

# Shaping a Terrible Beauty for Tourist consumption

The presentation of different groups in the Easter Rising in museums in Dublin



Master Thesis  
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**Abstract:**

This thesis will look at the question: in which ways are the memories of different groups in the Easter Rising presented to tourists in museums in Dublin? Four museums in Dublin will be examined in order to answer this question. The different groups that will be researched are the sixteen executed leaders, the women who participated in the rebellion, and the British army. All three groups have different statuses in Ireland, and therefore it will be interesting to see how they are presented. This thesis will argue that the touristic narratives offered in the four examined museums are all distinctly different, but that there is a trend in portraying a nuanced view of the rebels and the British army, as well as incorporation of women in the three newest museums. Through researching these three different groups, new light will be shed on the memories of the Easter Rising and a better understanding of incorporating groups of opposing sides in museums about conflict will be achieved.

**Key words:** Easter Rising, tourism, museums, Dublin, gender, conflict, controversy, British army, executed leaders, remembrance, commemoration

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## Introduction

*There's nothing but our own red blood*

*Can make a right Rose Tree.*

*-William Butler Yeats (96)*

When walking through Dublin city, the troublesome past of the island is tangible. One street in which the history is particularly visible is O'Connell Street. The first statue in the street is dedicated to Daniel O'Connell, who campaigned for Catholic emancipation in Ireland. The next is a statue of William Smith O'Brien, a leader of the failed Young Irelander Rebellion of 1848. As one makes their way along O'Connell Street, many of these statues can be found, along with one of the most recognisable monuments in this street, the Spire, a 120 metre needle. However, on closer inspection there are also some reminders of the history of the city which were not created on purpose, such as bullet holes in the post office building. These bullet holes were created during the Easter Rising in 1916. The city contains many reminders of this rebellion as well, and in 2016 many exhibitions and museums surrounding this uprising were opened.

On Monday, 24 April 1916, the Easter Rising began. The rebellion lasted six days. The Easter Rising was an insurrection against the English rule in Ireland. The insurrection was instigated by Irish nationalist parties such as the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Cumann na mBan, and the Irish Citizen Army. Even though the rising failed and the majority of the leaders were executed by the British army, it is deemed one of the most important moments in the Irish road to independence. This thesis will look at how the narrative of the Easter Rising was shaped and formed into the discourse that is now presented to tourists. The main question is: in which ways are the memories of different groups in the Easter Rising presented to tourists in museums in Dublin?

There has been a vast amount of research on the Easter Rising and the way it is commemorated, however it is not often linked to tourism. The only museum that is researched to some extent, is Kilmainham Gaol. This is probably due to the fact that this museum has been open for some decades now, while the other cases in this thesis are newer museums. This thesis will give more insight in not only how the Easter Rising is remembered but also how this memory is transformed into a touristic narrative. It will also show how Ireland

decides to present its history, and its future, which will help us to understand the Irish national identities better. Contested histories and how to present them will be an important element because the three different groups which are examined all have their own difficulties when it comes to presenting them.

The four cases that will be discussed are the GPO Witness History Visitor Centre, the Richmond Barracks, the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition and Kilmainham Gaol Museum. This selection is based on certain common denominators. All four sites have vital connections to the Easter Rising, and its aftermath, and now they all house a museum that is open to visitors which is dedicated at least in part to the Easter Rising. There are also distinct differences between the three different museums. Kilmainham Gaol has operated as a museum since 1966, while the GPO Witness History Visitor Centre, the Richmond Barracks, and the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition first opened their doors in 2016. All four also have different ties to each group, as some are more connected to the rebels and others to the British army.

The General Post Office (GPO) was an important site in the Easter Rising. It was the spot where Patrick Pearse, one of the leaders of the rebellion, read the proclamation, and it was used as the headquarters of the rebels for the majority of the Rising. The GPO is still an operating post office, and a museum opened in the building in 2016. This site is often associated with the Easter Rising, and is prominently featured in popular culture about the rebellion. The 2016 miniseries *Rebellion* features many iconic shots from the GPO throughout the first three episodes. The 1996 film *Michael Collins* even shows the rebels' surrender from a burning post office. This scene is rather a theatrical rendition of events than a historically accurate depiction, because the GPO had already been abandoned by the rebels before the ending of the insurrection. The actual surrender happened in Moore Street. The film ascribed an even bigger role to the GPO than it had. This kind of exposure has probably strengthened the connection between the memories of the Easter Rising and the GPO.

The Richmond Barracks do not have this exposure in popular culture as much as the GPO does. Once the rebels surrendered they were rounded up by the British army, and most of them were detained in these barracks. Here they awaited their sentences. When looking at the film *Michael Collins*, the barracks do not receive the same exposure as the GPO, in fact the period in the barracks is skipped entirely. *Rebellion* does feature the time the rebels spend in the Richmond Barracks, and the name of the barracks is mentioned multiple times, however, there is no recognisable footage of the barracks. The barracks in which the series is shot are the Collins Barracks ("Rebellion's Gleeson"). This location is explicable, because

only a small part of the Richmond Barracks has been preserved. However, it does lead to less exposure for the Richmond Barracks.

The Collins Barracks now house the decorative arts and military history branch of the National Museum as well as the separate Proclaiming a Republic exhibition, which is also examined in this thesis. These barracks were used as a British army base during the rebellion and British soldiers were sent from here to fight the rebels stationed at the Four Courts and the GPO among other places.

Kilmainham Gaol features in both *Michael Collins* and *Rebellion*, and is very recognisable in both. This site is different from the General Post Office and the Richmond Barracks, because it did not have a function as something else during the insurrection. The GPO served as a post office, and the Richmond Barracks as British Army barracks, but Kilmainham Gaol had been operating as a prison since 1796 (“Timeline”). The museum it now houses does not only focus on the rebels of the Easter Rising who were held here, and the fourteen leaders of the rebellion who were executed here, but also the rest of the history of the prison.

These cases will be researched through analysing the museums, by using some of the most intriguing themes. These include gender, to analyse the inclusion of women, othering, to understand and analyse the presentation of the British Army. These findings will be paired with secondary literature in order to put them into context.

The chapters in this thesis will be structured thematically. The first chapter will entail an explanation of the Easter Rising and the historical context, as well as the framework. The history of the four cases will also be expanded in this first chapter.

The second chapter will entail the answer to the question whether these museums focus on the sixteen executed leaders, and what the narratives surrounding these men entail. There were more than a thousand rebels that took part in the insurrection, there are a vast amount of stories to potentially focus on, however, the sixteen executed leaders are intrinsically bound to the rebellion, and were celebrated as martyrs after their executions. Therefore these men are often focused on in narratives about the Easter Rising. Even though many inhabitants were not in favour of the rebellion, the executions changed attitudes. Public sympathy started to turn in favour of the uprising quickly (Curayne 158). This chapter examines whether, over a hundred years after the conflict, these sixteen men are still seen as the faces of the Easter Rising, and in which ways they are presented.

In the third chapter, the representation of the British army will be analysed. Since the uprising was targeted against the English rule in Ireland, the Irish versus English narrative is

easily fabricated, however, a considerable part of the British army was made up of Irish soldiers. There is not a clear binary opposition, but some Irish people still see it that way. The recent developments in acknowledging the casualties of the British army in Easter Rising commemorations have not been without controversy.

The role of women will be the subject of the last chapter. The historical role of women in the Easter Rising will be analysed, and compared to the representation of women in the four museums. For a long time, the role of women in the uprising has been marginalised, even though it was remarkable to have women, not only operating as nurses, but also fight alongside men at the time. The aforementioned miniseries *Rebellion* might be seen as an attempt to shine a light on the forgotten participation of women, as it follows three fictional females during the Easter Rising, one of whom operates as a nurse, and one of whom fights alongside the men of the rising. This could be aiding the acknowledgement of the involvement of women in the Easter Rising, however, the series does not use the historical role of women to its full extent. The four museums will be analysed with regards to the presentation of these women in this chapter.

By researching these three groups a better understanding of the memories of the Easter Rising and a better understanding of incorporating different narratives and points of views in museums about conflict will be achieved.

## History and Remembrance

*Romantic Ireland is not old.  
For years untold her youth shall shine.  
Her heart is fed on Heavenly bread,  
The blood of martyrs is her wine.*

*-Joyce Kilmer (138)*

This chapter will be used to give more background information about the history of the Easter Rising, as well as the way memories with regards to the rebellion were shaped quickly. In addition, the museums will be contextualised more. First the history before the Easter Rising will be discussed briefly, after which an examination of Home Rule and the First World War will be used to explain the tensions in Ireland further. After this, the chapter will give an account of the Easter Rising week, and the way the event was remembered. Lastly the four museums will be explored briefly, in order to establish an understanding about these cases before looking at the three different groups. A detailed account of each group during the rebellion will be given in the chapter about the specific group.

### Beginnings

European studies scholar Joep Leerssen once wrote that writing about Ireland's history is not easy as, "beginnings and endings in history are anomalies, like trying to mark the beginning and end of an ocean current with boundary posts" (72). His description of the hardships in making a historical narrative also apply when trying to explain the rebellion of 1916. The Easter Rising was not a result of a few weeks, months or years of dissatisfaction, but rather a the result of a build-up of centuries of unrest. In the twelfth century the island was invaded by Henry II, a Norman, who was also king of England. James Dingley points out that this was technically not an Englishman, and thus he argues that the Irish were not under English rule for eight hundred years, as some Irish nationalists claim (151). However, they were ruled by the king of England, although he did not rule the entire island. The English monarchy did establish rule over the whole country in the Tudor and Stuart eras, in which the conditions did not better for the Irish. These periods saw many English and Scottish settlers being planted in newly acquired parts of Ireland (Dawson 33). During the Stuart era, the penal laws were



implemented. These were about political, economical, and religious restrictions which were imposed on the Catholic Irish (Connolly 263). The implementation of these laws affirmed the colonial identity for some Irish Catholics because they held a different status in society than those who were part of the Anglican church.

Another event that reinforced the colonial feeling in Irish nationalism was the Great Famine. During this famine the potato harvests failed between 1845 and 1850, which resulted in a million Irish people starving to death. Another estimated million people moved to America during, and just after the famine in order to escape that fate. Christophe Gillissen argues that this famine, and the way it was handled by the English monarch, Queen Victoria, contributed massively to the rise of Irish nationalism as: “[t]heir impression was that the Union had failed them in their hour of need, at best because of a callous neglect of what the British government perceived as second-class subjects of the United Kingdom, at worst through a deliberate policy of genocide” (Gillissen 333). Even though this notion of genocide is discarded by most scholars, it was a theory that some nationalists did believe at the time, which caused massive animosity among nationalists.

### Home Rule and World War

Because of this turbulent history many Irish people advocated the idea of Home Rule, which entailed a kind of self governance within the United Kingdom for Ireland. In the counties that nowadays make up the Republic of Ireland there was a longing for Home Rule, however, in the Northern counties of Ireland there was a big population of Protestants, who were afraid that self-governance would result in negative consequences, as the vast majority of the other counties was Catholic. After years of going back and forth, a Home Rule bill was passed through under the Parliament Act, with Royal Assent On 18 September 1914. However, that same year, on 28 June, the Archduke of Austria Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, which incited the First World War, which led to the implementation of Home Rule being postponed as The United Kingdom joined the war effort on 4 August. In September 1914 the plan of Irish nationalists inciting an insurrection while England was fighting in the First World War was first discussed by militant nationalists, most of whom were part of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret nationalist organisation (Maume et al. 41).

### Tensions on the Island

Irish identities are troublesome because of the many conflicting ideals within the country, and the religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics. These conflicting notions become clear, even within one single organisation such as the Irish Volunteers, as there was disunion with regards to the question of Irishmen enlisting for the First World War. This question caused a split in the organisation. One stance was that it was 'England's War' and that, since they were opposing English rule in Ireland, it was not their duty to participate. The other stance, a view led by John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Volunteers, was that the Irish should enlist, and join the British Army in their fight against Germany. He encouraged the men in his organisation to join the war, and the majority of the men in the Irish Volunteers followed his example, and went to fight. These men were called the Redmondites. Catriona Pennell describes how Germany was perceived in Ireland during the First World War: "On the whole, the population in Ireland, just as in Britain, felt that Germany was the enemy and that the cause against it was just. People feared Germany's aggression, her tyrannical rule and, in Catholic Ireland, her Protestantism" (40). For the men who felt this way, this was a reason to fight against Germany in the First World War, as they wanted to protect their own country, or other countries such as Belgium and France against Germany. Another reason why many Irish nationalists joined the army to fight against the Germans was because they felt that England might grant Ireland Home Rule, in gratitude, if the Irish showed that they were willing to be beneficent.

After John Redmond had left for the war, the minority of the Irish Volunteers who rejected the Redmondites, and stayed in Ireland were led by Eoin MacNeill, Patrick Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett and Thomas MacDonagh. The latter three would play important roles in the Easter Rising, while Eoin MacNeill tried to prevent the armed uprising by placing advertisements in newspapers which advised to not participate.

The postponement of Home Rule and the establishment of many opposing paramilitary groups at the times caused tension within Ireland. These tensions and the demand for Home Rule eventually led to the insurrection that started on Easter Monday 1916. A group of Irish nationalists considered that Home Rule had been delayed for too long enough and decided to act instead of wait.

Sir Roger Casement, another member of the Irish Volunteers, travelled to Berlin to seek German help for the insurrection. This gives an indication of the perception that some Irishmen had of the war. They did not oppose the Germans and observed no need to participate, because the English were not their allies and the Germans were not their enemies.

The fact that they requested German support signifies that some Irishmen rather perceived the English as their opponent than the Germans. During 1915, the unrest within the paramilitary nationalist organisations grew because the First World War had not come to an end yet and the prospect of Home Rule did not seem to get any closer. The members of the organisations started planning an insurrection. The leaders agreed on a rebellion during Easter 1916. Roger Casement received arms from the Germans but was arrested by the British upon his arrival back in Ireland, just days before the insurrection, which meant that the arms were never delivered to the rebels.

### The Rebellion Begins

The Easter Rising started on 24 April 1916. It was an insurrection not many civilians were prepared for. James Moran points out that some Dubliners even confused the start of the rebellion for a play (15). This confusion underlines the fact that the Rising was not supported by a majority of the civilians, and many did not even know about the plans for the Rising. The rebellion, which should have been a national uprising, remained for the largest part centred around Dublin with only a small part of the rebels they had expected to report for duty. This was a result of Eoin MacNeill's actions. After learning about the plans for the Easter Rising he placed advertisements advising the volunteers not to take part at the last moment.

One day after the commencement of the insurrection, British reinforcements arrived in Dublin. The British troops had heavier arms, and often did not know rebel from citizen, which resulted in a massive number of civilian casualties. After six days of fighting, on 29 April, Patrick Pearse signed the surrender, which ended the insurrection. Between 3 and 12 May 1916 fourteen of the Rising leaders were executed, including Pearse, Plunkett and MacDonagh. The execution of Sir Roger Casement followed in August that same year. Public sympathy began to turn in favour of the Easter Rising quickly (Curtayne 158). The sixteen men that were executed in the wake of the Rising were soon idolised as martyrs of the Irish nationalist cause. Many Irish citizens were shocked and outraged by the force the British troops had used against this rebellion.

### Commemorating the Insurrection

Perhaps one of the key notions in understanding the Easter Rising, and the way it is remembered is Guy Beiner's notion of the "triumphalist commemoration of traumatic

experiences” (Beiner 367). Beiner uses Bernard Giesen’s theory that national identities are intrinsically bound to trauma and triumph (Beiner 367). Beiner argues that the memories of the Easter Rising start before the rebellion itself, paradoxically. He argues that national memories are based on “templates provided by recollections of earlier experiences” (370). These earlier experiences can influence the ways people experience certain things and thus influence the way certain events are remembered. Therefore, in order to understand the Easter Rising and the ways in which it is presented in museums nowadays, one has to go back more than a hundred years ago, beyond 1916. Beiner’s theory starts in 1688, the period of the Williamite or Jacobite war. This war between King William III of Orange and the ousted King James II caused a divide in Ireland. The Protestant Ascendancy in the country generally supported the first while the Catholics generally supported the latter. The Jacobite defeat was, according to Beiner, a catastrophic blow for the Catholics in Ireland (373).

However, Beiner argues that the Irish supporters of James II developed a “triumphalist tone of wishful thinking”, despite the defeat (374). He also notes that the Jacobite war was not the only defeat which was changed into a triumphalist memory. The Irish Rebellion of 1798, or the United Irishmen Rebellion, a rebellion, like the Easter Rising, against British rule, was suppressed. However, its leaders were elevated into heroic martyrs due to popular press. One of the most famous of these rebels who was turned into a martyr was Theobald Wolfe Tone, who was sentenced to death for his role in the rebellion but died in his prison cell before the sentence could be carried out. Only five years later, the United Irishmen, the same group, led another failed insurrection. Robert Emmet was one of the leaders of this rebellion, and his sentence was the usual for leaders of rebellions; he too was sentenced to death. He gave one last speech from the docks, which would inspire Irish nationalists even a hundred years later, as he proclaimed: “when my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written” (qtd. in Beiner 375).

Beiner claims that these rebels helped to form a “republican model of martyrdom”, which turns rebels into celebrated martyrs for the cause of Irish freedom (375). He argues that presenting these defeats as steps toward the nation’s liberation of English rule and presenting these rebels as martyrs of Ireland is central to his theory of “triumph of defeat” (Beiner 375). The many failed Irish rebellions against English were paradoxically remembered as exemplary events according to Guy Beiner (375).

The 1916 Easter Rising is the culmination of the tradition of the triumph of defeat theory, according to Beiner. Patrick Pearse, one of the Easter Rising leaders, was greatly inspired by Robert Emmet because he was one of these rebels whose memory was

transformed into a heroic martyr (Beiner 377). Many of the leaders of the 1916 rising expressed that they were inspired by, what they perceived as heroes, like Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet, which can be seen in some of the examined museums.

The Easter Rising was thus inspired by these failed insurrections. The leaders of the Easter Rising, like the leaders of the other failed rebellions, were executed. Most of them were executed over a period of ten days, and these executions brought to life the idea that these men sacrificed themselves for their dreams, which helped to form the notion of these men as political martyrs. They followed in the footsteps of earlier executed rebels, who were celebrated in Ireland as heroes.

Beiner claims that the Easter Rising was the start of a successful Irish revolution, regardless of the fact that the rebellion had failed in military terms, as the rebellion awakened Irish nationalism in many Irishmen. The notion that the Easter Rising was the start of this Irish revolution has most likely served as a reason to commemorate the Easter Rising as an important event in Irish history. Even though the 1916 rebellion is essence failed, many of its leaders are seen as Irish heroes, and the Easter Rising is often seen as a successful blow to English rule in Ireland. Since the Easter Rising is considered as such a pivotal point in Irish history, doing research into how the memories of this conflict is transformed into touristic narratives in museums will give more insight into how it is remembered.

#### Four Dublin Museums

The four cases which were chosen for this thesis all have museums that are completely, or in part about the Easter Rising, and all four buildings are sites that have strong ties to the rebellion.

The first case is the GPO Witness History Visitor Attraction. The General Post Office, or GPO, was an operating post office in the time of the rebellion, and still is today. The GPO served as the headquarters for the rebels for the majority of the duration of the Easter Rising. The building was abandoned on 28 April, after which the headquarters were set up in Moore Street, from where a day later Pearse surrendered. The biggest part of the building was in ruins, but has since been restored. In 2016 the museum opened in the basement of the building. The museum features many videos in which different historians give their views on certain elements of the rising. There are also many display cases in which items are displayed,

such as uniforms and other artefacts like personal belongings. On touch screens the visitor can read about each item, and who it belonged to. There is also a film, of about twenty minutes, about the events of the Easter Rising, which takes place for the biggest part in the GPO. The narrative of the museum in the basement starts with the build up to the Easter Rising, with explanations about the tensions in the country at the time, and ends with some information about the War of Independence and the Civil War. One level up there is some information about the way the Easter Rising has been commemorated throughout the years. The GPO Witness History Visitor Centre is one of the seven permanent reminders, which are government funded projects to keep the memory of the Easter Rising alive. The aim of the museum is to give an unbiased account of the Easter Rising, not just from the rebels' side but all sides, including the citizens (FitzGerald).

The second case is the Collins Barracks. These barracks, now called Collins after Irish nationalist Michael Collins, were called the Royal Barracks in 1916, and were British military barracks. During the rebellion, the men who were stationed in the Collins Barracks fought against the rebels stationed in the Four Courts. Nowadays, the barracks are used as a museum about decorative arts as well as military history. The wing on military history has some information on the Easter Rising, but this thesis will focus on a separate exhibition on the rebellion called 'Proclaiming a Republic'. The exhibition features display cases with personal belongings from people involved with the Easter Rising, panels with information, touch screens with more in-depth information, an audio-loupe of an actor reading out the proclamation, like Pearse had done in 1916, a video of a dramatic re-enactment of the death of one of the rebels, and audio devices with which the tourist can listen to the last moments of the executed rebels. Sandra Heise says about the many artefacts on display: "they are a way for people to identify directly with not only the leaders, the people that usually get the attention, but the everyday participants in the rising" (Ireland 2016 // Éire). It is thus clear that the exhibition focuses mainly on participants, rather than civilians like the GPO. In addition, in that same video in which Heise makes this statement, only two of the many artefacts are highlighted, which happen to be the spectacles of Patrick Pearse and Seán Mac Diarmada, both leaders (Ireland 2016 // Éire). Even though they do have many artefacts from other people as well, there is still a focus on the leaders.

The third case is the Richmond Barracks. The barracks were, like the Collins Barracks, used as a British military base, and it was where many Irishmen who enlisted for the First World War trained before being sent to the front. The commencement of building the barracks

was in 1810 and the buildings that have been preserved were built between 1864 and 1877. The barracks have strong ties to the Easter Rising. The Royal Irish Regiment was based at the barracks and fought against the rebels who were led by Eamon Ceannt. After the rebels surrendered, over 3,000 suspected rebels were held at the barracks while awaiting their punishment. The court-martials of thirteen of the executed leaders took place at the Richmond Barracks before they were sent to Kilmainham Gaol (Ní Cléirigh). The barracks were transformed into housing after the Irish Free State came to be, and also housed a Christian Brothers school, before eventually being broken down for the biggest part. The parts of the barracks that are still intact were chosen to be one of the seven permanent reminders, like the GPO museum. An exhibition is now housed in the Richmond Barracks. The building which will be used as a case in this thesis is the Richmond Barracks gymnasium, as this is where many rebels were held captive, and where the exhibition on the Easter Rising is. The gymnasium has many panels with text, a big quilt with accompanying touch screens and an audio room, in which the visitor can listen to witness statements of rebels held at the barracks after the Easter Rising. The museum was set up in order to recover the parts of Irish history that had hitherto been largely neglected, such as the role of women in the Easter Rising, or the Irishmen in the British army (Ní Cléirigh).

Kilmainham Gaol is the final case which will be examined for this thesis. This historical site has a rich history, which is not confined to the events of the Easter Rising. The jail was also used after earlier rebellions, and held rebels such as Robert Emmet. The jail was also used during the Great Famine, during which many Dubliners were arrested for stealing food. However, many rebels were imprisoned here for their part in the Easter Rising, and fourteen of the insurrection's leaders were executed in the Stonebreakers' Yard. Even though the tour through the prison focuses on multiple parts of Irish history, there is a natural focus on the Easter Rising, because the tour starts at the chapel where Joseph Plunkett married his girlfriend Grace Gifford before he was executed for his role in the rising, and the tour ends in the Stonebreakers' Yard. The museum focuses on the many different reasons people were imprisoned, and there is an area about the Easter Rising as well. The biggest part of the exhibition on the 1916 rebellion consists out of artefacts that once belonged to the rebels. The museum focuses on the history of the building, which is why there is a focus on fourteen of the leaders here, as this is where they were executed (Crowley).

The fact that three of the four examined museums have been opened only recently is explicable. According to historian Eric Zuelow, this silence surrounding the Easter Rising in

tourism has three likely causes. The first is that, in the 1950s, in the wake of the Civil War, the country was still divided by the memories of this war. It was deemed better not to talk about the difficult recent past of the country, so most of the recent history was discarded in tourism (Zuelow 150). The second cause he describes is the relationship between The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland after 1959. According to Zuelow, the Irish policy towards Northern Ireland changed to one of cooperation, and one of the points of cooperation was tourism. Since the North was not overwhelmingly supportive of separation from Britain, hence why they are still part of Great Britain, a focus on the struggle of separating Ireland from Britain in tourism might not have benefitted the cooperation between the two countries (Zuelow 150). The last cause is the fact that most of Ireland's tourists come from Britain, notes Zuelow (150). Since these people are the main audience, it is not strange that the struggle between Ireland and Britain was not emphasised for a long time in tourism.

Now there have been multiple museums which opened in 2016. According to Aline Fitzgerald, general manager of the GPO, this timing was chosen, of course, because of the centenary, however, this was not the only reason for opening the museum a hundred years after the rebellion. It was opened in 2016, because only now most tensions between Ireland and England as well as the tensions between Ireland and Northern Ireland were resolved enough to use such a political and controversial theme in a museum, according to them (FitzGerald). After the Easter Rising the tensions on the island of Ireland only grew, which resulted in the War of Independence from 1919 until 1921, Civil War from 1922 until 1923, and the Troubles, which started in the 60s and often the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 is considered the end, however tensions were not resolved with this agreement (Power 1).

### Understanding the Rebellion through Tourism

There has been quite a lot of research on the Easter Rising and the way it is commemorated, however it is not often linked to tourism and museums, because most museums have only opened recently, as stated before. This thesis will give more insight in not only how the Easter Rising is remembered but also how this memory is transformed into a touristic narrative. I expect recent changes in the inclusion of women, due to the increased scholarly attention and societal pressure, as there have been some feminist questions in Irish society that have been in the news, such as the repeal of the eighth amendment, the abortion law. I also expect the



rising to be portrayed rather factual, rather than heroically, from the Irish nationalists' point of view, because all cases are funded by the Irish government and according to Zuelow many tourists to Ireland are from Great Britain (150). By having a 'good versus evil' narrative, this would offend many of these international tourists, and would be very biased. I expect that all museums will have differences, because the roles of the four sites in the Easter Rising were all distinctly different, so I expect differences in the choices in narratives. Also the aims of the different museums differ, so this will influence the narratives as well, I expect. Since there is little research on tourism and the Easter Rising the research question a good way to start the debate. It will also show how Ireland decides to present itself, which will help us to understand the Irish national identities better.

## Sixteen dead men

*No man shall deck their resting-place with flowers;  
Behind a prison wall they stood to die,  
Yet in those flowerless tragic graves of ours  
Buried, the broken dreams of Ireland lie.*

*-Eva Gore-Booth (103)*

After Patrick Pearse signed the surrender the remaining garrisons were informed one by one, the rebels were arrested and more than three-thousand were taken to the Richmond Barracks. These barracks were not only used to detain the men and women who had been arrested, but it was also the place where the courts-martial were carried out. Fourteen men were executed as a result of these courts-martial, among whom were the aforementioned Patrick Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett and Thomas MacDonagh. Not only these high-profile ringleaders were to be shot for their actions, but also William ‘Willie’ Pearse, for example. The younger brother of Patrick Pearse, he had always looked up to his brother, and the siblings fought at the GPO together during the Easter Rising. Willie was arrested and although he had no authoritative role in the rebellion, and according to scholars could not be defined as a ringleader in anyway, he was executed 4 May 1916, one day after his brother Patrick (Maume et al. 255). Sixteen men were executed on the charge of being involved with the Easter Rising.

This chapter will first examine the role of these sixteen men in order to give an overview of their connections to the Easter Rising. Next, their punishments will be examined, after which this chapter gives more information about the way they are commemorated on a daily basis in Dublin. Lastly the chapter will analyse how this group is taken up in the narratives in the four museums, and thus which narrative is told to tourists through these museums.

### Their Roles

Not all the executed men were in Dublin at the time of the Easter Rising. Roger Casement was in fact already arrested at the time of the rebellion. He travelled to Germany in order to

secure more forces. His intentions were to convince captured Irishmen fighting against Germany in the First World War to join the rebellion, in which case the Germans would free them, as this would distract England, which would be beneficial for the German forces. However, out of about 2,300 prisoners Casement only secured fifty-six (Maume et al. 63). Disillusioned, he went back to Ireland to advise against a rebellion as he felt it would fail without considerable help, but he was arrested upon arrival.

Thomas Kent was not in Dublin during the rebellion either, as he lived in Cork and was awaiting mobilisation orders, which never came. After the Easter Rising was suppressed, Irish Volunteers throughout the country were rounded up and arrested. The Kent family resisted and a gun battle ensued in which RIC Head Constable William Rowe was killed (Maume et al. 143). Thomas Kent was arrested.

The other fourteen executed rebels saw active fighting in Dublin during the rebellion. Seven of these men signed the proclamation in which they proclaimed the Republic of Ireland. The signatories were Thomas Clarke, Seán Mac Diarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly, and Joseph Plunkett. Pearse read this proclamation out to civilians in front of the GPO, which was the headquarters of the rebels, and Pearse was stationed here together with other signatories Clarke, who was pressed by the others to sign first because he had done more to bring about the rising than anyone else (Maume et al. 77-8), Connolly, who was the only one of the fourteen men who was badly injured during the week (Maume et al. 102), Mac Diarmada (Maume et al. 159) and Plunkett (Maume et al. 266). As mentioned before, William Pearse was also stationed at the GPO together with Patrick.

Signatory Thomas MacDonagh was stationed at the Jacob's Biscuit Factory, however, scholars have called his leadership erratic and indecisive (Maume et al. 169-70). His second-in-command, who has been accredited with better leadership was Major John MacBride, who did not know about the rebellion beforehand, but joined the fight under MacDonagh and thus fought in civilian clothes for the duration of the rising. After learning that Patrick Pearse had signed the surrender, he encouraged the men under him to flee and continue the fight for Irish freedom another day. MacBride himself did not try to escape (Maume et al. 154). Michael O'Hanrahan was also stationed at Jacob's factory. He fell down a flight of stairs during the rebellion and had a concussion as a result, but did not report this as he was scared he would be sent to hospital and would not be able to fight any longer (Maume et al. 223).

Signatory Éamonn Ceannt occupied the South Dublin Union and its outposts, which was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting during the rebellion (Maume et al. 70). After MacDonagh received the news that Pearse had signed the surrender, he declined surrender, but after conferring with Ceannt both lay down arms reluctantly (Maume et al. 170).

Michael Mallin occupied St. Stephen's Green, where his garrison dug trenches. He had a close encounter with death when he was dragging a man to safety and a bullet pierced his hat. Soon, it became clear that occupying a park which is surrounded by tall building, occupied by the enemy, is not a favourable position, which is why his garrison retreated to the College of Surgeons (Maume et al. 193).

Edward Daly occupied the Four Courts Area, which was one of the hardest areas to penetrate for the British Army (Maume et al. 112). Close to this area, Seán Heuston occupied Mendicity Institute, at first with only fourteen men under his command. Even though some reinforcements were sent, his men were exhausted and outnumbered, so Heuston decided to surrender on Wednesday, 26 April, and was taken to the Arbour Hill detention barracks (Maume et al. 126).

Con Colbert saw relatively little action, as he was first stationed in Watkin's brewery, but felt there was little purpose to serve there, which prompted him to join his battalion with the Marrowbone lane garrison, which also did not see much action (Maume et al. 82-3).

### Their Punishments

All aforementioned men were executed. They were not the only ones to be sentenced to death, however. Over 3000 men and women were arrested and detained at the Richmond Barracks. 171 people were tried (Enright 2). A total of ninety prisoners were sentenced to death, however, all but fourteen sentences were commuted (Enright ch. 7). The decision whether a sentence was commuted or carried out was in the hands of General Maxwell. He did not know the rebels, and the evidence on which he based his choices was incomplete and untested, and according to legal historian Seán Enright, this evidence was "hardly a sound basis for making life or death decisions" (ch. 7). This lack of evidence and knowledge led to some confusing choices.

Maxwell spared Hunter, who held an important rank in Jacob's Biscuit Factory, but his junior officer Michael O'Hanrahan was executed. Con Colbert was executed, but his immediate commanding officer was not (Enright ch. 7). Con Colbert did not fight much in the rebellion, and his sentence was rather based on earlier political actions, and the fact that he had strong ties to Patrick Pearse as he taught at his school. This unfair trial and his young age of 27 sparked outrage with Dublin citizens (White 83). Willie Pearse only held the rank of captain, but was executed, whereas Thomas Ashe and his men, who had inflicted heavy losses, were not (Enright ch. 7). William Pearse was also executed even though he did not have any authority during the rising, and scholars have argued he was executed because of his ties to his brother (Maume et al. 255). Some of the trials therefore did not seem justified to the Irish public.

The fourteen men who fought in Dublin were executed by firing squad in Kilmainham Gaol between 3 and 12 May. Thomas Kent was executed by firing squad in Cork on 9 May, and Roger Casement was hanged in London on 3 August. Even though many citizens opposed the rebellion at first, these executions turned public opinion in favour of the rebels.

## Remembrance

These fourteen, or sixteen men were quickly perceived as martyrs, and compared to executed leaders of earlier failed rebellions such as Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone. This ties in with Guy Beiner's theory, where the templates of memory where men sacrifice themselves by organising a rebellion and are executed for their roles were already present in Dublin society. The notion of sacrifice for Ireland through rebellions was also something that was celebrated in Irish culture. Plays such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, by W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, celebrated young men risking their lives in rebellions. Therefore, the memories of the executed men were quickly transformed into memories of martyrs of Ireland, as they fit in the heroic tropes, and the memory templates that were part of Irish culture perfectly.

Their memory lives on in Dublin nowadays still, as there are many references to the 'Sixteen Dead Men', as Yeats dubbed them in one of his poems. The three major train stations in Dublin are called Connolly, Pearse, and Heuston station, after James Connolly, Patrick and Willie Pearse, and Seán Heuston respectively. These stations were named after the executed Easter Rising leaders in 1966, as a part of the Easter Rising commemorations (Daly 20).

Street names in Dublin also show the tumultuous history of Ireland, with many streets named after political leaders of the past. This is the case with the executed leaders of 1916 as well, as there is Pearse Street, Sean McDermott Street, and Con Colbert Road, for example. On top of that there are multiple visual elements in the city in remembrance of the men.

There is a statue of James Connolly at the North Dock in Dublin, and there is a plaque with the faces of Patrick and William Pearse above the house in which both boys grew up on Pearse street. There is also a big panel with the 1916 proclamation with pictures of the seven signatories above it in an Andy Warhol-like edit, and the proclamation is displayed in multiple languages. Not only these official ways of remembrance can be found in Dublin, but also more individual approaches to remembering the executed rebels can be found in the city.

The Bachelor Inn Bar, on the Bachelor Walk in Dublin features some of Ireland's most famous writers, and among the men displayed are Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, but also Patrick Pearse. There is even graffiti in Pearse Street of Patrick Pearse's face. Many of these executed rebels therefore are known to the Irish public. When looking at the examined museums, it is clear that these men do not only receive special attention in public life in Dublin, but also in some of the researched cases.

## Museums

### Kilmainham Gaol

Out of all four museums, Kilmainham Gaol museum has relatively the biggest focus on the fourteen men who were arrested in Dublin. The museum does not pay much attention to the other two executed men, Thomas Kent and Roger Casement, who were both executed elsewhere. The fourteen men who were executed within the prison walls are all featured in the area called The Last Words. Here, an accompanying panel even states that the fourteen men on display were executed in Kilmainham, and that Roger Casement and Thomas Kent were executed somewhere else, so the museum focuses on their role rather than the bigger narrative. This fits well with the overall narrative of the museum, as the museum showcases the prison, and the role it has had in Irish history, during the Famine, for example, or during other rebellions.

Therefore it is understandable that Roger Casement and Thomas Kent are not featured in the Last Words area, as there is no tie between them and the jail. The room which is called the Last Words contains six display cases. Five of those cases each represent one day of executions. The executed men are represented by one shelf in those cases with items that were important to them, ranging from a letter to a mother to a pair of glasses. 3 May 1916 is thus represented by a display case featuring a shelf dedicated to Patrick Pearse, one to Thomas Clarke and one to Thomas MacDonagh. The next case, representing 4 May has shelves for Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O’Hanrahan, and Willie Pearse. The case representing 5 May features only Major John MacBride. The fourth case, for 8 May displays shelves with belongings of Éamonn Ceannt, Michael Mallin, Sean Heuston and Con Colbert. The fifth, and final of its kind, displays shelves with items associated to Seán Mac Diarmada and James Connolly. The men are all focused on equally, because they all have one single shelf, even though some shelves have more items than others. However, the sixth display case disrupts this balance somewhat. The sixth case is entirely dedicated to Joseph Plunkett, and his wife Grace Gifford. They were engaged when the Easter Rising started, and married each other in the prison, a day before Joseph Plunkett was executed. The display case displays items that belonged to the couple, such as her wedding band, the letter in which he proposed to her, and a locket that belonged to Grace, with a piece of hair of Joseph which was cut off during his time in Kilmainham jail.

This extra focus on Joseph and his wedding is not only contained to the museum, but is also apparent in the tour through the old prison. The tour commences in the chapel which was used during the wedding between Joseph and Grace. Therefore there is already a focus on the couple immediately. The tour ends in the Stonebreakers’ yard, which is where the fourteen men were executed. The tour also passes through the corridors where the leaders were held captive before their executions.

The museum and tour focus on the role of the prison in certain events, in this case the Easter Rising. This explains the lack of information in the exhibition about Roger Casement and Thomas Kent, who were not executed here but in London and Cork respectively. Since these two do not fit into the narrative of the prison, they do not receive much attention in the exhibition. Joseph Plunkett on the other hand receives more attention than the other leaders, purely based on something that happened at the site. His marriage to Grace in the prison chapel made his ties to the jail stronger than the other executed men, which is why there is an extra display case dedicated partly to him.

## Collins

The Proclaiming the Republic exhibition features a lot of information about the leaders of the rebellion. Throughout the exhibition there are many pictures of them and the visitor gets information about the different garrisons, and the people who were fighting in these garrisons, often with a picture of the relevant leader. It is clear that the Collins Barracks is in essence different from the other three museums, because it was never occupied by the rebels, so there is not more focus on the leaders with stronger ties to the barracks. The exhibition at the Collins Barracks does not only put specific focus on the fourteen men who were executed in Kilmainham jail, but also Thomas Kent and Roger Casement are featured. There is a semi-closed off area in the exhibition with audio devices and some information about their last visits and executions, and a picture of each man. All sixteen executed men are featured in this area, and each has an item that is connected to them, such as buttons from their uniforms which they gave to family on their last visit, and rosaries. But for example Michael Mallin's hat is displayed here too, which has a bullet hole that was a result of the rebellion, and James Connolly's vest with blood stains, also as a result of the Easter Rising.

Not only these sixteen men are featured in this separate area. Apart from them there is also some information on other people who initially were sentenced to death but did not get executed. The people who are featured with a picture and text are Countess Markievicz, and Éamon de Valera. Then there are also six pictures of people who were sentenced to death but were not executed either. Among these six men is Eoin MacNeill, who tried to prevent the Easter Rising from taking place. It is interesting that this exhibition also pays attention to those whose sentences were changed, rather than just the people who were executed. This makes this area more inclusive to the people who were sentenced to death as a whole, rather than only the ones who were actually killed.

The area has audio devices, and each of the sixteen men have a number which corresponds to a story on the audio device. The audio fragments are actors who read out letters, or witness statements. Thomas Clarke's fragment is a witness account of his wife Kathleen Clarke, who recounts the last time she saw her husband when he was held in Kilmainham jail. She describes the rebellion as the first successful blow for freedom, and Thomas and her agree that they should not cry. This wish to not show their emotions is not just expressed between Kathleen and Thomas, but also comes back in other fragments. For example, Con Colbert's fragment is a letter that he sent to his sister in which he apologises for



not letting her come to the prison, as it would sadden them both too much. Another fragment in which this is a theme is that of Michael O'Hanrahan. In it two of his sisters visit him in Kilmainham and they too do not cry, however Eily, one of the sisters, faints in the prison. A soldier helps her and tells her that her brother would get an honourable death, the death he wanted.

Michael O'Hanrahan's fragment is not the only fragment in which the death that was waiting for them is seen as glorious, honourable or brave. Thomas MacDonagh writes in his last statement that it is great and glorious to die for Ireland. Madge Daly says during her last visit to her brother Edward Daly that he must have done great to have earned a place among men like Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet, who were both leaders in earlier rebellions. Placing the Easter Rising in a bigger tradition of (failed) rebellions is also done by Roger Casement in his last letter, as he compares himself to these men as well, and he states that dying for Ireland is a beautiful death which he is willing to accept. In fact, nine of the fragments are about the pride they take in dying for their country. This reinforces the image of sixteen martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their dream of a free Ireland.

There is also some information on the wrongs committed by the rebels, as they have caused civilian casualties as well, however, these stories are somewhat tempered by other information given about the leaders. These stories are also given in combination with stories of the British soldiers. Therefore this aspect will be examined further in the chapter about the British army.

## Richmond Barracks

The Richmond Barracks take a similar approach to presenting the executed leaders as Kilmainham Gaol, because here too the role of the site is of great importance. The museum has a strong focus on women, however, there is some attention for the men as well. In the gymnasium there is an area where the visitor can listen to witness statements taken from the people who were held at the barracks after the rebellion. A considerable amount of these statements are about the rebel leaders who were held here. Éadaoin Ní Cléirigh, Project Co-ordinator at the Richmond Barracks, says that it was important to them to also take up the leaders into the narrative of the Richmond Barracks, because this is where they received their courts-martial, and thus where their fate was signed. Even though the main focus would be the

women that were held in the barracks, the men who were sentenced to death here had to be featured as well (Ní Cléirigh).

In the audio area the visitor can listen to actors reading out the witness statements, in which the leaders have a prominent role. One statement describes how Joseph Plunkett worries about Thomas MacDonagh, as they were friends. Both would be executed. Seán Mac Diarmada is also featured in the witness statements, as someone said that Sean had proclaimed that he hoped that if they could not free Ireland, someone else could, and that he knew he would be executed for his role in the Easter Rising. Another witness statement mentions that Thomas MacDonagh and Edward Daly were sitting together and looked tired, and when Daly saw the witness looking at him he smiled weakly. This was the last time the witness saw Daly, as he would be executed on 4 May. One witness also describes Con Colbert, John MacBride and Éamonn Ceannt, among others, being selected for court-martial. All three men would be executed, and the statement even accounts Colbert saying that they would be better off being executed, as he felt everyone opposed the rebellion, so their life would be torture after its defeat. Another witness describes seeing J. J. Walsh, who would not be executed for his role in the rising, and John MacBride, who would be, being led into court-martial.

The audio area has multiple effects. The executed men are, in a way, humanised by these witness statements. The image of the heroic martyr is somewhat tempered by showing the more vulnerable and realistic side to them. MacDonagh and Daly being exhausted, and Daly weakly smiling once more at the witness makes for a rather emotional image. They attain more human-like qualities, and the humanised image of them is perhaps more relatable than the image of the men who sacrificed themselves for their beliefs and never showing much emotion with regards to their fate. This image is more upheld in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition, as some of the men express their pride to follow in the footsteps of the rebels that gave their lives in rebellions before them in the area dedicated to the leaders. Even though Colbert remarks he would rather be executed, it has a different implication, as he does not seem to be proud or happy to take his place among these earlier rebels, an emotion expressed by some of the men in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition. He rather expresses the feeling that the citizens of Dublin would not be kind to them after the rebellion. The only one who might be seen as upholding that more detached, sacrificial image in the Richmond Barracks witness statements is Seán Mac Diarmada, as he expresses his hopes for a free Ireland, be it achieved by others, and the notion that he presumes he will be executed.

However, there is not necessarily a pride in this statement, rather a wish for Ireland. Another factor that humanises the executed leaders is that Joseph Plunkett is worried for Thomas MacDonagh. This shows their friendship, and shows that they were not only considering their own fate, but also that of their friends, which must have made the events much more difficult. This again makes the men more relatable, and makes their fate more emotional, because they cared for each other.

The Richmond Barracks thus show a side to the executed men that make them more realistic and like normal men, rather than some of the statements from the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition where some of the men expressed their pride in dying for their cause. The statements at the Richmond Barracks show the men in a different light. Like Kilmainham Gaol, the Richmond Barracks focus on the men at their site and what happened to them at the barracks. The leaders do not receive as much attention as in the aforementioned two museums, but they are still part of the narrative in the audio area.

#### General Post Office

The GPO Witness History Exhibition is, like the Richmond Barracks, less focused on the executed men. However, like the Richmond Barracks and Kilmainham Gaol, there is some attention for the men that fought here. There is a twenty-minute film on display in the museum which depicts the development of events in the rebellion. The film zooms in on different parts of the city, but main focus of the film is the GPO building to which it cuts back every time. The film also ends with the abandonment of the GPO, rather than the actual surrender, which happened later, from Moore Street. In the shots situated in the GPO there are some actors that represent famous rebels. Patrick Pearse is one of the featured figures, as are Joseph Plunkett, James Connolly, Tom Clarke and Seán Mac Diarmada, who were all executed for their roles in the rebellion. They are not alone in these shots at the GPO however, as Sean McLaughlin and Winifred Carney are also represented by actors in these scenes. Here the role of the GPO receives attention, and therefore the recognisable people who fought here.

Apart from in this film, the executed men are mostly part of the narrative rather than the centre of attention. This most probably has to do with the purpose of the museum. Aline Fitzgerald said in an interview that they wanted the GPO Witness History Exhibition to be an unbiased account, with as many sides illuminated as possible. In order to make the exhibition,

many historians from different countries and with differing points of view were invited. The people who were involved in the process of making the GPO exhibition wanted to feature the many different kinds of people who were affected by the rebellion, which is why there is not one group highlighted or singled out, but rather many different groups are. This is also why there is less focus on the men, compared to the Collins Barracks and Kilmainham Gaol.

There is also not solely positivity when it comes to the depiction of the Easter Rising leaders. One of the touch screens features the story of Bridget McKane, who was fifteen years old at the time of the Easter Rising. She lived with her family at Henry Place, a street just off Moore Street. The aforementioned leaders, together with some other rebels were seeking refuge in this area after abandoning the GPO building. No one would let the rebels in, which prompted them to shoot through one of the locks of the closed doors. This bullet killed the fifteen-year-old Bridget. According to the text provided in the GPO exhibition, Patrick Pearse was shocked by this and expressed his grief, however, this instance does show that not only the British army killed innocent civilians, but the rebels killed innocent people as well. This girl is also featured in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition, but this will be explored further in the chapter on the British army. Bridget McKane's story is not the only instance in the GPO that shows the rebels in a more neutral way. Sean Francis Foster was only two years old when his mother was caught in the crossfire while pushing him in his pram. Sean was killed, and his mother blamed the rebels according to the text in the exhibition. Even though it was not clear whose bullet had killed the child, his mother said the rebels had started firing. The twenty-minute film also shows rebels killing civilians who were unwilling to cooperate. Even though these events did not show the fourteen executed leaders who were fighting in Dublin at the time directly killing innocent people, it does demystify the narrative of the 'good' side of the Irish rebels versus the 'bad' side of the British army. This black and white idea of sides is broken down, and rather than focusing on the sacrificial image of those leaders, as has been done in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition for example, the museum focuses on the effects the rebellion had on different groups, among which are the British army and the rebels, but a big part of the exhibition focuses on civilians. This elevates the discussion away from 'wrong' and 'right', and takes it to the effects it had on Dublin as a whole, and all its inhabitants. The aim of the GPO Witness History exhibition was to have people from both sides of the conflict feel respected, which is why they tried to make the exhibition as unbiased as possible (FitzGerald).

The videos on display in which historians weigh in on certain topics also serve to demystify the Easter Rising. One video is about the executions, and one of the historians says the English were lenient when they decided that only sixteen rebels were to be executed for their roles in the rebellion. Even though other historians express other views in this video, it is opposing the narrative of the brave martyrs and the brute English.

## Comparison

It is clear that some of these museums are more focused on the individual leaders than others. All the museums have their own way of portraying the leaders, and all make choices in who they want to portray. Kilmainham Gaol focuses on the role the prison had in the Easter Rising and therefore the fourteen men who were executed here have a prominent place, with Joseph Plunkett being even more featured due to his wedding in the chapel in the jail. The men stationed in the GPO building are also the ones featured in the twenty-minute film on display in the GPO exhibition, so the GPO exhibition also puts focus on their role in the Easter Rising. The Richmond Barracks also do this by playing witness statements taken from the people at the barracks, which of course only feature the men that were held here, which thus excludes Roger Casement, James Connolly, and Thomas Kent. The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition does not leave any men out in their area dedicated to the executed men, most likely because they did not have a similar role as the other three sites. All three other sites have ties to the rebels because they either occupied it, were held there or were killed there. The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition is the only case that does not have these ties, but was rather used by the British as a base. This lack of connection to some of the executed men might be why all men are featured in the area with audio devices evenly.

The image that the narratives construct differ from each other. The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition emphasises the sacrificial element of the executions, and strengthens the idea that these men died as martyrs for the freedom of Ireland. Pride and glory are central to many of the accounts given in the area about the sixteen executed men. This is in contrast with the image offered by the Richmond Barracks. The audio room recounts the men being tired, worn down and afraid. Even though some still talk about the dream of a free Ireland, there is a more down to earth, gloomy feel to these testaments. Rather than an elevated, heroic image, the visitor gets a more human-like, relatable image of these men. The GPO exhibition takes this a step further by also featuring some of the crimes committed by the rebels. Even

though these acts were not carried out by any of the sixteen executed leaders, the idea of the rebels being purely good and just is being challenged this way, and therefore this status of the leaders might also be challenged. By offering the tourist the latter two narratives, they might re-evaluate the notion they have of the rebellion, and the different groups involved.

## Rebel Women

*Here's to the women of our blood  
Stood by them in the fiery hour,  
Rapt lest some weakness in their mood  
Rob manhood of a single power.*

*-George William Russell (72)*

The rebellion of 1916 was not only fought by men. Many women fulfilled a purpose during the six days of fighting. Many of the women involved with the Easter Rising served as nurses or messengers, however, not all of them. Female members of the Irish Citizen Army, as well as the members of the women's paramilitary organisation Cumann na mBan saw active service during the rebellion. Their roles have often been overlooked or ignored, and only recently have they been receiving more interest, due to the outcry of feminists (Jaffe 160). This chapter will examine to what extent and with what approach the women who were involved in the Easter Rising have been presented in the four museums.

First the roles of the women in the Easter Rising will be examined, which will shine a light on the diversity of the women who participated, and their tasks in the rebellion. Next, the punishments of the women will be discussed, after which the amnesia that they have been subjected to will be examined. After this the representation of these women in the four museums will be analysed.

### Their roles

The women's organisation Cumann na mBan was set up in 1914 to complement the all-male paramilitary organisation the Irish Volunteers, which was set up a year earlier. Women had divergent roles in the rebellion. Some of the involved women tended to the wounded. One of the most famous women with this role in the rising is Dr. Kathleen Lynn. She was a chief medical officer for the Irish Citizen Army and taught first aid to the members of Cumann na mBan (Maume et al. 149). Other notable women who were involved in the rebellion are Constance Markievicz, Winifred Carney, Margaret Skinnider, and Elizabeth O'Farrell, among others.

Constance Georgine Markievicz, more commonly known as Countess Markievicz, was a vocal political figure, who fought in St. Stephen's Green during the rebellion and reportedly kissed her revolver as she was arrested, although this story is said to be apocryphal (Weihman 229). Winifred Carney was the personal secretary of signatory James Connolly, and worked next to him in the GPO during the rising, being the only woman present at the siege of the GPO, with other women arriving later. As the week progressed and most of the women were evacuated from the GPO, she refused to leave Connolly's side, even replying sharply when Patrick Pearse suggested that she should leave the building (Maume et al. 56). Winifred was not the only woman going against men's orders during the Easter Rising. Margaret Skinnider, who served as a dispatch rider and committed to sniper duties, proposed the idea of hurling a bomb into the British-occupied Shelbourne Hotel while passing on her bike. Michael Mallin, who commanded the contingent Skinnider served under and who would later be executed for his role in the rebellion, felt that this would be too dangerous for a woman to attempt. To this, Skinnider responded that in the Irish Republic men and women were equal, so they had equal rights to risk their lives (Maume et al. 310). Elizabeth O'Farrell had one of the most potentially iconic roles, as she had a big part in one of the most pivotal events in the rebellion. She served as a nurse and a courier during the insurrection, and after James Connolly was wounded, she tended to him and, like Winifred Carney, refused to leave Connolly as most women were evacuated. Eventually she left as the last rebels were moving from the GPO to Moore Street. There the leaders of the insurrection decided to lay down arms and Patrick Pearse chose O'Farrell to surrender, as he was afraid a man would be shot down immediately. With a white flag she approached the British army, and after the surrender was signed by Pearse O'Farrell brought the news of the surrender to the other garrisons in the city.

It is clear that women demanded agency during the Easter Rising. They fulfilled more traditionally female roles such as smuggling messages and ammunition and taking care of the wounded, but also fought alongside their male comrades. On top of that there are multiple instances of women going against not only advice or orders from their male counterparts, but also superiors, as Michael Mallin and Patrick Pearse were in charge of the St. Stephen's Green garrison and the GPO respectively. However, as Margaret Skinnider implied, women in the rebellion had every reason to hope for more equality, as the proclamation with which seven of the leaders of the rising proclaimed the Irish Republic at the start of the uprising starts with the famous words: "Irishmen and Irishwomen" ("Printing Press Shooter"). Addressing both men and women, in a time in which most European countries did not yet



have women's suffrage indicates something about the ideals of the rebels. The document later states: "The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally" ("Printing Press Shooter"). This, again addresses both women and men, and promises a more equal future for all Irish citizens. The fact that relatively so many women actively participated in the rebellion is somewhat explained by the rebels' goals and ideas.

Lucy McDiarmid argues that this newfound freedom of speech many women employed angered some of the men who were used to more submissiveness. Colonel Bertram Percy Portal, who arrested rebels after their surrender, said to Elizabeth O'Farrell "[Y]ou think because you're a woman you can say what you like. Mind you don't get a shot through that little head of yours" (qtd. in McDiarmid 101). However, it did not lead to physical violence, as McDiarmid notes "Angry at the women and eager to do some violence to them, the men nonetheless restrain themselves, as if conscious of a border it would be unwise to cross" (102). Mentally the women were tested on multiple occasions.

Not just the women who participated felt the consequences of the Easter Rising. One of the most famous women connected to the Easter Rising is Grace Gifford Plunkett. She married Joseph Plunkett, who was a signatory of the proclamation, after his arrest. They were married in a chapel in Kilmainham Jail, just hours before Plunkett's execution on 4 May 1916 (Maume et al. 266). Her sister, Muriel Gifford MacDonagh, was married to Thomas MacDonagh, who was executed because of his involvement in the Easter Rising on 3 May 1916. Kathleen Clarke did not only lose her husband Thomas Clarke because of these executions, but also her younger brother Edward Daly, on 3 May and 4 May 1916 respectively. Margaret Pearse lost both her sons Patrick and Willie Pearse on 3 and 4 May. The rising thus had a considerable impact on many women's lives, whether they had joined the men in the streets, or had lost their husbands, sons or brothers.

Their punishments

Regardless of the idea of equality for women during the rebellion, many men did not yet see them as equal, as demonstrated by Mallin and Pearse. Once the surrender was signed by

Patrick Pearse, and, one by one, the garrisons throughout the city were informed, the British army was quite surprised by the amount of women in the garrisons. Most of the rebels were brought to the Richmond Barracks where they awaited their sentences. Among these rebels were seventy seven women. Some of these women were released, and some received a jail sentence. Out of all the women who participated in the Easter Rising, only Countess Markievicz was sentenced to death, but this sentence was commuted to a prison sentence because of her sex (Maume et al. 197).

As mentioned before, the women felt some serious incrimination after their arrests. The women were not only verbally abused, but also mentally, as is shown by Lucy McDiarmid. She quotes an account by Brigid Foley, one of the arrested women, who writes that at Kilmainham Gaol the women were forced to sit in empty cells, while the military sergeant told them, with great satisfaction, that more of their leaders were being executed (McDiarmid 107). This information, and the way it was delivered to them, had an effect on the women, as many became incredibly saddened by the thought of this. Not only the fate of the men distressed the women in Kilmainham Gaol. When the women wanted to use the toilet, they had to ask permission of two soldiers, who would lead them to the toilet, which had no door, and the soldiers would stay and watch the women while jeering at them (McDiarmid 107). These humiliations had serious impact on the mental well-being of the women.

However, the people in power at the jail did not have full control over the women's mental state. As the rebels were rounded up and marched to the Richmond Barracks, the men asked the women to sing marching songs, which, according to Annie Cooney's account, they did all the way to the barracks (McDiarmid 124). In Kilmainham Gaol, the women who were sentenced to a jail sentence danced a sixteen hand reel together on 2 May 1916 (McDiarmid 123). The newfound agency was thus not lost at the surrender of the rebellion. Many women who were active in the 1916 rebellion also played parts in the later War of Independence (1919-21) and Civil War (1922-23).

## Amnesia

Over time, the role of women in the Easter Rising has been muted. Lisa Weihman argues that this amnesia can be explained when looking at Irish tropes and Irish identities (228). Ireland is

often symbolised in literature and popular culture as a woman. This woman has different names and faces, for example Cathleen ni Houlihan, or the Poor Old Woman, tropes that many Irish people would be familiar with. These tropes came back in theatre, poetry and even political sketches. Something that often comes back in this female interpretation of Ireland is that she needs protection from men, who sacrifice themselves for her. The idea of other women protecting and fighting for the “Poor Old Woman”, Ireland, thus does not fit the narrative of this symbolic Ireland.

On top of that, the Irish rebel women caused anxiety about changing gender roles, Weihman argues (229-30). In a time when women could not yet vote in Britain, seeing them march down the streets in uniform, holding rifles was for many a difficult thing to process. Not only the bystanders or soldiers from the British army were negative about the inclusion of women in the fight, it was also not without protest within the group of rebels as some of the nationalists saw the armed women as an embarrassment (Weihman 242). Éamon de Valera, one of the leaders of the rebellion who did survive, even refused to let women of the Cumann na mBan fight in his garrison, the Boland’s Mills (Weihman 242).

After the rebellion was over, the remarkable involvement of women was therefore quickly discarded for a large part in the historiography of the Easter Rising. However, the stories of the aforementioned women, and others, have been resurfacing and receiving attention recently. In the past few years the interest for the women of the Easter Rising has grown and more scholarly articles and books are written about the women who participated in the uprising, and after feminist actions the 2016 commemorations paid attention to the women as well (Jaffe 160).

However, Not only on a scholarly level have the women in the rebellion been neglected for a long time, they also saw little spotlight in popular culture. When looking at the Easter Rising in films and series, there is an interesting trend. The 1996 film *Michael Collins*, which depicts Collins’ rise to political fame up until his death, starts with an opening scene showing the surrender of the Easter Rising rebels. This scene in itself is interesting because the rebels surrender from the GPO, which had already been abandoned by that time, but something that is even more interesting in the light of female roles in the Easter Rising, is that a man surrenders, carrying a white flag, as opposed to Elizabeth O’Farrell. However, since this entire scene is historically questionable, this might not be as strange as the next case. The 2016 miniseries *Rebellion* centres around three befriended women during the Easter Rising.

The fictional women are all in Dublin as the rebellion starts. One woman is affected by the rebellion, but does not participate, another operates as a nurse, and the last fights and operates guns. This plot promises a focus on women, and could perhaps have contributed to the newfound appreciation of the role of women in the 1916 rebellion, however, there is a reason to contest this. Most of the main characters in the series are fictitious. However, there are many real people who are used as smaller characters, who are very famous in Ireland. Patrick Pearse, Thomas Clarke, James Connolly, Michael Collins all made appearances, and so did some historical women such as Dr. Kathleen Lynn and Countess Markievicz. However, one of the most iconic moments during the rebellion, the moment of the surrender, has been altered. As mentioned before, the person surrendering in Moore Street with a white flag was Elizabeth O'Farrell. In the miniseries this moment is shown in the fourth episode, however, not Elizabeth O'Farrell is sent out to surrender, but instead a man named Sean is sent out with a white flag. This shows that the historical women's stories are still not recognised fully.

Therefore it will be interesting to see how museums are dealing with this subject, as this will show how much these women are represented in the touristic narrative. This also indicates if the notion of Ireland as the woman who needs men's help might have diminished over the last decades.

## Museums

### Richmond Barracks

Out of the four museums explored in this thesis, the one museum that focuses the most on women in the rebellion is the Richmond Barracks. The exhibition area on the Easter Rising has seven panels on the walls with the stories of fourteen women, two on each panel. Éadaoin Ní Cleirigh, Project Co-ordinator at the Richmond Barracks, said the fourteen women were picked because they were all so different, so the panels would illustrate the diversity within the women who participated in the rebellion. The narrative thus shows the tourist how multifaceted this group of rebel women in fact was. Highlighted women include the aforementioned Winifred Carney, Kathleen Lynn and Countess Markievicz. These three women all had very different roles in the rebellion. The panels in the Richmond Barracks show that these fourteen highlighted women took different paths to the rebellion, as some had joined the Irish Citizen Army, while others came from Cumann na mBan

In the Richmond Barracks it is also possible to read the stories of the other women who were detained at the barracks after the rebellion. A total of seventy seven women who were arrested for their roles in the uprising are featured in the museum by means of a commemorative quilt. The quilt was made by seventy seven local women in 2016, who lived around the barracks and had strong ties to it. Every woman was given the name of one woman who was detained in the barracks after the Easter Rising (Ní Cléirigh). The women then made a patch for the woman they were matched with, and eventually all the patches were processed into one big quilt that is on display in the gymnasium. On touch screen panels on either side of the quilt the visitor can read information on all seventy seven women featured on the patches.

There are two famous women who are not included on the commemoration quilt. The first is Margaret Skinnider, who was not detained in the Richmond Barracks, because she was gravely injured as she was shot on 26 April, during the rebellion, so she spent seven weeks in St Vincent's Hospital (Maume et al. 310). After these seven weeks, everyone was already transferred from the barracks to jails, executed or released. Another woman who is missing on the quilt is Elizabeth O'Farrell, the woman who surrendered. The reason she does not feature on the quilt is because she was released early because she made an arrangement with general Lowe, who said she would not be sentenced if she brought the news of the surrender to the rest of the garrisons which were still fighting, which is why she was released early (Ní Cléirigh).

Éadaoin Ní Cleirigh said in an interview that the roles that the Richmond Barracks fulfilled were forgotten over time, as well as the stories attached to them. As the roles of women in the rebellion were for a large part ignored, they became the main focus of the Easter Rising exhibition, as the need was felt to give a voice back to the voiceless. As mentioned, the Richmond Barracks are mainly focused on the role of the barracks, which is why they only feature those who were held here.

## GPO

The Richmond Barracks place relatively the most focus on women of all examined museums. The GPO takes a different approach. Instead of highlighting the women that participated, they are incorporated into the overarching narrative of the museum. The GPO displays many

artefacts from the rebellion, among which rebels' outfits. On display are the uniforms of the Irish Volunteers, and the Irish Citizen Army, as well as two uniforms used in the later War of Independence and the Civil War. Among the costumes is also a Cumann na mBan costume, which was the women's organisation. In the menu on the touch screen next to the display case with this costume visitors can read some background information about the formation of Cumann na mBan. This text also informs the visitor that women fought in all garrisons with the exception of the Boland's Mills, showing they had a significant role in the rebellion. In texts on the panels and touch screens women are featured as well, often referring to the rebels as "these men and women", clearly showing that not only men were active in this rebellion. They are not separated in order to highlight them, as is the case in the Richmond Barracks, but rather they are treated as 'one of the boys'.

There is also some information on the feminist movement that was growing at the time which many women that took part in the uprising were also a part of. One of the highlighted figures is for example Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, wife of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington who was executed during the Easter Rising. She was a fighter for women's vote, but did not have a very prominent role in the Easter Rising, so even though the museum in the GPO does not focus solely on women, and has a lot of information on other groups as well, it is rather inclusive in which women it features.

In the twenty-minute film which is on display in the exhibition, some of the famous male rebels, such as Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, James Connolly, Tom Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada and Sean MacLoughlin, are depicted by actors. However, not only these male rebels are featured in this film but also Winifred Carney, the secretary of James Connolly. By including Winifred Carney this film shows that women were involved in the rebellion as well.

Aline Fitzgerald, general manager at GPO Witness History, said in an interview that the aim of the exhibition is to show an as complete picture as possible. The choice to feature the women in the exhibition was a key decision in order to try and achieve a complete, unbiased and multi-faceted narrative in the museum, since they were an integral part of the rebellion. One group that is also represented in the museum are the forty children who died during the Easter Rising. Some of their personal stories can be read on the touch screens, and there is an artwork outside which symbolises the deceased children.

The GPO thus differs greatly from the Richmond Barracks, as the latter only focuses on the women with a relatively prominent role in the Easter Rising, as they feature only those

who were arrested for their actions. They also do not feature the women who, through circumstances, were not held here, but might have had important roles as well. The GPO does not solely focus on the women who were in the building at the time of the insurrection.

### Proclaiming a Republic

The National Museum's Proclaiming a Republic exhibition takes a different approach. Not only does the exhibition feature information about the women who participated in the Easter Rising, but also about the women who were otherwise affected by the uprising. There is some information about the women who lost their husbands for example.

The National Museum is also the only of the examined museums to highlight Elizabeth O'Farrell, the nurse who played a key role in the surrender. Her part in the rebellion is featured on the timeline wall, where it says that she approached the British barricades to begin negotiations. A portrait picture of her is accompanying the text, as well as a picture of the surrender with Pearse and Lowe, with O'Farrell behind Pearse. In another part of the exhibition the surrender is explained in more detail and again a portrait of O'Farrell accompanies the text.

Apart from O'Farrell, the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition also features other famous female rebels, such as Winifred Carney. The exhibition features a quote by her, in which she expresses that she did not cry until she saw Tom Clarke, the oldest leader, break down. There is also a big picture of Carney next to this quote. There is also a panel with information about who Carney was, and what her role in the rebellion was, accompanied by some of her personal belongings, such as her rosary. There is some information on Dr. Kathleen Lynn as well, along with some of her personal belongings on display.

One panel, which is completely dedicated to women in the rebellion, informs the visitor that most women who took part in the uprising fulfilled the role of courier, but the women "who wanted to fight for their country had to fight for their right to do so". The panel contains background information about Margaret Skinnider, and the fact that she served as a sniper during the rebellion, and information about Countess Markievicz. The panel also features some information about Markievicz possibly killing a D.M.P. constable, but also gives evidence against this notion. There are pictures of the women on the panel as well. In the area where visitors can listen to the leaders' last moments or statements, there is some

information about Markievicz as well, explaining that she was not executed, despite being in a commanding role, because she was a woman.

There is also a picture of a Cumann na mBan convention, which shows sixty of the women who took part in the Easter Rising. There are also many items which belonged to women who participated in the rebellion, such as the first aid outfit worn by Mary O'Sullivan, who was a member of Cumann na mBan, and operated in the Four Courts area. Many of these items belonged to lesser known women, but often there is a small piece of information on the individual. They thus do not only focus on the more famous women such as Markievicz, O'Farrell and Carney, but also the more 'ordinary' women. The GPO and the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition are similar in that both portray women who participated in the Easter Rising, however, in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition there is more attention for those who had an important role, such as Elizabeth O'Farrell. This has to do with the fact that the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition focuses on the combatants, whereas the GPO focuses on civilians as well, so there is more space in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition to go into detail about more rebels.

### Kilmainham Gaol

The museum that focuses the least on women who participated in the Easter Rising is the Kilmainham Gaol museum. The two women with ties to the rebellion who are the biggest part of the narrative of the museum, when it comes to the women, are Countess Markievicz and Grace Gifford. Countess Markievicz is highlighted because she was sentenced to be executed at Kilmainham Gaol on the ninth of May, but this sentence was reprieved because of her gender. This information is on a panel in the museum and was also part of the narrative in the tour through the jail.

Grace Gifford is highlighted because she was married to Joseph Plunkett inside the jail. The tour in the jail starts in the chapel in which the couple was married, so there is naturally a focus on Grace already, and the jail cell that she was in after her arrest during the Civil War is one of the highlights of the tour as well. This is due to the mural of Mary and her child, which she painted during her time there. However, there is also a significant focus on her in the museum. In the "Last Words" area, there is one display case for each day of executions. Inside of each display case there is one shelf for each executed leader. This means



that there is one display case for Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas Clarke, one case for Joseph Plunkett, William Pearse, Edward Daly and Michael O'Hanrahan, and so on, with five cases with personal belongings of the executed leaders in total. However, in that same area, there is one display case that is different. This case is completely dedicated to the marriage between Joseph and Grace. This one displays a letter by Joseph to Grace asking her to marry him, Grace's scrapbook of their wedding, a locket that belonged to her with a lock of Joseph's hair, and Grace's wedding band.

There are also some artefacts that belonged to women fighting in the rebellion on display outside of the 'Last Words' area. There are for example badges and buttons worn by women who were part of Cumann na mBan. But there is only a little bit of information on the individuals who wore them. There are some items that belonged to Winifred Carney, and there are a few sentences on her involvement in the Easter Rising. There is no information about the women while they were held in Kilmainham Gaol, and also no mention on the way they were treated or the dance they did in the prison. However, this is not because the museum as a whole does not choose to focus on women, as there is an exhibition of the suffrage movement, and the women who were arrested for their part in it. On top of that there is little information about the other male prisoners who were held here after the Easter Rising. Brian Crowley, who is now responsible for the collection, although did not set up this exhibition, says that this phenomenon is explicable. The fact that there is so little information about women in the Easter Rising exhibition has to do with the fact that this specific exhibition was set up in 1996, during a time in which there had not been much research into the women of the Easter Rising yet (Crowley). On top of that, he expects that the focus of this exhibition will always be mainly on the executed leaders, as they were executed here (Crowley).

## Comparison

All four museums incorporate women to a different degree and using other approaches. The Richmond Barracks have the overall focus mostly on women, and try to illustrate the roles they fulfilled through the use of personal stories. Both the GPO Witness History and the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition have quite a lot of artefacts on display that belonged to the women who participated in the rising. The GPO also has some personal stories on digital touch screens, and the Proclaiming the Republic exhibition has some personal stories on

panels as well. These two museums are the most comparable out of the examined museums when it comes to the representation of women in the exhibition. The museum inside Kilmainham Gaol has a few artefacts as well, on top of some information on Countess Markievicz, but the focus is mostly on Grace Gifford. This focus on Grace most likely stems from her special ties to the jail, as she has been detained there, but was also married there, and the museum in Kilmainham focuses on the role the prison had.

Kilmainham Gaol's museum therefore also focuses the most on the building's past rather than just the overall Easter Rising. The Richmond Barracks do this somewhat as well, because they focus solely on the seventy seven women who were detained at the barracks. Two of the most famous women; Elizabeth O'Farrell and Margaret Skinnider, are not featured because they were not held at the Richmond Barracks. The GPO does this a little bit, as they show Winifred Carney in the film which is set in the GPO, because Carney served in the building during the rebellion. However, there is also information about other women who participated in the rising, as well as general information about suffrage movements that were relevant at the time, and the Cumann na mBan.

The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition is the least biased in featuring women, as none of the women who participated in the Easter Rising were stationed in the Collins Barracks, as this was a British army base. Therefore, Elizabeth O'Farrell receives quite some information, whereas she does not feature in the Richmond Barracks, which is mostly focused on women in the Easter Rising. On top of that, they have more information on the individual women than the GPO, as there is more room in the narrative, because the Proclaiming a Republic focus on the military side to the Easter Rising, whereas the GPO focuses on all groups affected by the rebellion, which means they have to focus on a smaller group of individuals per group.

By including women into the narrative of the museum, the tourist will gain a better understanding of the Easter Rising events, but also the progressive nature of the proclamation, and many of the rebels. The proclamation promised suffrage for all men and women, which was not yet granted to women in Britain at the time. However, by explaining that in practice, the women were in fact often discriminated, as shown in this chapter, which the Proclaiming a Republic does, the tourist will also understand that the Easter Rising was decidedly complex. By restoring their place among the men, the touristic narrative that is offered in most of these examined museums becomes more intricate and more complete.

## **British Soldiers**

*I heard the Poor Old Woman say:*

*“At break of day the fowler came,  
And took my blackbirds from their songs*

*-Francis Ledwidge (192)*

Probably the most controversial group that is researched in this thesis is the British army. Even though the British army has been taken up in commemorations recently, this has not been without conflict. However, three of the examined museums have dedicated a relatively large part of the exhibition to the men fighting in the British army.

Two of the examined museums were British army barracks during the Easter Rising, from which British soldiers were dispatched to fight the rebels, one was a British prison, and one was a post office which was the rebels' headquarters during the rebellion. One might expect the latter museum to have the least information about the British army and its role in the rebellion, however this is not the case.

First, the build up of the army will be examined, as this will shine a light on the complexity of the issue regarding the identity of this group. Next the group at hand, and its role in the rebellion will be discussed. Then the current tensions with regards to the commemoration of members of the British army will be explained. After this, the representation of this group in the selected museums will be analysed.

### **The Army**

The notion that the 'Irish' fought the 'English' is a false one. Although the rebels might have been fighting against English rule, the men in the streets were not nearly all English. It was in fact a fight of Irish rebels against the British army. As James Heartfield and Kevin Rooney note, thousands of Irish men joined the British army over the centuries, and over two-thousand Irish men fought in the First World War, so in 1916 the British army was not necessarily non-Irish.

One example of an Irishman who died during the rising is Neville Fryday, who was born in Ireland and had emigrated to Canada in 1911. Together with his brother, he enlisted for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, which would sail to Europe in order to join the First World War. The two brothers were immediately given leave to visit their mother in Dublin. While on leave, the Easter Rising broke out and the brothers were called on to help fight the rebels. On 30 April Neville Fryday was shot in the abdomen, and he died not much later in a hospital. He died in a Canadian uniform, only seventeen years old (Richardson 8). He had lied on his application for the army and is one of the forty children who died during the Easter Rising.

As Richardson notes: “By a twist of fate, the rebels ended up fighting against many Irishmen who also supported the ideal of an independent Ireland, albeit in the form of Home Rule” (8). This notion complicates the idea of the British army as the enemy of the rebels.

### Their Roles

The British army was taken by surprise when the Easter Rising started. As stated, many Irishmen were part of the British army, and some were on leave in Ireland during the rebellion. Irish soldiers in British uniform were being attacked by Irish rebels, as anyone in a British uniform was seen as a threat, while the soldiers were often unarmed (Richardson).

Once the British army had had time to analyse the situation and bring in more forces and weaponry, the battle started changing drastically. Many more civilians were killed as a result. This had multiple reasons, according to Fearghal McGarry. He points out that many rebels were fighting in civilian clothes, which made it near impossible to distinguish rebels from civilians for the British soldiers (McGarry 184). This led to many civilians’ deaths, as they were assumed to be rebels. On top of that, the British army was using heavy weaponry such as artillery, incendiary shells, and heavy machine guns (McGarry 184). The inability to distinguish rebels from civilians, and the fear of rebel sympathisers might have led to what is referred to as the North King Street Massacre (McGarry 187). This was one of the atrocities committed by the British army, as soldiers were ordered to break into civilians’ houses in the North King Street and kill anyone who they feared might be a rebel. They shot fifteen unarmed men and boys.

McGarry argues that it is not inexplicable that the British army was responsible for more atrocities than the rebels. There were many more British soldiers than Irish rebels, and they were more mobile and covered a larger area. On top of that, the nature of the fight kept the soldiers on edge, as it was frustrating and confusing. Rebels might surrender in one outpost, only for their comrades a few houses down the road to fire upon the soldiers (McGarry 187). McGarry also argues that the responsibility of the high count of civilian casualties is mostly that of the Military Council of the rebels, as they decided upon the locations of outposts, which were in densely populated areas. However, he also indicates that this was not done to intentionally hurt Dublin's civilian population, but was rather a result of "a shocking lack of foresight" (McGarry 188).

Some of the most notable members of the British army in the Easter Rising were Sir John Maxwell and Captain John Bowen-Colthurst. Maxwell was in charge of dealing with the rebels after the suppression of the rebellion. Over three-thousand people were arrested, and over two-thousand were transported to camps in Britain, something which radicalised many of these rebels (Maume et al. 203). Maxwell was also the one who confirmed the executions of the leaders.

Bowen-Colthurst, born in county Cork, Ireland, was responsible for the deaths of multiple innocent civilians, among whom was Francis Sheehy Skeffington. He was executed by the British army during Easter week, even though he was not one of the rebels, quite the contrary. He had been a pacifist for years and although he was an Irish nationalist, he felt this was a democratic issue (Maume 304). Historian Patrick Maume says about his role in the rebellion: "During the 1916 rising he attempted to organise a civilian defence force to prevent looting, and showed great bravery, on one occasion attempting to rescue a wounded British officer under fire" (307). He was arrested on the night of 25 April, as he was on his way home, and he was executed the next day on the orders of Captain John Bowen-Colthurst without a trial, or any argument other than the assumption that he might have been a rebel.

### Conflicts in Remembrance

The aforementioned atrocities such as executing innocent civilians, and the massacre on Moore street, as well as the executions of the leaders of the Easter Rising resulted in public outrage towards the British army. This influenced the way the entire British army was seen, so

also the Irishmen fighting in the British army in the First World War, who were not even in the country during the rebellion. The commemoration of the Irish First World War casualties thus was a controversial topic for a long time. According to Ann Rigney, Veteran's associations were organising commemorations for the Irishmen who died in the First World War, after the Second World War (91). However, this practice changed from 1971 onwards as the Troubles in Northern Ireland caused fear of bombs, and poppies were no longer sold in the streets and the commemorations were no longer held in a park but in a church (Rigney 91). However, these commemorations were organised by veterans. Rigney argues that a shift in public opinion came as a result of IRA bombings of a Remembrance Day service in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, in 1987 (Rigney 92). Since the 1990's, there has been a growing interest in the Irish involvement in the First World War in both academic research and commemorations and museums.

However, these Irishmen who lost their lives in the First World War never fought against other Irishmen, like the men belonging to the examined group in this chapter did. Neil Richardson recounts a story of two Irish sisters who believed their uncle Patrick Leen, who was in the British army, had refused to fight against the rebels in 1916 and was subsequently executed. They saw him as an Irish hero because of these actions (Richardson 2). A nephew of the sisters asked a historian to look into the story of the twenty-two-year-old, who was believed to be executed by the British army. The historian found that the man was not executed, he had not even refused to fight. He was shot by the rebels as he approached the GPO on his horse, and died of his wounds (Richardson 4). When told the news, the nephew of the sister said his aunts would not be happy with that story, as he felt that the twenty-two-year-old could no longer be considered the hero who was on the rebels' side (Richardson 5). This means that even family members have a hard time accepting the truth with regards to the involvement of the British army in the rebellion.

On top of that, there were obviously not solely Irish casualties in the British army as a result of the 1916 Rising. This, and the earlier mentioned factors complicate the acknowledgement of casualties in this group. Neil Richardson states in his book, published in 2015, which explores the Irishmen fighting on the British side in the rebellion, that the story of these men had never truly been told before (7). So not only has the British army been left out of Easter Rising commemorations, in scholarly research they have also been neglected for a large part. This is not inexplicable, as the Easter Rising was transformed into the start of the successful revolution in Ireland, as earlier explained through Guy Beiner's theory. In addition, the British army was seen as the killer of the sixteen heroic martyrs. There were the

aforementioned atrocities as well. These elements created considerable animosity towards this group. Therefore this group is more complex than the Irishmen who died in the First World War, when it comes to remembrance. It is thus understandable that the inclusion of the British army in commemorations of the Easter Rising was unthinkable for a long time in Ireland. Recently, though, focus has been shifting in the run-up to the centenary of the rebellion in 2016. During the centenary commemorations the British soldiers who were killed were commemorated along with the Irish rebels and civilians who lost their lives in Dublin during the rebellion. However, this commemoration was not without protest.

This particular ceremony for the British soldiers was held at the Grangegorman cemetery in Dublin. During the ceremony one Irishman stood up and shouted that commemorating these British soldiers was an insult (McGreevy). He was quickly escorted out of the cemetery, however, this comment was not the only unrest this commemoration caused in Ireland.

One member of Sinn Féin, the political party, argued that no members of his party would attend the commemoration, as they felt it was “not appropriate” to pay respect to soldiers who had taken the lives of Irish patriots and republicans, and that they did not want to remember “the enemy of the Irish (“Dublin Event Remembers”). These statements fabricate a binary opposition of Irish versus British, but, as mentioned before, there were many Irishmen fighting on the British side.

Not just this event was met with controversy. In 2016, a necrology wall was unveiled in Glasnevin cemetery, which contains the names of all those who died in the Easter Rising. This monument includes the names of all the rebels and civilians but also the names of the British soldiers. The fact that the latter group was included led to protest and critique from some of the relatives of people who died in the 1916 rebellion, and among some republicans (“Easter Rising: Remembrance”). A year later, in April 2017, the wall was vandalised, as people had thrown paint on the names (Keena).

It is clear that, even though more attention is given to the British army, it is still a group which is not without controversy, which makes it interesting to see if and how the men in this group are represented in the museums.

## Museums

### Collins Barracks

Out of the three examined groups, leaders, women and the British army, The Collins barracks have the strongest ties with the latter group. However, this is not evident in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition. Even though there is a focus on the British army in the military history part of the branch of the National Museum of Ireland that is situated at the Collins Barracks, the separate exhibition that has been examined, which was established for the 2016 centenary of the rising, does not have this clear focus. That is not to say that there is no information about the British soldiers who fought against the rebellion. One area has a big panel with three stories accompanied by pictures. One is captioned 'Rebel', one 'Civilian', and one 'Soldier'. The panel tells the stories of an individual of each group, who lost their life in the rebellion. George Geoghegan, a member of the Irish Citizen Army, Margaret Naylor, a citizen whose husband was killed the same day as her, and Frederick Dietrichson respectively. It is a strong message to combine these three groups into one panel, as it not only shows that there were casualties on all fronts, it also implies the equality of the lives that were lost.

The museum does not imply that a rebel's or civilian's death is more tragic than the death of a British soldier, even though these men have sometimes been overlooked or neglected on purpose as shown before. Frederick Dietrichson is also an interesting person to feature, as his story is rather emotional, even though the amount of information given in this exhibition is rather little and factual. He was marching in Dublin when he encountered his wife and children, who had fled London because of Zeppelin raids. They shared one last embrace, as Dietrichson would die later that day in the rebellion. The GPO Witness History Centre also features his story, but handles it differently, which will be explained later. However, the placement of the story, together with the two other groups does imply equality.

One story that is featured here more prominently than in any other museum is that of the aforementioned Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. The story of his execution is featured with pictures of Sheehy-Skeffington and his wife, as well as Bowen-Colthurst. This information could strengthen the 'good Irish rebels' versus 'evil English soldiers' narrative for people who are not familiar with these people, however, Bowen-Colthurst was born in county Cork, which is also mentioned in the text about him in the exhibition. This breaks down the clear division between Irish and English and good and evil.



One other interesting detail in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition with regards to the British army is a panel with information about two separate events. Even though the events are separate, they are presented together, again giving the impression of equality. The first is headed 'Death in Moore Street', the second 'The North King Street Massacre'. The first tells the story of the aforementioned Bridget McKane, the fifteen-year-old who died at the hands of the rebels who were looking for shelter after abandoning the GPO, and notes that her death was one of many civilian deaths in that area. The second one tells the story of general Lowe, who ordered his British troops to break into the houses at North King Street, as he feared all residents were rebels. They killed fifteen unarmed civilian men and boys. By putting these stories next to each other, there is an implied comparison, or comment on how both the rebels, more often celebrated, and the British army, more often seen as 'the enemy', made civilian casualties. There is also a panel with the heading 'Three Men on Mount Street' which also tells the story of Dietrichson, as well as Francis Henry Browning and Michael Malone. The first was part of a training corps which was attacked by Irish Volunteers. The killing of Browning and his comrades sparked outrage as these men were all unarmed. After this event, the leaders of the rebels ordered that only armed soldiers be targeted. The second was a rebel stationed in Mount Street who was killed by a bomb. Again, this panel shows that both sides lost men, and both sides took lives. There is no binary opposition between good and bad.

However, there is a quote in big print by Patrick Pearse, taken from the surrender document, that says that they lay down arms 'In order to prevent further slaughter of the civil population and in the hopes of saving the lives of our followers'. The piece on the Four Courts garrison also notes that Edward Daly, one of the executed leaders, was greatly concerned with minimising civilian casualties. Since these statements are not made for the British army, the rebels might still be regarded by visitors as more sympathetic.

## The GPO

The GPO Witness History Centre has the least strong tie to this group. The building of the General Post Office was occupied by the rebels as their headquarters. There were no British soldiers fighting in the GPO during the rising. This could have led to little attention to the British army, however, this is not the case.

One story which is interesting in the light of blurring the boundaries between rebels and army and 'Irish' against the 'English' is the story which accompanies Charles Grant's match case. This match case is displayed in the exhibition and the touch screen tells the story of him and the men in his battalion. The men were stationed at, what is now called, the Collins Barracks, and they were marching to Dublin Castle when they came under fire. Lieutenant Gerald Neilan, an Irishman and British officer, was killed in this gunfire. The text states that his brother, Anthony Neilan, fought in this rebellion as well, but among the rebels. Even though the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition mentions brothers fighting among the rebels and the British army, this focuses on the men fighting in the First World War, as opposed to the men fighting in Dublin against the rebels. By highlighting the fact that brothers were directly opposing each other in this conflict, the GPO Witness History Centre emphasises the complicated nature of the Easter Rising.

One display box is dedicated to the crown forces, and the accompanying text states that most of the soldiers stationed in Dublin at the start of the Easter Rising were in fact Irish. This means that at the start of the Easter Rising, the largest part of the struggle and violence was actually Irish against Irish rather than Irish against English. By pointing this out the GPO Witness History Centre goes directly against the Irish versus English narrative. On top of that, there are texts on some of the members of the crown forces. One text is on the aforementioned Frederick Dietrichson, who was also featured in the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition. Here they also have two handwritten notes on display, written by his young son, thanking him for the chocolate he brought him. Dietrichson had these notes with him when he was killed. This adds an emotional touch to the story. There is also a text on Eric Murray, an Irishman fighting in the British army in the Easter Rising, who risked his life to save someone. The GPO's focus on giving an unbiased account shines through in the representation of the British army as a group as well, as there is not solely positive information on this group either.

In one of the videos in which the historians discuss certain topics, one of the historians says that the aforementioned North King Street Massacre hardened people's opinions on the British army. On top of that, the British government arrested three-thousand rebels, and sentenced ninety to death. One of the historians called this overkill and says that this also worsened the view on the British army. General Maxwell is quoted on the timeline wall saying: "the government is getting very cold feet and are afraid. They are at me every moment not to overdo the death sentences. I never intended to but some must suffer". This is also not beneficial for the image of the British army. One historian points out that it was not weird that

people were executed for the rising, but that drawing it out over a prolonged period of time fuelled the sympathy for the leaders on the one hand and the dislike for the British army on the other, as a momentum was built up.

The GPO Witness History Centre thus takes a different approach, as it does not only show both good and bad sides to the examined group, it also analyses the changing, and hardening public opinion with regards to the group. This is interesting because this shines a light on the earlier mentioned tensions with regards to including the casualties from the British army in the commemorations.

### The Richmond Barracks

Again the Richmond Barracks focus on the role of the site, this time with regards to the British army. In the gymnasium the story of the Easter Rising is told, as well as the overall history of the site as a British military base.

The narrative of the overall history of the site shines a light on the day-to-day reality in the barracks. It describes the bad living conditions in the barracks in the nineteenth century due to bad hygiene, overcrowding, boredom, and harsh punishments for deserting, and notes that there was a 'disturbing amount of suicides'. This might evoke some sympathy for the men who were part of the British Army.

One British soldier is highlighted in this museum. The Irishman Francis Ledwidge was born and raised in Slane and is an excellent example of the complexity of the British army as a group. An avid nationalist, and poet, he was friends with Thomas MacDonagh. Ledwidge joined the Irish Volunteers and was initially against enlisting for the First World War. However, as time progressed, his stance on enlisting changed. Scholars have speculated over why Ledwidge did decide to enlist, and there are multiple arguments. Some have brought up the fact that he was rejected by the girl he was in love with, while some say it was rather a case of pride, as he had been called a coward and pro-German for not joining the war effort (Curtayne 82-3). According to Al Kelly, this choice was rather financially motivated (Kelly 61). However, Ledwidge made statements about the need to protect Ireland as an Irishman. When he heard about the Easter Rising, and the execution of his good friend Thomas MacDonagh, he lost his motivation to fight in the British army. His identity as an Irish

nationalist and British soldier became even more troublesome, and this features in multiple letters and poems he wrote (Phillips 395).

Francis Ledwidge could therefore be considered to be an embodiment of the complexity of the Easter Rising and the British army. However, the Richmond Barracks do not examine the complex issues with regards to identity which Francis Ledwidge faced due to his conflicting loyalties. This might have added a better understanding of the effect it had on these men to be in the British army while they might have agreed more with the Irish rebels, for some. However, by highlighting this soldier, it becomes clear that the British army was not solely made up of English, or pro-English soldiers, but that the British army was a more complicated group.

Something that complicates this even further is one of the witness statements in the audio area. One woman's account portrays a British soldier who brought the captive women food, and apologised for bringing them hard biscuits, as this was all there was. This shows a sympathetic side to the British army.

The Richmond Barracks thus shows the more 'common' soldier, rather than put focus on General Maxwell, or Captain Bowen-Colthurst. The exhibition gives a glimpse of what it was like to be a part of the British army at the Richmond Barracks by explaining the harsh conditions. On top of that, the witness statements and the information on Francis Ledwidge complicate the Irish versus English narrative.

## Kilmainham Gaol

There is little focus on the British army in the Kilmainham Gaol museum when it comes to the Easter Rising area.

When the tour ended in the Stonebreaker's Yard, the tour guide stated that people often said that this was where Maxwell lost Ireland, as the executions that were carried out here led to more critique on British rule in Ireland, and Maxwell was in charge of the executions. Some historians claim that the Easter Rising was a step towards Irish independence, which is a notion that is often echoed in Ireland, and the rebellion started gaining support after the executions of the leaders. However, apart from this, the exhibition has no real information about the British army. There is little information about why the

Easter Rising happened in the exhibition. The museum is focused on their role, which most often is the site of the consequences of a rebellion, rather than the battleground. This might be why there is a focus on the executed rebels here, instead of the British army as well, as when the prison came into the story of the rebellion, the fighting was already over. All other three museums have strong ties to the fighting as they were either sites from which British soldiers left to fight, or sites that saw heavy fighting, but Kilmainham Gaol did not. This might be why this museum does not focus on this group.

Another explanation might be that this museum was set up fifty years earlier, in a time when the British army was even more controversial. According to Brian Crowley, responsible for the collection at Kilmainham Gaol, the current exhibition about the Easter Rising was set up in 1996. He argues that this was a time in which there was less interest in, and less research done into the British army, which is why there is little information about this group. On top of that he says that there will always be a focus on the leaders because the prison is where they were executed, and he feels that the public's interest is rather on the leaders than on the army which executed them (Crowley).

## Comparisons

Clearly the Kilmainham Gaol has the least amount of information about the British army. The reasons for this are diverse. First of all, the exhibition is twenty years older than the other three examined exhibitions. On top of that, there is a natural focus on the leaders at the prison because this is the site where they were executed.

The Richmond Barracks have a different approach as they do not only focus on the British army in the Easter Rising, but as a whole. They complicate the notion of the British army as simply 'the enemy' by showing the hardships the men went through at the barracks, as well as showing that these men could be friends with the rebels by featuring Francis Ledwidge.

The GPO Witness History Centre and the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition have a similar approach. Both show for example Frederick Dietrichson, to give a face to the British casualties, and both show how both the rebels and army committed atrocities, to show that these groups might not be that different. However, the GPO takes it a step further and analyses how public opinion hardened with regards to the British army. On top of that, the

Proclaiming a Republic exhibition seems more careful with this controversial subject than the GPO, as the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition also balances the negative information about the rebels by quotes and positive information, which is not really the case for the information about the army. The GPO also puts more focus on the fact that many of these forces were actually Irishmen, which might help to diminish the binary opposition of 'good Irish' versus 'evil English'.

By showing these different sides to the British army, and the rebels, the British soldiers might gain more acknowledgement, and the public will gain a better understanding of the complexities in this group, and in the individuals. In addition, family members, like those of the aforementioned Patrick Leen, might feel less embarrassment, and discomfort with their family history, as they learn more about the army, and as the negative connotations with the army are tempered. The touristic narratives offered by the museums could thus help to reduce the strong animosity people have against the British army. Creating and heightening the understanding of this group through museums could also lead to less protest at commemorative events or places for this group.

## Conclusion

*We passed their graves:  
The dead men there,  
Winners or losers,  
Did not care.  
In the dark  
They could not see  
Who had gained  
The victory.*

*-Langston Hughes*

Even though all examined exhibitions have the same theme, all four have distinct differences, as has been established, which leads to all four museums having a different narrative.

Kilmainham Gaol is focused on their role in Irish history. Therefore, the main focus of the Easter Rising exhibition is on the fourteen leaders who were executed in the prison, with an extra focus on Joseph Plunkett. There is little information about the women and the British army, which is partly due to the natural focus on the leaders, as this was where they lost their lives, and people visit the site for them. Another reason for having little information about the women and no information about the British army is that the exhibition is twenty years older than the other examined exhibitions. This was a time where there was less interest in these two groups, and less research had been done.

The Richmond Barracks have a focus on their role in Irish history as well. However, whereas the Kilmainham Gaol exhibition omits the role of women and the British army for the largest part, the women are undeniably prominently featured in the Richmond Barracks. The British army has a prominent role in the exhibition, albeit not only their role in the rebellion, but during the entire operational period of the barracks. Here, the leaders have a less prominent role, although they are mentioned on one of the panels, and in the audio area. The focus in this museum is on the women and the soldiers rather than the rebels.

The two most similar exhibitions are those of the GPO Witness History Centre and the Proclaiming a Republic. Both exhibitions feature personal stories about British soldiers, in order to give the men in the army a face. Both also feature stories of the civilian casualties made by both sides, so that the visitor realises that not just the army killed innocent people. This might break down the barrier between army and rebels somewhat, as this information breaks down the binary opposition created between soldiers and army. However, the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition seems to be more careful with this controversial subject than the GPO. In addition, the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition has a large area dedicated to the sixteen executed men, with personal belongings and audio fragments. The GPO does not have one separate area dedicated to the leaders.

The fact that all these exhibitions have such different narratives is reinforced by the aims of the museums. The Kilmainham Gaol museum's focus is the history of the prison, therefore the most remarkable things that happened with regards to the Easter Rising are highlighted in the museum. This consists out of the executions and the marriage between Joseph and Grace Plunkett. The Richmond Barracks also focus on the history of the site, although their aim is to recover the 'lost' side of Irish history. This means that their focus mostly lies on the other two groups, being women and British soldiers. They do not stay away from controversy, and actually want to complicate the narrative of the Irish history, by showing multiple sides to groups and not just focusing on the rebels. The GPO's aim is to give an account of the Easter Rising which is as unbiased as possible. Instead of focusing on the rebels, or focus on the women or the army, the exhibition evenly divides the focus over all groups affected by the rebellion. In addition they also take a more educational, scholarly approach by having multiple videos on display in which historians weigh in on certain subjects. The GPO is also the only museum with a real focus on civilians, which ties in with the aim of being unbiased and inclusive to all who were affected by the rebellion. The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition tries to tell personal stories through personal objects, of everyday participants as opposed to just the leaders. This exhibition does have a vast amount of artefacts, which tell stories of the people they belonged to. The exhibition is quite inclusive, as it features women and British soldiers as well, however, unlike the GPO it does have a focus on the executed men in addition to all the other stories. The Proclaiming a Republic exhibition also differs from the GPO because their focus is mainly on the combatants, whereas the GPO also focuses on the civilians.



## Implications

The results from this research might lead to part of a solution to a problem faced in many countries. Many heritage sites and museums about war struggle with the concept of the 'enemy'. This is not just confined to Ireland. Oftentimes when there is a development in commemorating 'the other' in situations of war or rebellions, this is met with protest. This is happening in The Netherlands, with regards to the Second World War and including German casualties in commemorations, as well as in France with regards to the First World War and German casualties. The findings of this thesis may indicate that these types of controversial topics need time in order to become appropriate for touristic exploitation. As Aline FitzGerald mentioned, the GPO Witness History Exhibition Centre opened in 2016 because of the tensions surrounding Irish independence in the decades after the Easter Rising. One time related aspect is also visible in these museums, and that is acknowledgement of different groups. The three most recent museums all included women and the British army, whereas Kilmainham does not pay a lot of attention to the first group, but certainly not the latter. This might indicate that for museums to focus on 'the enemy', the passing of time is an important factor as well.

Another factor which seems to overlap in the three museums which opened in 2016 is that the women and British soldiers were heavily featured through the use of personal stories, which might help in the acknowledgement of these groups. This is not just interesting in the light of the Easter Rising, but in a broader context as well. By examining and exploring ways in which the opposing group can be dismantled and, instead of being seen as the common enemy, be seen as individuals, who lost their lives, there might be a solution to the problems that are faced when commemorating an event with multiple 'sides'. As this is a problem faced by many countries, these findings could be useful for many heritage sites and museums.

Something that is emphasised in two of the museums is that both sides were 'wrong', as well as 'wronged'. One group was not inherently evil or good, but both groups hurt innocent civilians, and lost lives. By comparing these two groups a better understanding and a more nuanced view of the conflict might be achieved in the tourist. This could mean that showing a multi-faceted narrative of a conflict to a tourist could be beneficial for controversial groups such as those mentioned before.

On top of that, these findings that shows that the commemoration of the Easter Rising is not just confined to its 'heroes' anymore, is also interesting in the light of Irish studies.

There are different narratives being presented throughout Dublin, in which the executed leaders are not always central anymore. In addition, the heroism of the rebels is also nuanced in some of the touristic narratives presented in the museums. This might mean that the public interest is shifting away from just the leaders.

### Further Research

Since the examined exhibitions have only been open since 2016, with the exception of Kilmainham Gaol, there has been little research into the museums portraying the Easter Rising. There are still multiple interesting factors to look at in the museums, such as the representation of civilians, and children. The largest part of casualties in the Easter Rising was made up of civilians, and they had interesting roles in the rebellion, as most were not aware a rising was being planned and did not agree with the rebels. However, their opinion quickly changed during the executions. In addition, there were also civilians who did help the rebels during Easter week. This group was not examined in this research due to space limitations. It could be interesting to examine the way they are represented in these museums.

Another factor which might be researched is the influence of tensions on the island such as the Troubles, which is part of the reason that the Easter Rising was not as present in Irish museums for a long time. Something that might shine a light on this is to compare and contrast the ways in which the Easter Rising is commemorated in Dublin and in Belfast, to see how tensions might have influenced these events.

One topic could also be the question whether the museums mostly focus on domestic tourists or rather international tourists, and in which ways this influences the different exhibitions, since most domestic tourists would be familiar with the Easter Rising, whereas the international tourists might not be. On top of that, the domestic tourists might be much more attached to the stories of the Easter Rising, and the perceived heroism of the rebels, so by focusing on domestic tourists, an unbiased account might actually be harder to achieve.

As there is now slowly more attention for the role of Irishmen in the First World War in museums, a comparative analysis of the presentation of this war in museums and the Easter Rising in museums could also lead to new insights on the views on these two conflicts and the way they are commemorated. In addition, the way the British army is presented in museums about the war and in museums about the Easter Rising could be compared, as this

will give insight into how the army as a whole is presented, and how the different roles of the army are presented.

### Expectations

In the light of recent scholarly and societal developments, I expect the information about the British army in the Easter Rising to grow in museums like the Kilmainham Gaol museum and the Proclaiming a Republic exhibition. There has been an explosive amount of information and attention on women in the run up to the centenary, and this is visible in the museums that have been set up in honour of the centenary. Since most of these women gained little attention before this run up, it is possible that the shift in interest might also happen for the British army. This group is more controversial than the women, however, stories such as those of Neville Fryday or Frederick Dietrichson might help to change the perception of the British soldiers. In addition, there are gradually more initiatives to commemorate the British army, and although this is met with protest at times, it does mean that the narrative of the Easter Rising presented by the Irish government is becoming more inclusive. I also expect the Irish men who fought in the British army in the First World War to become more acknowledged in the Irish tourist sector, as the acceptance of Irishmen in the British army in the Easter Rising is growing as well. By examining the ways in which forgotten groups, or controversial groups are presented in commemoration and touristic narratives in museums, we can learn about ways to heal and cope with national trauma.

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