contention that a seat in Parliament does not make a man a gentleman (112) predates even Elizabethan connotations of gentlemanliness. In hopes of excluding Lopez from the realm of gentleman, Wharton must turn to a strict, pre-Renaissance definition of gentlemanliness; i.e., a gentleman is someone who can live without labor. Yet Wharton cannot rely on that early definition, for to do so would be to exclude himself from the realm of gentlemen (Wharton labors, albeit not physically, as a barrister). Therefore, even as this reactionary text validates xenophobia, it simultaneously critiques the very social pillars it struggles to protect.

Other cracks in the edifice of gentlemanliness are brought to light as well. Gentlemanliness’s flexibility, usually an asset, allows easy infiltration by Lopez. Lopez, the son of peddler, merely has to dress in the appurtenances of gentlemanliness to be able to circulate in the finest circles of English society. Although he is eventually expunged from that society, the threat Lopez poses is very real; after all, the only thing that stopped him was lack of money, and English conceptions of gentlemanliness were always predicated on the assumption that it was based on more than just financial resources. Furthermore, as these novels make clear, Trollope suspects some gentlemanly virtues (like tolerance and understanding of others) are incompatible with other characteristics of the gentlemanly class (such as exclusivity). Lopez penetrates the inner sanctum of the Whartons in part because Mr. Wharton’s gentlemanliness prohibits such decidedly vulgar questions as, “how much money do you make?”
A character in *The Way We Live Now* surveys the carnage left in the wake of Melmotte’s schemes and muses that “the world must be coming to an end” (568). Indeed, there is a kind of societal death at work in both *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*, and taken together, they signal a death knell for the English gentleman. There is a new world afoot in the 1870s, and it is a world of ledgers and balance sheets, not romance. As one twentieth-century commentator put it, “success is what the Victorians were beginning to have instead of God” (Polhemus 160). There is little place for the gentleman in this new world where, as Dolly Longestaffe observes, “most fellows are bad fellows” (*Way We Live* 737). Even Lopez understands that this is a world of “no mercy, no friendship, no kindness, no forbearance anywhere” (*Prime Minister* 503).

Trollope’s novels of the 1870s mark a bellwether in many respects. His long-feared notion that the gentleman was somehow becoming diluted (Gilmour 45) seemed to be coming to fruition. The hobbledehoys of *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*—the pale shadows of gentlemen past—are not restored to gentlemanly status like their predecessors; they are forced out of the country (Sir Felix) or shoved into sham marriages (Paul Montague) or even obliterated by express trains (Lopez).

Despite the fact that the immediate danger these faux-genteel hobbledehoys of the 1870s represent is assuaged, they represent a real threat. There exists in almost all of Trollope a line between the city and the country. Whereas the city represents crass and ill-mannered acquisitiveness, the countryside represents an idealized pastoral Eden. Under this system the

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87 Notice too how the types of names Trollope chooses for the hobbledehoy figures have changed since the more optimistic novels of the 1850s and 1860s. Trollopian hobbledehoys of the 1850s and 1860s possess solid British names (Tudor, Johnny, Charley, Norman—even Phineas, so clearly associated with Ireland). In contrast, the hobbledehoys of the 1870s possess names with a distinct continental tinge (e.g., Montague, Lopez).

88 Trollope’s works are rife with examples of this city/country dichotomy; for example, Alaric, Harry, and Charley use Mrs. Woodward’s lush suburban home in Hampton Court to recharge their emotional and spiritual batteries in
denizens of the English countryside are, in large measure, shielded from the bestial tomfoolery of the city. In the 1870s that begins to change, and the faux gentlemen, monstrous hobblesdehoys, and Smilesian self-made City “money men” manage to pierce the city/country line of demarcation. Lopez’s villainy rattles the very foundation of the country estates at Longbarns and Wharton Hall. In *The Way We Live Now*, Melmotte buys a stately country home (but does not pay for it), mortgages the property in full, and then savagely rips the property down. As these novels demonstrate, the barbarians are not just at the gates, they breach the gates.

The speed at which the pillars of gentlemanliness dissolved in the 1870s was truly startling. An examination of Trollope’s works in conjunction with the period’s extant prose non-fiction reveals that the cult of the Victorian gentleman began to collapse for a myriad of reasons—social, economic, temporal, and ontological. As discussed, the collapse in the system of Victorian gentlemanliness can in part be traced back to a malfunction in the traditional hobblesdehoys-mentor relationship. Yet the failure of the mentor-hobblesdehoys relationship in and of itself could not spell the doom of the English gentleman. Other factors were at play as well. Part of the reason for the gentleman’s demise was simply economic; simply put, farming and land rents—the gentry’s traditional source of income—fell or remained stagnant, while other sources of income (e.g., manufacturing) surged. In a *Fraser’s* article of 1876, J.A. Froude pointed out that land paid a mere 2% per year (675). *Blackwood’s* echoed the bad news, noting in 1876 simply that squires “found themselves nowhere these days” (Shand, “Speculative” 294). Gradual inflation, occasional bad harvests, and tenant vacancies made it particularly hard to stretch that 2% profit; “landholders find it hard to hold their own, if they live like their fathers on their rentals” (Shand, “Some Gentlemen” 341). Trollope’s novels of the period also manifest

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*The Three Clerks*. Country residents are safer than their counterparts in the city, but even country residents are sometimes vulnerable. Lily Dale’s false lover, Crosbie, comes from the city to wreak havoc on the idyllic and
signs of the gentry’s financial squeeze. In *The Way We Live Now*, Roger Carbury possesses an income that “is no longer comfortably adequate to the wants of an English gentleman” (45). Dolly Longestaffe’s occasional flirtations with debt exacerbate the problem: “‘It [the family estate] gives us three per cent on the money it’s worth, while the governor is paying six per cent, and I’m paying twenty-five for the money we’ve borrowed’” (219). This shift in the prevailing financial wind, of course, does not bode well for the gentry.

As the economic conditions adjust in the late nineteenth century, so too did the social and political milieu. Hence, the gentleman figure was becoming an atavistic relic. There is no shortage of reasons for this shift: Victoria Glenndinning notes that the Reform Bills eroded much of the gentry’s political powers (433), but the changes in the 1870s were more fundamental than merely shifting political winds. Tony Tanner has asserted that the typical country squire of the 1870s found that the “the modern world has passed out of his keeping” (265), a circumstance that manifests itself quite clearly in Trollope’s works. The gentlemen who appear in *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister* seem careworn and sometimes simply worn out. Mr. Wharton feels that “all his happiness was to be drawn from the past” (*Prime Minister* 114). Similarly, Roger Carbury, though barely middle-aged during *The Way We Live Now*, is “old-fashioned, and knew nothing of people as they are now” (234). Merely thirty-six when he first proposes to Hetta, Roger is thought to be absurdly too old to contemplate marriage.

Significantly, the gentlemen of Trollope’s 1870s novels are also portrayed as symbolic eunuchs. At the end of *The Way We Live Now* Roger Carbury plans to turn over his home to the woman who spurned his romantic advances, Hetta, and the man who successfully won her hand, Paul Montague (713). He is then complicit in his symbolic cuckoldry, and his future existence will be little more than that of a built-in eunuch on his own estate. Other examples of this pastoral world of *The Small House at Allington*. 
characterization include *The Prime Minister* in which Abel Wharton simply gives up the battle for Emily, and the chapter in which he grants permission for Lopez to court his daughter is fittingly titled “Surrender” (198). Wharton’s conceptualization of their courtship renders it in terms more suited to a rape than a romance: “The man had destroyed all the plans of his life, broken through into his castle, and violated his very hearth. No doubt he himself had vacillated” (386). Even *The Prime Minister’s* destroyer, Ferdinand Lopez, is eventually de-sexualized; late in the text he is referred to as “utterly unmanly and even unconscious of the worth of manliness” (514). The gentleman’s ineffectiveness draws the wrath of the Duchess of Omnium; she insists, “I hate people to be sensitive. It makes them cowards [. . .] Men shouldn’t be made of Sèvres china, but of good stone earthenware” (*Prime Minister* 437).

The gentlemen of the 1870s are rendered not only ineffectual, but also mute. In 1862, James Fitzjames Stephen wrote that the gentleman’s defining characteristic is a frank and honest simplicity (qtd. in Adams 207), and many characterizations of gentleman of the period showcase a man who is comfortable with silence. By the 1870s, however, that frank simplicity has morphed into muteness, and the gentlemen figures of Trollope’s novels are unable or unwilling to speak at key moments. Sometimes this silence comes out of a misplaced politeness; in *The Way We Live Now*, Lord Nidderdale cautions against speaking out against the card cheats who frequent the Beargarden club (174). Similarly, Paul Montague’s gentlemanly scruples keep him from publicly unmasking Melmotte’s villainy; as a director of the railway, behavior codes prevent Paul from publicly discussing the railway’s finances—even when those finances are teetering on the brink of insolvency. Paul threatens to go public with his information, but as Melmotte responds, “you can’t be in earnest in the threat you made, because you would be making public things communicated to you under the seal of privacy — and no gentleman would
do that” (286). In *The Prime Minister*, reserve keeps Abel Wharton from asking the impolitic but vital questions of Lopez regarding the younger man’s finances, and Wharton cannot even speak to Emily about his reticence to endorse Lopez as a suitor (73).

Sometimes this silence develops in response to a world that is becoming increasingly unfamiliar; in *The Way We Live Now*, Roger Carbury attempts to talk to his cousin, Sir Felix, but the gulf between the two men is so great that “Roger felt that he hadn’t half said what he had to say, but he hardly knew how to get it said. And of what use could it be to talk to a young man who was altogether callous and without feeling” (59). Later Felix is stunned into silence at the thrashing he takes from John Crumb that afterwards he “could say nothing. He could only moan and make futile efforts to wipe away the stream of blood from his face” (545).

In Trollope’s novels of the 1870s, this English gentleman, a man aged, impotent, and silent, is being replaced by a new-style false gentleman who is often of foreign descent and might well have been inspired by the self-help books of writers such as Samuel Smiles. Since Trollope’s works are peppered with unsympathetic characters like the Portuguese Lopez and the Irish Melmotte, it is easy to read Trollope’s novels of the 1870s as chauvinistic, racist, or even anti-Semitic undertakings in which nationality, race, and religion are all carelessly and conflated in one amorphous but xenophobic mass. 89 Certainly such sentiments are easy to find in both the texts; Lopez is called a “nasty foreigner” and a “swarthy son of Judah” (*Prime Minister* 110, 35), but the object of Trollope’s xenophobic and racist fear can be difficult to pinpoint. 90 In *The Way We Live Now*, Melmotte is clearly an “other,” but he is variously (and confidently) reported to be Irish, American, French, Jewish, and even Austrian. I believe that the reason for this lack of

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89 Michael Ragussis observes that Trollope continually conflates race and religion in *The Prime Minister*. At one point, Lopez is referred to as a “black Jew” (25).
clarity is that Trollope’s target is to be found much closer to home than some unspecified Jewish/Irish/Portuguese confidence man.

An examination of the Victorian press in the 1870s fails to reveal any particular increase in anti-foreign or anti-Jewish target prose. However, the 1870s were a decade in which Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help* books grew from a very successful series into a certifiable industry in and of themselves. The 1870s were also a decade in which the periodical press ran a number of articles debating the merits of Smilesian ideas. For example, in 1872, *Fraser’s* worried that increased egalitarian opportunity for those in the lower strata of society might lead to a disappearance of the truly exceptional in human endeavor (Leslie 151). Earlier that year, *Fraser’s* worried that competitive examinations (a favorite topic of Trollope’s) might lead to a position going to a “very vulgar fellow” (Boyd, “Competitive” 69). In both of Trollope’s novels of the 1870s such a “very vulgar fellow” does manage to infiltrate, however briefly, the highest echelons of British society.

In his profile of Smiles, Adrian Jarvis asserts that there is a link between Trollope’s novel *The Way We Live Now* and Smiles’s biography of the nineteenth-century railway baron, *The Life of George Stephenson*. In fact, railroads play an important role in both *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister*. But the relationship between Trollope and Smiles goes much deeper than that. I suggest that the real target of Trollope’s pair of 1870s novels is not the foreign other, but the Smilesian hero.

Certainly the juggernaut that Samuel Smiles’s self-improvement literature had become—works like *Self-Help* (1857), *Duty* (1880), and *Thrift* (1875)—was still a very important publishing force. Smiles’s works were still very influential during the 1870s; Asa Briggs notes

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90 Both works resist easy categorization. For instance, although *The Way We Live Now* is filled with xenophobic and anti-Semitic comments, the work’s only noble character is the Jewish banker, Mr. Breghert.
that a late nineteenth-century English visitor to an Egyptian palace was mistakenly told that the Islamic verses on the palace wall were actually quotations from Smiles and were “‘much better than the texts from the Koran’” (“Self-Help” 7). Despite their ubiquitous popularity, Smiles’s works were falling out of favor in certain circles, and a number of Victorian commentators believed that his work promoted a “ruthless self interest” (Richards 53) and was, in fact, “the apotheosis of respectability, gigamanity, and selfish grab” (Briggs, “Self-Help” 17).

At first glance, there is an affinity between Smiles’s motivational works and Trollope’s novels; both sets of writings endorse thrift, responsibility, and order while indicating an almost holy reverence for the value of hard work. Smiles even mentions Trollope by name in Character as he touts the benefits of a business background as a precursor to artistic endeavors (117-20). However, small but essential differences exist between Smiles’s theories and Trollope’s. For example, Trollope, who once remarked that “there are places in life which can hardly be well filled except by ‘Gentlemen’” (Autobiography 39), stops well short of the type of unfettered endorsement of the self-made man Smiles makes. Smiles, for his part, takes a position that owes “a great deal to the opposition in his mind between the (good) industrious People and the (evil) aristocracy” (Travers 162). For Trollope, who continually struggled to see all sides of an issue, Smiles’s rendering of an innately evil aristocracy must have been far too dogmatic.

Also, even Trollope’s earliest, most optimistic hobbledehoy novels are stories of regaining gentlemanliness, not attaining gentlemanliness. Ploughboys do not become gentlemen in Trollope’s works; educated sons of clergymen (who may sometimes act like ploughboys) become gentlemen in Trollope’s works. Smiles, for his part, would probably not rule out a ploughboy becoming a gentleman; Self-Help insists that “the poorest have sometimes taken the highest places” (40).
Additional divisions between Trollope and Smiles become apparent when examining their respective attitudes toward the concept of work. Certainly both writers owe a debt to Thomas Carlyle for their attitudes on labor; in 1831 Carlyle wrote, “man is actually Here; not to ask questions but to do work” (“Characteristics” 32), and no doubt both Trollope and Smiles would agree. Both men see work as having redemptive qualities and as a fundamentally didactic exercise. In Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives work teaches diligence, industriousness, and responsibility—a goal with which Smiles would no doubt approve.

But Smiles would be even more enthusiastic than Trollope in touting the benefits of labor; much of Smiles’s writing implies that hard work possesses inherent, almost mystical curative powers. For example, in Self-Help the ex-physician Smiles seemed to prescribe work as a remedy for what we in the twenty-first century might label “depression”; he wrote: “it is perhaps to the neglect of physical exercise that we find amongst students so frequent a tendency towards discontent, unhappiness, inaction and reverie [. . . ] the only remedy for this green sickness in youth is physical exercise” (304). Furthermore, Smiles seems to intimate that physical labor could somehow impart personal integrity itself; in 1871—shortly before Trollope began to write The Way We Live Now—Smiles wrote: “labor may be a burden and a chastisement, but it is also an honor and glory [. . . ] we have spoken of work as a discipline: it is also an educator of character” (Character 97, 109). It is this passage that best highlights the difference between Smilesian and Trollopian conceptions of work. Trollope might well have agreed about the benefits of work, but he would have required work to emanate from a locus of moral preeminence. The Smilesian edict of “work for work’s sake” might well have struck Trollope as absurd as the aesthetics’ edict of “art for art’s sake.” Both Melmotte in The Way We
Live Now and Lopez in *The Prime Minister* work diligently, but their work holds little value and is ultimately destructive, not constructive.

Smiles’s *Self-Help* appeared in 1857, just as Trollope was beginning his cycle of hobbledehoy narratives with *The Three Clerks*. But Trollope did not respond to the challenge laid forth by the Smilesian gospel of work until *The Way We Live Now* in 1875—some eighteen years later. Why? Perhaps the answer may be found in the changing social conditions of the period. Earlier, with the gentry holding class the line against upstarts (Smilesian and other) in the 1850s and 1860s, Trollope could afford to let the lesser ideological differences of opinion between himself and Smiles go without comment. But by the 1870s, the ebbing power of the landed classes coupled with the general growth of incivility around London made it imperative that Trollope, ever the social commentator, address the issue.
Chapter Seven: Shards: Reading Hobbledehoy Narratives as Critiques of Victorian Conduct Literature

In Charles Dickens’s novel *Barnaby Rudge*, locksmith Gabriel Varden is introduced grumbling about his apprentice’s habitual reading of conduct manuals and self-improvement texts. Speaking of Sim Tapertit’s latest pithy comment, Varden says derisively, “I suppose that’s out of the ‘Prentice’s Garland, or the ‘Prentice’s Delight, or the ‘Prentice’s Warbler, or the ‘Prentice’s Guide to the Gallows, or some such improving textbook. Now he’s going to beautify himself” (79). In *Barnaby Rudge*, non-fiction conduct literature manifests itself in the text in a way that is easily apparent. In Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels, however, the relationship between conduct literature and fiction is a bit more difficult to fathom. This chapter will seek to sum up the dissertation and delineate the problematic and thorny relationship between Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives and conduct literature. Such an undertaking is not without its challenges.

One challenge stems from Anthony Trollope’s (in)famously prodigious literary output. With a literary corpus totaling approximately nine million words, even the most intrepid study of Trollope’s work leaves individual texts under-examined. In studies of more modest length (like this one), such gaps are unavoidable. Although I have attempted to examine Trollope’s most important hobbledehoy figures, such as Charley Tudor, Phineas Finn, Johnny Eames, John Caldigate, Paul Montague, Sir Felix Carbury, and Ferdinand Lopez, that examination has been performed at the expense of giving short shrift to other Trollopian hobbledehoy figures, such as Lucius Mason in *Orley Farm*, Ralph Newton in *Ralph the Heir*, and Mountjoy Scarborough in *Mr. Scarborough's Family*. Similarly, a study of the position of Trollope’s female hobbledehoy figures (those he dubbed *hobbledehoyas*) characters such as Alice Vavasor in *Can You Forgive Her?*, Mable Grex in *The Duke’s Children* and Arabella Trefoil in *The American Senator*, will
have to wait. The stories of these women—or the eponymous hobbledehoya heroines from works such as *Lady Anna* and *Rachel Ray*—are in acute need of critical analysis.\(^9\)

In addition, the pervasive ambiguity of the term *gentleman* tends to work to thwart this work’s comprehensiveness. As discussed in the first chapter of this work and as the OED reminds us, the word *gentleman* derives not from the word *gentle* but rather from *gens*, meaning “race or type”—the same root that gives us *genus* or *genre*. So, when a group of gentlemen exclude some parvenu upstart by saying “he is not one of our kind,” they are doing more than just indulging unfettered elitism; gentlemanliness has always been bound with the idea of kinds or types. This was especially true during the Victorian era: as Victoria Glendinning notes, “gentlemanliness was not so much a question of class as of tribe” (52). But this *tribe* or community of gentlemen can be notoriously difficult to define. The OED’s definition of the term spans three oversized pages and lists twenty distinct definitions, ranging from the predictable, “a man of superior position in society,” to the specific, “one of forty gentlemen who act as guards or attendants to the sovereign,” to the curiously bizarre, “an apparatus used in soldering circular pewter ware” (6:451-453). Some assume those in the early modern era had a stable idea of what they meant by gentleman and point to Harrison’s narrow 1580 definition as evidence that gentlemanliness once carried stable meaning. Harrison, it will be remembered, points to six neat categories of gentlemen (lawyers, scholars, physicians, military officers, political counselors, and those who can live without manual labor [qtd. in Phillip Mason 29]). However, recent historical work by sociologists, anthropologists, and literary scholars indicates that the term had long had a certain amount of ambiguousness attached to it. Anecdotal evidence from literature seems to support that line of reasoning: in 1749 Lord Chesterfield wrote that

\(^9\) Although she does not use the term *hobbledehoya*, Rajiva Wijesinha makes inroads into a consideration of the figure in her 1982 work, *The Androgynous Trollope*.  

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gentlemanliness was based on “a thousand nameless things which nobody can describe” (Letter, April 19 OS, 1749). In the following century, William Hazlitt wrote of gentlemanliness, “we all know it when we see it; but we do not know how to account for it, or to explain in what it consists” (209).

Difficult as it is to settle on a precise definition of gentlemanliness, most informed readers might agree on some characteristics about the expression. They can agree it has something to do with behavior. They can agree that it is related to, though not entirely dependent upon, financial resources. In addition, most might agree that gentlemanliness has connotations of reliability. Though some refer to this quality by other names—Shirley Robin Letwin calls it “fixity” (68), Phillip Mason uses the Latin gravitas, and Robin Gilmour calls it disinterestedness—they’re all referring to what James Eli Adams calls steadiness.

By the nineteenth century, this sense of steadiness or gravitas was under attack and the concept of gentlemanliness was undergoing new pressures from both within the Empire and outside it. Some pressures originated from the other side of the English Channel; many point to the French Revolution as one of the defining moments in the history of English gentlemanliness. Not only did the Revolution curb some of the excessive affectations associated with eighteenth-century gentlemanliness, but, as Robin Gilmour has demonstrated, it also intertwined English gentlemanliness with nationalism in a way that never had been done before; “the gentleman” in writing and speech became “the English gentleman.” As Tony Tanner has observed, the nineteenth-century English gentleman was England’s answer to the French Revolution (27). The idealized (and arguably naïve) view of the English gentleman as something fixed and undeviatingly stable survived long after the sun had begun to set on the British Empire: shortly before World War II John E. Mason wrote with gushing sentimentality, “the classic world had
for its ideal the orator [. . . ] Renaissance Italy developed the courtier of Castiglione; the French Revolution, in its earliest and noblest enthusiasm produced the citizen; England still has the gentleman” (1). Given the complicated and sometimes contradictory pressures and needs surrounding the world of the English gentleman, it is not surprising the English society responded in complicated ways—some of them predictable, some of them surprising.

Predictably, Britain’s need in the nineteenth century for a larger gentlemanly class was met by a significant increase in the number of public schools; Phillip Mason has called the nineteenth-century public schools “factories for gentlemen” (161), and there was a real sense of merely ratcheting up the speed of the gentlemanly assembly line to meet increased demand. The reasoning was simple: the Empire’s need for gentlemen was increasing; a larger Empire demands a larger ruling class, and it was essential that these young men be thought of as gentlemen lest the Empire become disconnected from its traditional values. Ergo: more and better organized public schools. And, as public schools were being built, the idea of public schools was being built up by works like Tom Brown’s School Days (Hughes).92

Counter to this increasing demand for gentlemen was an uncertainty concerning who was and was not a gentleman—a crisis that was exacerbated by the steady shift of wealth from land to commercial ventures.93 Yet, as discussed in the preceding chapter, despite the perceptible “gentleman shortage” of the mid-nineteenth century, many feared the standards for gentlemen were being eroded. Consequently, pressure was placed on the cadres of gentlemen to keep their

92 James Eli Adams finds interest in the public school system part of a larger societal trend that was fascinated with an array of male secret societies. He links interest in the public schools with an interest in Newman’s Oxford movement as well as Catholic monasteries. See Adams’ work Dandies and Desert Saints 35-39.

93 Although anxiety over who was and was not a gentleman was particularly acute in the nineteenth century, such anxiety was not the sole province of that era. John Mason observes that grumbling about the poor quality of contemporary gentlemen compared with the noble gentlemen of the past has always been a part of English conduct literature. See Mason’s Gentlefolk in the Making (7).
ranks small. Therefore, the movement toward a more open, flexible idea of gentlemanliness is neither linear nor constant; as the culture ratchets up production of gentlemen via the public schools, it simultaneously places an increased number and more stringent set of societal checks on the process. So the movement toward a more flexible definition of gentleman is not a march, rather it more closely resembles a forward-backward/forward-backward struggle. As production increases, a counter-movement springs up that attempts to align the gentleman more closely with the past.\footnote{Although it is difficult to quantify the evidence of this counter-movement, anecdotal evidence of the backlash abounds: in the nineteenth century, for example, there is a tightening of the association of the gentleman with the country, with more cultural attention paid to things like hunts and agrarian issues. In literature there is an increase of plot lines concerned with “outing” false or “faux” gentlemen (e.g., Wickham in Jane Austen’s \textit{Pride and Prejudice}). In fashion, men’s clothing moves away from the foppish excesses of the Regency to the sober basic black and muted grays of the Victorian era. James Eli Adams even notes that the school tie and blazer serve as...}  

Yet another location for this struggle over gentlemanliness is Anthony Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels: \textit{The Three Clerks}, \textit{The Small House at Allington}, \textit{Phineas Finn}, \textit{Phineas Redux}, \textit{John Caldigate}, \textit{The Way We Live Now}, and \textit{The Prime Minister}. Given that economic and political atmosphere and given those particular societal tensions, the appearance of the hobbledehoy narratives around 1857 is not surprising. Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels ask the timely question, “How can the gentry’s traditional agrarian-based values be transferred to those upper-middle-class urban dwellers who are now administering the Empire?” In fact, one might even consider the appearance of novels that seek to work out the social problem of a “gentleman shortage” inevitable.  

Yet, what is surprising (and far from inevitable) is the response the hobbledehoy novels deliver to the challenge of gentlemanliness in the nineteenth century. If Trollope’s hobbledehoy narratives ask whether or not it is possible to transplant the gentleman’s value system onto (or into) young upper-middle-class urban professionals, the final answer must be read as a
resounding “No.” Despite the early promise of such a transfer in novels like *The Three Clerks*, *The Small House at Allington*, *Phineas Finn*, and *Phineas Redux*, if the hobbledehoy novels are to be read as social experiment novels, then the results of those experiments must be deemed failures, because the gentleman’s values cannot be transferred to the professional classes. *John Caldigate* demonstrates that the gentleman, despite society’s protestations (or perhaps its hopes) to the contrary, is a social figure whose existence depends on an adequate level of financial resources. *The Way We Live Now* and *The Prime Minister* illustrate that the cadres of gentlemen cannot be relied on to replicate their numbers in preceding generations due to the utter failure of the hobbledehoy-mentor relationship.

Outside the world of Trollope’s novels, it can be said that gentlemanliness died, not from the failure of the hobbledehoy-mentor relationship, but rather from its own success. The indefinable quality of gentlemanliness coupled with its attractiveness helped hasten an unchecked spread of the label that eventually rendered the quality meaningless. As one nineteenth-century essayist quipped, “nowadays a young man with a salary of £50 a year was insulted if he received a letter which was not addressed, ‘Thomas Jones, Esq.’” (Duncan 128). The ever-more-powerful middle class was right in the middle of this controversy: as Gilmour suggests, many in the middle class wanted to “widen the basis of qualification to include themselves without sacrificing the exclusiveness which gave rank its social esteem” (4). These social tensions quickly escalated and produced a paradoxical situation. As the courtesy writer “Lady of Rank” wrote, “the English are the most aristocratic people in the world; always endeavoring to squeeze through the portals of rank and fashion, and then slamming the door in the face of any unfortunate devil whom may happen to be behind him” (qtd. in Castronovo 40).

secret emblems or “cultic signs” of gentlemanliness (162). One can even argue that the labeling of Dickens as “vulgar” for his colorful waistcoats is part of this struggle of gentlemanliness.
What, then, besides their aesthetic value, is the benefit of studying Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels today? Certainly there is value in studying representations of both the failed social experiments and of the successful ones, but beyond that I think that the novels hold interest for us today in part because of the didactic function they served in their era. Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels serve as living, breathing conduct manuals of the nineteenth century, and as such their position alongside the body of conduct literature is worthy of consideration.

As a novelist, Trollope is peculiarly suited to rework the triple-decker novel into a didactic tool. As An Autobiography demonstrates, his own sense of gentlemanliness, especially early in his life, was fragile. Additionally, much of his writing demonstrates a penchant toward didacticism. In the novel Ralph the Heir, he declared, “we novelists preach to you from our pulpits and are keenly anxious that our sermons shall not be inefficacious” (2:338). His non-literary writings reiterate the theme: in a toast at a Royal Literary Fund dinner, he quipped, “it is much more pleasant to teach or to amuse, than it is to be taught or to be amused” (qtd. in Booth, “Royal” 214). To the American women’s rights activist Kate Field he wrote, “Teach, preach, convince if you can – but first learn the art of doing so without seeming to do it” (qtd. in Super, Chronicler 264). In an article for The Nineteenth Century, Trollope insisted, “there cannot be a doubt that the character of those around us are formed very much on the lessons which are thus taught [. . .] our boys grow into manhood, either nobly or ignobly partly as they [popular novels] may teach (“Novel Reading” 25). Given the novelist’s enthusiastic endorsement of the didactic uses of the novel, it is not surprising that Trollopian hobbledeoys are often fatherless—at least symbolically so; these missing fathers allow the novel itself to act in loco parentis.

When analyzing the hobbledehoy novels as didactic enterprises, an obvious place to look for connections is with Victorian conduct literature. The British Library’s catalogue is fairly
bursting with nineteenth-century conduct manuals, etiquette books, and courtesy books\textsuperscript{95}; the genre was evidently so popular that it spawned several good-humored parodies, such as *More Hints on Etiquette for the Use of Society at Large* authored by one known simply as “Pardagogos.”\textsuperscript{96} More serious ventures in the genre, including works such as *How to Behave, The Gentleman’s Book of Manners, Etiquette for Men, Etiquette for Gentlemen, Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen, English Etiquette for Indian Gentlemen, Spirit of Etiquette, True Politeness*, and *Everybody’s Book of Conduct*, offer advice on drinking (Atkins 53), speech, gait, punctuality (*Gentleman’s Manual of Modern 5*), the eating of asparagus (*Etiquette for Gentlemen 27*), and the inappropriateness of the use of hair dyes (Censor 28).

Since the mid-1970s, there has been a increased interest in conduct literature and a small boom of scholarship has looked at the intersections and overlaps between conduct literature and other forms of literature. In 1977, David Molstad examined George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* through the lens of Samuel Smiles’s work. In 1990, Sarah E. Newton saw echoes of conduct literature in some of the romantic tales of early American fiction. Similarly, 1994 saw Rémy Saisselin’s examination of the link between Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* and courtesy literature, as well as Maurice Montabrut’s similar examination of conduct literature and the Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House.* In 2000, Gwendolyn Foster examined conduct literature in conjunction with the poems of William Wordsworth. These investigations share some crucial

\textsuperscript{95} The first challenge for the scholar working with this behavior-based literature is defining one’s terms. Consensus on the precise definitions of *conduct literature, etiquette manual,* and *courtesy literature* is lacking, but most scholars agree that conduct literature tends to be concerned with character and behavior, etiquette manuals tend to concern themselves with the rules governing social functions, and courtesy literature is primarily concerned with behavior among the highest reaches of the aristocracy at court. There is, of course, considerable blurring among these types of prose and a single text can contain two or more of the subgenres within its cover.

\textsuperscript{96} As David Castronovo observes, courtesy and conduct books begin to be published in substantial numbers in the early eighteenth century—just when it becomes increasingly possible for the middle classes to close the gap between themselves and the gentry (40).
characteristics; typically, they examine a piece of literature and trace key textual moments from the fictional text back to conduct literature.

Such analysis can be performed on Trollope’s hobbledehoy stories; there are plenty of textual instances that can serve as a bridge from the novels to conduct literature. For example, the way the hobbledehoy story operates in loco parentis and the novel’s narrator becomes a surrogate parent would have been very familiar to the readers of conduct literature. The talismanic watch that Earl de Guest gives Eames in The Small House at Allington possesses a great deal of symbolic currency in the world of conduct literature. The nineteenth-century conduct manual How to Be a Man uses a man’s watch as an elaborate metaphor for a perfectly disciplined character: the man’s will is analogous to the mainspring, his judgment is the balance wheel, etc. Additionally, conduct writer Professor Duncan would no doubt approve of the self-effacing way Earl de Guest bestows the watch on young Eames; Duncan maintains, “a present should be made with as little parade and ceremony as possible” (93). A head-to-head comparison of nineteenth-century conduct literature and Trollope’s hobbledehoy stories reveals several such shared elements. However, mere examination of and categorization of these intersections yields relatively little insight to Victorian culture as a whole. The hobbledehoy figure fascinated Trollope through his entire sixty-seven books; the books do function as conduct manuals. Such a relationship might be expected to yield more than a few common references.

It does. I believe that the relationship between conduct literature and the hobbledehoy novel is much more complicated than mere progenitor/offspring. Metaphorically, the relationship between the hobbledehoy novels and nineteenth-century conduct literature is much more akin to the forward/back, forward/back struggle discussed earlier to illustrate the expansion

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97 R.H. Super notes that the young Anthony Trollope was a bit of an amateur conduct writer himself: his unpublished commonplace book contains a heading labeled “Rules for Conduct” (27).
of gentlemanliness in the century. Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels make movements toward nineteenth-century conduct literature, but they also distance themselves from the genre. In fact, I would argue that the hobbledehoy novel draws attention to the way much of Victorian conduct literature twists and distorts the traditions of courtesy literature.

Part of the reason for this disconnect is simply audience. Though Trollope’s readership spanned much of the literate, English-speaking world, the didactic nature of the hobbledehoy stories seems to be aimed at a much narrower public: young men who were struggling to hold onto (or regain) their gentlemanly status in the midst of Victorian social and economic upheaval. In comparison, much of Victorian conduct literature (despite bearing titles such as *The Gentleman’s Handbook* and *Etiquette for Gentlemen*) really was not meant for gentlemen at all; it was meant for decidedly middle-class, low-level clerks who wished to aspire to the status of gentleman or even pass themselves off as Victorian gentlemen. Read closely, the conduct manuals give up their real audience easily: one has a chapter entitled “Chivalry at a Discount” (Devereux 31), another cautions young men to avoid cutting their fingernails at the dinner table (DeS****** 33), and a third carries a flyleaf advertisement for “Cheap Frames Well Made” 2s, 6d” (*Gentleman’s Manual* np). Yet another conduct manual cheerfully mixes advice on how to meet the Prince of Wales with advertisements for Crosse and Blackwell’s Pickles, Sauces and Potted Meats (*Etiquette for Gentlemen* 9-12; n.p.). Other conduct books of the period assure their readers that “the Spirit of honour is confined to no class” (Freeling 75). Close reading of nineteenth-century conduct manuals divulges the unsurprising revelation that they were aimed at a decidedly mercantile audience; for example, *Beeton’s Complete Etiquette for Gentlemen* contains a chapter entitled “The Etiquette of Buying and Selling” (Beeton 108). Other conduct manuals carry titles such as *The Clerk’s Instructor and Manual* and *Hints on the Conduct of
In fact, what many of these conduct manuals are attempting is to teach young men how to “fake” gentlemanship. This mission of feigning gentlemanship presents a couple of problems. For one thing, the idea of low-born young men learning gentlemanship out of a book confirms the worst fears of those who fretted that social distinctions were being eroded. Additionally, and more importantly, is that if the conduct manuals are teaching how to fake gentlemanship and gentlemanship is inexorably bound up with this idea of fixity, gravitas, or honesty, then what the conduct manuals are really doing is teaching how to fake honesty.

This is where Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels enter into a cultural dialogue with the conduct manuals. Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels do not demonstrate how young men attain gentlemanship. In fact, no one in Trollope’s work attains gentlemanship. Trollope’s hobbledehoys recover gentlemanship that has been lost or eroded. This difference is more than just a matter of semantics, because it sets Trollope’s hobbledehoys apart from the concept of the self-made man and, in fact, much of Trollope’s body of work criticizes the self-made man.98

It seems strange that a person like Trollope, who was arguably a self-made man himself, would skewer the self-made man in his fiction. However, courtesy literature has always been in part about the policing of social boundaries, what Michael Steptat labels “social containment” or “the disgracing of upstarts” (29).99 Certainly this sense of social containment is going on in Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels as well; his self-made man is not the patient, sober hero he is in the works of authors such as Samuel Smiles. As demonstrated in chapter six of this work, Trollope’s self-made men are often thieves (like Musselbоро in The Three Clerks) or villains

(like Lopez in *The Prime Minister*) or monsters (like Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now*).

Michael Curtin has noted that as serious, formal, male-driven courtesy literature disappears in the nineteenth century\(^\text{100}\) (Curtin does not even admit those nineteenth-century conduct texts discussed in this chapter qualify as “real” conduct literature), it does not simply fade away: rather it shatters into what he calls “shards”—odd, unexpected little moments in literature where elements of courtesy literature resurface. I assert that one of these shards is Trollope’s hobbledehoy novel. However, like a glass shard from a broken mirror, the reflection it supplies is only partial and distorted. Indeed, Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels reflect the conduct genre, but they do not reflect contemporary, nineteenth-century conduct literature with its approach of How to Fake Being a Gentleman. Rather, Trollope’s hobbledehoy novels reflect a much earlier form of conduct literature, where true gentility was not put on like a suit of clothes but rather found within the young man himself.

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\(^{99}\) See also John E. Mason, *Gentlefolk in the Making*.

\(^{100}\) Others have noticed this phenomenon as well. Robin Gilmour states simply, “the rise of the novel meant the end of the courtesy book” (*Idea of the Gentleman*, 84-85). Jacques Carré agrees seeing in “the decline of courtesy book [ . . . ] the rebirth of the literature of conduct in other, more sophisticated forms” (2).
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Vita

Mark King received a Bachelor of Science degree in theater arts from Towson State University (now known as Towson University) in 1983. He received a Master of Arts degree, with distinction, in English from DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, in 1998. His literary scholarship has been published in journals such as *College Literature*, *The Upstart Crow*, and *The Journal of College Writing*. His research interests include Victorian literature, pedagogy, and masculinity studies.