Realism's Empire

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CHAPTER FOUR

ECONOMIES OF ROMANCE AND HISTORY IN PHINEAS FINN

“I have already, through my future mother-in-law, heard of a place that I think will suit: it is to undertake the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O’Gall of Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland....

“It is a long way off, sir... and then the sea is a barrier—”

“From what, Jane?”

“From England.”

—Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (1847)

I have shorn my fiction of all romance.

—Trollope, letter to George Eliot (October 1863)

I am well aware now that English readers no longer like Irish stories. I cannot understand why it should be so, as the Irish character is peculiarly well fitted for romance.

—Trollope, An Autobiography (1877; published posthumously in 1883)

A moment of Trollopian self-consciousness introduces the dilemma that organizes this chapter, which brings the complex forces of colonial identity to bear on the simultaneous shrinking of the world and Trollope’s novelistic fretting over problems of romance, realism, and representation. Phineas Finn has just been acquitted of murder, and the narrator writes:

Our pages have lately been taken up almost exclusively with the troubles of Phineas Finn, and indeed have so far not unfairly represented the feelings and interest of people generally at the time. Not to have talked of Phineas Finn from the middle of May to the middle of July in that year would have exhibited great ignorance or a cynical disposition. But other things went on also. Moons waxed and waned; children were born; marriages were contracted; and the hopes and fears of the little world around did not come to an end because Phineas Finn was not to be hung. (Phineas Redux 2.256)
Finn is simultaneously central to the elaboration of larger social concerns (“the feelings and interest of people generally”) and yet totally marginal to these concerns, as the narrator further demonstrates by proceeding to elaborate a plot strand that has nothing at all to do with Finn. Similar ambivalence emerges in a glance at the reception of *Phineas Finn* (1869) and *Phineas Redux* (1874), as Jane Elizabeth Dougherty has pointed out, with particular relevance to Finn’s foreignness: “Phineas is a successful and sympathetic character, and yet it may well have been a blunder on Trollope’s part to make him Irish. Phineas’s Irishness is and is not evident in the text; it is both crucial and incidental to Phineas’s characterization; the narrative trajectory of the Phineas novels is at once enabled and disabled by the ethnicity of their eponymous hero” (133). It was, of course, Trollope himself who, long after the writing of the two novels, saw Finn’s Irishness as an authorial “blunder” (*Autobiography* 318), and Patrick Lonergan claims that this admission has caused literary critics to ignore his ethnicity (147).

Historians have not passed over Finn’s Irishness without comment, and their contributions have primarily raised the issues of exactly how Irish Trollope’s Irish Member is and whether there was a real-life model for the character. Where this debate has surfaced, the question of literary realism (in the guise of historical accuracy) is not far behind, for both Phineas’s certain Irishness in the eyes of some and his certain un-Irishness in the eyes of others have been adduced as evidence of a lapse in or partial failure of Trollope’s realist project in the Palliser novels. Trollope himself equated Irishness with romance, but this must be complicated by the manner in which Finn’s story is said to contribute to a realistic “representation” of general society. This central ambivalence is significant in Trollope’s Palliser series, because Phineas Finn, the young Irishman who heads to London to enter Parliament, appears in four of the six novels and lends his name to two of them. A brief examination of the evolving role of the Irish in the English novel of the nineteenth century can clarify the literary-historical significance of *Phineas Finn* and set the stage for a discussion of the relevance of Finn’s contested Irishness—linked, in Trollope’s mind, to romance—to this curious two-volume *Bildungsroman*. The narrative indecision surrounding Finn’s identity is finally inseparable from formal considerations of the *Phineas* novels, which, like the Balzac novels already examined, constantly require a romance of which they are constantly wary. Ensuing chapters will explore the manner in which Trollope’s concern with romance and its disappearance manifests itself in spatial terms, as Great Britain is remapped in the *Phineas* novels; and the troubling insertion of the English metropolis into the global marketplace in *The Way We Live Now*. 
Chapter Four: Economies of Romance and History in Phineas Finn

(a) “The Colonies Next Door”: Irishness as a Realist Fact

In his book, *Paddy & Mr. Punch*, historian Roy Foster reminds his readers that, despite what he calls the recent “fashionable preoccupation” with “representation of ‘The Other’” in the wake of Foucault, the question of Irish otherness has long been an established historiographical field (171). Foster is quick to mention the influence of two books by another historian, L. Perry Curtis, Jr., whose *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* “began a long-running discussion” when it was first published in 1971. In an addendum to a reprinting of *Apes and Angels*, Curtis has also seen himself as a forerunner of these later scholarly achievements: “Little did I think when I set out all those years ago to investigate the origin and function of the Irish ape-man that the results would one day strike me as analogous to standing in the entrance hall of some huge mansion still under construction, with many unbuilt rooms that would one day be lavishly furnished by Foucault, Said, and a host of other cultural architects, designers, and decorators” (180). The extent to which one can employ postcolonial theory and theories of imperialism to the status of Ireland is still a matter for debate. Andrew Murphy usefully rehearses the problems in the introduction to his book on early modern English literature and Ireland. Yet while Murphy castigates Said and others (especially Terry Eagleton and Richard Kearney) for “fail[ing] finally to engage with the particularity of the Irish situation, . . . preferring instead to assimilate Ireland's colonial experience to a greater global imperial paradigm,” he ultimately acknowledges the relevance of such paradigms to an analysis of the Irish situation: “The nature of English intervention in the affairs of Ireland is always in some ways colonial. The English always behave in some ways like colonialists, and the Irish are always in some ways perceived as the colonized. But in other ways, the exact nature of the English initiative in Ireland is altogether more ambiguous” (15, 28). Trollope’s narrator in *Phineas Finn* will once bluntly refer to Ireland as “the colonies next door” (1.270). The novelistic negotiation and renegotiation of this ambiguity, though, becomes clearer through a general sketch of how the Irish were viewed in nineteenth-century England and a brief glimpse of their use in the nineteenth-century English novel up to the publication of Trollope’s *Phineas Finn*.

Petulant nationalism and permanent laziness were the chief stereotypes of the Irish in England in the wake of the United Irishmen’s rebellion of 1798.

1. Edward Said, though, has no trouble seeing Ireland as colonial/postcolonial in “Yeats and Decolonization.”
and the Act of Union of 1800. A central role for the Famine in Irish emigration to England has long been assumed. Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, for example, was published in 1847, at the Famine’s peak, and Eagleton’s *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* examines the possible effects of the Famine Irish on the novel and its sublimated anti-Irish sentiment. E. P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class*, however, disputes the relevance of the Famine to English contact with the Irish; Thompson asserts instead that the events of 1798 and 1800 (the United Irishmen’s Rebellion and the Act of Union, respectively), and not the Famine in 1847, mark the turning point in Irish immigration to England (429). Census statistics support this. As Linda Colley has pointed out, by 1831—well before the Famine’s onset—Irish immigrants already constituted 5% of the British labor force and inspired a backlash visible in (ultimately unsuccessful) Protestant resistance to Catholic Emancipation in 1829 (329). The Famine is still important to literary evocations of the Irish, but the most powerful early impressions register the Irish less as victims of history than as a permanent threat to it. The Irish in England were seen, in the words of another historian, as a working-class mass “politically antagonistic to the Establishment,” as objects of danger rather than pity (O’Connor 36). This is indeed how they appear, for the most part, in British novels after 1798: in muffled form in Scott, and more loudly in Brontë, Gaskell, Dickens, and Thackeray.

The importance of the rebellion of 1798 cannot be underestimated in any analysis of English attitudes toward the Irish in the early nineteenth century. The uprising precipitated Parliament’s passing the Act of Union of 1800, which shackled Ireland firmly to Great Britain until 1926, and it seemed significant enough to Napoleon that he committed several thousand French troops to aid the Irish insurgents. When one recalls Franco Moretti’s insistent reading in *The Way of the World* of the nineteenth-century English *Bildungsroman* as a nullification of the democratizing effects of Napoleon’s armies—who represented a lawless new order and a subversion of the old one—then this historical alliance between Irish nationalism and the godless continental revolutionaries demonstrates partially why the Irish were perceived as a constant threat to national security. Moretti quips, in *Atlas of the European Novel*, that in nineteenth-century English novels “France is clearly the epicenter of the world’s evils” (30). A cartoon from October of 1798, even depicts, mockingly, “The Allied Republics of France and Ireland,” an alliance made more disturbing because the French continental aggression had not yet ended, according to Douglas, Harte and O’Hara (11). As Donald MacRaild has noted, “In an age when the ruling élite generally feared the leveling tendencies of the working class, the Irish stood out as either agrarian rebels, nationalist conspirators or industrial militants” (131). The Irish were
thus threatening on several fronts, and additional risings in 1803 and 1848 did nothing to diminish this sentiment in England.

Scott is a key writer for Trollope, who valued *Ivanhoe* as one of his favorite novels, and rewritings of Scott permeate the Palliser series. In a more general way here, though, *Waverley* is especially important, because it functions as a prototype for the nineteenth-century English *Bildungsroman* (as both Moretti and Lukács have argued) and because it reveals the subtlety with which fear of Celtic unrest could appear, however romanticized, in a novel. As the author himself writes in *Waverley*‘s first chapter, the narrative was begun in 1805, a mere seven years after the United Irishmen uprising of 1798 and two years after its aftershock in 1803. Scott himself was personally affected by the rebellion of 1798, and so it is not too much to admit the possibility that Scott bore 1798 in mind when he commenced writing his account of another Celtic revolt, the one chronicled in *Waverley*. Saree Makdisi has linked *Waverley* to Irish unrest, arguing that, “at a certain political level, the subjugation and colonization of the Highlands represented not only the conquest of a previously wild and unruly revolutionary zone, but also the reclamation of this zone from the cultural influence of Ireland” (79). Scott’s narrative makes mention of “Irish officers” in Waverley’s rebel army (196) and twice refers to “Fin Macoul” (201), also written as “Finn M’Coul” (214), the leading figure of the Fianna, a group of Ulster warriors in Irish mythology. Essentially, *Waverley* seems as determined to link the Scots and the Irish as Trollope will later be to separate them, and Scott’s narrator refers to the Scottish army several times as, less specifically, Gaelic. Associating the Scottish rebels with the Irish almost forces one to remember that the Irish were friendly with Napoleon, and Scott concretizes the comparison when he points out that one of the more renegade Scots fighters first greets Waverley while wearing a French uniform. The Highland armies are rendered as a commingling of Scottish, Irish, and continental energies that would be associated with revolution at the time of Scott’s writing, even though the novel is set before the Revolution. The Celtic rebellion in *Waverley* is quelled, but Scott’s novel relies on representational subtleties that disappear in later novels’ use of the Irish.

2. Faulkner has examined the influence of Scott on Trollope’s failed historical romance, *La Vendée* (1850), but Scott’s shadow also hangs over Trollope’s more conventional realist works, especially *Phineas Finn*.

3. Hoefnagel writes that Lord Downshire, the guardian of Scott’s fiancée, caused Scott much consternation when he failed to reply to Scott’s request to marry Margaret Charlotte Carpenter, Downshire’s charge. Scott became “impatient and assumed that Downshire was making inquiries about him” (149). The real reason for Downshire’s delayed response and his subsequent failure to attend the wedding was his required presence in Ireland to quell the rebellion. The uprising chronicled in *Waverley* was still a matter of cultural interest well into the nineteenth century; Sir John Everett Millais, Trollope’s illustrator for *Phineas Finn*, painted *The Order of Release 1746* (1852–53), which depicts the release of a kilt-wearing Scottish prisoner by a Redcoat. On Millais and Trollope, see Hall 8–88.
“At a time when portrayals of Irish characters were often negative,” Loner- 
gan writes of *Phineas Finn*, “Trollope presented his readers with a realistic 
and sympathetic Irish politician—and developed his character during one of 
the most significant periods in Irish history” (147). Not every portrayal of the 
Irish was negative, to be sure, but even genial characters like the O’Dowds 
in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1847–48) are overpowered by the roguery both 
Celtic and continental of the Irish protagonist in the earlier *Barry Lyndon* 
(1844).  

The industrial agitators of Gaskell’s *North and South* (1854) are Irish, as is the hard-drinking curate Malone in Brontë’s *Shirley* (1849). Yet 
the larger pattern of the Irish in the nineteenth-century English novel is their 
service as convenient foils to the English protagonist and as unwitting plot- 
enablers in these protagonists’ upward struggle. As David Copperfield begins 
“Life on my own account,” Dickens has him make the acquaintance, in the 
bottling warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, of two youths to whom he will 
feel an incessant aversion: Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes. “Mick” is of 
course a common, pejorative appellation for Irishmen, but the reference to 
“mealy potatoes” is almost shocking, given that *David Copperfield* began its 
serial publication in 1849, towards the end of the Irish potato famine. David 
worries that his association with Mick and Mealy will stain him forever, and 
he is anxious to preserve “a space between” himself and the two boys (157). 
The vocabulary of difference is even more telling: “Mealy Potatoes uprose 
once, and rebelled against my being so distinguished,” David claims (159, 
emphasis mine). The episode at the bottling factory so disgusts David that it 
drives him to his aunt in Dover, a move that enables everything that happens 
afterward in the novel. Brontë constructs a similar scenario in *Villette* (1853). 
The tone is set early on by first-person narrator Lucy’s offhand equation of 
“faithless[ness]” and the “Celtic (not Saxon) character” (73), but the case of 
Sweeney, the governess whom Lucy replaces, is more vivid:

Beside a table, on which flared the remnant of a candle guttering to waste in 
the socket, a coarse woman, heterogeneously clad in a broad-striped showy silk 
dress and a stuff apron, sat in a chair fast asleep. To complete the picture, and 
leave no doubt as to the state of matters, a bottle and an empty glass stood at the 
sleeping beauty’s elbow. . . . By some means or other she had acquired, and now 
held in possession, a wardrobe of rather suspicious splendour. . . . I need hardly 
explain to the reader that this lady was in effect a native of Ireland. (130–33)

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4. Much has been written on Thackeray and his treatment of the Irish in his *Irish Sketch Book* (1843) and in *Barry Lyndon*. See, for example, Brewer, Klotz, and Colby.

5. *Nice Work* (1988), David Lodge’s rewrite of *North and South*, recasts the Irish as Asians. The implication is that, in the 1980s, the Irish are no longer sufficiently “other” for the narrative’s needs.
Mrs. Sweeney’s Christian name is Hibernice, an obvious play on the Latin for Ireland, Hibernia. Before Lucy has even met her, she is implicated in theft, drunkenness, idleness, wastefulness, and coarseness, and she must finally be removed from the school in the presence of “an agent of the police” (133). This episode, like the one in *David Copperfield*, enables the narrative that follows it, for it is Sweeney’s vacancy that Lucy fills. Brontë’s language—“I need hardly explain to the reader”—is confident in the accuracy of her depiction of an Irishwoman and highlights a culturally accepted pattern of such portraiture.

Trollope inherits such conventions from his contemporaries and forebears. However, unlike all of them but Thackeray, Trollope had spent significant time in Ireland, as a postal inspector, and even begun his writing career there. His commitment to realism, which he admits in his autobiography, may have forbidden him from relying on convenient stereotypes, but this same commitment to realism must be measured against Trollope’s belief that “the Irish character is particularly well fitted for romance” (*Autobiography* 156). In 1866, just three years before the publication of *Phineas Finn*, the narrator of Trollope’s short story, “Father Giles of Ballymoy,” plays on Ireland’s romantic associations:

Ireland is not very well known to all Englishmen, but it is much better known than it was in those days. On this my first visit to Connaught, I own that I was somewhat scared lest I should be made a victim to the wild lawlessness and general savagery of the people; and I fancied, as in the wet, windy gloom of the night, I could see the crowd of natives standing round the doors of the inn, and just discern their naked legs and old battered hats, that Ballymoy was probably one of those places so far removed from civilisation and law, as to be an unsafe residence for an English Protestant. (440)

Candidly acknowledging the common stereotypes of and antipathy toward the Irish—for Trollope both deliberately reproduces and carefully avoids them in *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*—Trollope envisions the *Phineas* novels at a point of transition in English history, in the development of the English novel, and in the emerging global economy. If I have dwelled at length on the tradition within which and the historical circumstances surrounding which Trollope is writing, it has only been in order to highlight, in this chapter and the two subsequent chapters, the extent to which Trollope does something new at a time of enormous change. Phineas Finn performs the same narrative task as the talisman, the netherworldly criminal, and the objectified colonial woman in the Balzac novels discussed above. As the foreign arrival in London, he forces the novel to grapple with questions of rep-
presentation that paint a complex picture of the interplay between romance (Trollope's conception of Irishness) and the real (the political histories to which the Palliser novels bear witness) in Trollope's novelistic world, within the dynamic of textually negotiated ethnicity. Finn's rise may be, as one critic has termed it, “anomalous” because he is an Irishman in a realm where Irishmen have not been well received, as several characters point out to him (Dougherty 140). “But in these days,” the narrator of *Phineas Finn* remarks in an apparently unnecessary generalization at the outset, “we have got to like red hair” (1.32). This is the ambiguity Murphy mentions, and the novels' expression of it records a commensurate ambivalence toward the need for romance in a shrinking world of duty and compromise.6

(b) *The Bildung of Phineas Finn: Irishness as a Realist Problem*

In Dougherty's article on Phineas Finn, whom she terms “Trollope's Irish Hero,” she twice remarks that *Phineas Finn* is “ostensibly a Bildungsroman” (136, 143). Trollope meant the novel to be read as a *Bildungsroman* and took great pains to that end. This bears directly on the question of Irishness and Englishness in the *Phineas* novels, because novels in the *Bildungsroman* tradition attempt the smooth socialization of their youthful protagonist. So, determining the place, in English society, of an outsider from Ireland becomes the implicit task of *Phineas Finn*. In contrast to the rebellious and unsocializable heroes of someone like Stendhal, Moretti claims in *The Way of the World*, are the almost unpalatably conservative narratives of the English novels, where the heroes consistently allow themselves to be restrained in their struggle for self-actualization or hierarchy-threatening upward mobility. *The Way of the World* attributes this national difference and the striking “stability of narrative conventions and basic cultural assumptions” in the English *Bildungsroman* partially to the fact that England, unlike the continent, “had never been touched by Napoleon's forces” (181). This generalization is abetted by the absence of Thackeray from Moretti's study, and Trollope also goes unmentioned in *The Way of the World* or *Atlas of the European Novel*, despite his enormous success as a novelist in nineteenth-century England. Reading *Phineas Finn*—and, to a lesser extent in this chapter, *Phineas*

6. P. D. Edwards, in *Trollope: His Art and Scope*, writes of Trollope's “two streams,” the quotidian and the sensational. This is clearly analogous to what I am calling here an ambivalence between Trollope's realism and his texts' imported romance tropes, but with at least one important distinction: as my analysis is grounded in the foreignness that gives rise to this dilemma, I highlight a particular historical context for this ambivalence.
*Redux*—as a *Bildungsroman* will reveal the novel(s) to be, alongside Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876), one of the most interesting assimilation narratives among nineteenth-century English novels, if not among English novels writ large. Trollope had already set several of his earlier novels in Ireland: *The Macdermotts of Ballycloran* (1847), *The Kellys and the O’Kellys* (1848), and *Castle Richmond* (1860). Sales had been so dismal that his editor felt prompted to remind him that there was no market in England for fiction about Ireland. However, the relocation to London in *Phineas Finn* represents an important change from Trollope’s earlier Irish work, and it was a commercial and critical success. As a *Bildungsroman* featuring an Irish protagonist in England—a protagonist who is also “a formal center for the novel” (Polhemus 150)—*Phineas Finn* becomes a narrative referendum on Irishness, its role in England, and its ability to be represented as a romantic trait within a realist novel.

That Trollope envisioned *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* as a *Bildungsroman* cannot be doubted. As the novel opens, the reader is repeatedly reminded of “the youth and extreme rawness of the lad” Phineas (1.16). Phineas himself knows simultaneously what is at stake in the story and how it must end, as he answers the questions of his Irish sweetheart, Mary Flood Jones, by saying, “I’ll explain it all to you when I come back, after learning my lesson” (1.20). Lady Laura is quickly marked off as Finn’s mentor, and the language of socialization, couched in terms of upward mobility, becomes pervasive thanks to the iterated metaphors of ladders (2.44) and stairs (2.293) whose symbolic significance is made clumsily explicit by characters within the novel. Trollope’s *Bildungsroman* finally settles into the pattern Moretti traces for all English *Bildungsromane* of aborted upward struggle, lessons learned, and gracious if not heroic final acceptance of failure; thus the narrator ultimately compares Finn with Icarus (2.350). Lady Laura, though, frames the problem in a different way, when she tells the dejected Finn, “You have had your romance and must now put up with reality” (2.293). The language here is important, as Finn’s rise and fall are intertwined, in Trollope’s novel, with a shifting idea of romance and realism that is inseparable from a shifting position of Irishness.

It would make sense to begin an investigation of Irishness in *Phineas Finn*, the Irish Member with a discussion of the Irishness in Phineas Finn, the Irish Member himself, but this offers immediate challenges. How to mea-

7. Trollope, of course, mentions in his *Autobiography* that the two are, in fact, “but one novel, though they were brought out at a considerable interval of time and in different forms,” but the structure of each novel is complete on its own, and so it is appropriate to treat them separately, as critics always have done (320). It is equally instructive, though, to see *Redux* as a sequel; Felber has pointed out, in her article on the novel, that “the function of the sequel is to depict change over time,” and the Phineas novels certainly do this (120).
sure “Irishness”? Lonergan indignantly quotes at length a 1937 introduction to *Phineas Finn* by Shane Leslie: “The Irish background grows feint despite an occasional ‘Bedad’ from Laurence Fitzgibbon and Mary Flood Jones, the unconvincing colleen whom Phineas marries. . . . One thing is certain and that is that Lord Chiltern with his red hair and blackguardly dare-devilling was much more Hibernian than Phineas. He races and gambles and kills a ruffian at Newmarket with his fists” (quoted in Lonergan 148). Lonergan derides such “points of view” as “absurd,” but he misses a chance to grapple with an unpleasant truth: according to Victorian conventions of Irishness, Leslie’s assessment of Chiltern is absolutely correct, and, furthermore, Trollope’s own narrative will support this reading of Chiltern as stereotypically “Irish” and Finn as stereotypically not Irish (Lonergan 149). Maria Bachman has demonstrated, in the historical backdrop she provides for her reading of one of Wilkie Collins’s later novels, that Irishness and Irish nationalism were systematically pathologized in later-Victorian England, with nationalists increasingly incarcerated not in prisons but rather in facilities for the mentally ill. The notion that Trollope’s view of a romantic Ireland necessarily entails an idealization of Ireland has proven hard to abandon, though. Other critics, like Owen Dudley Edwards, have written perhaps the most comprehensive consideration of Trollope’s writerly connection to Ireland, accepting the supposed Irishness of Finn and seeing “preeminently the beautiful savage, straight from the frontier” (16). This sentiment contrasts with that of Dougherty, who claims that “Phineas fulfills none of the Victorian stereotypes of Irishness” (140), or of E.W. Wittig, who asserts that Phineas “is really little different from protagonists of Trollope’s British novels” (116). There is a palpable lack of consensus, but it becomes comprehensible when one focuses less on who is Irish and who not, and more on who is Irish when, where, and why. Wittig approaches this line of analysis, claiming that Trollope displaces all of the stereotypical Irish traits onto the lesser character of Laurence Fitzgibbon, but this is only partly true. Irishness, in *Phineas Finn*, is an almost tangible property that signifies roguery or romance and shifts from character to character depending on how and where Trollope’s narrative needs it. Because it is equated with romance, and because Irishness is coded in the novel as inversely proportionate to socialization, it bears directly on Trollope’s narrative strategy in this novel-length meditation on resignation and more general disenchantment.

Trollope’s wavering portrayal of the Irish becomes clear in a brief examination of Laurence Fitzgibbon. Fitzgibbon is a Member for Co. Mayo, but, unlike Finn, he is a member of the upper class. The narrator repeatedly links the two Irishmen early on, referring to them as “countrymen” (1.58, 1.88, 1.111, 1.194). Their differences become more noticeable as the plot pro-
gresses, and these differences lend credence to Wittig’s reading of Fitzgibbon as the stereotypical Irishman. He is unenthusiastic about working (1.24) or is bluntly “idle” (2.162), and after Finn replaces him at the Colonial Office, Mr. Gresham is overheard saying to Lord Cantrip that Finn is “about the first Irishman we’ve had that has been worth his salt” (2.144). Most interesting is Fitzgibbon’s constantly shifting manner of speech, which flits from English to Irish throughout the novel. When the reader first meets Fitzgibbon, he speaks like a typical English character in a Trollope novel: “I hate all change as a rule, . . . but, upon my word, we ought to alter that” (1.27). This continues until chapter XII, when he slides from a “By George, my dear fellow” to, one page later, the stereotypically Irish speech of “D’ye think,” just as he proceeds to ask Finn for a large loan (1.111–12). What is crucial here is not merely the waffling in Trollope’s depiction of Fitzgibbon, but the fact that Fitzgibbon consistently speaks with an Irish accent when he is up to no good; the same happens when he serves as Finn’s second in the duel at Blankenberg. Fitzgibbon ultimately reneges on his promise to pay back the loan, and this leads to another important moment. Fitzgibbon’s sister, Aspasia, who is audibly Irish when the reader first meets her—“Mr. Finn, how d’ye do? I want to say a word to ye” (1.203)—is audibly not Irish when she comes to Phineas to pay back the loan that her brother will not pay, saying to Phineas, “I have just come about a little business, Mr. Finn, and I hope you’ll excuse me” (2.295). Trollope’s shifts counter the consistent portrayals of the Irish by Brontë, Thackeray and Gaskell. Shane Leslie’s observation—that Fitzgibbon’s occasional Bedads do not an Irishman make—falls short of engaging the question of when, exactly, Fitzgibbon utters these Bedads. Fitzgibbon’s occasional Irishness may serve to appease readerly expectations of Irish portrayal, as partial compensation for what some critics have rightly seen as Phineas Finn’s lack of stereotypical Irishness.

The case of Lord Chiltern is yet more complicated. In the comments derided by Lonergan, Leslie points to several traits that make Chiltern “more Hibernian” than Phineas: Chiltern’s red hair, his gambling, his dare-devilling. Apart from the red hair, though, these traits are shared by most of Trollope’s rogues, from George Vavasor in *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864–65) to Burgo Fitzgerald, the lover from Glencora Palliser’s youth who is eternally present in the Palliser series as a symbol of Glencora’s own complex experience with having chosen duty over romance; neither Fitzgerald nor Vavasor are coded as Irish in the way that Chiltern is. There is, of course, the red hair, to which Trollope’s narrator alludes at every possible chance, but it is important to note that the degree of redness changes depending on the role Chiltern is playing at a given moment in the plot. As with Fitzgibbon, Trollope’s narrator modulates the Irish stereotypes of Chiltern. Immediately before the illegal
duel fought between Finn and Chiltern (which Chiltern demands and which I discuss at greater length in the next chapter), Chiltern is described thus: “The redness of his complexion had become more ruddy than usual” (1.350). He is found by Phineas “standing there, fiery red,” and termed “the fiery-red lord” (1.352; 1.354). Other descriptions dilute this supposed—according to Leslie—Irishness in a discourse of general otherness, as Trollope depicts Chiltern as “half-savage” (2.94) and “wild” (1.96). Chiltern also refers to himself, ironically, as a “gipsy” and “Bohemian” (169). These very traits, though, lead first to assumptions, in others, not of Chiltern’s general foreignness but of his supposed Irishness. Trollope dramatizes this logic in an interesting conversation between Lord Fawn and Mr. Bonteen, who says:

“Those Irish fellows are just the men for that kind of thing [inventing a story about a girl].

“A man, you know, so violent that nobody can hold him,” said Lord Fawn, thinking of Chiltern.

“And so absurdly conceited,” said Mr. Bonteen, thinking of Phineas.

“A man who has never done anything, with all his advantages in the world,—and never will.”

“He won’t hold his place long,” said Mr. Bonteen.

“Whom do you mean?”

“Phineas Finn.”

“Oh, Mr. Finn. I was talking of Lord Chiltern.” (2.142)

That Chiltern—a member of the landed English aristocracy—could be simply assumed in conversation to be Irish, and that he could be paired with the Irish Phineas so uncritically, reveals an ease of association on the part of Trollope’s narrative and characters that is not corroborated by a closer look at Finn’s actual portrayal in the novel.

The astonishing thing about Phineas Finn, the Irish Member, is that he is not dependably or consistently Irish in the novel. I am not referring here to a lack of the stereotypes of Irishness derided by Lonergan and present in the novel via Chiltern and Fitzgibbon, but rather to the narrative’s explicitly confused rendering of Finn, who, like Balzac’s Vautrin, is always something in between. If Irishness, for Trollope, equals romance, then Trollope’s portrayal of Finn, which superficially marks him off as Irish but simultaneously offers him up as unromantic, ushers in some important complexities. Lonergan contends that “Phineas’s nationality” is crucial because it “may have made sense of his meteoric rise in Phineas Finn, but it also explains his descent in Phineas Redux” (148). This misrepresents the troubled rela-
tionship between advancement and Irishness in the first novel, though, as much as it overstates the importance of Finn’s Irishness to his arraignment on murder charges in the second. Indeed, Dougherty is probably closer to the mark when she contends that “the title of Phineas Redux might more accurately have been ‘Phineas Reduced,’ as Phineas’s Irishness becomes ever more closeted” (136). I argue in the next chapter that Phineas Redux locates romance elsewhere and thus has less need of Irishness, but the only certainty about Finn’s Irishness in Phineas Finn is that it appears to impede his advancement in English political culture. Finn’s Irish identity is finally a necessity of the plot, for it prompts him to support the Irish tenant-rights measure that assures the end of his career in Parliament and thus an end to the novel. Yet this Irishness functions as an aspect of his character that he and the narrator subtly attempt to shed throughout the text. The implications of this authorial strategy—the surface Irishness undercut by Finn’s unending attempts at assimilation—disclose a transformation in English culture as its novels consider the human and cultural consequences of the transition from imperialism to globalization, and of the accompanying shrinking of the world.

When the curtain rises on Phineas Finn, he is at home in the west of Ireland and, in standard Trollopian fashion, the reader meets him through a brief description of his parentage: a Catholic father, who is a country doctor, and a Protestant mother who married down. From the beginning, Phineas is caught between two poles, and the Irish and English opposition is only part of this. Finn’s between-ness is more often expressed as an indefinable mediocrity or an inconstant temperament that mirrors that of Scott’s indecisive Waverley. “It soon came to be admitted by all who knew Phineas Finn,” writes the narrator, “that he had a peculiar power of making himself agreeable which no one knew how to analyse or define” (1.118). Alongside Finn’s agreeability is the absence of the sort of romantic extremes that one might have expected in a hero whose Irishness, according to Trollope, should connote romance. Violet Effingham (the third of Finn’s four romantic attractions in the novel) describes him thus: “There is just enough of him, but not too much” (1.201). Phineas cannot even fail spectacularly, as Mr. Monk critiques the young parliamentarian’s first speech to the House of Commons with a dismissive “You have done yourself neither good nor harm. . . . [D]o not suppose that you have made an ass of yourself,—that is, in any special degree” (1.247–8). The more curious ambivalence, though, speaks to Finn’s apparently shifting nationality. The novel’s title announces him as The Irish Member, but the Irishness that Dougherty sees as disappearing in Phineas Redux is already in jeopardy in the first installment of this novelistic diptych. Despite
Part II: Trollope and the Problem of Integration

Lady Laura’s teasing when she calls Finn an “impetuous Irish boy,” the more Finn advances the less Irish he becomes in his own eyes and the more Irish he becomes in those of his enemies, primarily Bonteen and Violet’s guardian, Lady Baldock (1.75). Lady Baldock opposes Violet’s association with Phineas, complaining that he “has come from nobody knows where in the bogs of Ireland” (2.41). This pejorative statement emerges only as Phineas is being considered for an appointment to the Colonial Office, termed as a “Promotion” in the chapter of that name.

While his advancement is framed by an increased attention to his Irishness in the eyes of other characters, though, Finn—and, it seems, the narrator as well—sees himself as increasingly English. At the conclusion of the novel’s first volume, the protagonist sits with “great men,—Cabinet Ministers, and beautiful women,—the wives and daughters of some of England’s highest nobles. And Phineas Finn, throwing back, now and again, a thought to Killaloe, found himself among them as one of themselves” (1.356). Two snippets of conversation are further revealing, as Phineas talks with Madame Max Goesler, another outsider to England, and he asks her a question about the issue of women’s participation in politics:

“And which side would you take?”
“What, here in England?” said Madame Max Goesler,—from which expression, and from one or two others of a similar nature, Phineas was led into a doubt whether the lady were a countrywoman of his or not. (2.27)

Whereas the term “countryman” has already been used to link Finn and Fitzgibbon in their common Irishness, here it appears to refer to an Englishness in Finn. The narrator, and not Phineas directly, voices this, and so it shows a distancing of Finn from Ireland that cannot be reduced to or wholly explained by his local motives at that particular moment in the narrative. In the next chapter, a second conversation between Phineas Finn and Madame Max witnesses the same slippage. Madame Max claims that “An Englishman hardly ever makes a good servant,” to which Finn replies, “Is that a compliment to us Britons?” (2.35). Twice, in quick succession, Finn or the narrator jumps at the notion of Englishness in order to associate himself with it. There are repeated assertions, by other characters as well, that Finn does not behave like an Irishman: Mr. Low praises Phineas for his restraint, for example, by saying, “It was more than I expected from your hot Irish blood” (1.114). Then, on the other hand, there are repeated assertions that Finn is exactly like an Irishman: his skill at riding is attributed to his rural Irish

8. Sanders mentions that Finn “thinks of himself as a ‘Briton,’” which misses the larger picture of Finn’s shifting perception of himself (48).
upbringing, and there are constant references to his hometown and home county, as when Mrs. Flood Jones says, “It is not every day that a man from County Clare gets on as you have done” (2.257). The net effect is a fundamental ambivalence as to Phineas’s identity. It is perhaps too much to believe that Trollope set out to destroy Victorian stereotypes of the Irish, especially when those stereotypes are present in abundance in *Phineas Finn*, even if they are not present in Phineas Finn. Trollope’s indecision contains traces of a deeper uncertainty endemic to his realist project.

(c) Unrealist History: On Pretending Not to Know

Finn is caught in a delicate balance between Ireland and England and between romance and the real, and on this problematic position rests the importance of Trollope’s novel in registering and complicating the very period about which he writes, in which the subjects of imperialism can relocate to and move within the metropolitan centers of imperialism. “Our hero,” as the narrator refers to Finn incessantly, hails from a country that Trollope saw as particularly full of romantic potential, but he is imported into a novel whose chief aim is an elaboration of Trollope’s political convictions grounded in real-life parliamentary debates and political developments. To this historical end, the narrator will occasionally assume a reader’s partial knowledge of political events, as at the novel’s conclusion, when the reader is told, “Immediately after the passing of that scrambled Irish Reform Bill, Parliament, *as the reader knows*, was dissolved” (2.354; emphasis mine). Trollope would even, with the characteristic frankness of his autobiography, praise his own realist accomplishments in the Palliser series (*Autobiography* 185). One has the impression that Finn is but the reader’s conduit into Parliament, for he all but disappears from the most important scenes of political debate, as the narrative focuses instead and at length on speeches by Members Daubeny, Gresham, and Monk. Trollope may have later confessed his belief that taking his protagonist from Ireland was a “blunder,” but it is a blunder that is probably explained by Trollope’s own avowed worries over the audience’s interest in political novels: “In writing *Phineas Finn*, and also some other novels which follow it, I was conscious that I could not make a tale pleasing chiefly, or perhaps in any part, by politics. If I wrote politics for my own sake, I must put in love and intrigue, social incidents, with perhaps a dash of sport, for the sake of my readers” (317). Taking his hero from Ireland may have been a simple solution to what Trollope perceived as a challenge of inserting romance into what was otherwise a political history of events surrounding the Reform Bill of 1867.
If Finn's Irishness is in part an answer to the challenge of importing intrigue into a historical chronicle, though, it introduces new formal problems, and Trollope seems genuinely challenged by his own protagonist in *Phineas Finn*. The dilemma that the narrative faces revolves around the need to render Phineas simultaneously sympathetic and realistic to Victorian readers whose perception of the Irish would not be conducive to sympathy for them—recall Brontë's *Hibernice* in *Villette*. Trollope was far from oblivious to this hurdle, and especially within the framework of a political plot, admitting “an added difficulty in obtaining sympathy and affection for a politician belonging to a nationality whose politics are not respected in England” (318). The problem is partially resolved early on, because Phineas is presented as modest and unaware of his own skills, “timid” (1.187), and fairly conservative in his politics on the matter of Ireland, at least until the novel's important finale. (Finn explains in 1876's *The Prime Minister* why he is against Irish Home Rule [104].) Trollope leans on a gimmick of emplotment in order to encourage readerly sympathy with Phineas, when he has the Irish Member save the Scottish Member, Sir Robert Kennedy, from being garroted in the street at night. This act of heroism must be kept in perspective as a perhaps cheap narrative means of gaining Finn an unimpeachable aura of heroism. Trollope repeats the trick in *The Prime Minister*, as Ferdinand Lopez's almost identical rescue of Frank Wharton gets him into the good graces of Wharton's father, who soon becomes Lopez's father-in-law; Lopez turns out to be one of the most manipulative and scheming characters in the Palliser series if not in all of Trollope's fiction. Finn is not Lopez, but Trollope still seems to resort to this plot twist in an almost instant bid to secure the audience’s—and the other characters’—sympathy with the protagonist of the *Phineas* novels, whom Violet Effingham will then term a “Paladin” (1.285). This one act of heroism serves as a constant reminder of goodness when, later in the novel, others will begin to harbor doubts about Finn, above all after the news breaks of Finn’s duel with Chiltern. Even in this episode, though, Trollope paints Phineas in flatteringly decent colors, for it is Chiltern who demands the duel, while Finn resolves not to take full part in it: “Let come what might, he would not aim at his adversary,” as if countering Chiltern's red-faced anger (2.2).

The precarious balance that Trollope invokes in *Phineas Finn* is not limited to Phineas’s ambivalent portrayal or the manner in which the narrator fobs off onto other characters the stereotypical Irishness that could

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9. It is noteworthy that these two heroic episodes and the attempted murders they implied are overlooked in P. D. Edwards’s catalog of murders and attempted murders in Trollope’s fiction (*Anthony Trollope* 4). The omission supports the notion that Trollope’s main point in these passages is to quickly portray heroism rather than the crimes that permit the acts of heroism.
have belonged to Finn, had he followed in the pattern of Irish caricature. Ireland itself presents a different problem, because it is not a fictional character, and it has historical traces to which one might expect the narrator of a realist novel to defer, especially when that novel has explicit historicist pretensions. A full discussion of the imaginative geography of the Palliser novels must wait until the next chapter, which examines Trollope’s remapping of the British Isles in a reorganization of zones of romance and zones of order. However, Irish history is central to Phineas Finn, for the ambivalent attention to it reveals a moment of realist awkwardness when the narrative is confronted with the palpable discrepancies between Ireland as romantic image and Ireland as subjugated British colony. Taking his hero from Ireland afforded Trollope some thematic spice for what he had feared could be a bland political novel, but it also presented the relentless complications of troubled history confronting romance. Ireland in Phineas Finn is an island outside of history. This may partially explain, but certainly cannot excuse, the fact that scholarly attention to Trollope’s Ireland novels has omitted the Phineas novels from consideration. Unlike the four “Irish” novels that Trollope wrote, Phineas Finn may begin and end in Ireland but is not set primarily there, and Phineas Redux hardly sees the island at all. Yet the depiction of Ireland in Phineas Finn is revealing precisely because it differs significantly from the portrait offered in the other novels and because it shows a mobility that brings the Irish into England. Trollope could declare with some confidence that, despite the novel’s many shortcomings, the Ireland he had depicted in The Macdermots of Ballycloran represented accurately “what Irish life was like before the potato disease, the famine, and the Encumbered Estates Bill” (Autobiography 71). This same accuracy cannot be claimed for Phineas Finn, and the omissions are especially interesting in the context of realist narrative.

Trollope’s stance on the Famine has long been a topic for debate, not because his stance was uncertain—he wholeheartedly supported the British government’s policy and even took a Malthusian view of the Famine’s damages in Ireland—but because it is so objectionable. Trollope lived in Ireland during the Famine, and his position as postal inspector required him to crisscross the country so regularly that he saw everywhere the ravages of the blight. When Sidney Godolphin Osborne attacked the government’s handling of the crisis in a series of letters to London papers, Trollope responded with

10. The Macdermots of Ballycloran, The Kellys and the O’Kellys, Castle Richmond, some short pieces like An Eye for an Eye (1879) and the unfinished and posthumously published The Landleaguers (1883) are all included in most overviews of Trollope’s relationship to Ireland, but only Owen Edwards evaluates the importance of Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux in the equation. Asmundsson, Berol, Johnston, Tracy and Wittig all discuss one or both of the first two Irish novels (The Macdermots and The Kellys), and Castle Richmond has attracted great scrutiny as Trollope’s sole fictional approach to the Famine, from Tracy, Matthews-Kane, Nardin, Henney, and Fegan.
a defense of those same policies in the *Examiner,* later collected and published as *Six Letters to the Examiner.* Nor was Trollope’s assessment of the Famine an uninformed one; on the contrary, he claimed to have witnessed the very scenes of misery that spurred Osborne into editorializing action (Fegan 106). Amongst critics, though, discussions of this episode have invariably exonnerated Trollope, claiming, as Fegan does, that his “anxiety about British government policy is submerged in his writing, only to emerge clandestinely, in the subtext of his Irish novels” (107). Tracy is more cautious, allowing only the possibility that, as Lukács argues in defense of Fontane and as Engels argues in defense of Balzac,11 the work of art counters the objectionable personal politics: “Trollope’s whole fictional treatment of the Famine belies [his] position” on it (“Unnatural Ruin” 369). Only Dougherty is slightly more critical of the author. The debate over Trollope’s personal political convictions is not within the scope of this project, but the treatment of history in his novels is, because it directly impacts the approach to realist narration that the novels claim. John Halperin has provided an exhaustive account of the parallels between Trollope’s parliamentarians and real historical English politicians associated with the Reform Bill of 1867, and his enumeration of the parallels could almost substantiate the reading of *Phineas Finn* as a political roman à clef. Given this attention to historical detail, the palpable absence of significant aspects of Irish history from *Phineas Finn* contributes to the idea that Ireland was to serve, in the Pallisers, as a locus of enchantment and idyll in lieu of messier history.

The Famine is not the only, but is certainly the most glaring, of these historical omissions. I have already mentioned above the manner in which Trollope’s narrator points to specific historical events and to the reader’s assumed familiarity with them; although the Famine of the late 1840s cannot be expected to have a central role in a novel about an Irishman’s experiences in English society in England in the mid- to late-1860s, the degree to which it is glossed over is extraordinary. When Lord Chiltern takes Phineas riding, the narrator informs the reader that Phineas “had been riding since he was a child, as is the custom with all boys in Munster, and had an Irishman’s natural aptitude for jumping” (1.218). Given the inner chronology of the novel, Finn’s childhood would have included the peak years of the Famine, as would a visit to Ireland that Mr. Monk mentions to Phineas: “I thought everybody did

11. Of Fontane, Lukács writes, “We repeat: according to his own acknowledged political convictions, Fontane was no democrat. He is one, though, as an author [Gestalter]” (*Deutsche Literatur* 21). Engels’s famous letter to Margaret Harkness declares: “That Balzac thus was compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his favourite nobles, and described them as people deserving no better fate; and that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of Realism, and one of the grandest features in old Balzac” (*On Literature and Art* 92).
live in a castle in Ireland,” Monk says. “They seemed to do when I was there twenty years ago,” a time frame that lands that visit—following the novel’s chronology—in 1847 (2.180). Trollope knew Ireland, and so these omissions on the part of the narrator are significant, especially in the story of a man from Killaloe, Co. Clare. Trollope probably chose the town for its added unknown, romantic value, but it was also one of the hardest-hit areas of Ireland during the Famine. Historian Frank Neal writes that “the destruction of the potato crops was not evenly spread out, the worst hit counties being Clare, Cork, Galway, Kerry, Mayo and Roscommon” (4). In addition to this, Ignatius Murphy’s *A Starving People: Life and Death in West Clare 1845–1851* details the Famine’s deleterious effect on Phineas’s home county, while his *The Diocese of Killaloe, 1800–1850* narrows the focus onto Finn’s actual hometown, which was absolutely devastated.

Another interesting ellipsis involves the introduction of the Canadian bill Phineas works on for the better part of the second volume of the novel, at his desk in the Colonial Office. The bulk of the narrator’s discussion of Canadian history in *Phineas Finn* outlines plans to construct a length of railroad there, the “Inter-colonial Railway line,” and Morton Bloomfield has shown how Trollope appears to have culled fairly precise data and facts from contemporaneous newspaper accounts of the project, in order to render it in admirable and accurate detail (68). However, Bloomfield points out that the news from Canada during the period of *Phineas Finn*’s composition and serialization had far less to do with railways and far more to do with Irish rebellion in the New World, the so-called Fenian raids. Three of the most important of these raids occurred in 1866 at Niagara, Campobello Island and Pigeon Hill, just as Trollope was beginning work on the manuscript of *Phineas Finn*. Trollope had dealt with Irish nationalist aggression before, most notably in *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, which involves one of its Irish characters in a group of “Ribandmen” carrying out plots against local Royalist constabularies. Fenianism is even mentioned in *Phineas Finn*, but, perhaps predictably, it is located in the past: “It had been all very well to put down Fenianism, and Ribandmen, and Repeal,—and everything that had been put down in Ireland in the way of rebellion for the last seventy-five years” (2.180). Fenianism was far from the past tense, though, both during the narrative present of *Phineas Finn* and during the time of its authoring. Not until *The Eustace Diamonds* (1873) four years later will Trollope situate Fenianism in the present, when his narrator offhandedly remarks of the unsavory character, Lord George de Bruce Carruthers, “young men about

12. Gaskell also uses the Canadian railway project a few years earlier than Trollope, in her novella, *Cousin Phillis* (1863). Six years after *Phineas Finn*, in *The Way We Live Now*, this project is still an unfinished political and commercial issue.
London hinted that he was the grand centre of the British Fenians” (1.332). By that time in Trollope’s writing, though, as Carruthers’ outlandishly English-Norman-Scottish name implies, borders are being constantly redrawn. In *Phineas Finn*, the narrator’s curious relocation, into the past, of an ongoing aggression in the present discloses a further effort to minimize the intrusion of history on romance.

The clearest nod to the cold, hard truth in the novel’s presentation of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century is Mary Flood Jones’s random remark, in a missive to Phineas, that she never knows whether a letter in the mailbox is a *billet-doux* from him or “an order to go to Botany Bay,” a reference to the British practice of deporting Irish petty criminals and nationalist rebels to Australia (2.288). Apart from this, Trollope’s Ireland in *Phineas Finn* is a fabulous one, either a romanticization of the Emerald Isle or an attempt to assuage the English reader’s colonial conscience. Phineas remarks, late in the novel, that “men in Parliament know less about Ireland than they do of the interior of Africa” (2.178). Wittily meant, to be sure, Finn’s comment nevertheless captures the novel’s desire to both reflect and amplify the foreignness of Ireland—more foreign, it would seem, than Africa, and more unknown.

To return to considerations with which this chapter opened its inquiry into the ambivalent portrayal of Irishness in *Phineas Finn* and the effects of that ambivalence on the narrative, Lonergan has argued that “the structure of Trollope’s Palliser series was thoroughly de-stabilized by his inclusion of an Irish character, just as its realism was compromised. This shows how important Phineas’s Irishness is” (157). It is difficult to accept this argument, though, given both the uncertain depiction of Finn’s Irishness and the ending of *Phineas Finn*. The novel may find itself challenged by Phineas’s Irishness, as Trollope himself felt challenged by it, but it finds its equilibrium in the way that, according to Moretti, every English *Bildungsroman* does; it checks its hero’s upward progress and preserves the social order. It is important that Mary Flood Jones’s reference to deportation—the novel’s closest engagement with the dark side of this period in Irish history—arrives only at the novel’s end, once the plot has accepted Finn’s Irishness and is prepared to remove him from Parliament for it. John Hynes attributes to Trollope’s biographer Michael Sadleir the claim “that Trollope never learned to disentangle Irish individuals from the sorrows and aspirations of their native land” (Hynes 54), but this claim is made first by Phineas Finn, at the novel’s end. Defending to Parliament his decision to vote for a doomed Irish Tenant-Rights bill,
Phineas explains that “his Irish birth and Irish connection had brought this misfortune of his country so closely home to him that he had found the task of extricating himself from it to be impossible” (2.340). The finale of *Phineas Finn* ultimately renders him Irish, a decision that facilitates the final adherence to the form of the traditional English *Bildungsroman*, which puts all comers into their proper place. For Finn in England, that proper place is Ireland.

Trollope’s resolution here differs greatly from Balzac’s in the three novels discussed earlier. Unlike the irremediably foreign and inexplicable object of *La Peau de chagrin*, which vanishes once its damage is done and leaves the narrative mourning the loss; or the criminal of *Père Goriot*, who is forcibly removed by law; or *La Fille aux yeux d’or*, who is brought to a violent end, Phineas removes himself. The precise nature of the geographical removal, though, raises questions of physical space which the next chapter explores in depth. *Phineas Finn*’s clumsy dénouement recalls Pip’s end in *Great Expectations* (1861), in which he “quit[s] England” and takes up a clerical position abroad, in the imperial project (474). Phineas finds himself first back in Dublin with the aim of resurrecting an abandoned legal career there, but he is soon whisked further away from the English Pale by a letter from his former Parliament colleagues, inviting him to take up a lowly government position in Cork. “And thus,” the narrator concludes, “we will leave our hero an Inspector of Poor Houses in the County of Cork” (2.356). Leaving Dublin (in Leinster) for Munster is significant, in the geography of Ireland that Trollope’s novels present: narratologically, it is a cyclical return, as Phineas started in Munster, in Co. Clare; culturally, it represents a final removal from England. In Trollope’s first novel, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, Dublin is pegged as the central point of reference for his English readers, and the setting is laid only in relation to it, “about 72 miles W.N.W. of Dublin, on the mail-coach road to Sligo” (1). Furthermore, the Irish capital would still long be associated with Englishness. In Roddy Doyle’s recent *A Star Called Henry* (2000), an account of the 1916 Easter Uprising,

*Dublin was too close to England; it was where the orders and cruelty came from. And the homespun bollixes in Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League were to blame too; Ireland was everywhere west of Dublin, the real people were west, west, as far west as possible, on the islands, the rocks off the islands, speaking Irish and eating wool; the Leaguers lived in Dublin but they went west for their holliers, to the real people.* (237)

Here, space—the internal geography of Ireland—determines Irishness. From metropolitan London, Finn returns through metropolitan Dublin to less-
metropolitan Ireland, where he weds his Irish beloved. His movements, while finally emphatic of an accepted geographical relationship between England and Ireland, underscore a disenchantment that Trollope only begins to confront in Phineas Finn and attempts to undo in Phineas Redux (1874) and The Way We Live Now (1875).