ment of the volume, apart from the unfortunate reduction of references to a minimum and some evidence of hasty proof reading, is the failure to do justice to Wise's part in legitimizing the collecting of Romantic and Victorian books and manuscripts. Pre-Raphaelite scholarship in particular owes Wise an enormous debt for bringing together in the Ashley Library so many books and manuscripts of the Rossettis, Morris, and especially Swinburne. Collins gives the impression, mostly because he depends so much on Gosse as his source, that Wise's "Buying Up 'The Pines'" (179) following the deaths of Swinburne and Watts-Dunton was more in the nature of plundering.

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Trollope: A Biography by N. John Hall. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1991. Pp. 581. $35.00. ISBN 0-19-812627-1.

The biographer who chooses Anthony Trollope as a subject must, inevitably, face that Victorian's own account of his life, *An Autobiography* (1883), the seeming candor and humility of which has defined our notions of Trollope since its publication. The problem a biographer faces is not simply an anxiety of influence, however, but how far he can trust the testimony of Trollope, a master of understatement and self-deprecation. Trollope's account of his childhood especially has been questioned as overly self-pitying: it is difficult for the reader to see in the dull, lazy Anthony of Westminster school the industrious civil servant and outrageously productive novelist. Several fine biographies of Trollope have come out recently, each treating *An Autobiography* rather differently. R. H. Super, for instance, attempted to write his *Chronicler of Barsetshire* (Michigan, 1988) "essentially independently" of *An Autobiography* (vii). The result is an unsatisfactorily slight treatment of Trollope's early years, about which Trollope himself is the principle source. Victoria Glendinning's *Anthony Trollope* (Knopf, 1992) goes to the opposite extreme, detailing how practically every event of Trollope's life finds its way into his fiction.

Most appropriately, N. John Hall's *Trollope: A Biography* maintains a healthy skepticism toward *An Autobiography*, weighing its evidence carefully while essentially trusting Trollope's "quixotic honesty" (75). Even acknowledging that autobiography relies upon fictional forms and that the "practised novelist" would "highlight events that would carry forward his story," there is, Hall asserts, "no valid reason . . . for doubting the essential fidelity" of Trollope's autobiography (74). Moreover, Hall's careful reading of Trollope's youth — impossible without *An Autobiography* — helps him develop a portrait of a complex, paradoxical personality which is remarkably consistent throughout the life.

Hall tends to enforce what has become the standard interpretation of Trollope's aesthetic and political principles: a common-sensical but humane balance of "typically Victorian" conservative liberalism with equally typical sentimentality. But Hall also sets out to vindicate Trollope's reputation for having a merely "mechanical imagination" that the novelist himself fostered. Trollope, Hall insists, was "a writer of care and judgement" and "more of an intellect than is usually recognized" (xv). Hall's detailed discussions of Trollope's editorial work on the *Fortnightly Review* and *Saint Pauls Magazine* and of his travel books help to establish these themes. That Trollope was thoughtful and politically aware is seen through the intellectual growth from his first account of European colonies, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), to his last, *South Africa* (1877). In *The West Indies*, Trollope's attitude toward sugar plantation slaves in Cuba is, if "typically Victorian," quite complacent: "the men [slaves] do not apparently lose their health . . . The property is too valuable to be neglected or ill-used" (176). In his final travel book, however, Trollope vehemently opposes British emigration, calling South Africa properly a "'country of black men'" (433).

Nor does Hall deny the reader a detailed account of Trollope as fiction writer. He manages to discuss all of Trollope's nearly seventy books, the short fiction as well as the novels. Hall interestingly emphasizes