『제임스조이스저널』
제29권 2호(2023년 12월) 55-82
http://dx.doi.org/10.46258/jjj.2023.29-2.55

A Star Called Henry: A Historical Novel for Irish Socialism

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I. Introduction

In *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, in 1910, James Connolly defended socialism against Father Kane who denigrated "the essential principle of Socialism" (Connolly, *Selected Writings* 68) vindicating the common ownership of national wealth: Connolly argued for socialism teaching that "since the break-up of common ownership . . . all human history has turned around the struggle of contending classes in society" in which one class makes the other class their "chattel slaves" (Connolly, *Selected Writings* 70). Refuting Pope Leo XIII's perception of socialists as doctrinaires attempting to "destroy private property" (78), Connolly further argued that socialists oppose not any man's right to possess "what he has earned" but any man's being deprived of what he has earned by "an idle class" (79). Connolly was one of the founding

fathers of Irish socialism, who led the 1913 Dublin Lockout and the 1916 Easter Rising. In an Irish condition, yet, Irish socialism has been stunted since Connolly by the political, cultural power of Catholic nationalism. The predominance of Catholic population has spawned the social milieu of clientelism giving rise to political conservatism. Ellen Hazelkorn says, since 1922, "Labor and socialist groups and parties have subsequently been buried beneath the populism of the dominant bourgeois parties" (139), while they have been increasingly incumbent upon bourgeois nationalism.

A Star Called Henry is Roddy Doyle's fiction reproducing the revolutionary period of 1913-1922 in which Irish republican nationalism sprouted into the movement of national independence. This novel is a historical novel in which events of historical magnitude such as the Dublin Lockout, the Easter Rising, and the War of Irish Independence are recounted. But *A Star Called Henry* is a historical narrative making a history into a myth. That is to say, the prodigious Henry Smart has been associated with the Celtic legendry hero, Cuchulain (Dawson 169; Agudo 131; Lanters 245). The mythical aspects of Henry have further been supported by the fact that, in the Easter Rising, the Irish intelligentsia made their rebellion into a Celtic make-believe: some of the Irish rebels like Padráic Pearse were poets who conjured up the Celtic warriors into their rebellion. Critics have approached the fantastic Henry by two contrary views. On the one hand, the mythical power of Henry is the means for undercutting in a facetious way the authenticity of an idealized nationalism, the "narrative of self-identity" (Lanters 250) that generates "blind patriotism" (Agudo 131) and "romantic nationalism" (Dawson 179). It is to question "the accepted view of Irish history by parodying the official version of it" (Lanters 246). On the other hand, the parodic power of Henry is no more than that of an "imposter" (Lanters 252), merely mythicizing the historical events. In *A Star Called Henry*, yet, a

remarkable thing is that his fantastic aspects recontextualize bourgeois nationalism through creating the verisimilitude of an Irish working-class experience. There is no enough ground for such an argument that "Henry's interest in the poor and working class" is merely "skin deep" (Lanters 256). If Doyle makes the bourgeois nationalism a provisional history in pluralism of histories, say, he is debunking what Frederick Engels perceived as bourgeois consciousness in writing history: "The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, hence also the writing of history. It is part of its being, of its condition for existence, to falsify all goods: it falsified the writing of history" (Marx and Engels, *Ireland* 304).

This paper is making a critical account of the inverse proportion between social revolution and national independence which is centered on Henry's dilemma from his proletarian position. Three regards concerning that are explored in the following lines. First, Doyle deliberately makes Henry a working-class hero, resembling any superhuman being in a legend or folktale, whose heroic feats and gigantic figure are portrayed at a mythical level. Henry is, in a fantastic way, the aggrandizement of a supraliminal truth disclosing the proletarian emotional intensity never represented in totalizing myths of bourgeois historiographies. Secondly, the verisimilitude of Henry's proletarian anger against the bourgeoisie is grounded in his relationship with James Connolly, however fictional it is, whose writings *A Star Called Henry* calls into attention about the Irish socialism as contradicted by the Catholic and bourgeois nationalism. Thirdly, Henry represents the affective power of the multitude creatively being disillusioned with any nationalism when it takes the form of its capitalist association and being awakened to the possibility of a proletarian nationalism not contradicting the common interest of workers at the international level, the proletarian nationalism that decenters the national narrowness of the Catholic nationalism exploited by the Irish bourgeoisie.

II. Myth and History
—*A Star Called Henry* as a Fictionalized History

One of the remarkable things in reading *A Star Called Henry* is Doyle's fictionalization of Irish history. He creates Henry Smith, anybody from the Irish working class, and makes him go through the turbulent periods of the early twentieth century. Tampering with histories so that they can be refashioned in fictionalized stories about Henry and his family, strikingly, Doyle makes him into a modern hero from Irish poverty. In description of Henry's birth, for example, a mock-epic style makes Henry elevated into a legendary figure whose creation takes a superhuman scale, as contrasted with the dire condition of his parents—his mother from "the Dublin slums" (5) and his "maggoty drunk" father "missing his leg" (3):

> 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 newspapers.
> —They say that he was born with the teeth already in his head.
> —She has to use the blanket off the bed for his nappy.
> —A woman seen him said he has enough meat on him to make triplets.
> The local oul' ones all queued up, across the landing, down the stairs, out onto the street, to have a dekko at me. The stairs groaned and threatened to cave in but the prospect of falling into the black well and the waiting rats below wouldn't budge the oul' ones. They had to see the famous baby. It wasn't the weight of me they wanted to see – big brats were ten a penny, and cheaper – it was the glow. I was the Glowing Baby. (22)

For Henry, Dublin is set as a wild land, full of "the action, the noise and smells" he "gobble[s] . . . all up, . . .starving for more" (45). The superhuman greatness of Henry is made much more absurd by his destitute condition "in the rags and scarcity, dirt and weakness" (45). Henry's namesakes, Henry's

dead brothers, tell high infantile mortality in the Dublin slum. A bleak picture of the Dublin slum, which shows vividly the reality of the necessitous Dubliners at the turn of the century, is delineated to the degree in which Henry's superhuman quality is felt more extravagant: "Houses bending towards each other . . . and ready to topple. Flaking brick and rotten wood; a good wind or a push would bring them down. . . . they could see the houses dying. . . . Three houses and eighty-seven people" (13).

Henry's birth and his extraordinary personage in imitation of a legendary prodigy are the parody of a creation myth. Just as Jesus Christ's glorious birth is consecrated by the three wisemen, Henry is in his birth glorified not less than the Holy Son's is. It is supposed that, in making Henry clothed in mythical touches, Doyle utilizes the narrative power of myth making human (or social) experience to be grasped on a higher intellectual level. Roger Grainger takes myth as "a transcendent story" (351) playing out the "epistemic jump" "to promote understanding of a transcendent truthfulness" (352). Grainger further details what myth is like:

> [It is myth] which transcends and at the same time validates history by using a temporal sequence to communicate eternal truth. The impulse to do this proceeds, not from a particular meaning, but from the idea or awareness of meaning itself; the *possibility* of meaning. Myth is the expression of a supraliminal truthfulness which takes precedence over other kinds of truth at the same time as finding expression and historical location in them, substituting its own narrative contingency for that of ordinary events and appearances. (352)

Grainger's theory of myth is a valid ground for expounding Henry's superhuman aspects, which are shown to be so ahistorical, but the historical implications of which are suggested in their metarepresentational meanings.

Henry is himself "a supraliminal truthfulness," transcending an accepted history to signify the "eternal truth" of the working-class experience. One of the unwritten working-class sentiments is perhaps Henry's blasphemous uproar, "Fuck off" (Doyle 51), towards King Edward VII in the procession through downtown Dublin in 1907 at his visit to Ireland when Henry was a five-year-old boy. Henry roars "Fuck off," as he tries to get a fine view of the King and Queen moving through the crowd on the lamppost Victor, his younger brother, on his shoulder and he are clinging to. Henry's "Fuck off" never means Irish patriotism or nationalism: "Why had I told the King of Great Britain and Ireland to fuck off? Was I a tiny Fenian? A Sinn Feiner? Not at all. I didn't know I was Irish" (52). Henry directs his anger, "Fuck off," against the wealth of the English King, not like himself, who is excruciated by poverty: "I was angry. He didn't belong. I looked at his carriage and thought of the cart that had carried us from house to house to basement" (52).

Henry's extrasensory perception is another example of his supernatural power. Henry is portrayed to have unusual sensations about the flowing of subterranean water, which, be it unseen, he feels, and the being of which always enthralls him. After "an unconditional surrender" (Doyle 135) by the G.O.P rebels, for example, as one of the surrendering rebels, Henry is taken to Richmond Barracks, the make-shift prison in history for having accommodated over 3,000 suspected rebels in the aftermath of the Easter Rising before they were sentenced. When asked about his name there by a G-man, who identifies Henry despite his masquerading as "O'Linn," Henry suddenly feels water, as he is irresistibly drawn to the water running through the underground waterway for sewage under Richmond Barracks: "Under me. Running under the barracks. And it was dragging me. Every bone I owned was bending towards it, quivering, promising to snap if I didn't move" (139).

The moving power of the subterranean water impels Henry to keep in movement, in the way of giving Henry a great pain when he is "there without moving" (139) in stopping to remove a manhole cover, so that he can escape into the underground waterway leading to the Camac River.

Movement is a prime attribute of water, the movement symbolism of which to be associated with social revolution, when it is considered that the word 'revolution,' which signifies '"a complete overthrow of the established government . . . by those who were previously subject to it" (*Oxford English Dictionary*), connotes "the action, on the part of a thing or person, of . . . moving round" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, Friedrich Engels deplored the working class's impossibility into rising to the middle class. He implies in a notable way that the immovable station of the working class is a spur for creating the impulse of laborers for social revolution:

> . . . now, when master artificers were crowded out by manufacturers, when large capital had become necessary for carrying on work independently, the working class became, for the first time, an integral, permanent class of the population, whereas it had formerly often been merely a transition leading to the bourgeoisie. Now he who was born toil, had no other prospect than that of remaining a toiler all his life. Now, for the first time, therefore, the proletariat was in a position to undertake an independent movement. (13)

Henry's flight from Richmond Barracks by the means of the moving water represents his revolutionary impulse against the fetters of the English imperialists or the Irish-imperial bourgeoisie taking advantage of Irish nationalism. The sublimation of Henry into a man having a superhuman sense of the moving water accounts for Grainger's view of myth as going beyond

ideation. As a myth, to say in terms of Grainger, Henry is from the imaginative dramatization of "events necessarily [set] . . . at a distance from the literal" "on the logic of dissimilarity" (352) "to entertain the reality of the feelings" (353). The mythical magnetism of water towards Henry is part of retranslating of historical experience into "another code of human communication" (356) in which the agitated state of the proletariat into moving upward is exhibited.

As shown by Henry's mythical aspects, his affective power is in friction with the intellectual regime of the bourgeois polity. His proletarian position questions the bourgeois domination in historiographies. In the midst of the 1918 Irish general election, Henry feels that he is an active player in "shaping the fate of" (208) Ireland. His complacency is, yet, undermined by his later owning of his futility in building up a new nation: "I was one of Collins's anointed but, actually, I was excluded from everything" (208). Henry further describes a working-class man as nobody, whose voice is never represented in Irish politics: "There was no Henry Smart M.P." . . . "And none of the other men of the slums and hovels ever made it on to the list [of the elected]. We are nameless and expendable, every bit as dead as the squaddies in France" (208). Henry is a new interpretive possibility about the proletariat muted in historiography. Henry epitomizes a new significance of nobody, a "nameless" working-class man, when he is fictionally made to "[play] the *Last Post* at the grave of O'Donovan Rossa" (90), as an Irish Fenian leader, whose funeral at Glasnevin Cemetery on 1 August 1915 was historic when his body was returned to Ireland for burial. Henry challenges the bourgeois historiography: "The history books will tell you that it was William Oman [who played the *Last Post*] but don't believe them: he was tucked up at home with the flu" (90). Henry also insists in his presence at the historic moment, but not taken in the photo, when Eamon de Valera posed for taking the photo in Richmond

Barracks: "I was there, to the left of de Valera" (138) in "the famous photo" of "the last man [de Valera] to surrender" (138) at the Easter Rising.

Myth is a process of finding a heterogenous reality overlooked in a grand narrative made in a socially dominant form of historiography. A myth is, in Grainger's words, a narrative "not by inventing the past but re-writing it in the light of new conclusions we have arrived at with regard to its significance, new ways of interpreting situations which are starting to look different" (354). Linda Hutcheon also finds "the provisional, indeterminate nature of historical knowledge" (88), which requires "the questioning of the ontological and epistemological status of historical fact" (88). Through the reconstruction of an Irish revolutionary period in *A Star Called Henry*, Doyle shows, in terms of Hutcheon, that "both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past" (Hutcheon 89). The photo of de Valera, as Henry remarks, shows the way in which a historical account of what happened is always provisional. When the photographer called Hanratty took a shot of de Valera at Richmond Barracks for public displaying of the "soldier, the father of" (139) Ireland, Hanratty put only de Valera into the viewfinder of his camera in the way of excluding Henry standing "to the left of de Valera." Unlike his hope, Henry realizes that there was nothing of him in the photo, finding that only his elbow was in it, "but even that went in later versions [of the photo]" (139). Not taken in the photo, Henry has no way of proving that he was a significant player in the actions for national liberation as much as de Valera was. He is made muted, expurgated from historical accounts of the Easter Rising by a dominant process of signification a ruling system produces. Henry says, "If Hanratty had moved his camera just a bit to the right, just a fraction of a bit, I'd have been in" (139). The camera is a symbol representing a view point in writing history. A history account is the outcome of contingency: it implies, in Hutcheon's

terms, that "there can be no single, essentialized, transcendent concept of genuine historicity" (89). Henry's displeasure reflects Hutcheon's view of historiography: "the meaning and shape [of historicity] are not *in the events*, but *in the systems* [of the ruling discourse] which make those past events into present historical facts" (89).

III. Henry as an Association of the Historical James Connelly

In *A Star Called Henry*, Doyle materializes the historical Marxist James Connolly in the way in which Connolly is made to be part of his invented myth, Henry. Henry is represented as a nameless proletariat in the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Doyle envisages Henry playing a historic role as an aide loyal to Connolly whose benefaction saves Henry from his starvation: "He'd fed me, given me clothes, he let me sleep in the [Liberty] Hall" (127) during the Lockout. In the novel, Henry is also assumed to be a working-class boy who is educated by Connolly: "It was Connolly who'd finally taught me how to read . . . I'd no use for reading or writing. He'd pushed me into a room and forced my face down to the pages of a book" (96). Henry's grudge against the social condition of no care for the impoverished is fed by his vitriolic memory of the death of his beloved younger brother, Victor. Henry feels: "Dublin didn't care. And my brother was dead on a cinder path behind the grand Canal Dock and nobody cared about that either. Another dead child. We'd found dozens of them on our travels, me and Victor. There wasn't even a reward for them" (82). The 1913 Lockout is *deux ex machina* in which Henry is destined to feel that his bitterness about social ill-treatment of have-nots is enlightened by the anti-bourgeois sentiment in Connolly's socialist politics.

The Liberty Hall, which accommodated Henry for three years in the novel, was the historic center for the Irish socialist movement. The building had housed the headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) since 1912. Historically, the ITGWU was founded in 1908 by James Larkin, who had helped to organize dock laborers to take strike action in Liverpool before he led Dublin workers to be unionized. Connolly assisted Larkin in establishing the ITGWU. The ITGWU initiated the 1913 Lockout by virtue of syndicalism. Larkin's syndicalism "emphasized direct action, militancy, and strikes to build workers[']consciousness, culminating in a general strike where workers could take control of industry and organize production for the benefit of all" (O'Brien 6). Strikingly, the 1913 Lockout is intermittently recollected piecemeal by Henry in Part II, the main action of which is the 1916 Easter Rising. Yet, Henry's casual remarks on his involvement in the 1913 Lockout never belittle his visceral feelings about social injustice, which are never compromised by any national priority. Henry prioritizes class interest over national interest:

> I liked it that way. *We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser*. So said the message on the banner that had hung across the front of Liberty Hall, headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. 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. (91)

"We Serve Neither King nor Kaiser But Ireland" was brought into display by Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army on the front side of the Liberty Hall building in 1914. The declamatory message was designed to show his advocation of the internationalism for workers' common interest against the contending powers of bourgeois hegemonies in World War I.

Part II of *A Star Called Henry* is a fictional reproduction of the 1916 Irish

rebellion against the British rule of Ireland. Markedly, the historicity of the nationalist movement is in Part II rendered into having its proletarian implication. Henry's fury is directed at the reality of the poor's economic distress, rather than at that of the national state of deprived sovereignty. As a member of the Irish Citizen Army, the working-class militia, Henry is taken to the cause of national liberation. However, his role is manifested for proletarian revolution, part of which should be national independence. When Henry is stationed at the General Post Office (G.P.O), the headquarters of Irish revels, in the Easter Rising, his grudge goes against shops, the profits of which are made by the mercantile greed to 'buy cheap and sell dear' at the expense of the poor's deadly condition. Henry's retaliation for the middle-class unconcern for Victor's pitiful death is performed in his shooting at the shops, which kept the commodities necessary for Victor's survival but denied to him:

> I grabbed the trigger back and fired at the exposed boots and slippers. Then l fired at Noblett's window, and the cakes and cream jumped out of their stands. . . . My aim was true and careful; every bullet mattered. Two for Lewer's & Co. and their little boys' blazers, suits and knickerbockers. . . . And Cable and Co., and more and more shoes. And back over to the Pillar Café—I'd been thrown out of there before I was properly in the door, me and Victor . . . and I took out all the café windows with timing and precision that impressed but didn't surprise me. 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. (105)

Henry's vengeful sabotage of the flourishing shops, which never attended to the death of Victor, comes from the anger against a miserable social condition shared among the workers during the 1913 Lockout. The

working-class anger was endorsed by Connolly: "[Connolly] explained why we were poor and why we didn't have to be. He told me [=Henry] that I was right to be angry" (127). In the February 5th, 1916, *Workers' Republic*, which was a paper for Irish socialists, Connolly found a source of social revolution in the affective drive of the working class: "from the intelligent working class could alone come the revolutionary impulse" (Connolly, "The Ties That Bind" 422). In the same article, Connolly condemned the bourgeoisie as a social class in complicity with the English for their own interest against Irish true interest: "for long years we have carried on propaganda in Ireland pointing out how the strings of self-interest bound the capitalist and landlord classes to the [British] Empire, and how it thus became a waste of time to appeal to those classes in the name of Irish Patriotism" (422). In terms of Connolly, thus, Henry's shooting at the shops, the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois proprietors of which seek for "high dividends and financial security" (422) through the Empire, is working out a "rebellion against" (422) them.

Henry's challenge to commerce capitalism, as staged in his shooting at the shops, evidently evokes Connolly's political grain in his pursuit of socialist revolution. Connolly regards the working class as actors of revolution. For him, the working class is the only class "which can be depended upon for consistent revolutionary action" (Connolly, "The Working Class and Revolutionary Action" 115) because the working class "has nothing to hope for from the maintenance of present conditions" (115). In Connolly's view, a revolutionary action is propelled by the prospect for "a healthy, happy, human life" (115). Thus, reverence for cultural traditions, as Connolly notes, is none other than "heedless of the fact that the world moves" (Connolly "Socialism and Revolutionary Traditions").

In Part II, Henry's revolutionary action is accentuated when Doyle supposes him to be a youngster responsible for part of writing the

Proclamation of Independence made in the Easter Rising. Henry is assumed to be "the first man [who read the Proclamation of Independence] after Connolly and Pearse" (96) and to be asked for an opinion about the first draft of the proclamation:

> —What do you [=Henry] think? he [=Connolly] asked.
> —It's the stuff, I said.
> —Is it perfect?
> —Well, I said.
> —Go on, said Connolly.
> —There should be something in there about the rights of children. (97)

The first draft of the proclamation is assumed, in Doyle's invention, as reflecting Henry's wish for a proclamation stipulating social responsibility for childcare for the sake of Victor, one of the socially untended children:

> *We hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent Sate . . . and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally*—[*cherishing all the children of the nation equally* is] My part, My contribution. My present to Victor. (96)

Henry's revolutionary action has its historical resonance in Connolly's view of real nationalism. For Connolly, real nationalism has its source from the struggle of laborers for their emancipation. He says, "Labour recognizes daily more clearly that its real well-being is linked and bound up with the hope of growth of Irish resources within Ireland, and nationalists realize that the real progress of a nation towards freedom must be measured by the progress of its most subject class" (Connolly, "Economic Conscription" 421). He notes, that is to say, that "the only hope for Ireland . . . lies in a

revolutionary reconstruction of society, and that the working class is the only one historically fitted for that great achievement" (Connolly, "A New Labour Policy"). Thus, Henry's belligerency in his actions for Irish independence illuminates Connolly's socialist nationalism. His socialist nationalism assumes that the liberation of the Irish working class is "the emancipation of Ireland as a sovereign nation" (Metscher 215). As it is fictitiously assumed that Connolly says to Henry "[you are] right to be angry" (Doyle 127) in the novel, Connolly's sanction of Henry's anger is brought back to the antagonism of the socialists against the bourgeoisie as Connolly justified: "The section of the Socialist army to which I belong, the Irish Socialist Republican Party, never seeks to hide its hostility to those purely bourgeois parties which at present direct Irish politics" (Connolly, *Selected Writings* 126). Henry's opposition to bourgeois nationalism when he says "I didn't give a shite about Ireland" (Doyle 91) calls up the early twentieth-century Polish revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg's caution against bourgeois nationalism in the reason that "the fight for national independence" is "merely helping to strengthen the power of the native national bourgeoisie" (Metscher 178) who would exploit other people for their capitalist interest.

Henry's revolutionary pulse is also displayed in his atheism, or his disbelief in Irish Catholicism. When asked about more things to be done in making the Proclamation of Independence into such a one in his wish, besides the phrase of "cherishing children of the nation equally" to be added in it, Henry says, "I'd take out all that stuff about God" (97). Contrary to Henry's wish, however, the Proclamation of Independence actually states, "We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonor it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine." Connolly asserts, in the novel, that taking advantage of religion is an effective

tactics for mobilizing the mass into going upward to national emancipation—"We need Him on our side. And all His followers" (97). This imaginary dialogue between Henry and Connolly carries its socialist implications with regard to religion in Connolly's days in history.

Connolly's socialism takes religion as "a systematized business of deception and trickery invented and perpetuated by men thoroughly aware of its falsehood and baseness" (Connolly, "Roman Catholicism and Socialism"). Catholicity is, he remarks, no more than "a belief in fairy lore and legend" (Connolly, "Roman Catholicism and Socialism"). In Connolly's sense, Henry's devaluing of religion points to an indication of religion's falsification of reality into hoodwinking a revolutionary mind. In Chapter 6, Henry shows in the way of making a false miracle that religion is merely a fantasy, or a fairy tale. In Chapter 6, Henry pretends that he gets back his lost leg after simulating of going lame in one leg in the way of strapping his doubled-up leg to his father's wooden leg. In so doing, Henry plays an impostor cheating "the thousands of country people converging on Templemore to see the holy things that bled for [them]" (278), the "holy things" which are the statues of Holy Mary they buy from a shop. By way of making the false miracle of his restored leg, Henry mocks the popular belief that seeing a bleeding statue brings to the seer a miracle such as being cured of illnesses and disabilities. From Henry's working-class position associated with the socialist lines of Connolly, either Irish Catholicism or English Protestantism is the means of the oppressors to dumbfound the working class. Connolly states, "The capitalist class rose upon the ruins of feudal Catholicism. . . . Yet today that robber class, conceived in sin and begotten in iniquity, askes the Church to defend it" (Connolly, *Selected Writing* 67).

IV. Bourgeois Nationalism and Social Revolution

In the correspondence to Sigfried Meyer and August Vogt on 9 April 1870, Karl Marx elucidated the Irish land question as an instance of the inseparability between national liberation and social revolution.

> But the overthrow of the English aristocracy in Ireland involves as a necessary consequence its overthrow in England. And this would fulfil the preliminary condition for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England herself, because in Ireland *the land question* has hitherto been *the exclusive form* of the social question, because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question. This [is] quite apart from the Irish being more passionate and revolutionary in character than the English. (Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question* 407, emphasis original)

In *A Star Called Henry*, Henry's actions for national liberation in the Easter Rising invoke the Irish land question in Marx's view half a century ago, the nature of which was an unjustifiable state of Irish peasantry, who was displaced into the landless after their native land was confiscated. Henry's family background adumbrates peasant origins of the majority of Dublin workers: Henry's grandmother, Granny Nash, is from Leitrim, who was "a young country girl, a waif, just a child, aching for food" when "she'd left her family dead in a ditch" (2); Henry's father was "the son of a Sligo peasant who'd been eaten by his neighbours: they'd started on [Henry's] father before he got away" (7). The profiles of Henry's ancestry attest the conversion of Irish peasantry into the destitute having lived in urban slums: "the family trees of the poor don't grow to any height" (7). In the view of Marx on the Irish

land question, the most notable is the relevance between social revolution and affective aspects of human nature: he suggests that any people is conditioned to be more passionate about revolution not by national character but by social condition.

Henry's social condition develops his antagonism against the bourgeois class taking advantage of nationalism. Henry's execution of Alfie Gandon is an effectuation of his retaliative repulsion for the nationalism ideologically exploited for a bourgeois hegemony. Gandon is presented as a business tycoon who relentlessly eradicates his enemies getting in the way of his economic and political interest. His accumulation of wealth is triggered from running a brothel in Monto, northwest of Dublin, historically notorious for its housing of hundreds of prostitutes. He starts his business career as a pimp in Monto and puts in his place Dolly Oblong, who he raped when she was "thirteen," as his puppet on behalf of him. Gandon incarnates the pecuniary voraciousness of a capitalist: "He's a giant in this city, man. Property, transport, banking, Corpo. He's in on them all. He's a powerful man" (189). His self-serving interest does, though, put on a nationalist mask. He displays his public image as a benefactor whose "generosity" "more widows and orphans liv[e] off" (189) and he creates his nationalist image as a supporter for "Chamber of Commerce, Gaelic League" in the way of constructing himself into "a great sodality man" (189) and a "perfect" man.

Gandon emblematizes a capitalist manipulation of nationalism. In Marx's 1870 view on the Irish land question, striking is that his speculation on the combination of national liberation and social revolution as inseverable is made to be more cautious by his regard for the possibility of nationalism turning into the bourgeois nationalism as a means to sustain the hegemonic power of the rulers over the state. The bourgeois nationalism was brought into critical focus when he drew attention to a division between English workers and Irish

immigrant workers within Britain in the late nineteenth century:

> Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling nation* and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. (Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question* 407-08, emphasis original)

In consideration of the competition between laborers against each other as instigated by English capitalists, Marx discerns the form of nationalism to be politically contrived for the financial gains of capitalists: the bourgeois nationalism. In this regard, to borrow Golman's words in his exegesis of Marx's accounts of Irish nationalism, the bourgeois nationalism brings forth "the ruinous effects on the workers of the chauvinist ideology and national strife that the capitalists were eager to cultivate among them" (Golman 37). In *A Star Called Henry*, Gandon's affected nationalism validates Marx's view of the bourgeois nationalism based upon, to put it in Golman's words, "the class narrowness of the [nationalist] radicals" (Golman 34), when Doyle invents Gandon as one of the ministers in 1919 during the Irish War of Independence: the "Minister for Commercial Affairs and the Sea" (229), representing the bourgeois interest. In the novel, Michael Collins is also mentioned as one of the other ministers making the 1919 ministry in history, whose republicanism Doyle portrays as a sort of radical nationalism taking the form of chauvinism.

In *A Star Called Henry*, Henry is rendered into being an IRA member working for Michael Collins. Henry is committed by Collins to assassinations

of Irish spies assisting the British government or forces. But Henry realizes that he is "a complete and utter fool, the biggest in the world" (317), who has been duped by nationalism into terrorizing his own people. He gets aware that Irish republican nationalists are not better than British rulers when Irish republicans such as Ivan Reynolds are turning themselves into thugs, who are butchering their own people in the name of Ireland. Henry is disillusioned about nationalism:

> 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 . . . (317-18)

Ivan is transformed into a new master replacing English masters. Ivan perceives himself as "king of the Republic" (314) in his territory: "I already controlled this island, my part of it anyway. The war was over. Nothing moves in this country without my go-ahead. I have cattle, land, a cut of the creameries, the pubs. Every bloody thing" (314-15).

The bourgeois nationalism upholding the ruling class takes the ideation of national narrowness. For example, Jack Dalton, as an architecture student and a member of the Irish Volunteers, dreams of redesigning Ireland so that she has "no evidence left of England" (Doyle 170-71) in the way of newly "designing houses" and "build[ing] halls and cathedrals" (170). However, Henry conceives that Dalton's idea of Ireland is too small to include larger parts of Ireland and is even permeated with his rancor about his own people: "his Ireland was a very small place. Vast chunks of it didn't fit his bill; he had grudges stored up against the inhabitants of most of the counties" (171).

In contrast, the proletarian nationalism kept by David Climanis takes the form of inclusionary nationalism in opposition to exclusionary nationalism, one form of which is the chauvinistic nationalism ideating national narrowness. In *A Star Called Henry*, it is told that Climanis is a Latvian immigrant in Dublin who is making tabaco pipes, as he becomes Henry's drinking company at Mooney's. Henry is puzzled by his ambiguous national identity. Climanis's national identity is multiple: he is "a Jew and a Latvian" (283). Furthermore, his Jewish identity is, be it still definite in his racial background, negated by his unbelief in Jewish religion:

> My father was a Jew. My mother, grandfather and everybody. Jews. But I am not Jewish. The Jews are a people. So I am one of the Jews. Jewish is a religion. I am not one of them. Mister Smart, I do not like religions. (283)

Climanis shapes himself as "a man with no country" (245), "crossing borders" to have a job. He is circumscribed to no border boundary such as "the soldiers and policemen make their own borders" because he has "been crossing them" (245).

Henry's killing of Gandon is an awakening from the historical nightmare of the bourgeois nationalism, which promotes a strife between nations at the international level and a struggle between classes, racial groups, and religious groups at the national level. Henry's execution of Gandon is his revenge for Gandon's murder of Climanis, whose Irish wife causes Gandon's sexual jealousy after her marriage to Climanis by way of her ceasing to prostitute for Gandon. The proletarian camaraderie between Henry and Climanis betokens the dynamism of movement: Henry is a bodily embodiment of the unchecked state of flowing water, as illustrated in his breaking out of Richmond Barracks by the means of the subterranean moving water. Climanis materializes a bodily

movement "crossing borders" to labor. Not to mention Climanis's inter-national body, Henry's un-territorial body denotes the affective power of the multitude prompting the proletarian revolution Marx and Engels in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* characterized as "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority" (482).

Spinoza's view of affects—i.e. the realm of the emotions emerging from mutual relations of persons—is pertinent in contextualizing Henry's antagonism in a class struggle. That is, Henry's agitation in social relations makes part of the relational feelings of the "immense majority," which is an aggregate of impulses by which individuals are connected to each other. In Spinoza's conceptual system of the emotion-mind-body union, body is one and the self-same thing of mind or emotion. Spinoza figured out a body as a reciprocal relationship with other bodies in which a body is influencing and influenced by other bodies. Spinoza says, "when a number of bodies of the same or of different magnitudes are constrained by others in such a way that they are in reciprocal contact with each other . . . we shall say that those bodies are reciprocally united to one another" (Spinoza 128). The relationship of bodies does not "cease to vary" (127), as Deleuze comments, the relationship of bodies which he likens to "a symphony as an immanent higher unity" (Deleuze 126). That is to say, the aggregate of impulses, which is a communication among bodies, never ceases to move, as intimated by Henry and Climanis's free flow of their bodies. Their reciprocally united bodies by their organized antagonism against the bourgeois nationalism clearly illuminate Marx's demand for the international unity of laborers, which tells "a symphony as an immanent higher unity" in Deleuze's terms, for true national independence.

V. Conclusion

A Star Called Henry is a socialistic refiguring of Irish historical experiences around the Easter Rising and in the ensuing rise of Irish nationalism. Henry Smart is Doyle's artistic hyperbole for aesthetically shaping the passions of the Irish working class in revolutionary movements. Enacted in Henry's superhuman performance, the mythologization of the historicity of national struggles is not for the self-delusive reinvention of an alternative history. The mythicized Henry is for exposition of a metahistorical truth about the workingmen as a revolutionary force in Irish revolutionary history, the metahistorical truth as historically unknown but to be discovered when told in another way different than in the way of accepted historiographies.

Henry's revolutionary action has a historical ground: workers were the largest number of the Irish revolutionaries who were involved in the Easter Rising. In an analysis of the list of the people, who were arrested and court-martialled, or received heavy sentences and death sentences in the 1916 Revolution, Stein Ugelvic Larsen and Oliver Snoddy classified 877 men out of 1,464 people on the list under the category of workingmen. It means that 877 men are workers when the participants in the Easter Rising are sorted out by their social position or their occupation. It suggests that workingmen made approximately 59% of the participants in the Rising. The occupational structure of the 1916 participants shows that "this was a revolution undertaken by workers in alliance with small farmers, many middle- and a few upper middle-class people" (Larsen and Snoddy 383). Henry is a verisimilar apostle of Connolly's socialist nationalism against bourgeois nationalism. Henry's proletarian position argues that national independence should be conditioned by social revolution. That is, a true national revolution is made through an emancipated state of the working class because they are the most exploited of social classes.

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Abstract

A Star Called Henry: A Historical Novel for Irish Socialism

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This paper tackles the issue of the reverse proportion between nationalist movement and social revolution, which characterizes Irish revolutionary movements depicted in Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry*. The most salient of Henry Smart's heroic actions, mythologized aspects of which are told to parody those of legendary warriors in Celtic myths, is his proletarian performance grounded in his socialist disposition. It is argued in this paper that the mythicized Henry evokes the revolutionary passions of workingmen in the 1913 Dublin Lockdown, the 1916 Rising, and the ensuing Irish War of Independence. Henry is a verisimilar incarnation of the historical James Connolly, who was a forerunner of Irish socialism, in the way of reinstating a proletarian position in the movement of national independence. Henry is Doyle's artistic hyperbole for constructing the internal exigencies of workingmen propelled to prioritize social revolution over national independence. Henry's proletarian heroism has the prospect of the national independence followed by the liberation of the working class, the most deprived of social classes.

■ Key words : Irish socialism, Irish nationalism, Connolly, proletariat, revolution
(아일랜드 사회주의, 아일랜드 민족주의, 코놀리, 무산계급, 혁명)

논문접수: 2023년 10월 31일
논문심사: 2023년 10월 31일
게재확정: 2023년 12월 1일