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TROLLOPE THROUGH THE WINDOW-PANE

By Katherine Voyles

BY NOW, ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE familiarity of realism in general, and the novels of Anthony Trollope in particular, are themselves familiar. D. A. Miller's suggestion that the "easy chair" is "still the most likely place to read Trollope" because such a location is congenial to novels that allow one to fall "into the usual appreciation of his appreciation of the usual" is the touchstone of such arguments (107). In Trollope's own day, reviewers and commentators did not use the term "the usual" to describe the domain of his novels, but they convey the same notion as Miller by maintaining that the transparency of his novels creates verisimilitude. What follows here suggests that an "easy chair" is not "the most likely place" to read Trollope. I reveal the surprising extent to which Trollope himself investigates and thinks at length about "the usual," instead of merely allowing his reader to "appreciate" the transparency of his novels, by attending to his ideas about classical perspective in relationship to the novel form.[1] I focus on Trollope's complicated relationship to issues of classical perspective because the transparency of his novels described by his contemporaries continues into today's critical descriptions of his novels as the domain of the ordinary, the everyday, and the familiar. Such descriptions, however, do not fully illuminate Trollope's own complicated relationship to issues of perspective. I throw Trollope's own ideas on perspective into full relief in an effort to disrupt accounts of his work that emphasize its natural qualities.[2] On the one hand, Trollope's work is described by contemporaries as perspectival, and his own comments in his *Autobiography* and his handling of issues of intimacy in his novels demonstrate what he sees as the virtues of perspectivalism.[3] Foremost among those virtues is the ability of perspectivalism to abstract its observer, which is confirmed as Trollope accomplishes a universal, generalized intimacy with characters that is felt by the author, the narrator, and the reader. By attempting to align readerly, authorial, and narratorial perception, Trollope works to recreate the "objective ground of visual truth" that a classical model of vision supplied (Crary, *Techniques* 14). Nevertheless, he worries about issues of point of view. Perspectivalism relies on its viewer's attitude in a particular position. That is, in its ideal form, pictorial perspectivalism allows any viewer who inhabits a particular position to see the same objects and to see them in the same way as any other viewer. In this sense, perspectivalism depersonalizes and abstracts the observer because it does not rely on the individuality of any particular observer. Trollope, however, fears that this impersonal model of the observer creates a vacuum that the personality of a particular observer fills. The narrator is the name Trollope gives to the personality that fills the vacuum, which Trollope

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fears indicates that his novels are subjective and represent only one way of understanding the world. In such a case, the point of view that characterizes his novels is not familiar – as we are accustomed to believe – because it represents the everyday world. Trollope believes that because novels are oriented from the narrator's point of view, the catholicity implied by pictorial perspectivalism is not available to the novel. The presence of a narrator, to Trollope's mind, veers the novel away from the objectivity to which perspectivalism seems a means. As Trollope notes fundamental differences between novelistic and pictorial point of view, we see that he himself did not consider his novels as natural or naturalizing.

Trollope's attraction to the virtues of perspective is something of an oddity; the nineteenth century is not known for its interest in and adherence to the precepts of Renaissance perspectivalism. Jonathan Crary's claims about the rise of subjective perception in the early nineteenth-century mean that by the time Trollope writes his novels, a classical, perspectival model of the observer is no longer dominant. In *Techniques of the Observer*, Crary writes:

> What takes place from around 1810 to 1840 is an uprooting of vision from the stable and fixed relations incarnated in the camera obscura. If the camera obscura, as a concept, subsisted as an objective ground of visual truth, a variety of discourses and practices – in philosophy, science, and in procedures of social normalization – tend to abolish the foundations of that ground in the early nineteenth century. In a sense, what occurs is a new valuation of visual experience: it is given unprecedented mobility and exchangeability, abstracted from any founding site or referent. (14)

If we follow Crary, the 1850s, when Trollope began to publish regularly, were a time that the object under observation had been loosened from its conceptual grounds in the more stable, classical mode of vision.[4] By facilitating the traffic in images between a subjective viewer and an object world, the camera obscura also facilitates a system of representation that allows a subject to transmit "truthful inferences" to others (29). While in the classical mode of vision people see the same things because of the hard and fast distinction between a viewing subject and the object world, subjective perception is potentially – almost necessarily – atomizing.

Recent accounts of the epistemological and representational implications of photography suggest that what Crary describes as the rise of subjective perception can also be described as a newly complicated relationship between representation and referent. Geoffrey Batchen's description of photography seems most relevant here: "Daguerre's image once again represents photography as a reproduction of what are already reproductions (in the case of the bas-relief, perhaps even a reproduction of a three-dimensional copy of an engraving after a sculpture by Goujon)" (133). Batchen's comments on the picturesque help to explain what it means to describe photography as a "reproduction of what are already reproductions." He writes: "According to [Richard Payne] Knight the picturesque was essentially a set of relations between one class of imitation and another, with nature acting only as a prompt for the transfer of associational memories always originating elsewhere" (78). Batchen discusses the picturesque because of the continuities he sees between it and photography. Both the picturesque and photography depend upon a viewing subject who "constitutes" the objects under observation.[5] Nature provides neither the content that is represented, nor the basis of representation. Representation is not once removed from the object itself; rather, the object itself is another version of representation. Thus, there is no difference between representation and that which is represented; both are "imitations."[6]

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Although the advent of photography and new models of the observer suggest that classical perspectivalism is on its way out in the Victorian period, the stereoscope indicates that a strong interest in issues of perspectivalism remains active. David Brewster explains how the stereoscope allows a viewer to see a "picture" in "binocular relief" so that it looks like its three-dimensional "original":

> When we look at a picture of which every part is nearly at the same distance from the eyes, the point of convergence of the optical axes is nearly at the same distance from the eyes; but when we look at its original, whether it be a living man, a statue, or a landscape, the optical axes are converged in rapid succession upon the nose, the eyes, the ears, or upon objects in the foreground, the middle, and the remote distances in the landscape, and the relative distances of all these points from the eye are instantly perceived. The *binocular relief* thus seen is greatly superior to the *monocular relief* already described. (51–52)

Brewster claims that the stereoscope circumvents monocular relief by taking multiple images of the same object from at least two distances so that the difference between those two distances, when seen through the stereoscope, turns monocular relief into binocular relief. Brewster explains that the stereoscope creates a three-dimensional "picture" that looks like its "original" by taking advantage of differences in distance between the observer's eye and an object inherent in three-dimensional objects.[7] The stereoscope makes the world of the observer consistent with the world being represented as it creates an imitation that looks like its original because it is seen in binocular relief.

With respect to Trollope's novels, descriptions of them as perspectival convey the notion that their world is three-dimensional because it is an imitation that is like its original. Trollope can make his novelistic world three-dimensional because, according to his contemporaries, in Trollope's novels, subjects and objects are oriented from a point of view that is transparent. Reviewers from the period use the novel-as-glass metaphor to describe the novels in a way that is very different from how late twentieth and early twenty-first-century critics describe the Victorian conceptualization of glass. Victorian commentators on Trollope treat windows as – to borrow phrasing from Andrew Miller's study *Novels Behind Glass* – "transparent media for display" and not "items of display themselves" when they describe his representational system (2).[8] By and large Victorian reviewers of Trollope treat glass as transparent, whereas both Isobel Armstrong and Miller contend that glass is not universally understood as transparent in the period. Both the American author Nathaniel Hawthorne and a reviewer in 1869 of Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* use a novel-as-glass metaphor in ways that imply that the point of view of the novel does not explicitly orient the relationships among subjects and objects. I begin with the reviewer of 1869:

> His writings have no aesthetic purpose; they mean nothing more than they say; they are not written *at* the reader; the author thinks of nothing but how his works may be made a correct copy, complete and minute; he looks at human nature as a man looks out of a window, painting exactly what he sees, up to the exact square of a pane. (qtd. in Smalley 329)

The reviewer's phrasing echoes *quattrocento* texts on perspective by using the window as a metaphor for perspective.[9] Leonardo da Vinci writes that "perspective is nothing other than looking at a thing through a transparent plane of glass" (qtd. in Elkins 48). Leon Battista

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Alberti's *On Painting* is widely regarded as the foundational expression of Renaissance perspectivalism. In the midst of a treatise chock-full of complicated discussions of the geometric rules of perspective, Alberti becomes conversational: "Let me tell you what I do when I am painting. First of all, I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen" (55). Although Renaissance writers themselves develop the window-for-perspective metaphor, they also, according to Elkins, emphasize the geometric rules that undergird perspective. He maintains that although the rules of geometry for creating perspective were crucial to Renaissance writers on the subject, this fact has been largely ignored in recent times: "The metonymic substitution of tracing for the rules of perspective and the metaphoric replacement of the plane of projection with a window are as close as we normally come to an informal definition of perspective" (12). Nineteenth-century commentators on Trollope pick up and use the window-on-the-world metaphor in a manner that downplays the rules and technique involved in creating perspective. Transparency, not technique, rules the day in these descriptions of Trollope. By downplaying technique, these critics suggest that Trollope conveys verisimilitude because the means by which verisimilitude is achieved is effaced. The metaphor of Trollopian transparency means that the point of view that coordinates the relations among subjects and objects is not obviously discernable. Hawthorne also treats Trollope's novels as transparent:

> It is odd enough that my own individual taste is for quite another class of works than those which I myself am able to write. If I were to meet with such books as mine by another writer, I don't believe I should be able to get through them. Have you ever read the novels of Anthony Trollope? They precisely suit my taste, – solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business, and not suspecting that they were being made a show of. (qtd. in Smalley 110)

Hawthorne believes that his own writings are more self-consciously artfully constructed and more highly improbable (his own word from the famous "Preface" to *The House of the Seven Gables* in which he distinguishes between novels and romances) than Trollope's. The attitude of the observer that both Hawthorne and the reviewer imagine depersonalizes the observer. The reviewer of *He Knew He Was Right* imagines the observer in a stationary position at the window so that he is like the figure that Elkins describes as gracing the opening pages of "essays, monographs, and artists' and architects' manuals" on perspective who sits "facing a wall or window laced with geometric lines" (9). Both Elkins's figure and the reviewer's observer constitute their perspective from a single, stationary point; but Elkins's observer uses the geometric rules of perspective, while the reviewer's does not. The reviewer lays down no criteria for his observer, such as familiarity with the geometric rules of perspective. The reviewer initially names his observer "Trollope," but then says that Trollope "looks at human nature as a man looks out of a window." A specific observer – Trollope – is here seamlessly replaced by a general category of observer – a man – so that virtually anyone who achieves the position at the window, not just Trollope, would see the same version of "human nature" as anyone else. Hawthorne's image of the glass case suggests a rather different attitude of the viewer, but essentially speaks to the same conception of the observer as the reviewer. Hawthorne imagines a piece of glass that is itself three-dimensional, and, thus, allows a viewer access to a variety of different vantage points as if the viewer could walk

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around it. The observer who could circumambulate the case is never identified or specified. Trollope here is never imagined as an observer; he is the author of novels that imagine a depersonalized observer, so he himself never fulfills that role. The giant, perhaps the most obvious candidate to fill the role of the observer after Trollope himself, hews the lump of earth, but is never depicted as gazing down upon it. Finally, the subjects under glass are obviously here the objects of observation, though one could imagine a scenario in which they turn the tables and themselves observe the observer – a possibility that is never realized. Despite the attention both men devote to the attitude of the viewer, the point of view that they describe is not particularized because the transparency of Trollope's narrative point of view allows every reader-observer to apprehend the relationships among subjects and objects in the novels in exactly the same way.

In Trollope's view, perspectivalism is achieved through a generalized intimacy with the novelistic character that is experienced by the author, the narrator, and the reader. In his *Autobiography*, Trollope describes his theory of novelistic characterization:

> [The novelist] desires to make his readers so intimately acquainted with his characters that the creations of his brain should be to them speaking, moving, living, human creatures. This he can never do unless he know those fictitious personages himself, and he can never know them well unless he can live with them in the full reality of established intimacy. They must be with him as he lies down to sleep, and as he wakes from his dreams. . . . It is so that I have lived with my characters, and thence has come whatever success I have attained. (232)

Trollope believes so strongly in the intense intimacy between author and character that of Mrs. Proudie's death he says, "I have never dissevered myself from Mrs. Proudie, and still live much in company with her ghost" (276). The visitations of Mrs. Proudie throw into relief the theory of characterization that Trollope develops. He describes the dissolution of a boundary between the fictitious world and the world of "full reality." Mrs. Proudie is not a ghost because she is fictional: she is a ghost because, to Trollope, she was a real person who has died. His characters are not confined to the novels in which they appear; they inhabit the same non-novelistic world as Trollope himself. The similarity between external reality and the internal world of the text that Trollope imagines here offers a clue as to why he cares so much about novelistic characterization: he understands characterization as an index to novelistic representation more generally. A writer who creates realistic characters, for Trollope, writes realistic novels because there is no boundary between the novel and the real world. For Trollope, the domain of painting is so fruitful because it provides him with a conceptual vocabulary for clarifying what it means to achieve a representational scheme that can capture "full reality." Trollope articulates a desire to create realistic, not idealized, characters. In *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, the narrator says:

> We are, most of us, apt to love Raphael's madonnas better than Rembrandt's matrons. But, though we do so, we know that Rembrandt's matrons existed; but we have a strong belief that no such woman as Raphael painted ever did exist. In that he painted, as he may be surmised to have done, for pious purposes – at least for Church purposes – Raphael was justified; but had he painted so for family portraiture he would have been false. Had I written an epic about clergymen, I would have taken St Paul for my model; but describing, as I have endeavoured to do, such clergymen as I see around me, I could not venture to be transcendental. (860; ch. 84)

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The distinction in the passage between the art of Raphael and that of Rembrandt depends upon the narrator's sense of their different relationships to representation. Rembrandt anchors his paintings of matrons in the physiognomy of the subject of the portrait. Raphael does not. Moreover, the narrator claims that the matrons "existed" but the madonnas did not. The narrator likens his mode of representation to Rembrandt's through the suggestion that the clergymen he writes about "exist." Trollope avoids modeling his characters after real-life figures that he does not know, such as St. Paul, for fear that this leads to idealization. His clergymen are ones that he "see[s] around" him, in the manner of Rembrandt's matrons. The use of models that are not known to the artist paves the way for imitation, in the sense that Batchen describes with respect to photography, instead of realism. Trollope says that relying on idealized, unknown models is the domain of the epic, not of "family portraiture," which is a figure for the novel insofar as it is not idealizing. The rejection of an idealized model for a clergyman in favor of models who "exist" makes the clergymen of Tollope's novels – Archdeacon Grantly, Mr. Robarts, and Septimus Harding, for example – into fully realized people, not "transcendental" reproductions of what are already reproductions.

Trollope values the scrupulous handling of distance as a means to create realistic characters.[10] He does not feel that intimacy is primarily a matter of proximity; but he does fear that too much distance is harmful to intimacy. Trollope's image of a "gallery" of his characters powerfully illustrates his feeling that too much distance between author and character creates estrangement instead of familiarity. He writes: "There is a gallery of them, and of all in that gallery I may say that I know the tone of the voice, and the colour of the hair, every flame of the eye, and the very clothes they wear" (*Autobiography* 233). The gallery might seem to stand for a distanced, omniscient point of view, precisely the kind that Hawthorne's giant would achieve if he were to look down upon the "lump of earth." Trollope uses the image of the gallery in a very unexpected way. It is not surprising that intimacy and distance should be opposed to each another. However, Trollope's use of the gallery, an image that more readily speaks to distance, is unexpected as an image of his intimacy with his characters. His focus on his intimacy with each and every character, instead of the group or groups of characters, means that he is not too distant from them. At least two potential ways of describing the gallery, neither of which Trollope employs, would demonstrate the achievement of a distanced view. Trollope could have chosen to focus on the social and political relationships among the characters in the gallery. He could have, for example, grouped Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope together to highlight their shared brand of church management. Or, he could have linked Lady Lufton and Mr. Robarts together and, in turn, linked them to the Duke of Omnium and his circle. In these instances, the complicated relationships among the characters would be highlighted. Trollope, however, also could have focused on these as groups of portraits or likenesses by talking about the aesthetic effect of a hanging, or grouping, of like portraits such that the absence of any single portrait is disruptive. In the period, a hanging connoted a group of pictures that should be displayed together: if one is missing the effect is spoiled. If the likeness of Griselda Grantly were missing from a hanging of portraits of Grantlys, the hanging would be incomplete. Trollope, instead of striving for a distanced view, highlights the intimacy he has with each and every character. He knows them all, not as a group, but in their individual particularity. Moreover, he knows them all to the same degree of intimacy. He knows "the tone of the voice, and the colour of the hair, every flame of the eye, and the very clothes they wear" of all of his characters. He does not just know all of these aspects of some of his characters, or some of

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these aspects of all of his characters; rather, he claims to know all of these aspects of all of his characters.

For as much as he worries that too much distance hinders intimacy, Trollope also worries about the dangers of a close-up point of view. In Trollope's estimation, George Eliot fails to measure up to his ideals for a novelist because of her close-up handling of perceptual distance. He ranks Eliot lower than William Makepeace Thackeray in his account of important English novelists when he writes, "At the present moment George Eliot is the first of English novelists, and I am disposed to place her second of those of my time" (*Autobiography* 245). He goes on to explain that "Her imagination is no doubt strong, but it acts in analyzing rather than in creating. Everything that comes before her is pulled to pieces so that the insides of it shall be seen and be seen, if possible, by her readers as clearly as herself."[11] Trollope turns Eliot into an anatomist. To achieve her analysis, Eliot gets violently close to what she observes. Trollope believes that both the close-up and the distanced view hinder the achievement of intimacy. On the face of it, Trollope's equally strong objections to both the close-up and distanced views are surprising. Proximity is commonly conceived of, by us and by Victorians, as both a condition for intimacy as well as an expression of intimacy. Such, according to Trollope, is not the case with his contemporary: Eliot analyzes because she does not know the object under observation; she has to see its discreet particulars to become familiar with it. The means by which this observation is achieved is violent. Eliot does not just see the interior of an object. Trollope says that she "pulls it to pieces." In an attempt to better understand the object of analysis, the object itself may be destroyed. Even a less violent form of analysis, however, is potentially dangerous. When we remember the terms of Trollope's "gallery" of his characters, it becomes clear that one of the dangers of the close-up view is that one might see the "colour of the hair" but not "every flame of the eye" because one's field of vision would not be sufficiently wide. Neither the distanced nor the close-up view allows Trollope to create the kind of intimacy that he values in his *Autobiography*.

Trollope's narrator claims that his use of the long *durée* provides him the means to create intimacy with his characters.[12] Trollope uses temporal elongation over the course of a series of novels to construct various views of the same character over time in much the same way that the stereoscope takes multiple views of the same object from slightly varying distances.[13] The narrator's descriptions of the inalterability of John Eames in both *The Small House at Allington* and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* stretch over the course of two novels to emphasize narrative, temporal elongation.[14] In an introduction to Eames from the early novel, the narrator says of him, "I may as well announce at once that John Eames, when he went up to London, was absolutely and irretrievably in love with Lily Dale" (*Small House* 38; ch. 4). He continues:

> He had not dreamed of asking her to be his wife. John Eames was about to begin the world with eighty pounds a year, and an allowance of twenty more from his mother's purse. He was well aware that with such an income he could not establish himself as a married man in London. . . . He had acknowledged to himself, in some indistinct way, that he was no more than a hobbledehoy, awkward, silent, ungainly, with a face unfinished, as it were, or unripe. All this he knew, and knew also that there were Apollos in the world who would be only too ready to carry off Lily in their splendid cars. But not the less did he make up his mind that having loved her once, it behooved him, as a true man, to love her on to the end. (38; ch. 4)

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John's love for Lily is a defining feature of his character. Beyond simply establishing an important character trait, these passages also describe the workings and implications of characterization. Eames's unrequited love for Lily makes him a static, recognizable character. He may change in other respects, such as professional advancement; but his disposition towards Lily never alters. Whatever other changes he may go through, the constancy of his love for Lily in the face of her constant refusals confirms that this character is Johnny Eames. John's lack of money and situation initially seem to account for his hesitancy in declaring his love for Lily. However, one presumes that Johnny will not earn eighty pounds a year for the rest of his life, that this is only his beginning salary at the beginning of his life in London. Money is not the cause of John's silence to Lily. Rather, his position as a "hobbledehoy" is an intractable situation that the money only masks. He thinks that because he is a not "an Apollo" that Lily will never love him. This matter-of-fact pessimism suggests that an inalterable character trait will always separate him from Lily. The inalterability of being a "hobbledehoy," however, does not provide John with an excuse to find another lover up in London. In fact, a static character trait is matched with a static response on his part – though she will never love him, he will always love her. Thus, Eames's initial introduction reverberates at the end of the novel:

> His [John's] life hitherto, as recorded in these pages, had afforded him no brilliant success, had hardly qualified him for the role of hero which he has been made to play. I feel that I have been in fault in giving such prominence to a hobbledehoy, and that I should have told my story better had I brought Mr Crosbie more conspicuously forward on my canvas. He at any rate has gotten himself a wife – as a hero always should do; whereas I must leave my poor friend Johnny without any matrimonial prospects. (653–54; ch. 59)

More than six hundred pages after the initial introduction, Johnny Eames is still a hobbledehoy and Lily still does not love him. The importance of reliable characterization that was first laid out at the beginning of the novel is confirmed by this end-stage echo. At the end of *Small House*, the narrator apologizes for giving so much "prominence" to a character whose romantic fortune does not change. However, instead of turning narrative attention away from the romantically unsuccessful Eames, Trollope brings him back to "prominence" in the final novel of the Barsetshire series. Like the Eames of *Small House*, the Eames of *The Last Chronicle of Barset* fails to get "himself a wife." In *The Last Chronicle*, Eames is re-introduced:

> And even up in London Mr John Eames was somebody. He was so especially at his office; although, indeed, it was remembered by many a man how raw a lad he had been when he first came there, not so very many years ago. (141; ch. 15)

At first glance, Eames's hobbledey-dom seems residual; it has been replaced by his position as "somebody." The transition from "hobbledehoy" to "somebody" makes it seem as if the inalterability that defined the "hobbledehoy" was confined to the early novel. And yet, the narrator's reminder of Eames's long-standing love for Lily confirms that, despite changes in his professional and monetary circumstances, Eames is still not the hero-Apollo because he does not have "any matrimonial prospects." The narrator reports:

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> That he was still in love, and in love with the same lady, was known to everyone in the office. When it was declared of him that in the way of amatory expressions he had never in his life opened his mouth to another woman, there were those in the office who knew this to be an exaggeration. . . . But the constancy of Mr Eames's present love was doubted by none who knew him. (143; ch. 15)

The degree to which the continuity of Eames's love for Lily is both a defining feature of that love and a defining feature of his character is underscored in this passage, in part by the references to that love as a commonly held belief ("by those in the office" and by those "who knew him"). Eames is "seen" in binocular instead of monocular relief, because his self-consistency is underscored by the possibility of change. In stereoscopic vision, two different images taken from slightly varying distances are laid over one another to produce binocular relief. Eames is not seen from varying distances. Instead, he is shown at different points in time. The sense of "same, old John Eames" contends with the sense that "maybe Johnny really can become 'somebody'" to underscore the different views of the same, old Eames the narrative provides. John does not change insofar as his romantic fortunes do not, but the possibility that he might change structures the narrative descriptions of him. Eames becomes three-dimensional because he is shown at different points in time, even though those views of him always indicate that he is the same as he ever was. Eames's self-consistency makes him 3-D, but the use of temporal elongation also suggests that the basis of self-consistency is his status as a recurring character in a series of novels. That is, the portraits of Eames that are taken at different times are derived from the novels themselves.

Even in the face of such consistency, however, Trollope's novels consistently dramatize the possibility that different people might hold different judgments about an intimate. This possibility draws attention to the difficulty of achieving the generalized intimacy for which Trollope expresses his preference. In *The Last Chronicle*, Trollope writes:

> Mrs Arabin had become very fond of Johnny, and felt that he deserved the prize which he had been so long trying to win. The reader, perhaps, may not agree with Mrs Arabin. The reader, who may have caught a closer insight into Johnny's character than Mrs Arabin had obtained, may, perhaps, think that a young man who could amuse himself with Miss Demolines was unworthy of Lily Dale. If so, I may declare for myself that I and the reader are not in accord about John Eames. It is hard to measure worth and worthlessness in such matters, as there is no standard for such measurement. (785; ch. 76)

The narrator and Mrs. Arabin would both like to see Lily Dale relent and marry John Eames in spite of her longstanding love for Adolphus Crosbie. Mrs. Arabin's wish that Lily marry Johnny is based in his constancy to Lily. The narrator feels so strongly that he fears that the reader will not agree with Mrs. Arabin and himself. Eames may seem unworthy to the reader because of the potential inconsistency to Lily that his time with Miss Demolines reveals. Indeed, that time is even more potentially damaging to the reader's opinion of Eames because it raises the possibility that Eames himself cannot "measure worth and worthlessness." It is, of course, the reader who is explicitly asked to judge here, but readerly judgment is based on the assessment of Eames's own judgment. Without a basis from which to judge "worth and worthlessness," a judgment is a matter of opinion which cannot be credited nor discredited because no grounds exist from which to make such an assessment. In this way, the passage goes beyond simply suggesting that there are two ways to assess Eames's judgment and behavior. There is a decentralizing, atomizing potential at work in the passage. The reader

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may feel differently from Mrs. Arabin and the narrator. If more opinions were solicited, ever more distinct judgments would be passed.

The ethical dilemma posed in *Can You Forgive Her?* realizes the atomizing potential latent in the scene we just saw because it offers a full expression of the primacy of the narrator's point of view as the narrator prioritizes his own intimacy with a character over the reader's intimacy with that character. In *Can You Forgive Her?* the narrator worries about the proliferation of judgments. In an attempt to create reliable characterization, the narrator claims that sped-up narrative time forces him to tell the reader how to feel about a character. The narrator's own point of view creates reliable characterization. The narrator intrudes thus:

> But can you forgive her, delicate reader? Or am I asking the question too early in my story? For myself, I have forgiven her. The story of the struggle has been presented to my mind for many years, – and I have learned to think that even this offence against womanhood may, with deep repentance, be forgiven. And you also must forgive her before we close the book, or else my story will have been told amiss. (398; ch. 37)

As in the instance of John Eames, here the narrator asks the reader to favorably judge a character whom the narrator has already decided to judge favorably. In this instance, the narrator suggests that his request for understanding may not be honored because it is precipitous. The request comes just about halfway through the novel and at a point where the female protagonist's behavior is unlikely to endear her to the reader – or at least this is the narrator's worry. The precipitousness of the request highlights a split between the reader's judgment of Alice and the narrator's. The narrator has already forgiven Alice, but he imagines that the reader has not yet done so. He goes on to suggest that the second half of the novel will be devoted to ensuring that the reader's opinion is aligned with his, which has been formed over time. The outcome of the narrator's own lengthy struggle over whether to forgive Alice has been successfully resolved and seems to provide a model for the reader's own choice. Here it becomes important to notice another aspect of the haste that causes the narrator so much anxiety. He admits to having thought about Alice's predicament for many years, but the reader only has the remainder of the novel to pass his or her judgment of Alice. The narrator does not just hurry the reader by asking him or her to forgive Alice part-way through the novel; he hurries the reader by forcing the reader to forgive Alice much more quickly than the narrator himself did. There is a strong air of compulsion that hangs over the phrase "you also must forgive her," which suggests that even in the absence of such a revelation the reader's and the narrator's judgments will ultimately be one and the same. The brusqueness of the narrator's demand that the reader should forgive Alice enacts readerly forgiveness without the need to wait for narrative suspense to achieve the same goal. The compressed timeline to forgiveness and judgment the reader experiences in *Can You Forgive Her?* forcefully highlights the primacy of the narrator's own judgment. Although the narrator typically claims that his long familiarity with characters – in this instance underscored by the length of time he has spent deliberating about whether to forgive Alice – allows him to pass judgment on them, here we see that speed is of the essence because it allows for the narrator quickly to align the reader's judgment with his own. The reader's experience of Alice is compressed, as is his or her timeframe for making a judgment – especially when compared to the narrator's, but the narrator himself does not sacrifice the long *durée* that typically forms the basis for his relationship to characters. Sacrificed in this haste is the reader's own

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intimacy with Alice. Although the narrator asserts that he and the reader will agree, the reader's agreement is not based on intimacy; it is based on the model for a relationship with Alice provided by the narrator.

This is not the full-blown, generalized intimacy with character that Trollope imagines; it is an inversion of his ideal. The agreement here between narrator and reader that is imagined does not indicate generalized intimacy. Trollope expresses his hope that a generalized intimacy would indicate that his representational mode is not merely one way of seeing the world. He here gives full voice to his belief that by orienting a novel from the narrator's point of view he cannot attain a universal intimacy with character. This is particularly devastating because he believes that universal intimacy is a means to perspectivalism – a pictorial representational mode that binds viewers together in a commonly shared way of seeing and, thus, underwrites a novelistic representational scheme that can do the same.

Instead of functioning as the impersonal placeholder of Renaissance perspectivalism, narrative point of view is occupied by a highly opinionated, intensely individualized personality called the narrator. Trollope idealizes issues of perspective in an attempt to achieve a form of objectivity. He holds fast to the ideal as he uses temporal elongation to create a generalized intimacy with character that seems to indicate that he has achieved perspectivalism. But Trollope does not hold fast to his representational ideal for its own sake. His novels reveal the extent to which he believes that instead of accounting for the ordinary, everyday life of the mid-century Victorian middle-class, his novels are highly self-referential because they are oriented from a subjective point of view. Transparency may be his ideal, but he is not so idealistic as to believe that he achieves it.

University of California, Irvine

NOTES

1. See both Brooks and Yeazell for discussions of the reasons for the strong link between realism in the visual and novel traditions. My own argument both takes seriously that link, as well as uses the work of Trollope to demonstrate the limits of that link, as expressed by realist writers.
2. In their different ways, critics in our own day often treat Trollope's novels as natural and naturalizing. See Sadleir, apRoberts, Kendrick, and D. A. Miller. Earle makes the case that writers (he singles out apRoberts and Miller) who emphasize the historical accuracy, "congeniality," and "complacency" of Trollope's writing – the sense that they faithfully record the manners, customs, and habits of the time about which he writes – drain Trollope's novels of ambivalence towards and critique of liberalism. Kincaid's book on Trollope devotes attention to the fictionality of the novels and thus does not treat them as naturalizing.
3. Batchen describes *quattrocento* perspectivalism: Monocular perspective allows a geometric and therefore idealized space to be pictured on a two-dimensional plane, with the regulating coordinates of this space centering on a single point of vision (the *punto di fuga* or "point of light," later called the "vanishing point"). Perspective is, in other words, a homogenizing system of representation constructed around a given point of origin – the eye of an individual human observer. This system also implies a boundary between this eye and what is seen, a clear separation of observing subject and observed object. (108) In Crary's terms, "observation leads to truthful inferences about the world" because it is a "homogenizing system" which clearly distinguishes between observing subject and observed object (*Techniques* 29).

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4. Elkins describes Renaissance perspectivalism in terms that sharply call into question Crary's characterization of it as stable. My own use of Crary is not meant to signal my dismissal of Elkins's analysis; rather, I find that Crary's description of Renaissance perspective accords with Trollope's own wish for stable, representational grounds from which to manage relations of scale in his novels.
5. This model of the viewer is dramatically different from Crary's description of the observer constituted by the camera obscura. For the model of the viewer crystallized by the camera obscura, there is a "necessary relation" between the "perceptual experience" and the "exterior world" (*Suspensions* 12). The phrasing I use here comes from Crary's description of subjective perception in *Suspensions of Perception*. He writes: The idea of subjective vision – the notion that our perceptual and sensory experience depends less on the nature of an external stimulus than on the composition and functioning of our sensory apparatus – was one of the conditions for the historical emergence of notions of autonomous vision, that is, for a severing (or liberation) of perceptual experience from a necessary relation to an exterior world. (12) At this point in *Suspensions* Crary provides his reader with a condensed version of the argument of *Techniques*.
6. See Novak for an account of the way that photography was conceived of as mediating between an original and its imitation in the period. Pettitt calls our attention to the way that copyright and patent law reworked the relationship between imitation and original in the period.
7. Again, see Pettitt and Novak for extended discussions of the relationship between what they call "imitations" and "originals," but which Brewster calls "a picture" and "its original."
8. Miller discusses the similarity between commodities and the novel as he argues that "novels too slipped behind the 'barrier of glass'" (6). Armstrong says: "In the nineteenth century glass became a third or middle term: it interposed an almost invisible layer of matter between the seer and the seen" (3).
9. The understanding of perspective that these nineteenth-century novelists and reviewers use is one that Elkins understands as anachronistic and writes to correct.
10. It is hard to overstate the influence of Anderson's *The Powers of Distance* on the field of Victorian studies. Anderson writes: I defend the progressive potentiality of those modern practices that aim to objectify facets of human existence so as to better understand, criticize and at times transform them. In defending detachment, however, I do not mean to suggest that absolute objectivity can be achieved, or that one ever fully or finally inhabits any given practice of detachment. When I refer to the cultivation of detachment, I am referring to the *aspiration* to a distanced view. (6) Instead of focusing on distance as a form of detachment or cosmopolitanism, my own research focuses more on the way that Trollope negotiates issues of distance by neither getting too close to, nor too far away from, his object of study.
11. The Eliot who, in Trollope's understanding, gets violently close to her subject is conceived of by Eagleton as distanced. Where Trollope sees a potentially atomizing aesthetic at work in Eliot, Eagleton sees a deeply tolerant, multiperspectival writer. Of Eliot he writes: You can tell that George Eliot is a liberal by the shape of her sentences. Whereas Dickens's prose is declamatory and impressionistic, Eliot's sentences unroll like undulating hills, full of wry asides and scrupulously qualifying sub-clauses... Her writing is mellow yet incisive, marked by a well-tempered wisdom and genially tolerant wit. If she suffers or rejoices along with her characters, she can also stand at a judicious distance from them and deliver dispassionate judgements on their behaviour. This is not an author who is likely to be impulsive or one-sided. (163) Eagleton's understanding of distance here is like a description of attenuated objectivity. The balance and fairness that Eagleton attributes to her is made possible by a form of distance that is similar to the concept of distance as detachment with which Anderson, in *The Powers of Distance*, has made us familiar. Eagleton further implies that the structure of the Eliotic sentence is: on the one hand ... on the other hand. He claims that this prose structure finds its political and ethical corollary in an advocacy of tolerance. Eagleton's Eliot is one who can move away from the close-up view of Trollope's description of her to "stand a judicious distance" from her characters.
12. See Anderson, "Trollope's Modernity," for a discussion of her understanding of the relationship between character and critique. I focus, more than does Anderson, on the status of the

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narrator in relationship to character, and, thus, do not as strongly foreground a possibility of critique.

13. Price's *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* is an extended meditation on the way that the extended length of novels invites reading practices such as abridging, skipping, and skimming. See also Dames for a discussion of the nineteenth century's theories about the physiological effects of extended narrative time.
14. See Langbauer for a discussion of the prevalence of series of novels in the period.

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