history has also generated a pantheon of heroes who have withstood this oppression such as O’Connell, the 'Liberator'. Furthermore, for the Irish Protestants, their historical celebrations embody a set of rules or guidelines for action. The events being remembered are the ones that, above all, established a 'Protestant ascendancy' in Ireland and therefore provide practical models for the reaffirmation of Protestant power. Lesser incidents such as the battles of the Williamite Wars do not seriously attempt to justify Protestant claims but they are used, rather, as models of action. In this way, mythology and memory in Ireland have a serious influence on the actions and behaviour of those in the present.

Thus, though myth and history are inextricably linked as they both explain the present by telling some sort of story, there is some way of distinguishing between them. Histories are often evolved and shaped into myths by agents in order to create nation states, exert authority or to legitimise actions. Further, whilst histories are formed on the basis of factual knowledge, myths can be created out of virtually no evidence, or very little. Crucially, myths continue to effect current society; but as we move from economic and political history to a more social and cultural format it may be acceptable to argue that history and myth are becoming more and more similar in this way; Henry David Thoreau noted, "It is the province of the historian to find out, not what was, but what is." With any historic event, there is the actual occurrence and then how it lingers and is embellished by our experiences.

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