THE FEMINIST TROLLOPE: HERO(IN)ES IN THE WARDEN AND BARCHESTER TOWERS

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Although Anthony Trollope has traditionally been considered an anti-feminist author, studies within the past decade have shown that Trollope's later novels show support for female power and sympathy for Victorian women who were dissatisfied with their narrow roles in society. A feminist reading of two of his earliest novels, The Warden and Barchester Towers, shows that Trollope's feminism is not limited to his later works. In The Warden, Trollope acclaims female power and "wonan's logic" through female characters and the womanly warden, Septimus Harding. In Barchester Towers, Trollope continues to support feminism through his positive portrayals of strong, independent women and the androgynous Harding. In Barchester Towers, the battle of the sexes ends in a balance of power.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: TROLLOPE AND FEMINISM

Feminist criticism is one of the most exciting interpretive theories to arise from the deconstructionist movement. Feminist critics are interested in the study of gender in literature and are committed to exposing patriarchal thought that has marginalized women. While many traditionalists have maintained that they are neutral or unbiased in their criticism, feminist critics such as Kate Millet, Dale Spender, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar have shown that these "neutral" theories sometimes represent a patriarchal point of view that has led to the belittling of female authors, critics, and characters in literature. These feminist scholars and many others have provided readers with new perspectives from which to read literature, which in turn enrich the knowledge and scholarship of all. Feminist criticism has catalyzed a new interest in overlooked writers and prompted further study and new evaluations of canonical writers.

Anthony Trollope is a notable example of a canonical writer whose reputation is undergoing revision because of feminist criticism. Rebecca West, an ardent feminist, declared in 1957 that "Trollope was a feminist" (167), yet it

is only within the past decade that other feminist critics have looked at Trollope's novels in enough depth to support West's claim. Until recently, West's opinion has been shared by very few other critics. Michael Sadleir, who reawakened scholarly interest in Trollope in 1927 with the publication of Anthony Trollope: A Commentary, shaped the views of most Trollope criticism to follow with the comment that Trollope shows "scorn for feminist theory and ambition" (383). The "true essence of the Trollope heroine," Sadleir said, is reflected in those characters who are "obscure and quietly dutiful" and "modest of mien, low-voiced, by modern standards strangely feminine" (A Commentary 382). Sadleir maintained that Trollope shared the views of Sir William Hardman, who declared in 1863 that "unmarried girls are a mistake" (A Commentary 383).

In Female Characters in the Works of Anthony Trollope, published in 1933, C. C. Koets supported Sadleir's observations of Trollope. Koets believed that

> Trollope's views of feminism . . . are very clear. Our author is constantly repeating that nature intended woman to be a mother, that therefore woman's life can only be happy and complete in the married state. Let women deny this as fiercely as they wish, the fact remains a fact and cannot be refuted. (27)

In "Mr. Trollope's Young Ladies," published in 1949, E. L. Skinner offered readers probably more insight into himself than into Trollope with the comment that "Trollope had a remarkable faculty for depicting girls whose imbecile behavior inflames one with a burning impulse to slap them hard and fast" (197).

In 1974, another article about women in Trollope's fiction also took up the charge that Trollope was an anti-feminist. In "Anthony Trollope on 'the Genus Girl,'" David Aitken proposes the idea that Trollope created women who "conform to type little more than that they are all Victorians," and then shows why he believes such a theory is incorrect (417). Trollope believed that a woman "is compelled by her very nature to occupy the roles allotted her by Victorian society," Aitken writes (418). Trollope also believed that women "can love but once," (425) and ". . . in some corner of his imagination, clearly seems to regard women as mantraps and as a man to resent them for it," says Aitken (431). Aitken maintains that Trollope is an "anti-feminist author" (424).

These studies all share in common the fact they were written by men and are rather dated. Yet the gender of the author or the time period of the article cannot be blamed for the concept that Trollope was anti-feminist. In Women in the English Novel, published in 1984, feminist critic Merryn

Williams maintains that Trollope's fiction depicts women as "clinging creatures who needed male support" (125).

Within the past decade, however, this traditional interpretation of Trollope has undergone change. Feminist critics have found that Trollope's novels are concerned with "The Woman Question" and are sympathetic toward women who wanted to break free from the constraints of Victorian society. In The Androgynous Trollope: Attitudes to Women Amongst Early Victorian Novelists, Rajiva Wijesinha states that Trollope shows a deeper understanding and objectivity toward women and marriage than any other Victorian novelist, male or female (337). In the 1982 study, Wijesinha compares Trollope's depiction of women and marriage to the works of Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and George Eliot. Wijesinha looks mainly at Trollope's later works and asserts that his "feminist tendencies" are chronological in development (179). Trollope's novels and his representation of women reflect his own "androgynous mind," says Wijesinha (39).

In the same year, Trollope's feminist tendencies were also explored in the well-written, well-researched Corrupt Relations: Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Collins and the Victorian Sexual System. The authors, Richard Barickman, Susan MacDonald, and Myra Stark, find that Trollope's novels are based upon a "conservative plot" that focuses on the standard Victorian trials of courtship and career success and

a "radical counterplot" that questions and clashes with the traditional Victorian goals and assumptions of the main plot (235). The study declares that "in his understanding of the oppressive nature of patriarchal values, he merits Rebecca West's conclusion: 'Trollope was a feminist'" (203).

Like The Androgynous Trollope, Corrupt Relations finds a chronological development in Trollope's support of feminism and focuses mainly on his later novels. The authors of Corrupt Relations state that

> Beginning with the genre of the domestic novel in the Barchester series, Trollope gradually transforms his courtship stories until they belong more properly to the tradition of the apprenticeship novel; they trace the education of a young woman--or two or three--in the social and psychological dynamics of male-female relationships in a male-dominated marriage system. . . . By the mid-1860s and later, Trollope is much more likely to treat courtship as an apprenticeship to the difficult career of marriage. (204-05)

"Early heroines" such as those in Doctor Thorne, published in 1858, and Framley Parsonage, published in 1861, "hardly even affect their own fates," according to Barickman, MacDonald, and Stark (205).

Trollope's feminism is further studied in Women in Trollope's Palliser Novels by Deborah Denenholz Morse, which

was published in 1987. This study focuses exclusively on five of the Palliser novels: Can You Forgive Her? (1864), Phineas Finn (1869), Phineas Redux (1876), The Prime Minister (1876) and The Duke's Children (1880). In these novels, Morse explores the "manifestations of Trollope's disquiet with his culture's assumptions" about women (2). Trollope's conflict between affirmation and subversion of traditional female roles is evident in "ambiguous characterization, tension between narrative intent and resolution, between characterization and narrator's commentary, or between text and illustration," says Morse (2).

While Morse does not ultimately declare Trollope a feminist, she does believe that he was liberal in his views of women. "Ultimately, Trollope's vision of women's rights is marital equality," she states. And the ideal of marital equality in the Victorian period does show a support for feminism. She writes:

> If Trollope's perception of Woman's role was limited, it was much more elastic than that of most of his contemporaries. Trollope's definition of women's rights was an egalitarian marriage. But in the context of a culture in which ideal women were supposed to deny much of what a natural human being might feel and express, Trollope's vision of a relation between two intelligent sexual beings who

> were equals within their private union of Man and Woman is subversive. (6)

All three of these studies find that Trollope questioned traditional gender roles and supported female power, yet all three focus primarily on his later works, those published from 1860 to 1880. Jane Nardin focuses on twelve of Trollope's earlier novels in one of the most recent studies of Trollope, He Knew She Was Right: The Independent Woman in the Novels of Anthony Trollope, published in 1989. Nardin correctly points out that critics need to study the feminism of these earlier works to understand the later novels, which are more widely considered feminist in nature (xviii). In her book, she says that

> Trollope ceased to organize his novels around conventional Victorian notions of female and male nature and began to subvert those earlier than most critics have realized: the shift from acceptance to dissidence was, in fact, completed between the writing of Barchester Towers in 1855 and that of The Belton Estate in 1865. (xvii-xviii)

Like previous feminist critics, Nardin finds that Trollope subverts traditional views of women through conflicts between the narrator's comments and the actual events and between the main plot and subplots. And she, too, finds a chronological development in Trollope's feminism. She believes that Trollope's opinions on women's rights, like

those of most Victorians, "were gradually liberalized by the success of the women's movement" between 1855 and 1865 (He Knew She Was Right 11). Nardin does not consider Barchester Towers, the first novel in her study, as feminist in nature, though several female characters do challenge Victorian notions of femininity. Instead, Nardin thinks the novel reaffirms traditional views of women and that the narrator's tone "is more consistently misogynistic than is usually the case, and there is a lot of rib-digging, antifeminist humor" (He Knew She Was Right 39). Nardin's analysis leads the reader to believe that Trollope's feminism must have been only slightly developed or nonexistent when he began writing Barchester Towers in 1855.

In my own study, I have found that Barchester Towers and an even earlier novel, The Warden, support feminist views. Ironically, these two novels, which are studied very little by most feminist critics, are Trollope's two most widely read works. While there certainly may be some chronological development in Trollope's feminist themes, these two early novels affirm feminist ideas and need to be studied more closely to present a full picture of his work. In this thesis, I will deal exclusively with The Warden and Barchester Towers, two of Trollope's earliest novels. Trollope started writing The Warden in 1852 and published it in 1855. He started writing Barchester Towers in 1855 and published it in 1857.

Trollope believed that "the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman, and must have his own system of ethics" (An Autobiography 222). When The Warden and Barchester Towers are read from a feminist perspective, it becomes evident that Trollope preaches a system of feminist ethics that upsets patriarchal domination and supports female power and equality. In The Warden, Trollope creates a male character, Rev. Septimus Harding, who by Victorian social standards is feminine in nature. Throughout The Warden, most of the male and female characters act according to gender-based norms of the mid-Victorian period. Harding, however, follows the values and behavioral patterns considered the norm for females. Harding, the story's main character, uses his feminine traits to subvert masculine authority. His status at the novel's end as a moral person is an acclamation of the feminine.

In Barchester Towers, the sequel to The Warden and the second book in the Barchester chronicle, Trollope continues to support feminism through his affirmation of Harding. In this longer, more complex novel, however, Trollope's support of feminism is broadened. No longer do most of the other characters act along prescribed societal notions of female and male behavior. In the happy, pastoral world of Barchester, gender is no longer a litmus test for behavior or values. Female independence and strength are championed as

women show they can fight for themselves and the good of the community. Many women have equal value and equal power with men; indeed, in many instances women have more effectual power than men. Barchester Towers depicts a world that is a Victorian feminist utopia.

Part of the problem with analyzing literature from a feminist perspective is that there is no single definition of "feminism" (Ruth 4). The word "feminism" has been used to signify many different ideas, and feminists themselves do not agree what the term means, which accounts for the wide variety of opinions expressed by feminist literary critics (Ruth 4). Although feminism--and its proponents--tend to resist classification, feminism is often considered to have two basic orientations: "radical" and "liberal or moderate" (Ruth 429). Sheila Ruth, an advocate of women's studies programs, explains the difference between the two by saying that liberal feminists "want to secure for women a piece of the pie; radical feminists want to change the pie" (429). Liberal feminism is an outgrowth of liberalism and is often associated with people such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, and Margaret Fuller (Tong 11, 13). In contemporary society, liberal feminism is represented by groups such as the National Organization for Women. Radical feminism is more often associated with Marxist or socialist theorists and groups. Ruth points out, however, that "the word radical is a relative term" (428). And rhetorician

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell believes that all feminism is "radical" because it attacks the basic values of our culture (388).

Toril Moi believes that as "politically motivated critics" feminists need to make their own views clear to counter the view of "patriarchal power politics, which is so often presented as intellectual 'neutrality' or 'objectivity'" (119). As a feminist, I am more closely aligned with liberal feminist thought. Liberal feminists believe that all people--men and women--are of equal value and have unalienable rights to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As a liberal feminist, I am committed to supporting a partnership society in which both men and women share knowledge, authority, and work. Liberal feminists tend to believe that gender-specific policies that cast men in dominant roles and women in submissive roles are detrimental to both men and women (Tong 4). Liberal feminists believe that biology is not destiny for women or men. As a literary critic, I support Moi's view that feminist criticism and theory should be "relevant to the study of social, institutional, and personal power between the sexes" (118). Feminist critics should be interested in exposing the invalidity of patriarchy, (Moi 118) which Kate Millet has defined simply as male dominance over females (25).

In The Warden and Barchester Towers, Trollope shows support for many of the basic beliefs of liberal feminism. Trollope upsets the notion that being female--a term that

signifies biological gender--guarantees femininity--a term that signifies social patterns of behavior imposed by cultural norms (Moi 122). At the same time, he upsets the notion that being male guarantees masculinity. Both novels champion characters who dare to defy conventional Victorian ideas of femininity and masculinity. In Victorian England, women were generally regarded as the "weaker sex" or "inferior sex" (Williams 2). It was "universally accepted as a biological fact" that women lacked sexual desire and that they were "inferior to man in all ways" (Altick 54). The ideal, feminine woman "was to cultivate fragility" and lean on the arm of a man (Altick 53). She was the angel in the house, a quiet, passive, domestic woman who was a "subservient" and "submissive" wife (Altick 53). The "'ideal' specimens of Victorian girlhood and womanhood" were those women who were "wrapped in an aura of virtue and innocence" (Altick 56). For most Victorians, "there was something unpleasant, even alarming, about strong-willed women who insisted on using their minds" (Altick 54). Considering the restricted lives of most upper- and middle-class Victorian women, says Richard Altick, it is not surprising that so many of them suffered from neurasthenia (56). In many ways, definitions of femininity and masculinity have changed little since the Victorian era. The 1988 Webster's New World Dictionary defines "feminine" as "having qualities regarded as characteristic of women and girls, as gentleness,

weakness, delicacy, modesty." "Masculine" is defined as "having qualities regarded as characteristic of men and boys, as strength, vigor, boldness." Trollope's subversion of biological essentialism--the belief in essential female and male natures--in these two novels was radical in Victorian England and would still be considered radical by much of society today.

Although these two novels are radical in their feminism and I believe Trollope was a feminist, I do not want to misconstrue Trollope as a radical feminist. Trollope was a transitional feminist, a person who was caught between what he saw as the evils of a patriarchal society and yet who did not believe that complete change was practical or possible. Trollope himself was opposed to all idealists and ideologies and is better known for his criticism of ideological feminism than his support of it. "Of course, everyone knows how along with the Queen, Trollope disapproved of the 'mad, wicked folly of Women's Rights,'" declare Barickman, MacDonald, and Stark (195). Such comments have made good copy for critics for many years. Yet emphasis on Trollope's vituperative remarks have led to the conclusion that there was a sort of Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde split between Trollope the man and Trollope the artist. In their study, Barickman, MacDonald, and Stark conclude that

> there are two Trollopes--the seemingly hostile critic of the Victorian women's movement and the

> sympathetic Victorian sociological novelist capturing in fiction the tensions being felt by upper-class men and women. (196)

In the past, critics have concentrated on biographical information that supports the view of Trollope the man as an anti-feminist. For feminist critics, this position cannot but help lead to the idea that a strange split existed between the personalities of the man and the author. In any feminist discussion of Trollope, however, it is important to look at both sides of Trollope's views on feminism. And yet "Trollope the man's" support of feminism has been strangely overlooked in feminist studies. Biographical information does exist to support the idea that Trollope sympathized with feminist goals.

Trollope's mother was Frances Milton Trollope, a popular and prolific author of novels and travel books in her own time. His father, Thomas Trollope, failed to support the family in his work as a lawyer and as a gentleman farmer (An Autobiography 1-13). Thomas Trollope's "crowning lunacy" was a plan to open a shop in Cincinnati that sold small British goods such as pin cushions (Sadleir, A Commentary 62). In 1827 while he stayed in England with young Anthony, Frances Trollope went to the United States with her eldest son, Henry, and her close friend Frances Wright, a young American feminist. Wright had spent much of her inheritance to create a communal society in Louisiana for slaves she had purchased

and then freed (Bigland 84-85). Frances Trollope had high expectations of Nashoba, but was bitterly disappointed by the realities of swampland, leaky buildings, and hand-hewn furniture (Bigland 85). Nashoba later flooded and failed, so Wright moved the freed slaves to Haiti (Sadleir, A Commentary 65). The Nashoba experiment led to Frances Trollope's distrust of feminism and socialism as ideologies and later influenced Anthony Trollope's own distrust of "impractical idealists" (Sadleir, A Commentary 66). Though the family lost faith in grand ideological schemes, the incident is important because it shows the Trollopes' long-standing interest in feminism.

The store in Cincinnati also failed, and the family lost more money. But Frances Trollope's adventures in the United States led her at the age of 50 to write her first book, The Domestic Manners of the Americans. Published in 1832, the book was widely read and financially successful. From that day on, she began rising at four in the morning to write (a habit that Anthony later adopted) before the rest of the family awoke and she assumed her household duties. She wrote more than 40 books, which became the family's major source of income.

Said Trollope of his mother: "She had much, very much, to suffer. Work sometimes came hard to her, so much being required . . . but of all the people I have known she was the most joyous, or at any rate, the most capable of joy" (An

Autobiography 25). Frances Trollope was an independent, strong-willed woman, who relied upon her own talents to triumph over poverty and achieve fame. It is hardly surprising that Anthony Trollope, whose mother's life affirmed the validity of liberal feminism, would write novels in support of strong, independent women.

Trollope also had immense respect for his wife, Rose Heseltine Trollope. She transcribed his handwriting and handled his literary affairs when he was abroad (Snow 60). She was the only person to read his novels before they were published, and he said that he "trusted her judgment totally in all literary manners" (Snow 61). Later in his life, Trollope also told his son to trust his mother's (Rose's) judgment in all literary affairs (Snow 61).

Trollope also showed sympathy for the problems women faced finding jobs in Victorian society. In 1861, he contributed the short story "The Journey to Panama" to Victoria Regia, and in 1863 he contributed the story "Miss Ophelia Gledd" to A Welcome (Trollope, Letters 211). Both books were collections of prose and poetry published by the feminist Emily Faithfull, who founded the Victoria Press. Faithfull believed that printing offered new career opportunities for women and staffed her press with female compositors. (Sadleir, A Bibliography 214). Victoria Regia's title page includes the social statement, "Victoria Press (for the Employment of Women)" (Sadleir, A Bibliography 213).

As evidence of Trollope's anti-feminism, Sadleir and Koets both refer to letters in which Trollope encouraged his close friend Kate Field, an American feminist writer, to marry. Trollope met Field at his brother's home in Italy when he was middle-aged and she was 20. The daughter of American actor Joseph M. Field, a friend of Edgar Allan Poe's, she was reared in literary and artistic circles on both sides of the Atlantic (Sadleir, A Commentary 211). Trollope took the young woman's literary aspirations seriously, (Sadleir, A Commentary 220), and they maintained a correspondence for many years on literary topics. Sadleir notes that Trollope "never made love to her; he was not that kind of man. But in love with her he certainly was" (A Commentary, 210). Although Trollope did encourage her to marry, such encouragement does not seem to be anti-feminist. Trollope truly believed that, as he wrote in a letter to her, "in middle life, married people have a better time than old bachelors and spinsters" (qtd. in Sadleir, A Commentary 284). Trollope thought marriages should be egalitarian, and as his letter states, that both men and women can find greater happiness together than alone. And while he did encourage matrimony in some letters, in another letter he seemed to discount its importance. In a letter in 1862 he wrote to her, "I didn't at all understand how you are living, where--with whom--or on what terms. But I don't know that it matters" (qtd. in Sadleir, A Commentary 228). It is important to note that

Trollope never encouraged Field to forsake her professional aspirations for domestic ones; he helped her develop as a writer. Indeed, the simple fact that he maintained a close friendship and affection for the young American feminist is important, but oddly overlooked, evidence of his personal interest and support of feminism.

Such basic biographical information on Trollope is important in a feminist study to strengthen the validity of readings that show his novels are feminist in nature. Certainly Trollope and his 47 novels are not always consistent in their views. Both the man and his work are complex and changed with time. Socially and ritually, "there is no doubt" that Trollope sympathized with the High Church party, notes biographer C.P. Snow (83). On the other hand, he was a "Whiggish liberal about radical issues and (unlike most English intellectuals) the American Civil War" (Snow 83). When Trollope made his unsuccessful bid for a seat in Parliament, he ran as a Liberal candidate (Snow 83). Considering the support he shows for liberal views in his own life, the support that he shows for feminism in The Warden and Barchester Towers is not strange. Trollope himself may not have defined his support for women and female power as feminism; he probably would have seen it as part of a civilized, humanitarian respect for people (which is an essential part of liberal feminism). Yet when feminist criticism is defined as the unmasking of patriarchy, and

patriarchy is defined as social constructs that dominate and marginalize women, Trollope and many of his works emerge as feminist.

In liberal feminism, biology is not destiny: women may or may not be feminists, and men may or may not be patriarchal. As a liberal feminist, I believe it is crucial to study female writers to call attention to the contributions and ideas of women in our culture. I also believe that it is crucial to study male writers. Feminist critic Mary Jacobus believes that for women, "being written about by however loving a father can . . . prove fatal" (52). In the works of male authors such as D.H. Lawrence and Thomas Hardy, she says, a female "achieves womanhood at the point where she is silenced . . . and installed within the sanctuary" (52). Trollope, however, does not prove fatal to women. In The Warden and Barchester Towers, women are not silenced, sanctified or sacrificed. Trollope depicts women as real people and does not force female characters into the Victorian molds of virtuous virgins, angelic wives, absurd spinsters and immoral sirens. In the Androgynous Trollope, Wijesinha notes that his representation of women reflects his own androgynous mind, and as Virginia Woolf states, an androgynous mind can produce work that is "naturally creative, incandescent and undivided" (Wijesinha 39). The Warden and Barchester Towers are both such works.

CHAPTER II

THE WOMANLY WARDEN: TROLLOPE'S FEMININE HERO

In their analysis of Trollope and his later novels, Corrupt Relations and The Androgynous Trollope focus mainly on Trollope's depiction of courtship and marriage to show his support for female power. Yet by looking beyond his treatment of marriage, one can find Trollope's "feminist tendencies" (Wijesinha 179) and subversion of biological essentialism in one of his earliest novels, The Warden. The hero of The Warden, Rev. Septimus Harding, may have a male body, but his mind and actions are clearly feminine by Victorian social standards.

Traditionally, critics have seen The Warden as a story of a battle between the reform movement and the conservative Church of England. R.C. Terry sees it as a "confrontation between radical dynamism and conservative reaction," which he terms a "uniquely Trollopian subject" (10). James Kincaid views the story as the clash between Harding and his "enemies" (97). In drawing the lines of battle, Kincaid places Harding, his daughters and even Archdeacon Grantly on one side, and John Bold and The Jupiter on the other (97-98). Coral Lansbury adds a new twist to the standard reform versus establishment

interpretation, viewing the story as "the triumph of age over youth, simplicity over guile, and weakness over strength" (132).

Lansbury's use of binary opposites to describe the difference between age and youth is especially interesting from a feminist perspective because as Helene Cixous demonstrates in her essay "Sorties: Out and Out:Attacks/Ways Out/Forays" such "dual, hierarchical opposites" (101) have long been used to define differences between men and women. Indeed, Lansbury's pairing of "strength/weakness" is one of the most standard used to define "male/female," a definition that aligns strength with men and masculinity and weakness with women and femininity. And weakness is certainly a trait all critics agree that Rev. Septimus Harding shares. From a feminist perspective, however, The Warden is not a clash between age and youth or the establishment and the reform movement; it is a Victorian rendering of the age-old battle of the sexes. And when those battle lines are drawn, Harding is standing with the women.

The Warden looks at morality by focusing on character, not plot. The little bit of action there is revolves around Harding, the "kind and sweet" (61) and "womanly" (83) warden of Hiram's Hospital, a home for 12 elderly bedesmen. Through the years the hospital's land has increased in value, which has increased the warden's income but not the bedesmen's. The hospital is singled out as an example of church abuse,

leaving Harding to struggle with his conscience while the reformers and church struggle for power. Throughout the novel, Harding's actions and thoughts are closer in spirit to the female characters than those of the male characters. Like the females, Harding approaches morality from a personal level and is concerned about how his and others' actions will affect people. The male characters, however, approach morality on a public level and care little how their mandates will affect others' lives. The masculine authority of both the reform movement and the church becomes a personal threat to Harding, who uses his feminine traits to subvert that authority. Harding's status as the moral hero (or heroine) becomes an acclamation of the power of the feminine.

Harding's entire way of life, his mental and economic well-being, are nearly destroyed by the crusading John Bold. The brave Bold is macho to the core. Young and "strong" (12), "well-made and good-looking" (13), he approaches his "patriotic endeavors" with "violence" (12). Bold is a Victorian warrior who "hurls his anathemas" (12) and strives to smite his enemies with the law. Although he possesses the power and knowledge to heal people, he would rather practice public politics than medicine. A man of privilege, he lives off the income from an inn, shops, and villas he inherited from his father.

Although some critics view Bold as acting upon the highest of principles in his fight against the church and

Harding (Terry 229), a feminist reading shows that Bold's motives are determined more by his self-interest than his desire to help humanity. Set free from the private worries of earning a living, the young man boldly sets out to correct the world and find fame in the public eye. The "drudgery" of the medical profession (11), helping people within the confines of his own office, does not appeal to him, though he does set the limbs of those poor who share his politics. He needs a larger audience and "got himself elected a town councillor" (12) and has even harbored grandiose thoughts of mounting Olympus to write for the Jupiter. Like so many warriors, he is not particular in choosing his foes or his causes. He gladly fights against "state abuses, church abuses, corporation abuses . . . abuses in medical practice, and general abuses in the world at large" (12). After a "severe battle" in which he "gained victory" over an old woman who collects tolls, he is so swelled by the "fame of his success" (13) that he takes on another old woman: Mr. Harding. Bold wants to break Hiram's will even though Harding is his friend and Harding's daughter is his beloved. After all, Bold is not the "man to flinch from his undertaking from personal motives" (18). When he informs Harding that he is filing a suit against the church, Bold bolsters his conscience by assuring the mild precentor that he bears no "personal enmity" before recommencing "his attack" (24). A good soldier, he does not want to care about the people he is

killing. Bold assassinates his old friend's character and tries to take away his livelihood--and then adds, "Well, it's nothing personal." No wonder Trollope calls him the "Barchester Brutus" (56).

Like most macho men, Bold is also chivalrous. To protect and win the hand of his lady love he finds he must give up the case of the hospital. So he makes an about-face and rides off to the enemy camp of Plumstead Episcopi to surrender. He "does not exult as a happy lover"; instead, he feels "childishly weak" and wonders how he will save his public reputation (115). When he waves the white flag to Grantly, Bold makes the ludicrous claim that "there has been no attack" as he squirms his way through the insulting interview. His ego is bruised by his surrender, and he believes he has "given up so much to the request of the girl" (121). In the fashion of a true bully, he begins to strike his horse, "a poor animal" (121), to make himself feel strong and in control again. When he later urges Tom Towers to give up the cause of Hiram's Hospital, Bold never thinks about Harding or even the 12 bedesmen he had been trying to defend. Instead, he thinks about himself and his own reputation. He finds his retreat from Mount Olympus humiliating. He "greatly disliked the job" of urging Towers to stop writing about the hospital and again condemns himself for managing his business "weakly" (147). Bold must forsake the spoils of war, the "delightful intimacies," "public praise," and "Athenian

banquets," all for the personal esteem of a mere girl. When he leaves Tom Towers, Bold is not happy that he is no longer "in the wrong" (147); instead he condemns his former ally because he covets Towers' "worldly power" and longs himself to be safe within the impregnable Jupiter (150).

Although Bold's betrayal of the warden and his mixed motives in dropping his attack do not make him likable, he is not entirely an unsympathetic character. The narrator damns him with faint praise by saying that the archdeacon is not "strictly correct" in calling Bold a demagogue (12) but also says that Bold's "character is good in all respects" (13). Bold is "sincere" even if he does need "more diffidence in himself" (12). Bold eventually does accept public defeat in exchange for private victory, even though his victory tastes more bitter than sweet. The warrior learns from his fight that "a morality that separates public and private virtue is mad" (Kincaid 100). But he cannot call off the attack he led on the warden. Dr. Pessimist Anticant has discharged his pamphlets, Mr. Popular Sentiment has fired his novel, and Tom Towers has thrown his thunderbolts.

Trollope's relentlessly heavy satire of these three men of letters makes them the true villains in the story. All three have immense power and set out to slay the warden, whom they have never met but are sure must be evil. After all, the case has been written in the Jupiter, and everyone knows that the "Jupiter is never wrong" (132). Writing, which gives them

both the power and authority to destroy the meek Harding, was considered a masculine act in the nineteenth century. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar say that male sexuality was considered the essence of literary power (4), and "the pen is truly mightier than its phallic counterpart the sword" (6). Anticant, Sentiment, and Towers are the "paternalistic ruler[s] of the fictive world" (Gilbert, Gubar 5) they have created, a fictive world that threatens Harding's real world. And like so many male writers, they depict the feminine as a monster (Gilbert, Gubar 27-36). The "all-powerful organ" Jupiter (65), controlled by the male organ, misrepresents the humble, sweet Harding as a person of "moral indifference" (66) who greedily takes money from old men. In his "Modern Charity" Dr. Anticant shows no charity to Harding, whom he re-creates as a person who controls others with the "power of his gorge" (146). Mr. Sentiment depicts the warden as an evil demon "who looked cruelly out of a hot, passionate, bloodshot eye" (151). Although Bold starts the attack, these authors capture and trap Harding within their texts so they can become the masters of his fate.

Like Bold and the authors, Archdeacon Grantly is a man of public action. He has not the virile, swashbuckling style of Bold, yet he, too, displays his machismo and power with the cock's pride. Grantly, a burly man with "heavy eyebrows" and "broad chest" (47), plays the role of the dogmatic paterfamilias to everyone else in the novel. He speaks in a

"sonorous" (13) or "loud brazen" (44) voice as he "cows the whole parish" (13). His ruling nature does not only try to govern those in lesser positions; he adopts a paternalistic attitude toward the quiet Harding, his father-in-law, and even to his own father, the bishop. Although the bishop is head of the diocese, Grantly is the "working man" of the diocese (27). The archdeacon uses his "strong hand" to deal with those who are "refractory in their doctrines or their lives" while the "kind" bishop refrains from all "authoritative demonstrations" (27). Like Bold, Grantly is a warrior with a strong sense of mission, but he fights for the establishment, not reform. The archdeacon, who is an "indomitable cock," prepares his "weapons for the coming war, without misgiving and without fear" (40). He already controls Harding's financial matters, and in this fight over moral ground, he assumes the warden will again give up with "passive submission" (41). Grantly bullies Harding into attending his degrading diatribe against the bedesmen (he calls them "cripples," "worn out," and "wretched" [48]) by insinuating that his absence would show "division in the camp" and that the warden cannot handle "his duty" (46). When Harding later says he must give up the wardenship, Grantly is a "hard-hearted orator" (89) and "merciless tyrant" (90) who accuses him of "cowardice" and once again plays upon the warden's sense of loyalty to the church. "You owe it to the church . . . you owe it to those who preceded you . . . you

owe it to those who come after you . . . you owe it to us all," exhorts the bombastic archdeacon (89), controlling the unhappy warden through guilt. Later when Harding dares to bear this guilt and give up the wardenship and his salary, Grantly tries to blackmail Harding into keeping his job by saying the warden must pay the heavy legal expenses in the case. Indeed, money is never far from Grantly's mind. He may be a "moral man" (13), yet he believes in "the sacred justice of all ecclesiastical revenues" with more assurance than he believes in the Gospel (40). Money is power to Grantly, who displays his wealth at home with expensive furnishings as proof of his authority and the strength of the church militant.

As Bold fights for the have-nots to please his pride, Grantly carries his cudgel for the haves to protect his own pride. Grantly believes all who question the church's right in money matters should be damned to "darkness and perdition" (16). The appointment of the warden is in the power of the bishop, and Grantly, for all practical purposes, is the bishop of Barchester. Grantly clearly cares little for the bedesmen, and he does not seem to care much for his friend Harding, either. The archdeacon does not want to lose the public battle, even if victory makes Harding's life a private hell. He is not interested in the morality of the issue or even the intent of the will. He believes the church has a perfect defense by maintaining that the warden is both a

manager and servant of the hospital and therefore can set his own salary as high as he wishes. Never a man of "delicate feeling" (42), Grantly cannot understand that there could be ethical questions raised in such a situation. The archdeacon is secure in his belief that Bold "doesn't have a leg to stand on" (83), so he has the audacity to tell Bold he cannot withdraw his lawsuit. He even criticizes Bold for speaking to him, for engaging in "personal communication" in a public case. The archdeacon's ego needs victory, even if the warden's blood is shed.

Both Grantly and Bold believe a wrong is a wrong, and their might will make right. Grantly, too, is not likable, but he is not really a villain. "His aspirations are of a healthy, if not of the highest kind," the narrator says in his back-handed apologia (194). As the novel's heaviest satire of the reform movement falls upon those outside Barchester, the harshest satire of the establishment falls upon Sir Abraham Haphazard of London.

Haphazard embodies Bold's and Grantly's ideas that public actions should never take into consideration the people they will affect. Haphazard is devoid of all sensitivity to humans. You can hire him "to defend your property," but you "would be sorry to confide your love" (167). He is a "machine with a mind" (167) who wants no friends; he doesn't even want to talk to his wife. He is too busy in his public tasks as attorney general for such private

considerations as people. He, like Bold, seems to find self-satisfaction in taking up cases against women. This "great man" of "gigantic powers" (41) is at first too busy to spend much time on the warden's defense because he is writing a ludicrous bill with 137 clauses to give Protestant clergymen the right to stop and search any nun for treasonable papers. Like the nuns, Harding is not a "rational being" (41) to Haphazard. The lawyer is astonished that Harding cares whether he is entitled to the salary of 800 pounds a year; he cannot understand a person who is troubled by a conscience. For Haphazard, a leader in the male stronghold of Victorian law, "success alone was praiseworthy" (168). None of these men, Bold, Grantly, Haphazard, Towers, Anticant, and Sentiment, care how their actions will affect Harding or the bedesmen. They try to approach Hiram's will as a question of morality, but they are more interested in crushing their enemies and gratifying their own egos than finding truth or justice.

While the men try to mandate change through public challenges, the women of Barchester work to solve the hospital dispute on a personal level. Of course, as women in Victorian society, they really have no other level of action. Yet within the walls of their own homes, these women carefully wield a power that reaches beyond their own confines to the public, a power that seeks to heal personal pain, not inflict it.

Archdeacon Grantly may be a man of action in public, but in the private sanctum of his office he whiles away the hours reading Rabelais. And within the privacy of his own bedroom, this man of public action is controlled by his wife. In public, "unlike Homer, he never nods" (13). But alone with his wife, he replaces his shovel hat with a nightcap and appears as "an ordinary man" (13). As Andrew Wright notes, Dr. Grantly is "splendid" in his "personification of the church militant always ready to rise in his wrath, dominating all about him (except his wife, in bed)" (33). And by Victorian standards, bed, at least, is the one place where men should always dominate women. Trollope's depiction of the Grantlys' private relationship is one of the novel's highest ironies. Susan Harding Grantly is the only person in the parish who is not cowed by the archdeacon. Alone at night, the archdeacon "listened to the counsels of his wife though he considered himself entitled to give counsel to every other being he met" (14).

Archdeacon Grantly is wise to listen to his wife's counsel. Susan Grantly's common sense in their nighttime conversation in Chapter Two is in direct contrast to the archdeacon's bombast throughout the novel. When Grantly says that her father is imprudent, Mrs. Grantly calmly replies, "There's nothing new in that," (14) letting the archdeacon know it is ridiculous to rehash established facts. The archdeacon can only stammer that "such imprudence is--is--"

and realizes that when talking with his wife, he must get to his point quickly. Grantly's real fear is that if Harding is not careful, John Bold may marry Eleanor, which means the archdeacon would have a reformer for a brother-in-law. Mrs. Grantly then calmly points out that the young people will probably get married regardless of Mr. Harding's actions. Faced with the common sense of his "all-trusted helpmate" (13), Grantly once again finds himself at a loss for words and mutters " 'Good heavens!' in a manner that had been found very efficacious in clerical meetings of the diocese" (14). As the narrator tells the reader, the archdeacon "must have for the moment have forgotten where he was" (15); in bed, his wife is the boss. Susan Grantly openly disagrees with her husband's assessment of John Bold and then devises a plan to solve the hospital problem, a plan that will bring the Harding family happiness, not destruction. If Bold marries Eleanor, he will leave the case of the hospital alone, she tells her husband. No weapons of war are needed in such a plan, Harding's good character will not be publicly destroyed, and Eleanor can marry the man she loves. Susan Grantly states her plan quickly and plainly, and then turns her back on her muttering husband and goes to sleep.

Later when Grantly ignores his wife's logical plan and the Jupiter has convicted and condemned Harding in front of its 200,000 readers, she tells the archdeacon, "It's all your fault . . . I told you from the beginning how it would end"

(70). If Grantly had not "brought this young man down on papa by huffing him," as Susan says, love might have run its natural course and brought a marriage and a happy ending to the warden's personal tragedy. Susan Grantly also lets her husband know that this battle has serious economic ramifications for Eleanor, an innocent bystander who is becoming a victim in this war. For if Bold does not marry Eleanor, who will? Harding could be left destitute by the lawsuit, and Eleanor has no money of her own, no real way to make a living and "not at all a taking style of beauty" (71) to attract a husband. In nineteenth-century England, there were very few jobs open to women, especially women of the middle and upper class, and marriage was a social, religious, and economic institution. When a young man or woman was seeking a spouse, cherished notions of love and beauty--and subsequently their underlying notion of sexual attractiveness--were measured against or even determined by a future spouse's economic attractiveness (Harrison 12). For instance, in Coventry Patmore's popular poem of married love, "Angel in the House," Honor's father tells her suitor precisely how much money Honor will receive as a dowry (Harrison 13).

The economic importance of Victorian marriage is made clear at the beginning of The Warden, when the narrator says that Harding may have received his promotion to the wardenship because the archdeacon married Susan. Susan

Harding Grantly, the daughter of a low-ranked cleric who married the bishop's son, is quite aware of the political and economic importance of marriage. After hearing his wife's remarks on a possible marriage between Eleanor and John Bold, even the mighty archdeacon is beset by a few self-doubts and admits, to himself, that an alliance between Bold and Eleanor "might not have been imprudent" (71)--the greatest admission of error a man with Grantly's ego can make. Susan Grantly had the power to see into the future and understand the consequences of her husband's militant stance.

Susan Grantly's doctrine of common sense and personal concern is echoed by Mary Bold when she speaks to her brother. Mary does not "have the energy of her brother," but she does possess a "sweet temper" and a "kindliness of . . . disposition" (50). While John Bold is "too much imbued with the idea that he has a special mission for reforming" (12), she is simply "guided by a high principle of right and wrong" (53)--a principle that John Bold clearly lacks. Mary, who is over 30 and a spinster by Victorian standards, keeps house for her brother and shows a maternal attitude toward him. When he first tells her that he has taken up the case of the bedesmen and therefore may "have to oppose" Harding, even "injure" him (54), she looks at him steadily for a few minutes and cuts right to the main points: Exactly how will he help the old men, how much money will he take away from Mr. Harding, and why of all people, must he, Mr. Harding's

friend, be the one to fight the case? Bold has no satisfactory answers for any of these common-sense questions. He belittles Mary by telling her "I don't know that I can make you understand" the case, admits that "I don't know what I mean" to do to Harding's wealth, and then "comforts himself in the warmth of his own virtue" with platitudes about helping the poor (54).

John Bold tells his sister that she is practicing "woman's logic" (54), a comment that he clearly intends as an insult. "Woman's logic," he believes, is inferior to his own militaristic logic. Yet Mary's sweet temper still remains undisturbed. She is more interested in the personal happiness of Eleanor and her brother than her own pride. She kneels before John and asks him to realize that his sense of duty is misplaced and he will "make us all miserable . . . for a dream of justice" (55). Once again he patronizes her, repeating his claim that she does not understand. And once again, Mary speaks with logic based upon common sense and both peace and people--a woman's logic. "I do understand . . . I understand that this is a chimera . . . I know well that no duty can require you to do this mad--this suicidal thing" (55), she tells her brother. Mary, too, shows she can live up to her last name. She refutes John's contention that she cannot comprehend the situation and tells her brother that *he* does not understand justice and is working for both a foolish and monstrous fancy. But to John Bold, who follows

destructive "man's logic," any consideration for others at this point would taint his public cause with private interest. As the "Barchester Brutus" meditates on his own virtue, Mary Bold sadly sits down, unable to admire her brother's "self-devotion" to his "singular virtue" (56). Like Susan Grantly, she has the power to understand the awful consequences of battle and realize that, in this fight, innocent lives will be sacrificed for the sake of false justice and false pride.

Eleanor Harding, too, shares in this woman's logic. She does not, however, suggest her own marriage as a way to end the trouble because she wants to help her father more than she wants to help herself. But like Susan Grantly and Mary Bold, she works on a personal level to bring about change. She is tender and patient when talking to her father. When she sees that he is troubled, her first desire is to share the shy man's sorrows, "not to force him to be sociable but to persuade him to be trustful" (95). Even when she does not succeed and decides she "must force him to talk to her" (96), she uses the force of her love, not intimidation. She puts her arms around his neck, "encouraged him to dilate on every feeling he expressed" (99), and "comforted him as a woman only can do" (97). Her first plan to end the hospital dispute, a quite logical one, is just like her father's. If his position as warden has brought him trouble, why not give it up? Unlike Grantly and Bold who are motivated by pride,

she does not care how the outcome of the lawsuit will affect her. Eleanor does not care whether she loses her emblems of status, a pony-carriage and a fine drawing room. "I could be gay as the day is long in the smallest tiny little cottage, if I could see you come in and go out with a light heart," she tells her father (99).

When Harding first declines to give up the wardenship, Eleanor does not ridicule his resolve; instead she tries to find another way to make him happy. Trollope titles this chapter "Iphigenia," but unlike the Greek myth, the Iphigenia of Barchester is not tricked by her father into self-sacrifice. To save her father she decides to sacrifice her future life with Bold and appeal to Bold's "manliness" to give up the lawsuit. She "would kneel to him" if necessary, but she will never marry him or make herself his reward. Although some critics have accused her of "moral dullness" (Kincaid 97), surely a woman who sacrifices marriage for her father follows a sharp moral code. The narrator defends Eleanor's plan, letting us know that her sacrifice is genuine and she is not "a little fool, or a little schemer" (102). Through self-sacrifice, Eleanor finds success. The nervous "modest maiden" speaks plainly to Bold. She does not accuse him of wrongdoing or blame him for the articles in the Jupiter; instead she begs him to pity her father. As Bold denies that anyone has blamed Harding personally, Eleanor uses the common sense of what Bold termed "woman's logic,"

the same logic used by Susan Grantly and Mary Bold (54). These three women all follow a logic based more upon the personal happiness of others than upon dogmatic public justice. This system of ethics was socially inculcated into Victorian women; it was considered a "feminine" style of logic more appropriate for women, "the weaker sex," than men in Victorian England. Although Bold used the term "woman's logic" in a derisive manner--the term itself might have been considered an oxymoron by many Victorians--it is this same "woman's logic" that the novel champions as appropriate for both men and women.

In his conversation with Eleanor, Bold must hide behind his old platitudes; his own logic is meaningless and "by no means worthwhile to repeat" (109). Eleanor says to Bold that it is Harding who "has to bear the punishment; it is he that suffers . . . what has he done wrong?" and breaks down into sobs. And her weakness becomes her strength. As she implores Bold and places her hand on his arm, he is "unmanned" (109). While he loses his manliness, she seems to take on his sexual strength. Eleanor "ejaculated" (109, 110) her words at Bold[1] as her emotion and logic gain control of the conversation. Bold is left wondering how he "dared to love" such a woman and agrees to abandon the suit. Eleanor enjoys "a sort of triumph," but when he declares his love "as men do" with "some truths and many falsehoods" (112), she can no longer deny her love for Bold. She loses her resolve but gains her

future happiness with Bold and her father's happiness. As Ruth apRoberts noted, "Eleanor's logic of the heart has won out over his larger social logic" (37), except that it is Eleanor's logic and heart that are shown to be larger than Bold's social logic of pride and platitudes. In the end, she may have "capitulated," but she also "marched out with the honours of war" (113). She subverts his masculine domination and walks out with a double victory.

A close look at the male and female characters in The Warden helps to show Trollope's sympathetic and realistic portrayal of women and his appreciation for the power of women. It also helps to reveal that Harding is allied with the women, not the men. Harding's very actions define him as feminine, not masculine, by Victorian social standards. Like Susan Grantly, Mary Bold, and Eleanor Grantly, he practices a "logic of the heart" and is always concerned with the effect of public actions on personal lives. His appearance and demeanor are both feminine by Victorian standards; he is the antithesis of the crusading Bold and patriarchal Grantly. James Kincaid also notes that Harding seems "feminine," though the comment is made about Harding as a character in a much later book, The Last Chronicle of Barset (135). The theme of the battle between the sexes is clear in the comic tea-party scene, when the "black-coated corps" of young men "skirmish" with the "muslin ranks" (58). In a mock-heroic tone, the narrator says that soon "the battle" was no longer

"between opposing regiments, but hand to hand and foot to foot with single combatants as in the glorious days of old, when fighting was really noble" (58). The theme of the war of the sexes, however, runs throughout the novel on a much more serious level as the women work for personal harmony and the men work for public success. Trollope does not choose sides in the battle between the crusading reformers and church militant (Pollard 54-56), but he does choose sides as he looks into the gender gap. Critics agree that Harding's virtue makes him the novel's hero; he represents what Geoffrey Harvey terms Trollope's "ideal of heroic goodness" (67). ApRoberts does much to explain the continuing popularity of the novel when she notes that not only do readers think that the mild warden is good, but that readers "love Mr. Harding" (37). Pollard calls Harding a "saintly character," and Terry says that Harding becomes Trollope's "moral centre" (246). Harding holds the moral yardstick which all others must be judged by, and when his measurements are taken, Harding is found to be feminine by the standards of Victorian culture.

When Harding is introduced in the first chapter, his physical description paints a picture of a feminine-looking man. (This is not to say that one should question Harding's sexuality. He was married and is a father. As in many Victorian depictions of virtuous characters, especially virtuous women, Harding seems to be devoid of sexual desire.)

Although Trollope satirizes Dickens as Mr. Popular Sentiment for using physical descriptions to reflect inner qualities, Harding's appearance reinforces his character. He is a "small man," "his eye is mild," and "his hands are delicately white, and both hands and feet are small" (6). Delicate white skin and small hands and feet were desirable physical characteristics in Victorian women and certainly make Harding appear different from the well-made Bold and burly archdeacon.

Harding plays a nurturing role in the novel; his instincts are more maternal than paternal. For "many years" (2) he has been a widower, and through these years he seems to have established what Victorians would consider a mother/daughter relationship with Eleanor. When she consoles him, "the warm tears were running down his cheeks like May rain" (96). They exchange secrets: he tells her his fears about the lawsuit, and she expresses her love for John Bold. Harding calls her "by a hundred sweet names" and thinks of their relationship in domestic, feminine terms: she is a "jewel on his bosom," "a flower in the choice garden of his heart" (99). His relationship with the bedesmen is also marked by characteristics considered typically maternal in the nineteenth century rather than authoritarian, paternal ones. Against the strong objections of his lawyer and the archdeacon, Harding gives the 12 men an extra twopence a day. Like a Victorian angel in the house, he makes sure that "all

their wants are supplied; every comfort is administered; they have warm houses, good clothes, plentiful diet, and rest" (32). He watches over them in this world and watches over them for "the world to come" (32). Harding's maternal attitude is brought into focus by the paternalistic attitude of the archdeacon, who treats Harding as if he were a lenient mother and the bedesmen as if they were disobedient children. Harding can do nothing to stop Grantly's diatribe against the men; he admits in "an apologetic voice" that he would "much sooner remain quiet" (45). Unlike Bold who acts in the name of the bedesmen but does not care about them, Harding "loved so well" the old men and is concerned about the quality of their day-to-day life (21).

Even Harding's friendship with the bishop seems more characteristic of a female friendship. The two form "little plans to mitigate" the archdeacon's wrath and "soften his aspirations for church dominion" (27). The two "mild old priests" press each other's hands and make "little signs of love" (83). Indeed, with the bishop and the rest of Barchester, Harding is a person of "soft womanly affection" (83).

Although Trollope did not force women into unrealistic female molds, it is ironic how well the warden fits the woman-as-angel stereotype found in nineteenth-century literature. Gilbert and Gubar define this image of "noblest femininity" with a passage from Eichner's Wilhelm Meister's

Travels that describes Makarie, the ancestress of the popular virtuous female in the poem "Angel in the The House" (22):

> She . . . leads a life of almost pure contemplation . . . on a country estate . . . a life without external events--a life whose story cannot be told as there is no story. Her existence is not useless. On the contrary she shines like a beacon. . . . When those involved in feeling and action turn to her in their need, they are never dismissed without advice and consolation. She is an ideal, a model of selflessness and of purity of heart. (Gilbert, Gubar 22)

Like this domestic angel, Harding lives a life of contemplation in the country. Before Bold sets in motion external events, Harding's entire life is summed up quickly and quietly in a few short paragraphs. Harding willingly offers consolation and advice, but he waits until others seek it. He may seem ideal, but he is saved from becoming a stereotype because Trollope shows him wrestling with his conscience. Ironically, Harding's Victorian feminine virtues of patience, compassion, and moral influence seem more realistic because they are found in a man, which cleanses them of their cliche-like quality.

Harding is also realistic, because like the female characters in the novel, he reaches beyond the boundaries of the angel in the house. The angel was limited to the power of

influence, while Harding displays another form of feminine power found in Victorian literature, the power of "ability" (Newton 5). The power of female ability is subtly expressed in the nineteenth century (Newton 5), and Harding is no exception. He may seem passive to many readers, but an understanding of female power shows him to be a person of strength. Manifestations of female power of ability are the expression of opinions, self-defending actions, and achievement (Newton 6). Harding, no matter how quietly, expresses himself when speaking to others. He warns Bold that if Bold uses "no unfair weapons," there shall be nothing to forgive (24). Harding speaks plainly of his plight to the archdeacon, saying, "I cannot bear this" (87). But the warden does bear his burdens and defends himself by resigning. His resignation becomes a personal achievement against the masculine forces of the church and reform movement that have tried to force him to their will.

Much like Eleanor, Harding wins by losing. He tries to understand the church's view that if he was right to accept the wardenship in the first place, then he must be right to accept the money. After all, how could he refuse an appointment from the bishop? But to the mild warden, "these arguments, though they seemed logical, were not satisfactory" (26). He needs "inward comfort" not outward comfort (26). Like the females in the novel, Harding practices the Victorian feminine "logic of the heart;" he continues to be

concerned with the personal happiness of others even when his own world is being destroyed. Even though Bold has led the attack against him, Harding invites his traitorous friend to a tea party and assures Eleanor that she should not give up her love for Bold. Even when the bedesmen, whom he has cared for and loved, sign a petition against him, Harding will not speak or act against them. Although he does not agree with Bold's or Grantly's positions, he will not harm them even in self-defense. Grantly bullies Harding into believing he will be "unmanly" if he gives up the wardenship (99), but Harding later decides that manliness is not worthwhile if it costs him his conscience. After Eleanor assures him that leaving the hospital is not a sacrifice for her and the Jupiter attacks him again, Harding decides he must leave the hospital. He has tried to deal on a personal level with the archdeacon and failed, so now he flees to London to speak to Haphazard, who cannot answer his questions and regards him "little better than a fool" (173). Faced with no other option, this mild, meek man "gallantly" faces Haphazard and declares his resolution to give up the hospital as he offers up the sorrowful music of his soul to St. Cecilia on his imaginary violincello. Haphazard, who does not know the warden's mannerisms, does not understand these "wild gesticulations" and believes the warden has become "almost violent" (172). Harding, who abhors violence and all confrontation, longs to escape from the archdeacon but

decides that he must "stand his ground manfully" (173). And he does stand his ground, but hardly like a man. When confronting the archdeacon, Harding finds strength in weakness. He moves "uneasily from one foot to another," "hung his head" (176), and states his resolution to resign "very, very meekly" (178). Faced with this resolve, Grantly is reduced to muttering "Good heavens" and gives up his fight. Harding leaves London with "something of triumph in his heart" (187). He even wonders if he had not "manfully combated against great odds" (187), though such a thought is expressed as a question that remains unanswered. Indeed, such a question cannot be answered either affirmatively or negatively. Yes, he did fight against great odds and win. But, no, he did not do so "manfully." He fought with the strength of a Victorian woman.

Lansbury believes that The Warden is "one of the most elaborate defenses of failure that Trollope wrote" (132). From the Victorian masculine perspective of success based upon stature in the public world--the perspective of Archdeacon Grantly and John Bold--Rev. Septimus Harding did fail. But from a Victorian feminine perspective of success based upon personal relationships in the private, domestic world--the perspective of Susan Grantly and Mary Bold--Rev. Septimus Harding did not fail. Wright notes that Harding's resignation in the face of opposition "constitutes a kind of

victory, though on another battlefield" (30). Harding's victory is a kind of victory--feminine victory.

In the creation of an androgynous hero(ine), Trollope shows support for female power in a time when women were not supposed to have power. In his Autobiography, Trollope states that he believes "the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman, and must have his own system of ethics" (222). In The Warden, Trollope preaches a system of "feminine" ethics. The behavior and values of Harding would have been considered more appropriate for Victorian women than men. Yet in The Warden, Trollope shows that typically feminine behavior is appropriate for both sexes. The Warden subverts biological essentialism by creating a feminine male and subverts a patriarchal society by championing the actions and values of women and the androgynous Harding. In The Warden, Trollope preaches a sermon that supports feminism.

CHAPTER III

BEAUTIFUL BARCHESTER: TROLLOPE'S FEMINIST PARADISE

"It is astonishing how much difference the point of view makes in the aspect of all we look at!" declares the narrator of Barchester Towers (217). Such a comment is hardly surprising in pages written by the "androgynous" Trollope, who in The Warden showed that he had the ability to understand life from male and female perspectives (Wijesinha 339). In Barchester Towers, Trollope once again proves his androgynous mind and support for female power through his depiction of Barchester as a Victorian feminist utopia. In The Warden, women and the "womanly" warden, Rev. Septimus Harding (83), act according to Victorian gender-based norms for women. In Barchester Towers, Trollope's "feminist tendencies" (Wijesinha 179) are even stronger because men and women do not always follow patterns of feminine or masculine behavior. In Barchester Towers, both women and men act in a manner which is shocking to accepted notions of Victorian femininity and masculinity. And yet in the happy, tolerant world of Barchester, women and men who break the norms are depicted as successful, moral people.

The narrator's comment on the astonishing difference "the point of view" can make is certainly true from the point

of view of the critic. Traditionally, Barchester Towers, like The Warden, is seen as the battle between the old, conservative High Church and the new, reform-minded Low Church. P. D. Edwards calls the novel a struggle between "old Barchester and the outside world" (16). Ruth apRoberts sees it as an expansion of "the ironic case of The Warden into variations on the theme of Reform" (48). Robert Tracy views both novels as stories of the threat of "anti-traditional forces of Victorian progress" to the "innocence" of Barchester (4).

While many critics agree that the story is one of tradition versus change, they don't always agree on the victor. ApRoberts, who in The Moral Trollope finds that Trollope's novels show an affinity for situational ethics, finds that the "right and truth lie on neither side" (49) in Barchester Towers. John Kenneth Galbraith declares that Trollope "is wholly on the side" of Grantly, the High-Church warrior, and that "so, as the story progresses, is the reader" (x). Arthur Pollard also declares that in the battle between "the old order represented by Grantly" and the "new by Bishop Proudie" Trollope "leaves no doubt" that he sympathizes with the tradition of the High Church (56). Bishop Proudie is "a thorough Whig," declares Pollard (56), who in analyzing Trollope's loyalties overlooks the fact that on political matters Trollope, too, was a Whig (Snow 83). C.P. Snow is probably closest to the truth when he notes that

Trollope is "crossing his vote" between the two parties in the Barchester novels (83).

Other analyses of Barchester Towers have added new dimensions to the theme of the battle between the traditional High Church versus the new Low Church. Gay Sibley claims that taste is aligned with morality in the novel (38). Grantly and the High Church followers exhibit "good taste" and the Low Church Slope and Proudies exhibit "bad taste," which leads the reader "to hold in suspicion" Slope's and the Proudies' "behavior" and "religious position" (Sibley 42-46). James Kincaid finds that the novel is a battle between young and old that "inverts the usual pattern of struggle" by cheering "very strongly for the parents, celebrating their escape from the young" (101). M. S. Bankert, despite the story's comedy, reads it as "a study of the religious psychology of the nineteenth-century churchman" (153).

The "astonishing difference" that a feminist point of view makes in reading Barchester Towers is clear from this survey of previous Trollope criticism. Although there are important differences in the studies above, all are bound together in that they see the novel as a war between the High Church and Low Church. Characters are defined primarily by their religious and political party affiliations. Yet to the feminist reader, gender relations and women's experience become a primary focus in literary analysis (Culler 63). When gender and gender roles become the focal point in reading

Barchester Towers, the inherent feminism of the novel becomes more evident. Characters such as Archdeacon Grantly and Mrs. Proudie, who follow typical "masculine" behavior patterns for the Victorian period, are championed along with more "feminine" characters such as Eleanor Harding Bold and the Barchester hero(ine), Harding. As the authors of Corrupt Relations note, the creator of both Mrs. Proudie and Rev. Harding "was too intelligent to imply that all women are essentially gentle and tolerant and all men harsh and intolerant" (230).

Barchester Towers is a feminist utopia simply because it is a world that allows both men and women to break free from Victorian stereotypes. But the feminism of the novel goes further than to solely break the bonds of biological essentialism. Unlike the female and feminine characters in The Warden, those in Barchester Towers exhibit a different kind of power: the ability to plot, to plan, to shape their environment rather than just react to it. This quality is most evident in the authoritative Mrs. Proudie and the voluptuous Madeline Neroni, who both help to restore peace by ridding the town of the evil Slope. This different kind of strength is evident even in the mild-mannered Harding, who "craftily" (477) manipulates the bombastic Grantly to his own point of view. In Barchester, the battle between the sexes results in a balance of power between the masculine and feminine. In this nineteenth-century paradise, evil is not

defined as female desire for knowledge and authority. The deceitful Obadiah Slope, "who knows the wiles of the serpent" (55), represents the true threat to the Barchester balance with his unscrupulous lust for totalitarian power over both the men and women in town. Yet in Barchester, Eden is re-created along liberal-feminist principles of shared knowledge and power between the sexes. The snake, Slope, is forced to slither away, and Arabin and Eleanor, the story's Adam and Eve, are joined together in a marriage of equality to live perpetually in paradise.

While from my view Barchester is a feminist utopia, several studies have found it to be a feminist dystopia. Ironically, Kincaid seems to agree with my view of Harding when he says that the mild precentor acts "essentially feminine" in The Last Chronicle Of Barset (135). Yet in his analysis of Mrs. Proudie in Barchester Towers, Kincaid states that she "reflects the novel's quiet but distinctive anti-feminism" (105). P. D. Edwards claims: "If Barchester is united in any respect, it is in its mingled cruelty and vulnerability to women" (22). Jane Nardin argues that the "narrator's tone" in Barchester Towers is more "consistently misogynist than is usually the case in Trollope's novels, and there is a lot of rib-digging, anti-feminist humor" ("Conservative Comedy" 388).[2] The novel treats women's dissatisfaction with their limited roles "far less

sympathetically than Trollope's later works," Nardin concludes ("Conservative Comedy" 392).

Critics who find Barchester Towers to be anti-feminist overlook or de-emphasize the amazing power that women have in Trollope's world. They also overlook the ironic tone in the narrator's voice--and the twinkle in his eye. It cannot be denied that the narrator encourages the reader to laugh with him at the female characters. At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that the narrator encourages the reader to laugh with him at male characters. All of the characters in Barchester Towers are at times ridiculous; the novel is, after all, a comedy. The presence of females with faults does not make the book any less feminist. Indeed, the novel's lack of characters in the mold of the "angel in the house," that perfect image of Victorian womanhood, helps to make it feminist. In Barchester, women are real people with real problems who possess their own goals. As a feminist reader, I often find female strength where other critics find female weakness.[3]

Mrs. Proudie is a character people love to hate, and Trollopians have joined together to sing a loud litany of her perceived faults. David Shaw finds her dignity "a comic, but morally monstrous fabrication" (48). Sibley chalks up the narrator's defense of Mrs. Proudie to chivalry and says that any apology is "lame when set beside the characterization" (46). Geoffrey Harvey writes that the loss of her lace

petticoats at her party exposes her "inherent vulgarity" and that the scene's irony "prompts the reader's recognition of her dehumanizing moral stupidity" (44). David Aitken finds that Mrs. Proudie is the "prime example" of Trollope's disapproval of feminism and women who take on men's roles: "She is a fish out of water in the world of male affairs in which she forever meddles, utterly incapable of understanding any of its ways" (418). Kincaid calls her a "prototype of the big-bosomed, jewel-bedecked, pompous and castrating females in literature" (105). Nardin says that Mrs. Proudie's desire for power is "selfish" and claims that she wants to give the wardenship to the Quiverfuls not because she cares about their hungry fourteen children but because she finds Mr. Quiverful "pliant and submissive" ("Conservative Comedy" 389). Nardin, Pollard, and Kincaid all call Mrs. Proudie the "butt" of Trollope's comedy (Nardin, "Conservative Comedy" 392, Pollard 58, Kincaid 105); the pun was undoubtedly intended. Edwards, whose portrayal of the female characters is more sympathetic, says Mrs. Proudie's "fear" is that "her usurpation of her husband's prerogatives both in the home and diocese" endangers her dignity (26). Even the authors of Corrupt Relations, who find that Trollope's later works are feminist in nature, say that Mrs. Proudie is "punished" for her strength and power (195).

So many negative portrayals seem odd because the novel as a whole shows sympathetic support for Mrs. Proudie. The

narrator admits halfway through Volume II that she has not been depicted as an "amiable lady," but still Mrs. Proudie has "a heart inside that stiff-ribbed bodice" (237). By the end of Barchester Towers, the narrator's expectation that readers will share his fondness for her is evident by the use of the word "our": "As for Mrs. Proudie, our prayers for her are that she may live forever" (487). And in his autobiography, Trollope admits that he regretted the death of "my old friend" Mrs. Proudie, whom he killed off in The Last Chronicle of Barset, after overhearing two clergymen in his club complain about her one evening (275). In a typical Trollopian description, he shows both the faults and virtues of her character. He first calls her a "tyrant, a bully, a would-be priestess, a very vulgar woman, and one who would send headlong to the nethermost pit all who disagreed with her" (Autobiography 276). But then he absolves her of guilt by countering his criticism with praise: "she was conscientious, by no means a hypocrite, really believing in the brimstone which she threatened, and anxious to save the souls around her from its horrors" (Autobiography 276). It is important to note that Trollope emphasizes her strengths by placing them last and then reiterates his affection for her. Over time other characters became "equally dear" to him, he adds, "but I have never dissevered myself from Mrs. Proudie, and still live in much company with her ghost" (Autobiography 276). Mrs. Proudie, as her name implies, is proud and

ambitious. Mrs. Proudie, by Barchester's standards of etiquette, is rude. Yet she loses some of her pride, and rudeness, though unpleasant, is not a mortal sin.

The opening of the novel paves the way for approval of ambitious, masculine characters such as Mrs. Proudie, "a militant lady," and Dr. Grantly (293). In The Warden, Grantly's ambition is depicted as a destructive force that almost destroys the mild, feminine Harding. Yet Grantly becomes a sympathetic character after the opening of Barchester Towers when he loses his chance to wear the bishop's apron. When Grantly faces his own desire for power during his vigil by his father's deathbed, he is ashamed. This "proud, wishful, worldly man sank on his knees by the beside . . .and prayed eagerly that his sins might be forgiven" (3). As Andrew Wright notes, after this scene, the archdeacon "can never be disliked again" (38). Although Grantly's haste to send a note to the prime minister informing him of the bishop's death might be unseemly, it is not malicious. The narrator defends Grantly against readers who may misconstrue his ambition as avarice, letting them know that "it was for no love of lucre that he wished to be Bishop of Barchester" (8). The archdeacon does, however, desire "to play first fiddle . . . to sit in full lawn sleeves among the peers . . . to be called my 'Lord'" (9). In this episode, the narrator sanctions personal ambition, a quality that had been criticized in The Warden. He points out

to the reader that a "lawyer does not sin in seeking to be a judge" and adds the tongue-in-cheek comment that "a poor novelist when he attempts to rival Dickens or rise above Fitzjeames, commits no fault" (8).

Mrs. Proudie's faults are the same faults as those of Archdeacon Grantly, who is generally portrayed by critics as a sympathetic character. Since most critics focus on the difference between the Low and High Churches, they are sometimes blind to the similarities between the Low-Church Mrs. Proudie and the High-Church Dr. Grantly.[4] Both Mrs. Proudie and Dr. Grantly never have been the bishop in title, even though both greatly enjoy their roles as the acting bishop of Barchester. Mrs. Proudie does the work of the bishop for her weak-minded, weak-willed husband, but she cannot be bishop because she is a female in a male's world. Dr. Grantly has "long managed the affairs of the diocese" for his elderly father, but after his father's death he cannot become bishop because he is a Tory in a Whig's world (1). Mrs. Proudie berates the mild Harding in her drawing room just as Dr. Grantly berates the mild Eleanor in his drawing room. The two even have similar speech patterns. When angered, they repeat phrases spoken by another, calmer, person. When Harding admits that "'I don't think I shall ever like that Mr. Slope,'" the archdeacon roars back, "'Like him! like him!'" (37). When Slope defends his flirtations with Madeline to Mrs. Proudie by saying that "'she's lame, Mrs.

Proudie, and cannot move,'" Mrs. Proudie replies angrily, "'Lame, I'd lame her if she belonged to me'" (94). Both Mrs. Proudie and Dr. Grantly believe strongly in the rectitude of their own viewpoints and will gladly charge against their enemies on the open field without subterfuge. They are strong-willed, hard-working, and thick-skinned. Neither one would ever stoop to tell a lie. Their authoritative, ambitious, and forceful natures make them both masculine by Victorian standards. By the pairing of two masculine characters, one female and one male, Trollope cleverly shows the double-standards of Victorian society and the ludicrous limits of typical gender roles. Yet some critics miss this irony. Pollard, for example, declares:

> for whatever we may think of his [Archdeacon Grantly's] self-confident, domineering ways, better be dominated graciously by him than ungraciously by a "bishopess." Even his perversity as he determines his strategy in opposition to Proudie, is acceptable because it is so understandable, so natural. (57)

Yet Mrs. Proudie's perversity is also understandable and natural. Mrs. Proudie, "the lady bishop" (483), would sit in full lawn sleeves among the peers if she could, but there are some rules in Victorian society that even her strength cannot overcome. She is the Amazon, the woman warrior who fights tirelessly and ferociously for her cause. In contemporary

twentieth-century terms, she is also the Supermom, the woman who wants the best of both worlds. The Victorian rule of separate spheres for men and women is not one that Mrs. Proudie follows. As the narrator tells us, "in matters domestic she rules supreme over her titular lord" (19). If a Victorian woman did have power, that power would be within the confines of her own home, so Mrs. Proudie's domestic authority is not entirely shocking. But Mrs. Proudie frequently trespasses into the male world of religious authority. Her presence during the meeting between her husband, Grantly, and Harding is "an innovation" in Barchester, an innovation that may not please the men but one they are powerless to stop and must learn to tolerate (31). She flaunts her authority, daring to speak for her husband by declaring "our position" on religious matters and quoting the Bible at the stunned Harding (33). As in this early scene, the zeal of her own beliefs frequently results in rudeness. Yet such rudeness is easily forgiven, for it results in humor, never harm. And though she is strict in following her own doctrines, she is also quite willing to forgive the sins of "dissipation" and "low dresses" in those who atone by attending church (21). Her crusade for Sunday schools can hardly be characterized as a source of evil; in fact, Harding, Eleanor, Mrs. Grantly, and most of Barchester are supportive of Sunday schools. Mrs. Proudie's other plans are also the cause of good in the town. She fights valiantly for

the impoverished Quiverfuls, winning them the place in Hiram's Hospital so they can properly feed and care for their fourteen children. Her victory over Slope weakens his authority and leads to his dismissal as the bishop's chaplain, which helps to rid Barchester of its true evil.

Mrs. Proudie's fight to wield the power of the bishop does not reflect an unscrupulous desire for power. Her social and economic positions are tied inextricably to her husband, a man incapable of independent thought or action. How a person as weak as Bishop Proudie ever rose to a position of authority would be a complete mystery if the reader did not realize the power of the woman who stands behind the bishop. A feminist reader is compelled to applaud, not chastise, Mrs. Proudie for coming out from behind "her little man" (313). Like a feminist reader, the other men in town can find little to recommend the bishop. Grantly refers to him as "a puppet," "a mere wax doll" and even the kind Harding notes the bishop is "not very bright" (37).

Although Dr. and Mrs. Proudie are often linked together as Low Church members, they are actually polar opposites in their religious viewpoints. Dr. Proudie is a latitudinarian motivated by "spiritual babbitry," not by the doctrinal tolerance and "high-minded liberalism" of real-life latitudinarians such as Thomas Arnold and Canon Kingsley (Bankert 155). Unlike his wife, Dr. Proudie has no real convictions. He has "adapted himself to the views held by the

Whigs" (16), "bore with the idolatry of Rome," and "tolerated even the infidelity of Socinianism" (17). In one of the novel's most comic scenes, the bishop is flabbergasted when he meets for the first time a person more latitudinarian than himself, Bertie Stanhope. Bertie announces that he had "thoughts of being a bishop," then adds that he likes "the Church of Rome best," (83) and later declares: "I once was a Jew" (91). Bishop Proudie is simply a man who was "amenable to those who were really in authority" (17). He happily allows Slope to handle his matters and preach for him so he can sit idly at home. When Slope publicly insults the other Barchester clerics in his sermon, Dr. Proudie handles the situation by fleeing to London. When faced with the prospect of talking to Grantly, he develops "an attack of bile" and claims he is too ill for a meeting (143). The new bishop's only motivation is his own selfish desire for his own comfort. He wants to use the "big room upstairs" (140), enjoy "his ease," and "take the goods the gods had provided" (314). He opens the town to danger because he willingly allows himself to be controlled by others, even the deceitful tyrant Slope. He is a man who is more concerned with image than the good of the community. In London, he was involved in "courtly matters" (16) and sat on "various boards" to lend "a kind of dignity" to the proceedings (17). In Barchester, he is quite willing to make Slope the new dean to get rid of him and "to save appearances" (316). Mrs. Proudie, on the other hand,

does not care about such appearances. "I want Mr. Slope to appear just what he is--a false, designing, mean, intriguing man," she declares (316). The fact that the bishop is "henpecked" is a blessing (19). Barchester is far safer in the hands of Mrs. Proudie in than her husband's.

The trial of having such a husband as the bishop makes Mrs. Proudie a sympathetic character. Barchester marriages are depicted as ones of equality--the Grantlys, the Quiverfuls, and the Arabins. As Deborah Morse notes in her analysis of the Palliser novels, "Trollope's definition of women's rights was an egalitarian marriage" (6). Mr. Slope's tyranny would not only destroy the balance between the High and Low churches, it would destroy Mrs. Proudie's own power within her own home, a power that all women in Barchester enjoy and exercise as their right. Within the context of Barchester's feminism, Mrs. Proudie's war to become "cock of the walk" and save her domestic power is a struggle to ensure her guaranteed rights, not the greedy power play of a castrating man-hater (139). She has championed and supported both her husband and Slope, who came into power as the bishop's chaplain through her hands. Yet the ungrateful men, neither of whom possesses the "magnanimity of this woman," band together and secretly plot to overthrow her (148). Slope pretends to be her ally and to fulfill her wish that Quiverful should become the new warden, but then he starts campaigning for Harding. At first, Mrs. Proudie continues

fighting in her masculine style. She fights with Slope openly just as she fought face-to-face with Harding and Grantly in their first meeting. Yet in the showdown in the bishop's study, she makes a "false step" in battle for the first time by alluding to the "possibility of a retreat on her part" (233). Her mistake and her plight make her even more sympathetic. If Mrs. Proudie seemed hard-hearted or invincible before, she is no longer. The battle over the warden's post shows that Mrs. Proudie is not motivated only by her own pride. She is genuinely "touched" by the plight of the poor Mrs. Quiverful and her children and wants to see them safe within the walls of Hiram's Hospital (238). Mrs. Proudie "proved herself a woman" by listening to Mrs. Quiverful's troubles (237), and at this point, she finds it necessary to change tactics and fight in a more socially accepted battle zone for women: the bedroom. Behind her bedroom door she reigns supreme, and Dr. Proudie later appoints Quiverful as warden. But as soon as possible, she comes from behind the bed curtains to fight in the open, public territory reserved for men. She quite easily crushes Slope in the next duel in front of the bishop as she dismisses him from his post as chaplain. When Slope declares he will "have no words" with Mrs. Proudie, she counters him by saying, "Ah, sir, but you will have words . . . you must have words" (484). Mrs. Proudie proves to all that she has

the power to give him the chaplain's post, and she also has the power to take the post away.

One can hardly fault Mrs. Proudie for fighting like a woman. And though she may breach rules of etiquette with her masculine, confrontational tactics, she always fights with honesty for justifiable causes. Her victory over Slope, the evil usurper of women's rights, is an acclamation of the equality and strength of all Barchester women. Even if Grantly and Harding are at first shocked by her power, the town as a whole recognizes it. As Mrs. Quiverful says to her husband, "Doesn't all the world know that Mrs. Proudie is Bishop of Barchester?" (223). Barchester is a place that allows a woman to break the barrier of the separate spheres. In the battle for the bishop's seat, "Mr. Slope had, for a moment, run her hard, but it was only for a moment," the narrator says (482). It is true that Mrs. Proudie must fight to maintain her authority, but if she did not, there would be no story. In the end, Mrs. Proudie, despite her gender, is undeniably the true bishop.

Mrs. Grantly wields as much control over her home and husband as Mrs. Proudie. When inspecting St. Ewold's parsonage, Susan Harding Grantly shows that "she had not been a priestess herself of a parish twenty years for nothing" (183). Unlike Mrs. Proudie, though, Mrs. Grantly does not flaunt her authority in public. While Mrs. Proudie's feminism is radical by Victorian standards, Mrs. Grantly's is more

conservative. But feminism it is--Mrs. Grantly is no quiet, submissive house angel. When the narrator compares the two women, he notes that Mrs. Grantly "knows how to assume the full privileges of her rank, and express her own mind in becoming tone and rank" (19). Her "obedience," the narrator lets the reader know, is only for superficial display "before the world," a comment that recalls images of Mrs. Grantly's control over her husband at home in The Warden. Mrs. Grantly "values power, and has not unsuccessfully striven to acquire it" (20). And like Mrs. Proudie, Mrs. Grantly can cross the boundaries of separate spheres when she desires. When a young curate "who had come direct from Oxford" continues to bewilder the poorer members of the Plumstead congregation by intoning the service instead of reading it, Mrs. Grantly takes religious matters into her own hands. As a member of the High and Dry Church, Mrs. Grantly "had her own opinion on the subject" of intoning versus reading (40). So in her superficially polite but own strong way, she makes her displeasure with intoning clear by asking the young man if he is ill and offering to send him medicine for his sore throat. Her tactics prove to be powerful, for after "that there had been no intoning at Plumstead Episcopi" (40). Mrs. Grantly distrusts these celibate Oxford clergymen, who have had little contact with women, and distrusts the all-male institution of Oxford itself. She speaks "with a sneer" to her husband about the problems of his own alma mater: "Oh

Oxford! . . . What men choose to do at Oxford, nobody ever hears of. A man may do very well at Oxford who would bring disgrace on a parish" (451). She particularly distrusts Arabin, her husband's protege, and tells the archdeacon that "one person's swans were very often another person's geese" (174).

Mrs. Grantly makes her views on the importance of male and female equality clear when inspecting St. Ewold's parsonage. The feminine Mr. Harding "innocently" tells an "old legend" about the magical powers of the "priestess" of St. Ewold's and adds that the parishioners believe the priestess legend adds "sanctity" to the "consecrated ground of the parish church" (182). Mr. Harding, Eleanor, and Mrs. Grantly, who are accustomed to Barchester's feminism, find nothing surprising in the legend's popularity. Mr. Arabin, however, is shocked and finds such a story "anything but orthodox" (182). Yet Mrs. Grantly defends the Barchester balance and tells the Oxford champion that

> she so entirely disagreed with him as to think that no parish was in a proper state that had not its priestess as well as its priest. "The duties are never well done," said she, "unless they are so divided." (182)

Like Mrs. Proudie, Mrs. Grantly willingly fights against the evil of Slopism in Barchester. She has been a peace-loving woman who managed her wealth and affairs to ensure

"that her carriage and horse had given umbrage to none" (108). When Slope insults her husband and diocese, "people had little guessed how bitter Mrs. Grantly could be" (108). Mrs. Grantly is the first to recognize that Mr. Slope "keeps more than one iron in the fire" as he dishonestly attempts to woo both Madeline and Eleanor, one for sex and one for money (110). Mrs. Grantly knows that Slope wants to do more than harness the men of the church; he also wants to control the women. When Mrs. Grantly raises the battle flag, "the people of Barchester were surprised at the amount of military vigour she displayed as general of the feminine Grantlyite forces" (108). At the novel's end, Mrs. Grantly's authority is affirmed when the narrator declares "that we are inclined to agree with Mrs. Grantly" that the High Church "bell, book, and candle" are the "lesser evil" compared to "Mr. Slope's dirty surplices" (498). It is significant that at the closing Mrs. Grantly, rather than her husband, is praised for religious wisdom. The difference between Mrs. Grantly and Mrs. Proudie is one of style, not substance.

Charlotte Stanhope, much like Mrs. Proudie, must take control of the family's domestic and business matters because her father, who would be considered the proper head of the household in Victorian times, is incompetent and too interested in his own comfort to trouble himself with family responsibilities. Charlotte represents one of the most dreaded of Victorian women, a spinster. Unlike most spinsters

in Victorian literature, however, she seems to have no interest in marriage and never seems grieved "that she was becoming an old maid" (154). Instead of looking for a husband for herself, she tries to find a wife for her spendthrift brother, Bertie. Although Nardin characterizes Charlotte as a parody of the "practical homemaker, who like many a Dickens heroine, keeps home bright and alluring" ("Conservative Comedy" 392), it seems that Charlotte is actually a strong, independent person who is far from parody. She gains the reader's approval because unlike so many "old young ladies" she never "dressed young, nor talked young, nor indeed looked young" (64). Charlotte, like Harding, is another example of androgyny in the world of Barchester:

> She was a fine young woman; and had she been a man, she would have been a very fine young man. All that was done in the house, that was not done by her servants, was done by her. She gave the orders, paid the bills, hired and dismissed the domestics, made the tea, carved the meat, and managed everything in the Stanhope household. . . . She, and she alone, prevented the whole family from falling into utter disrepute and beggary. (64)

Miss Stanhope is also "clever" and prides herself "on her freedom from English prejudice . . . and from feminine delicacy" (65). Charlotte's control over her family ranges far beyond that of any house angel; she enjoys her authority

and does not discourage her other family members from their lazy ways. Charlotte, it seems, is the only one who is always capable of responsible, adult behavior. Dr. Stanhope is "habitually idle" and can forgive anything but "inattention to his dinner" (63). Mrs. Stanhope regards "a state of inactivity as the only earthly good" (63). Bertie's "great fault was an entire absence of that principle which should have induced him, as the son of a man without fortune, to earn his own bread" (69). Madeline is the only other active member of the family, but she is not capable of caring for everyone. Even though the others cannot cope with daily life, Charlotte is strong enough to cope for all of them and find pleasure in doing so. No one in Barchester finds Charlotte's control over her family's domestic and business matters shocking because in Barchester women like Charlotte are tolerated and respected. In an era of literature marked by desperate, pitiful old maids, she stands independent and authoritative. Charlotte, the androgynous female, appears to be "always happy" (154).

Madeline Stanhope, Charlotte's younger sister, is one of Trollope's most unforgettable characters. Like Mrs. Proudie, she is used "to having her own way, though that way was not very conformable with the customary usages of an English clergyman" (67). While Mrs. Proudie flaunts her authoritative power, Madeline Stanhope flaunts her sexual power. She is a classic femme fatale with her "copious rich brown hair" and

"marvelously bright eyes" that "would absolutely deter any man of quiet mind and easy spirit from attempting a passage of arms with such foes" (67). Her eyes also express "cruelty . . . and courage," yet as the femme fatale Madeline is only cruel and fatal to the evil Slope. She enjoys confusing and surprising men, and it is clear that the men, such as Dr. Thorne, enjoy being confused and surprised. Even Dr. Proudie is drawn to her at his wife's party. Unlike so many Victorian beauties, Madeline is neither stupid nor a prude. She is a proficient "modern linguist" who writes "short romances" in French and poetry in Italian (69). Madeline is an "indomitable letter writer" whose correspondence contains "wit, mischief, satire, love, latitudinarian philosophy, free religion, and, sometimes, alas! loose ribaldry" (69). In short, she is far from being the typical Victorian heroine. And though some in town find her frank sexuality shocking, Madeline receives a steady flow of visitors, including leading citizens such as Dr. Thorne and Arabin, and is the center of attention at the Thornes' and Proudies' parties. Madeline is the only person--male or female--in Barchester who is strong or clever enough to expose Mr. Slope's hypocrisy. Madeline knows that he is trying to woo Eleanor at the same time he is kneeling at her own couch. After he declares his love to her, she reminds him that she is still married and boldly confronts him:

> And you consider then, that if a husband be not master of his wife's heart, he has no right to her fealty; if a wife ceases to love, she may cease to be true. Is that your doctrine on this matter, as a minister of the Church of England? (250)

In her final meeting with Slope, Madeline sets out "to put Mr. Slope down . . . and to do it thoroughly" (447). In front of Dr. Thorne, Arabin, and other townspeople, she publicly humiliates him by asking about his proposal to Eleanor and his desire for the deanery. After his humiliation in Madeline's drawing room and his dismissal by Mrs. Proudie, Slope is finally shamed into fleeing Barchester. And like the strong Mrs. Proudie, the strong Madeline also proves that she has a heart and can work for others' happiness. Madeline, a woman who wants men to be at her own feet, realizes that Arabin does love Eleanor and plays matchmaker between the two. Her sexual power is affirmed as she helps to save the town from Slope and helps true love run its course, thus single-handedly creating the circumstances for the novel's happy ending. Once again, in the happy world of Barchester, female power is shown as a force to be respected and as a force for great good.

Madeline's incredible sexual force is not at all limited by the fact that she is crippled. Her status as a married woman, though no one knows--or cares--where her husband is, gives her more social freedom than single women have. Edwards

proposes that Trollope made her a cripple as a way of "playing safe: a sexually incapacitated siren would not compromise her male admirers to the same extent as one they could be suspected of hoping to seduce" (26).[5] However, Edwards rejects this hypothesis because he believes it is not "credible that she should cast a spell over so many men" and that such sexual power borders on the "comic fantasy" (26). Although some feminists would, like Edwards, want to show Madeline as purely a creation of male fantasy, the fact remains that women like Madeline exist. One only has to think of the profound effect that women such as Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Madonna have had on the collective American psyche to realize the validity of Madeline's sexual spell over the men of Barchester. And while female sexuality can be used as a weapon against women themselves, Madeline has learned how to use her sexuality as a weapon for herself. In Madwoman in the Attic, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar analyze the story of Snow White to show that the passive, reclining woman is a desirable, safe woman. The great irony of Madeline is that she reclines most of her time on a couch, yet she is anything but passive. Indeed, it is her sexual energy that makes the men around her into passive playthings. She reverses the image of the sleeping beauty who is watched for male pleasure by watching her own watchers, making them move according to her will. Trollope's depiction of Madeline

as a sexually strong woman shows support for female power and should not be considered anti-feminist.

The authors of Corrupt Relations, though they declare Trollope a feminist, believe that Madeline is "apparently crippled . . . as an authorial punishment for sexual rebellion" (54). Yet it seems more correct that Trollope the feminist would not punish her for rebellion. In analyzing the reasons for Madeline's crippled state, it is necessary to look more closely at her history. Madeline serves as a warning to Victorian female readers that life outside Barchester is not so safe for women, that Barchester is indeed a fantasy world. In Barchester, as shown in the marriages of the Grantlys and Arabins, marriage can be a union between two equals. Madeline's marriage, however, shows that not all women can expect to be so lucky. Madeline, who "had been a great beauty," was reared and married in Italy, far from the safety of Barchester (65). She married for one reason only: she was pregnant. Her husband, Paulo Neroni, was "a man of harsh tempers and oily manners, mean in figure, swarthy in face, and so false in words as to be hourly detected" (66). Although she told her family that she was injured when she fell from a ruin, the narrator lets the reader know that Madeline had been "cruelly ill-used by Neroni," who was the real cause of her accident (66). Her own husband has abused her to the extent "that when she stood she lost eight inches of her accustomed height; so fatally, that

when she essayed to move, she could only drag herself painfully along with protruded hip and extended foot, in a manner less graceful than that of a hunchback" (66). Madeline, not surprisingly, is the only character to speak out against marriage in the novel. In one of the novel's feminist outcries, she tells her sister:

> You know as well as I do in what way husbands and wives generally live together; you know how far the warmth of conjugal affection can withstand the trial of a bad dinner, of a rainy day, or of the least privation which poverty brings with it; you know what freedom a man claims for himself; what slavery he would exact from his wife if he could! And you know also how wives generally obey. Marriage means tyranny on the one side, and deceit on the other. I say that a man is a fool to sacrifice his interests for such a bargain. A woman, too generally, has no other way of living. (126)

Through Madeline's tragic marriage and her speech, Trollope exposes the double standards that bound many Victorian women. Madeline is far from being a comic fantasy; she is a strong-willed survivor. Trollope creates Madeline as a dark reminder of the realities of a sexual code that allowed men freedom but denied it to women and a social code

that allowed husbands to be the mental and physical tyrants of their wives.

As a female heroine, Eleanor Harding Bold is very different from Madeline. While Madeline's beauty stuns all who see her, Eleanor's is so subtle that "those who are only slightly acquainted" with her are not likely to notice her charms (129). Yet charms she has: "quiet, enduring, grateful sweetness," (129) and "beautiful long hair" (133). Like Madeline, though, she is a strong, independent woman who takes pleasure in acting autonomously. And as with the novel's other strong women, critics often consider Eleanor to be a problematic character. Kincaid finds that Eleanor is "morally stupid" (111) and that her love for her home and child reflects selfishness (112). He also notes that Hugh Walpole called her "Trollope's most tiresome heroine" (105). Edwards says that in her defense of Slope, Eleanor is driven to "the same abject surrender, the same admission of weakness, as nearly all of Trollope's heroines who try to assert their own judgment on matters outside the domestic sphere" (22). Nardin believes that Eleanor has "faulty morals" that are shown as "excessively, stupidly progressive" ("Conservative Comedy" 382) within the context of Barchester. The novel shows that "independence goes to her head" (Nardin, "Conservative Comedy" 384) and that she is "mistaken" when she defies "advice from her elders" (Nardin, "Conservative Comedy" 385). Eleanor's marriage to Arabin reinforces the

conservative, traditional role of women, Nardin claims ("Conservative Comedy" 388).

These analyses all minimize Eleanor's strength and overlook the similarities between Eleanor and Harding, who is still the moral hero(ine). It is significant that Eleanor is once again independent at the beginning of the novel. If a reader of The Warden had any doubts about John Bold's nature, they are put to rest when the narrator of Barchester Towers admits that "I cannot say with me John Bold was ever a favourite" (12). Bold's death leaves Eleanor with wealth, and her status as a widow gives her the social freedom that most unmarried Victorian women lacked. In her future relationship with Arabin, usual gender stereotypes are reversed. He is poor and pines away for a spouse and home. Eleanor is rich and never even thinks about another spouse and home. Arabin is a virgin; Eleanor is sexually experienced. The older Eleanor refuses to give in to Arabin with tears as she did to John Bold. The narrator of Barchester Towers points out with irony that if "she had sobbed aloud, as in such cases a woman should, he would have melted at once, implored her pardon, perhaps knelt at her feet and declared his love" (281). But Eleanor is no longer quite so willing to win by losing; like most women in Barchester she now is ready to fight openly for her independence and dignity. She angrily rejects Arabin and all masculine dominance over her. When Arabin tells her she must follow Dr. Grantly's orders because what "the bishop is

to Dr. Grantly, Dr. Grantly is to you," Eleanor jumps up and "literally flashing before Arabin" she declares, "I deny it. I utterly deny it" (282). The two do not become engaged until after Madeline plays matchmaker and gently chastises Arabin for believing "as a rule" that women are below his notice as companions (367). And in their final courtship scene, Arabin does not declare his love until he admits to Eleanor that "I owe you retribution for a great offence of which I had been guilty towards you" (464). Although Eleanor does this time cry, her tears fall unseen. The marriage between the two does not reinforce the narrow, conservative role of marriage--this is a marriage of equality. The two live together in "perfect mutual confidence" (498). Eleanor, at the end, exemplifies Toril Moi's concept that feminism does not require depicting women as "eternal victims of male ploys" (119). Many women have exercised their right "to appropriate other people's ideas" for their own purposes, Moi says (120). As a strong woman, Eleanor appropriates her husband's High Church ideals and becomes even higher than he. She now approves of his silken vests and enjoys having red letters in her prayer book. She donates money towards ecclesiastical legal expenses and puts up a memorial window in the cathedral. Whenever the Archbishop of Canterbury is mentioned, Eleanor "assumes a smile of gentle ridicule" (497), for as Galbraith notes, the archbishop at that time sympathized with evangelicals (526). Arabin, on the other hand, "is more moderate and less

outspoken on doctrinal points than his wife" (498). Mrs. Proudie may be the "she-bishop," but Eleanor is a priestess.

Eleanor's defense of Slope is anything but morally flawed by the true standards of Barchester. Eleanor defends Slope because she believes he is innocent until proven guilty. Although there was something "in his manner which even she distrusted," (138) and she "did not like Mr. Slope personally," (105) Eleanor is unaware of any wrongdoing on his part. She believes he deserves the "benefit of the doubt" and that it would "be a shame" to "revile him, and make him miserable while he is among us" (139). Even Arabin believes that if Eleanor's defense of Slope is based "on principle," then it is "admirable, lovable, womanly" (361). She also has other reasons for maintaining a friendship with Slope--she wants to help return her father to the wardenship. For her father's sake, Eleanor is quite ready to make personal sacrifices. Her feminine father's attitude toward Slope is the same as her own. Harding also admits that he does not "like that Mr. Slope" (37) and that "it would be very wicked of me to speak evil of him, for to tell the truth I know no evil of him; but I am not quite sure that he is honest" (107). Harding has seen Slope's offensive, sleazy side during the interview about the wardenship, so he has more reason to distrust the man than Eleanor does. Even so, when he believes Slope and Eleanor might marry, he maintains that Eleanor "had full right to please herself, and he, as a father, could not

say that she would disgrace herself by marrying a clergyman" (150). Both Eleanor and Harding still practice some of the same moral logic in Barchester Towers that they did in The Warden.

Critics such as Nardin who see Eleanor in mainly negative terms seem to miss the great irony and humor in the narrator's descriptions of her. Throughout the novel he refers to her as "poor Eleanor" (12, 117, 122). In her introduction in the novel, he refers to her as "poor Eleanor" three times in two paragraphs, making the refrain humorous by sheer repetition (12). The phrase is especially ironic because at the same time the narrator informs the reader that Eleanor is now a widow, he admits he disliked John Bold, who possessed "arrogance of thought, unsustained by first-rate abilities" (13). In other words, the narrator smiles and politely tells the reader that Eleanor is better off with her husband dead than alive. The term "poor" soon takes on new ironies because the narrator also says that the widow is anything but poor--she has been left "in prosperous circumstances" with "nearly a thousand a year" at her own disposal" (15). Such a sum makes her quite wealthy, especially in comparison to Arabin, who earns only £300 a year in his position at St. Ewold's. Throughout the book, such comments by the narrator parody the typical view of a widowed woman as pitiful and lost without her husband. Eleanor herself is not the parody; she is the proof that such

notions about widows are ridiculous. She is active, strong, and free. She does as she wishes and refuses to bow to all, even the archdeacon.

The narrator's comments about Eleanor's hitting Slope are equally ironic. The actual description of the scene shows his approval: "she raised her little hand and dealt him a box on the ear with such right good will, that it sounded among the trees like a miniature thunder-clap" (384). Her violence in the scene is depicted as proper self-defense against a man of "greasy" civility (343) who is speaking disgusting words of love and is trying to put his arm around her waist to pull her closer to him. After the scene, the narrator directly addresses "the well-bred reader" who may believe that Eleanor is a "hoyden" or "not a lady" (384). And though the narrator says that Eleanor is "too keen in the feeling of independence, a feeling dangerous for a young woman" (385), it is clear that he admires her independence. The narrator is not poking fun at Eleanor; he is poking fun at the "well-bred reader" who might actually think that Eleanor behaved improperly when the truth of the situation is that only Slope acted improperly. The narrator says that Eleanor possessed a "true instinct" about Slope and knew that he "was capable of rebuke in this way and no other" (385). If hitting Slope were the only way to stop his advances, no "well-bred" reader could assert that she should have submitted rather than defend herself. Throughout the book, Slope's oily manners and

slithering ways have made him hateful to the reader. Indeed, the narrator includes the reader in such hatred when he comments that the kind Harding "did not hate the chaplain as the archdeacon did, and as we do" (151). When Slope touches Eleanor in the garden, "she sprang from him as she would have jumped from an adder" (384). In this Eden, Eve strikes back at the snake.

Another instance of the narrator's irony in describing male/female relationships is clear when Arabin proposes to Eleanor. In this passage, the narrator mocks the Victorian notion of men as stalwart oaks which women cling to like ivy. The narrator expands upon the oak/ivy metaphor in mock rapture, rendering the image ridiculous with a lengthy description:

> When the ivy has found its tower, when the delicate creeper has found its strong wall, we know how the parasite plants grow and prosper. They were not created to stretch forth their branches alone, and endure without the protection the summer's sun and the winter's storm. Alone they but spread themselves on the ground, and cower unseen in the the dingy shade. But when they have found their firm supporters, how wonderful is their beauty; how all-evading and victorious! What is the turret without its ivy, or the high garden wall without the jasmine which gives it its beauty and

> fragrance? The hedge without the honeysuckle is but a hedge. (470)

Once again, Trollope takes a typical Victorian view and exposes its fallacy by making fun of it. The ridiculousness of the closing statement--a hedge is just a hedge--should certainly clue the reader into the joke. The joke is made even funnier because it has been set up with the image of Arabin--not Eleanor--as the ivy. In the two paragraphs preceding the mock metaphor, Arabin is shown as "winding his arm around her waist" (470, emphasis added). And then Trollope spins the image around again in the second paragraph after the metaphor by noting that "she crept nearer to his bosom" (471, emphasis added). The well-chosen verbs "winding" and "crept" are clearly associated with ivy, and Trollope uses them to show that in the happy relationship of Eleanor and Arabin both the female and male are dependent upon one another. Theirs is a marriage of equality.

The depiction of Slope throughout the novel can only make him the most unsympathetic of characters. Unlike the burly archdeacon and the militant Mrs. Proudie, Slope never brings any sense of honor or scruples to his battle. He knows that if he is "careful to meddle with none who are too strong in intellect . . . he may indeed be supreme" (27). Slope "intends to hold the purse strings of the diocese, and draw around him an obedient herd of his poor and hungry brethren" (26). Purse strings and the women who hold them are never far

from Slope's mind. Slope declares his love to Olivia Proudie, only to withdraw his affections after he learns her father had "no immediate worldly funds" (23). He is so sleazy that he stages a failed attempt to regain Olivia's favor after her father gains the income of the bishopric. His love for Eleanor is sparked by Mr. Quiverful's off-hand remark about the size of her income. Slope immediately drops the case of the poor and hungry Mr. Quiverful to campaign for Harding, realizing it would be "more easy for him to gain the daughter, if he did all in his power to forward the father's views" (119). He tries to woo Eleanor with vulgar flattery about her "beautiful long silken tresses," (240) and then later the same day he paws Madeline and passionately declares, "How can I love another, while my heart is entirely your own?" (249).

In his battle with Mrs. Proudie and his fight for the deanship, Slope fights unfairly and relies upon deception. His attack on the High Church during a sermon is cowardly; he is safe in a pulpit while all else are "under an obligation of listening" and have no "immediate power of reply" (45). He insults Harding in private, calling him "useless rubbish" (99), as he tries to goad the mild precentor into refusing the wardenship. Slope even lies when he tells Harding that the bishop has made the Sunday school a condition attached to the appointment. Slope lies to Quiverful, claiming he does not believe he actually "did go quite so far" as to offer the

poor man the wardenship (228). Like most cowards, he attacks his victims in private. In his insulting interviews with Quiverful, Harding, and Eleanor, Slope contrives to make sure there are no witnesses. Unlike Mrs. Proudie, he never makes his promises in writing. Slope also deceives Mrs. Proudie into believing that he will help her, but instead he has been preaching "sedition" to her husband (232). He then "lied in his application to each of his three patrons" as he seeks support for his own self-promotion to the deanery, a position he has neither the background nor the experience to fill (306). When his quest for money and power fails in Barchester, he consoles himself and a widow by marrying her fortune. Slope is so practiced at deception that he can even deceive himself. In a backhanded defense of Slope, the narrator says the chaplain "had taught himself to think that in doing much for the promotion of his own interests, he was doing much also for the promotion of religion" (120).

Slope is the only person in all of Barchester to lie. He lies in his attempts to gain control over Mrs. Proudie, Madeline, and Eleanor. It is not surprising that this man who tries to dominate Barchester women "cares nothing, one way or the other, for the Queen's supremacy" (26). He is described in images of evil: He is a "bestial creature," (38) he wants to get others "under his hoof," (120) he knows "the wiles of the serpent, and he uses them," (55) and he appears to Eleanor as an "adder" in the garden (384). The sweaty-palmed

Slope is a lying, lustful, greedy traitor. The women of Barchester use their collective power to make him flee: Mrs. Grantly marshals her feminine forces, Mrs. Proudie fires him, Madeline humiliates him, and Eleanor hits him. With his departure, serenity once again returns to Barchester. Mrs. Proudie, who has gained power and prestige in her battle to become bishop, leaves the matters of the diocese to the High Church crowd while she takes on a "sphere that is more extended, more noble, and more suited to her ambition than that of a cathedral city" (496). Her departure from Barchester should not be interpreted as a punishment; it is her reward, an affirmation of her abilities. The same is true for Charlotte and Madeline, who return with their family to Italy when they realize that "Mr. Slope's power need no longer operate to keep them from the delight of their Italian villa" (498). The men in Barchester are not big enough game for Madeline, so the novel affirms her sexual power by allowing her to practice it in a larger, more challenging arena. Mrs. Grantly's views as the priestess of the "high and dry church" are affirmed at the novel's end, while her husband's "ecclesiastical authority has been greatly shorn" since the days of his father (497). Eleanor becomes the priestess of the very High Church, which "is two degrees higher than that of Mrs. Grantly" (497). The sisters have grown closer together even if they "do not quite agree on matters of church doctrine" (497). And even though Eleanor

and Mrs. Proudie certainly agree less on matters of church doctrine, they honor each other with a "yearly dinner" (496). Female authority in the town has been solidified and strengthened by its fight with Slope, and the equal relationship of Eleanor and Arabin foreshadows the perpetuation of shared power between the sexes within Barchester.

It is significant that the novel's final two paragraphs laud the androgynous Harding. Although he plays a small part in Barchester Towers, he is present in the background throughout as a representative of mildness, fairness, and goodness. Once again, Harding wins by losing. He gives up a chance to return to his position as warden rather than give in to the demands of Slope. When offered the deanship, he realizes he lacks the "power of combating" to fill the job (456). As before, he stands firm in his decision against Archdeacon Grantly, who "in vain . . . threatened and in vain . . . coaxed" Harding to accept the deanship (457). Harding's power, however, ranges beyond the personal strength he showed in The Warden by standing up to his son-in-law. This time, "slowly, gradually, and craftily Mr. Harding propounded his own new scheme" to put Arabin in the deanship (477). The mild, meek minister has learned new ways to subvert authority. Like the women in the novel, he can now plot and plan to achieve his goals. Unlike the machinations of Slope, however, the manipulations of Harding and the women never

rely upon deceit and are used in self-defense or for the good of others.

The narrator defends Harding--and therefore all feminine characters--against the masculine archdeacon who considers his father-in-law to be "little better than a fool" in worldly matters (493). If readers have doubted Harding's feminine qualities, the narrator clears the air with the declaration: "Few men, however, are constituted as Mr. Harding. He had that nice appreciation of the feelings of others which belongs of right exclusively to women" (493). Comparisons between Grantly and Harding throughout the novel show approval for Harding: Grantly "was wanting in, moreover, or perhaps it would be more correct to say he was not troubled by, that womanly tenderness which was so peculiar to Mr. Harding" (257). Dr. Grantly, unlike Harding and Eleanor, "knew nothing of that beautiful love which can be true to a false friend" (257). At the end of the novel, the narrator claims that Harding is left "in the hands of his readers; not as a hero" because Harding is clearly not the type of "man to be toasted at public dinners and spoken of with conventional absurdity as a perfect divine" (499). Harding is not a hero to be cast in bronze and put on a pedestal. He is simply "a good man without guile, believing humbly in the religion which he has striven to teach, and guided by the precepts which he has striven to learn" (499). As the narrator has shown, one of the reasons that Harding is a "good man" is

because he is "womanly." Harding cannot be left to us as a typical hero; he is a feminine hero. He is guided by the lbieral-feminist precept that people deserve to share in power and be treated equitably. Although he eschews ambition, he does not denigrate ambition in others. The acclamation of his androgyny is an acclamation of the feminism of Barchester. As a feminine male, Harding becomes a symbol of the utopic nature of Barchester, a world where men and women live together in peace.

Barchester Towers is a Victorian feminist utopia much like Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford, which began serialization in 1851 and was published as a book in 1853. Cranford is the funny, charming tale of a town that "is in possession of the Amazons" and where "all the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women" (1). Coral Lansbury astutely draws comparisons between The Warden and Cranford. In Cranford, Lansbury says, female friendship "creates an idyllic community . . . a small Utopia" (133). It seems, however, that Barchester Towers is actually more similar to Cranford because of its greater emphasis on the town as an ideal community where women are powerful. In Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction, Nina Auerbach analyzes Cranford along with other novels. Auerbach finds that in female communities "the male quest is exchanged for rootedness--a school, a village, a city of their own" (8). In the typical female community, Auerbach states, "the treasure is the invisible

and often partial gain of a possession that is self-possession" (8). Barchester, too, fits this pattern of a female community. Both Cranford and Barchester are small, quaint English towns, places where the railroad stops but does not cause any change. Both Gaskell and Trollope write with a pastoral nostalgia for these very British villages, which were fast disappearing amidst the industrialization of the mid-1800s. The very pastoral tranquility of both Cranford and Barchester helps to make them utopian. The inhabitants of Barchester, like those of Cranford, care little for the world outside their city boundaries. The women in Barchester Towers, Mrs. Proudie, Mrs. Grantly, Eleanor, and Madeline, are more interested in self-possession and self-control than any visible treasure. It is not surprising that Barchester Towers, which belongs to the genre of the domestic novel, celebrates feminine values of domesticity and community. Even the celibate Arabin, who has spent most of his life at the all-male Oxford, begins to long for a home and family when he reaches Barchester. The story of male quest becomes a story of evil as Slope relies upon deceit in his quest for positions of power.

Although Barchester Towers and Cranford share the same feminine values, Barchester has one obvious, crucial difference: men. Indeed, the fact that Trollope depicted a world of feminine values shared by both men and women makes Barchester an even more idyllic setting to the liberal

feminist reader. Barchester, unlike communities of all women or communities of all men, maintains a balance between "feminine" and "masculine" values of Victorian England. Feminine values of compassion, community, and domesticity are not translated into an all-powerful code that demands conformity; such a transformation would be opposed to the ideals of liberal feminism. Auerbach states that "the bridge leading from male and female communities lies in the different connotations of the word 'code'" (9). In her analysis of male and female communities in literature, she found that male communities tend to live by dogma, "a code in its most explicit, formulated, inspirational sense," while female communities tend to live by a more "flexible, private, and often semi-conscious set of beliefs" (9). For women, a code is more likely to be a "whispered and a fleeting thing, more a buried language than a rallying cry" (9). In Barchester Towers, both men and women follow a "flexible, private" code, one that allows for a wide variety in beliefs and behavior and is based upon liberal feminist values of tolerance and freedom for both men and women. In Cranford, the assertive, masculine Deborah Jenkyns is killed to make the town safe for more feminine women, says Auerbach (82). Yet in Barchester Towers, assertive, ambitious women--Mrs. Proudie and Madeline Neroni--and assertive, ambitious men--Archdeacon Grantly and Mr. Arabin--are tolerated and portrayed with sympathy. The feminine code of Barchester is

flexible enough to understand those who desire power, as long as that power is not used to harm the community. Trollope, Kincaid states, gives his approval to "those who strive, who make money, who do; who achieve power, and to those who are humble, passive, retiring" (58). In Barchester Towers, Trollope depicts a liberal-feminist world of balanced power between men and women. In Barchester, the battle of the sexes ends in peace.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: THE FEMINIST TROLLOPE

Along with Michael Sadleir and the Trollopians who followed, perhaps no one would be more surprised than Anthony Trollope himself to know that some critics had decided he was a feminist. And yet studies such as The Androgynous Trollope (1982), Corrupt Relations (1982), Women in Trollope's Palliser Novels (1987), and He Knew She Was Right (1989) show his sympathetic portrayal of Victorian women and his subversion of patriarchal politics. The development of these feminist themes is even clearer when studied in relation to two of his earliest novels, The Warden and Barchester Towers.

In The Warden, Trollope showed an "unusual" ability to see both sides of the dispute between the reform movement and the established Church over Hiram's will, says Arthur Pollard (48). Yet Trollope's ability to see both sides is not limited to ecclesiastical or legal issues. In both The Warden and Barchester Towers, Trollope also shows his ability to see both sides of gender issues. When these two early novels are read as depictions of the battle between the sexes instead of the battle between religious and political factions, Trollope's feminist roots emerge. And when these studies of Trollope's early and later novels are taken as a whole, it

becomes clear that Rebecca West was indeed correct: Trollope was a feminist.

The feminism of The Warden and Barchester Towers is further clarified in light of the contemporary psychological studies of Harvard professor Carol Gilligan. In her book A Different Voice, published in 1982, Gilligan explores differences in views of morality and self, and the association of these different views with men and women in studies of human development and in her own research. Gilligan's discussion about differences between male and female voices and values are based upon empirical observations from her own studies (2). She cautions that "No claims are made about the origins of the differences described or their distribution in a wider population, across cultures, or through time" (2). Gilligan does not declare that either the male or female voice is best, but instead she calls for a further understanding and study of female development to be added to the current psychology that has focused predominantly on male development. Many psychologists, such as Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg have based their research on human development upon studies of men or written about women from a male viewpoint, Gilligan says (7-22). As a result, Gilligan believes, psychology has tended to equate human development with male development. When these psychologists have noted differences in male and female psychology, they

have tended to depict male psychology as "normal" or standard and female psychology as deviant (Gilligan 7-22). Such a viewpoint leads scientists to surmise that girls and women are somehow less adult or less morally developed than men (Gilligan 7-22).

In her studies of women, Gilligan finds that women tend to view the world and their relationships as a web of interdependence, and men are more likely to view the world and relationships as a hierarchy (62). Gilligan's work builds upon the theories of Nancy Chodorow, who attributed differences in male and female development to factors of socialization (Gilligan 7-8). While men tend to define themselves through separation, women tend to define themselves through relationships (Gilligan 8). These differing views of the self and the world lead many men and women to have differing concepts of morality. Gilligan says:

> This confrontation reveals two modes of judging, two different constructions of the moral domain--one traditionally associated with masculinity and the public world of social power, the other with femininity and the privacy of domestic interchange.(69)

In her studies, Gilligan finds that women are more likely to see "the moral problem as a problem of care and responsibility in relationships" while men see the moral problem "as one of rights and rules" (73). Both systems are

logical, she finds, though they are based upon different principles. Gilligan says that an "ethic of care is a psychological logic of relationships, which contrasts with the formal logic of fairness that informs the justice approach" (73).

Women's concern for others leads them to "include in their judgment other points of view," says Gilligan, which becomes problematic when maturity is associated with quick, clear decision-making (16). If the world is viewed as a hierarchy, wrong and right solutions are more clearly delineated. If the world is viewed as a web, then each problem has many solutions, and wrong and right ones are no longer so clear. For many women, the moral decision or the good decision is simply defined as "a way of solving conflicts so that no one will be hurt" (65). And yet in a web of interdependence, finding a solution that hurts no one is often impossible. Gilligan says that

> Women's moral weakness, manifest in apparent diffusion and confusion of judgment, is thus inseparable from women's moral strength, an overriding concern with relationships and responsibilities. The reluctance to judge may itself be indicative of the care and concern for others that infuse the psychology of women's development and are responsible for what is generally seen as problematic in nature. (16-17)

In The Warden and Barchester Towers, Trollope also explores the difference between male and female logic. His assessment of the difference between male and female logic is the same as Gilligan's: women are more concerned with individuals and personal responsibilities to others, and men are more interested in individual rights and the public world. In The Warden, when John Bold accuses Mary Bold of woman's logic, it is an insult. Like psycholgogists such as Freud and Piaget (Gilligan 7-10), John Bold considers female ethics somehow less just or logical than a system of male ethics. And yet, unlike these psychologists, Trollope shows that feminine values are not flawed or problematic. In both novels, feminine ethics are championed through the depiction of female characters and the feminine Rev. Septimus Harding.

In The Warden, Harding and the women, Eleanor Harding, Mary Bold, and Susan Grantly, are concerned with "not hurting others;" they all look for solutions that will result in personal happiness. The men in the novel, however, are concerned whether or not Harding has "the right" to keep his post as warden. Harding's own desire to act morally results in personal confusion. Like the women in Gilligan's abortion decision study (65-105), Harding realizes he cannot act without hurting others, which means he can find no easily identifiable moral solution. Keeping his position as warden seems right because he must support his daughter, Eleanor, and he also has a responsibility to care for the twelve

bedesmen. On the other hand, he also realizes that the church might not have had the right to profit from Hiram's will and increase the warden's salary over the years. Trollope creates male characters such as John Bold and Archdeacon Grantly who view Harding's lack of will to fight on either side as personal weakness, but the novel as a whole depicts Harding's quandary as moral strength. After Harding realizes the situation itself has no solution, he, like the women in Gilligan's abortion study, begins "to develop a new concept of goodness" that does not deny paying attention to the needs of the self (Gilligan 85). Through personal crisis, Harding realizes he cannot meet the needs of everyone and at the same time meet his own need for personal peace and integrity. So this mild, meek man can "win" only by removing himself from the situation. Instead of arguing or fighting, he forfeits--he chooses to lose. And for Harding, public loss becomes personal victory. Such behavior is also kin to studies by psychologist Janet Lever of girls and boys at play. Lever found that boys "enjoyed the legal debates as much as they did the game itself" while girls "tended to end the game" in face of disputes so as not to risk hurting others (Gilligan 9).

In Barchester Towers, the female conflict between responsibility to self and responsibility to others is explored in greater detail. Women in the novel, such as Eleanor Harding Bold, Mrs. Proudie, Susan Grantly, and

Madeline Neroni, all follow a moral code based upon responsibility and care for others and make crucial decisions based upon their desire to help others. These women, like the women in Gilligan's college student-study and abortion-decision study, have also begun to question a morality that depends upon self-sacrifice. Both the modern women in Gilligan's studies and the Victorian women in Barchester Towers integrate a concern for the self into their morality, which is based upon responsibility for others. Indeed, Mrs. Proudie has so integrated concern for her self into her morality that she at times becomes masculine in character by Victorian standards. But all of these women's ability to care for their own selves while at the same time caring for others gives them a strength and vigor of character that makes them somewhat masculine in an era when femininity was associated with weakness.

Though Harding is not as central a character in Barchester Towers as he was in The Warden, he is always present in the background. And once again, he emerges as an example of morality at the end. In Barchester Towers, Harding is given an opportunity to return to his position as warden, but he chooses to lose again rather than put himself in a position that involves a dispute. Although Harding has twice given up "his right" to the wardenship, he has never stopped doing what he felt was "right" by visiting and caring for the bedesmen. In the beginning of Barchester Towers, the narrator

tells the reader that Harding has "almost daily" visited the bedesmen, even though he is no longer in charge of caring for them (10). And at the end of the novel, Harding once again shows his concern for others by walking arm-in-arm with Rev. Quiverful, the new warden, into the hospital. Harding understands that many townspeople and the bedesmen might believe that Quiverful usurped his right to the wardenship, and Harding wants to dispel any possible hard feelings toward the impoverished Quiverful family. It is at this point in the novel that the narrator declares that Harding "had that nice appreciation of feelings which belongs of right exclusively to women" (493).

Clearly, though, Trollope does not believe such concern for others is limited "exclusively to women" because he creates a male hero who exhibits feminine qualities. In the introduction to In A Different Voice, Gilligan is also careful to point out that the differences she notes between male and female voices "is not absolute" and is based upon empirical observations (2). In their work, both Gilligan and Trollope emphasize the value of women and feminine voices, which have been marginalized by society. They both subvert typical negative views of women and femininity by turning perceived weaknesses into strengths.

Feminist critics need to take a closer look at The Warden and Barchester Towers because in both novels Trollope explores differences in male and female psychology. His

positive depictions of women become almost radical psychological portraits considering the fact that more than a century after the novels were published many psychologists saw women's different voice as a sign of female weakness (Gilligan 7-22). The Warden and Barchester Towers are also radical because they depict a world where men and women can break free from their society's conceptions of femininity and masculinity without going mad, committing suicide, or living in isolation, as do so many heroes and heroines who violate societal norms. The happiness and serenity that pervade these novels are radical within the context of so much of literature that visualizes society only as a punishing god to those who refuse to conform. It is interesting to note that most feminist studies have focused on Trollope's later works, which are considered darker or more serious by Trollope critics. Feminists, like so many critics, tend to find tragedy more noble than comedy, and feminism itself often seems to be required to focus on unhappiness and despair. A study of The Warden and Barchester Towers, however, shows that we can learn much about literature and feminism from laughter.

NOTES

[1] The word "ejaculate" can be read as having a double meaning. Although it is obviously used as a verb meaning "to utter suddenly," the word also meant "to eject fluids from the body," including semen, at the time Trollope wrote The Warden (OED). Throughout the novel, this verb seems to be applied to the speech of male characters, so it is significant in this scene that the word "ejaculate" is applied to a female.

[2] The quotes and page numbers throughout the rest of this thesis that are attributed to Jane Nardin refer to the essay "Conservative Comedy and the Women of Barchester Towers," which was published in Studies in the Novel in 1986. A revised version of this essay was printed in her book, He Knew She Was Right, which was published in 1989. I have chosen to quote from the earlier version of the essay because it includes more detailed comments about several characters.

[3] So many negative depictions of Trollope's female characters in Barchester Towers may support the feminist theory that readers are taught to sympathize with male characters and see the male point of view as standard. Male readers may be more sympathetic to male characters, and "women are led to identify with male characters, against

their own interests as women," Culler shows in his survey of feminist criticism in On Deconstruction (51). While I do not believe that men and women inherently do or should read differently, I do believe that socialization may cause readers to place greater emphasis on or feel more sympathetic toward male characters.

I do not mean in any way to imply that critics such as Jane Nardin, P. D. Edwards, and James Kincaid are anti-feminist. They all make important, insightful comments on the novel and its depiction of gender roles. They themselves seem quite supportive of feminism; they simply do not believe that Barchester Towers is, too. I am indebted to their critiques because they helped me to formulate my own arguments.

[4] Although Edwards does not draw parallels between Mrs. Proudie and Dr. Grantly, he does point out that "petticoat government" plays a role in both the Proudie and Grantly households (22).

[5] Edwards says that Madeline is "sexually incapacitated," but I can find no support in the text to back such a claim (26). The novel's narrator says that Madeline has "fatally" injured the sinews of her knee, which makes it impossible for her to walk standing perfectly upright (66). Such an injury does not make her incapable of sexual intercourse.

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