



Adopting Historicization as an Alienation Technique in Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden's *The Non- Stop Connolly Show*

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Abstract:

This study investigates the unique approach of John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy in employing historicization in The Non-Stop Connolly Show (1975) to prompt a V-effect (Verfremdungseffekt). Their innovative use of this effect, which represents a cornerstone of Epic Theatre, compels audiences to critically engage with the theatricality of the performance rather than passively absorb its emotional content. The Non-Stop Connolly Show is a six-part dramatic cycle that meticulously recounts the life of the prominent Irish socialist and nationalist leader, James Connolly. It skillfully blends factual historical details with fictionalized elements, using alienation techniques to ensure the accuracy of Connolly's portrayal. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of Connolly's story from various angles, the study presents a chronological overview—from his early years to his execution after the 1916 Easter Rising. It connects historical records with artistic representation, highlighting Connolly's political and social struggles. This exploration fosters an awareness of history as a dynamic process and encourages critical reflections on Connolly's legacy, emphasizing its relevance to the current socio-political issues and thereby engaging the audience in a contemporary context.

Key words: Alienation, Brecht, Connolly, Epic Theatre, Historicization, Nationalism, Socialism, Verfremdungseffekt

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I. Introduction

Epic Theatre was established in the early twentieth century by Erwin Piscator and further developed by the Marxist German playwright Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's redefinition of drama turned it into an instructive tool that actively engages spectators in critical reflections on socio-political issues, providing intellectual stimulation. This departure from traditional theater emphasizes a deliberate transformation of the audience's emotional immersion in a play's narrative into an active contemplation, fostering a more profound understanding of societal challenges and provoking critical scrutiny of class conflicts and prevailing social structures. The alienation effect (Verfremdungseffekt) inhibits the audience's emotional identification with characters, encouraging them to focus on critical analysis rather than emotional empathy. Another essential technique in Epic Theatre is "gestus," which refers to characters' societal gestures and behaviours that reflect socio-political contexts. These gestures prompt interruptions in the story, allowing for critical assessment by audiences. This radical departure introduces several pioneering techniques, including episodic plot structures, the concept of gestus, and anti-realism, to dismantle naturalistic elements, disrupt the audience's emotional entanglement, provoke intellectual scrutiny, stimulate critical reflection, and provide an enlightening educational experience. The process of alienating the audience is essentially achieved by breaking the fourth wall, a technique where the actors acknowledge the audience's presence, dispelling the illusion of reality and transforming the audience into objective observers of the performance. This shift in perspective enhances the audience's crucial role in the theatrical experience as active participants.

Brecht's theory also emphasizes the role of historicization as a theatrical tool that fosters critical examination of contemporary issues. This method highlights the evolving ideological nature of historical accounts by linking historical contexts with present-day challenges. It encourages audiences to compare different eras and engage in critical thinking. While many Epic techniques set plays in the past with a focus on actual historical figures, historicization has broader applications as it draws parallels across different periods to encourage a nuanced understanding of societal evolution. Ultimately, it prompts audiences to consider the potential for change by examining historical legacies in the present context. Plays utilizing historicization, such as Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Edward Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy's *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, and Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and *Mad Forest*, exemplify this technique by bringing together characters from various historical periods in order to shed light on societal and political upheavals, provoke critical reflection, engage the audience in history, reveal its ongoing impact on the present, and reframe historical narratives. They go beyond mere representation to spark a sense of discovery. From Brecht to contemporary playwrights, this technique has re-examined history, highlighted marginalized voices, and encouraged critical observation over emotional immersion.

II. Methodology

This study employs a historical analytical approach to investigate implementing historicization as an Epic technique in *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*. By meticulously analyzing the text and comparing it with authentic and reliable historical materials, this research underscores how Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden have crafted a literary work that is deeply rooted in historical truth.

III. Theoretical Framework: Conceptualizing Historicization

Brecht's concept of historicization represents a transformative shift in theater, intertwining historical narratives with contemporary issues. This approach encourages audiences to critically evaluate the continuity of historical problems, as noted by Luckhurst, who emphasizes its role in enhancing understanding of present conditions (477). The alienation effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*) promotes detached observation, disrupts the audience's emotional involvement in the narrative, and enhances analytical engagement with the theatrical material. Spencer suggests that this effect connects historical events to modern issues (3), stimulating critical thinking about societal changes by establishing parallels between the past and present. Luckhurst notes that Brechtian techniques serve as powerful educational tools helping audiences reflect on history and its socio-political implications (479). Mumford also highlights that Brecht's approach aligns with Marxist perspectives, emphasizing the complexities of class conflict and power structures (173). The essence of historicization lies in its portrayal of events through a critical lens, shifting the audience toward an analytical observation. This process fosters a deeper understanding of historical legacies and societal evolution, ultimately connecting the audience to a larger narrative and inspiring action in response to contemporary challenges.

Bertolt Brecht introduced the term "historicization" to explain the artistic technique of defamiliarization, known as "H-effects." This technique creates a sense of historical context, encouraging critical examination of current situations by drawing on historical contexts and questioning established historical interpretations. Historicization involves presenting events as products of specific historical conditions and human choices rather than eternal truths. This approach seeks to expose the differences and affinities between the past and present to emphasize evolution over time. It aims to reveal the problematic connections between historical periods, advocate for change, and highlight the inherent bias and ideology in narrating historical events. The concept of historicization is essential in narrative storytelling, encompassing both form and content. The portrayal of social gestures in the narrative reflects the socio-political context, while the storytelling method introduces interruption, encouraging the audience to analyze the depicted situation. It leads to two important considerations. The first is related to the alienation effect, which occurs when the social gestures within a scene present a distinct historical viewpoint in a space where actions can be altered. The second consideration seeks to avoid using synonymous terms for

alienation, such as distancing or estrangement, which apply to both Formalism and Epic Theater (Reinelt 11).

Brecht argues that a specific social context can be emphasized by portraying it from a historical perspective and presenting historical events on the stage. He believes this approach can create a rational impact, balancing between 'Theater for Pleasure' (entertainment-focused theater) and 'Theater for Instruction' (educational or didactic theater) to achieve a neutral ground. This method is the only way to reveal the principles of cause and effect. As human actions must coexist with "being so" and "capable of being otherwise", therefore, with its unexpected and enlightening shock, *Verfremdungseffekt* would reveal not just a reinterpretation of the familiar through a historical lens but thorough scrutiny. Thomson and Sacks suggest that it would be assessed by an audience with a skeptical and curiously innocent gaze (191-192). Brecht's approach invites the audience to actively interpret historicization, empowering them with a sense of agency and involvement.

Brecht's historicization operates on the premise of showing an issue of a specific culture at a particular point in the past. Instead of merely illustrating the existing problems, it offers the audience a vantage point to view their circumstances from a distance. The essence of historicization is to estrange the spectators and defamiliarize them as they do not see themselves as a representation of daily life. It is a historical depiction of individuals whose lives and concerns can be identical. Rather than transforming the stage into a mirror reflecting reality, Brecht makes the audience capable of perceiving elements they might otherwise overlook. This transformative potential of historicization can inspire the audience to view their circumstances from a new perspective and feel inspired and enlightened, hence, emphasizing the audience's active role in the performance.

Historicization is enabled by juxtaposing one particular social system with another. The dilemma a specific community presently struggles with, such as economic inequality or political oppression, can be a replica of another issue other communities have faced. In other words, Brecht conceived history as a treatment for societies struggling with these problems. Hence, as Keith Dickson suggests, the essence of the Brechtian approach aesthetically lies in his clever utilization of historicization, which transforms the traditional view of history as a passive tracing of confined events from the past into a dynamic mechanism (61). It aims to leverage the past to comprehensively understand the present and empower proactive engagement with contemporary circumstances. To apprehend this conceptualization of history, one must understand that "for Brecht, history is a function of social change" (62).

Historicization depicts specific controversial issues from the past to shape the audience's present standpoint of these historical issues (Caceres 12). As active guides, playwrights choose different timeframes to show how an issue has been dealt with (13). Moreover, implementing this method allows the spectators to contemplate the conditions or circumstances that foregrounded the particular point in their history (32-33) and inspires them to reflect on the past and its influence on the present. By deploying a subject matter from the past, Brecht creates a distance between the actors and the audience, advocating for critical observation over emotional receptiveness. In 'Short Description,' Brecht presents historicization as a 'crucial technical device' (72). His approach highlights essential historical events and connections, demonstrating how these situations influence historical eras. Historicization incorporates essential elements, such as novel approaches to theatrical production and scriptwriting, while aligning with Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*. In addition, historicization plays a crucial role in enlightening the audience by shedding light on the influence of past events on contemporary times. It also helps adhere to the essence of Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, which aims to distance the audience from the play's events. Franks and Jones believe that *Verfremdungseffekt* simultaneously works to provoke the audience's attention to the acts of the performance and the script reading. Moreover, it sheds light on social circumstances by projecting past events into contemporary times (15). They added: "The technique of Historicization should aid interpretation and critical reflection, revealing how social relations are reflected, promoted or glossed over, both in terms of the forms of representation and in terms of the content they carry" (18).

Brecht indicates that every technique contributing to the distancing effect should be managed through teamwork “from the writer to the lightning engineer.” (Styan 142). However, historicization is the responsibility of the playwright. Brecht confirms that viewing a historical scene on the stage will make the present appear strange to the audience (142-143). Bartoňová argues that historicization puts historical subjects on the table to be further discussed. The onstage performance can be considered an interpretation of ongoing historical subjects (26). Brecht uses two different periods with a commentary song that interconnects them to view the change of social norms in the acts (34). Historicization, thus, aims to break the fourth wall and alienate the audience by differentiating between historical and current events, thereby stimulating and intriguing them intellectually (41).

Gretchen E. Minton argues that historicization is not just a concept but a process that reveals the challenges communities face. She states, “The full establishment of a textual community involves a process of historicization. This is the writing down of a community’s experience” (iv). Memory plays a crucial role in triggering the process of historicization as we can understand the social conditions of a community by understanding its theatrical text (v). Hence, Brecht’s approach to historicization, with its profound impact on the audience’s perception of historical events and contemporary situations, enlightens us about their underlying connection to societal concerns, engaging us in a deeper understanding of the relationship between theater and society. Furthermore, historicization is crucial in shaping a community’s identity as it “provides community members with a sense of their past, and consequently, their identity” (Minton 62). When the history of a struggle in a particular community is fully understood, this understanding leads to transformative actions and fosters a deep sense of pride in cultural identity. Historical and literary works and documented materials of past generations inspire future generations to strive for positive change. The memory of historical figures or events is shaped by the collaboration of recorded details from the past and the literary works derived from them. In other words, it is a relationship of synthesizing two concepts: constructing the past and creativity. Hence, the process of historicization requires the combination of two complementary elements: the works of art and the historical information related to the discussed topic. By employing these two factors, as Stock indicates, the work produced will help make society reminisce about its future and assist the audience in gaining knowledge about a specific subject matter (16).

In “Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic” (1964), Brecht emphasizes the role of historicization as a dramatic device that distances the audience from the drama. He argues that historical topics should not be taken for granted in Epic Theatre; instead, they should be critically examined on stage from various viewpoints. Brecht reinforces this by stating, “The conduct of those born before us is alienated from us by an incessant evolution” (140). The expectation is that the historical events that new generations have not witnessed will make them more alienated from the events of the play than those who have witnessed them. Moreover, the alienation technique demands a compelling presentation from the actor to reinforce it. According to Brecht, the actor “must alienate these characters and incidents from us” (140). To reduce the audience’s emotional involvement in the events on the stage, they need to firmly believe that the timeframe of the play is set in the past with different routines and beliefs from those of today, as the conditions differ from one generation to another (140).

Brecht aims to shed light on critical social issues; by creating a distancing effect through historical context, he shows the audience that their current perception will soon become part of history, which will foster new transformations. Following the footsteps of Karl Marx allowed Brecht to delve into history to understand contemporary events and help bring about improvements (Dickson 61-62). Brecht’s historical approach remains realistic, yet fundamentally optimistic, by focusing on comprehending the existing reality and its capacity for change. He emphasizes that optimism is the realization that we can actively address these limitations and transform them to carve out new paths toward more promising future conditions despite the continually-arousing obstacles. This understanding of the existing reality is crucial for our engagement and commitment to the process of change. Dickson argues:

Brecht did not seriously envisage a state of absolute perfection as a realistic socio-political objective. Nevertheless, he did share the optimistic belief of the dialectical materialists that human society is in a state

of continuous flux, incessantly striving towards higher forms. The utopian dimension of Brecht's work functions as a social conscience, continually reminding society how far it still has to go. (8)

Creating a theater that focuses on historical perspectives of societal issues is an intriguing way to understand current concerns based on past experiences as it reflects the distinctiveness of these experiences and shows that change is inevitable. Each era has its challenges and characteristics that shape it. People in each era faced these challenges and found ways to overcome them. To effectively showcase their uniqueness on stage, it is crucial to carefully select specific traditions and folklore that represent different periods. Therefore, modern theatrical techniques should be able to convey this concept of uniqueness more effectively on stage (Brecht, 1964, 190). Similarly, if the present circumstances become eligible for projection on the stage, depicting the current struggles and atrocities, which can differ from those of the previous ages, must be preserved to maintain their originality.

Instead of accepting the assumption that history always repeats itself or that things never change, the play should explore how things could have been different: "The image that gives historical definition will retain something of the rough sketching which indicate traces of other movements and features all around the fully-worked out figure" (Brecht, 1964, 191). Offering the characters various choices provokes the audience to think critically about their decisions instead of responding emotionally. This approach extends beyond the theatrical production and catalyzes the critical contemplation concerning individual lives and the immense and potential choices available to them. Brecht brilliantly explains the effectiveness of characters in applying such concepts as: "The historical conditions must of course not be imagined (nor will they be so constructed) as mysterious powers (in the background); on the contrary, they are created and maintained by men (and will in due course be altered by them); it is the actions taking place before us that allow us to see what they are" (190). The success of creating a vision of history refers to the cast's acting to deliver a specific perception to the spectators. The required acting methods should be wisely chosen. Brecht adds: "And if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical, then perhaps the circumstances under which he acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins" (190).

While writing their history, men encounter challenges with problems inherited from the past, limiting their prospects. Brecht adopts Marx's belief that men can overcome these challenges and improve their circumstances in order to create a better future. Brecht's historical perspective is realistic and optimistic, emphasizing the importance of understanding reality and recognizing the potential for change. Men make their history under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living (Marx and Engels 103).

IV. Analysis: Historicization in *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*

IV.1. Connolly in Historical Records:

Arden and D'Arcy began their literary work in 1969 and completed it in 1975. According to Arden "the one representative of Revolutionary International Socialism among the leaders of 1916 was undoubtedly the most important possible theme for an Irish play" (Trussler 54). The cycle was first performed in a continuous twenty-six-hour show in Dublin at Liberty Hall in 1975, and the initial performance was a tremendous success as it received a very positive response from the audience. *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* presents a linear, chronological account of the essential phases and activities in Connolly's life. It presents a detailed biography of Connolly's early life, family background, exposure to socialism, roles in socialist/labour groups, writings and activism, and involvement in the 1916 Easter Uprising, where he was executed. It presents Connolly's biographical details sourced from historical materials.

Connolly, born in 1868 to immigrant parents John Connolly and Mary McGinn, found inspiration primarily from his elder brother John, who significantly influenced him as a Catholic and a socialist. His secondary influential factor stemmed from his passion for reading books. Immersing himself in socialist texts, Connolly became associated with prominent socialist figures, with John Lesli having the most profound impact on him. Connolly dedicated himself to persuading the Irish to achieve communal control over

institutions through nationalization. His enthusiastic pamphlets advocated for public ownership in Ireland and were driven by his firm belief that Ireland's freedom depended on public ownership. He believed that workers had to be empowered to rule economically in order to be able to rule politically. According to Connolly, "the achievement of political power required the conquest of economic power" (Howell 57).

Connolly's interest in socialism motivated him to establish a working-class organization in Ireland. He notably contributed to drafting manifestos for the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) in Scotland, advocating for rights such as nationalizing railways and providing free childcare. His immigration to the United States in 1903 marked a significant turning point in his socialist career. In 1907 Connolly extended his efforts by supporting the Irish-Scottish Federation (ISF) to strengthen the Irish-American socialist movements. He emphasized the historical ties of Irish heritage and ethnicity. Connolly's book, *Labour in Irish History* (1910), stands as a significant milestone in the understanding of the struggles faced by the Irish working class under British imperialism. This seminal work in Irish socialist thought comprehensively analyzed the socio-economic factors that shaped Irish history and the quest for independence. While many of Connolly's contemporaries, like Patrick Pearse, sought heroism by restoring Gaelic culture, Connolly approached it from a socio-economic perspective. The weight of Connolly's contribution to Irish history is palpable in this book, which continues to be a cornerstone in the study of Irish socialism.

Connolly returned to Ireland in July 1910, where he encountered various parties such as Sinn Féin, Nationalists, the Gaelic League, Trade Unionists, and Catholics. However, these parties did not collaborate despite their shared goal of achieving home rule. Each party's belief that its policies for ensuring stability, socialism, and reform in Ireland were superior to those of the other parties hindered integration. Due to these circumstances, Connolly found it challenging to support his family back in the States. He considered traveling abroad to lecture on socialism but decided to postpone this plan in favor of seeking a non-sectarian union. Connolly understood that this task would be challenging as the existence of sectarian political societies in Ireland was rooted in religious ideas, which formed the basis of past Irish politics. Moreover, Connolly faced criticism from a church leader who accused him, as a socialist, of attempting to create laws that contradicted those of God. In response, Connolly sought to demonstrate that socialism is compatible with Catholicism and not in opposition to divine laws. He argued that the principles of socialism, such as equality and justice, were in fact in line with the teachings of Catholicism, and that his socialist beliefs did not conflict with his religious ones. In "Labour, Nationality, and Religion", Connolly emphasized that the Socialist doctrine teaches human beings that:

All men are brothers, that the same red blood of a common humanity flows in the veins of all races, creeds, colours and nations, that the interests of Labour are everywhere identical, and that wars are an abomination. Is not this also good Catholic doctrine? How, then, can that doctrine which is high and holy in theory on the lips of a Catholic become a hissing and blasphemy when practiced by the socialist? (*Connolly, Selected Writings*, 61)

With the unwavering dedication of Jack Lyng, Connolly managed to constitute the Irish Socialist Federation, a platform to spread socialism among the impoverished working class. Connolly and Jack were determined to ensure that all immigrant workers were well-versed in socialism, a goal they pursued by establishing *The Harp* in 1908. In the inaugural issue of the newspaper, Connolly's impassioned address to the poor workers resonated with his deep commitment: "Socialism will make them better fighters without making them less Irish; we propose to advise the Irish, who are socialists now, to organize their forces as Irish and reconnect with the organized bodies of literary, educational, and revolutionary Irish" (Connolly, *Selected Writings*, 288). Connolly's efforts were worthwhile. In New York, he became a revered figure, deeply committed to his native Ireland. Throughout his time in the United States, Connolly tirelessly reminded the Irish of their national identity and encouraged them to embrace their Irishness. His mission was to educate the Irish working class about socialist principles and prepare them to collaborate with workers of all races, colors, and nationalities in the liberation of labour.

Furthermore, Connolly and Larkin initiated a strike to confront sectarianism, significantly influencing the Easter Rising. During the strike, a violent clash erupted in Dublin, instigated by British workers attacking

the local working class and refusing oppression. This event impelled Connolly to advocate for an armed defense, leading to the creation of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA). Connolly was an influential leader in the Easter Rising. He was later injured, apprehended, and tragically executed during the Easter Uprising in 1916.

IV.2. Connolly in Dramatic Representation:

A historical drama is not a static representation of history, but a dynamic interpretation that evolves over time, transcending the limitations of documented sources. Potter observes, "All historical judgments involve persons and points of view, one is as good as another, and there is no objective historical truth" (xxv). This evolution of historical perspectives is a testament to the enlightening nature of historical interpretation. According to Fred Johnston, "The name of James Connolly is intertwined with a heady mix of mythology and fact. He is prayed in song and poetry as a hero of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin city" (90). In *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, Arden and D'Arcy utilize historicization as an epic technique to distance the audience from the play's events, prevent them from becoming emotionally enmeshed, unravel the layers of historical representation, and transform the performance into an interactive thought-provoking experience where critical engagement is essential. The playwrights skillfully depict the biographical details of James Connolly along with the legendary significance of his struggles. In *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, "history and drama are brought together in a startling theatrical image which reveals the historical and dramatic imaginations to be closely interlinked" (Harben 16). The interconnectedness between historical truth and dramatic presentation are evident in *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* where the playwrights highlight Connolly's heroic traits in the context of his time's socio-political environment and cultural backdrop. Connolly represented a moral ideal who inspired the social and political reform movement against capitalism and imperialism. According to Innes, "in *Connolly*, the contrast between documentary situation and dialogue... is designed to reflect the ideological perspective of the protagonist" (145).

In *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, D'Arcy and Arden illustrate Ireland's declining socio-political conditions through a dialectical structure and an anti-idealistic perspective, revealing their dramatic vision and adherence to historical truth in an evocative language and a serious tone. The dramatists illustrate Connolly's personal and political challenges, emphasizing their impact on historical events. Lindenberger noted that historical drama conveys its fundamental nature: "the first word qualifying the fictiveness of the second, the second qualifying the reality of the first" (3). Hence, the playwrights' mission is to "turn a bundle of documents into a resurrected personality and to see how a heap of dry facts, when properly put together, may present us with a dramatic human situation" (Butterfield 232). By employing historicization in *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, they contextualize Connolly's life alongside the historical portrayal of his actions, revealing no significant discrepancies between the factual details of Connolly's biography and the dramatization of his life story.

Arden and D'Arcy's unwavering commitment to historical documents in their dramatic portrayal of James Connolly reassures the audience of the play's accuracy and instills trust in the authenticity of the performance. Their meticulous dedication to historical accuracy ensures a balance between historical fidelity and artistic freedom and verifies the performance's authenticity. The plot of *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* outlines historically documented biographical details that highlight different aspects and phases of Connolly's life. It encompasses many events, figures, and themes related to his influential role in promoting socialism, labour rights, and Irish nationalism. The historical records provide a linear, chronological account of Connolly's significant experiences, from his early years and introduction to socialism to his various roles in socialist organizations, writings, activism, time in America, and leadership during the 1916 Easter Rising, where he was executed. Meanwhile, the dramatic representation in each segment of the play interprets specific moments in Connolly's life through a skilled portrayal of the external socio-political struggles alongside the interpersonal relationships that shaped the protagonist's mission, creating a multifaceted drama written "in the anti-realist and poetic tradition, combining history, song, verse and poetic imagery, to create drama in which the protagonists are survivors in a society and a life continually threatened by extinction" (Rusinko 144). Hence, implementing historicization as an alienation technique

provides an intellectually stimulating portrayal of Connolly's life and encourages the audience to reflect critically on the historical context in which he lived. In *To Present the Pretence*, Arden elaborates on his views regarding history and drama: "The decision to include this or that episode in the plays ultimately had to be guided by intuition rather than reasoning. You can formulate a historical thesis based on established data, but a play must be constructed through an imaginative grasp of the human probabilities of each character." (93)

The Non-Stop Connolly Show strikingly incorporates a poetic style and songs, as epic devices, to dramatize both the factual historical details and the legendary significance of James Connolly's struggles. This artistic choice adds a unique and emotional dimension to the performance, enhancing the audience's understanding and appreciation of Connolly's life. It is arguably "the most ambitious attempt in English to dramatize working-class and socialist history" (Cohen 78). *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* employs an episodic structure with fragmented scenes and settings to disrupt the illusion of continuity and provoke the audience's critical thinking. Spanning six parts over 24 to 26 hours of theatrical performance, the dramatic cycle explores various stages of the Irish nationalist hero's life, highlighting Connolly's courage, sacrifice, perseverance, and determination during the dark years of Irish history under British colonization. The episodic technique does not have any scope for intense concentration or identification as the audience is not carried away by the developing action. Each episode is presented separately. Sometimes, the scene is introduced by a narrator presenting divergent actions or repetitions of the same action. According to Innes:

The speed of presentation, required by short episodic scenes, is intended to reflect the irresistible forces of history that shape Connolly's career. The use of multiple stages translates the documentary montage into concrete terms; and the physical involvement of the audience in the action serves as an external sign of the political solidarity, which a performance is intended to produce...Various parts were designed as self-contained entities capable of being rent on separately and with minimum physical resources. (147)

Although Connolly is well-known for his remarkable role in the Easter Rising of 1916, his contribution to the history of Irish Nationalism extends beyond his heroic participation in that event. He dedicated his life to advocating for the poor working class in Ireland, Britain, and the United States. However, Connolly did not receive the respect he deserved, as many of his teachings were often misunderstood. As Arden notes, Connolly "had worked very hard with little thanks and no apparent reward throughout his adult life" (*To Present the Pretence*, 99). In *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, the authors provide a detailed depiction of the deteriorating social, political, and economic conditions faced by the poor working class in Ireland, Britain, and the United States. These conditions, which significantly shaped Connolly's socio-political perspective, included widespread poverty, lack of political representation, and exploitation by the ruling classes. Innes remarks:

As the subtitle to the cycle indicates, the performance of *Non-Stop Connolly Show* intended to form an image of "continuous struggle." Each section follows the same patterns, ending with an apparent defeat which hardens the protagonist's resolve and illustrates that "the failure of revolution is the springboard to the next success. (147)

The dramatic cycle effectively portrays the historical events in James Connolly's life from 1868 to 1916. The first part of the dramatic cycle, *Boyhood 1868 – 1889*, depicts his early years. The second part, *Apprenticeship 1889 – 1896*, deals with Connolly's fascination with the socialist system and his struggle to become an office member. The third part, *Professional 1896–1903*, narrates Connolly's effort in founding the Irish Socialist Republican Party that became recognized by Socialist International. Part four, entitled *The New World 1903–1910*, focuses on Connolly's emigration to the United States, where he joined the Socialist Labour Party, enrolled in the Industrial Workers of the World, and contributed to Eugene Debs's presidential election. Part five, *The Great Lockout 1910–1914*, portrays Connolly's return to Ireland, where he contributed to founding the Irish Labour Party and the Dublin Employers' Federation, an organization that represented the interests of employers in Dublin and was a key player in the labour disputes of the time. In this part, the Great Lockout on Dublin is imposed. The last part, *World War and the Rising 1914–*

1916, illustrates the breakout of the First World War and the collapse of International Socialism. The fear of a civil war eruption arose, and the Easter Rising began with Connolly as a Socialist leader. Connolly eventually dies.

IV.2. 1. Part One: *Boyhood 1868–1889*

Implementing historicization as an alienation technique is evident at the play's beginning when D'Arcy and Arden use a song to convey the deteriorating situation in one of the slums of Edinburgh. This scene features the Union Jack flag hoisted on a turret building, with Mother Connolly poetically expressing their dire circumstances and the dreadful and brutal conditions of the subjugated working class:

It is the right of every man on earth,
(Who for his life must bend his back and work)
To own, control, and finally enjoy
The produce of his labour at its greatest worth.
Did I say every man? Each woman, girl, and boy
Is equally entitled to such a right. (1)

This song illustrates the unbearable condition of the working class which compelled Mother Connolly to articulate her inner turmoil and demand justice and equality. Grabitall's mocking interruption highlights the futility of her hopes and her defiance against any change. The opening stanzas skillfully reveal the deep-seated antagonism between the proletarians and the capitalists in Ireland. The authors' use of songs serves not merely as a narrative device but as a powerful tool to evoke a sense of alienation among the audience. It urges them to critically reflect on class struggle and social injustice, keeping them engaged and contemplative while deepening their understanding of the play's themes. The discrepancy between the rich landlords and the poor working class is powerfully illustrated in the capitalist Grabitall's exploitation of the poor people who were incapable of stopping this crisis or facing the landlords. According to Innes, in *Non – Stop Connolly Show*, "the capitalist is explicitly the villain from melodrama" (Innes145). Arden depicts the conflict between the landlords and the poor people as a reference to the conflict between capitalism and the oppressed working class. Capitalists represent "a beast of prey, and cannot be moralized, converted or conciliated but must be extirpated." (Connolly, *Workers' Republic*, 41).

Father Connolly enters the stage documenting the birth of his son, James Connolly:

In eighteen hundred and sixty-eight
In a dark and smoky hole
In Edinburgh town, a child was born
Who was both pale and small:
His mother came from Monaghan
And his father from God knows where —
But that they both were Irish folk
Their poverty did declare. (2)

Father Connolly portrays a pictorial image of the town of Edinburgh at that time:

In the royal town of Edinburgh
That stands so dark and tall
There're many a mouse and many a rat
Live deep in a narrow hole

And many a boy and many a girl
Observe them as they crawl
Between the cradle and the bed
And up and down the wall. (2)

The above song provides a stunning picture of the terrible socio-economic conditions of the Irish tenants who were forced to leave their homes in Ireland immediately after the great food crisis in the nineteenth century. Notably, a distancing effect is created by merging both songs and utilizing historicization as a device: The authors skillfully weave in historicization, commenting on the socio-economic conditions of that period. James Connolly was born in Edinburgh in 1868 to poor Irish parents who had fled to Scotland due to famine and poverty in Ireland. Both parents, especially Father Connolly, are deeply concerned about their newborn child: "James Connolly, that careful child — / He was born in the dark, and he looked out for the light" (3). As James Connolly grows up and turns eleven, his mother encourages him to start working. His Uncle McBride appears on stage, offering Connolly support and advice, shedding light on the challenges he might face due to being Irish. The circumstances of that era are historicized in a poetic style, illustrating the dual struggle of social injustice and nationalism, as the uncle reminds James Connolly of his roots: "You who will live and work in Scotland: you must not forget. / Above all things, Jimmy Connolly, you are an Irishman yet" (4).

The alienation technique reflects the social and racial strife within the play when three employers appear, offering jobs to James Connolly at low wages. The first Employer tries to convince him that based on his age, nationality and religion, Connolly must accept the offer: "Irish, are ye no? Catholic, are ye no? Then I doubt ye'll find nae employment anywhere else in the trade" (5). Connolly reluctantly accepts the offer. However, the job proves to be challenging: "The work was hard, the pay was poor. / The wind blew in at the workshop door. / And scattered the papers on the floor" (5). Later, an inspector visits the factory to conduct checks. A trap from the Proof-Reader, responsible for ensuring the quality of the work, exposes James Connolly, leading to his dismissal. The First Employer remarks, "Mr. Dreich, ye should be ashamed. Employing a bairn among grown men! Send him home to his mother" (6). The Second Employer, an Irish baker, exploits Connolly's age: "A wee child to watch their burnings is the best. / He costs me no great wage, two pence per day. / And being small, he keeps out of the way" (7). The Baker's song powerfully illustrates the attitudes of capitalists that perpetuate social injustice and class discrimination. The hardships Connolly has faced in his various jobs have made him realize that ignorance and lack of qualification are the main reasons for the suffering of poor workers who are often seen as "human shovels", whose finer characteristics are always ignored and unappreciated (Fox 24).

Connolly's decision to follow in the footsteps of his brother, John, who was recruited into the Queen's Army and left for India, is dramatized by D'Arcy and Arden as a significant historical shift in Connolly's life. James feels compelled to consult his Uncle McBride, particularly if he is to serve the colonizer: "If I serve the Famine Queen for meat and for bread, does it mean my Irish blood has been betrayed?" His uncle replies, "Ah, Sure. It is common enough, don't they do it all the time? / I was a royal soldier and considered it no crime" (11). As this scene addresses controversial issues of nationalism and loyalty to the colonizer, the audience is emotionally alienated from the stage and prompted to reflect on the complex moral and social dilemmas Connolly faces. The audience is challenged to conjecture about the moral conflicts individuals encounter under oppressive regimes and critically consider the dire circumstances that compel people to act against their moral convictions. By presenting Connolly's decision through a dialogue that emphasizes internal conflict and societal pressures, the play urges the audience to contemplate the far-reaching effects of colonialism and the intricate realities faced by those living under its rule. The stark conversation between Connolly and his uncle illustrates the dissonance between personal survival and national identity, enhancing the audience's awareness of the historical and ethical dimensions of the drama. This intentional

distancing fosters a critical perspective, allowing viewers to analyze broader social and political contexts rather than being solely focused on the immediate drama.

Additionally, Sergeant-Major, who recruits new soldiers, serves as a significant historical reference. The playwrights provide an account of the British Empire's oppression in regions like Malta, Gibraltar, Egypt, and India through this character. This historical context enriches the audience's understanding of Britain during colonial times. The dramatists also contextualize Queen Victoria's Coercion Act from the 19th century. Connolly's initial challenge revolves around executing this Act in Ireland, which strips Irish landlords and tenants of their properties: "whereby all forms of resistance to the acknowledged rights and privileges of hereditary landlords are immediately forbidden" (13). The Serjeant-Major accompanies Connolly, who is assigned as the drum boy in the army, and the other soldiers as they carry out their mission in Ireland.

Nationalist and Socialist Agitators appear on stage to express their beliefs. The Nationalist Agitator attempts to inspire his compatriots regarding Home Rule, urging them to follow Parnell as their leader: "Fellow Irishmen, our great leader controls the scales of English politics, and until we get Home Rule, he will throw in his national weight upon whichever side best suits this country" (24). In contrast, the Socialist Agitator critiques the situation in Ireland, believing that capitalists receive their directives from the parliament in London. He meets Connolly and inquires whether he is English or Irish. Connolly replies, "I'm Irish but born in Scotland" (25). The Socialist Agitator influences Connolly with socialist philosophy and ignites his interest. Connolly asks, "What's this Socialism?" (25). The Socialist Agitator responds by explaining the conflict between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, emphasizing that the advancement of an individual correlates to the development of the whole nation. Enthralled by these ideas, Connolly desires to learn more but is given pamphlets by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels instead. He then leaves the army, disillusioned by the red coat, which the playwrights symbolically represent as Connolly's "chain" (26). Through their exploration of Connolly's journey towards embracing Marxism, D'Arcy and Arden effectively utilize historicization and Marxism— as intersectional concepts in Brechtian theatre—to alienate the audience. Another pivotal incident in Connolly's life is historicized in the play when he meets Lillie and they decide to get married and escape after Connolly leaves the army in 1889. Lillie sings: "In eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, / Young Jimmy Connolly jumped the line. / He left the army far behind" (29). Connolly and Lillie underscore their shared aspirations amid the historical context.

IV.2.2. Part Two: Apprenticeship 1889 – 1896

The second part of the cycle starts with Connolly and his wife back in Scotland. The year 1889 marks the beginning of Connolly's new path, as referenced in the song, drawing the audience's attention to the historical events and keeping them engaged with James Connolly's life. The fourth and fifth scenes explore the intertwining themes of religion and social struggle, highlighting the personal and ideological challenges faced by Connolly and Lillie. The fourth scene opens with Lillie and the Bishop on stage. He tells her that in order to marry Connolly as a Catholic, she must promise to adhere to certain disciplines regarding their future children's Catholic rites. Torn between her love for Connolly and her faith, Lillie replies, "I will promise" (37). Connolly, a man of strong convictions, asserts that their children will choose any religion "through the freedom of an aroused mind" (37). Britain encouraged this religious dichotomy as part of its policy. Connolly thinks that all the Irish nation whether Protestants or Catholics "had traveled through the valleys of disillusion and disappointment to meet at last by the unifying waters of a common suffering" (Connolly, *Labour in Irish History*, 120). As a reaction against the British policy, Connolly, the Catholic, decides to marry the Protestant girl he loves to encourage his people to overcome fragmentation and disintegration. Regardless of their religious differences, the poor people must unite and stand in the face of hostility. Connolly says: "I am an Irish man. Look at it how you like; the church and the people are the one thing all together" (40).

In *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*, Arden and D'Arcy historicize the issues of "Socialism, Syndicalism, Radicalism", emphasizing their significance in the late 19th century. Connolly thinks that the workers must have an effective role to help themselves. He is greatly influenced by Leslie who is responsible for giving

Connolly the chance to, as Ruth Dudley Edwards suggests: “apply his logical, quick and powerful mind to the disciplined study of Marxist theory and its application to his ... nationalism and social inequality” (45). The secretary of the Socialist Federation, Leslie, says: “we are socialists: we are revolutionists” (43). Connolly is nominated Secretary of the Socialist Federation: “So, local secretary I was made to the Scottish Socialist Federation, at once I must begin to write and to read the multifarious meticulous, precise documentation appertaining to such an office in such an organization” (45). This historical context connects the audience to the events being depicted. Lillie’s describes the situation awaiting Connolly in England and Scotland:

In eighteen hundred and eighty-nine
 It seemed as though the glorious time
 Of revolution was at its prime
 In England and Scotland— There was—
 Socialism, syndicalism, radicalism
 All fermenting up in Scotland. (31)

John Connolly suggests that James can go to Edinburgh due to the rise of the Socialist movement there, assuring him that he can write articles and give speeches. Connolly responds, “I have no doubt I could try— / Provided only I could earn enough to be able to buy” (38). Scene 5 begins with Connolly and Lillie deciding to rent a room so she can support him on his journey. He is committed to learning in order to earn a living. Lillie interprets this as a promise from Connolly when he declares, “That is the vow which hand-in-hand we take” (40). Connolly adds, “In sickness or in health, we will not break” (40). The play employs a religious theme as a significant issue of the late 19th century. By historicizing this matter, the play emphasizes religion as a societal challenge of that time.

In Scene 14, the intense competition and eventual collaboration between Connolly and the Three Employers is symbolized through an innovative stage design. D’Arcy and Arden incorporate a ring with ropes surrounding the stage to alienate the audience and convey the tension and rivalry among the characters. This stage design enhances the audience’s understanding of the power dynamics and the high stakes involved. After a heated conflict, the Employers join forces against Connolly. Lillie protests, “No, fair!”. Connolly responds, “Oh Lillie, what is that? Is ‘fair’ a word? Do you think a capitalist may have heard?” (60). Ultimately, Connolly loses. In Scene 15, Lillie tries to reassure him, stating, “At least one-seventh of the total vote was cast for you” (61). Scene 16 depicts Connolly’s ongoing struggles within the Socialist movement, highlighting tensions, career challenges, and the opportunities that arise from these conflicts. In this scene, Connolly and Leslie argue about the state of socialism, with Leslie frustrated by Connolly’s interference in the ILP’s affairs. Connolly expresses a desire to resign and considers emigrating to Chile to lecture but eventually agrees with Leslie’s proposal to lecture in Britain, where the movement is gaining recognition. Leslie assures him that he will help make Connolly sound appealing in his advertisement.

IV.2.3. Part Three: Professional 1896 – 1903

Part Three of the cycle historicizes Connolly’s arrival in Dublin, where he realizes that the leaders of the Social Club of Dublin are inexperienced and disorganized. The community suffers from severe economic hardships such as starvation and rampant unemployment. These conditions allow capitalists to maintain control over the struggling working class. Connolly’s challenge is to promote socialism among the Irish population and beyond. He begins drafting a manifesto to support his party’s vision of a radical revolutionary movement aimed at establishing a democratic socialist republic. To achieve this goal, Irish people must own the means of production, land, and machinery. Connolly understands that the political situation is closely tied to economic conditions. It is essential to create a strong foundation for sharing between the people and a democratic state: “It is social and economic because... as long as one class owns as private property the land and instruments of labour... that class will always have it in their power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow-creatures!” (Connolly, *Socialism and Nationalism*, 11).

Part Three consists of three acts highlighting different phases of Connolly's struggle. Act 1 centers on his founding of the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP) and his interactions with members of the Irish Literary Renaissance, such as William Butler Yeats. Act 2 showcases the ISRP's opposition to British Imperialism and the Boer War, which influenced Connolly's anti-imperialist stance. The final act hints at the ISRP's eventual recognition by the Socialist International Organization, while Rosa Luxemburg questions Connolly's leadership, leading him to consider a new direction (65-67).

The Marxist class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is illustrated through the characters of Grabitall and the Three Employers in various contexts. Act 1 begins with Grabitall discussing Connolly and Lillie's upcoming fourth child, as they plan to emigrate to Ireland with their three children: Mona, Nora, and Aideen. In Scene 1, the Three Employers try to hire low-wage workers, but the workers hesitate to accept. The Second Employer states, "Take it or leave it" (70). One woman reluctantly asks for fair pay, and the employers respond in unison, "Come work, work, work...!" (71). This scene emphasizes the workers' unity and resilience against exploitation, encouraging the audience to value their struggle.

In Scene 3, Connolly discussed with Dorman, Tom Lyng, and William O'Brien the importance of establishing a well-organized revolutionary party:

It means an adequately organized revolutionary party—nothing less, or I am done with it. Furthermore, the necessary elements are as follows: regular subscriptions, a weekly or monthly newspaper, a permanent working committee, a rank-and-file membership that is prepared to do some work when it is needed, and, of course, a manifesto. (74)

O'Brien expresses his surprise at Connolly's background as a labourer and his enthusiasm for collaborating with them. In Scene 4, Connolly announces the formation of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, outlining key demands such as free education, a 48-hour workweek, pensions, and universal suffrage. The party's goal is to establish the Workers' Republic, depending on their financial situation. Audience members question Connolly about how he plans to achieve this vision, to which he confidently asserts their success (72-76). The quote from D'Arcy and Arden provides historical context for Connolly's vision in the 1890s, aiming to connect the audience with the foundational elements of 19th-century socialist parties. D'Arcy and Arden portray Connolly's encounters with key figures in Irish history. In Scene 9, he meets Maud Gonne who expresses faith in Connolly's ability to achieve change and "win the freedom of Ireland" (86). They decide to postpone Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebration in Dublin, a significant event that symbolizes British rule in Ireland (86). In Scene 10, Gonne introduces W.B. Yeats, whom Connolly praises as "the greatest poet in the English tongue" (87). Writer Alice Milligan joins them to disrupt the celebration and plans to publish Connolly's writings. In Scene 11, Connolly reveals that an ISRP member will cut electricity during the festival. Yeats and Connolly lead the demonstrators, who, despite their small numbers, carry a coffin draped with a blanket reading "The Corpse of the British Empire", showing their unwavering determination: "They could not hear us, not at all, / They mocked us, and they'd shut us down, / They watched us sink, and they hoped we'd drown" (100). The song creates alienation effects by disrupting emotional engagement and prompting the audience to reflect critically on socio-political struggles. The lyrics highlight the marginalization faced by Connolly and his movement, encouraging consideration of broader historical implications. They illustrate that the social, economic, and political conditions of the poor working class are deplorable under the rule of Queen Victoria. Connolly believed that these sufferings were imposed by "the hand of greed and treachery in the darkest and most ignorant days of our history" (Fox, *James Connolly-The Forerunner*, 45). To break the fourth wall, the playwrights use Brechtian techniques to foster a critical detachment, inviting the audience to engage with the play on an intellectual level and delve into its socio-political themes. In Scene 11, Connolly and Mr. Keir Hardie argue about the retreat. Hardie insists that workers must support Home Rule. While Connolly contemplates the voting population, Hardie says: "I'm afraid your Socialism in Ireland is up the creek both oar and paddle: Jim, pull yourself to the ground, man, before you're blown beyond the moon!" (117). He warns Connolly that his socialism is doomed, advising him to gather votes before continuing the discussion.

Act Three opens on Christmas night when Connolly feels devastated for having nothing to give his family. A begging child asks for money, and Connolly reluctantly gives him three pennies, returning home empty-handed. Lillie suggests he return to Scotland or leave the country, but Connolly hesitates. He then receives an invitation from Daniel De Leon to lecture on working-class immigrants in the U.S. Connolly traveled across several states to give lectures and returned to Ireland with earnings to support his family and the ISRP (137-141). After the party declared bankruptcy, he and Jack Lyng met to discuss issues like printing costs for Connolly's book, rent for the committee room, and bills. After a disagreement, Connolly resigned, feeling let down by other ISRP members. In Scene 10, Connolly asserts, "Party or no party, I must continue to publish the paper. Why, sure, they will ask me back; they will beg me to reconsider" (143). This section draws from historical records of Connolly's travels and plans, embedding his struggle within a dramatic framework for authenticity.

IV.2.4. Part Four: *The New World* 1903 – 1910

The fourth part of *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* emphasizes James Connolly's dedication through three acts. Act 1 introduces Connolly in the United States as a member of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and his frustration with sectarianism. Act 2 shows Connolly connecting with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and establishing the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF) for Irish immigrants. However, disagreements with De Leon led Connolly to seek other opportunities in the U.S. Act 3 highlights his struggles in New York, where he supports Eugene Debs' presidential campaign and takes a paid position with the Socialist Party of America, prompting him to relocate again (147-149).

The first scene of Act 1 illustrates the oppressive conditions of proletarians as workers of various ethnic backgrounds are assigned to exploitative bosses by Samuel Gompers: "We must have immigrants and blacks and yellow dirty dagoes. To hire and fire at our own desire and moderate the payroll" (152). This quote reflects the harsh realities faced by immigrants in early 20th-century New York. Scenes 2 and 3 depict labour disputes between Debs' Socialist Party and De Leon's faction. Connolly arrives in New York, recounts his past contributions, and meets Frank Lyon, who initially does not recognize him. After some conversation, Lyon refers Connolly to De Leon (159). When Connolly meets De Leon, he expresses interest in working with him, but De Leon suggests he is not yet qualified and should find a job elsewhere. The exchange concludes with Connolly's dismissal at the end of Scene 3 (156-161).

In Scene 4, Connolly begins working as an insurance agent, earning a seven percent commission for each new customer he enrolls. He meets a customer who becomes his ally in the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and encourages him to continue writing. Scene 5 unfolds with De Leon's fury ignited by Connolly's critical letter about the SLP, published in *The Weekly People*. In scene 6, Connolly and the Troy branch find themselves in a heated discussion about Connolly's letter. A woman worker expresses her fears about losing her job to machines. Passano, a messenger from De Leon, urges the group to focus on their local issues in Troy rather than assisting others. He advises Connolly to attend the convention, but Connolly is troubled by the prospect of affording insurance if they go on strike. Connolly is then abruptly fired by the Manager, who claims that policyholders on strike pose a threat to their future coverage. With his family's imminent arrival from Ireland, Connolly is consumed by anxiety and a sense of being overwhelmed. He utters, "And any time now my family comes from Ireland – oh God, what to do for the best?" (168). His comrade suggests that he leave Troy to seek work in preparation for the struggles ahead.

Act Two begins with Gompers assuring President Theodore Roosevelt that a Russian-style uprising will not happen in New York. During Scene 2, IWW organizer Debs leads a meeting, but police soon interrupts, demanding attendees disperse. Scene 3 features Connolly and Lillie expressing their disillusionment with capitalism, addressing the audience directly through a disturbing song:

Will you look at me – I'm flat broke:

No money in my pocket, and where the hell can I get work?

Try my luck as I did before with the insurance companies: no luck.

I carried tiles up a ladder for a craftsman on a roof, but no luck. I fell off.

No union card, except the pink one on the heel of my left sock –

And that one will feed no family: more like it will break my back. (185)

In Scene 8, Irish Americans gather to celebrate the formation of the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF), raising banners bearing its name. Connolly proclaims that the Federation aims to help Ireland gain independence and announces a new newspaper, *The Harp*. A local publican underestimates his efforts and asks a worker to remove him, while an Old Fenian offers support. De Leon congratulates Connolly on his election by the Socialist Labour Party of New Jersey and shares a copy of *The Weekly People*. Connolly finds a letter criticizing the Federation's ethnic basis and responds despite De Leon's objections (199-202).

Act 3 opens with unemployed workers holding placards that read "Slumps Hits USA—Five Million Out of Work" demanding their jobs from 1907.

I do not want your millions, mister:

I don't want your diamond ring.

All I want is the right to live, mister:

Give me my job back again. (210)

This song, along with the placards and banners, help alienate the audience and break the illusion of actuality as they provide authentic information about the historical context of the conditions of emigrants in New York in the early 20th century and provoke them to think critically about the nature of the Marxist class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Historicizing the social conflict and presenting it in a song is an alienation technique that transforms the audience's perspective into a critical state. The Unemployed keep singing as the distancing and alienating effect of the songs works appropriately to keep the audience attentive to the class oppression during that era, which is perfectly historicized by the playwrights:

We worked to build this country, mister

While you enjoyed a life of ease:

You've stolen all that we built, mister:

Now, your children starve and freeze. (210-211)

Connolly discusses his books, *Labour in Irish History* and *Socialism Made Easy*, with Lillie, emphasizing his ideals and the National Liberation Movement (215-216). By referencing these works, the playwrights compellingly illuminate Connolly's beliefs and the movement. In Scene 6, Connolly faces issues with De Leon, who accuses him of undermining the ISRP in Dublin. De Leon portrays Connolly as an unskilled worker intent on sabotaging the SLP. Due to Connolly's illness, Elizabeth Flynn attends the meeting but leaves because of De Leon's behavior. The delegates confront De Leon about his prejudice, leading the Chairman to adjourn the meeting until Connolly recovers (220-221).

In Scene 8, D'Arcy and Arden point out the historical context of the presidential elections, which affirms the campaigns in 1908. Eugene Debs ran for the chair for the second time after 1904, receiving half a million votes. He was a rifle for the Republican-elected William Taft, who later became the President of the United States. Connolly supports Debs because if he wins, socialism will spread. Unfortunately, Debs lost with fewer than a half million votes compared to the first election. However, Debs does not give the impression of distress as he claims: "The campaign has ended. However, the loyal support given to me in every part of the country expressed the true spirit of socialist comradeship, which is the making of our movement and will sustain it through every ordeal until it is finally triumphant" (229). Even though Debs's defeat has frustrated all his supporters, Connolly maintains his spirit and never loses hope as he says after the release of the election results: "After the defeat, the discussion of the reason therefore/ Reordering of the battalions for the next battle in the long, long war" (229). D'Arcy and Arden have applied historicization as an

alienation technique in the above quote, which is accurately recited from the historically documented public speech of Eugene V. Debs: “The End of a Magnificent Campaign” (November 3, 1908).

After spending seven difficult years in America, Connolly leaves, reflecting, “Seven years in this great wilderness where nothing will breed/ But dry bones, thorns, and broken stone” (234). He hopes to establish the Irish Socialist Federation and feels compelled to return to Ireland, where his contributions are urgently needed. In 1910, Connolly returned to Ireland, looking forward to a new experience filled with emotions like hope and fear. To create an alienation effect among the audience, the playwrights include a song that signals the transition between the conclusion of Part Four and the beginning of Part Five. This technique also emphasizes the episodic structure as a Brechtian theater hallmark:

We must have Connolly till Larkin is at large.

All Ireland quakes and shudders; revolution is at hand.

James Connolly, come home to your own proper land!

Your fare will be paid, and your position will be assured.

At last, your Irish comrades send authentic urgent words:

Don't look back; leave your life to follow after

The whole new world of socialism breaks to birth across the water! (235)

This strategic use of songs and episodic narrative marks a significant shift in the plot. It reinforces the themes of struggle and solidarity, prompting the audience to reflect on the historical and social dynamics. The song alienates the audience by breaking the narrative flow, encouraging them to consider the broader implications of Connolly's journey and the burgeoning socialist movement in Ireland.

IV.2.5. Part Five: The Great Lockout 1910 – 1914

Act 1 of *Part Five* marks a pivotal moment, portraying Connolly's return to Ireland in response to Larkin's invitation. His expertise on socialism is sought after as he is sent to Belfast to supervise and organize the newly formed Irish Transport Workers Union. This act also highlights the clash between Connolly and William Walker in the Northern Irish labour movement. Act 2 then unfolds, depicting the Irish Labour Party (ILP) establishment and the enforcement of the 'Great Lockout' in Dublin, necessitating Connolly and Larkin's general strike. Act 3 demonstrates the failure of the 'Great Lockout' as the leader of the British trade union remains unresponsive to the Irish labourers' demands. The formation of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) and the Irish National Volunteers also takes place.

The rapid cross-cutting between short, compressed scenes is intended to capture the pace of history shaping the protagonist's life. Brown declares: “Instead of setting the action in a single room, or moving it between two contrasted scenes, or varying it according to strict narrative requirements, Arden chooses scenes that provide a series of different views and different confrontations” (200). Wixon also argues: “An episodic plot has the effect of breaking up the flow of the play and alienating the audience from the action. Rather than the continuous narrative and unbroken illusion of naturalistic drama, the audience views a series of broken scenes drawing attention to themselves as theatrical devices” (118). The play's use of rapid scene changes and its episodic structure engage the audience with the unfolding events and encourage them to reflect on the broader historical and social context. This deliberate interruption of emotional engagement, through extensive use of songs, verse, and direct address to the audience, is crucial in reinforcing the play's purpose of provoking thought and inspiring action regarding the historical and ongoing struggle for social justice. It encourages the audience to critically examine Connolly's sacrifices and the broader social and political struggles he represents. It also instills a sense of respect and admiration for Connolly's character and his unwavering commitment to his cause.

In this part, Connolly starts executing the mission, for which he left America, by meeting James Larkin, who is imprisoned now, and William O'Brien, who resembles him:

In America, through letters, I was led to believe
 That the socialist movement in Ireland had at least come alive –
 The prowl and leap of Larkin like a lion,
 The precise endurance of O'Brien,
 Combined inside this jungle to ensure
 The hunting path that leads the working class to power
 At last drives forward, vigorous as a spear:
 Direct effect, we go, from here to there –. (248-249)

Connolly discusses his ideas and plans concerning the infrastructure required to establish the new party with Larkin and O'Brien. He states: "There must be at the end of it a precisely defined goal. On the one hand, the Socialist Party of Ireland; on the other, Jim Larkin's new Transport Workers' Union" (249). He steadfastly determines making nationalism a bridge between the two parties as he affirms: "And across the two of them we put a cross-bar – a genuine, national, working-class Labour Party for the first time in history belonging to the trade unions, supported by socialist theorists" (249). O'Brien confirms Connolly's shared vision and, consequently, the latter prepares himself for a visit to Larkin in prison (249).

Scene 12 presents a long monologue by Larkin that conveys the dreadful reality of the typical Irishman, born a proletarian, working in the fields, workshops, and factories: "Life all around appears to stagnate, everything miserable, depressing- I must get them to realize there is much great hope for the future- something worth working for if only the workers will rouse themselves..." (263-264). Larkin's monologue urges the crowd of workers and the play's audience to think critically about their current situation and strive to transcend their present circumstances. It alienates the audience by describing the deteriorating conditions of Irish people within the historical context of the Marxist class struggle as an essential Brechtian theme. It helps the audience comprehend the contemporary situation by historicizing the dramatic situation. Larkin's alternating between directly addressing the audience and talking to the onstage crowd breaks the illusion of actuality.

Scene 14 showcases the Mill Girls' frustration with capitalist exploitation and their subsequent strike, illustrating the power of collective action and Connolly's role in advocating for worker's rights. It begins with the Mill Girls, who suffer from the pressure imposed on them by capitalists to accelerate work and production. After pushing them to their limits, the women workers go on a strike:

And the cry of the harried master is for always 'Faster faster–
 More work for no more pay
 No more idleness this day ...!'
 Strand by strip, the thread will snap:
 They all come out - they've had enough! (268)

These angry women go to Connolly, requesting a solution, as their role in the strike is not inferior to that of their male counterparts. As the situation escalates, Connolly summons his daughter Nora to write down their demands. Connolly responds that they do not have funds to solve the problems, and it would be much wiser to be in touch with Miss Marry Galway, who appears on the stage denouncing the women's act. A compromise begins by Connolly with the 1st Employer to settle things as he faces a bald accusation from the Priest. Things settle down between Connolly and the Employer, which agitates Walker, claiming that he is supposed to be confined to his tasks. Connolly replies, "I was sent here to represent those who were not represented" (274). Happiness and excitement are swept through the women:

Cheer up, Connolly, your name is everywhere.

You left Old Baldy sitting in his chair.

Crying for mercy: Mercy was not there.

Cheer up, Connolly, your name is everywhere! (274)

This success reinforces Connolly's status with the socialists in Ireland. As it induces alienation among the audience, the song depicts a cheerful scenario and sets the stage for the conclusion of Act 1.

In Act 2, P. T. Daly appears on the stage for the first time, asking for volunteers from the trade union who fit the roles they will be requested to fill. These men will be delegates if they have been successfully elected for the roles. This impels Connolly to come from Ulster and become elected. The call he makes is to protest against all the middle classes:

The modest middle classes, with all due speed

To counteract the bosses and their greed.

Shopkeepers, journalists, teachers, lawyers, doctors, priests – d'ye not realize

The town and trade of Wexford fall to bits before your eyes! (277)

The above song emphasizes the theme of class conflict. Connolly anticipates a civil war between the proletariat and the capitalists to break out in the future, as he says: "To inform you that civil war was about to break out" (277). This quote deploys historicization to emphasize the historical incident of the Great Lockout.

Larkin is on the brink of starting a strike. In Scene 8, the strike is declared by Larkin on Tuesday and stated by the Narrator, who represents an outsider commentator on the action and symbolizes the dividing line between the dramatic world and the actual historical incidents. The upcoming song narrates the historical facts of the strike's initiation, concurrently fostering a sense of alienation among the spectators:

At ten in the morning

The trams all stopped, and the drivers left them

The conductors went home without forewarning.

On every set of rails in Dublin, A silent tramcar stood like a statue

From the windows projected the heads of the passengers

Calling and crying in the hope of rescue. (295)

Connolly is released after a week of imprisonment: "For a week in Mountjoy prison, I went without food. It did some good" (306). Connolly attempts to reach out to the leaders across various regions in Britain. Unfortunately, his attempts are futile. Despite the atrocity he comes across, he keeps pushing the strikers to endure the hardship they are going through by saying: "Be men now or be forever slaves!" (325). James Larkin is released and meets with Connolly. To cope with the state of the Lockout, Connolly suggests that they should form an army that is well-organized, trained, and supervised by them to guarantee the protection they need while marching. The Narrator appoints: "Draw back the curtain and reveal/ The Citizen Army at their drill" (327). Captain White is given the leadership of the ICA. In their first encounter, they face the police, who subsequently retreat after the first clash. The ICA celebrates the initial successful operation with a cheer.

IV.2.6. Part Six: Professional 1914 – 1916

The final part of the cycle illuminates the aftermath of the Great Lockout in Dublin, as initially presented in the first act. Fear surged due to the Irish constitutional crisis, the threat posed by the general strike in Britain, and the escalating international tensions worldwide. The second act of Part Six illustrates the international collapse of socialism following the outbreak of World War I (337). James Connolly is determined to confront imperialism by seeking an alliance with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the

National Volunteers (339). In the concluding act of this section, James Connolly leads the Irish Citizen Army into the Easter Rising of 1916. He is involved in the global conflict in pursuit of socialism despite the overwhelming force he faces. Consequently, he is compelled to surrender and eventually executed by a firing squad (341). As the curtains draw back, the playwrights contextualize the year 1914, Post-Great Lockout, with a song that reflects Connolly's bitter defeat and the collapse of the Lockout:

Nineteen hundred and fourteen
And in Dublin, has there been –
Must we say that we have seen –
In the great strike and the locking-out
Through all this winter, we have fought –
Immeasurable defeat...? (349)

Through carefully orchestrated musical interludes, Arden and D'Arcy aim to entertain, inform, and analyze human nature and societal conditions while challenging traditional forms of emotional engagement.

In *Part Six*, D'Arcy and Arden provide historical insights into the groundwork and strategizing behind the Easter Rising. Due to global tensions, Connolly takes action to uphold the Irish Constitution. One proposed solution is to seek assistance from the National Volunteers, who appear onstage after the curtains open. The leaders gather to document their demands, with arms supplies at the top. Connolly believes an alliance with the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) would be effective. Tom Clarke assures them that negotiations are underway with a German arms merchant to secure rifles. O'Casey outlines several terms to consider, stating: "One: the first and last principle of the Irish Citizen Army is the avowal that the ownership of Ireland, moral and material, is vested right in the people of Ireland. The Irish Citizen Army shall stand for the absolute unity of Irish nationhood." (363) Connolly responds enthusiastically, "Let's add to it this: we support the rights and liberties of the democracies of all nations". Larkin suggests an additional term, expressing his agreement with O'Casey's points: "Five: before being enrolled, every applicant for the Citizen Army must, if eligible, be a member of his trade union, such union being recognized by the Irish Trade Union Congress. (364) Before the curtains fall, Connolly expresses his belief that the flame of socialism will endure, stating, "I am confident that the International Socialist Movement will unite throughout Europe to prevent an unimaginable holocaust" (379).

Act 2 portrays the escalating historical situation worldwide due to the First World War, which negatively impacted socialism in Ireland. During this act, Connolly demonstrates unwavering perseverance in combating imperialism. However, efforts are made to recruit the Irish to defend Britain in the war. The playwrights incorporate Eoin MacNeill's statement to reflect his shock as he articulates: "They split! For Redmond and his proposal to devote the Volunteers to the defense of the British Empire—one hundred and eighty-eight thousand have offered themselves. Eoin MacNeill, opposing this decision, received support from no more than twelve thousand" (388). Connolly and MacNeill debate the potential for staging a protest against British imperialism, as they see it as the only means to prevent the collapse of socialism due to the war. Connolly asserts that if Larkin and the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) do not begin working alongside him, he is convinced that socialism will fail, leaving many individuals unemployed. As influential figures in the socialist movement, Larkin and the ICA played a vital role in Connolly's vision. He warns that greedy capitalists will enslave workers in the fields (392). Volunteers and MacNeil urge Irishmen not to enlist in the British Army, repeating their message insistently. Connolly joins them in chanting: "Don't join the British Army, don't join the British Army, don't join the British Army" (393). In response, Connolly dedicates himself to producing pamphlets, leaflets, newspapers, and books.

In Scene 16, Connolly is abducted by two members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), blindfolded, and brought before prominent figures such as Pearse, Clarke, Plunkett, MacDermott, and other IRB leaders.

Pearse apologizes to Connolly for his abduction, explaining that it is for Connolly's safety to avoid public exposure, as the two parties have a mutual goal of convening (407). They plan to incite a riot, and Connolly inquires about the date of the execution. Pearse replies, "Easter Sunday, which falls this year on April 23. Three full months from now. I don't know about scientific matters, Mr. Connolly, but militarily, it's precise" (408). Connolly prefers to stick to his original plan, stating that previous riots have failed. Pearse urges Connolly to accept his assistance within the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), emphasizing their potential to make a significant impact. Plunkett informs Connolly that Sir Roger Casement will support them with weaponry. Pearse asks Connolly to ally with the ICA, justifying his request by saying, "I'd go so far as to say, Mr. Connolly, that without the Citizen Army and its background and experience, a successful battle in Dublin would hardly be possible. So, what do you think?" (408-409). Connolly requests twenty-four hours to consider the matter before responding to Pearse. After deep reflection, he decides to join them, a decision that will echo through the annals of Irish history, stating before the scene concludes, "Mr. Pearse—shall we have a word!" The curtains then fall on Act 2 (415).

Act 3 opens with Pearse and Connolly continuing their discussion about the riot. Connolly expresses his willingness to collaborate under certain conditions: the agenda of the ICA must remain separate from that of the IRB, and he will not be under any superior command. Pearse agrees to these terms, and Connolly is appointed a member of the Military Council (416). Connolly then questions Pearse about socialism, sharing his vision for a unified Ireland: "We want, and we must, have economic conscription in Ireland. Socialism. Joint ownership of land resources. Under one common direction, Ireland may live and bear upon her fruitful bosom the most significant number of the freest people she has ever known" (417). Connolly advocates for "the men of no property," arguing that class struggle is unavoidable and must be addressed (417). Pearse responds, "Class conflict with a nation is more destructive than anything else" (417). Connolly counters, "Class conflict is inevitable until the nation itself agrees to outlaw all exploiters. There's no compromise" (417). The incorporation of Marxist ideas in the play, alongside historical details, effectively alienates the audience and reflects Arden and D'Arcy's alignment with the Brechtian approach to Marxism.

Connolly meets with O'Brien and Countess Markievicz to strategize against Murphy, declaring, "We need fury against Murphy. We need fury against the state" (419). He instructs O'Brien to inform the managers hired by employers to be ready for radical action and assures them that financial support will be provided (420). The plan begins with ICA members bringing in boxes of weapons while Nora brings a green flag to hoist. A Police Officer arrives to arrest Connolly, but he challenges, "Do you have a warrant?" (425). Connolly is accused of distributing illegal newspapers. He asserts that this is Liberty Hall, where they can do as they please, insisting the Police Officer check with his superiors for any law against what he calls "subversive football." This argument forces the Police Officer to retreat.

On Thursday, the 26th anniversary of James Connolly and his wife Lillie is noted. This anniversary holds a significant emotional and historical weight, as it symbolizes the couple's enduring commitment to the revolutionary cause. Nora remarks, "In Belfast, on Holy Thursday, the twenty-sixth anniversary of her marriage in Scotland to the Irish revolutionary." Lillie adds, "He doesn't think I'll stay in Belfast, washing blankets, in this small home? I would stand with him and his guns in Liberty Hall, if I could" (435). They decide to go to Dublin to see him. Nora receives a letter to return to Belfast, a proclamation that is best kept hidden. She must memorize its contents. The proclamation reads, as prepared by D'Arcy and Arden: "The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the people of Ireland. Irish men and Irish women, in the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland – through us – summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom" (436). This scene juxtaposes personal and political devotion, highlighting Lillie's unwavering support for Connolly and the revolutionary cause. The reading of the proclamation underscores the historical significance and nationalistic fervor that define their struggle. The blend of personal narrative with a political manifesto is a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made for Irish freedom, and the personal sacrifices made for the political cause resonate deeply with the audience.

The ICA and the National Volunteers take the stage, raising their flags. Pearse commands the IRB to march to the General Post Office (GPO) (436-437). As they infiltrate the building, Connolly and Carney try to find

enough space to establish it as their headquarters. The stage representing the GPO becomes surrounded and is under attack (438). Connolly's expression during the battle reflects the struggle they are facing. He says, "They've tried with cavalry, God help them, we beat them off. They've tried with infantry, and we're beating them off" (440). An ICA member desires to return to work after the Bank Holiday. Connolly questions him about the meaning of the flag they are hoisting, to which the member responds, "Sure, the freedom of Ireland." Connolly then asks him which employer he works for, and he replies, "Dirty Murphy" (442). Connolly assigns him the task of hoisting the flag on Murphy's hotel.

As the struggle intensifies, Connolly is forced to evacuate from the GPO and go to the barricades across the street to assess the situation. Unfortunately, he is shot in the leg, but the GPO is successfully evacuated (444). Many people are killed, consequently, the Provisional Government agree to an unconditional surrender. Connolly and Pearse reach an agreement for their men. The General holds a court-martial and instructs a Subaltern to read the names of those convicted. The names mentioned include Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Thomas Clarke, Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, and William Pearse. The General delivers the verdict, stating, "Death." The next names to be read are John MacBride, Edmund Kent, Michael Mallin, and Thomas Kent, to which the General again declares, "Death." As the names continue to be read, Connolly expresses his unwavering patriotism:

Out in the street, the people throng and rush

And cry aloud 'Bread, bread, where is our food –

This child destroys our life,' they cry.

It would not have been done had there been any other way.

They'll never understand why I am here.

They all forget I am an Irish man. (448)

The remaining names are John Heuston, Cornelius Colbert, John MacDermott, and James Connolly. The General delivers the final verdict: "Death." Grabitall reappears and mocks Connolly, saying, "The man with the wounded leg is still alive" (448). The General is informed that Connolly cannot stand, so he orders Connolly to be executed while seated. The playwrights use the last line of this song, marking it as a historical quote that Irish men and women will remember for eternity. Connolly's following reflective speech is a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of perseverance, persistence, dedication, and determination:

For nearly thirty years, I tried

To clear the world of those who now have had me tied

Into my chair and shot at till I died.

They always claimed that they were here to stay.

They did not ask us if they may. (448)

Connolly's poetic reflection on British imperialism emphasizes the lasting legacy of oppression in Ireland, particularly by referencing the historical events of the Easter Rising in 1916 as a symbol of resistance against colonial rule. The imagery of disbelief highlights the profound impact of the uprising, compelling both British authorities and the Irish people to confront the significance of the struggle for independence. Through concise yet evocative language, Connolly captures the essence of this pivotal moment in Irish history, encouraging viewers to reflect on the ongoing struggle for sovereignty and celebrating the enduring resilience of the Irish people.

And indeed, once more, in Ireland, my own home

They could not credit what it was they had done

Or what it was in Dublin we'd begun

At Easter, nineteen hundred and sixteen. (448)

Connolly's poignant verse serves as a haunting reminder of the indomitable spirit of Ireland's revolutionary struggle. Through vivid imagery and a rhythmic flow, the poem emphasizes the enduring importance of Ireland's pursuit of independence and encourages the audience to confront the ongoing legacy of oppression and resistance.

We were the first to show the dark, deep hole within

Could be thrown open to the living sun.

We were the first to feel their loaded gun

That would prevent us doing it anymore-

Or so they hoped. We were the first.

We shall not be the last.

This was not history. It has not passed. (448)

Connolly's death does not mark the end of his impact; instead, it solidified a legacy that demands active reconsideration and provides essential lessons for the future. The repeated phrases "We were the first" and "We shall not be the last" are a testament to Connolly's unwavering commitment to confront the tyranny of British imperialism.

IV. Conclusion

The Non-Stop Connolly Show is an exceptional historical drama that articulates the ideals of James Connolly's ideology within the context of Ireland's national liberation movement. It is a significant addition to contemporary dramatic literature, honoring Connolly and offering a nuanced exploration of his historical importance. By transforming Connolly's life story into an intellectually engaging exploration of history, socialism, and Irish nationalism, Arden and D'Arcy have created a literary achievement that resonates with audiences and prompts reflection on current socio-political issues. They have emphasized Connolly's role, encouraging audiences to re-examine his contributions to the socio-political domain and engage with historical narratives while celebrating Connolly's legacy. This deliberate focus enhances the play's dramatic impact and underscores its relevance as a critical examination of historical narratives, ideological constructs, and Connolly's lasting influence. By linking historical events to contemporary issues, the play stimulates intellectual curiosity and fosters a connection to ongoing socio-political discussions.

This study highlights how D'Arcy and Arden have created a compelling dramatic work that transcends mere representation, challenges the Aristotelian notions of the tragic hero, and offers a nuanced exploration of Ireland's anti-colonial struggle. They have skillfully woven together biographical details and historical events, balancing historical authenticity with an artistic interpretation of Connolly's life. The playwrights have delved beneath surface-level facts to portray human experiences and challenges within an authentic historical context, showcasing their exceptional craftsmanship. Their interpretation of the past is closely tied to contemporary realities, suggesting that reconstructing history requires imaginative engagement with established facts. Arden and D'Arcy have effectively reconciled the dichotomy between the mythologized version of Connolly and the historical figure by grounding their portrayal in historical accounts of his life. This approach features a dynamic development of historical facts, enabling a critical and independent reinterpretation of the past.

The play revolves around the conflicting ideals of reform and revolution. This conflict can also be understood as a tension between nationalism and internationalism, with revolution being a universal concept. To be revolutionary means transcending the current reality in order to transform it. The plays examine the extent to which Connolly recognized the complex relationship between nationalism and revolution. He faced a significant internal conflict, wrestling with the dichotomy between nationalism and socialism. As a member of an occupied nation striving for freedom, Connolly embraced socialism to address economic, political, and social issues, which was a transformative act in itself. The playwrights have

effectively explored Connolly's impact on the socio-political domain, drawing the audience into a profound examination of the complexities surrounding nationalism and socialism. Their unique approach highlights the intricate interplay between these two ideologies in *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*. From the outset, the play starkly portrays the harsh realities faced by the oppressed working class. Connolly's explicit rejection of capitalism, which he deemed a primary obstacle to social justice, led him to advocate for socialism as a solution to economic, political, and social inequities. His various occupational experiences deepened his awareness of social injustices and class disparities, fueling his belief in the need for proletarian empowerment for political agency. By providing detailed depictions of the social, political, and economic conditions faced by the working class in Ireland, Britain, and the U.S. during Connolly's lifetime, the play contextualizes his development as a socialist leader. This historical framing encourages audiences to consider the ongoing relevance of Connolly's struggles and ideas in contemporary society.

Connolly's efforts illustrate the tension between national liberation and socialist ideals, often with nationalist passion overshadowing socialist goals—an outcome influenced by subjective factors related to Irish national identity and culture. This prioritization is evident in many historical instances where Connolly and his followers focused on nationalist objectives, sometimes at the expense of socialist aspirations. His assertion, "I am an Irishman," captures his struggle with the inherent opposition between nationalism and socialism. Through the thematic lens of double struggles, the play confronts British imperialism and the oppressive forces of capitalism, inviting audiences to critically reflect on Connolly's legacy and its profound relevance to contemporary social and political issues. This exploration of intersectionality not only deepens appreciation for Connolly's principles but also stimulates critical engagement with these intertwined ideologies. *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* is a universal literary achievement that resonates across various periods of political turmoil, inviting audiences to connect with its thematic explorations. The symbolic representation of humanity's highest ideals through heroic transcendence raises awareness of the nature of struggle. Heroism emerges as a vital characteristic within the nationalistic figure, navigating the complexities of liberation and social transformation while facing significant external challenges. This journey culminates in Connolly's physical demise, mirroring a metaphysical resurrection that ignites a collective national consciousness among his people.

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