Realism's Empire

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Chapter Six

Global London and
The Way We Live Now

Rome, after all, was a special case: an imperial capital, a metropolis. It could have been traced to its sources, in the exploitation of a hundred peoples. But its particular and spectacular corruption becomes very different when it is incorporated into a version of relationship between any urban and any rural order, as a way of ratifying the latter. This, clearly, is the point of ideological transition.

—Raymond Williams, The Country and the City

Rome risks losing itself by expatriating itself, by rushing toward foreign lands, toward the non-Roman. Ever since it was founded, Rome has no longer been in Rome.

—Marcel Hénaff, “Of Stones, Angels, & Humans”

... London will break up...

—Anthony Trollope, Phineas Redux

In March of 1873, after moving from Waltham in Hertfordshire to Montague Square in London and signing a contract with Chapman and Hall for the publication of The Way We Live Now, Trollope wrote his initial description of the work in progress: “1873. Carbury novel. 20 Numbers. 64 pages each number” (quoted in Sutherland, “Trollope at Work” 474). It seems odd now that Trollope envisioned the Carbury family as the focus of this novel, because they were eclipsed in the writing of it by the character of Augustus Melmotte. One of Trollope’s most memorable villains, Melmotte is central to both The Way We Live Now and its reception, but the uncertainty surrounding his identity has too often been forgotten by scholars eager to treat the abundant anti-Semitism in the novel. Derek Cohen’s quick description of Melmotte as “a Jewish financier” is typical, as critics have constantly bought into the rumors of his Jewishness that fly around the London of The Way We Live Now (61). Trollope, though, never settles it so handily, and the final word one gets from the narrator is that “the general opinion seemed to be that [Melmotte’s] father had been a noted coiner in New York,—an Irishman of the name of
Melmody” (2.449). Robert Tracy is one of the few to put real pressure on this important revelation, and he relates it to another area of relative silence in scholarship on Melmotte, his possible literary ancestor in Charles Maturin’s 1820 gothic novel, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (Tracy, *Trollope’s Later Novels* 172). Read together, Melmotte’s alleged Irishness and possible gothic roots may represent a surprising fulfillment of what comes undone in *Phineas Finn*: the use of the Irish for romance or narrative complication.

Melmotte encapsulates several concerns central to this project. Like Balzac’s and Fontane’s imported figures, from the Chinese Mandarin to the Chinese Ghost, Melmotte comes from outside, suggests both romance and its destruction, and defies easy categorization. He is probably Irish but rumored to be Jewish; thought to be from New York but builds his wealth in Vienna and Paris; and held above the law even as he is finally rendered human and culpable. Embodying the worst fears of *The Way We Live Now*—the colonial revenant, the wide world, the dangerous metropolis—Melmotte exemplifies a criminality that takes shape in the inseparable processes of global expansion and global commerce. I argued in the last chapter that the attempted murder (by the Scot, Robert Kennedy) and the murder (by the Hungarian Jew, Josef Emilius) that occur in *Phineas Redux* signal a new direction in Trollope’s work by bringing the outside world into London and using it as materiel for fiction, the remapping of the city, and the attempt to define a narrative epistemology. The present chapter probes the manner in which the Carbury novel Trollope planned for *The Way We Live Now* cedes to the international crimes of Melmotte and other foreigners. While crime is already contextualized in *Phineas Redux* as a new collision of empiricism, foreignness, and the city, foreign and colonial figures fill *The Way We Live Now*, providing narrative complications that become overwhelming. Global commerce both anchors and destabilizes England’s capital city and its spatial expression in the novel, and Trollope’s narrative finally situates this compressed new London within a compressed new world-system. The shift proves catastrophic, and the novel retreats to the countryside.

(a) Business as Unusual: Foreignness, Crime, Commerce

As *The Way We Live Now* is not part of the Palliser series, it may seem an

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1. Like Cohen, Hertz and Cheyette also rely on the unestablished identification of Melmotte as a Jew. Van rightly highlights the uncertainty but omits the Irishness of Melmotte’s father when quoting the line I have just quoted; she thus links him to New York but not to Ireland (76). Her article is illuminating in its charting of anti-Americanism in Trollope, and she too sees *The Way We Live Now* as “a nostalgic response” to advances in speculative commerce (78).
imposition on Trollope to lump it in with *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*. Trollope must have seen them as somehow related, though; characters first appearing in Palliser novels (Lord Nidderdale, for example) end up in *The Way We Live Now*, and that novel’s Beagarden Club later graces *The Duke’s Children* (1879), the final in the series. Stephen Wall points out that “Trollope is quite ready to think of its [*The Way We Live Now’s*] personnel as moving in that imaginative continuum on which the Palliser series draws” (53). Abbott Ikeler’s contrary assertion that “the lack of parochial setting or a dominant political intrigue makes the novel difficult to wed to either of the chief cycles in the Trollope canon” (the Barsets or the Pallisers) is disingenuous. It forgets both Melmotte’s election to Parliament, the peak of his success, and the fact that certain of the Pallisers—*The Eustace Diamonds* (1873) especially—are themselves fairly unpolitical (219). It is important to note that *Phineas Redux* was being proofread (if not substantially revised) immediately before and during the composition of *The Way We Live Now*, and that the London setting of both novels makes them unique among Trollope’s vast output between 1869’s *Phineas Finn* and 1876’s *The Prime Minister*. Despite these cosmetic affinities, though, the most compelling need to read *Phineas Redux* alongside *The Way We Live Now* arises from the manner in which the latter novel continues a proposition begun in the former. If the trial in *Phineas Redux* serves as a venue for interrogating an empirical epistemology associated with detective work, it is no less important toward an understanding of Trollope’s patient elaboration of the theme of the foreignness of crime that becomes central to *The Way We Live Now*. In staging a local criminal event with truly transnational sources and solutions, *Phineas Redux* begins envisioning London as a global city. The relationship between crime, the foreign, and the linking together of the world in the novel’s articulation of its epistemological quandary sets the stage for the international financial crimes committed by foreigners in the London of *The Way We Live Now*. Initially expressed by violence in *Phineas Redux*, though, globalization is lulled quietly and finally into the monetary terms it will comfortably inhabit in *The Way We Live Now*. It is in *Phineas Redux* that Trollope introduces the single overarching mission of Plantagenet Palliser in the series named for him: the transformation of England’s currency to meet world standards. At the end of the novel Palliser, “as all the world knows, is on the very eve of success with the decimal coinage” (2.360).

*The Way We Live Now* is a deeply uncertain text, despite its reputation amongst critics as a forceful and uncomplicated critique. The source of much of this indeterminacy is the vast cast of foreigners who light on London,

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2. Scholars disagree on the extent of Trollope’s revisions to the manuscript that he locked away in a strong box before leaving for Australia in 1871. See Chapman and Tinker.
bereft of certain origins in a novel that narrates largely uncertain outcomes. Contrast these ex nihilo creations with Trollope’s normal strategy of shaping a character through his or her parents or roots, as he does at the outset of every single novel in the Palliser series with the exception of Phineas Redux. Any lack of a familial context or pedigree is explained, by the narrator of The Prime Minister (published one year after The Way We Live Now), as “mysterious, and almost open to suspicion. It begins to be known that nobody knows anything of such a man, and even friends become afraid” (9). The deracinated imports to London in The Way We Live Now fit this profile, and as signifiers of mystery and absent origins they both record and produce a changing city. Several critics have referred to a foreign invasion of London in the novel, “a kind of new imperialism by which the mother country is being conquered, occupied, taken over by dark forces from without” (Cohen 68), or “a first impression of the British Isles under siege” (Ikeler 224). This miscategorization is as grave as Raymond Williams’s opposite view, in The Country and the City, of a one-way flow outward from the British Isles into the wide world—the “way out” that posits “the lands of the Empire” as an “idyllic retreat” for the English but does not really account for immigration into London, “The New Metropolis” (281). What is required, for a reading of Trollope’s city and country, is a recognition of circulation. Michael Sadleir offers just that, in his introduction to the first critical biography of Trollope, in 1927. By the 1860s, Sadleir recalls, “the wealth of England was already seeking outlets in distant corners of the globe,” but “the ‘sixties did not foresee the coming implication of their England with the outer world” (25–26). Trollope recognizes from Phineas Finn in 1869 onward the mutual interpenetration of imperial center and colonial periphery. If foreigners are invading London, Trollope balances this with the pat references to colonialism and

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3. The first lines of the Pallisers: “Whether or no, she, whom you are to forgive, if you can, did or did not belong to the Upper Ten Thousand of this our English world, I am not prepared to say with any strength of affirmation. By blood she was connected with big people…. Her grandfather, Squire Vavasor of Vavasor Hall...” (Can You Forgive Her? 1.1); “Dr. Finn [Phineas’s father], of Killaloe, in county Clare, was as well known in those parts,—the confines, that is, of the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, and Galway,—as was the bishop himself who lived in the same town, and was as much respected” (Phineas Finn 1.1); “It was admitted by all her friends, and also by her enemies,—who were in truth the more numerous and active body of the two,—that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself. She was the only child of old Admiral Greystock...” (The Eustace Diamonds 1.1); “It is certainly of service to a man to know who were his grandfathers and who were his grandmothers if he entertain an ambition to move in the upper circles of society, and also of service to be able to speak of them as of persons who were themselves somebody in their time” (The Prime Minister 9); “No one, probably, ever felt himself to be more alone in the world than our old friend, the Duke of Omnium, when the Duchess died. When this sad event happened he had ceased to be Prime Minister. During the first nine months after he had left office he and the Duchess remained in England. Then they had gone abroad, taking with them their three children” (The Duke’s Children 1). Phineas Redux is the only Palliser novel that does not commence with such a pedigree, but its characters are already known. See also Gilmartin, whose Ancestry and Narrative in Nineteenth-Century British Literature organizes itself partly around a split between certain English and uncertain Celtic origins in the novels she analyzes.
colonial travel one expects in a Victorian novel: Roger Carbury’s sisters in India and America; Paul Montague’s travels in America; and the African travels of an unnamed guest at Melmotte’s fête. The governing image here is not of a one-sided assault on Mother England but rather of a new mobility that shrinks the world. The homogenizing effects of this shrinkage peak in *The Duke’s Children*, as news of a racehorse’s condition spreads not just “about the town,” but “to America and the Indies, to Australia and the Chinese cities, . . . in Cairo, Calcutta, Melbourne, and San Francisco” (352). One senses this process already in Lady Carbury’s requiem for “county feeling” in *The Way We Live Now*, when she complains that “Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Cheshire and Lancashire have become great towns, and have lost all local distinctions” (1.152).

It is perfectly appropriate that *The Way We Live Now*, Trollope’s depiction of the London financial world, is underscored by a globalized novelistic scale. In an article on the value of “harriedness” in fictions of globalization—to which this chapter will return in its discussion of the harried, globalizing Melmotte—Bruce Robbins emphasizes that “capitalism’s global integration is much more pronounced at the level of finance, for example, than in production or even trade” (“Very Busy” 436–37). Trollope elaborates his discomfort at this integration and at the new primacy of finance by allying finance with crime and by representing it as foreign and, more specifically, American. Trollope’s *Autobiography* locates the animus behind *The Way We Live Now* in the author’s return from travels through Australia and America to an England whose financial circles had descended into moral decay, and so Trollope’s critics have largely repeated this version of events. However, Trollope’s disapproval of finance is palpable as early as 1865, when the narrator of *Can You Forgive Her?* tracks the many changes in the professional life of the unsavory George Vavasor. First placed, with the help of his uncle, “in the office of a parliamentary land agent,” George leaves to become “a partner in an established firm of wine merchants” (1.35). When he changes jobs yet again, his decision to “become a stockbroker” coincides with the narrator’s assurance that George “had gone back greatly in the estimation of men. He had lived in open defiance of decency” (1.37). Trollope already passes judgment here on the core of *The Way We Live Now*, where the movement from the security of land into the flirtation with global commerce ends in the morass of speculation. All that is new about pernicious finance in the later novel is its foreignness.4

In *The Way We Live Now*, there is not a single Englishman at the helm

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4. Cf. Doña Lupe’s complaint in Galdós’ *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887), also set in the 1870s, that “everybody’s so moral and full of righteousness [ rigoristas]. That’s why this nation doesn’t get ahead [no adelanta] and foreigners [extranjeros] walk off with all our money” (2.290–91).
of the firm organized to “float shares” in an enormous railway scheme to link Salt Lake City with Vera Cruz. The two most important figures in the company are Melmotte and Hamilton K. Fisker, an American from California. Willard Thorp has suggested that Trollope found Americans “useful” in his novels (14), and James Kincaid more specifically asserts that America, in *The Way We Live Now*, “suggests the true hell that England should regard as a warning” (171). Sabine Nathan is more careful; she reads Trollope’s somewhat unflattering portrayal of the American Mrs. Hurtle as evidence of “Trollope’s prejudiced conception of Americans” but justifies this portrait by arguing that Hurtle’s disturbing amorality simply makes her the product of a disturbingly amoral American commercial culture (274). Nathan does not link this culture to Melmotte—his being American is again overlooked—but her view of Trollope’s prejudice closes off an important interpretive possibility. The frequent inclusion of Americans in the Pallisers, where they are mostly women who are invariably described as well-read and physically beautiful, belies any notion of a reflexive anti-Americanism. Rather, the normally flattering portrayal of Americans makes Trollope’s vilification of them in *The Way We Live Now* all the more pertinent as a sudden re-coding of the value of American-ness that recalls the constant shifting of Irishness in *Phineas Finn*. The foreigners are many in *The Way We Live Now*: the Emperor of China; the Canadian delegation; Herr Vossner, the scheming German attendant at the Beargarden Club; Madame Melmotte, Melmotte’s Jewish wife; and Herr Croll, Melmotte’s German assistant, for example. The Emperor of China reinforces the global scale of the novel, the Canadian delegates provide added evidence of both Britain’s ongoing colonial projects and the importance of railroads to them, and the Continentals end up reflecting Franco Moretti’s assertion that the Victorian novel often viewed Europe as a potential source for evil and complication. However, none of these characters is as essential as Fisker, Hurtle, and Melmotte are to the plot of the novel and to Trollope’s articulation of increasingly global crime as increasingly global business. Furthermore, the relevance of all of the above parties can ultimately be ascribed to the presence of Melmotte and Fisker in London. *The Way We Live Now* needs the Americans.

(b) “Metropolitan Danger”: Melmotte and the (Other) Americans

The novel’s two most obviously American characters—Hurtle and Fisker—are treated in two completely different ways by the narrator, but both under-
score a complicated picture of Americans as wild yet calculating, fabulous yet historical. Critics point to possible real-life bases for Fisker’s character, especially in the person of James Fisk (1834–72), a Gilded Age swindler and smuggler who helped supply the South during the Civil War (a feat attributed to Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now*) and was murdered in New York City in 1872, just as Trollope was about to begin work on the novel. James Fisk’s most notorious achievement was a failed attempt to corner the market on gold in 1869. The similarities between Fisk and Fisker are many, but there is another possible template for Trollope’s character: Harvey Fisk (1829–90), who co-founded the brokerage firm of Fisk & Hatch with Alfrederick Smith Hatch, a future president of the New York Stock Exchange. Together, Fisk and Hatch supplied the Union during the Civil War and were deeply involved in railroad finance, including peripheral liability in investment panics in 1873, when they briefly suspended business due to troubles at the Central Pacific (the name of which recalls Fisker’s “South Central Pacific” in Trollope’s novel). As historian Richard White points out, shareholders were lulled into their investments by Fisk & Hatch’s assurances of solvency; in a manner reminiscent of the global malfeasance in *The Way We Live Now*, the efforts of Fisk & Hatch were paralleled by those of firms like the Speyer Brothers’ of London and Lazard Speyer-Ellissen of Frankfurt (White 27). Adding superficial plausibility to the connection between Fisk & Hatch of New York and Fisker of *The Way We Live Now*, Hatch’s wife Theodosia shares her maiden name, Ruggles, with that of the Ruggles family in Trollope’s novel. If one then considers Harvey Fisk—and not just James Fisk, for both were in the headlines as Trollope was composing his novel—as a possible source for the character of Fisker, one is forced to reckon with the legitimacy and global reach of the swindling in *The Way We Live Now*. Fisk & Hatch was a major Wall Street firm that prospered and survived through the turn of the century, not merely a colorful smuggler like James Fisk. Trollope’s Fisker could thus be read as much more than a comically evil incursion into London economic life.5

The drawing of Fisker is admittedly a bit comical, and *The Way We Live Now* positions him, as if against his historical counterpart(s), as a figure of romance and uncertain origins. The reader learns, early on, that Fisker is an associate of Paul Montague’s uncle in California, but in a more specific speculation on his history later, we are told that Fisker “had sprung out of some California gully, was perhaps ignorant of his own father and mother, and had

5. R. H. Super and others have pointed to John Sadleir, George Hudson, and other notorious nineteenth-century swindlers as possible models for either Fisker or Melmotte. See Super, *The Chronicler* 324. Van suggests the fictional figure of “Monroe P. Jones,” invented by Trollope in *North America* (1862) to “exemplify frontier spirit and character” (90).
tumbled up in the world on the strength of his own audacity\(^6\) (1.324). Trollope uses him consistently to illustrate the differences between America and England; after an all-night round of card games at the Beagarden Club, the narrator remarks that “not one there had liked Fisker. His manners were not their manners” (1.93). Lord Nidderdale nationalizes the difference when he says, “He’s not a half bad fellow, but he’s not a bit like an Englishman” (1.95). Having carefully established the conceptual and cultural distance between England and America, Trollope then shows its troubling dissolution, as English characters, beginning with Sir Felix Carbury, are said to follow Fisker’s example in behavior minor and major. Tempted to leave a game that is costing him all of his money, Sir Felix instead, “as he played on, . . . remembered how Fisker had played all night, and how he had gone off from the club to catch the early train” (1.467–68). Fisker is at least competent in financial matters, though, and on his return to London after Melmotte’s death he criticizes the English members of the board for their lack of knowledge and discipline in running the company. Ultimately, The Way We Live Now manages to shuffle most of the blame for the corruption onto Fisker, claiming that “the work of robbing mankind in gross by magnificently false representations, was not only the duty, but also the delight and the ambition of his life” (2.394–95). We thus have every reason to fear for Marie Melmotte when Fisker proposes marriage to her in terms befitting a global business deal. Marie accepts, and Fisker’s response is curious: “I’m the happiest man on this continent,’ he said, forgetting in his ecstasy that he was not in the United States” (2.456). As gratuitous as it is comical, the conflation of geographical distance is symptomatic of what happens to space in The Way We Live Now’s representation of the globalizing financial world.

Mrs. Hurtle’s function in the novel has little to do with finance and everything to do with romance. She is essential to the development of the love triangle between herself, Paul Montague, and Hetta Carbury, and she has decisive impact also on the triangle between Sir Felix, the country girl Ruby Ruggles, and Ruby’s country suitor John Crumb.\(^7\) In short, though, Hurtle is as central to the romantic intrigues of The Way We Live Now as Melmotte is to the financial and social ones, although, as with Melmotte, it is impossible to conceive that Trollope envisioned Hurtle as so elemental before actually composing the novel. In his working notes, according to Sutherland’s study of the manuscript and sketches, Trollope’s first mention of Hurtle is at

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6. Flaubert’s Arnoux, in L’Éducation sentimentale: “I’ll have to send them to California . . . to the devil!” (2.67).
7. Odden has argued that this “triangulation enables plot complexity,” but the triangulation and the accompanying complexity were inevitable necessities in a novel that portrays a shrinking world, in which a greater number of characters from a greater number of places are forced into diminishing novelistic space (140).
best elliptical, as an implied presence in the notes on Paul Montague: “Paul Montague—Hetty’s lover. Gets into some scrapes which must be devised” (quoted in Sutherland, “Trollope at Work” 479). “Some scrapes” were indeed devised, as Hurtle, a widow whom Paul promises to marry while in America, turns out to have a long and wild history involving rumors of having shot a man in a duel in Oregon and threatened her first husband in Kansas. “She was regarded,” the narrator remarks, “as a mystery,” and so she remains for much of the novel, while Paul and the reader are left to speculate on the veracity of the rumors surrounding her (1.243). Trollope goes to great lengths to render Hurtle romantic, a savage import from the frontier. She is repeatedly referred to as a “wild cat,” and one character alleges jokingly that “there was a bit of the wild cat in her breeding” (1.355). Fisker may not know his parentage, but Hurtle’s is shown in an animalistic light. Capturing this romantic side of Hurtle in a passage that marks her off as Hetta’s “rival,” the narrator refers to Hurtle as “nasty,” in a style indirect libre meant to reflect Hetta’s thoughts (2.375).

There is, of course, more to Hurtle than the “wild cat,” and Trollope emphasizes her dual nature through an almost explicit marriage of Hurtle’s two sides in Hetta’s eyes. After seeing Hurtle as “nasty,” and as a “rival,” Hetta adds to her assessment of Hurtle the word, “intriguing,” as in “scheming” (rather than merely “interesting”) (2.375). The similarity here between Hurtle’s dual rational and romantic sides recalls Vautrin’s dual portrayal in Le Père Goriot. Fittingly, Hurtle does this comparison justice by consistently showing herself capable of Vautrin-like manipulation, and even by parroting his disturbing morality. Hurtle articulates first and most explicitly the increasingly popular paradigm against which the novel rails, most often through the voice of Roger Carbury, whom many critics have read as Trollope’s fictional stand-in.8 In an exchange between Montague and Hurtle regarding Melmotte’s alleged dishonesty, Hurtle contends that

“Such a man rises above honesty... as a great general rises above humanity when he sacrifices an army to conquer a nation. Such greatness is incompatible with small scruples. A pigmy man is stopped by a little ditch, but a giant stalks over the rivers.”

“I prefer to be stopped by the ditches,” said Montague.

“Ah, Paul, you were not born for commerce.” (1.245–46)

8. Nathan, for example, writes, “Roger Carbury here is clearly Trollope’s mouthpiece” (275). R.D. McMaster concurs. Daniel Becquemont disagrees, arguing that “Roger Carbury... is not Trollope’s spokesman” because Carbury’s concept of “rigid social fixity” is far more conservative than Trollope’s (142).
When Hurtle goes on, comparing Melmotte to Napoleon and Washington—two men who had fairly recently troubled scrupulous England—several things can be seen happening in this passage. Spoken by an American, and when read in conjunction with the behavior of the Americans Fisker and Melmotte, Hurtle's amorality comes across as a particularly American one. It is, furthermore, explicitly tied to commerce, which is in turn explicitly tied to war. The scripting of the dialogue reminds one of the dilemma of the Mandarin, the allegorical form in which Rastignac packages for Bianchon the question that Vautrin raises, of how far one can go for wealth without jettisoning ethics. Paul's answer here is that of Bianchon's, and he chooses the lowly ditches—the moral choice here, importantly coded as that of the colonized "pigmy"—over the destructiveness of the conquering generals. Hurtle's elaboration of this mindset will be echoed by Melmotte as he gathers admirers, snookers investors, and wins election to Parliament. Her role, as originally planned by Trollope, outgrows the confines of small scrapes and becomes central to the novel as romance partnered with a diabolical logic.

Of the characters associated explicitly or implicitly with America in The Way We Live Now, Melmotte of course looms largest. It is not going too far to suggest that he is the center of the entire novel, and the attention to him in both the novel and the reception confirms this. “There was still much to be done in London,” the narrator tells us at one point, “in all of which Mr. Melmotte was concerned, and of much of which Mr. Melmotte was the very centre” (1.326). More important, though, Melmotte is also the heart of world commerce, “in company with all the commercial world, for there was no business to which he would refuse his co-operation on certain terms” (1.81). A lengthy list of Melmotte’s plans and accomplishments further positions him in the middle of everything, in language that emphasizes the reorganization of global space to accommodate the new aims and means of business:

He was the head and front of the railway which was to regenerate Mexico. It was presumed that the contemplated line from ocean to ocean across British America would become a fact in his hands. It was he who was to enter into terms with the Emperor of China for farming the tea-fields of that vast country. He was already in treaty with Russia for a railway from Moscow to Khiva. He had a fleet,—or soon would have a fleet of emigrant ships,—ready to carry every discontented Irishman out of Ireland to whatever quarter of the globe the Milesian might choose for the exercise of his political principles. It was known that he had already floated a company for laying down a submarine wire from Penzance to Point de Galle, round the Cape of Good Hope,—so that, in the event of general wars, England need be dependent on no other country for its communications with India. And then there was the philanthropic scheme for buying
the liberty of the Arabian fellahs from the Khedive of Egypt for thirty millions sterling,—the compensation to consist of the concession of a territory about four times as big as Great Britain in the lately annexed country on the great African lakes. It may have been the case that some of these things were as yet only matters of conversation,—speculations as to which Mr. Melmotte’s mind and imagination had been at work, rather than his pocket or even his credit; but they were all sufficiently matured to find their way into the public press. (1.412)

Focusing on a much earlier and much quicker enumeration of Melmotte’s feats, Annette Van argues that he “allied himself with the wrong sides, sides whose interests run contrary to England’s” (81). As this later passage makes clear, though, Melmotte generally serves the ends of empire, including England’s, despite his being in some ways a product of the colonies.

The notion of Melmotte’s colonial—probably American—identity must be complicated to account for the text’s own depiction of the uncertainty surrounding the financier. Melmotte’s wife is the object of the novel’s initial anti-Semitism, as she is first identified as a “Bohemian Jewess” (1.22, 1.30). The assumption of her Jewishness soon becomes an assumption of Melmotte’s Jewishness in the novel (2.71). It is difficult to understand how these rumors have contributed to an acceptance of them in the scholarship on The Way We Live Now, though, because the novel clearly vexes them. Georgiana Longstaffe, in a letter to her mother, plainly states that “everybody knows that Madame Melmotte is a Jewess, and nobody knows what Mr. Melmotte is” (2.140). The novel appears to conclude, as mentioned above, that Melmotte is Irish-American, and evidence supporting the American association is given at the outset when Marie Melmotte recalls her earliest memories, “the dirty street in the German portion of New York in which she had been born and had lived for the first four years of her life” (1.106). Marie’s later memories, of travels around the European Continent (she mentions specifically Hamburg, Frankfurt, Paris, and Vienna), are much clearer, but it all seems to start in the city from which the novel suggests Melmotte comes. If Hamilton Fisker springs from a gully in California, Melmotte rises from a dangerously cosmopolitan city in the New World, a place of mixture, where he could conceivably learn the flawless German and French that he is said to speak later in the novel. For his part, Melmotte declares himself English on arrival, a notion on which the novel itself vacillates; the narrator reminds the reader that “it had been said repeatedly that Melmotte was not an Englishman” but elsewhere refers to him as “an English merchant” (2.33; 1.297).

Melmotte’s being American is clearly not as important to The Way We Live Now as the uncertainty is. This uncertainty fuels one of the two essential facets of Melmotte’s character and function in the novel, his use as an
almost endless source of romance or narrative complication. Tracy has already speculated about Melmotte’s possible literary ancestor in Charles Maturin’s gothic novel, *Melmoth the Wanderer*; apart from the cosmetic similarity of their names, Trollope’s villain shares fundamental character traits with Maturin’s Melmoth, who wandered the world and “died as he had lived, in a kind of avaricious delirium” (Maturin 19). A full-fledged comparison of these characters is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the link already intimates the romantic role that Melmotte is to play. Harold James sees the image of the “master magician” as typical among portrayals of financiers in the nineteenth century (251), and Trollope’s narrator indeed refers to successful financiers, like Melmotte, as “great conjurors,” and proceeds to extend the metaphor of witchcraft—“boiling cauldrons,” e.g.—to the field of finance (1.114–15). The irony is thick, but only the narrator seems to realize this, as Mr. Longestaffe is more than content to view Melmotte as a “necromancer” who can help him to prevent the loss of his family’s property due to debt and mismanagement. The narrator paints Melmotte several times with an unrepentantly romantic and adventurous brush, and this tone peaks as the thin sheen of respectability dissolves and the financier knows his career is over. Melmotte

had known that he had to run these risks. He had told himself a thousand times that when the dangers came, dangers alone should never cow him. He had always endeavoured to go as near the wind as he could, to avoid the heavy hand of the criminal law of whatever country he inhabited. He had studied the criminal laws, so that he might be sure in his reckonings; but he had always felt that he might be carried by circumstances into deeper waters than he intended to enter. As the soldier who leads a forlorn hope, or as the diver who goes down for pearls, or as the searcher for wealth on fever-breeding coasts, knows that as his gains may be great, so are his perils, Melmotte had been aware that in his life, as it opened itself out to him, he might come to terrible destruction. He had not always thought, or even hoped, that he would be as he was now, so exalted as to be allowed to entertain the very biggest ones of the earth; but the greatness had grown upon him,—and so had the danger. (2.104)

Melmotte acknowledges here an important paradox of his situation; the very achievements and audacity that give him “greatness” also endanger him. The disequilibrium between earned greatness and its very impossibility reproduces the dilemma of disenchantment and the ambivalence of fiction toward the advances of late-imperial Britain, processes that simultaneously enable and endanger the imagination. Melmotte’s more specifically commer-
cial side—the second essential facet of his character—engages the problems more directly, through a redrawing of London that emphasizes its new centrality to the world and the consequences of this new centrality.

(c) Unrealist City: The New Mobility and the Way We Lived Then

In the disenchanted London of *The Way We Live Now*, Melmotte causes a stir no matter what he does. His newly redecorated London house, however, explicitly transports the setting of the novel, if only momentarily, into a place that is both of the past and of an nonurban elsewhere, recalling the unmapping of Paris by Balzac's narrator in *La fille aux yeux d'or*. The Melmotte mansion elicits from Trollope's narrator an uncharacteristically lengthy description of an interior:

The broad verandah had been turned into a conservatory, had been covered with boards contrived to look like trellis-work, was heated with hot air and filled with exotics at some fabulous price. A covered way had been made from the door, down across the pathway, to the road, and the police had, I fear, been bribed to frighten foot passengers into a belief that they were bound to go round. The house had been so arranged that it was impossible to know where you were, when once in it. The hall was a paradise. The staircase was fairyland. The lobbies were grottoes rich with ferns. Walls had been knocked away and arches had been constructed. The leads behind had been supported and walled in, and covered and carpeted. The ball had possession of the ground floor and first floor, and the house seemed to be endless. (1.34)

The Melmottes' London house appears as a triumph of disorder, misdirection, the exotic, and the infinite, an architecture out of time and place, all of which contribute to Melmotte’s romantic purpose. As if in a nod to Scott, Trollope has even the Countess of Mid-Lothian express her admiration at the extravagant décor. The Melmotte house and its London reenchantments, however, are countered by a force that articulates London as a global city and begins to reckon the effects of this change.

In his management of the commercial center of *The Way We Live Now*, Melmotte presides over a compression of the globe on which the novel seems to base its concomitant compression of the English capital. The project of the railroad itself imagines this tampering with distance in several ways.
London society, in the novel, accepts the disenchanted aims of the railways as agents of homogenization and forces for civilizing cultures seen as uncivilized. This aim is presupposed in an article appearing in the “Evening Pulpit” newspaper, which sees “a good deal of praise, but still alloyed by a dash of irony, bestowed on the idea of civilizing Mexico by joining it to California” (1.277). The distances that the railways will destroy are responsible, furthermore, for the entire relationship that springs up between Paul Montague and Mrs. Hurtle (Paul’s monumental “scrape”). Detailing the history of their interaction, the narrator recalls that “at this time, the reader will remember, there was no great railway in existence” (1.244). The distance between New York, where they meet, and San Francisco had not yet been abolished by the transcontinental railway, and the increased travel-time and space between the two coasts are adduced as a partial explanation of their relationship. After the relationship unravels, Hurtle refers to the end of a meaningful distance that Paul seems still to take for granted: “Had not the distance between us seemed to have made you safe,” she asks Paul, “would you have dared to write that letter [breaking off the engagement]?” (1.443–44). Hurtle’s mere presence in London is an assurance that Paul is, in fact, not safe from a woman in America. The effects of facilitated travel on *The Way We Live Now* are profound, as Fisker is able to come and go almost as he pleases between San Francisco, Liverpool, and London. Fisker’s trans-Atlantic mobility explains the comical lapse in his confusion of Europe with America, as he forgets which continent he is on. Melmotte’s confusions are likewise global. In a similar slip to Paul Montague, whom Melmotte would send to investigate the progress of the railroad (a cheap excuse to be rid of Paul, who is asking too many questions), the great financier says:

“I was proposing that you should go to Pekin?”

“To Mexico.”

“Yes, yes;—to Mexico.” (1.427)

Twice, Trollope employs these humorous errors that nevertheless testify to diminishing distance and geographical difference, and to Fisker’s and Melmotte’s role in the process.

The lengthy citation, above, that lists Melmotte’s alleged achievements, underscores his global reach and intimacy with political and colonial processes in diverse places. He is simultaneously in India, Ireland, South Africa, Egypt, and, by implication, everywhere. Yet Trollope’s novel is careful also to provide a solid, site-specific origin for the current diffusion of Melmotte’s global commercial power: London. The *global city* is sociologist Saskia Sassen’s term for the localization of the apparently ubiquitous forces behind
globalization, the place that organizes—even if it cannot fully contain—these broader, more diffuse networks (her exemplars in *The Global City* are London, New York, and Tokyo). Such cities only become possible in the wake of advances in telecommunications technology; for Sassen, this implies the onset of the internet, as she argues in an essay on “Electronic Space,” but her observations can be fruitfully applied to the projections of Trollope’s London and to Melmotte himself. Indeed, communications capabilities are central in the novel and are articulated as allies of both the police and the railroad, the forces of disenchantment and the destruction of distance. The narrator refers to Fisker’s and Melmotte’s railway as “means of communication,” and the increased effectiveness of the telegraph arises as a tool for detection (1.82). Already in *The Eustace Diamonds*, Trollope has a character express the sentiment that it is futile to flee the police, “now we has the wires” (2.217). The wires, one recalls, are explicitly linked in *The Way We Live Now* to Melmotte (just as they will be explicitly linked to Gordon in Fontane’s *Cécile*), who plans to lay down enough of them to bring India into instantaneous contact with London. Elsewhere, the narrator asserts that “Melmotte had the telegraph at his command, and had been able to make as close inquiries as though San Francisco and Salt Lake City had been suburbs of London” (1.84). The telegraph’s effects are palpable in Melmotte’s worry that “he could reach no place so distant but that he would be known and traced,” and in Cohenlupe’s attempts to “remember what happy country still was left in which an order from the British police would have no power to interfere with the comfort of a retired gentleman such as himself” (2.116; 2.182).

The importance of Melmotte to Trollope’s portrayal of London can be enriched by Sassen’s notion of time in the global city and by the “harriedness” that Robbins explores as an aspect of globalization. *The Way We Live Now* is easily categorized as a “London novel,” according to Michael Cotsell, who declares it the only “major Victorian novel to deal with the subject of London” between Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) and George Gissing’s novels in the 1880s (ix). Trollope makes it clear that Melmotte is, to a certain extent, London’s heart. When a parliamentary seat for Westminster is vacated, the narrator reveals that “it was considered indispensable to the country that

9. Sassen writes that “The global city is a function of the global grid of transactions, one site for processes which are global because they have multiple locations in multiple countries” (213). The financial transactions of Melmotte are precisely transnational, involving banks and investors from at least North America and the European Continent, and truly global projects.

10. “To no one’s surprise, it was an American who found a way to put electricity in the service of communication and, in doing so, eliminated the problem of space once and for all. I refer, of course, to Samuel Finley Breese Morse, America’s first true ‘spaceman.’ His telegraph erased state lines, collapsed regions, and, by wrapping the continent in an information grid, created the possibility of a unified American discourse.

“But at considerable cost. For telegraphy did something that Morse did not foresee when he prophesied that telegraphy would make ‘one neighborhood of the whole country’” (Postman 64–65).
Mr. Melmotte should go into Parliament, and what constituency could such a man as Melmotte so fitly represent as one combining as Westminster does all the essences of the metropolis?” (1.326). It goes deeper than this, though, because London soon begins openly accommodating the presence of Melmotte, and noblemen like Lord Alfred suddenly feel “no aristocratic twinges” when “called by [their] Christian name” (1.340). Melmotte represents, moreover, the sort of time compression that Sassen relates to the development of the global city, in which time accrues more value in the changing economy. “As the market becomes a key site for new opportunities for profit,” Sassen argues, “speed is of the essence,” increasingly (209). Robbins’s attention to harriedness as a symptom of globalization is especially useful here, because it examines what is ultimately a personal expression of global shifts in public dealings. Robbins remarks that “this time pressure reflects global capital, of course, but that is not the only relation between the two terms,” and he goes on to posit the transfer of harriedness from the workplace into the home (429). Trollope’s novel conditions this reflection in one more way, for Melmotte’s harriedness is presented, in The Way We Live Now, not merely as a symptom of his global dealings but rather as the condition of their possibility; the world shrinks, in other words, because people like Melmotte remain constantly busy. Excusing himself from a meeting with Paul Montague, during which Montague wishes to air his concerns for the company’s methods and aims, Melmotte acknowledges that the meeting “was quite necessary,—only you see I am a little busy” (1.427). To Dolly Longestaffe, he claims, “I have so many things on my brain, that I hardly know how to get along with them” (2.28). Melmotte, the “essence of the metropolis,” openly identifies himself and his commercial dealings with the value of harriedness: “A man with my business on his hands,” he states, “is bound to be quick” (1.428).

The compression of time and space bleeds into the city that Melmotte is said to embody, drastically affecting its perceived geography. A contemporary reviewer noted the novel’s hurry, as Tony Tanner has pointed out, and this same reviewer explicitly ascribed this hurry to Trollope’s change of venue, his movement to London (257–58). Philip Collins has claimed that Trollope’s aim in The Way We Live Now was “to explore and relate to one another a series of London worlds,” but this implies too concrete a conceptual separation between these worlds (23). The example of Islington alone demonstrates a change in Trollope’s mapping of London from Phineas Redux as discussed in the last chapter. Through the madness of Robert Kennedy, one recalls, Trollope renders a quadrant of the city foreign and dangerous. Islington appears to perform a similar function in The Way We Live Now. The country girl Ruby Ruggles, who has easy access to London from her country origins, thanks to the regular train service, and the American Mrs. Hurtle take
rooms in the same house. Mrs. Hurtle comes to metonymize Islington, and Paul’s visits to her are even referred to, by the narrator, as trips “to Islington” (1.371, e.g.). But Trollope emphasizes the nearness to—rather than the distance from—Islington and the other worlds of London. Paul’s first visit to Hurtle calls attention to the nearness, as Paul

threw himself into a Hansom cab, and ordered the man to drive to Islington.

How quick that cab went! . . . Paul was lodging in Suffolk Street, close to Pall Mall—whence the way to Islington, across Oxford Street, across Tottenham Court Road, across numerous squares north-east of the Museum, seems to be long. The end of Goswell Road is the outside of the world in that direction, and Islington is beyond the end of Goswell Road. And yet that Hansom cab was there before Paul Montague had been able to arrange the words with which he would begin the interview. (1.371)

The effect here is the opposite of that in Balzac’s La Fille aux yeux d’or, where the speed of de Marsay’s carriage ride renders Paris foreign to him. Paul’s conception of distance in the passage is first excused by the narrator—“the way to Islington . . . seems to be long”—but then viciously undercut. Islington, it appears, “the outside of the world in that direction,” is in truth not at all far away. Moretti relates, in Atlas of the European Novel, the manner in which Dickens first transforms the binary city—East London, West London—of Oliver Twist into the interwoven complexity that one sees at its peak in Our Mutual Friend, with its long and twisting coach ride from the neighborhood of gentlemen to the neighborhood of watermen (86). By contrast, Trollope’s coach rides finally disenchant London by abbreviating it. Hetta Carbury’s later visit to Hurtle is less eventful than Paul Montague’s but similarly stresses the compactness of the city. Abetted by the new Underground and a solid knowledge of London’s layout, “Hetta trusted herself all alone to the mysteries of the Marylebone underground railway, and emerged with accuracy at King’s Cross. She had studied her geography, and she walked from thence to Islington” (2.385). The mysteries of the new railway cannot detract from the easy navigability of the city. Only a drunken Felix Carbury gets lost in London in The Way We Live Now, and a policeman (of course) helps him find his way home.

The compression of urban space, which shortens the narrative rendering of carriage rides in a city that seems to host the world in The Way We Live Now, arises as well in the actual act of narration in the novel. Despite his modesty when comparing himself to the thorough designs of Wilkie Collins, as we saw in the last chapter, Trollope’s emplotment is usually careful; his novels were, almost without exception, completed well before their serial-
ization began, so that Trollope could avoid scurrying around under deadline pressure. The structure of *The Way We Live Now* is thus striking in its non-linearity, especially for Trollope. The narrator repeatedly backtracks, often with an explicit admission: “But we must go back a little” we are told in one place, and in another we hear of “Fisker,—whose subsequent doings have been recorded somewhat out of their turn” (1.77; 2.410). Trollope’s narrator seems incapable of managing the compression, within its own pages, of so many characters and so little time. As Tanner has observed, “it is a crowded book, but that very crowdedness is part of its meaning” (263). Another stylistic upheaval in the novel, the drifting attention of individual chapters, similarly testifies to its compression of London life. The most pertinent example is chapter XLV, “Mr. Melmotte Is Pressed For Time” (1.421–29). Trollope’s chapters in the Palliser series and elsewhere normally focus on the development of one character or situation; divergences from this are rare enough that they are explicitly acknowledged. In the first chapter of *Barchester Towers* (1857), for example, “Mr. Harding went out and sent the message, and it may be as well that we should follow it to its destination” (7–8). In *The Way We Live Now*, however, “Mr. Melmotte Is Pressed For Time” floats from a conversation between Dolly Longestaffe and Melmotte to one between Dolly and her father, returns to Melmotte in order to show him speaking with Sir Felix Carbury, who upon leaving bumps into Paul Montague. Paul and Felix converse until Paul is let in to see Mr. Melmotte, at which point the scene shifts to a board meeting the following day, and concludes with Melmotte leaving another meeting. The point of the chapter is clear: Melmotte is very, very busy. The execution, though, by involving multiple characters and floating between them as they come and go from Melmotte’s office, simultaneously incarnates the harriedness of Melmotte and compresses the city and its characters around him. Another chapter, “Melmotte in Parliament,” goes

11. David Harvey accuses “realist narrative structure” of being so linear as to ignore “a reality in which two events in quite different spaces occurring at the same time could so intersect as to change how the world worked” (255). Ramponi’s work on globalization in German realism confronts Harvey’s argument but neglects to answer the charge in terms of “narrative structure”; Ramponi offers instead remarks made by characters in Freytag’s *Soll und Haben* on the interconnectedness of the world. Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* actually addresses Harvey’s accusations more directly, because in Trollope we see not just the content but that actual structure of the book change in order to accommodate this complex reality. See also Hamer, who examines the particular challenges of complexity in the realm of serialization, and Tracy’s chapter on “Multiple Structure” in *Trollope’s Later Novels*. Hornback argues, in an article matching the chronology of *The Way We Live Now* to the actual calendar of 1872, that the complexity of the novel required faithful adherence to a realistic chronology: “The novel is very dependent upon its chronological structure because of the method Trollope uses in presenting his characters: first one is set in motion, then the narrator turns back to pick up another” (456). P. D. Edwards disputes Hornback’s claims, concluding that no amount of interpretive juggling of dates can show that Trollope used one chronology consistently (“The Chronology” 216). Sutherland diplomatically sides with Edwards but acknowledges “the salience of time markers in the novel” (“Introduction” xxxv). Grawe has similarly argued that precise historical dates for events in Fontane’s *Effi Briest* can be calculated (51–53). See also Riechel.
to even greater lengths in this same way. Trollope’s form in *The Way We Live Now* is frequently prey to a harried content.

If Paul’s journey to Islington emphasizes minimized distance within the city, another journey strives to preserve the divide between country and city. In a last effort to win his cousin Hetta Carbury’s affections, Roger Carbury “determined that he would again go up to London. He would have the vacant hours of the journey in which to think of it all again” (2.405–6). The slow lapse of time in the train is performed by Trollope’s text, as the narrator spends half a page elaborating on the fact that “those vacant hours” did not “serve him much” (2.406). Roger Carbury stands in opposition to the zero-sum commercial ethos embodied by Melmotte, articulated by Hurtle, and enacted within the city. Roger is, through the course of the novel, “manly” (1.51), “good” (1.362), “true” (1.72), and a “rock” (1.361). Rather than merely represent the rural, though, Roger *is* the country; his family’s roots stretch back so far in Suffolk that parts of it bear the name of Carbury, a fact that sets Roger at odds with the new global mobility that Trollope’s novel thematizes (1.50). Trollope’s brief description of Suffolk architecture relies on English history: Carbury Manor is “a Tudor building,” while the Longestaffes’ Caversham was “built in the early part of George III.’s reign,” for example (1.128–30). Roger is also the most vocal opponent of the Melmottes when he says of their stay with the Longestaffes, “I don’t approve of them in London, you know; but I think they are very much worse in the country” (1.136). At once setting city against country and the Melmottes against all, Roger’s sentiment is soon parroted by Georgiana Longstaffe, albeit hypocritically: “What makes me most angry,” Georgiana says, “is that we should have condescended to be civil to the Melmottes down in the country. In London one does those things, but to have them here was terrible!” (1.197) The opposition is made clear.

It is important that Trollope ends *The Way We Live Now*, as the last chapter’s title has it, “Down in Suffolk,” at Carbury Manor, where Roger magnanimously invites Hetta and Paul—the man who bested Roger in the contest for Hetta’s affections—to live with him. The only three characters in the novel whom one can claim as uncomplicatedly sympathetic, Hetta, Paul, and Roger choose country over city. The choice is not surprising; we learn early on that Paul “found that he could not wake up on these London mornings with thoughts as satisfactory as those which attended his pillow at the old Manor House” (1.88). Contrast, with this, the unsympathetic Sir Felix’s complaint that Carbury Manor is “like a prison . . . with that moat round it” (1.163). The moat around Carbury Manor, an earnestly reiterated symbol of both the age of the Manor and its function as a place of defense,
recalls Wemmick’s Castle in Dickens’s *Great Expectations*. Its “chasm about four feet wide and two deep” is meant to, Wemmick tells Pip, “cut off the communication” (204). Moretti produces this as an example of the “two lives” one must lead in Dickens’s vision of middle class London (*Atlas* 120), Brooks sees it as a consolidation of and safe haven for Wemmick’s “portable property” (*Realist Vision* 15), and Robbins reads this “archaic fantasy of suburban self-containment” as a “vision of domestic self-reliance” emblematic of the concerns of upward mobility in *Great Expectations* (*Upward Mobility* 78). It also represents the notion of defense against—and an alternative to—the encroachment of the urban, but in *The Way We Live Now*, suburbia will not suffice. If Islington (“the outside of the world in that direction”) can be so quickly reached by cab, then Wemmick’s Walworth is also imperiled. Trollope’s Carbury Manor, accessible only via “a short, private road,” is in another place and time (1.128). Fittingly, one of the last images in the novel is of Roger, “walk[ing] up and down the walk by the moat” that separates his bit of country from the shrinking, compacting world (2.468).

The phrase “Metropolitan Danger” comes not from *The Way We Live Now* but from *Phineas Finn*, where my discussion of Trollope began. Miss Boreham bemoans her over-protective guardians and their penchant for travel: “Fancy going to Brighton! And then they have proposed Switzerland. If you could only hear Augusta talking in rapture of a month among the glaciers! And I feel so ungrateful. I believe they would spend three months with me at any horrible place that I could suggest,—at Hong Kong if I were to ask it,—so intent are they on taking me away from metropolitan danger” (2.63). *Phineas Finn*, in all its domestic disenchantment, does not really envision the metropolis as a site of danger; duels, for example, are meant for the Continent. Yet by importing danger from the north and murder from the south, its sequel begins the reconstruction of London that culminates in *The Way We Live Now*. *Phineas Redux* moreover commences, on a much smaller scale with its Channel crossings and detective efforts, a version of the mobility and communication that *The Way We Live Now* will make entirely global and entirely perilous for England’s stability. “The movement of men,” Eric Hobsbawm has noted, acquires “the momentum of a landslide” (*Revolution*...
As in *Phineas Redux*, the constant trafficking in people across national borders underscores new possibilities for both good and ill. Trollope, whom A. O. J. Cockshut pegged as a pessimist in 1955, chose to see mixture as debilitating. The long list of Melmotte’s fictional achievements includes the brokering of peace between warring nations and the solution of long-standing political squabbles, including that between Britain and Ireland in which Trollope was so emotionally invested. *The Way We Live Now*, though, tempers these possible goods with its own angry version of the probable bad.

The novel requires the new mobility and communication that it ultimately comes to fear. Trollope’s deployment of a fraudulent railroad investment scheme captures perfectly the intersection of transportation, communication, and an increasingly global financial world reducible, according to Trollope, to crime and foreignness. All of these concerns converge in the figure of Melmotte. *The Way We Live Now* apparently breaks down in the face of too much complexity, too much intrigue, too many foreign incursions for Trollope and his narrative to tolerate. The controlled recodings and bursts of complication in *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* are all over London in *The Way We Live Now*, changing it in ways that the novel cannot stomach. In the final Palliser novel, *The Duke’s Children*, Lord Silverbridge laments, “I hear men say that it isn’t quite what it used to be” (282). Wistfully, another character replies, “Nothing will ever be quite what it used to be.” These are first Roger Carbury’s words, though, as the Melmottes invade the countryside on their weekend visit: “Things aren’t as they were, of course, and never will be again” (1.136). The last refuge of *The Way We Live Now* from the threats of compressed time and shrunken space, is a deliberately located nostalgia. In resisting foreign amorality and the future, the novel’s closing pages recall the final images of Balzac’s *La Peau de chagrin*, and Pauline’s desperate, losing battle against the upriver steamer, the onslaught of modernity. *The Way We Live Now*’s retreat to Carbury Manor, in the good old English countryside, realizes a desire to be where things, according to the novel’s understanding of them, still recall the way we lived then.

14. On the pessimistic Trollope, see also Brantlinger 6–8.

15. Perera’s discussion of Dickens’s *Edwin Drood* offers opium rather than railroads: “If *Edwin Drood* suggests that the increasing savagery of English domestic life is a product of the imperial connection, the register of that guilty relation is opium, a commodity made globally available only through the workings of the imperial system, while that system depends for its viability on promoting opium consumption anywhere *outside* its own metropolis” (108).