

Tamara S. Wagner, ed., *Frances Trollope: Beyond 'Domestic Manners'*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Pp. 144. \$145.00. ISBN 9780415527934.

As films like *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) and *Belle* (2014) draw increasing public attention to abolitionist discourse of the Romantic era, Tamara Wagner's essay collection makes important strides towards restoring Frances Trollope's *Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw* (1836) to its rightful place as the first anti-slavery novel in English. Wagner initially gathered these seven essays for a special issue of *Women's Writing* titled *Beyond Domestic Manners: Repositioning Frances Trollope in Literary History*. Written by contributors based in the UK, Australia, the United States, and Singapore, the essays set Trollope in a transcontinental context, placing her in dialogue with not only British writers, such as Maria Edgeworth and Frances Burney, but also American Harriet Beecher Stowe and Canadian Susannah Moodie. The contributors present Trollope in various roles – crime writer, anticlerical satirist, Anglican, abolitionist, *flâneuse parisienne*, social reformer, Gothic novelist — taking readers beyond her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832). The result is a crossing of disciplinary and national boundaries, reflecting the cosmopolitan trajectory of Trollope's life, which took her from England to America and back again before she eventually settled in France.

Several of the contributions to *Frances Trollope: Beyond 'Domestic Manners'* emphasize her persuasive force as a witty, transatlantic critic of slavery. In “‘Very Nearly Smiling’: Comedy and Slave Revolt in *The Barnabys in America*,” Christine Sutphin argues Trollope's depiction of slave revolt ‘contributed to the erasure of her novels from the discussion of US slavery in fiction’ (75) while ‘xenophobia and misogyny combined in accusing her of ignorance, vulgarity, and falsehood, and dismissed her insights’ (75). As Wagner's introduction notes, the works of Anthony Trollope have overshadowed his mother's oeuvre, despite his novels evincing the influence of her satire. Frances Trollope uniquely deploys irony to mock slave owners in her abolitionist fiction. Wagner explains, ‘The absurdity created by the intrusion of sometimes heavy satire, even slapstick, into an exposure of slavery that ends in violent revolt is an ironic inevitability in a society where slavery uneasily co-exists with a rhetoric of freedom’ (2). In the legacy of Samuel Johnson – who famously asked in 1775 how it could be that slave drivers were calling for liberty – Trollope participates in a burgeoning British exposé of the logical contradictions in American politics. Oblivious to his own hypocrisy, her anti-hero Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw blurts out a protest against social reform, asking what the point of freedom is if slave owners cannot do what they like with their own slaves.

Fascinatingly, a contributor based at an evangelical institution, Brenda Ayres (Liberty University) focuses on Trollope's satire of pastoral hypocrisy in ‘The Vexing Vicar of Wrexhill.’ Ayres presents Trollope as holding to Church of England liturgy with a ‘fierce allegiance’ (46) amidst the destabilizing cultural shifts triggered by Methodist leaders, such as George Whitefield, and activists, such as the Countess of Huntingdon. According to Ayres, Trollope's pharisaical protagonist in *The Vicar* ‘was modeled on the Reverend John William Cunningham, the evangelical rector of St. Mary's, Harrow. Frances Trollope especially resented his refusal to allow Byron's natural child, Clara Allegra, to be buried in the consecrated ground of St. Mary's Parish Church’ (57). Ayres presents Trollope as a Tory rationalist who treated bombastic religious fervour with a wry irony akin to Jane Austen's.

Elsie Michie and Lucy Sussex compare Frances Trollope's work with two Austen novels: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*. In ‘Frances Trollope's *One Fault* and the Evolution of the Novel,’ Michie argues that Trollope, like Austen, depicts interaction ‘between a man of

property and a woman who is his social, if not psychological inferior' (26) but represents this relationship as unhealthily unbalanced. For Michie, Trollope's depiction of the resultant miserable marriage is more 'evolved' than Austen's harmonious ending. Lucy Sussex, in 'Frances Trollope as Crime Writer,' more convincingly presents Trollope's 'heroine-sleuth' (43) as a bold figure whose agency exceeds that of Austen's chastised Catherine Morland. Both present Trollope's take on a given genre as more feminist than Austen's, but Sussex's argument that Trollope grants more freedom to her heroine holds greater appeal. In another feminist move, Barbara Pauk lauds Trollope's satire of British tourists who thwart women's 'intellectual pursuits' ("The Parisian *Beau Monde*": Frances Trollope's Representations of France,' 111) in contrast to French salonières.

Frances Trollope: Beyond 'Domestic Manners' eventually highlights this female satirist's role as social commentator, but the arrangement of the essays, which places those making comparisons to Austen at the front, eclipses Trollope's radical contribution to international political discourse on topics such as slave revolts and Parisian salons. Had Wagner placed the chapters treating Trollope as cosmopolitan thinker and anti-slavery polemicist at the very beginning, Trollope's movement beyond the coded gender expectations for British women would have come through even more strongly.

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