Ch. 9 - Society and Culture in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993

Learning Intentions

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Nationalist and unionist identities
- The Apprentice Boys of Derry (Case Study)
- The sectarian tensions created by the Apprentice Boys parades
- The impact the Troubles had on culture and the arts

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Economic Impact of the Troubles

The Oil Crisis, 1973

- In October 1973 a war broke out in the Middle East after a coalition of Arab countries attempted to invade Israel. While the conflict lasted less than three weeks, it had a significant impact on the world's economy. When the United States supplied the Israelis with weapons, the **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**, which was largely made up of Arab countries, retaliated by raising the cost of oil. Almost overnight, the price of oil went up by 70%. The **Oil Crisis** had a dramatic impact on the world's economies. Northern Ireland, due to its distant location from foreign energy supplies, struggled more than any other area of the United Kingdom.

Declining Foreign Investment

- The UWC strike had done serious damage to Northern Ireland's already weakening economy in 1974. When the strike ended it was believed that the economy would recover quickly, but due to the Oil Crisis and other factors the North's economy only grew by 1.9% per annum from 1973 to 1979, creating fewer than 3,000 jobs per year. By 1974 one of the North's most famous companies, Harland and Wolff, had to be taken into State ownership to prevent it from closing.
- Foreign companies had established themselves in Northern Ireland prior to the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969, but new businesses were put of investing because of the ongoing violence. There was a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs, 5% fewer each year between 1973 and 1979. In 1976 unemployment stood at 10%, twice the average in the rest of the UK. Unemployment was not spread evenly. Many Catholic areas suffered unemployment levels closer to 50%, as businesses were based in the more Protestant areas east of the Bann.
- The Troubles were responsible for widespread damage and disruption to economic development. Large numbers of people had been driven from their homes, while others had had their homes and businesses destroyed. A government report in January 1976 showed that over 25,000 houses in Belfast had been damaged during the conflict.

Society in Northern Ireland

Religious and Cultural Identities

- *At the heart of the Ulster problem is a conflict of national identity. It consists not only of different national identities but different kinds of national identity, rooted in historical evolution.* (The Ulster Question Since 1945 by *James Laughlin*)
- The separate identities of the North's nationalist and unionist communities, and the religious difference between Catholics and Protestants, played a very large part in Northern Irish life. The two communities were not mutually exclusive: while the majority of Catholics were nationalists and the majority of Protestants were unionist, some Catholics supported unionism and vice versa. For the most part, though, nationalist and unionist identities were shaped by different political and religious views, which went far back into Irish history. Unionist history stretched back to the plantations of the 17th century, while Catholics looked back even further to the Gaelic traditions of Ulster. The cultural differences that persisted between the two communities meant that they lived quite separate lives. Mixed marriages were quite unusual, for example, and were usually met with hostility.

Social Class

- Social class also played a part in shaping people's sense of identity. Middle-class and working-class Protestants were most likely to identify themselves as British. Many middle-class Catholics accepted the union, while seeing themselves as Irish, while working-class Catholics were the largest group to support a united Ireland.
- The Protestant-Catholic divide had a huge bearing on attitudes to Northern Ireland's political status, though there were differences, too, between middle- and working-class attitudes. Surveys on attitudes in the late 1980s and early 1990s indicated that 84% of middle-class Protestants, and 90% of working-class Protestants, saw Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. Fewer than 10% saw the North's future as part of a united Ireland.
- Some 30% of middle-class Catholics saw Northern Ireland as part of the UK, though 60% saw the North's future as part of a united Ireland. Working-class Catholic men supported a united Ireland more strongly, with 63% in favour.
- Class divisions also had an impact on support for the North's political parties, with working-class Protestants and Catholics tending to support the DUP and Sinn Féin respectively.

Key Concept: Cultural Traditions

- **Cultural traditions** are the practices and beliefs groups of people hold in common. Members of a community are often expected to act in ways that have been observed traditionally.
- In Northern Ireland, Orange Order parades are one of the most notable examples of the unionist cultural tradition. The Irish language and Catholic religious practices serve as identifiers of nationalists' traditional culture.

Key Concept: Cultural Identity

- **Cultural identity** is shaped by one's cultural traditions. Expressions of cultural identity often involve festivals, participation in sporting events, wearing particular styles of dress, etc. Cultural identity also shapes people's sense of what group they belong to. In Northern Ireland, **Protestants** generally identify themselves as **British** while **Catholics** identify themselves as **Irish**.

Catholic/Nationalist Identity

- The partition of Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 left a large Catholic minority- about one-third of the population - living in the new Northern Ireland. They identified themselves as Irish and supported the nationalist goal of a unified Ireland. However, they faced ongoing discrimination under the Unionist government, which created widespread inequality and discouraged the integration (combining) of the North's two communities.
- Partition cut Northern Ireland's nationalists off from their geographical and historical heartland. In the western part of Ulster, where Catholics were more numerous, they were further from the sectarian tensions that permeated life in areas of the northeast. There were some cross-border ties to nearby Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan, but the failure of successive Irish governments to end partition meant that many Northern Irish Catholics became ambivalent towards the South over time. Hemmed in by unionism and the border, the nationalist community also became quite insular.

Catholic/Nationalist Identity

- Once the Troubles began in 1969, the division between the two communities intensified. Catholics turned to their unique Irish identity, which was based on the traditions, customs and culture of the island as a whole, as well as the Catholic faith. Catholics used their faith as a mark of identity, in much the same way as Protestants did, and Mass attendance was high. Nationalist children went to Catholic schools, where they learned the Irish language and traditional Irish music and dance. In 1960 there were so many Irish speakers in Belfast that the city had its own informal Gaeltacht. Many nationalists expressed their identity through Gaelic football and hurling. The GAA strengthened Northern links with the South as teams met in championship matches. Nationalists also celebrated Catholic holidays such as St Patrick's Day, while some were members of **the Ancient Order of Hibernians**, an Irish Catholic fraternal organisation, similar to, but less prominent than, the unionists' Orange Order.
- Catholics' expression of their cultural identity was sometimes met with intolerance, as unionists believed that nationalist culture undermined the North's Britishness. An example of this intolerance was the **Flags and Emblems Act, 1954**, which allowed the authorities to remove nationalist symbols and flags, including the Irish tricolour, if they received objections from members of the unionist community.

Protestant/Unionist Identity

- The Protestant unionist community saw themselves as both Irish and British. Despite this dual character, they tended to use British symbols such as the Union flag to demonstrate their identity and differentiate themselves from Northern Irish nationalists. The Protestant faiths also played a significant part in shaping the unionist identity. Having historically suffered from persecution at the hands of the Catholic Church and European monarchs following the Reformation, many Protestants, particularly Presbyterians, had strong **anti-Papist** views.
- Over the centuries Protestants developed a reputation for being hardworking and honest. This culture, as much as any natural resource, contributed to the North's prowess in business, engineering and industry. Protestants often saw Catholics as lazy, and after partition looked on the South as poor and backward. Their strict adherence to the Bible also meant that many staunch Protestants, such as Methodists, refused to take part in gambling and other vices. They adhered strictly to the Sabbath, and did not take part in sporting activities or dances on Sundays.

Key Concept: Tolerance and Intolerance

- **Tolerance** offers respect to other people's beliefs, views and values. It allows people to practise their beliefs and express their views free from discrimination.
- **Intolerance** is an unwillingness to accept the views or beliefs of others. Intolerance often leads to discrimination, when the ideas and practices of others are prohibited.

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The Orange Order

- The most important unionist organisation in Northern Ireland is the Loyal Orange Institution, more commonly known as the **Orange Order**. This is a male Protestant society, originally established in 1795 to defend Protestant religious and civil liberties. It traditionally holds parades and marches to mark key events in Protestant history, most notably on **12 July**, to commemorate the Protestant King William of Orange's victory over the Catholic King James II at the **Battle of the Boyne** in **1690**. The Orange Order takes its name from William of Orange.
- Members of the Order are referred to as **Orangemen**. They meet in lodges, which are located in most towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland. Membership is made up of Protestant men from all classes, a fact which helped to unite Protestants in the North. An overwhelming majority of Unionist Party members were also members of the Orange Order. The Order nominated members of the party's executive council, and no man could hope to become Prime Minister if he was not an Orangeman.
- The Orange Order is often associated with Ulster loyalism, and in the past Orangemen served in the UVF and other loyalist associations. Groups affiliated with the Orange Order include the **Apprentice Boys of Derry** and the **Royal Black Institution**. These three groups are known collectively as the **Loyal Orders**, whose loyalty is to the British monarch.
- Following partition, the unionist community felt threatened by the large Catholic minority within
- Northern Ireland and the broader nationalist community in the South. Unionists themselves were a
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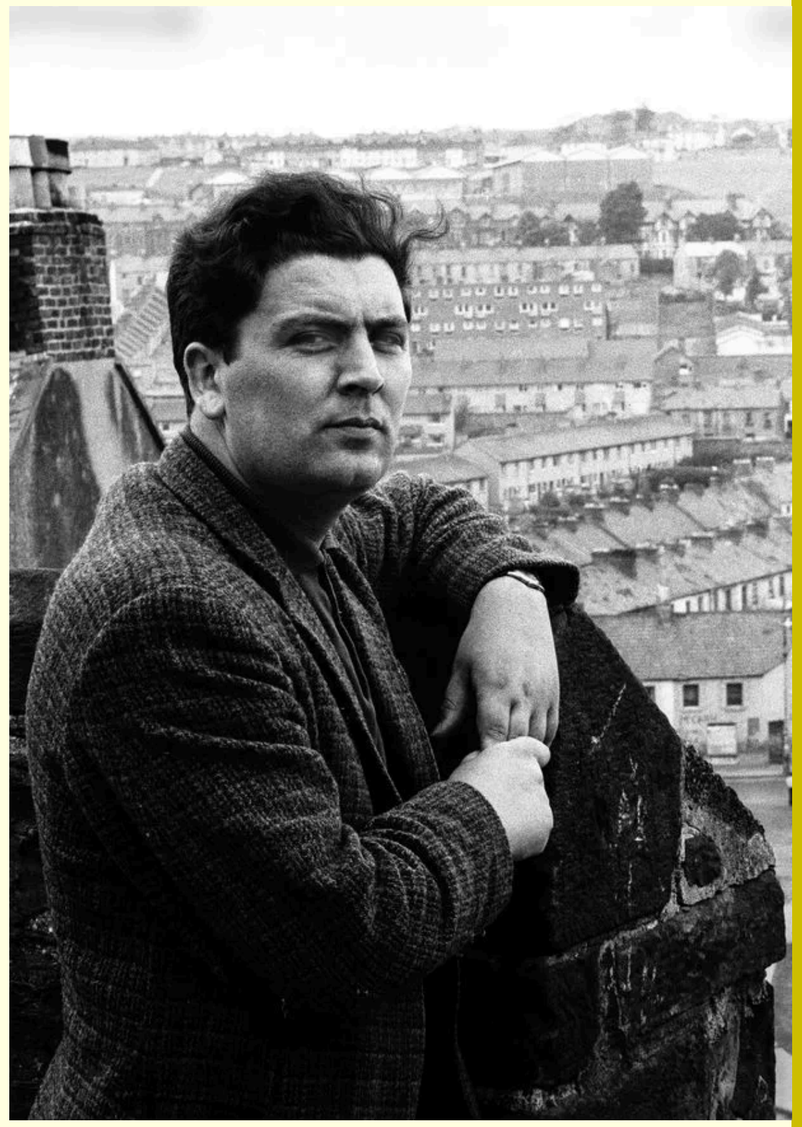
The Orange Order

- Following partition, the unionist community felt threatened by the large Catholic minority within Northern Ireland and the broader nationalist community in the South. Unionists themselves were a minority in Ireland as a whole. Due to the **'siege mentality'** they developed, unionists were often quite hostile to any expression of nationalism. In fact, opposition to nationalism was one of the key elements shaping Northern unionists' identity. This identity was heavily influenced by Northern Protestants' history, going back to the founding of the Ulster Plantation in 1609. One of the most important events in their tradition was the **Siege of Derry, 1688-1689**, which was commemorated annually by the **Apprentice Boys of Derry.**

Key Personality: John Hume (1937-2020)

- **John Hume** was born in Derry in 1937. Intending to become a priest, he attended St Patrick's College in Maynooth with the intention of becoming a priest. He did not fully complete his studies, but he did receive an MA degree. He returned to Derry and worked as a teacher. He became a founding member of the Credit Union movement in Derry and served as the president of the Credit Union League of Ireland for a number of years.



Beginnings in Politics

- During the early 1960s he was a member of the Nationalist Party but left it in 1964 because of the party's unwillingness to cooperate with other nationalist groups. In the late 1960s he played an active role in the campaign to have Northern Ireland's second university established in Derry.

Civil Rights Campaigner

- When the university was located in Coleraine, Hume became involved with the civil rights movement where he highlighted the injustices faced by the North's Catholic community. He was often seen attempting to prevent the outbreak of hostilities while participating in NICRA marches and he also attempted to prevent violence following the Apprentice Boys parade on 12 August 1969. He was elected as an independent nationalist MP for Foyle in 1969. In 1970 he became a founding member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). The SDLP was founded as a constitutional nationalist party that advocated for peaceful reunification. SDLP members initially took their seats at Stormont but soon pursued a policy of abstentionism when the Unionist government refused to listen to their demands.

Support for Power-sharing

- Hume strongly opposed internment, but following the introduction of direct rule he agreed to participate in the formation of a new assembly headed by a power-sharing executive. He believed that the proposals laid out in the Sunningdale Agreement, for power-sharing in the North and a Council of Ireland, offered the best opportunity to achieve reunification.

Working towards Peace

- After the collapse of the Sunningdale Agreement, Hume held secret talks with Sinn Féin in an effort to convince them to end the IRA's violent campaign. In 1979 Hume replaced Gerry Fitt as leader of the SDLP.
- Hume's role in the New Ireland Forum as well as his links with successive Irish governments helped to strengthen the influence of the SDLP and contributed to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. Hume's links with Irish American politicians also facilitated US pressure on the British government in the 1980s and 1990s. Following strong unionist opposition to the agreement, Hume worked closely with Gerry Adams to create a framework that would offer unionists assurances about their role in the future of Northern Ireland.

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Support for Power-sharing

- His talks with Adams met strong criticism from unionists and Southern politicians who believed that he was consorting with terrorists. Nonetheless, his work with Adams led to Hume's document *A Strategy for Peace and Justice in Northern Ireland*. While his proposals were not accepted by unionists or the British government, Hume's work helped to secure support for the peace process, culminating in the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Hume was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble in 1998 in recognition of his work during the peace process. He retired from politics in 2004.

Exam Question

- How did John Hume influence events in Northern Ireland? (2018) OL

Case Study: The Apprentice Boys of Derry

The Williamite War and the Siege of Derry

- One of the most important events in Northern Irish history was the **Williamite War,** which took place between 1688 and 1691. The war was fought between the Catholic King James II of England, France's King Louis XIV, and the Protestant Prince **William of Orange**. In 1688 William deposed the Catholic James II from the English throne. James fled to Ireland, from where he attempted to regain the throne. In December 1688 James II's forces marched on the Protestant- controlled city of Derry.
- The city of Londonderry was founded in 1613, when London-based investors paid for the construction of a walled city during the Plantation of Ulster. The city was originally called Derry, from the Irish doire, meaning oak wood.
- Before the arrival of the Catholic army, the governor of Derry, **Robert Lundy**, announced that he was going to surrender the city. The citizens refused (the name Lundy has since become a byword for a traitor amongst unionists). On 18 December, as the Catholic forces approached, **13 apprentice boys** shut the city's gates, preventing James II's forces from entering. With shouts of **'No Surrender'** the citizens of Derry opened fire on the Catholic army, which responded by laying siege to the city.
- Governor Lundy fled and **George Walker** took command. Walker refused all requests to surrender. The city endured a siege of 105 days, which led to the deaths of 8,000 of the city's residents. In July 1689 Williamite forces arrived with vital food and supplies, and on 12 August the siege was finally lifted.

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@MsDoorley

The Formation of the Apprentice Boys

- The first Apprentice Boys Club was founded in 1714 to commemorate the Siege of Derry. Further clubs were established in Dublin in 1814 and a No Surrender Club was set up in 1824. The two most important dates for the Apprentice Boys are 18 December, when the original apprentice boys closed the city's gates, and more importantly 12 August, which celebrates the end of the siege. On these dates the Apprentice Boys dress in bowler hats and orange sashes, and carrying bright banners take part in a religious service, followed by a parade around the city's walls. During the 18 December parade the Apprentice Boys traditionally burn an effigy of the traitor Robert Lundy at the foot of a monument to Robert Walker.

We'll fight and don't surrender
But come when duty calls
With heart and hand and sword and shield
We'll guard old Derry's walls.

(Extract from the lyrics of Derry's Walls sung by the Apprentice Boys)

Sectarian Tensions

- Up until the middle of the 19th century, Derry's Catholic citizens regularly took part in the celebrations, and Catholic clergy joined in the prayer services. However, as Irish nationalism grew from the 1860s onwards, the parades became increasingly divisive. Following partition in 1920, Derry's population was 30% Protestant and 70% Catholic. However, Derry City Council was under Unionist control, not least due to gerrymandering. Partition heightened the significance of the Apprentice Boys parades as Protestants sought to demonstrate their dominance of Dery and Northern Ireland as a whole.
- As the relationship between nationalists and unionists deteriorated, especially after the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the Apprentice Boys parades took on an increasingly sectarian tone. When the Apprentice Boys paraded along the walls overlooking the Catholic **Bogside** area, they threw coins down at the poorer Catholic residents and sang anti-Catholic songs.

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The Catholic Response

- The Catholic community, particularly those in the Bogside, were frustrated and angered by the Apprentice Boys parades. Their anger increased when the government attempted to ban civil rights marches from taking place after 1968, but allowed controversial unionist parades to continue. For Catholics, the unionist parades were a reminder that they were second-class citizens. As sectarian friction increased throughout 1968 and 1969, it was inevitable that tensions would eventually boil over, especially after the RUC had attacked a civil rights march in Derry in October 1968.

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The Battle of the Bogside, 12-14 August 1969

- Tension was high in Derry in the lead-up to the Apprentice Boys parade on 12 August 1969. Members of the **Derry Citizens' Defence Association** had been stockpiling petrol bombs, stones and other missiles in anticipation of a conflict. John Hume and other civil rights leaders asked the authorities to call off the parade, but the Home Affairs Minister, Robert Porter, believed that they were exaggerating the situation and refused to ban the event. Indeed, the Irish Minister of External Affairs, Patrick Hillery had already travelled to London prior to Hume to make the same request, but had also been ignored.
- Derry youths prepare petrol bombs during the Battle of the Bogside On the morning of 12 August 15,000 Apprentice Boys from across Northern Ireland gathered in Derry. Before the parade began, local nationalist leader **Paddy Doherty** met with the Apprentice Boys and pleaded with them to call of their march. He was assured that the necessary precautions had been taken. Over 700 members of the RUC had been brought in to police the parade.
- The Apprentice Boys parade got under way following a religious ceremony at midday. The parade passed peacefully along the city walls until it reached the Bogside area, when the Apprentice Boys began throwing pennies down at the Catholics below. There was an immediate response from the nationalist crowd. Stones were thrown at the RUC. Nationalist leaders attempted to restore order but they were quickly swept aside as the RUC and the crowd came to blows. Throughout the evening Catholics barricaded streets and fought running battles with the RUC. The riot, referred to as the Battle of the Bogside, lasted two full days and nights and only ended when the British Army was sent in to restore order. The events of 12-14 August are seen as the beginning of the Troubles.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Finding a Solution

- In the years following 1969 the Stormont government ordered the Apprentice Boys parades to remain within the Protestant **Waterside** area of Derry. However, the situation escalated once more when the IRA bombed the **Walker Pillar** (named after George Walker), where the Apprentice Boys traditionally burned an effigy of Governor Lundy. While Northern Ireland was under direct rule, the Northern Ireland Office banned the controversial marches in order to prevent violence.
- A parade was allowed to go ahead in 1989 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Siege of Derry, but it was only in the late 1990s that the marches were once again allowed annually. This was achieved by the British government's creation of an independent **Parades Commission**, which recommended that the Apprentice Boys hold talks with local residents to agree on the route of their marches. This approach eventually led to the resumption of the Apprentice Boys parades from 1998.

Exam Questions

- What did the Apprentice Boys of Derry celebrate and why did their celebration cause controversy? (2021) OL
- Why were the activities of the Apprentice Boys of Derry met with opposition? (2019) OL
- What were the aims of the Apprentice Boys and why did their aims cause problems in Derry? (2017) OL

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Culture during the Troubles

Culture and Conflict

- Before partition, both unionists and nationalists read the works of Irish writers and poets, and a number of Protestants were also supporters of the Irish language. In 1893 **Douglas Hyde**, son of a Church of Ireland clergyman, was one of the founders of the Gaelic League, established to revive the Irish language. Hyde believed that the language belonged to everyone living on the island of Ireland and could serve as a unifying bond between Catholics and Protestants. In its early years the Gaelic League did have significant Protestant support, but by the beginning of the 20th century the language had become associated with Irish nationalism, and many Protestants abandoned it. After partition, Northern Irish Catholics used Irish as a symbol of their identity, while Protestants tended to regard it as an alien language and instead called for the promotion of Scots Gaelic, the language spoken by settlers at the time of the Plantations.
- Likewise, prior to partition both Catholics and Protestants took their influences from British and Irish writers and poets, including the southern Protestant poet, **W. B. Yeats**, and the northern nationalist poet, **George Russell**, who wrote under the pseudonym Æ. However, after partition, Northern Ireland's writers and poets produced works from within their own communities, as they sought to capture their unique cultural character. These works were often shaped by sectarian tensions, violence and the authors' personal expressions of identity.

Post-Partition Identity

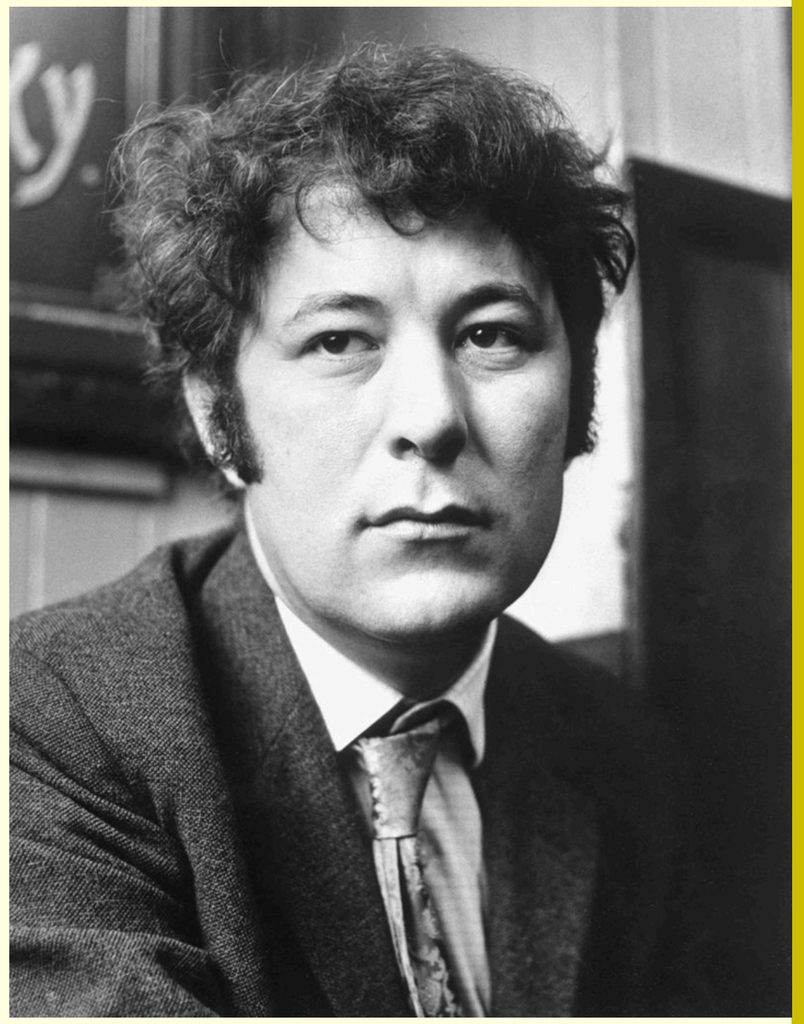
- Northern Ireland's Unionist-controlled governments sought to restrict nationalist culture, which they believed was determined to undermine their control. This included censoring films that were thought to have a republican tone. In response, many Northern nationalist writers migrated to Dublin, where they could express their sense of Irishness. In 1944 a new literary magazine, Lagan, was launched in Northern Ireland. The magazine's founder, John Boyd, called for a 'regional literature' that would have neither a predominantly English nor Irish outlook but instead seek to combine the two. However, Boyd's approach received criticism from a number of sources. One critic stated that it *'skated over the thin ice of political and sectarian animosities'* (A Century of Northern Life by *Eamon Phoenix*).
- In the 1960s a **new wave of Northern poets** emerged, including Michael Longley, Derek Mahon, Medbh McGuckian, Paul Muldoon, John Hewitt and Seamus Heaney. These poets did not seek to involve themselves in political developments but instead engaged with what it meant to be either Catholic or Protestant during Northern Ireland's formative years. Following the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969, it was somewhat inevitable that artistic expressions of cultural identity would be shaped by the conflict, though artists were genuinely non-sectarian.

Post-Partition Identity

- In the poem 'A Constable Calls', Seamus Heaney describes the terror he felt as a child when an RUC officer called to his father's house, and he saw the gun in the policeman's holster. In other works, such as 'The Tollund Man' and 'Bogland', Heaney attempted to make sense of the Troubles by exploring acts of ancient violence. While Heaney's poems have universal themes, they were heavily influenced by his experience of growing up in the nationalist community. In 1983 Heaney objected to being referred to as a British poet in the Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry, and was criticised by some for that. Other poets such as **Derek Mahon** took their influences from Northern Ireland's urban and Protestant traditions. In poems such as 'Grandfather' and 'After the Titanic', Mahon reflects on Belfast's shipbuilding heritage. Both his father and grandfather had worked in Harland and Wolff.
- In 1980 the playwright **Brian Friel** and actor **Stephen Rea** established the **Field Day Theatre Company** in Derry. They hoped that the company would allow artists from all cultural backgrounds to move beyond the Troubles and develop Northern Ireland's own cultural identity. Writers such as Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and Seamus Deane became involved with the company and contributed to its pamphlets on cultural issues.
- The theatre's first play was Friel's *Translations*. Set in the 19th century, the play focuses on language, history and cultural imperialism, through which identities can be shaped, altered or destroyed. The theatre subsequently helped to provide an outlet for artists to explore their responses to the political and historical events in Northern Ireland and bring their works to a cross-community audience.

Key Personality: Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)

- **Seamus Heaney** was born in Derry in 1939 to a small farming family. He attended St Columb's College and went on to study English Language and Literature at Queen's University, Belfast, graduating in 1961.

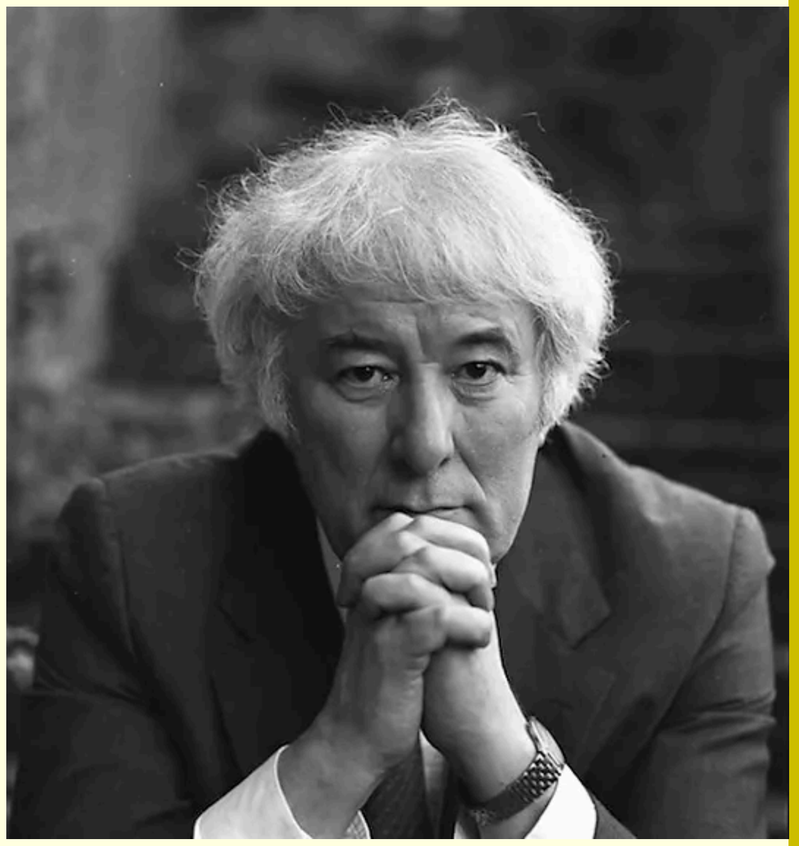


Early Career

- While working as a teacher he began to contribute articles on literature and poetry to magazines. In 1963 Heaney joined with other poets to form an informal Northern group of poets. Heaney published his first collection of poems in 1965, and in 1966 published a collection of poetry, *Death of a Naturalist*, which won him critical acclaim.

Poetic Themes

- His early poems focus heavily on his childhood and his experience of growing up in a rural environment. These include 'Mid-Term Break', which recounts the accidental death of his younger brother. His works also reflected on Northern Catholics' ambivalence and fear of authority figures such as the RUC. He wrote prolifically throughout the 1960s and 1970s, when his work reflected the deep political and religious divisions that prevailed in Northern Ireland. His works often made reference to Irish and international history and linked past acts of violence with those of the Troubles.



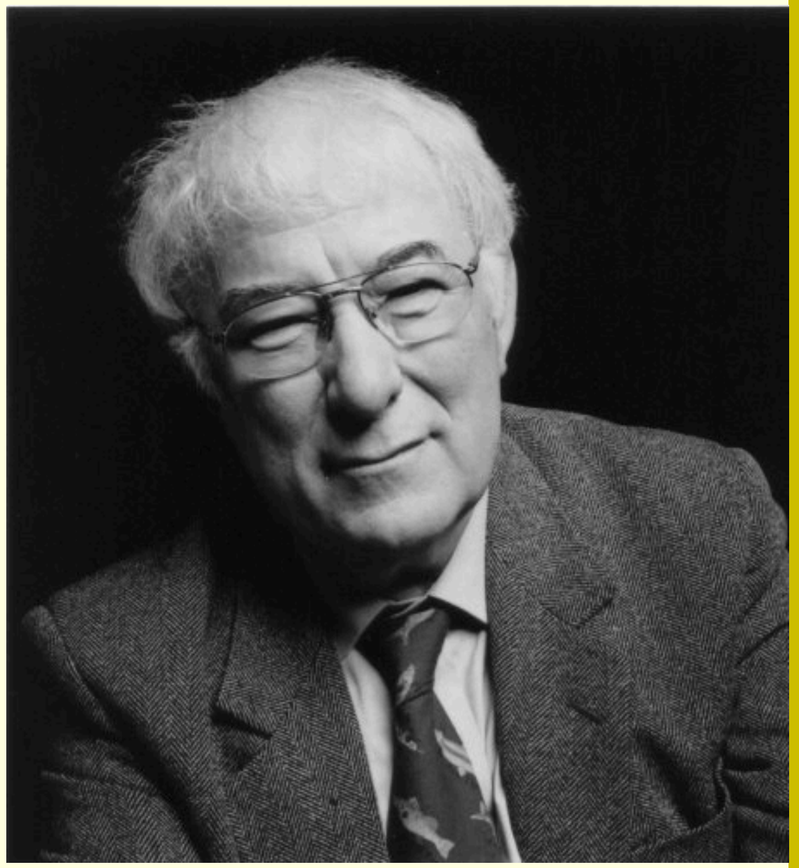
A Poet of Reconciliation

- In 1980 he joined the Field Day Theatre, which concerned itself with the reconciliation of the North's communities. In 1983 he helped to co-found Field Day Publishing, which helped to promote the works of Northern Irish writers.

Support for Power-sharing

- In 1981 he became a professor at Harvard University in the USA and was later awarded with two honorary doctorates in recognition of his contribution to literature. Between 1989 and 1994 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford University. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 and in 1996 he was made Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He also won the Whitbread Prize for literature in 1996 and 1999. Heaney remained heavily involved in literature until his death in 2013. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he spoke of his work in relation to the Troubles:

‘*The very gunfire braces us and the atrocious confers a worth upon the effort which it calls forth to confront it.'*



Exam Question

- During your study of Northern Ireland, 1949-1993, what did you learn about Seamus Heaney and/or cultural responses to the ‘Troubles’? (2020) HL
- In what ways did Seamus Heaney reflect conditions in Northern Ireland? (2018) OL
- Write a short paragraph on Seamus Heaney. (2009 and 2019) OL

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Music

- The period of the Troubles proved to be a fruitful time for music in Northern Ireland as artists sought to confront, highlight or simply make sense of events around them. Nationalists maintained a strong association with traditional Irish music, and musicians like **Derek Bell** of the Chieftains helped to make it popular. Artists such as **Paul Brady** and **Phil Coulter** produced anti-war songs inspired by the conflict, including one of Brady's most famous songs, 'The Island'.
- As new styles of music became popular in the 1970s and 1980s, young bands such as Belfast's Stiff Little Fingers wrote punk songs like 'Alternative Ulster':

Take a look where you're livin'/ You got the Army on your street
And the RUC dog of repression Is barking at your feet
Is this the kind of place you wanna live? Is this where you wanna be?
Is this the only life we're gonna have? What we need is
An Alternative Ulster
Grab it and change it it's yours

- Northern Ireland produced a rich array of artists and musicians. Among these were guitarist **Gary Moore** and songwriter **Van Morrison**, whose artistic output won six Grammy Awards and saw him inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. These and other artists not only wrote about life in Northern Ireland, but produced works that received worldwide acclaim.

Music

- The impact of the Troubles was felt beyond the borders of Northern Ireland, and this is seen in the music of bands like **The Cranberries** from Limerick. Released in 1994, their song ***"Zombie"*** became a powerful anthem of protest against the ongoing violence in Northern Ireland. Written in response to the 1993 **Warrington bombing**, which claimed the lives of two children, **Dolores O'Riordan's** haunting lyrics encapsulated the sense of grief and anger felt by many:

"Another mother's breakin'
Heart is taking over
When the violence causes silence
We must be mistaken."

- The song evokes the cyclical nature of the conflict, drawing a connection between **past and present** with the line:

"It's the same old theme
Since nineteen-sixteen
In your head, in your head, they're still fightin'."

- With references to tanks, bombs, and guns, *"Zombie"* became a poignant reflection on the toll of violence and a call for peace, its emotional intensity resonating with listeners around the world. The Cranberries' raw portrayal of the conflict through such vivid lyrics helped *"Zombie"* become an enduring symbol of resistance to the violence that plagued Northern Ireland.

Sport

- Sport was an important part of popular culture. For nationalists, the GAA offered a link with the rest of Ireland. Clubs became targets for sectarian violence from loyalist gangs at the height of the conflict in the 1970s and 1980s. Members of the RUC, meanwhile, were prohibited from membership of the GAA under Rule 21, which prevented them from taking part in Gaelic games.
- Sectarian tensions also emerged in soccer. Clubs like the Belfast-based Linfield FC were seen as Protestant-only clubs, though the club itself was never sectarian in the players it signed. However, its largely loyalist fans could regularly be heard to sing sectarian chants at matches. In 1949 Belfast Celtic FC, one of the most successful Irish League (Northern Ireland League) clubs, was dissolved following widespread clashes between its Catholic supporters and Protestant supporters of clubs such as Linfield. Following the outbreak of widespread violence in 1969, Derry City FC games saw an escalation in sectarian rioting when they played against Protestant supported clubs. Derry City FC eventually left the Irish League in 1972 and in 1985 it joined the Republic's League of Ireland.

Sport

- Despite the tensions that existed in sport, Northern Ireland produced some of the greatest sportspeople of the era. George Best, who played for Northern Ireland and Manchester United, and whose father was a devoted Orangeman, remains the only Irish soccer player ever to win the Ballon d'Or. Martin O'Neill, a Catholic, captained the Northern Ireland team to the 1982 World Cup, when they reached the quarter-finals. Although born in Lancashire, Olympian Mary Peters grew up in Ballymena and Belfast. Peters won a gold medal in the pentathlon in the 1972 Olympic games.
- In Northern Ireland rugby was not played by the Catholic community who instead focused on Gaelic games. Nonetheless, the Irish Rugby Team draws its players from the entire island of Ireland.
- As such, issues of symbols and anthems have emerged over its history as its players were drawn from all communities. Players from the Republic refused to stand for ***'God Save the Queen/King'*** when games were played in Northern Ireland and it has not been performed at Irish internationals since the 1950s. The use of ***'Amhrán na bhFiann'*** has drawn similar criticism from unionists and is only performed at home games in Dublin. At the 1987 World Cup ***'The Rose of Tralee'*** was performed instead of either national anthem and in more recent years ***'Ireland's Call'*** has become the anthem of the Irish Rugby Team.

Changing Attitudes

- As political developments brought greater cooperation between Northern Ireland's nationalist and unionist communities, writers and poets also sought to come to terms with the violence of the Troubles and develop an understanding of Northern Ireland's differing cultural traditions. One of the most notable works to do this was Donegal-born writer **Frank McGuinness's** play, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*. The play focuses on the Battle of the Somme, where a large number of unionist volunteers were killed, and offers a sympathetic exploration of a key event in Ulster's loyalist history. The playwright **Martin Lynch's** *Dockers* is another important work, which focused on the harsh realities of working-class life in a Belfast shipyard during the 1960s.
- In the late 1980s artists such as **Jack Pakenham** produced works that portrayed something of the torment of the Troubles. In his Belfast Series paintings, Pakenham depicts blindfolded and gagged figures, along with masked men, suggestive of paramilitary gunmen. In 2014 Pakenham and other artists such as Rita Dufy, Catherine McWilliams and Alastair MacLennan took part in the Art of the Troubles exhibition in the Ulster Museum.

Changing Attitudes

- The Troubles have also become a rich source of inspiration for filmmakers and documentarians since the 1970s. The violence of the Troubles has formed the background for a number of thrillers, and television dramas. These include the controversial 1988 documentary *Death on the Rock*, which deals with the deaths of three IRA members in Gibraltar at the hands of British special forces. One of the most famous films set during the Troubles is *The Crying Game* from 1992. This thriller has an IRA kidnapping of a British soldier at its centre. *In the Name of the Father* from 1993 explores the wrongful arrest and imprisonment of Gerry Conlon, a member of the Guilford Four. Such works help to bring attention to various aspects of life during the Troubles from all perspectives.

The Development of Education and Cultural Amenities

- In the 1950s and 1960s, a number of cultural and educational developments attempted to bring together various aspects of Northern Ireland's cultural history. For example, in 1957 the **Ulster-Scot Historical Society** was established, and in the following year the Ulster Folk Museum was opened. The Folk Museum became the **National Museum of Northern Ireland** in 1964. In 1965 Queen's University, Belfast, established a new Irish history faculty and an **Institute for Irish Studies.**
- At primary and secondary level, Protestants and Catholics generally attended denominational schools. As students, they learned subjects such as history differently. Protestant schools focused on British history, while Catholic schools focused on Irish history. These differences in education reinforced the two communities' separate cultural identities.
- Denominational education also meant that students from both communities tended not to mix, which continued as they got older. In 1981 Lagan College in Belfast became the first **integrated secondary school** in Northern Ireland. By 1989 there were 23 integrated schools in the North.

The Development of Education and Cultural Amenities

- Cooperation between the North's two communities from the late 1980s facilitated developments in education and cultural activities. In 1989 the British government introduced **Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU)** as a statutory part of the State education curriculum. Its aim was to promote understanding and respect for cultural differences. One element of EMU was the **Cross Community Contact Scheme**, which fostered cultural understanding by bringing people from the North's different communities together. By 1994, 42% of primary schools and 59% of secondary schools were involved in the scheme, helping to break down cultural barriers and promote greater tolerance of different identities.

Exam Questions

- Divided societies are sometimes culturally productive. How true is this of Northern Ireland, 1949-1993? (2021) HL
- Write a short paragraph on cultural responses to the 'Troubles'. (2017 and 2019) OL

Recap

You should now be able to:

- Evaluate the economic consequences of the Troubles for Northern Ireland
- Describe nationalist and unionist identities and explain how their cultural differences led to tensions between the two communities
- Recognise that cultural traditions also proved to be flashpoints for violence, as political views became inextricably linked with cultural identity
- Discuss the cultural and sectarian significance of the Apprentice Boys marches in Derry
- Explain why the deep political divisions in Northern Ireland exacerbated sectarian and cultural tensions
- Appreciate that the tensions of Northern life helped to create a unique Northern Irish identity

Questions: Revision

1. Briefly outline the economic consequences of the Troubles.
2. What is meant by cultural identity?
3. How did social class shape political identity in Northern Ireland?
4. Briefly outline the basic elements of nationalist cultural identity.
5. What were the basic elements of unionist cultural identity?
6. Why did unionists have a 'siege mentality'?
7. Who was involved in the Williamite War?
8. Who was Robert Lundy and why do unionists regard him as a traitor?
9. Why do the Apprentice Boys of Derry commemorate 18 December and 12 August?
10. Why did the Catholics of Derry city become angered by the Apprentice Boys parades?
11. Briefly describe the causes and consequences of the Battle of the Bogside, 12-14 August 1969.
12. What is the Parades Commission?
13. What impact did partition have on the cultural identity of the people of Northern Ireland?
14. What contribution did Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney make to Northern Irish culture?
15. How has the peace process impacted on cultural identity?

Adapted from The Making of Ireland (Third Editions) by Paul Twomey, educate.ie

Higher Level Questions

1. In what ways was cultural identity in Northern Ireland shaped by the divisions between unionists and nationalists?
2. In what ways has Northern Irish cultural identity developed since partition?
3. From your study of Northern Ireland, 1949-1993, what did you learn about religious affiliation and cultural identity? (2019)
4. From your study of culture and religion in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993, what did you learn about cultural responses to the 'Troubles'? (2017)

Ordinary Level Questions

Anyone at all in touch with public feeling would have known that to allow the Apprentice Boys to parade in a tense and angry Derry this week was merely setting the match to the powder keg. Statements about 'keeping the position under examination and suchlike culminated in the announcement by the Minister of Home Affairs on Monday that the police would, if necessary, re- route the Apprentice Boys parade. ...

Everyone is appalled at the scale of the fighting in Derry. Stormont cannot say it was not well warned in time. Unfortunately, the Government is the prisoner of its extreme elements, and the Cabinet is seen by the public as weakly pandering to them by sanctioning a parade that ought never have been allowed.

Source: Strabane Chronicle, August 16, 1969

1. This edited extract from the Strabane Chronicle discusses the outbreak of violence following the Apprentice Boys Parade on 12 August 1969. Read it and answer the questions that follow.
    a. What would anyone in touch with public feeling have known about the Apprentice Boys parade?
    b. b. What did the Minister of Home Affairs announce on the Monday?
    c. How did everyone respond to the fighting in Derry?
    d. Who is the Government prisoner to?
    e. Why did Catholics have a problem with the Apprentice Boys parades?
2. Write a short paragraph on one of the following:
    a. Religious identity in Northern Ireland
    b. Cultural differences in Northern Ireland
    c. Sport in Northern Ireland
    d. Film and Literature in Northern Ireland.
3. What were the main cultural differences between nationalists and unionists?
4. Why were the Apprentice Boys parades a source of tension in Derry?

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