

Walter Love's 'Bloody Massacre': an unfinished study in Irish cultural history, 1641–1963

JOHN GIBNEY*

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Abstract

This article is based on the unpublished papers of the American historian Walter D. Love, retained in the Department of Manuscripts, Trinity College Dublin. Prior to his death in 1966, Love was writing a study of the contested historiography of the Irish rebellion of 1641. This article attempts to reconstruct Love's broad overview of the significance of 1641 from the seventeenth century to the twentieth and his efforts to overcome the methodological problems that the writing of such a study posed. Arising from this, it also attempts to reconstruct the framework of the book that Love was writing at the time of his death. In doing so, this article is intended to contribute to ongoing debates about the nature and significance of the rebellion by examining Love's pioneering but sadly unfinished attempt to examine its legacy.

Introduction

At some point in the early 1960s an American historian of Ireland, Walter D. Love, read *The leopard*, Giuseppe de Lampedusa's epic novel of the *Risorgimento*. In it was a passage he deemed worthy of recording:

Nowhere has truth so short a life as in Sicily; a fact has scarcely happened five minutes before its genuine kernel has vanished, been camouflaged, embellished, disfigured, annihilated by imagination and self interest; shame, fear, generosity, malice, opportunism, charity, all the passions, good as well as evil, fling themselves on the fact and tear it to pieces; very soon it has vanished altogether.¹

* Author's e-mail: gibneyjf@gmail.com

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¹ Trinity College Dublin (TCD), MSS 7,236–8, fol. 244. The citation from the relevant edition is Giuseppe Di Lampedusa, *The leopard* (London, 1960), 250.

The problem this implied was bound to engage the attention of a twentieth-century historian; namely, the inevitable requirement to peel away the layers of distortion and meaning that could accrue to an event over time. Broadly speaking, this was a task that Irish historians took a particular interest in during the latter decades of the twentieth century. But while the passage from *The leopard* cited above would have struck a chord with any number of Irish historians, the scholar who took note of it was an outsider whose academic career was shaped in a very different milieu, and the passage seemed to echo his particular concerns.

Walter Love grew up in a Mormon family in Salt Lake City, Utah, and was a graduate of both the University of Chicago and the University of California, Berkeley. He had held successive posts at Emory University in Atlanta and the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, before he was killed in a car accident in 1966.² Prior to his premature death he had been working on a project that, in hindsight, seems far ahead of its time when considered in purely Irish terms: a historiographical study of the manner in which the Irish rebellion of 1641 had passed into Irish historical memory, and of how it was represented, debated, and argued about from its outbreak until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This was not the kind of project to which professional Irish historians were likely to dedicate themselves in the 1960s. Indeed, Love was working on a study of precisely the kind of historical writing that many of his Irish contemporaries would have been likely to dismiss. The emergence of professional academic history in twentieth-century Ireland is usually ascribed (often in a rather eulogistic and uncritical manner) to the various initiatives of J.C. Beckett of Queen's University Belfast, Robert Dudley Edwards of University College Dublin and T.W. Moody of Trinity College Dublin, from the 1930s onwards.³ Their attempts to professionalise Irish history were driven by an acute awareness that the writing of Irish history had largely been shaped by the competing religious and political affiliations of those who wrote it. Strictly speaking, there was nothing specifically Irish in this other than its uniquely Irish manifestations—the existence of both nationalist and unionist versions of Irish history, often corresponding to older confessional paradigms that offered Catholic and Protestant narratives of the Irish past. Yet despite an awareness of such subjectivity on the part of these 'new historians', and their resultant ambition to correct this, there seemed little inclination

² For these and other biographical details I am indebted to Karl Bottigheimer. I would like to thank Professor Bottigheimer for sharing his recollections of Walter Love with me.

³ Valuable introductions to the subject that avoid such pitfalls are Ciaran Brady, '“Constructive and instrumental”: the dilemma of Ireland's first “new historians”', in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history: the debate on historical revisionism, 1938–1994* (Dublin, 1994), 3–31; and Nicholas Canny, 'Historians, moral judgement, and national communities: the Irish dilemma', *European Review* 14(3) (2006), 401–10. The most comprehensive study of twentieth-century Irish historiography is Evi Gkotsaridis, *Trials of Irish history: genesis and evolution of a reappraisal, 1938–2000* (London, 2006). However, while containing much valuable material, this work is extremely tendentious, and should be treated with caution. For a polemical critique of 'revisionism', see Kevin Whelan, 'The revisionist debate in Ireland', *Boundary 2* 31 (2004), 179–205.

to probe the reasons why such polemical histories had come into being, and why they might continue to exist. Indeed, Moody's most obvious statement of intent, as belatedly articulated in the 1970s, simply took their existence for granted and argued that these so-called 'myths' of Irish history needed to be critically interrogated in the light of empirical reality as revealed by historians.⁴ It is hard to argue against that proposition. Yet it seems crude, almost reductionist in its assumptions, for it took little cognisance of the role such 'myths' had played in Irish history, nor of the processes by which they were reshaped and reinvented through the generations.⁵ Admittedly, this situation has changed in more recent years, as historians of Ireland have become increasingly preoccupied with issues pertaining to recollection and remembrance.⁶ But the question of how the Irish past was remembered cannot be divorced from the question of who was remembering it. And this inevitably begs consideration of the vexing subject of 'collective', 'historical' or 'social' memory.⁷

In attempting to grapple with such a problematic concept, the most obvious issue to be addressed is perhaps the most enduring: the inevitable tension between the individual and the collective. Indeed, the very notion of 'collective memory' may well be a contradiction in terms. Do communities and cultures remember collectively or as individuals? Or do the the individuals who make up that community remember the past in overlapping and congruent ways? The manner in which such processes of recollection take place is of fundamental importance to any consideration of the past, for received versions of a specific historical event could be reconstructed by individuals and communities whose lived experience was far removed from the event in question, and often in ways that diverged wildly from the reality of what had actually happened. This brings us back to Moody's original formulation, but it also implies that between the reality and the 'myth' there is a dynamic process that transformed one into the other. The notion that 'history' and 'memory' are antithetical by nature is nothing new, but the fluidity between the two is an area worth probing. Paul Connerton has posited a distinction between 'social memory' and 'historical reconstruction'; the latter can, by its nature, reveal things that play no part in the former, but in certain circumstances it can also play a part in shaping 'social' memory.⁸ But if 'memory' in this context simply refers to a pattern of remembrance, it does not automatically mean that such a pattern reflects the reality of what is being

⁴ T.W. Moody, 'Irish history and Irish mythology', in Brady, *Interpreting Irish history*, 71–86.

⁵ Guy Beiner, 'Between trauma and triumphalism: the Easter Rising, the Somme, and the crux of deep memory in modern Ireland', *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007), 366–89: 377.

⁶ Significant contributions to this burgeoning field are Ian McBride (ed.), *History and memory in modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001); and especially Guy Beiner, *Remembering the year of the French: Irish folk history and social memory* (Madison, WI, 2007).

⁷ Useful methodological overviews of these concepts are Alon Confino, 'Collective memory and cultural history: problems of method', *American Historical Review* 102 (1997), 1385–403; and Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 179–97.

⁸ Paul Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge, 1989), 13.

remembered. Such ‘memory’ could also refer to a particular representation of the past; or as Moody put it, a ‘myth’.

If ‘history’ and ‘memory’ are antithetical, then the same can be said of ‘history’ and ‘myth’. And again, there is a dynamic process that transforms one into the other. Traditions of remembrance might become muted and sublimated over time but they could still survive to be reinvigorated at certain key moments. The fluid and organic nature of these transmitted traditions could be married to the ostensible precision of the written word in what David Gross has termed a ‘cognitive reappropriation of the past’.⁹ History could be a tool to reinvigorate myths as much as refute them. So did this mean that the existence of such myths was the product of simple or wilful ignorance, or of something more complicated?

It was one thing to attempt to destroy myths. It is a far more challenging task to examine them, understand them, and explain them. There is a strong case to be made that the ostensibly value-free history expounded by figures such as Edwards and Moody, based on an English model, with an excessive emphasis on political history and the deliberate exclusion of potentially contentious contemporary events, was inherently conservative even by the standards of the 1930s. After all, this was the decade that witnessed the blossoming of the *Annales* school in France.¹⁰ The empirical basis of this so-called ‘new history’ in Ireland was quite capable of attempting to dispel myths, but its methodological basis was arguably incapable of explaining them. Hence the significance of any attempt by a historian to grapple with such myths, which was precisely what Walter Love was attempting to do in the early 1960s with regards to the manner in which 1641 was represented in historical writing. But while his study remained unfinished at the time of his death, his notes and research materials were bequeathed to Karl Bottigheimer, an American historian of early modern Ireland whom Love had originally met in Dublin; and in turn, Bottigheimer deposited them in the library of Trinity College Dublin in the 1970s.

Love’s papers consist of a bewildering jumble of material: notes, files, drafts, jottings and assorted papers both in longhand and typescript; some correspondence; and, in a piquant testament to his industry, hundreds of call slips from the National Library of Ireland. Collectively, the papers provide a road map of sorts into the intricacies of the contested historiography of the 1641 rebellion, the methodological problems that the writing of such a study might pose, and the material with which one might attempt to write it. At the core of Love’s papers are his extensive typescript notes on a huge number of historical works ranging from c. 1700 to 1963, along with

⁹ David Gross, *The past in ruins: tradition and the critique of modernity* (Amherst, MA, 1992), 80.

¹⁰ Whelan, ‘Revisionist debate in Ireland’, 184–7. It should be said that in later phases of their careers Edwards and Moody were quite open to methodological innovation, and became more willing to engage with contemporary events, as illustrated by their involvement in the Bureau of Military History, set up by the Irish government to collect oral testimony from survivors of the revolutionary period (1916–21): see Gkotzaridis, *Trials of Irish history*, 80–102.

some photocopies of related source material.¹¹ His surviving papers demonstrate that he was working on what would have been, first and foremost, a historiographical study. Love's academic background lent itself to this: the three dissertations that he had written as a graduate student were all of a historiographical nature.¹² The broad contours of Love's career suggest that a recurrent interest in the writing of history brought him to Irish history via Edmund Burke, the subject of his doctoral thesis; equally, the handful of interrelated articles that he published in his lifetime suggest that Burke led Love to the contested memory of 1641.

Love's scholarly trajectory

With one exception, Walter Love's few publications on Irish history cover broadly similar ground: Irish historical writing and antiquarianism in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Edmund Burke seems to have been the vehicle by which Love became interested in Irish historiography, as Burke's own interest in Irish history was driven by an awareness that the Irish past was usually interpreted in polemical and sectarian terms. Burke was inevitably drawn into the resultant debates, which largely dealt with the nature of ancient Irish history, as examined by antiquaries; Love published a brief study of this.¹³ Presumably this had become his scholarly trajectory: Love published two more brief studies of Irish antiquarianism in the eighteenth century. The first of these outlined the history of two volumes of Irish language manuscripts, sent by Burke to the Anglican clergyman (and historian), Thomas Leland. These were subsequently passed on to the antiquarian, Charles Vallancey, who utilised part of them in his *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicum* before they were eventually donated to the library of Trinity College Dublin.¹⁴ The second of these essays was essentially an extension of the first, as it dealt with Vallancey's short-lived Hibernian Antiquarian Society, founded in 1779.¹⁵ But it also addressed running debates

¹¹ Love's notes and file on 1641 are retained in TCD, MSS 7,231–8. In quotations from these manuscripts, spelling and emphases have generally been left unchanged, though some typographical errors have been silently amended, and some capitalisation has been altered for the sake of clarity. Contractions and abbreviations have been expanded, but deletions in the original papers have not been included. Love's own amendments to typescript material have been included in angled brackets. Interpolations by the current author are indicated in square brackets.

¹² See Walter D. Love, 'The philosophy of history of Alfred North Whitehead', unpublished AM thesis, University of Chicago, 1950; 'Theories of history in England, 1550–1625', unpublished MA thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1952; and 'Edmund Burke's historical thought', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1956. Love also published a monograph, presumably based on his doctoral thesis, entitled *Edmund Burke's idea of the body corporate: a study in imagery* (Notre Dame, IN, 1965).

¹³ Walter D. Love, 'Edmund Burke and an Irish historiographical controversy', *History and Theory* 2 (1962), 180–98.

¹⁴ Walter D. Love, 'Edmund Burke, Charles Vallancey, and the Sebright manuscripts', *Hermathena* xcv (1961), 21–35.

¹⁵ Walter D. Love, 'The Hibernian Antiquarian Society: a forgotten predecessor to the Royal Irish Academy', *Studies* LI (1962), 419–31.

amongst Irish antiquarians about the true nature and origins of the ancient Irish: were they ‘Scandian’ or ‘Phoenician’, northern or southern, barbarous or civilised? Underpinning such seemingly innocuous disputation was a more visceral sectarian reality, for, as Love noted, ‘the clash of rival systems of ancient history was also a clash between Protestant and Catholic’.¹⁶ And if such an essentially sectarian debate could be conducted about the ancient past, then it was perhaps inevitable that it would come to encompass more recent events. As the eighteenth century wore on, such debates ‘were sharpened by the incorporation of the wars and rebellions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into the available narrative’.¹⁷ Pre-eminent amongst such ‘wars and rebellions’ was that of 1641.

1641 and its shadow

On 22 October 1641 Sir Phelim O’Neill, MP for Dungannon, orchestrated the capture of key positions across Armagh and Tyrone as the prelude to a larger scheme for a rebellion. The essential motive was straightforward enough. Amidst the crisis that eventually led to civil war across the Stuart kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland, the Catholic gentry of Ulster sought a position of strength from which to negotiate with King Charles I on issues of concern to them: namely, security of tenure on their lands, and the free exercise of their religion. But such a limited rebellion for specific purposes soon gave way to a popular uprising directed at the British Protestant colonists who had settled there under the plantation of Ulster, and as the rebellion fanned out from its core, Protestant settlers were explicitly targeted for attack. Some of these attacks stemmed from little more than banditry; some from socio-economic tensions. But they were driven by deeper resentments, for the pre-eminence of these colonists had come at the expense of the natives whom they had supplanted. A visceral anti-Englishness (Scottish settlers were initially left unharmed) became evident as the settlers came under attack. As the rebellion wore on, the insurgents sought in places to eradicate all vestiges of the culture of British Protestant colonists, and an often vicious sectarianism came to the fore as the settlers were increasingly attacked on the grounds that many of them were Protestants. Taken as a whole, the winter of 1641–2 saw almost ritualised attempts to wipe out the physical, cultural and religious presence of the British colonists in Ireland.¹⁸ Consequently, the rebellion was interpreted by Protestant contemporaries as a full blown sectarian war in which Catholics fully intended to wipe out Protestants in Ireland. In the propaganda

¹⁶ Love, ‘Hibernian Antiquarian Society’, 424. Antiquarian activity in late eighteenth-century Ireland is comprehensively examined in Clare O’Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations: antiquarian debate and cultural politics in Ireland, c. 1750–1800* (Cork, 2004).

¹⁷ Clare O’Halloran, ‘Historical writings, 1690–1890’, in Margaret Kelleher and Philip O’Leary (eds), *The Cambridge history of Irish literature* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2006), vol. 1, 599.

¹⁸ The fullest modern accounts of the origins and course of the 1641 rebellion, upon which this discussion freely draws, are Michael Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994), Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (Oxford, 2001), 461–550, and William J. Smyth, *Map-making, landscapes and memory: a geography of colonial and early modern Ireland, c. 1530–1750* (Cork, 2006), 103–65.

war that ensued in both Britain and Ireland in the 1640s, this perception was magnified even further.

It would also persist. Love correctly discerned that the key significance of 1641 in the centuries after the event rested on how the rebellion had been perceived, rather than on the reality of what had actually happened. 1641 was usually depicted in lurid terms, with allegations of horrendous and widespread Catholic atrocities becoming synonymous with its events. The rebellion first emerged in Love's published work in a study of the Anglican clergyman Thomas Leland's unsuccessful attempt at writing a 'philosophical' history of Ireland that was supposed to transcend and supplant such partisan versions of the Irish past.¹⁹ But from the outset of his study, Love had accurately discerned the central issue at stake:

Protestants wrote histories that were alive with Catholic rebellions and massacres; they justified the penal laws as necessary protection against an unforgivably and ineradicably rebellious people. Catholics wrote histories to protest against the penal laws; they laboured to show that the rebellions and massacres were really provoked by Protestants and that most past troubles were caused either by the Protestants themselves or by the unfortunate division of the country, by law, into two hostile bodies.²⁰

The broader issue remained a constant; regardless of what aspect of Irish history was under discussion, it was inevitably mapped onto an existing sectarianism, the origins of which lay in the contested terrain of that same history. And one of the events that became a pre-eminent focal point of such sectarian disputation was the 1641 rebellion.

The reasons why were straightforward enough. From the 1640s onward, a Protestant paradigm of the rebellion as an attempt at wholesale sectarian massacre was constructed and given official sanction via the official commemoration of the rebellion by the established church on 23 October each year. In this reading of the rebellion, the grievances of Catholics following the plantations of the early seventeenth century, which had played a part in fuelling the original insurgency, were elided, as the rebellion and its perceived brutalities were ascribed to the inherent viciousness of Irish Catholics. This had been utilised as a pretext for both the Cromwellian reconquest of 1649–53 and the subsequent land confiscations of the 1650s, and was also used as a justification for the substantive maintenance of this settlement after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Consequently, to uphold a Protestant version of the rebellion was to justify the dispossession of Irish Catholics on the grounds of both justice and prudence, most obviously with regard to forestalling any potential repeat of the rebellion and its atrocities, and in time, this perception of 1641 as wholesale sectarian massacre provided a crucial ideological buttress for the eighteenth-century Irish Protestant state.

¹⁹ Walter D. Love, 'Charles O'Connor of Belanagare and Thomas Leland's "Philosophical" history of Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* 13 (1962), 1–25.

²⁰ Love, 'O'Connor and Leland's "Philosophical" history', 1.

But conversely, there was also a Catholic interpretation of the rebellion—one that downplayed or dismissed Protestant allegations of atrocities and argued that the maintenance of such a paradigm was merely a cynical justification for relegating Irish Catholics to the status of a disenfranchised and oppressed underclass. Should this Protestant version of the rebellion be successfully challenged, then a key historical justification for the existence of a sectarian state in eighteenth-century Ireland would be undermined. This was the context in which the Catholic physician and activist, John Curry, for example, sought to articulate a Catholic perspective on the rebellion in his own writings on Irish history. To dismiss the allegations of a massacre of Protestants was to provide a further weapon in the ongoing debate over the re-admission of Irish Catholics to political and social rights: the so-called ‘Catholic question’.²¹ Such disputations also recurred against the backdrop of later events: the 1798 rebellion, the campaign for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s, and the later campaigns for Home Rule in the second half of the nineteenth century. What Walter Love correctly discerned was the continuity of this historiographical debate from the seventeenth century to the twentieth. Consequently, he saw fit to examine it in its totality.

The remembrance of 1641 in Irish historiography

Arguably Love is still ahead of his time, for there have been relatively few systematic studies of the contested memories of 1641, and none has been on the scale of what he contemplated 40 years ago. The rebellion naturally looms large in the historiography of early modern Ireland, and its broader cultural significance is often alluded to. But this topic has only received scattered attention, and much of this work has been confined to the seventeenth century rather than later periods. The witness testimonies (depositions) generated by the rebellion and retained in Trinity College Dublin, have been extensively utilised to reconstruct its events,²² as well as having been studied in their own right.²³ In addition, they are now the subject of a major project to transcribe and digitise the entire collection for publication in the form of an online database.²⁴ There are a number of studies of authors such as the Church of Ireland dean of Kilmore, Henry Jones, and the Irish master of the rolls, Sir John Temple, who published these testimonies in their own seminal works in the 1640s, thereby help-

²¹ See [John Curry], *A brief account from the most authentic Protestant writers of the causes, motives, and mischiefs, of the Irish rebellion, on the 23rd day of October 1641, deliver'd in a dialogue between a Dissenter, and a member of the Church of Ireland, as by law established* (London, 1747); *Historical memoirs of the Irish rebellion in the year 1641; extracted from parliamentary journals, state-acts, and the most eminent Protestant historians ... in a letter to Walter Harris, esq* (London, 1758); *Occasional remarks on certain passages in Dr. Leland's history of Ireland, relative to the Irish Rebellion in 1641* (London, 1778); and *An historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the settlement under King William* (Dublin, 1775).

²² Perceval-Maxwell, *Outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641*; Canny, *Making Ireland British*.

²³ Aidan Clarke, ‘The 1641 depositions’, in Peter Fox (ed.), *Treasures of the library, Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin, 1986), 111–22; Michael Perceval-Maxwell, ‘The Ulster rising of 1641 and the depositions’, *Irish Historical Studies* 42 (1978), 144–67.

²⁴ Details of this project can be found at www.tcd.ie/history/1641/ (accessed 23 November 2009).

ing to disseminate perceptions of the rebellion as sectarian massacre.²⁵ Likewise, there are a number of studies of the depiction of the rebellion in contemporary print culture,²⁶ along with at least one as-yet unpublished study that examines the complex relationship between these testimonies and seventeenth-century print culture more broadly.²⁷ Other studies attempt to directly address the cultural significance of the rebellion; some of these extend their analysis beyond the seventeenth century,²⁸ and occasional studies of later periods indirectly touch upon the significance of 1641.²⁹ There are also studies of the specific historiography of 1641 that extend beyond the seventeenth century, some of which have utilised Love's work, and which cover at least some of the areas that he had intended to examine.³⁰

²⁵ [Henry Jones], *A remonstrance of divers remarkable passages concerning the church and kingdom of Ireland* (London, 1642); Sir John Temple, *The Irish rebellion ... with the barbarous cruelties and bloody massacres which ensued thereupon* (London, 1646). Useful studies of both works are, respectively, Joseph Cope, 'Fashioning victims: Dr Henry Jones and the plight of Irish Protestants, 1642', *Historical Research* 74 (2001), 370–91; and Raymond Gillespie, 'Temple's fate: reading *The Irish rebellion* in late seventeenth-century Ireland', in Ciaran Brady and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds), *British interventions in early modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), 315–33.

²⁶ Royce McGillivray, 'Edmund Borlase, historian of the Irish rebellion', *Studia Hibernica* 9 (1969), 86–92; Iain Donovan, "'Bloody news from Ireland": the pamphlet literature of the Irish massacres of the 1640s', unpublished MLitt thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1995; Tom O'Gorman, "'Occurrences from Ireland": contemporary pamphlet reactions to the Confederate war, 1641–1649', unpublished MLitt thesis, University College Dublin, 1999; David A. O'Hara, *English newsbooks and Irish rebellion, 1641–1649* (Dublin, 2006); Ethan Howard Shagan, 'Constructing discord: ideology, propaganda, and English responses to the Irish rebellion of 1641', *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997), 4–34; Kathleen M. Noonan, "'The cruel pressure of an enraged, barbarous people": Irish and English identity in seventeenth-century policy and propaganda', *Historical Journal* 41 (1998), 151–77.

²⁷ Eamon Darcy, 'Politics, pogroms and print: the 1641 depositions and contemporary print culture', PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2009.

²⁸ Aidan Clarke, 'The 1641 rebellion and anti-popery in Ireland', in Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Ulster 1641: aspects of the rising* (2nd edn, Belfast, 1997), 139–57; T.C. Barnard, 'The uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant celebrations', *English Historical Review* 106 (1991), 889–920; Brian Walker, '1641, 1689, 1690 and all that: the Unionist sense of history', in Brian Walker (ed.), *Dancing to history's tune: history, myth and politics in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996), 1–14.

²⁹ James Kelly, "'The glorious and immortal memory": commemoration and Protestant identity in Ireland, 1660–1800', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 94C (1994), 25–52; James Kelly, "'We were all to have been massacred": Irish Protestants and the experience of rebellion', in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds), *1798: a bicentenary perspective* (Dublin, 2003), 312–30.

³⁰ Jacqueline Hill, 'Popery and Protestantism, civil and religious liberty: the disputed lessons of Irish history, 1690–1812', *Past and Present* 118 (1988), 96–129; Jacqueline Hill, '1641 and the quest for Catholic emancipation, 1691–1829', in Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Ulster 1641*, 159–71; Toby Barnard, '1641: a bibliographical essay', in Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Ulster 1641*, 173–86; Toby Barnard, "'Parlour entertainment in an evening?" Histories of the 1640s', in Micheál Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis: Ireland in the 1640s* (Dublin, 2001), 20–43; O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, 141–57.

But for the most part these are articles that are inevitably constrained in terms of their coverage. Love's unwritten book remains the exception rather than the rule.

Walter Love's project and its conception

Love began work on his project in earnest in early 1964. The American Philosophical Society funded his research in Dublin, though by his own admission, he could have seen virtually all of what he required in New York, Chicago and the Huntington Library in California. But Love assumed that a trip to Dublin would be 'simpler and much more pleasant (I thought)', though he left no indication of what difficulties (if any) he may have encountered.³¹ Scholarship is often categorised as a solitary preoccupation, and in Love's case this certainly seems to have been true. Despite spending a number of summers in Dublin (usually staying in Buswell's Hotel on Kildare Street, directly across from the National Library of Ireland), he does not seem to have forged many links, if any, with historians in Dublin. He became a close friend of William O'Sullivan, the keeper of manuscripts in Trinity College Dublin (given Love's natural interest in the 1641 depositions, this was probably inevitable), and he met the young Karl Bottigheimer (also a visitor from the US) on the steps of the National Library, but for the most part, Love seems to have ploughed a lone furrow. He was industrious in doing so: by the time of his death he was confident that he had read virtually everything of significance to his project.³² And while the book he had envisaged was never completed, the broad conclusions he had arrived at were outlined in two papers presented in New York and San Francisco in March and December 1965, respectively. Only the latter was published: it arose from a panel Love shared with Bottigheimer at the annual conference of the American Historical Association. While Bottigheimer's article dealt with the reality of events in Munster in the 1640s, Love's dealt with the perception of the rebellion, and the manner in which the Protestant interpretation of 1641 was enshrined, most especially in the works of Jones and Temple.³³ However, the broader interpretive thrust of Love's project had been outlined in New York some months earlier.³⁴

Love was intensely aware that the issues he was dealing with were not confined to Ireland. His obvious inclination towards 'scientific' history was at odds with what he saw as the polemical intentions of most writers on the subject. 'Their interest has always been in the question 'should' it have happened, and they have usually come to their study with a resounding answer—<an answer> already arrived at'.³⁵

³¹ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, fol. 224.

³² TCD, MSS 7,233–5, fol. 224.

³³ Karl Bottigheimer, 'Civil war in Ireland: the reality in Munster', *Emory University Quarterly* 22 (1966), 46–56; Walter D. Love, 'Civil war in Ireland: appearances in three centuries of historical writing', *Emory University Quarterly* 22 (1966), 57–72.

³⁴ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, 'The Irish massacre of 1641: an historiographical study' ('Paper to be delivered at the Conference on Irish Studies, 20 March 1965, New York City', unpublished typescript, 26 February 1965), fols 97–117.

³⁵ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish Massacre of 1641', fol. 98.

Love identified two confessional traditions that had dictated the interpretation of the rebellion: one Catholic, one Protestant. He argued that Temple's notorious *Irish rebellion* was the keystone of the 'Protestant' tradition which, especially in the nineteenth century, had linked the allegations of a massacre of Protestants with the eventual Cromwellian settlement, both of which became:

linked inextricably as a kind of judgmental/historical complex that appeared in writing after writing in this tradition. Since the Settlement was the basis for the social, economic, and religious situation in Ireland right through the nineteenth century, the massacre was used over and over again as justification for the [Protestant] 'establishment'.³⁶

However, the opposing Catholic historiographical tradition sought to undermine this by attempting to disprove or downplay the evident exaggeration of the massacres, or even to deny their existence. The writings of Curry and the emigré Mathew Carey³⁷ were identified as key texts in formulating this perspective; both authors adopted the virtually identical strategy of systematically refuting or discrediting the myriad Protestant accounts of the rebellion. But 'the Catholic tradition remained <for a long time> a kind of outsiders' interpretation and protest, while the Protestant tradition belonged to the establishment and was a sort of official line'.³⁸ Consequently, if 1641 was the proof of Irish Catholic degeneracy, the Cromwellian settlement was a justifiable punishment; Love also collected material on Cromwellian massacres, especially the events at Drogheda, presumably to provide a counterpoint to accounts of 1641. There was another story of another massacre that could potentially be told.

While the rise of 'scientific' history in the nineteenth century held out the possibility of determining what had actually happened in 1641, the contrasting writings of historians such as J.P. Prendergast³⁹ and J.A. Froude⁴⁰ ('a muscular protestant if there ever was one'⁴¹) in the latter decades of the nineteenth century suggested that its inflammatory utility was far too potent to be discarded so easily. Such a resolution of the debate over the events of 1641 also proved to be beyond the grasp of the great liberal historian W.E.H. Lecky, who was dismissive of the wilder allegations of a massacre.⁴² Yet despite his veneer of scientific methodology, Lecky 'didn't look at the depositions any more than Froude did' (the veracity of this massive corpus of contemporary testimony had been long contested).⁴³ Lecky's arguments, influential as they proved to be, simply derived from the 'Curry-Carey' tradition.⁴⁴ The subsequent writings of Mary Hickson ('who I see as a stern and prim little lady, probably

³⁶ TCD, MSS 7,233-5, Love, 'The Irish Massacre of 1641', fol. 99.

³⁷ Mathew Carey, *Vindiciae Hibernicae: or, Ireland vindicated* (Philadelphia, 1819).

³⁸ TCD, MSS 7,233-5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 100.

³⁹ J.P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian settlement of Ireland* (London, 1865).

⁴⁰ J.A. Froude, *The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century* (3 vols, London, 1872-4).

⁴¹ TCD, MSS 7,233-5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 103.

⁴² W.E.H. Lecky, *A history of Ireland in the eighteenth century* (5 vols, London, 1892).

⁴³ TCD, MSS 7,233-5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 103.

⁴⁴ TCD, MSS 7,233-5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 104.

in a velvet hat'⁴⁵) were a reaction to this 'reinforcement' of the Catholic tradition, but her conclusion from her own work on the depositions was that the Protestant tradition was right after all, and that the rebellion had been characterised by a massacre of Protestants.⁴⁶

The issue remained unresolved. As Love put it on another occasion, 'the sad part is that professionals have not been able to solve the problem well enough so as to make the extreme versions fall into realm of legend completely. Nor have they solved it well enough to make it easy for the writer of watered-down history to know how to present it'.⁴⁷ He concluded that 'the two traditions went right on, and they have continued, bombast and all, into the present day'.⁴⁸ Love ended with an exhortation to examine the actual evidence from the rebellion itself, in the form of the depositions, 'but I leave the study of the massacre itself till later on or to others, not as a hopeless task, but as one never properly done'.⁴⁹

Methodology and influences

Love certainly had an interest in the contentious contemporary accounts of the rebellion, but only insofar as they contrasted with perceptions of it after the event. He was concerned with representation rather than reality. The bulk of the material upon which he intended to draw was historiographical, consisting of histories that dealt with the rebellion published mainly in Britain and Ireland, though there was some material from the United States, along with the works of such European luminaries as Francois Guizot and Leopold von Ranke; even fiction made an appearance in the form of William Godwin's *Mandeville*.⁵⁰

Love was inevitably concerned with the complex interplay between texts that was of fundamental importance to his subject (accounts of 1641 often borrowed wholesale from one another), though he was increasingly concerned with the vexing utility of the original depositions, particularly in terms of their influence on seventeenth-century writers. 'Did the writings distort the depositions? Did they change in conception of the massacre as the collection of depositions grew and new details appeared in them? And so on'.⁵¹ Equally, the occasional commentaries scattered amongst Love's files indicate a penetrating shrewdness in dealing with his material.⁵² His essential objective was to examine the manner in which 1641 had been

⁴⁵ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 105.

⁴⁶ Mary Hickson, *Ireland in the seventeenth century; or, the Irish massacres of 1641–2* (2 vols, London, 1884). J.A. Froude wrote the preface to this work.

⁴⁷ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 162.

⁴⁸ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 108.

⁴⁹ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 110.

⁵⁰ William Godwin, *Mandeville. A tale of the seventeenth century in England* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1817).

⁵¹ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 218.

⁵² For example, in the work of the Irish unionist Hugh O'Grady, the following passage attracted attention: 'Imagine Ireland with no government at all, the religious question at full blaze, the land question again in the melting pot, great men bragging of great support from across the water, priests preaching angry jihads, and finally as a bait to the submerged tenth,

reconstructed and represented in the centuries since the event itself. Such an ostensibly narrow focus belied the broader conception of his project. As another text on historical methodologies put it:

The cliché that history must be rewritten every generation should therefore run somewhat differently: the past cannot help being reconceived by every generation, but the earlier reports upon it are in the main as good and true as they ever were. He who would know the full history of any period will do well to read its successive treatments, just as the ordinary researcher who would know the truth of a single incident seeks out all of its witnesses. The revisionism of historians, rightly considered, does not substitute, it subtracts a little and adds more.

This struck a chord with Love, and forced him to ask 'will my study bear this out?'⁵³ But despite his willingness to ask such questions of himself, Love's papers offer virtually no clues as to who or what had influenced him in intellectual terms. Equally,

the land of Ulster, imagine all this and the wonder is not that the massacre was so terrible, but that all Ireland did not in twenty four hours revert to the age of the cave dwellers. No juggling with figures can minimise the slaughter that ensued, the furies miseries, savageries, and rapacity ... the incident stands out as one of the most terrible examples in history of what follows when the zeal of men for their "particular ends" tempts them to overthrow the Status Quo by appeals to force, forgetting that all communities from Empires to village communes depend on the mutual trust that each man has in his neighbour': Hugh O'Grady, *Strafford and Ireland: The history of his vice-royalty with an account of his trial* (2 vols, Dublin, 1923), vol. 1, 234. Love noted the authors rhetorical abhorrence of rebellion, and mused on the fact that O'Grady had been writing in the midst of the Irish Civil War of 1922–3. The extract elicited the following observation: 'does this reflect 1922, when he wrote the intro?': TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fols 489–91. Equally, more reputable and sober historians were not immune from his scrutiny. Godfrey Davis, author of the relevant volume of the *Oxford history of England*, had described 1641 thus: 'The controversy about the extent of the massacre is of long standing, but there is no gain saying Hume's remark that the Irish catholic who denies the massacre of 1641 must be considered beyond the reach of argument or reason. The exact number of victims matters little. It is sufficient to know that certainly several thousands were killed in cold blood and probably two or three times as many perished from exposure and privation. What is more important is that contemporaries in England and Scotland believed, however unjustifiably, that there had been a plot formed by the Irish for the universal extirpation of all British settlers, and that many thousands of men, women, and children had been barbarously murdered without any provocation' (Sir John Temple was cited to support the latter point): Godfrey Davies, *The early Stuarts, 1603–1660* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1959), 117. But this analysis proved insufficient for Love, and the respectability earned by the authors status did not spare him from scrutiny 'Davies has used [S.R.] Gardiner belief approach—won't actually pronounce but certainly leaves impression that it happened': TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 531.

⁵³ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 234. The extract is from Jacques Barzun and H.F. Graff, *The modern researcher* (New York, 1957), 165.

there is no indication as to how he had been influenced by contemporary historiographical trends, if indeed he had been.

One can infer that there was a constellation of *possible* influences. Love was an American scholar trained in an American academic environment, and the ideal of ‘objectivity’ had been firmly enshrined in the American historical profession since its professionalisation in the latter decades of the nineteenth century; in other words, long before its Irish counterpart. But while the attainment of objectivity had largely remained an aspiration rather than a reality amongst American scholars, the aftermath of the Second World War and the onset of the Cold War had facilitated what Peter Novick described as a ‘qualified and tolerant’ objectivism that, in line with an cautiously optimistic belief in the eventual attainment of scholarly objectivity, managed to accommodate a ‘certain amount of perspectival relativism’.⁵⁴ But it seems simplistic to simply assume that Love’s work was either directly influenced by this, or was merely a reaction to it. As he himself put it:

I am not backing one of the old superficial attacks on scientific history. Maybe ‘scientific’ is too pretentious a name for it, but we can come a lot closer to something intelligible and believable than a huge blot, at the center of a babel of angry rhetoric—which is almost all the centuries of writing have left us with on the massacre.⁵⁵

Yet Love was by no means an unabashed advocate of non-judgmental, value free history. ‘I would like to have it, I think, but perhaps it is giving up too much’.⁵⁶

In this light, one might look elsewhere for potential influences. In the course of his graduate studies, Love had written an evaluation of the English mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, one of whose key philosophical preoccupations was with ‘the interplay of subject with object. This interplay is the stuff constituting those individual things which make up the sole reality of the Universe’.⁵⁷ The corollary of this, in historical terms, was that ‘the past has an objective existence in the present’.⁵⁸ The relevance of such a position to Love’s work is obvious; indeed, the vexing tension between objective and subjective had helped to shape his attitude towards the depositions.⁵⁹ But while Love had studied Whitehead, and while there is the occasional hint of philosophical preoccupations amongst his remaining papers, such a link, while plausible, remains speculative.⁶⁰ There is precious little in his surviving papers with which to posit any linkages to either intellectual developments or historiographical trends. The scattered jottings and musings he committed to paper provide no clues as to what had brought him to the point he had arrived at, for the

⁵⁴ Peter Novick, *That noble dream: the objectivity question and the American historical profession* (Cambridge, 1988), 415.

⁵⁵ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, ‘The Irish massacre of 1641’, fol. 119.

⁵⁶ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, ‘The Irish massacre of 1641’, fol. 125.

⁵⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of ideas* (Cambridge, 1933), 228.

⁵⁸ Whitehead, *Adventures of ideas*, 246.

⁵⁹ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, ‘The Irish massacre of 1641’, fol. 121.

⁶⁰ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, ‘The Irish massacre of 1641’, fols 119, 127.

nature of his subject was, in itself, at odds with the dominant tenor of contemporary Irish historiography. Love was attempting to write a study of two opposing historical paradigms; of what people *thought* had happened as opposed to what actually had.

He devoted considerable effort to contemplating the manner in which he might attempt such a study. By its very nature it was an analysis of subjectivity, and, perhaps understandably, he was unimpressed with Isaiah Berlin's suggestion that history was effectively incompatible with the disciplinary rigour of the natural sciences.⁶¹ For Love, this was missing the point.

In Ireland and England what had happened in 1641 is of little importance. Everything depends on what was believed ... scientific investigation could not just abolish old beliefs as unhistorical the way that historians did to William Tell by showing he was fiction. They couldn't so much as prove the unhistorical nature of other accounts, although there is some of this—and they were left with problem of explaining what did happen, and this was next to impossible.⁶²

Love was convinced of the relevance and vigour of what he was attempting to do, and the manner in which he conceived of his work and intended to present it was harnessed to a definite purpose.

The subject of the massacre is of tremendous interest and importance in the study of humanity, which I regard as the ultimate <purpose> of <all> historical work. Lecky could look for the truth 'somewhere in the middle' because he rejected as unbelievable all suggestions of really monstrous human behaviour. In the twentieth century, with contemporary actions of great horror so well documented by photographs, <to speak only of the most irrefutable> evidence, and with a profounder sense than Lecky possessed of the wolf that lurks in every man, we are more impressed by what we are told of extreme behaviour. And we want to know more about it.⁶³

His chosen topic provided a means by which he might do so, and in a manner explicitly coloured by an awareness of the twentieth-century's horrors.⁶⁴ At the very least he 'might find out a lot about three centuries of conflict in that broken world of Irish

⁶¹ Isaiah Berlin, 'History and theory: the concept of scientific history', *History and Theory* 1 (1960), 1–31.

⁶² TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 226r.

⁶³ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 119v–r.

⁶⁴ Given his obvious awareness of how the atrocious events of the Second World War might shape a twentieth-century perspective on the past, this allows for speculation about other potential influences on Love: there were a number of pioneering contemporary studies of what might crudely be termed 'irrational' systems of belief and behaviour; for example, Norman Cohn, *The pursuit of the millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London, 1957), and George Rudé, *The crowd in history, 1730–1848* (London, 1964). But again, this remains speculative: there is no indication in Love's papers that he had read these works, let alone been influenced by them.

life by studying the historiography of the massacre',⁶⁵ for the simple reason that 'the significance of the Irish massacre then is just the story I have been trying to tell of its afterlife'.⁶⁶ That afterlife 'has more of a reality in men's minds than in actual fact, and even when it is seen as a malignant nightmare it has a certain kind of reality—something to be observed as a part of other men's minds that tells something about them, that they hate Irish Catholics'.⁶⁷ The conscious and unconscious mentalities that underlay the historiography of 1641 were his ultimate target.

The manner in which he might present his findings was another ongoing preoccupation. Love queried the perceived necessity to tell history as a story.

Life itself is not like a story, even from the point of view of one person. Just try remembering your past life, for instance. You never go back to the beginning or the first memory and then work up chronologically to the present. You skip all around in the time sequence, and the principles of organization vary as you move from one memory to another because they both have to do with the same subject (your love-life, for instance) or because the feeling aroused by one reminds you of the other, and so on.⁶⁸

According to Love, 1641 'was for some three centuries the most celebrated, discussed, and controversial event in Irish history',⁶⁹ but interestingly, he was unimpressed by traditional studies of historiography, which he dismissed as 'not much more than dictionaries of historians and their works, in some rough chronological order. The story, the connected development of modern historical consciousness, has not been written; and we have very little sense of how men in other ages conceived the past'.⁷⁰

If this was the case, it implicitly allowed for leeway in terms of presenting the past to a contemporary audience. Love considered the possibility of making a film, possibly a documentary, about his subject. 'The object of making a film would be to see what extra and different resources could be brought into the enterprise of trying to take account of the past.'⁷¹ He was acutely aware of the inherent dramatic potential of his material: he contemplated using depictions of the actual massacres, the taking of depositions, and the preaching of commemorative sermons; even dramatic reconstructions of the presentation of the remonstrance provided by Henry Jones to the English House of Commons in 1642, not to mention Froude's controversial American lecture tour in 1871. Love considered using a broad range of visual imagery, making links from woodcuts depicting the Irish rebellion to those depicting the parallel events of the Thirty Years War; indeed, he also considered using images of atrocities from the Second World War by way of

⁶⁵ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 125.

⁶⁶ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 127.

⁶⁷ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 156.

⁶⁸ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 124.

⁶⁹ TCD, MSS 7,223–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 215.

⁷⁰ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, Love, 'The Irish massacre of 1641', fol. 221.

⁷¹ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 243.

'analogy'. 'I do have a deposition somewhere that talks about people laid in graves like herrings, and this could be coupled with a bulldozer scene for the bodies'; presumably images from the Nazi concentration camps.⁷² He mused that this project might be of interest to the Hibernophile John Huston. 'It can be an exploration of the techniques of making movies and the mysteries of the responses to them', one which could potentially serve as a companion piece to his book.⁷³ As for the book itself, it would begin by addressing the vexing historiographical issues that had been formulated in the 1640s; 'then it will be possible to go into the treatment that I have been thinking of where I simply ignore whether it is true or not and deal with the contexts which determine upholding the myth and trying to break it down'.⁷⁴

The 'Bloody Massacre'

It is difficult to be entirely sure of the title of the book that was to be the eventual outcome of Love's research, but the surviving drafts are filed under a phrase that recurred again and again in both his papers and his writings: the 'Bloody Massacre'.⁷⁵ Love's notes for the book indicate an inevitable concentration on moments of crisis: the events of the 1640s and 1650s; the settlement of the 1660s; the Popish Plot; the Glorious Revolution; the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745; White-boy agitation in the eighteenth century; Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s; the rise of Irish nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century; the emergence of Home Rule; and ending with the Froude-Hickson-Lecky debate over the nature of 1641 from the 1870s onward.⁷⁶ Fragments of the text survive in his papers in Trinity, the most notable of which is the draft of the opening chapter. The book was supposed to begin with an evocation of the state ceremony commemorating the rebellion on 23 October 1746, describing the parades of troops, sermons, cannon volleys, fireworks and bonfires that had all marked the occasion. But Love noted the irony that, on this occasion, 'it is the failure of the rebellion that is being celebrated'.⁷⁷ But who was celebrating? Not John Curry, who on that day supposedly heard a little girl ask 'are there any of those bloody papists in Dublin?'; hence his desire to refute the Protestant version of 1641.⁷⁸ According to Love, 'the only difference between the guilt of the massacrists in 1641 and the Curry people was that in 1641 the crime was committed while in 1746 the crime was only about to be committed': hence, he argued, the constant vigilance required to forestall this became the essential impetus behind the penal laws.⁷⁹ Consequently, Love was also aware of the very distinct possibility that Catholic hostility to the commemoration of 1641

⁷² TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 242.

⁷³ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 243.

⁷⁴ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fols 266–7.

⁷⁵ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fols 1151–264.

⁷⁶ TCD MSS 7,236–8, fol. 267.

⁷⁷ TCD MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1157.

⁷⁸ TCD MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1152–9.

⁷⁹ TCD MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1163.

might have existed.⁸⁰ In what was an elegant and erudite draft, Love suggested that a degree of empathy with all sides was necessary for the fullest understanding of his subject (Pl. I).

The other surviving drafts concern themselves with the major historiographical controversies about the nature of the rebellion; namely those revolving around the scholarly activities of O'Connor and Curry in the eighteenth century, and those of Froude in the nineteenth. The activities of O'Connor and Curry were essentially intended to 'advocate reconciliation with Catholics through relaxation of the Penal Laws'.⁸¹ Love's treatment of Burke's relationship with the two echoed his published article in *Irish Historical Studies*, and the text as a whole attempted to yoke together antiquarian, historical and literary endeavours with the politicians and public events of the day, with the 'Catholic question' forming the unavoidable backdrop.⁸² Equally, his long and complex draft on the disputes between Froude and J.P. Prendergast in the 1870s showcased an extremely impressive and fluent command of the relevant material, along with its origins, influences and contexts.⁸³

Love's projected book was intended to have a tripartite structure. Its opening would be in the eighteenth century, with the draft introduction setting the stage. This initial concentration on this period was intended to illustrate the 'two sets (opposing and contradictory) of feelings, unresolved'.⁸⁴ The second section would move back to the seventeenth century to illustrate 'what actually happened in the sense of what happened to create this story'.⁸⁵ Love conceived of the rhetorical trick of writing this segment from 'personal experience': his own identification and examination of the sources. It would end by using the depositions—the significance of which he was

⁸⁰ TCD MSS 7,236–8, fols 1166–7. In his surviving draft of this section, he utilised two examples that seemed to suggest this: he referred to a report of what seems to have been a riot in 1744 provoked by the 23 October anniversary commemorations of the outbreak of rebellion in 1641, and reinterpreted an ostensibly mundane account in Daniel Corkery's *The hidden Ireland* (Dublin, 1941) in which Corkery quoted at length from an account by one J.M. Caldwell, who described how, on 23 October 1747 'at that moment the whole of Galway was illuminated, and that there were candles even in the windows of the convents. Colonel Eyre does not mention the cause of these rejoicings, that being, of course, well known to those to whom he was writing, but we have no difficulty in divining it': Corkery, *Hidden Ireland*, 54. Caldwell's conclusion was shared by Corkery: that this was a celebration of the successful mopping up operations carried out by the Irish brigade after the French capture of the city of Bergen-op-zoon in the Netherlands, on 16 September 1747; consequently, the candles were assumed to be a celebration of victorious Irish arms in the service of England's enemies. There was no mention whatsoever of the obvious significance of 23 October. Love, on the other hand, made the reasonable suggestion that the scene described by Eyre may have been a deliberate and symbolic act of collective dissent on the part of Irish Catholics from the official version of 1641 sanctioned by the Protestant state that governed them.

⁸¹ TCD, MSS 7,231–2/4, fol. 62.

⁸² TCD, MSS 7,231–2/4, fols 60–86.

⁸³ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, fols 191–213.

⁸⁴ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1258.

⁸⁵ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1258.

1163

as guilty because of a crime committed by their ancestor, but as guilty because they were inherently disposed to commit the same crime by virtue of the principles of their religion. The only difference in the accusation as made by the Bishop of Dromore between the guilt of the massacrists of 1641 and the Curry people was that in 1641 the crime was committed while in 1746 the crime was only about to be committed.

This kind of thinking, officially promoted in great state occasions by the government of the kingdom and voiced by the spiritual adjunct to that government, was of course the simplest reason for laws against bloody papists, such as the one that kept Dr. Curry from receiving his education in Ireland. ~~we~~ ^{There's no need} will not ~~rather~~ ^{outwardly outraged} ~~right~~ now to go into the ~~all too usual~~ description ^{that} outraged writers have for a long time ~~made~~ of the whole set of "penal laws" against catholics from the ones barring them from owning property and educating their children to the one that allowed the nearest protestant to sweep away a horse from under a papist bottom if that horse was worth more than £5. ^(m) The crime committed in 1641 was simply evidence of the potential crime from which the laws protected the protestants in Ireland. ~~The~~ ^{Fear that was expressed and partially provoked by the} Bishop of Dromore saw the danger as absolutely stark danger ^{was that} from a "blind and mad Zeal for the Advancement of Popery" carried ^{could be so as to have as the such also would be} inevitably to the point of accomplishing the goal ~~by~~ the total Extirpation of the Protestants of this Kingdom. ^{According to} ~~him the only reason the total extirpation had not already been~~ ^{because of had been tried in 1641, and had failed only because} ~~accomplished in 1641 was that~~ the great plot to EX carry out ^{to utter this} universal massacre was divulged by a man, one Owen O'Connellly

Pl. 1—TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1163. Part of the first section of Love's unfinished manuscript; his handwritten corrections indicate that this draft was far from complete. Reproduced by permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

aware of, in terms of their relationship to the published accounts—to reveal to what extent the massacres were exaggerated as they made their way into print. This would lead onto section three, dealing with the nineteenth century, and an engagement with ‘scientific’ history. This was justified in order to deal with ‘what seems to me the next obvious problem: why wasn’t the question of whether it actually happened or not settled when history-writing became (this was the word used in the late nineteenth century) scientific’.⁸⁶ Such varying issues as the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, agrarian disturbances, the rise of Irish nationalism, and Home Rule had all had prompted reflections on Irish history from the 1860s onwards, which were combined with developing concepts of ‘scientific’ history that seemed to hold out the possibility of a resolution of the debate. However, Love’s delineation of the evolving historiography of the rebellion would not in itself resolve the question of what the rebellion had actually consisted of. ‘And so that projects part four, which I may or may not do, the problem of what actually happened’.⁸⁷

‘The subject of the massacre has called forth some gorgeous rhetoric from historians, some of them the most famous’: David Hume, Froude, Catherine Macauley, Francois Guizot, Leopold von Ranke, and Thomas Carlyle, amongst others.⁸⁸ An impressionistic montage of the differing views of these and others was to be part of the text, though its intended location was unspecified. Love was well aware that the rise of ‘scientific’ history ‘did not solve it and historical relativity did not end’. But the crucial question was ‘how did the original story get formed, assuming it is false and can be destroyed. Or perhaps it is true; then too, one might ask how it got formed in such a way that such violent exception can be taken to it and seem plausible for good historians to write it’.⁸⁹

Love was naturally aware that perspectives altered over time, as the broader vantage point of the historian was brought to bear on the subject: the historian ‘looks at it from God’s point of view, relating to what he could experience what he gets from other information ... it will be one of the fruits of doing this, helping to define history’.⁹⁰ But his professional valediction came at the end of the single article that he had published on the subject that so exercised him.

What was needed, I think, was not a sacred veil but a settled history that could be accepted by both sides as conveying approximately what actually happened, whatever might still be controverted in the area of interpretation. But the study of the historiography of 1641 shows that such was not to be; though that study points to such an eventuality soon. Too late, of course; I hope not too little to write a happy ending to the story of the appearances of The Bloody Massacre.⁹¹

⁸⁶ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1258.

⁸⁷ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 1259.

⁸⁸ TCD, MSS 7,233–5, fol. 176.

⁸⁹ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 266.

⁹⁰ TCD, MSS 7,236–8, fol. 266.

⁹¹ Love, ‘Civil war in Ireland’, 72.

Conclusion

Walter Love never achieved his objective; he died before he could fulfil the task that he had set himself. But had he completed his unfinished book, might it have inspired similar studies into aspects of the Irish past that are often alluded to: the 'myths' that T.W. Moody and others had sought to combat? Given the peculiar emphasis in twentieth-century Irish historiography on discrediting such 'mythologies', the absence of works such as that proposed by an innovative outsider like Love is a striking omission. At least some of the issues he raised in the early 1960s remain unresolved, for the history of the history of 1641, and much else besides, largely remains in shadow. It may be the case that such scholarship as has been written on the subject since the 1960s has touched upon some of the ground that Love had intended to cover. But his precocious and imaginative conception of the subject, as revealed in his papers, remains unmatched. This article has attempted to shed light on his pioneering approach at a time when the precise nature of the 1641 rebellion has come under increasing scrutiny; but the broader significance of the rebellion has more to do with the representation of its events than their reality. In the absence of a study such as Walter Love was attempting to write, the enduring history of a disputation that reflected the incipient sectarianism which defined so much of Ireland's political and social life remains, as yet, unwritten. Walter Love's singular attempt to extract meaning from the subject that he had devoted himself to before his untimely demise ensured that his unfinished book would, inadvertantly but inevitably, become a part of that same unwritten history. But it is no less worthy of remembrance for that.