

Remembering Ireland's architecture of containment: "telling" stories in *The Butcher Boy* and *States of Fear*

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PATRICK MCCABE's third novel, *The Butcher Boy* (1992), describes the eventful life of Francie Brady, a traumatized schoolboy in a small town in late 1950s and early 1960s Ireland. (1) Irish society deems Francie mad and resorts to confining his deviant behavior at a variety of different institutions--an industrial school, a mental hospital, and a prison. Hidden away, out of sight and out of mind, McCabe's protagonist evokes the many real-life victims of Ireland's architecture of containment. (2) In its concrete form, this architecture encompassed an array of interdependent institutions--schools, hospitals, mother-and-baby homes, adoption agencies, and Magdalen laundries--that obscured the less desirable elements attached to a number of interrelated social phenomena, including poverty, illegitimacy, and infanticide. (3) In its more abstract form, this architecture comprised both the legislation that inscribed these issues as well as the numerous official and public discourses that resisted admitting the existence and function of their affiliated institutions. What remains incontrovertible, however, is that this bureaucratic apparatus and the discourses surrounding it served the nation-state: its function, to confine and render invisible segments of the population whose very existence threatened Ireland's national imaginary, the vision of Ireland enshrined in President Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution. (4) As a result, among those incarcerated were unmarried mothers, illegitimate and abandoned children, orphans, the sexually

promiscuous, the socially transgressive, and, often, those merely guilty of "being in the way." (5) *The Butcher Boy* participates in the formation of a narrative that excavates the elided history of Ireland's architecture of containment.

In 1999, only seven years after the publication of *The Butcher Boy*, Mary Raftery's three-part documentary *States of Fear*, examining the history of Ireland's residential child care practices, aired on the national broadcasting network. (6) It remains, to date, the most significant representation of the nation's containment infrastructure. The first episode concentrated on Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools prior to 1970, when the recommendations of the Kennedy Report indicted the whole system and resulted in the closure of many larger institutions. (7) Thirty years later, seven witnesses challenged Irish television audiences with memories of neglect and abuse. (8) John Prior revealed that he was "sadistically sexually abused" on the day he made his First Holy Communion. Barney O'Connell told how the Christian Brother in charge of the nationally revered Artane Boys Band ordered him to strip naked before "grossly molesting" him. Mary Phil Drennan described a punishment ritual in which adult supervisors encouraged students to strike half-naked peers crawling on all fours between them. Mannix Flynn remembered seeing captured escapees beaten senseless until they were "reduced to simpletons." Confronted by these accounts of institutional experience, the nation's television audience acknowledged the fear and hurt, yet unabated, among these survivors. Like McCabe's novel, Raftery's documentaries excavate Ireland's architecture of containment by focusing on the very people the structure was erected to deny.

In examining the social and historical contexts for *The Butcher Boy* and *States of Fear*, this essay underscores the regulatory function of

an institutional system that supported the State's postcolonial nativist morality. In other words, the existence of such sites of confinement functioned as a constant reminder of the social morals deemed appropriate in post-independence Catholic Ireland and of the consequences awaiting transgressors of that morality. (9) de Valera's 1943 St. Patrick's Day address famously expresses the nation's nativist aspirations: an idealized society "bright with cosy homesteads, ... joyous ... with the romping of sturdy children, ... and the laughter of comely maidens." (10) However, the Taoiseach carefully elides any mention of domestic realities, for example the tragic fire at St. Joseph's Industrial School in Cavan on 23 February 1943--some three weeks earlier. (11) de Valera's silence regarding the thirty-five young girls who lost their lives--all committed to care through the courts--reflects the pervasive social response to institutionalized children held hostage to a State-authored nativist ideal.

TELLING STORIES IN THE 1990s

Presenting a somber view of provincial life in post-independence Ireland, *The Butcher Boy* and *States of Fear* reflect the ambivalent status of children residing in Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools. As representative depictions of institutional life, both narratives indict a protracted process of decolonization dominating Irish society well into the 1980s. Both emerged in a decade that witnessed a distinct shift in Ireland's willingness to confront its past. Although traditionally silent when confronted with controversial social problems, Ireland began to "speak out" in the 1990s with a new openness most evident in media-generated controversies--particularly in those focusing attention on the suffering of children and other marginalized citizens. (12) The 1990 election of Mary Robinson was pivotal to this transformation, for the new President symbolized a

hunger for change and an attendant renegotiation of Irish identity. (13) During her term, a newly confident Irish society transformed its relationship with established cultural traditions. In her inaugural address, Robinson invoked an open and pluralistic notion of national identity, claiming that

[t]he Ireland that I will be representing is a new Ireland, open, tolerant, inclusive.... This, I believe, is a significant signal of change, a sign, however modest, that we have already passed the threshold of a new pluralist Ireland.... I want Aras an Uachtarain to be a place where people can tell diverse stories--in the knowledge that there is someone there to listen. I want this presidency to promote the telling of stories--stories of celebration through the arts and stories of conscience and social justice. (14)

President Robinson's emphasis on the role of "stories" in realizing the goal of a newly "open, tolerant, inclusive" Ireland suggests a radical break with tradition--a reimagining of Ireland's foundational narratives that Richard Kearney advocates in *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*. (15) Kearney argues for deconstructing the "Official Story" of the nation-state "into the open plurality of stories that make it up." For Kearney, this plurality of stories indicates a "political or ethical community where identity is part of a permanent

process of narrative retelling," and where "every citizen's story is related" and thus exists in a state of dependency with others. (16) In linking the concepts of "narrative retelling" and "dependency," Kearney's description of postnational Ireland invites a re-evaluation of stories of institutional abuse emerging in recent years. Simultaneously, it reinscribes those victimized by Ireland's official story--adoptees, single mothers, illegitimate children, and former residents of industrial and reformatory schools--into a new national narrative. Their stories invoke a history Irish society prefers not to acknowledge and excavate the nation's architecture of containment.

If the emergence of "stories" representing institutional care, in part, signals a transformation toward a post-national society, then the undermining force of such narratives warrants further interrogation. Certainly, recent narratives, both in the media and in imaginative literature, challenge the ideological forces shaping the official version of Ireland's past. However, because these revelations are informed by individual memory or depend on individual testimony, they frequently raise concerns about "false memory" and the role of individual memory vis-a-vis "empirically based realist historiography." (17) Faced with this dilemma, philosopher Paul Ricoeur argues for a two-pronged critical response. He suggests opening up "the archive by retrieving traces which the dominant ideological forces attempted to suppress," and thereby initiating "a critique of power" that gives voice to those that were abused and intentionally excluded. (18)

Creating and maintaining Ireland's national identity necessitated the formation of a narrative selective in what it chose to remember and who it chose to forget. (19) Given the conservative Catholic nativism of post-independence Ireland, the construction of a plot to reflect

national identity--the official story of what "we" are--did not incorporate, for example, illegitimate children, unmarried mothers, and residents of industrial and reformatory schools. Such an exclusionary narrative permeated both the modes of discourse by which the nation-state maintained its architecture of containment and the hegemonic forces fostering a conspiracy of silence regarding Ireland's restrictive moral culture. My focus on narrative thus attempts to explore the social and linguistic mechanisms by which the State rendered that culture, as well as its victims, an abstraction.

Ricoeur argues for countering "the manipulation of narratives by telling the story differently and by providing a space for the confrontation between opposing testimonies." (20) A self-conscious retelling of the traumas associated with residential child-care practices includes a public airing of Ireland's containment culture, and this was facilitated not only through media attention, but also through the voices of imaginative writers. At least ten years before television documentaries began to address this material, novelists such as Bernard McLaverty, Dermot Bolger, Mary Morrissey, Dermot Healy, Roddy Doyle, Kathleen Ferguson, and Edna O'Brien insistently explored the lives of those trapped within Ireland's architecture of containment. (21) The cumulative effect of their imaginative texts, appearing concurrently with an outpouring of memoirs written by adult-survivors, rendered the nation's industrial and reformatory schools visible and accessible, even as the works of fiction deconstructed the hegemonic agenda suppressing their existence. (22) In the process, novelists both challenged the State's restrictive practices and contradicted the State's narrative of abstraction. McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, in particular, offers a dark and satiric retelling of institutional child care. If as Paul Ricoeur suggests, "fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator. Eyes to

see and to weep," (23) then Francie Brady embodies the anger engendered by abuses and failures in the institutional care system. He personifies the need of survivors to liberate themselves from that anger and that past.

Building on the revelations of at least a decade of fiction and memoir, television documentaries ruptured the secrecy that shrouded this particular aspect of the nation's past. In a series of documentaries and related news coverage, the visual media established that Ireland's architecture of containment has survivors as well as victims. Television narratives literally attached a face and a speaking voice to a forgotten history, bringing a measure of accountability to contemporary Irish society. Hearing the voices and seeing the faces of survivors dramatically contradicted ideological attempts to silence them. Perhaps because *States of Fear* attempted to tackle Ireland's residential child-care system as a whole, rather than to focus on one survivor's experience or on a single institution, the documentary effectively empowered victims to contest a historic elision and speak their experiences back into the nation's cultural memory. (24) As exemplary texts that reinscribe Ireland's architecture of containment, *The Butcher Boy* and *States of Fear* remember and thereby retell the past.

STATES OF FEAR (1999)

Almost ten years after Mary Robinson's call for "stories of conscience and social justice," *States of Fear* elicited the most significant government acknowledgment of the wrongs suffered by adult survivors of Ireland's industrial and reformatory school system. On 11 May 1999, speaking before the Irish parliament, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern announced a comprehensive package of proposals in response to the controversy provoked by the documentary. (25) At the core of

Ahern's speech was the first official apology to victims of abuse suffered while they were institutionalized as part of the nation's child care system. The Taoiseach noted that his apology for the State's past failures to provide care and security to children was "fundamental" in bringing the transition toward a more mature, "self-confident and inclusive society." (26) Thus, he asked for forgiveness: "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." (27) For the many thousands of survivors of Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools, many of whom are still living with the scars of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, the government's apology represented a crucial validation of their childhood experience and of the wrongs that were done to them. (28)

A question, however, remains: for what exactly was the government apologizing and why did it apologize only in May 1999? Or, to put it another way, what precisely did the States of Fear documentaries reveal? Much of the essential knowledge volunteered was widely available, and in some circles was common knowledge for well over thirty years. In addition to the Kennedy Report (1970), at least two other commissioned studies had investigated Ireland's industrial and reformatory school system since the founding of the State. Both the Cussen Report (1936) and the findings issued by the Task Force on Child Care Services (1980) echoed the Kennedy investigation's condemnation of institutional practices at these schools: all three official narratives document widespread emotional neglect and varying degrees of physical abuse within the system. (29) And as noted previously, several memoirs and autobiographies by adult survivors appeared throughout the 1980s and 1990s, well in advance of States

of Fear. Only three years before its airing, in fact, Louis Lentin's drama-documentary *Dear Daughter*--detailing horrendous abuse at Goldenbridge Industrial School--led to a public controversy similar to that provoking the government's response to the 1999 documentary. (30) But *States of Fear* offered new information for, as it turns out, survivor testimony was neither its most startling nor its most significant revelation. By gaining access to the Department of Education's archival records--revealed to the public for the first time--the producers of the documentary made clear that the State knew a great deal about the systematic physical, emotional, and in some instances sexual abuse within the system, but chose for the most part to ignore it. (31) Government officials continued to fund such abuse generously, even after receiving accurate assessments of conditions. The extent of State support for the institutions proved startling, and in the face of firsthand recollections, for example, of hungry children reduced to eating pig-swill (from Sharon Murphy), maggot-infested potatoes (from Don Baker), and grass and stolen Communion wafers (from Barney O'Connell), public outrage grew. (32) Close-ups of government archives repeatedly documenting "gross malnutrition," "semi-starvation," and "children reduced to half their normal body weight" buttressed the memories of those witnesses speaking out. (33) Moreover, the religious orders operating these institutions were not "utterly dependent on the support of a largely impoverished Catholic community," as claimed by Dublin's Archbishop Desmond Connell, filmed as recently as November 1998. (34) Rather, as Raftery's documentary points out, schools received State capitation grants for each child in their care--grants equivalent to the average wage of a farm laborer who might be supporting a large family. (35) Contrary to public belief, Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools

were never charitable institutions; whereas the institutions were managed exclusively by Catholic religious orders, school funding came entirely from the government. States of Fear thus affronted Ireland's most cherished national assumption--that it was a nation uniquely nurturing of the poor and marginalized. The nation's moral conscience, it seemed, demanded an official response.

In light of the documentary's revelations, Ahern's response warrants further examination. First, there is the apology itself. The Taoiseach's comments imply that the government merely failed to supervise someone else's derelictions, but he did not acknowledge the State's avoidance of accountability, which, as States of Fear made abundantly clear, was longstanding. The care system was, essentially, a creature of the State in terms of committals, funding, and inspection, but more crucially in terms of how it facilitated the nation's nativist imaginary. The State's industrial and reformatory schools conveniently "took care" of the nation's anomalous children: those whose parents were deemed socially and morally inadequate; those with juvenile delinquent tendencies; those who were the victims of incest or sexual abuse; and, frequently, those whose crime was to be born poor or illegitimate. Ahern's subtle attempt to shift responsibility for institutional child abuse reflects a long established practice of abdicating accountability for destitute children. Representing and speaking for a society dedicated to nativist ideals, politicians were only too glad to leave these children in the "care" of the religious orders.

The government's apology and the ensuing package of corrective measures emerged, therefore, only after a television documentary publicized abuse about which the State had long been cognizant. Whereas the official response suggests the media's capacity to

influence a modern democracy, the form of Ahern's apology obscured the State's historic failure to nurture Irish children. The government's actions, in fact, reflected its awareness of changing national attitudes toward children, who were by the 1990s, at least on the level of public platitude, no longer viewed solely as parental property, but as the State's most treasured commodity. (36) In this light, Ahern's apology, supported by a package of future-oriented legislative measures, was a politically advantageous tactic. (37) And from the government's point of view, the potentially damaging controversy emerged when a convenient scapegoat presented itself. Recent decades of increased sensitivity to children's rights in Ireland had also witnessed an ebb in the Catholic Church's social, political, and cultural power, particularly with regard to the church's historic involvement in child-related activities. Numerous scandals centering on clerical pedophilia--for example, the Fr. Brendan Smyth case--presented an opportunity whereby the State could once more conveniently elide responsibility by pointing the finger elsewhere. (38) Nonetheless, *States of Fear* asserted, unlike any previous representation that helped excavate the history of Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools, that these sites of confinement contributed in mutually benefiting ways to Church and State interdependence.

Ahern's announcement also appears as a carefully timed preemptive strike against revelations in the final episode of the *States of Fear* documentary, broadcast on the very evening of his apology. (39) Unlike the preceding two episodes--focusing on industrial and reformatory schools and homes for mentally and physically challenged children through the 1970s--the last installment of the documentary concentrates on contemporary institutional child abuse in Ireland. More specifically, the episode focuses on how the government

intervened to censor sections from the Madonna House Report (1996) that directly linked abuse to ongoing mismanagement by the religious order operating the institution. (40) Acting on legal advice from the State's Attorney General, the government deleted precisely those sections of the report documenting both the State's and the religious order's inability to learn from past failures. Thus a report that minutely identified the costs of secrecy within a residential child-care system was itself subject to censorship and cover-up. Although two agencies were responsible for the abuse of children residing in Madonna House--the State that funded it and the Irish Sisters of Charity who owned and managed it--government censorship of the officially commissioned report protected both from exposure. By revealing this history to the public, *States of Fear* asserted that contemporary abuse is the inevitable legacy of the State's continuing denial of its past responsibility for such abuse. The documentary thus threatened to breach the relatively comfortable ground of retrospective fault-finding and to introduce politically precarious questions relating to contemporary failures in the nation's child-care system. Concurrently, it called into question the nation's presumption of its superiority over the past. (41) Hence Ahern's apology and legislative package simultaneously reapportioned responsibility for that past elsewhere, and, in the apology and the outlining of new legislative measures, promised a brighter tomorrow. However, as this essay demonstrates, somewhere between the past and the future, the present was effectively circumvented.

THE BUTCHER BOY (1992)

Like *States of Fear*, McCabe's novel exposes Irish society's deployment of an architecture of containment to police and maintain the nation's nativist imaginary. *Bunreacht na hEireann/The Irish Constitution*,

authored by de Valera in 1937, and more specifically the articles addressing "The Family" and "Education," establishes this relationship. (42) In the former, the State, reflecting the nation's presumably Catholic identity, recognizes the family as the "fundamental unit group of society," and as "a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights." (43) Articles on "Education" reflect similar presumptions as the State recognizes the sole responsibility of parents "to provide ... for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children." (44) Assuming that families were permanently nurturing institutions performing such mandated functions, the Constitution allowed only for State intervention in times of family breakdown:

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. (45)

Augmented by The Children Act, 1908, and its various amendments, this constitutional clause sanctioned Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools to provide alternative "homes" for at-risk children. (46) In the process the State conveniently elided social phenomena deemed inconsistent with the national ideal, including family breakdown, poverty, and, in particular, all manifestations of moral and sexual deviancy. (47) The most disturbing aspect of this fusion of

legislative and judicial power stems from the State's conveniently complementary obligations. Not only did it invest the "Family" with ideological significance vis-a-vis a post-independence national imaginary, but the State simultaneously retained the power to contain and therefore conceal aberrations in that imaginary. Post-independence Irish politics engineered Ireland's architecture of containment as the necessary supporting scaffold of its newly constructed national identity.

As a product of this institutional system, Francie Brady assaults the reader with his unreliable and crazed voice in *The Butcher Boy's* first sentence:

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 done on Mrs.

Nugent. I was hiding out by the river in a hole under a tangle of briars.

It was a hide me and Joe made. Death to all dogs who enter here, we said.

Except us of course.

You could see plenty from inside but no one could see you. Weeds and

driftwood and everything floating downstream under the dark archway of the

bridge. Sailing away to Timbuctoo. Good luck now weeds, I said. (1)

Grotesque in its subterranean darkness, Francie's "hide" protects him momentarily from society's fetters. It also casts light on, therefore rendering visible, the architecture of containment's function to tidy away the human refuse of respectable Irish society. Francie, who is so often hidden away by that society, here translates its structures of confinement into his own alternative hiding place. Incarcerated in his "hide" by choice, Francie's view on the outside world, framed through a window-like opening, forges the connection to his experiences of incarceration. For the remainder of the novel, this connection between being confined and being hidden is reflected in the myriad windows that frame his view of the world. Francie, in fact, describes the various recarcinal institutions in which he spends time as "house(s) of a hundred windows." (48)

Patrick McCabe indicts the presumed rehabilitative function of Ireland's institutions of containment in his narrative of a child's progress through three separate experiences of incarceration. In a landscape offering no shortage of institutional alternatives, Francie's community chooses to confine rather than provide treatment or support. Consequently, Francie first spends time at the industrial school; then the mental asylum; and ultimately the prison for the criminally insane. Through Francie's progression from school to asylum to prison, McCabe interrogates society's sequestering of those it deems socially aberrant. The novel recalls, certainly, Michel Foucault's argument that asylums in particular, and institutions of confinement in general, attempt to ensure "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." (49) Bernadette Fahy,

a survivor of Goldenbridge Industrial School, underscores Foucault's contention with her claim that "the adult victims of orphanages were really the victims of Irish society's need to reinvent itself according to de Valera's ideals." In addition, Fahy points to one of the most disturbing legacies of institutionalization: "The impact is still being felt, as the families of adult survivors reenact the trauma in multi-generational patterns of grief and abandonment." (50) Francie Brady embodies these generational reverberations: his father's disdain stems from unresolved psychological traumas suffered during his own childhood incarceration in a Belfast orphanage, whereas his mother's fragile optimism reflects the stigma Irish society associates with mental illness. (51) Consequently, Francie exhibits the psychic and moral disintegration of a child forced to suffer each stage of the collapsing parental relationship:

Ma was in a bad way now. It destroyed you that place,
can't you see that?

she said. You can't even talk about it, can you? Not
even after all this

time! It's no shame Benny that you were put in there!
And even if it was,

no shame should make you turn on your own brother like a
dog!

He didn't like that and he turned on her then. He
said at least he never

had to be took off to a madhouse to disgrace the whole
family. I knew then

ma was never in any garage but I knew all along anyway,

I knew it was a

madhouse I just didn't want Nugent or anyone else to hear so I said it was

a garage. (37)

Francie's slide into madness emerges, surely, from his need to create a charade of familial respectability by suppressing the truths of his parental history. Finally, his madness duplicates that of his parents in telling detail, as the shared experience of institutional confinement connects all three family members.

Although seeking to instill a sense of moral conformity, religious faith, and individual responsibility, the industrial school instead encourages Francie's delusional tendencies. McCabe presents the boy's confinement there as arbitrary. All legislative guidelines are ignored and the child has no recourse to legal counsel, for the local police sergeant simply deposits Francie on the doorstep and warns him that when "the priests get their hands on you there won't be so much guff outa ye" (71). Unlike his father, who could never forgive anyone, including himself, for the humiliation suffered while in an orphanage, Francie's determination to return to society dictates that he charm his way out. His goal is to achieve the "Francie Brady Not a Bad Bastard Any More Diploma," and with it his freedom (75). But freedom comes with a price, as Francie attempts to impress the school principal with his delusional conversations with the Virgin Mary, conversations that undermine the institution's mission to reform its inmates into normalcy:

I looked up and there she was over by the handball alley. I wasn't sure

what to say to her ah its yourself or did you have a

nice trip or something

like that.... she said that it gladdened her that I had chosen to be good.

I said no problem, Our Lady. (83)

The search for freedom also mandates that Francie befriend a pederastic priest recently returned from the missions. When the "moist-lipped" Fr. Tiddley, a.k.a. Fr. Sullivan, and Francie are discovered in a sexually compromising position, McCabe depicts how the organizational ranks of respectable society close in to contain any threat of infamy. Although the boy is told "Father Sullivan was a good man," and that he has gone to stay with his sister in Dublin for a while (100-1), Francie is more astute than his guardians assume. Seeing Fr. Tiddley packed into a car, the boy surmises the destination: "probably away off to the garage to rub some bogman with his mickey good luck and good fucking riddance" (100). Equally quick to detect society's fear of scandal, Francie knows that "they were going to let me go the first chance they got I was like a fungus growing on the walls they wanted them washed clean again" (102).

His freedom is short-lived, and his next bout of anti-social behavior finds him confined once again, on this occasion at the local asylum, previously the site of his mother's incarceration for mental illness. Once again respectable Irish society intervenes, sending Francie to "another kiphouse with a hundred windows," this time after the discovery of his father's decomposing body (153). At this site of confinement, Francie again exhibits greater resourcefulness than his parent, reducing the process of medication, rehabilitation, and recovery to a game. The shame and disappointment that so burdened his mother fails to deter him from his objective. After his second release into society, however, the generational pattern of incarceration

accelerates, and Francie's destiny appears inevitable. Like his father, he turns increasingly to alcohol to cope with anger, punishing others for his own despair (148-49, 208-9); predictably, a prison provides his third experience of walled confinement.

The Butcher Boy's denouement exposes the failure of the nation's institutional response to Francie Brady. McCabe depicts social and religious conformity, the yardstick for participation in Ireland's nativist project, for what it has become: the maddened and maddening legacy of an ongoing decolonization process. In the process, the assumed distinctions between legitimate and aberrant behavior reveal themselves as arbitrary and socially constructed. The novel juxtaposes the townspeople's preparations for the end of the world, foretold by the appearance of the Virgin Mary, with Francie's execution of Mrs. Nugent--the righteous and powerfully symbolic Irish mother he believes destroyed his life. In an equally telling juxtaposition, while the emotive hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," blares out over the loudspeakers, Francie composes his own subversive hymn to the eccentric martyr Matt Talbot. (52) Moreover, the "Francie Brady Deadwood Stage," the cart containing Mrs. Nugent's disemboweled corpse, savagely mirrors the prop of the reformed town drunk, who uses a wheelbarrow to transport saintly statues to the hastily erected shrine in the town center (222). (53) Francie's final confinement in the prison for the criminally insane, yet another "house of a hundred windows," becomes farcical--merely something to be played out and mocked. As he cries out to the wardens, "You don't fool me.... You're trying to put me in a mental hospital!" and then adds, "Its all right ... its only a joke" (229).

Each step of Francie's slide into madness threatens to contaminate the nation's nativist ideals, especially as he plays out his role in the

generational pattern inherent in Ireland's architecture of containment. Again and again respectable society turns its back, and in so doing repeatedly fails to acknowledge the consequences attending childhood institutionalization. McCabe's novel explores how a back turned away in scorn makes an enticing target for revenge and speaks for many actual Irish children who have suffered precisely such abandonment. The case of Brendan O'Donnell is only one example. Like his fictional alternative, this Francie Brady-like teenager was shuttled through various State-run remand institutions. In the aftermath of his trial for three murders in 1996, in an Irish Times editorial, Fintan O'Toole reflected upon his first encounter with the disturbed adolescent in the early 1980s. (54) During O'Toole's visit to Loughan House, a number of staff expressed concern for one fourteen-year-old inmate who they believed would certainly commit violent crimes when released. Despite staff endeavors on his behalf, the State denied the necessary remedial care and simply dispatched O'Donnell to the next institution. O'Toole concludes ominously:

For 15 years, the State psychological services watched him grow into a killer. For five years, the police and penal system dealt with an escalating pattern of violent crimes. In 1988, he was assessed as psychotic and a certain danger to society. But at no time did the State seem capable of doing anything to avert that danger. And it is not at all clear that

that situation has greatly changed. We think nothing of the cost of prison

places, of trials, of Garda time, and everything of the cost of remedial

intervention before a fragile personality has been so irreparably damaged

as to represent a danger to others. (55)

It is not my intention to pathologize the thousands of living alumni of Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools by suggesting that they present a danger to society. Neither do I wish to imply an inherent link between institutionalization and psychotic illnesses. Rather, Francie Brady, a fictional character, and Brendan O'Donnell, an actual case study, offer worst-case scenarios. The imaginative and the real-life narratives both imply the consequences of the State's dependence on institutions to dispose of "problem children."

According to Paul Ricoeur's definition of justice, Irish society must apologize to the survivors of Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools--a requirement the State has fulfilled but, as I suggest, not satisfactorily. Justice also requires that survivors of institutional violence obtain legal recourse for the traumatic abuses suffered while in State care. These survivors need assurances that contemporary Ireland will effect infrastructural changes that guarantee against a repetition of the past. Such guarantees must ensure complete transparency with regard to the State's provision of child care--past and present--and oblige the general public to remain vigilant about residences in their communities. Only with these two guarantees in place will the shadow of the nativist imaginary finally abate. Then the survivors of Ireland's industrial and reformatory school will have

spoken themselves back into the national family and, in the process, will have contributed to the emergence a post-national narrative of Irish identity.

(1) Patrick McCabe, *The Butcher Boy* (New York: Delta Books, [1992] 1997). All further references to *The Butcher Boy* refer to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

(2) My understanding of the State's investment in institutional containment is influenced by Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995) and *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

(3) The Magdalen was an institution for women deemed socially deviant or sexually promiscuous. In Ireland, women religious operated Magdalen institutions. Those committed invariably spent their days laboring in industrial laundries--the philosophy being that having been "stained" by the sin of immorality they could cleanse themselves by constant labor, prayer, and isolation. Thousands of Irish women were committed to the Magdalen by other family members. Many remained incarcerated for the rest of their lives and were denied all civil and legal rights.

(4) My use of the term "national imaginary" reflects the influence on my work of Benedict Anderson's seminal text on modern nationalism. See Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1991).

(5) The use of the term "illegitimate" throughout this article refers only to society's rendering of the birth as transgressive of social norms. It does not, obviously, refer to the child itself.

(6) *States of Fear*, three episodes, narr., Aine Lawlor, writ., prod., dir., Mary Raftery, RTE, Ireland, 27 April to n May 1999. Raftery together with Trinity College Dublin academic, Eoin O'Sullivan, subsequently published a book-length study of the same material. See Raftery and O'Sullivan, *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland's Industrial Schools* (Dublin: New Island Books, 1999).

(7) The Kennedy Report takes its name from its chairperson, District Justice Eileen Kennedy. Its more precise title is given in the following citation: Ireland, Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools, *Coiste Fiosruchain Choras Scoileanna Ceartuchain Agus Saothair: Tuarascail, 1970 / Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems: Report, 1970* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1970).

(8) Barney O'Connell, John Prior, Mannix Flynn, Don Baker, Mary Norris, Sharon Murphy, and Mary Phil Drennan provided the seven first-person accounts. All subsequent references to their accounts refer to *States of Fear*, episode one.

(9) On the advent of "nativist" nationalism in the postcolonial moment, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993) xi-xxviii; and Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

(10) See Maurice Moynihan, ed., *Speeches and Statements By Eamon de Vera 1917-1973* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), 466.

(11) That Ireland today is even aware of the tragedy attests to the impact of Mavis Arnold and Heather Laskey's groundbreaking publication, *Children of the Poor Clares: The Story of an Irish Orphanage* (Belfast: Appletree Press, Ltd., 1985). In the official government inquiry, neither the religious order that managed the

industrial school nor the local district council were found culpable despite evidence to suggest the institution was not in compliance with regulations regarding fire drills and locked fire-escapes. However, as Arnold and Laskey report, the legacy of the tragedy remains the conviction that the nuns' first reaction, before they realized the seriousness of the situation, was to avoid having themselves or the girls be seen in their nightclothes. For this reason, many believe, the girls were ushered back into their dormitories from which the raging fire ultimately allowed no escape.

(12) In addition to the "stories" I outline below, in a longer version of this essay, I consider the "X" case, the Eamon Casey affair, the Brendan Smyth affair, the Lavinia Kerwick rape case, the Kilkenny Incest case, the Kelly Fitzgerald Inquiry, the Madonna House Inquiry, the "West of Ireland Farmer" (Sophia McColgan) case, and numerous others, as part of this movement toward greater visibility, and consequently greater accountability.

(13) Among the many others who make the same connection, see Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation: Studies in the New Irish Fiction* (London: Pluto, 1997) 5-6; and Ailbhe Smyth, "Feminism: Personal, Unqualified (or Ex-Colonized Girls Know More)," *Irish Journal of Feminist Studies* 2:1 (1997), 37-54.

(14) Extracts from "The Inaugural Speech" in K. Donovan, A.N. Jeffares, and B. Kennelly, eds., *Ireland's Women: Writings Past and Present* (London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 1994) 253-55.

(15) Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997).

(16) Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland*, 61-65.

(17) See Janet Walker, "The Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22:4 (1997), 803-25, 803, 806. Also see Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray, "Survivor Discourse: Transgression or Recuperation," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18:2 (1993), 260-90; and Linda Williams, "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary," *Film Quarterly* 46:3 (1993), 9-21.

(18) Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination, Testimony, and Trust: A Dialogue with Paul Ricoeur," *Questioning Ethics: Debates in Contemporary Philosophy*, eds., Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 16. In addition, Ricoeur cautions: "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," (16).

(19) Ricoeur points to the dual aspect of narrative when he states, "It is precisely through narratives that a certain education of memory has to start. Here we can introduce the connection between memory and forgetting, because the best use of forgetting is precisely in the construction of plots, in the elaboration of narratives concerning personal identity or collective identity; that is, we cannot tell a story without eliminating or dropping some important event according to the kind of plot we intend to build. Narratives, therefore, are at the same time the occasion for manipulation through reading and directing narratives, but also the place where a certain healing of memory may begin." Ricoeur, "Imagination, Testimony, and Trust," 8-9.

(20) Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination, Testimony, and Trust," 16.

(21) See, for example, Bernard MacLaverty's *Lamb* (London: Penguin, 1981); Dermot Bolger's *Father's Music: A Novel* (London: Flamingo, 1997); Mary Morrissey's *Mother of Pearl* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996); Dermot Healy's *The Bend For Home* (London: The Harvill Press, 1996); Roddy Doyle's *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1996); Kathleen Ferguson's *The Maid's Tale* (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1994); and Edna O'Brien's *Down by the River* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

(22) See Paddy Doyle, *The God Squad: A Remarkable True Story* (London: Corgi Books, [1988] 1989); Margaret Matley, *Always in the Convent Shadow* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991); Patrick Touher, *Fear of the Collar: Artane Industrial School* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 1991) and *Free as a Bird: The Shadow of Artane* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994); Pat Tierney, *The Moon On My Back: Autobiography* (Dublin: Seven Towers Publishing, 1993); Mary Phil Drennan, *You May Talk Now!* (Blarney, Co. Cork: On Stream Publications, 1994); and Bernadette Fahy, *Freedom of Angels: Surviving Goldenbridge Orphanage* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 1999).

(23) Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 188.

(24) Three years prior to *States of Fear*, there was a very similar public outcry after the broadcast of the drama-documentary, *Dear Daughter*, which focused on life in Goldenbridge Industrial School. See *Dear Daughter*, narr. Bosco Hogan, dir. Louis Lentin, Crescendo Concepts for RTE, 22 February 1996. A number of television and radio programs also contributed to the ensuing controversy, none more important than an episode of *Prime Time* where Sr. Xaveria, the nun

accused of horrific physical abuse in *Dear Daughter*, denied the allegations. See "Dear Daughter," Prime Time, prest. Miriam O'Callaghan, prod. and dir. Anita Notaro, RTE 1, 23 April 1996; "Dear Daughter," Farrell, prest. Brian Farrell, RTE 1, 28 April 1996; "Christine Buckley," Kenny Live, prest. Pat Kenny, RTE 1, 24 February 1996; and "Sisters of Mercy," 60 Minutes, narr. Ed Bradley, prod. Jeanne Solomon Langley, CBS News, New York, n May 1997.

(25) The government's package included a number of important legislative measures, including a proposed "Commission to Inquire into Childhood Abuse," a commitment to fund a professional counseling service available on a regional basis, a commitment to introduce legislation that would reform the Statute of Limitations as it refers to victims of childhood sexual abuse, a promise to establish a long-awaited "Register of Sex Offenders" and proposals on "Mandatory Reporting" of sexual abuse of children. See "Speech by An Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, T.D., Announcing Government Measures Relating to Childhood Abuse on Tuesday 11 May 1999 at 5.00 p.m.," *The Irish Times*, 11 May 1999, Breaking News.

(26) "Speech by An Taoiseach."

(27) "Speech by An Taoiseach."

(28) Mary Raftery, the documentary producer, and her research assistant, Sheila Ahern, estimated that somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 alumni of the residential care system are still alive. Mary Raftery, "Are Today's Children Safe in the Care of the State?" *The Irish Times*, 11 May 1999, Opinion.

(29) The Cussen Report takes its name from its chairperson, Mr. G. P. Cussen, Senior Justice of Dublin's District Court. See Saorstát Éireann,

Report of the Commission into the Reformatory and Industrial School System, 1934-1936. Report (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1936). See also Ireland, Task Force on Child Care Services: Final Report to the Minister for Health (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 1980.

(30) See footnote 25.

(31) The records are part of the Department of Education's "Special Education" section and have never been released to the National Archives for public examination. They remain exempt under the National Archives Act, 1986. The author tried to gain access to a limited selection of files while visiting the National Archives in Dublin in 1996 and 1998, but was denied on both occasions. In the aftermath of *States of Fear*, the Minister for Education, Mr. Michael Martin, announced that "any remaining files relating to the State's industrial and reformatory schools would be made public." See "Minister Describes Steps to Uncover Abuse in 1960," *The Irish Times*, 14 May 1999, Ireland.

(32) Following the broadcast, numerous expressions of surprise at the State's funding of these institutions were articulated in the various newspaper commentaries. See Kathy Sheridan, "State's Role in Church Wrongs," *The Irish Times*, 27 April 1999, Features; Bruce Arnold, "Trapping Young Hearts and Minds in a State of Fear," *Irish Independent*, 1 May 1999; and Eddie Holt, "Unholy Trinity," rev. of *States of Fear*, dir. Mary Raftery, *The Irish Times*, 1 May 1999, Features. Similar expressions of surprise appeared in numerous letters to the editor of *The Irish Times* in the ensuing weeks. See Brian Quinn, letter, *The Irish Times*, 11 May 1999; and Philip Casey, letter, *The Irish Times*, 26 May 1999.

(33) *States of Fear*, episode one.

(34) States of Fear, episode one.

(35) A capitation grant is one given to the religious orders by the State on a "per child, per week" basis at the predetermined amount. Thus, in 1958, each industrial school received forty-five shillings (45/-) from the State and Local Authority per child, per week. In most cases, this grant was paid only for children between the ages of six and sixteen years. See *Eire, Reformatory and Industrial Schools (Average Cost of Maintenance of Youthful Offenders and Children) Order, 1958* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1958).

(36) Harry Ferguson, Robbie Gilligan, and Ruth Torode, eds., *Surviving Childhood Adversity Issues for Policy and Practice* (Dublin: Social Studies Press, Trinity College, 1993), and Robbie Gilligan, *Irish Child Care Services* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1991).

(37) John Waters, "Past Abuse Evident to All With Eyes to See," *The Irish Times*, 18 May 1999, Opinion.

(38) See Chris Moore, *Betrayal of Trust: The Father Brendan Smyth Affair and the Catholic Church* (Dublin: Marino Books, 1995).

(39) The third episode was broadcast on RTE 1, 11 May 1999.

(40) Ireland. *Report on the Inquiry into the Operation of Madonna House, May 1996* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1996).

(41) John Waters, "Past Abuse Evident to All With Eyes to See."

(42) On the Constitution in general, see Tim Murphy and Patrick Twomey, eds., *Ireland's Evolving Constitution, 1937-97: Collected Essay* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 1998). On the Constitution's gender implications, see Patrick Hannafin, "Defying the female: the Irish constitutional text as phallogocentric manifesto," *Textual Practice* 11:2

(1997), 249-73.

(43) Ireland, *Bunreacht na hEireann/The Constitution of Ireland* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1945), Article 41 (1)(i). The State augmented the desired vitality and stability of family life by outlawing divorce, by banning contraception, and by recognizing "that by her life within the home woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved." See *Bunreacht na hEireann Article 41 (2)(i)*.

(44) See *Bunreacht na hEireann Article 42 (1)*.

(45) See *Bunreacht na hEireann Article 42 (5)*. As sociologist Anne Dunne explains, "The principle that a marital child had a right to belong to and be educated by a constitutionally protected family may sound well, but is really an assertion of parental privilege and a very heavy onus is placed on any party who seeks to challenge on behalf of the child." See Anne Dunne, "Constitution Does Not Cherish All Children Equally," *The Irish Times*, 22 May 1993, 6. Recent socio-sexual scandals in Irish society, including the Kelly Fitzgerald Case (1993), the Kilkenny Incest Case (1996), and the Sophia McColgan case (1995), demonstrate that community members outside the family were hesitant to interfere, even in the face of domestic or sexual abuse of children. See Ireland, Department of Health, *Kilkenny Incest Investigations: Report Presented to Mr. Brendan Howlin, T.D., Minister by South Eastern Health Board, May 1993* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1993); Ireland, Joint Committee on the Family, *Kelly: A Child Is Dead* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1996); and Susan McKay, *Sophia's Story* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998).

(46) It is worth noting that the 1908 Act was not finally repealed until the introduction of *The Child Care Act, 1991*.

(47) See Kennedy Report, "Appendix G--Reasons for which a child may be taken into care under section 58 of The Children's Act, 1908," 125-26. See also "Appendix E--Tables 1-13" for the annual totals of children committed in industrial and reformatory schools from 1950-1970 and the grounds for committal for those children detained during the same period, 92-97.

(48) The first example occurs when Francie is approaching the industrial school with the local police officer; see *The Butcher Boy*, 71.

(49) Michel Foucault, "The Birth of the Asylum," *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Random, 1984), 150.

(50) Kathryn Holmquist, "Obsession With Sexual Morality Led to Rejection of Children," *The Irish Times*, 9 March 1996, 7.

(51) Speaking in an interview, McCabe claims: "Francie 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 institutionalized and bereft. So it strikes back though the generations, this sadness." See Wendy Herstein, "You Lie In Wait: Patrick McCabe Reflects Upon Despair, Idealism, and the Workings of His Muse," *The World & I* 8:8 (1993), 299-301.

(52) Matt Talbot (1856-1925) is a figure of popular devotion in Ireland. After suffering from alcoholism at an early age, Talbot underwent a religious conversion that included him taking the teetotal pledge. He is highly regarded for his various acts of charity, regular sacramental practice, and acts of physical penance. Talbot was beatified in 1976.

(53) See Clare Wallace, "Running Amuck: Manic Logic in Patrick

McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*," *Irish Studies Review* 6:3 (1998), 57-165.

(54) Loughan House, in County Cavan, is a "temporary secure facility for the reception of boys from the courts who are so intractable as to be unmanageable in the open special schools." Loughan House was converted for this purpose and certified by the Minister for Education as a reformatory school in 1978. See Ireland, Minister for Health, Task Force on Child Care Services, *Final Report* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1980), 57.

(55) See Fintan O'Toole, "State Watched O'Donnell Grow Into a Killer," *The Irish Times*, 4 April 1996.

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