

## 16

AMANDA CLAYBAUGH

## Trollope and America

The Trollope family made something of an industry of visiting America and writing about it. In the late 1820s, Frances Trollope had gone to America in the hope of reviving the Trollope family fortunes. After trying and failing to establish a business on the western frontier, she decided to become an author instead. She first published a book about her American travels, *The Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), and then a novel, *The Refugee in America* (1832), and the success of these launched her on a prolific career. A generation later, Anthony Trollope would visit America four times. He stopped off briefly in the late 1850s after touring the West Indies, and he paid a more substantial visit in 1861, in order to write an American travel book of his own, *North America* (1862). He subsequently gave a public lecture in London about his experiences. In 1868, he returned to America in an official capacity, negotiating a new treaty for postal rates, and in 1875 he visited America a final time, crossing the continent from west to east at the end of his tour of the Pacific and publishing an essay about California in the process. America and Americans are also a frequent topic in his fiction. In addition to several short stories from the early 1860s, three of Trollope's later novels focus on America. The most memorable of these, perhaps, is *The Way We Live Now* (1874–75), which is set in a London entirely upended by two visitors from the American West, the speculator Hamilton K. Fisk and Mrs. Hurtle, an adventuress. Another novel, *The American Senator* (1876–77), follows the adventures of one Elias Gotobed, senator from the fictional state of Mikewa, as he makes his way through the English countryside, commenting on all that he sees. And the final chapters of a late novel, *Dr. Wortle's School* (1881), are set in America, as a young Englishman travels to California in search of a desperado who is threatening him and his wife.

The Trollopes were far from alone in writing about America. After the War of 1812 (which lasted from 1812 to 1815) confirmed that America was no longer under British control, authors on both sides of the Atlantic

attempted to make sense of the relations between the two nations. For the most part, these authors presented America and Britain as different from – and opposed to – one another, and their writings established the terms in which this difference would be described. American openness and British reserve, American energy and British leisure, American merchants and British gentlemen: these oppositions are familiar even in our own day. Each of these nations thus represented what the other was not, but each also represented what the other might yet choose to become. In the eyes of the British, as the critic Paul Giles has shown, America embodied the full flowering of a dissenting tradition that had begun with the English reformation and then migrated across the sea. As a consequence, America was frequently invoked, as both exemplar and as cautionary example, in British debates about religion and politics.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of the Americans, as the critic Lawrence Buell has shown, Britain set a cultural standard against which American achievements inevitably seemed inferior or, at best, belated. For this reason, the most ambitious American authors, including the ones belonging to the American Renaissance, explicitly rebelled against the British and European authors whom they secretly feared they could not equal.<sup>2</sup> In these ways, each nation defined itself both with and against the other, and claims about national difference seldom expressed simple opposition, but rather a more complicated mix of admiration and rebellion, envy and regret.

Of the many nineteenth-century writers who explored the British–American relation, Anthony Trollope was among the most discerning. He offers, I will show, an unusually nuanced account of national difference, establishing some of the national types that are still with us today but also subjecting this emphasis on difference to a searching critique. Moreover, he offers an unusually rich account of the relations between the two nations, emphasizing that the former colony stood poised to become a partner in imperialism. In the process, he describes an Anglo-American alliance held together by the ties of business, politics, and love.

## National difference

At the beginning of *North America*, Anthony Trollope attempts to distinguish his own travel book from the one his mother had published thirty years before. Hers, he says, was “essentially a woman’s book,” while his will be the work of a man (NA ch. 1). By this, Trollope is referring in part to a difference of approach. Where his mother had recorded her rather haphazard experiences, he attempts a more systematic survey. Prevented by the outbreak of the Civil War from visiting the southern states, he nonetheless

manages to visit all the states that remained in the Union, with the single exception of California. (When he did visit California, in 1875, he would decide that no city in the whole world was “less interesting to the normal tourist” than San Francisco.)<sup>3</sup> Where his mother had described vivid scenes and recounted telling anecdotes, he gives statistical tables of population and wheat production, along with charts of army expenditures. Trollope’s own book is, however, less systematic and scientific than he claims it to be. Following the loose conventions of nineteenth-century travel writing no less than his mother had done, he describes places in the order he visits them and records his more general observations as they occur. He is particularly digressive when it comes to the postal service, the details of which he carefully notes as he learns them, even as he admits, quite charmingly, that they will interest no one but himself.

In Trollope’s view, his mother’s travel book was womanly in its focus, as well. She concentrated on describing the social arrangements of America, while he will concentrate on political matters instead. In drawing this distinction between their two books, however, Trollope fails to do justice to what his mother had achieved. For while it is true that she did concentrate on social arrangements and also true that she did identify such arrangements as a subject well-suited to the capacities of a woman writer, she nonetheless understood social arrangements to be a crucial index to a nation’s political life. This is most clearly the case when judging the question of equality. All too often, she observes, equality is considered only in the abstract, either by British travelers who describe the structure of the American government without ever observing the kind of society it creates or by British radicals who stay at home and advocate equality only after their servants have brought in the port and respectfully shut the door. Equality is far more appealing as an abstract ideal than as a concrete reality, for it tends to manifest itself “in the shape of a hard, greasy paw, and [to be] claimed in accents that breathe less of freedom than of onions and whisky.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, so disillusioning is the reality of equality, Frances Trollope concludes, that the British government should not imprison radicals, but rather send them on an American tour in order to cure them of their views. For those who cannot take such a tour, her travel book must suffice. And so she devotes herself to describing equality as it is lived in practice, from the insistence on communal living in hotels to the impossibility of keeping decent servants in the home. Only in Canada are the poor still willing to bow and curtsy as the Trollopes pass.

More direct in his attention to political arrangements than his mother had been, Trollope reprints portions of the American Constitution and the constitution of the state of New York, as well as discussing the workings of American government more generally. But he also shares his mother’s

interest in the social manifestations of political equality. He, too, recoils instinctively from these manifestations, and his travel book records his shock at being addressed impudently by a railway porter or by a working-class woman on an omnibus. But he then tries to transcend his instinctive response and to view the world as these porters and women must see it. He is quick to recognize that the lack of servility in those who serve is their attempt to assert a claim to political equality in the face of real economic inequality. “Have you ever realized to yourself as a fact,” Trollope asks his readers, “that the porter who carries your box has not made himself inferior to you by the very act of carrying that box? If not, that is the very lesson which the man wishes to teach you” (NA ch. 19).

Trollope has more difficulty coming to terms with the women on the bus. He prefaces his description of them with several paragraphs apologizing for daring to say anything at all critical of the female sex, and when the description actually comes, we can see why he would think an apology was necessary. For Trollope depicts the women on the bus not merely as coarse, but as actually revolting. He compares them to “unclean animal[s],” and he describes the dragging trains of their filthy dresses as giving “blows from a harpy’s fins” as “loathsome as snake’s slime” (NA ch. 14). But he recollects himself and tries to move beyond this revulsion when he visits one of the schools that produces women like these. Acknowledging that British women of this class are “humble” and therefore not offensive to the “squeamish,” he nonetheless reminds himself that American self-assurance, no matter how impudent, is better than English humility – at least for the women themselves, if not for their middle-class observers (NA ch. 14). In passages like these, we can see Trollope divided between his immediate response to American equality and his subsequent willingness to reason beyond that response and accept, at least intellectually, different, more radical, conclusions.

But the most important divergence between Frances and Anthony Trollope is one that Trollope does not name: they differ in their accounts of British–American relations, and so, I will show, they differ in their accounts of national difference itself. For Frances Trollope, the history of British–American relations is a history of rupture, with the American Revolution (1775–83) creating an absolute break between the two nations. In her account, the Americans rejected everything they had inherited from the British, while creating almost nothing to put in its place. They rejected, for instance, British culture, but they have no real culture of their own. That is, they have no popular culture, “no fetes, no fairs, no merry makings, no music in the streets, no Punch, no puppet-shows” (*Domestic Manners* 164). Nor do they have a high culture. Their feeble attempts to imitate British

literature and art are merely laughable to her, although she does approve of the few artists who confine themselves to distinctively American themes, such as the sculptors who carve sheaves of corn in their columns' capitals and the authors who write about the Native Americans.

Even worse, in Frances Trollope's view, is the fact that the Americans have rejected the customs of British social life, but not replaced them with any of their own. The result is a world that she finds entirely lacking in manners, and her travel book is a catalogue of revolting scenes. The Americans grab at their food and gulp it down, picking their teeth with their knives when they are done. Husbands do not speak to their wives, nor do tablemates speak to one another, and on the rare occasion where a conversation does occur, it focuses on "the DOLLAR" with all the single-mindedness of ants in an ant hill (*Domestic Manners* 235). And worst of all, the men constantly spit. In describing Americans as lacking in manners and lacking in culture as well, Frances Trollope is describing a nation that is not only fundamentally different from Britain, but fundamentally abhorrent to all. "I do not like them," she concludes, "I do not like their principles, I do not like their manners, I do not like their opinions" (*Domestic Manners*, 315). Nor is she alone in this. Several times, she pauses to emphasize that her shock at a particular incident is shared by the German or French observers nearby. All of Europe is united, it seems, in disgust at the Americans.

Anthony Trollope, by contrast, views the American Revolution as a painful but necessary stage in the history of British colonialism. Once the British established a settler colony in North America, it was inevitable, in his account, that the colonists would one day rise up against them, inevitable that the British would try to put them down, and inevitable that the Americans would ultimately succeed in winning their independence. Viewing the American Revolution in this way, Trollope does not see it as a rupture. On the contrary, he emphasizes that the Americans are still eager for British approval, that is, for "English admiration, English appreciation of [their] energy, and English encouragement" (NA ch. 3), and the British, for their part, are now willing to approve. They have ceased to resent the Americans for seeking independence and are now willing to acknowledge that the Americans have done well for themselves and "deserve well of all coming ages of mankind" (NA ch. 1). Indeed, Trollope wonders why the Canadians have not done the same. To go from America to Canada, as he describes it, is to go from "a richer country into one that is poorer, and from a greater country into one that is less" (NA ch. 4), and he attributes the difference to their failure to seek their independence. At the same time, Trollope is also quick to emphasize that the Americans, in their Revolution,

did not reject nearly as much of their British inheritance as his mother had suggested. When the Americans achieved their independence, they could have done anything; but what they chose to do, Trollope observes with great satisfaction, was to retain their British ways. This point was so crucial that Trollope would emphasize it in italics: there is "*nothing in the history of the United States so wonderful as the closeness with which our laws and habits of rule have been adopted.*"<sup>5</sup>

So close have the two nations remained, despite the frequent conflicts between them, that they now stand poised to share the work of imperialism, a project that Trollope sees as worthy of all praise. He acknowledges that the two countries may think of themselves as competing for world influence, with the British wanting to Anglicize the world and the Americans wanting to Americanize it. But these, he insists, amount to the same thing in the end: both words are merely synonyms for "civilize" (PC 55). Two of Trollope's short stories from the early 1860s reflect this view. They take as their subject neither Britain nor America, but rather a shared Anglo-American world of colonies and former colonies. In "An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids" (1860), English and American travelers are united by their shared language in a Cairo that is filled with Egyptians babbling an incomprehensible Arabic and Frenchmen speaking an accented and imperfect English. And "A Journey to Panama" (1861) describes an even more cosmopolitan world. This story is set onboard ship, among a community of passengers who are not so much tied to specific nations as in circuit among them. Some are going to North America and some to South America; some, to the West Indies or to Canada; some are Unionists and some are Confederates, but all are part of the project of colonizing the western hemisphere.

Given his views of British-American relations, it is hardly surprising that Trollope would offer a complicated account of national difference. On the one hand, he identifies fundamental differences between the people of Britain and the people of America, as we can see from this passage from *North America*:

The American . . . is not like an Englishman in his mind, in his aspirations, in his tastes, or in his politics. In his mind he is quicker, more universally intelligent, more ambitious of general knowledge, less indulgent of stupidity and ignorance in others, harder, sharper, brighter with the surface brightness of steel, than is an Englishman; but he is more brittle, less enduring, less malleable, and, I think, less capable of impressions. The mind of the Englishman has more imagination, but that of the American more incision . . . In his aspirations the American is more constant than an Englishman – or I should rather say he is more constant in aspiring . . . But in his aspirations he is more limited than an Englishman. (NA ch. 14)

Unlike Frances Trollope, who had seen in America the absence of anything she valued, Anthony Trollope understands the Americans to be both different from the British and, as the balanced syntax of the passage implies, equal to them at the same time.

And yet, even as Trollope sets the terms of national difference in his travel book, he sometimes questions, in his fictional works, whether such differences really exist. We can see this in *The Way We Live Now*, which is filled with characters eager to generalize about national difference. The American adventuress Mrs. Hurtle, for instance, is continually deriding Britain as “a safe-going country,” “an effete civilization,” a “soft civilization,” and a place structured by inequality, where everyone is either “too humble or too overbearing” (WWLN chs. 47, 42, 71). But while Mrs. Hurtle’s experiences while visiting Britain might suggest that these views are correct, the novel elsewhere undermines claims of national difference. Some claims are mocked for being too exaggerated. Mrs. Hurtle’s chief adversary, the very English Roger Carbury, is shown to be naive in thinking of America as a nation of rebels, like “Jack Cade or Wat Tyler” (WWLN ch. 87). And even more naive is the dim, but good-hearted, lord who confuses another American with a “heathen Chineese” (WWLN ch. 10). But the novel also mocks claims that are too trivial, as when the members of a gentleman’s club find that they dislike a visiting American because “his manners were not as their manners; his waistcoat was not as their waistcoat” (WWLN ch. 10).

Trollope would expand on this latter idea in another novel, *The American Senator*, attempting to explain why such minor differences had come to seem so significant. The problem can be traced to the closeness between the Americans and the British. If a British man were to visit Japan, or a Japanese man to visit Britain, he would expect to be struck by all the differences and actually be surprised by the many similarities. But with the British and the Americans, the matter is reversed. Everyone expects to find similarities, and so the differences are more vivid – and more galling:

When an American comes to us, or a Briton goes to the States, each speaking the same language, using the same cookery, governed by the same laws, and wearing the same costume, the differences which present themselves are so striking that neither can live six months in the country of the other without a holding up of hands and a torrent of exclamations. (AS ch. 77)

In this way, Trollope subjects to scrutiny the manners of the Americans, but also the insistence on national difference. And in his novels more generally, he would pay much less attention to the putative differences between Britain and America than to the many forms of interaction that connected them.

### Anglo-American interactions

It was through business that the Trollope family first interacted with America. Frances Trollope came to the United States in the hope of establishing a shopping bazaar that would include, in a Moorish building complete with dome, a picture gallery, a refreshment room, a ballroom, and a concert hall. In this way, she intended to supply the needs of what Anthony Trollope would later describe as “the still unfurnished States” (A ch. 1). The plan proved to be an ignominious failure: the Trollope family ran out of money while the emporium was still being built, and when the goods finally arrived to supply the store, they were so poorly made that not even the Americans would buy them. Anthony Trollope, too, would have disappointing financial dealings with the United States. Writing at a time when there was not yet an international copyright law, he made from the American sale of his books only what the American publishers chose to pay. In his meticulous financial records, he would calculate the lost profits from each of his books and write “cheated” alongside them. These losses were made vivid to him when he visited America at last. Like other British authors, he was struck by the sheer size of the American market and newly conscious of all the money he was losing from it. We can see this in *North America*, when he marvels at how cheap books are in America and at how eager people are, as a result, to read. For both Trollope and his mother then, America stood as a vast market insufficiently supplied with local goods and so needing to import them, whether legally or illegally, from Britain.

These economic relations, and much else, would be changed by the American Civil War (1861–65). When the war broke out, Trollope had already arranged his trip to America and he was not willing to postpone it. And so the war became, against his intentions, the central subject of *North America*. When he arrived in America, he found that what he had understood as a war between the Union and the Confederacy was understood by the Unionists all around him as a conflict between the Union and Britain as well. Britain’s economic interests lay with the cotton-producing southern states, but the British government nonetheless declared its neutrality in the war. But this was not enough for the Unionists, who felt that the British should explicitly take their side. Trollope therefore found himself questioned and challenged by all the Unionists he met. Matters grew even more tense while he was visiting Washington, DC. A British ship was boarded by the Union Navy, who seized the two Confederate diplomats it was carrying on an embassy to London. The British were outraged by this violation of their naval rights and diplomatic relations, and for a while it seemed as if the British might take

sides in the war after all – if not directly, then certainly by challenging the Union blockade of the Confederate coast. And it also seemed possible, at least to Trollope, that all British subjects would soon be expelled from the Union. His letters show him to be “anxious to get out and see the people before war is declared,” but he was forced to stay in his hotel room while a doctor tended to an infected cyst on his forehead (*Letters* 1:165). Soon, the matter was resolved through diplomacy, and Britain maintained its policy of neutrality until the war’s end, thereby making a Confederate victory much less likely.

Upon his return to Britain, Trollope involved himself in the war more directly. He gave a speech in London about his American travels, in which he attempted to persuade his listeners to take the Union’s side. He acknowledges from the beginning that English sympathies tend to be with the Confederacy – in part because its cause seems the more chivalric, and in part because it is attempting to break up a nation that sometimes presents itself as a rival to Britain. But he urges his listeners to remember that their sympathies more properly belong to the Union. He reminds them that the Confederacy supports slavery and that they themselves would not permit the Irish to secede. More importantly, he reminds them that the Union deserves their sympathy because it is, like Britain itself, a nation destined for greatness. The Union soldiers have displayed, if not military genius, then certainly “pluck,” and have shown themselves to be “Anglo-Saxons to the backbone” (PC 54).

Trollope was hardly alone in urging his country to side with the Union – a number of other British authors would do so as well – but he was quite idiosyncratic in his understanding of the war more generally. He viewed it through the same lens as he had viewed the American Revolution. Just as it was inevitable for the American colonists to rebel against Britain and for Britain to try and fail to put them down, so it is equally inevitable for the Confederate states to try to secede from the Union and for the Union to try – and fail – to retain them. America has simply grown too large to maintain itself as a nation, and the western states, in Trollope’s view, will be the next to secede. Viewing the Civil War through this lens, Trollope sees Confederate secession as ultimately inevitable. The Union may achieve a military victory, but there is no clear way for them to force the Confederate states to participate again in the nation. (Here, Trollope proves to be prescient about the difficulties of Reconstruction.) And yet, Trollope advocates for the British to support the Union anyway because a military victory, while not preventing the secession of all the Confederate states, might retain the border states: Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Washington, DC. And with these border states, the Union is certain to continue on its path to national greatness, for it is the Union that is dredging the canals,

establishing the schools, building the cities, increasing the trade, and multiplying the industries that a great nation needs. The southern states, as is typical of southern nations in Trollope’s view, have no impulse for greatness, and so their destiny, after they secede, will be to provide a staple crop to British cotton mills.

Thus, Trollope’s views on the Civil War. In his fictional works from the time, he is much less partisan. His “The Two Generals” (1863) is carefully balanced, as its title suggests, between the war’s two sides. The story dramatizes the divisions that the war has caused through a pairing of protagonists: two brothers, one who has become a general in the Union Army and one who has become a general for the Confederates. But even as the story emplots division, its setting suggests the terms of reconciliation. Set in Kentucky, a slave state that nonetheless refused to secede with the rest, the story is careful to condemn both slavery and radical abolition, approving instead a gradual freeing of the slaves. Another story foregrounds the economic dimensions of the war, and the extent to which these involve Britain. The purpose of the Union naval blockade, notoriously violated by the Confederate diplomats, was to prevent the transport of southern cotton and so to disrupt the Confederate economy. It disrupted the British economy as well, as Trollope acknowledged in *North America* and explores more fully in “The Widow’s Mite.” Set in Britain, this story takes up the subject of the so-called “cotton famine,” which was caused when southern cotton was no longer available for British mills. The story does not unfold among the workers, but rather among the members of a clergyman’s family, who debate among themselves how best to aid the workers suffering around them. One of the young women in the family, who is engaged to an American man, decides that she will be married in her old clothes in order to show her sympathy for the suffering workers. The other characters mock this decision as both eccentric and pointless, and the story leaves undecided the wisdom of her actions, as it leaves undecided the more general question of how best to aid the poor. But the story does make one thing clear: for Trollope, the Civil War is as much a British experience as an American one. Indeed, the American textile workers suffer much less, he had noted in *North America*, than their counterparts in Britain.

If the Civil War threatened the existing trade relations between Britain and America, it would also create new ones, as the historian Eric Rauchway has shown.<sup>6</sup> In the course of fighting the war, the American government would take on a debt financed largely by British bankers. As a consequence, where antebellum America had been seen as a vast market undersupplied with goods, postbellum America came to be seen, much like the developing world today, as a place for the global speculations of international

capitalists. These speculations are the subject of Trollope's most important novel, *The Way We Live Now*. America stands as the place where the British can make their fortunes, and the more naive characters believe that this is because the land is so fertile and full of resources. But the money to be made in America is to be made through speculation, and soon even the novel's hero has fallen in, somewhat against his will, with Hamilton K. Fisker, a smartly dressed westerner with a distinctive twang. Fisker associates the United States with speculation because he associates it with imagination: "we're a bigger people than any of you and have more room" (WWLN ch. 9). And what he imagines, implausibly enough, is a railroad running from Salt Lake City to Vera Cruz, one whose cost has not yet been computed, but whose distances are vast. And indeed, the work of selling the shares is only a work of the imagination. All that Mr. Fisker has done is make an elaborate prospectus filled with pictures of trains running through mountains and emerging beside beautiful lakes. Any resistance to this new mode of doing business is seen as a "John Bull scruple" (WWLN ch. 9), but it soon becomes clear that the British have few scruples at all.

In the same year that Trollope published *The Way We Live Now*, he also published his final piece of travel writing about the United States, his essay about San Francisco. In this essay, he identifies the city as the epicenter of all that *The Way We Live Now* had described. Everyone is buying and selling stocks, even chamber maids, and those who have overextended themselves are protected by others from bankruptcy so that the game can go on. Trollope condemns this, reminding his readers that the shame of bankruptcy is all that prevents men from gambling with other men's money, but he acknowledges that "such doctrines are altogether out of date in California" (TT 215). This, in Trollope's eyes, is the city of the future, but as his own writings have shown there is no way of separating this city from the Britain with which it is everywhere entwined.

In these ways, Trollope's fiction depicts the many business and political ties that connect Britain and America. But it is only with respect to a third form of connection, family feeling and love, that Trollope does not merely depict a trans-Atlantic phenomenon, but actually responds to it by altering his fictional form. Family metaphors were often used to describe the ties between America and Britain, even when those ties were most frayed. Trollope calls the Americans his "near relatives" (NA ch. 1) and speaks of the "old family quarrel" between them (NA ch. 6); Frances Trollope had done so as well, although she had been quick to note that family quarrels are often the most difficult to resolve. The making of these family relations is given narrative form by courtship plots, and these courtship plots most commonly involve a figure then known as the "American Girl," who

personifies the self-assertion that was seen as typical of American women. Trollope himself had described this self-assertion, observing that American women are "much given to talking ... generally free from all *mauvaise honte* ... collected in manner, well instructed, and resolved to have their share of the social advantages of the world" (NA ch. 11). And on the American Girl was conferred an autonomy in courtship that was seen as distinctive of America as well: the American Girl, free to marry or not as she liked, was an appealing complement to masculine forms of political freedom. The most famous American Girl is, of course, Henry James's Daisy Miller, who horrifies and attracts James's narrator by her frankness, her freedom, and her unwillingness to follow convention. But an earlier version of this story is Trollope's own "Miss Ophelia Gledd" (1863). Trollope's story begins much as James's novella would end, with the narrator trying to classify the woman who has so beguiled him. Here, the question is whether a woman who does all that Ophelia Gledd has done can be considered a lady. Trollope knew such a woman himself, the Bostonian Kate Field, and his letters to her show him trying to persuade her to conform to more conventional models of female behavior: he refuses to lend her money to travel on her own to St. Louis, for instance, and he portentously advises her to marry.

Elsewhere in Trollope, however, the Anglo-American courtship plot does not follow this paradigm. In *The American Senator*, for instance, the novel's British heroine associates freedom in courtship as a British, rather than an American, trait: she reminds herself that it is only in other, presumably continental countries that girls must marry as their parents like. An earlier short story, "An Unprotected Female," offers a more complicated revision of the American Girl plot. Here, the eponymous female is a British woman traveling on her own in Egypt, looking for companions for a journey down the Nile or across the Sahara. But unlike the American Girl, who may well choose not to marry, this unprotected female is quite desperate to do so, and the story sets her stratagems against the more conventional courtship of a young American woman by a British suitor, who must submit to talking politics with the girl's father in order to win her hand.

But the most interesting revisions of the American Girl come in Trollope's late novels, *The Way We Live Now* and *Dr. Wortle's School*. Here, the American Girl is not a girl at all, but rather a mature woman. Mrs. Peacock, in *Dr. Wortle's School*, does not reveal her nationality in her accent or speech, much less in her manners; indeed, she is more freezingly correct than the British ladies around her. Far more familiar is the appropriately named Mrs. Hurtle from *The Way We Live Now*, who has not only a nasal twang in her speech, but also a "bit of the wild cat in her breeding"

(WWLN ch. 38) and is rumored to have shot a man in Oregon. What unites these two otherwise disparate women is the fact that each has been married before – and each turns out to be married still. Mrs. Peacock had been abandoned by her husband in Missouri and later told that he had subsequently died in Mexico; she then marries again, the man she truly loves, only to learn that her first husband is still alive after all. Mrs. Hurtle's situation is a bit more ambiguous. She had presented herself as widowed when being courted by a young British man and only much later admits that she is actually divorced; still later, there is some suggestion that she did not divorce her husband at all, but rather fought a duel with him, and that he might still be alive, albeit safely imprisoned in Leavenworth. The British characters dismiss this confusion as typical of American moral laxity. Mrs. Peacock's British neighbors speculate that the Americans do not get married at all, while Mrs. Hurtle's British rival suggests that "they get themselves divorced just when they like" (WWLN ch. 76). But Trollope mocks this view for its provincial ignorance, and both Mrs. Peacock and Mrs. Hurtle are much more compelling than the young British women they are set against, even though, in the case of Mrs. Hurtle, there is something alarming about a woman "so handy with pistols" (WWLN ch. 47). "You are a girl," Mrs. Hurtle says to her young British rival, "and I am a woman" (WWLN ch. 91).

Elsewhere in his American writings, Trollope had been quick to undermine claims of national difference. He emphasized that it was only the closeness between the two nations that threw the small differences between them into too-stark relief, and he also took care to depict the many ways in which the two nations were entangled. But here, with respect to courtship, one of Trollope's most serious and persistent concerns, he projects onto America differences of quite a different kind. For these compelling American women, with their shadowed American pasts, bring maturity and sexual experience into the courtship plot, even as this history is cordoned off from the present and confined to another country.

## NOTES

- 1 Paul Giles, *The Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 2 Lawrence Buell, "American Literary Emergence as Postcolonial Phenomenon," *American Literary History* 4:3 (Autumn 1992), 411–42.
- 3 Anthony Trollope, *The Tireless Traveller* (1875; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), p. 212. All further references to this edition will be cited in the text as "TT."
- 4 Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832; Stroud, Gloucestershire: Nonsuch Publishing, 2006) 102–3. All further references are to this edition and will be cited in the text as *Domestic Manners*.

- 5 Anthony Trollope, "The Present Condition of the Northern States of the American Union (1862 or 1863)," *Anthony Trollope: Four Lectures*, ed. Morris L. Parrish (Folcroft, PA: Folcroft Press, 1969), p. 40. All further references to this edition will be cited in the text as "PC."
- 6 Eric Rauchway, *Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).