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AN ANGEL IN THE HOUSE: THE ACT OF UNION AND ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S IRISH HERO

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ANTHONY TROLLOPE famously rued having made Phineas Finn, the hero of two of his Palliser novels, an Irishman. He wrote in his *Autobiography* that "[t]here was nothing to be gained by the peculiarity, and there was the added difficulty in obtaining sympathy and affection for a politician belonging to a nationality whose politics are not respected in England" (202). In spite of this, Trollope noted that the novels were read and admired by the denizens of the political world he had described, and *Phineas Finn*, at least, remains regarded by critics as one of Trollope's best novels. Yet because Trollope himself called attention to the "blunder" of having made Phineas Irish, many of these critics have examined the importance of Phineas's ethnicity to the story Trollope tells. Owen Dudley Edwards sees Phineas's Irishness as "essential to the whole business. He is preeminently the beautiful savage, straight from the frontier" (16). Likewise, Bill Overton argues that "Phineas's Irish birth is crucial to the novel's plot" (qtd. in Walton 72), while F. S. L. Lyons argues of Trollope that "his hero's Irishness made the novelist's task much harder than it might have been" (xiii). R. F. Foster asserts that there is little about Phineas that would have been obviously "Irish" to Victorian readers, but he also argues that "in many ways, Trollope makes [his ethnicity] favour Phineas" (*Paddy and Mr. Punch* 287). For her part, E. W. Wittig notes that Phineas is "little different from protagonists of Trollope's British novels" (116), though, of course, *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux* are usually grouped with Trollope's British novels.

Clearly, critics have not yet reached a consensus on the tricky subject of the ethnicity of Phineas Finn, and its effects on the characterizations, composition, trajectory, and reception of Trollope's two novels. This is due to the complicated nature of Irish identity and representation in the United Kingdom after the 1801 Act of Union between Britain and Ireland; yet, despite their differences, all of Trollope's critics make valid points about Phineas's ethnicity: it did make the novelist's task harder, and it is crucial to the plot of, at least, the first Phineas novel. There is little about Phineas that is obviously Irish, and yet it does favor him, at least in *Phineas Finn*. 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. All these contradictory observations are true because of the self-contradictory status of Ireland after the Union, a union which is explicitly defined in *Phineas Finn* as a marriage

contract and which rendered Ireland an anomalous entity within the contractarian society of the United Kingdom prior to and during the time that Trollope was writing the Palliser novels.

The Act of Union legally assimilated Ireland into the United Kingdom. From the moment it was proposed – as a means of subduing Ireland, which had in 1798 exploded into violent rebellion – it was seen in the popular imagination as a marriage between Great Britain and Ireland, with Britain as the groom and Ireland as the bride. In part, this metaphor gained wide currency because the Act of Union had so many of the hallmarks of the classic marriage contract. The Irish Parliament became in 1800 the only parliament in history to freely vote for its own abolition; likewise, the classic marriage contract has been defined as a vehicle through which, by their own consent, women give up their civil rights, specifically their right to make any future contracts. The classic marriage contract thus ensures the incorporation of women "into a sphere that both is and is not in civil society," a private sphere which is "part of civil society but separated from the 'civil' sphere" (Pateman 11). That marriage contract called the Act of Union, then, ensured that Ireland would remain in paradoxical relation to the civil sphere of Great Britain: formally joined to it (the Irish had 100 seats in the House), but practically separated from it (the Irish continued to be seen, and represented, as uncivil despite, and also because of, the national marriage). Moreover, by abolishing Ireland's House, the Union ensured that Ireland itself no longer possessed or embodied a public sphere, a sphere which has been defined as masculine by both Pateman and Trollope, who saw politics as the most manly of the professions (qtd. in Halperin 2).

As the nineteenth century progressed and the domestic sphere – created by the extension of the marriage contract into the marriage itself – became possible (Jones 43), it also became possible to argue that the marriage contract Britain and Ireland had made in 1801 should be extended into the ongoing marriage of the two parties. Indeed, the text of *Phineas Finn* argues that

> [i]t had all been 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. England and Ireland had been apparently joined together by the laws of nature so fixed, that even politicians liberal as was Mr. Monk, – liberal as was Mr. Turnbull, – could not trust themselves to think that disunion could be good for the Irish. They had taught themselves that it certainly could not be good for the English. But if it was incumbent on England to force upon Ireland the maintenance of the Union for her own sake, because England could not afford independence so close against her own ribs, it was at any rate necessary to England's character that the bride thus bound in a compulsory wedlock should be endowed with all the best privileges that a wife can enjoy. Let her at least not be a kept mistress. Let it be bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, if we are to live together in the married state. Between husband and wife a warm word now and then matters but little, if there be a thoroughly good understanding at bottom. But let there be that good understanding at bottom. (180; vol. 2, ch. 58)

The text argues for the full inclusion of Ireland in the domestic realm of England, and the extension of the marriage contract into the Anglo-Irish marriage, specifically to rid Ireland of separatist movements which threatened the union, a marriage essential for England's security and indeed masculinity, as evidenced by the statement that England, the ostensible groom, "could not afford independence so close against her own ribs." Yet the text argues for the assimilation of Ireland into the domestic space only as a (subordinate) wife, with rights "endowed" upon her by her husband, despite the fact that it is arguing in support of a bill for

Irish tenant-right, the legislative extension of British tenant-right to the Irish, which would ensure equal treatment for Irish tenants. The text here is ensnared in the contradictions of the marriage metaphor, which, as Louise Olga Fradenburg notes, "is defined by its simultaneous suspension and preservation of inequality" (72); it becomes further ensnared by its own rhetoric when it suggests that what is needed in the Anglo-Irish relationship is a "good understanding at bottom." The Act of Union had established that the success – or at least the survival – of the marriage depended upon Ireland's practical subordination to her husband; to argue that the success of the marriage depends, instead, on domestic understanding is to offer a justification for its dissolution: if the Irish can remain othered, the marriage is untenable.

In arguing the way it does, the text is revealed as an advocate of the mid-Victorian policy of seeking to establish a "union of hearts" between the two countries, a policy advocated in response to the Fenian insistence that domestic understanding between the two countries was impossible, that the marriage had failed and that it was time for a national divorce, an insistence reinforced by "masculine" displays of violence meant to emphasize that Ireland would no longer be anyone's blushing bride (Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland* 155). Inevitably, the text's vision of domestic bliss, one produced by the increased assimilation of Ireland into the civil sphere, subject to the same laws, is fractured by difference, which calls into question the possibility of true assimilation, rendering doubtful the tenability of the exogamous marriage between the two countries.

The text goes on to ask,

> What about this Protestant Church, and what about this tenant-right? Mr. Monk had been asking himself these questions for some time past. In regard to the Church, he had long ago made up his mind that the Establishment in Ireland was a crying sin. A man had married a woman whom he knew to be of a religion different from his own, and then insisted that his wife should say that she believed those things which he knew very well that she did not believe. But, as Mr. Monk well knew, the subject of the Protestant Endowments in Ireland was so difficult that it would require almost more than human wisdom to adjust it. It was one of those matters which almost seemed to require the interposition of some higher power, – the coming of some apparently chance event, – to clear away the evil; as a fire comes, and pestilential alleys are removed; as a famine comes, and men are driven from want and ignorance and dirt to seek new homes and new thoughts across the broad waters; as a war comes, and slavery is banished from the face of the earth. (181; vol. 2, ch. 58)

The text's vision of a happy domesticity quickly gives way to the reality of the deep differences between Britain and his bride which prevent a "good understanding at bottom," and this reality prompts Mr. Monk to envision a genocidal, rather than a domestic, solution, to what was called, in the nineteenth century, "the Irish question." It may be that the text is satirizing Monk's own hypocrisy here, but the character does echo his creator, Trollope, who in so many of his books arranges a disastrous exogamous marriage for one of his characters, and who, like Monk, praised a natural disaster as a means of achieving progress. Despite having witnessed, and written, scenes of Irish deprivation and suffering, Trollope believed that the Great Famine of 1845–1850 was a divine mercy, ridding Ireland of her surplus population and allowing the society to prosper and progress (Foster, *Paddy and Mr. Punch* 141; Mullen with Munson 402). Thus does the text's viewpoint quickly devolve from a vision of domestic bliss into something more like "Exterminate all the brutes!" in the face of Ireland's apparently irremediable otherness.

Trollope's first Phineas novel, *Phineas Finn*, which was published serially in 1866, follows much the same trajectory as the passage. The second novel in Trollope's celebrated Palliser series, it is a novel, ostensibly a Bildungsroman (Felber 124), in which the young hero attempts to become assimilated into the domestic sphere of Britain through a career in "the House," an institution which also represents the apotheosis of the civil, and masculine, sphere into which post-Union Irishmen cannot quite be assimilated. In so attempting, Phineas repeatedly encounters, and nonviolently vanquishes, the forces of violence to which the text has referred when it references Fenians and Ribandmen. Yet while the text repeatedly shows that Phineas, though Finnian, is no Fenian, the terms of his assimilation stipulate that he remain an angel in the House, and his trajectory of assimilation is continually threatened by difference. In particular, Phineas's attempts to establish his (nonviolent) masculinity – a masculinity defined by the achievement of "independence," an independence close to England's ribs – by capturing a bride are continually thwarted by his Irish identity, an identity produced by the marriage already made by Ireland. The novels ends with an untenable narrative resolution, and in order to continue Phineas's story, Trollope must effect an act of divine intervention in order to rid the narrative of its surplus Irish population. In so doing, he ensures that the title of *Phineas Redux* might more accurately have been "Phineas Reduced," as Phineas's Irishness becomes ever more closeted. This Finnian sequel is able to assimilate Phineas only through a kind of European union, one which forecloses the possibility of him ever making a union of hearts with an Englishwoman. As the narrative of the Palliser novels continues, Phineas gradually loses nearly all of his Irish identity. Indeed, in writing of Phineas's career after Phineas leaves center stage, Trollope's vaunted social realism breaks down: he can keep Phineas in the narrative only by continuing to deny him the masculine independence that he ostensibly sought in his Bildungsroman quest, an independence Phineas's real-life counterparts were busily establishing in England's House during the time Trollope was writing the later Palliser novels.

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Like many Bildungsromans, *Phineas Finn* ends with a marriage, but it also begins with one: the marriage of Phineas to the Liberal party. Liberal scion Barrinton Erle proposes to Phineas that he run for a seat in Ireland, and unexpectedly, the brother of the Conservative candidate supports Phineas, enabling him to win the seat. As a new member, Phineas is tutored by Lady Laura Standish, with whom he falls in love. But Lady Laura has used her fortune to pay her brother Chiltern's debts, and she marries the wealthy Scots MP Robert Kennedy so that she might remain connected to the inner circle of the Liberal political world. After her marriage, Laura remains friendly with Phineas, and Phineas becomes friends with Chiltern, who has been in love with the daughter of his father's best friend since childhood. Chiltern is a prodigal son with a reputation for drinking and violence, and his achievement of a betrothal to Violet Effingham is the only possible means of effecting a reconciliation between father and son. As he gets to know Violet, Phineas also develops a romantic interest in her. Phineas loses his Irish seat, and rescues Robert Kennedy from a garrotting attack, leading the Earl of Brentford, the father of Laura and Chiltern, to offer him, rather than Chiltern, the Brentford family seat. Phineas is elected to the seat, but after his interest in Violet becomes known to Chiltern, he challenges Phineas to a duel.

In their duel, Phineas shoots to miss, and Chiltern shoots to kill, injuring Phineas in the shoulder. The secret encounter becomes the talk of the political world, and Laura is furious

when Phineas tells her that he and Chiltern have dueled, not least because she is angry that Phineas has so quickly withdrawn his affection for her. Laura is unhappy in her marriage, feeling that Kennedy is cold, demanding, and excessively religious. As her unhappiness grows, she feels more and more that Phineas is the great love of her life. Phineas, for his part, loses his seat when the rotten boroughs are abolished, and once again runs from Ireland, winning again and being put into political office. Violet and Chiltern become engaged for the first time, but soon break it off because of their clashing wills. In the wake of the broken engagement, Phineas announces that he will continue to fight for Violet's hand. Lady Laura thinks of leaving her husband. Violet and Chiltern once again become engaged, and Phineas goes to Ireland with Mr. Monk, making speeches in support of Irish tenant right, and asking Mary Flood Jones, his childhood sweetheart, to marry him. When he returns, Laura leaves her husband, and Phineas is called on the carpet for defying the will of the party on Irish tenant right. He loses his office and must return to Ireland, where he marries Mary Flood Jones and takes a job in local government, after rejecting a marriage proposal by Marie Max Goesler, a wealthy widow of indeterminate nationality.

Phineas Finn's career in *Phineas Finn* is thus bracketed by two proposals of marriage: the first, made by Barrington Erle, establishes Phineas's marriage to the Liberal Party, and the second is made by Marie Max Goesler and rejected by Phineas, who has already become engaged to Mary Flood Jones. Barrington Erle's proposal, throughout which Phineas blushes "like a girl," delineates quite clearly the possibilities for the Irish members of England's House:

> 'the party'. . . required that the candidate should be a safe man, one who would support 'the party,' – not a cantankerous, red-hot semi-Fenian, running about to meetings at the Rotunda and such-like, with views of his own about tenant-right and the Irish Church. 'But I have views of my own,' said Phineas, blushing again. 'Of course you have, my dear boy,' said Barrington, clapping him on the back. 'I shouldn't have come to you unless you had views. But your views and ours are the same.' (6; vol. 1, ch. 1)

Phineas does not seek office, but is chosen, and selected for qualities which Erle thinks will make him a "safe man," one who will support the party as a wife supports her husband. The fact that "your views and ours are the same" increases the possibility that the union will be a happy one, though Phineas, who is both Irish and Catholic, retains his potential for dangerous difference, and Erle warns him that more than the usual submission will be required from him because of the presumption that the Irish – even Irish members – will be violent and separatist. Erle himself is related to every important member of the Liberal party and to the Whig manner born; he is the consummate insider, perhaps the best example of the essential consanguinity of the British political system, a consanguinity which seemed to Trollope, as Jack Berthoud notes, to make a political party "more trustworthy than one cemented by dogma" (xxi). By contrast, Phineas is an outsider, and enters the English political world through a kind of marriage to his party, which is the vehicle through which outsiders become relatives: the exogamous impulse offers the possibility of establishing new consanguinities (Fradenburg 87). Yet for Phineas, as for any wife entering the classic marriage contract, the price of his inclusion is his submission. Throughout *Phineas Finn*, as characterized by Trollope, Phineas's sense of himself as a man requires that he chafe at this requirement, and

he seeks a bride of his own, preferably a wealthy one whose fortune will ensure his ability to express his own views without having to depend on holding a political office for an income.

Phineas courts two wealthy and connected British women in his quest for a fortune, though a fortune is not his only goal in seeking the hand of, first, Lady Laura Standish, and then Violet Effingham. In part, Phineas seeks to counterbalance his political submission with domestic domination. As Carole Pateman argues,

> Political right originates in sex-right or conjugal right. Paternal right is only one, and not the original, dimension of patriarchal power. A man's power as a father comes only after he has exercised the patriarchal right of a man (a husband) over a woman (wife). The contract theorists had no wish to challenge the original patriarchal right in their onslaught on paternal right. Instead, they incorporated conjugal right into their theories, and, in so doing, transformed the law of male sex-right into its modern contractual form. Patriarchy ceased to be paternal long ago. Modern civil society is not structured by kinship and the power of fathers; in the modern world, women are subordinated to men as men, or to men as a fraternity. The original contract takes place after the political defeat of the father and creates modern fraternal patriarchy. (11)

Like marriage, the "most manly of professions" (qtd. in Halperin 2) is governed by contract. The difference between the social contract, which is entered by men, and the classic marriage contract, entered by a man and woman, is delineated in the text's statement that "[i]t was of course a man's duty to bind himself together with no other men but those with whom, on matters of general policy, he could agree heartily" (47; vol. 2, ch. 43), an agreement often made possible by culture, class, and consanguinity. Despite the requirements of the social contract, the text takes seriously the notion of independence as the hallmark of masculinity: even Phineas, the angel in the House, says to himself that "[h]e would throw up his position, resign his seat, and go to work at the Bar instantly, if he found that his independence as a man required him to do so" (269; Vol II, ch. XLIII). Phineas pursues a wife with somewhat more than the usual zeal because he has established a marriage contract, rather than a social contract, with his party, one which limits his "independence as a man." He seeks to enter the "modern civil society" of Victorian Britain and establish himself on a fraternal footing with his fellow members – to gain, as it were, "member-ship" – by making a marriage contract and asserting his male sex-right in the private realm. Yet the already existing Union between England and Ireland will make this a quixotic quest, not least because the characters in the novels, English and Irish alike, have been formed by the respective gender positions of their countries.

Throughout most of *Phineas Finn*, Phineas seeks to make a moneyed Englishwoman his bride, in part to establish his male sex-right in the private realm. Yet neither Lady Laura Standish nor Violet Effingham is particularly submissive. Their wealth, their proximity to power and the civil sphere, and the gender of their home country have all contributed to their gender hybridity. Lady Laura and Violet are both quite knowledgeable about politics, the "noblest and manliest of professions"; the political realm is Lady Laura's consuming passion (qtd. in Halperin 2). Violet declares, "'I shall knock under to Mr. Mill, and look forward to stand for some female borough. Matrimony never seemed to me very charming"' (17; vol. 2, ch. 34). She marries Chiltern, whom she has always loved, only after she realizes the impossibility of living independently. Laura marries Robert Kennedy "as the only outlet for her energy" and her desire to be involved in politics (McMaster 173). The text describes her face as "lacking that softness which we all love in women," and has Laura remark that "'a woman's life is

only half a life, as she cannot have a seat in Parliament"' (32; vol. 1, ch. 4; 58; vol. 1, ch. 6). Understandably, Laura chafes at her confinement to the private sphere, and her attempts to bring the House into her home create a major conflict in her marriage, from which she eventually flees and for which the text punishes her by stripping her of her beauty and making her pathetic in her obsession with Phineas, despite the clear sense in the text that Kennedy is being unfair to Laura by not allowing for the extension of their marriage contract into their marriage. Violet gives up her quest for independence voluntarily; Laura does not believe she has to give up hers, and the text exacts a steep price from her. If the text allows Violet and Laura some degree of gender hybridity and some expectation of domestic mutuality, it places limits on the extent to which they, like Phineas, can pursue their dreams of independence.

The proximity of Violet Effingham, Lady Laura Standish, and Glencora Palliser to the masculine world of politics – a world confined to Britain since the Act of Union – makes these upper-class women also political, at least in the domestic sphere, and this hybridizes them. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable when the political Englishwomen of the novel are contrasted to Mary Flood Jones, Phineas's Irish love and the most feminine woman in the text. Mary's femininity is explicitly linked by the text to her ethnicity: we read of her that "[s]he was one of those girls, so common in Ireland, whom men, with tastes that way given, feel inclined to take up and devour on the spur of the moment; and when she liked her lion, she had a look about her which seemed to ask to be devoured" (19; vol. 1, ch. 2). Leaving aside the reference to a lion, the symbol of British imperialism, Mary appears here as a supreme example of femininity precisely because she is an Irish girl. Unlike the politically savvy English women who appear in the text, Mary cannot quite grasp the particulars of political life: the text says of her condescendingly that "Mary had taught herself to believe that after the many sweet conversations she had had with a man so high in office as Phineas, she really did understand something about the British government" (276; vol. 2, ch. 67). Critics have called Mary a "cute blob of Irish dew" (Epperly 26); Robert Polhemus notes that "being in love with Mary offers opportunities for unconditional love, for almost slavish devotion, for nearly absolute power over another," something clearly not offered by Phineas's English loves (390). More chivalrously, Phineas himself notes that "Violet lacked that sweet, clinging, feminine softness which made Mary Flood Jones so pre-eminently the most charming of her sex" (282; vol. 2, ch. 68). Mary's femininity is reinforced by her ethnicity, while the masculinized ethnicity of the female Britons often conflicts with the feminine roles they must assume.

As an Irish male, Phineas is himself something of a gender hybrid, like the political Englishwomen with whom he consorts. Certainly Phineas's feminine qualities are referred to repeatedly in the text; Laura remarks that he "'has enough of the feminine side of a woman's character' to be unusually sensitive to a woman's feelings" (McMaster 48). Phineas is also repeatedly placed in feminine roles, as indicated by the two marriage proposals he receives; critics of the Palliser novels, including this one, always refer to him by his first name. Phineas's feminine sensitivity and submissiveness are balanced by examples of his virility: he rides to hounds, is physically strong, and rescues Robert Kennedy from a garroting attack which increases the esteem in which he is held. This virility is never violent, of course, as the text takes pains to absolve Phineas of any Fenian tendencies, and unlike the Fenians, Phineas has no interest in dismantling the Union; instead, he hopes to make the Union work for him, as it did for his creator Trollope (*Paddy and Mr. Punch* 145). Certainly, the Union has shaped Phineas's character as well as his ostensible narrative trajectory, as he has been feminized by his country's concomitant feminization; Lady Laura, who has lived in England all her life,

must tutor Phineas in the workings of the British political world. Nevertheless, Phineas's gender hybridity makes him the perfect politician: he is described as a man "with strong opinions, who could yet be submissive" (22; vol. 2, ch. 40), which is essential for political success as a junior party member in England's House, itself a hybridized space representing the apotheosis of masculinity and the symbol of English domesticity. If something more than the usual submissiveness is required of Phineas because of his ethnicity, and the Fenian taint that accompanied it at the time Trollope was crafting the character, this very submissiveness makes possible Phineas's early rise, and this rise is so anomalous – Phineas is described by the party leader as "'about the first Irishman we've had that has been worth his salt"' – that the British politicos forget that Phineas is Irish at all (144; vol. 1, ch. 16).

Phineas's gender hybridity enables his rise in the British political world, and it is his most Irish quality. Phineas fulfills none of the Victorian stereotypes of Irishness: the text tells us that he is neither lazy, nor improvident, nor dishonest, nor a drunkard, nor anything more than a nominal Roman Catholic, nor, in particular, violent. He doesn't even have a brogue. When Gresham compliments Phineas on his singular salt-worthiness, he does so at the expense of another prominent Irish member, Laurence Fitzgibbon, who is, as Wittig notes, "a stage Irishman . . . unreliable, irresponsible, and outrageous, fond of exaggeration and occasional tippling" (116). Phineas's Catholicism – he is the product of a mixed marriage – is differentiated from that of Mary Flood Jones, who is depicted as quite devout, and he is absolved of violent tendencies in four separate incidents in the two novels, culminating in his trial for murder. In particular, the text offers Lord Chiltern as a contrast to Phineas; Chiltern is violent, "half-savage," described as "outside the pale of decent society," and has been identified by Dudley Edwards as a character with "Irish origins" (98; vol. 1, ch. 11; 18; vol. 1, ch. 2; Dudley Edwards 16). Chiltern tries to kill Phineas when they duel, but Phineas shoots to miss, encapsulating the differences between the two characters and further increasing the esteem in which Phineas is held in the political world. Already, at the time of the duel, Phineas has been placed in Lord Brentford's seat, which is seen as the rightful possession of Chiltern, Brentford's son. However, Phineas falls from this lofty height soon after the duel, as his rise through the political ranks threatens the English social order, and despite his status as an Irish exemplar, the text quickly undoes Phineas, rupturing its own Bildungsroman narrative. The text ultimately forecloses the possibility of Phineas being both Irish and independent, and ultimately doubts the ability of marriage to forge consanguinities, to turn outsiders into relatives. It does so in the passage quoted earlier, with regard to England and Ireland, and also with regard to the marriage of Phineas to his party and the marriages and proposed marriages of the various characters in the text, particularly those of Phineas himself. In so doubting, the text calls into question that which it had sought, through the success of its "Irish member," to prove: the tenability of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

Phineas's rise in the English political world is profoundly threatening to the consanguinity of that world, a consanguinity which enables the success of the social contract, and, with the rise of the domestic and the growing importance of that "good understanding at bottom," the success of the marriage contract as well. This consanguinity is so taken for granted by the denizens of the British political realm that as Phineas becomes socially and politically popular, his humble origins become obscured.

> Of those who knew him intimately, not one in twenty were aware from whence he came, what his parentage, or what his means of living. He was a member of Parliament, a friend of Mr. Kennedy's,

> though an Irishman did not herd with other Irishmen, and was the right sort of person to have at your house. Some people said he was a cousin of Lord Brentford's, and others declared that he was Lord Chiltern's earliest friend. There he was, however, with a position gained, and even Lady Baldock asked him to her house. (200; vol. 1, ch. 22)

So anomalous is Phineas's rise that it is only explicable if he is related to the English political figures with whom he consorts, whether by blood or because of a childhood intimacy. The text tells us that Phineas has come to be accepted into the endogamous political world of England, but reminds us repeatedly, as in the example above, of Phineas's true identity. Phineas's inclusion in the elite political sphere comes to become something of a family romance, as he forgets his humble Irish origins in consorting with Lords and Earls and Prime Ministers. Indeed, he forgets himself to the point that he begins to think of himself as a member of the House of Brentford, replacing the prodigal Chiltern. But the text insists that Phineas be cast out, in order to effect a different sort of family romance, one which will restore the fractured family of Lord Brentford.

Phineas becomes a stand-in for Lord Chiltern, being placed in the seat that is assumed to be Chiltern's by right, and developing an affection for Violet Effingham, Chiltern's childhood friend, the surrogate daughter of Lord Brentford, and the intended wife of Chiltern. In pursuing Violet, then, Phineas tests the limits of his acceptance into Brentford's family, and Chiltern challenges him to the duel on the grounds that

> [y]ou stand before the world as a rising man, and I stand before the world as a man – damned. You have been chosen by my father to sit for our family borough, while I am an outcast from his house. You have Cabinet Ministers for your friends, while I have hardly a decent associate left to me in the world. (351; vol. 1, ch. 37)

Evidently Chiltern sees Phineas not only as having threatened his primary place in Violet's affections, but in his own family, and in the larger society to which he and his family belong, and which they are accustomed to running. For her part, Lady Laura rebukes Phineas for dueling with her brother, and in the process neatly encapsulates Phineas's unstable position in her family and in the political world generally. She first appeals to Phineas's quasi-familial relationship to her, saying that "Oswald has treated you as a brother in this matter, telling you everything, and this is the way you would repay him for his confidence" (13; vol. 2, ch. 39). But when Phineas tells her that he has come to her as he would his sister, Laura angrily denies any familial connection between them, saying incredulously, "Your sister? Psha! I am not your sister, Mr. Finn. Nor, were I so, should I fail to remember that I have a dearer brother to whom my faith is pledged" (15; vol. 2, ch. 39). In first appealing to, then disavowing, a familial connection between herself and Phineas, Laura shows that Phineas is expected to exhibit the loyalty of a family member without partaking in any of the privileges of membership in a powerful family, or expecting any loyalty in return. This, of course, is also the expectation of Phineas's party, and it is representative of, and caused by, Britain's expectations for Ireland – loyalty and subordination, the expectations of the classic marriage contract – in the context of the national marriage of the Union. The text's expectation of loyalty and subordination from its titular character undercuts not only its ostensible Bildungsroman narrative, but Trollope's supposed support of the union of hearts between Britain and Ireland, a union which would establish a more domestic kind of relationship between the two countries.

Of course, Laura ultimately aids Phineas in his pursuit of Violet, but she does so mostly because of the desire he continues to provoke in her; as befits his gender hybridity, Phineas's social and political power often seems to reside in his "comeliness." However, despite Phineas's status as a paragon, particularly in contrast to Chiltern, the text will not allow for the possibility of his marrying Violet. She chooses Chiltern, because she has loved him since childhood, and because Phineas lacks independence; she says of him that "'[h]e lacks something in individuality. He is a little too much a friend to everybody"' (309; vol. 2, ch. 71). The former rationale is endemic in the Palliser novels, where having known someone in childhood is the best reason and foundation for marriage, making for unions which are quasi-endogamous without being incestuous; marrying exogamously is, in the Palliser novels generally, portrayed as disastrous. The latter rationale has everything to do with Phineas's gender hybridity and the marriage contract he has been forced to make with his party, a marriage contract imposed on him because of his ethnicity. Ironically, Phineas had hoped to marry Violet in order to become his own man, by establishing control over Violet's fortune and achieving male sex-right in the private realm. As Priscilla Walton notes, "Phineas's desire for inclusion is displaced onto a desire for sexual subjugation, which would lend him the illusion of control and enable him to perform in centric fashion" (49); this is a desire which the text simply cannot allow Phineas to fulfill.

His bid for Violet's hand thwarted, Phineas seeks a different method of establishing his "independence as a man." Phineas decides to dissolve the marriage he has made with his party, and like his counterpart Lady Laura, who decides to leave her marriage as well, he succeeds only in exiling himself from "the world." He ends his relationship with the party by making speeches in support of Irish tenant-right, the issue which prompts the text's speech in support of treating Ireland as bone of England's bone and flesh of England's flesh. The text notes that, in Ireland, "the men who were to produce the wealth had no guarantee that it would be theirs when it was created. In England and elsewhere such guarantees were in existence. Might it not be possible to introduce them into Ireland?" (262; vol. 2, ch. 66). Like wives, the Irish were not entitled to their own wealth, and those who advocated for the union of hearts, like Monk, argued that extending British tenant rights to the Irish would at last make the Union a reality – a true marriage, based on equality. Yet the classic marriage contract depends as much on preserving inequality as suspending it, and the same Irish reforms which are meant to establish a domestic partnership threaten it: an Ireland that is more equal could easily become less submissive. As we have seen, the threat of Irish independence feminizes England; Phineas's independence is equally threatening to his party, which requires something more than the usual submission from him, and his expression of independent views on Irish tenant-right results in his expulsion.

Phineas's bid for masculine independence comes in the form of an appeal to consanguinity; he notes that "his Irish birth and his Irish connection had brought this misfortune of his country so closely to him that he had found the task of extricating himself from it to be impossible" (340; vol. 2, ch. 75). In appealing to consanguinity, Phineas is following the logic of the text, in which consanguinity is the supreme political – and domestic – value. But because he is Irish, this appeal to consanguinity is seen as rebellion; in being asked to marry the party, Phineas has already been warned that he must not be a "red-hot semi-Fenian" who makes speeches in support of Irish tenant-right. Likewise, Phineas's marriage to Mary Flood Jones follows the logic of the text: like Chiltern and Violet, Phineas and Mary have played together as children. Marriage to Mary is the only endogamous marriage Phineas can make,

and it would seem that marriage to Mary would at last ensure Phineas's achievement of male sex-right, just as his speechifying would seem to establish his masculine independence. Instead, Phineas's actions banish him to Ireland, a feminized space where Phineas has no way of asserting his hard-won masculine independence. With his endogamous marriage to Mary, and his assertion of masculine independence, Phineas's narrative grinds to a complete halt.

It was his authorial decision to marry Phineas to Mary, a decision demanded by the logic of the text, that Trollope most rued about the book.

> It was certainly a blunder to take him from Ireland, – into which I was led by the circumstance that I created the scheme of the book during a visit to Ireland. There was nothing to be gained by the peculiarity, and there was an added difficulty in obtaining sympathy and affection for a politician belonging to a nationality whose politics are not respected in England. But in spite of this Phineas succeeded. It was not a brilliant success, – because men and women not conversant with political matters could not care much for a hero who spent so much time either in the House of Commons, or in a public office. But the men who would have lived with Phineas Finn read the book, and the women who would have lived with Lady Laura Standish read it also. As this was what I had intended I was contented. It is all fairly good, except the ending – as to which till I had got to it I made no provision. As I fully intended to bring my hero again into the world, I was wrong to marry him to a simple pretty Irish girl, who could only be felt as an encumbrance on such return. When he did return I had no alternative but to kill the pretty simple Irish girl which was an awkward and unpleasant necessity. (*Autobiography* 202)

That Trollope had made no provision for the ending of *Phineas Finn* is astounding, given that it is ostensibly a Bildungsroman – or half of one – and thus belongs to a genre which is driven, as Franco Moretti notes, by a teleological logic (7). Apparently, Trollope could not imagine how both to marry off his hero and keep him in "the world," how both to uphold the value of consanguinity and the conventions of the coming-of-age story. Indeed, Phineas comes to regret his decisions to marry Mary and break with the party, though he notes that "of course he would be true to her, though he did lose the world" (297; vol. 2, ch. 69). As in the passage quoted earlier, the text discovers the untenability of assimilating Ireland, and the Irish, into the domestic sphere of England without threatening the integrity of that sphere. And as in the passage quoted earlier, Trollope's text posits a rather violent solution to this Irish question: Mary is killed off in order to restart the narrative of progress and make possible Phineas's return to "the world." Mary, then, is imaginatively linked to the Great Famine, functioning as the surplus population of the narrative precisely because of her unhybridized and unassimilable Irishness.

Trollope believed that the Famine was a divine mercy, not a divine punishment (Pollard 20). The million who died, and million or more who emigrated, were mostly poor, Catholic, Irish-speaking; before the Famine it had been a commonplace to remark that Ireland had a "surplus population" of two and a half million (Woodham-Smith 35), and Trollope believed that with the elimination of this intractably Irish, and intractably other, "surplus population," Ireland could become a modern society, joined with Britain on its narrative march unstoppable progress. Likewise, the conspicuously Catholic Mary Flood Jones impedes Phineas's narrative, and Trollope is forced to kill her off. Mary remains unassimilable; throughout *Phineas Finn*, Phineas never once mentions her to any of his English friends. Even after their engagement, Phineas treats Mary as though she were a shameful secret; the text informs us that "he whispered to this new friend no word of the engagement with his

dear Irish Mary. His Irish life, he would tell himself, was a thing quite apart and separate from his life in England. He said not a word about Mary Flood Jones to any of those with whom he lived in London" (271; vol. 2, ch. 67). Thus, Phineas closets "his dear Irish Mary" before Trollope kills her.

In killing off Mary Flood Jones, the most conspicuously Irish character in the text, Trollope removes most of what made Phineas an Irish character. In *Phineas Redux* Phineas's family disappears from the narrative, he takes little interest in Irish affairs, and there are fewer mentions of his ethnicity; Phineas seems to agree with Lady Laura that "'anything will be better than going back to Ireland"' (109; vol. 1, ch. 12), suggesting that he would be more than willing to renounce his "independence as a man" if doing so meant he could stay in London. Moreover, Phineas's (womanly) abilities in the private realm, the most visible sign of his Irishness, hurt him in *Phineas Redux*, after having served him so well in *Phineas Finn*: his trial for murder results directly from his inability to separate the public and the private, as he makes a political rival, Bonteen – who has been removed from office as a result of the meddling of Phineas's female champions – into a personal one.

Indeed, Phineas's trial for murder represents a kind of rite of passage, as he first enters a state of liminality and then emerges with a new identity. The trial subjects Phineas to the conditions he had once set for himself, when he began his political rise:

> There came upon him, as he looked around them, an idea that he had had no business to be in Parliament, that he was an impostor, that he was going about the world under false pretenses, and that he would never set himself aright, even unto himself, till he had gone through some terrible act of humiliation. (255; vol. 1, ch. 27)

Phineas's trial provides for his assimilation – with terms – because he is utterly stripped of his masculinity by the ordeal, and it provides for the assimilation of Madame Max Goesler, Phineas's future wife, as well: she defeats the "bad Jew," the Reverend Emilius, in the process of finding the evidence that rescues Phineas from the gallows (Walton 107). After Phineas recovers from the trial and its aftermath, he asks Madame Max to marry him, a narrative solution which neatly sidesteps the problems inherent in an English or an Irish bride, and which, given Marie's insistence that their marriage must be an even partnership, ensures that Phineas will have no future opportunities to exercise his male sex-right. *Phineas Redux*, then, resolves Phineas's narrative with a European union, and one which doesn't allow Phineas the masculine independence he once sought, but does provide him with enough money to remain "in the world," and in the background of the later Palliser novels.

Phineas's subsequent career takes him to the pinnacles of Liberal power: he becomes Chief Secretary for Ireland and eventually First Lord of the Admiralty under the Duke of Omnium (Mullen with Munson 407). Yet his success makes Phineas an even more anomalous Irishman, given that at the time Trollope was writing *The Prime Minister*, most Irish Catholic members of Parliament had joined forces in the Home Rule Party, which would eventually decide the balance of power in the House and help Gladstone discover his desire for Irish Home Rule and other reforms (Foster, *Modern Ireland* 398 and 416–17). It is the final measure of the servitude Trollope's texts demand of their Irish member that Phineas, who had so longed for masculine independence, denounces and votes against Home Rule for Ireland, which would have restored a measure of "masculine independence" to Ireland through the creation of a devolved Irish Parliament and the restoration of Ireland's civil sphere. Phineas's Irishness

is something that Trollope, the social realist, cannot bring himself to portray realistically. Indeed, Trollope succeeds only in showing, through his character's narrative trajectory, the untenability of the Union between Britain and Ireland, the opposite of his goal in *Phineas Finn*, and not the first, nor the last, unintended consequence produced by the Act of Union and its metaphoric national marriage.

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