

Rui Carvalho Homem  
(Universidade do Porto)



Culturas da Comemoração:  
o Caso da Literatura Irlandesa

FLUL, 15 de Março de 2016

‘the reputation of a major writer can offer a glimpse into the contestations of history that have structured our understanding of the past and of ourselves’

John Nash, “‘In the Heart of the Hibernian Metropolis’? Joyce's Reception in Ireland, 1900-1940’, Richard Brown (ed.), *A Companion to James Joyce* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). 108-122 (108).

‘memory is the scaffolding upon which all mental life is constructed (...)  
memory *distortion* (...) raises important issues regarding institutional and societal memory and how distortion at these levels relates to the function of individuals.’

Gerald D. Fischbach and Joseph T. Coyle, ‘Preface’, Daniel L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion: how minds, brains, and societies reconstruct the past* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U.P., 1995) ix-x

‘Halbwachs provided an extensive analysis of how social groups remember and perpetuate their collective pasts, with a strong emphasis on the distortions that are an inevitable part of collective memory (...) In addition, Halbwachs believed that social groups exert a profound influence on the content of individual memories, and help to create various illusions, condensations, and distortions’

Daniel L. Schacter, ‘Memory Distortion: History and Current Status’,  
*Memory Distortion: how minds, brains, and societies reconstruct the past*  
(Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U.P., 1995)

Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and ‘collective memory’:

‘social thought is essentially a memory and (...) its entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances. (...)

among them, only those recollections subsist that in every period society, working within its present-day frameworks, can reconstruct’

Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*,  
ed., translated, and introd. by Lewis A. Coser  
(Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992) 189

‘Memories are never exact replicas of external reality. Psychophysical studies and electrical recordings from the brain have shown that incoming sensory information is not received passively. (...) In this sense all memories are “created” rather than simply “received”’

Fischbach and Coyle in Schacter 1995: x

The struggle for memory is ultimately also a struggle for history and against high-tech amnesia (...)  
all representation – whether in language, narrative, image, or recorded sound – is based on memory. *Re*-presentation always comes after, even though some media will try to provide us with the delusion of pure presence. But rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation. The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory.

Andreas Huyssen, 'Introduction: Time and Cultural Memory at our Fin-de-Siècle', *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995)

Wordsworth's implication (...) that poetry has its origins in memorial inscription and that such poetry of mortality is a guarantor of immortality. (...)

Traditionally, of course, the origins of poetry are traced back to the stories of bards (the root of epic, heroic, and narrative poetry) and the declamations (...) of prophets and priests (the root of drama and those forms of poetry which derive their essence from public performance). But these two traditions are *oral* (...)

The epitaph, the monumental inscription, is the earliest form of written poetry

Jonathan Bate, 'Wordsworth and the Naming of Places',  
*Essays in Criticism* XXXIX: 3 (July 1989): (196-216) 197

One of poetry's age-old functions is precisely to canonise a past'

Harold Toliver, *The Past that Poets Make* (Cambridge, Mass.:  
Harvard U.P., 1981) 3



W.B. Yeats – ‘Easter 1916’

I have met them at close of day  
Coming with vivid faces  
From counter or desk among grey  
Eighteenth-century houses.  
I have passed with a nod of the head  
Or polite meaningless words,  
Or have lingered awhile and said  
Polite meaningless words,  
And thought before I had done  
Of a mocking tale or a gibe  
To please a companion  
Around the fire at the club,  
Being certain that they and I  
But lived where motley is worn:  
All changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

...

*from Michael Robartes and the Dancer 1921*

‘Yeats loved Irish nationalists as heroic losers, but Irish nationalists as potential winners (...) was a different matter’

G.J.Watson, *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) 104

...

For England may keep faith  
For all that is done and said.  
We know their dream; enough  
To know they dreamed and are dead;  
And what if excess of love  
Bewildered them till they died?  
I write it out in a verse---  
MacDonagh and MacBride  
And Connolly and Pearse  
Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

*September 25, 1916*

...

Hearts with one purpose alone  
Through summer and winter seem  
Enchanted to a stone  
To trouble the living stream.

(...)

Too long a sacrifice  
Can make a stone of the heart.  
O when may it suffice?  
That is Heaven's part, our part  
To murmur name upon name,  
As a mother names her child  
When sleep at last has come  
On limbs that had run wild.

...

W.B. Yeats

‘To a Wealthy Man who promised a second Subscription to the Dublin  
Municipal Gallery if it were proved the People wanted Pictures

You gave, but will not give again  
Until enough of Paudeen's pence  
By Biddy's halfpennies have lain  
To be ‘some sort of evidence,’  
Before you'll put your guineas down,  
That things it were a pride to give  
Are what the blind and ignorant town  
Imagines best to make it thrive.

...

*from Responsibilities, 1914*

W.B. Yeats, 'September 1913'

What need you, being come to sense,  
But fumble in a greasy till  
And add the halfpence to the pence  
And prayer to shivering prayer, until  
You have dried the marrow from the bone;  
For men were born to pray and save:  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet they were of a different kind,  
The names that stilled your childish play,  
They have gone about the world like wind  
(...)

*from Responsibilities, 1914*

...

Was it for this the wild geese spread  
The grey wing upon every tide;  
For this that all that blood was shed,  
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,  
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,  
All that delirium of the brave?  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

...

*from Responsibilities, 1914*

Meditations in Time of Civil War

1. Ancestral Houses

...

Some violent bitter man, some powerful man  
Called architect and artist in, that they,  
Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone  
The sweetness that all longed for night and day

1923

*from The Tower, 1928*

Blood and the Moon

...

I declare this tower is my symbol; I declare  
This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair is my ancestral stair;  
That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke have travelled there.

*from The Winding Stair and Other Poems, 1933*



...

it is tragic that within three years of this country gaining its independence we should be discussing a measure which a minority of this nation considers to be grossly oppressive. I am proud to consider myself a typical man of that minority. We against whom you have done this thing, are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created the most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence.

...

*from the Debate on Divorce, 1925*

*from The Senate Speeches of W.B. Yeats, 1961*

W.B. Yeats, 'To A Poet, Who Would Have Me Praise Certain  
Bad Poets, Imitators Of His And Mine'

You say, as I have often given tongue  
In praise of what another's said or sung,  
'Twere politic to do the like by these;  
But was there ever dog that praised his fleas?

*from The Green Helmet and Other Poems, 1910*

‘when a poet so great as Yeats is born to a country as small as Ireland, this is a wonderful windfall for everyone in that country *except the poets*. For them it is a disaster (...) [because] they find themselves transformed into puppets sitting on the great ventriloquist's knee’

Donald Davie, ‘Austin Clarke and Padraic Fallon’, Douglas Dunn (ed.), *Two Decades of Irish Writing: A Critical Survey* (Cheadle Hulme: Carcanet, 1975) 41-2

‘The unselfish generosity of our great father figure,  
Yeats’

John Montague, ‘The Figure in the Cave’, *The Figure in the Cave and other essays*, ed. Antoinette Quinn (Dublin: Lilliput, 1989) 15

‘Yeats may be our seer, in the tradition of the poet-  
aristocrat. But Joyce is our all-seeing ear, a great  
democrat of literature’

John Montague, "Work Your Progress", *Irish University Review* 12:1  
(Spring 1982), (48-52), 52

So, the Irish writer, if he cares who he is and where he comes from, finds that Joyce and Yeats are the two main objects in view; and I think he finds that Joyce is the true father. I will risk putting it diagrammatically, and say that Yeats stands for the Irish tradition as broken; Joyce stands for it as healed – or healing – from its mutilation.

Thomas Kinsella, 'The Irish Writer', *Éire Ireland* II:2 (Summer 1967): (8-15) 14









‘[the wish] to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed from [his] book’

James Joyce cit. Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* [1934] (Oxford and New York: O.U.P., 1972) 69

‘In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him.

[...] It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history ... Instead of a narrative method, we may now use the mythical method’

T.S. Eliot, "*Ulysses, Order and Myth*", *The Dial*, 1923, 480-83.

‘*Ulysses* has long been considered as one of the works perfectly embodying the modernist ideal of totality. Even though the claim may sound disputable today, the notion that this novel might constitute a museum of Western civilisation is alluring’

Pascal Bataillard ‘Musing in and out of the museum with James Joyce’s *Ulysses*’, *Word & Image* 30:1 (January-March, 2014): 39-45

to write of 1904 Dublin in World War I Trieste or Zurich was already an elegiac act. Joyce had sensed the yawning rift in cultural continuity that opened as the war shattered the old epoch: after 1916 he had to reckon with the possibility, as British gunboats bombarded the Post Office, that his work might indeed have to serve as a blueprint for rebuilding. He knew he was memorializing a way of life that had already passed.

Herbert N. Schneidau, *Waking Giants: The Presence of the Past in Modernism* (New York and Oxford: O.U.P., 1991) 19-20

'When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets' (469)

'I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church; and I will try to express myself (...) using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning' (519)

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

‘No one has ever mined his memories so closely and profitably, wresting from the daily bread of Irish experience and the sluggish matter of its earth the raw material of an art that set many readers and writers in quest of their own personal pasts’

‘the image of the past as a dead hand, mortmain, mindlessly choking the life out of its own sons and daughters’

Schneidau 11, 4

‘A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and *at present a praiser of his own past.*’

(*Portrait* 512; my emphasis)

‘In Joyce's work the typical Irish gesture is genuflection toward the past even if one's part in it had been shameful’

(Schneidau 7)

The reception of James Joyce in Ireland has been – like Joyce’s attitudes to his native country – a sometimes contradictory and muddled affair (...)  
the particular historical circumstances of twentieth-century Irish life have surely exacerbated the already substantial difficulties of reading Joyce (...)  
his reception also consists precisely in his *not* being read

John Nash, ‘"In the Heart of the Hibernian Metropolis"? Joyce's Reception in Ireland, 1900-1940’. Richard Brown, *A Companion to James Joyce* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008) (108-122) 108-9



# BANNED IN IRELAND

CENSORSHIP & THE IRISH WRITER



EDITED FOR ARTICLE 19 BY JULIA CARLSON

Featuring interviews with Benedict Kiely, John Broderick, John McGahern,  
Edna O'Brien, Lee Dunne, Maurice Leitch, and Brian Moore

Sean O’Faolain on Joyce’s ‘Anna Livia  
Plurabelle’:

‘[this language] has one reality only – the reality  
of the round and round of children’s scrawls in  
their first copybooks, zany circles of nothing.’

*(Virginia Quarterly Review 1928)*

If the Troubles had not flared up again in 1968, these writers would not now, I think, be reading Yeats, Joyce, O'Casey, Shaw and the other Irish writers in a spirit of anger and resentment. They would have been willing, as I was, to take our poetic masters pretty much on their own terms and as they came.

Denis Donoghue, 'Afterword', *Ireland's Field Day* (London: Hutchinson, 1985) (107-20) 119-20

The oppressiveness of the tradition we inherit has its source in our own readiness to accept the mystique of Irishness as an inalienable feature of our writing and, indeed, of much else in our culture. That mystique is itself an alienating force. To accept it is to become involved in the spiritual heroics of a Yeats or a Pearse (...) The dissolution of that mystique is an urgent necessity if any lasting solution to the North is to be found.

Seamus Deane, 'Heroic Styles', *Ireland's Field Day* (London: Hutchinson, 1985) (43-58) 57-8

# REVISING THE RISING



Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha  
and  
Theo Dorgan (Editors)

F I E L D   D A Y

the revisionists are now themselves more vulnerable to revision because their pseudo-scientific orthodoxy is so obviously tailored to match the prevailing political climate – especially in relation to the Northern crisis – that its claims to 'objectivity', to being 'value-free', have been abandoned as disguises no longer needed.

Seamus Deane, 'Wherever Green is Read', *Revising the Rising* (Derry: Field Day, 1991) 91

Commemorations are as selective as sympathies (...)

I suggest that Irish Catholics and Ulster Protestants not only tend to remember different things, but to remember them in different ways. The mnemonic structures differ: the categories, tropes, rituals (...)

Commemoration is a means whereby communities renew their own *religio*

Edna Longley, 'The Rising, the Somme and Irish Memory', *Revising the Rising* (Derry: Field Day, 1991) 29-30

we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect the present

Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*  
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 2

Seamus Heaney, 'Requiem for the Croppies' (1966 / 1969)

The pockets of our greatcoats full of barley –  
No kitchens on the run, no striking camp –  
We moved quick and sudden in our own country.  
The priest lay behind ditches with the tramp.  
A people, hardly marching – on the hike –  
We found new tactics happening each day:  
We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike  
And stampede cattle into infantry,  
Then retreat through hedges where cavalry must be thrown.  
Until, on Vinegar Hill, the fatal conclave.  
Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon.  
The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.  
They buried us without shroud or coffin  
And in August the barley grew up out of the grave.



In Memoriam Francis Ledwidge

*killed in France 31 July 1917*

The bronze soldier hitches a bronze cape  
That crumples stiffly in imagined wind  
No matter how the real winds buff and sweep  
His sudden hunkering run, forever craned

Over Flanders. Helmet and haversack,  
The gun's firm slope from butt to bayonet,  
The loyal, fallen names on the embossed plaque—  
It all meant little to the worried pet

I was in nineteen forty-six or seven,  
Gripping my Aunt Mary by the hand  
Along the Portstewart prom, then round the crescent  
To thread the Castle Walk out to the strand.

The pilot from Coleraine sailed to the coal-boat.  
Courting couples rose out of the scooped dunes.  
A farmer stripped to his studs and shiny waistcoat  
Rolled the trousers down on his time

Francis

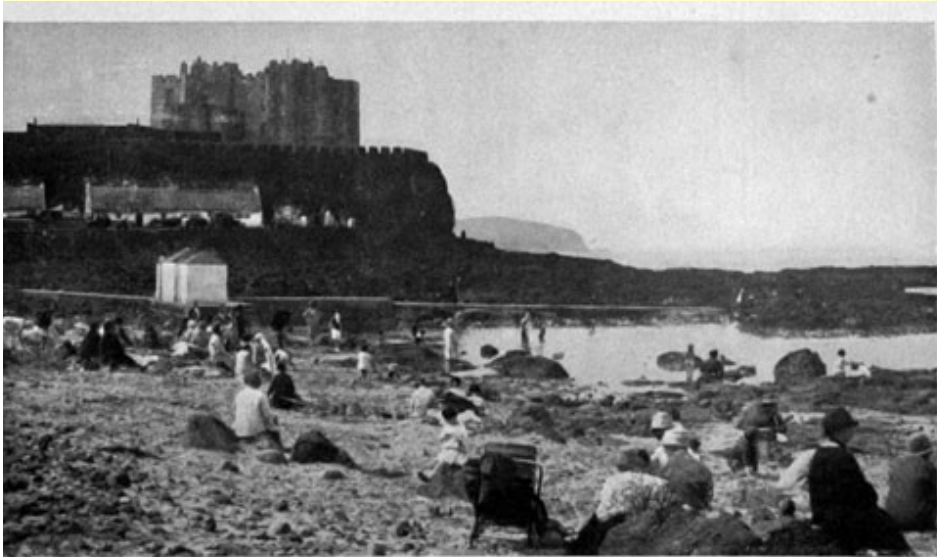
Seamus Heaney,  
'In Memoriam  
Francis Ledwidge —  
Killed in France 31  
July 1917',  
*Field Work* (London:  
Faber, 1979)



It all meant little to the worried pet

I was in nineteen forty-six or seven,  
Gripping my Aunt Mary by the hand  
Along the Portstewart prom, then round the crescent  
To thread the Castle Walk out to the strand.

The pilot from Coleraine sailed to the coal-boat.  
Courting couples rose out of the scooped dunes.  
A farmer stripped to his studs and shiny waistcoat  
Rolled the trousers down on his timid shins.



Francis Ledwidge, you courted at the seaside  
Beyond Drogheda one Sunday afternoon.  
Literary, sweet-talking, countrified,  
You pedalled out the leafy road from Slane

Where you belonged, among the dolorous  
And lovely: the May altar of wild flowers,  
Easter water sprinkled in outhouses,  
Mass-rocks and hill-top raths and raftered byres.











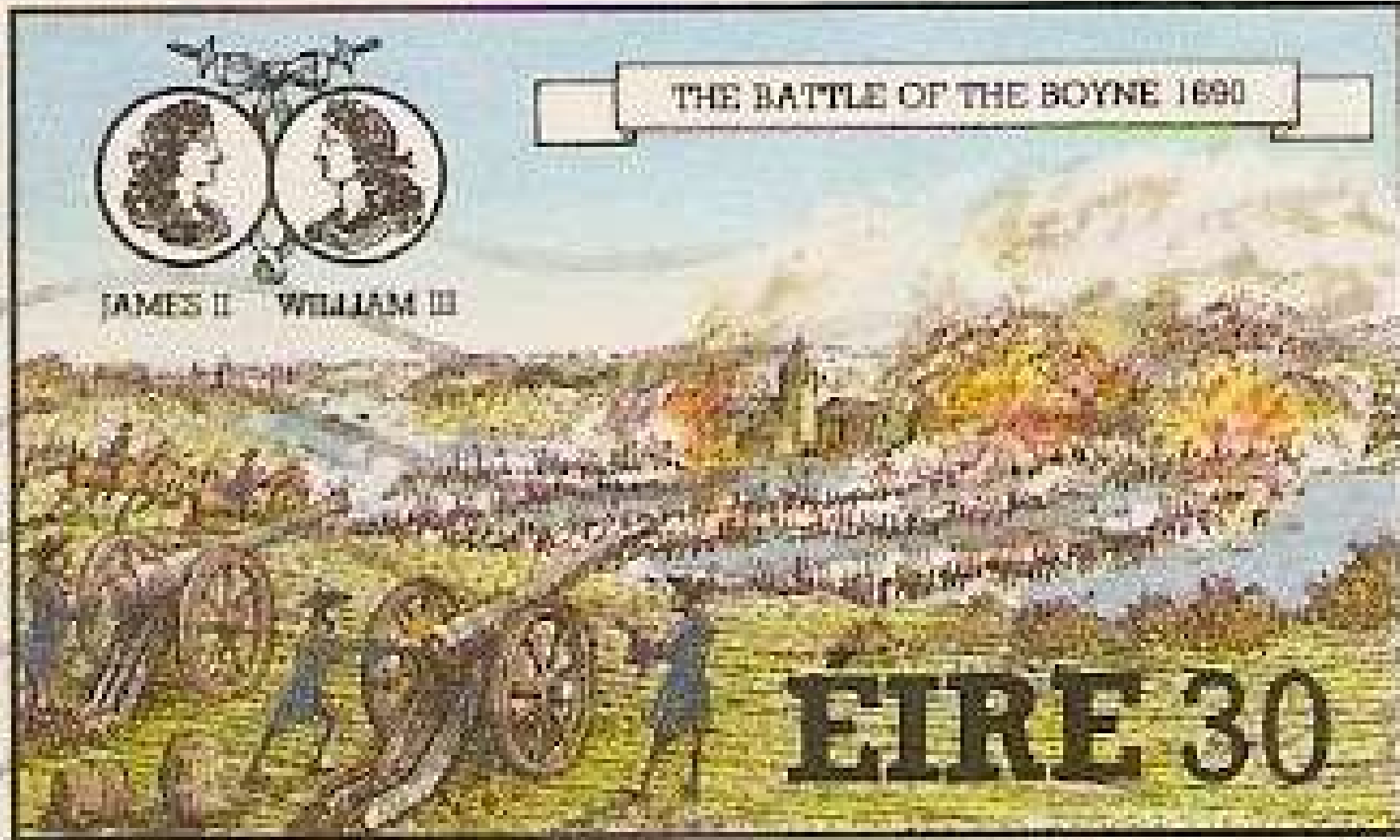
‘My soul is by the Boyne’





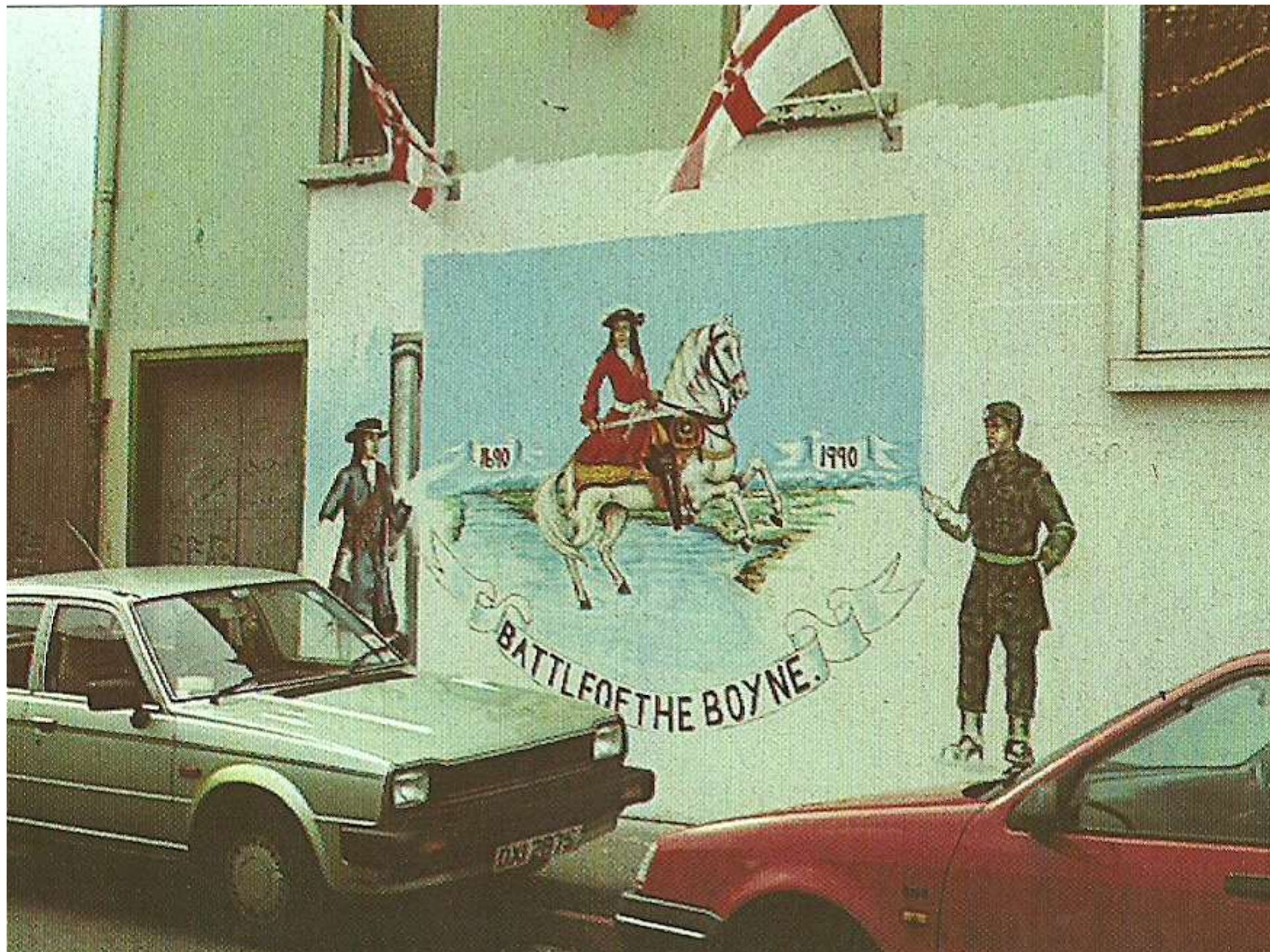
JAMES II WILLIAM III

THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE 1690



EIRE 30

1992



‘My soul is by the Boyne, cutting new meadows....  
My country wears her confirmation dress.’

‘To be called a British soldier while my country  
Has no place among nations....’ You were rent  
By shrapnel six weeks later. ‘I am sorry  
That party politics should divide our tents.’

In you, our dead enigma, all the strains  
Criss-cross in useless equilibrium  
And as the wind tunes through this vigilant bronze  
I hear again the sure confusing drum

You followed from Boyne water to the Balkans  
But miss the twilit note your flute should sound.  
You were not keyed or pitched like these true-blue ones  
Though all of you consort now underground.

Seamus Heaney, *from* ‘In Memoriam Francis Ledwidge – Killed  
in France 31 July 1917’, *Field Work* (London: Faber, 1979)

Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 18