

**POPULAR SPANISH LEGEND, HISTORY AND CULTURE IN THE
SUBSTANTIATION OF THE ANGLO-IRISH UNIONIST DISCOURSE 1800-1815.**

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Much attention has been given to the ‘commonplace’ observation of the act of union of 1800 as the instrument which abolished a ‘recently’ emancipated Irish Parliament and eventually established the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. This crucial event ‘exerted a formative influence on Irish history’ and has since ‘remained the dominant issue in Anglo-Irish relations.’ This affirmation was stated by James Kelly back in 1987 when he lamented ‘that the origins of and background to the union had received such cursory attention.’¹ Recent historiography has fathomed into the time-span around the union and after,² and scholarly studies on public opinion,³ political relations,⁴ and unionist mindscape⁵ have analysed different aspects of that time.⁶ In the field of literary and critical studies attention to Anglo-Irish unionist authors has been scarce and clearly ‘cursory’.

I contend in this paper there existed an aesthetics of unionism around the time of the union as well as a deep concern fraught with the fixing of national and cultural identities. The three authors of this paper expressed their interest in the Irish, and especially Anglo-Irish, status quo at the turn of the eighteenth century through the social, political, historical, and cultural events in Spain, aided by the imprint of unionism. The period between the

¹ James Kelly, ‘The origins of the act of union: an examination of unionist opinion in Britain and Ireland, 1650-1800’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 25: 99, (1987), pp. 236-63.

² Charles Townshend has recently approached the state of the union during the nineteenth century in *Ireland. The 20th Century*, (London: Arnold, 1999).

³ D. George Boyce analysed the response of public opinion after the union and around the granting of Catholic Emancipation in ‘Trembling solicitude. Irish conservatism, nationality and public opinion, 1833-86’ in D.G. Boyce, R. Eccleshall, V. Geoghegan, eds., *Political Thought in Ireland since the Seventeenth Century*, (London: Routledge,) 1993, pp. 124-145.

⁴ An overall view of unionist practices in the British Isles has been advanced in S.J. Connolly, ed., *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500. Integration and Diversity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999).

⁵ Thomas Bartlett, ‘Protestant nationalism in eighteenth-century Ireland’ in M. O’Dea & Kevin Whelan, eds., *Nations and Nationalisms: France, Britain, Ireland and the Eighteenth-century Context*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 335, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1995), pp. 79-88. This brief study was widened by Jacqueline Hill in her *From Patriots to Unionists. Dublin Civic Politics and Irish Protestant Patriotism 1660-1840*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁶ One of the latest contributions to tracing the dénouement of Protestantism and identity in the British Isles is Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity. Britain and Ireland c. 1650-c. 1850*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

passing of the act of union in 1800 and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 proved a crucial time in Ireland, in which issues of race, patriotism, history, political and economic relations, as well as literature, were at stake. However, the depiction and portrayal of Spain and popular Spanish culture aimed at the establishment of a ‘disguising’ mirror, in which the Anglo-Irish discourse at large could be reflected, furnished and even enforced through the aesthetics of unionism, mainly expressed through poetry and drama.

One of the interesting instances of Anglo-Irish unionist writing of the time was the description and reference to contemporary characters and events deprived of an urgent need to *re-translate* or *re-allocate* Irish or Gaelic ancient characters and histories, and the approach to Spain was no exception. For those Anglo-Irish authors, who saw in England their destiny and believed Ireland had to continue within the union of both countries, Anglo-Irish figures who played an important role in English society and politics and, moreover, who led English troops against the French and Napoleon were of vital importance, as they represented the epitome of union in military, political and social terms; encapsulating the embodiment of the tenets of the Anglo-Irish garrison mindset.

The Anglo-Irish Arthur Wellesley, future Duke of Wellington, and his participation in the British campaigns in the Peninsular War (1808-13) triggered a great deal of unionist literary production. Within the unionist discourse in Ireland the distinction of Wellington as a hero counteracted republicanism and an incipient Irish nationalism when ‘the persistence of the Napoleonic myth in particular filled the leadership vacuum for many years, for there was no active republicanism between the collapse of Emmett’s Rebellion and the rise of Young Irelanders in the 1840s.’⁷ The creation of a new myth out of a contemporary hero sufficed the poorly biographically described⁸ Preston Fitzgerald to write poetry. His *Spain Delivered (In Two Cantos)* (1813) is reduced to the exuberant examination of Wellington and his Spanish campaigns against the French for the sake of universal freedom:

I ask: ‘tis WELLINGTON and fame,
And fall of France, demand the lyre;
‘Tis England’s glory, freedom’s flame,
Swell ev’ry string and waken all their fire!

⁷ Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution. The United Irishmen and France*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 366.

⁸ The front-page of *Spain Delivered (In Two Cantos)* states he had been the authors of a previously written tale, *The Spaniard*, which partially accounts for his popularity.

Fitzgerald's unionist purpose is summarised in the identification of Irish and English under the same country, as it is England's glory what is at stake here. After achieving his goals in the Peninsular War Wellington was later encumbered to glory with his victory at Waterloo and started, thus, to form part of the English 'pantheon of heroes'. Fitzgerald's enterprise, which sought the enforcement of the aesthetics of unionism within the new reality resulting from the Anglo-Irish polity, was proving successful. Wellington's Anglo-Irish personality and character are to the service of the British cause against Napoleon:

For fosse nor fortress shall avail
 When, Wellington, thy arms assail!
 Each mound of art's long-labor'd plan
 Crumbles before the mighty man!
 Swift as the lightning rend the oak,
 His cannons cleave with thunder-stroke;
 And, instant, o'er the breach, unfurl'd,
 Floats the red flag that awes the world!
 Yet, generous and just, as brave,
 He bows it to Hispania's claim:
 For Britain conquers but to save,
 And strew the olive o'er the fields of fame.

And, too, that boasted border shield,
 Iberian Badajoz, must yield:
 While Guadiana's southern stream
 Glows with the burning battle's beam,
 And far, suffused with deathful stain,
 Rolls his red waters to the main.
 Nor thine the crime nor thine the blood,
 Which crimson o'er that frighted flood,
 Fair Albion! no; the triumph's thine -
 It spreads the flame which freemen know,
 Bids force and fraud their wreaths resign,
 And lays the menace of the mighty low!

These two stanzas intertwine liberating history with visual plasticity and unionist stereotypes in an epitome of lyricism although Fitzgerald's main interests lay in what Britain would lose against the French, objecting, thus, to a Britain which, according to Irish republicans and nationalists, overlooked and neglected Ireland. For Fitzgerald, England stood for high ideals of patriotism and was the defender of law and tradition. Peace was sought in Spain, as Britain 'strew the olive o'er the fields of fame'. 'Albion' spread the notion of 'freemen' to the final triumph, which strove for the maintenance of the institution of the crown in Britain, as well as in Spain. The possible destruction of the crown was seen as the direct menace to the objectives of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, for it meant the

detachment from England, the repository of its power. Arthur Wellesley's is praised as saviour of the traditional organicism in Spanish society first, and subsequently in Britain:

At length the morn, with heralds grey,
 Proclaims the coming pomp of day,
 Which, rising o'er the wreck of Gaul,
 Shews the wide ruin of her fall -
 Standards and guns and captive train,
 And heaps of dead that pile the plain:
 Pledges of Wellesley's proud renown,
 Of deeds that shall redeem a crown!
 Yes! the prophetic muse declares,
 He ne'er shall yield Iberia's plain,
 Though fraud a moment mar his cares,
 Till valor vindicate her ancient reign!

The second canto 'Vittoria and the Pyrennees' describes the battle of Vitoria⁹ (21st June, 1813) in which Wellington took part and which proved decisive for Spain and Britain's efforts against the Napoleonic troops. Praise and glory will be attached to Arthur Wellesley from now on, as his defence of ancient tradition and religion, but not Inquisition, in Spain boosted him to prime importance in the British political discourse. The author envisaged Wellesley as the emblem of chivalry, the representative of traditional England and her institutions, the 'righteous knight' of the established order. The last stanza of the second canto deploys Fitzgerald's aesthetics of unionism succinctly. As the poem states 'a rescued people's prayer to heaven' is what Wellington has brought back to Spain; a distinct belief that law and order win when in contact with treason and treachery. The author renders Wellesley as the son of Erin, but the shield of England. What mattered to the author was Wellington's defence of England's institutional order enforced via the unionist mindscape which formed part of the author's discourse of the ascendancy:

And, oh! when full the heart o'erflows,
 And pleasure tastes the tide that glows,
 Bid grateful thought that chief recal,
 Who guarded from inglorious fall.
 And, Wellington, for thee be given
 A rescued people's prayer to heaven!
 While succour'd Europe hails thy name,
 And, conscious, feels its friendly flame!
 Yes; Erin's son, and England's shield!
 Be thine, enshrined in victory's fane,
 Thine a world's vows, till freedom yield,
 And valor wake no more at glory's strain!

⁹ A colossal monument dedicated to this battle dominates the central square of Vitoria-Gasteiz today.

For the Galway-born John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), Wellington represented more than a hero in the making and their personal relationship had extra-literary considerations. Croker stood for the archetypal Anglo-Irish character whose influence seeped through different levels of both Irish and British societies after the act of union. In Croker the politician and poet were not in disagreement. After moving to Cork, he got acquainted with French culture and society at ‘a school kept by French émigrés, where he acquired a good training in the French language – and also, no doubt, a distinct aversion to Revolutionists.’¹⁰ As a confirmed unionist his attitude against revolutionary France was triggered after his first visits to London, when he was getting ready for the bar.

On his return to Dublin he produced written work on the state of Irish affairs and literary life, creating ‘great local commotion’ with his views on the Irish stage.¹¹ The extent to which the Anglo-Irish affairs affected Croker was first explained in depth in a much-quoted pamphlet called *A Sketch of the State of Ireland, Past and Present* (1808) ‘which remained alive through several decades, during which it ran through more than twenty editions.’¹² Due to Croker’s success with the publication of the *Sketch* the political establishment formed so high an opinion of Croker that he obtained a recommendation and was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, when Sir Arthur Wellesley was sent to the Peninsula as commander in June 1808. As a result, ‘a relation between Wellesley and Croker was thus established which grew into intimacy and lasted through life.’¹³ Wellesley’s campaigns in the Peninsula introduced Croker to producing unionist political propaganda and pamphlet literature with the Spanish conflict as background.

The genesis of *The Battles of Talavera* (1809) stems from Wellington’s opposition to the French at Talavera on 27-28 July, 1809. Croker’s long composition, around 750 lines, first appeared anonymously in the following month of August in Dublin published by M.N. Mahon, previous editor of Croker’s *Sketch*. The poem was conceived as political propaganda rather than a literary piece because ‘in the gloomy and critical days of 1809, it was not unfitting either to write a patriotic poem or to praise Wellington’, what adds, in

¹⁰ Marion F. Brightfield, *John Wilson Croker*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940), p. 4.

¹¹ Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XIII, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1886), p. 124.

¹² Marion F. Brightfield, p. 52.

¹³ *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XIII, p. 124.

fact, ‘extraliterary considerations’.¹⁴ The poem ran through four Dublin editions in the course of a few weeks and moved to London with the help of the publisher of *The Quarterly Review*, John Murray, who introduced the composition to Walter Scott, whose connection with Croker was established in an article in *The Quarterly*.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the highest praise was sent in a letter to Croker from Badajoz (15 Nov., 1809) in which Wellington admitted reading the poem and added he ‘did not think a battle could be turned to anything so entertaining.’¹⁶ Murray’s first London edition, the poem’s fifth, rapidly sold out, and by the eighth that same year Croker was encouraged to revise the work by Murray as ‘it ha[d] been more successful than any short poem ... – extending in circulation far beyond Mr. Heber’s ‘Palestine’ or ‘Europe’, and even Mr. Canning’s ‘Ulm and Trafalgar’. Croker’s composition was even proving itself ‘more popular’ than Scott’s “Vision of Don Roderick,” which had just appeared.’¹⁷ In fact, Walter Scott praised it warmly and Robert Southey professed superlative admiration for the poem:

I must not avail myself of your name to cover these *Quarterly* contributions without thanking you for “Talavera” – a poem which has been one of the most successful of modern times, or indeed of any times – and yet not more so than it deserves to be. You have done for Sir Arthur Wellesley what none of his contemporaries could do for Marlborough. I must not wish you leisure to do as much for Earl Wellington; yet I have good hope that he may be destined to achieve victories as splendid in themselves as Blenheim and more important in their consequences – and then perhaps even your avocations will not prevent you from finding time to celebrate his career.¹⁸

The poem recalls many newspaper pieces on the Peninsular War although Croker himself acknowledged in the 8th London edition ‘greater part of the poem reminds Scott’s ‘Marmion’, in particular the battle of Flodden. A first critical approach to Croker’s poem produced in *The Quarterly Review* stated ‘the neglect of the forms of versification as well as a punctilious disregard for the rhymes or measurement of stanzas’. After confirming the ‘several hasty expressions, flat lines, and deficient rhymes’, it goes on to say it is ‘the spirit of the poet’ that demands the chief attention.¹⁹ Once again the aesthetics of unionism is characterised by a prevalence of content over form.

¹⁴ Marion F. Brightfield, p. 268.

¹⁵ *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. II, August and November, (London: John Murray, 1809), ART. XVII, p. 426.

¹⁶ *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XIII, p. 125.

¹⁷ Marion F. Brightfield, p. 269.

¹⁸ Letter of March 27, 1812 (Morgan Library), *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁹ *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. II, ART. XVII, pp. 426-433.

The poem deploys much newspaper, gazette and pamphlet writing technique, most probably, due to Croker's reception of first-hand information directly from Spain in official dispatches. In this light, many stanzas deal exclusively with military jargon and detailed manoeuvres abound, always bearing in mind Wellington's praise and the superiority of the British and Spanish armies over the French troops:

A fiercer bloodier day,
 France, every nation's foe, is there,
 And Albion's sons her red cross bear,
 With Spain's young Liberty to share,
 The fortune of the fray.

The poem recalls the stature of Wellington's feat as the number of French soldiers almost doubled the British forces, a fact that did not prevent a glorious fight. Although the genesis of the poem originated from a blind praise of Wellington, Croker reflects in the poem as well on the widespread criticism on the Duke's figure and campaigns back home:

Even at that moment fierce and dire,
 Thy agony of fame!
 When Britain's fortune dubious hung,
 And France tremendous swept along,
 In tides of blood and flame:
 Even while thy genius and thy arm
 Retrieved the day and turned the storm,
 Even at that moment, factious spite,
 And envious fraud essayed to blight
 The honours of thy name.

It strikes any Croker critic to discover how many editions of *The Battles of Talavera* were rapidly produced and how Croker tried varying his first 'unpolished' composition, probably imbued with much antiquarianism and Spanish patriotic sentiment. But behind it all lie the workings of the aesthetics of unionism, which commencing with a straightforward defence of the unionist mindscape it goes on to incorporate layers of stereotypes and lyric clichés. Therefore, it is significant to approach the 8th edition to discover the incorporation of a highly pastoral new stanza to the poem which introduces the odd presence of a shepherd musing about Spanish ancient glory, chivalry, religious conflict, and historical characters; such as the legendary Cid, all of which disappeared due to war:

There is a brook, that from its source,
 High in the rocky hill,
 Pours o'er the plain its limpid course,

To pay to Teio's monarch force
 Its tributary rill;
 Which, in the peaceful summer tide,
 The swarthy shepherd sits beside,
 And loitering pours his rustic song
 In cadence, as it rolls along;
 Carol of love or pious chaunt,
 Or tale of knight and giant gaunt,
 And lady captive held;
 Or strains, not fabled, of the war,
 Where the great champion of Bivar,
 The Moorish pagan quell'd.
 But now, no shepherd loiters there -
 He flies with all his fleecy care,
 To mountains high and far,
 And starts, and breathless stops to hear
 Borne on the breeze, and to his fear
 Seeming at every gust more near,
 The distant roar of war.

As Chief Secretary for Ireland Croker realised the importance of Wellington's campaign in the Peninsula, which eventually banished all French claims over Ireland as well. In this light, he quickly produced a short poem entitled 'To Him Who Despairs of Spain', urging the population in general and parliament in particular not to despair of Spain in her difficult ordeal. The general tone of the composition is rigid and strewn with references to the 'love of country' and the injustice of Napoleonic France:

Despair of Spain! – and dost thou dare
 To talk, cold plodder, of despair?
 Dost thou presume to scan
 The proud revenge, the deathless zeal,
 The throes that injured nations feel,
 Beneath the oppressor's ban;
 The pride, the spirit, and the power,
 That, growing with the arduous hour,
 Ennoble patriot man?

The poem is a brief exposition of Spain's plight as well as the need to defend the last redoubt of traditional Spanish patriotism which acts as an icon for the rest of the European continent. Croker quickly understood that, even if Wellington's praise also meant straight political propaganda on behalf of the imperial government at stake, the European cause had to go through Wellington's victory in the Iberian Peninsula:

Oh, no; tho' France's murderous hand
 Should sweep the desolated land,
 Revenge will still remain: -

Smother'd, but not extinguish'd quite,
 A spark will live, in time will light,
 And fire the lengthening train. –
 Stung by that pang which never dies,
 Enthusiast millions shall arise,
 And Europe echo to their cries,
 Never Despair of Spain!

The Anglo-Irish discourse around the time of the union was not exclusively furnished with hero and myth creations regarding Wellington due to his participation in the British campaigns on the Continent. The unionist mindset aimed at establishing a more influential link with Britain, which involved the recognition of the British political status, embodied by the institutions of the parliament at Westminster and the crown as well as the adoption of the much revered Burkean traditionalism and social organicism. This political situation was best negotiated through the aesthetics of unionist drama.

For Henry Brereton Code (?-?1830), drama writing constituted one of his many occupations besides journalism and song writing. He was one of many Anglo-Irish whose social, political and literary veins intermingled. David J. O'Donoghue recalled Code's participation in two key events around the time of the union; he 'was a government spy during the 98' period, and several payments of money were made him for information in 1802-3.' One of his first political productions was the publication of a version of Robert Emmet's speech from the dock, which he mutilated 'for base purposes, according to the United Irishmen.'²⁰ In *The Insurrection of the Twenty-Third July, 1803*, an attack on Emmet's revolutionary conduct, Code's unionist principles are proclaimed, especially his praise to the throne, country and the loyalty of Ireland:

How glorious and consolatory is the sight! How assuring to virtue! How acceptable to Heaven! To see the loyalty of Ireland, valorous and strong; covering, with its hallowed ægis, the throne, and the country; and opposing an hundred thousand bayonets to the foreign or domestic ruffian, who shall dare to assail the security of either.²¹

Code's literary contributions are principally found in the second decade of the nineteenth century and particularly during the Napoleonic period he abhorred. His approach to a popular, historical and legendary Spain, transformed into the perfect setting from

²⁰ David J. O'Donoghue, *The Poets of Ireland. A Biographical Dictionary. (with Bibliographical Particulars) In Three Parts*, (London, 1892), p. 40.

²¹ [Henry Brereton Code], *The Insurrection of the Twenty-Third July, 1803*, (Dublin, [1803]), p. vi.

which to deploy his unionist precepts, was exposed in the 1812 historical drama, ‘which had for its object to strengthen the loyal and generous enthusiasm felt by Britons in the cause of Spanish freedom’, *Spanish Patriots a Thousand Years Ago*. The play is preceded by a fable which sets the action at the time of Don Pelagio, king of the Spanish Goths, forced to retire to northern Spain after the invasion of the Moors in the first half of the eighth century. A simplistic reduction of that historical event will highlight the direct clash between two religions, Christian and Moslem, plus the usurpation of the Spanish land which had to be *re-conquered* in a process that lasted almost eight centuries, constituting the ‘sole *mythomoteur*’ for Spanish identity in what has been known as ‘reconquista’.²²

However, Code transforms and *re-writes* Spanish history, as the plot presents forceful changes of intention on the author’s side and a simplistic analysis of Code’s composition instantly highlights the principal political factions, facilitating their translation into the contemporary historical events in Ireland. Code establishes an analytical parameter, based on unionism, omitting the religious conflict as central to the Anglo-Irish plight. Code’s work exalts patriotism under the figure of the king, understood as the defence and praise of the legislative and political institutions which support the reality resulting from the union with Great Britain. Code seemingly transforms history for his own compositional purposes establishing the importance of cultural, ideological and cultural exchange in Ireland. Code intentionally overlooks certain points of interest in the play as he regards Pelagio’s final victory as the end of Moorish influence in Spain or the ‘total rout of the barbarous invader’²³ setting the action in Salamanca far from Pelagio’s historical realm in Asturias, but closer in time to the Duke of Wellington’s victory at the battle of Salamanca fought on 22nd July, 1812, exactly two months before the play’s first performance at the Lyceum Theatre on 22nd September, 1812.

Code’s historical drama is straightforward in the exposition of the main conflicts, as if content simplicity constituted the principal tenet of the aesthetics of unionism. His political unionism enforces an ideal of a unified Ireland in which the high tenets of the free-born man, patriotism and a development of the Burkean organicism of a traditional society are shared, as it is the case with England. Code’s praise for England and her society as opposed to a future Napoleonic empire accounts for his defence of Burke’s traditionalism,

²² John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 69-75.

²³ Henry Brereton Code, *Spanish Patriots a Thousand Years Ago*, (London 1812), p. viii.

‘a doctrine that ascribes legitimacy to customary or evolved practices and moral beliefs’²⁴ and is established directly when Clara, on her escape from a tyrant father, asks Pedro where the ‘island of love and beauty’ in which he had encountered love lies:

PEDRO: In England, madam. O! there were spent the happiest of my days - the blessing of life enhanced by civil security and political independence.

CLARA: How different the scenes which, perhaps, you are now fated to witness! our nature land the object of foreign violence, or worse, the theatre of civil dissension; - our poor and humble fellow citizens made the suffering instruments of faction and ambition, to be used, broken, and cast away in the contest. (II, ii)

In fact, Code does away with the apparently ambivalent appeal to the founders of Irish republicanism, influenced by the French Revolution, who had looked at the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, which was, however, discarded with the figure of Napoleon as his ‘campaigns did, of course, inject a dose of pernicious ambiguity into this principle’. Both the 1798 carnage and the union somehow exacerbated at once a sectarian nationalism and unionism.²⁵ Code chose to strongly despise the former:

SANCHO: What shame that now when most we stand in need of honest union, there should be found amongst us traitors, seeking to distract our councils, and divide our strength! - Would that I had them all under my grinding stone, I would soon bring them to a proper consistence.

ANTONIO: The hand of the despot, if they work their country’s fall, will more than satisfy thy wish, and give them just reward. But come, let’s onward to the camp, where the yet unconquered relics of Old Spain collect to meet the foe, determined to conquer, or to perish for their country. (I, i)

Images, such as the misuse of the power of the whole mass due to a tyrant’s will, as Don Guzman’s in the play, boosted by the promises of foreign powers and native revolutionaries, recalls events known and recorded by Code such as the 98’ and Emmet’s insurrections, which furnish much background to Code’s plays. He repeatedly exposed his hatred towards revolutionary uprisings in Ireland, and especially Emmet’s insurrection:

From the warning voice of the unfortunate *Emmet*, who might have been a support, and an ornament to society – that voice, which spoke almost from the grave, and seemed assimilating to the energy

²⁴ Frederick G. Whelan, *Edmund Burke and India. Political Morality and Empire*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), p. 299.

²⁵ Richard Kearney, ‘The Irish heritage of the French revolution: the rights of the people and the rights of man’, Barbara Hayley and Christopher Murray, eds., *Ireland and France, a Bountiful Friendship: Literature, History and Ideas*, (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1992), pp. 30-46.

and inspiration of eternal truth; they will learn to appreciate the character of that enemy whose abandoned emissaries would seduce them from their King, their Country, and their God.²⁶

However, Code's unionist enterprise purports a series of equivocal appropriations aiming at encapsulating much patriotic Anglo-Irish mindscape within the play. In this light, the exchange of both Spanish and Irish historical events is also accompanied by the ambiguous adoption of significant symbols of the Irish tradition. Thus, when Ramira is repudiated by Don Guzman he approaches Alonzo's patriot camp disguised as a minstrel 'with a harp in his hand' and 'playing a national air'. Within the realm of Spanish iconography the harp does not represent her national essence as it is the case in the Irish tradition. Joep Leerssen recalls how in Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* 'the icon of the harp as the true voice of the real Ireland was to gain immense importance.'²⁷ It is not merely coincidental therefore that John Stevenson, who put Code's play into music, might have had a go at Code's choice of the harp as an icon through which the direct reference to Ireland was possible. Accordingly, the unionist maintenance of the harp as symbol of the Irish kingdom after the union of 1800 evinced an interest in a broad *de-Gaelicization* and attendant *Anglo-Irishcization*, curiously adopting former imagery, of an Ireland which partakes of the recently established union. British aid is considered essential for the welfare of the Irish kingdom and her traditions threatened by the danger of a possible French instauration in Spain and later Ireland:

RAMIRA: This harp, with which I fondly associate the memory of our ancient happiness and freedom, would become mute among slaves. Oh, my country! may the voice of thy native instrument, and the song of thy bard, never be silenced by a foreign foe. (II, v)

Pelagio is rescued from his secluded abode in the final scenes, which constitute the play's climax. Code infuses his ideas about independence and legislation through Pelagio, who states how 'feverish' and 'imaginative' independence is. For Pelagio those effervescent revolutionary ideals are but illusions of a few dreamers who do not respect a long-established and flawless order. Deeply imbued with Burkean thought Code contends that the dreams of the French Revolution and the American Independence could not compare with the constitutional tradition of the English kingdom of which Ireland, 'a

²⁶ [Henry Brereton Code], *The Insurrection of the Twenty-Third July, 1803*, (Dublin, [1803]), p. viii.

²⁷ Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination. Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, Field Day Monographs 4, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 59.

sinking state', now formed part. Spain, as Ireland, profits from this political status with the institution of the crown embodied in the figure of king Pelagio:

ALONZO: Your virtues to save a sinking state - to uphold the independence of your country.

PELAGIO: Independence, young soldier, is but a name - the phantom of feverish popularity - the dream of warm imaginations - the poetry of legislation! The vigour of my days was sacrificed upon its shrine: I fought, I bled for independence; but where is the generous delusion flown? (II, vii)

Code's anger for anti-unionist sentiment in Ireland springs from a firm opposition to pernicious influence from France and revolutionary Jacobinism counteracted by a strong belief in the Anglo-Irish move towards the welfare of Ireland after the union:

PELAGIO: If she [Spain] fall, she falls by her own dissensions; by her turbulent spirit, which she calls the love of freedom. Every unfledged visionary, every ignorant mouthing demagogue, can urge her to her ruin, and excite her to high the achievement of resistance to the laws, and ingratitude to her friends. She disgusts liberty by her caprices! The goddess, frightened by her frantic devotion, has withdrawn the chaste vigour of her spirit, and left her to herself. - Ungrateful people! (II, vii)

The only plausible outcome for Code is the much repeated union against the French tyrant:

PELAGIO (*To Ramira.*): Thou, my preserver, here! Come, then, I may yet be profitably devoted to my country. O, sacred name! which arouses all that is noble in my nature, and teaches me that individual feeling should never be opposed to public good. Spain! Spain! be your sons united as they are brave, and in vain shall the invading tyrant attempt to rob you of your freedom! (II, vii)

Code understood the welfare of the institutions which were created after the union was rooted in a united military power. Code's song 'Sprig of Shillela',²⁸ which partakes of the literature of manners in its description of Donnybrook fair and the merry behaviour of the stock Irishman, summarises what furnished the Anglo-Irish mindset and discourse. Code moves from love and Ireland into international politics after the union. His song comprises all that could be claimed by republicans, Catholics and Protestants, embodied in the union of Great Britain and Ireland and epitomised in iconography that is contained to be enforced in clearly unionist propaganda. The first stanza praises Patrick's land and encourages the union of land and iconography. References to the three rivers of England,

²⁸ The song was part of Code's historical and musical drama *The Russian Sacrifice* first performed at Crow Street in 1813.

Scotland, and Ireland and the subsequent flowers symbols of the rose, thistle and shamrock encapsulate a concoction of appropriations within the aesthetics of unionism:

Long life to the land that gave Patrick his birth,
 To the land of the oak, and its neighbouring earth,
 With a sprig of Shillela and shamrock so green:
 May the sons of the Thames, the Tweed, and the Shannon,
 Thrash the foes that would plant on their confines a cannon;
 United and happy at Liberty's shrine,
 May the rose and the thistle long flourish and twine
 Round the sprig of Shillela, and shamrock so green.

Code's appeal to all kinds of Irish to join the imperial army has recourse to ancient Gaelic mythology and Spain. Their legendary ancestral link of the first Irish peoples and mythic Spain, through the 'Milesian tide', was rhetorically used to take part in the Peninsular War with a united army commanded by Wellington to free Spain from the French yoke:

Nore here shall the wish of an Irishman end,
 All the wide world round he will stand by his friend,
 With his sprig of Shillela, and shamrock so green:
 May the Milesian tide which still floats in his veins,
 Swell high at the clank of his forefather's chains;
 And may WELLINGTON brave, a true son of the sod,
 Find freedom for Spain – for her Tyrant a rod,
 In a sprig of Shillela, and shamrock so green.

This brief approach to popular Spanish legend, history and culture undertaken by three Anglo-Irish unionist authors has recalled the deep preoccupation shown in their attempt to integrate what furnished their Anglo-Irish discourse and literary production shortly after the union of 1800. Even if their approach to Spain 'did not appeal to the new concept of history and origin, folk and country exposed by nationalism at the time child of the Romantic movement.'²⁹ Instead, strongly influenced by their reverence to England, they brought along with them Anglo-Irish tinges, through which they referred to grave political issues such as patriotism, understood as the 'love of country' a praise of the country's institutional order, unionism, the culmination of a patriotism engulfed by the British institutional reality, and an incomplete religious integration. Popular Spain facilitated somehow the establishment of a setting in which they could display their views to stock-

²⁹ Renate Zoellner, *William Wordsworth. Politikari eta Poeta*, (Bilbao: Einseucarrean, 1988), p. 80.

characterisation, the creation of new heroes, such as Wellington, as well as deploy their ideological mindset about tradition, social order, and the necessity of the new political status after the union. Their Anglo-Irish unionist enterprise constituted a new reversal in what had been considered the traditional Irish approach to a legendary, historical and contemporarily popular Spain of former times. It was probably these authors, who best enforced, reversed and eventually appropriated an image and concept of the Spanish in Ireland that would not be repeated again.