

The Anonymous Trollope

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IN 1865, Anthony Trollope wrote an essay for the fourth issue of the *Fortnightly Review*, a periodical he had been instrumental in getting underway, entitled "On Anonymous Literature."¹ In his essay, Trollope added his voice to those who had already opposed the practice, still common in England, of publishing anonymous articles and reviews in the periodicals.² Trollope's article is aimed primarily at bringing into the open the critics who seemed to him to have been allowed to hide their malice or their carelessness behind the mask of anonymity; but he insists that all material, including fiction, should appear with the authors' names. In later years, when Trollope came to write his autobiography, he had second thoughts about his original stand opposing anonymity. But he continued to maintain that "the name of the author does tend to honesty, and that the knowledge that it will be inserted adds much to the author's industry and care."³

Curiously enough, however, Trollope himself wrote three novels intended for anonymous publication, two of which, *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel*, did so appear, first serially in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and then as two-volume books. In *An Autobiography*, Trollope discusses what prompted him to assume the mask of anonymity. He was, by 1865, a famous and successful novelist; and having won a name for himself, he wondered now whether "a name once earned carried with it too much favour." Was it not with him as it was with other well-known novelists: that anything he might write would be favorably received as a matter of course; while unknown authors, whose work might in fact be of superior quality, would receive in-

adequate recognition or none at all? Wanting to find out whether it was an author's name or his merit which won the public's attention, he determined "to begin a course of novels anonymously."⁴ The first was begun just two months after his attack on anonymity in the *Fortnightly Review*.⁵

Trollope's attempt to obtain what he called "a second identity" was soon given up. There was some interest in the unknown authorship of the two novels while they were appearing serially; but when each was published, subsequently, as a two-volume book, again anonymously,⁶ both failed to win an appreciative audience and so proved financial failures. Expectedly, when Trollope offered *Blackwood's* yet another novel for anonymous publication, *The Golden Lion of Granpère*, it was turned down and did not appear until 1872 in another periodical where it was published under Trollope's name.⁷

It must be said of Trollope's anonymous novels that neither of them has ever attracted much critical attention or praise. Trollope himself thought "that the stories are good."⁸ He preferred the first, because it was "less lachrymose"; but as usual Trollope's critical assessment of his novels is not as useful as one might wish. He does, however, helpfully distinguish between the two kinds of disguise he attempted in writing the novels: the language, or the style, by means of which the stories were to be told; and the substance of the tales themselves. "I had endeavoured to change not only my manner of language, but manner of story-telling also." In what follows, however, there is nothing about purely stylistic disguises. Rather, he is concerned to describe matters of content, both omissions and additions, which were unusual for him. "English life in them there is none. There was more of romance proper than had been usual with me. And I made an attempt at local colouring . . . which had not been usual with me." He goes on to say that in both novels, "there is much that is pathetic," and though he does not specifically say so, one gathers from the context

that the "pathetic" was itself an addition, part of the disguising mask, the new identity.⁹ Certainly the most striking thing about the anonymous novels is their pathos.

It cannot be said, however, that Trollope managed to establish a second identity by means of his anonymous novels. Despite Mr. Blackwood's assurances that *Nina Balatka*, accepted by him as the first of the anonymous series, would not, "from its style," be recognizably Trollope's;¹⁰ and despite the fact that some reviewers and readers did not penetrate the disguise (one reviewer announced that the author was most certainly a woman);¹¹ others quickly enough discerned the identity of the author. R. H. Hutton, writing in the *Spectator*, announced that *Nina Balatka* was written by Trollope. Hutton knew the author, he claimed, by recognizing certain phrases — he called them "test phrases" — which "are found in Mr. Anthony Trollope's stories, and in those alone."¹²

Most readers of Trollope's anonymous novels who are familiar with his work in general would want to agree, I should think, with Hutton's verdict that the style of the novels is Trollopien, if by "style" we may be allowed to mean merely the way in which a writer characteristically uses language.¹³ Trollope's failure to achieve what may be described as a new style, however, certainly does not mean that the anonymous novels failed altogether to be new, to be departures from what readers of Trollope's fiction would have come to think of as his usual manner. The novelty of *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel* lies, however, in their content, not in their style, as Trollope himself seems to have perceived. To be sure, there are enough similarities to his other novels in substance, too, to suggest the hand of Trollope in them. In the case of both, for instance, the heroines, around whom the action revolves, are in many ways seemingly typical of Trollope's heroines — they are honest, plain-spoken, without guile. The romantic situation in both is also typically Trollopien: the heroines are in love, but they are separated from the

men they love by social and family obstacles that seem insurmountable.

Besides various similarities that link the characters and plots of the anonymous novels to Trollope's fiction already published, there are important differences. One of the most obvious lies in their brevity. Trollope's novels are, of course, characteristically long, their length the result of the parallel plotting he ordinarily employed. The anonymous novels, in contrast, contain a single plot. Their focus, indeed, is intense, even relentless. The brevity itself may, of course, be seen as part of the disguise. It may also be seen, however, as the result of Trollope's trying to find his way over unfamiliar grounds. Earlier, when writing *The Warden*, he seems to have found the same kind of concentration necessary. It, equally short, was an experimental novel too, a departure as well as a beginning, a turning point in his career as a novelist.

A second obvious departure from his norm has to do with setting. Trollope himself, in locating the nature of his disguise, said of his anonymous novels, as we have already noted, that they contain nothing of English life. Their settings are in fact foreign: *Nina Balatka* takes place in Prague, *Linda Tressel* in Munich. The foreignness of the novels is, however, I would suggest, only symptomatic, one might even say symbolic: i.e., the foreignness of the settings parallels the presence of narrative elements foreign to Trollope's usual practice as a novelist, at least in the popular period immediately prior to the anonymous fiction. It is these foreign elements—departures into new areas, deeper waters—which we wish now to locate.

Without attempting here to continue the effort of other critics to divide Trollope's works into convenient, if sometimes misleading, groupings and divisions, it is perhaps nonetheless helpful, at the outset, to place the anonymous novels in Trollope's canon, to indicate their relationship to his development as a novelist. The view propounded most forcefully by A. O. J. Cockshut that Trollope's later fic-

tion is darker, gloomier, than his earlier work has subsequently been modified by somewhat more moderate critics of Trollope, such as William Cadbury, who have reminded us of what every reader of Trollope must know for himself: that Trollope's fiction from the beginning alternated between light and dark, comic and tragic, poles.¹⁴ It is nonetheless true, however, that from *The Warden* to *Nina Balatka* Trollope's novels do generally deserve their popular reputation for pleasantness. None of the novels belonging to that period (1850-1867) are as untroubled as they have seemed to a surprising number of readers to be; but, with the exception of *Orley Farm* (1862) and *The Small House at Allington* (1864), the novels of that period are largely reassuring, comic in tone and denouement. Trials and tribulations there are, but they are surmounted; and even before they have been overcome, one is assured by Trollope's leisurely, friendly tone, perhaps even by the large, expansive nature of the plots themselves, that the world, though troubled, is not really very dangerous, that things will surely turn out all right in the end.

The presence of *Orley Farm* and *The Small House at Allington*, with their ambiguous endings, in the generally sunny period that extends from *The Warden* to *Nina Balatka*, however, is strong evidence that Trollope's sense of the difficulty and complexity of modern life, so strongly expressed in his tragic first novel, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, had by no means left him. But it is not until we come to *Nina Balatka*, to what may rightly be described as Trollope's anonymous period, that there is a full return, if not a permanent one, to the somber mood of Trollope's first novel. The mask that Trollope put on for the anonymous tales was a dark one; the usually comic writer laid aside the visage of the smiling public man, to borrow Yeats' description of himself, and put on a more tragic one.

Nina Balatka appears at first to be a troubled problem novel in the modern sense of that term, the "problem"

here being anti-semitism. Trollope had written about other problems, but (with the exception of the Irish question) they were problems less vexatious, more easily solved. The novel does not, however, have much to say about the alleviation of anti-semitism. The novel's hero wishes to be instrumental in crushing "the prejudice which had dealt so hardly with his people — to make a Jew equal in all things to a Christian — this was his desire."¹⁵ But the novel ends with that desire being diluted to the simple wish that he and his Christian wife, Nina, will be able to find, away from Prague, "a spot on which they might live without the contempt of those around them" (p. 134). Whether the couple ever finds such tolerance is not told by Trollope. It is not, in fact, so much the solution of the problem of anti-semitism that Trollope gives his attention to, but rather the effect of it both upon those who hold anti-semitic views and those who are the object of them.

Nina Balatka has betrothed herself to a Jew named Anton Trendellsohn, an act outrageous to the gentile world of Prague in general and to her family in particular, most acutely to her aunt, one Madame Zamenoy. Trollope had depicted hateful figures before Madame Zamenoy; but it is hard to think of any figure since before *The Warden* who matches the open virility of her acrimony. She, Trollope tells us at the outset, "could still hate a Jew as intensely as Jews ever were hated" (p. 3); and to prevent the offensive marriage she announces that "There is nothing I would not say — nothing I would not do" (p. 76). It is she who devises the plot to discredit Nina in her lover's eyes, hoping to see to it that the Jew jilts his fiancé. She justifies her dishonesty by saying "Oh, I hate them! I do hate them! Anything is fair against a Jew" (p. 77). Her motives, in fact, are purely a matter of unexplained and inexcused hostility. Even toward her niece, she feels neither loyalty nor pity: "the girl herself, when rescued, she would willingly have left to starve in . . . poverty . . . as a punishment for her sin in having

listened to a Jew" (p. 78).

Opposing Madame Zamenoy and those who are her agents, there stands Nina and the Jews of Prague, chiefly Anton Trendellsohn. Trendellsohn is certainly the hero of the novel, but he is by no means the kind of lover whom Trollope usually gives his young heroines. Though he is handsome and intelligent, he is neither young nor light-hearted. Even his niece, who is well disposed toward him, must describe her uncle as "never gay," as one "too old to laugh and dance" (p. 50). As a result, the element of romance in the novel is never that island of youthful love in a sea of tumultuous maturity, that oasis of idealism in the desert of modern materialism, that it frequently seems in Trollope's early novels to be. The romance here provides no clear contrast to the drab world presided over by Nina's scheming aunt.

Nor is the romance safe against the hostility that permeates the novel. If Trendellsohn is a figure of strength and maturity, there is also in him an unmistakable streak of something harsh, even cruel, that anticipates Josiah Crawley (*The Last Chronicle of Barset*) and Louis Trevelyan (*He Knew He Was Right*). When Madame Zamenoy's plot to alienate Trendellsohn from Nina by making him doubt her honesty and loyalty begins to work, he makes demands of Nina, intended to prove her innocence, that are at once cruel and unfair, even sadistic. Having learned to doubt her word, he feels that "she must be made to go through the fire" of proving her innocence by spying upon her father even though she makes it clear that to do so is abhorrent to her (p. 133).

The world of the novel, divided between anti-semitic and Jew, is indeed poisoned, a drab, ugly place of hostility and suspicion. Going back and forth between the opposing camps, from the home where she lives with her father to the Ghetto where Trendellsohn lives, goes Nina herself. Appropriately enough, she must cross from one side to the other by means of a bridge. Crossing it, however, she is usually overtaken by a fear of drowning, a fear

well supported by, perhaps based upon, her frequently active desire to throw herself from the bridge. Her hydrophobia may be said to represent symbolically the consequences of failing to bridge the dangerous division that separates her from her lover: certainly her fear of death by drowning always accompanies her across the bridge on those occasions when her desire to be united with her fiancé seems most threatened, most impossible of fulfillment. Thus, though she initially seems to be primarily a figure of love who alone in a world poisoned by hostility and suspicion actively seeks to heal division by love, her preoccupation with suicide makes her unlike those heroines of Trollope's who had appeared in the popular novels since *The Warden*. She reveals, furthermore, other masochistic traits in addition to her suicidal longings. She feels "a certain delight, an inward satisfaction, in giving up everything for her Jew lover — a satisfaction which was all the more intense, the more absolute was the rejection and the more crushing the scorn which she encountered on his behalf from her own people" (pp. 62-63). Her masochism is also accompanied by outbursts of complementary sadism. She, like her aunt and her lover, wishes to punish others, to make them suffer as she suffers. In her case, she sees suicide not only as a way out of her own misery but also as a way to make her lover suffer for the unhappiness he has caused her: "she had wasted all her heart upon a man who had never believed in her; and would she not be revenged upon him? Yes, she would be revenged" (p. 182).

There is, then, even about the book's heroine something decidedly perverse, a suggestion of morbid psychology, that links her to both Madame Zamenoy and Trendellsohn. All of them seem engaged in playing out something more elaborate, more sinister, than the usual Trollopiian plot. Trollope had already examined perversity, most recently in his portrayal of Lily Dale in *The Small House at Allington*; but Lily, though perverse in her obstinacy against John Eames, is not a figure who suggests psychological

depths. All the central figures of *Nina Balatka*, however, must be seen as representing a new interest in, or at the very least an intensification of his interest in, abnormal psychological states which anticipates immediately his most elaborate studies of perversity in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* and *He Knew He Was Right*. The novelist famous for his pictures of average English life, of ordinary human beings caught in the acts of everyday life, reveals, from behind his anonymous mask, probably because of it, an unexpected knowledge of morbid states of mind.

If the reader used to the Barset novels finds himself on unfamiliar, foreign ground in *Nina Balatka* because of Trollope's expanded psychological sensitivity, he will also feel himself on unfamiliar ground because of what may be described as the novel's general ambience. In the English novels that commence with *The Warden*, Trollope's characters face whatever difficulties they have to face in a world still presided over by traditional institutions that provide a sense of continuity in the midst of change. Trollope was always certain that the world changes, but his belief in the value of certain traditions in English life and government is everywhere present in his novels. It is true that in general his heroes and heroines must face, as the central issue of the novels in which they appear, difficult moral dilemmas which can only be resolved within one's own conscience. Even those who, faced with difficult decisions, wish for or seek advice from others realize that, because of their inability to communicate fully with others or because of genuine differences of opinion, no such advice is to be had. If such characters come to feel themselves alone, sometimes even alienated, it is nonetheless true that their difficulties occur in the larger context of stable English life. The Church, Parliament, the family, the aristocracy and squirearchy all remain, as do certain values, ideals, and assumptions associated by Trollope with the gentlemanly class.

In *Nina Balatka*, however, the assurances of England are

not at hand. Nina's love for a Jew makes her, in her own and in others' eyes, "an outcast from all religions" (p. 17) and throughout the novel she suffers religious anxiety on account of her uncertain position with regard to the Church. She has no spiritual advisor, no one to whom she can turn except the statue of St. John Nepomucene standing on the bridge over which she frequently crosses; and St. John was himself thrown from a bridge on the same spot and drowned. She also feels herself unprotected by any secular, civil authority. She knows that there is nothing legal that can be done to prevent her marriage; but the ominous idea of persecution remains present to her: "there came over her a cold feeling of fear when her aunt spoke to her of the police. The law might give the police no power over her; but was there not a power in the hands of those armed men [of the Hapsburg army] whom she saw around her on every side, and who were seldom countrymen of her own, over and above the law? Were there not still dark dungeons and steel locks and hard hearts?" (p. 27). From time to time she looks up to the Hradschin Palace, located on an eminence above the house where she lives, as if to some friendly presence presiding over her life. Her doing so is ironic, however, even bitterly so, because, as Trollope tells us, the palace, once the residence of Bohemia's kings, is now usurped and largely empty, quite literally an image suggesting the absence of those stabilizing, potentially beneficent forces in Nina's life which an English girl might still be able to associate with such a building in her own land.

Opposed on all sides and finally, it seems, even turned on by her love, Nina finds the death of her father an insurmountable blow. "Doubly deserted as she now was by her lover and father, she could live no longer" (p. 177). Though she does not in fact commit suicide, she suffers, as a result of her decision to destroy herself, a night of anguish that is unusual in its intensity for a Trollope novel and totally unexpected if one has in mind only the norm of the Barchester series. The night scene on the bridge

where Nina goes to throw herself down into the water is certainly Trollope at his most anonymous. Climbing up behind the statue of St. John Nepomucene where, protected from sight, she can persuade herself to fall forward into the river below, Trollope renders her response to her situation in terms of general metaphysical horror and anguish: it is the emptiness of the world that terrifies her, her sense of utter isolation. "When she became aware that there was nothing between her and the great void space below her, nothing to guard her, nothing left to her in all the world to protect her, she retreated, and descended again to the pavement" (p. 184).

Taking fresh resolve, however, Nina returns to the niche behind the saint's statue where, once again, her religious anguish returns to her at the prospect of her impending sin, i.e. her suicide. "In these moments her mind wandered in a maze of religious doubts and fears, and she entertained, unconsciously, enough of doctrinal scepticism to found a school of freethinkers." She is, however, finally able to pray dumbly to God who "would know all, and would surely take some measure of her case" (p. 185). Immediately thereafter comes rescue, and quickly after that the novel concludes with her reunion and reconciliation with Anton, their marriage and departure from Prague.

The novel ends, then, happily; but whatever happiness there is in it is reserved almost exclusively for the conclusion. The general impression of the novel is, in fact, overwhelmingly unhappy. The torment of the heroine, from inner and outer causes, is unrelieved; and the atmosphere throughout is charged with hostility, suspicion, frustration, loneliness, and despair. So unhappy a book is it, in fact, that Trollope himself later seemed to have forgotten that he ended it on the pleasant note of the lovers' marriage and escape: he referred to it, in a letter to Blackwood in 1871, as a story that ends unhappily.¹⁶ If Trollope remembered his novel incorrectly in its final details, however, he was certainly right about it in spirit: it is an unhappy book. *Nina Balatka* must surely be seen,

in fact, despite its ending, as a distinct departure from the popular novels that immediately preceded it. It is a novel that not only looks back to the torment of Trollope's first novel, published eight years before *The Warden*, but which introduces us to a mood which was to prove characteristic of some of his most powerful fiction, soon to appear. The mask of anonymity did indeed produce, if not a new novelist, certainly one who announced himself prepared to experiment with materials unlike those on which his popularity as a novelist was based.

If Trollope did not quite go all the way and provide his first anonymous novel with an ending more fitting to his experiment, a failure perhaps justly attacked by some of his critics,¹⁷ the misery depicted in his second anonymous novel, *Linda Tressel*, is in no way palliated by its ending. *Linda Tressel* must, in fact, surely be Trollope's most gloomy novel. It is also one of his most powerful. In many ways it is like *Nina Balatka*. Once again the heroine is in love with someone unacceptable to her family and the society it represents; and once again the action has to do with trying to prevent the offensive union and forcing on the heroine a match acceptable to her next of kin. The emphasis, however, has changed somewhat. In *Linda Tressel* the heroine's chief antagonist, again an aunt, looms much more fully and terribly the workings of a mind corrupted by religious fanaticism. Like Madame Zamenoy in *Nina Balatka*, Madame Staubach opposes her niece's romantic waywardness on religious grounds; but in *Linda Tressel*, Trollope explores much more fully and terribly the workings of a mind corrupted by religious fanaticism.

According to Madame Staubach, the way to salvation lies through suffering, and she gladly becomes the instrument whereby her niece will suffer. The more apparent do Linda's sufferings grow, the more cruel does her aunt become: "To Madame Staubach's mind a broken heart and a contrite spirit were pretty much the same thing. It was good that hearts should be broken, that all the inner humanities of the living being should be, as it were,

crushed on a wheel and ground into fragments, so that nothing should be left capable of receiving pleasure from the delights of the world" (p. 294). She is, throughout the novel, a figure who inflicts acute and intentional misery upon her niece in the cause of religion.

Madame Staubach's instrument for chastising and hence, presumably, improving the spirit of her niece is a middle-aged man, Steinmarc, who boards with the two women: it is he whom Madame Staubach has chosen to be the husband for Linda, reasoning that "for the special correction of a mind sinful as Linda's had been, marriage with such a man as Peter Steinmarc would be sackcloth and ashes of the most salutary kind" (p. 362). Steinmarc's original interest in Linda is almost purely a materialistic one: Linda owns the house in which she lives with her aunt and their boarder, and the house is of considerable value. In time, however, when Linda has openly disdained him and attempted to run away with another, he comes to share Madame Staubach's desire to chasten, even to crush, the younger woman's spirit. Then he, too, shows his cruel, sadistic capacity for willfully inflicting suffering on the novel's heroine: "He wanted to be her master, to get the better of her, to punish her for her disdain of him, and to bring her to his feet" (p. 350).

The innocent heroine is, then, like her predecessor in the earlier anonymous novel, surrounded by powerful adversaries whose power derives not only from the intensity of their monomaniacal hatreds and desires, but also from the baleful fact that their views are generally acceptable to the world at large. One of the novel's cruelest episodes comes when Linda, trying desperately to escape the inhuman harassment of her aunt, flees to Herr Molk, an old friend of her dead father's, hoping to receive from him counsel that will strengthen her in her resistance to Madame Staubach's persecution. Herr Molk, when first he appears, seems the very source of solace she has been seeking. When her story is fully told, however, and she reveals the name of the young man she loves, Herr Molk

expresses himself violently in agreement with Linda's aunt, her chief persecutor. Like Nina Balatka, Linda finds herself surrounded by those who oppose and torment her. She too encounters no really friendly, sympathetic assistance, except, of course, from the man whom she loves and he, as it turns out, is an even more problematical hero than Anton Trendellsohn was in *Nina Balatka*.

Ludovic Valcarm, the young man in question, is a curiously shadowy figure, a hero who plays a much smaller part in the novel than the hero of *Nina Balatka*, providing the novel's heroine a correspondingly smaller measure of comfort. On the surface, Trollope's own attitude toward him appears to be interestingly ambiguous, as was his attitude toward Anton Trendellsohn. Trollope's reservations about Trendellsohn clearly stemmed from two sources: the nature of his personality, which has already been discussed; and the fact that he was a Jew. (There is evidence both in *Nina Balatka* and in his other novels that Trollope's attitude toward the Jews was ambivalent.) Whatever reservations Trollope may have had about Trendellsohn, however, they were not sufficient to prevent his allowing him to play the forceful role of the hero and the *deus ex machina* who eventually rescues the novel's heroine and carries her off to what is presumably a better land. In the case of Ludovic Valcarm, Trollope's ambivalence goes deeper and is left more fully unresolved. We know about him that he is young and handsome and that he has a kind of Byronic flair and dash about him that wins Linda's admiration. As it turns out, however, Valcarm is engaged in political activities of a revolutionary or anarchic nature for which he is violently opposed by those who know of Linda's interest in him: all who speak of him assume that he is, if not positively evil, at least irresponsible. Trollope, however, does not himself explicitly condemn Valcarm. Whatever his political outrages against the *status quo*, he is nonetheless presented as the only figure in the novel who is genuinely kind to Linda, the only one who is seemingly capable of really generous,

humane acts and attitudes.

The reason for Linda's failure to find in Ludovic Valcarm the *deus ex machina* who might offer her a means of escape does not necessarily lie, then, in Trollope's clear-cut dislike of him. The heroines of both anonymous novels are in love with men who are clearly not altogether attractive to Trollope and whose situations are not improvable in the eyes of those who oppose them: a Jew and a revolutionary simply lie beyond the pale. Therefore, if the heroines are to marry the suitors whom they love but who are offensive to their families and friends, they must find the strength to do so in themselves. Nina Balatka has such strength: Linda Tressel does not. It is in fact her weakness, not the revolutionary activities of Ludovic, that seems clearly to prevent their union in Trollope's view.

The reason why *Linda Tressel* is ultimately so much gloomier a book than *Nina Balatka* is, in fact, precisely the weakness of the book's heroine. She, like Nina, longs for a better life, and achieving a better kind of life for herself is originally connected inseparably in her mind, too, with a suitor whom she looks to not only for love but for escape. She also offers resistance to those who thwart her emotional inclinations; and she is even capable, too, of wanting to take a cruel revenge against her tormentors (p. 349). But when, toward the end of the novel, Ludovic is released from prison, his political offenses having proved apparently more imaginary than real, and again presents himself as Linda's suitor and protector, then we realize fully that Linda cannot escape because finally she is simply too weak to do so. When she does escape, it will only be through death.

Of the reasons for Linda's weakness, Trollope is perfectly explicit: she has been trained to submissiveness, and however much she may oppose the advances of Steinmarc and long to be rescued by her lover, she finds herself nonetheless ultimately in agreement with Madame Staubach's religious principles, hence doctrinally opposed to her own

emotional inclinations. She is never able to overthrow her aunt's implanted hostility to anything as young, attractive, and rebellious as Velcarm. Her own ambivalence toward him is signalled in a dream. In it, he comes to her "beautifully, like an angel, and, running to her in her difficulties, dispersed all her troubles by the beauty of his presence. But then the scene would change, and he would become a fiend instead of a god, or a fallen angel; and at those moments it would become her fate to be carried off with him into uttermost darkness" (pp. 250-51). She is, in short, her own victim; and it is that fact, emphasized by Trollope, that constitutes the novel's chief horror, its chief point. Even when her aunt's views have hardened into their most grotesque form, strengthened as they are by Linda's resistance, she is unable to free herself. "Could she have enfranchised her mind altogether from the trammels of belief in her aunt's peculiar religion, she might have escaped the waters which seemed from day to day to be closing over her head; but this was not within her power. She asked herself no questions as to the truth of these convictions. The doctrine had been taught her from her youth upwards, and she had not realized the fact that she possessed any power of rejecting it" (pp. 362-63).

Trollope's own explicit analysis of Linda's weakness does not go beyond his comments on the effects of a religious indoctrination too narrow, too inhumane. Linda's weakness, however, contrasts to the strength of Nina Balatka and Trollope's other happier heroines in such a way that one can discern where she fits into the pattern of Trollope's concept of the romantic heroine. A young woman, in his view, is strong or weak depending on her capacity to love, to attach herself emotionally to something, someone, outside herself. Only if she has the ability to love fully another will she also have the capacity to resist the pressures of those who oppose her, to pit her will successfully against the wills of her antagonists. Heretofore

Trollope had usually given his heroines strong capacities for love with correspondingly strong wills, strengths of an obviously positive kind in Trollope's mind. With Lily Dale, however, in *The Small House at Allington*, he departed from his usual presentation of the romantically successful heroine, giving us instead a portrait of a young woman who loves the wrong kind of man in the first place and whose tenacity of love becomes a defect instead of an asset. With Linda Tressel, however, he goes even more deeply, locating in the mind of the heroine herself the reasons that make it emotionally and psychologically impossible for her to love at all, a defect which cripples her will and leaves her imprisoned, not only by the machinations of her aunt but by her own inner disabilities.

The ending of the novel is especially terrible because all the suffering that it contains culminates neither in the achievement of romantic goals characteristic of comic endings nor in the illumination that accompanies tragic dénouements. Instead, Linda dies in darkness, believing her aunt to have been right in her narrow religious views, herself to have been wrong in her emotional inclinations. All the suffering she has endured produces, in short, nothing. But Trollope's presentation of her mind, possessed by ideas that distort and destroy her life, convinces us of his growing willingness and capacity to render themes and materials that depart strikingly from his earlier practice and which anticipate other studies of disabled minds, like that of Louis Trevelyan in *He Knew He Was Right*, and the growing proportion of tragic aspects in all the fiction ahead.

Indeed nothing argues so convincingly for the importance of the anonymous novels as the fact that the novel written immediately after *Nina Balatka* was *The Last Chronicle of Barset*; the novel written immediately after *Linda Tressel* and *The Golden Lion of Granpère* was *He Knew He Was Right*. The appearance of those two long novels, among those most admired by recent critics, immediately after the appearance of the anonymous novels

certainly suggests that the way to them lay through his experiment with "a second identity," that in order to expand his fictional world, to move away from the general equanimity of the Barchester novels to those later novels which corresponded more painfully to his expanding sense of the modern world, it was necessary for Trollope to hide away for a while, to lay aside that amiable presence who narrated the early Barchester novels and write from a darker point of view. If he failed to hide himself completely, if the second identity was enough like the familiar one that the wise were not fooled, if Trollope remained primarily a writer of comedies; it is nonetheless also certainly rightly agreed that the later fiction is not only darker, more pessimistic, more gloomy than the earlier, but also richer. The means to that larger, if more troubled, fictional world seems to have been the mask of anonymity behind which the novelist experimented and expanded. Even if *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel* are not great novels, or among the best Trollope wrote (though I would argue that *Linda Tressel* is among his most impressive achievements), they stand nonetheless as the gateway through which he passed as he entered upon his mature, late phase and are therefore worthy of our attention.

NOTES

- ¹Anthony Trollope, "On Anonymous Literature," *The Fortnightly Review*, 1 (July 1, 1865), 491-98.
- ²For an excellent discussion of the history of anonymity in nineteenth-century English periodicals, see Oscar Maurer, "Anonymity vs. Signature in Victorian Reviewing," *Studies in English*, 27 (June, 1948), 1-27.
- ³Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 192.
- ⁴*Autobiography*, p. 204.
- ⁵Michael Sadleir, *Trollope: A Commentary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 268.
- ⁶It was, in fact, the anonymous publication of the two short novels in book form that represents Trollope's intention to remain unknown. Technically speaking, Trollope had already published novels anonymously in the periodicals, and he was to do so later in his career as well; but, with the

exception of *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel*, novels published serially without his name always carried it when reissued as books.

- ⁷*The Golden Lion of Granpère* will not be treated here as one of the anonymous novels. According to *An Autobiography*, it was written immediately after *Linda Tressel* and again it was offered to *Blackwood's* for anonymous publication. *Blackwood's*, however, refused the novel and it did not appear until 1872. When it was published serially in *Good Words* it was accompanied by Trollope's name.
- ⁸*Autobiography*, p. 205.
- ⁹*Autobiography*, pp. 205-06.
- ¹⁰*Autobiography*, pp. 204-05.
- ¹¹"New Novels," *The London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art, & Science*, 16 (May 30, 1868), 548-49.
- ¹²[R. H. Hutton], "Nina Balatka," *The Spectator*, 11 (March 23, 1867), 329. The attribution of this review to Hutton is Trollope's own. (See Sadleir's *Trollope: A Commentary*, p. 269). In a recent issue of the *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* (Number 20, June, 1973), Robert H. Tener has listed it among Hutton's probable contributions to *The Spectator*.
- ¹³Bradford Booth, for one, would disagree. Though no admirer of the result, Booth feels that Trollope did "adopt a style of more obvious colors." See Bradford Booth, *Anthony Trollope* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 66 and p. 224.
- ¹⁴A.O.J. Cockshut, *Anthony Trollope, A Critical Study* (New York: New York University Press, 1968); and William Cadbury, "Determinants in Trollope's Forms," *PMLA*, 78, 326-32. Cadbury's essay places the three anonymous novels according to his own schema for organizing the novels of Trollope, though he does not discuss any of them. Cadbury's article was written in response to, and in opposition to, another article which had attempted to schematize Trollope's fiction: John E. Dustin, "Thematic Alternation in Trollope," *PMLA*, 77, 280-88. Dustin places the anonymous novels among those which are departures from Trollope's usual range. Again, however, though he places the novels, he does not discuss them.
- ¹⁵Anthony Trollope, *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel* (in one volume), "The World's Classics" (London: Oxford University Press, 1946). All further references to the two novels will be to this edition, page references cited parenthetically.
- ¹⁶Anthony Trollope, *Letters*, ed. Bradford Booth (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 282-83.
- ¹⁷*Trollope, The Critical Heritage*, ed. Donald Smalley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), provides a convenient sampling of the reviews which attended the publication of Trollope's novels, among them contemporary reviews of the anonymous *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel*; and Smalley's introduction discusses briefly Trollope's experiment with anonymity.