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The Informer by Liam O'Flaherty and A Star Called Henry by Roddy Doyle: Analysis of Two Works of Irish Historical Fiction During the Anglo-Irish War

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá zkoumáním dvou literárních děl v kontextu irské historické fikce: *The Informer (1925)* od Liama O'Flahertyho a *A Star Called Henry (1999)* od Roddyho Doyla. Práce zkoumá historické pozadí Anglo-Irské války a jeho vliv na literaturu, popisuje životní příběh autorů a vliv na jejich knižní díla, poskytuje shrnutí obsahu obou knih, analyzuje postavy a identifikuje hlavní témata a symboly. Finální analýza důkladně porovná zmíněné části a popíše podobnosti a rozdíly v přístupu obou autorů. Cílem práce je poskytnout komplexní pohled na irskou historickou fikci prostřednictvím zkoumání těchto významných románů.

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis examines two novels in the context of Irish historical fiction: *The Informer (1925)* by Liam O'Flaherty and *A Star Called Henry (1999)* by Roddy Doyle. The thesis explores the historical background of the Anglo-Irish war and its influence on literature, describes the life stories of the authors and their impact on their novels, provides summaries of both books, analyses characters, identifies main themes and symbols, and identifies the main themes and symbols. The final comparative analysis thoroughly compares the mentioned aspects and describes similarities and differences in the approach of both authors. This thesis aims to provide a comprehensive view of Irish historical fiction through the examination of these significant novels.

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1. Introduction

The Anglo-Irish War, also known as the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921), was a period of political and guerilla warfare, and a crucial era in Irish history. This period set off a significant wave of literature, with authors commenting on the socio-political situation, and many authors portraying this era in their novels. Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September (1929)* and William Trevor in numerous works provided perhaps the most famous fiction novels which will not be treated in this thesis. Two more novels of relevance under the study are *The Informer (1925)* by Liam O'Flaherty and *A Star Called Henry (1999)* by Roddy Doyle. These novels provide captivating insights into the difficulties of the Irish struggle for independence and the human experiences associated with it.

Set in the early 20th century in Ireland, both novels offer unique perspectives on the socio-political situation in Ireland. O'Flaherty skilfully narrates the personal struggles of individuals dealing with the political situation of this era within the years of the military conflict. His characters, while fictional, represent real emotions and challenges that many people faced during those chaotic times. Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called* Henry, unlike *The Informer,* sets fictional characters into the historical period. Doyle's novel introduces Henry Smart and through his life story Doyle explores the violent and complicated events of the Anglo-Irish War. While O'Flaherty's novel focuses on the psychological aspects of the protagonist's struggles, Doyle's narrative places greater attention to the shifting loyalties between the characters, reflecting the complex nature of sometimes unclear allegiances during these times of political upheaval.

At the beginning, a brief history of Ireland will be presented, exploring the important events in Irish history, crucial for an understanding of the political and historical background of both novels. Subsequently, the thesis will explore authors' backgrounds, shedding light on how their personal experiences and beliefs influence their narratives. Following this, concise summaries of each novel will provide a foundation for the character analyses and thematic exploration. Alongside themes, supporting motifs will be analysed to provide a complete understanding of the core message in the narratives.

The goal of this thesis is to introduce and analyse these two novels, with a focus on their respective portrayals of the Anglo-Irish War. Using a comparative method, the thesis aims to analyse the different approaches used by the authors, trace the boundary between fiction and reality, and assess the ways in which historical events are interpreted within the novels.

2. Historical Background

This chapter provides a very brief overview of the British rule in Ireland. This era began with the arrival of Anglo-Norman forces led by Richard de Clare in 1169. This invasion marked the beginning of a long-lasting period of political, religious, and cultural conflicts, shaping the complex relationship between Ireland and England for almost 800 years.

2.1. Origins of the Anglo-Irish War

In 1169, Richard de Clare, also known as Strongbow, led a force of Norman knights to support Dermot MacMurrough. Dermot, the exiled King of Leinster, sought external assistance due to a series of political conflicts he faced in Ireland, and initially, sought assistance from Henry II, the King of England. However, Henry II did not offer any military support and authorised Dermot to seek help in his kingdom among soldiers and mercenaries, one of whom was Richard de Clare. (Warren, 1973, p. 114)

After Strongbow helped Dermot to regain control of Leinster, the situation further escalated when Henry II recognized the benefits of having control over Ireland and sent English soldiers to prevent the establishment of an independent Norman fortress. As Henry II sought to take control over eastern Ireland, Strongbow's forces played a crucial role in achieving this goal and marking the beginning of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. Over the centuries, the English influence in Ireland grew westward and to the north, leading to the establishment of plantation colonies and the English Pale – a region around Dublin that was under complete English control.

By the middle of the 14th century, the English descendants living in Ireland slowly assimilated into the majority Irish culture, so the English government tried to stop this with the Statutes of Kilkenny. In 1367, they passed thirty-five acts that prohibited the English descendants from adopting Irish customs. However, because of the weak enforcement by the government, the English were not able to compel people to obey the laws. (Joyce, 1910, pp. 161-162) In 1494, Poynings' law was passed and prohibited the Irish parliament from meeting without prior approval from England's monarch.

Another significant event was the Tudor conquest in the 16th century, particularly the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. During this period, the English control expanded and was accompanied by efforts to implement English law and religion on the Irish population. This was followed by the Cromwellian period in the 17th century, when Oliver Cromwell led a military campaign, that resulted in the dispossession of Irish Catholic landowners.

By the end of the 17th century and into the 18th century, following the “Glorious Revolution,” a series of laws were passed, known as the Penal Laws. Those laws aimed to suppress Catholicism and reinforce Protestant dominance in Ireland. Catholics were prohibited from openly practising their religion, voting in elections, land ownership, and were restricted in various civil rights, such as marriage, inheritance, or the right to bear arms.

After the attempts at rebellion with the aid of the French Navy under the Protestant Theobold Wolfe Tone, the Act of Union, which was passed in 1800 and took effect in 1801, merged the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, forming the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. However, this union did not bring by any means equal rights for Ireland as promised, and throughout the 19th century, Irish nationalism grew, seeking independence from British rule.

After the Act of Union, the promised economic prosperity and equality with the United Kingdom naturally never transpired for Ireland. Instead, The Act of Union greatly expanded British dominance over Ireland and left most of the Irish Catholic population feeling angry and unnoticed. Before the Act of Union was passed, the Scottish Members of Parliament “had been bought and sold by English gold,” (MacPherson, 2020) securing a majority of votes for the British government, while the Irish had no say in the matter whatsoever.

In the early 19th century, Daniel O’Connell, known as the Liberator or the Emancipator, began his political career, dedicated to achieving Catholic emancipation. In 1828, O’Connell won the election but was unable to take his seat in the British parliament, as the Members of Parliament were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Protestant Church. This event greatly increased the pressure for Catholic emancipation; One year later, to avoid a potential uprising, the British government

passed the Catholic Emancipation Act, which granted political rights to Catholics throughout the United Kingdom, allowing the majority of the Irish the right to vote.

The Great Famine or Irish Potato Famine was one of the most catastrophic events in Irish history. It lasted from 1845 to 1852 during which at least a million Irish people died and another million emigrated. (Kinealy, 1997, p. 151) Even as the Irish were starving, amounts of food were exported from Ireland to Britain. Although the primary crop for the famine was the potato, Ireland still produced other food like grain, meat, and dairy. Instead of distributing these resources among the famine victims, the British kept the food exported from Ireland to Britain as a form of taxation, leaving them only the inedible potatoes full of blight.

The Home Rule movement aimed to achieve an Irish parliament within the United Kingdom – "home rule" or self-government (which Michael Collins ultimately achieved with the Anglo-Irish Treaty passed in 1922), except in the six Northern counties. Despite its popularity, the Home Rule movement was met with harsh resistance in England. Additionally, Protestants of the Ulster region, fearing the Catholic majority, strongly opposed Home Rule and formed the Ulster Volunteer Forces in 1913. (Bardon, 1992, p. 405) In response to the growing militarization of the unionists in Ulster, nationalist counterparts formed the Irish Volunteers, and the conflict was about to unfold.

However, in 1914, World War I intervened, and both unionists and nationalists served in the British forces during the war. Regardless of the ongoing war, the Easter Rising of 1916 occurred, even though it lasted just six days and was a complete military failure, yet for a few dreamers, its symbolic significance was important. Mark Gibbon remarked the "shots from khaki-uniformed firing parties did more to create the Republic of Ireland than any shot fired by a Volunteer in the course of Easter week". (Dawe, 2015, p. 52) On the first day, Patrick Pearse, one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, read out the Proclamation of the Republic outside of the General Post Office in Dublin, declaring an independent Irish republic. (Campbell, 1991, p. 243) The subsequent brutal execution of the rebellion's leaders further stirred public opinion in favour of independence.

After World War I, the nationalist Sinn Féin party won the 1918 General Election in Ireland. Sinn Féin refused to take their seats in the British Parliament and instead formed their own Irish Parliament - Dáil Éireann, in Dublin. The British government tried to suppress the Irish nationalist movement in multiple ways, including the deployment of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries – military forces notorious for their violent tactics. (Leeson, 2011, p. 1) In the first six months of 1919, the violence between the British and Irish escalated into actual guerilla warfare under the command of General Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish war had officially begun. (Townshend, 1979, p. 321)

2.2. Key Events and Turning Points

The Anglo-Irish War was marked by several important events and turning points that affected the direction and result of the conflict. The war was unconventional, primarily fought by the Irish as a guerilla war, but the political and symbolic events surrounding the military actions were equally important.

2.2.1. The Soloheadbeg Ambush (January 21, 1919)

The Irish Volunteers, who would eventually transform into the Irish Republican Army (IRA), ambushed and killed two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) officers in this incident, which many people consider to be the beginning of the Anglo-Irish war (Kautt, 2006). The act was not just an act of violence but was a statement, a declaration of the Irish intention to actively resist British rule and military occupation.

2.2.2. RIC Barracks Attacks (1919 – 1920)

The IRA, under the guidance of a founder Michael Collins and other key figures, organised a series of attacks on Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) barracks across Ireland. These strategic assaults were intended to weaken the British intelligence operations in Ireland, demoralize the British Army, and provide arms for the IRA members. As the attacks grew more frequent and intense, several barracks were abandoned, further inspiring the IRA, and indicating the weakening of the British grip in Ireland.

2.2.3. Bloody Sunday (November 21, 1920)

One of the bloodiest attacks of the war was November 21, 1920. On Michael Collins' command, the IRA executed 14 members of the British intelligence in Dublin. As an act of revenge, the British forces opened fire on civilians at a Gaelic football game in Croke Park, killing fourteen people in total, one of whom was just fourteen years old. (Moran, 2018) Bloody Sunday served as a metaphor for the cycle of vengeance that defined most of the war.

2.2.4. The Burning of Cork (December 11, 1920)

In another act of vengeance, the British forces set fire to significant parts of Cork City in December 1920 (since Cork was the place of origin of Michael Collins and the most senior IRA members.) This caused extensive damage and left many people homeless, including Collins' family home. This act among others, drew international criticism of British military tactics. *The Manchester Guardian* called the arson at Cork *"the crowning wickedness of the reprisals campaign".* (Seedorf, 1972, p. 60)

2.2.5. Truce and Treaty Negotiations (December 6, 1921)

After nearly two years of intense combat operations, it became apparent that military solutions were ineffective. This realization led to a truce, which was signed by mid-1921. In late 1921, the British government and representatives of the Irish Republic began face-to-face negotiations in London. On December 6, 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed by the negotiators of both sides, marking the end of the Anglo-Irish War. While the treaty did not grant complete independence of the entire island, it did provide self-government to the 26 southern counties, excluding 6 predominantly Protestant counties, that the Unionists knew they could fully control – resulting in the foundation of the Irish Free State in December 1922 and an artificial separate state called "Northern Ireland."

2.3. Outcome and Its Impact on Ireland

After the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921, ending the nearly three-year Anglo-Irish War and the British dominance of 750 years, significant terms were established. While the treaty granted Ireland autonomy at a national level, it also

introduced significant terms, notably the partition of Ireland and the oath of allegiance to the British Crown (with the English monarch serving as the Head of State) that tied Ireland to Britain in terms of foreign diplomacy and defence. However, these terms further stirred the existing discontent among the Irish public and led to disagreements among the Irish population.

The partition of Ireland, which divided Ireland into two self-governing nations, established the Irish Free State in south, while Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom. This decision was argued by many, with numerous Irish nationalists accusing their leaders of betraying them (Barrington, 1957, p. 382), claiming the partition of Ireland was a betrayal of a unified independent Ireland. These arguments further escalated the situation, leading to the Irish Civil War between pro-treaty and anti-treaty forces from 1922 to 1929.

Although the following brief overview goes beyond the scope of the two novels under study, the overview will be extended to the Following the Civil War, Ireland entered a period of reconstruction. The Great Depression of the 1930s, a period of unemployment and economic problems worldwide, presented both challenges and opportunities for Ireland. While the economic downfall brought poverty to many, it also strengthened the case for reconstituting the Irish economy as a more self-sufficient entity. (Daly, 2011, p. 19)

As World War II came in 1939, Ireland faced another significant dilemma regarding its stance on the conflict. The Irish government, led by Prime Minister Éamon de Valera, chose the policy of neutrality. This decision was influenced by a desire to avoid involvement in another devastating conflict and to assert an Irish foreign policy, independent of British interests. However, Ireland was not truly neutral, De Valera's neutrality policy sought to maximize Irish independence, but it also realised the strategic importance of Ireland to British defences, including the military cooperation in case of the German invasion after the fall of France in May 1940. (Jesse, 2006, p. 10) Following the devastating years of World War II, Ireland, like many other nations, faced a period of transformation and rebuilding (as Northern Ireland and some parts of the "Free State" had been bombed by the German Airforce *Luftwaffe.*)

In 1948, Ireland passed the Republic of Ireland Act, declaring Ireland as a sovereign republic, and removing its ties to the British Crown. In these post-war years, Ireland witnessed modest economic growth, mostly due to the First Programme for Economic Expansion, which was passed in 1958. The value of exports in 1960 was the highest in thirty years (PDST, 2016, p. 6) although the unemployment rate under De Valera remained around 70% and poverty was the lot for most of the Irish Republic's population.

However, as Ireland was transforming into a sovereign nation, unresolved tensions appeared in the late 1960's. After the partition of Ireland in 1921, most of the population felt divided, especially in Northern Ireland because of Protestant discrimination against Catholics, and by the end of 1968, the situation escalated into an actual conflict, marking the beginning of a period known as the Troubles. During the Troubles, which lasted for over three decades, Irish unionists and nationalists fought again for their visions of the future Ireland – unionists sought to keep Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, while nationalists wanted unification with the Irish Republic. This period was characterized by bombings, shootings, and murders in broad daylight. However, in 1997, leaders from all the parties met in Belfast and passed the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 (also known as the Belfast Agreement). The agreement addressed the ongoing issues, decommissioned most of the weapons, and laid a foundation for a new beginning.

3. Author Insight and Narrative Influence

3.1. Liam O'Flaherty

Liam O'Flaherty *(Irish: Liam Ó Flaithearta),* born on August 28, 1896, in the Aran Islands of Ireland, was an important Irish novelist and a major socialist author during a critical period in Irish history. Since his early years, O'Flaherty has been dealing with an internal conflict of Irish nationalism and the influence of the English culture. He was born in an area where both Irish and English language was spoken and in a letter to the *Irish Statesman* in 1927, O'Flaherty says: (Cronin, 2003, p. 47)

> *English was the first language that I spoke. My father forbade us speaking Irish. At the age of seven I revolted against father and forced everybody in the house to speak Irish.*

In 1908, at the age of twelve, O'Flaherty left the Aran Islands to attend Rockwell College in order to study for a priesthood. However, he got into an argument with college officials and was transferred to Blackrock College in Dublin. At Blackrock College, O'Flaherty tried to form a unit of the Irish Volunteers, and later at the University College Dublin, he tried to form a group of Irish Volunteers again. (Malia, 2009, p. 202)

In 1916, O'Flaherty joined the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Guards under the name of William Ganley – he was baptised as William, and Ganley was his mother's birth name. He later served on the Western Front during World War I – in northern France and Belgium. In September 1917, during the third battle of Ypres, in the battle of Langemarck, O'Flaherty suffered a serious injury and was dismissed with shellshock. Back in Dublin, O'Flaherty was treated in a military hospital and was released with a disability pension. (Costello, 2009)

After being discharged, he worked as a sailor for two years in America and Europe. While he was working in New York, he joined the Communist Party and returned to Ireland in late 1921. There, together with Roddy Connolly, Nora Connolly O'Brien (children of James Connolly – who attempted to form the earliest Communist Party of Ireland in 1921), and Peadar O'Donnell, he was one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Ireland (as a result of James Connolly's earlier attempt) And later, organised 'the Dublin unemployed', which was a group of military veterans. In January 1922, O'Flaherty helped to seize the Rotunda in Dublin, raising a red flag over it. The

group held a four-day revolution, O'Flaherty declared an Irish Soviet Republic and named himself the Chairman of the Council of the Unemployed. (Malia, 2009, p. 191)

When the Civil War started in June 1922, O'Flaherty participated on the Anti-Treaty Republican side and after their defeat, he fled to London in July 1922, where he met English writer Edward Garnett. (Farrell, 2021) Garnett encouraged him to write short stories and helped him with publishing his first short story "The Sniper" and his first novel *Thy Neighbour's Wife* in 1923.

Two years later, he published *The Informer (1925)*, which incredibly popular and won multiple awards, including the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and several other for the movie adaptation of the novel. Interestingly, Dudley Nichols, who won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay for the movie *The Informer (1935)*, was the first winner to decline the award due to the ongoing writer's strike, though he claimed it three years later. (Hickman, 2012)

In 1929, he published *The House of Gold,* which explored themes of greed, priestly lust, and sexual frustration; and was the first novel banned by the Irish Free State for alleged indecency. (Siggins, 2013) In 1930, O'Flaherty travelled to the USSR to collect material for his book on Bolshevism. However, he came back disappointed by the Soviet system and instead wrote the political satire *I Went to Russia* in 1931.

O'Flaherty travelled to Hollywood, where John Ford was making an Oscar-winning (that was declined by Dudley Nichols) film version of The Informer and O'Flaherty was involved in the film writing. In 1937, he wrote one of his most acclaimed novels, *The Famine*. During World War II, O'Flaherty supported the public stance of Irish neutrality and stayed in the USA for the duration of World War II. After the war, he wrote a novel titled *Insurrection (1950)*, narrating story about a group of characters during the Eastern Rising. And even though it received generally positive reviews, it was negatively compared to his earlier novels. (Hildebidle, 1989, p. 25) wrote, "The greatest problem with these late works is that they can be read seriously only if all of O'Flaherty's prior work is ignored altogether."

He returned to Dublin in 1952 and a year later, he published a volume of short stories written in Gaelic, called *Dúil (1953)*, which was commonly read in Irish schools. He spent the last three decades of his life trying to finish a novel titled *The Gamblers*

but was not able to. (Cronin, 2003) In 1977, the Irish publisher, Wolfhound Press reissued many of O'Flaherty's books, where some of them were translated into various languages. O'Flaherty died on September 7, 1984, in Dublin

As a direct witness to the difficult events of revolutionary Ireland, including the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War, O'Flaherty's naturalistic narrative often portrayed characters trapped in an endless struggle, where their destinies are predetermined by the harsh environment. In his short stories and novels, O'Flaherty explored concepts of the human mind, naturistically describing life as a never-ending fight against external forces in society. Whether it was the harsh environment, political unrest or other uncontrollable events, O'Flaherty's characters often contend with situations they could not fully control, usually in rural settings.

3.2.Roddy Doyle

Roddy Doyle, born on May 8, 1958, in Dublin, is an Irish novelist, screenwriter and one of the most famous Irish authors, known for his striking portrayals of working-class life. He attended St. Fintan's Christian Brothers School and then studied English and Geography at University College Dublin. After completing his education in 1980, he worked as a schoolteacher for several years before becoming a full-time writer in 1993.

Doyle began writing seriously during the summer break of his third year of teaching. In the early 1980s, he wrote his first novel, a political satire *Your Granny's a Hunger Strike*, but it was never published. Doyle admits it was an awful book, "very long and smart-arsed – the type of thing that's often called undergraduate humour." (Younge, 1999)

Doyle's literary growth came with the release of his breakthrough novel *The Commitments* in 1987, which he self-published through his own company – King Farouk. The novel marked the start of a popular Barrytown series, including *The Snapper (1990), The Van (1991);* and *The Guts (2013).* In 1993, Doyle published his fourth book, *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, which follows the journey of ten-year-old Patrick, dealing with his parents' marriage falling apart.

After the publication of *Paddy Clark, Ha Ha Ha*, Doyle's book has often been compared to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* due to his heavy use of dialogue as well as a *bildungsroman* subgenre style. However, Doyle complained that the Irish writers are always compared to Joyce. The *Sunday Tribune* reported him saying:

> "*If you're a writer in Dublin and you write a snatch of dialogue, everyone thinks you lifted it from Joyce. The whole idea that he owns language as it is spoken in Dublin is a nonsense. He didn't invent the Dublin accent. It's as if you're encroaching on his area or it's a given that he's on your shoulder. It gets on my nerves."* (Chrisafis, 2004)

In 1994, he wrote a four-episode television series, called *Family*. The show was centred around a working-class family with an abusive father and caused controversy throughout conservative Ireland. (Mackin, 2013) Doyle's next Booker Prize-winning novel *The Woman Who Walked into Doors (1996)*, and its sequel *Paula Spencer (2006)*, are also novels with dark themes, depicting the life of a woman dealing with brutal domestic violence.

In 1999, Doyle wrote his first historical novel, and the first book of "The Last Roundup" trilogy*, A Star Called Henry*. The first novel depicts the life of Henry Smart and his involvement in the Irish Republican Army. The second novel, *Oh, Play That Thing (2004)* follows Henry through his journey in the United States. The third novel, *The Dead Republic,* published in 2010, narrates Henry's return to Ireland and reinvolvement with the Irish Republican Army. In 2020, Doyle wrote his most recent novel, *Love,* depicting a night out of two friends, reminiscing their lives.

Doyle's narrative is known for its heavy use of dialogue between characters with a minimum of narrative exposition. (McGuire, 2006, p. 84) This approach to storytelling sets his work apart and together with heavy use of Irish dialect enhances the authenticity of his portrayals of working-class Dubliners. In addition, Doyle's naturalistic approach is another noteworthy aspect of his narrative style, where he often portrays his characters as a product of their environment, unable to overcome the problems life presents them, similar to Liam O'Flaherty in this aspect. Whether navigating in the historical environment in *A Star Called Henry (1999),* depicting humorous characters in *The Commitments (1987)*, or exploring the struggles of Paula Spencer in *The Woman*

Who Walked into Doors (1996), Doyle's central element of dialogue remains apparent in most of his books.

4. Plot Summary

4.1. The Informer (1925)

The story opens on the 15th of March 192– with Francis Joseph McPhillip running to the entrance of Dunboy Lodging House in Dublin. However, before entering he makes sure no one is following him. This is because Frankie McPhillip is a murderer with a £20 bounty on his head. McPhillip killed a secretary of the Farmers' Union during the labourers' strike in the previous October. Since then, he has been hiding in the mountains with other criminals and came to Dublin just recently.

In the lodging house, McPhillip carefully examined the hall and the men that passed him. Nobody aroused his interest, and he entered a large room, crowded with people. He walked from one table to another, carrying his automatic weapon under his raincoat. The last table was seated by the man McPhillip was looking for – Gypo Nolan, McPhillip's partner in crime. They were known in the revolutionary circles as the "Devil's Twins". Gypo Nolan used to be a policeman but was dismissed because of suspicion he was giving information to the Revolutionary Organization – ever since then, Gypo has been an active member.

McPhillip came back to Dublin for one reason only – because he missed his family. The first thing McPhillip asked Gypo was if he delivered the letter Frankie gave him. Gypo explains that he delivered it but has not visited McPhillip's family since then. Gypo also notes that he does not know if the house is guarded by the police and cannot guarantee a safe visit. Shortly after, Frankie leaves and Gypo suddenly realises the fact that he has no money to get a bed for the night. The second fact he realises is that Frankie is wanted for murder, and this is where he gets the idea of informing on Frankie McPhillip. While Frankie goes to visit his family, Gypo goes to the police station to inform and claim the £20 reward. Shortly after, Detective McCartney with ten other men surrounds McPhillip's house and while he attempts to escape, he is shot in the head. Gypo is given his money and is released from the police station.

After Gypo left the station, he immediately started planning his next steps. He went to a pub like he used to with McPhillip after a successful mission. However, it did not take long before Gypo realised that it was McPhillip who always used to make plans.

Gypo often said to McPhillip: *"Mac, you bite the easy side o' the cheese. I got to do all the rough work an' you do all the thinkin'. Strikes me you get away with it easy, mate."* (p. 23) Now Gypo for the first time realised the difficulty of making a plan without McPhillip. Gypo bought a drink and started planning, it did not take long before he was interrupted by Katie Fox.

Katie's relationship with Gypo was the irregular kind of one. *"She was undoubtedly not his wife and in the same manner she could not be called his mistress. But their relationship partook both of the nature of lawful marriage and of the concubinage that is sanctified by natural love."* (p. 26) Whenever Gypo had any money, he would spend it with her. Sometimes, when Gypo was without money, Katie would accommodate him and provide a warm breakfast the next morning. After drinking for a while, Katie offers Gypo to sleep at her place. However, Gypo tells her that he does not need bed that night, and Katie wonders how Gypo got his new-found wealth. Gypo angry with himself for not having made a plan in advance, tries to say something but is immediately interrupted by Katie. Katie jokes about Gypo robbing a church, but Gypo quickly comes up with a story about robbing an American sailor instead of a church. Katie offers to accommodate Gypo at Biddy Burke's for the night, but he declines. He can finally afford to buy a bed for himself and does not want Katie's charity.

Suddenly, Gypo realises that he needs to make an alibi for the night, as he is convinced that the Revolutionary Organization already knows about his informing. With that, he also realises that the city already knows about McPhillip's death and people will suspect something if he does not visit the McPhillip's home soon. In the McPhillip house, Gypo and Frankie's father, get into an argument. The father blames Gypo for everything – from his involvement in crime to his death. During the argument, Frankie's sister – Mary, comes home and stops her father. After a while, Mary wants to talk with Gypo alone. There she explains that Frankie told his family that he met with Gypo in the Dunboy Lodging House before coming home. Mary asks this in hopes that Gypo might know something. This is interrupted by four silver coins dropping out of Gypo's pocket. Immediately, the whole room is silent. Everyone is confused and amazed at the same time, everyone except the two members of the Revolutionary Organization standing in the back of the room.

Everybody suddenly remembered that there was suspicion that an informer betrayed Frankie McPhillip. As Gypo is panicking, he shouts*: "I swear before Almighty God that I warned him to keep away from the house."* (p. 46) Then Gypo pushes his way towards Mrs McPhillip and gives her the four silver coins that fell out of his pocket. Then he rushes out of the house, but two men rush after him. The members of the Revolutionary Organization – Bartly Mullholland and Tommy Connor, caught up with Gypo and questioned him about how he got his money. Gypo is ready to beat them up, but breaks down, claiming they suspect him of informing on Frankie McPhillip. Both told Gypo they do not suspect him, but he must meet with other members of the Revolutionary Organization, especially Commandant Dan Gallagher. Gypo does not want to, noting that he is no longer a member of the organisation.

Gypo and the other men meet with Commandant Gallagher in a hideout within a pub. Gypo and Gallagher are aggressive towards each other at the beginning, but Gallagher's attitude changes when Kitty the barmaid enters the room. Gallagher immediately starts joking about having a cursing competition and orders 4 glasses of Jameson's. Cautious at first, Gypo does not drink or say anything. However, under pressure from Gallagher, he is forced to drink a glass of Jameson's. Gypo gets tipsy and tells Gallagher that he knows who informed on Frankie McPhillip. He claims it was a man called Mulligan. With this information, Gypo's attitude changed completely, suddenly he felt confident, even finishing Gallagher's drink. On that note, Gallagher ordered another four glasses of Jameson's and continued with the interrogation. As Gypo drinks more of the whiskey, he starts talking nonsense. All three men are suspicious of Gypo, yet they keep up the act. Gallagher informs Gypo they need to verify his statement first and instructs him to return at one o'clock for the court of inquiry. Gypo leaves and Mulholland is sent to spy on Gypo.

When Gypo leaves, he is full of confidence, even shouting aloud. Immediately, he goes to a fish-and-chip shop, inviting all the people inside. He pays for twenty-four meals with a one-pound note. This raises suspicion, and people start wondering where he got this amount of cash. During this time, Gallagher visits his partner – Mary McPhillip. Mary tells Gallagher, that the only person Frankie talked to that day was Gypo Nolan, thereby proving Gypo Nolan's guilt. Gallagher urges Mary to come to the court of inquiry to testify against Gypo. As Gypo is drinking and eating, an argument

ensues when people debate the death of Frankie McPhillip. This angers Gypo, but upon realizing that he is acting suspiciously, he attempts to mask it with strange humour before leaving the pub.

After roaming the streets for a while, Gypo decides to go to a part of Dublin where he was is not known. *"He wanted to go among beautiful women. Strange, beautiful women clothed in silk! He wanted to go mad. It was a mad night."* (p. 91) He roams the streets for a while until he comes up to Aunt Betty's brothel. He kicks the door until a man opens it. Gypo forces his way through, surprising the people inside. There are rich men inside, and Gypo is clothed like a working man. Therefore, they expect no money from him. Gypo shocks everyone when he pulls out a roll of notes and gives one to Aunt Betty. Everyone was suddenly interested in Gypo, except one woman sitting alone in a corner. This drew Gypo's attention, so he talked to her for a while, and when he tried to kiss her, she slapped him. The whole room went quiet, and everyone expected Gypo to get angry. Gypo just laughed it off and said to Aunt Betty that he wants this girl.

The young woman refuses, expressing her anger as she insists, she is an educated woman and not a prostitute. She explains that she is from London and arrived in Dublin after her husband left her due to her disfigured cheek. With anger, she regrets coming to Aunt Betty's and not seeking assistance from the police. Gypo, scared of the police, took pity on her and gave her three pounds for a fare back to London. As soon as she disappeared, Aunt Betty demanded that the woman owe her two pounds ten. Gypo gave that to her as well and went to bed with Connemara Maggie.

"At fifteen minutes to one, Bartly Mulholland entered Biddy Burke's kitchen and sat by the fire." (p. 102) Mulholland was there to ask Biddy Burke if she knew anything about Gypo Nolan because he lost track of him after he left for Aunt Betty's. Shortly after, Katie Fox rushed through the door, visibly upset. She explained that she found drunk Gypo with Maggie at Aunt Betty's. *"An' what's more he gave three quid to that swank of an Englishwoman. He gave her three quid and he paid two quid more to Aunt Betty... an' he never gave me a penny. Me that kept him for the last six months when I hadn't a bite mesel'."* (p. 106) Mulholland silently left, chuckling as he now had plenty of specific information for Gallagher. He went straight to Aunt Betty's to bring Gypo to Gallagher. Gypo, initially disobedient, challenges Mulholland, but Mulholland armed

with a revolver explains that he is following Commandant's orders. Gypo requests his clothes from Maggie and hands her his remaining money – two pounds four and sixpence. He instructs her to keep one note and give the other to Katie Fox. Gypo leaves with Mulholland and Maggie goes to Biddy Burke's to give Katie the money given by Gypo.

After he is taken to a Bogey Hole, a wine cellar below the ruins of a house and the location of the Revolutionary Organization's court of inquiry, he is taken to a room with other members of the organization. Gypo, still unaware of the situation, thinks he is there to witness against Mulligan. However, Mulligan has a plausible alibi, and Gallagher starts interrogating Gypo. Gypo, still drunk, does not have proof to back up his statements. Gallagher keeps pushing Gypo until he breaks down and starts crying. *"I didn't know what I was doin'. I declare to God I didn't know what I was doin'."* (p. 136) After Gypo is convicted of informing the enemy, he is thrown into a prison cell, waiting to be executed. Gallagher then leaves to tell Mary the name of the informer. However, Mary tells him that she knew it all this time and she does not want Gallagher to execute Gypo, claiming he will be just another murderer.

Gypo laid perfectly still for ten minutes, thinking about his impending death, but within this stillness, he remembered Frankie. He remembered the time when he and Frankie guarded this specific cell. Specifically, when Frankie told Gypo about a trapdoor in the roof, that is leading outside. Armed with this knowledge, Gypo climbed a narrow stone ledge that led to the trapdoor and once he got near, he was met with a setback. Over time, dirt and debris accumulated on the trapdoor, making it harder to open. Gypo managed to open the trapdoor despite the debris on top of it, but the debris falling alarmed the guards. The guards started shooting, but Gypo was already gone. He headed for the mountains, running through the slums towards the Butt Bridge.

He stopped before the bridge to examine it. Two men were standing near one side of the bridge. Gypo recognized the silhouette of Mulholland and was forced to go back. After roaming the streets for a while, Gypo came near a church. Then suddenly, the clock struck half-past four. He stopped and realised he was near Katie Fox's house. He knocked on her door, but Katie did not let him in until he broke the piece that was holding the door closed and barged in. He tried to persuade Katie to let him sleep on the floor near the fireplace and some time, Katie told him to get into bed and she waited

until he fell asleep. Once he was asleep, Katie, under the influence of some drug, started speaking to Louisa and herself. She explained to Louisa that she has to be quiet and shortly thereafter she left the house.

After learning about Gypo Nolan's position from Katie Fox, Mulholland rushes to inform Commandant Gallagher that they located him. Gypo is in Katie Fox's room at 61 Mount William Crescent and Captain Burton has the house surrounded. Gallagher prepares to confront Gypo and tells Mary McPhillip to accompany him. Mary, however, is distressed and attempts to prevent what she believes will be Gypo's murder. *"Murderer, murderer', she cried after him, until they stuffed her mouth."* (p. 178) After Gallagher, Mulholland and other men arrive at the location. Mulholland and two other men try to assassinate Gypo in Katie's room. However, Gypo is awake and manages to overpower the attackers. As he is rushing from the house, he sees Gallagher standing against the church railings across the road. As Gypo's foot touched the pavement, a rapid succession of shots came from all sides, hitting Gypo three times. Despite his wounds, he manages to crawl towards the nearby church. Inside, he finds the grieving mother of Frankie McPhillip. Overwhelmed by guilt, Gypo confesses his betrayal, pleading for her forgiveness with his final breath.

4.2. A Star Called Henry (1999)

The first part of the novel opens with a heartbreaking scene of Melody Nash, Henry's mother, gazing at the night sky. She claims that each star symbolizes one of her lost children, believing that God has taken them to illuminate the night. Born in the aftermath of his sibling's tragic death, the young boy initially remains nameless due to his mother's haunting memories. When the father suggests naming the child after himself, Melody hesitates, haunted by the awful memory of her deceased son. Eventually convinced by the father, Henry Smart's birth is considered a miracle, bringing a glimmer of hope not only to the Smart family but also to the entire neighbouring slums.

As Henry grew older, he noticed his father's diminishing presence at home. Henry's father worked two jobs: as a bouncer for Dolly Oblong and as a contract killer for Alfie Gandon. On one occasion, the father was so violent he got called to Dolly Oblong's

room. Despite the tension, Dolly granted him a second chance. To Henry Sr., she was not merely an employer, she was the queen of the city. *"She was the queen of the city, and nobody knew. Except herself and, now, my father. My father was in love… He'd be the puppet at the end of Dolly Oblong's strings. Pinocchio Smart. He already had the wooden leg."* (p. 43) At home, two more babies, Alexander and Susie, joined the family. Henry is angry because his parents refer to the new siblings by their names, a practice they never used with him. The family then moves to another house. Another three boys are born, all named Victor, but only the youngest one survives. At five years old, Henry decides to leave home to look for his father. The nine-month-old Victor follows him, so Henry picks him up and leaves with him.

When Henry's father was returning from a job to Dolly Oblong, he ran into a crowd. It was a crowd assembled to welcome King Edward VII in Dublin and Henry and Victor insulted the king minutes before as they were hanging on a lamppost. The father noticed the police trying to detain the boys, so he smashed the policeman who was trying to drag them down and ran away with both. They all hid together in a canal, where the father gave Henry a lecture about disappearing underground. Once he brought Henry and Victor to a safe place, he disappeared. Later, while guarding the Dolly Oblong's brothel, Henry Sr. was surrounded by police, forcing him to fight his way through and disappear. Henry never saw his father again.

After roaming the streets of Dublin for three years. Henry and Victor learned to make a living in any way possible, from begging and stealing to reinventing rat-catching methods. Occasionally, they visited home to bring food to their mother. On one occasion, Henry decided to attend a national school. Miss O'Shea, a local schoolteacher, took pity on them and let both in. They learned the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics. The first sentence Henry learned to write was "My name is Henry Smart" just before they were kicked out by the head nun. Henry smashed her head with a spare wooden leg his father left at home, so both were back to living on the streets. Then one day Henry woke up, but Victor did not. *"The city killed Victor. And, today, the King was being crowned. In another city. In London. Did they cough till they died in London? Did kings and queens cough up blood?"* (p. 83) After Victor died, Henry went looking for his mother, but everyone was gone.

The second part of the novel takes place during the 1916 Easter Rising. Henry is fourteen years old and is a member of the Irish Citizen Army. Henry, together with members of the Irish Citizen Army and Irish Volunteers attacked and occupied the General Post Office building. After securing the G.P.O., Patrick Pearse read the Proclamation, marking the beginning of the Easter Rising. The night before, James Connolly let Henry read the Proclamation. Henry pointed out that the Proclamation should include *"…something in there about the rights of children."* (p. 97) and when Connolly saw the pain in Henry's eyes, he agreed. After Connolly and Pearse came back to the G.P.O., the rebels started to tear down recruitment posters and put the Proclamation in their place. Suddenly, one of the rebels shouted that the British were arriving. Everyone held their position, but the man shouting was only joking.

Shortly after that, a crowd of women came pounding on the door of G.P.O. They were the wives of British soldiers who came to collect their allowances. Henry suggested giving them the money they had plundered from the G.P.O. Despite the initial reluctance from some of the Irish Citizen Army members, Henry convinces them to distribute the money to the women waiting outside. The decision is met with mixed reactions, especially from Collins and some of the Volunteers. *"Jesus, I hated the Volunteers…When was the last time Collins had been hungry? I knew the answer just by looking at the well-fed puss on him."* (p. 103) Despite the situation, Henry notices Piano Annie, a young and beautiful woman among the crowd. The brief exchange Henry has with Annie is interrupted by the arrival of Lancers and Henry promises he will be looking for her.

Once the shooting began, Henry was not aiming his gun at the enemy but was aiming for shop windows. He shot at everything that was denied to him and other hundreds of thousands of poor people. After successfully defending against the first attack, the rebels cheer and laugh, claiming the Empire is collapsing in front of them. The next day, as Henry waits in line for free porridge, he comes across his teacher Miss O'Shea, and discovers that she is a member of the *Cumann na mBan*. Miss O'Shea notes that Henry still carries his father's wooden leg. After the short interaction, Henry goes back to his post. During the night, fireworks start blasting and the rebels think they are under the attack of the British forces. After the situation calms, the rebels realise it is

just kids using the fireworks stolen from a nearby shop. The Volunteers are outraged, claiming that it is Irish property being robbed.

However, Henry and other members of the Irish Citizen Army start arguing with the Volunteers until the situation escalates to the point Henry points his gun at one of the Volunteer officers. *"Five seconds that very nearly shook the world – the revolution, the counter-revolution and the Civil War were all waiting to happen in that five-second spell in the G.P.O., as Dublin outside burned."* (p. 114) Pearse and Connolly rushed into the room to de-escalate the situation. They ordered to send a squad to get the raiders off the street and the rebels got back to their posts.

Suddenly, the real bombardment started. The British began bombarding the rebels from a gunboat on the river. All the men were shocked, but Connolly was delighted, cheering at finally being taken seriously by the Empire. Henry, however, was not present. He was in the dark basement with Miss O'Shea and they both ignored the bombardment that raged above them. After their intimate moment in the basement, Henry claims that Miss O'Shea made a man of him, and Henry goes back upstairs. Upstairs the men joke about Henry surviving the bombardment before going back to fighting. On Saturday the heavy bombardment sets the G.P.O. on fire and shortly after Connolly is shot. Connolly comes up with a dangerous plan to run through the barricades and escape north. Henry runs with the first group and is the only man in the group to survive. After regrouping with some of the rebels, Henry and the other rebels are taken prisoners. Henry is beaten and the wooden leg is thrown into the fire. On the next day, all the prisoners are taken to Richmond Barracks to be interrogated. From there, Henry manages to escape through canalisation, using the skills his father had taught him. After escaping, Henry spends the whole night searching for the burnt wooden leg, before arriving at Annie's step. On Wednesday morning the Irish Citizen Army officers are executed.

In the third part of the novel, Henry distances himself from the revolution, lives with Annie and works at the docks under a false name – Fergus Nash. One day, Henry gets into a fight and is sent home early, then gets drunk in a bar and roams the streets. At the end of his wanderings, Henry often found himself locked out of Annie's room, yet he knew it was different this time. He felt a chair against the handle inside. Henry started kicking the door and shouting at Annie to let him in. Suddenly, the door opened, Henry

fell, and inside stood Annie's "dead" husband. Henry sobered immediately but pretended to be drunk. He said he was looking for Nellie, not Annie, claiming he must be in the wrong house. After Annie's husband calmed down, Henry apologized for disturbing them and left.

Homeless again, Henry worked during the day in the docks and during the night he roamed the streets of Dublin, constantly looking for his mother. Sometimes, he visited Granny Nash, where he asked her about his mother. However, Granny Nash talked mostly about Alfie Gandon and Henry's father, barely mentioning his mother, until one day, she revealed to Henry that his mother was dead. Some days later, Henry is stopped by a man in a bar. Henry cautiously introduces himself as Fergus Nash. However, the man states he knew him when he was Henry Smart. The man introduces himself as Jack Dalton and claims he was there when Henry escaped through the manhole cover. By the end of the night, they were like old friends. While wandering the streets of Dubin, Jack Dalton sang *"He fought like a lion with an Irishman's heart"*. Henry warned Jack he could be arrested for that, but Jack ignored him and continued with *"The pride of all Gaels was young Henry Smart."* (p. 170)

This shocked Henry, so he started asking Jack about the song. Jack claimed that the people wrote it, and even De Valera sang it while imprisoned. Henry felt like a legend and wanted Jack to finish the song. However, Jack declined, saying he was starving and would finish the song tomorrow. As they walk, Jack reveals that Alfie Gandon is his landlord and is part of the revolution. At Jack's place, Henry is served tea, slices of cooked ham and even a bit of a porter cake. Jack also reveals to Henry that he used to be an architect before the revolution and promises to name a bridge after Henry. All of this convinces Henry to join the revolution again. *"I was ready to die again for Ireland; me, who had never been further than Lucan, who less than a year before jumped over the bodies of friends lying dead and destroyed, who would never have given a fuck what de Valera sang in his prison cell. I was ready to die for Ireland... I'd gone out to die for the last time"* (p. 171) Jack then takes Henry to Michael Collins; Henry swears an oath and joins the Irish Republican Brotherhood and before the end of the week was past, Henry murders his first policeman with his father's leg.

Henry becomes one of Michael Collins' men on bicycles and is sent to Granard to deliver a letter from Collins. After arriving, Henry is surprised by Collins, who arrives

by train and explains that the journey was only a test. Henry does not get angry at first, but as Collins keeps pushing him, they get into a fight and Henry's eye is injured. Henry wakes up in a bed in Roscommon, there he meets with a woman called Missis O'Shea, and immediately thinks it is the mother of his lover. However, she explains to him that she has no daughters teaching at school and Henry rides back to Dublin on his bike. Back in Dublin, Collins explains to Henry that a new supply of weapons and ammunition is coming soon. Henry becomes one of Collin's assassins and visits Annie for one last time before he starts training new soldiers for Collins.

After the Great War ended in 1918, a general election was held and Sinn Féin party received the majority of votes. Michael Collins, Jack Dalton, and Alfie Gandon are elected to parliament, and imprisoned de Valera is elected president but Henry is too young to participate. Sinn Féin fought the election on the promise of not taking their seats at Westminster. They instead met in the Mansion House and formed the Dáil Éireann, the parliament of the Irish Republic on the 21st of January 1919. On the same day, during the Soloheadbeg ambush, two policemen are killed, the first two official killings in the Irish War of Independence.

Henry cycles back to Granard to meet with the group of soldiers he is going to train. There, Henry runs into Miss O'Shea, where he finds out she is the daughter of the famous old Kitty O'Shea. On September 12, 1919, Henry and Miss O'Shea got married. Collins gifts Henry his birth certificate, where he has four extra years added to his life – according to the certificate, Henry was born on the 11th of May 1897. That made him twenty-two, just ten years younger than his bride. On the same day, Dáil Éireann was declared illegal by the British government.

Back in Dublin, Henry meets with Collins and becomes one of his Twelve Apostles, a group of assassins working directly under Collins. He gives Henry an order to assassinate Detective Sergeant Smith in Roscommon. During the night, Henry is on his way to assassinate the detective but is forced to hide from the police in a hedge. Henry decides to try his chances with David Climanis, a Latvian Jew living nearby, whom he has met one evening in a bar. At first, Henry spoke to him carefully, worried he might be a spy but over time they became close friends. *"He asked for nothing except my company and I Loved to listen to him; he told me everything. And I told him everything. I couldn't understand what was happening to me. It just seemed safe and right."* (p.

244) After Henry made sure the British left the area, he left Climanis' house and murdered Detective Smith shortly after. Later, Henry meets with Jack Dalton for the first time in over a year, Jack tells him to stay away from Climanis and gives him a note with another name – the name of Annie's "dead" husband. After Henry kills him, he pins a note to his body saying *"Shot as a traitor and a spy. The I.R.A."* (p. 256)

Several months later, during the night, Henry leads an attack on a British barrack alongside Miss O'Shea and a unit of soldiers he had personally trained. The goal of the assault is to obtain weapons and ammunition for their cause. However, their plans take an unexpected turn when the group is ambushed by the notorious Black and Tans. As the Black and Tans close in, the group tries to desperately flee the barrack. A red flare lit the sky, and bullets started flying through the air. Miss O'Shea was shot in the arm but kept running. As she began to slow down, Henry turned around to assess the situation, but he also got shot and fell to the ground. Every time he regained consciousness, he found himself in a different place, carried by Miss O'Shea.

Henry was taken in a cart to a nearby house. There he discovered, from the man and woman caring for him, that the bullet passed through him, missing all vital organs. Henry immediately worries about Miss O'Shea but the pair calms Henry down, explaining she is well and has earned a nickname for herself – the Lady of the Machine Gun. They shared with Henry that she had been actively fighting against the Black and Tans and robbing banks. During the night, Miss O'Shea urgently wakes up Henry, explaining that Black and Tans were searching nearby houses and together they flee from the safe house.

Over the several days, Henry and his wife cycle to a Templemore, avoiding all the major roads. Templemore, now under rebel control and without the presence of the Black and Tans, serves as a temporary hub for running guns and explosions. Before entering the town, Henry sheds his middle-upper-class clothing for more subtle clothing. Shortly after, Henry is given another contract which he must realise back in Dublin. Henry travels back to Dublin alone and meets with Mister Climanis. They talk for a while and Climanis reveals his Jewish origin to Henry. Henry explains that his name was mentioned and warns him to be careful.

On Sunday morning, November 21, 1920, thirteen British secret service agents of the Cairo Gang are shot in different places in Dublin. Henry kills one of the agents but spares a woman who is in the room with the secret agent. Later, he visits Granny Nash in her room, where she compares him to his father. *"You're just like your father. And that's no compliment."* (p.289)

In the fourth and final part of the novel, Henry is arrested during his visit and is interrogated about his involvement in the murders. Henry denies everything and insists his real name is Fergus Nash. After successfully denying everything, Henry is taken to Dublin Castle and placed in a cell with a man called Ned Kellet. Ned claims he knows him, saying his real name is Henry Smart but Henry does not answer his questions. After some time, Ned is taken away and two officers enter the cell. They try to trick Henry into revealing his identity by calling him Jack Dalton, saying they have his release papers. Henry sees through their trap and insists his real name is Fergus Nash. Later, the British soldiers tie Henry to a steel bar on top of a lorry and hang a piece of board around his neck – with "Bomb us now" written on it. They are using Henry both as a warning and protection during his transport to Kilmainham Gaol.

In Kilmainham, Henry is placed in a cell with another man. Henry thinks he knows him, but the cell is too dark to be sure. At dawn, Henry confirms the man's identity but does not interact with him at all. Henry is taken to be photographed and when he returns to his cell, he is beaten by a group of guards. On that night, a guard without a uniform visited him, saying Henry disappointed him and gave Henry a warm griddlecake. At first, Henry is focused on the griddle cake but soon notices the door is slightly open. Henry successfully manages to escape from the cell block but is stopped by the griddle-cake guard. Henry thinks he is screwed but the guard gives him money for a tram fare and explains that Miss O'Shea planned everything. After Henry successfully escapes from the Kilmainham Gaol, he is reunited with Miss O'Shea on a tram.

Henry is in disbelief when he sees Miss O'Shea with her head completely shaven. She explains to him that it was shaven by Ivan, leader of the group Henry trained, last year in Templemore. Henry is shocked by the fact that Templemore was a year ago, so Miss O'Shea hands him a newspaper with a date – Henry was imprisoned for over four months. One night, Ivan visits Henry while he is sleeping. During his visit, Ivan explains to Henry that the war is coming to an end. Explaining that he made an

agreement with local British forces, but Henry's wife keeps killing them. Putting everyone in danger. Ivan warns Henry that if they want to stay alive, he must stop his wife from killing people. Henry tries to convince Miss O'Shea to leave for Dublin with him but fails. Before leaving, Miss O'Shea reveals to Henry that she is pregnant.

Back in Dublin, Henry is looking for David Climanis. He tries to look for him at his house, but a scared woman opens the door and explains the house was empty when she moved in. Henry meets with Jack Dalton, who claims that Climanis was a spy. Dalton convinced that Henry is also a spy, passes a note to Henry with the name of his last target – Smart, Henry. Henry is forced to flee and hide for months, missing the birth of his daughter. At this point, the Civil War started between supporters of the Free State Treaty and the Republicans, and both sides were busy fighting. This gave Henry a chance to travel to Roscommon. On the day Michael Collins was killed, Henry got to see his five-month-old daughter for the first time. Old Missis O'Shea was taking care of her, while Henry's wife was busy fighting the new National Army.

Henry travels back to Dublin to meet with Granny Nash. He asks her about the murder of David Climanis and his wife. She responds with *"Alfie Gandon says Hello"*, hinting to Henry it was Alfie Gandon who killed David Climanis. Before leaving, Granny Nash reveals to Henry that his wife is imprisoned in Kilmainham. He goes to Dolly Oblong's bar, waiting for Alfie Gandon. Before killing him, Gandon explains to Henry why he had Climanis killed. He explains that Climanis was not a spy, but he stole from his wife from him. After learning that, Henry immediately kills Alfie Gandon with the wooden leg of his father.

In the end, Henry visits his wife Miss O'Shea in Kilmainham. He tells her that he is leaving Ireland and Miss O'Shea reveals the name of their daughter to him – Saoirse; and promises that she will search for him after her release from imprisonment. At the age of twenty, Henry leaves Ireland and travels to Liverpool.

5. Main Character Analyses

5.1.Gypo Nolan

Gypo Nolan, the central figure of *The Informer (1925)*, is a complex character struggling with the consequences of his nefarious actions after informing on Frankie McPhillip. Through Gypo, a product of his environment, Liam O'Flaherty explores the complexities of loyalty and treachery while illustrating the workings of the human mind.

On one hand, Gypo's actions can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to survive under the harsh environment of revolutionary Dublin, where he may have felt compelled to inform on Frankie McPhillip in order to secure his own survival. On the other hand, the most likely explanation is that Gypo is a coward because he chose the path of least resistance by selling his comrade out for his own financial benefit. By informing on Frankie, Gypo reveals his lack of courage, as he rather prioritizes his own well-being over the safety of his friend. After leaving the police station, he suddenly realises the consequences of his actions, forcing him to start devising an alibi. However, he is overwhelmed by the feeling of guilt and starts loathing himself instead.

When some of the coins fall out of his pocket during his visit to Frankie's mother, his decision to give them to her appears to be driven by fear of being caught by the members of the Revolutionary Organization rather than by guilt. Similarly, when Gypo gave the woman money for a fare back to London at Aunt Betty's place, he started feeling guilt only because of the mention of the police. This demonstrates that most of his good-deed actions are actually motivated by his selfish concern for his own well-being rather than atoning for his guilt.

Using the character of Gypo Nolan, O'Flaherty explores the intricacies of the human mind, revealing its vulnerability to external forces. The choice to betray his friend for his own benefit brilliantly exposes a darker aspect of human nature. However, Gypo is not purely a villain but rather an opportunist who did not fully think through the consequences of his actions. Gypo's choices and the decisions behind them, reveal his lack of foresight rather than any purely hateful intention. Through his story, the author

narrates the workings of the human mind, emphasising the moral and personal ambiguity of individuals.

5.2.Henry Smart

Henry Smart, the central figure and storyteller of *A Star Called Henry*, is shaped by the ongoing conflicts and his personal misfortunes. The narrative follows Henry's development from a little child to an adult living with his own wits. His journey starts in the slums of Dublin and slowly progresses until his involvement with the Irish Republican Army, mirroring the experiences of countless Dubliners of his generation, yearning for a better life.

From the earliest pages of the novel, Henry's need for recognition and his own identity becomes obvious. The premature loss of his dead siblings, paired with being born in his father's shadow, made Henry feel inferior to others and cast a long shadow over him. Henry's desire for identity becomes the motivation, pushing him through the many challenges of his youth and encouraging him to define himself on his own terms. Even though it helped him in numerous situations, it also proved to be a vulnerability later in the story. A clear example was when Jack Dalton manipulated Henry back into the IRA.

As Henry grows older, his yearning for social justice becomes clear. The harsh reality of Henry's early life and the unstable political situation of the time inspired his sense of responsibility towards addressing social injustice in Ireland. He forms a conception of a higher good, which transforms Henry from a character motivated by selfish personal goals to a character committed to addressing social issues. A notable example of this was when Henry, with other soldiers, prevented the Volunteers from disrupting a raid during the Easter Rising. *"Without saying anything, without even looking at one another, we – the Citizen Army men – suddenly knew that we would have to protect the people outside."* (p. 114)

As Henry matures, another desire emerges: a deep yearning for love. A desire that comes with age: Miss O'Shea, Henry's substitute for an absent mother figure in his childhood, becomes a crucial maternal character in Henry's emotional development. When Miss O'Shea reappears in Henry's life during the Easter Rising. Henry's attitude

changes, and he starts to view Miss O'Shea as a romantic figure in his life, ultimately, marrying the older woman four years later.

After joining the Irish Republican Army again, Henry starts working as a hitman – a role mirroring the violent legacy of his father. The similarities between Henry and his father become clear as he fully embraces the role of an assassin. The wooden leg, a representation of his father's identity, changes into a deadly weapon in Henry's hands. This highlights Henry's complete transformation into his father and a violent man following the family legacy. After being accused a traitor, his character is tested, forcing him to confront external challenges but also his internal conflicts. At the end of the novel, Henry struggles with the consequences of his own actions. However, his hope of a future, with an illusion of being free of the burdens of his past, propels him forward in the creation of the false legacy he seeks.

6. Major Themes

6.1. Treachery and Consequences in *The Informer*

In the 1920s Dublin, during the chaotic times of the Irish Civil War, betrayal to British forces of occupation was common, so trust was a luxury few could afford. Liam O'Flaherty's novel, *The Informer (1925)*, depicts this era, portraying the harsh realities faced by ordinary people caught in the chaos of revolt against British rule. The journey of Gypo Nolan, in O'Flaherty's narrative, constitutes moral and personal ambiguity, where the protagonist fights with his own conscience after betraying Frankie McPhillip by informing on him for money. This selfish act launches a series of events leading to Gypo's descent into a world of paranoia, guilt, and self-destruction. While the novel revolves around the theme of betrayal, the act serves as a starting point for the portrait of the protagonist's conscience as he deals (or does not deal) with the consequences of his actions. This analysis will examine extracts to consider the psychological development of characters in the novel.

> *At twenty-five minutes past eight Gypo left the police-station by a door in the rear of the building… Immediately he felt that the footstep was menacing, as if he were certain that it belonged to somebody that was tracking him. How strange! Within the course of ninety minutes the customary sound of human footstep had, by some evil miracle, become menacing. (p.22)*

In this extract, Gypo's state of mind starts to fear revenge following his departure from the police station. The ordinary sounds change to ominous sounds, emphasising the psychological impact his act of betrayal had on his mental condition and launching Gypo's, both internal and external, struggle with the consequences of his actions.

> *"I swear before Almighty God that I warned him to keep away from the house."*
> *"There's no man suspects ye, Gypo. Ya needn't be afraid of that," cried Tommy Connor Nobody suspects ye. Good God, man ..." (p.46)*

During Gypo's visit to the McPhillip household, tensions arise when coins fall out of his pocket. Gypo, already paranoid, acts weirdly, claiming he had warned Frankie to keep away from the house. Some of the people present, reassure Gypo that no one suspected him. However, the members of the Revolutionary Organization are already suspicious of him.

> *Since that infernal moment when he kicked open the door of the police-station, his whole life had been submerged in a pitch-black cloud that was impenetrable and offered no escape. (p.61)*

I'll tell ye who informed," he gasped. "It's the Rat Mulligan. It's him as sure as Christ was crucified." (p.62)

Walking out from the public-house into the street, Gypo felt as if he had leapt suddenly into an arena, where he was to perform astounding feats, while an amazed audience, with two million eyes, gazed silent and spell-bound... He took two staggering steps forward and uttered a long-drawn-out yell. He staggered to the kerbstone and yelled, letting his body go completely limp with ecstasy (p.75)

With a growing sense of helplessness, as described in the first passage, Gypo is caught off guard by Gallagher's offer to rejoin the Revolutionary Organisation in exchange for information on who informed on McPhillip. Despite having no proof, Gallager's proposal offers a potential escape from Gypo's despair, so he takes a risky gamble and claims Rat Mulligan has informed on McPhillip. Although Gypo believes his gamble paid off when he is eventually released, the Revolutionary Organisation is actually convinced of his guilt. Once Gypo steps outside, feels free of his burdens and his state of mind radically shifts from desperation to a calming sense of relief.

"Why not," he muttered aloud. "Why shouldn't I go an' have a bit o' fun?
A wave of passion surged through his body. He was on the point of opening his mouth to utter a yell, but instead he thrust his hand into his trousers pocket anxiously and groped for his wad of money. (p.89)

"I had no right to come in here," cried the woman, bursting into tears. "I should have gone to the police and got them—— "
"The police!" yelled Gypo suddenly, starting as if he had been awakened from his sleep."
"What'll bring ye home?" he continued. "How much will it cost?"
"A little over two pounds," she replied in a low voice.
"Here," he cried, taking out his money, "here's yer fare. One, two, three," he paused and was going to add fourth, but he put it back. (p.101)

As Gypo suddenly believes he is free from the consequences of his actions, passion surges through his body and he yearns to celebrate. However, his joy is quickly overshadowed by anxiety as he suddenly starts worrying about the blood money, highlighting his materialistic nature that was not well thought out in advance. The second section narrates the interaction between Gypo and the woman from London, where Gypo, drunk and careless, escalates the situation up to the point the woman starts crying. Once the distressed woman mentioned the police, Gypo got startled and offered the woman money for the fare back to London. This good deed, although motivated by fear of being caught expressing worry for his own safety rather than his genuine concern for her, reveals a glimpse of humanity in Gypo's selfish behaviour.

"An' what's more he gave three quid to that swank of an Englishwoman. He gave her three quid and he paid two quid more to Aunt Betty, money that was owin' to her for board, an'

he never gave me a penny. Me that kept him for the last six months when I hadn't a bite mesel' (p.105)

"Listen to me, Bartly," she said. "You remember me when I was a good girl an' when I was a member o' ... ye know yersel' ... Well, so was he, wasn't he? Well, can you tell me how did Frankie McPhillip get plugged? Who got the twenty quid that the Farmers' Union gave out? Where did he get the money? I'm not shoutin' any names. No names, no pack drills. But ye can guess for yersel'..." (p.106)

While Gypo is drinking and having a good time at Aunt Betty's, Katie expresses her frustration to Bartly Mulholland, the man assigned to follow and bring Gypo to the revolutionary court of inquiry. As she starts expressing her feelings, she feels betrayed after caring for Gypo for the last six months and not receiving any money, while some random women received a large amount. Additionally, she asks Bartly about McPhillip, hinting that Gypo could have possibly claimed the reward money in exchange for informing. This scene demonstrates the nature of betrayal within this environment, as people who could be considered partners may betray those very partners in a matter of mere minutes.

"Commandant," he cried, "I didn't know what I was doin'. I declare to God I didn't know what I was doin'
"Is there no man here to tell him why I did it? I can't tell him. My head is sore. I can't tell him. Commandant, Commandant, you an' me, Commandant. We'll make a plan, the two of us... uh-r-r-r... " His voice sank into an inarticulate jabber as his hands clutched Gallagher's boots... His thick lips that tried to kiss Gallagher's boots were imprinting kisses on the stone flags. (p.135)

Gypo breaks down in tears as he is facing the consequences of his actions during the court of inquiry. He starts crying and declaring that he did not know what he was doing. He seeks understanding and tries to bargain with Commandant Gallagher for forgiveness. As he clings onto Gallagher's boots, even attempting to kiss them, he demonstrates his willingness to humiliate himself in order to save himself from the ultimate punishment at all costs. This moment shows Gypo at his lowest point in the novel, with O'Flaherty depicting him as a bootlicker, desperate to do anything for his life.

He was not afraid. No. He did not feel at all in the ordinary sense of the word... He was quite calm and collected about everything. The darkness consoled him. He felt at home in it. (p.145)

Shapeless figures dancing on tremendous stilts, on the brink of an abyss, to the sound of rocks being tumbled about below, in the darkness, everything immense and dark and resounding, everything without shape or meaning, glob and preponderance, yawning, yawning abysses full of frozen fog, gliding away when touched, leaving no foundation, and endless wander through space, through screeching winds and ... crash.

Gypo awoke with a snort, perspiring with his nightmare, terrified. The old woman had at last awakened him by squeezing his nostrils between her fingers.
"They're after ye," she hissed. "They're after ye. They're on the stairs." (p.179)

Once locked in a cell, Gypo suddenly displays profound acceptance to his fate. However, this newfound peace lasts only for a few minutes before Gypo remembers a trapdoor through which he can escape. Following his escape, the feeling of peace immediately gets replaced by a feeling of hope mixed with despair. During his escape, all possible exits are guarded, so Gypo, unaware of Katie's angry feelings, seeks shelter at her place. Tired and feeling safe, he decides to sleep in her bed, unknowingly sealing his fate. As soon as he falls asleep, Katie leaves the room to inform about Gypo's location to Gallagher and shortly after, her house is surrounded.

While Katie is away, Gypo has a nightmare, during which he feels disoriented and afraid. In his dream, everything feels chaotic and threatening, mirroring his situation in the real world. Terrified of the consequences even while asleep, he is awoken by Louisa, the old woman living with Katie, seconds before he faces with the members of the Revolutionary Organisation.

He wet his hand to the wrist. He tried to take off his hat in order to cross himself. His hand pawed about his skull, but his fingers were already dead. They could not grip the tattered hat. He tried to cross himself. Impossible. (p.181)

"Mrs. McPhillip, 'twas I informed on yer son Frankie. Forgive me. I'm dyin'."
"I forgive ye," she sighted in a sad, soft whisper. "Ye didn't know what ye were doin'."
He felt a great mad rush of blood in his head. A great joy filled him…
He cried out in loud voice:
"Frankie, yer mother has forgiven me." (p.182)

After fighting off his former fellow revolutionaries, Gypo escapes the house but is shot near the church. At the church door, Gypo tries to cross himself using the holy water but is unable to do so because his hand is already paralysed, indicating his impending demise. Gypo staggers inside and falls to his knees before Frankie's mother, seeking forgiveness. With his last chance at redemption, Gypo admits his guilt and confesses his sin to Frankie's mother. Her empathy fills Gypo with joy before he faces the inevitable consequences of his actions.

The selected extracts offer a glimpse into the psychological development of the characters, with each one representing different aspects of human nature. Gypo Nolan, the central figure of the novel, symbolises opportunism and self-interest, with his actions driven primarily by the need to escape the consequences of his betrayal. When

he is faced with danger, he prioritises his own well-being over the safety of his friend, underlining his selfishness and cowardice.

The commandant Gallagher, a loyal member of the Revolutionary Organisation, represents a mix of loyalty and self-interest. The pursuit of Gypo's punishment is not an attempt to seek revenge for his fallen comrade, but rather a necessity to preserve the integrity of the Revolutionary Organisation. His actions seem ruthless but are required for the cause of Irish nationalism, illustrating the moral complexity of the warfare.

Katie, initially a supportive figure to Gypo, demonstrates moral ambiguity in her actions. When she betrayed Gypo, by providing Gypo's position to Bartly Mulholland at Biddy Burke's, she initially felt betrayed herself. However, when Connemara Maggie came with money from Gypo, she suddenly felt a profound feeling of guilt – similar to Gypo when he received the financial reward for informing. Her actions, same as Gypo's, reveal the unpredictability of human behaviour.

Frankie's mother represents Christian forgiveness and perhaps the possibility of redemption. Despite the pain caused by her recent loss, she forgives Gypo in the end, symbolising a path towards transcending the cycle of violence, characterizing the novel and the path towards Irish independence.

Through the interplay of these characters, O'Flaherty, as a first-hand witness to the events of this period, masterfully narrates the psychological development of characters as they struggle with their conscience. Using a recurrent motif in Irish literature, the outcast who betrays a cause, O'Flaherty clearly illustrates the treacherous environment of the early 20th century Dublin, where informers were seen as greater enemies to Irish independence than the British army. The cycle of redemption portrayed in the novel mirrors the actual history of the cycle of vengeance during the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, where friends and colleagues often betrayed each other for their own benefit. Even though O'Flaherty published *The Informer (1925)* during the Civil War, he managed to thoroughly explore and narrate the human conscience of those times, without provoking either of the parties.

6.2. Identity in *A Star Called Henry*

Born into the poverty of early 20th century Ireland, young Henry Smart needs to grow up fast if he wants to establish his own identity in the unforgiving streets of Dublin. Through his journey, Roddy Doyle explores all the important events of revolutionary Ireland, where the fictional Henry Smart interacts with the historical figures of the Anglo-Irish War (1919 – 1921). His story mirrors a life that many Irish urban people faced with poverty and oppression, surviving by any means necessary. However, unlike O'Flaherty, Roddy Doyle's narrative in *A Star Called Henry (1999)* focuses on the broader historical scene and the shifting loyalties in divided Ireland, instead of delving into the deeper psychology of individual characters. The selected extracts will track Henry's evolution throughout the narrative, while also providing an insight into the oppressed Ireland.

> *I was a broth of an infant, the wonder of Summerhill and beyond, I was the big news, a local legend within hours of landing on the newspaper. (p.22)*
>
> *I was the other Henry. The shadow. The impostor. She still fed me, held me, doted on me. But when her husband was in the room she began to feel sharp cuckoo lips on her breast. (p.33)*
>
> *– My name is Henry Smart! The one and only Henry Smart!*
> *I'd yell until I could no longer see its shadow against the blueness of the night, until there was nothing out there. I killed my brother every night. (p.35)*

When the nameless child was born healthy and strong, it was considered a miracle amongst the locals. However, the situation quickly changed when the father offered to name the child Henry, and as Henry grew older, he often found himself overshadowed by the memory of his deceased sibling. Despite this, Henry did not surrender to any pressure and grew up with a strong sense of determination to establish his own identity.

> *I shared everything with Victor, even the stories that were only mine. He went into the crib beside me. There was never me; it was always us. We slept where we fell and ate whatever we could find and rob. We survived. (p.63)*
>
> *I was eight and surviving. I'd lived three years in the streets and under boxes, in hallways and on wasteland. I'd slept in the weeds and under snow. I had Victor, my father's leg and nothing else. I was bright but illiterate, strapping but always sick… And I was surviving. But it wasn't enough. I was itching for more. (p.70)*

Initially, Henry felt hate towards his siblings, but everything changed with the birth of Victor, marking another important stage in Henry's life. Suddenly, Henry's care for only his own well-being disappeared and was replaced by a sense of responsibility

towards Victor, representing a major development in Henry's personal growth. At the end of the chapter, Henry's yearning for more becomes apparent, highlighting his growing ambition. However, once Victor dies, Henry's sense of purpose disappears and is replaced by a sense of hopelessness and confusion.

> *I was fourteen. None of the others knew, or would have believed it. I was six foot two, two inches tall and had the shoulders of a boy built to carry the weight of the world… I was one of the few real soldiers there; I had nothing to fear and nothing to go home to. (p.89)*

> *We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser. So said the message on the banner that had hung across the front of Liberty Hall… If I'd had my way, Or Anyone Else would have been added instead of But Ireland. I didn't give a shite about Ireland. (p.91)*

> *I shot and killed all that I had been denied, all the commerce and snobbery that had been mocking me and other hundreds of thousands behind glass and locks, all the injustice, unfairness and shoes – while the lads took chunks out of the military. (p.105)*

At age fourteen, with nothing to fear and nothing to go home to, Henry joins the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Even though the novel describes Henry as a very tough figure, his utter lack of fear indicates an emptiness within Henry. Later, when the British attacked the building; Henry, instead of aiming for the enemy, fired at the shop windows, claiming he was killing "all the snobbery and commerce he had been denied". Despite his disregard for the revolutionary cause itself, Henry's actions demonstrate a growing sense of social justice, illustrating his emotional growth.

> *She hadn't changed a bit; the five years had done no damage. But I'd changed, of course… Henry, the small, filthy boy who'd been a whopper for his age was now a man, and big for any age. My eyes were blue and fascinating whirlpools; they could suck in women while warning them to stay well away, a fighting combination that had them running at me. And I knew exactly what my eyes could do (p.108)*

> *I kept a tight watch on all the street corners and let Miss O'Shea make up my dreams for me. She was down there waiting for me, with a bowl of stew, slices of thick, warm brownbread or maybe even couple of chops. (p.110)*

A more important moment in Henry's evolution is his reunion with Miss O'Shea. Seeing her after five years makes Henry realise how much he has changed over the years, and while she looks the same, Henry has since grown into a tall and mature man, capable of attracting women with just his blue eyes. Suddenly, the emptiness that was within Henry disappears and is replaced by a feeling of belonging somewhere.

> *Into the darkness and nothing. I fell and the pain left me and, just before I hit the water, in the second it took to fall, I caught the sweet smell of my father's coat and I could feel his neck against my face as he held me to him, and I could hear Victor's excited and terrified breath from the other side of my father. (p.140)*

It was burnt black but still a leg. I'd spent the night, before arriving on Annie's step, roaming the rubble of Upper Sackville Street, searching for it. (p.142)

After the British forces overran the General Post Office and Henry was captured, he managed to escape through the underground canalisation, highlighting the similarity between Henry and his father. After the escape, Henry spends the night looking for his father's leg, which gets completely burnt. The burnt leg symbolises Henry's scarred identity after the Easter Rising and his refusal to let go of the ties of his past.

Before I went back to my bed that night I'd been sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the secret society at the centre of the centre of all things. I was Fenian. I was special, one of the few. And before the end of the week, by late Saturday afternoon, I'd murdered my first rozzer. (p.184)

I was on for it; I came from a line of cop killers. I'd been chased by them; I'd dived into underground rivers to get away from them. They were never people, the rozzers. And they were stupid too; seven hundred years of easy rule had made them lazy. (p.193)

Before meeting Jack Dalton in a bar, Henry was living an ordinary life with Annie, far away from all the political chaos. However, when they met, Dalton made Henry feel important and easily manipulated him back. Shortly after, Henry was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood by none other than Michael Collins. By the end of the week, he murdered his first rozzer and fully embraced his father's identity. This passage is one of the most crucial ones, as Henry embraces an identity similar to his father, slowly transforming into a person he hated.

I was Collins's anointed but, actually, I was excluded from everything. I was on a bike in the rain, all alone on the road. I was never one of the boys… There was no Henry Smart M.P. We were nameless and expendable, every bit as dead as the squaddies in France. We were decoys and patsies. We followed orders and murdered. (p.208)

Working as a hitman for Michael Collins for over three years, Henry dedicated most of his youth to the IRA. During this time, he murdered and trained soldiers to support the revolution. However, as time passed, he started feeling excluded and expendable, despite being labelled as an apostle by Collins. While the IRA was a significant factor in shaping Henry's identity, he no longer continued to feel the sense of belonging he used to have before.

– We should have shot her, said Rooney.
– She won't say anything, I said. – She'll be gone by the time they get there.
– Sleeping with an Englishman, he said. – For money,
– At least she wasn't doing it for nothing. How's your egg?
But I'd decided: my war was over. (p.288)

During his last mission, Henry spares a woman's life, and later, while he is debating with his comrades, he decides that his war is over. This decision, possibly influenced by

his growing exhaustion of all the violence, marks an important moment in Henry's journey, illustrating his desire for a new life.

> *There was no pretending now: I was a complete and utter fool, the biggest in the world. It had been niggling away at me for years but now I knew. Everything I'd done, every bullet and assassination, all the blood and brains, prison, the torture, the last four years and everything in them, everything had been done for Ivan and the other Ivans, the boys whose time had come*
> *That was Irish freedom, since Connolly had been shot – and if the British hadn't shot him one of the Ivans would have; Connolly would have been safely dead long before now. (p.318)*

After being caught by the British and later branded traitor by the IRA, Henry is forced to face the consequences of his actions. Despite having doubts for years, Henry finally confronts the truth of the situation and claims that everything he had done was foolish – from training "the Ivans" to carrying out the assassinations. With this realisation, Henry thinks about the violent situation in Ireland, admitting that his own actions contributed to the cycle of violence.

> *I came out of the water behind Kilmainham. Washed, cleaned. A beautiful morning, I felt myself drying even as I hauled myself onto the bank. I'd left the leg in the water… It was well away by now, out in the bay. And I'd be following it soon. p.340*

> *I'd start again. A new man. I had money to get me to Liverpool and suit that didn't fit. I had a wife I loved in jail and a daughter called Freedom I'd held only once. I didn't know where I was going. I didn't know if I'd get there.*
> *But I was still alive. I was twenty. I was Henry Smart. (p.342)*

After visiting Miss O'Shea in prison, Henry emerges from the water behind Kilmainham Prison. There he points out the beauty of the morning, possibly symbolising a new beginning, and lets the wooden leg float away, symbolising letting go of his identity, ready to start anew. At the end of the novel, he reflects on his new beginning and fully embraces the identity of Henry Smart before travelling to Liverpool.

The selected extracts illustrate Henry Smart's journey of identity during the Anglo-Irish War and the subsequent Irish Civil War. Born into the poverty of 20th-century Ireland, Henry's life takes a complete turn when he becomes involved in the revolutionary chaos. Initially, joining the IRA to find a sense of belonging, Henry fully commits to the cause when Jack Dalton manipulates him back. Suddenly, after multiple years of living alone, he finally feels like he belongs somewhere, oblivious to the fact the organisation is taking advantage of him. The turning point in his life comes when Henry realises that the people he trusted and believed in, used him only for their own

gain. At the end of the novel, when Henry admits that he had been a fool all this time, he decides to leave behind the violent world of the IRA and leaves Ireland to forge a new identity.

Using Henry's journey, Roddy Doyle skilfully illustrates the intricacies of being a young man in a revolutionary country, while also fictionally representing the struggles that many young people had faced in revolutionary Ireland. Although the reasons why individuals joined the cause may vary, their experiences could possibly be the same, especially for those without important ranks or titles. As the plot progresses, the similarity between Henry's search for identity and Irish independence becomes apparent. Doyle's presentation of his journey mirrors to some extent the collective struggle of the Irish people, as they sought to define themselves, just like Henry. Through Henry Smart's journey, Doyle masterfully explores the themes of identity, while also offering a detailed portrayal of Ireland during its journey for independence.

7. Main Motifs and Symbolism

7.1. *The Informer*

Throughout the narrative of *The Informer (1925)*, several motifs emerge, each with its own significance. These motifs, both major and minor, underscore the theme of betrayal and subsequent consequences. These all reappear as markers for important moments in the narrative and often illustrate the development of Gypo Nolan's state of mind.

One of the reappearing elements in *The Informer* is the motif of patriarchy, which significantly influences some of the characters' behaviour throughout the narrative. This is particularly evident in the relationships of Katie and Mary with their respective partners. Despite Katie's initial loyalty and support, Gypo betrays her trust by spending his money at Aunt Betty's brothel instead of repaying her for her generosity over many months. His actions highlight a sense of entitlement to dictate the terms of their relationship, illustrating patriarchal norms. Similarly, Mary's relationship with Gallagher further highlights these norms; even though her brother was recently murdered, Mary lacks any authority in deciding Gypo's fate. Gallagher's dominance over her decisions demonstrates how limited women's power was, even in matters directly affecting them. This disregard for Mary's wishes, as she opposes Gypo's execution, further underlines the patriarchy prevalent in Irish society, as reflected in the narrative, while also emphasising the theme of betrayal as Mary's desires are rejected in favour of male authority.

Another motif of the narrative revolves around the idea of respect within society. After Gypo's dismissal from the Revolutionary Organisation, which is not described in the novel but must be presumed, he was stripped of all respect he had possibly held before his discharge. Driven by his selfish motives and desire to reclaim the respect he once held, Gypo's actions lead to a path of betrayal. This motif is shown multiple times throughout the narrative, such as when Gypo buys food for the whole shop or spends the money at Aunt Betty's, highlighting his yearning to buy respect. In contrast to Gypo's desperate pursuit of respect, Commandant Gallagher's authority within the community is earned by his sense of duty and honour. Unlike Gypo, who attempts to regain respect by bribing people around him, Gallagher's authority and respect comes

from his willingness to make tough decisions for the organisation, even though they may be morally ambiguous. By comparing Gypo's desperate pursuit of respect and Gallagher's natural authority, the narrative points to two possible paths individuals may take to gain society's respect within society.

By using these motifs, including the patriarchal norms and the desire for respect, O'Flaherty enhances the themes of betrayal within the narrative of *The Informer*. These recurring elements, serving as markers in the psychological exploration of characters, portray the inner conflict these characters face in the revolutionary environment.

7.2. A Star Called Henry

Within the narrative of *A Star Called Henry (1999)*, several important motifs emerge, each with its own meaning and significance. The novel consists of a variety of recurring elements, which provide identity to characters during the Irish revolutionary period. Similar to *The Informer (1925)*, these motifs often mark the character development of the protagonist, while also reflecting the societal context of that time.

Like *The Informer*, patriarchy frames the plot. In the Smart family, the patriarchal impact of Henry's father is obvious, as only he ultimately determines what goes on. For instance, the deceased children are only referred to as the "Henrys" or "Victors," illustrating the prioritisation of male lineage. Later in the story, several significant female characters, such as Winnie Carney or Nancy O'Brien, are introduced in relation to their male counterparts, emphasising their secondary status. Despite their important contributions, these women are often portrayed as secondary figures. Using this motif, Doyle enhances the theme of identity, as the characters fight against the predefined gender norms.

Another motif that appears in both novels, the motif of respect and social aspiration, is particularly evident in Henry Smart's journey. Initially, born in poverty of Dublin, Henry lacks respect or recognition. However, as he becomes involved with the IRA and gains a more significant position within the organisation, Henry gains respect and recognition. Later in the story, Henry becomes wanted by the British forces, illustrating his increasing threat to their domination. Through Henry's progression from poverty and lack of acknowledgement to recognition and importance, Doyle brings Henry's

struggles for recognition to highlight the complexities of identity by means of this revolutionary effort.

The novel also presents several unusual symbols in the novel. One such is the wooden leg of Henry's father, which represents Henry's transformation from a son burdened by his father's violent legacy to a man who ultimately overcomes the vicious cycle of violence. The author uses the leg as a reminder of Henry's past, while also highlighting his desire to break free from this violent cycle by creating his own identity. The stars, representing Henry's deceased siblings, symbolise an unfulfilled life and feelings of inferiority. Initially, they serve as constant reminders of Henry's feelings of weakness and insignificance, but then disappear once Henry joins the IRA, symbolising a concrete sense of belonging. For the majority of the novel, the stars almost never appear, but once Henry begins to question his role in the violent revolution, they reappear once again, symbolising his sense of insignificance.

The River Liffey, which flows through Dublin, is used to highlight Henry's transformation throughout the novel. Initially, Henry utilizes the sewers and the river to escape after missions have been finished, much like his father, mirroring his violent legacy. However, as the plot progresses, the river evolves into a symbol of transformation for Henry. Near the end of the novel, Henry allows the river current to carry the wooden leg away, symbolising Henry breaking free from the burdens of his past and the possibility of a new beginning.

Using these motifs and symbols, Doyle highlights the theme of identity and gives different perspectives on the struggle for Irish identity. Whether through the portrayal of patriarchy, the pursuit of respect and social rise, or the symbolism of objects like the wooden leg or the River Liffey, Doyle enhances the plot with multiple perspectives. Through Henry's journey, Doyle expands upon the complexities of Irish nationalism and Irish identity, reflecting the struggle of many oppressed individuals.

8. Comparative Analysis

This chapter will compare and analyse Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer (1925)* and Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry (1999)*, with a focus on describing both the differences and similarities between these two novels. It will examine the narrative techniques, character development, thematic elements, and motifs of both novels. For each section, necessary extracts will be provided to illustrate how each of these authors uses these aspects to shape their narrative.

> *Gypo rested, exhausted, while he was being condemned to death. It was a dead rest, like the rest of a child in the womb before birth, sucking strength all round for the savage struggle with life that will soon commence… He was not afraid. No. He did not feel at all in the ordinary sense of the word. He was quite calm and collected about everything. The darkness consoled him. He felt at home in it. It concealed him.*

In *The Informer (1925)*, O'Flaherty explores the psychological complexity of the novel's protagonist by narrating his psychological decline. The narrative exhibits impressionistic features, focusing on the emotional state of the characters rather than the actual events. This impressionistic approach, illustrating Gypo's emotional state in detail throughout the novel, is prevalent in the narrative but traces of naturalism are also apparent. The characters are portrayed as products of their environment, influenced by societal pressures. This mix of impressionism and naturalism in the narrative enhances the portrayal of Gypo's inner conflict in the society of revolutionary Dublin.

> *The funeral was huge… The Volunteers took over the city. Wearing banned uniforms, carrying banned hurley, we marshalled the crowd and walked behind the coffin with thousands of mourners from all over the country.*

In *A Star Called Henry (1999)*, Doyle takes a different approach from O'Flaherty's impressionistic style. Instead of focusing on the psychological state of the individuals, Doyle's narrative pays great attention to historical accuracy and accurate portrayal of the societal mood during the events of revolutionary Ireland. The extract, portraying Thomas Ashe's funeral, illustrates the sociological approach that Doyle used in the narrative. Using this style, Doyle was able to narrate a story of a fictional character with historical accuracy, while providing insight into the societal changes of that era. Like O'Flaherty, Doyle portrays the protagonist of his novels as a product of his environment, emphasising naturalism. However, in comparison to O'Flaherty's impressionistic approach, Doyle focuses rather on the sociological aspect than the individual's emotional state.

He had killed the secretary of the local branch of the Farmers' Union during the labourers' strike at M—— in the previous October... The conductor of the train was a member of the Revolutionary Organization, to which McPhillip himself had belonged when he shot the Farmers' Union Secretary. (pp.5-6)

Another noteworthy difference between the novels lies in their portrayal of events and figures. O'Flaherty, unable to explicitly mention names or events, used indirect references in his novel. The extract highlights this, as O'Flaherty refers to the IRA as the Revolutionary Organization or uses dashes to conceal specific details. This approach reflects O'Flaherty's need to avoid possible trouble with publishing the novel.

Four gates away from his home, on his own street... It was late afternoon. Not a traditional killing time, but we were out to terrify the police. There were no safe times or sanctuaries... Smith was standing up. There was blood pouring off his coat to his feet and trousers. I ran back towards him and shot twice. (p.246)

In contrast, Doyle took a completely different approach as he was not restricted by the politics of his era. His novel features explicit references to historical events and figures, even referencing lesser-known figures and events. The extract narrates the assassination of Detective Sergeant Smith and illustrates Doyle's accurate approach of the events. While some of the details may be slightly altered to fit into the story, such as replacing characters with Henry, Doyle's narrative maintains historical authenticity in most of the cases.

While this may be a subtle aspect of individual narratives, in the overall context, the different approach of O'Flaherty and Doyle significantly contributes to the insight into the revolutionary period. O'Flaherty's inability to directly reference events or figures of that era illustrates the political climate and constraints of that time. Without being physically written in the novel, this provides a glimpse into the challenges faced by people living through that complex period. Together with Doyle's extensive directory of historical figures and events, these contrasting approaches provide an understanding of the socio-political landscape of revolutionary Ireland. As the overview is quite extensive, it will be put in its dedicated chapter following this comparative analysis.

Shut up yer gob," cried Gypo, "here's two pound for ye. That's enough. Not another word outa ye." He threw two pound notes at her. Then he threw out his arms. "Who's comin' to bed with me," he cried "before the bank is broke?" (p.101)

To illustrate Gypo's moral decay, O'Flaherty used the motif of money as a marker in Gypo's emotional descent. Throughout the novel, money appears whenever Gypo is confronted with moral dilemmas to illustrate his moral decline. By using this symbol,

O’Flaherty portrays Gypo’s ongoing struggle and highlights the themes of betrayal and consequences.

> *She was looking up at the wooden leg. I’d put it on the mantelpiece. It was burnt black but still a leg. I’d spent the night, roaming the rubble of Upper Sackville Street, searching for it… Annie hauled me up. She fought me, slapped my back my flaying arms and feet; she pulled me, held me tight with her arms and legs, tighter. (pp.142/143)*

Similar to O’Flaherty, Doyle uses the central motif as a marker in the protagonist’s character development. However, while O’Flaherty used the motif of money to highlight Gypo’s moral decay, Doyle used the wooden leg to underline important moments in shaping Henry’s identity. The extract describes Henry’s burnt leg and the trauma he was experiencing after the death of his friend during the Easter Rising evacuation.

Both authors use the central motif to mark their protagonists’ character development. While O’Flaherty uses the motif of money to symbolise Gypo’s moral decline, Doyle uses the wooden leg to highlight Henry’s transformation throughout the narrative. Even though these motifs serve different purposes in each novel, they share a common aspect of highlighting the decline or development of the characters.

> *Gypo descended the five steps to the streets at one bound. Then as his right foot landed on the pavement there was a rapid succession of shots. They came from all sides. Three of them entered his body. Gallagher was there in front of him, smiling dreamily now, with distant, melancholy eyes. (pp.180-181)*

Another important aspect of each narrative is the portrayal of violence. O’Flaherty’s writing style mirrors the sensitivity of the matter prevalent at that time, as his narrative portrays the violence without any praise or glorification and can be considered as a warning of the consequences of betrayal.

> *Before I went back to my bed that night I’d been sword into the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the secret society at the centre of the centre of all things. I was Fenian. I was special, one of the few. And before the end of the week, by late Saturday afternoon, I’d murdered my first rozzer. (p.184)*

In Doyle’s narrative, this portrayal of violence differs significantly, as it is often described as a necessary aspect of that era. The violence, particularly when it is directed against British forces or those seen as enemies of the Irish nation, is described as an appropriate and justified act. This contrasts with O’Flaherty’s more cautious approach, as his narrative uses violence to illustrate the treacherous environment of revolutionary Dublin rather than justifying it.

The way in which violence is shown in each book differs significantly and highlights the different perspectives of each author. O'Flaherty's cautious portrayal of the violence, focusing more on its consequences rather than justifying it, mirrors the sensitivity of the matter in his time. On the contrary, Doyle's portrayal of violence, while not glorifying it, emphasises its necessity, especially in the revolutionary environment. This contrast in approach reflects the freedom Doyle had in writing about violence in Ireland, without being constrained like O'Flaherty was.

By comparing these selected aspects of *The Informer (1925)* and *A Star Called Henry (1999)*, it becomes apparent that the period in which each novel was written heavily influences its narrative style, thematic development, and portrayal of historical events. In O'Flaherty's era, the sensitivity of the matter surrounding the Irish Revolution, where explicit references could lead to possible censorship, limited his narrative choices. The impressionistic style and psychological exploration highlight O'Flaherty's focus on internal conflict and moral dilemmas of his characters, rather than explicitly portraying the political climate of that era. In contrast to O'Flaherty's careful approach, Doyle's novel, written over seventy years after the events it portrays, offers a direct portrayal of historical events and figures. By using explicit references to historical events and figures, Doyle provides a comprehensive overview of the societal and political climate of that time.

8.1. Historical Figures and Events in Each Novel

Both *The Informer (1925)* and *A Star Called Henry (1999)* provide captivating insights into revolutionary Ireland, particularly during the Anglo-Irish War and the subsequent Civil War. However, the portrayal of the conflict differs significantly in each narrative.

In *The Informer (1925),* published during the Irish Civil War, Liam O'Flaherty could not explicitly mention names due to the sensitivity of the matter in Ireland. Even though he lived in London, the politics of that time required a cautious approach to avoid any potential trouble. Using fictional characters and names, such as the Irish Republican Army being referred to as the Revolutionary Organisation, O'Flaherty portrayed the situation in revolutionary Ireland without explicitly naming anyone. By

using this indirect approach, he was able to describe the treacherous environment of Ireland to write a psychological novel without provoking either of the parties or taking sides.

In *A Star Called Henry (1999),* published almost eighty years after the conflict, Roddy Doyle had much more freedom in his narrative as he was not restricted by the political situation nor by the Committee on Evil Literature (which banned some of O'Flaherty's novels). Unlike O'Flaherty, he could explicitly mention groups like the IRA or the Black and Tans and include a variety of long-dead real figures and events in his novel. Using the fictional protagonist Henry Smart, Doyle introduced an extensive selection of both major and minor figures and events of the period, which enhanced the authenticity of the novel's portrayal of revolutionary Ireland. Those figures and events will be listed in the order in which they were presented in the novel, with a brief description of each one.

A Sunday in June, 1897, when the Famine Queen, Victoria, was still our one and only. (p.7)

Queen Victoria is the first real-life figure and monarch mentioned in the novel. She is referred to as the "Famine Queen" due to her reign during the Great Famine. She donated 2,000 pounds to famine relief, yet her donation was notable mostly because it limited charitable assistance, as it was deemed inappropriate for foreign dignitaries to donate more than the queen.

God Bless Our King: the banner across the road explained to him. Edward VII was in town. Henry had forgotten: it was holiday... July, 1907. (pp.50-51)

King Edward VII's reign, particularly the end of it, is briefly noted in the narrative. The extract describes his visit to Ireland on July 10th and 11th, 1907, four days before the Irish Crown Jewels were stolen from the Dublin Castle.

And then Victor died. On the same day as the new king was crowned... I walked all over the city. Away from the main streets and bridges there were no flags, no banners. George V's coronation. And Dublin didn't care. (pp.80/82)

King George V is the last British monarch mentioned in the novel, and his reign lasts until the end of the novel. The extract describes the celebration of his coronation on July 22nd, 1911, on the main streets of Dublin, and how the rest of the city does not care.

A thing called Sinn Féin was mentioned. The name Carson was followed by curses or spitting. And Home Rule. It meant nothing to us who had no homes, but I listened and tried to understand. (p.70)

Sinn Féin, a political movement focused on gaining Irish Independence, is briefly noted in this extract, highlighting its growing presence in Irish society.

Edward Carson, an Irish Protestant unionist, and opponent of Home Rule is also briefly mentioned, with the extract noting that his name "was followed by curses or spitting" (p.70) – most likely due to his opposition to Home Rule and his role in securing a place for the six northern counties within the United Kingdom.

Home Rule, or self-government for Ireland within the United Kingdom, was meant to reverse the 1800 Act of Union which made Ireland part of the United Kingdom instead of a colony. However, the protagonist, Henry, lacks an understanding of the concept, claiming that it means nothing to those who have no homes.

> *The woman was holding a burning torch… The men held up a Union Jack.*
> *– It's a disgrace, said someone.*
> *– On today of all days.*
> *The rozzers had arrived but there wasn't much left for them.*
> *– It's the fuckin' Countess again, said one of them. (p.83-84)*

Countess Markievicz was the first woman elected to the British parliament, but she refused to take her seat, similarly to other Sinn Féin members elected. In this extract, she is attempting to burn the Union Jack before the arrival of the police, which was an actual protest that occurred in July 1911 during George V's visit to Ireland.

> *We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser. So said the message on the banner that had hung across the front of Liberty Hall… If I'd had my way, Or Anyone Else would have been added, instead of But Ireland. (p.91)*

We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser, But Ireland, was a statement written and displayed on a banner at Liberty Hall during the Easter Rising, rejecting both the British King and the German Kaiser.

> *I'd played The Last Post at the grave of O'Donovan Rossa the year before. The history books will tell you that it was William Oman but don't believe them: he was tucked up at home with the flu.*
> *We assembled in front of the Hall, the main noise now our feet finding position, until Willie Oman started his bugling. (pp.90/93)*

William Oman, a lesser-known figure in the Easter Rising, played at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, sounded the "fall-in" at Liberty Hall on Easter Monday morning 1916, and later fought with multiple units in the uprising.

Doyle replaced William Oman with Henry Smart at O'Donovan Rossa's funeral, claiming that Oman was ill that day, which annoyed William Oman's son, who later wrote a letter to Doyle. To this letter Doyle responded, saying that the Omans "were an interesting family, and you should write about them." (Oman, 2016)

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was a key figure in the Irish nationalist movement and is mostly known for the organisation of the first-ever bombings by Irish Republicans of English cities, which he planned from exile in New York, called the "dynamite campaign."

O'Donovan Rossa's funeral, briefly mentioned in the extract, was an important event in Irish history. The event brought together many Irish nationalists and Patrick Pearse gave his famous speech, inspiring determination among many.

> *The men were cheering the arrival of a car, a sparkling De Dion Bouton. I recognised the driver. It was The O'Rahilly, in the uniform of a Volunteer officer… The back of his car and the front seat beside him were packed with guns. (p.92)*

The O'Rahilly, whose full name was Michael Joseph O'Rahilly, was an important Irish nationalist and a founding member of the Irish Volunteers. He opposed the Easter Rising, knowing it would result in a loss, but ultimately participated due to his commitment to the Irish Volunteers. The extract describes his car as "packed with guns," illustrating the actual transport of supplies in O'Rahilly's car.

> *Connolly was on the steps now, and Pearse behind him, and other officers coming out of the Hall. A fine body of men: Clarke was there, as old and as frail as Ireland; MacDiarmada, left lopsided by polio, was leaning on his stick; Plunkett had his neck wrapped in bandages and looked like death congealing… Connolly was furious. He barked something over his shoulder. Collins barked at somebody else. Then we heard the order. (p.93)*

James Connolly, founder of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) and Irish Labour Party, was one of the leaders of the Easter Rising and a signatory of the Proclamation. He forced the Irish Volunteers to act by threatening to send ICA against the British empire alone. He was also interested in making Ireland a "people's republic."

Patrick Pearse, leader of the Easter Rising and a signatory of the Proclamation, was nominated as president of the Provisional Government during the rebellion. As a nominated president he read the Proclamation of The Irish Republic outside the General Post Office in Dublin in Irish and in English. He co-founded the Gaelic League, illegally teaching the Irish language throughout Ireland, along with Douglas Hyde, Ireland's future first president.

Tom Clarke was a key figure in the planning of the Easter Rising and the first signatory of the Proclamation. He was the man who used O'Donovan Rossa's funeral and Pearse's speech to mobilise the Irish Volunteers. In one of the final meetings before the Easter Rising, the leaders decided that Clarke's signature should be the first amongst

them, claiming that “he had done more than anyone else to bring about the rising.” (Quinn, 2012)

Seán MacDiarmada, the second signatory of the Proclamation and one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, played a crucial role in planning the rising together with Tom Clarke. Due to his disability – polio, mentioned in the extract, he was not involved in the fighting but stayed in the General Post Office with the rest of the leaders.

Joseph Plunkett, another leader of the Easter Rising and a signatory of the Proclamation, was stationed in the General Post Office but was not involved in the fighting due to his disability – tuberculosis, just like MacDiarmada.

Michael Collins, Joseph Plunkett’s military assistant during the rebellion, played a crucial role in the Easter Rising, despite his relatively low-ranking position. He proved to be a skilled tactician and was trusted with important tasks, such as acquiring weapons from England disguised as a Roman Catholic priest or managing communication. After the Easter Rising, Collins emerged as the most important figure in the Irish War of Independence.

> *Two hundred marching men, and Winnie Carney, Connolly’s secretary, with her huge typewriter in a case and a Webley revolver, almost as long as her leg, in her holster. (p.94)*

Winnie Carney, as Connolly’s secretary and assistant, was responsible for writing the mobilisation orders for the Irish Citizen Army. She fought with her typewriter and Webley revolver, as described in the extract, and was the first woman to enter the General Post Office during the Easter Rising. (Fallon, 2019)

> *“We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible… ” The men with me were hearing the Proclamation for the first time. I watched their faces as the words rolled up to them. I watched the pride and excitement. (p.96)*

Reading of The Proclamation of the Irish Republic was a crucial moment during the Easter Rising, as Patrick Pearse, nominated president of The Provisional Government, stood outside the General Post Office at 12:45 pm on Eastern Monday, April 24, 1916, and read the Proclamation together with names of all the signatories.

> *They drove their bullets into the dragoons – the Sixth Reserve Cavalry Regiment, from Marlborough Barracks, I found out a few years later when I (Henry Smart) was comforting one of the widows – and their fat, gleaming steads. By the time I was finished with the shop windows, there were horses, dead or twitching… and their riders were under them or hobbling and crawling away. (p.105)*

Sixth Reserve Cavalry Regiment, described in the extract, was a unit deployed by the British government to investigate a “disturbance” at Dublin Castle. (Byrne, 2007, p.

105) However, as they passed the General Post Office, they were shot at by the rebels, resulting in the deaths of four British soldiers, the first casualties of the Easter Rising.

> *There was a spark behind a window that could have been a rifle barrel… I was looking at it, waiting for it to become something definite, when the fireworks started… The kids had broken into Lawrence's toy and sports bazaar, and had released all the fireworks. (pp.112-113)*

Easter Rising Fireworks were set off by children who had broken into Lawrence's shop at 4:10 pm, three and a half hours after Pearse read the Proclamation. This put the stored explosives at the top of the building at risk of igniting, making the rebels nervous. Shortly after, Lawrence's shop was set on fire. (Hegarty & O'Toole, 2016)

> *We bit chunks out of the wall with seven-pound hammers and picks… There was nothing like fresh air any more… Wednesday rolled into Thursday: there was no night. The fires lit the sky and the air right up to our windows was red… And there were men in the basement, trying to dig under Henry Street and other men had been sent into the sewers.*
> *The word came up: Connoly had been shot. It stunned us. (pp.124-126)*

Easter Rising Evacuation occurred after the fires spread due to the bombardment, during which the rebels tunnelled through neighbouring buildings to evade enemy fire. James Connolly was wounded by shrapnel, O'Rahilly was shot during an escape, and Pearse ordered the surrender on Saturday.

> *On Wednesday morning, the 3rd of May, in Kilmainham Gaol, Pearse, Clarke and MacDonagh were taken out to the Stonebreakers' Yard and shot. (p.141)*
> *– Four more exee-cutions! Four more exee-cutions!*
> *Ned Daly, Plunkett, Michael O'Hanrahan and Willie Pearse. Into the pit with the other three, another blanket of quicklime. (p.142)*
> *– One more exee-cution! One more-exee-cution!*
> *John MacBride… (p.143)*
> *– Four more exee-cutions!*
> *Heuston, Mallin, Con Colber, Éamonn Ceannt… (p.144)*
> *On Friday morning, the 12th of May, James Connolly, a dying man in brand-new pyjamas, was brought from the hospital in Dublin Castle to the Stonebreakers' Yard in Kilmainham Gaol. He was tied to a chair and shot. MacDiarmada had been shot minutes before him, the last two bodies thrown into the pit. (p.147)*

Fourteen leaders of the Rising were executed after the surrender in a ten-day period between the 3rd and 12th of May. Seven signatories of the Proclamation, including Patrick Pearse, Tom Clarke, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Éamonn Ceannt, James Connolly, and Seán MacDiarmada, were executed by firing squad. Additionally, seven other prominent figures, mostly leaders, were also executed during this period, including Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan, William Pearse, John MacBride, Seán Heuston, Michael Mallin, and Con Colbert. The executions were seen

as a radical measure and an attack on Irish sovereignty, further gaining support for Irish nationalism amongst people.

> *Annie and I listened and, with the window open all that summer and autumn, all of Summerhill listened to John McCormack singing the same song – The little toy dog is covered with dust but sturdy and staunch he stands. (p.158)*

John McCormack, a famous Irish singer, is briefly mentioned in the novel as the protagonist listens to him singing "Little Boy Blue" by Eugene Field. He finished first in the most famous Irish music competition – Feis Ceoil (Festival of Music, which takes place to this day)

> *Frongoch and the other jails in England had been emptied of Irish rebels and Dublin was full of restless men, desperate to get back into action, still sweating and giddy after Easter Week. (p.180)*

Frongoch and other jails were emptied when David Lloyd George replaced H. H. Asquith as Prime Minister in late December 1916. (McGuffin, 1973, p. 28) By the end of the year, hundreds of men were released and amongst them were Michael Collins and Ernie O'Malley. According to Collins, the British government made a mistake by bringing that many rebels to one place, as Frongoch was the place where the tactics for the Irish War of Independence were first discussed

> *Ernie O'Malley was the speaker this time. He was several cuts above the other young lads. I liked him. There was an intelligence about him, a twist to the lines on his forehead that impressed me. (p.181)*

Ernie O'Malley became concerned about Irish politics after his involvement in the Easter Rising. Later, he joined Irish Volunteers and became an Irish Republican Army training officer. During the Civil War, he sided with De Valera's anti-treaty forces, opposing the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

> *A protest meeting, proscribed, as we'd hoped it would be. Beresford Place, in front of the ruins of Liberty Hall. We were demanding prisoner-of-war status for the remaining Easter Week prisoners in Lewes Gaol. Things got ugly – we made sure they did... I took a running swing at a Castle rozzer with my father's leg. The papers the day after said it was a hurley. (p.185)*

The Liberty Hall protest on June 10, 1917, where George Noble Plunkett, father of Joseph Plunkett, gave a speech to a crowd of over a thousand Sinn Féin supporters, was dispersed by police. As the speakers were taken away, inspector John Mills was hit in the back of his head by a hurling stick. The novel claims it was the protagonist with his father's wooden leg, even addressing the newspaper article.

> *Then Thomas Ashe died... with Ashe in the lead, they went on hunger strike. Ashe was pulled out of his cell and force-fed. He was strapped to a chair and an eighteen-inch rubber*

tube was shoved down his throat… Nausea, vomiting, internal bleeding. By the end of the day he was dead. (p.189)
The funeral was huge. "Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord. For Ireland is weak with tears." The Volunteers took over the city. Wearing banned uniforms, carrying banned hurleys… thousands of mourners from all over the country, de Valera in the lead in his new uniform and the Countess leading what was left of the Citizen Army. (p.191)

Thomas Ashe, a founding member of the Irish Volunteers and a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, held a hunger strike starting on September 20, 1917, demanding a prisoner of war status during his imprisonment at Mountjoy Prison. Five days later, he was taken away and force-fed, causing internal bleeding and resulting in a death few hours later.

Ashe's funeral, held on September 30, 1917, was a significant event in Irish history as it provided major propaganda for the nationalists. Tens of thousands of people came from all over the country to mourn Ashe's death, and demonstrations occurred throughout the country. The extract mentions "Let Me Carry Your Cross For Ireland, Lord," which was a poem written by Ashe, of which thousands of copies were distributed across the country during his funeral.

Collins's own cousin, Nancy O'Brien, had a job in the Castle; her duties included filing the secret-coded messages of the Under-Secretary, Sir James MacMahon. Another cousin, Pearce Beaslai's, a woman called Lily Merlin, worked behind the walls as a typist. A couple of times a week she got the tram from work to the top of Clonliffe Road… She typed verbatim what she'd typed throughout the day, and left. And I gathered the pages and brought them to Collins or Jack. (p.193)

Nancy O'Brien was one of Michael Collins' spies in Dublin Castle. She was James MacMahon's secretary appointed to decode messages sent to Dublin Castle due to her dedication and lack of interest in politics. However, she was a second cousin of Michael Collins, and each day, she passed any information acquired to the Irish Republican Army. (Fitzgerald, 1997)

Elizabeth "Lily" Merlin, another of Collins' spies in Dublin Castle, played a crucial role in Bloody Sunday (November 21, 1920), as she provided addresses of the British intelligence officers who were later killed on Collins' order.

The Great War finally ended but not before the British did us another favour and tried to bring in conscription. The country was packed with able young men unwilling to die for the King… and they voted for Sinn Féin. De Valera, Griffith and most of the other leading lights had been arrested again. Forty-seven of the candidates were in jail on polling day. "Release the Prisoners, Release Ireland". Sinn Féin had very quickly become respectable. (p.207)

Leaders of Sinn Féin were arrested on May 17, 1918, including Éamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith – the founder of the Sinn Féin, due to British government claims

that they were involved in weapon importing from Germany. Despite these arrests, forty-seven of the Sinn Féin candidates were elected from jail.

> *Sinn Féin fought the election on the promise that they would abstain from taking their seats at Westminster… Instead, they met in the Mansion House on the 21st of January, 1919 and formed Dáil Éireann, the first parliament of the Irish Republic. (p.209)*
> *What a day that was. In Dublin, the foundation of the Irish State and in Soloheadbeg the murder of two poor peelers, the first official killing of the War of Independence. Two huge events and I missed both of them. (p.210)*

Dáil Éireann, or First Dáil was the first Irish parliament formed on January 21, 1919. The elected Sinn Féin candidates refused to take their seats in the House of Commons in Westminster, where they had to pledge allegiance to the English King, and instead, they met in the Mansion House in Dublin. The extract mentions "Irish State," which existed in name only and held no actual power. Michael Collins did not like this "theatre of De Valera playing government" and wanted the British out by force, resulting in an actual Irish State.

The Soloheadbeg ambush occurred on the same day as the formation of the Dáil Éireann in Tipperary County, where rebels ambushed two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) officers, stealing a cart with gelignite. These two events are considered by historians as the beginning of the Irish War of Independence.

> *Seamus Robinson and Tim Crowe, Paddy O'Dwyer… They lay in ambush for five days, the men I'd trained and the others with them, including the one who lived long enough to write the book and so became the man who fired the first shot for Irish freedom. They waited, although they went to Dan Breen's mother's house each night… And on the fifth day the peelers arrived with the cart and they shot them, Constables McDonnell and O'Connell, two local men… and they took the cart and then nearly killed themselves and half of Tipperary by driving the springles cart loaded with a hundredweight of frozen gelignite over a rough road made of loose stones and holes. (p.211)*

Seamus Robinson, Tim Crowe, and Paddy O'Dwyer, with other men, are claimed to be responsible for the Soloheadbeg ambush in the novel. The party consisted of eight men in total and was led by Seamus Robinson without the formal approval of Sinn Féin. It is believed that Seán Treacy, not mentioned in the novel, fired the first shot (Flynn, 1997). However, the extract mentions *"a man who lived long enough to write the book and so became the man who fired the first shot for Irish freedom,"* which is likely a reference to Dan Breen's *My Fight for Irish Freedom (1924)*, as he was involved in the ambush as well.

> *And he was escorted into the centre of Dublin Castle by Ned Broy and spent hours reading fat files in their treasury of secrets and bad business. He read his own file: "He comes of a brainy Cork family." (p.229)*

Eamon "Ned" Broy, mentioned in the extract, was one of Michael Collin's double agents working in Dublin Castle. He copied secret files for Collins, even smuggling him into the castle, giving Collins access to the most sensitive files, including his own.

> *I was one of the Squad, one of the secret elite. An assassin. There were nine of us, then twelve, and we became the Twelve Apostles and the name stuck even when, with deaths, arrests and executions, there were less and more than twelve of us.*
> *I was with Collins now. He was sharing himself with me – I was one of the chosen – sharing his time, risking his security, in return for which I was going to kill Detective Sergeant Smith of the G Division. (p.240)*

The Squad, also known as the Twelve Apostles, was a group organised by Michael Collins to carry out assassinations and gather intelligence during the Irish War of Independence. Under the direct orders of Michael Collins, they played a significant role in damaging British intelligence in Ireland.

Detective Sergeant Patrick Smith, mentioned in the extract, was the first G-Man to be assassinated by The Squad on July 30, 1919, near his home in Dublin.

> *They were the Black and Tans, the mercenaries Jack had warned me about in January. The sweepings of England's jails, he'd called them in the Irish Bulletin… What they actually were was veterans who'd been unable to get work in England and Scotland after the War and who'd now been promised good money, ten shillings a day, to sort out Ireland. (p.258)*
> *They murdered priests and mayors… Fermoy, Balbriggan, Templemore, Cork, Granard – they burnt them all – Mallow, Milltown Malbay, Fermoy again. They corked their faces and went berserk. They took people from houses and shot them. They shot children. They shot livestock. With the secret blessing of their government. (p.263)*

Black and Tans were infamous for their brutality on Irish civilians and consisted mainly of unemployed British veterans of World War I, totalling approximately 10,000 recruits. They were sent to Ireland to suppress the Irish Republican Army and to maintain control. The extract suggests that they were recruited from jails, which was a popular claim in Ireland at that time. However, a criminal record would disqualify one from working as a policeman (Augusteijn, 2013).

The reprisal burnings, carried out by the Black and Tans and the Auxiliary Division, were one of the most brutal acts of the Irish War of Independence. The reprisals involved looting and burning of civilian homes as an act of vengeance. The extract notes burned cities and mentions a murdered mayor, which was possibly the mayor of Cork, Tomás Mac Curtain, and a murdered priest, possibly Michael Griffin from Galway City.

> *They were the Auxiliary Cadets. The Auxies. All former officers and sergeants, they came from the same bitter world as the Black and Tans, but they were paid more, a quid a day, and they uniforms were more complete and army-like. (p.274)*

The Auxiliary Division, known as the Auxiliaries or Auxies, mostly consisted of former British officers. They were a counter-insurgency unit and were better trained, equipped, and paid than the Black and Tans. Nevertheless, they were just as infamous for their brutal actions as the Black and Tans.

> *Sunday morning, the 21st of November, 1920. Five minutes after nine o'clock… I fired. One bullet into the chest of the dead man… In other rooms, in other parts of the city, in houses on Baggot Street, Lower Mount Street, Earlsfort Terrace, Morehampton Road, upstairs in another room of this hotel, the Gresham, there were men lying dead, on beds, landings, in gardens. Thirteen of them. Secret service agents. Members of the Cairo Gang. (p.286)*

Bloody Sunday, on November 21, 1920, was a day on which fourteen members of the British intelligence agents, known as the Cairo Gang, were murdered on Michael Collins' order by his Squad. As an act of vengeance, left unmentioned in the novel, British forces opened fire on civilians at a football match in Croke Park. Using armoured cars, they killed fourteen civilians.

> *Collins's men in the Castle, Nelligan and MacNamara, found the names of the men with curfew passes. Waiters, maids, hotel porters were courted and interviewed… Names were added to names. They were examined, tested, found spot-on or off the mark. And, the night before this Sunday, they were divided amongst us, Collins's Squad. My Black and Tans, he called us. (p.287)*

David Neligan and James McNamara were another of Michael Collins' spies in Dublin Castle. After Ned Broy and James McNamara were dismissed in 1921, David Nelligan, a former policeman, was ordered by Collins to let himself be recruited into the British Military Intelligence – MI5. There he memorised the identities of British agents, passing all the names to Collins.

> *They tied my hands to a steel bar that ran across the top of the lorry. One of them picked up a piece of board from under the bench. There was a piece of string looped to it. He put it around my neck.*
> *– Can you read it, Pat?*
> *Bomb us now*
> *– You're our insurance, mate, he said – They won't kill one of their own. Nothing personal. (p.301)*

"Bomb us now" signs were used by the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) by the end of January 1921. The RIC would use prisoners to stop grenade attacks on them during their patrols, with signs saying, "Bomb us now." However, this was discontinued when foreign journalists in the city reported it. (McCormack, 2021)

> *Kevin Barry had been executed. Terence MacSwiney had died in Brixton Gaol after refusing food for seventy-four days… Rory O'Connor had taken the war to England and set fire to warehouses on the Liverpool docks…Tom Barry and the West Cork Flying Column*

ambushed and killed seventeen Auxiliary Cadets… Lloyd George wouldn't talk to de Valera until the I.R.A had handed in its weapons. (pp.310-311)

Kevin Barry, an Irish Republican Army soldier, was executed at the age of eighteen on November 1, 1920. His execution, the first since the execution of the 1916 rising leaders, drew international attention, with pleas for clemency from the Vatican and the American government (O'Dowd, 2017).

Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, and a member of the First Dáil, held a hunger strike for seventy-four days while he was imprisoned in Cork and Brixton prison, resulting in a coma and death five days later. His death occurred days before Kevin Barry's execution, and the timing of these two events resulted in international attention.

Rory O'Connor, Director of Engineering for the IRA, and a member of the anti-treaty IRA, is briefly mentioned when he sets fire to warehouses on the Liverpool docks on November 28, 1920.

Tom Barry, leader of the West Cork flying column (small and mobile unit), is mentioned in the extract during the Kilmichael ambush, where his group killed multiple members of the Auxiliary Division. This event occurred on November 28, 1920, and as a response, British forces burned parts of Cork.

And Ireland wasn't the only colony giving lip; badly needed troops were taken from Macroom and Athlone and sent off to other cranky places: India, Egypt, Jamaica. Martial law was extended to Wexford, Waterford, Clare and Kilkenny. (p.311)

The protests in other British colonies during the early 20th century, such as the 1919 Egyptian Revolution or the non-cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in India, reflect the developing sense of anti-colonialism in British colonies.

The truce was on the way but there were scores to be settled in the last days and hours of the war, final points to be made, victories to be claimed… July came, and the Truce. The I.R.A were the police now and, respectable citizen that they'd been waiting to be. (pp.323/328)

The Truce agreed upon in mid-July 1921, set the stage for negotiations between Britain and Ireland. However, fighting continued even after its agreement. When the Anglo-Irish treaty (which was not mentioned in the novel) was signed, resulting in the establishment of the Irish Free State, Éamon de Valera resigned from Sinn Féin, and the Civil War between pro-treaty and anti-treaty forces began shortly after.

The Civil War was over in Dublin. Sackville Street was now O'Connell Street and it was rubble all over again. (p.331)

Sackville Street was renamed O'Connell Street in 1924, in honour of Daniel O'Connell, and is the last historical event mentioned in the novel.

This extensive overview covers historical events and figures presented in *A Star Called Henry (1999)*. From the Easter Rising of 1916 to the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, the novel introduces well-known leaders like Michael Collins or Éamon de Valera, as well as lesser-known figures who were not involved in the rebellion, such as John McCormack, the Irish singer. While the chronological order of the events may not be completely accurate, such as the novel putting the burning of Cork in December 1920 before Bloody Sunday in November 1920, it provides an insight into the chaotic times of revolutionary Ireland.

Given the fact that Roddy Doyle wrote *A Star Called Henry (1999)* nearly seventy years after the conflict it portrays, he explicitly mentions historical figures and events from this era. This direct approach allowed him to narrate a comprehensive and realistic depiction of the Irish War of Independence and Civil War through the journey of a fictional character.

Unlike Doyle, O'Flaherty faced several limitations when writing *The Informer (1925)*. As a firsthand witness of those events, he could not directly mention certain names and events due to the risk of censorship or possible consequences. Instead, he chose an indirect approach, exploring the psychological impacts of revolution, without mentioning names. Through subtle references and hidden meanings, such as comparing Gypo to Judas, O'Flaherty illustrated the period with an allegorical approach. While O'Flaherty's portrayal of the events and figures may not be historically specific, the atmosphere of the revolutionary environment is accurately captured.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis introduced and analysed two significant examples of Irish historical fiction set during the Anglo-Irish War and the subsequent Irish Civil War: *The Informer (1925)* by Liam O'Flaherty and *A Star Called Henry (1999)* by Roddy Doyle. Through examination of these two novels, the thesis explored and described how fiction interacts with reality and how historical events are interpreted within the narratives.

The study reveals that both novels offer unique interpretations of historical reality, with each providing a distinctive perspective. In *The Informer,* the narrative illustrates the moral dilemmas and psychological challenges of revolutionary Dublin: betrayal was more common than ever, and allegiances were often tested. O'Flaherty's careful writing approach mirrors the political climate of his time, where potential censorship compelled authors to craft their narratives with caution. In contrast, Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* offers a fairly different perspective, even though it portrays a similar period in Irish history. Free from the limitations of censorship, Doyle's narrative offers a more comprehensive portrayal of the era. Instead of focusing solely on the psychological complexities of characters, Doyle's narrative presents an authentic depiction of historical events.

Additionally, analysis of the literary aspects of this study reveals how both authors skilfully use symbols and motifs to enrich the themes explored in their narratives, highlighting themes as identity, as portrayed in *A Star Called Henry*, and betrayal, as depicted in *The Informer*. However, these themes are not specific for each novel and reappear in various forms in both works, showing how prevalent betrayal was and the yearning for identity during this period. Furthermore, both novels exhibit elements of naturalism, portraying the characters in a never-ending fight against external forces in society.

By comparing these aspects, the complicated relationship between political climate and narrative expression becomes evident, particularly when focusing on the opposite approaches of O'Flaherty and Doyle. The importance of this difference lies in authors of different eras adapting to the political situation in which they write. This provides further understanding of the relationship between the politics of censorship and

narrative freedom, enriching the understanding of both the history and politics of revolutionary Ireland. Despite these differences, both authors employ similar methods in their narratives, such as a notable emphasis on naturalism.

In summary, the analysis of *The Informer (1925)* by Liam O'Flaherty and *A Star Called Henry (1999)* by Roddy Doyle illustrates the complexity of Irish history and Irish historical fiction. By comparing the differences and similarities between *The Informer* and *A Star Called Henry*, the political climate influenced each author differently, thereby having an impact on their respective narratives. O'Flaherty, careful to avoid potential censorship, crafted a narrative that explores the psychological aspects of revolution, rather than focusing on an accurate description of the events. This contrasts with Doyle's narrative, where the depiction of historical events and figures is open and historically accurate, reflecting his freedom from censorship. Through these distinct approaches, both authors contribute to the overall understanding of Irish history, highlighting the impact of the political climate on the accurate portrayal of historical events.

10. Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo představit a analyzovat dva významné příklady irské historické fikce: *The Informer (1925)* od Liama O'Flahertyho a *A Star Called Henry (1999)* od Roddyho Doyla, které jsou zasazeny do doby anglo-irské války a následné irské občanské války. Zkoumáním těchto dvou historických románu práce vysvětluje a popisuje, jak jsou historické události interpretovány v jednotlivých dílech a jak se realita promítá do fikce.

Oba romány představují různé perspektivy na historické události: *The Informer* zkoumá morální dilemata a psychologické aspekty revolučního Dublinu s ohledem na dobovou politickou cenzuru, zatímco *A Star Called Henry* se zaměřuje na autentické vyobrazení historických událostí bez politických omezení. Tímto se O'Flahertyho román stává jakýmsi výpovědním dokumentem doby, kde autentičnost často ustupovala před možnou cenzurou, zatímco Doyleův přístup nabízí nezkreslený pohled na historii bez jakýkoliv omezení, což umožňuje hlubší porozumění těchto událostí a jejich kontextu. Společně ukazují, jak autorův styl psaní odráží jejich schopnost se volně vyjádřit, přičemž jedno dílo zohledňuje dobové politické klima, zatímco druhé je volné od těchto omezení.

Dále se práce zaměřila na analýzu literárních aspektů těchto románů a odhalila, jak oba autoři využívají symboly a motivy k zesílení témat, jako je například identita v *A Star Called Henry* nebo zrada v *The Informer*. Tyto motivy se objevují v různých podobách v obou dílech, což ukazuje, jak běžná byla zrada a touha po identitě v této době. Navíc oba romány odrážejí prvky naturalismu, ve kterých jsou postavy zachyceny v nezkreslené realitě v boji proti vnějším silám společnosti.

Porovnáním těchto aspektů je patrný vztah mezi politickým klimatem a svobodou projevu umělců, zejména pokud se zaměříme na opačné přístupy O'Flahertyho a Doyla. Rozdílnost těchto románů poskytuje další porozumění vztahu mezi politickou cenzurou a svobodou projevu, obohacující pochopení jak politiky, tak historie revolučního Irska. Navzdory tomu, že autoři popisují ve svých knihách stejné období a používají podobné vyprávěcí metody, jako je například výrazný důraz na naturalismus, jejich odlišné

přístupy přináší nové perspektivy a hloubku pochopení politického a historického kontextu revolučního Irska.

Prostřednictvím analýzy těchto dvou románů: *The Informer* od Liama O'Flahertyho a *A Star Called Henry* od Roddyho Doyla, práce přináší hlubší vhled do irské historie a její literární intepretace. Porovnáním těchto děl zjistíme, že politické prostředí ovlivnilo každého autora odlišně a promítlo se do jejich vyprávění. O'Flaherty, opatrný kvůli možné cenzuře, se zaměřuje na psychologické aspekty revoluce, zatímco Doyle se věnuje přesnějšímu zobrazení historických událostí. Tento odlišný přístup obou autorů přispívá k dalšímu porozumění o irské historii a zdůrazňuje vliv politického prostředí na schopnost přesně zobrazit historickou dobu.

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