

Stream of Consciousness in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*

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ABSTRACT

Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that is commonly seen as a product of the modernist era. It is a literary technique characterized by introspection, self-awareness, and openness to the unconscious. Associated primarily with Joyce and Woolf, the technique is a way of representing the whole mind of an individual, not just conscious thoughts. It is based on the psychological theory that human minds are made of many layers of awareness. McCabe is a prominent contemporary Irish writer who has a penchant for the technique and its employment in novels. This article examines the psyche and behaviour of the main character, Francie Brady, in the novel, *The Butcher Boy*. McCabe uses a crucial tool, the stream of consciousness to let the psyche of a child talk and show readers what the character desires to convey. He is creative in attracting readers' attention to the mind of his characters. McCabe's use of the technique may be different from others because there is no separation between the dialogues and the thoughts, albeit with little use of punctuation in addition to shifting from one story to another. Elements that are used in depicting stream of consciousness are narration, use of punctuation, familial and societal issues, obsession, and madness, trauma and conduct disorder.

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INTRODUCTION

Patrick McCabe, a creative Irish playwright, was born in 1955. Most of his stories deal with children's worlds and their adventures during their childhood. He is a winner of the *Irish Times*, Irish Literature Prize for Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1992, apart from being well known for his portrayal of youthful, psychotic Francie Brady in *The Butcher Boy* (1992).

The Butcher Boy is set in the early 1960s in a small Irish town. A young boy, Francie Brady, is the protagonist and the focal character in the novel, along with his close friend, Joe. Francie tells his story with an angry voice and shows his animosity towards Nugent's family, especially to her son, Philip. This leads to a disastrous moment at the end of the novel, with the death of Nugent. Francie has a hidden hatred towards Nugent's family, especially from the moment Francie hears that his family is called pigs. This becomes a serious obsession for Francie, which increases his anger towards the Nugent family. It is within a dysfunctional family that he spends his life; a drunken father, Benny, who always hurts his wife verbally and physically until she is admitted to a hospital for mental illness, besides being sexually abused by a priest. All these affected Francie's psyche.

McCabe uses a crucial tool, the stream of consciousness to let the psyche of a child talk and show readers what the character desires to convey. He is creative in attracting readers' attention to the mind of his characters. His use of the technique may be different from others because there is no separation between the dialogues and the thoughts, with little use of punctuation in addition to shifting from one story to another.

Elements that are used in depicting stream of consciousness are narration, use of punctuation, familial and societal issues, obsession, and madness, trauma and conduct disorder. Francie's stream of consciousness is described as a negative one, which may be

seen as madness within the novel. One can detect it through the manner of his narration and behaviour with his surroundings such as family, friends and the people in town.

METHODOLOGY

As a product of a quantitative research, this paper refers to the school of psychology that considers stream of consciousness as a significant tool in analysing human psyche. The discussion of the theory is based on James's *The Principle of Psychology* (1890) and Freud's *General Psychological Theory* (1997). These fundamental books are the primary sources for this research. An in-depth analysis of stream of consciousness as a literary approach is influenced by Dujardin's *Les Lauriers Sont Coupés* (1888), focusing on his definition of the technique and Steinberg's *Stream of Consciousness Technique in the Modern Novel* (1979). In short, stream of consciousness attempts to convey exactly what is going on in a character's mind — conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings and impressions — without any sense of the author's presence.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper investigates how stream of consciousness is used in McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, with whatever inherent problem its use entails. Current research on stream of consciousness shows its effective role in modern novels, as it is an important factor for analysing the psyche of the characters, which leads readers to enter a character's mind.

Stream of consciousness is the pivotal technique throughout the novel, which calls for psychoanalytic discussions, examples, and criticisms. Without doubt, stream of consciousness also appears in other novels; however, the concern in this paper is specifically with its use in *The Butcher Boy*. What is different about this paper is that it provides analyses not only on thematic issues in the novel but also the literary devices focussing on the use of the stream of consciousness as a unique narrative technique.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether stream of consciousness is a viable technique in depicting the psyche and behaviour of the main character in the novel. In doing so, one can see the significance of stream of consciousness as it relates to personality of the main character.

One of McCabe's achievements in *The Butcher Boy* is how he accurately enters the depth of a child's psyche and behaviour through his character's personality. Sadly though, McCabe presents the reader with a rather pathetic vision of Irish children's world in this novel.

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

The novel opens with Francie, the narrator, recalling a time "When I was a young lad twenty or thirty or forty years ago I lived in a small town where they were all after me on account of what I had done on Mrs Nugent" (*The Butcher Boy*, p. 1). These opening lines are significant as they introduce an

interior monologue that creates an idea in the reader's mind across the length of the story. Moreover, the novel is often narrated in the first-person point of view which can be regarded as a stream of consciousness. Yet, sometimes it switches to the third-person narrator, which is a sign of using interior monologue, although for some critics, stream of consciousness and interior monologue can be used interchangeably. The following passage, which is in first-person narrator, shows Francie's own stream of consciousness in dwelling on Mrs Nugent:

I could see the neighbour's curtain twitching whistle whistle hello there Mr Neighbour, it's me Francie with my special delivery for Mrs Nugent. Then away she went from the window so I knocked on Mrs Nugent's door and out she came wearing her blue housecoat. Hello Mrs Nugent I said is Mr Nugent in I have a message for him from Mr Leddy (pp. 194-195).

This passage is a good example of stream of consciousness, but the readers may not be able to analyse it by associating it with what is inside Francie's mind due to several reasons. Firstly, there is no separation between the dialogue and the thoughts, which makes it difficult for readers to follow the flow of the thoughts of the character. Secondly, Francie's mind is considered as being in a chaotic state; too many utterances come in succession without

a clear explanation. Thirdly, it is perhaps, due to the weakness in the development of Francie's psyche as he refuses to grow up. This implies a failure of the *bildungsroman* literary tradition, and, according to Kirwan (2011), the novel intentionally fails and Francie does not show any progress in the course of the narrative.

The overall narration of the story is "fragmentary, repetitive and disjointed, while the text consists of an almost constant, polyphonic flow of commentary, self-correction, wit and mimicry" (Wallace, 1998, p. 159), as it is seen in the following quotation from the novel: "I could hear a plane droning far away. One time we were standing behind the houses shading our eyes from the sun and Joe says: Did you see the plane Francie? I said I did...I was thinking about Mr Nugent standing there crying her eyes out" (2). McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998) is another novel which has attracted much criticism for its confusing narrative form, especially when readers who look to build a traditional linear narrative structure are faced with some lines at the beginning of the novel which are irreverent and flamboyant, as in the following example: "I was a High-Class Escort Girl although I am afraid that I don't get too many clients these days!" (p. 1).

The Butcher Boy refers to the misdeed that Francie commits towards the Nugent's family due to Francie's mother's death and the loss of Joe, his best friend. Francie enters Nugent's house aggressively, saying "You did two bad things ... You made me turn back on my ma and you took Joe away from me"

(p. 195). Francie's obsession with Nugent's family is stated at the very start of the story, "what is the use in crying now Nugent it was you caused all the trouble" (p. 2). The violence greatly increases in Francie's psyche, which sets itself into an imaginary world that Booth calls "a confusion of distance" (Booth, 1961, p. 311).

It is noteworthy that McCabe's narrative structure can be difficult to follow as there is no clear distinction between the paragraphs and the stream of the characters that created the non-stop effect of the story. There is minimal use of punctuation and the flow of ideas is without any distinction between them.

USE OF PUNCTUATION

Generally, there is minimal use of punctuations in stream of consciousness novels. This presents some difficulty in understanding the story. McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* is an apparent example of those in which he rarely uses punctuation in the novel, which makes the dialogues and the thoughts difficult to be distinguished. Thus, this is the main castigation that McCabe has been faced with in modern novel criticism.

Her mouth was hanging open and she was crying again pointing to the broken mirror and the writing on the black-board I mean wall. I looked at Philip he was white as a ghost too what was wrong with him now, hadn't he got the prize for the pig poo what more did he want? But Mr. Nugent said he was in charge

now. I'll deal with this! he said in his Maltese Ready Rubbed Voice. Philip and Mrs Nugent went down stairs and there was only me and him. He looked good Mr Nugent you had to say that for him (p. 63).

The above paragraph, with little punctuation, is a good example of stream of consciousness because the dialogue and the thoughts are mixed up all together. Francie's current state of psyche reaches an unstable moment where his ideas overflow.

Francie likes Joe, his best friend, whom he spends most of his time with, and they enjoy childhood together, including some adventurous activities. However, after a desperate moment, Joe leaves Francie and befriends Phillip's friends and family. Francie always dwells on Joe's betrayal of their friendship — receiving a goldfish from Phillip, at which point Francie voices up again: "But what did Joe have to take it for? Why why why? Why he didn't say Phillip, You can keep your goldfish?" His obsessive hostility ends once Mrs Nugent is killed. Jordan describes Francie's personality as an "unaccommodated man. He is somebody who refuses to learn the rules of disappointment. He refuses to civilise his feelings because that would do his feelings an injustice" (Falsetto, p. 51).

Joe has an impact on Francie's life, he keeps advising Francie to be a good lad and follows him; but Francie does not obey. Therefore, in the midst of each story there is a flashback to his memory and his early time with Joe and their happy time in town. This

reaches a peak when Joe decides completely to separate with him as he asks Francie, "what do you want? No he didn't. He said: what do you want" (p. 189). This is regarded as one the most hurtful moments to Francie: "He asked me again: What do you want me for? Are you deaf or something?" Francie gets confused at this embarrassing moment he is in, and he repeats words in long non-stop sentences without punctuation, symbolising this confusion:

I never thought Joe would ask that I never thought he would have to ask that but he did didn't he and when I heard him say it that was when I started to feel myself draining away and I couldn't stop it the more I tried the worse it got I could have floated to the ceiling like a fag paper please Joe come with me that was all I wanted to say dumb people have holes in the pit of their stomachs and that's the way I was now the dumbest person in the whole world who had no words left for anything at all (pp. 189-190).

OBSESSION

Obsession is a core theme in the novel. Francie's obsessed mind with a hatred of Philip is more or less obvious as readers come to the end of the novel. Francie brings a clear image of pigs and what they do — "PHILIP IS A PIG" and "they do poo" which describes Nugent's family and how dirty they are. This obsession makes Francie's promise to Joe forgettable and he teases and

increases his hatred of the Nugent family more and more as if nothing is there to focus on except Nugent's family in Francie's head —“come on! Pig! Pig! Pig!”

Even in the beginning of the novel, this appears while Francie speaks about his activity with Joe, his best friend, when all of a sudden Francie's mind uncontrollably shifts to Nugent's family without any indication in advance: “I was thinking how right ma was – Mrs Nugent all smiles when she met us how are you getting on Mrs and young Francis are you both well? It was hard to believe that all the time what she was really saying was: *Ah hello Mrs Pig how are you and look Philip do you see what's coming now – The Pig Family!*” (p. 5).

There is an issue of reality and dream which is the same for Francie; reality and dream are terrible as both focus on the life of the Nugent family: “I woke up in the middle of the night. I had been dreaming about Mrs Nugent. She was out in the scullery baking scones. The house is full of baking smells. She called in: Is anybody ready for some scones” (p. 73). Dreams, in a psychological sense, are for the fulfilment of wishes and desires. Here, for Francie, dreams also become reality — the reality of hatred towards Nugent's family.

Escaping from those horrific surroundings is another issue for Francie. Most of the protagonist's phantasmic reveries are located on the river, which, for Francie, is an ideal place where he can flee from those hardships inflicted by society (Kirwan, 2001, p. 5). Francie talks eagerly in the novel of how enjoyable it is being by the river: “It was a hide me and Joe made

... you could see plenty from inside but no one could see you” (p. 1). The river might be an effective place for the protagonists, such as Francie, where it might be the only place to rethink and recall the old memories more easily and quickly to his mind and continue the story in the form of stream of consciousness. However, Francie fantasizes about a pastoral life as a kind of independence. Despite that, the shocking incidents and darker images in the novel undercut the escapism that Francie has been dwelling on.

This augments psychological issues in Francie's life in terms of the development of his personality and understanding his surroundings. Gauthier (2003) notes that Francie has more responsibilities in his desperate community, especially having grown up with a suicidal mother and an alcoholic father. As a result, he is left on his own, rather than being given care. Instead, he becomes the caregiver to his parents. A parent who is unable to overcome a bad current situation leads to a disaster in the end (p. 197). Early in the novel, his mother, who beats him for stealing Philip's comics, pathetically turns back to Francie saying:

She said there was nobody in the world meant more to her than me. Then she put her arms around me and said it was her nerves it was them was to blame for everything. It wasn't always like this for your father and she said. Then she looked into my eyes and said: Francie – you would never let me down would you? (p. 4)

Gauthier (2003) asserts that Francie's psychological crisis also has to do with his community (p. 198). It is his community which does not let him develop his personality throughout the novel, as Smyth (qtd. in Gauthier, 2003) found that:

Such a community, so at odds with the official pastoral ideology of modern Ireland, finds a hero it deserves in Francie Brady, for as well as being the agent of evil and resentful revenge, Francie is also a scapegoat for this community, the empty, innocent vessel into which all its repressions and vices are poured. (p. 82)

Unlike Joe, who is welcomed by the community after he continues his studies in "another house of a hundred windows" (p. 97), especially revealing the friendship between him and Philip, the Nugents and Purcells, Francie expresses his most terrible time and frustration towards his community — a community where there are other levels of living: "she said she knew the kind of us long before she went to England and she might have known not to let her son anywhere near the likes of me what else would you expect from a house where the father's never in, hanging around the pubs from morning to night, he's no better than a pig" (p. 4). This angers Francie, as it is an indication of the Nugent's high social status and their disgust with the Bradys.

Apart from this hatred of Nugent's family, historical context is another concern

in Francie's psyche as shown by the mention of several well-known past leaders in Ireland such as Daniel O'Connell, whom Francie does not recognise in Irish history: "I didn't know anything about him except he was something to do with the English and all that" (p. 37). Francie is young in age, yet he is quite open-minded in dealing with some big famous figures such as priests and political leaders. He observes, criticises, and blames them for the failure of his country, which has caused chaos in his psychological world. There is a lot of questioning which proves to be too much for the stream of consciousness of a child. Francie adopts a vivid cultural hatred as Baker observes: "Mrs. Nugent's words take Francie's life over until the pig and the butcher become one" (*Times Literary Supplement*, 24 April 1993).

One of the characters who psychologically damages Francie is J. Leddy. In addition, there are Mrs. Connolly and two other women, with a sense of humour in the novel, who are also harmful to Francie. Leddy wants to shoot a piglet in front of Francie's eyes, which makes him imagine an image of killing and using a bolt in an easy way. A sense of guilt is apparent in Francie once he kills the piglet: "And what does he do only stick it into the babe pig's head and bit-dunk! Right into his skull goes the bolt and such a squeal. Then down on the concrete plop and not a squeak out of him all you could see was him saying you said you'd mind me and you didn't" (p. 123).

Gauthier confirms that Francie is neither a pig nor a butcher, but in some ways he is obliged to become both (p. 198). This

brings up a sensitive issue in Francie's life — his being is simple and innocent yet the disturbing surroundings create an unstable psychological state in which he desires to become a part of Nugent's family — a state of psychical obsession where he feels the guilt especially when he does not keep his mother's promise and finds her dead when he returns to town.

It does seem that readers are led to feel the depth of Francie's aggressiveness and sense of alienation. Gauthier notes that the brutality of the murder of Mrs Nugent is not an action without a mind; there is logic. Nugent is killed the same way as the piglet and "PIGS" was written on the wall with her blood (p. 208). When the psychical issues are too much in one's mind, human beings try to avoid them in the same way Francie does — in a way, patience is gone and brutality appears.

FAMILIAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

Francie takes pleasure in disturbing Nugent's family, as he thinks about planning and making fun of them most of the times. This can vividly be seen when the "Pig Toll Tax" announcement is made where none of the "Nooge's" as he calls her family, can get passed unless they pay the toll. Although this is a comical scene in the novel, it exposes Francie's psyche towards Nugent's family. The death of Nugent and a reference to *The Butcher Boy* are detected in the beginning of the novel, where it is written like verses of poetry, and where the narrator shifts from first person to third person:

*He went upstairs and the door he
broke*

He found her hanging from a rope

*He took his knife and he cut her
down*

*And in her pocket these words he
found.* (p. 19)

Francie claims that he is disturbed by anything related to Nugent's family, as if there are voices everywhere from Nugent's family, such as from Phillip or Buttsy, Mrs Nugent's brother. It is Francie's stream of consciousness that recalls his enemy and competes with him. In *Paddy Clarke HaHa* by Roddy Doyle, where its main character's obsession with his parental relations and the loss of his friends is a major theme, here the same desperate situation full of terror is being repeated in Francie's life.

Psychologically, Francie has already made his decision that there would be a bloody ending for Nugent's family, whose name ironically is derived from the name of the sweet candy, nougat, by telling Philip for the second time the story of *The Butcher Boy*. He explains how a woman is hanged from a rope in the story "because this butcher boy told her lies," without Philip understanding what is meant by that. The impulse to commit a murder is due to his mother's death, non-existent father, and the loss of Joe's friendship: "he cursed at me now look what you've done look what you had to go and do! I'm sorry Joe I said and I knew that was that. Joe was going to leave me and I'd be left with nobody no

ma nothing" (p. 49). These cause a chaotic psyche within Francie without any solution. Although he promises Joe, he still continues his adventurous life: "I swore on my life that was the end of it and it would have been too, only for Nugent" (p. 49).

Francie has been raised in an atmosphere of inhumanity and brutality, the cycle of wildness that crescendos with the murder of Mrs Nugent. Jordan states that "...the relationship between Francie and Joe is all the more important because Francie loses his mother and father...children have no language, no expression for certain enormous tragedies like the death of a parent. Of course, it is a loss, and they are desperately sad but they can't really express it" (Jaehne 4). However, when a mate betrays them, they have their own language and seek justice. Francie's anger is at that point where he will do everything to demolish whoever and whatever that takes Joe away from him. While he is powerless to avenge the loss of his father because of alcoholism, or his mother from suicide, this time he knows that there is something he can do – he can kill Mrs Nugent.

MADNESS, TRAUMA AND CONDUCT DISORDER

McWilliams (2010), in her article titled, *Madness and the Mother Ireland in the Fiction of Patrick McCabe*, claims that *The Butcher Boy* includes the theme of Mother Ireland, and that Francie's behaviour manifests similar characterisation which is almost Joycean in nature. In McCabe's novels, "male protagonists are often trapped

in a pathological relationship with Mother Ireland, which causes a great deal of suffering to both the men and women who inhabit the fiction" (McWilliams 397). For example, when Francie goes to Dublin, Francie buys a picture for his mother of "an old woman in red shawl rocking by the fireside" with "A mother's love's a blessing no matter where you roam" written on it (*The Butcher Boy*, p. 41).

When Francie returns home, he realises that the manic state of his mother has led her to commit suicide. As a result, he looks for an imaginary mother, which takes the form of the personality of Mrs Nugent. It should be noted that this replacement can never be convenient; it is rather a psychological fulfilment for a young child like Francie, and, to McWilliams:

[...] a key development in the main character's psychosis emerges in a scene where Francie breaks into the Nugent's house and is shown hallucinating in Mrs Nugent's bedroom, imagining himself suckling like a piglet at her breast. He accidentally knocks and smashes the mirror on the dressing room table, doing further injury to the symbol of Irish art identified by Stephen Dedalus as 'the cracked looking glass of a servant' in the opening chapter of Ulysses (p. 397).

McWilliams sees a lot of similarities between Dedalus and Francie as these two lost strangers try to find their own way and

escape in the current society, because in McCabe's fiction, "the past is a nightmare from which his characters are trying to awake" (McWilliam, 2010, p. 399). Francie further explains about his home bitterness: "we'd just there for hours sometimes just staring into the firegrate only there never was a fire ma never bothered to light one and I was not sure how to go about it. I said what fire do we want its just as good sitting here staring into the ashes" (pp. 4-5).

Another scene which clearly denotes Francie's chaotic state of mind is when he is back on the death of his mother. Francie finds Benny, his father, surrounded by stinky tin fish and some flies, "the back door was open and the sink was full of pilchard tins ... The flies were buzzing around them. There was curdled milk and books thrown round all over the place" (p. 43). This awful scene perhaps serves to prepare the readers for something distressing to follow such as the death of Benny on the chair beside the fire. Again, Francie gets frustrated stating "no matter what I did Jeyes Fluid or anything there was still a bit of stink and flies about" (p. 120, emphasis added). Here, as Kirwan confirms, "flies" symbolise a "decaying social order, the protagonist's mental decline, and/or haunting relationship to paternity and heritage" (p. 16).

Some critics, indeed, have an Oedipal explanation for Francie. As his mother commits suicide, he fantasises Mrs Nugent to be his replacement mother and dreams of her offering her breast, "she slowly unbuttoned her blouse and took out her breast. Then she said: This is for you

Francie" (p. 64). The conflict between his real, dead mother and the fantasised mother necessitates him to murder Mrs Nugent, as Eldred (2005) states, "the reason for the killer's desire to inflict pain is both the loss of and desire for the mother, and Francie's motives for murder prove similar" (p. 106).

On the other hand, Posh (2003) goes beyond the behavioural aspect of Francie's attitude to his violent and unstable family, which she claims is based on "biological and or chemical causes" (p. 178). In addition, a psychological problem in troubled boys is sometimes due to Conduct Disorder. Conduct Disorder features anger towards people and animals, destruction of property, cheating or theft, and serious violation of rules (Garbarino, 1999, p. 52), as Francie can be noticed to be doing so throughout the story because of the lost of those close and valuable to him.

Kellerman in *Savage Spawn: Reflections on Violent Children* (1999) describes "a small subset of murderous adolescents whose crimes result from psychosis. These youngsters exhibit the same symptoms as do adult psychotic murderers — paranoia, command hallucinations ... and delusions" (p. 36). Francie's hallucinations are clearly shown in the novel, especially the moment Francie hallucinates Mrs Nugent's offering to feed him. Bernheim and Lewine (1979) bring a clearer definition of complex disorder, "schizophrenia, which refers to characteristically disturbed ways of thinking, feeling and relating that develop in biologically predisposed individuals under certain personal and environmental

circumstances" (p. 21). This shows a vivid similarity between Brady and his son, Francie, indicating that both share a mental illness. In other words, Francie's family group is characterised by trauma, loss and abuse. These all refer to his psyche, from the point of psychosis, which affects Francie's stream in narrating the story.

The conversation between Francie and Roche denotes another sign of Francie's schizophrenic state in which readers do not know when Roche is in the conversation or when he exits: "I don't know why the fuck I did it for he didn't ask me anything but I started into telling him everything ...what do you think of that, doc, all that old days being finished? ... He lowered his voice and I had to strain to hear what he said. He said yes, yes that's good but I could tell by the sound of it that he didn't believe me" (pp. 105-106). Here, Francie's narrative is quite confusing because he appears to be unable to distinguish his thoughts from his actions, thus leading Bernheim and Lewine to state that there is incapability for schizophrenics in differentiating "between thinking about an action and actually doing it" (p. 25). Fantasy and reality, in that sense, are mixed up and become inextricably intertwined.

Furthermore, another symptom to consider in this analysis of Francie's state of mind is his delusional state. Delusions, according to Bernheim and Lewine, are "false ideas that are not correctable by reasoning" (p. 41). People with delusions may have negative thinking about those who are around them, thinking that people might plot against them or harm them. In the case of Francie, he feels threatened

because he loses many people close to him, and at the same time, in his later conversation with Mrs Connolly, Francie has the misconception that Mrs Connolly considers Francie a pig too. Francie's psyche is quite complex, as one can perceive from his stream of consciousness, displaying signs of trauma, delusions, hallucinations, and schizophrenia. The actual causes of these psychological issues are the death of his mother, and effectively, the loss of a father, Joe, and his uncle. The moment Francie's mother commits suicide, Francie imagines that Philip sleeps happily in Mrs Nugent's hugs. This inequity drives Francie to exact revenge and finally murder Mrs Nugent.

The aforementioned terms such as trauma, schizophrenia, and conduct disorder can all be seen as a form of madness manifested by Francie. Thus, Wallace (1998), in her article *Running amuck: manic logic in McCabe's The Butcher Boy*, concentrates on "manic logic," in the novel, in which "function" can be comprehended in two senses: exploring the devices that McCabe applies in the text and the role of madness as long as the story goes on in terms of characterisation and plot (p. 142). The symbol of "manic logic" is the pigs for Francie, as he states continuously back and forth about the pig imagery and applies the image to Mrs Nugent's family. Besides his envious attitude towards the Nugent family, losing his friendship with Joe also significantly influences Francie's life.

It is noteworthy that the sense of madness can be interpreted as the process of breakdown. Francie's narration, behavioural

aspects, schizophrenia, etc. are all apparent examples in the novel that, as Bolger (1992) confirms, *The Butcher Boy* is a “a powerful and deeply shocking novel where the seemingly innocent logic of a child imperceptibly turns into the manic logic of an unhinged mind” (p. 47).

CONCLUSION

McCabe addresses the psychical issues of his characters very well in a way that allows readers to share the pitiable violent moments with Francie Brady. The depiction of stream of consciousness in the novel is well established through non-breaking dialogues and thoughts of the characters, which show McCabe’s unique treatment of the technique.

Francie’s issue with the narration of the text has made critics voice out about the difficulty that exists in following his story, to the extent that even his little punctuation does not distinguish the confusion between his thoughts and his dialogues.

Being obsessed with family and society has led Francie to a chaotic state that results in his madness and trauma. This is a core focus in the novel that shapes the personality of Francie. Francie’s bitter life starts with the death of his mother, losing his father and, most traumatically, losing his best friend, Joe. Besides all these, the psychological concern with the Nugent family aggravates his chaotic psyche and brings tragedy to the story and into Francie’s life. In the end, Francie realises how his being is lost and lonely in the community.

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