



La Vendée: Trollope's Early Novel of Counterrevolution and Reform

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1. Counterrevolution

“Counterrevolutionary” as a term emerged in the wake of the French Revolution to denote not just those opposed to radical social change but who positively abhorred it and manifested a palpable opposite agenda. This essay will argue that Anthony Trollope, though at first counterrevolutionary in his perspective on social change, became more reformist in his views in the course of his career, and that Trollope's deployment of region and place can be seen as an index of this change.

Anthony Trollope is usually seen as an anti-Romantic writer, his guying of Lizzie Eustace's love for Shelley in *The Eustace Diamonds* seen as typical of his disdain. Yet Trollope's first few novels affiliate themselves with specific 'other' places, exuding a topicality fundamentally Romantic. Trollope's 1850 novel *La Vendée*, about the conservative rural resistance to the French Revolution in the early 1790s, is the consummately romantic subject, both in its resistance to universal prescription and its intense affiliation with place. As Trollope's sense of place stretches over the ensuing years of his career, from the global (the Antipodes, the Indies; America) to the local (Devonshire and a specifically provincial setting in *Rachel Ray*, Wales in *Cousin Henry*, and of course the Barsetshire novels) the motif of topicality is revised to be more inclusive and interchangeable. Yet it retains a referential relation to place that is a transmutation of an earlier, more explicitly counterrevolutionary Romantic one.

What we might call the political place of Anthony Trollope's fiction is strongly influenced by romanticism and the politics of its sense of place. Place was often conceived in the Romantic era as a site of resistance to revolutionary universalism. This became nationalized, with English and German specificities being used as rhetorical counters to French revolutionary universalism, and the *ad hoc* disorganization of Spanish *guerrillas* acting as a conceptual as well as military counter to Napoleonic martial regularity. Even in France itself, a sense of locality, of place was seen as a site of resistance to revolution. This occurred most famously in the “La Vendée” uprising of 1793 where rural peasants in west central France refused to accept the overthrow of the Monarchy and rallied against the Republican forces then assuming power¹. This incident became famous for the way the peasants were acting against their presumed class interests, supporting an elitist, hierarchical institution instead of rallying to egalitarian doctrines that on the face of it would have directly benefit-

ted them. It was an early instance of the idea of conservative populism, that the rank and file of a society are as or even more likely to rally in support of tradition and the given rather than something that will radically disrupt their lives. There were surely sociological reasons for this. Barrington Moore speculated that the Vendée peasants lived on "isolated individual farms" (93) and thus were less susceptible to mass revolt. But a perspective interested in the rhetoric of counterrevolution as an ideology will give stress to how certain individuals gravitate to ideological causes for utopian reasons, not ones of mere self-interest.

That Trollope devoted his first non-Irish novel, *La Vendée* (1850) to this subject and furthermore that he did so in the wake of the Revolutions of 1848, ties the rhetoric of place in Trollope's fiction to ideas of resisting progress, blocking the centralizing innovations of the new and urban. But, Trollope being Trollope, this tie is not unproblematic or even ideologically reliable. If partisanship, political opposition, plays a leading role in one way or another in most Trollope fictions, this partisanship is nonetheless not always deployed in strict right-or-wrong terms. N. John Hall (112) refers to a "one-sidedness" in the book, but that is something that Trollope arguably tries but fails to achieve there. Trollope writes about people who act polemically, but this does not mean he writes polemically.

Trollope's relationship to France was significantly more tenuous than his to Ireland, where he is capable of writing about complicated class, religious, and historical divisions without taking sides. But in *La Vendée* Trollope clearly seems to be taking sides. As the essential early Trollope scholar Thomas Sweet Escott put it, Trollope was determined to show "the French royalists at their best" (86) and to argue against "the progressive removal of ancient landmarks" (89). The protagonists of the revolt—most of whom in some way are historical characters—are paladins: Larochejaquelin, Cathelineau, de Lescureⁱⁱ. This sympathy transcends class identity: the lowly postillion Cathelineau is the most virtuous of all. Adolphe Denot, the closest the book comes to a villain, is depicted as having a moral valence corollary to what degree he is on the side of the rebels. Trollope clearly prefers monarchy as the ideal form of government in France, and—writing just after the July Monarchy was overthrown—predicts, in the very last sentence of the book, that monarchy will return to France in 1865. This of course never happened, France seeing a 'farcical' (*qua* Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*) emperor and then a republic. But Trollope has played his cards: monarchy for him is the way for France, and those who support it are to be admired. Indeed, Trollope's depiction of France reminds us of how recent France's current reputation for radical politics is; the character of the French polity was not totally resolved until after the fall of the Vichy regime in 1944, and an intriguing sign of this is that it was only that year French women got the vote—in other words, only after the US invaded France did this happen. In Japan, women's suffrage had occurred thirteen years earlier. Thus there was, in the nineteenth and twentieth century, a lot of counterrevolutionary and reactionary feeling in France, and Trollope depicts this vividly.

Yet the novel is neither angry nor militant. For all its depiction of a struggle not only ideologically fierce but full of bloodshed, the novel has surprisingly little sense of *parti pris*. Indeed, it might be said that Trollope exhibited many of the same traits he describes in his character de Lescure: "A perfect man, we are told, would be a monster; and a certain dry obstinacy of manner, rather than of purpose, preserved de Lescure from the monstrosity of

perfection. Circumstances decreed that the latter years of his life should be spent among scenes of bloodshed; that he should be concerned in all the horrors of civil war; that instruments of death should be familiar to his hands, and the groans of the dying continually in his ears. But though the horrors of war were awfully familiar to him, the harshness of war never became so; he spilt no blood that he could spare, he took no life that he could save. The cruelty of his enemies was unable to stifle the humanity of his heart; even a soldier and a servant of the republic became his friend as soon as he was vanquished." Trollope writes about partisans, but even though he has sympathies, he does not himself show partisanship.

The French Revolution's literary legacy was complicated. On the one hand the spirit of liberty and of overthrowing long-established hierarchies fit right in with the Romantic aesthetic. On the other hand, both the revolutionary movement itself and the subsequent dictatorship of Napoleon were highly neoclassical in aesthetic orientation, as can be seen in the paintings of Jacques-Louis David. Thus irregular, romantic aesthetics became, to a degree, a sign of resistance to the homogenizing hegemony of the French, as was true of the paintings of Francisco Goya. of the *guerrilla* movement in Spain against Napoleonic occupation. Trollope describes well the disillusionment of people with the initial hopes for revolution:

Many who had sympathized with the early demands of the Tiers É tat; who had rapturously applauded the Tennis Court oath; who had taken an enthusiastic part in the fête of the Champ de Mars; men who had taught themselves to believe that sin, and avarice, and selfishness were about to be banished from the world by the lights of philosophy; but whom the rancour of the Jacobins, and the furious licence of the city authorities had now robbed of their golden hopes. The dethronement of the King, totally severed many such from the revolutionary party. They found that their high aspirations had been in vain; that their trust in reason had been misplaced, and that the experiment to which they had committed themselves had failed; disgusted, broken-spirited, and betrayed they left the city in crowds, and with few exceptions, the intellectual circles were broken up.

Trollope admitted he knew little about the Vendée and his brother Tom's French travels. In his *autobiography*, he says "In truth, nothing of life in the La Vendée country and also because the facts of the present time can be more within the limits of my powers of storytelling than those of past years" (67). This may be plausibly extended to indicate that he had no huge ideological stake in the subject, compared say to a Carlyle or even a Dickensⁱⁱⁱ. Unlike G.A. Henty's more adventure-filled, juvenile version of this tale in *No Surrender: A Tale of The Rising in La Vendée* (1899), there is no English viewpoint, no protagonist mediating the French rural fighters and English readerly sensibilities. Even in Balzac's comparable *Chouans*, there is much more of narrative filter in that we come to know the Marquis de Montauran and sympathize with him just as the narrative and in particular Marie de Verneuil does. There is none of this narrative perspective in *La Vendee*. We have only Frenchmen into whose heads, as Trollope admitted, he did not really try to get. It must be said, though that not once in the narrative does Trollope betray any hint that the narrator is not French.

Another unusual aspect of the book is its closeness to real history. All the major characters except for Denot and Agatha are historical, and Trollope's source for the book was the

memoirs of Madame de la Rochejaquelin (the more usual spelling as opposed to the one Trollope used in the novel), which he hewed to with reasonable fidelity. The book can be seen therefore not just as the first of his overseas novels but the first of its travel books, or at least his first in the “nonfiction research” genre. This makes the rhetoric of place all the more important.

Although the political movement in La Vendée was named after the place and the place-name more or less began to be equivalent to the political movement (especially so after Marx’s use of La Vendée as a trope for reactionary peasant revolt made it a byword among Marxists), the novel’s emphasis on place as such, as opposed to ideology, is strong. One of the difficult aspects of the book is that there is no single focus on a protagonist. Cathelineau, the valiant but low-born postillion (one thinks of the W. M. Praed line, “When a foreign postillion/Has hurried me off to the Po” [Praed 201]) is the likeliest protagonist but he dies in the middle of the book, before his love for the virtuous Agatha can be fulfilled. Larochejacquelin and de Lescure are almost too noble—in the characterological, not the social sense, although they are both of ‘high’ descent—to be protagonists, the novel looks at them from an admirable distance but does not inhabit their souls enough to render them three-dimensional. Denot, the unstable turncoat, is the most interesting character, but he presents the image of a pathology—as Super (57) calls him “too mad for love”—more than a novelistic quandary. Trollope’s focus is not personal, but topographic. Trollope explores not the interior landscape of the mind---as he characteristically does—but the topography of symbolic La Vendée et the place

Again this is strengthened for the latter-day reader by the way Marx made the word Vendée so proverbial, in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, for instance. Marx made a Vendée a kind of genre—a sobering reminder to ardent leftists that the rural poor who often seemed to have the most to gain from revolution were often dead-set against it. The thoughtful Marxist had to face the fact that many peasant’s revolts or insurgencies seen as left wing had Vendée-esque aspects. For instance the 1897 uprising in the Brazilian backwater of Canudos, memorably chronicled by Euclides da Cunha in *Os Sertões* (1902), was ostensibly right-wing in its desire to restore the recently overturned monarchy. But its utopian millennialism and populist messianic ardor has led it overwhelmingly to be read as left wing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Vendée became a trope for history’s unwillingness to go the way the Revolutionary left desired. It also, given the ferocity of how the rebellion was suppressed, exhibited the way revolutionary governments could be as sanguinary as traditional authorities. The Vendée rebels in their unorganized insurgent warfare, are in essence *guerrillas*, and that very term originated in the (basically monarchist and traditionalist) resistance against Napoleon in Spain. The underlying identity of many objects of revolutionary desire may indeed be counterrevolutionary. Counterrevolutionary fiction haunts a presumed liberal consensus with its implicit grasp of this paradox.

2. The Rhetoric of Counterrevolutionary Fiction

But what is a counterrevolutionary fiction? Why are there so few famous ones, especially in the nineteenth century? There are many novelists in France in the early 1800s who were counterrevolutionary as individuals—Chateaubriand, Madame de Staël, the later Friedrich Schlegel—but whose fictions are not counterrevolution in a heart-on-their-sleeve way. Benjamin Constant, whose fiction was more overtly political, was insufficiently reac-

tionary to be a counterrevolutionary in a strict sense, and the two most famous French counterrevolutionaries of the era, Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, did not write fiction. In England, the possibilities, beyond the obvious example of Disraeli's novels, are even more thin, if one excludes Scott. W. H. Mallock's *The Old Order Changes* (1886) is another example, as perhaps is Conrad's *Nostromo*. If one extends the net wider to include the seventeenth century, Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* (1852) might be a candidate, although Thackeray's attitude towards counterrevolution becomes, like Trollope over the long term, ultimately skeptical and liberal.

Brian Hamnett (110) adduces, as nineteenth-century counterrevolutionary fictions, Scott's *Old Mortality* (1816), the Carlist sequence in Benito Pérez Galdós' *Episodios Nacionales* (published 1898-1900; the Carlists were the rival, 'legitimist' branch to the more liberal regnant strand of the Bourbon dynasty in the early to mid nineteenth century), and, most aptly for *La Vendée*, Balzac's *Les Chouans* (1829). Scott, although in a sense the idea of the romantic historical novel comes from him, and although he was a causative agent for Trollope even more directly in that it was he who translated Mme. la Rochejaquelein's memoirs, is as concerned with Scottish/British as liberal/conservative issues in his work, and so the issue of revolution *per se* is not entirely unclouded by more theoretically contingent nationalisms. Moreover, *Old Mortality* actually provides a hope of social mediation *La Vendée* does not, although what I will call Trollope's 'second regionalism' does just this. There is a direct link with Scott in Trollope's novel, which comes in most directly with the idea of Celticity.

The strategic ironies of revolutionary alignment meant that the most Celtic elements of the British Isles—the Irish Catholics—were aligned with the anti-clerical, revolutionary French—as seen in Thomas Flanagan's 1979 historical novel about 1798, *The Year of the French*, which notes that Humbert, the commander of the French expedition to Ireland, "gave no quarter to the peasants in the Vendée" (380). This French revolutionary-Irish rebel alignment somewhat muddies attempts such as that of W. J. MacCormick, in his introduction to the Oxford edition of *La Vendée*, to see Trollope's interest in France as an attempt to explore by analogy the ardent Catholicism of the Irish. It would be much purer from a counterrevolutionary perspective if both the 1798 Irish uprising and the Vendée had involved alliances with monarchist regimes. But the former did not. Yet there is obviously a link. And not only because there is an eerie resemblance between aspects of the two landscapes. Trollope makes the Celtic aspects of Brittany, where the insurrection anchors its last redoubt, "la Petite Vendée", direct. The Vendée is geographically proximal to the Anglophone world and proposing itself as a cultural minority in France analogous to the Celts in Britain. In the other major presence of the Vendée in English literature, Coleridge's 'Fire, Famine, Slaughter': A War Eclogue, published in the *Morning Post and Gazetteer* (8 January 1798). Coleridge parodied *Macbeth*, his use of the Scottish play drawing on both the shared Celticity of Britain and the Vendean arena. The Vendée as a region is more rural, more religious, representing aspects of the national wealth residual but in times of crisis becoming re-emergent. This sort of milieu is the seedbed of counterrevolutionary identity.

The Pérez Galdós and Balzac books are more direct comparisons and the Balzac one near to being an overt source for Trollope. *Les Chouans* and *La Vendée* are in many ways

about two phases of the same process; at the end of Trollope's novel it is remarked that some vestiges of the Vendée uprising eventually became Chouans who revolted against the late 1790s Directory in much the same manner as the Vendéans revolted against the Committee of Public Safety in 1793. Indeed, at one point in the 'Clisson' chapter of Trollope's novel there is a misprint of 1798 for 1793 in the date of a letter—apposite as 1798 would be the era of the Chouans, not the Vendée. These two novels also held a very analogous place in each writer's oeuvre—early atypical historical novels. Balzac does make a point of mentioning the Marquis de Montauran in other novels of the *Comédie Humaine*, not just to pay tribute to a man whose values he admired but to suture the uncharacteristic nature of his early historical novel into the more familiar realist grain of the rest of his work. Barred from both the foreign setting and his selective, rather than all-pervasive, use of the idea of the recurring character, Trollope's French counterrevolutionary fiction is more marooned in his oeuvre. But in both the cases of Balzac and Trollope it is atypical. This is rather surprising in Balzac's terms, as, unlike Trollope, his mature political sympathies, in their royalist romanticism, were somewhat in the Chouan direction, although Balzac's politics, pleasingly, always had an element of the burlesque and the preposterous to them. But Balzac maintains a clinical distance in his novel, speaks somewhat sardonically of local color as a quality "to which so much value is attached in these days and even speaks of the Chouans with contempt as vulgar instinctual commoners swarming to the most convenient cause; and indeed the Chouans were both more violent and had a narrower base of support than their predecessors. Like Trollope, who speaks of the diversity of customs among the rebels, Balzac speaks of "a collection of fantastic costumes and a mixture of individuals belonging to...many diverse localities and progressions". Like Trollope, Balzac observes, to a degree delights in, but cannot ultimately endorse the anarchic romanticism of the counterrevolutionary rebels. Both Trollope "centered in externality" (Wright 92) and Balzac fit Balzac's description, in his 1842 *Avant-Propos*, of the writer as "un peintre plus ou moins fidèle plus ou moins heureux, patient ou courageux des types humains, le conteur des drames de la vie intime." It is an odd mix—both of these writers dislike revolution but prefer realism. Even in the more overtly liberal Victor Hugo, his tension is there: if one does the math, Valjean was in fact first imprisoned in the Napoleonic period, and the successive post-1815 Bourbon monarchs represent a failed hope for change; in different ways from Balzac and Trollope, but nonetheless analogously, *Les Misérables* finds ways to champion both realism and equality while avoiding both revolution and reaction. If only Hugo's seemed unqualifiedly progressive, Balzac and Trollope's works fail to be totally conservative,

In both Balzac and Trollope, there are concrete embodiments of this failure, crises displaying the inability of the form to coalesce. In both Balzac and Trollope a specific nomenclature issue arises. Even though Vendée as a term quickly became less a geographical designation than a counterrevolutionary trademark, both Balzac and Trollope make clear that Vendée was not the historical name of these regions but the designation it received (from a river that ran through it) in the new, post-Revolutionary classification of French regions. The very name under which the rebels were pursuing their historic and purportedly ancient grievances was thus neither historic nor ancient; a paradigmatic instance of the invention of tradition, as Balzac indicates when he speaks of the provinces as "*known under* the name of La Vendée" (6 emphasis mine) while Trollope speaks of the area *subsequently* called La Vendée" (10 emphasis mine). Escott speaks of the Vendée as "the new

publican name" (90) of the region.

Thus the rebellion takes its name from the lexicon of the institution arrayed against it. Like any other political movement, the rhetoricity involved in the verbal expression of counterrevolution tends to complicate it. This is particularly true in that Trollope, writing before Tolstoy's drastic recasting of the historical novel as a tableau both including hundreds of fictional characters and also incorporating large swaths of literal historical narrative, has to concentrate on a delimited number of characters and to embody history primarily through plot and character^v.

A twentieth-century novel like Flanagan's, with its clear Tolstoy influence, shows how much easier it is to inject historicity and ideology when the marriage-plot is not the main focus, an issue the first two Irish novels, particularly *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* struggle with more or less overtly, in that there is pretty much an inverse variation therein between an actual immersion in the historical issues and the presence, or lack thereof, of the marriage plot. Because the Scott-style historical novel has to end domestically, and because women do not take a part in public life, any public, agenda-revolutionary or counterrevolutionary, conservative or liberal, is to some extent ironized. This sets up a reflexive relation between the ironies of revolution and counterrevolution, and shows that just because they call for a return to the past counterrevolutionary ideologies in fiction do not escape what might be termed the domestic quandary that with remarkable regularity envelops revolutionary ideology in the romantic and early-Victorian historical novel.

Discrete features of *Les Chouans* and *La Vendée* also constitute cruxes in way their ostensible ideology and the fiction's result do not coincide. Both novels contain an enormous amount of ekphrasis, verbal renderings of visual items, ornate visual descriptions of houses and churches, as if that was being used to evoke the sense of place that counterrevolutionary ideology should be able to give in a political sense but which has difficulty being plausibly evoked in the novel. The ekphrasis in *La Vendée* often dwells upon Catholic iconography or even depiction of sculptures of pagan, Greco-Roman gods to add a slight sense of exoticism and bizarrerie for an English Protestant reading audience. The ekphrasis not only intrudes in the way of the plot several times but confirms the highly visual and place-oriented frame of the novel, as seen here:

The rooms were square, very large, and extremely lofty; the salon alone was carpeted, and none of them were papered, the drawing-room, the dining-room and the grand salon were ornamented with painted panels, which displayed light-coloured shepherds and shepherdesses in almost every possible attitude. In these rooms, also, there were highly ornamented stoves, which stood out about four feet from the wall, topped with marble slabs, on which were sculptured all the gods and demi-gods of the heathen mythology — that in the drawing-room exhibited Vulcan catching Mars and Venus in his marble net; and the unhappy position of the god of war was certainly calculated to read a useful lesson to any Parisian rover, who might attempt to disturb the domestic felicity of any family in the Bocage.

La Vendée also contains several prolonged deathbed scenes, including De Lescure's, which is lengthily protracted, because, given the era, the medical prognosis is so incompetent and capricious. Agatha's palliative entreaties to Cathelineau are really the only sort of

treatment that is at all functional.

Sometimes Agatha sat by the window, and watched his bed, and at others, she stole quietly out of the room to see her other patients, and then she would return again, and take her place by the window; and as long as she remained in the room, so that he could look upon her face, Cathelineau felt that he was happy.

Does the disorder and idiosyncrasy of counterrevolution stand so far in the way of rationalistic abstraction as to preclude aspects of life like adequate medical care, or even a way of classifying illness that can lead to an inevitable death not being a protracted ordeal for the sufferer? The absence of medical competence is an indication that an ideology that hearkens back to the pre-rational may pose problems even for its own continuance. If modern science prolongs life, might not some contamination of the sacred truths by it be worthwhile? Would better science help the valiant De Lescure live?

The ornamentation of ekphrasis and the nearly interminable nature of the novel's rendering of terminal illness as specific cruxes both conceal and, inversely, call attention to the issue I mentioned at the beginning: how are revolution and counterrevolution different? Counterrevolution wants to negate revolution. But it cannot simply turn back the clock to an era before popular participation or consent; it must use the tools of revolutionary agitation against it. One can see this in Denot, a rank opportunist, one of life's "superficial votaries" (Escott 92) who at one point in time finds the counterrevolutionary opportune, and then just as conveniently finds the same of the revolution. This is why Balzac finds the very Chouans with whose goals he sympathizes politically unrepresentable and *dé d'assé*, and why the anarchy and opportunism Trollope fears in leftist agitators like Mr. Popular Sentiment in *The Warden* find their equivalent here in the impetuosity of Denot. Trollope's awareness of this point is what leads him to foreground the virtue of Cathelineau who has no place in the hierarchy and earns his laurels by merit. Counterrevolution, Trollope suggests, is as or more negotiable by a *carrière ouverte aux talents* as is revolution, and is not just a narrow vendetta of the literally aristocratic. Yet the same populism that enables a man of merit like Cathelineau to achieve prominence also opens the floodgates to the impassioned mob as much as does the convulsive atheism of a Robespierre or a Danton.

A word should be said about the death of Cathelineau. Again it must be stressed that Trollope takes all his major characters directly from history, so he does not have the novelist's usual God-like sway over who lives or dies. Trollope indeed must have felt deprived by the early loss of such a winning hero as Cathelineau, who proves the Vendéens *insurrecti* not just a bunch of disgruntled aristocrats but has a genuine popular base. Yet Cathelineau's death is in class terms convenient: after all he is a postillion. Much like in *Downton Abbey*, where we know the careers of certain actors necessitated certain deaths in the show, yet still note those were the characters who in one way or another transgressed class divisions and seem to be punished for it, so is Cathelineau—whoever in fighting against the Revolution made the democratic point that merit is in character not descent—too unaristocratic to survive in the economy of this novel, despite his fighting in defense of the aristocracy. Trollope had no choice but to kill him off; but it does preclude the social mobility that in later Trollope novels we are to see much more in abundance. It may also be said that Trollope's particular period of history covered just does not give him the charismatic aristocrat that Balzac finds in the Marquis de Montauran, who, as opposed to the divided

canvas of *La Vendée*, provides very much a crystallizing, “Last of the Mohicans” figure—and I say this not accidentally, Cooper was a clear influence here—around whom the novel coheres.

Trollope also has an uneasy relationship with the anti-reason aspects of the rebellion. Trollope is not a hard-and-fast man of the Enlightenment; he is not a devotee of abstract reason; but he was fond of a certain reasonability, a practical, reformist moderation that did not get too emotionally moved even on behalf of the right cause. The plot of *La Vendée* also raises the danger of the excess of the unsystematized, anti-rationalist aura of counterrevolutionary ideals. Adolphe Denot defects to the Republican cause out of weakness of character, and a too fervent, almost snivelingly heart-on-its-sleeve love for the aforementioned Agatha. Like so many later Trollope characters, such as Lizzie Eustace, his characterological weakness is expressed through a self-indulgent romanticism. Yet the book’s end makes clear that the other Vendéens regard Denot as at heart a man truly of their own who repents before his death, and is simply a case of enthusiasm gone awry, much as Trollope (far more than any commentator, left or right, would today when Robespierre has become a symbol for over-fervid revolutionary zeal) depicts Robespierre as an intelligent, altruistic man gone wrong in his hyper-rationalistic vision. Polhemus (22) even uses the phrase “balanced tolerance” to describe Trollope’s depiction of Robespierre, an unusual tone for such an ostensibly counterrevolutionary novel. Trollope sees Robespierre as a psychological type with respect to whom he manifests both empathy and disaffinity. Denot, similarly, has the excessive emotionalism, which is the inverse of Robespierre’s rigid rationalism.

Denot’s misbehavior is a correlate of his unbridled romanticism. His excessive affect is the flip side of valuing place. This leads to another question about counterrevolutionary resistance in *La Vendée*. How much of it is genuine, unpremeditated, and inherently loyal, and how much of it is simply a bargaining chip? If *La Vendée* supports the King it will be more powerful at the end. Regionalism exists as a bargaining chip, auguring a utopian hope of regional fulfillment. The meritocratic tinge of the virtuous postillion Cathelineau suggests a social mobility even within reaction, a populist conservatism of a vaguely Disraelian sort. In other words, the Vendean revolt could in its rhetoric of reaction, open up socially mobile opportunities for men like Cathelineau in just the same way that the storming of the Bastille did so for other meritorious but class-subordinated individuals. As in the case of the Catholic Irish supporting the atheist French Republic while the conservative French peasantry aligns with the liberal, bourgeois Great Britain, there is the intrusion of expediency, self-interest, and the tactical within the seams of ostensible idealism.

Marx and Engels indicate a similar phenomenon in *Revolution and Counterrevolution, or Germany in 1848* when they speak of Czechs rallying against German liberal revolution because the cynosure of Pan Slavism, Czar Nicholas I, was aiding the Austrian Empire in suppressing internal dissenters as a “Vendée” that “no country in a state of revolution and external war can tolerate.” (139). This raises the issue of a non-idealistic Vendée of the Czechs not supporting German revolutionaries because they believe that the suppressor of German liberalism, the Russian Emperor, will give them something they want, not because they have any inherent dedication to keeping Austria and Germany as they were.

This has parallels in Trollope’s novel not only in the patent turncoat Denot but the valorous postillion Cathelineau, whose motives are pure partially because he dies so early in

the book. Another scenario might have seen him living and being accused of adventitious motives, short of his love for king and church, such as wanting to court Agatha in order to marry up. The point here is the counterrevolution is not exempt from the danger of self-interest that confronts any organized political movement. Because counterrevolution, as opposed to revolution, has been talked about so little in literary criticism, or because it is presumed that most critics are on the left and are automatically against counterrevolution, there is a danger of sentimentalizing counterrevolution and not alertly examining its actual unfolding. Is recourse to place automatically reactionary? Or can there be a “critical regionalism” (Frampton)? In *La Vendée*, is the rhetoric of place a cover for ideological interests, or does a previously obscure place seek to foreground itself by bang particularly ardent in its support of a royal restoration after which time it would no longer be obscure?

The realistic novel, with its suspicion of overarching bonds beyond individual relationships, its emphasis on domesticity and circumstance, is ill equipped to justify utopian hopes evinced within it, no matter what the personal politics of the author. If you start with revolutionary hope, the novel will end up ironizing it. Equally, if you start with counterrevolutionary hope, the novel will end up ironizing that. As manifestly anti-revolutionary and anti-Republic as Trollope is, by having the utopian hope of his characters be the counterrevolution he makes sure that it is the counterrevolution, not the revolution, that the novel subjects to irony. This is, of course, why revolutionaries, or the critics who love them, like so few novels, and why a critic like Lukács disdained most fiction wittingly or unconsciously “liberal, centrist, or social democratic perspective” (Corredor 79). But another aspect of later realistic and naturalistic fiction that Lukács disdained was its wealth of detail (Corredor 188). In Zola, this detail occurred as substrate. In Trollope the detail unfolded as event, what the *Examiner* review of Trollope’s novel calls “the phlegm of history” (Smalley 558) which as the novel proceeds becomes, as it were, the phlegm of domestic emotion.

This emphasis on detail led Trollope from the premise, in *Cousin Henry* (1879), of rolling the clock back against change to the premise, in later novels, of leading the society slightly forward in terms of change but embedding that change in a detailed particularity that would anchor it and considerably slow down its pace. Here, Indefer Jones, a wealthy land owner, possesses an indefeasibly Welsh name but is also utterly British, perhaps even English in everything but the name. The semi-immiscibility that Trollope conveys in his Irish novels is gone; here Welsh can be British/English and British/English can be Welsh. When Indefer Jones reads (14) “a daily copy of whatever might be the most thoroughly Conservative paper of the day” we assume it is a Conservatism exactly identifiable with that which might be manifested in Devon or Staffordshire. The Welsh setting and nomenclature is a distinct feature of the book but do not give it a regional inflection that would make its content substantively different if set in an English shire. Moreover, the plot of *Cousin Henry* gravitates towards slow if palpable liberalization and reform. Indefer Jones’ lineal male heir is his nephew Henry, but Indefer far prefers his niece Isabel. There are reminiscences here of periods in English history where a female was preferred as monarch because of the ideological (i.e. religious, Catholic) unacceptability of the male rival, as during the Elizabethan period with respect to Philip II of Spain and especially the Glorious Revolution, the prototype of peaceful, evolutionary change in English history, with respect to James II. Henry Jones has every right by blood and descent—the values privileged by those who fought on behalf of the royal cause in the Vendée—but here in Wales when the community decided

they do not like Henry Jones, they basically nullify his inheritance, proving through Jones's nominal attorney Mr. Apjohn and his nominal antagonist Mr. Cheeky that Indefer had not intended to leave Henry the property. Not only does the female line inherit at the end but also this inheritance is inked with an inter-class marriage. The young William Owen, Isabel's deserving but lower-class suitor, marries her at the end, much like Cathelineau would have done with Agatha had it been conceptually possible in his world. A situation where in immediate terms was simply an unacceptable heir being rejected for an acceptable one ends up opening possibilities for democracy, liberalism, and class mobility.

Mr. Apjohn, after Henry is disqualified as heir, advises Isabel to change her name to "Miss Indefer Jones" (344) to secure her inheritance, and then urges William Owen, upon marrying Isabel to, through "the proper changes" (344) also adopt the name Indefer Jones. This is to bolster the title to their inheritance but also indicates a good deal of transitivity and motility, as the name of Indefer Jones migrates first to a young woman and then to a lower-middle-class male. The weakening of ascribed identities and "ancient landmarks" so feared by the Vendé el and owners happen here as does the mixing of the Celtic redoubt with larger national identities. On the other hand, the locals prefer Isabel to Henry precisely because she seems more in touch with their values, and continuity prevails at the end of the novel. But reform, progress—even as signified by the way the happy couple slip in the name "Apjohn" in tribute to the lawyer who had helped them, into their name of their firstborn son—also contributes to a gradual process of regional change. Whereas Trollope's first regionalism, of the "sacred" (*Vendée* 23) cannon of resistance could only end in bloodshed and civil strife, his second regionalism, of the alert young woman and determined attorney, ends in placid reform.

If one looks at the nineteenth century realist novel expecting radical social revolution, one might find such a negotiated outcome disappointing. Yet if one contrasts this outcome to the counterrevolutionary dreams of the potentates and postillions depicted in *La Vendée*, Trollope's work reveals a remarkable shift from the redoubt of opposition to the flexibility of regional change.

i. See Cobb for background on the Vendé e uprising

ii. Glendenning sees Trollope as particularly enthusiastic about De Lescure and his epitomizing of the theoretical and limited radicalism of the moderate man." I would argue, though that Trollope's real interest is in the 'intrinsically motivated Cathelineau, and one of the novel's problems is thus a loss of energy consequent on that character's early demise

iii. Serge Heirrant (415) describes *La Vendée* as a "total failure" both aesthetically and commercially in which sphere it apparently sold less than 140 copies; Trollope himself famously spoke of earning only an initial £20 payment from it.

iv. Mme. de la Rochelaquelin's description of the pieties Vendé ei n her n e mir p ays up t he exōic Celtic aspects considerably.

v. Super (58) castigates *La Vendée* for featuring "an amass of characters" going "through a mass of events" but in truth there are no more than ten significant characters, the same as in the average Trollope novel, and the issue is less the mass of characters but that the novel relies on the melodrama of domestic plot and not a more totalized, quasi-objective Tolstoyan background