

**Investigating Narrative Techniques in Frank O'Connor's  
"Guests of the Nation" in Terms of Labov's Natural  
Narrative Model: A Socio-Stylistic Study**

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**استقصاء التقنيات السردية في قصة فرانك أوكونر "ضيوف الأمة" طبقاً لأنموذج السرد**

**الواقعي ل لايبوف: دراسة في الاسلوبيات الاجتماعية.**

**الاستاذ الدكتور**

**الباحثة**

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## Abstract

**Guests of the Nation** is one of Frank O'Connor's personal experience short stories. It represents the Irish-English war era. As a real witness of the Irish rebellion, the narrator incarnates what he experienced like futility of war, conflicts, and betrayal in his story. The paper in question investigates the narrative components the narrator used to convey his story to the readers depending on an effective way by which the structure of his story is accurately set up. This structure is analogous to Labov's Natural Narrative model which classifies any well-told story into six components (Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Result, and Coda) and this model is what, along with Hoey's Pattern as a helping linguistic tool, the study depends on in the analysis of O'Connor's **Guests of the Nation**.

## الخلاصة

"ضيوف الامة" هي واحدة من اشهر قصص فرانك اوكونر القصيرة المستوحاة من تجاربه الشخصية. فهي تمثل حقبة الحرب الايرلندية-الانكليزية. كشاهد واقعي للعصيان الايرلندي، يجسد الراوي فيها ما شهدته من عقم الحرب وصراعاتها فضلا عن عنصر الخيانة فيها. تسعى الدراسة الحالية الى تقصي التقنيات السردية التي استعملها الراوي ليحمل هذا الواقع لقرائه معتمدا على طريقة فعالة بوساطتها قامبتكيب قصته على نحو دقيق. يماثل هذا التركيب لما اسسه لايوف في أنموذجه (انموذج السرد الواقعي) والذي يصنف اي قصة جيدة الى ست تقنيات (او تركيبات): الملخص، والتوجه، والعقدة، والتقييم، والحل، والخاتمة وهذا ما اعتمدته الدراسة فضلا عن انموذج هوي لتقصي البنية السردية في تحليل رائعة اوكونر "ضيوف الامة".

## Introduction

The present study investigates the narrative components in O'Connor's short story **Guests of the Nation** by using **Labov's Natural Narrative Model**. The study classifies the story into six sections which are the components of Labov's model: Abstract, Orientation, Complicating action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. The study attempts to prove that Labov's Natural Narrative model is applicable and adequate to be applied on written narratives like O'Connor's one, since this model was made to be applied on oral narratives. But since O'Connor's **Guests of the Nation** is a

story of its writer's personal experience (Natural Narrative), the model can be applied to it.

## **William Labov**

William Labov (born in December 4, 1927) is an American linguist, widely regarded as the founder of the discipline of variationist sociolinguistics. He has been described as "an enormously original and influential figure who has created much of the methodology" of sociolinguistics. He is employed as a professor in the linguistics department of the University of Pennsylvania, which has become the Mecca for the discipline of sociolinguistics, and pursues research in sociolinguistics, language change, and dialectology. He has been the dominant figure in sociolinguistics since its emergence in the mid-1960s. Labov made many contributions to the analysis of narratives. While his deep insights into the transformation of everyday experience into narrative would be hard to rival, the example he set, and the protocols he established for the analysis of narrative discourse have inspired a proliferation of research in this area.

## **Labov's Natural Narrative Model:**

William Labov made his analyses of the oral stories of young African American people in New York city and came up with a totally new model of an overall structure of narrative which every fully formed oral story of personal experience should consist of (Misra, 2009: 88-9). A narrative has a beginning, middle, and an end and also there are other elements of narrative structure that can be traced in more fully developed types. Briefly, Labov suggests that a fully formed narrative contains the following six structural categories: (Abstract, Orientation, Complicating action, Evaluation, Result or resolution, and Coda)

The first and last categories among these six categories, the Abstract and the Coda, are optional elements of the narrative structure (Klapproth: 2004).

A narrative can be seen as a series of answers to underlying questions:

- a. Abstract: what was this about?
- b. Orientation: who, when, what, where?
- c. Complicating action: then what happened?

d. Evaluation: so what?

e. Result: what finally happened?

These elements, the six components of any well-formed story, are dealt with in detail in the following pages:

## **The Abstract:**

As Labov (1997: 402) gives his definition of Abstract, he defines it as "an initial clause in a narrative that reports the entire sequence of events of the narrative." The abstract which is of one or two clauses at the beginning of a narrative summarizing the story to come declares that the narrator has a story to tell and prepares a claim to the right to tell it, a claim supported by the suggestion that it will be a good story, worthy of the listener's (or reader's) time and the speaking rights the listeners/readers will temporarily abandon (Johnstone, 2001:637-8).

Another opinion is given by Klapproth (2004: 94) who admits that "as an optional element the Abstract may be present or not, and it is also possible for a story to have more than one abstract." If an abstract is there, its position is at the beginning of the story, where it encapsulates the story as a whole before the narrator starts his story. It accomplishes, on the one hand, a cognitive/structural function via preparing the listener to the story's point and via aiding him/her in the process of story comprehension. On the other hand, the abstract accomplishes interactive functions; when it forms the base on which narrator and listener discuss whether the story is to be told at all.

## **Orientation**

At the beginning of the story, it is essential to pinpoint, in one way or another, the setting, persons, and their activities or the situation. This can be found throughout the first several clauses of the narrative, but it is common to find an orientation section made of free clauses which give a detailed picture of the situation, time, place, and persons. For example: a clause sets the time (Sunday), a clause sets the persons (we), a clause sets the situation (nothin' to do), etc. Orientation in a narrative presents temporal and physical setting, characters, and situation:

**"It was on a Sunday, and we didn't have nothin' to do after I – after we came from church"; "I had a dog – he was a wonderful retriever, but as I say he could do everything but talk."**

It usually occurs near the beginning, but can be infiltrated at other points, when needed. The past progressive is the characteristic tense of orientation in English:

**"I was sittin' on the corner an' shit, smokin' my cigarette, you know; "We was doing the 50-yard dash"** (Johnstone, 2001: 638).

The narrative's orientation component answers the question (*who? when? what? where?*), and sets the stage for the narrated events. Some orientation may appear embedded within the complicating action and resolution sections, while other orientation parts are recognized independently in free orientation clauses. Their place within the text is of special interest, as orientation clauses can take place at strategic points in the story. Though it is usual to put the main portion of the orientation section at the beginning of a story, preceding the first narrative event, this unmarked form may change and vary for purposes of narrative effect (Klapproth, 2004: 95).

Smith (2006: 474) states that the orientation section of a story encloses statements that supply the setting or context of a story which aid to orient the listener in respect to person, place, time and behavioral situation. Orientation is very essential in the narrative structure of the story; because while reading stories, readers search for spatio-temporal signs of what and how the incidents narrated occurred. Orientation creates the necessary environment, which adds to the overall meaning of the story. In addition to the presentation of a spatio-temporal setting and the creation of an environment, orientation also presents to the readers the reasons for the primary narrative stimulus, and presents the dramatic persona.

## **Complicating Action**

The complicating action is an important narrative category that gives the 'what happened?' element of a narrative. It is often realized by narrative clauses which usually have a verb in the simple past tense. Any change in the order of these clauses will lead to another significant change in the order of the events of the story as this example clarifies:

**. . . we ate at the bistro and then we got on a bus and went to the museum. . .**

Complicating Action clauses sum up a sequence of events leading up to their climax, the point to events in the world of the story and generate tension which holds audience listening (Johnstone, 2001:638). Another opinion about Complicating action is of Squire (2005: 5) who adds that, for Labov, the complicating action structure informs us 'what happens next', and is the element that defines talk as 'narrative'.

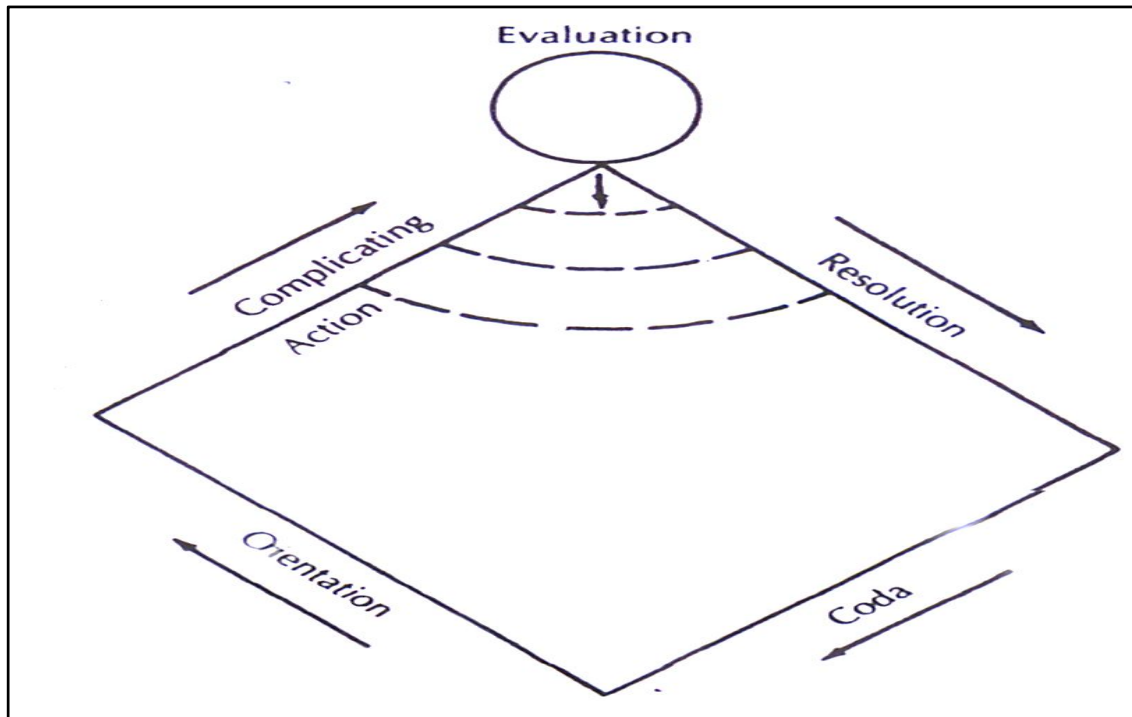
Misra (2009:92) admits that the complicating action of the story comes mainly through the direct speech of the two protagonists. The complicating action indicates that the narrative has reached the climax. Smith (2006: 473) says that the chronologically ordered clauses, or complicating actions provide the referential function of the story. They represent the backbone of the story and are the most 'reportable' event. Without these clauses, there is no story. The complicating action is usually terminated by a result or resolution. In fact, it would be abnormal if most stories serve the referential function only. It may be regarded as an empty or pointless story. We need to know what's the point behind telling the story and this is referred to as the evaluative function of the story which will be tackled in the evaluation section.

## **Evaluation**

There are elements that come usually before the result or resolution section as well as occurring throughout the whole story describing and underlining what is unusual or interesting about the story, and showing why the audience should keep listening and let the narrator to keep talking. Labov's model made a more firm view holding that the evaluation section is placed between complicating action and resolution. Labov's model realizes that the positioning of the evaluation section is not constrained to this particular place in the structural order of the story. Adjusting the original scheme, Labov proposes that the place between complicating action and resolution establishes *the focus of waves of evaluation* that infiltrates the *whole* narrative. Indeed, the evaluation infiltration is what marks a skilfully told narrative. The evaluative section is not limited to a specific location but is found distributed throughout the whole story, either as free evaluative clauses or embedded within clauses of other structural categories.

By evaluating his/her story the narrator refers to the point of the story, that is, why it is being told and what the narrator is getting at. The evaluative constituent, therefore, reflects the story's audience-orientation. The skilful handling of the evaluation element will assure the listener that the narrative is certainly reportable. The following figure clarifies the focus of waves of evaluation, which penetrates the

narrative as a whole and clarifies the relationship between evaluation and the other narrative elements:



**Fig. (1): focus of waves of evaluation (Labov: 1972)**

### **Types of Evaluation:**

Labov (1972:371-4) clarified that the evaluative function can be achieved through a number of large-scale mechanisms:

#### **External Evaluation**

The narrator can stop the story, turn to the listener and inform him/her what the point is. This is a common feature of middle-class narrators, who often interrupt the course of their story. For instance:

- **And it was the strangest feeling because you couldn't tell if they were really gonna make it.**
- **But it was really quite terrific.**

Other narrators would be comfortable to let the story itself convey this information to the listener, to offer them the experience. But this narrator finds it impossible to stay within the limits of the story. There are a number of in-between steps in providing external evaluation for a story which do not clearly break the flow of narrative clauses.

## **Embedding of Evaluation**

The first step for a narrator in embedding the evaluation into the story, and maintaining dramatic continuity, is to quote the feeling as something happening to him at the moment rather than addressing it to the listener outside the story. Another step concerning embedding evaluation, for the narrator, is to quote himself as addressing someone else. A third step is, for the narrator, to present a third person who evaluates the antagonist's actions. The narrator might have ascribed this evaluative comment to himself, but it conveys more dramatic force when it comes from a neutral observer. It is important to emphasize that this component is used only by older, highly skilled narrators from traditional working-class backgrounds. Middle-class speakers are less likely to embed their evaluative comments so deeply in the narrative and are actually most likely to use external evaluation.

## **Resolution**

The result or resolution absolves the tension and tells what finally happened. Riessman (2003: 3) states that the section of resolution represents the outcome of the plot. In addition to Riessman's opinion, Smith (2006: 473) defines result or resolution as the section which represents the set of complicating actions which come after the most reportable event (Johnstone, 2001: 638).

The complicating action and the resolution components together construct the main structural 'spine' of the story as they describe a series of events going on linearly through time. Complicating action and resolution are recognized by narrative clauses, that is, simple-past main clauses in an order which is taken to recapitulate the order of the events. In contrast to the rest of the categories of Labov's model, which are recognized in "free clauses", the "narrative clauses" are not chronologically free, because a change in their order will lead to a change in the temporal order of the original semantic interpretation.

## **Coda**

Labov (1972: 365-6) states that there are free clauses that occur at the end of the narratives, for instance, "That was one of the most important." This clause makes the Coda. It is a means of many optional means available for the narrator to indicate that the story is finished. There are many similar forms "*And that was that.*", and "*And that-that was it, you know.*" Coda may also include general observations or describe the effects of the events on the narrator.



Coda as an element that occurs at the end of the story by which the narrator announces that the story is over ("*And that was that*"), and sometimes giving a short summary of it or connecting the world of the story with the present ("*That was one of the most important*"). Labov (1997: 5) gives a definition to Coda as "a final clause which returns the narrative to the time of speaking."

## **Problem-Solution Pattern**

It is quite necessary for comprehending the message of a text to have the ability to recognize different text organization. Interrelationship between non\_adjacent sentences may be stronger than that between adjacent ones (Hoey, 1983: 31-32). According to Hoey (Ibid), language resources are infinite. Thus, it seems difficult to describe all discourse patterns of a language. What we can do is to describe some typical or frequently used patterns as well as their variations if we want to do anything with discourse patterns. One pattern, which can be applied to understand these less discussed patterns in English, is the problem- solution pattern.

The problem solution pattern comprises four elements: Situation-Problem-Response-Evaluation. The author first states the 'present' position of a problem (the situation) and mentions its inadequacies or defects (the problem), then proposes a new hypothesis or suggests a number of alternative explanations and describes various 'tests' of the new proposals (the solution), and ends by arguing the merits of implications of his proposed solution (the evaluation). These universal structures are obvious at the microstructural level (i.e. in the actual text) in the form of 'discourse signals' which provide readers with clues to what they may expect to follow, in narratives, such signals are generally indicators of time relations; e.g. "in the beginning, one day, later, then, meanwhile". Discourse signals are not restricted to conjunctive and adverbial forms; nouns and verbs such as "achieve, addition, attribute, basis, change, etc." are frequently the bearers of information on the overall structuring of paragraph and texts.

## **Frank O'Connor's "Guests of the Nation"; (henceforth GN)**

### **The Story in Brief:**

In *Guests of the Nation* (1931), the themes of betrayal, conflict (between duty and humanitarianism) and the futility of war exist. The story opens with two Englishmen, Hawkins and Belcher, being held prisoners by a small group of rebels, somewhere in Ireland, during the Irish Rebellion, when Ireland is at war with England. Belcher is a big Englishman. He is a polite, quiet fellow, who helps the old woman do her chores.

Hawkins however is very small and always willing to argue about anything. They all play cards and argue about politics, religion, and capitalists. The group is housed in the cottage of an old lady, who in addition to tending the house engages the men in arguments. She is a religious woman and quick to scold the men if they irk her.

Bonaparte, the narrator, and his compatriot, Noble, become friends with the English soldiers. Jeremiah Donovan, the third Irishman, remains aloof from the others. He is the officer in charge of the small Irish group. Bonaparte can sense that there is no love lost for the prisoners on Donovan's behalf. He sees them as just prisoners not as ordinary men as Bonaparte and Noble do. There is a lot of friendly banter between Noble and Hawkins criticizing Noble's beliefs. Beliefs that the reader finds at the end of the story keep Noble self-possessed and calm.

One evening Donovan tells Bonaparte and Noble that the Englishmen are not being held as prisoners, but as hostages. He informs them that if the English kill any of their Irish prisoners, the Irish will order the execution of Hawkins and Belcher in retaliation. This news disturbs Bonaparte and he has difficulty facing his prisoners the next day.

A few days later, Feeney, an intelligence officer for the rebels, arrives with the news that four Irishmen were shot by the English and that Hawkins and Belcher are to be executed that evening. It is left to Donovan to tell Bonaparte and Noble. In order to get the Englishmen out of the cottage, Donovan makes up a story about a transfer; on the way down a path into the bog, he tells them the truth. Hawkins does not believe him. But as the truth settles in, Hawkins tries to convince the Irishmen not to kill them, arguing that, if their positions were reversed, he would never shoot "a pal." He asks to be allowed to become a traitor and to fight for the Irish side.

Bonaparte has misgivings about executing the two men. He hopes that they attempt to escape, because he knows that he would let them go. He now regards them as men, rather than the anonymous enemy. Despite Hawkins's pleadings, the party makes their way to the end of the path where Feeney and Noble are waiting.

Donovan shoots Hawkins in the back of the head. As Belcher fumbles to tie a blindfold around his own eyes before he is shot, he notices that Hawkins is not dead and asks Bonaparte to "give him another." Belcher displays an inordinate amount of dignity and composure, considering the circumstances. Donovan then shoots Belcher in the back of the head. The group digs a shallow grave and buries them. Feeney leaves and the men go to the cottage, where the old woman asks what they have done

with the Englishmen. No answer is given, but she knows nevertheless and falls to her knees to pray. Noble does the same. Bonaparte leaves the cottage and looks up at the dark sky feeling very small and lost. He says that he never felt the same about things ever again: “... and I was somehow very small and very lonely. And anything that ever happened me after I never felt the same about again” (*GN*: p. 6).

## A Socio-Stylistic Analysis of "Guests of the Nation"

The researcher is going to study and analyse the short story of the Irish writer Frank O'Connor "*Guests of the Nation*" socio-stylistically. It represents the writer's Personal Experience Narrative. To be precise, the story is going to be divided into six sections according to the narrative structures of Labov's Natural Narrative model. The six components (Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Result, and Coda) of Labov's model are going to be tackled one by one in the following sections:

### Abstract of *GN*:

Abstract, as it is mentioned in the theoretical background, is an important component because it gives a forward overview of the story that is going to be read by various kinds and levels of readers. Examining O'Connor's short story "Guests of the Nation", we can recognize that he gives the readers the *Abstract* throughout the title to summarize the whole story and to inform them what this story is about by the few words of the title phrase *Guests of the Nation*. It answers the question "*what is this about?*" and "*why is it told?*" by telling the reader that this story is about two English guests of Ireland whose issue is going to be revealed and discussed throughout the story later on. The *Abstract* in this story did not take any part in the block of the story because the writer made the title as his abstract not a sentence from the story. So it has no place in counting the six components of Labov's model, i.e. its count in the body of the story is zero.

### Orientation of *GN*:

Every reader needs to know some information, general or/and detailed about the main characters, where the actions took place, when the events happened, and what is the general atmosphere and circumstances of the story. Concerning these pieces of information, the narrator plays a great role in making the readers live in the fictional world of the story he narrates. In *Guests of the Nation*, the *Orientation* section starts from the very beginning of the story. Starting from the first line, O'Connor gives his readers the information about the time, place, persons and their activities, and situation

of the story very neatly. He provides his readers with very detailed and well elaborated information about the characters of the story and their place and habits. This section begins from:

*“At dusk the big Englishman, Belcher, would shift his long legs out of the ashes and say, 'Well, chums, what about it?’ and Noble and myself would say ‘All right, chum’ (for we had picked up some of their curious expressions), and the little Englishman, Hawkins, would light the lamp and bring out the cards”* sentence (1) in the story and ends with *“So, seeing that Jeremiah Donovan was going, and there was no knowing when the conversation about religion would be over, I took my hat and went out with him.”* (GN: p.1)

This component specifies the participants and circumstances of the narrative. O'Connor produced the *Orientation* section throughout the spatio-temporal setting of the story. It comes through in the first (53) sentences. It creates the necessary environment which adds to the overall meaning of the story. In addition, the presentation of *Orientation* gives important information about the characters of the story. The first paragraph of the story gives hints about the friendly relationship among the four men, Hawkins and Belcher (the hostages) and their guards Noble and Bonaparte, which made it difficult for Noble and Bonaparte to kill the two Englishmen:

*“Well, chums, what about it?” and Noble or me would say, 'As you please, chum' (for we had picked up some of their curious expressions)”* (GN: p.1)

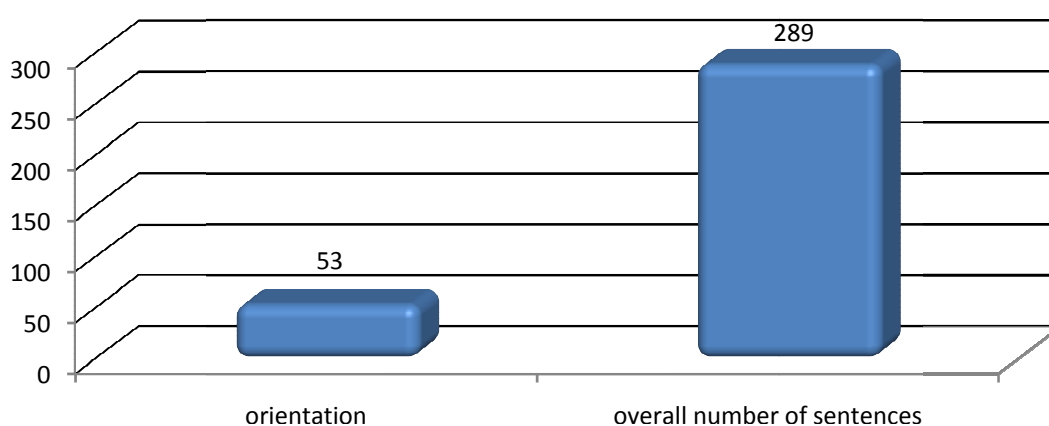
Also the narrator informs the readers that he enjoys their accent and behaviours especially Belcher, for example, Bonaparte confesses his admiration of Belcher's and Hawkins's accent and behaviour in the first, the fifth, and the sixth paragraphs in the story:

*“His uncommon broad accent was a great source of jest to me”, "it was a treat to see how Belcher got off with the old woman of the house we were staying in", “Allow me madam,” he says, smiling his queer little smile; 'please allow me,' and takes the hatchet from her hand.”* (GN: p.1)

In the last paragraphs in the *Orientation* section, the narrator tells the readers about the nature of the discussions and arguments that happen between Hawkins and Noble which are mostly about religion and politics. The following table gives information about the number of sentences that are included within this section and the number of sentences of the story as a whole:

**Table (1): The Distribution of Orientation Sentences in GN.**

Orientation (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of GN	Percentage %
53	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53	15%	289	85%



**Figure (1): Orientation Section in GN.**

As we can notice that this section has a considerable number of sentences (53; 15%) in comparison with the whole number of sentences of the story (289; 85%) and this gives it a big space in the story. This is because the writer wanted to make his readers know more about his characters and the whole setting of the story to enable them to live in his fictional world.

### **Complicating Action of GN:**

After he has given his readers the necessary information about the characters, time, and place of the story in the orientation section, O'Connor moves on to give the readers some events that clarify the debates between Noble and Hawkins about politics and religion. Then he gives some information that prepares the readers for the complicating action to be the beginning of this section:

*“We strolled down towards the village together, and then he suddenly stopped, and blushing and mumbling, and shifting, as his way was, from toe to heel, he said I ought to be behind keeping guard on the prisoners. And I, having it put to me so suddenly, asked him what the hell he wanted a guard on the prisoners at all for, and said that so far as Noble and me were concerned we had talked it over and would rather be out with a column. ‘What use is that pair to us?’ I asked him.”* (GN: p.2)

The quotation above informs us that this is the turning point in the story and in Bonaparte’s mind because Jeremiah Donovan told him about putting guards on the prisoners as a starting action to kill the two Englishmen. All the happy hang outs and humorous discussions between the four friends turned to be a crisis in his mind. This section begins from the (54) sentence in the story. Then, Jeremiah Donovan told Bonaparte (the narrator) that they have to execute the British prisoners as a reaction to the cruel execution of the Irish soldiers by the British Army. This point is shown clearly in the following:

*“He looked at me for a spell and said, ‘I thought you knew we were keeping them as hostages.’ ‘Hostages -?’ says I, not quite understanding. ‘The enemy,’ he says in his heavy way, ‘have prisoners belong’ to us, and now they talk of shooting them. If they shoot our prisoners we’ll shoot theirs, and serve them right.”* (GN: p.2)

These statements represent a clear start for this section. In sentences 124-31, the narrator (Bonaparte) reaches to the climax in the complicating action, see the following:

*“So we all sat round the table and Hawkins produced the cards, and at that moment I heard Jeremiah Donovan’s footsteps up the path, and a dark presentiment crossed my mind. I rose quietly from the table and laid my hand on him before he reached the door. ‘What do you want?’ I asked him. ‘I want those two soldier friends of yours,’ he says reddening.”* (GN: p.3, 4)

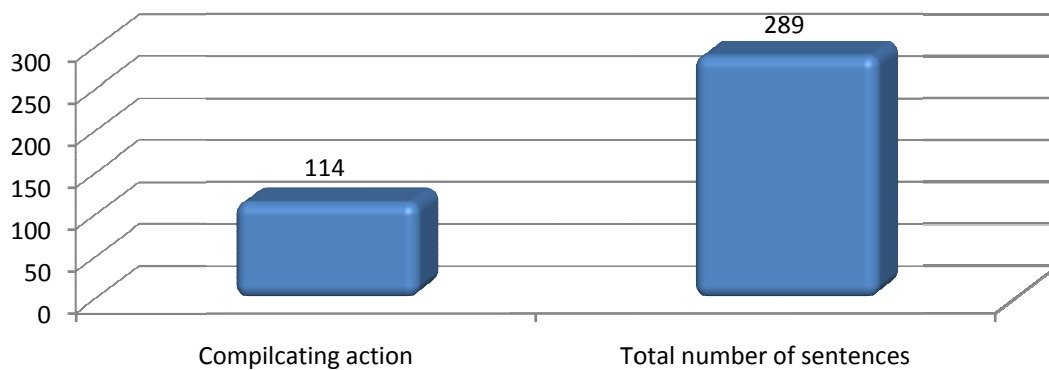
This section ends with:

*“Was Noble in this?’ ‘Hawkins wanted to know, and we said yes. He laughed.”* (GN: p.4)

The following table shows a detailed counting of the sentences that fall under in this section in comparison to the overall number of sentences of the story:

**Table (2): The Distribution of Complicating Action Sentences in GN.**

Complicating Action (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of GN	Percentage %
114	54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 178, 179, 180	28%	289	72%



**Figure (2): Complicating Action Section in GN.**

It is clear that this section took the greatest space in the story (114; 28%) in comparison with the overall number of sentences of the story (289; 72%) and with the other sections of the model. This can be justified by saying that the *Complicating Action* represents the problem of the story and since the problem influences negatively and deeply in Bonaparte's mind and heart, the narrator went on to speak profoundly about the crisis of executing his dear friends who are considered as hostages for Donovan.

### **Evaluation of GN:**

Evaluation is a very important section because it is the component which represents that part of the story which conveys the narrator's attitude towards his/her story. It is the most important contribution by William Labov in his Natural Narrative model. Labov's model establishes a significant view that the evaluation section is placed between complicating action and resolution, and it is found between those two sections in *Guests of the Nation*.

As we have already said in the previous paragraph that in GN the Evaluation section lies between the Complicating action and the Resolution sections. This case fits exactly to Labov model. It lies between these two sections because the writer wants to evaluate the problem of the story before going to its result. He tries to make suspension and make his readers more indulged in the details of the problem of the story because it is not easy for him *not* to show his attitude about it; he says what he feels deeply in his heart. This section starts from:

**“But why should Noble want to shoot him?”(GN: p.4)**

And it ends with:



**“But all the same, if you can understand, I didn’t want him to be bumped off.”(GN: p.5)**

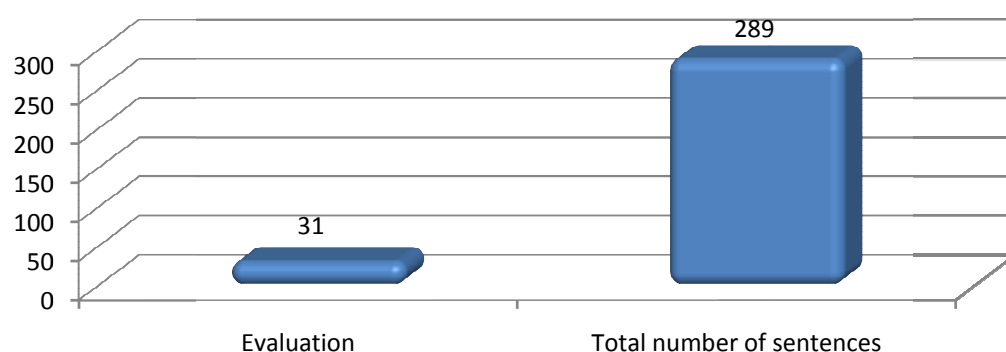
But the Evaluation component is not limited to this section only. Labov concludes that Evaluation is somehow different from the other components in his model because in Evaluation the narrator can establish an evaluation section as an independent section and mention other evaluative comments here and there throughout the story every now and then according to his needs and his reader's needs as well. So, there are other evaluative comments which are spread over the whole story in GN like in the following examples:

1. *"So I lay there half the night, and thought and thought, and picturing myself and young Noble trying to prevent the Brigade from shooting Hawkins and Belcher sent a cold sweat out through me.”(GN: p.3)*
2. *“I don't remember much about the burying, but that it was worse than all the rest, because we had to carry the warm corpses a few yards before we sunk them in the windy bog.”(GN: p.6)*

Of course there are other evaluative comments spread throughout the story but we will mention them all, including the independent (main) Evaluation section, in the following classifications of the Types of Evaluation to clarify to which type they belong. Table and graph (3) will make clear the ration of sentences of Evaluation to the total number of sentences of the story:

**Table (3): The Distribution of Sentences in Evaluation.**

<b>Evaluation (sentences)</b>	<b>Sentences No.</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Total No. of Sentences of GN</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>72, 77, 105, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 123,176, 177, 181, 182,183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 242, 265, 269, 270, 271, 281, 287, 288</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>91%</b>



**Figure (3): Evaluation Section in GN.**

As this graphic view shows, Evaluation takes an important space in the story (31; 9% out of 289; 91%). This portion is not small in comparison to the other sections since it represents the narrator's attitude towards the events of the story especially the problem. He feels so sad about the course of the story. So he tries to clarify it through the independent section of Evaluation as well as the spread evaluative comments in the story.

### **Types of Evaluation in 'Guests of the Nation':**

Concerning the types of Evaluation in *Guests of the Nation*, we can notice that there are two types of Evaluation which are the External Evaluation and the Embedding Evaluation. The researcher will present the Types of Evaluation in the story in the following pages:

#### **External Evaluation of GN:**

As it is clarified in the theoretical background that the External type of evaluation enables the narrator to break the course of the story and to comment on its main events to clarify what the point is. In GN, the narrator resorts to this component most of the time as it is shown in the following evaluative sentences in the story:

- "I cannot explain it even now, how sad I felt, but I went back to the cottage, a miserable man."
- "So I lay there half the night, and thought and thought, and picturing myself and young Noble trying to prevent the Brigade from shooting Hawkins and Belcher sent a cold sweat out through me. Because there were men on the Brigade you

daren't let nor hinder without a gun in your hand, and at any rate, in those days disunion between brothers seemed to me an awful crime. I knew better after."

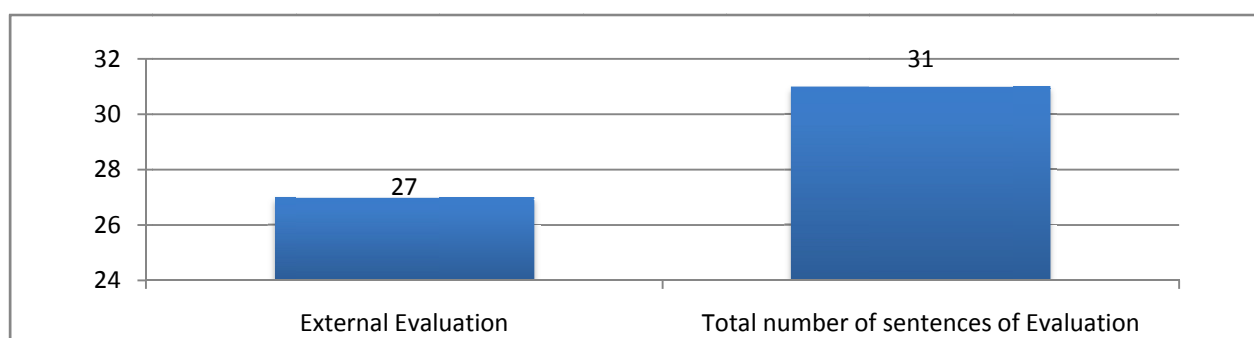
- "It was next morning we found it so hard to face Belcher and Hawkins with a smile. We went about the house all day scarcely saying a word. Belcher didn't mind us much; he was stretched into the ashes as usual with his look of waiting in quietness for something unforeseen to happen, but little Hawkins gave us a bad time with his audacious gibing and questioning. He was disgusted at Noble's not answering him back."
- "I don't know clearly how we got over that day, but get over it we did, and a great relief it was when the tea things were cleared away and Belcher said in his peaceable manner, 'Well, chums, what about it?'"
- "From which you will perceive how difficult it was for me, as I kept feeling my Smith and Wesson and thinking what I would do if they happened to put up a fight or ran for it, and wishing in my heart they would. I knew if only they ran I would never fire on them."
- "But why should Noble want to shoot him? Why should we want to shoot him? What had he done to us? Weren't we chums (the word lingers painfully in my memory)? Weren't we? Didn't we understand him and didn't he understand us? Did either of us imagine for an instant that he'd shoot us for all the so-and-so brigadiers in the so-and-so British Army? By this time I began to perceive in the dusk the desolate edges of the bog that was to be their last earthly bed, and, so great a sadness overtook my mind, I could not answer him. We walked along the edge of it in the darkness, and every now and then Hawkins would call a halt and begin again, just as if he was wound up, about us being chums, and I was in despair that nothing but the cold and open grave made ready for his presence would convince him that we meant it all. But all the same, if you can understand, I didn't want him to be bumped off."
- "It is the first time I have heard him laugh, and it sends a shiver down my spine, coming as it does so inappropriately upon the tragic death of his old friend."
- "Belcher's head is raised like a real blind man's, so that you can only see his nose and chin in the lamplight."
- "It was all mad lonely, with only a bit of lantern between ourselves and the pitch blackness, and birds hooting and screeching all round disturbed by the guns."

- “What did you hear?’ asks Noble, but sure he wouldn’t deceive a child the way he said it.”
- “It is so strange what you feel at such moments, and not to be written afterwards. Noble says he felt he seen everything ten times as big, perceiving nothing around him but the little patch of black bog with the two English stiffening into it; but with me it was the other way, as though the patch of bog where the two Englishmen were was a thousand miles away from me, and even Noble mumbling just behind me and the old woman and the birds and the bloody stars were all far away, and I was somehow very small and very lonely.” (*GN*: p.3, 4, 5, 6)

In table (4), we can notice the number of the External Evaluation sentences as being compared with the total number of sentences of the Evaluation section in the story:

**Table (4): The Distribution of the External Evaluation sentences in *GN*.**

External Evaluation (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of Evaluation	Percentage %
27	77, 109, 110, 111, 112,113,114,115, 123,176,177,181, 182,183,184,185, 186,187,188,189, 190,242,265,271, 281,287,288	47%	31	53%



**Figure (4): External Evaluation Section in *GN*.**

## **Embedding Evaluation of GN:**

Embedding Evaluation is another type of evaluation, which enables the narrator to maintain dramatic continuity by quoting the feeling as something happening to him at the moment rather than addressing it to the listener outside the story. This type of evaluation has been rarely used by the narrator. He used to stop the continuation of the story which is not a trait of this type of evaluation as we saw in the External type of evaluation. The following evaluative sentences are considered to be of the Embedding type:

- **"How so?" said he sharply; but I couldn't tell him the difference it made, for I was struck too silly to speak."**
- **"I having thought of the same thing myself (among many others) said no, because it was more than likely the English wouldn't shoot our men, and anyhow it wasn't to be supposed the Brigade who were always up and down with the Second Battalion and knew the Englishmen well would be likely to want them bumped off."**
- **"The big man goes over like a sack of meal, and this time there is no need of a second shot."**
- **"I don't remember much about the burying, but that it was worse than all the rest, because we had to carry the warm corpses a few yards before we sunk them in the windy bog." (GN: p.3, 6)**

It is extremely clear that the narrator of GN used the External type of evaluation extensively. He used External evaluative sentences approximately 24 sentences out of 28 sentences which signify that the narrator of this story is a middle-class narrator as it is mentioned in the theoretical background.

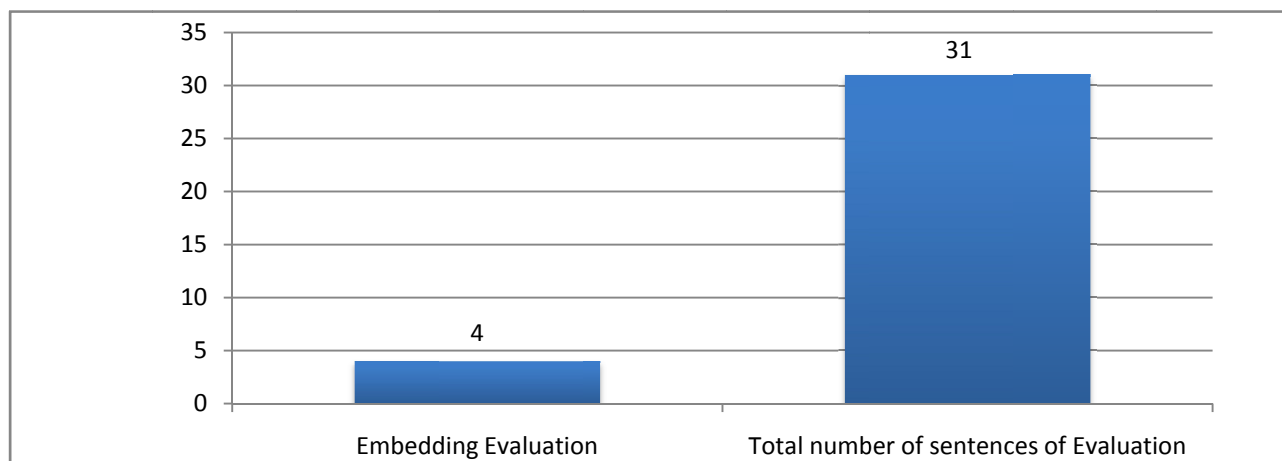
Because our analysis of Evaluation of the narrative depends on what is considered grammatically as sentences not clauses or phrases, we are not going to take into consideration the other evaluative comments which are of those two types of statements. The following are some examples:

1. **"Everything if I can so express myself was tottering before my eyes, ..."**
2. **"..., and somehow the picture of the two of them so silent in the bog lands was like the pain of death in my heart." (GN: p.4, 5)**

The next table shows the percentage of this type and the whole number of sentences of the Evaluation section in the story:

**Table (5): The Distribution of Sentences in Embedding Evaluation.**

Embedding Evaluation (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of Evaluation	Percentage %
4	72, 105, 269, 270	11%	31	89%



**Figure (5): Embedding Evaluation Section in GN.**

### **Result or Resolution of GN:**

As it is mentioned earlier in the theoretical background, resolution completes the complicating actions to form the main structural spine of the story. So in GN, O'Connor gives the readers the final result in the story where the tension of the readers absolves when they know what happens at last. The tension ends when the readers are told that the Irish guards killed the two English prisoners with sorrow. It turns from a feeling of tension to a feeling of sorrow and regret. It is a very important point in the

story because it represents the problem of the narrative. This section starts when the complicating action section ends. It starts with:

*"At last we saw the unsteady glint of a lantern in the distance and made towards it."(GN: p.5)*

The narrator reaches the climax of the events when Jeremiah Donovan shoots Hawkins. It is the climax in the result section in the story:

*"I alone of the crowd saw Donovan raise his Webley to the back of Hawkins's neck, and as he did so I shut my eyes and tried to say a prayer. Hawkins had begun to say something else when Donovan let fly, and, as I opened my eyes at the bang, I saw him stagger at the knees and lie out flat at Noble's feet, slowly, and as quiet as a child, with the lantern light falling sadly upon his lean legs and bright farmer's boots. We all stood very still for a while watching him settle out in the last agony."(GN: p.5)*

This section ends with:

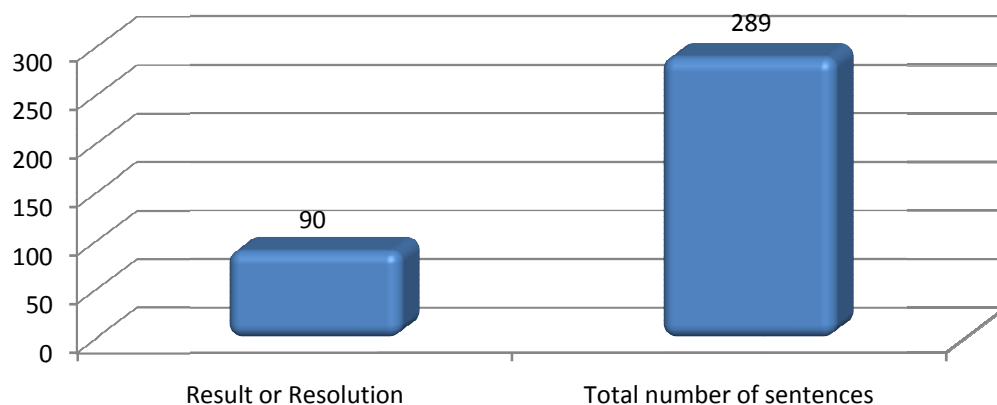
*"So then, by God, she fell on her two knees by the fireplace, so I pushed my way out past her, and stood at the door, watching the stars and listening to the damned shrieking of the birds...and I was somehow very small and very lonely." ("GN": p.6)*

The following table provides us with a view of the percentage of this section to the total number of sentences of the story:

**Table (6): The Distribution of Sentences in Result (Resolution).**

Result or Resolution (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of GN	Percentage %
90	191,192,193,194,195,196,197,198,199,200,201,202,203,204,205,206,207,208,209,210,211,212,213,214,215,216,217,218,219	24%	289	76%

	,220,221,222,223,224,225,226,227,228,229,230,231,232,233,234,235,236,237,238,239,240,241,243,244,245,246,247,248,249,250,251,252,253,254,255,256,257,258,259,260,261,262,263,264,266,267,268,272,273,274,275,276,277,278,279,280,282,283,284,285,286.			
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**Figure (6): Result (Resolution) Section in GN.**

The Result took a very big portion of the number of sentences of the whole story (90; 24% out of 289; 76%). This may be justified by saying that it is a very important part in the story because in it the two Irish soldiers kill their dear friends whom they love too much. They killed their friends with a great and deep sorrow. It was a hard task for them to do. All these complicated feelings make the narrator take his time in describing this harsh catastrophe.

### **Coda of GN:**

As Labov has proposed in his model, the Coda occurs at the end of the story to enable the narrator to declare that the story is over, and sometimes to give a short summary of it or connecting the world of the story with the present. In GN, the writer of the story, who is its narrator at the same time, did the same concerning the location



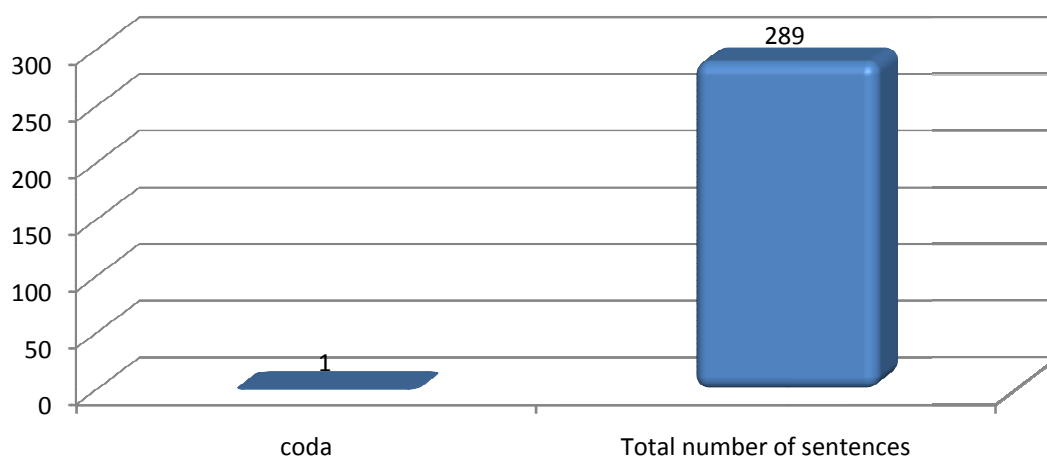
and function of his Coda. It occurs at the end of the story and does the function of finishing the story and connecting it with the present time of narration.

**“And anything that ever happened me after I never felt the same about again.” (*GN*: p.6)**

The narrator of *GN* used the Coda to explain how bad the effect of the events on him is. He summarized all the feeling of sorrow, futility, unfaithfulness and betrayal he has suppressed in his heart in this small sentence of the Coda. As Labov clarified, clever narrators separate their Codas from the main stream of the events of the story and this is what the narrator of this story did. The next table and graph show clearly the ration of this section in comparison with the total number of sentences of the story:

**Table (7): The Distribution of Sentences in Coda.**

Coda (sentences)	Sentences No.	Percentage %	Total No. of Sentences of GN	Percentage %
1	289	0%	289	100%



**Figure (7): Coda Section in *GN*.**

The story consists of several plots, minor and major, and each plot consists of a situation, which develops throughout a number of events to a problem followed by a solution determined by the protagonists of the story. This method of partition emphasizes the Problem-Solution Pattern which divides the plots of the story to four subdivisions which are called ‘Episodes’ and each episode consists of four sectors, Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation. And as Fries (1985:305) asserts that “episodes devote some space to evaluation, while mere sequences of events do not.” This method of division is achieved by means of the sentences used along the story. Table (8) illuminates the whole structure of the story. As the table shows, the first column consists of four episodes. The second column contains the story level structure which contains also four levels and the third one which shows the episode level structure is divided into four minor levels (Situation, Problem, Solution, and Evaluation). The last column clarifies the sentences which are devoted to the various episode level functions.

If we scrutinize this table carefully, we will discover several facts about the story. First of all, the areas given to each episode are not parallel because of the writer’s view at the events and the environment of the story. Episode (2) is remarkably long because of the many sentences devoted to it as an outcome of the importance of this episode in the story. In all of the episodes, a considerable area is given to the evaluation function. This has a relation with the narration method used in this story. As Labov donated in his model, the writer can usually make many comments and remarks about the events and actions of the characters and put an appropriate evaluation about them.

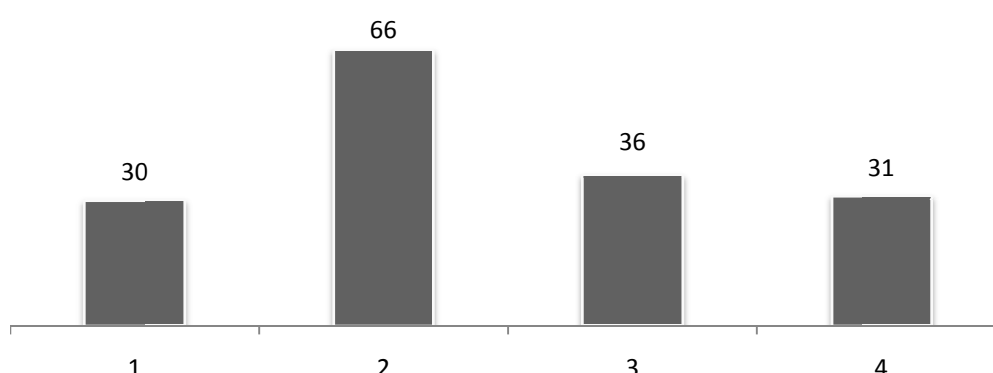
**Table (8): Linguistic Structure of *GN*.**

Episode No.	Story Level Structure	Episode Level Structure	Sentence No.
1	Situation	Situation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56.
		Problem	57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71.
		Solution	73, 74, 75, 76.
		Evaluation	72, 77, 105, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 123.
2	Problem + Evaluation	Situation	123, 124.
		Problem	125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151.
		Solution	152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 167, 168,

			169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 178, 179, 180.
		Evaluation	175, 176, 177, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190.
3	Solution (1) + Evaluation	Situation	191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207.
		Problem	208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224.
		Solution	225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230.
		Evaluation	270, 271, 286, 287, 288, 289.
4	Solution (2) + Evaluation	Situation	273, 274, 275, 276, 276, 277.
		Problem	278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285.
		Solution	286.
		Evaluation	287, 288, 289.

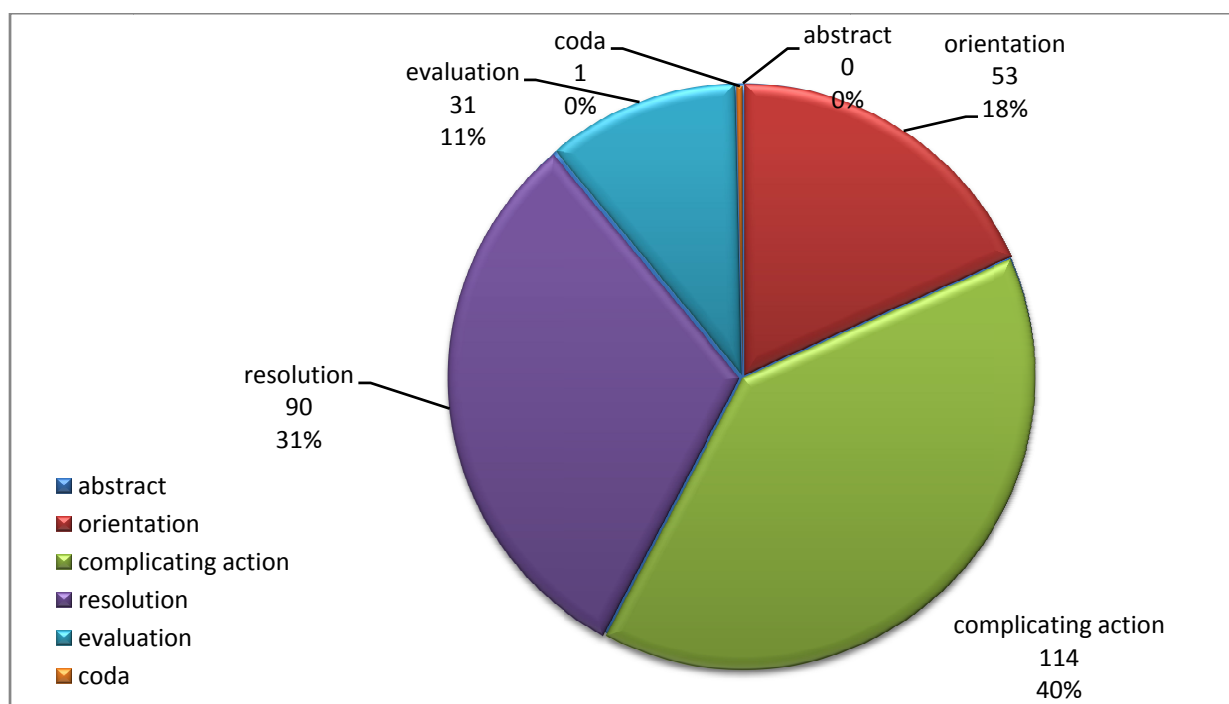
**Table (9): Sentences Devoted to the Various Episode Level Functions**

Episode	Situation	Problem	Solution	Evaluation	Total
1	5	15	4	9	33
2	2	27	25	13	67
3	17	16	6	6	45
4	6	8	1	3	18
Total	30	66	36	31	163



**Figure (8): Sentences Devoted to the Various Episode Level Functions**

Table (9) displays a detailed graphic view of the number of sentences devoted to each episode level function. As this table shows, the situation function in all episodes obtains the least number of sentences. This decrease in number happens because the situation function is not in focus because the writer is concerned only with describing a story level problem which leads to a story level solution. In addition, the writer puts much concern to the evaluation function in order to show his attitude towards the events and the characters of the story. One essential point should be tackled here is that the story comprises one situation and one problem but two solutions and this is due to the big amount devoted to the problem level in comparison with other levels. It is also necessary to mention that the solution provided by Bonaparte (solution 1) is not enough to solve the problem for him, Noble and the Old Woman. Thus, episode 4 (solution 2) represents the final result of the story; this is where all bad struggle the narrator, Bonaparte, has inside himself turns to be a feeling of tranquillity and loneliness.



**Figure (9): Distribution of Sentences of all narrative components of GN.**

As we have seen in this chapter, the short story of Frank O'Connor '*Guests of the Nation*' is analysed according to the six components of Labov's Natural Narrative Model. All the six components have their place in the narrative. A summary of the story is given to clarify its general theme and subject matter. Then, the six components of the model are found throughout the story beginning with the *Abstract* and ending with the *Coda*. Figure (9) shows a clear distribution of the six components of Labov's Natural Narrative model in GN.

The *Abstract* took the title of story only because the title represented the full meaning of the story since it gives a forward view about the story. The researcher discussed the second component of the model which is the *Orientation* section. It started from the first sentence of the story, since we deal with sentences in our analysis, till sentence (53). It clarified the information about the place, time, persons, and situations of the story clearly so that it takes the first (53) sentences of the story which is a considerable amount to give accurate description about the setting of the story. Then the third component in the model is discussed which is the *Complicating Action* section which takes (114) sentences in the story and clarified the complication of the story reaching to the climax by a step-by-step complications which takes place throughout the events in this section. It took the biggest portion in the story in comparison to the other section or components because this type of events needs longer time, effort, and clarification from the writer of the narrative. There are

significant events happened in this section beginning with deceiving the two prisoners to take them to their destiny and ending with their tragic death by the hands of their dear friends.

The researcher, then, began to discuss the *Evaluation* component which is a very important section in the model. It is the new contribution of *William Labov* to the world of Narrativity. It takes (31) sentences in the story and enabled the narrator of the story to comment freely and precisely on the events, characters, and their behaviours and activities in the story. This component falls into two types which are the External Evaluation and the Embedding Evaluation. The first type takes (27) sentences out of the (31) sentences, which indicate that this narrator is a middle-class one because he overused this type of Evaluation. The second type of Evaluation takes the rest of the Evaluative sentences. The next component comes which is the *Result or Resolution* which gives the final outcome of the events of the story. It announced the end of the Complicating actions and the beginning of a new trend in the story, that is, ending the suspension the readers' have. It consists of (90) sentences in the story which is a big amount in comparison to the other components. It represents an important section in the story because it carries important events. It consists of the tragic destiny of the two hostages, Hawkins and Belcher. Finally, the last component, the *Coda*, is discussed by the researcher. It consists of only one sentence which the last one in the story since the Coda section in Labov's model should occur at the end of the story. It clearly represents the finishing tool of the story for narrator.

At the end of the story, we understand that the two Irish soldiers, Noble and Bonaparte, returned to the house of the Old Woman. They went back with deep desperation and sorrow of what they have done to their much loved friends, the two Englishmen, Hawkins and Belcher. The narrator ends his story with a monologue talking about how everything beautiful at the beginning of the story turned to be ugly. He describes his feeling of the torturing nature around him and his feeling towards this tragedy.

## Conclusion

The application of the Natural Narrative Model helps in investigating the narrative structures of O'Connor's Guests of the Nation in an accurate way that succeeds in classifying the structure of the story to its six components to prove that it is a well-organized narrative and the Natural Narrative Model is applicable to the written types of narratives too. The effectiveness of Hoey's Pattern helps greatly in analysing the

narrative structure of the story. Labov's Natural Narrative Model, then, helps the readers to analyse, not only Oral Natural stories, but also written stories easily and adequately. Moreover, along with Hoey's Pattern, a number of subplots can be recognised depending on a number of simple patterns. So both models are successfully able to be applied in any area other than literary texts because it represents a good component to solve any problem by analysing it into its four basic episodes: situation, problem, solution, and evaluation; alongside with the six components of Labov's model.

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## APPENDIX

### O'Connor's Guests of the Nation

At dusk the big Englishman Belcher would shift his long legs out of the ashes and ask, 'Well, chums, what about it?' and Noble or me would say, 'As you please, chum' (for we had picked up some of their curious expressions), and the little Englishman 'Awkins would light the lamp and produce the cards. Sometimes Jeremiah Donovan would come up of an evening and supervise the play, and grow excited over 'Awkins's cards (which he always played badly), and shout at him as if he was one of our own, 'Ach, you divil you, why didn't you play the tray?' But, ordinarily, Jeremiah was a sober and contented poor devil like the big Englishman Belcher, and was looked up to at all only because he was a fair hand at documents, though slow enough at these, I vow. He wore a small cloth hat and big gaiters over his long pants, and seldom did I perceive his hands outside the pockets of that pants. He reddened when you talked to him, tilting from toe to heel and back and looking down all the while at his big farmer's feet. His uncommon broad accent was a great source of jest to me, I being from the town as you may recognize.

I couldn't at the time see the point of me and Noble being with Belcher and 'Awkins at all, for it was and is my fixed belief you could have planted that pair in any untended spot from this to Claregalway and they'd have stayed put and flourished like a native weed. I never seen in my short experience two men that took to the country as they did.

They were handed on to us by the Second Battalion to keep when the search for them became too hot, and Noble and myself, being young, took charge with a natural feeling of responsibility. But little 'Awkins made us look right fools when he displayed he knew the countryside as well as we did and something more. 'You're the bloke they calls Bonaparte?' he said to me. 'Well, Bonaparte, Mary Brigid Ho'Connell was arskin ababout you and said 'ow you'd a pair of socks belonging to 'er young brother.' For it seemed, as they explained it, that the Second used to have little evenings of their own, and some of the girls of the neighbourhood would turn in, and seeing they were such decent fellows, our lads couldn't well ignore the two Englishmen, but invited them in and were hail-fellow-well-met with them. 'Awkins told me he learned to dance 'The Walls of Limerick' and 'The Siege of Ennis' and 'The Waves of Tory' in a night or two, though naturally he could not return the compliment, because our lads at that time did not dance foreign dances on principle.

So whatever privileges and favours Belcher and 'Awkins had with the Second they duly took with us, and after the first evening we gave up all pretence of keeping a close eye on their behaviour. Not that they could have got far, for they had a notable accent and wore khaki tunics and overcoats with civilian pants and boots. But it's my belief they never had an idea of escaping and were quite contented with their lot.

Now, it was a treat to see how Belcher got off with the old woman of the house we were staying in. She was a great warrant to scold, and crotchety even with us, but before ever she had a chance of giving our guests, as I may call them, a lick of her tongue, Belcher had made her his friend for life. She was breaking sticks at the time, and Belcher, who hadn't been in the house for more than ten minutes, jumped up out of his seat and went across to her.

'Allow me, madam,' he says, smiling his queer little smile; 'please allow me,' and takes the hatchet from her hand. She was struck too parlatic to speak, and ever after Belcher would be at her heels carrying a bucket, or basket, or load of turf, as the case might be. As Noble wittily remarked, he got into looking before she leapt, and hot water or any little thing she wanted Belcher would have it ready for her. For such a huge man (and though I am five foot ten myself I had to look up to him) he had an uncommon shortness – or should I say lack – of speech. It took us some time to get used to him walking in and out like a ghost, without a syllable out of him. Especially because 'Awkins talked enough for a platoon, it was strange to hear big Belcher with his toes in the ashes come out

with a solitary 'Excuse me, chum,' or 'That's right, chum.' His one and only abiding passion was cards, and I will say for him he was a good card-player. He could have fleeced me and Noble many a time; only if we lost to him, 'Awkins lost to us, and 'Awkins played with the money Belcher gave him.

'Awkins lost to us because he talked too much, and I think now we lost to Belcher for the same reason. 'Awkins and Noble would spit at one another about religion into the early hours of the morning; the little Englishman as you could see worrying the soul out of young Noble (whose brother was a priest) with a string of questions that would puzzle a cardinal. And to make it worse, even in treating of these holy subjects, 'Awkins had a deplorable tongue; I never in all my career struck across a man who could mix such a variety of cursing and bad language into the simplest topic. Oh, a terrible man was little 'Awkins, and a fright to argue! He never did a stroke of work, and when he had no one else to talk to he fixed his claws into the old woman.

I am glad to say that in her he met his match, for one day when he tried to get her to complain profanely of the drought she gave him a great comedown by blaming the drought upon Jupiter Pluvius (a deity neither 'Awkins nor I had ever even heard of, though Noble said among the pagans he was held to have something to do with rain). And another day the same 'Awkins was swearing at the capitalists for starting the German war, when the old dame laid down her iron, puckered up her little crab's mouth and said, 'Mr 'Awkins, you can say what you please about the war, thinking to deceive me because I'm an ignorant old woman, but I know well what started the war. It was that Italian count that stole the heathen divinity out of the temple in Japan, for believe me, Mr 'Awkins, nothing but sorrow and want follows them that disturbs the hidden powers!' Oh, a queer old dame, as you remark!

So one evening we had our tea together, and 'Awkins lit the lamp and we all sat in to cards. Jeremiah Donovan came in too, and sat down and watched us for a while. Though he was a shy man and didn't speak much, it was easy to see he had no great love for the two Englishmen, and I was surprised it hadn't struck me so clearly before. Well, like that in the story, a terrible dispute blew up late in the evening between 'Awkins and Noble, about capitalists and priests and love for your own country.

'The capitalists,' says 'Awkins, with an angry gulp, 'the capitalists pays the priests to tell you all abaout the next world, so's you won't notice what they do in this!'

'Nonsense, man,' says Noble, losing his temper, 'before ever a capitalist was thought of people believed in the next world.'

'Awkins stood up as if he was preaching a sermon. 'Oh, they did, did they?' he says with a sneer. 'They believed all the things you believe, that's what you mean? And you believe that God created Hadam and Hadam created Shem and Shem created Jehoshophat? You believe all the silly hold fairy-tale abaout Heve and Heden and the happple? Well, listen to me, chum. If you're entitled to 'old to a silly belief like that, I'm entitled to 'old to my own silly belief – which is, that the fust thing your God created was a bleedin' capitalist with mirality and Rolls Royce complete. Am I right, chum?' he says then to Belcher.

'You're right, chum,' says Belcher, with his queer smile, and gets up from the table to stretch his long legs into the fire and stroke his moustache. So, seeing that Jeremiah Donovan was going, and there was no knowing when the conversation about religion would be over, I took my hat and went out with him. We strolled down towards the village together, and then he suddenly stopped, and blushing and mumbling, and shifting, as his way was, from toe to heel, he said I ought to be behind keeping guard on the prisoners. And I, having it put to me so suddenly, asked him what the hell he wanted a guard on the prisoners at all for, and said that so far as Noble and me were concerned we had talked it over and would rather be out with a column. 'What use is that pair to us?' I asked him.

He looked at me for a spell and said, 'I thought you knew we were keeping them as hostages.' 'Hostages -?' says I, not quite understanding. 'The enemy,' he says in his heavy way, 'have prisoners belong' to us, and now they talk of shooting them. If they shoot our prisoners we'll shoot theirs, and serve them right.' 'Shoot them?' said I, the possibility just beginning to dawn on me. 'Shoot them exactly,' said he. 'Now,' said I, 'wasn't it very unforeseen of you not to tell me and Noble that?' 'How so?' he asks. 'Seeing that we were acting as guards upon them, of course.' 'And hadn't you reason enough to guess that much?' 'We had not, Jeremiah Donovan, we had not. How were we to know when the men were on our hands so long?' 'And what difference does it make? The enemy have our prisoners as long or longer, haven't they?' 'It makes a great difference,' said I. 'How so?' said he sharply; but I couldn't tell him the difference it made, for I was struck too silly to speak. 'And when may we expect to be released from this anyway?' said I. 'You may expect it tonight,' says he. 'Or tomorrow or the next day at latest. So if it's hanging round here that worries you, you'll be free soon enough.'

I cannot explain it even now, how sad I felt, but I went back to the cottage, a miserable man, When I arrived the discussion was still on, 'Awkins holding forth to all and sundry that there was no next world at all and Noble answering in his best canonical style that there was. But I saw 'Awkins was after having the best of it. 'Do you know what, chum?' he was saying, with his saucy smile. 'I think you're jest as big a bleedin' hunbeliever as I am. You say you believe in the next world and you know jest as much ababout the next world as I do, which is sweet damn-all. What's 'Eaven? You dunno. Where's 'Eaven? You dunno. Who's in 'Eaven? You dunno. You know sweet damn-all! I arsk you again, do they wear wings?'

'Very well then,' says Noble, 'they do; is that enough for you? They do wear wings.' 'Where do they get them then? Who makes them? 'Ave they a fact'ry for wings? 'Ave they a sort of store where you 'ands in your chit and tikes your bleedin' wings? Answer me that.'

'Oh, you're an impossible man to argue with,' says Noble. 'Now listen to me -' And off the pair of them went again.

It was long after midnight when we locked up the Englishmen and went to bed ourselves. As I blew out the candle I told Noble what Jeremiah Donovan had told me. Noble took it very quietly. After we had been in bed about an hour he asked me did I think we ought to tell the Englishmen. I having thought of the same thing myself (among many others) said no, because it was more than likely the English wouldn't shoot our men, and anyhow it wasn't to be supposed the Brigade who were always up and down with the Second Battalion and knew the Englishmen well would be likely to want them bumped off. 'I think so,' says Noble. 'It would be sort of cruelty to put the wind up them now.' 'It was very unforeseen of Jeremiah Donovan anyhow,' says I, and by Noble's silence I realized he took my meaning.

So I lay there half the night, and thought and thought, and picturing myself and young Noble trying to prevent the Brigade from shooting 'Awkins and Belcher sent a cold sweat out through me. Because there were men on the Brigade you daren't let nor hinder without a gun in your hand, and at any rate, in those days disunion between brothers seemed to me an awful crime. I knew better after.

It was next morning we found it so hard to face Belcher and 'Awkins with a smile. We went about the house all day scarcely saying a word. Belcher didn't mind us much; he was stretched into the ashes as usual with his usual look of waiting in quietness for something unforeseen to happen, but little 'Awkins gave us a bad time with his audacious gibing and questioning. He was disgusted at Noble's not answering him back. 'Why can't you tike your beating like a man, chum?' he says. 'You with your Hadam and Heve! I'm a Communist - or an Anarchist. An Anarchist, that's what I am.' And for hours after he went round the house, mumbling when the fit took him 'Hadam and Heve! Hadam and Heve!'

I don't know clearly how we got over that day, but get over it we did, and a great relief it was when the tea things were cleared away and Belcher said in his peaceable manner, 'Well, chums, what about it?' So we all sat round the table and 'Awkins produced the cards, and at that moment I heard Jeremiah Donovan's footsteps up the path, and a dark presentiment crossed my mind. I rose quietly from the table and laid my hand on him before he reached the door. 'What do you want?' I asked him. 'I want those two soldier friends of yours,' he says reddening. 'Is that the way it is, Jeremiah Donovan?' I ask. 'That's the way. There were four of our lads went west this morning, one of them a boy of sixteen.' 'That's bad, Jeremiah,' says I.

At that moment Noble came out, and we walked down the path together talking in whispers. Feeney, the local intelligence officer, was standing by the gate. 'What are you going to do about it?' I asked Jeremiah Donovan. 'I want you and Noble to bring them out: you can tell them they're being shifted again; that'll be the quietest way.' 'Leave me out of that,' says Noble suddenly. Jeremiah Donovan looked at him hard for a minute or two. 'All right so,' he said peaceably. 'You and Feeney collect a few tools from the shed and dig a hole by the far end of the bog. Bonaparte and I'll be after you in about twenty minutes. But whatever else you do, don't let anyone see you with the tools. No one must know but the four of ourselves.'

We saw Feeney and Noble go round to the house where the tools were kept, and sidled in. Everything if I can so express myself was tottering before my eyes, and I left Jeremiah Donovan to do the explaining as best he could, while I took a seat and said nothing. He told them they were to go back to the Second. 'Awkins let a mouthful of curses out of him at that, and it was plain that Belcher, though he said nothing, was duly perturbed. The old woman was for having them stay in spite of us, and she did not shut her mouth until Jeremiah Donovan lost his temper and said some nasty things to her. Within the house by this time it was pitch dark, but no one thought of lighting the lamp, and in the darkness the two Englishmen fetched their khaki topcoats and said good-bye to the woman of the house. 'Just as a man mikes a 'ome of a bleedin' place,' mumbles 'Awkins, shaking her by the hand, 'some bastard at Headquarters thinks you're too cushy and shunts you off.' Belcher shakes her hand very hearty. 'A thousand thanks, madam,' he says, 'a thousand thanks for everything ...' as though he'd made it all up.

We go round to the back of the house and down towards the fatal bog. Then Jeremiah Donovan comes out with what is in his mind. 'There were four of our lads shot by your fellows this morning so now you're to be bumped off.' 'Cut that stuff out,' says 'Awkins, flaring up. 'It's bad enough to be mucked about such as we are without you plying at soldiers.' 'It's true,' says Jeremiah Donovan, 'I'm sorry, 'Awkins, but 'tis true,' and comes out with the usual rigmarole about doing our duty and obeying our superiors. 'Cut it out,' says 'Awkins irritably. 'Cut it out!'

Then, when Donovan sees he is not being believed he turns to me. 'Ask Bonaparte here,' he says. 'I don't need to arsk Bonaparte. Me and Bonaparte are chums.' 'Isn't it true, Bonaparte?' says Jeremiah Donovan solemnly to me. 'It is,' I say sadly, 'it is.' 'Awkins stops. 'Now, for Christ's sike....' 'I mean it, chum,' I say. 'You daon't saound as if you mean it. You knaow well you don't mean it.' 'Well, if he don't I do,' says Jeremiah Donovan. 'Why the 'ell sh'd you want to shoot me, Jeremiah Donovan?' 'Why the hell should your people take out four prisoners and shoot them in cold blood upon a barrack square?' I perceive Jeremiah Donovan is trying to encourage himself with hot words.

Anyway, he took little 'Awkins by the arm and dragged him on, but it was impossible to make him understand that we were in earnest. From which you will perceive how difficult it was for me, as I kept feeling my Smith and Wesson and thinking what I would do if they happened to put up a fight or ran for it, and wishing in my heart they would. I knew if only they ran I would never fire on them. 'Was Noble in this?' 'Awkins wanted to know, and we said yes. He laughed. But why should Noble want to shoot him? Why should we want to shoot him? What had he done to us? Weren't we chums

(the word lingers painfully in my memory)? Weren't we? Didn't we understand him and didn't he understand us? Did either of us imagine for an instant that he'd shoot us for all the so-and-so brigadiers in the so-and-so British Army? By this time I began to perceive in the dusk the desolate edges of the bog that was to be their last earthly bed, and, so great a sadness overtook my mind, I could not answer him. We walked along the edge of it in the darkness, and every now and then 'Awkins would call a halt and begin again, just as if he was wound up, about us being chums, and I was in despair that nothing but the cold and open grave made ready for his presence would convince him that we meant it all. But all the same, if you can understand, I didn't want him to be bumped off.

At last we saw the unsteady glint of a lantern in the distance and made towards it. Noble was carrying it, and Feeney stood somewhere in the darkness behind, and somehow the picture of the two of them so silent in the boglands was like the pain of death in my heart. Belcher, on recognizing Noble, said 'Allo, chum' in his usual peaceable way, but 'Awkins flew at the poor boy immediately, and the dispute began all over again, only that Noble hadn't a word to say for himself, and stood there with the swaying lantern between his gaitered legs.

It was Jeremiah Donovan who did the answering. 'Awkins asked for the twentieth time (for it seemed to haunt his mind) if anybody thought he'd shoot Noble. 'You would,' says Jeremiah Donovan shortly. 'I wouldn't, damn you!' 'You would if you knew you'd be shot for not doing it.' 'I wouldn't, not if I was to be shot twenty times over; he's my chum. And Belcher wouldn't – isn't that right, Belcher?' 'That's right, chum,' says Belcher peaceably. 'Damned if I would. Anyway, who says Noble'd beshot if I wasn't bumped off? What d'you think I'd do if I was in Noble's place and we were out in the middle of a blasted bog?' 'What would you do?' 'I'd go with him wherever he was going. I'd share my last bob with him and stick by 'im through thick and thin.'

'We've had enough of this,' says Jeremiah Donovan, cocking his revolver. 'Is there any message you want to send before I fire?' 'No, there isn't, but ...' 'Do you want to say your prayers?' 'Awkins came out with a cold-blooded remark that shocked even me and turned to Noble again. 'Listen to me, Noble,' he said. 'You and me are chums. You won't come over to my side, so I'll come over to your side. Is that fair? Just you give me a rifle and I'll go with you wherever you want.'

Nobody answered him.

'Do you understand?' he said. 'I'm through with it all. I'm a deserter or anything else you like, but from this on I'm one of you. Does that prove to you that I mean what I say?' Noble raised his head, but as Donovan began to speak he lowered it again without answering. 'For the last time have you any messages to send?' says Donovan in a cold and excited voice.

'Ah, shut up, you, Donovan; you don't understand me, but these fellows do. They're my chums; they stand by me and I stand by them. We're not the capitalist tools you seem to think us.'

I alone of the crowd saw Donovan raise his Webley to the back of 'Awkins's neck, and as he did so I shut my eyes and tried to say a prayer. 'Awkins had begun to say something else when Donovan let fly, and, as I opened my eyes at the bang, I saw him stagger at the knees and lie out flat at Noble's feet, slowly, and as quiet as a child, with the lantern light falling sadly upon his lean legs and bright farmer's boots. We all stood very still for a while watching him settle out in the last agony.

Then Belcher quietly takes out a handkerchief, and begins to tie it about his own eyes (for in our excitement we had forgotten to offer the same to 'Awkins), and, seeing it is not big enough, turns and asks for a loan of mine. I give it to him and as he knots the two together he points with his foot at 'Awkins. 'E's not quite dead,' he says, 'better give 'im another.' Sure enough 'Awkins's left knee as we see it under the lantern is rising again. I bend down and put my gun to his ear; then, recollecting myself and the company of Belcher, I stand up again with a few hasty words. Belcher understands what is in my mind. 'Give 'im 'is first,' he says. 'I don't mind. Poor bastard, we dunno what's 'appening to 'im now.' As by this time I am beyond all feeling I kneel down again and skilfully give 'Awkins the last shot so as to put him forever out of pain.

Belcher who is fumbling a bit awkwardly with the handkerchiefs comes out with a laugh when he hears the shot. It is the first time I have heard him laugh, and it sends a shiver down my spine, coming as it does so inappropriately upon the tragic death of his old friend. 'Poor blighter,' he says quietly, 'and last night he was so curious ababout it all. It's very queer, chums, I always think. Naow; 'e knows as much ababout it as they'll ever let 'im know, and last night 'e was all in the dark.' Donovan helps him to tie the handkerchiefs about his eyes. 'Thanks, chum,' he says. Donovan asks him if there are any messages he would like to send. 'Naow, chum,' he says, 'none for me. If any of you likes to write to 'Awkins's mother you'll find a letter from 'er in 'is pocket. But my missus left me eight years ago. Went away with another fellow and took the kid with her. I likes the feelin' of a 'ome (as you may 'ave noticed) but I couldn't start again after that.'

We stand around like fools now that he can no longer see us. Donovan looks at Noble and Noble shakes his head. Then Donovan raises his Webley again and just at that moment Belcher laughs his queer nervous laugh again. He must think we are talking of him; anyway, Donovan lowers his gun. ' 'Scuse me, chums,' says Belcher, 'I feel I'm talking the 'ell of a lot ... and so silly ... ababout me being so 'andy ababout a 'ouse. But this thing come on me so sudden. You'll forgive me, I'm sure.' 'You don't want to say a prayer?' asks Jeremiah Donovan, 'No, chum,' he replies, 'I don't think that'd 'elp. I'm ready if you want to get it over.' 'You understand,' says Jeremiah Donovan, 'it's not so much our doing. It's our duty, so to speak.' Belcher's head is raised like a real blind man's, so that you can only see his nose and chin in the lamplight. 'I never could make out what duty was myself,' he said, 'but I think you're all good lads, if that's what you mean. I'm not complaining.' Noble, with a look of desperation, signals to Donovan, and in a flash Donovan raises his gun and fires. The big man goes over like a sack of meal, and this time there is no need of a second shot. I don't remember much about the burying, but that it was worse than all the rest, because we had to carry the warm corpses a few yards before we sunk them in the windy bog. It was all mad lonely, with only a bit of lantern between ourselves and the pitch blackness, and birds hooting and screeching all round disturbed by the guns. Noble had to search 'Awkins first to get the letter from his mother. Then having smoothed all signs of the grave away, Noble and I collected our tools, said good-bye to the others, and went back along the desolate edge of the treacherous bog without a word. We put the tools in the houseen and went into the house. The kitchen was pitch black and cold, just as we left it, and the old woman was sitting over the hearth telling her beads. We walked past her into the room, and Noble struck a match to light the lamp. Just then she rose quietly and came to the doorway, being not at all so bold or crabbed as usual.

'What did ye do with them?' she says in a sort of whisper, and Noble took such a mortal start the match quenched in his trembling hand. 'What's that?' he asks without turning round. 'I heard ye,' she said. 'What did you hear?' asks Noble, but sure he wouldn't deceive a child the way he said it. 'I heard ye. Do you think I wasn't listening to ye putting the things back in the houseen?' Noble struck another match and this time the lamp lit for him. 'Was that what ye did with them?' she said, and Noble said nothing – after all what could he say? So then, by God, she fell on her two knees by the door, and began telling her beads, and after a minute or two Noble went on his knees by the fireplace, so I pushed my way out past her, and stood at the door, watching the stars and listening to the damned shrieking of the birds. It is so strange what you feel at such moments, and not to be written afterwards. Noble says he felt he seen everything ten times as big, perceiving nothing around him but the little patch of black bog with the two Englishmen stiffening into it; but with me it was the other way, as though the patch of bog where the two Englishmen were was a thousand miles away from me, and even Noble mumbling just behind me and the old woman and the birds and the bloody stars were all far away, and I was somehow very small and very lonely. And anything that ever happened me after I never felt the same about again.