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Shahriyar Mansouri, PhD

"Decolonizing Anarchic Formations and the State's Politics of Isolationism in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*"

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Decolonising Anarchic Formations and the State's Politics of Isolationism in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*

Shahriyar Mansouri

In a chapter on 'The Interweaving of History and Fiction', Paul Ricoeur introduces the modern Irish fiction as an anomaly; he notes: 'fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator. Eyes to see and to weep'.[1] According to Ricoeur, to appreciate the historical labyrinth of modern Irish novel one needs a social and cultural understanding greater than the 'selective testimony' of new historicism.[2] For unlike other modernist narratives even the phantasmagoric realism of the modern Irish novel is 'a mode of social criticism and a means of dramatising' the nation under postist regimes, and answering what John Foster regards as the 'Irish question'.[3]

The Irish novels of formation support Ricoeur's argument by portraying the starkness of Irish childhood and a bifurcated social mal-formation, but they also incorporate Ricoeur's socio-historical criticism as an epistemological core of their narrative. The modern Irish novel, in this respect, transforms into a negative narrative that provides a dramatised perception of Ricoeur's fictive realism, narrativising a fictionalised sense of Irish reality that portrays formation in the war trodden Dublin of the 1920s, which according to

[1] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago, 1988), iii, 7.

[2] In addition, acknowledging a Foucauldian understanding of new historicism, Ricoeur notes: 'we must remember, however, that the historian is also embedded in history, he belongs to his own field of research. The historian is an actor in the plot ... The historian's testimony is therefore not completely neutral, it is a selective activity. It is, however, far less selective than the testimony of the dominant class'. See Paul Ricoeur, 'Imagination, Testimony, and Trust: A Dialogue with Paul Ricoeur' in Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (eds), *Questioning Ethics: Debates in Contemporary Philosophy* (London, 1999), 16.

[3] According to Foster, what all the post-independence modern Irish novels have in common is a narrative of blighted beginnings, and in his terms were 'problem-novels', exploring malformations under an oppressive state. These narratives, therefore, transcend their clichéd purpose of entertainment and emerge as fictionalised voices that narrativise a sublimated reality of 'problematic' Irish formations. See John William Foster, *Irish Novels 1980–1940: New Bearing in Culture and Fiction* (Oxford, 2008), 37–43.

Eimar O'Duffy leads to nothing but 'blighted beginnings'.[4] A fictive reality that illustrates the wasted potentials of street children in transition, namely, transforming into either radicals and rebels – such as Henry, Johnny, Ivan – or marginalised characters – such as Lucy and Sandra. This paper shall discuss such bipolarity in Irish formations under the suppressive rule of the state Nation. It will explore narratives that at once resist the past and act selective in remembering the nationalist socio-political norms; narratives that question not only the foundation of postist Irish formations but also the nationalist politics of forgetfulness and political parochialism. Isolationism and radicalism, in this respect, formed the central pillars of in the formation of the modern Irish novel: concepts that gave voice to the blighted beginnings of Irish youths by dominating the modern Irish novel.[5]

In 'The Ideology of Modernism', discussing isolationism and ahistorical modern self-formation, Georg Lukács finds such isolationism as the drive which leads to individual's social irrelevance, and finally indulgence in a subjective perception of reality. According to Lukács, the modern man not only externalises his sense of irrelevance to his current state, but also scolds his status quo ante, especially social integration and formation of a social self.[6] The result is a man 'reduced to a sequence of unrelated experimental fragments', who is 'as inexplicable to others as to himself'.[7] In this regard, as Gottfried Benn, the German expressionist poet, explains: 'there is no outer reality, there is only human consciousness, constantly building, modifying, rebuilding new worlds out of its own creativity'.[8] This non-conformist and isolated sense of selfhood also appears in Theodor Adorno's definition of a non-identarian, anti-social subject who defines itself through its particular features and principles, especially its split, self-referential identity. The result is an anarchist, whose reality and 'concern', according to Max Stirner, are founded 'only [on] himself'.[9] Under such egoist formations the individual

[4] Eimar O'Duffy, *The Wasted Island* (Dublin, 1920), 192.

[5] By replacing drama and poetry in early twentieth century, the novel in Ireland, and in particular its modern variation, transformed itself into an overtly expressive vehicle, presenting the nation's socio-political frustrations as well as their economical whims. See Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation* (London, 1997), 18–25.

[6] Georg Lukács, 'The Ideology of Modernism' in David H. Ritcher (ed.) *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (London, 2006), 1220–3.

[7] Ibid., 1222.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own: The Case of the Individual Against Authority* (New York, 1910), 3.

engages with society insofar as its 'cause', namely, self-formation, allows.[10] Their understanding of social, historical and cultural boundaries of a nation is naturally antiauthoritarian and lacks the balance that harmonises individual and national formations.[11] Their narratives of formation, therefore, are not only a fictive realism of their imagined formation but also the 'eyes' that enable them to understand the past and present of their nation. It is a phantasmagoric narrative, rooted in the formation of non-conformist individuals, which engages with a radical interpretation of their history: the one that at once rejects and affirms the rule of the republic in its formation.[12] The narrative of the modern, anarchic protagonist, in this respect, substitutes the fundamental questions of 'what to do? How to act? Who to be?' with what do you want to do?; how do you want to act?; and who do you need to be?[13] These are the self-referential questions that disturb not only the foundation of classical, Goethean Bildung but also the modern variations which emphasises self-formation rather than social mobility and social integration.

Such an isolationist and radical perception of selfhood, in colonial nations, manifests itself as a non-conformist process of individuation that abides by neither colonial nor post-colonial socio-cultural norms. The result is characters who find post-colonial Ireland too limiting, submerged in the nationalist vision of agrarian Ireland and full of 'dirty bog-trotters' and 'bogmen'[14]; and Englishness of course is the source of this socio-cultural apathy and historical anachronism, for instance the Nugents in Patrick McCabe' *The Butcher Boy*: 'if only the Nugents hadn't come to the town, if only they had left us alone, that was all they had to do'.[15] Social radicals such as Francis in McCabes' novel are the embodiment of an antiauthoritarian anarchic impetus that, according to

[10] Ibid., 3–4.

[11] On self-referentiality as a modern variation of egoism in the twentieth century, and egoists' engagement in formation of their nation see Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, 1991), 70–85.

[12] Such a Janus-faced perception of history, as D. George Boyce and Terry Eagleton note, becomes the very foundation of nationalists' definition of history in Ireland, a fragile narrative which is founded on people and their revolutionary potential while at once ignores their relevance as the developing force. The result of such an intended political dichotomy reaffirms Büchner: 'the revolution is like Saturn, it devours its own children'. Georg Büchner, *Danton's Death* in idem, *Complete Plays* (Harmondsworth, 1993), Act I, line 23. See D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, (1982; London, 1995), 285–330; and Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London, 1995), 358–70.

[13] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 70.

[14] Patrick McCabe, *The Butcher Boy* (1992; London, 2002) 75, 76)

[15] Ibid., 167.

Maia Ramnath, at once finds the post-colonial norms as well as the nationalist, neocolonial principles contradictory and contentious to their core.[16] Such a rebellious characterisation emerges as a self-referential, self-seeking force that finds its formation in the way it has paved for itself: a forked, separatist, isolationist path that leads to formation, albeit inexperienced and unknown.[17]

Chaotic, radical characters, such as Francis in McCabe's novel, are nothing but the continuation of a wave of young radical Irishmen who obeyed neither the Empire nor the nativist politicisation and division of Ireland. A radical consciousness was rooted within the nation, striving to dismantle not only a colonial sense of Irishness but also what it perceived as a totalitarian, neocolonial despotism, practiced by the nationalists themselves. This anarchic cogency in escaping from the empire and the nationalists, provided chaotic characters such as Francis Brady in McCabe's novel with the necessary leeway to emerge as the non-fictive epitomisation of post-nationalist, modern Irish identity. An anti-Imperialist Irish momentum embraced not only modernism and thus modern Irishness but also an informal sense of internationalism. By joining forces with other European nations, it was able simultaneously to keep Englishness and the Empire as an uninvited 'passive periphery'.[18] By so doing, namely, nationally welcoming a reversal of political binaries of nationalism and non-traditionalism versus modernism and internationalism, the Irish non-conformist movement plainly joins a global anarchic pattern of national formation that other colonised nations have already experienced: a slow, though continuous, socio-cultural and economic growth, by following an antiauthoritarian sense of development.[19]

[16] See Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (Oakland, 2011), 132–50.

[17] Concepts such as 'unexperienced', ' unknown', and 'non-identarian' (identity) must be read in light of Theodor Adorno's critique of social subjectivism presented in his *Negative Dialectics*. By 'unexperienced' and 'unknown', for instance, I meant to emphasise the nationalists' efforts in presenting only an abstract dimension of radical Irishness. Such a suppressed form of identity, as Samir Gandesha notes in his discussion of 'Homeless Philosophy', finds itself 'othered' and thus socially marginalised as a result of a significantly politicised dialectical discourse of the oppressor, namely, the state. See Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (eds), *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical investigations* (California, 2012), 252.

[18] Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, 32. On the Irish welcoming (informal) internationalism by joining other European nations see David McCullagh, *The Reluctant Taoiseach: A Biography of John A. Costello* (Dublin, 2010), 270–300.

[19] Other nations with similar anarchic patterns of formations are Argentina, Cuba, Ukraine, Mexico, South Africa, and Egypt. See Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, 35–41.

Such a national approval of internationalism and as a result non-Irish Irishness tallies with Willy Maley's post-nationalist perception of Irishness, namely to repel Englishness, Catholicism, and the shadow of the Empire, while seeking to amend the Celtic roots.[20] I argue, however, the anarchic self-referentiality embedded in the meta-national Irish identity, as I will discuss shortly in my reading of McCabe's novel, transcends the binary of national vs. international, and modern vs. nationalist; for the modern, meta-national young Irish as the exemplification of post-independence Irish non-conformism seeks Irishness neither in nationalist or anti-nationalist suppressive norms nor in post-colonial, revivalist conformism. Rather, the young Irish identifies with Stephen Dedalus' 'non serviam,' radical critique of the nation state, namely, a non-identarian form which pursues Irishness in modern re-visualisation of Irish norms. This non-conformist form critiques the non-functional political frameworks of the nation, by presenting it, for instance, in a historically haunted, carnivalesque narrative of an Irish boy early in his formative years, who not only defies the binary of moral and immoral formations by indulging in his radical passion of 'eat[ing] of the fruit of all the trees', just as a Wildean rebel would, but also mocks the nationalist perception of formation as a narrow, and apologetically English objectification of Irish identarianism.[21] To better understand the root of such anarchic antiauthoritarian rebellion and non-conformity prevalent in the modern Irish novel of formation, and especially in McCabe's characterisation of Francis, I shall briefly explore the roots of anarchic anti-colonial Irishness in post-independence Ireland.

Decolonising Anarchism in Post-Colonial Ireland

Anarchism in Ireland emerged as an anti-colonial, originally apolitical movement as early as the 1880s, aiming to rid the nation from variations of colonialism.[22] It was during and after the Easter Rebellion, however, that the

[20] See Willy Maley, 'Varieties of Nationalism: Post-Revisionist Irish Studies' in *Irish Studies Review*, 4 (1996), 35–6.

[21] Oscar Wilde, 'The Soul of the Man Under Socialism', Project Gutenberg, 1997, 68. For an online perusal (it is not a downloadable ebook) see: http://goo.gl/nLA2e.

[22] While British Imperialism remained as the most dominant form of (external) colonial mentality in Ireland, internal and psychological variations emerged as other notable, albeit minor, forms that plagued the nation after the wars. Anarchist groups such as the Socialist League appeared as a counter-response to such a dominantly imperialist air of nationhood in late nineteenth century. On 26 April 1894, for instance, *The Irish*

movement transformed into a severely political consciousness shared by the proletariat and the leading political figures; a radical psyche with plans to lead the nation from colonialist to nationalist, to pluralistic and republic, and finally to internationalism. It was during the Irish wars that Irish anarchism reached its zenith, and transformed from being only a libertarian Celtic doctrine, into a non-conformist, proletariat mass movement, sympathising with the 'suppressed'.[23] While the historical origin of anarchism in Ireland has been mythologised by both revisionist and nationalist historians, to highlight their triumphant emergence over one another, notable non-conformist proletariats were involved in the formation of the nation-state and the republic. Historically obscure anarchists such as Matt Kavanagh (1876–1954), a Liverpool-based anarchist factory worker whose strategic contributions during the Irish lockout of 1913 helped revolutionaries and nationalists such as James Connolly and James Larkin eventually accomplish what they started even in their absence;[24] the Fabian society at Trinity College Dublin with 200 members (generally students from low-income families) whose aspiration for establishing anarchist fraternities was rooted in seeking a fair, independent Ireland;[25] Captain Jack White (1879–1946)–an exception to this class-based characteristic of Irish anarchism, belonged to the landowning class, and was one of the founders of Irish Citizen Army (1913–19) and an early supporter of the formation of a Republican Congress, led by workers and small farmers.[26] These whose paths crossed one another's through the obscure history of Irish anarchism were among the earliest anticolonial Irish anarchists who not only defied the empire and its hegemonic dialectics of dominance but also later questioned the state for its politics of silence and dominance, which deviated their original libertarian principles. My contention is that, although anarchic formation has been sidelined by the nationalist history of Ireland,

Times reported a large anarchist crowd led by Dr Fauset McDonald in Dublin at Central Lecture Hall, Westmoreland Street, explaining how anarchist communism can be utilised to better the process of national formation. See http://irishanarchisthistory.wordpress.com/2012/08/16/an-anarchist-communist-in-dublin-1894/>. Also see Fauset McDonald, 'On the Social Question' in *Worker*, 18 July 1896: < http://www.takver.com/history/raa/raa29.htm>.

[23] Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, 103–5).

[24] See Nick Heath, 'Kavanagh, Mat, 1876–1954', Libcom.org, Accessed on 21 January 2013: < http://www.libcom.org/history/kavanagh-mat-1876-1954>.

[25] See Owen McGee, *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood, from the Land League to Sinn Fein* (Dublin, 1997), 218–25.

[26] See Alan MacSimóin, 'Anarchism's Greatest Hits No. 4: Jack White', *The Struggle Site*, Web, accessed on 21 January 2013: < http://struggle.ws/ws/ws50_jack.html>.

and introduced it as only a product of critical and literary lightheartedness in the 1960s and beyond, the movement, as I shall explore shortly in my reading of McCabe's novel, has been at the crux of a kind of Irish resistance. As Alan MacSimón and Nick Heath have put it, while the proletariat anarchist rebels, such as Jack White, were 'never under any illusions about Irish nationalism which finally triumphed over the original revolutionary aspirations of 1916', their contributions towards independence and decolonisation of Irish identity, and eventually republicanism of the later twentieth century have been critical, yet unknown and thus unsung.[27] It is the very libertarian movement which resurfaced in the 1960s and 1970s, fictionalised by modern Irish authors such as Patrick McCabe, Edna O'Brien, Dermot Bolger and Roddy Doyle. The reemergence of the movement in the 1960s was more socio-political than cultural, resulting in the formation of radical groups setup by ex-members of the IRA and other expatriates who returned to home.[28] Prior to such a broad re-emergence, however, the movement grew substantially as a mass proletariat socio-political impetus under the disguise of the Irish Labour Party, especially in 1935 when an internal friction between Fianna Fáil and the Irish Citizen Army led a vast number of ICA to leave Fianna Fáil and join this dynamic party.[29] Their mission, however, remained the same: to further their

[27] Ibid.

[28] Although the 1920s saw the same level of resistance, the emphasis was on restoring the Irish culture to Celtic heritage and language. In the 1960s the emphasis was on a just treatment of labour parties and a civil servants, as in relation to the marching of thousands of civil servants in April, June and July 1953, and May 1954 demanding a just wage; or when in 1966 the IRA blew up the Nelson Pillar in Dublin in retaliatory response to their rejection by Catholic community. 1968, however, witnessed a more social air of resistance, when Civil Rights protests and marches began, they were immediately banned by the Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig, labeling them as uninvited movements from without, leading the frustrated opposition groups to turn to IRA. The IRA was reinvented as an influential military wing of dissident politicians. See John Hume, Edward M. Kennedy, Tom McEnery, *A New Ireland: Politics, Peace and Reconciliation* (New York, 1996), especially chapters 6 and 7. Also see Angela Kathryn Stout, Richard Alan Dello Buono, William J. Chambliss, *Social Problems, Law, and Society* (Maryland, 2004), especially 346–9.

[29] While the Irish Labour Party emerged as a major opposition party in the Dáil in the 1930s and beyond, there were other minor, though politically active, opposition parties, which were sympathetic if not fully anarchy-oriented, during 1923–4. These functioned as a radical political response to conservative parties such as Fianna Fáil. The Irish Worker League, among many, appears as a radical opposition party, established by James Larkin after his return to Dublin in April 1923. According to historians it was founded on communist rather than anarchic principles. While Larkin's Worker Leagues precedes the Irish Labour Party, they both worked in tandem as mass proletariat socio-political parties to further libertarian principles

anti-imperialist ethos while advocating a free, non-conservative Ireland.[30] To them, decolonisation meant a decentralised egalitarianism in which there are only Irish people and no Others, as in Catholic or Protestant, Northern or Southern, Shinner or Unionist; concepts which under the conservative state had led the nation towards a silent fragmentation.[31]

Decolonising anarchic Irishness shared one origin and path of formation with other antiauthoritarian movements: street children and a large crowd of deprived working class, or in Ramnath's terms, 'underprivileged proletariat'.[32] Such an antiauthoritarian identity not only helped the nation to dismantle the English values and norms but it also allowed the younger generation to experiment with the inexperienced, resulting in, for instance, a Wildean rebellious contemplation of the fruit of the unknown; George Moore's experimentation with reversing the binary of slave/master relationship in his novel *Esther Waters* (1894); or J.M. Synge's carnivalesque of social taboos and norms in his plays, especially *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), ridiculing the politics of suppression.

To nationalists, the radical proletariat, who helped build the state, according to David Lloyd, transforms into an anomalous, hegemonic crowd, which needs to be suppressed. Those who refrain from such an impulsive silence will join a history that under the state's rules must be forgotten.[33] This is the blanket consciousness of forgetfulness that failed as radical characters such as Francis in McCabe's novel and Henry and Ivan in Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* (1999) furthered their participation in their formation of their nation. As a result, instead of obedience, the nationalist politics of forgetfulness conversely gave birth to a troop of defiant young Irish radicals whose deeds can be justified as socio-cultural counter-conformist responses to the state's politics of suppression and containment.

According to Ramnath, decolonising anarchic movements have the tendency to split; to form forked sub-division anarchic forces and identities

which formed the constitution of other parties and groups in the 1970s.

[30] See John Goodwillie, 'Glossary of the Left in Ireland, 1960 to 1983', *Gralton*, 9 (1983), 17–20.

[31] On socio-political fragmentation and how political parties coped with it see John Coakley and Michael Gallagher, *Politics and the Republic of Ireland* (London, 1999), 116–17. On the political fragmentation as a historical concept see William Keys Anderson, *James Connolly and the Irish Left* (Dublin, 1994) especially chapters 3 and 11.

[32] Ramnath, *Decolonising Anarchism*, x

[33] See David Lloyd, *Anomalous State: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment*, (Durham, 1993), xx.

in a nation that itself has been divided, thus making both a postist regime, and a complex oppositional system opposed such formations.[34] The Irish anarchic identity, too, manifests itself as a non-identarian variation of a modern sense of Irish resistance; a conceptual identity that defied postism and disavowed traditionalism, and during its process of maturation became a victim of such political sectarian bipolarity. On the one hand, therefore, there are revolutionaries, who challenged British colonial authoritarianism and were inclined towards the Yeatsian hero; and on the other, we have characters such Francis in McCabe's novel. These are chaos-driven anarchists whose sense of formation lies in deformation, or in other words, non-identarian, un-Irish formations; counter-revolutionaries were sent into psychological exile and thus separated from the cause that originally united them.

Anarchist Irishness is a modern, counter-postist variation of the same movement that emerged in 1914 and 1916, forming non-conformist radicals with a non-colonial vision of an agrarian Ireland. However, it was the same troop of non-conformists that redefied their own principles, and advocated the formation of a united nation-state.[35] Those struck and neglected by nationalists' Janus-faced politics, then joined forces with a national counter-revolutionary impetus, defying the state's politics of chastity and forgetfulness by indulging in chaos and further deformation. In other words, anarchic meta-nationalism, as at once a movement and an antiauthoritarian form of identity, emerges as a form of anti-colonial, a-historical, counter-postist Irish identity that questions the central pillar of nationalist separatist mentality: nationalists' masked indulgence in the concept of sectarianism and separation manifests itself as religious partitioning of the same crowd of underprivileged proletariat that originally contributed to the formation of the state.[36]

By introducing the revolution as 'unstable' and in need of military and political administration, nationalists further distanced their ethos of control and confinement from their original principles of potential republicanism, and took control of the physical forces. Counter-revolutionaries, in this regard, emerged as a force in charge of liberating an unconsciously suppressed and

[34] Ramnath, *Decolonising Anarchism* 3–19.

[35] Political figures such as de Valera, Padraig Pearse, Cathal Brugha and many other non-conformists-turned-nationalists defended their separatist vision through military threat and fortifying a physical force by recruiting large numbers of young soldier, and then dismissing them as illegal military forces. See Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 346–50.

[36] On nationalists' masked attempt at dividing the Irish into two distinct poles see Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 259–94.

deprived nation that has been bound by the nationalists' normalising politics of forgetfulness combined with a consciousness of internal colonialism. The result is a unique state of structurelessness most apparent after the Irish wars of 1920s, which at once is uniting, both sides fighting the Empire and the imperial identity, and fragmented, as one side advocates anti-nationalism and counter-sectarianism, while the other persists in its neocolonial function, namely, partitioning the nation.

My contention is that it was such a forked, radical, though libertarian, perception of modern Irish identity that helped free a nation that has been ruled by oppressive governing forces: from imperial to anti-imperial, and to national and a range of overlapping sectarian units that were produced by the separatist, nationalist crowd. Revivalists, nationalist, revolutionaries, and the post 1920s counter-revolutionaries, in this regard, emerge as liberating illegitimate forces, produced by Ireland's inclination towards a multidimensional politics of non-conformism. Francis Brady, in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, is in this respect, a child of a dichotomous political polarity in post-independence Ireland.

Rebellion

In the beginning of his narrative, Francis Brady authoritatively introduces himself as a manifestation of an anarchic rebellion against the nationalist neocolonial narratives of formation; predictable narratives which include a ventriloquial nationalist voice as their core, dictating the proletariat their 'blighted beginnings.'[37] Such an anarchic authoritarianism in Francis' harrowing self-introduction can be seen in his lack of hesitation in combining violence, disorientation, trauma, and a broken perception of time in his narrative. As will be explained shortly, it is this unhesitant rebellion in his narrative that allows for his account of containment and re-formations in Irish Bildung, albeit fictive and representational, to emerge as a national voice expressing discontent and disillusionment with the nationalist state.

Traumatised by the dominant politics of confinement and conformism in post-independence nationalist Ireland, Francis emerges as a young rebel,

[37] These narratives are predictable as they are set to follow the state's metanarrative of stasis and conformism; obscuring unwelcome elements such as unmarried mothers, illegitimate children and severely impoverished families.

unlearning the very principles that defined the de Valeran nationalist Ireland;[38] he emotionally relinquishes his family – especially after his mother's death; mocks society and societal norms: 'I bought bubblegum and spread them all out on a park bench'[39]; and ridicules religiousness of the post-independence Irish society:

> Bubble says to me what are you doing going on all these long walks. I told him I thought Our Lady was talking to me. I read that in a book about this holy Italian boy. One minute he's an Italian bogman with nothing on him only one of his father's coasts the next he's a famous priest going round the world writing books and being carried around in a sedan chair saying the Queen of Angles chose me.[40]

An outcast, Francis secks refuge and solace in his platonic friendship with Joe Purcell, a companion who supports and shadows Francis' anarchic rebellion only superficially, leaving Francis alone as he finds his dreams of dominance and control can be fulfilled by changing his direction. As Joe decides to pursue his dreams of social mobility and recognition, disregarding their friendship, Francis' traumatic formation manifests itself as a fractured identity which neither acknowledges the rural traditionalism of his agrarian nation nor complies with the national neocolonialist manifesto of formation. A split identity, in other words, which rejects society and socialisation yet seeks to unite with Joe. Such a dualistic formation present in McCabe's depiction of Francis targets the state's failure to provide a unified national identity for its younger generation without suppressing their differences. The split identity, according to Ellen Scheible, illustrates the duality in having 'a unified nation [which] depends on the erasure of personal identity, while individualism resists conformity, thereby evading the forward motion of cultural and national modernity'.[41] It is the binary opposition of national and individual identity that leaves rebels such as Francis no option but to

[38] Francis' understanding of formation is an obvious reversal of psychosocial Bildung, whereby the protagonist learns to ignore society and indulge in a self that his childish egoism finds fit; and that which allows him to compete against other more successful peers. On the concept of 'unlearning,' especially its manifestation in the modern Bildungsroman, see Elizabeth Dipple, *The Unresolvable Plot* (London, 1988), 218–20.

[39] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 39.

[40] Ibid., 77.

[41] Ellen Scheible, 'Reanimating the Nation: Patrick McCabe, Neil Jordan, and the Bog Gothic', *Bridgewater Review*, 31 (2012), 5.

transform into cultural catalysts, and facilitate the re-emergence of individual identity.[42]

McCabe's portrayal of Francis' family tallies with what Doyle depicted in his narrative of Henry Smart set in the 1920s: fragmented, irrelevant, yet unique in entrusting the young protagonist his miseries, social unpopularity, and blighted formations. For instance, Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* presents Henry Smart Jr. receiving from his father, Henry Smart Sr., an involuntary engagement with un-Irish formation by introducing Mister O'Gandúin's murderous business, and the concomitant un-Irishness is a recurring theme in Henry's non-identarian narrative of deformation. McCabe's revealing narrative, too, depicts Francis becoming the heir to a broad anti-socialism that had included not only his parents but every other post-independence revolutionary, and thus changing into a critique of the nationalists' political inefficiency. Families that along with other counter-revolutionaries and radicals such as Francis have become the face of an ideological civil 'crack' and division; as Joe notes in McCabe' novel: 'Joe said there was some crack in this town and there sure was'.[43]

Being set in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, McCabe's novel engages with non-identarian concepts such as revolutionary-ness, anarchic formation, and modern Irish identity and presents them as concepts that have been dissolved in the stasis of post-revolution. It is the period when non-conformity and non-identarian formations have become an inseparable, hence identarian, pattern of modern Irish formations, forming what I call the generic Irish non-identarianism. The result is a modern generation that has transvalued the post-independence radical Irish identity into an essentially generic Irish Bildung, consumed by the inevitable modern everydayness of this existence. This is the generation that further questions the authenticity of post-colonial

[42] I call such radical awakenings present in Francis' characterisation re-emergence for in fact it is the same revolutionary consciousness that can be explored in the works of other writers such as Roddy Doyle's depiction of Henry Smart Jr. and other street children. Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry* (London, 1999). However, this rebellious consciousness faced a sudden reversal and was contained by the suppressive nationalist state. From 1930, when revivalists such as Yeats found their hopes of Celtic awakening have been manipulated and crushed by the oppressive state, until the 1940s and early 1950s, what dominated the island was a culture of psycho-political paralysis, obvious in, for instance, William Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault* (London, 2002). Francis' rebellion, however, rekindles non-identarianism in Irish formations as a response to the state's politics of containment, leading to what president Mary Robinson, the first female president of Ireland, recalled as new beginnings.

[43] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 9.

Irish studies, by becoming an addition to what Willy Maley and Colin Graham regard as the 'binary of thinking in Irish contexts', namely, the post-colonial and nationalist Irishness, and thus annulling the postist equilibrium.[44] Characters such as Francis, in this respect, are the very non-conformists that defy not only their Celtic history and the dominant culture of postism but also the psychological and literary duality of nationalism and anti-colonialism. They are a touchstone that separates modern Irishness from the stereotypes of anti-colonialist, nationalist revivalism. The result is an anarchic, non-compliant impetus that stands as a product of a socio-cultural and theoretical clash between Irish nationalism and modernism.

McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* emerges as a broad delineation of Irish formations in the 1940s, as it provides a thematic portrayal of radical changes. Mostly this occurs in retrospective, and in examining the body of Irish politics as a Fenian nationalism swept through the island. This established a poignant dialectic of forgetfulness by rendering the opposing groups, rebels, and regarding the voices of neglected children as unwanted elements, deserving to be silenced.[45] In Francis' words, to the state, rebels such as himself were 'like fungus growing on the walls [and] they wanted them washed clean again.' Indeed in speaking in English, Francis bore witness to the nationalists' non-functional persistence in restoring the Irish language, which contributed to the stratification of the nation.[46]

[44] Willy Maley and Colin Graham, 'Irish Studies and Postcolonial Theory', *Irish Studies Review*, 7 (1999), 149.

[45] Among the most striking examples is the Cavan Orphanage fire tragedy in 1943 and the government's reluctance to even acknowledge such a poignant tragedy and refusing a proper burial, and suppressing scattered news leaks by known and unknown sources. This stands as an exemplar of the nationalist consciousness of forgetfulness. De Valera's visionary speech, encouraging agrarianism and retrospective progression, 'The Ireland that We Dreamed of', is in contrast a political confirmation of such a suppressive consciousness. Another harrowing narrative of mistreatment and nationalist silence can be found in Peter Tyrrell's autobiographical, quasi-Bildungsroman, in which he warns 'society against the child who has been hurt.' Peter Tyrrell, *Founded on Fear: Letterfrack Industrial School, War and Exile* (Dublin, 2006). On Cavan Orphanage tragedy see documents hesitantly released seventy years after the incident by the Oireachtas: http://goo.gl/gjVEM, and http://youtu.be/StfwptHbzaI. On de Valera's speech see Maurice Moynihan (ed.), *Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera 1917–1973* (Dublin, 1980), 440–66.

[46] In 1946, Thomas Derrig, the minister of education, officially divided the Irish into those who know the Irish language, and thus are more Irish, and those without the knowledge of language, who may not stand a similar chance of finding jobs or identity. See Bruce Arnold, *The Irish Gulag: How the State Betrayed its Innocent Children* (Dublin, 2009) 115–28, 238–50.

McCabe's characterisation of Francis introduces sectarianism and social disintegration as his founding features, reflecting on a society that has been based on political and ideological division. McCabe's Francis, in this regard, emerges as a caricatured depiction of Ireland in the 1940s and 1950s: an ambivalent, anarchic, and thus un-Irish character whose understanding of being with respect to society is neither a question nor a challenge; rather, Francis appears as a product of an in-between generation that is lost between the revolutionary experience of their immediate predecessors and the developing stasis, and the isolationism that will follow. To seek identity and recognition, therefore, they engage with the extreme, namely, the dialectics of negativism, rather than the negative dialectics of formation. To this end, Francis finds ideological and psychosocial solace in adhering to neither the bohemian principles of modernism nor the nationalist retrograde agrarianism, but in his own idyllic, separatist perception of life: 'I wasn't complaining. I liked rain. The hiss of the water and the earth. This is life I said. We've got all the time in the world'[47].

Francis' conception of Irish life, shared with his friend Joe Purcell, even though temporary, highlights my argument of perceiving the modern, meta-nationalist Irish as a third form to the duality of Irishness introduced by Maley and Graham.[48] McCabe's Francis, Joyce's Stephen, Beckett's Murphy, the young anarchic narratorial voice in Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) have united to form a unique class: rebels whose perceptions and narratives of formation deviate from the generic dichotomous binary of nationalist and post-colonial, or nationalist and modernist. Characters such as Francis, therefore, become the very force of the post-independence modern Irish novel proving to the postist theoreticians that barriers which would separate the text from its historical context, in this case post-independence national formations and self-referential individual deformations, have been demolished.[49] By becoming the voice of a lost, radical generation, traumatised characters such as Francis not only represent the psychology that dominated their society but also the transitional stages of Irish formations that had plagued the nation, namely, the shift from the psychology of revolution and objective rebellion to an egoist mentality of anarchism, blind subversiveness, and stasis.

[47] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 1–2.

[48] See Maley and Graham, 'Irish Studies and Postcolonial Theory', 149.

[49] In their introduction to a special issue of *Irish Studies Review*, Colin Graham and Willy Maley discuss an obvious inconsistency in allowing for a text to be read in light of a certain theory while 'keeping ... backgrounds separate'. They regarded textual and historical background necessary in reading any Irish text, especially the modern Irish novel. See Ibid., 149–52.

Through *The Butcher Boy*, McCabe excels at imagining Irish society as dominated by the nationalist state's architecture of containment and consciousness of forgetfulness. It is, therefore, quite logical to see that such an ominous combination would find Francis' non-conformity and rebellion at odds with its norms. It is society, paralysed by the stasis of the nationalist ethos. Exiles, albeit internal exiles like Francis share his non-conformism, rebel against places where the state can exercise its binary of normalised behavior and permanent isolation. The Foucauldian perception of formation regards schools, prisons, and (mental) hospitals as the birthplace of power-hungry, authoritarian states, under which individuals are subject to either isolation or conformity.[50] To dominate Francis' anarchic non-identarianism, the normalised society confines him to institutions such as an industrial school, a mental hospital, and finally prison; places that, according to Foucault, are not only founded on the state's politics of confinement, but contribute to the development of the state. To maintain control, the nationalist state resorts to a number of normalising institutions, where the government can practice its politics of power and control; and where the most genuinely radical oppositional principles and individuals are formed as a result of the same level of suppression.

My contention is that through such institutionalised politics of forgetfulness, the Irish state succeeded in not only controlling and directing society towards a static, conformist structure but suppressed societal anomalies that surfaced as a result of nationalists' conservative perspective, namely, poverty, illegitimacy, and infanticide. This is the Ireland that Frank McCourt highlighted in his stark, personal portrayal of Dublin, Cavan, and Limerick, where his father refused any assistance even though he has done his 'bit.' The state McCourt recalls, is inherently repressive and no one seems to remember the days of revolution, and those who remember regret that they 'were better off under the English'[51]. McCabe's portrayal of post-independence Ireland, though set decades after McCourt's novel, offers a similar perception of Irish inconsistencies: they either have to accept the anomalies, or face further isolation and exile.

Francis, a more contemporary variation of Joyce's Dedalus, is introduced accepting neither of the choices offered by the repressive society; rather, he establishes his uniquely rebellious identity based on his interpretations of

[50] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1995), 195–228.

[51] Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes* (New York, 1996), 50.

individual formations and social deformations. While to Francis there is a 'crack' and an anomaly in social deformations, individual formations too in the post-independence Ireland are nothing short of a comedy of errors:

> People of the town ... gawping after us like we'd marched through the street without our trousers. The women whispered there they go the poor orphans. I had a mind to turn round and shout hey fuckface I'm no orphan but then I remembered I was studying hard to get the Francie Brady Not a Bad Bastard And More Diploma at the end of the year so I clammed up and gave her a sad, ashamed look instead.[52]

McCabe's narrative not only provides a carnivalesque portrayal of post-independence Irish society but it also highlights the corrupt architecture of 'dirty bog-trotters' who legitimise such anomalous, equivocal formations.[53] Unlike other Bildungshelden, Francis spends a considerable part of his life defying nationalists' institutionalised politics of normalisation in correctional facilities. His Bildung, therefore, is neither about gentlemanly formation nor bureaucratic hegemony; rather it deals with understanding and mastering the 'structureless' labyrinth of Irish society; deciphering the nationalists' dubious dialogism in introducing the duality of modernity and agrarian Ireland; and finally in unlearning a parochial meta-discourse used by the Church which empowered the state to render people and parts of the nation invisible. Such narratives, in this respect, transform into a dynamic consciousness that the nationalist Irish society flags as a threat, and endeavors to forget and 'wash them clean' of their walls.[54]

As Francis leaves the 'house of a hundred windows', namely, a reform school managed by priests, and says 'goodbye and good fucking riddance' he not only sheds any residue of belonging a nationalist uncompromising architecture of division but fully embraces his isolation: 'Can you hear me? But I didn't know what it was I wanted them to hear'.[55] However, it is the self-induced exile in the form of isolation that helps rebels such as Francis to come to terms, though temporarily and intermittently, with their society and continue with their self-referential self-formation. Similar to McCourt's narrator in *Angela's Ashes* (1996), Francis finds ignorance and isolation the best

[52] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 74.
[53] Ibid., 75.
[54] Ibid., 95.
[55] Ibid., 96, 140.

possible pattern of formation.[56] Not only did he disown Joe, but he embraced the changes that previously were seen as barriers: 'there's to be no more about John Wayne or any of that, that's all over. Everything's changed now it's all new things'.[57] Through self-induced, internal exile, in other words, Francis becomes another example of modern Irish protagonists who embrace the present and disown the nationalist retrospective correctional future, and thus transcend the stereotypical binary of Irish formations. Nostalgia and resentments, nevertheless, remain the dominant forces in his narrative of formation. Unlike nationalists, however, Francis' indulgence in the past signifies one objective: to emphasise his departure from 'all the beautiful things of this world' which are nothing but 'lies'. Thus gaining further independence and 'unlock[ing] something precious'.[58]

Under nationalists' repressive regime, substantiated by legitimisation of centers for institutional normalisation such as prisons and mental houses and a growing dominance of parochialism in Irish schools, one question dominates McCabe's libertarian rendezvous with post-independence Irish society: who is Francis, or Francie, Brady? Is he an immoral outcast; a psychologically unstable young Irishman? Is he a radical reflection of the post-independence Irish society dominated and antagonised by the sluggishness of society to embrace what Nuala O'Faolain regards as the 'new possibilities'?[59] Is he a part of a large crowd of radical, non-conformist young rebels, whose source of belligerence is found in society's post-revolution stasis, and nationalists' drastic shift of opinion with respect to rebels and revolutionaries? Is he a child, or a respresentative of a young generation of Irish rebels, molested and betrayed by nationalists' parochialism and the Church? Is he a phantasmagoric representation of socio-cultural anomalies at the heart of Irish society, or is he a sensibly real character; a friend (of Joe Purcell), a neglected son (of Benny Brady and the unnamed mother, the ex-revolutionaries), an unstable murderer (of Mrs Nugent), and a sworn enemy (of the Nugents, the 'half English' family) who tends to depict and challenge the aforementioned anomalies?[60]

[56] While in McCourt's novel it was the father who learned that he needs to return to Ireland to better his relationship with his family, economically and emotionally, McCabe's Francis finds it most soothing to keep his distance from Joe and Philip should he requires an easy life.
[57] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 158.
[58] Ibid., 198, 78.
[59] Nuala O'Faolain, *Are You Somebody? The Accidental Memoir of a Dublin Woman* (New York, 1996), 91.
[60] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 27.

According to McCabe's narrative, he is all and none of these. Francie, and not Francis, is a mere memory that the state finds too true and thus too horrific to allow to be remembered. Francie Brady, the individual and the national example of deformation, emerges as the subject of nationalists' Freudian association and repression: a cathexis of anti-nationalist forces joined by a haunting past; a rebellious libidinal force that needs to be sentenced to an indefinite exile to the nationalist Unconscious. The resulting story, therefore, narrativises an impulsive isolationism, imposed by the nationalist state and its politics of containment and forgetfulness that would lead to either a mythologised anonymity, or a gothic rendition of Francis' actions, labeling him insane and thus irrelevant and dangerous.

Francis' narrative is at one and the same time a rich depiction of an intrusive anonymity, which has been masked by nationalists' 'Eire-Irish' historical arrogance, and his anarchic efforts to dismantle such a suppressive architecture of historical ambivalence. His identity (and its formation) and as an example of national Bildung, transforms his story into a mythic, Adornian unknown that Gerry Smyth regards as an example of post-colonial counter-literature, formed to enable the modern young Irish to defy the colonial matrix of control and identarian formation.[61] His anarchic non-identarianism, for instance, manifests itself in the form of a carnivalesque narrative that mocks the nationalist parochial authoritarianism: 'I was supposed to say Et clamor meus ad te veniat. Et fucky wucky ticky tocky that was what I said instead. It didn't matter as long as you muttered something'.[62] By mocking the state's religiosity and its parochial blindness, not only did Francis reveal the street children's identity, namely, their societal and cultural non-conformity, but he also appreciated his own true self: an anarchic, un-Irish self that has disowned both his Irishness and family.

In one of the earliest instances of self-recognition and 'id-entity' formation, McCabe presents Francis confronting the half English Nugent family: a family with roots in both Ireland and Britain, yet captured by their Englishness in perceiving the Irish life.[63] Mrs Nugent's haphazard, nevertheless provocative, comments on Francis' family, calling them pigs, sets Francis on his eventual path of self-(referential) deformation and provides the narrative with a sense

[61] Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*, 32–8.

[62] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 76.

[63] By using the word 'id-entity' I meant to highlight a severely ego-oriented, anarchic form of identity, most prevalent in the modern Irish novel (of formation). A variation of egoist Dedalus-ism that is more prone to self-reflexivity and self-referential formation than solipsistic totalitarianism.

of direction. Her remarks are not only derogatory and subordinative but also historically discriminatory, and broadly tally with what Gerry Smyth finds as the English way of seeing Ireland: a barren, unsophisticated wild land.[64] Francis' damaged self-formation as a result of such a wild remark can better be understood by investigating the labyrinthine, sublimated definition of pig and its relation to human life. In *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986), Peter Stallybrass and Allon White explain the offensiveness and contextual ambivalence of the word pig in European literature. The contradiction, note Stallybrass and White, lies not only in the depreciatory tone and subordinative visual reference but also in the animal's skin tone and participation in human life's ecosystem. According to Stallybrass and White,

> Not only did the pink pigmentation and apparent nakedness of the pig disturbingly resemble the flesh of European babies (thereby transgressing the man-animal opposition) but pigs were usually kept in peculiarly close proximity to the house and were fed from the household's leftovers. In other words, pigs were almost, but not quite, members of the household... Its mode of life was not different from, but alarmingly imbricated with the forms of life which betokened civility.[65]

Mrs Nugent's remark, in this respect, should not be seen as a thoughtless, personal attack on Francis' individual character; rather, the contextual reference is far more inclusive, as it refers to Ireland's geopolitical position; its image as a financially dependent, unsophisticated barren land; and how it that neighbours Britain and thus unconsciously mimics the proximity of the pig's habitat to that of humans. It also satirises Francis' Irish agrarianism in being an outdated copy of the Victorian street children. Francis' reaction is without doubt puerile and excessive, yet it is emblematic of the depth of his pain and his need for an identity regardless of the consequences: he sets out to collect 'the Pig Tax Toll' from the Nugents.[66] By intimidating the Nugents in collecting 'the pig tax toll', Francis initiates his psychological, rather than psychosocial, Bildung, and sets out to become anything but the stereotypical Irish 'bogman'. In other words, his radical reaction is nothing but an internal anarchic response to a

[64] See Smyth, *The Novel and The Nation*, 44–5.

[65] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, 1986), 47.

[66] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 11.

view of Irish identarianism that had dominated the nation as an aftermath of the 1920s chaos: a new period of complete stasis and denial, unappreciative of what a revolutionary form of Bildung might award the Irish. Francis' 'pig tax toll', in this respect, is one of the earliest instances of non-conformity and rebellion against the nationalist consciousness of silence and forgetfulness in allowing the young Irish to experiment with a concept that is neither Irish nor anti-colonial. The pig tax toll, in fact, translates as a counter-response to Mrs Nugent's English perception of Irishness; a comical reversal of the mise en scène, whereby the pig and the human change their habitual role; that now it was the time for 'Mrs Nooge' to pay the pig and trust his mercy.[67]

Francis' symbolic pig tax toll, moreover, resonates with what Ramnath finds as the counter-power streams in the decolonising anarchic movements in previously colonised nations.[68] By establishing his new tax system, Francis forms structural obstacles for the nationalist, postist regime and their architecture of suppressive formations. To maintain his fully dependent and yet isolated counter-power force, Francis further tries to distance himself and his ideals from any form of social subjectivism that has traces of not just Englishness but also Irish identarianism: 'I told him I wanted to hear nothing about football either. You don't think it's a great thing the town won the cut? ... No, I says. I said it was a pity they didn't lose'.[69] Football; a bourgeois perception of education; classic music; art (visual); significance of family and many more values, together with an intrinsic resentment regarding the controlling state, suddenly transform into a mine field set up by Francis' traumatised psyche enabling him to distinguish himself from the agrarian bogmen pigs.[70] Francis' defiance and denial (of anything Irish and English) awards him recognition and (self-) identity, yet what he finally gains is anything but a proper Bildung. His ritualistic process of formation, in this respect, is a modern Irish translation of a progressive anti-Bildung, a form which according to Gregory Castle, has been instrumentalised in the negative dialectical discourse of novels such as *Jude the Obscure* (1895), and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), namely, narratives that appropriate radicalism and choose obscurity and the unknown over social subjectivism and bourgeois identarianism.[71]

Francis, similarly to Jude, finds himself unable to transform, to fully

[67] Ibid., 12.

[68] Ramnath, *Decolonising Anarchism*

[69] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 13.

[70] Despite its Greek and Roman ancient history, historians regard ninth-century England as the birthplace of modern football. See *Historia Brittonum*. http://goo.gl/tOAiH.

[71] See Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Tallahassee, 2006), 77–100.

break away from the repressive nationalist mentality; however unlike Jude, by indulging in the oddity of his actions especially his pig tax toll he finds a way to manipulate and caricature the widely politicised and thus polarised post-independence Irish society.[72] The result, though redundant and significantly personal, is a rekindling of a silenced Irish revolutionary sentiment in the marginalised Irish such as Francis: a traumatised young boy, neglected by his parents, forgotten by his society, and betrayed by the Church. Francis' narrative, in this respect, becomes a counter-nationalist response to nationalists' narrativity of normalisation. Not only did nationalists impose their politics of chastity and forgetfulness on the post-independence Irish society and the concomitant literature, but they also engaged in producing a spellbound national literature, which could support their politics of paralysis.[73] Francis' chaotic narrative emerges as a fantastic backdoor that would allow anti-nationalists to debunk nationalists' oppressive realism, contributing to an already present binary of nationalist and anti-nationalist. As Rosemary Jackson explains, fantastic narratives of rebellion and non-conformity, such as that of Francis, are not only pivotal in reflecting the formation of national and individual independent identity, but they also reveal the underlying socio-cultural and political corruptions and repressiveness of postist regimes. It is the fantasy-oriented dimension of (libertarian) literature, Jackson notes, that enables a rebellious protagonist such as Francis to highlight the obscure and untouched corners of the isolationist state; it is fantastic literature, in other words, that,

> Points or suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the value system. The fantastic traces the unsaid and the

[72] Castle finds Jude Fawley's efforts 'to transform aesthetic consciousness' into a non-identarian variation of Bildung a failed attempt, which eventually leads to this belief that 'he can transform neither himself nor the world around him', Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, 100.

[73] A critique (or a manifestation) of such a hypnotised nationalist literature can be found in the works such as Kate O'Brien, *Pray For the Wanderer* (1951), which contains O'Brien's frank critique of neo-Parnellism practiced by de Valera. See also Jim Phelan, *Jail Journal* (1940); Edward McCourt, *Home is the Stranger* (1950) (especially for his depiction of Irish families in transition, namely, moving from total stasis of the 1950s Ireland to a 'brave new world' full of changes and odd new things in Canada, and The United States); and Frank O'Connor, 'My Oedipus Complex' in *The Stories of Frank O'Connor* (1952), where he recounts the binary of dynamic Irish formations under the stasis of de Valeran supremacy).

> unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'.[74]

Francis' narrative of negativity and deformation, therefore, emerges as a phantasmagoric reflection of a corrupted Irish society, paralyzed by nationalists' ahistorical antiquity and emphatic parochialism. Francis becomes a mad rebel, a stereotypical mean, deaf, dumb, and blind counter-conformist, who narrates the bizarreness of the nationalist state.[75] He unveils their concerns and trepidations of facing another revolution, this time a counter-nationalist revolution and reflects a paralysis that has dominated Irish formations; by highlighting the dichotomy of Irish modernity and nationalist agrarian vision, in trying to be anything but a rural bogman.

Placelessness

Placelessness emerges as the other major theme in the formation of young Irish radicals, such as Francis, who find the nationalist retrograde understanding of Irishness as not only a suppressive political agenda but also a developing concept that challenges the revolutionary principles that were originally set by the men of 1916 and 1922. According to nationalists, Ireland can best be described as 'a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children'.[76] However, to people such as Michael Collins, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Griffith, Eamon de Valera and other one-time revolutionaries, independence was nothing but an escape from the very same imperial culture of socio-cultural subordination and political subjugation; an escape route that, much to revolutionaries' surprise, transformed into a path of nationalist formation and internal othering, manifested, for example, in de Valera's snobbishness in drafting the 1937 constitution.[77] In every anti-

[74] Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London, 2002), 2.

[75] Reference to Pete Townshend's song 'Pinball Wizard' (1969), seeks to highlight Francis' chaotic role as a narratorial mouthpiece in revealing the truth by acting as a nonchalant, insane voice whose actions directly target nationalists' politics of confinement and forgetfulness. By indulging in insanity, in fact, Francis provides himself with an impregnable cover against nationalists' identarian societal norms.

[76] De Valera, *Speeches and Statements*, 334.

[77] Much has been written on de Valera's snobbish lordliness despite his pleas for Irish republicanism. However, his efforts in drafting the 1937 Constitution sets a new standard of haughtiness by continuing to count women as second class citizens; seeking papal approval for Constitution (despite the very elements that breathed life into the 1916 Proclamation of Independence, promising a non-religious, unbiased Ireland); and ignoring the rights of children in national formations. See Séamus O'Tuama, 'Revisiting the Irish Constitution and de Valera's Grand Vision', *Irish Journal of Law Studies*, 2, (2011), 54–87. On the 1937 Constitution as betraying Irish women, see Peter Beresford Ellis, 'De Valera's Betrayal of the Women of 1916', *Irish Democrat*, 5 July 2006: http://goo.gl/wdaSC.

colonial, nationalist formation, othering remains as an essential element which either unites or repels people. Dissidents (cultural and religious), radical revolutionaries, and politically motivated individuals, especially those who originally contributed to the formation of the nationalist state are among those who under the state's politics of dominance and control will be labeled as 'others', and who need to be contained immediately. The state, as the symbol of social efforts towards the liberation of the people, crumbles as a fragmented facade of broken promises of egalitarianism. It constitutes a libertarian masquerade, the achievement of which, according to Maia Ramnath, 'was not to the endpoint of liberation.'[78] A contagious dichotomous perception of national formation develops to reverse the original principles of nationhood; revivalist groups and individuals such Douglas Hyde, John Eglinton and W.B. Yeats, begin to see their objective either radicalised and moved or altered to comply with the state's politics of control. Douglas Hyde, for instance, began to present his sharp critiques of the Empire and imperialism in English, accompanying their original version in Gaelic. The Yeatsian androgynous hero, as another example, initially is first introduced as inefficient and ineffectual, and then disposed of as politically limited by the de Valeran principles. The image of women, moreover, once understood as providing a substantial contribution towards the liberation of their nation, is altered with a new wave of misogynistic parochial patriarchy, which first endeavors to erase radical figures such as Constance Markeivicz from public memories, and then limits them to their Victorian social status, as either the angels of the house or the unwomanly beasts.

McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* depicts such a blatant Janus-faced polarity through a stark characterisation of sexually promiscuous Father Sullivan, Father Bubbles, Father Dom, and the unnamed policemen. In producing these characters, McCabe has placed a concealed contradictoriness that reveals, as part of their duty, the hidden side of their nature. Father Sullivan, also known as Tiddly, for instance, is an authoritarian priest known for his

[78] Ramnath, *Decolonising Anarchism*, 4.

puritanical holiness. Yet he is introduced as a child molester. It is the never-ending duality that not only marred Francis' formation as an individual but was also sublimated into a nightmarish national principle, penetrating industrial schools and thus changing them into reformatory prisons with a distinct understanding of Bildung. Self-formation, therefore, not only deviates from its universal definition, and transforms into a conviction of failure which needs to be confessed by children on a daily basis but also loses its significance as a psychosocial development and changes to a resentful part of parochial everydayness in 'prison schools', or in Francis' terms, 'the incredible School for Pigs'.[79]

The Butcher Boy introduces education as part of a macrocosmic system of control, namely, the nationalist repressive state, and by so doing formally annuls not only the nineteenth-century perception of education but also any modern variation. Francis, similar to other street children, finds education at once ineffectual and unnecessary, an unwelcome element that intensified the gap between Joe and himself. However, there is another dimension to McCabe's engagement with the concept of education in Francis' narrative of deformation. While education has lost its significance, it was because of education and the social stature it grants the damaged and the deprived that such rebellious voices such as that of Francis, and narratives of deformation in the 1960s and 1970s became the face of Irish literature, providing a stark critique of nationalism. The main voices in these narratives reflect individuals whose existence was meant to be censored under the nationalists' nativist politics: 'adopters, single mothers, illegitimate children, and former residents' of industrial schools.[80] However, through education, though intermittent, partial and religiously repressive, unrecognised characters such as Francis can learn to 'think in contradiction', and understand and reach the deeper layers of nationalist architecture of containment.[81] By indulging in the authority of their fantastic voices invoke suppressed memories which, according to Paul Ricoeur, are nothing but 'a critique of power'.[82] In forming a non-conformist

[79] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 68. By 'prison schools' I meant to further emphasise the nationalist politics of forgetfulness that had ravaged not just the political aspect of Irishness but the very concept of Irish individualism by dominating schools and turning them into virtual ideological prisons.

[80] James M. Smith, 'Remembering Ireland's Architecture of Containment: "Telling" Stories in *The Butcher Boy* and *States of Fear*', *Éire-Ireland*, 36 (2001), 5.

[81] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 145.

[82] Paul Ricoeur, 'Imagination, Testimony and Trust' in Mark Dooley and Richard Kearney (eds), *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Continental Philosophy* (London, 1998), 16.

contradiction against a nationalist reality, rebels may be able to deconstruct the nationalist reality from within, or in Adorno's terms, 'a contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality'.[83]

Through education and by appreciating its empowering dialogical discourse, members of a socio-cultural minority such as Francis and his family find the courage to rise from the excluded and face the politics that regarded them as a threat to the liberation of the Irish. While in Francis' case education lasted for a short time and was channeled through a parochial depravity, it is through education that the uncredited, underprivileged part of society provides a radical narrative that further renounces the nationalist deformation and welcomes the plurality of the 1980s. After his return from the School of Pigs, Francis exhibits obvious changes in his social manners and personal integrity, although empty, superficial and in accordance with his plans and schemes to dominate the world of without: 'it was nice talking to them there beside the cornflakes shelf'.[84] What Francis seeks in return for such a change tallies with the state's politics of forgetfulness, namely, to be erased from the public's memory: 'will you ever forget them old pig days I says. Oh now Francie, says Mrs Connolly, don't be talking!'[85] However, he seeks forgetfulness and erasure only to prepare the very selective memory for a much greater re-appearance, which he 'planned and schemed' while being on exile in the School for Pigs. Ironically enough, after killing Mrs Nugent his narrative shifts into using a much gentler expressive discourse, as though a lesson has been taught: 'you never thought you'd see the day the Mother of God would be coming to this town, eh? he says and looked at me as much as to say it was me arranged the whole thing'.[86] Francis' narrative, which sounded marginalised and alien, emerges to include a distant yet more controlled voice; a voice that sounds to be aware of consequences that are about to happen.

According to Ricoeur, in his discussion of the modern Irish novel as a vehicle of national anti-colonialism, creating a proper Éire-Irish form of Irish identity required the nationalist regime to invest their political drive in producing an obedient literature, namely, a means of expression that is socially selective, and historically biased.[87] This, according to Gerry Smyth, is a variation of nationalist literary resistance, namely, an anticipated implosion

[83] Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 145.

[84] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 102.

[85] Ibid., 102.

[86] Ibid., 196.

[87] See Ricoeur, 'Imagination, Testimony and Trust', 12–17.

that helps deconstruct the colonial boundaries and identity.[88] However, what Smyth and Ricoeur have failed to notice is how such anti-colonial, nationalist efforts are manipulated to reproduce a microcosmic matrix of colonial sub-narratives governed by nationalists. This matrix emerges as a neocolonial discourse which belittles and rejects the very values it originally used to advocate. The de Valeran, nationalist narrative of Sinn Féin (We Ourselves), for instance, was formed to reflect the formation of Celtic, progressively anti-colonial individuals, whose nationalist legitimacy and blind trust in the state had been unwavering. However, this replicates narratives of national formation and contradicts the narratives of un-Irish rebels such as Ivan in Doyle's novel, or Francis in that of McCabe. For the narratives of Francis, Henry, Johnny, and other rebels, not only defy nationalist formation but also question the authenticity of nationalist memory; thus according to the nationalist principle of forgetfulness, they are vagaries of a 'false memory', lost in their phantasmagoric depiction of an anti-nationalist sub-reality.[89]

Francis' narrative establishes its own adaptation of 'We Ourselves' based on an antiauthoritarian, egoistic interpretation of the word. By indulging in his self-referential, multifaceted narratorial voice, Francis transforms his non-identarianism into a resistant narrative that defies the nationalist boundaries of literature. By 'telling them differently and by providing a space for the confrontation between opposing testimonies', Francis' transforms his representational narrative of social intolerance and psychological incongruity into an inclusive, self-conscious vehicle of expression which excavates the suppressed memories of traumatised children in industrial schools.[90]

Francis' ritualistic and non-formulaic Bildung during his (internal) exile contributes to the definition of meta-nationalist Irishness in particular in the 1950s and 1960s by transforming into an antiauthoritarian voice which personifies a marginalised generation of young rebels, betrayed and silenced by nationalists' architecture of forgetfulness and a patronising binary of patriotism and rebellion. A voice which belongs to a generation whose narrative of deformation is an active reversal of the politics of suppression

[88] See Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*, 21–5.

[89] Linda Williams, 'Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary', *Film Quarterly*, 46 (1993), 12.

[90] Ricoeur, 'Imagination, Testimony and Trust', 17. McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* appears as an apolitical narrative that narrativises a psychologically troubled Irish boy, with clichéd socio-cultural background (of familial and social difficulties). But it is also, on the contrary, a representational narrative which is politically motivated and culturally aware of ongoing changes imposed by the state.

and discrimination; a resistant generation who survived the harsh realism of Irish wars, colonial subjugation, and the hegemonic, retrograde politics of nationalist patriarchy. Moreover, Francis belongs to a generation who shared a staunch anti-Englishness with revivalists; fervor for independence with revolutionaries; a conviction of being the descendant of the legendary Brian Boru with nationalists; and a growing hatred for an internal, neocolonialist variation of socio-cultural subjugation with counter-revolutionaries. In one of his numerous quests for non-identarian self formation, Francis' radical narratorial voice assaults the reader by presenting a harrowing narrative of mal-formation combined with psychological vendetta and revenge: Francis enters Nugents' house and without any hesitation defecates on the carpet of the bedroom: 'it really was a big one, shaped like a submarine, tapered at the end so your hole won't close with a bang, studded with currant with a little question mark of steam curling upwards'.[91] To Francis' anti–English /–Nugent mind, what he did was a 'credit', worthy of praise and recognition; a motive that should earn him recognition and help him find his self lost between his familial disintegration, and social decline.[92] Soiling the Nugents' bedroom, for instance, is an anarchic subliminal response to the harsh reality of post-independence Ireland; Britain's efforts to keep the island divided; and a radical, though excessive, counter-reply to the politics of subordination. Francis' aggression emerges as a fictive reflection of IRA's fatal post-independence insurgencies, especially in the late 1960s and 1970s, known as the 'insurgency phase', which as Peter Taylor explains, reflects a heavy militarisation of rebels.[93] Francis' anarchic vendetta, though only symbolically, tallies with IRA bombings in England during 1970s; it was a hectic time when radicals and rebels joined forces to rekindle a united Ireland by taking 'the heat off Belfast and Derry' and shifting it towards the English.[94] Bombings in Yorkshire (1973), pubs in Guildford and Woolwich (1974), as well as a bombing, though informed upon, targeting the House of Parliament (1974) were some of the antiauthoritarian counter-responses to the colonial presence in Ireland. These assaults reflect at once the revolutionaries' discontentment with their postist regime in handling socio-historical issues such as partition, economic dependency on the British market, as well as a vague sense of

[91] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 62.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Peter Taylor, *Behind the Mask: The IRA and Sinn Féin* (New York, 1999), 32. Until late 1950s, IRA was a poorly armed rebel, paramilitary force, disowned by its creators, which was expecting an inevitable division that happened in 1969. See ibid., 35–43.

[94] Ibid., 45.

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[94] Ibid., 45.

repressive internal affairs, especially in the state's politics of containment.[95] Similarly, Francis' response not only corroborates his antiauthoritarian identity but it also illustrates his childish innocence that has been changed into a monstrous horror under the nationalist politics of containment. The state's reaction neither implied behavioral correction nor social improvement; rather, rebels and radicals were confined to correctional institutions, and reformatories infested with deprived, power-hungry Christian Brothers or the Irish Sisters of Charity, the former molested rebel orphans such as Francis, as the latter followed the state's order to silence those who inquired about places such as the Cavan orphanage.[96]

The motives that led Francis towards a series of deconstructive actions, which ended in his psychosocial demise, I argue, were not all historical, namely, a historical and national feeling of antipathy towards anything English, but political as well. My contention is that the roots of Francis' social antagonism and national antiauthoritarianism can be found in the institutionalisation of containment sponsored by the state in the form of child-care institutions. Defying Mrs Nugent and her English authoritarianism, though partially fantastic, justifies Francis' distressful narratorial tone in the first pages of his narrative, where he unravels his radical account of how he disparaged the state, in his case a rural society, by forming a personal 'hide' after he debunked the state's codes of containment.[97]

One of the mechanisms through which the state introduced and enacted its politics of containment was the constitution, especially its articles on family and the child's psychosocial formation. On the significance of family vis-à-vis how it has to provide for the safety and psychological fitness of children, the constitution selects family as the prime source of protection and solace, however with priorities which the state can override. The state therefore emerges as the agent that may intervene and contain families' inefficiencies,

[95] To these angry rebels, the elected government neither strived to unite the poor and the rich, nor did they strategise to gain financial independence from the discriminatory ecosystem of the Empire. To them, the socio-economic failure of the twentieth-century nationalist government resembled the doomed strategy of the government in 1846 that ended in the notorious great famine with a million dead. See Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 123–53.

[96] On Cavan Orphanage see note 45 above.

[97] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 1. His narrative assaults reader as it is a harrowing account of how the presumably controlling state has failed to maintain rebels such as Francis. When every movement was controlled either by the militarised state or its military wingmen, IRA, hiding for a rebel with a family background as horrific as Francis' is to be considered as anarchists' first victory over the repressive state.

when they fail to provide for their children due to poverty, sexual deviance, or war-related disabilities.[98] In other words, the state imagines itself as a dominant force that can contain any anomalous familial conditions, which may or may not damage its authoritarian solidity. Francis' narrative, however, begins as a counter-conformist response to such an authoritarian diplomatic supremacy as it introduces Francis' 'dark, archway' hideout where 'no one could see you', even the state; a place which has provided shelter and solace to a young, socially rejected rebel with an incensed town after him.[99]

It would be fundamentally flawed to regard Francis' hide as a plain symbolic reference to children's amusement resort for it represents a concept rather than a location for which rebels such as Francis have sacrificed their lives. Although, as the narrative unfolds, Francis is introduced as a rebel haunted by his anti-social anarchism, and imprisoned for his anomalous anti-bourgeois radicalism in the state's tripartite correctional facilities,[100] his hide emerges as his personal interpretation of the binary of freedom and imprisonment; it is the place where he can choose to imprison himself and hide from the state's freedom, inundated with corrupt 'bogmen cops' and depraved priests.[101] Such a dichotomous binary opposition between the state's politics of confinement and Francis' deliberate self-imprisonment is the crux of McCabe's engagement with the impact of industrial schools and reformatories in the 1960s and 1970s on a young generation of Irish dissidents. Such a dichotomy manifests itself in the form of 'houses of a hundred windows', madhouses and industrial Schools for Pigs. While his hide symbolises a childish idyllic lifestyle, safety combined with the inconvenience of agrarian stasis and self-imposed incarceration, the aforementioned correctional houses resemble a foucauldian delineation of interminable confinement. To Francis' anarchic formation, such institutions of physical confinement and psychological incarcerations represent 'only a joke' retold by the nationalist bogmen to maintain further

[98] 'In exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children, the state as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means shall endeavor to provide the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child'. See Bunreacht na hÉireann (The Constitution of Ireland), Article 42 (5).

[99] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 1.

[100] My understanding and use of tripartite correctional facilities is influenced by Foucault's definition of state-sponsored suppression in asylums, schools, hospitals and prisons. See Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of the Asylum' in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (London, 1984), 141–68.

[101] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 201.

control.[102] Francis' foucauldian perception of suppressed formation only ensures 'an ethical continuity between the world of madness and the world of reason by practicing a social segregation that would guarantee bourgeois morality the universality of fact and permit it to be imposed as a law upon all forms of insanity'.[103] Therefore, the necessity for Francis to be confined to his hideout to be free and out of reach of the state's 'bogmen cops' is as ludicrous and fallacious as learning that he will not be hanged for the crime he satisfactorily committed: 'I said to Sausage: will they hang me? I hope they hang me. He looked at me and says: I'm sorry Francie but there's no more hanging. No more hanging? I says. For fuck's safe! What's this country coming to!'[104] The reformatory Ireland under the nationalist rule, in this respect, was as dichotomous as Francis' own hide, falsely combining freedom with ideological and socio-political confinement. While it is Francis who chooses whether to stay in his hide or not, the state turns the island into a nationwide asylum.

Recalling his hide with an apparent satisfaction and safety, and with such long intervals of chaos and insanity, after 'twenty or thirty or forty years' becomes Francis' sublimation of a state of oppression which was experienced not just by Francis' family but also by his peers throughout the nation.[105] While Francis' parents had to cope with the hostile zeitgeist of 1916 and the 1920s, being constantly repressed by both the British and nationalist regimes, Francis and his generation emerged as byproducts of the same culture of containment and nativist oppression. However, here lies a subtle difference: although the aggressive and vengeful radicalism exhibited by Francis and his generation is unprecedented, their traumatised antiauthoritarianism is a creation of their war-inflicted immediate predecessors, who themselves were psychosocial victims of a haunting past. Francis' aggressiveness, in other words, is an unrequested inheritance from his father, who himself was a victim of social prejudice and cultural marginalisation, and his mother whose traumatic hospitalisation in a 'kiphouse' or a 'garage' (a mental hospital) contributed to her suicide.[106]

[102] Ibid., 214.

[103] Foucault, 'The Birth of the Asylum', 150.

[104] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 212, 213.

[105] Ibid., 1, 214.

[106] Ibid., 35, 144. In an interview with Wendy Herstein, McCabe clarifies Francis' anarchic restlessness as being a generational echo of a sad, repressed memory: 'Francis becomes aware that the reason his father doesn't get along with his brother is not entirely his father's own fault in that he himself had been institutionalised and bereft. So {this sadness} it strikes back through the generations.' See Wendy Herstein, '"You Lie in Wait . . .": Patrick McCabe Reflects Upon Despair, Idealism, and the Workings of His Muse', *The World and I*, 8 (1993), 299–301.

The re-enacted trauma and egoist mal-formation apparent in Francis' anti-social behaviorism, in this respect, is the steep price Irish youths had to pay to provide their nationalist society with a context 'to reinvent itself according to de Valera's ideals'.[107] While it is the obscure and the anomalous such as Francis who pays such a dear price, they, in a fashion similar to their parents, fall prey to society's double-faced architecture of containment as they exert to gain social recognition and respect. The result is repeating what Henry Smart achieved in his narrative, namely, becoming the victim of the negativism of nationalist social subjectivism, and thus embodying such a negative dialectical discourse. Francis' efforts to try to honor and respect his traumatised parents in a judgmental, suppressive nationalist society end in forming an internal psychology of suppression. Not only did Francis offend the Connollys, the Nugents and many others, but he also shifted his suppressive mentality towards his childish visions of formation. His schematic departure towards a major city, Dublin in this case, ends in a doubly chaotic familiarity with alcoholism and heated racial prejudice.[108] As James M. Smith notes in his reading of *The Butcher Boy*, Francis is the victim of a suppressive nationalist society which 'chooses to confine rather than provide treatment or support'.[109] His aggressiveness and politics of suppression is a creation of an unforgiving society which through negligence and ignorance augments Francis' anarchic potentials and allows him to trivialise institutionalisation and the rituals of confinement, and introduce it as a 'joke'. It is as a result of such a reversed social Bildung that Francis' exemplary narrative emerges as a horrific carnivalesque of a society in which people's symbolic preparation for the end of the world coincides with a realistic rendition of a murderous closure, namely, the execution of Mrs Nugent, and Francis' triumphant exit.

Francis' aggression and society's oppressiveness make an interdependent binary, as each element contradicts and demands the other one simultaneously. According to Terry Eagleton, such a pairing can be seen in systems of belief; radical movements; and gender based oppositions: Catholicism and Protestantism; nationalism and anti-nationalism; woman and man.[110] However,

[107] Bernadette Fahy quoted in Kathryn Holmquist 'The Obsession with Sexual Morality Led to Rejection of Children', *The Irish Times*, 9 March 1996, 7.

[108] Francis first robbery, however small, takes place in Dublin at a chip shop, where he goes 'behind the counter like a bullet and . . . stuff[s] any notes [he] could into [his] pockets'. McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 38.

[109] Smith, 'Remembering Ireland's Architecture of Containment', 15.

[110] In his chapter entitled, 'Nationalism: Irony and Commitment', Eagleton discusses the shared dimensions that can be found in contradictory concepts. According to

in the context of post-colonial Irishness and decolonising anarchic Irish identity, or in short, the nationalist Irish identity and the meta-nationalist Irishness a binary opposition forms, despite basic commonalities in contending with colonial forces. However, in such a particular binary formation, the former embraces the logical contradictions of the relationship only to suppress the dialectical discourse of the latter. The postist regime and the concomitant society, in other words, do not intervene insofar as their authoritativeness and dominance are safe with the normalised subjects. When anomalies such as Francis arise, society will remodel and reintroduce its controlling systems; and law will be a legitimate means of normalisation in the hands of untouchable ventriloquists, such as the priests in the School for Pigs. It is only at the doorstep of the School for Pigs that Francis understands the insignificance of law, his isolation and disconnectedness from legal counsel, and how law becomes ineffectual when confronted with a priest's legislative power. He is warned (by sergeant Sausage) that if 'priests get their hands on you there won't be so much guff outa ye'.[111] Any infamy and sexual promiscuity, during and after Francis' exile in the industrial school for pigs, will be contained not only by the state's architecture of containment but also by society's nationalist moral schemes. Society, in this respect, is an inseparable face of the nationalist justice, rising only to contain the unwanted efforts of the oppositional groups or individual dissidents such as Francis. The state intervenes to send Francis to a psychological exile and by so doing separates him from the rest of society. The state's intervention, in this respect, has nothing to do with bettering Francis' educational Bildung or his way of life, concepts that the Constitution originally meant to address.[112] Rather, by sending him to reformatories and prison schools, the state only helped him embrace the negative dimension of his dialectical formation. The state's oppressive telos, in this respect, manifests itself as a Hegelian dialectics. By sending Francis and the likeminded young rebels to reformatories, the state successfully creates a segmental catastrophe.[113]

Eagleton, there are more shared aspect in nationalist and anti-nationalism than in, for instance, nationalist and radicalism or revolution. See Terry Eagleton, 'Nationalism: Irony and Commitment', in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson and Edward W. Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis, 1990), 23–38.

[111] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 66.

[112] De Valera's final draft of Bunreacht na hÉireann (The Constitution of Ireland), through numerous articles, explicitly highlighted families and their children as well as providing proper form of education for the children as the most notable responsibilities of the Irish nation-state; concepts that took only a decade to be contained.

[113] In his description of 'Being' Hegel introduces 'Nothing' as the antithesis, and

By so doing, the state not only provides an antithesis, namely, ideological and physical imprisonment, to rebels' thesis of resistance but also leads them towards an eventual synthesis, though unwelcome and intrusive. The state's institutions of normalisation emerge containing a more inclusive criterion of normalisation than what Foucault originally noted in his discussion of prisons and hospitals. While the latter appears as the instrumentalisation of a disciplinary location for gaining dominance, the former manifests itself as a nationwide doctrine of governance.

Simultaneously, however, Francis' hide illustrates the state's inefficiency in safeguarding the nation and policing its own rules. A rebel, who needs to be contained, lives in his secret archway, without anyone noticing him. This is McCabe's ironic reference to the eventual prevalence of rebels and dissidents whose non-conformity and bohemian dialectical rebellion forced the nationalist state, weakened by the rising pluralism and republicanism of the 1990s, to offer an official apology. Although wrapped in the Irish tradition of belatedness, the apology expressed by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, was swathed in nationalists' double standards. While acknowledging the state's inefficient administration of industrial schools, and thus extending an apologetic hand towards the victims of abuse, the statement vindicates the postist state as an official body responsible for the committed wrongs, and only expresses how the politics of containment should have been enforced by society and thus worked:

> On behalf of the State and of all citizens of the State, the Government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue.[114]

The statement, though apologetic, not only does emphasise the existence and relevance of the nationalist architecture of containment, but it also questions the efficiency of nationalist society, and by implication the churches, in containing such sudden disclosures of unfortunate events. As depicted in Francis' narrative, it is the very same 'citizens of the state' such as Mrs Connolly, Mrs Purcell, and Mrs Canning who helped the state to contain

Becoming as a result of their inevitable interaction. See G.W.F. Hegel, 'Volume One: The Objective Logic' in *The Logic*, Marxists.org. < http://goo.gl/EZvwb> (accessed 29 October 2012).

[114] 'Speech by An Taoiseach', *The Irish Times*, 11 May 1999.

Francis' unfavorable condition, while at the same time contributed to his psychological break down by meddling in his personal, familial life:

> [Mrs Connolly] says what can I do for you Francie and I says its just about my father ... she says may the Lord have mercy on his soul ... so I said no no Have Mercy or any of that Mrs Connolly why did you not mind you own business ... Mind my business? What do you mean? I said you know very well what I'm talking about and she tries the Mrs Nugent trick pushing a tear out into the eye. Then she starts sniffling and I says who asked you to clean that's the trouble with the people in this town they can't mind their own business can they *they can't mind their own fucking business!*[115]

Francis' childish argument is a negative preemptive retort to Taoiseach Ahern's apology, as he rebukes the oppressiveness of nationalist society in the 1960s and 1970s. The citizens of the state, highlighted by McCabe's shrewd polemic against society's nationalist identarianism, emerge as a collective consciousness that allows the Irish neither to transform the static nationalist principles nor transcend and re-imagine the boundaries of nationalist Bildung. This blanket consciousness does not regard the Irish as a collective body of individuals with different psychosocial needs, but rather as a political commodity, which needs to be contained and trained in accordance with the state's definition of Bildung.[116] According to the nationalist consciousness of containment, therefore, not only was it society's responsibility to contain subversive forces such as Francis and other street children, but it had to erase such negative psychological imprints in a more efficient fashion. As Smith

[115] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 164.

[116] Under Article 42 (5) of The Irish Constitution, individuals and especially families are regarded as parental commodities of the state, who may be relieved of their parental status should the state finds their performance and social status unfit, and damaging the child's proper formation. The state, under such circumstances, may legally take the child under its protection. Fintan O'Toole finds such commodification of parental rights as the very corrupt source that has introduced criminals such as Brendan O'Donnell, whose life bears a horrifying resemblance to Francis'. See Fintan O'Toole, 'State Watched O'Donnell Grow into a Killer', *The Irish Times*, 4 April 1996: < http://goo.gl/sBCBR>. In addition, Ann Dunne regards such commodification of families for potential political support to be an indirect obstruction of not only children's right (to belong to a family and thus the feeling of belonging) but also human rights. See 'Constitution Does Not Cherish All Children Equally', *The Irish Times*, 22 May 1993.

explains, the abused children of the past are the 'the state's most treasured commodity' of the present, for their collective formation could either force the state to issue such apologetic statements or continue to support the state's unquestionable legitimacy.[117] While it is the latter that dominates much of Francis' narrative, which censures his anarchic formation, questions his relevance and finally institutionalises him, the former emerges as a more tolerant society at the end of his narrative, the one which has abandoned hanging, and yet only prevents Francis from committing more crime through exile.

Francis' return to his small town, only to accomplish a formulaic, ritualistic sense of Bildung, appears to be hollow and partially insignificant for himself as well as the townspeople. The only major outcome of his return is a masked sense of bewilderment and insecurity; a fear of non-identarian formation, which for the normalised townspeople is indigestible. Their nativist paralysis did not stop Francis from entertaining anarchic musings about a proper social recognition though negative it turned out to be; nor did it help him to keep his 'Francie Brady Not A Bad Bastard Any More Diploma' for longer than a few days.[118] Rather, the state's culture of forgetfulness combined with society's paralysis and ignorance combined to push Francis closer to the edge of identarianism and eventually disillusionment with his society, embracing his self-referentiality, and finally becoming what society feared most:

> I told him more then, about the boilerhouse and the fags but he just tapped the leather of his black bag and sucked his teeth saying mm. All the sudden it came into my head what the hell do I care if he believes me or not who the fuck is he, doctor, some doctor, he couldn't even keep ma out of the garage.[119]

His failed efforts to return and befriend his society transforms into a rush of childish anger, and provokes the return of the repressed, in his placelessness and being an insignificant, unwelcome part of a macrocosm. The cathexis of such dialectical negativism becomes the force which narrates the latter part of Francis narrative: an anarchic, vengeful character, who opposes not only his society and its codes but also the very principles that made Francis what he was.

[117] Smith, 'Remembering Ireland's Architecture of Containment', 11.

[118] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 95.

[119] Ibid., 106.

Francis' anarchic anti-nationalism, though explicit and often excessive, is neither original nor unknown to post-Easter Irish rebels. Defying the authoritarian voice, be it imperial colonialist or postist nationalist, in this respect, has roots in the late nineteenth century, and resonates with radicals such as George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Where Francis describes his discontent and disillusionment with the nationalist paradigm of formation, 'bogmen cops', depraved priests, and his marginalised parents, as 'sparks in the boiler', an anarchic Wilde objects to a widespread capitalism most prevalent in the 1890s Britain, which then also crippling the Irish economy.[120]

'I was as bad as the sparks in the boiler-house stove with all these notions tearing around in my head', notes Francis imprisoned at the School for Pigs.[121] However, his rage and discontent is not limited to seeing his childish utopia being destroyed by the nationalist power-oriented greed; rather, what bohemian rebels like him have really been saving their energies for extends beyond the state's prejudiced politics of containment, for they seek self-individuation, rather than social development: 'You'd only be half-finished with one idea and the next thing here would come along another one, no I'm a better idea what about me it would say'.[122] 'What about me' is, in fact, an outcry of a generation whose hopes of liberation and social recognition has been crushed by autocrats such as de Valera; a generation that can be heard from as far as Henry in Doyle's narrative being set in the 1920s up to McCabe's rebellious Francis in the 1950s and 1970s: 'My mother shook her head. She looked up at the ceiling, at her children beyond it. She looked up at her first Henry. What about *me*!'[123] Such an egoistic commonality can be found in Wilde's anarchic critique of the imperial financial system, as well as a limiting Victorian social mobility. In 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism' Wilde emerges as an unlikely precursor of Francis' anarchic inclination towards a non-identarian, anti-social subjective formation: 'the majority of people spoil their lives by an unhealthy and exaggerated altruism — are forced, indeed, so to spoil them ... so, in the present state of things in England, the people who do most harm are the people who try to do most good'.[124] According to Wilde self-correction and self-referential formation, rather than 'amusing the poor'

[120] Ibid., 73.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*, 31.
[124] Wilde, 'The Soul of the Man Under Socialism', 1.

and invigorating one's social altruism, is the only way to reconstruct society and make 'poverty ... impossible'.[125]

Francis' lack of social altruism combined with a growing reluctance to have a positive presence in his society, heightens as he leaves the reformatory and learns that not only his 'plans and schemes' to restart his friendship with Joe have failed but now he is also regarded by the society including Joe as an unwanted persona.[126] 'Unhomeliness' and placelessness, in this respect, emerge as the principles that are imposed on Francis and those who defy the state and its politics of containment. Their narrative becomes a reflection of state's antagonistic ideology of isolationism and society's acceptance of internal sectarianism. However, there is one more dimension to Francis' narrative: a labyrinthine anarchic self-formation, which dismantles the postist, stereotypical definition of novel in being, as Smyth notes, 'closely connected with the ideologies of the community'.[127]

In Francis' case, although the novel reflects the apathetic ideologies of the nationalist society, it remains loyal to Francis' anarchic formation and his efforts to retell a silenced, untold proportion of Irish history. Francis' anarchist non-conformism, albeit childish, led him to be butchered by the state's structure of containment, losing the freshness required for development. Physical exile, as in being cast out to reformatories and industrial schools, complements his internal and psychological isolation, making him accept, if not believe, Mrs Nugent's harsh remarks, labeling him as a 'pig all [his] life' in a society dominated by Connollys, Purcells, and Tiddlys, the state's agents of normalization.[128] The narrative he produces extends to facilitate an instrumentalised fantasy-oriented language, which is unknown and thus alien to the conformists, and hence transforms into a doubly fictitious variation of a postist sub-reality. It is an anti-nationalist, anti-colonialist reality wherein Francis, as the only inhabitant, is both regarded as the ordinary and the uncanny. He is the small 'pig' who did the uncanny and soiled in the Nugents' bedroom; entered the School for Pigs; attacked one of his instructors;[129] was molested; and returned back to his society as a supposedly corrected 'pig.' In *Theorising the Fantastic*, Lucie Armitt,

[125] Ibid.
[126] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 73.
[127] Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*, 20.
[128] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 102.
[129] 'I wouldn't like to be you he said again but I was fed up of him by then so I made a go at him with what was left of the statue and off he went as white as ghost nearly skittering himself. Then I threw No-Head in the bid and lay down on the bed'. McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 70.

regards the 'inhabitant of the fantastic [to be] always the stranger', serving their narrative as the only real mouthpiece from within an unknown, unreal realism.[130] Francis, in this respect, resonates with Armitt's stranger in being the only real mouthpiece narrativising not only his narrative of deformation but also the nation's narrative of suppressive anti-formation, for which he became the subject of suppression and was regarded as being too fictitious, unknown and thus unreliable:

> Ah well, I said, that's all over, you can't be a pig all your life isn't that right ladies?
> They said it was.
> I said to Mrs Connolly: isn't that right Mrs Connolly.
> That's right Francis she says, that's very true.
> It is indeed I says.
> Ha ha says Mrs Connolly.
> Ha ha says the other women.
> I didn't care. They could laugh themselves stupid if they wanted to. They weren't like smiles at all more like elastic banks pulled tight.[131]

The blandness, incoherence, and indifference embedded in Francis' verbal engagement with society reaffirms and further amplifies his role as an unknown stranger. He narrates a non-nationalist form of realism from within a matrix of nationalist consciousness that was meant to function in reverse, namely, to narrativise a nationalist reality and glorify the state. As the novel progresses, however, his status as an unreliable mouthpiece in the beginning of his narrative changes into a reliably radical voice, whose narrative is a carnivalesque engagement with a postist reality. He provides a decolonising narrative which at once deconstructs the layered colonial discourse and dismantles the static foundation of a postist regime. Similar to Stephen Dedalus, in ridiculing the dominant postist discourse and producing an unknown dialectical discourse of his own, Francis' chaotic rebellion results in the formation of a fantastic narrative, centered on anarchic Bildung and self-referentiality, written in a discourse that has failed to properly appropriate English as its medium. The result is a narrative which is not only rebellious and harrowingly traumatic but also different from what Francis as the main narrator originally meant to communicate. The narrative, in this respect, further alienates Francis as

[130] Lucie Armitt, *Theorising the Fantastic* (London, 1996), 8.
[131] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 179.

the main voice, and introduces him as a subordinate, unreliable narrator who is being spoken, rather than speak. Francis' efforts to transcend such socio-lingual subjugation end in failure and anti-national ludicrousness:

> I went by Doctor Roche's house it was all painted up with big blue cardboard letters spread out on the grass: AVE MARIA WELCOME TO OUT TOWN. I was wondering could I mix them up to make THIS IS DOCTOR ROCHE THE BASTARD'S HOUSE, but I counted them and there wasn't enough letters and anyway they were the wrong one.[132]

It is not letters that are insufficient, but rather Francis' knowledge of the English language and its structural mechanism which enacts and enforces its fluidity. To express his discontentment, Francis thinks of 'mixing up' and rewording the words written on Doctor Roche's house.[133] (However, what he meant to say was to express an internal aversion towards not only the rules that bind the words, sentences and phrases together but also the people who brought such an alien, broken language to their nation. Ironically, such spuriously lexical hatred and confusion regarding English language and its origin surfaces as Francis is shown on his way to murder Mrs Nugent, the person before whom his social integrity, found in his friendship with Joe and even Philip Nugent, 'was fine': 'it was fine until Mrs Nugent started interfering and causing trouble'.[134] Francis' language skills, internally affected by Mrs Nugent's pure Englishness, appear to follow neither the Nugents' pure English nor the Irish taught by Father Sullivan in the School for Pigs. Francis' identity appears to be fractured by a language as alien and subordinative as the Nugents. To hide his failed self-formation he discards his 'plans and schemes', as well as any hope of being socially re-incarnated, and indulges in a traumatic sense of mal-formation. Unsure of his individual originality and a social sense of belonging, Francis sets out to accomplish what he has coveted for a long time: to murder 'Mrs Nooge' and undo the 'two bad things' she made him do: 'you made me turn my back on my ma and you took Joe away from me'.[135]

Francis' formation, namely sublimating familial frustration and social disillusionment into a murderous attack on Mrs Nugent, transforms into a

[132] Ibid., 194.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 167.
[135] Ibid., 12, 195.

haunting narrative of gothic formation, or in Ellen Scheible's words 'bog gothic' formations, with certain peculiarities and unexperienced formations.[136] As Joe and Francis identified in the beginning of the novel, the 'crack' in their town affected not only their perception of agrarian Irish life but their very formation, producing an anarchic, though inherently defeatist, variation of decolonising identity, centered on post-independence socio-political bifurcations. As McCabe concurs, 'a split or bifurcated identity can be a cultural and political survival tool rather than an alienating force'.[137] Francis' fractured, anarchic formation, in this respect, emerges as a tool that enables him and other street children to survive the harsh temporal realism of a decolonising Ireland. Although their formation is as unproductive and failed as their ritualistic path of deformation, oscillating between anti-formation and trauma, their identity appears as a desensitised, efficient byproduct, which identifies the 'crack' and provides self-referential solution to change and develop. Dehumanisation of Bildung, in other words, helps those who were suppressed by the nationalist politics of containment to reimagine formation and reevaluate it as deconstructing the state's normative principles through establishing their own anarchic structure of formation. Murdering Mrs Nugent, as Francis' final act in his tragicomedy of anti-conformist deformation, appears as the point where chaos and anarchism deconstruct Francis' self-formation into an absurdist conception of nothingness, and introduce him as a protagonist who finds not only his life but 'all the beautiful things of this world [as] lies. They count for nothing in the end'.[138] 'Such a retreat' to nothingness and the threshold of insanity and reformation, notes Scaggs, 'is effectively an attempt to refuse the burden of subjectivity, and to remain in isolation from the world'.[139]

My contention is that Francis' relapse into bohemian insanity, though initially involuntary, is a self-referential response from a young generation of Irish rebels who found themselves trapped in nationalists' nativist paralysis and at the same time suppressed by the unjustness and deceitfulness of a society which shamelessly was advocating retrospection instead of progression, presenting a future, as Terry Eagleton understands, which is 'desirable but unfeasible, one that fails to found itself in the present in order to bridge us

[136] Scheible, 'Reanimating the Nation', 4.
[137] Ibid., 1.
[138] McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*, 198.
[139] See John Scaggs, 'Who is Francie Pig? Self-Identity and Narrative Reliability in *The Butcher Boy*', *Irish University Review*, 30 (2000), 52.

beyond it'.[140] Not only did rebels like Francis indulge in such solipsistically autonomous identity to guise their real antiauthoritarian identity and resist the oppression of the state, but they also forged a resistant literature that appeared inconceivable and insane to nationalists. It is a literature that includes elements necessary to form a typical modern Irish novel, such as the conflict between the city and the country, family matters, madness and a rising terror of gothic deformations.[141] What scholars such as Gerry Smyth failed to identify while detailing such an epistemic pattern of formation for the modern Irish novel was how anarchism and insanity as a symbolic variation of non-conformist formation provided rebels such as Francis with a pattern to perceive previously hidden concepts such as sexuality, individualism, and self-formation. Bifurcation, non-conformism and finally anarchic formations and mere insanity emerge, therefore, as paths for the young Irish rebel to exit the state's politics of stasis and embrace novel concepts such as maturation, sexuality and sexualised modern identity.

[140] Eagleton, 'Nationalism: Irony and Commitment', 25.
[141] On the elements required for 'decolonising' the modern Irish novel see Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*, 48–62.

in modern poetry in general. Nevertheless, this essay shows beyond doubt that the 'struggle with jarring witnesses' Robert Holton attributed as 'one of the definitive characteristics of modernist fiction' is fundamentally true of the modern Northern Irish poetry of John Hewitt and Derek Mahon[43]. Hewitt's 'The Colony' and 'The Coasters', while adopting respectively atoning and accusatory personae, both have a struggle with jarring witnesses at their core; 'The Colony', rather than straightforwardly comparing Roman colonisation to British colonisation of Northern Ireland, is fundamentally about the struggle between inter-communal atonement and threats, perceived or otherwise, to cultural survival. 'The Coasters' takes a different tack and, rather than having a 'native' and 'foreign' group jar against each other, sets inter-communal strife up as a class conflict, with the values of materialism espoused by the middle-classes fundamentally intertwined with the violence that pervades their society. Derek Mahon's poetry, while more oblique, struggles similarly with jarring witnesses. 'Poem Beginning with a Line by Cavafy', harking back to a version of history overlooked by specifically Irish republican jarring witnesses can be said to, on the one hand implicitly legitimise the Protestant Ascendancy but, on the other hand, give voice to a lost narrative of Irish hybridity. 'A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford' similarly deals with lost rather than subjugated narratives but its scope is so vast as to illustrate, albeit metaphorically, the pressure on poets or artists to give voice to the jarring witnesses of history.

University of Edinburgh

[43] Ibid., 251.

Notes on Contributors

Timothy C. Baker is Lecturer in Scottish Literature at the University of Aberdeen. He is the author of *George Mackay Brown and the Philosophy of Community* (2009), and is completing a monograph on contemporary Scottish Gothic. His research is focused on the relation between community and religion in Scottish fiction; he has recently published articles on Catherine Sinclair, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, John Burnside, Compton Mackenzie, and Robin Jenkins.

Edwin Cruden is an alumnus of National University of Ireland, Galway, Universitá degli Studi di Udine and University of Edinburgh. His research interests include the cultural mobilisation of masculinities, formalist approaches to non-linear narrative structures, war poetries throughout history and dominant minority narratives.

Fergus Dunne has completed a doctoral thesis on the texts and contexts of Francis Sylvester Mahony. He has published articles on various aspects of Mahony's writing career, including his role in the Cork Fraserians contribution to 1830s British periodical culture, his Rome correspondence for the *Daily News*, his later journalism for the *Globe*, and his translation-based critique of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

Ersev Ersoy completed her BA (honours) in Linguistics at Hacettepe University in Turkey in 2005. She received her MSc and PhD in Comparative literature from the University of Edinburgh, respectively in 2007 and 2012. Her doctoral thesis, 'Social Reality and Mythic Worlds' explores the reflections of folk belief and national heritage in Macpherson's Ossian and Lönnrot's *Kalevala*. Her main research interests include cultural memory, historical writing and the representations of Scottish identity in the eighteenth century.

Shahriyar Mansouri received his PhD from the University of Glasgow. He specializes in twentieth-century Irish novel, with additional interests in

theory of the novel, historical fiction, biopolitics, and a Deleuzian reading of (post-) nationalist identity. He has presented and published papers on Irish identity and culture in post-independence Ireland, and on authors such as Samuel Beckett, Francis Stuart, Jim Phelan, Roddy Doyle, and Edna O'Brien. Shahriyar is Assistant Professor of English at Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, and IASIL regional Bibliography Representative for Iran.

Aideen M. O'Leary (Ph.D. Cambridge) is Lecturer and Programme Coordinator in Celtic & Anglo-Saxon Studies at the University of Aberdeen, having held prior appointments at University College Cork and the University of Notre Dame. Her main research interests lie in the interactions between the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon worlds and Latin literature, and in New Testament apocrypha. Recent publications include *Trials and Translations: the Latin Origins of the Irish Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (Aberdeen 2013).

Virginie Privas-Bréauté teaches English and business English through drama and dramatic techniques at the Lyon 3 University - France. After a PhD on the work of Anne Devlin and Stewart Parker, she studied the dramatic representation of national identities in contemporary Northern Irish drama. She has recently examined the didactic value of drama through the borrowings from Bertolt Brecht's and Augusto Boal's theories. This has led her to consider how contemporary playwrights from minorities aim to reshape the contours of their drama. She also analyses how drama may reshape the contours of language teaching.