

The Episodic Trollope and An Editor's Tales

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In 1860, Thackeray rejected one of Trollope's short stories on the grounds that the subject matter would shock the Cornhill's readership. Trollope's reply begins with some measure of understanding:

I trust you to believe me when I assure you that I feel no annoyance as against you at the rejection of my story. An impartial Editor must do his duty. Pure morals must be supplied. And the owner of the responsible name must be the Judge of purity. A writer for a periodical makes himself subject to this judgement by undertaking such work; and a man who allows himself to be irritated because judgement goes against himself is an ass.

But exasperation breaks through by the letter's close: 'Are you not magnanimous enough to feel that you write urbi et orbi;--for the best & wisest of English readers; and not mainly for the weakest?' (Hall 127-9). This exchange reveals something of Trollope's sense of the relationship between editor and short story writer, one in which the writer is 'subject' to the greater perceived

editorial good, and individual stories must conform to social expectations.

By the early 1860s, Trollope's list of editorial contacts was wide ranging, but his relationship with each individual editor, in terms of his short fiction, was short-lived. In 1859 he contributed a few stories to the American magazine Harper's Weekly; by 1860, he had moved on to the penny-weekly, Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper. Later that year he corresponded with the business editor of the new periodical, the London Review and Weekly Journal, and in 1862 he was negotiating with Alexander Strahan at the popular fiction monthly, Good Words. Trollope was all too aware that, as one of his own contributors for Saint Pauls Magazine [sic] wrote, a periodical has 'its character to maintain' (Rands 368), but he seemed to specialize in challenging the characters on offer, producing stories which, like the rejected 'Mrs General Talboys', repeatedly missed their target audiences (Sutherland 1994 ix-xxiii).

Trollope's difficulties with periodical editors punctuate his Autobiography (1883), although his 'emotionally reticent, and factually unreliable' (Shrimpton vii) accounts are heavily edited. Trollope, and his son, excised a number of passages about writerly disappointments and embarrassments from his manuscript, while others were never included. We hear about

Thackeray's invitation to Trollope to contribute a serialized novel to the Cornhill (137), but not about the rejection of 'Mrs General Talboys'. He discusses Norman Macleod's verdict that Rachel Ray (1863) was unsuitable for Good Words, but does not mention that the editors of Harper's were similarly shocked by his short fiction (Autobiography 186-8 and Sutherland 1994 xii). While the detail may not be fully given, the tone of An Autobiography demonstrates Trollope's grievances about 'injustice in literary affairs' (203) and the ways in which an individual writer might suffer at an editor's hands as their fictions are subsumed into larger narrative frameworks. It also indicates Trollope's uncertainties about exactly what an 'impartial Editor' might really be. Such anxieties become reconstituted in fictional form and provide a metaphor for larger considerations concerning Trollope's ethical and psychological universe.

Drawing on Trollope's fictional representations of editors, and his representations of self-narrativisation, this article will suggest that there is, both in Trollope's mind and in his fiction, an analogy between the actions of a periodical editor, shaping the 'character' of a magazine, and the actions of an individual, like Trollope, or indeed one of his characters, selectively recollecting, forgetting, and

selecting parts of his experience, to create a cogent autobiographical self. The salience of the analogy is thus literary, but it is also psychological and ethical. 'The editorial conscience' (to borrow Martin Buber's phrase) of the fictional Trollopian editor, may be extended outwards for the good, or ill, of his paper, but also inwards, upon himself.¹ Editing, for Trollope, then, is more than a career--it is a habit of mind, and a habit of mind which he imagines for many of his fictional protagonists. For Trollope's characters, the metaphor of editing bears on a range of complex matters relating to ethical judgement and the idea of selfhood in time. Trollope, in his 1835-40 'Commonplace Book', complained of his 'life most disorderly & unmethodical' (Hall 1027). We find, in his novels, characters repeatedly weighing up similarly 'disorderly & unmethodical' demands in order to produce their life as a complete issue. In The Way We Live Now (1874-5), Paul Montague ostensibly edits his love affair with Mrs Hurtle from his history in order to present himself to Hetta Carbury. Mrs. Hurtle, in her turn, makes a stoical attempt to hide the true history of her first marriage from Paul. Lady Carbury, meanwhile, is flirtatious and garrulous, and not as in control of her story as she should be. Unhappily 'cut and scotched and lopped' by her first husband, she now offers herself in unabridged form (i 335).

Trollope has sympathy for these kinds of editorial self-revisions, but he is also suspicious of them. His fiction searches, instead, for an alternative understanding of the way in which individuals might exist in time, and the ways in which selves might resolve their contradictory urges. At its broadest level, my work joins recent scholars in revisiting debates about Trollope's interest in inconsistency from the latter parts of the last century--debates initially located in the divide between apRoberts' 1971 'situationist' vision of Trollope (apRoberts 39, 52) and Kincaid and Nardin's claim that Trollope's morality is 'tied to situations, but only because situations test and make solid an ethical code' (Kincaid 15, Nardin 141). For Amanda Anderson, the idea of 'recalcitrant psychology' is a disturbing factor in either conception of Trollope's ethical universe 'whether in its blunt or its more refined form' (Anderson 510-511). My approach is indebted to Anderson's model in acknowledging the importance of psychology and ethics--or, as Patrick Fessenbecker puts it, in 'enriching the meaning of the term "ethics"' to encompass the psychological (653), but I also take a more practical view. I too explore the relationship between 'aesthetic fact[s]' and 'issue[s] in philosophical psychology,' in order to think not just about Trollope's fiction, but to test the 'interpretative usefulness of a concept from

moral philosophy' (Fessenbecker 649, 651). But while Fessenbecker takes the moral concept of 'akrasia' to illuminate Trollope's inconsistent characters, the 'concept' in question in my article is Galen Strawson's vision of 'episodic selfhood': the idea that one can live a morally good life without a notion of a continuous self--that a morally good life may be lived from moment to moment, rather than in a consequentially based, 'edited', narrative form.

Trollope's fiction, as I will argue, eventually suggests that the 'episodic' model may be a psychological aberration. However, in giving the model such an intelligent hearing, Trollope extends what Helen Small has located as the readerly sense of 'self-interest' into the realm of other-interest, 'a respect for the autonomy of others,' however unusual their modes of existence might be (397). Small's article is distinctive for the way in which it focuses not just on the importance of the ethical judgements and activities of 'participants in the narrative' but also those that 'belong to "us" the readers of their fictions' (399). Small's 'us' is, I believe, a contemporary field divided into (at least) three parts. While a critic such as Rachel Sagner Buurma looks with brilliance at Trollope's relationship with print culture, Fessenbecker makes acute observations about Trollope's moral psychology but does not dwell on

the idea of readership, or on the text in its formal states. My work attempts to join these two approaches together and in spirit comes closest to the writings of Nicholas Dames, Helen Small and Andrew H. Miller in its desire to think, centrally, about 'us', the readers, and in my interest in what Miller defines as 'implicative' criticism (Andrew H. Miller 30).² Believing that there are important insights to be gained from thinking about philosophical psychology and ethics in relation to readership, this article will attend to the materiality of reader's encounter, and will offer an analysis, in its final part, of the specific ethical and narrative encounters that some of Trollope's short stories require, which, I will suggest, bring us closest to 'episodic' living.

Trollope's An Autobiography

In the opening pages of An Autobiography Trollope declares his work as a lightly edited one. '[H]old[ing]' it 'to be impossible' to 'tell everything of himself,' he will resist the confessional mode. How, after all, could he 'throw' his 'matter' into a 'recognised and intelligible form'. His focus, he claims, will be his life 'in literature', although 'the little details' of his 'private life' creep in (1). Indeed, throughout the work, we can see two lines of narrative--that of

Trollope's private life (remembered, selectively presented, and rearranged), and that of his autographical narrative--how he thinks about the act of writing, editing, and remembering, and changing his mind as an author. Modern editors of An Autobiography, from P. D. Edwards in 1980 to Nicholas Shrimpton in 2014, have shown how carefully Trollope selected and exaggerated his narrative. Not only did he edit his own narrative, he offered it up to his son, Henry, as an editor, giving 'instructions for the preparation of a text determined by other hands as well as his own' (Shrimpton xxiv). Nevertheless, even (and perhaps especially) such an edited self-construction reveals much about Trollope's practical relationship with editing and self-revision.

While nearly all of Trollope's novels, after 1860, were written in 'serial units' (Hamer x), he gives the somewhat airy (and untrue) impression that throughout his career he always finished every part of his serial before the first number went into print.⁴ '[I]t had . . . been,' his Autobiography records, 'a principle with me in my art, that no part of a novel should be published till the entire story was completed. I knew, from what I read from month to month, that this hurried publication of incompleted work was frequently . . . adopted by the leading novelists of the day' (138). While he admitted that it is the novelist's 'first duty to fit the end [of

his novel] to the beginning,' he should still keep in his hands the power of remedying any defect in this respect.'

Your Achilles should, all through, from beginning to end, be 'impatient, fiery, ruthless, keen'. Your Achilles, such as he is, will probably keep up his character. But your Davus also should be always Davus, and that is more difficult. The rustic driving his pigs to market cannot always make them travel by the exact path which he has intended for them. When some young lady at the end of a story cannot be made to be quite perfect in her conduct, that vivid description of angelic purity with which you laid the first lines of her portrait should be slightly toned down. (139)

What is both remarkable and characteristic here is the way in which Trollope defends the right to be inconsistent, to revise his opinion, and to edit. As he writes in The Eustace Diamonds (1871-3), 'within the bones and flesh of many of us, there is but one person' who is 'to-day as they were yesterday'. But not everyone who is 'of necessity single in body' shares this consistency. They may be 'dual in character' (135), and Trollope's writing methods enable such duality. Even after the first number was 'set up in print' (Sutherland 2008 478), the

working materials for The Way We Live Now show Trollope's attempts to change what he has already written. 'Can this be altered?' he writes, as a pencilled afterthought, with respect to a chronological detail. It is a question which, in its phrasing, hovers between the permissible and the practical, echoing the title of his 1864 novel, Can You Forgive Her? Would writerly revision cause a hole in the plot, or break a self-imposed rule?

[Fig.1]

Trollope's discussion of Achilles and Davus, and of the slipperiness of fictional characters, appears as part of an account of his own changeable nature. For despite his 'principle' of reserving the right to edit his work, Trollope agreed at Thackeray's request to offer a novel for publication in the Cornhill before he had finished it. 'On this' he notes, 'my first attempt at a serial story, I thought it fit to break my own rule' (Autobiography 140). Inconsistently, he took it upon himself to be consistent--to stand by, at his novel's end, the decisions he made at its start. The publication of this novel--Framley Parsonage (1860-1)--was a turning point for Trollope, and a key moment in An Autobiography. Marking his breakthrough success, his 'breaking with principle' became 'the means of introducing me . . . to

that literary world from which I had hitherto been severed' (146-7).

The sense that, for Trollope, any vision of life must involve the possibility of change or of exception has been described by Ruth apRoberts as an example of his 'casuistry.' For apRoberts, Trollope's 'way of art' is designed to show us that 'any theory of precept can be invalidated, in some case' (39). Nardin and Overton disagree, arguing that such a presentation of Trollope as a 'situationist ethicist' is only sustainable by 'silently editing out . . . much that is discordant' (Overton 149, Nardin 141). What has been missed, even in recent accounts by Anderson and Fessenbecker, is Trollope's interest in a notion of selfhood which goes considerably beyond 'situationist ethics', or even 'akrasia.' Trollope's writing is ghosted by a reaction against consistency and linear narrative selfhood which threatens to break conventional modes of selfhood down entirely. This risky incoherence emerges (more or less strongly) in numerous Trollopian characters, ranging from the feckless Felix Carbury to the Last Chronicle of Barset's 'confused, contradictory, unintelligible' Josiah Crawley (16). Trollope is drawn to figures who do not simply change their minds, but who find themselves to be different selves, living without consequence from moment

to moment. This constitutes Trollope's fascination with the 'now.'

Trollope's 'Now'

Provocative titles--He Knew He Was Right (1869), Can You Forgive Her?, Is He Popenjoy? (1877)--are Trollope's speciality, but The Way We Live Now has a particular tonal edge to it. Ostensibly outward-reaching and inclusive, Trollope's 'We' soon settles into the characteristically anonymous editorial 'we' of collaborative print culture, a culture which Trollope highlights in the novel's opening chapter, 'The Three Editors', and jokes about in the course of the fiction.³ Much of Trollope's interest in the editorial trope lies in that titular 'We', and in the opportunity that it brought him to explore the nature of the writing of a self in a world in which, as Burma puts it, 'almost all published writing is the product of multiple hands' (105). But the 'Now' is important too, for Trollope's concern goes beyond textual origins and communities. He is also preoccupied with the idea of textual continuity, with the idea of what it might mean to live, read, and write 'now'.

The obvious temporal concern in Trollope's title is that of decline. 'Now' conjures a sense of fixed nostalgia: 'This is the way we live', it suggests, 'given

what has happened--and what a falling off it is from how we once lived.' But the 'now' of Trollope's fictional world is sadder, even, than this. It has lost its resonance. As the 'look-out into the future' (Way We Live Now i 16) is repeatedly seen in terms of the next post or tomorrow's newspaper, characters are found to be proposing marriage, speculating, chasing book review puffs, and electioneering. 'Now' is not, for these characters, the responsive immediacy of the moment. It is, instead, the expedient action, the very near consequence, as they move towards a 'happiness . . . never reached but always coming' (Way We Live Now i 110).

Nicholas Broune, Esq., editor of the 'Morning Breakfast Table', seems to embody such a tension between this expedient 'now' of a world concerned with continuity and consequence, and the 'now' of the immediate felt moment, the 'now' of the present. Calm, responsible and 'powerful in his profession,' (i 3), Broune is one of the many characters in The Way We Live Now who lives his emotional life according to a 'balance. . . sheet,' 'auditing his daily account' pragmatically, in line with his editorial duty (i 337). He is, however, 'a susceptible old goose,' and 'fond of ladies' (i 287, 3), and it is through this susceptibility (mentioned nine times in the narrative), that his desire to live in the moment is revealed.

Before the novel opens, we understand that Broune 'in a moment of enthusiasm, had put his arm round Lady Carbury's waist and had kissed her' (i 4). Midway through the novel, he makes a sudden proposal of marriage to the same. It is a surprising move. Matilda Carbury, a widow, has been 'driven very hard for money,' and burdened by a dissolute and spendthrift son (i 15), has turned to periodical publication in an effort to stay financially afloat. After a day's wait, Broune receives an answer to his bungled proposal: he has been refused.

Nevertheless, at the novel's end, he renews his suit, and in a different tone. Lady Carbury is stunned. She sits 'silent, quite unable to look him in the face, while he kept his place in his arm-chair, lounging back, with his eyes intent on her countenance.' His speech is carefully constructed, and delivered in the spirit of the editor, not the 'susceptible old goose':

'Well,' he said; 'what do you think of it? I never loved you better than I did for refusing me before, because I thought that you did so because it was not right that I should be embarrassed by your son.'

'That was the reason,' she said, almost in a whisper.

'But I shall love you better still for accepting me now,--if you will accept me.' (ii 463)

In terms of the novel's chronology, a period of 'two or three months' (ii 463) has elapsed between Broune's first and second proposal. A similar stretch of time would have gone by for Trollope, who managed to make his way from one fictional proposal to another, writing over 200,000 words (or thirteen 'numbers') between August and December 1873. The novel's first readers, encountering The Way We Live Now in monthly numbers, would have had a longer wait. Broune's first proposal appeared in the seventh number, published in August 1874, while his second would have appeared a little over a year later, in the final number--September 1875.

Matilda Carbury is not a character who remembers things. Broune's kiss has already been 'forgotten' as a 'little absurd episode in their joint lives' (i 104). It is, however, unlikely that either Broune or the reader would have forget the events surrounding the first proposal: in the seventh number, Broune's 'mixed frame of mind' on first receiving Lady Carbury's refusal is delineated in some detail. He is indignant, surprised, angry, fearful for his reputation, full of admiration for her independence, and finally relieved--settling upon 'the conviction that he had escaped' (i 339-40). Broune's current account of his earlier disappointment ('I never loved you better') is not entirely untrue. He even admits

that his desire to marry has been 'not without some doubts, for you shall know all' (ii 463). The memory has, however, been heavily edited. '[E]ndowed with gifts peculiarly adapted for the editing of a daily newspaper' (i 290), Broune has no scruple in piecing together a psychological account of himself that creates good copy for Matilda Carbury. Indeed, there is a suggestion that, for him, editing/self-editing has become automatic; the messiness of 'mixed' feelings has been resolved into a clear narrative rationale. Tenses and conditionals are juggled to create an easy balance: 'before' and 'now'; 'should be', and 'shall'; 'now' and 'will', put forward a conception of the self as easy as the armchair in which 'he kept his place' (ii 463). When equipped with the psychic equivalent of scissors and paste, the autobiographer may view the past as an arena in which anyone might comfortably recline.

The Associative Self and 'Absurd Little Episodes'

My description of Broune's mode of public self-representation, smoothing and reconstructing the past's susceptibilities into a palatable narrative, has much in common with the nineteenth-century model of memory which Nicholas Dames describes in his study of nostalgia and in nineteenth-century fiction, Amnesiac Selves (2001). For Dames, 'the fiction of the time was engaged in

constructing a psychic structure' which produced 'a secure, generalizable, willed, genial retrospect that disconnects the present from the past and that operates always with an eye toward the future' (10). In making this statement, Dames makes a clear distinction between two forms of fictional associationism. The first is the 'freely associative fictions' of Tristram Shandy (1759-1767) which are congruent with the 'high associationism of the eighteenth century [that] could and often did describe a mind unmoored from the sequence of past events' (129-130). His focus is a second distinct form: a particular model of Victorian philosophical and narrative associationism that was efficient, practical and forward looking: 'in the associationist theory of Bain or Hamilton we see a turning away from the enigmas of Wordsworthian memory and a turning toward a cleansed, organized mind free of such uncategorizable detail'(128).

In writing about models of memory, it is useful and important to clarify the relationship that is being posited between a mind as described by Victorian scientists and philosophers, a fictional model of memory as represented by a novelist such as Trollope, and the 'psychic structures' which I imagine Trollope projects onto, and imagines for, his readers. My aim--in the following accounts of imagined minds--is not to argue that Trollope concurred, or directly engaged with any

contemporary views of the mind's construction. Nor do I want to imply that he was necessarily aware of them. The philosopher Gregory Currie has written astutely, and with a 'drizzle of scepticism' about the project of yoking together literature and psychology in conceiving the Victorian novel as a neatly utilitarian 'laboratory of the mind' (Currie). Rather, I wish to convey a sense of the sorts of broad discourses surrounding memory and selfhood which were present at the time and that appear to have made a mark on Trollope's own thinking and writing, and may make a mark on ours. While there is something being worked out in Trollope's writing, his writing offers nothing so clear as a fictionally staged 'mental gymnasium' (Currie) in which readers may flex their ethical and cognitive muscles. Rather, we struggle, in these fictions, to see a problem that is only partially grasped work its way into the light.

Dames's account of nineteenth-century novelistic associationism suggests that a life experienced as a cogent, sequential narrative is allied with positive conceptions of moral personage. Indeed, many works of the period frequently associate the consistent and innate sense of self-enabled by memory. Dugald Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, much-read in its 1842 edition, suggests that '[m]emory. . . enables us to treasure up, and preserve for future use, the

knowledge we acquire'; that it is 'the great foundation of all intellectual improvement' (344-5). Emerson, meanwhile, makes even stronger associations between linear narrative selfhood and moral life in his late lecture on 'Memory', part of his series on 'The Natural Method of Mental Philosophy,' which he delivered in 1857. Emersonian 'memory' is 'a guardian angel set there within you to record your life'; 'a scripture written day by day'; 'a primary and fundamental faculty, without which none other can work; the cement, the bitumen, the matrix in which the other faculties are imbedded; or it is the thread on which the beads of man are strung, making the personal identity which is necessary to moral action' (101).

Lines of continuity can be drawn between these nineteenth-century conceptions of narrative morality and the work of twentieth-century moral philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Alistair MacIntyre. For MacIntyre, moral thinking relies on 'a concept of a self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative' (205). There is, however, opposition. Galen Strawson's writing on selfhood and narrativity sets out to critique the moral value associated with this model, challenging the idea that 'experiencing or conceiving one's life as a narrative is a good thing' (Strawson 2004 428). Strawson proposes what he sees as a variation on a model of selfhood conceived

in what he calls narrative and diachronic terms. He calls this variation an 'episodic' self, a model which is partially inspired by questions of the self's persistence in time as they present themselves in Hume. In Strawson's variation, 'one does not figure oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future. . . .

Episodics are likely to have no particular tendency to see their life in Narrative terms' (Strawson 2004 430).

'Many think,' Strawson argues, 'that a good human life must be both Narrative and Diachronic. They think that an Episodic person cannot live a fully moral life. An

Episodic, they say, cannot properly inhabit the realms of responsibility, duty and obligation--not to mention those of friendship, loyalty, and so on' (Strawson 2007 86-7).

Strawson cites Kathleen Wilkes as one of the 'many' who object to his model (87). '[M]orality', for Wilkes, 'is a matter of planning future actions, calculating

consequences, experiencing remorse and contrition; such mental phenomenon are both forward- and backward-

looking' (Wilkes 27). For a philosopher such as Charles Taylor, this kind of episodic self-conception would also have devastating effects upon the conception of a moral life, as the 'basic condition of making sense of

ourselves' is 'that we grasp our lives in a narrative'

(47). But for Strawson, it is the narrative conception of

life which may be 'essentially a matter of bad faith', while the episodic view may, in fact, be ethically superior because one who holds it is 'more located in the present' (Strawson 2004 435). In response to the question, '[i]sn't the capacity to feel remorse and contrition, at least, essential to moral life?', one of Strawson's replies is 'No', arguing that one can experience 'the negative thud' of self-realization without the 'essentially self-indulgent' quality of 'guilt' (Strawson 2007 91, 93).

There is much to quarrel with in Strawson's brilliant and provocative essays. Most critically, the idea of stable linear narrative selfhood which Strawson imagines, and then attacks, is an unsteady and broad brush construct, rooted, as Matti Hyvärinen notes, in the 'simplified image of nineteenth-century realism' (329) and a similarly simplified notion of nineteenth-century psychology. Dames argues that nineteenth-century novelists imagined the mind working in a linear fashion, but as Craig and Creevy describe (34, 120), philosophers of the time did not necessarily concur. J. S. Mill's account of the mind in 'Two Kinds of Poetry' (1833) emphasises that the truly artistic and poetic (and superior) mind does not work 'chronologically' but in a 'synchronous' mode (Mill 716). William Hamilton's image of the mind as a 'chain web' or 'sphere of chainwork'

rather than a 'mere chain' (34), meanwhile, complicates the linear, causal Emersonian 'thread' of 'beads'.⁵

Nevertheless, Strawson's questions about the relationship between an ethical life and the idea of experiencing oneself in the present--the idea that '[c]onscience. . . in its most general, original sense' is 'simply a matter of inner mental-self awareness in the present' (Strawson 2007 102)--are particularly relevant to ideas of morality as they unfold in Trollope's writing.

Trollope's own position on the construction of selfhood in time can only be a matter for conjecture. As a commissioning editor for Saint Pauls, he paid almost no attention to philosophy or science of the mind. A sole review of a biography of Sir William Hamilton is the only mention metaphysics and psychology get in two years ('Life of a Scottish Metaphysician', 685-697). His libraries show no particular fondness for philosophical works in volume form, although he was a subscriber to numerous periodicals (Grossman 52) such as the Monthly Review, the Edinburgh Review and his own Fortnightly in which he might have encountered works ranging from J. S. Mill's review of Bain's Psychology to W. L. Courtney's account of the Lewesian arguments concerning the translation of 'sensation' into 'intelligible experience' (Courtney 326). Trollope's own explicit writings on the

ideas of self in time are sparse. In a marginal note to Burke's The Sublime and the Beautiful, an eighteen-year-old Trollope weighs up the idea of present and future selfhood. No man, Burke writes 'could be found, who would earn a life of the most perfect satisfaction, at the price of ending it in the torments.' 'I would,' counters Trollope (Humphreys 198). In a late work, the 1880 Life of Cicero, Trollope expresses a tentative case: 'It is hard for a man,' he notes, 'even in regard to his own private purposes, to analyse the meaning of a conscience if he puts out all thought of a future life' (218). It may be hard, but at times in his fiction, Trollope makes an attempt. For Trollope often seems straightforwardly sympathetic to those who find themselves unable to think about their lives as a narrative. Paul Montague's inability to extract himself from his simultaneous love affairs with Winifred Hurtle and Hetta Carbury is associated with a narrative that has been stalled by an acute sensitivity to the immediate pains of other individuals: 'an inner softness, a thinness of the mind's skin' (Way We Live Now i 442). His 'sorely burdened conscience' (i 205) is more concerned with immediate mutual space than far-reaching teleological chronology, making his moral decision-making ultimately subject to the feeling of a moment, an immediate 'now,' where conscience and consciousness seem to blur. His attraction

to these characters seems to suggest that Trollope's own sense of personal identity had more in common with that of fellow biographer of Cicero, Arthur Hallam, for whom 'susceptibility' to the moment (33-4) was key. While recognizing the teleological vision of self-constitution, Trollope also critiques it, and probes alternative ways of conscientious existence.

An Editor's Tales

At this point, my framing of Trollope both draws on Dames's account and diverges from it. Dames sees Trollope's novels as forming a complex part of a nineteenth-century fictional mode which may forget and blur the past but in which is essentially forward looking. For Dames, while the 'psyche [is] orientated toward perception and sensation--toward the *present*', the genial self's retrospect 'operates always with an eye to the future' (10). I argue that Trollope has a distinct interest in the possibilities and perils of resisting both past and future selves. His fiction plays out different ways of living in the moment--taking on a version of Strawson's episodic mode.

Interest in the concentrated psychological and moral form of the moment is most sharply focussed in his 1870 collection of short stories, An Editor's Tales.⁶ The six stories were initially published individually in Saint

Pauls Magazine, one of the many monthly shilling magazines so popular in the 1860s. Saint Pauls was a new venture, spearheaded by the publisher James Sprent Virtue, and edited, at Virtue's persuasion, by Trollope himself. Trollope's initial refusal of the editorial role, followed by his reluctant acceptance that it was, as a novelist, necessary to 'undertake the duty' of editorial work, demonstrates the tensions between individual desires and wider responsibilities (Autobiography 284). The expectation that, as Catherine Delafield argues, a periodical editor was to 'ensure' the 'continuity' of a periodical, 'a continuity supplied in his own person' (57), is salient here, and such tensions between momentary desire and personal continuity reveal themselves in the individual stories, both at the level of content, and also at the level of genre.

Saint Pauls was pitched at 'professional and university men' (Sutherland 1980 119); Trollope's aims, as declared in his October 1867 'Introduction,' were 'modest'. The magazine would 'be political', and while not claiming to break new ground, it would be 'as good of its kind as can be made' (2). He was 'desirous of assuming an idiosyncrasy, of walking in a certain defined path' (3). It would include 'serial tales' and poetry, but not 'literary criticism' (4). Trollope's introduction ends with the note that '[t]he Editor now bows thrice to

his audience, and retires behind his curtain, not purposing to intrude himself again in his own person before the public' (7).

This is a teasing exit. Trollope may not offer an editorial again, but in October 1869, exactly two years later, a fictional editor reappears, as narrator of the series of short stories, prefaced with the capitalised title 'An Editor's Tale'. While each tale appears to be self-contained, as a group they have numerous similarities. All the tales touch on the difficulties one might encounter if questions of emotion cloud editorial judgment. In 'The Panjundrum' (January-February 1870), a group of men and one woman try to decide the content and premise for a new magazine, and find that chivalry and candor prove incompatible. In two stories about aspiring writers--'Mary Gresley' (November 1869) and 'Josephine de Montmorenci' (December 1869)--lust threatens clear editorial decision making; in the May 1870 story, 'Mrs Brumby', it is fear, not desire, that compels the editor to bend the rules.

The stories are narrated by a semi-fictionalised editor, giving them an intriguingly meta-editorial status. In drawing on the trope of an inscribed fictional editor, Trollope stands in the 'long and illustrious novelistic tradition' from Cervantes to Swift that Andrew Piper describes (109). Trollope's fictional editors,

however, seem of a different species than a figure such as Walter Scott's Jedediah Cleishbotham, the 'editor' of Tales of my Landlord. This is partly because Trollope's narrator lacks a name. While Cleishbotham keeps Scott at a playful critical distance, Trollope's tales hover indeterminately between fiction, autobiography, and an expose of the magazine's own creation. Indeed Trollope's use of the editor-function seems altogether more slippery, and slightly grubbier, than Scott's. As Piper argues, Scott's editor allows him to explore complex questions of textual origin and textual legitimacy, but also adds a certain gravitas to his tales, 'drawing attention to a professional continuity' (109) between the fictional intra-textual activities and Scott's extra-textual editing and scholarship. Trollope's editor also raises questions about 'continuity', but these are questions of a different sort--not least because the publication of these tales in Saint Pauls gives the impression that an editor is editing the story that he is simultaneously writing. As the next section will show, the fictional editor/narrator of these disrupted and disrupting stories is not so much holding them together, as himself falling apart. In this sense, the editor of Trollope's tales bears some affective similarities with that of Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, who 'revolve[s]' his

'editorial difficulties' in 'the dark depths of his own mind' (9).

Trollope's first editor's tale, 'The Turkish Bath' seems, initially, misleading. The title conjures something backward and eastward-looking, romantic and Byronic. Our editor is, however, soon framed as a degenerate Scheherazade. The Turkish Bath in question is in Jermyn Street, not Constantinople, and the scene is close to Trollope's present moment:

It was in the month of August. The world had gone to the moors and the Rhine, but we were still kept in town by the exigencies of our position. We had been worked hard during the preceding year, and were not quite as well as our best friends might have wished us;--and we resolved upon taking a Turkish bath. This little story records the experience of one individual man; but our readers, we hope, will, without a grudge, allow us the use of the editorial we. We doubt whether the story could be told at all in any other form. We resolved upon taking a Turkish bath, and about three o'clock in the day we strutted from the outer to the inner room of the establishment in that light costume and with that air of Arab dignity which are peculiar to the place.

(75)

This titular disappointment sets a peculiar tone. The encounter is ostensibly a literary one, as the editor finds himself discussing the finer points of literature, swapping quotations from the work of Alexander Pope, with an engaging Irishman named Molloy. However, at a critical point in the story, the editor realizes that Molloy is proposing more than a chat; the entire conversation was set up in order to get the editor to agree to read a manuscript.

It appears that the editor also has ulterior motives. As the pair sit naked in the steam room 'with an absence of all bashfulness' (76), Trollope's subtext allows us to suspect that the editor was hoping for something more than conversation. He has been charmed by Molloy ('His manner of moving about the place was so good that I felt it to be a pity that he should ever have a rag on more than he wore at present' (80)) and what the editor refers to elsewhere as 'the delicious plural' (136) takes on a tragic-comic weight. The affected professionalism and 'mystic . . . aegis' of the editorial 'we' (Morley 290), is, in part, Trollope's joke on the question of exactly who was writing what in the world of Victorian periodicals. An Editor's Tales were written in the midst of the debates concerning signed journalism and anonymity, debates in which 'a fence-sitting Anthony

Trollope' played a part (Liddle 33).⁷ However, as Buurma points out, Trollope felt deeply the 'conflicting relations between' a 'novelist's position of individual authorial autonomy' and the 'editorial role' with its 'own sphere of responsibility' (106), and here, in 'The Turkish Bath', the difficulty of the position starts to show. The editorial 'we' moves from the incongruous ('We were of course accommodated with two checked towels' (75)) to the absurdly isolated. The editor's description of '[s]itting there at the Turkish bath with nothing but a towel around us' (81) hints at a desperate wish to escape the body's solitude, to gain literal rather than metaphorical plurality. But it is only a hint. Molloy does indeed visit the editor with his promised manuscript, but we are told of no tryst. The manuscript transpires to be a work of incomprehensible gibberish--for Molloy is a madman.

A central interest of the story lies in the bathhouse scene, and the questions of what precisely happens--or is desired to happen--there. The answer remains misty. As Mark Turner writes, '[w]hat we have is a series of build-ups which cannot ever reach climax without the story tipping over from a playful ambiguous tale of editing into a story of fully realized homosexual desire and activity' (Turner 209). One might add that it is the very fact that this is a 'tale of editing'--or,

more specifically, an edited tale--that stills it into an ambiguous vignette. Stead's description of some editors as 'the eunuchs of the craft' (667) is apt here. Our nameless editor inhabits and creates a narrative existence which is meticulously controlled, and yet so lacking in perspicacity and judgement that it seems entirely impotent.

Another element of the story's interest, however, comes in its relationship with the stories following it. A month later, readers waited to find out the potential answers to the mystery of what happened in Jermyn Street, and whether it was to happen again, but found, instead, a new story--'Mary Gresley'. This tale concerns an editor who meets a young aspiring novelist. Again, the 'susceptibility' of the editor is highlighted--'the needle within our bosom was swayed' (97). Faced with a manuscript that seems likely to be unpromising, the editor reflects on his possible answers. 'The Unfortunate Man of Letters' would, he notes, be pragmatic and say:

'For the writing of a book that shall either interest or instruct a brother human being many gifts are required. Have you just reason to believe they have been given to you?' That is what the candid, honest man of letters says who is not soft-

hearted;--and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it will probably be the truth.

The editor reflects on the actions of the 'soft-hearted man of letters.' He, by contrast 'remembers that this special case submitted to him may be the hundredth; and unless the blotted manuscript submitted to him is conclusive against such possibility, he reconciles it to tune his counsel to that hope' (99-100).

Both 'Mary Gresley' and 'The Turkish Bath' can be usefully considered alongside Trollope's fifth story, 'The Spotted Dog'. Here, the plot revolves around an editor's encounter with another near-destitute man who, like Molloy, is begging for work. Julius Mackenzie has been highly educated and comes from a wealthy background, but a family quarrel has forced him to sever links (174). A mysterious run of bad fortune and periods of drinking have meant that he now earns his living writing penny-dreadfuls. He also happens to be burdened by an alcoholic wife. He presents himself to the editor in a dishevelled state:

His eyebrows were large and shaggy, but well formed. . . . His nose was long and well shaped,--but red as a huge carbuncle. . . . The binding of the coat was frayed, the buttons were half uncovered, the button-

holes were tattered, the velvet collar had become party-coloured with dirt and usage. . . . Not an inch of linen or even of flannel shirt was visible. (177–8)

Despite some qualms, the editor decides to entrust the man with a large and important task: the indexing of a 'certain learned manuscript in three volumes,' written by one of his oldest clients, a venerable 'Doctor' (176). Mackenzie sets about working on the manuscript, keeping it safe in the top room of the local pub, 'The Spotted Dog'. But one night his inebriated wife throws the manuscript into the fire. Mackenzie responds by drinking himself into oblivion and then commits suicide. The children are left destitute, and the manuscript is left as a pile of charred remains.

Trollope thought 'The Spotted Dog' 'the best' of An Editor's Tales and John Sutherland agrees with his assessment (Sutherland 1995 xvii). It is worth considering why. The characters in 'The Spotted Dog' are typical of nineteenth-century melodrama, as is, in particular, the tone in which Mackenzie's drunken stupor is described:

there we saw the body of Julius Mackenzie stretched in the torpor of dead intoxication. His head lay

against the wall, his body was across the bed, and his feet dangled on to the floor. He still wore his dirty boots, and his clothes as he had worn them in the morning. . . . And there sat, and had been sitting for hours past, the four children in the other room, knowing the condition of the parent whom they most respected, but not even endeavouring to do anything for his comfort. What could they do? (205)

The scene may be new to this editor. 'No sight so piteous, so wretched, and at the same time so eloquent had we ever seen before,' (205) he writes. But the story is, tonally, not a new one. The tale takes its place in a tradition: the broken and destitute family, suffering in poverty, so central to the Victorian melodramatic genre. Such a scene, in terms of texture, does not so much move the narrative forward, but, like the interpolated tales in The Pickwick Papers (1836), works through a sort of affective stasis, like a 'photographic still' (Johns 107). Its force may be seen as Trollope's attempt at what Martin Meisel terms the 'art of effect'--an art which works not merely through 'plot or character,' but through a form of 'emotional coloration', in which 'presentational immediacy can work as a narrative style' (73, 79).

But the precise premise of the tale--the encounter between editor and an unpromising author to whom he makes an unwise commitment--is not new either. It is personally derivative. In writing a story that is consistent with every other story in the collection (excepting 'The Panjandrum'), Trollope is repeating himself. Indeed, the particular personae in 'The Spotted Dog'--the reluctant but compassionate editor and the destitute author--makes it a rehearsal of the first story in the collection, 'The Turkish Bath'.

One might ask how a reader is meant to negotiate these strikingly similar tales. How are they to process them in relation to any putative narrative of progression, either for the character, or for themselves? Are they intended to come to each story in the spirit of the 'soft-hearted editor', forgetful of what comes before, or are they to remember each tale in relation to the last, and read 'The Spotted Dog', for example, with the memory and experience of the 'Unfortunate Man of Letters'? Reflecting on the order and publication of the stories, Trollope worried that readers might have been bored or distracted by what they encountered. 'I know now. . . they came out too quick, one upon another, to gain much attention' (Autobiography 337).

Attention, and its extension, is central to understanding these stories' complexities and their

melodramatic tone. From the outset, Trollope self-consciously highlights ideas of connected memory and oblivion. The pseudo-Eastern setting of 'The Turkish Bath' provides one sort of alerting device for the reader. A comic allusion to 'Intimations of Immortality' (1807) provides another. Trollope's editor is pretty much, like the imagined child of the ode, 'in utter nakedness', but in place of the 'trailing' Wordsworthian 'clouds of glory' (lines 63-4) he is 'trailing our second towel' (76). The light echo of a poem which has, as its central wish for the self's 'days to be/ Bound each to each' (lines 2-3) puts the central theme of these stories in focus, for the notion of a connected self is exactly what these editors, or this editor, seems to be missing. Dilettante, impetuous, generous, and self-seeking, the narrator or narrators of Trollope's tales show little capacity for seeing their lives in a neat, edited, teleological narrative involving cause and effect.

An Editor's Tales also raise questions about a reader's ability to make connected judgements in relation to their generic status as 'tales'. Novels, and particularly novels with recurring characters, arguably encourage their readers to think about how cause and effect are connected. As Dames argues, the recollections and forgetfulnesses of characters in novels could be seen (along linear associationist lines) to elicit similar

selective acts of remembrance and forgetting in the readers' minds, editing their recollections into mutual, hopeful, future-based narratives (18-19). Trollope's tales, though, work differently, and the difference is partly a generic one. Trollope's stories, Lisa Niles points out, are often critically overlooked, despite the fact that they 'mediat[e]' 'complex narrative strategy[ies]' through 'repetition and continual revision' (72). However, the attempt to address this complexity in asking what a short story does specifically, risks essentialism of many kinds. Per Winther describes the shifts in narrative theory away from attempts to capture the 'essential qualities that short stories possess' (136) towards the question--'What does a short story do?' (142) but notes that such a question is only of use if we take what might be seen as a situationist approach to short-story reading, arguing for 'central tendencies rather than absolutes' (Friedman 16 in Winther 139).⁸ With such 'central tendencies' in mind, it is possible to argue that short stories, compared to novels, offer an opportunity for distinct sorts of readerly and writerly relationships with time and attention. While it would be an exaggeration to say that a single short story deals with 'the only thing one can be sure of--the present moment' (Gordimer 70), it does, as a form, embody, as Michael Trussler argues, 'a

hermeneutics of temporality that is distinct from the novel' (193). Trussler convincingly defends the short story as a form with a something approaching an essence, an essence which he argues gives a 'sense of temporal ostracism' from a wider temporal frame. Viewed as a form which works 'largely in opposition to a culture's overall reliance upon sequential narrative as a way of articulating and policing experience' (193), the short story has an intriguing affinity to Strawson's episodic self. The short story can, for a moment, be claimed as a formal approximation of living in the moment.

But thinking about An Editor's Tales as either a collection, or as a series of stories, complicates its potential formal and temporal resonance further. Indeed, the component stories both request and resist sequential connection. Trollope's stories were, Sutherland notes, formally, not quite distinct from each other but neither were they temporally related in a clear sense--he considered them as 'bundles' (Sutherland 1994 ix), a term which suggests a connection between the narrative without suggesting quite what shape this connection might take. This is, perhaps, the point. We cannot be sure, for example, whether the editor in each of the stories is the same, making him an example of what Stephen Wall calls 'a reappearing character' (54)--or whether we are meeting a series of very similar but distinct editors (in which

case, each Prefatory title 'An Editor's Tale' refers to a different editor). The temptation to view the stories as featuring the same editor (the more likely view for later readers, who read the stories under the unifying title An Editor's Tales) places a reader of Saint Pauls (or of the stories in a collected volume) in a complex position in relation to their own readerly recollections. If they remember the tale of 'The Turkish Bath', then the actions of the editor in 'The Spotted Dog' make no psychological sense, rendering him an almost nonsensical character. Even if the editors are viewed as distinct entities, then it is difficult from the reader's perspective for the repeated scenario to hold the same ethical imperative, given the lessons learned in the first story.

The merit of 'The Spotted Dog' potentially lies not, as Sutherland claims, in its dramatic psychological material, but in what Andrew H. Miller might call its 'implicative' power. By this, I mean its continuing power to 'invite' or implicate the reader in their own act of moral unfolding or 'perfecting', drawing upon the work of literature themselves (29). This power is dependent on the tale's formal predictability and its place in the collection. For in terms of any sort of instrumentalist ethic, it makes no sense for the editor to give Julius Mackenzie this particular employment. The benefit for Mackenzie is outweighed by the risk posed to the

manuscript and its author. Given that the pattern of characterization echoes 'The Turkish Bath' so strongly, a reader could expect that the writer will turn out to be-- as he was in the earlier story--untrustworthy, completely insane, or in some way unreliable. In a felicitous coincidence of form and content, by writing a story that seems to have no memory of, or causal relationship with, its previous sibling narratives, Trollope tacitly encourages the reader to echo the actions of his editor, who responds to the aspiring writer not with the logic of experience, or with thoughts about the future, but with the 'soft-hearted' feeling of the present moment. If a typical Victorian narrative allows us to 'envision a reader engaged in. . . difficult acts of thematic and structural remembering' (Dames 3), then Trollope's Editor's Tales takes us into different activities: almost an amnesiac blotting out of the entire past narrative, and an existence in the present.

For Strawson, citing Shaftesbury's Philosophical Regimen (Strawson 2004 438), the ethics of such immediacy seem straightforward:

The metaphysicians . . . affirm that if memory be taken away, the self is lost. And what matter for memory? What have I to do with that part? If, whilst I am, I am as I should be, what do I care more? and

thus let me lose self every hour, and be twenty successive selfs, or new selfs, 'tis all one to me: so I lose not my opinion. If I carry that with me 'tis I; all is well. . . .--The now; the now. Mind this: in this is all. (Shaftesbury 136-7)

For Trollope, similarly, living in the moment seems sufficient, and can often be redemptive. Shaftesbury's happy self-abnegation is echoed by the 'good Doctor' in 'The Spotted Dog', who willingly gives the original manuscript of his masterwork over to Julius Mackenzie to be indexed. On hearing that it has been incinerated, he is entirely without protest. Glancing at the charred pages in the box, he says, 'we will say no more about it' (209). He was, the editor claims, 'as good a Christian as I ever met' (209). For Trollope, the 'quiescent' doctor's willingness to accept that his 'Opus magnum' (213, 198) will have had only a momentary--and episodic--existence, is an act of conscience; it is suggested that truly ethical action is time- and self-effacing.

But Trollope's short stories also allow us to interrogate the Strawsonian perspective. Might the episodically 'soft-hearted' easily slip into 'soft-headed'? One might compare The Eustace Diamonds' Lucy Morris, who welcomes back her prodigal lover after his infidelity, thinking only of the now: 'from this time

forward, [she] altogether forgot that she had for some time looked upon him as traitor. . . . All his sins were forgiven him. No single question was asked as to his gross misconduct during the last six months. No pledge or guarantee was demanded for the future. There he was, in the guise of a declared lover, and the fatted calf was killed' (567). As with the expansive father in the parable of the Prodigal, such an immediacy of response may have an ambiguous quality: might the editor in this tale be seen as much as a 'silly old fool' (White 70, Mackinnon 137) as a generous man?⁹

Pressing further, the episodic mode threatens to break down into something more ethically intriguing. The editor's peculiar relation to time, with his apparent disregard for past or future consequence, calls to mind some of the perceived moral consequences of Strawson's episodic individual. The editor's inability to resist, for example, an association with a much-younger, engaged woman, or his desire to take risks with a stranger in a bathhouse, may not make him 'a-moral or a "wanton"', in Wilkes's terms (27), but it does foreground questions about what an individual loses, and gains, when they choose to live episodically, with no strong sense of continuity with, or obligation to, to past or potential future selves.¹⁰

Finally, the repetitive nature of the stories allows us to question the virtue claims of the Strawsonian 'episodic' mode itself. It is as if Trollope's stories, which repeatedly demonstrate the editor acting 'in the moment', and which repeatedly invite the reader to respond in the same spirit, transform the idea of felt immediacy into a convention. One can see a hint of this in Strawson's own writings, when he claims that 'a happy-go-lucky person can be the best among us' (2007 87). Strawson is open about the fact that 'Episodics' are a 'type' (2007 90). However, the 'happy-go-lucky' cliché alerts us to the paradox of typicalised immediate responsiveness. Can one ever have an 'instinctive responsiveness to things, a responsiveness in the present' (2007 100), when spontaneous responsiveness has its own happy-go-lucky tradition, and community?

Trollope's Editor's Tales do not answer such questions, but, in their odd repetitiveness, they pose them. In both depicting such questions about selfhood and framing them formally, Trollope's Editor's Tales provide a touchstone and starting point for our engagement with some of his best-known inconsistent figures, from the dissolute Burgo Fitzgerald to the divided Glencora Palliser. These particular narratives also test our own capacities for attention and responsiveness to the limit.

Strangely familiar, An Editor's Tales makes demands on Trollope's readers, and their time.

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Notes

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1. See Martin Buber's letter to Ellen Kay, 27 September 1908 (Glatzer 119).
2. My ideas about Trollope and repetition have also been developed and challenged by D. A. Miller's seminal article, 'The Novel as Usual: Trollope's *Barchester Towers*' although I come to very different conclusions.
3. The title chapter 'The Three Editors' was present in Trollope's working notes from the earliest stages. Throughout the novel Trollope joking elides individual editors with their periodicals in the novel, as when Broune states "We shall hold our tongue about him till we really do know something." The "we" of whom Mr. Broune

spoke was, of course, the "Morning Breakfast Table." (ii 240).

4. Trollope's working diaries show that there were a number of other instances where he was still composing novels when they were already being published. Orley Farm, for example was being written in June 1861, when the first issue came out in March 1861; the first number of The Small House at Allington was seen in print in Sept. 1862, and Trollope was still writing it in Feb. 1863. Other examples of this include Can You Forgive Her? and The Belton Estate. See Hamer 182-6.

5. I owe my knowledge of this passage from Hamilton to Cairns Craig's Associationism and the Literary Imagination (2007). Jason Camlot's excellent Style and the Nineteenth-Century British Critic (29-30) led me to this discussion in Mill.

6. An Editor's Tales was first published as a collection in 1870, and reprinted by Arno Press and Penguin in 1981 and 1993. I cite from the stories as they appear in the more widely available 1995 Sutherland edition of the Later Short Stories.

7. For Trollope's changes of mind between founding the Fortnightly Review in 1865 (which had 'signature as its editorial policy') to his editing of the anonymous Saint Pauls Magazine in 1867, to his support for signature as declared in An Autobiography, see Liddle 35 and 63.

8. See the debates in Narrative 20.2 (2012) and 22.1 (2014), in particular, Sarah Copland's 'To Be Continued: The Story of Short Story Theory and Other Narrative Theory', Narrative 22.1 (2014): 132-149.
9. My grateful thanks to Eric Griffiths, whose lectures led me to Mackinnon's Gifford series.
10. It is intriguing to note that the one mention, in the Autobiography, of Kate Field, a woman towards whom Trollope felt considerable affection, comes just before he discusses editing Saint Pauls Magazine. His decision to give voice to this episode--'[t]here is an American woman, of whom not to speak in a work purporting to [be] a memoir of my own life would be to omit all allusion to one of the chief pleasures which has graced my later years' (316)--is akin to a kind of memorial and moral 'stet'.

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